

THE REPORTER

Newsletter of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church

March 18, 2007

Sunday Services

Sunday services and Children's Religious Exploration classes at St. John's begin at 11am. Child care is available. Parking can be found behind the Clifton Mosque (located across Clifton Avenue from the Clifton School construction site) or in the Clifton Recreation Center lot on McAlpin Avenue. The church parking lot is reserved for visitors, families with small children, our older members, and those with handicapped permits.

Sunday March 25th

"What Chicken Little Never Knew"

the Rev. Dr. Frank Carpenter

We have many dark concerns about the fate of our society and of our planet. Are people fully aware of them? Do they (we) want to be aware of them? How can we maintain hope in dark times?

Sunday April 1st

"Investing In Today and Tomorrow!"

the Rev. Dr. Frank Carpenter with the Stewardship Committee

On this day we will kick off our annual pledge drive. Your spiritual commitment to St. John's is important. Your moral bond with our community is important. And your financial loyalty is important.

Pledge Sunday is April 1st

No foolin'! By now, you have received more information about the very important pledge campaigns. During the service on April 1st, you will hear about our financial goals as we are "Facing the Future." In addition to capital campaign pledges, we will be collecting pledge cards to "Fund the Flame" for the 2007-08 fiscal year that begins on July 1st. Perhaps you are a newer member who has not yet had an opportunity to speak with someone about pledging. Perhaps you are a teacher with the children on Sundays and haven't had the opportunity to hear the testimonials in March or to attend the service on April 1st. Following the services on April 1st and April 8th, all are invited for "Coffee with a Council Director" in Krolfifer to further discuss pledging at St. John's

-Jonena Jones

Minister

The Rev. Dr. Frank Carpenter

Affiliated Minister

The Rev. Bonnie Meyer

Minister Emerita

The Rev. L. Annie Foerster

Minister of Music

Dr. Catherine Roma

Assoc. Director of Music

Rachel Kramer

Directors of Religious

Exploration for Children

Mary Darner

Barbara Hadden

Office Administrator

Mary Jo (Josie) Arens

Caretaker

J. Michael Skaggs

Newsletter Editor

Bruce Beisner

Church Office

513-961-1938

stjohnuu@fuse.net

Church Office Hours

Monday through Friday

7:30am to 2:30pm

Church Website

www.stjohnsuu.org

Next Reporter Deadline

Thursday March 29 at 5pm

Send articles to Bruce Beisner via email

Frankly Speaking....

by the Rev. Dr. Frank Carpenter

Since the riots in 2001, a lot has happened in Cincinnati to address racism and improve the working relationship between the Cincinnati Police Department and the Community. The most significant is the court mandated Collaborative Agreement involving the various parties, the ACLU for the plaintiffs, the city, and the FOP. Here at St. John's, we have had a Congregational Initiative involving a number of discussions about the Collaborative Agreement and voted to become a Friend of the Agreement

The Department and the community have made great progress under the Collaborative Agreement, as indicated by the NAACP deciding to have its upcoming convention in our City. Under the agreement, use of force policies were rewritten and officers have been trained consistent with those policies.

Also, the Citizens Complaint Authority was established. The CPD collects data on every traffic stop. The City agreed to adopt problem solving as the "principal strategy for addressing crime and disorder problems." This has two aspects: community engagement and police department adoption of problem solving. In a nutshell *CPOP is evidence based policing*.

What is needed now is for the CPD to implement problem solving internally, and for the monitor to be able to review that implementation. When policing is evidence based then deployment will have a solid foundation in the analysis of the facts of a problem. It requires that we approach crime and disorder as problems defined through careful analysis of data. When we do this we find that that much disorder is traceable to repeat offenders, repeat victims and repeat locations. Strategies are then tailored to solve those problems by enlisting the resources and stakeholders appropriate to the problem. The CPD would then be able to explain to the community how the effort is tailored to the problem. And clear outcome measures will be articulated to measure the deployment to insure that it is done fairly and effectively.

