

THE REPORTER

Newsletter of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church

November 23, 2008

Community Worship Services

Sunday Community Worship Services begin at 11:00am. Childcare is provided for infants and toddlers. Religious Exploration classes are offered for older children.

Sunday November 30 at 11:00am

"From Gratitude to Giving"

Bruce Beisner

By focusing on where we find strength and acknowledging the abundance in our lives, we will be better able to give of ourselves in the coming holiday season. This service will offer an opportunity for each of us to name the holy as we experience it and to offer a self-written, self-inspired message of gratitude.

Sunday December 7 at 11:00am

"Voices of Variety"

St. John's choir for children and youth, under the leadership of Associate Director of Music Rachel Kramer, will present their annual holiday concert service. The concert is a set of nine pieces representing various holidays and traditions of the season. The songs will be interspersed with spoken word. (*see page 4 for details*)

Sunday December 14 at 11:00am

The St John's Choir Winter Concert (*see page 5 for details*)

Contemporary Worship Services

Contemporary Worship Services are held on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month in Krolfifer Hall at 9:00am. Childcare is provided.

Sunday December 7 at 9:00am

"Seasons of Light"

Bring your favorite holiday story and breakfast recipe (preferably, prepared!) to kick off the holiday season.

Minister

The Rev. Dr. Frank Carpenter

Affiliated Minister

The Rev. Bonnie Meyer

Minister Emerita

The Rev. Annie Foerster

Minister of Music

Dr. Catherine Roma

Assoc. Director of Music

Rachel Kramer

Director of Religious

Exploration

Omope Daboku

Worship Coordinator

Omope Daboiku

Office Administrator

Mary Jo (Josie) Arens

Caretaker

J. Michael Skaggs

Church Office

513-961-1938

stjohnuu@fuse.net

Church Office Hours

Monday thru Friday

7:30am to 2pm

Church Website

www.stjohnsuu.org

Newsletter Editor

Bruce Beisner

Next Newsletter Deadline

Thurs December 4 at 5pm

Carpenter's Workshop

by Rev. Dr. Frank Carpenter

A friend sent me an article, "Giving up on God." It's by Kathleen Parker in the November 19 Washington Post. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/11/18/AR2008111802886.html?referrer=emailarticle>

It's not about GOD; it's about politics. She writes, "Simply put: Armband religion is killing the Republican Party." Armband religion, that's a new one. Button religion; magnet (as on refrigerator) religion.

Every generation has this struggle between (let me call it) spirituality and religion. When I told an MIT professor of mine I was headed off to seminary, he muttered something about a 'God box.' From the beginning of the human adventure people have sought to nail God down, get a clear target so that she/he/it/thou could be manipulated. Even the Ten Commandments complained about it. Deuteronomy 5:8 declaring "You shall not make for yourself an idol."

Religion, it has been said, is for those afraid of going to hell, and spirituality for those who have been there. Fear, envy, resentment seem to me to underlie this effort to idolize the divine. My God is bigger than your god. Is that envy? Freud might suggest god is not what we envy, yet with god on our side, who can stop us enlarging our egos or whatever? Envy, like revenge, was to be left to god; Deuteronomy 5:7 urges: "you shall have no other gods before me."

There is, though, a sense that something is on our side. Would we be here if it were not so? Overcoming the adversity of this cosmic spot, each of us has somehow emerged however much by 'chance.' Each of us is here, mysteriously. A gift. Our sense of fragility may be little more than the openness of the promise calling us to lift up our eyes. And it's not just I know it is on my side, I believe it is on your side, too.

At the roots of our being is some unnamed generosity. Unitarian poet William Herbert Carruth wrote, "some call it evolution, and others call it God." Something there is that doesn't love a wall.. Whatever 'it' is, 'it' won't be nailed down, tied around our arms, stuck to the frig, or chiseled into stone. And more than likely it isn't the Goose that will lay that Golden Egg, nor will it give you what you wish for. But do, do call it Hope, call it Love, drop the capitals and call it god. And also, call it

Peace,
Peace,
Frank

Our Mission: St. John's is committed to creating a safe and caring community, working for and 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

Thanksgiving Game Marathon

All friends and members of St. John's are invited to participate in a twelve hour game marathon taking place on Friday November 28 beginning at noon at St. John's. You are welcome to come for one hour or for all twelve, just stop over anytime between noon and midnight! The Final Friday Game Group will have lots of games for all ages available for you to play, and you may, of course, bring your own. Some snacks will also be provided, but again, feel free to bring your own. If you and/or your family are looking for an alternative to the shopping madness, look no further and join us in Krolfifer to play your favorite board games, card games, party games, etc. Please contact Karen Miller with any questions.

