

# THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

*The Newsletter of the  
Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Salem, Oregon  
March 7, 2007*



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## Canvass Countdown!

Wow! Is it really only a couple of weeks to the official start of spring?

Well, you know what that means – our congregational canvass for 2007-08 pledges is almost over. We're hoping to have it pretty much wrapped up by this coming weekend. Of course some follow up is always needed. As we headed into the second and final week of the canvass we had pledge cards in hand totaling \$155,600 or about 60 percent of the \$254,000 needed to continue current operations.

If you've made your pledge, many, many thanks. If you haven't gotten around to it yet, thanks in advance for putting it onto your to-do right away list. It is important for us to know as soon as possible how we stand in order to budget for the coming fiscal year.

As we've been emphasizing, we are hoping for a slight increase in order to maintain the current level of church program and services. Costs are going up, and we want to be able to give our hard-working staff a cost-of-living increase. That will require as many people as are able to increase their contribution from the current year's level. (Hint – if you've already pledged but now think you could do a little more, it's not too late to make a revision.)

Kicking off the official canvass was a truly wonderful Inspiration Sunday service on February 25. Kate Lore, our Intern Minister for last and next summer, talked of the joy of passing on good deeds to create an expanding circle of good will and helpfulness. Helping maintain our church and the wellbeing of our congregation is, of course, one way to help pass good things along – even to those who will be coming along later. In the same light, we owe so much to those who came before and were so generous in creating what we benefit from today.

So, thanks, Kate, for the inspirational message. Thanks, too, to the choir for its upbeat – and not too subtle – assistance in spreading the message both that we do need “Money, money, money” and that “This church is your church.” And thanks also for the beautiful instrumental music provided by Alma Marianos, Sara Greenleaf-Seitz and Noah Seitz. Thanks, too, to Jo Bateman who organized the scrumptious dessert and to those who helped her set up and clean up. It is truly a wonderful part of UUCS that so many people are willing to step up when needed.

Indeed, it is the people – staff and congregation – that make this such a wonderful place to belong – and such an important body of good will to keep in a healthy condition. That's an obligation we have both to those who came before and those who will come later.

*Kay Cogswell, for the 2007-08 Canvass Steering Committee*

## Reverential Ramblings

Word has come to me through the grapevine that the Rev. Fred Phelps, of the Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas, will soon be in Tri-Cities area of eastern Washington. He will be picketing at the funeral of a young soldier who died in Iraq, as he and his followers have been doing at many other such funerals. Why? Because, as he and his followers see it, the deaths of Americans in this misbegotten war are God's punishment for our country's acceptance of homosexuals. That homosexuals are accepted in America will come as news to many gays and lesbians who daily feel the brunt of intolerance, but that is Rev. Phelps' rationale for his protest. He fervently believes, as his protest signs declare, that "God hates fags."

I don't think so. Phelps and his followers hate homosexuals and claim that God does as justification for their hatred. In general, the biggest sin of leaders of organized religion is to project human prejudices onto God and then claim that they bear God's personal stamp of approval. Today this is done with homophobia and, at least in some places, with the oppression of women as it was done with racism and slavery in the past.

Too many people bow down to worship the cruel idols of hate and intolerance that they have created. And that which we truly worship shapes us, for good or ill. The worship of the gods of hate and intolerance distorts human hearts and minds, which deepens the divisions in the human family. As Thomas Paine put it, "Belief in a cruel God makes for a cruel person."

There are many religious people who believe that God does not condone homosexuality but hasten to add that the hateful actions of people like the Rev. Phelps do not represent them. But Phelps and his ilk display the bitter fruits of theologically sanctioned intolerance, just as do the varieties of hateful incidences against gays and lesbians in our world – from gay and lesbian school children being slammed against hall lockers or tormented in restrooms or disowned by their own parents to gays and lesbians being denied the benefits routinely granted to heterosexual couples to their being imprisoned and even executed in some countries. However much religious people who claim that God does not condone same sex love try to sugar coat their views with talk of "hating the sin but loving the sinner," a bitter, poisonous pill lies at the center of their views, and this harms many good people.

There was a time when virtually everyone was ignorant on the subject of homosexuality. Now, however, after countless gays and lesbians have testified how they tried and failed to change their sexual orientation, and several decades after the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association have recognized that same sex relations are normal and healthy, ignorance on this subject is more akin to willful, fearful, harmful disbelief.

