

# THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

*The Newsletter of the  
Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Salem, Oregon  
December 31, 2008*



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## Foster Parent Night Out

UUCS has successfully hosted its second Foster Parent Night Out! We have officially joined with seventeen other Marion County churches that provide nine separate programs to offer a monthly “night off” for foster parents. Joan Stembridge and Janet Neuburg, coordinators, are justifiably proud of their efforts on behalf of the most vulnerable children in our community. The program entertained thirty children from eight separate families on December 8. The children, who ranged in age from two months through twelve

years, arrived at the church at 5:30 for the three-hour period of play and meals. Babies and toddlers were in the nursery, while older children did art and craft projects in Hanneman Hall.

UUCS volunteers were Stephanie Jernstedt and Don Wolf, Jeanette Teta, Allana Thompson, Keith York, Sunny Jones, Lynne Percevey, Harvey and Andrea Kramer, Nannette Martin, Tom Lancefield and Jean Logan, and Rick Davis. Two Temple Beth Shalom and two Salem Alliance Church members also helped.

For the January FPNO the coordinators are seeking hula hoops and hand-held musical instruments, e.g., drums, bells, tambourines, wood blocks, kazoos, etc. Please contact Joan Stembridge.

*Joan Erickson*

## Circle Suppers 2009 Begin!

Sunday, **February 8**, 2009 is the date for the next Circle Supper. These are small gatherings, like mini-potlucks, held at members' homes, where people can share fellowship and food. This is how they work: People sign up as guests or hosts, Circle Supper coordinators divide the people into appropriate-sized groups, hosts call guests and arrange what type of food guests should bring and when they should arrive. Hosts traditionally provide a sitting room, dining area, and beverages, while guests bring food (although being UUs we leave this up to the individual groups). As a new addition to the past procedure, we encourage hosts to invite someone they would like to get to know better, and ask them sign up as your guest (on the sign-up sheet). Sign-up sheets will be on the credenza in the Fellowship Hall until February 1. If you have questions, please call Leah Knudsen or Lois Nodland.

## Micro-credit Financing Project

As a follow-up to Rev. Rick's sermon on December 7 on ending global poverty, there will be two meetings in January: Wednesday, **January 7** and Thursday, January 29—both at 7 p.m.—to explore the possibility of UUCS establishing a micro-credit financing project in a developing nation. Dr. Carol Doolittle, Carl Comerzind, and Rev. Rick Davis will host and facilitate this meeting.

## Ministerial Meditations

I've been conducting an informal survey, and it's unanimous: people are ready for a New Year.

I always look forward to beginning a new year, but this year my anticipation has taken on an urgency I haven't felt in years past. Like every year, 2008 brought its share of blessings and curses.

For me, 2008 began as the continuation of a major transition which began in early 2007 when I ended my EarthWorks Community Farm ministry in L.A., moved to Salem and began my new ministry as Hospice Chaplain, joined UUCS, divorced, and began to build new relationships of support and friendship. By September, I was feeling really good about my life and ministry and the possibilities for the future.

Maybe the reason I am so ready for a new year is because it seems the curses have been mounting in these last few months. The financial crisis with its roller coaster ride has left me, at best, baffled as to what to do. At worst, I feel fear gripping me in some primal place that I didn't even know was there. What a blessing it was to have the holidays to look forward to and celebrate, but then the snow and ice shut off the power, and family and friends couldn't travel. Let's just get this over with.

But it was in the ice storm, with my power off, that I had an epiphany. Sometimes you just have to wait. Sometimes all you can do is pray. Sometimes you have to change your way of living and thinking. You have to adapt, like it or not, and it's easier if you like it.

But change is hard, and uncertainty is even harder. I think that is what has made 2008 so very difficult for so many of us.

As I said goodbye to a friend who was leaving for Arizona for the holidays, I blurted out, "I just don't want anything bad to happen in 2009. I just want one year when something bad doesn't happen!" That's the primal voice inside, wanting security, stability, certainty. We all have that voice inside. But we also have the ability to change, to adapt, to face our sufferings and those of the world around us, and do something to create a better future.

Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus as God made flesh, come to earth to take away the sins of the world. My own view as a UU informed by process theology is that God is, indeed, incarnate in the world, not in the form of a single person in history, but in all of us. God is, in the words of Sallie McFague, "the power of life and the love that wills its fulfillment." God with us, God within us, God beyond us, a God of relationship calling us, guiding us and sustaining us to ever greater love, life, creativity, beauty, enjoyment, light, and truth.