-Karen Miller

First Friday Flicks

The Friday Flicks on December 5 is canceled. The film for December, *The Lives of Others*, will be shown on February 6. Please join us on January 2 to watch *Peaceful Warrior*, an inspirational story about the power of the human spirit starring Nick Nolte. For information about First Friday Flicks contact either Debbie Combs or Karen Miller.

-Debbie Combs

Daytimers Lunch

On Thursday December 18th we welcome all those who can come to a special holiday lunch. We will join for food and fellowship provided by the Membership Committee. Following lunch, if you have time, we will be showing a wonderful documentary called "Young At Heart." Bring a friend. Please email or call the church office to make reservations at 513-961-1938.

-Omope Daboiku

First Tuesday Potluck and Community Night

We are back to our regular schedule of potlucks on the first Tuesday of the month. Everyone is invited to share food and fellowship in Krolfifer Hall on December 2. So far food choices have been excellent so you will want to be here when we start promptly at 6:00pm so you won't miss out! Help is needed setting up a few tables starting at 5:45. We finish up by 7:00pm in time to attend other Community Night activities. Or just come for the potluck and socializing. Please bring a dish to share; soft drinks and milk will be provided.

-Jan Hay

Gingerbread House Making Party

It's the most wonderful time of the year. Why? That's Gingerbread House-making time, of course! On Saturday evening, December 13, our annual Gingerbread House Party will be held in Krolfifer. There



will be a few changes from years past—from 6:00-7:00pm will be social hour (Bring-Your-Own-Dinner), a time to meet new folks or rekindle old friendships; from 7:00-8:00pm-ish will be construction time; and from 8:00-8:30pm we hope to serve dessert and watch "A Charlie Brown Christmas" on the big screen! (Games and simple holiday-themed activities will be available for the little elves who might be feeling a bit squirrely!) This is an event for all ages. Feel free to bring a friend, too! Cost of the event is \$10 per Gingerbread House kit. Registration begins after the 11am service on November 23 in Krolfifer and runs through December 7. For more information, see the display table in Krolfifer and/or contact Elizabeth, Dave or Alexandra Wilson.

-Elizabeth Wilson

TOWN HALL MEETING

Sunday December 7 at 12:30pm

Grab a cup of coffee and come to the Town Meeting! Bring your ideas about anything and everything related to St. John's directly to your Board of Trustees.

-Karolyn Schalk

Voices of Variety to Participate in First Youth Holiday Festival

On Saturday, December 6, the Voices of Variety will host members of youth choirs from Heritage Universalist Unitarian and Northern Hills Fellowship. All youth, ages Kindergarten through eighth grade have been rehearsing on their own and will come together for a dress rehearsal on Friday, December 5 at 6:30pm. The concert on Saturday morning at 10:00 am will be followed by "Breakfast with the Elves".

Omope Daboiku, St John's RE Director, has been coordinating the pizza party on Friday night and the breakfast on Saturday and would welcome any all to assist with food preparation, serving, clean-up, etc! Omope is joined by the RE Director from Heritage, Hollie Johnson, and Brenda Bene, the RE Director from Northern Hills, who have been working with the choir members from their churches and coordinating efforts.

The concert is a set of nine pieces representing various holidays and traditions of the season. The songs will be interspersed with spoken word and the variety of pieces will delight the audience. On Sunday December 7 at 11:00, the Voices of Variety will present the same program by themselves at the Community Service and we look forward to seeing all of you there! We will have guest musicians and the Voices of Variety have done a wonderful job preparing for this performance! There is no better way to begin your holiday season!

-Rachel Kramer

World AIDS Day Service

The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center and MUSE will collaborate with St. John's UU to present an informal service to commemorate World AIDS Day on Monday December 1 at 7:30pm. So far, MUSE, the Cincinnati Men's Chorus, and the Voices of Freedom will perform. Please join us for this program to remember and honor those who have died from AIDS across the world. Please invite your friends.

-Cathy Roma

Haehnle Hall Art Opening

The halls of Haehnle will be decked in December and January with art from the Studio Elan. While you probably have not seen this art before, you will recognize the artists as members past and present of St. John's. Present members Jean Ashcraft, Jan Hay, and Nina Tolley and previous member Sue Sessum inspire and learn from each other at their shared studio at The Essex. Works include oil, pastel, watercolor, pencil, photography and mixed media. Everyone is invited to attend an artist reception on Sunday December 14, 3pm to 5pm. An assortment of holiday refreshments will be served.