Among organized religious movements Unitarian Universalist have been at the forefront of challenging homophobia. So denouncing it in a Unitarian Universalist newsletter requires as much moral courage as would denouncing anti-Semitism in a synagogue or racism in a black church. Yet I would like you to know that on Wednesday, **March 7, at 11:30 a.m.** I will be joining other activists, under the guidance of Basic Rights Oregon, on the steps of the Capital to participate in a rally calling for an anti-discrimination law and for legislation that would allow for civil unions of same sex couples. I hope to see many of your there. Think of this rally and lobbying as an act of compassion that helps counteract the hateful protests of others.

Love, *Rick*

**Announcement:** Join our minister, Rick, on **Thursday** evening, **March 15, at 6:00 p.m.** for a **Pot-luck Dinner** and a discussion on possible changes to the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes. The UUA's Commission on Appraisal has sent all congregations materials which should make for an enlivening discussion.



# LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

## Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem

### March 7, 2007

#### Mark's Message

##### Spring

The other day, looking out the kitchen window, I saw 15 robins in the small yard next door. They stayed for most of the afternoon, running a few short steps and then stopping, rooting around in the bark dust. It was disorienting to watch: unexpected movement kept drawing the eyes, so that it seemed as if there was always one more.

The upstairs neighbor moved his abandoned car from behind the house, leaving a new patch of earth we can turn into garden. On warm days the children and I have been out with spades looking for worms. It's surprising how in a space of 3 or 4 feet you can have markedly different consistency in the soil. So we take some worms where they are plentiful and move them over a few feet to where they aren't and the ground is hard and comes out in chunks under the shovel. These little farmers will help us loosen up the soil.

Part of the mystery and the magic of spring is that it's always a surprise. We know what is going to happen, even the sequence and details of how it will unfold. But it's still new; it remains somehow beyond our comprehension. I remember the moment of pure astonishment in the hospital when our oldest daughter Rosemary was born, that this living being could emerge from inside of her mother. The opening of a daffodil has the same inexplicable quality: it presents us with a fact that silences our reason. If we take Nature seriously, we can live in this kind of awareness all the time.

**Director of Religious Education: Lise Adams Sherry**

Office Hours: Mon. 2:00-6:00 PM, Wed. 9:30-1:30 PM  
503/364-0932

**Associate Director of Religious Education: Mark Babson**



#### Religious Education Dates to Note

**Adult** Thursdays- March 8; March 22; March 29 Feldenkrais course- 7PM. Call Mark Babson for more information.

**Children** Choir practice Sundays 12-12:30 for April 8 performance.

**Youth** YOUTH SERVICE MOVED TO MAY 20. A brainstorming session/ pizza party is being scheduled (maybe on a Friday night?) Get involved! Get your friends involved! For info call advisor Todd Logan, or youth Ben Nicholson-Nelson.

**Youth Con.** March 23-25 Contact Lise about registration, rides, fees. Theme: Superheroes

**Women** March 16-18 Women's Retreat at The Cedars. Theme: Passion for Life- A Woman's Journey.

**Youth/Adult** Wednesday March 7 7-9 p.m. Introduction to meditation. Contact Rev. Rick for more info.

**Adult** Tuesday March 13 RE team meeting 7 p.m.

**All** Thursday March 15 Dances of Universal Peace 7 p.m.

**All** Sat. March 24 5:30-8:30 Vegan Potluck- Bring your favorite game; Share recipes.

## Chamber Music Concert

Mark your calendar! Great Music for a Great Cause. On **Sunday, March 11 at 3:00 p.m.** our congregation is sponsoring our Second Annual Chamber Music Concert to support the musical educations of gifted youth from financially challenged families. Our own Loraine Stuart will play Chopin, and Noah Seitz and Sara Greenleaf Seitz will play Brahms. You can also hear the Oregon Trio, play Ravel and the Waller String Quartet, Schubert. The Women's Alliance will host a reception and the winner of the Classical Music Trivia Quiz will take home a special CD. Suggested donation: \$10.00.

## Leadership Fair

Visit the Leader Circle in the Hanneman Fellowship Hall on **Sunday, March 18**, and have an Italian chocolate on us.

The three members of the Nominating Committee—Margaret Boyle, Petra Berger, and Cheryl Randall—will staff an information table after the service. At that time, we invite you to ask questions, to find out what board members do, and to explore the possibility of helping us to fill one or more anticipated vacancies on the UUCS board starting this coming July. All inquiries are welcome! Looking forward to talking with you—

*The Nominating Committee*

## Everything's Vegan!

Join us for an evening of great food and family fun in the UUCS Fellowship Hall on **Saturday, March 24**, between 5:30 and 8:30 p.m. Bring your vegan potluck dish and a favorite family game.