This is the God I pray to, the God who suffers with me and the world, but always offers new possibilities for co-creation of all that brings greater life and love into the world. In the dark of uncertainty, death, and loss, this is the God I turn to. This is the God who helps me adapt to the ever-changing landscape within me and in all my relationships in the world.

Rouo, a ninth grader at South Salem High School, says it best:

"Everything in life changes you in some way, even the smallest things. If you don't accept these changes, you don't accept yourself. For through these changes brings new and greater things to you, making you wiser as time progresses. To avoid these changes is a loss. You only live your life once. Do not waste a minute of it avoiding things. Let them come to you, and learn from them. There is always a tomorrow."

*Blessings for a joyous New Year,*

*Connie*



**LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS**  
**Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem**  
**December 31, 2008**

## Religious Education Dates to Note

*Look for updated Religious Education calendars and brochures in January!*

**Youth/Adult Weds.** – Meditation 7-9 PM

**Child/Youth Sun. Jan. 4** – RE Classes resume, bring Guest At Your Table boxes back.

**4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> graders Sun. Jan. 4** – OWL begins!

**Youth/Adult Sun. Jan. 11** – Readers' Forum resumes, Sundays, 9:15 AM.

**Child Jan. 11** – Children's Choir resumes for those in kindergarten and up, 9:30 AM, RE Commons.

**Kinder/1<sup>st</sup> graders Jan. 11** – OWL begins; parents attend first session with child.

**High School Youth Jan. 11** – Youth group attends service.

**Youth/Adult Mon. Jan. 12** – 6:30 PM, World Religions Dessert and Dialogue w/ Rev. Rick.

**Older Child/Adult Thur. Jan. 15** – Dances of Universal Peace, 7 PM, Hanneman Hall

**Youth/Adult Tues. Jan. 20** – Religious Education Team meets, 7 PM, Library.

## Lise's Letter

As a Unitarian Universalist my experience in the Pacific Northwest is that our winter holidays usually focus on our Pagan and Judeo/Christian traditions or adaptations thereof. This year, I wanted to take a little time to research and reflect on the Pan-African holiday, Kwanzaa. I think it is an event many are aware of, but perhaps only superficially.

Kwanzaa, "A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture,"<sup>1</sup> was first celebrated Dec. 26, 1966 to Jan. 1, 1967. Dr. Maulana Karenga, a professor of African Studies in California, created the holiday based on the historic African "first fruits" celebrations that can be traced back to ancient Egypt and continue to be

celebrated in modern African cultures today. Created during the Black Freedom Movement of the 1960s in the US, Dr. Karenga used "first fruits" as a basis for his holiday because he felt that African Americans needed a ritual way to ground themselves in their own history and traditions. Although not a religious holiday, but rather a cultural one, he also wanted to give African Americans a choice of celebration and connection beyond the religious holidays observed by dominant the Christian and white society.

Using ideals from first fruit Pan-African holidays, seven days were established to celebrate *Nguzo Saba* (the Seven Principles): *Umoja* (Unity), *Kujichagulia* (Self-Determination), *Ujima* (Collective Work and Responsibility), *Ujamaa* (Cooperative Economics), *Nia* (Purpose), *Kuumba* (Creativity) and *Imani* (Faith). During this holiday celebrants create an altar with beautiful African cloth, a mat, the *Kinara* (candle holder) which holds seven candles for each of the days, corn (which represents children), a Unity Cup for sharing libations, heritage books, and other African historic or cultural artifacts important to the celebrants. The colors black, red and green (respectively representing the people, the struggle, and the future) were taken from the 1960s Freedom Movement to use for the candle colors; the Swahili language was chosen because it is the most commonly shared language among African nations.

What I find most moving about this celebration are the values of community and cooperatively working together. In our current challenging times, it seems like the more we help one another, the more we all will benefit.

And so I wish you a Happy New Year, and if you celebrate it, a Joyous Kwanzaa! I'll be gone in January for my ministry studies, but our new Associate DRE, Christi Olsen, will be here (she'll introduce herself in our next newsletter). Please contact Christi, or RE Chair Micky Logan if you have questions or ideas.

<sup>1</sup> Most of my information came from [www.officialkwanzaasite.org](http://www.officialkwanzaasite.org). Check it out!

## From the Board Chair

Our recent snowy, cold weather gave me a new appreciation for my warm and snug home. I know several among you experienced loss of electricity and heat during the recent storm. Maybe some of you imagined, as I imagined, what it would be like to be homeless in such weather. Perhaps some of you reading this now have been or are now homeless.

