



# THE FIRST Unitarian

VOL. 79, DECEMBER 2006 • THE FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF MINNEAPOLIS

## From The Minister

The autumn of 2006 has been an eventful season at FUS, as we publicly celebrated our 125th birthday, assimilated four new staff members and a student intern, met with our UUA Large Congregation Consultant, and hosted the Downtown Interfaith Forum for the first time. I have also been keeping up with my responsibilities for the UU Ministers Association Guidelines Revision taskforce, a weekly class on UU worship at United Theological Seminary in New Brighton, and the ongoing work of Class 14 at the Humanist Institute leadership program.

I am hopeful that this pace will slow down somewhat in the new year, but several adventures still await us. Most importantly, FUS is to be the host congregation for this spring's Prairie Star District Annual meeting, the weekend of April 15, and we will soon need to begin recruiting various helpers for that event. Personally, I am very excited that our Downtown Interfaith Senior Clergy group is planning a trip in January, to visit Israel together. This appears to be an unprecedented tour group, which will include Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim professional leaders, as well as myself. Those of us planning to go represent a variety of political perspectives and opinions of the situation in the Middle East; we hope to visit with a variety of groups there, and deepen our understanding of both the obstacles and the possibilities of peace.

We also expect to enlarge our ever-growing appreciation of one another as people of faith, committed to leading our communities in ethical living and moving the world in the direction of justice and peace. I rejoice in this opportunity for what is surely a once in a lifetime experience, and I hope to have much to say about what I have learned from it when I return. We are, of course, monitoring events in the region carefully, and if we judge that it has become significantly unsafe, we will change our plans. Yet we recognize that, especially for a group such as ours, this kind of a journey can never be without some degree of risk, and taking that risk together will be part of our shared learning.

When I return from this trip, it will be time for a new session of adult religious education programming. Because of last year's sabbatical, I did not have the sequence of weeks necessary to offer the series on Constructing a Personal Worldview, and I know that there are people who have been waiting patiently for the next time this course would be presented. This is a ten-session course (we will have a break in the middle) which is designed to help participants articulate their existing beliefs, understand something about the origins of those beliefs, and compare them with some of the classic theological and philosophical ideas of our western intellectual heritage. It is an excellent way of starting the ongoing spiritual journey for those who are new to Unitarian Universalism, and it can also be very helpful to those who have been around for a long time, but aren't sure whether they have ever really done the 'homework' of identifying and evaluating their own beliefs. I have even known people who have taken the course once to do it again after a few years, and see themselves having changed and grown. We use

*continued on page 3*

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**Just a reminder.**  
 Order of Service announcements are appreciated by noon on Wed of each week. Please email your submission(s) to: [info@firstunitariansociety.org](mailto:info@firstunitariansociety.org)

Newsletter submissions are due by the 10th of each month and should be sent to [newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org](mailto:newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org)

# Forum and Assembly Previews

Forums are at 9:30 a.m. in the Lower Assembly Hall. Assemblies are at 10:30 a.m. in the Upper Assembly Hall.

12/03/2006

## **FORUM: Ending Homelessness: new strategies and outcomes, Cathy ten Broeke**

Significant homelessness in Minnesota continues into a third decade – eroding children’s academic achievement, adult work success, and family and community stability. New approaches are being used to address homelessness, and new lessons being learned in the process. What are these promising new strategies, and what are the outcomes and lessons?

Cathy ten Broeke is the Coordinator to End Homelessness for Minneapolis and Hennepin County, where she leads the planning and implementation of the County’s Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness and directs Project Homeless Connect. Prior to this appointment, Cathy was an Archibald Bush Leadership Fellow and spent 16 months studying the national movement to end homelessness, including an in-depth look at national best practices. Cathy holds a Masters degree from the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

FUS Social Action Committee organizes one Forum per month on a social justice issue of interest to FUS members – also linked to monthly Social Justice collections, and Sunday Assembly themes. In December the social justice issue is poverty and economic justice.

