

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

*The Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Salem, Oregon
December 16, 2009*



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Microfinance Collection Big Success

We were delighted to learn that the December 6 special collection to support our microfinance project took in more than \$1,800. This reflects extraordinary generosity on the part of our congregation and a true commitment to extending our social action to less fortunate people elsewhere in the world.

The money from the special collection, along with other contributions, will go for small loans – from one to a few hundred dollars – to help poor Laotian women launch

or expand their small businesses. Our previous contribution of more than \$2000 is already providing credit to women in the Laotian village of Phonesong in their enterprise of weaving bamboo into baskets for sale as storage containers. Ultimately, the effect of the UUCS contribution will be magnified as the loans are repaid and the funds then re-loaned for other similar enterprises.

We mentioned during the service that in the near future we expect to share photos and more information about the recipients with the congregation. We also will be looking for opportunities elsewhere for similar microfinance loans to help people work their way out of poverty through small business enterprises.

If you missed the Sunday service, forgot your checkbook or otherwise wish to contribute, you may send a check to the church, payable to UUCS and with "Microfinance project contribution" on the memo line. Contributions through the church are tax-deductible. [You will soon be able to read the presentation at our website, uusalem.org. ed]

We thank the UUCS Board for authorizing the special collection and, of course, express on behalf of the ultimate recipients our gratitude to you, our generous congregation, for your support.

Microfinance Steering Committee

Local Fund-raising Projects

The December 6 Holiday Bazaar raised over \$1,200, to go toward the purchase of a defibrillator.

The Chamber Music concert December 6 raised \$800, enough for two students to receive a year of private music lessons.

Wreaths made by farm women brought in \$480. Kay Young donated the two wreaths hanging in the foyer.

The December 13 book sale netted nearly \$800.

Reverential Ramblings

During my first ministry at Emerson Unitarian Church in Canoga Park, CA (I served at that wonderful congregation for six years, 1987-92) a goodly portion of the members – perhaps a third of them – came from a Jewish heritage which they had not abandoned. I was glad they realized that being a Unitarian Universalist does not entail leaving behind the best of your religious past but rather bringing it with you and embroidering upon it. The annual Seder dinner (celebrating Passover) in the spring was one of our biggest celebrations. I was cast into the role of the service leader, and I stumbled through as best I could. Members always laughed and corrected me when I invariably mispronounced “afikomen” (matzoh used in this Seder ritual) during the dinner. I never could say it right, which was a source of endless amusement for them and embarrassment for me.

One of our most active leaders was, as he sometimes called himself, “a Jewnitarian Universalist.” His Jewish spiritual roots were important to him, so it was a bit of a surprise to me that he was an avid supporter of our Christmas Eve service and the celebration of Christmas in general. He confessed that he always choked up and shed a few tears during his annual viewing of the classic American Christmas movie “It’s a Wonderful Life.”

Just as this congregation helped me see that the meaning of Passover transcends the Jewish tradition – it can be a celebration of any person’s Exodus from any form of bondage – he helped me realize that Christmas transcends the theological boundaries of the Christian tradition – that it can be for all people of good will to celebrate the ongoing, miraculous birth of love and compassion into our world.

It is in that spirit that I celebrate this season of light in the darkest time of the year. Indeed, prior to the coming of the Christian tradition in many parts of Europe people celebrated the return of light after the shortest day of the year had passed. The urge/need to celebrate at this time in the cycle of the year lies deep within us.

Now if you’re reading this, you’ve already been born – been there, done that. Well, not entirely. Christian evangelicals speak of being “born again.” Yet we (UU’s) sometimes speak of being born again and again. That is, throughout our lives new wisdom, compassion, courage, hope, joy are born within us with the implicit command: “bring this light into the world – a world that is too often lost in the darkness of indifference, greed, cruelty, hopelessness and despair.” Indeed, let your light be born into the dark corners of the world in which you may find yourself. This will prove to be a gift precious beyond your reckoning.

On the evening of December 24 I will most deeply feel the true meaning of this season – as I do every year – during closing moments of our Christmas Eve service. The choir will begin singing “Silent Night,” and we will begin lighting the unlit candles everyone has held throughout the service. The light will spread throughout the darkness until every candle is lit and then we will all join in singing. Finally, we will hum this heartfelt music as we raise our candles high above our heads where we can all see the light we all hold and will take out into the world in days to come.

*Love,
Rick*

P.S. – During the first two weeks of January and the last two weeks of March I will be taking short sabbatical leaves. My good friend and colleague the Rev. Craig Moro will be on hand for any pastoral emergencies.



LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem
December 16, 2009

Religious Education Dates to Note

Weds. Youth/Adult – Meditation 7-9 p.m.

Sundays Child/Youth – Children’s Choir, 9:45 – 10:20 a.m., RE Commons.

Thur. Dec. 17 Older Child/Adult – Dances of Universal Peace, 7 pm.

Sun. Dec. 20 All – Multigenerational Christmas service, including a performance by our Chalice Circle Players. Bring mittens for the mitten tree! No RE, but nursery care available.

Thur. Dec. 24 All – Christmas Eve service, 7:30 pm. Children welcome, but it is a quieter service. Nursery care available.

Sun. Dec. 27 Child/Youth – No RE classes, but nursery care is available.

Thur. Dec. 31 All – Pagan and Dances of Universal Peace New Year Celebration. Check page 4 or the Sunday Bulletin for times.

Fri. Jan 1, 2010 All Happy New Year!!!!

Sun. Jan. 3 Child/Youth – RE classes resume. **All** – Don’t forget to bring your *Guest At Your Table* money to the service. Make sure checks are made out to UU Service Committee.

Lise’s Letter

UUCS Youth Rock! Have you noticed the invigorating presence of our middle and high school youth? Right before Thanksgiving our middle school youth polled our congregation during coffee hour about our religious beliefs. They’d had lots of interesting conversations in class and it was time to take their questions to you. Take a look at their results posted in Han-neman Hall and ask them what they think about it. This group is starting to develop a strong sense of who they are and what’s important to them.

Were you here last Sunday to see our high school youth and their many guests from the UU Eugene congregation light our chalice? Under the leadership of our own Sophia Knudsen and Alex and Madysin from Eugene, they

organized a mini-con for high school youth in the Willamette Valley. With help from their co-youth this involved planning potluck meals for dinner and breakfast (yes, they were healthy), playing games (ask one of our youth about “Lap Tag”), worshipping together, doing art, and generally hanging out. Last but not least, they got up early Sunday morning to clean and make sure our wonderful space was ready for worship. Although the icy weather decreased the expected turnout, it was still a great overnight experience. Our youth are meeting the challenges and responsibilities of young adulthood with grace and confidence. I hope you’re enjoying their contributions to our community as much as I am.

Solstice Approaches: The first verse of hymn #241 sparks my imagination: *In the bleak mid-winter frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone; snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter long ago.*

What must it have been like in the days long before electricity when people hunkered down in their homes during the decreasing days of light trying to keep warm and hopeful? Hopeful that once again the sun would return to brighten their days and nourish the crops they would need for the following year’s survival. That hope is what leads to human imagination and ritual.

Think of the many holidays observed at this time of year that involve light. Pagan and Advent wreaths and candles honor the cycle of seasons and the coming of the sun/son. Hanukkah candles celebrate cultural renewal after oppression. St. Lucia brought light and hope to Swedish citizens suffering famine. What rituals do you know and follow?

I hope you all are able to take time to meditate on and celebrate both the darkness and the light that surround us this time of year.

The Unitarian Universalist

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*This issue was edited by Elsa Struble. NEXT NEWS-
LETTER DEADLINE: 11:30 a.m. Sunday, January
3. Send news to editors@uusalem.org (or to Lois Nod-
land and Elsa Struble- put it in workroom newsletter
"mailbox," or mail it (marked "newsletter").*

Women's Alliance

The Women's Alliance will meet on **December 17** at 6:00 p.m. to decorate the church for the holidays. Refreshments will be served during this traditional gathering, and a good time will be shared. All who wish to participate are welcome.

Cheryl Randall

Rumi Celebration

Around the world, the 13th-century poet and Sufi spiritual leader, Hz. Mevlana Jellaluddin Rumi, is honored on December 17th, the day of his passing. Rumi believed passionately in the use of music, poetry, and dance as a path for reaching God. At UUCS, **Dances of Universal Peace on Thursday, December 17**, from (7-9 p.m.) will feature a mixture of poetry, song, and Mevlevi zikr including the whirling dervish turn honoring Rumi's life. A \$5 donation is appreciated

from Pam Prichard

New Year's Eve at UUCS

The Salem UU Congregation's annual New Year's Eve celebration will again be presented by CUUPS and Dances of Universal Peace. Come early or come late. Stay for part or all. The more the merrier in welcoming in the New Year. Bring hors d'oeuvres to share at 6:30 in Hanneman Hall before the CUUPS potluck at 7 p.m. The Blue Moon Ritual will follow the potluck at 8 p.m. A Blue Moon is the 13th full moon of the year and only falls on New Year's once every 20 years. Join us in celebrating this astrological rarity.

