

THE REPORTER

Newsletter of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church

April 15, 2007

Sunday Community 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 April 22

"Celebrate the Earth!"

Guest Speaker: Sr. Paula Gonzalez

Join St. John's Green Sanctuary Partners for this special service to commemorate Earth Day. We will welcome guest speaker Sr. Paula Gonzalez and there will be extra special music from the MUSE Women's Choir.

Sunday April 29

"Religious Exploration Sunday"

the Rev. Dr. Frank Carpenter

RE Sunday will be the time we honor our teachers who have made this year possible and hear from our youth who have been in the "Coming of Age" program.

Contemporary Services

The next Contemporary Service at St. John's will be on Sunday May 20 starting at 9am. The service will be titled "What Does God Look Like to You" and will explore how ideas of deity have come in all shapes and sizes throughout history.

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 April 26 at 5pm

Send articles to Bruce Beisner via email

Frankly Speaking....

by the Rev. Dr. Frank Carpenter

It's been a fascinating struggle this past week over institutional sexism and racism.

Imus' remarks about the Rutgers women's basketball team have brought a hailstorm of outrage down upon his head. Clearly he doesn't get it, and a lot of other people don't get it either. I have been fascinated to hear the number of people that blame it all on Rev. Al Sharpton.

The members of the basketball team took offense more because of his attack on woman than on African Americans. And what has been pointed out by many is that Imus was not insulting powerful members of the Senate, but young people who are just beginning to make their way, and very successfully

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus have said that Imus wasn't being malicious. What was he then? It seems to me that it was, then, just the knee jerk mouth of institutional racism and sexism in America pushing people down. We see it here in Cincinnati in the ongoing struggle for black dignity as white supremacists want to turn this city into theater. We see it as leading politicians back away from gay equality

Once again it is the vulnerable: the young, woman, blacks who are being maliciously attacked. That some hip hop rappers may use some of the same language doesn't mean it isn't an attack on the vulnerable. Once again, language is being used by the powerful, by those who cherish their access to power, to put down those less powerful.

Since that is the way of much of the world, Imus' crime wasn't that he did it, perhaps, so much as that he was so blatant. Maybe he didn't know what he was saying. In which case, let us pray that Rip Van Imus soon wakes up.

-- Dignity is all,
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

St. John's Music Series Concert

The Music Series will present Terra Azul on Saturday April 21 at 8pm at St. John's. Celebrate the Earth Day Weekend with Cincinnati's Brazilian and World Music Ensemble. Members of Terra Azul have performed at the Chicago Jazz Festival, Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center, the Cincinnati Convention Center, as well as international and local clubs, festivals and cultural events. The band includes St. John's member Manuel Susserat on guitar, one of St. John's resident percussionists Baba Charles, and others on vocals, bass, sax, flute, and keyboards. Dance leaders will encourage guests to move and groove to an eclectic world music mix. Drinks and light snacks will be available for purchase. Tickets for the concert are \$15 and are available in advance from the church office.

—Sherry Tippey

In the Haehnle Gallery...

St John's Caretaker and Visual Sociologist Michael Skaggs explores contemporary American culture through the lens of his camera and black and white film. Inspired by *The Americans*, Robert Frank's classic 1956 study of people across the United States, Skaggs has embarked on a photographic journey to revisit the 43 cities half a century later. The project was initiated in New York City in 1994 and Savannah in 1996. This exhibit presents the first phase, including candid portraits made during the summer of 2002 in Indianapolis; Ann Arbor; Detroit; Chicago; Cleveland; Hoboken; Jay, NY; Newburgh, NY; New Haven; New York City and Washington, DC. Pending funding, he plans to visit the remaining 30 cities, compiling the images in his own book to be published in 2009. There will be a special Opening Reception for Michael's photo exhibit on Sunday May 6 at 1:30pm.