Please come prepared to share your recipes. For more information or recipe ideas Contact Lydia Gurierez or Alma Marianos.

## Is Your Yard a Mess?

The Youth Group will be doing yard work and odd jobs for donations.

Donated funds will go towards the education of a student in Africa who needs money to complete High School.

Youth are available for jobs on weekends. For additional information, or to schedule a time, contact Ben Nicholson-Nelson.

## Readers Forum

The Reader's Forum is discussing *The Engaged Spiritual Life: A Buddhist Approach to Transforming Ourselves and the World*, by Donald Rothberg

### Schedule of Topics

*March 11:* Chapter Six: Not Knowing but Keeping Going and Chapter Seven: Interdependence

*March 18:* Chapter Eight: Transforming Anger and Chapter Nine: Acting with Equanimity

*March 25:* Spring Break

*April 1 (no fooling!):* Chapter Ten: Committed Action, Non-Attachment to Outcome and Conclusion: Finding Our Individual Directions, Discerning Our Next Steps.

The next book to be discussed will be *Amazing Grace* by Kathleen Norris.

*Don Wolf*

## Spam and “editors” Email Box

Your editors are having trouble with retrieving items from the “editors” e-mail box. This time it was Lois's computer that accepted the messages while Elsa's said the page was closed. So please use our personal e-mail addresses. The next newsletter deadline is March 18.

## SIHN Fundraiser

While national and international attention has been focused on earthquakes, hurricanes and other disasters, human needs in our own community are sometimes overlooked. Fortunately, the Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network, of which UUCS is a member, has been hard at work supporting homeless families for over seven years. Support the Network by attending the annual fundraising breakfast Wednesday, March 14, at Mission Mill Museum. Contact Loraine Stuart for reservations.

## Bhutan Fundraiser

At UUCS on Monday, March 19, at 7 p.m. Lama Karma will be cooking and serving his favorite Bhutanese dishes to help raise money for Gomdrag Retreat Center and Tamshing Monastery, built in 1501 in Bumthang, Bhutan, and urgently needing repair. Information: Rick Davis.

## Community News

Congratulations to **Eric Valentine** for his outstanding piano performance at a recent regional jazz festival competition!

Congratulations to **Dalia and Kevin Zimmerman** at the February birth of their first child, Greta, as well as to Dalia's mother Maryann Wrentmore, who announced Greta's birth by lighting a candle for her!

**Kristen Lassen Hunt's** family surprised her with a Mexican "Riviera" cruise to celebrate her sixtieth birthday! She and Bruce will join the others in southern California and cruise to Alcapulco during the second half of March. Congratulations to **Kristen**, whose *In a Grain of Sand* pastel of a little girl lying at the water's edge will be in the *Figure in Art* exhibition at the Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown, Ohio, for the next few weeks. Her painting of trees hangs in Han-neman Fellowship Hall.

Kristen, a professional artist, is also preparing to teach a five-week beginner-intermediate class in acrylic painting in her Salem studio. Interested?

**Barbara Stebbins Boaz'** family surprised her on her fiftieth birthday recently! Her brother, Peter Stebbins, flew from Portland, Maine, while Barbara's and David's daughter Susan and granddaughter Megan flew here from Charlotte, North Carolina. David writes "half a century; whoa, and still a gorgeous, young chick!"

**Jacque Main** is planning a trip to Hawaii soon, and from there on April 2-4, a charter flight to Midway-Atoll for what promises to be superior wildlife watching led by a resident naturalist. She is looking for one or two others to join the adventure. Interested? Call or e-mail.

While in Chapala, Mexico, on a vacation recently **Marge** and **Dick French** and **Pam** and **Ernie Williams** attended a Unitarian Fellowship in the nearby town of Ajijic. The group formed last year with seven people, and forty-three attended the two Sundays they were there! Mostly Americans and Canadians, the group meets at local restaurants followed by lunch together.

Long-time UUCS member **Betty Hamilton** died March 17 following an extended bout with cancer. She will be remembered as a fine art photographer, perhaps most especially for the color photo of our beloved stained glass sanctuary window. There will be a memorial service in the church on Saturday, March 17, at 1 p.m.