The ACLU and the NAACP are among those calling for the consideration of extending the Collaborative Agreement past its August 5, 2007 expiration date. With an extension the court appointed monitor can review the CPD command staff's implementation of problem solving internally.

I hope you will communicate your concerns about our city to the appropriate city officials. If you want more information, please contact me, or Sylvia Mersfelder.

-Peace,

Frank

Our Mission: *St. John's is committed to creating a safe and caring community, working for social justice and celebrating beliefs that respect freedom of thought.*

We are pleased to be designated a "Welcoming Congregation" by the Unitarian Universalist Association, and as such we honor and value the racial, cultural, economic, religious, physical ability, sexual orientation and gender diversity of our members and visitors, young and old.

Opportunities & Invitations

Interweave Movie Night

Join Interweave for their premier Movie Night. This social group for GLBT St. Johners and friends will be showing "Trans America" in Krolfifer Hall on Saturday March 24th at 7:30pm. Please bring a snack or beverage to share. For more information, contact Greg Terhune.

-Greg Terhune

Women's Book Group

At our April gathering, the Women's Book group will begin meeting in member's homes again. The book we are reading for next month's discussion is "March: A Novel" by Geraldine Brooks. All women friends and members of St. John's are welcome. For more information, please call Debbie Combs.

-Debbie Combs

Coffee Hour Fill-ins Needed

I would like to thank everyone for the wonderful responses we received following our coffee hour sign-up mailing. Overall there were very few who could not commit to volunteering and those who needed to switch dates coordinated the change smoothly, which was much appreciated. I am still in need of ten people who are willing to host on the dates where there were cancellations, May through October. If you were not assigned a date this year or would be willing to host more than once, please contact me (Tracy Flanagan) and I will give you the dates where help is still needed. Again, thank you all for your support.

-Tracy Flanagan

Coffee Hour Coordinator

Contemporary Service News

Did you get to the first service on March 18th?

If you liked it and would like to be part of future services, please contact George Dersheimer.

We are especially looking for musicians of all types - drummers, keyboards, guitar, bass, acoustic, singers, and more! Or, if you want to be part of creating art, ushering, tech operations, coffee prep or helping in other ways, we want you! The next service will be on April 15th at 9:00 AM.

-the Program Planning Team

Workshop on UU Social Activism

On April 1st, Unitarian Universalists from around Cincinnati will gather at Heritage UU Church for an afternoon workshop titled "Be The Change You Want to See." The workshop will be led by Richard S. Gilbert, author of *The Prophetic Imperative* and Social Justice Coordinator for the St. Lawrence UU District. The presentation will explore the spiritual roots of social action work and offer practical suggestions for creating and maintaining a strong social justice program in local congregations. The workshop is free and will be on Sunday April 1st from 1pm to 4pm (light lunch included) at Heritage Church in Newtown. To register, contact Connie Booth.

-UU Council of Greater Cincinnati

Final Friday Game Night

All are welcome to join us as we gather on the final Friday of each month to play games of all sorts ranging from dominoes to Apples to Apples to various Euro-style games. We meet in Krolfifer at St. John's at 7pm and stay until the last games are finished. If you are so inclined, you may bring some sort of snack, but it's strictly optional. Please join us at our next meeting on Friday March 30th. Contact Karen Miller with any questions.

-Karen Miller

Adult RE Classes

If you have been putting off signing up for one of our Adult Religious Exploration programs, don't delay any longer. We have three offerings that have open registration at this time. Books can be purchased at a discount through the St. John's Bookstore for the first two classes. Contact Carol Fencel to register for any of the following programs:

Soul Work

Monday Evenings from 7-8:30pm

Based on the text Soul Work: Anti-Racist Theologies in Dialogue, we'll discuss topics on the related themes of racism and class. With our UU religious movement embracing and affirming theological diversity, the readings are challenging, requiring the willingness to hear different perspectives and rethink assumptions. This discussion will be three Monday evenings, from 7-8:30pm beginning April 16th. The group will be co-led by Jacque Rousseau and Carol Fencel.