-Jan Hay

Holiday Poinsettias

Our Christmas Eve Service will be enhanced by decorating the front of the sanctuary with traditional poinsettia plants. You may pick up your plant right after the service to brighten your home. They are available in red or white. The plants are from Rahn's Greenhouses and are of top quality and color. Cost is \$11 for a 6" plant and \$20 for an 8" plant. Please send in your order to the church office at 513-961-1938 or stjohnuu@fuse.net. Indicate color and size. We will send you a bill after we pick them up at the greenhouse.



Can We Be Greener?

"The use of paper, perhaps more than any other single product, reflects the throwaway mentality that evolved during the last century"

-Lester R. Brown

Fact: Almost one-half million disposable paper coffee cups are used every 15 minutes. Solution: bring your own cup. Count the number of paper coffee cups you use in a week. When you are at the drive-up window at a fast food restaurant, check out how many people in line ahead of you use their own cups. Just as you watch them, they will watch you. Set an example.

Fact: 8 Million trees are harvested in the U.S. every month to make paper for mail order catalogs. Solution: Visit www.41pounds.org to sign up for a service that takes your name off direct mail catalog lists. Visit www.catalogchoice.org to choose which catalogs you want to receive.

Fact: Over One Million paper grocery bags are used every hour in the U.S. plus 60,000 plastic bags are used every 5 seconds! Solution: Use only reusable nylon or canvas bags when you shop; the nylon ones are small enough to store anywhere (in your purse, on your key chain). Ask a Green Sanctuary member where to get a small nylon bag.

-Green Sanctuary Partners

Bread for the Elderly Lunch A Great Success

Thank you to everyone who participated and helped to make our lunch successful. We raised \$321.00 to continue our support of our partner church in Szentlaszlo, Romania. Thanks to Melanie Marsh, Judy Strong, Judy Cirillo, Edith Marrero, Manuel Susarret, Tom Darner, Jean Ashcraft, Winnie Goodridge, Connie Prairie and Jim McDonough.. Our next lunch is Sunday, January 18. Please mark your calendars. We always need people to make soup and help in the kitchen.

-Friends of Szentlaszlo

Music Vivace

By Dr. Catherine Roma, Minister of Music

The Sunday Choral Service on December 14 is called "Many Windows, One Light--Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward All." The choir will weave together 13 pieces of great beauty, many with the accompaniment of strings and percussion. The program will excite and soothe, delight and amaze. We will sing in Bembe, Spanish, Hebrew, Zulu, Latin, and English, all in the cause of peace and to celebrate the season of light and peace. Please plan to join us.



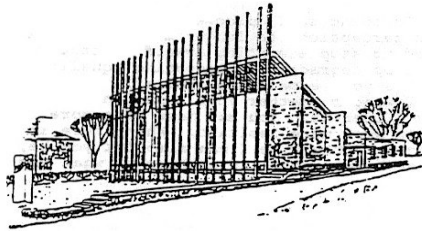
RE-ally!

News from Your Director of Religious Exploration
by Omope Daboiku

Hey, all you Elves (parents), it's almost time for Breakfast with Santa and our UU Youth Holiday Choir, Saturday December 6. David Wilson will be the chef d'jour making his fabulous pancakes, and Elves could bring the toppings like berries, whipped cream, chocolate chips, bananas, syrup, jams, juices (apple/orange), milk and small variety boxes of cereals. We're expecting a crowd; so, please call Omope for more details.

RE teachers are off on November 30th and all children are invited to gather in Rosa Parks; there will be music, stories and crafts. Adults are welcome, too. As the holiday season approaches, please remember that there are no RE classes during December.

However, our annual Gingerbread House Party, hosted by the Wilson Family, will be December 13 and we will have a Holiday Party on 12/21 during Community Service. RE Associates, expect a phone call and/or e-mail request for assistance.



See you at the movies!

A St. John's ad is running at the Esquire Theatre in Clifton thru February 4. It runs in all theatres and at least twice before each movie.

View it on the St. John's website under Visitors and Newcomers, then let us know what you think.
<http://www.stjohnsuo.org/index.php/visitors-and-newcomers/invitation>

Be prepared to welcome those who share our values!

