

THE REPORTER

Newsletter of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church

April 29, 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 May 6

"A Safe and Caring Community"

-the Rev. Dr. Frank Carpenter

I'll begin a three part series on St. John's Mission statement. The very word sanctuary suggests a place of safety. Do we all feel safe at St. John's. Can we feel safer?

Sunday May 13

"Maiden Mother Crone"

-the St. John's Earth Spirit Group

Join us in worship as the Earth Spirit Covenant of UU Pagans leads a provocative service in which we will explore the history and traditions of Mother's Day, celebrating Goddesses and Saints and the Mothers of Us All.

Contemporary Services

"What Does God Look Like In Your World?" is the topic of the next Celebrate Life Together Contemporary Service at **9:00am on Sunday May 20**. Karen Heaster will be the worship leader. We had 65 people at our April Contemporary Service. Help spread the word to your friends and neighbors!

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 May 10 at 5pm

Send articles to Bruce Beisner via email

Frankly Speaking....

by the Rev. Dr. Frank Carpenter

Driving back to Cincinnati a few hours ago along I-70 west of Zanesville, there was a sudden flap of wings, a flash of yellow and a hard thump on the upper center of my windshield.

I was startled. One of the enjoyments of driving for me is looking around at nature. In just the few days since I drove out to New England, trees and pastures had become greener. I like to see horses in pastures. I saw a wobbly foal with its mother today. And then, this flash of yellow.

I was returning from the semi-annual convocation of Greenfield Group, the oldest of the UU ministers' study groups. We had been talking about our 'living tradition.' One of our presenters talked about her spiritual journey in our tradition. During the discussion time afterwards – I'm not sure how it came up – she shared that when she drives by a dead animal on the road, she imagines herself holding it in her arms, blessing it. I thought of her as I saw dead deer on the road returning home.

I'm not one to injure most of the Earth's creatures. There are some which I won't hesitate to terminate. But usually I can be pretty forgiving of even mosquitoes and flies, unless they're a nuisance. But cute and startlingly beautiful creatures astonish me more than anything else.

After the thump on my windshield, I looked out the back window. Whatever it was, of course, was too small to show up. Another car was not far behind. I thought of my colleague who held those creatures on the side of the road – possums, raccoons, deer. This one was too small to be seen.

I felt sad. I had twinges of guilt. What would I do? Finally, I decided to stop, and at least look to see if anything was caught in the roof of my car. There were no signs of anything being hit by me.

But I'm glad I stopped. At least I took a moment out of my life for this tiny creature, and acknowledged I had done it harm. Rationally, of course, it was just one of those things. But I still feel sad.

-- 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 Camping Trip

Over the weekend of May 18 to 20 St. John's Interweave social group for GLBT folks and their friends will be tent camping at Natural Bridge State Park in Kentucky. There is electrical hook up and showers. Hike on Saturday or just enjoy the campfire. Campgrounds are available after 2pm on Friday. A small good faith deposit is required. Contact Peggy Vaughn if you'd like to join us.

-Peggy Vaughn

Adult RE Class to Feature America's Evolution Evangelists

First Unitarian Church invites us to "Thank God for Evolution!" on Wednesday evening June 6 from 7pm-9pm. It will be presented by the Reverend Michael Dowd, a former UCC pastor, and Connie Barlow, a popular science writer and UU humanist, who have been called "America's Evolutionary Evangelists." They were featured in the Spring 2006 issue of UUWorld magazine. Since the spring of 2002, Connie and Michael have lived entirely on the road, presenting the 14 billion-year story of cosmic, earth, and life evolution as a sacred and inspiring story that can bridge America's religious differences. See the RE Board near the church office at St. John's for more information.

-Carol Fencl

Exploring UU Class

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

LiLACs Pancake Breakfast

Ginny and Janie couldn't resist... the Lavendar Ladies Activities Club, a social group for lesbians, will be gathering for breakfast once again! Please join us on Sunday May 6 at 9:15am in Krolfifer Hall at St. John's. Pancakes will be whipped up by chefs Ginny and Janie. Please bring a dish to share. Join us for great food and conversation! No child care provided. Direct questions to Ginny Creasman.

-Ginny Creasman

Women's Book Group

The Women's Book Group will meet at the home of Debbie Combs at 7:30pm on Friday May 18. We'll discuss *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Sijie Dai. This short novel tells the story of two young men who were sent to a Chinese village for "re-education" during Mao's Cultural Revolution. The book for June's meeting will be *The Birth of Venus* by Sarah Dunant. All women are welcome. For directions or information call Debbie Combs.