## **ASSEMBLY: Racial disparities are among the toughest issues we face as a society.**

What should we understand about these complex issues, so that effective solutions can be addressed? Why is it that at the start of the 21st century, white families are more likely to acquire wealth through inheritance, own stocks and other investments and possess homes with a higher average value than families of color? In her new book, “The Color of Wealth: The Story Behind the U.S. Racial Wealth Divide”, Professor Rose Brewer looks at race and wealth, using exhaustive research that exposes a compelling history of the United States. Professor Rose Brewer is Morse Alumni Distinguished teaching professor of African American & African Studies at the University of Minnesota and a former chair of the department. Dr. Brewer has published widely in the areas of Black inequality, race, class, and gender, and social change. NOTE: Prof. Brewer has been invited to stay and sign books during coffee hour following the Assembly (a great holiday gift idea). The monthly social justice collection, on December 3rd, will be for Sabathani Food Shelf - - please bring non-perishable food items to FUS that morning, as well as your check book! Thanks.

12/10/2006

## **FORUM: The Prevention of Homicide: Is It Possible?**

Homicide incidents are increasing across the nation and especially here in Minneapolis. What does this mean for minority communities, and how can we prevent people from killing one another? Dallas Drake from the Center for Homicide Research, whose work centers on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender homicide, will describe the homicide problem and propose various strategies for its prevention. Once we understand the problem, faith communities have an important role to play.

## **ASSEMBLY: December 10 – Music Performance**

Barbara and Gabriela have put together a program that will put you in a festive mood and lift your spirits during this dark time of year! **Definitely, bring your children to hear the “Harry Potter Symphonic Suite”,** a marvelous medley of the endearing themes from the film, composed by John Williams and arranged by Jerry Brubaker. You will recognize the vivid imagery of the film woven into the various musical themes, including flight and travel, broomstick practice, Hogwarts forever, Diagon alley, Voldemort, any one for Quidditch, and Harry’s parents. **SEE PAGE 7 for a complete preview of MUSIC SUNDAY!!!!**

12/17/2006

## **FORUM: FUS Green Sanctuary Plan Madalyn Cioci**

With your input over the last several months, the FUS Green Team has put together a broad ranging list of about 40 possible activities that are grouped into the required categories: ministry, religious education, environmental justice and sustainable living. These ideas range from a new boiler to new trees, from “Sweater Sunday” to rain gardens. Through your voting, the list will be narrowed to our top 12 and we’ll save the runner-ups for future action. **See page 9 for full details on FUS Green Sanctuary Plan.**


## **ASSEMBLY: We Have Need of Gifts Speaking: Kendyl Gibbons**

Generosity and reciprocity are some of the most basic building blocks of culture, which bind together many communities of creatures other than human beings. What is it about our physiology that makes giving so necessary, and at the same time, both a morally complex and seemingly irrational behavior? If the holiday season didn’t exist, would we have to invent it? The youth of the religious education program will share with us some of the special music they have been working with during the past few weeks.

# Forum and Assembly Previews

12/24/2006

## FORUM: Music



**The holidays are coming and The Alliance will help you get ready with...**

Good things to eat Holiday Temptations Sale on Sunday December 3rd Gifts, cards, knit items, calendars Holiday Gift Sale on Sundays December 3rd and 10th  
Look for sales tables in the Lower Auditorium after the Assembly.

## ASSEMBLY: 10:30 am – Birthday of Wonder, Service for All Ages

Speaking: Kendyl Gibbons

Every child's birth, however humble, however far from home, is a renewal of our hope for the future. As if the miracle of birth were not enough in itself, legends of magical happenings are woven around the birth stories of many people who turn out to be great spiritual leaders. We will re-tell several of these classic tales, enjoying their 'special effects', and recognizing the deeper meanings of our stories and the yearnings they represent.

## December 24, 5:30 pm – Light Sharing Celebration

Speaking: Kendyl Gibbons, Karen Hering and others

The promise of healing, redemption, and light in the darkness is as ancient as human fear and human hope. Come share the light, sing the songs, and celebrate the universal meaning of Christmas. Children are invited to bring mittens for the Mitten Tree, and all are invited to come early and share hot chocolate and cookies starting at 5:00.

## FORUM: Conversation with Kendyl

An opportunity to explore what's on your mind in a free-wheeling discussion with Kendyl—ask questions, offer observations, talk about the Society's future, the nature of ministry, good books, or whatever is shaping your thinking these days. Questions you wish you had asked at the New Member Orientation are welcome..