In our December board meeting, the UUCS Board of Directors spent some time visioning with the social action team co-chair about our current and possible future outreach to the homeless. As a congregation, we join with others in offering some help to the homeless right now. For 10 years, we have been a member of the Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network (SIHN), a group of congregations that offers shelter for up to 14 homeless families in their church building for a week at a time on a rotating basis—about once every six weeks for UUCS. We encourage support of Marion-Polk Food Share, which is a food bank serving two counties. We help every two months or so with the soup kitchen held in a Salem church. We recently had our annual winter clothing drive and annual collection of toiletries for the homeless. We contribute Christmas presents for mental patients through our annual “giving tree” at Christmas time. We contribute as a congregation to Congregations Helping People, a non-profit run by Salem congregations to more effectively point people toward resources available to them through current programs, and helps financially when no one else can. UUCS volunteers recently began “Foster Parents’ Night Out” to give relief care to foster children while their parents take a few hours off.

All these are worthy projects, and help many people. I encourage you to participate if you are not already. But with economic times looking worse for many, as the congregation’s board of directors, we began to brainstorm about other possible projects. These would be those we could start ourselves, start with the help of other congregations, or urge city and community groups to join us in supporting.

Our ideas ranged from simple to very complex. Perhaps we could serve a meal here at the church during cold, snowy weather. Perhaps we could volunteer our church to be a warming center during cold or severe weather and power outages. We could encourage SIHN to finance a more permanent shelter for homeless families, perhaps in an unused hotel or motel. Could we open up some way for homeless people to get the prescriptions they need, or basic medical care? As has been done in Eugene, could there be a safe parking lot for homeless to sleep in their cars from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. each day, patrolled by volunteers? Maybe we could sponsor a tent city for the homeless (in our parking lot across the street?).

We know there are more great ideas out there among our congregation members. What are your thoughts and feelings about these kinds of projects? Do you have another idea?

Please feel free to share these ideas with me or with any board member. If you write them down, it will be easier for us to remember to share them with the rest of the board. I have a mailbox in the workroom at church labeled “board chair”. Or contact any other board member as you feel comfortable.

May we all—everywhere—be warm and safe.

*In Peace, Vicki Cunningham, Board Chair*

## CUUPS January Meeting

The January meeting of CUUPS (The Coven of UU Pagans of Salem) will be Saturday, **January 10** at 5:30 p.m. at Teena Kunkel’s house. We will celebrate the first full moon of 2009. Bring a dish to share for potluck. Call for directions.

*Kate Walker*

## New Member Orientation

Are you interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism and UUCS?

Reverend Rick Davis and the Membership Team invite you to the first Orientation Class in the Path to Membership series on Sunday, **January 11**, following the morning service. Join us in Rick’s office with your questions for coffee and conversation. Child care will be available.

*The Membership Team*

## Adopt-A-Road Clean-Up Day

Mark your calendar, Saturday, **January 24**, 2009 for the first ever outing to clean up a mile section of Cordon Road as part of Marion County’s Adopt-A-Road Program. All are welcome as you are able and the county’s rules allow youngsters 12 years and older to participate (those under 18 must have their parents’ permission). When we prove our mettle with two clean-up days, one in the first six months of the year and the other in the last six months, the county will place the name of the congregation on the Adopt-A-Road signs noting our good works. To sign up, look for the Adopt-A-Road sign-up sheets at the Social Action Team table after church services or e-mail or phone Laura Stine, who is acting as coordinator for the clean-up events.

*Laura Stine*

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**Errata:** Apologies to Robin Wengert and Ryan Nelson for mixing up their bios in the last newsletter. Ryan’s bio should have started with “I was raised in Federal Way.” Eds.

## *The Unitarian Universalist*

*published by*

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of Salem, Oregon

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*This issue was edited by Kathleen Ehli. NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: 11:30 a.m. Sunday, January 11. Send news to [editors@uusalem.org](mailto:editors@uusalem.org) (or to Lois Nodland AND Kathleen Ehli put it in workroom newsletter "mailbox," or mail it (marked "newsletter").*

## Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network

Loraine Stuart and Rosa Barton are ending their many years of devoted service to homeless families and to the Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network (SIHN). UUCS' final hosting for the calendar year and their final service ended on a high note, Loraine wrote. "We had an uproarious time with your guests this time...eight little ones among them. Our volunteers coped very well, though, and our families were very thankful. It was gratifying to know that one family was moving into their own apartment this month."