The Global Peace Dance, an annual event that occurs worldwide on December 31, begins at UUCS at 9 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Partners aren't necessary and beginners are very welcome, with all dances being fully taught. If you'd like, bring finger foods to share during a break at 10 p.m. (ethnic/international flavors particularly welcome). This will be followed by more Dances of Universal Peace, including a guided meditation with a welcoming of the New Year at midnight. Celebratory/ethnic dress is encouraged. A \$10 donation is requested for this celebration to cover costs, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

Child care will be provided. If you plan on bringing children and staying late, please bring sleeping snugglies.

from Pam Prichard

Requests

People with current CPR or First Aid cards willing to take turns being available to handle **medical emergencies** during Sunday services are asked to contact the Safety Committee's Mary Jo Eyler.

The Safety Committee is also looking for a **videographer** who could spend several hours making a photo-inventory of the building's contents for insurance purposes, and also for an assistant to provide audio descriptions of the objects photographed and their locations. Please contact DeAnn Rathbun.

SIHN (Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network) continues to collect pots, pans, and other kitchen items for families moving out of the SIHN shelter program.

Please keep putting money in your Guest At Your Table boxes. Bring the cash or a check to the UU Service Committee to church on January 3. A few more boxes are on the north end of the credenza in the Fellowship Hall).

...And a personal request from Michelle Blake: contact her to find out about adopting Steve, a lovable, exuberant, recently rescued Australian Cattle Dog mix.

Soup Kitchen Report

On Sunday, December 6, the UU Congregation assisted the Kairos Soup Kitchen and served over 47 people with clam chowder, meatball sandwiches and barbecue ham sandwiches, along with a dessert of cakes. The following fine folks helped with the preparation, set up and clean up at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in downtown Salem: Pamela Ruona, Pamela Ray, Dominic Maluski, Cathy Connelly, Will Austin, Lois Stanley and the Kairos Soup Kitchen Coordinating Team of Daphne and Mike Wierich. Thank you all!

Any donations to UUCS designated for the soup kitchen will help defray expenses of approximately \$100 each time we serve. A donation basket is located at the Social Action Table.

We expect to continue serving meals approximately every two months and will announce our next date when we receive the 2010 schedule. Please sign up after Sunday services and/or make a donation at the Social Action Table in Hanneman Hall.

*John T. Maluski
UUCS Soup Kitchen Coordinator*

Foster Parents' Night Out

On Monday, December 7, our church again hosted 24 foster children for the evening, giving six foster parent families the "night off". About half the children were of school age. We had 20 marvelous volunteers who worked as a team to make the evening a rousing success. The 16 volunteers from UUCS, assisted by two from Temple Beth Shalom and two from Salem Alliance, were Stephanie Jernstadt, Ed and Jackie Klimowicz, Harvey Kramer, Tom Lancefield,

Ruth Larson, Allana McDonald, Nancy Murphy, Janet Neuburg, Danna and Paul Parmley, Lynn Percivay, Laura Stine, Jeanette Teta, John Roy Wilson, and Don Wolf. We played indoor basketball, we made hats, and we made cookies! FUN! Anyone interested in joining this wonderful program please contact Janet Neuburg.

Joan Stembridge

News of the UUCS Community

Joanne and **Jerry Nathan** are on high alert for radioed news from daughter Kim Farar, one of only two crewing a thirty-eight foot sailing ship, an adventure in the South Pacific. She and a friend embarked from Indonesia with sails set for Singapore on a humanitarian mission to deliver school supplies to villages in ports enroute, including remote islands in the Fiji group.

Congratulations to **Eunice Sherman** on celebrating her ninety-second birthday!

UUCS philatelist **George Struble** sent his Swiss airmail exhibit to the AEROPEX Exposition in Beijing, China in November; it returned home with a "small gold" award, second only to the "large gold" award!

Condolences to UUCS Office Manager **Rose Drake** at the recent death of her husband, John. Pastor Davis will conduct a memorial service at church for **John** at 2:00 p.m. December 26.

Condolences to **Jerry** and **Mary Bray** at the death two weeks ago from Alzheimer's Disease of Jerry's brother Don.

UUCS member **Lisa Jorgenson** is a master fabric artist and designer of liturgical garments, including several which Pastor Davis wears while in the pulpit. Two Sundays ago he modeled a new, unusually short stole; he announced this extraordinarily fine artwork, embodying our stained glass chalice motif and colors, to be a gift of the congregation to UUCS member **Angela Herrera** (not quite five feet tall!), about to be ordained as a minister by the UUA.