## ASSEMBLY: December 31 – Golden Oldie Speaking: Kendyl Gibbons

A survey during the month of November will determine which sermon from past years members of the congregation would like to hear again. If you haven't seen the choices in your order of service, check in the office for a copy so that you can indicate your preference. Some ideas are enduring enough, and some words are compelling enough, that it is worth hearing them again.

# From The Minister, continued

readings, journaling, survey instruments and storytelling, as well as discussion, to lead us to insights about how we each construct the world of our own beliefs and make sense of our life experiences, and we always have a good time in the process. We will meet on Thursdays, beginning January 25th 7:00 to 9:00pm, skipping Feb 22nd and March 1st, and ending on April 12th. If you have been looking for a structured way to deepen your values and make your life more intentional, I hope you will join us for this stimulating journey together! Sign up sheets will be available at the Ask Me table during Social Hour starting in December. Give me a call if you would like more information about this program.

I am sorry to add that we are once again in the process of search for office support staff. Our Congregational Administrator, Kristine Holmgren, has resigned, and the Personnel Committee will be taking up the task of filling this position as soon as possible. This is as much as we know at press time for this newsletter; watch for more information next month, and in the weekly announcements.

**Rev. Kendyl Gibbons, Senior Minister**  
612-377-6608, ext. 116  
minister@firstunitariansociety.org

# Religious Education Life

Let UUs claim the language and joy of the holidays! Many times I see families struggle to talk to their children about the meaning of Christmas. We get into the “we don’t believe” talk very quickly. But that is not very positive...or exciting for children! I suggest that we reclaim in positive language the meaning of Christmas. Talk to children about the sources from which we get inspiration and meaning...pagan, Christian and Jewish tradition and well as the human emotions of joy and giving and blessings. We can celebrate so many things! Let us marvel at the rituals that bring light into this dark time of year. Let us honor the birth of babies everywhere. Let

us revel in the hope of peace on earth and honor the tradition of teaching that Jesus (among others) brought to the world. Let us use the word “advent” not to mean waiting for the Christ Child, but waiting with anticipation for the joys of the season. Let us not be afraid to talk to children about the wonderful teachings of Jesus.....and about the fact that with each child that is born comes the capacity for a leader to born who can affect their community or even the world! Perhaps they are that person!! Let us all follow our own personal star to events and family that can make the season a welcome relief from the dark.

Events that will be happening for the children and youth in this Society over the holiday season.....

**DECEMBER 3RD:** K-3 will make their own gifts to give to others at the Holiday Craft Fair. They will go to service first and then to the activity.

4-7<sup>th</sup> will be with Russell Packard doing Rock’n Rythems from around the world. They will begin right away in the Chalice Room at 10:30

Coming of Age will have their usual great class  
Senior High will have Karen Hering talking about UU History

**DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>:** k-3 will be having fun in the Holiday Craft Fair. They will attend the service first and then go to activities

4-7 will with our resident musician, Russell Packard, doing Rock’n Rythems from Around the World. They will begin right away at 10:30 in the Chalice Room.

Coming of Age Class: Meet with Kendyl

and Jan by 8:45 in the FUS lobby and then walk to the Basilica to meet with the youth from the Basilica and Temple Israel. We will go to a service at the Basilica and then from interfaith discussion groups and return to FUS by 12:30.

Senior High will be going to the Simpson Housing to serve a meal this day.

## DECEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>:

K-5 will be celebrating the Solstice with Audrey Kingstrom and volunteers. They will be in service for the first 15 minutes.

4-7<sup>th</sup> will be performing with Russell Packard in the first part of the service today. This will be a wonderful conclusion to Russell’s residency with us.

6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> will watch the movie Miracle at Moreau

Coming of Age: Last class for the fall term.

Senior High: last class for the fall term.

## DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup>—

10:30 There will be an intergenerational service at 10:30 with care for pre-schoolers and babies available.

5:00pm: Come for holiday cookies and hot chocolate!

5:30pm: Christmas Eve Service

## Heifer Project International is here at FUS for the Holidays!!

The Religious Education Program is proud to help you give donations to the Heifer Project International this Holiday Season. Heifer Project International has a long history of helping people in third world countries receive animals that can have life changing benefit for people.