UUCS volunteers who prepared dinners, acted as evening hosts, prepared breakfasts, or slept overnight were Delores Lusk, Kelli McKnight Allan, Ellen and Chuck Howard, Colleen and Dominic Spedale, Jean Sherback, Sharon Dearman, Sarah and Liam Bent, Joan and Ken Erickson, Trinity Methodist Church, Ed and Jackie Klimowitz, Mary Edith Gilbertson, Grant Gilbertson, Kim Willaman and daughter, Ruth and Erik Larson, Margaret and Dick Boyle, Barbara Joque, Mark Kendall, Karen Bajpai and sons, Dani Adams, John Thomas and Dominic Maluski, Don Fries and Treva, Joan Stembridge, Teena Kunkel, Loraine Stuart, Rosa Barton, Mark Babson and children, Eugenia Becker, John Gorman, and John Roy Wilson.

Folks who moved RE furniture and guests' belongings into the church were Gil Nicholson-Nelson, John Gorman, John Roy Wilson, Joel Martin, Jerry Nathan, Don Fries, Lise Adams-Sherry and sons

Kennen and Derrek, Joan Stembridge, Loraine Stuart, and Rosa Barton.

Stanley Tepper, Samantha, Victoria, and Charles Scales worked on the game cupboard, and Phil and Amerlia Smith worked on the children's library.

Together Loraine and Rosa have worked on this service project for fifteen plus years! They hope to be replaced by four or five co-coordinators who will find things very orderly and laid out for them. Please contact one of them with your offer of help so the UUCS component of the project can continue.

*Joan Erickson*

## SIHN Donations Needed!

The Interfaith Hospitality Network Day Center has advised that the following supplies are much needed:

- Toilet paper and paper towels
- Shampoo, conditioner, body lotion, liquid soap, etc.
- Cleaning supplies (window cleaner, disinfectant, general cleaner, etc.)
- Kitchen supplies (Ziploc bags, small and large garbage bags, coffee filters)
- Children's toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Diapers—all sizes

There will be a marked box in the foyer beginning Sunday, January 4 and throughout the month of January for those of you who may wish to donate any of the above items. Thanks!

*Social Action Team*

## PNWD-AGM Scholarships Available

The UUCS Board has approved a fund for a few need-based scholarships for the February 20-22 Pacific NW UU Annual General Meeting at the Red Lion Hotel in Salem for UUCS members. Full scholarships are available based on need. The scholarships go mainly to pay for one-and-a-half days of catered food. Please send your request for a scholarship to Phil Carver by **January 10**. Please indicate if you are requesting a full or a half scholarship. Scholarship recipients are expected to volunteer for six hours, as discussed below. If there are more requests than available funds, the UUCS will conduct a lottery or distribute only half scholarships.

Anyone willing to work six hours as a volunteer overall will receive a \$69 rebate after the AGM. If interested, please contact Laura Stine. Volunteer slots are limited and will be awarded based on date of request. Volunteer rebates are not based on need. Examples of volunteer duties include helping with three

workshops or three two-hour shifts at the bookstore or registration table or a combination of these.

Full registration for the AGM is \$185 if received by the PNWD office by **January 12**. See [http://www.pnwd.org/pubs/AGM09\\_mailer.pdf](http://www.pnwd.org/pubs/AGM09_mailer.pdf) for a PDF of the AGM brochure with registration information. There are various partial packages. Costs rise by \$20 if you miss the early registration deadline. Online registration and payment is available. The registration password is PNWD.

We hope you join us at a wonderful Salem AGM. This is a rare opportunity to attend an AGM and not have to travel.

## News of the UUCS Community

While the rest of us coped with inclement weather, three UUCS families enjoyed the warmth and ambience of Hawaii! Tom Lancefield, Jean Logan, and Jean's son Adam, spent nine days on Maui, Jean's first visit to that land of magic, and one that would reunite her with her paternal aunt and family, who hosted them. Jean describes the experience as "a soul-touching surprise, a paradise filled with flower smells, a glut of fruit...a paradise! Singing is what the family does there, and while Thanksgiving was about food, it was more importantly about singing." They visited the observatory on Haleakala and from their vantage point at 10,000', the hour-long sunset was glorious. The treacherous trip to Hana, with 600 extreme switch-backs, Kukaemoku surrounded by mist, and bamboo forests clacking like talking storks, snorkeling the waters made the days an absolute delight for the three.