Condolences to both **Sandra Meredith and Ernest Perez** on the recent deaths of Sandra's father and Ernest's brother, both in Texas.

**Kim** and **Darryl Willaman** have vacated their rental in Independence and bought a home in Albany. To add to her delight, Kim has resumed playing the flute.

Next weekend **Mike** and **Petra Berger** will fly to Charlotte, North Carolina, to attend the wedding of Mike's daughter Jennifer to Charles Elbert III.

Sharing milestones in our lives helps us draw closer as community. When you have news to share please contact me or e-mail me.

Joan Erickson

## UU EVENTS ELSEWHERE

(Also check the bulletin board in the RE corridor.)

### First Unitarian Church Portland Honors Mothers of Fallen Soldiers

On Friday, March 30, at 7 p.m., the First Unitarian Church in Portland is presenting anti-war Activist Ann Wright, who will be introducing Pergolesi's "Stabat Mater" ("Sorrowful Mother"), performed by Cascadia Academy of Music. The eight piece chamber orchestra accompanying soloists will be conducted by Signe Lusk. Ticket order forms are available in the UUCS office.

## UU Bed & Breakfast

Do you dream of inexpensive vacation travel to interesting destinations where you can stay in the homes of friendly people who share your ideals and are happy to provide directions and advice for their area?

The UU bed and breakfast directory *UU're Home* (formerly *Homecomings*) can fulfill your dream. For 27 years, we've provided a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and who are happy to open their home to like-minded people.

You can also become a host and be listed in the directory. Contact us and we will gladly send you information about listing your accommodations.

Host listings on the UU're Home website, [www.UUreHome.com](http://www.UUreHome.com), are updated whenever changes are made or new hosts are added. The paper edition is published every year in April (and has many listings different from those on the website). For a copy of the 2007 directory, please send a check for \$20 (or \$25 and your e-mail address for both the book and a year's access to the website) to UU're Home, 43 Vermont Court, Asheville, NC 28806.

\* \* \* \* \*

## UUCS New Members

**Janice Carrier** grew up a Methodist but came to feel the need for a new spiritual home. After attending the U of Illinois, she received a BS from Linfield College and now works as a cytotechnologist. Her family consists of three sons, one in Oregon and two in California. Her 84 year old mother lives in Illinois, where Janice grew up. Janice moved to Salem 12 years ago. Her interests include walking, biking, kayaking, yoga, global public health, reproductive rights, responsible consumption, and "AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH." Her activities at UUCS so far have been Readers' Forum, meditation, Feldenkrais, Dances of Universal Peace, and Women's Retreat. Initially drawn to UUCS by Rick's sermons, she has found friendliness, respect, and creativity in a space of natural beauty.

**Kathleen Ehli** has been an Oregonian most of her life, and a Salem resident since 2005. She has known about Unitarian-Universalism for many years through contact with the Eugene church, although she was not a member there. She says she was searching for a way to enrich her spiritual life, contribute to community, and expand her family of choice when Eugene friends at work suggested she move to Salem and visit UUCS. Kathleen's hobbies are many and varied, including bicycling, hiking, fencing, reading, cooking, writing and editing on Wikipedia, genealogy, and music, especially old time and blue grass. A history graduate of U of O, she has worked as a baker and as a copy editor on the staff of the Legislature. She currently works as an office specialist for the State of Oregon and is thinking of returning to school.

**Margo Eliescu**, a licensed clinical social worker and psychotherapist for 30 years, came to Salem almost three years ago from San Luis Obispo, California. She loved her job as behavioral health director for Community Health Centers, a nationwide integrated health practice, but wanted a simpler and less stressful life and is happy to be nearer her son, who lives in Beaverton. She is a therapist and intern counseling supervisor at West Salem Clinic Mental Health Program and plans to start a small private practice here. She was raised in New York State in an interfaith family with an Armenian Orthodox mother, a Romanian Jewish father and a wonderful woman who was a West Indian Catholic. She and her brothers went to a number of churches and Sunday schools while in elementary school, while in high school she attended a Reform Jewish congregation, and she has been greatly attracted to Buddhism. She understands what the best, and sometimes the worst, attributes of formal organized religion offer a thirsty spirit, but only now has she made a commitment to an organized place of worship and expression of spirituality. To lessen the angst

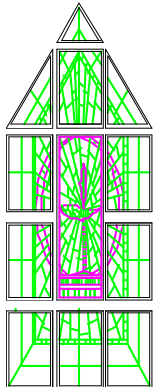
about the war, global warming, or living under a developing dictatorship, she is dedicating herself to “living in the solution.” She has embraced Voluntary Simplicity for many years and is about to complete the Marion County’s Master Recycler course.

