

St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church

**Religious Exploration Program
Children & Youth**

2009 – 2010



**Looking for a liberal faith community where your children
can find their own spiritual truths?**

TEACHERS & COMMUNITIES

Childcare for Infants and Toddlers (down the front stairs)

Jenn Lowry & Nikki Verlin

PK / K – Rosa Parks Room (down the back stairs)

Connie Prairie (LT), Maria Yunker

Grades 1-3 – Gandhi Room (all others, front stairs)

Ann Schuur,
Wendy Waters-Connell, Dave Wilson (LT)

Grades 4-5 – Lincoln Room

Angie DeWald, Barbara Tonne, Elizabeth Wilson (LT)

Grades 6-8 – Darwin Room

Bruce Beisner, Edie Holder, Diana Long (LT)

YRUU (Grades 9-12) – Wells Room (up the back stairs)

Jane Goetzman, Jay Guenther (LT),
Marty Harrington, Karen Miller

RE Visioning Team

Nancy Colegrove, Omope Daboiku (DRE), Jay Guenther,
Melanie Malaviya (Board Member), Connie Prairie,
Elizabeth Wilson (Chair)

If you have any questions, contact Omope Daboiku, Director of Religious Exploration
youthre@stjohnsuu.org or 961-1940

We, the Member Congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. A right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

The Living Tradition we share draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

As a Welcoming Community, we at St. John's strive to create and support activities and classes for our children that stimulate discussion and reflection on how to walk our talk. We extend ourselves to those who are searching for a liberal religious community where they can develop their own path to spiritual maturity.

Most Sunday mornings we all gather together in our Sanctuary for our Community Worship Service; our children experience the opening liturgy, listen to a sermon-related story and then move to age-appropriate communities with responsible adults who have chosen to share their gifts and talents within our Religious Exploration Program. In teams of three, our teachers provide inspiration and guidance, volunteering as an aspect of **Shared Ministry** that supports the continuance of our Church, locally and internationally.

On the **First Sunday** of most months as an aspect of our RE programming, our children will participate in our Community Worship Service Chalice Lighting, as they learn to develop liturgy and experience the elements of worship design. Then, after a Story for All Ages, they progress to **Children's Church** where we sing together, explore the nature of our UU faith, and learn about individuals who have used our Seven Principles in outstanding service to our Global Village.

There are several Sundays when we have **Multigenerational Services** which are specially designed to include our children and extended families. When a service is "Multigen," only childcare for infants and toddlers will be available.

UU identity through music is part of our children's faith development and there are several opportunities for our youth to be engaged in the musical fabric of our church. On the first Sunday of every month, RE students gather in the worship service with the entire congregation and are led through a series of songs that are representative of the UU singing tradition. From September - December, RE students K-8th grade are encouraged to become an active member of the youth choir, "**Voices of Variety**," who present a choral service every December. The St. John's Music Series offers an eclectic array of concerts, including the "Family Friendly Concerts" on February 6 and March 7. Additionally, the UUA General Assembly will be forming a UU Children's Choir in the summer of 2010 and this is a wonderful opportunity for our students ages 10-12 to become involved at a national level with other UU youth.

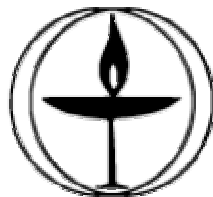
Throughout the year, our RE program sponsors activities that help our children understand our church's commitment to the Beloved Community: Push for Pencils, The Mitten Tree, hosting a Gingerbread House Party for Interfaith Hospitality Network (homeless) families, and gathering donations for the Free Store Food Pantry are a few examples.

OUR CHALICE SYMBOL

The symbol had its origins in a logo designed by Austrian refugee Hans Deutsch for the Unitarian Service Committee (USC) (now the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee) during World War II. According to USC director Charles Joy, Deutsch took his inspiration from the chalices of oil burned on ancient Greek and Roman altars. It became an underground symbol in occupied Europe during World War II for assistance to help Unitarians, Jews, and other people escape Nazi persecution.

After 1941, the flaming chalice symbol spread throughout Unitarianism in America and the rest of the world. This spread continued after Unitarians in North America merged with Universalists to form the Unitarian Universalist Association. The symbol gradually became more than a printed logo. By the 1960s, people like Fred Weidman of Dearborn, Michigan, were making flaming chalice jewelry. Some congregations began displaying the symbol in their worship spaces. At some point, three-dimensional chalices were made to be lit during worship services, but the origin(s) of this usage remains obscure.

The chalice symbol is often shown surrounded by two linked rings (*see* illustration below). The two linked rings were used as an early symbol for the Unitarian Universalist Association, signifying the joining of Unitarianism and Universalism. In August 1962, the newsletter of the Midwestern Unitarian Universalist Association began using a chalice symbol drawn inside the two interlocking rings, as drawn by Betty King.



AN OVERVIEW OF OUR 2009-10 RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION CURRICULUM

“CHALICE CHILDREN”

(PK / K)

This curriculum is designed to help young children learn about their church and congregation. Each set of stories, activities and projects stands alone; continuity is provided by the ritual of the format, the teaching team, and the theme and symbol of the chalice in a community of people and in a sacred, special place. The rituals are simple rhymes, finger plays and games that start the morning with a “call to worship” and a way of getting to know each other. Through repetition, children learn about their religious community and about listening and sharing with others.