## HEIFER PROJECT CONTINUES ON PAGE 6



**Jan Devor**  
Director of Religious Education  
612-377-6608, ext. 108  
jan@firstunitariansociety.org

# From the Student Minister

## Join the conversation: NEW DISCOVERY GROUP TO BEGIN IN JANUARY

What are the deeper patterns present in your life right now? What are the questions you are living and leaning into? What is calling you into the new year ahead?

Everyone knows we Unitarian Universalists love a good question. Beginning in January, I will be facilitating a new six-session FUS Discovery Group, exploring questions about where and how our lives are moving at this time and how we are responding to that movement. We will meet at the Society on six Tuesday evenings from mid-January through March (see dates below). Registration for the group is open to 6-12 participants; the registration deadline is December 31.

The Society offers a number of Discovery Groups that meet regularly to discuss a variety of topics, sharing joys and concerns and discoveries together. They are a good way to get to know and connect with fellow FUS members, to explore how our UU principles relate to our daily lives and to deepen our self-understanding and our relationships with one another. Participants are asked to attend most or all of the meetings scheduled in any series for continuity's sake. Some groups meet on an ongoing basis; others form for just one series of meetings. The Membership Column in this newsletter includes information about other, ongoing groups.

The group I will be facilitating will hold six meetings at FUS on Tuesday evenings, 7 – 9 p.m., January 16 and 30; February 13 and 27; and March 13 and 27. The questions we will explore are:

- *What gifts have made a difference in your life?*
- *What beckons you in the new year and in your life? What is calling you?*
- *What is dying and what is being born?*
- *What nurtures you or sustains you?*
- *What do you honor? What do you serve?*
- *What is the need for action? For stillness?*

If you would like join this group or learn more about it, you can reach me at FUS by phone (ext. 107) or e-mail ([intern@firstunitariansociety.org](mailto:intern@firstunitariansociety.org)). If you are registering for the group, please let me know by December 31 and provide your name, phone number and e-mail address.

**Karen Hering**  
Student Intern  
612-377-6608, ext. 107

# Membership News

One of my favorite holidays this time of year is Las Posadas. Occurring Dec 16-24, Las Posadas (Spanish for "the inn") is a traditional Mexican festival which re-enacts Joseph's search for room at the inn. Each Christmas season, a processional carrying a doll representing the baby Jesus and images of Joseph and Mary riding a donkey walks through the community streets. The processional stops at a previously selected home and asks for lodging for the night. The people are invited in to read scriptures and sing Christmas carols called villancicos. The hosts provide refreshments.

The doll is left at the chosen home and picked up on the next night when the processional begins again. This continues for eight nights in commemoration of the story of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

The symbolic nine days of Las Posadas has meaning for me in the need to spend enough time to listen, focus and prepare for the gifts we have to offer. When we unwrap the gift of ourselves, we may be surprised and delighted to see it is using our talents and gifts in life-giving, life-sustaining ways that answer our own calling. Perhaps you hear the knocking of FUS calling you to serve?

During this season of gift giving and receiving, I invite you to thoughtfully consider the gifts and talents you have to offer to our congregation and its members and friends. Our congregation: It's all ours and it's all what we make of it together.

## DO YOU NEED A RIDE? CAN YOU GIVE A RIDE?

Anyone in need of a ride to FUS on Sundays, or anyone who can offer a ride should contact Jo Franco at the FUS office. The Membership Committee would like to arrange for regular pick-up drop off services for folks on Sundays.

## DISCOVERY GROUPS AT FUS

Be sure to stop by the Lower Assembly Hall and find out more about the ongoing Discovery Groups offered at FUS. Contact information is listed on the green half sheets located on the bulletin boards, Ask Me Table, or church office. For general information about the groups, please contact Barbara Weatherhead.

## SOUP LUNCHEON IS DECEMBER 17

Mark and his crew of volunteers will be in the kitchen on Sunday December 17 to provide us with another spectacular Soup Luncheon following the 10:30am service. Suggested donation is \$7. Hosted by the newest members of the Society! Proceeds to benefit Membership Committee.