**Eric and Angela Evenson** moved to McMinnville two years ago for Eric's job. They have been married for six years. Both were raised in Minnesota, Eric in the country and Angela in the city. Throughout their time together they have searched for a spiritual community where they could participate with integrity. When they visited UUCS, they noticed a difference from other churches they had visited, and have been attending regularly for over a month and have decided to become members. They have two children, Elise (2) and Lindsey (15). They hope to continue growing and learning and are grateful for this welcoming community.

**Rebecca Rivera and Mayra Fernandez** came to UUCS looking for a good environment to raise their two little boys. They had hit a few bumps in the road and needed to know there was still some good in the world and "church" seemed to be the solution. Both had been Catholic, but felt that was not a good fit. Rebecca had lived in the Salem area and Oregon for most of her life as well as in other places in the country where her brother happened to be stationed or where her job took her, but she always came back home. Mayra has been in Salem for four years, brought here by work opportunities and what they like to think of as fate. Mayra works with Resident Lending Group as a loan officer and couldn't be happier. Rebecca's experience is in auto insurance, more specifically subrogation claims and agency. Although they have only known each other a short time, they are a family. They love to travel and love the outdoors. At home, they enjoy movies, knitting and crocheting.

Also welcomed into membership on February 25 were **Kendra Forster, Bethany and Kevin Gabbert,** and **Mary Unruh.** You will read about them in a subsequent issue.

## UUCS Calendar



<b>Wednesday, March 7</b>	Meditation, 7:00 p.m. (includes introduction for newcomers) Chat ‘n’ Craft, 7:00 p.m. (1st & 3rd Wed.)
<b>Thursday, March 8</b>	UUCS Board Meeting 7:00 p.m. Adult RE Class, Feldenkrais, 7:00 p.m. (see page 3)
<b>Sunday, March 11</b>	Readers’ Forum, 9:15 a.m. (every Sunday) Sunday Service, 10:30 a.m. (every Sunday) Chamber Music Concert, 3 p.m. (see page 4)
<b>Monday, March 12</b>	YRUU Meeting, 7 - 9 p.m. (every Monday)
<b>Wednesday, March 14</b>	SIHN Fundraising Breakfast, 7:30-8:30 a.m. (Mission Mill) UU Meditation, 7:00 p.m. (every Wednesday) Choir, 7:00 p.m.
<b>Thursday, March 15</b>	Principles/Purposes/Potluck, 6:00 p.m. (see page 2)
<b>March 16 - 18</b>	Women’s Retreat at the Cedars
<b>Saturday, March 17</b>	Landscape Work Party, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
<b>Monday, March 19</b>	Lama Karma Dinner, 7:00 p.m. (see page 5) High School Youth Group, 7:00 p.m.

*This issue was edited by Lois Nodland and Elsa Struble. NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: 11:30 a.m., March 18, 2007.*

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***THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST***

March 7, 2007

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**SUNDAY SERVICE AND CHURCH SCHOOL**

**10:30 a.m. (Child Care Available)**

**March 11**                      **“Advance Spiritual Geometry”**                      **The Reverend Richard R. Davis**

(Note: the Youth Service scheduled for this Sunday is now tentatively planned for May 20)

Living in compassionate relationship requires some skill in lining oneself up in the right ethical configurations. Our regular math skills may run the gamut, but we are all called to excel in this higher form of spiritual math.

*Because of the change in daylight savings time we will lose an hour next Saturday night. Therefore to make this switch easier on us this Sunday will be **“Dress Down But Show Up Sunday”**. No need to gussy yourself up since you lost an hour of sleep.                      **Just come as you are.***

**March 18**                      **“Why Mr. Emerson is Your Friend”**                      **The Reverend Robert Jones**

The great American Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson was the intellectual rebel child of Unitarianism. The Rev. Rick Davis will also participate in the service.

**March 25**                      **“Toward Healthy Healing: The Native American Path”**                      **Dr. Larry Murillo,**

Dr. Murillo teaches about public health at OHSU. He writes, “Traditional health practices are a relevant part of the health care system for the American Indian/ Alaska Native population. This presentation will briefly describe an underlying belief system and the purpose for using these practices in a modern medical based health clinic. The goal of a cultural based health practice is to learn how to take care of yourself.”