—J. Michael Skaggs

Women's Book Group

The Women's Book Group will meet at the home of Sylvia Mersfelder at 7:30pm on Friday April 20. We'll discuss *March: A Novel* by Geraldine Brooks. Have you ever wondered what Mr. March was doing during the Civil War while reading *Little Women*? This is your chance to find out. In May we'll discuss *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Sijie Dai. All women are welcome. For directions call Sylvia Mersfelder and for information call Debbie Combs.

—Debbie Combs

Chalice Group Discussions

The St John's Chalice Groups are in full swing. The facilitators hold a monthly meeting to discuss ongoing issues including ways to contribute to the community and future topics for group discussion. In April individual groups will be discussing "Peacemaking," in May "Reverence," and in June the topic will be "How We find Connections to Others." Recent topics have included "Finding Positive Ways to Deal with a Doomsday World" and "the Upside of Growing Older."

The conversations for different groups always have the possibility of going a variety of directions, but all Chalice facilitators reported interesting and thought provoking discussions occurred. Another important part of being in a Chalice Group is finding ways to contribute to our community. Currently ideas being considered include a barbecue for the IHN Group on Memorial Day, donating clothes to the Mustard Seed, and a project in which a group would do yard work for individuals who need assistance. As you can see, the Chalice Groups are engaging in interesting discussions, while also looking for ways they can contribute to the community. New comers are always welcome to join a group, and if you are interested please contact a facilitator, Frank, or Josie in the church office.

—Jim Nunn

30s & 40's Group Outing to Celebrate Earth Day

The 30s & 40s group will go to Sawyer Point for the annual Earth Day Celebration on Saturday April 21. The plan is to meet in the church parking lot at 12:30pm and carpool down together. Expect lots of free opportunities (informational booths for local groups, a rock climbing wall, a petting zoo, live music). Bring money if you'd like to buy lunch there. This is a kid-friendly event. If you're planning to come, please contact Pete Asman.

-Pete Asman

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. 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 gathering on Friday April 27. Contact Karen Miller if you have any questions.

-Karen Miller

LAFS Derby Party

This year, the Lively After Fifty (LAFs) social group will celebrate the Run for the Roses at the home of Bob and Kathy Laufman in Ludlow, KY. This fun event will take place on Saturday May 5 starting at 4:30pm on. It will be a great time to socialize, have a mint julep and share a potluck dinner with friends new and old. An optional betting pool will add to the spice of watching the excitement from Churchill Downs. Parking is an issue so car pooling is encouraged or plan on walking some distance from spots available. Please make your party reservation by Saturday April 28 by contacting Jan Hay.

-Jan Hay

Last Chance Until October

Exploring UU, St. John's orientation and education session, will be offered on Saturday May 12 from 9am to noon at the church. If you have been a frequent visitor or would just like to know more about Unitarian Universalism and St. John's congregation, please join us for conversation, information and socializing. Call the church office at 513-961-1938 to reserve a place and to let us know whether you will need child care. Rev. Frank Carpenter will lead the session assisted by other members of the church. A light lunch will be served after the orientation.

-The Membership Committee

"Godspell" Production at First Unitarian Church on April 29

The choir and membership of the First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati will present "Godspell" in an evening performance on Sunday April 29. In the morning service, excerpts from "Godspell" will be performed. The complete production will begin at 7pm that evening. Kenny Smith, First Church choir director, is directing this production with Jean Rohling serving as production assistant. First Church members performing will be Andy Chirch as Jesus, Al Gerhardstein as Judas, Nick Payne as Jeffrey, Charlyn Jackson as Linda, and Jennifer Seitzer as Joanne, just to name a few of our cast. Tickets are \$15 but are \$20 at the door the night of the production. To reserve your tickets in advance please call the First Church office at 513-281-1564. Reserved tickets must be picked up at the church by 6:45pm the night of the performance. If you have questions, please contact Vicki Ragsdale. We hope you will join us for this musical event.

-Vicki Ragsdale

Sunday Coffee Hosts Schedule

Coffee Hour Hosts for Sunday April 22 are barb Crock and Omope Daboiku. Coffee Hour Hosts for Sunday April 29 are Marta Donahoe, Christopher Douglas and Jennifer Douglas.