-Debbie Combs

Outreach Offering

On Sunday May 13 we will have our fourth, and final, Outreach Offering for the Outreach Grants Committee. The recipient will be North Fairmont Community Center. Their mission is to provide opportunities for those of lower income to get the education and support they need to become independent of the welfare system. Please be generous with your contributions to this important community support.

-Kelly McMichael

Planning for Joint Services in July Gets Underway

It's now official! St. John's will be again holding joint worship services this summer with our friends from First Unitarian Church. As a special bonus, we will also be joined by the members of the Northern Hills UU Fellowship as well. The services will be held on all five Sundays in July here at St. John's. Various committees from all three churches have already begun the process of planning many aspects of this very special time we will be sharing together. We are very excited about being able to continue what has become a summer UU tradition, and are especially happy to welcome our friends from Northern Hills. Look for more details coming soon.

-the Worship & Liturgy Committee

Thought of the Week

"Why do people in churches seem like cheerful brainless tourists on a package tour of the Absolute? Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it?"

-Annie Dillard

Notice for Applications for Director of Religious Exploration Position

DRE to begin July 1, 2007. An application for job-sharing of this position will be considered.

The DRE, working collaboratively with the RE Committees, will provide professional leadership for the RE program for children, youth and Adult RE program at St. John's. The minister is the day to day supervisor of the DRE.

Job description:

- *Recruits, orients, supports and recognizes volunteers, teachers and youth advisors for children and youth. Recruit adult RE coordinator.

- *Provides leadership to the RE Advisory Group for goal-setting and for the development of a philosophy of religious growth and learning for RE program participants.

- * Collaborates with RE Associates to organize special events and celebrations. Provides training and follow-up for their classroom liaison responsibilities. Advises the Adult RE Committee, which is responsible for the planning and offering of classes and discussions.

- * Works with the minister to schedule and plan services for all ages and coordinate child and youth participation in selected worship services.

- * Offers parent education and support, and family events. Participates in regular meetings with the minister, staff, RE Advisory Group, RE Associates and Adult RE Committee.

- * Develops and administers annual budgets to support RE Program needs.

- *Coordinates purchase and maintenance of curricula, supplies, resources, and equipment.

- Career experience or degree in a field related to education or human services. UUA RE credential or willing to work toward such credentialing.

Contact Jim McDonough, chair of the Personnel Committee for a more detailed job description.

-The Board of Trustees

Among Ourselves

Adult RE Spring Survey

The orchid-colored survey in this issue is to help us plan for next year's Adult Religious Exploration program. If you haven't already filled this out at church, please take the time to fill it out and return it to the YELLOW box in the lobby. Thanks from the Adult RE Committee.

-the Adult RE Committee

Becoming Greener

A project that addresses "green" on two levels has been completed by the Property Council. After some research into the best models on the market, four Eljer Titan gravity toilets have been installed in the women's bathroom and the bathrooms off the coat closet. We have become more "green" because these toilets use less water and we will have more of the "green stuff" in savings to our water bill. Thanks go to Bill Luerssen and Michael Skaggs for doing the installation.

-Barbara Casson

The Finance Corner

Do you have ideas? Do you have artistic talent? Do you have thoughts or questions about the stewardship campaign, the church budget, fundraising, accounting, investing and strategic planning? Looking for a niche at St. John's? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then opportunity is just around the corner! The Finance Council, an advisory committee on church financial matters, will be forming in May. No finance degree or background is required, just a desire to have a presence in the financial health of our beloved institution. If interested, please contact Jonena Jones.

*-Jonena Jones
Finance Council Director*

"Fund the Flame" Stewardship Campaign & "Facing the Future" Capital Campaign

As a reminder, our annual pledge campaign goal is \$280,000 (an increase over last year's \$240,000). To date we have received \$131,000 in pledges from 80 out of more than 170 possible pledge units. Items to be funded from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008 include the following:

- Salary increases for staff
- Increase in office administrator salary to fair pay
- Increase in religious education expenses
- Increase of outreach to 5%
- Increase in funds for property maintenance
- Contemporary Service (Note: Grants will fund 70% of the Contemporary Service budget.)