“FREE to BELIEVE”

(Grades 1-3)

A component of Sheltering Spirit by TH and RS Kimball, this program is designed for young elementary children. It is an experiential program designed to nurture the emotional, social and spiritual life of children. The curriculum uses UU principles as starting points for exploring values, beliefs, and what it means to be Unitarian Universalist.

Included are in-class, hands-on activities, stories, games, songs, discussions, meditation, ritual chalice lightings and closings as well as opportunities to explore the wonders of nature acknowledging multiple intelligences theory.

“WINDOWS AND MIRRORS”

(Grades 4-5)

As Unitarian Universalists, we view our members' multiple perspectives as a blessing. In spirit, we embrace the contribution of diversity to our collective ability to pursue truth, fairness, justice and love. In practice, however, we often fail to embrace all the experiences and viewpoints in our communities as respectfully or as wholly as we might. Sometimes, we fail to even see differences among us. We seem most prone to gloss over differences when to acknowledge them requires acute self-examination and may lead to pain, shame, discomfort or guilt.

“Windows and Mirrors,” part of the *Tapestry of Faith* program, nurtures children's ability to identify their own experiences and perspectives and to seek out, care about and respect those of others. The sessions unpack topics that lend themselves to diverse experiences and perspectives—for example, faith heritage, public service, anti-racism and prayer. The program teaches that there are always multiple viewpoints and everyone's viewpoint matters. The metaphor of windows and mirrors represents the dynamic relationship among our awareness of self, our perceptions of others, and others' perceptions of us.

“CARRY THE FLAME”
(Grades 6-8)

A self-discovery and religious identity program, this curriculum supports middle-schoolers in an emotionally safe environment as they discover their emerging adolescent personality, and explores the stabilizing nature of worship. As they learn about the Seven Principles and Six Sources that comprise Unitarian Universalism, they will also explore how to manifest the principles in their own lives and develop a spiritual practice for themselves.

“X-plore!”
(YRUU / High School)

Our high school aged community will work with multiple themes focusing on UU principles and sources, building a spiritual practice in preparation for establishing their own homes, and a theater arts project which will create a format for sharing personal revelations.

Led by trained adult advisors, YRUU is a unique adolescent community that designs and implements worship opportunities, service projects, and social gatherings. Our Youth Advisors guide and facilitate conversations, workshops and travel to District-sponsored CON-vocations where our youth explore worship design elements, strengthen friendships, and develop their leadership potential.



2009 – 2010 RE CALENDAR

August

- 2 **Animal Blessing** (Multigenerational / Sanctuary)
- 9 **Summer RE** – Infant-6th grade (Rosa Parks)
- 16 **Camping with the Wilsons** (Rosa Parks)
- 23 **Messy Science with Dr. Wilson** (Rosa Parks)
- 30 **RE Program 2009-10 Begins**
Communities Resume

September

- 6 **Water Communion** (Multigenerational / Sanctuary)
No Children's Church; only childcare open
- 13 **Rev. Denise Tracy's First Service**
(Begin "Sing out" each Sunday)
- 20 **Partner Church** Information shared in RE Communities
- 27 **(Yom Kippur) Atonement re: UU**

October

- 4 **Children's Church / First Sunday** Who's Who in UU?
- 11
- 18
- 25 **Halloween Celebration in Classes and Parade during Postlude**

November

- 1 **Children's Church / First Sunday** Who's Who in UU?
- 8

15

22 **Thanksgiving Service** (Multigenerational / Sanctuary)

29 **Mitten Tree Up** (an after church activity with snacks for the “elves”)

December

5 (Saturday) **Voices of Variety** Final Rehearsal (Sanctuary) followed by Lunch (Krolfifer)

6 (Sunday) **Voices of Variety Choral Service** No RE or Children’s Church; all in Sanctuary

12 (Saturday) **Gingerbread House Event with Interfaith Hospitality**

13 (Sunday) **Adult Choir Choral Service** No RE or Children’s Church; all in Sanctuary

20 (Sunday) **Solstice materials in RE Communities**

24 (Thursday) **Christmas Eve Multigenerational Service**

27 (Sunday) **Kwanzaa materials in RE Communities**

January

3 **Children’s Church / First Sunday** Who’s Who in UU?
Mitten Tree Down (after church activity with snacks)

10

17 **ML King Birthday** Holiday Weekend

24 **“Rising Star/Shining Star” Recital** (after church activity)—tentative date

31 **“Chinese New Year”** – Dragon Parade during Postlude

February

6 (Saturday) **Music Series “Family Friendly Concert”**, TBA

7 **Children’s Church / First Sunday** Who’s Who in UU?

14 Valentine’s Day

21

28

March

- 7 **Children's Church / First Sunday Who's Who in UU?**
Music Series "Family Friendly Concert", TBA
- 14
- 21
- 28

April

- 4 **Easter Sunday (Multigenerational Service)**
- 11 **Adult Choir – Choral Service (tentative date)**
- 18
- 25

May

- 2 **Beltane Breakfast with Outdoor Clean-Up**
Children's Church / First Sunday
Maypole Presentation and Dancing after service
- 9
- 16 **RE Sunday**
- 23
- 30 **End of 2009-10 Year; Honor High School Grads / YRUU**