What is Marriage For?

The Strange Social History of Our Most Intimate Institution

Tuesdays April 17th & 24th from 7-9pm

Based on the book by E. J. Graff, participants will investigate past and current marriage laws and customs and develop personal definitions of marriage. Whatever your gender, relationship status or age, the discussions should challenge your thinking, both at the personal and societal level. This class will meet for two Tuesday evenings, April 17th and 24th, from 7-9pm.

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The Spiritual Reader-

Thursday afternoons from noon-1:30pm

Led by Frank Carpenter, our minister, this group will study Wayne Muller's book: *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal and Delight in Our Busy Lives*. After reading selected passages aloud (like the old Bible study model), we will talk about their meaning in our lives. The group will meet over the lunch hour, from noon to 1:30 for four weeks, beginning on Thursday March 29th and continuing through April 19th.

Great Decisions

Sunday afternoons from 1:30-3:30pm

Get informed about current hot topics around the world by reading the Great Decisions articles and participating in lively discussions with others. This program, co-sponsored by St. John's, First Unitarian Church and the Global Center, will be meeting for six weeks at St. John's. You do NOT need to be present for all weeks to participate. It is helpful if you have read the 10-page article before coming to the group. Books are available from Dick Fencel for \$14 each. Each session will have a DVD panel of experts to introduce the topic. There is no charge and registration is not necessary. Topics have been selected for the remaining four sessions of the program. All future sessions will meet in the Chapel at St. John's on Sunday afternoons from 1:30 to 3:30pm:
March 25- Mexico - Neighbor in Turmoil
April 1- International Migration
April 15- Central Asia -Three power resource rivalry
April 22- Helping the world's endangered children

Adult RE Instructors Needed

To maintain our vibrant Adult Religious Exploration program, we are always looking for new people to help us. If you have skills in either teaching or facilitating groups, please talk with Carol Fencel, Adult RE Chair. We have a wealth of curriculum resources, some using "knowledge" and others needing "facilitation skills." Of course if you come with both, that is no problem either.

Among Ourselves

Stewardship Sunday is April 1st

No foolin'! By now, you have received more information about the very important pledge campaigns. During the service on April 1st, you will hear about our financial goals as we are "Facing the Future." In addition to capital campaign pledges, we will be collecting pledge cards to "Fund the Flame" for the 2007-08 fiscal year that begins on July 1st. Perhaps you are a newer member who has not yet had an opportunity to speak with someone about pledging. Perhaps you are a teacher with the children on Sundays and haven't had the opportunity to hear the testimonials in March or to attend the service on April 1st. Following the services on April 1st and April 8th, all are invited for "Coffee with a Council Director" in Krolfifer to further discuss pledging at St. John's. If you would like to participate in the stewardship process, contact Jonena Jones, Finance Council Director.

-Jonena Jones

Your Pledge and Your Taxes

Tax time is here and so is the annual pledge campaign and along with it the capital campaign. Don't forget that if you donate property, such as stock or mutual fund shares to St. John's, and you owned the asset for more than a year, you can write off its value on the day that you made the gift, not what you originally paid for it. You don't have to pay tax on the appreciation while you owned the stock, either. You may want to consider using appreciated property instead of cash for your pledge. What if you really want to keep the stock in your portfolio? Donate the shares you own and use the cash you would have given to buy new shares. The advantage is that you'll owe tax only on the profit that accrues after you repurchase the shares. If the stock or mutual fund shares you plan to donate have decreased in value, sell the shares

and donate the cash. That way, you can deduct your loss and claim charitable deduction as well. If you have any questions about donating stock or mutual fund shares as your pledge, please contact Judy Buxton, Treasurer.