**Jo Franco**  
Membership Coordinator  
612-377-6608, ext. 104

Winter Solstice



# Celebration!

Friday, December 22, 2006  
6:00pm Dinner & Caroling  
7:00pm Midwinter Revels Program  
8:00pm Dessert & Folk Dance

Tickets \$8.00  
Kids 12 & under \$4.00

Purchase tickets at FUS on Sundays or  
Send check to FUS office to reserve tickets  
~Bring your own wine, if desired~  
~Childcare available for babies and toddlers~  
For more information or to help, contact Audrey at  
**952-924-1039 or [akingstrom@mn.rr.com](mailto:akingstrom@mn.rr.com)**

# Take back the season!

Audrey Kingstrom

Often non-Christians are made to feel like interlopers on the holiday season. While sumptuous feasts, winter greenery, light displays, gift giving and wanton merrymaking have always characterized the onset of winter, we are constantly exhorted to “remember the reason for the season.” But those who insist that Christmas has become too secularized don’t know much about history.

Midwinter, the end of the agrarian cycle of the seasons and the darkest time of year, was celebrated in Europe long before the rise of Christianity. Many of the customs of Saturnalia and Kalends in the south and Yule in the north were incorporated into the commemoration of Jesus’ birth as a means of securing people’s allegiance to Christianity. Thus traditions we cherish today often have nothing to do with the nativity of Jesus but hearken back to older cultural practices.

Further, Christendom has not always embraced Christmas. The entrenched ancient earth-centered rituals and raucous topsy-turvy festivities of the season incited many a Christian zealot throughout history to denounce the holiday and Puritans to outlaw it. Not until the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century did the observance of Christmas completely take hold in American Christian churches.

It’s time then to take back the season. Contrary to popu-

lar belief, Christians do not own this age-old holiday tradition. It belongs to all of us. But for modern day humanists just what, you may ask, is there to celebrate? Here are three suggestions.

First, the winter solstice beckons us to stand in awe and wonder at the forces of nature and the regeneration of the earth. To celebrate the solstice is to recognize that we must live within the rhythms of the natural world. While we no longer attempt to appease the unknowable powers that our ancestors believed would keep the cycle of life going, still today we would do better to honor the inter-dependency of the web of life.

Secondly, the midwinter season has always been “the people’s” holiday. This natural break in the cycle of the year provided a festive respite from the hard labor of survival. After the harvest and preparation for winter comes the communal feast and festival. People who work together also play together. Thus the season has been one of excess, merriment and freedom for ordinary folks. Midwinter revels—such as the festivities at FUS—take inspiration from that tradition.

And, finally, in the life of any community, festival occasions are times to renew our commitment to our values and imbue our lives with meaning. The winter solstice provides us as humanists an opportunity to celebrate our worldview and share with others our hopes for the future. Good Yule!

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## Heifer project continued from page 4

\*A cow can give a hungry family up to four gallons of protein-packed milk every day!

\* More children around the world actually rely on goats’ milk than cows milk!

\* Heifer sheep are known the world over for being high-quality, hardy animals that produce thicker, warmer wool that provide warm clothing for children.

\* A fully grown single hen can lay more than 200 eggs each year, so that a starter flock of 10 to 50 chicks will provide plenty of protein rich eggs to eat!

\*Placed strategically, a single beehive can double fruit and vegetable yields on a family’s farm.....pollinating crops is just one benefit of bees!

\*Water Buffalo can provide a family with protein rich milk, organic fertilizer and pull-

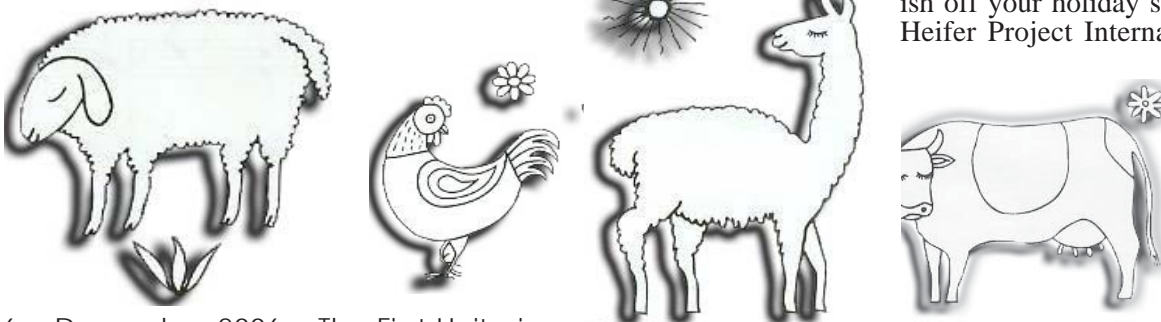
ing power. They are among the most sought after livestock in many parts of the world.