Mako Hayashi Mayfield and husband Stan returned to Hawaii after five years and enjoyed the same warmth they'd remembered in Kona and Honolulu, except for a cold evening spent stargazing on Mauna Kea, where many countries have built observatories; at 14,000', it is one of the world's premier spots for viewing the night sky. Of major interest in Hawaii since the election is anything related to Barack Obama's youthful life there. They photographed his apartment building and private Punahou School a block away, in the heart of Honolulu that they found to be "a very nice neighborhood, not very dense."

To recuperate from election-exhaustion Allan and Gloria Holland escaped for two weeks to Kauai, where they have a timeshare near Lahui. They revisited Waimea Canyon and the island's glorious beaches, snorkeled at gentle Lydgate State Park and took a kayak trip up the Wailua River. Exploring the island's south shore, they went to historic Koloa, a coffee plantation, and on to Hanapepe. Alan discovered some lovely golf courses, played four times and even found one at \$9, which offered a surprisingly good day!

Following his return home, Adam Logan flew east to Rochester, New York, where he has been attending the National Technical Institute for the Deaf. He writes, "I have two courses left for the core in Arts and Imaging Science curriculum, and then I begin the concentration. I'm more interested in photography now than in graphic design. My coordinator suggests that I add publishing fundamentals too..." We await more of Adam's plans.

The Van Osdols anticipated a stellar Christmas holiday season highlighted by a two-week visit from elder son Matt and his Chinese fiancé, Wang Ting, from Beijing! Matt's professional work after graduating from Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington has been exclusively in Beijing. Ting develops travel itineraries for a private touring agency catering to foreign tourists and business groups. She and Matt plan to marry in Beijing next June and again here in Salem in August!

Younger son Todd VanOsdol, who graduated last June from Whitman, was home as well. He lives in Fairbanks, Alaska, and conducts energy assessments for a weatherization company. Judith planned to do the normal Willamette Valley touring, so it will be interesting to hear of their flex plans!

Alma Marianos' daughter Marrion has announced her engagement to Mike Skinner; they plan to marry next August. Both Marrion and Mike work at Starbucks drive-up stores in Portland. Alma's other daughter, Sia, who earned a master's degree in education from Harvard last June, is now teaching kindergarten in a public school in the Boston area. There's that sense of relief mixed with contentment seeing one's offspring moving ahead with their lives! Congratulations, Alma!

Iris Sea writes from the warmth of Palm Desert, California that she and Bill can see the snow-covered mountains across the valley floor and are happy when the skies open with enough water for the dry desert plants. "Bill is recovering but feeling like being quiet and restful. He does water aerobics daily, which is good for the bones. I do yoga and golf and painting. Our desert UU church is having a hard time financially and looks as if we won't be able to keep our minister. The snowbirds and senior community aren't enough to add the vigor it needs."

Condolences to Mary Edith Gilbertson at the death from Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma on December 14 of her sister Helen Dentler in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She was a member of First Parish UU Church of Lexington.

Cathy Olcott hosted her late daughter's husband and his wife for an extended stay last month. Their leave-taking took them to the Grand Canyon, where despite winter weather Greg Bertoni's wife was determined to hike to canyon bottom. They did, but she fell enroute, injuring her knee. They made it to the

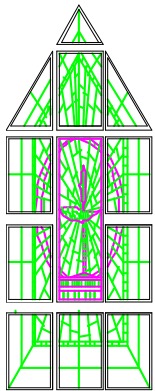


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December 31, 2008

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## UUCS Calendar

- Wednesday, December 31 New Year's Eve Dances of Universal Peace, 9 p.m.  
*(Note different starting time from Thursday dances)*
- Thursday, January 1 Happy New Year!
- Sunday, January 4 Guest at Your Table Boxes Collected
- Wednesday, January 7 UU Meditation (Compassionate Mind UU Sangha),  
7 p.m. (every Wednesday)  
Chat & Craft, 7 p.m. (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays)  
Micro-credit Financing Meeting, 7 p.m.
- Thursday, January 8 Board Meeting, 7 p.m. (All are welcome)
- Saturday January 10 AGM Scholarship Requests Due  
CUUPS (UU Pagans), 5:30 p.m.
- Sunday, January 11 Readers' Forum, 9:15 a.m. (every Sunday)  
New Member Orientation, after the service
- Monday, January 12 World Religions Dessert and Dialogue, 6:30 p.m.  
Cutoff for Early-Bird Pricing for AGM Registration!  
UU Meditation, 7 p.m.
- Wednesday, January 14 Dances of Universal Peace, 7 p.m.
- Thursday, January 15 NEXT Newsletter Deadline, 11:30 a.m.
- Sunday, January 18