-Judy Buxton

Sabbatical Committee Update

As part of Rev. Carpenter's contract, he is eligible for a sabbatical this coming year. The sabbatical will provide Frank with a time of reflection and study, and at the same time give us the opportunity to strengthen the church and its committees. Frank has applied for a sabbatical from February through May of 2008 and the Board has approved his moving forward with this idea. A Sabbatical Committee has been formed to help Rev. Carpenter develop a sabbatical plan that will be presented for Board approval in May. Following approval, more information will be distributed during the summer detailing both the plan and other arrangements regarding how the church will function during the minister's absence. The committee will keep the congregation updated as plans mature. If you have questions or concerns, we are here to help. Members of the committee are: Bruce Beisner, Judy Buxton, Carol Fencl and Cliff Shisler.

-the Sabbatical Committee

Love Books?

St. John's needs your help in our St. John's Bookstore. You'd work in conjunction with the Adult RE Chair, ordering books and staffing the bookstore table on designated Sundays. There is also an opportunity to expand the stock to include other sources or individual copies of books not being used in Adult RE classes. Please talk with Carol Fencl if you are interested.

-the Adult RE Committee

Peacemaking Survey Results

At the Sunday March 12th service members voted on a UUA study for a Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking. Eleven members favored a pacifist approach, 12 endorsed a “just war” policy and 54 voted for greater peace activism without expressly declaring whether or not force would ever be acceptable. Eighteen attended the talk back, and several members were concerned that a UU Just War policy might make it more difficult for UU youth be able to obtain Conscientious Objector status. Members interested in joining a study group on the issue should contact Frank Carpenter or Howard Tolley. Copies of the sermon, readings, and order of service are available by request from Howard Tolley.

-Howard Tolley

The Wheel of Life

Last year we experimented with a column, “Wheel of Life,” that contained personal news about members and friends. Feedback was universally and overwhelmingly positive, but we have a problem to solve if it is to continue. Column writer Barbara Pinzka is disabled and unable to attend Sunday services. She needs someone to send her a short email each Sunday summarizing the personal announcements that are made during the Wheel of Life segment. If you can help, contact Barbara. You don’t have to be “a writer,” just able to collect the information and list it accurately for her.

-Barbara Pinzka

Big Turnout for Transylvanian Dinner!

This year’s Transylvania dinner, in support of St. John’s partner church in Romania, was a big success with over 140 tickets to the event sold. Even more impressive is the number of volunteers for the event, over 110 members and friends. The Millinius String Quartet entertained the crowd with a variety of music from Brahms to Joplin. Another sign of the success of the dinner was the fact that all the wine was sold! Next year we’ll be sure not to run out. Thank you to everyone who made this event so successful; the planners, the setup people, the cooks, the servers, the clean up crew and all the other volunteers. Your Friends Steering Group would like feedback on this year’s dinner. Please take a minute to send your comments on the dinner to the Friends Group by email to Tom Darner or mention your comments in person to one of the Steering Group members: Rick and Connie Prairie, Emily Hodges, Meg Harman, Sally Larson, David Koehnke, Jim and Kathryn McDonough, Wanda Crawford and Mary and Tom Darner. We hope to have a report on the dinner’s net profits in the next Reporter. The next Friends meeting is Monday March 19th at 7pm at the McDonough’s. This will be a potluck dinner so call Tom Darner ahead of time if you’d like to attend.

-Tom Darner, Co-Chair, Friends of Szentlaszlo

Heartland District Chalice Lighter Call Letter

UU’s around our Heartland District have received a “call letter” from the District Extension Committee announcing the decision to grant St. John’s and Northern Hills money from the Chalice Lighter program. “Chalice Lighters” are asked to pledge that three times a year they will contribute a minimum of \$10 in support of various growth initiatives around the 4 state area. If you would like more information about this program, please contact Janie Cashon, Denominational Affairs Person at St. John’s.