These are a few of the animals that you can donate money to purchase here at FUS in the Lower Assembly starting on Dec. 3 and going until Dec. 24. You can donate the cost of a whole animal or make a contribution toward part of an animal. A GIFT CARD WILL BE FURNISHED FOR YOU TO SEND TO PEOPLE TO SAY THAT YOU HAVE DONATED TO THE HEIFER PROJECT ON THEIR BEHALF. There will also be an ornament making table so that after you donate to Heifer, you can make a Heifer ornament for your own Christmas tree if you would like to do that.

Prices for the animals range from \$10.00 for part of larger animal to \$500.00 and more for a heifer.

Why not do some good for others and finish off your holiday shopping by donating to Heifer Project International? The cards are

lovely that are sent to people and you will feel great about your gift! Seems



# Music News

It is with great delight and anticipation that we await our December 10<sup>th</sup> Music Sunday. I believe we have put together a program that will put you in a festive mood and lift your spirits during this dark time of year! **Definitely, bring your children to hear the “Harry Potter Symphonic Suite”**, a marvelous medley of the endearing themes from the film, composed by John Williams and arranged by Jerry Brubaker. You will recognize the vivid imagery of the film woven into the various musical themes, including flight and travel, broomstick practice, Hogwarts forever, Diagon alley, Voldemort, any one for Quidditch, and Harry’s parents. Also the orchestra will perform “*The Three Cornered Hat*”, by Manuel de Falla, a piece based on a story full of misunderstandings and adventures, set masterfully to music by the Spanish composer.

Lastly, included on the program is John Rutter’s “*Gloria*”, a vibrant, exciting, mystical work scored for chorus, soloists, and orchestra. It is a piece filled with wonderful brass fanfares, driving rhythms, and exquisite reflective moments. Rutter’s stylistic hallmarks are everywhere; his ability to get to the root of the text, beautifully balanced vocal writing, short ecstatic climaxes, and visits to the neo-Byzantine sound world of his fellow colleague, John Tavener. This is a work not to be missed my friends!

This program will be a blast for young and old alike!!!!  
See you on Sundays!

p.s. dust off your vocal chords for a hearty sing-along to celebrate the season!

**Barb Brooks, Music Director**  
612-377-6608, ext. 106  
chorus@firstunitariansociety.org

**Dr. Gabriela Díaz-Alatriste**  
Associate Music Director  
612-377-6608, ext. 106  
orchestra@firstunitariansociety.org



The official FUS calendar is online at [www.firstunitariansociety.org](http://www.firstunitariansociety.org). Choose “Calendar” under the “News & Events” top menu to view weekly events

# Foundation News

Memorial gifts totaling nearly \$4000 honoring Joyce Asselstine were received by the Foundation and deposited in the FUTURE IS NOW FUND. Other recent memorial gifts have been received in honor of Elsie Hambidge and Helga von Natzmer. In addition, a large gift was received for the KURT PEARSON MEMORIAL SOCIAL CONCERNS FUND. The Foundation is grateful for and appreciates this outstanding support.

The nominating committee of the FUS Foundation is accepting names of members interested in becoming a director. Please submit the name and brief biographical sketch about the proposed candidate to Chuck Blomquist, Hossein Akhavi-Pour, or Ray Schreurs. Skills desired but not required include non-profit communication, investment knowledge, and development. Directors generally meet monthly. The term of office is three years.

Many choices are available for those desiring to make end-of-year charitable gifts. There are 8 funds to which cash or stock can be transferred. Contact a Foundation Director or pick up the brochure GIFT PLANNING STRATEGIES in the FUS office.