Among Ourselves

Stewardship 2007

Have you seen the blooming tree and the flame in Haehnle Hall? Our "Fund the Flame" and "Facing the Future" campaigns are well underway. As of this writing, \$108,000 in pledges for the 2007-08 operating budget and \$49,000 in pledges for the two-year capital campaign have been received! The goals are \$280,000 in annual pledges and \$75,000 in capital pledges. The commitment is larger than asked for in 2006-07. But just as we tend to our own homes and families, an investment now in our church building, programs, and operations will have positive impact in value and sustenance. Pledge cards are available in and can be returned to the Stewardship Mailbox in the church office. You can also contact Financial Secretary Rick Prairie or Finance Council Director Jonena Jones for pledge cards.

*-Jonena Jones
Finance Council Director*

From the Nominating Committee

The St. John's Nominating Committee has been active in recruiting and nominating members for the following Board positions: Director of the Administrative Council, Director of the Religious Development Council and the Executive Vice President. Additionally, nominees have been recruited for the Nominating Committee and Fund Trustees. Individuals who wish to run for any of these offices may also nominate themselves by submitting a written statement to the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee before April 28. The statement must be signed by five members of the congregation. Please deliver nominations to St. Johns or fax them to 513-961-4008. For further information please contact Cliff Shisler.

*-Cliff Shisler
Nominating Committee Chair*

Annual Transylvania Dinner A Financial Success Too!

This year's Transylvania Dinner, in support of St. John's partner church in Nyaradszentlaszlo, Romania, raised just over \$1,800. As a result, we have been able to send \$1,500 to our partners. \$500 will go to Rev. Kiss and his family as our annual supplement to his salary of approximately \$800 a year. The other \$1,000 will be available to our partner church congregation for its general use. The additional \$300 raised at the dinner will be added to our growing "Van Fund." Thank you to everyone who supported the dinner including the more than 110 volunteers and the over 140 dinner attendees. The Unitarian Church of Transylvania has started a once a week English language radio broadcast which can be heard over the internet, with the use of special downloadable software. Recent program topics included traditional Transylvania cooking, the Hungarian war of liberation in 1848, and the history of the beginning of Unitarianism in Transylvania. If you're interested in learning more about these broadcasts, please contact Tom Darner. The next meeting of the Friends of Szentlaszlo will be held on Monday April 30 at 7pm at Jim and Kathryn McDonough's home.

-Tom Darner & the Friends of Szentlaszlo

Collecting School Supplies for Our Partner Church

The Third and Fourth Grade Class is collecting school supplies to send to those in need at our partner church in Romania. If you can bring some to church that would be great. We will be collecting the supplies starting on the first Sunday in May and ending on May 20. Thanks!

*-Tiernen McKinney and Hugh O'Niell
of the 3rd/4th Grade Class*

Quote of the Week

“It does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty Gods or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.”

-Thomas Jefferson

The Wheel of Life

Congratulations to Veronica Colegrove. She received honors at Covington Latin School for the third quarter of the 2006-2007 school year.

Brian Fowler, son on Linda Fowler, married Emily Fagundo in Columbus, OH on March 17. They will reside in Columbus until Emily finishes Veterinary School at OSU next year.

As of mid April, John Fine was still at Good Samaritan Hospital. He would appreciate your cards and visits.

Board president Frances May Brooks reports that the first week of collaboration between First Church and St. John's in participating in the Interfaith Hospitality Network went very well. She encourages you to get involved in this important outreach to help homeless families in Greater Cincinnati.

If you have news about a St. John's member that should be shared in The Wheel of Life in the newsletter, please send it via email to Barbara Pinzka or leave a note in the Reporter mailbox in the church office.