The capital campaign goal is \$75,000. To date, we have received \$56,000 in pledges. Items to be funded with the capital campaign include:

- Air conditioning for selected rooms downstairs, minister's study, and the administrator's office.
- Exterior south wall painting
- Chair lift to downstairs classrooms
- Front lawn sign and landscaping

If you have returned your pledge cards, THANK YOU!! If you have not yet turned them in, please do so as soon as possible to the church office (in care of Stewardship.) If you need the forms, they are available in the Stewardship Mailbox in the church office or via email to Jonena Jones.

-Jonena Jones

Sunday Coffee Hosts Schedule

Coffee Hour Hosts for Sunday May 6 are Victoria Girard, Al Geiser and Sandy Geiser.

Coffee Hour Hosts for Sunday May 13 are Ethel Ingalls, Jan Hay and Diana Long.

*-Tracy Flanagan
Coffee Hour Coordinator*

Thank You from the Green Sanctuary Partners

Our Green Sanctuary Partners Earth Day Service last Sunday was such a marvelous blessing. Many gifts were combined to help create it. Sr. Paula Gonzalez's sermon has inspired many of us to now move forward in more aspects of our lives than ever before with regard to reducing our personal footprint on the planet Earth. We are grateful to all the good people who contributed so generously to make this service happen: Sr. Paula Gonzalez, Ruth Anne Wolf, Cathy Roma, Rachel Kramer, Andrew Millar, Janice Trytten, Manuel Susarrel, Greg Metz, Bill Surber and Judy Cirillo, plus many singers and behind the scenes supporters and encouragers. For Green Sanctuary Partners, we thank you all!!

-Mira Rodwan/Redwing

Reception for Michael Skaggs Photo Exhibit on May 6

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

UU Wine Country Excursions

An hour north of San Francisco are the lush vineyards, world class wineries and picturesque small towns of the Napa and Sonoma Valleys. We invite all UUs and friends to share the beauty of our "home" through the UU Fellowship of North Bay's Wine Country Excursions. We offer small customized two day tours of our valleys which can include wine tastings, art galleries, museums, scenic trails and much more. We provide private rooms with bath in the homes of our members and experienced guides to conduct tours in their cars. Napa itself is alive and vibrant with, galleries, boutique shops, world-class restaurants, wine tasting rooms and entertainment. Sites of special interest include COPIA (The American Center for Food, Wine and the Arts); Jack London's home (now a state park); the Culinary Institute of America; the diRosa Art and Nature Preserve. Tours are offered from mid-May through mid-October. Plan for two days of touring and a two or three night stay with all local transportation provided. Home hospitality without tours is also available. Our fees are below market rates for similar services. All proceeds to help our Fellowship grow and purchase property in this expensive real estate market. We have limited openings, so contact Iris Barrie at 707-265-6926 as soon as possible.

-UU Fellowship of North Bay

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 Szentlaszlo, 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*

St. John's Church Calendar

Monday April 30

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

Tuesday May 1

- 9am- Staff Meeting
- 10am- Meditation
- 10am- Yoga
- 7pm- Sabbatical Committee
- 7pm- YADA Young Adults Discussion
- 7pm- Adult RE Class: World Religions

Wednesday May 2

- 7pm- Membership Committee

Thursday May 3

- 4:30pm- MUSE Ujima
- 7:15pm- Choir Rehearsal

Saturday May 5

- 6pm- Lively After Fifty(LAFs) Derby Party

Sunday May 6

- 9:15am- LiLACs Pancake Breakfast
- 11am- Sunday Community Worship Service
- 1am- RE First Sunday Service
- 12:30pm- Maypole Celebration
- 6pm- Earth Spirit Full Moon Gathering
- 6pm- St. John's Men's Group
- 7pm- A Course in Miracles

Monday May 7

- 7pm- Contemporary Service Planning Team
- 7pm- RE Advisory Committee

Tuesday May 8

- 10am- Meditation
- 10am- Yoga
- 6:30pm- Tech Committee
- 7pm- Chalice Group (J. Cirillo)
- 7pm- Adult RE Class: World Religions

Wednesday May 9

- 5:30pm- Executive Board Meeting
- 7pm- Chalice Group (B. Luerssen)

Thursday May 10

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

Saturday May 12

- 9:30am- Exploring UU Class
- 11am- Chalice Group

Sunday May 13- Mother's Day

- 9:45am- Meditation
- 11am- Sunday Community Worship Service
- 1pm- Interweave Luncheon
- 7pm- A Course in Miracles

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 Fencl, 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