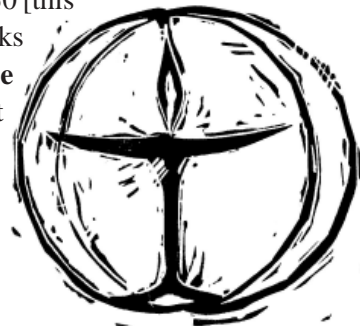
## SPECIAL FOUNDATION ANNOUNCEMENT

“The FUS Foundation would like to invite all senior FUS members to join fellow FUS members for a brief information session about living wills/estates on December 3rd, at 9 AM in the Diedrich room. Coffee and a light breakfast will be provided. This is an opportunity to learn and benefit from each others experience.” - Zsolt Vincze

## Parent’s Night out!

This year the senior high is going to do a Parent’s Night out **ONCE a MONTH! YES**, you read that right...on the following dates the senior high will be here at FUS to baby-sit so that you can have some precious time out and about without the little ones! **Dec 22, Jan 26, Feb 23, March 30, April 27, May 25** This is a fundraising activity for the senior high for their trip to Boston this spring.

**Cost:** is \$7.00 an hour per child, with \$12.00 an hour per family. **Time:** 6:00 until 9:30 [this year there will only be snacks served. **Reservations are needed:** Call Jan Devor at 612-377-6608 ext 108 by the Wed. before the event.



# The Alliance News

We welcome our newest members Garnet Olson and Susan Tincher and look forward to your presence at upcoming meetings. Please know that The Alliance is open to visitors at its meetings, and invites those who are interested to join at any time. If you'd like further information about The Alliance, feel free to contact Linnea Asp at 763-551-1558 or linneaasp@comcast.net.

## Upcoming Events

### December 2nd

Alliance members are invited as guests to a Holiday Tea on Saturday, December 2nd, from 2-4 pm, hosted by the Association of Universalist Women at First Universalist Church. This annual event is always festive and a great way to connect with friends old and new.

### December 3rd

Anticipating the rich goodness of your favorite Christmas cookie? The taste of hot cocoa and a freshly baked piece of cranberry bread? The Holiday Temptations Sale is your chance to enjoy home-made treasures without slaving in your kitchen! Freshly made by talented cooks at FUS, these taste treats are available to purchase one Sunday only - December 3rd - in the Lower Auditorium after morning services. Everything will be wrapped ready to give as gifts, to take home, or to consume immediately.

### December 3rd and 10th

The Holiday Gift Sale sponsored by The Alliance will take place on two Sundays in the Lower Auditorium after the Assembly. This is your chance to stock up on 2007 Blacklock calendars, attractive note cards, ceramics, and assorted interesting items for your holiday giving.

Don't forget another benefit to these sales proceeds go to fund many worthwhile projects here at the Society. We look forward to seeing you on December 3rd and 10th!

### February 7

We don't meet during the chilly month of January, but please mark your calendar for the program in February. Our own Dr. Gabriela Diaz-Alatrisme will present a talk titled *A Musical Path* on Wednesday, February 7. Ticket sales begin at 10:45 am, followed by the program at 11 am, lunch at noon and a business meeting. All are welcome! Come check us out! To reserve a place at lunch, contact Olive Sarkinen at 763-544-6168.

# Miscellaneous

## SAVE THE DATE! Prairie Star Annual Conference!

FUS is hosting the 2007 Prairie Star District Annual Conference April 13-15, 2007. The theme of this year's conference (planned by a committee from the PSD) is *Nurturing Our Faith Communities*. The Keynote Speaker will be the Rev. Dr. Laurel Hallman, Senior Minister of the First Unitarian Church of Dallas; Bill Doherty, professor from the University of Minnesota department of family social science, has agreed to present the Judy Lecture. In addition to many stimulating workshops for youth and adults, the conference will also be a great opportunity to meet and interact with UU members from across the district. All conference attendees will be invited to attend the Sunday service at FUS on the 15th.

Our denominational affairs committee will be needing many volunteers from FUS, both in preparation for the conference and assisting during the actual conference. So mark your calendars now, and keep these dates free so you can participate in the PSD Annual Conference and proudly represent FUS as a leading humanist congregation in the UUA.

### Women's Awareness Group

The December meeting of the Women's Awareness Group will be held on Monday, Dec 11th, 2006 at the home of Wanda McCaa, 1235 Yale Place, #402, Minneapolis; Pat Jordan is the co-host. FUS women are invited to join us at 6:30 for a potluck supper, followed by discussion. Please bring an unwrapped gift suitable for women who are in a battered women's shelter during this holiday season. (Suggested items include practical items such as: socks, gloves, underwear, shampoo, or other toiletries, etc.). Please call Wanda (612-378-0660) or Pat (763-746-3330) to RSVP and for directions.