UUA General Assembly

This year, from June 20 to 24, an estimated 4,500 Unitarian Universalists will gather in Portland, Oregon for the 46th General Assembly, the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The myriad of programs, worship services, business events and exhibits provide a rich experience to all those in attendance. Registration is open to one and all and everyone is welcome. GA Registration Forms are available on the web and all GA attendees are required to register for GA. You may complete an online registration at www.uua.org/ga or pick up a paper registration form in the Denomination Affairs box in the church office. (Register before May 1, when fees increase!) If you are interested in GA, there are several ways to get more information. Visit www.uua.org/ga or check the posting on the bulletin board in Krolfifer Hall or call Janie Cashon. Chat with previous GAers about their experience (Karen Miller, Frank Meyer, Carol and Dick Fencel, France May Brooks, Edie Holder, Alexandra Wilson, among others!) If you do plan to attend and want to represent St John's as a delegate, please contact Janie. To be a delegate you must be a voting member of the church. Delegates are asked to attend plenary sessions and are entitled to vote on the various issues presented at GA.

-Janie Cashon

News in the Office

*By Josie Arens
St. John's Office Administrator*

Is there anyone who would like to cover the church office for me on Monday May 7 or Friday May 25 from 9am to noon? Please call me at the church office at 513-961-1938 if you are interested. You'll need only to check the phone messages and answer phones. The deadline for the next issue of The Reporter will be Thursday April 26 at 5pm. Happy Spring to all! (as we warm up?- hopefully)

St. John's Church Calendar

Monday April 16

- 7pm- Adult RE Class: Soul Work
- 7pm- Cont. Service Program Planning Team
- 7:30pm- Art with Dessert Auction Item

Tuesday April 17

- 9am- Staff Meeting
- 10am- Meditation
- 10am- Yoga
- 5:30pm- Cincinnati Women's Collaborative
- 7pm- Adult RE Class: What Is Marriage For?
- 7pm- Adult RE Class: World Religions

Wednesday April 18

- 7pm- Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday April 19

- Noon- Adult RE Class: Sabbath- Finding Rest
- 7:15pm- Choir Rehearsal

Friday April 20

- 7:30pm- Friday Eves Women's Book Group

Saturday April 21

- 9am- All Council Breakfast and Meeting
- 9:30am- Dream Group
- 8pm- Music Series Concert with Terra Azul

Sunday April 22

- 9am- Chalice Group (Strong)
- 9:45am- Meditation
- 11am- Sunday Community Worship Service
- 12:30pm- PR Committee
- 12:30pm- Social Action Committee
- 1:30pm- Great Decisions Discussion
- 7pm- A Course in Miracles

Monday April 23

- 7pm- Adult RE Class: Soul Work
- 7:30pm- Art with Dessert Auction Item

Tuesday April 24

- 10am- Meditation
- 10am- Yoga
- 6:30pm- Tech Committee
- 7pm- Adult RE Class: What Is Marriage For?
- 7pm- Adult RE Class: World Religions

Thursday April 26

- 5pm- Deadline for The Reporter
- 7:15pm- Choir Rehearsal

Friday April 27

- 7pm- Game Night

Saturday April 28

- 10am- CGCC
- 1pm- Coming of Age Meeting

Sunday April 29

- 10am- RE Teacher's Breakfast
- 11am- Sunday Community Worship Service
- 7pm- A Course in Miracles

RE-Joys

*By Barbara Hadden and Mary Darner
St. John's Directors of Religious Education*

Thanks to all the folks who helped with the Tea, Talent and Dress-Up party on March 24, especially Christine Mouch and Maria Yunker. There were special visits from older ladies in the congregation and everyone had a great time. There will be an opportunity to thank this year's teachers, advisors and helpers on Sunday April 29. If you would like to assist the breakfast crew, please let Nancy Colegrove know by email. The theme for summer programming this year will be "Harmony Habitat." Children entering 1st grade through 4th grade will meet in the Rosa Parks Room beginning in June. Those who enter 5th through 8th grades will meet in the Library for the summer. We are looking forward to hosting the children and youth from 1st Church and Northern Hills during July. Lots of volunteers are needed for all ages. If you are upgrading your computer (must be able to load Windows XP) or digital camera, we could really use either or both in the RE Program. You could get a tax deduction for the donation. Contact either Mary Darner or Barbara Hadden.