A more somber note for Lisa was her announcement of the recent death of her brother-in-law from leukemia, a disease acquired directly from his Vietnam War expo-

sure to the U.S. Army's spraying of Agent Orange.

Anne Alexander will spend the holidays in Fort Worth, Texas supporting her sister Alice's rehabilitation from recent hip replacement surgery. There'll also be time to visit family and friends, and she'll return home on New Year's Eve.

Marge and Dick French will spend the holidays in California, first visiting with Sharon Saldavia and her family in Santa Cruz, and then with Sue Brown and her family in Santa Maria. They're traveling with a friend who not long ago moved to Salem from western Canada.

Cathie Olcott has made a recent, life-enhancing move from her home in Salem-towne to The Springs, a residential community located not far from UUCS. While its companion residence, The Willows, is designed for those in need of assisted care, The Springs is a place for active, older adults. Cathie reports that it's filled with interesting people of diverse interests, the eighty apartments few enough to allow one to become acquainted with other residents who are eager to "take care of each other." She found it warmly welcoming from the outset, with cheery, well-maintained interiors, and meticulous landscaping.

When **Jo Bateman** was ready to sell her home in northeast Salem, one reason she chose Capitol Manor was the continuum of services it offers. Located near the river in West Salem, it boasts an extensive library served by Salem Public Library, and a Cherris' bus route comes to the Manor's door.

Some of these advantages convinced **Fred Ratzeburg** to move this week to Capitol Manor. While he is waiting for his eye health to improve and allow his ophthalmologists to operate on his optic nerve, he is hedging his bets by staying where more care is available. A gourmet, he adds that he is impressed by the quality of the Manor's kitchen. And he has learned that his fifth cousin also lives there!

We wish **Loraine Stuart** a speedy recovery from the fall down her stairs Sunday morning. She came to church ready to play anyway, but everyone was grateful to **Sara Greenleaf Seitz** for taking over at the piano!

Are you traveling this holiday season? Are your family members home for the holidays? Along with joys or sorrows you wish to share with our community, please send your news to me.

Joan Erickson

PNWD Annual Meeting

The 2010 PNWD District Assembly (DA for short; known last year in Salem as AGM or Annual General Meeting) will be held at the Hilton Hotel in Bellevue, WA, February 19-21. Details and registration are now available online at <http://pnwd.org/districtassembly.php>.

Volunteers Needed

Organizers have learned over the years that one of the top two reasons for attending DA is being with other UUs. Volunteering gives people an opportunity to do that and provide a service as well.

Many volunteers are needed to support the ambitious agenda and make this a memorable event. If you are willing, for the good of the community, to give an hour or two of your time, there are a variety of volunteer options. These include assisting in the bookstore, acting as a greeter, ushering at one of the main events, assisting during a workshop, assisting with meal oversight, and helping with general breakdown on Sunday. Organizers will work with everyone to plan a shift that works with his or her DA schedule. If you are not registering for DA but would like to volunteer, your help is also welcome.

To volunteer, or to seek more information, please e-mail or call Volunteer Coordinator Jean Sillers.

Although the registration form itself has a box to check to volunteer, the sooner Jill has offers to help, the better it will be for the teams managing the assembly activities.

There is a very specific volunteer opportunity for **hand drummers**. Join us in drumming in the opening ceremonies to create a drum line during the banner parade portion of the ingathering service on Friday evening, February 19th. For more information please contact Mary Anderson.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem
5090 Center Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97317

Non-Profit Org.

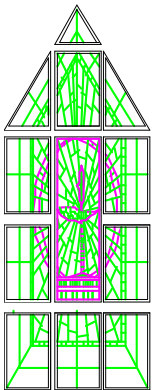
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December 16, 2009

UUCS Calendar



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|------------------------|--|
| Wednesday, December 16 | UU Meditation, 7 p.m. (every Wednesday)
Chat & Craft, 7 p.m. (1 st & 3 rd Wed.) |
| Thursday, December 17 | Women's Alliance decorates sanctuary, 6 p.m.
Dances of Universal Peace, 7 p.m. |
| Thursday, December 24 | Christmas Eve Service, 7:30 p.m.
preceded by carol sing-along |
| Thursday, December 31 | CUUPS potluck & Blue Moon Celebration, 6:30 p.m.
New Year Dances of Universal Peace, 9 p.m. |
| Sunday, January 3 | Next Newsletter Deadline, 11:30 a.m. |

NOTE: Many "regularly scheduled" meetings will not take place during the holidays; you may wish to check with a team or committee leader. The Sunday morning Readers' Forum resumes January 10. The next newsletter won't reach you until January 6 - 8.