-Carol Fencil

Music Vivace

by Cathy Roma, St. John's Minister of Music

"Do Not Leave Your Cares at the Door" is a great upbeat piece the choir will share on Stewardship Sunday (April 1st), so join us. Do not leave those cares at the door, bring all of you in.

On Sunday March 25th, we will have an interactive Sunday anthem. Brenda Wolfersberger will get you singing Bernice Johnson Reagon's "We Are the Ones We've Been Waiting For." Pipe in with your voice--we all need to sing together-- *we are the ones we've been waiting for.*

AND, it is not too late to join us for our New Orleans Tribute (our Choral Service on June 3rd). We rehearse every Thursday at 8:30 on this music. We also invite the congregation to join the choir as we watch Spike Lee's documentary on Katrina call-ed "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts" on Friday March 30th at 6:30 for potluck and film. Ask a choir member for more information.

Prepare to come out steppin' for the fifth and final concert in the Music Series. Terra Azul, a Brazilian and Contemporary World Music group, will get you dancing. Join us on Saturday April 21st at 8pm. Free Latin dance lessons, people helping each other move around the dance floor. Tickets are available from the church office.

News from the Office

by Josie Arens, St. John's Office Administrator

Written announcements for the Order of Service are due to me in the office by 11am on the Wednesday prior to the Sunday you want them printed. I am looking for persons who would like to volunteer to cover the office for me on occasions when I am on vacation. I need someone to check messages and answer phones in the mornings for a couple of hours. I need someone for Monday May 7th, Friday May 25th and Tuesday July 3rd. I am expecting a new grandchild in July and will be taking some days off

when the baby arrives. I don't know the specific dates that this will happen but would like to have someone ready to cover for me when it does (even if its just for a day or two or whatever would work into your schedule) Since office summer hours will be in effect at this time there would be no coverage needed for any Mondays or Fridays in July. If you are interested, contact the office at 513-961-1938 or stjohnuu@fuse.net. If you are not sure what would be involved with checking phones, you can stop by the office anytime during my office hours and I would be more than happy to show you what you need to do. Thanks to Ethel Ingalls (3/16), Carolyn Banfield (3/30) and Emily Hodges (4/6) for your upcoming help.

RE Joys

*by Barbara Hadden and Mary Darner
St. John's Directors of Religious Exploration*

Girls from 3-13, don't forget the annual Tea, Talent and Dress-Up Party on Saturday March 24th from 2pm to 4:30pm at St. John's. You may bring several outfits, hats, shoes and accessories. This year we have asked some of the older ladies in the church to be our guests to get acquainted with you. Parents are also invited. Girls in fifth grade through senior high are asked to come and help with make up and costume changes. If you plan to attend, please send a message to Barbara or Mary (We don't want to run out of goodies or tea).

We're looking for some helpers to assist with a Boy's Party on April 28th. It's planned for a local park, maybe Miami Whitewater, for games, lunch and getting acquainted. Please let Cynthia Villacis know if you can assist. We'll need lots of parents and grandparents for this event.

Other events coming up are the Easter Egg/Social Service Project on Sunday April 8th and the annual Maypole Celebration on May 6th.

ST. JOHN'S Church Calendar

Monday March 19

2pm- Adult RE Class: School of the Americas
7pm- Adult RE Class: Emerson as Spiritual Guide
7pm- Cont. Service Program Planning Team

Tuesday March 20

9am- Staff Meeting
10am- Meditation
10am- Yoga
7pm- Leadership Development Task Force
7pm- YADA Young Adults Discussion
7pm- Adult RE: World Religious Traditions

Wednesday March 21

First Day of Spring!
1pm- Adult RE: Emerson as Spiritual Guide
6pm- Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday March 22