-the PR Committee

Thought of the Week

“With faith to face our challenges,
With love that casts out fear,
With hope to trust tomorrow,
We accept this day as the gift it is--
A reason for rejoicing.”

--Gary Kowalksi

Finance Corner

Good news! The Taste of St. John's Luau on Nov. 15th was quite enjoyable and a success! (See additional article below for kudos.)

Other news... The Board and Finance Council continuously monitor the status of actual income and expenses compared to budgeted figures. A current analysis shows that actual pledges paid to date are 20% lower than prior years. Now is the time for us to think creatively and positively about how we can “live within our means.” Please plan to attend the December 7th Town Hall Meeting for further discussion about the current budget status and to discuss possible actions. Current financial statements and budget projections are posted on the bulletin board outside the church office. Questions can be directed to Jonena Jones at gjcj@fuse.net.

-Jonena Jones

Taste of St. John's Rockin' Luau Raises Over \$4,000

The Taste of St. John's Rockin' Luau last Saturday was a success, with over 80 people attending and \$4313 raised so far. Thanks to the many people who offered to host a social gathering in their home over the next few months. Special thanks to John Carr, who prepared the succulent pulled pork, to Maria Yunker for providing chair massage, and to the many volunteers who made the event run smoothly: Pete Altekruise, Diane Antestenis, Frances May Brooks, Judy Cirillo, Ginny Creasman, Joseph and Jonah Creasman-Jones, Barbara Hadden, Trish, Rich, Jon and Julia Hoge, Ethel Ingalls, Shelley McKinley, Rick Prairie, Penny Shada, Judy Strong, Greg Terhune, Bo Wachendorf and Eric Weinberg.

There will be another Taste of St. John's on Sunday, February 1 featuring coffee and desserts and sign-ups for more gatherings in members' homes. Start thinking now about what you might donate!

*-The Taste Team (Wanda Crawford,
Jonena Jones, Karen Miller, Kari Olson)*

St. John's Church Calendar

Monday November 24

6:00pm: Non-violent Communication Potluck

Tuesday November 25

10:00am: Yoga

6:00pm: Social Time Brown Bag

7:15pm: Adult RE- Evensong, Dharma Reader
and Living in Balance

Wednesday November 26

Church Office Closed

7:00pm: Program Planning Team (PPT)

Thursday November 27

Thanksgiving Day

3:00pm: Thanksgiving Potluck

6:45pm: Adult Choir Rehearsal

Friday November 28

Church Office Closed

12:00pm: Game Marathon

Saturday November 29

9:00am: CLT Rehearsal

4:00pm: Member Wedding & Reception

Sunday November 30

10:00am: Adult Forum

11:00am: Community Worship Service

12:15pm: Voices of Variety Rehearsal

Monday December 1

7:30pm: World AIDS Day Service

Tuesday December 2

10:00am: Yoga

1:00pm: Hang Art Display

5:30pm: Leadership Development

6:00pm: Community Potluck

7:00pm: YADA Young Adults Discussion

7:15pm: Chalice Group-Luersson

7:15pm: Adult RE-Living In Balance

Wednesday December 3

7:00pm: Membership Committee

7:00pm: Program Planning Team (PPT)

Thursday December 4

10:00am: Meditation

5:00pm: REPORTER Deadline

6:00pm: Music Committee Meeting

6:45pm: Adult Choir Rehearsal

Friday December 5

6:30pm: UU Youth Festival Choir Rehearsal

Saturday December 6

10:00am: Adult RE at First Unitarian Church

10:00am: Cincinnati UU Youth Choral Festival

Sunday December 7

9:00am: Contemporary Worship Service

10:00am: Adult Forum

11:00am: Community Worship Service

12:30pm: Town Hall Meeting

1:00pm: Non Violent Communication

6:00pm: Men's Group

Tuesday December 9

10:00am: Yoga

6:00pm: Community Building with the Minister

7:15pm: Chalice Group-O'Neill

7:15pm: Dharma Reader & Living in Balance

7:15pm: Great Story

7:15pm: Adult RE Evaluation Team

From the office

by Josie Arens

St. John's Office Administrator

Please note that the deadline for the written order of service announcements for the November 30 service is **MONDAY NOV. 24TH AT NOON.**

(due to the holiday week). I will be out of the office on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday November 26, 27 and 28. New updated People Books are ready. If you haven't already gotten one, they can be picked up on Sundays in the office. If you are not able to pick one up, please call the office 513-961-1938 or email stjohnuu@fuse.net and I will mail you a copy. Have a happy thanksgiving.