7:15pm- Choir Rehearsal

Saturday March 24

10am- CGCC
2pm- Tea and Dress Up Party
7:30pm- Interweave Movie Night

Sunday March 25

11am- Sunday Worship Service
12:30pm- Social Action Committee
1:30pm- Adult RE: Great Decisions Discussion
7pm- A Course in Miracles

Monday March 26

7pm- Adult RE Class: Emerson as Spiritual Guide

Tuesday March 27

10am- Meditation
10am- Yoga
7pm- Sabbatical Committee
7pm- Adult RE: World Religious Traditions

Wednesday March 28

1pm- Adult RE: Emerson as Spiritual Guide
6:30pm- Tech Committee

Thursday March 29

Noon- Adult RE: Sabbath- Finding Rest
5pm- Deadline for The Reporter
7:15pm- Choir Rehearsal

Friday March 30

Office Open 9am to Noon (Josie on Vacation)
7pm- Game Night

Sunday April 1

11am- Pledge Sunday Worship Service
12:15pm- Coffee with a Council Director
1:30pm- Adult RE: Great Decisions Discussion
6pm- Earth Spirit Full Moon Gathering
6pm- St. John's Men's Group
7pm- A Course in Miracles

Monday April 2

7pm- Cont. Service Program Planning Team

Tuesday April 3

Passover Begins
10am- Meditation
10am- Yoga
7pm- YADA Young Adults Discussion
7pm- Adult RE: World Religious Traditions

Wednesday April 4

7pm- Membership Committee

Thursday April 5

Noon- Adult RE: Sabbath- Finding Rest
6pm- Music Committee
7:15pm- Choir Rehearsal

Friday April 6

Good Friday
Church Office Closed

Sunday April 8

Happy Easter!
9:45am- Meditation
11am- Sunday Worship Service
12:15pm- Coffee with a Council Director
1pm- Interweave Lunch
7pm- A Course in Miracles

Tuesday April 10

10am- Meditation
10am- Yoga
7pm- Chalice Group (J. Cirillo)
7pm- Adult RE: World Religious Traditions

The Wheel of Life

After 30 years as St. John's Historian, Dick Reiman has decided to step down. Effective on March 15, 2007, Dick will be handing the job over to Larry Wolf, but will assist him when needed. He will still be available to answer any genealogical questions members and friends have anytime. Dick says the history files cover items beginning in 1820 and up to the current time. Because of lack of space, many of the files are archived at the Historical Society Library in the Museum Center. Melanie Marsh is a volunteer in this department and helps to assemble them in archival order. The history file collection includes an 8mm film of the ground breaking for the Sanctuary prior to 1960, various photographs, ministers pictures and constitutions of the church are also collected. The metal file cabinet in the closet adjacent to the Rosa Parks Room also contains drawings of the church building and a metal box to be opened on St. John's 200th anniversary in 2014. Dick says he plans to be there, age 91! There is no way to begin to express our gratitude to Dick for his decades of outstanding work to preserve the history and heritage of St. John's. When you see Dick on Sunday, please tell him THANK YOU!!!!

Lucas Hergert, a longtime member of St. John's and aspirant for the Unitarian Universalist ministry, completed his first semester in Harvard's Master of Divinity program with honors. Next year, he will begin halftime work as Student Minister in the First Parish of Needham. John Buehrens, former president of the Unitarian Universalist Association and Needham's senior minister, will be his supervisor. Both Lucas and his husband Jason are enjoying their time in Boston, but miss each of their friends at St. John's very much.

Please keep Dave Rentz in your thoughts. He recently had back surgery and is now recovering at home.

Thought of the Week

“Our money is a sacrament in which we can say, ‘This is me... this is my sweat and toil...’ We should use it to nourish ourselves and on gifts for those we love, to friends and to organizations and activities we feel are important to the world and the growth of the human spirit. Whenever we give the gift of money we could seal it with a kiss and a wink, saying, ‘This is my body, this is me, this is my love.’”

-Edward Hays