# Dollars and Good Sense

*Direct Deposit for your Pledge*

-by Bob Calgren

The system which allows your First Unitarian Society pledge payment to be made by direct bank debit (ACH program) is up and running.

This convenient system allows an automatic debit to your checking or savings account each month to be applied to your annual pledge. It saves you the time (and expense) of remembering to write a check each month.

Anyone with problems with the system or who would like to enroll please contact me, the Finance Director either by email ([fin-adm@firstunitariansociety.org](mailto:fin-adm@firstunitariansociety.org)) or please see me in person on Sunday. You can find me in the church office.

**Bob Calgren**

**Finance Director**

612-377-6608, ext. 112

# 2006-07 Board of Trustees

**Chris Bubser** (Chair), Liaison - Stewardship • **Barbara Weatherhead** (Vice-Chair), Liaison - Art in the Gallery, Social Action, Special Events • **Scott Eller** (Secretary), Liaison - Personnel, History/Archive • **Beth Godhes**, Sunday Assembly, Emergency Preparedness,, Youth Adult Committee • **Jim Tincher**, Liaison - Discovery Groups, Membership, Religious Education • **Richard Seurer**, Liaison - Building & Grounds, Nominations • **Madeline Simon**, Liaison - Alliance, Music • **Bob Aderhold**, Liaison - Greater Community, Forum, Summer Assemblies • **Le Schreurs**, Liaison - Bookstore/Library, Caring Circles, Finance • **Art Higinbotham** (Treasurer)

## 80 Drawn to See and Discuss “An Inconvenient Truth”

With images of the universe taken by the Hubble Telescope as a backdrop, about 80 people, neighborhood residents and members of the First Unitarian Society, watched “An Inconvenient Truth” Friday October 27 at First Unitarian Society. The movie, about global warming on our home planet Earth, was one of about 4,000 showings around the country and part of the Spotlight on Global Warming project, a national interfaith effort sponsored in Minnesota by Congregations Caring for Creation. Many stayed after the movie to discuss actions they’ve taken to significantly cut greenhouse gas pollution emissions. For more information about FUS and

Photo credit : Dorothy Childers, Hill & Lake Press



its events, see [www.firstunitariansociety.org](http://www.firstunitariansociety.org) For more information about Congregations Caring for Creation, see [www.c3mn.net](http://www.c3mn.net) Individuals, neighborhoods and faith communities are encouraged to track and document their carbon dioxide emissions reductions through the Minnesota Energy Challenge, [www.mnenergychallenge.org](http://www.mnenergychallenge.org)

lemence 612-920-9234, or Polly Peterson 612-625-6408.

## Peacemaking, Congregational Study/Action Issue: 2006-2010

On UN Sunday, October 22, a group of about 20 people attended our “Speak Up, Speak Out” session and voiced enthusiastic interest in and support for FUS involvement in the new UUA Congregational Study/Action Issue (CSAI): Peacemaking. This issue was selected by the 2006 General Assembly as the first issue for study under the new four-year process resulting in a UUA Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking in 2010. The full DRAFT text of the CSAI can be found at [http://www.uua.org/csw/CSAI\\_06-10\\_P.pdf](http://www.uua.org/csw/CSAI_06-10_P.pdf). Also available at the Social Action Table during Coffee Hour.

This winter, congregations and districts are encouraged to begin programs of education and reflection, service, community organizing, advocacy, and public witness. Part of the process is to submit comments on the CSAI by March 1,

2007. We are currently working on plans for this process. Please watch for updates and opportunities for your input on this very important issue!

FFI: Madeline Simon [madeline-mpls@msn.com](mailto:madeline-mpls@msn.com) or 952-854-2976. Please leave a message; calls are screened. I hope you appreciate the recorded message about the UN International Day of Peace—an important building block in Peacemaking!

## TIME TO VOTE ON GREEN SANCTUARY ACTION PLAN

related Forum on December 17

From December 1 to January 7, FUS members, friends and RE students are invited to vote for their favorite ideas for inclusion in the FUS Green Sanctuary Action Plan. Be heard! It is important for our democratic process that you weigh in and let us know which proposed ideas most capture your energy and enthusiasm. Youth and kids are encouraged to vote too!

With your input over the last several months, the FUS Green Team has put together a broad ranging list of about 40 possible activities that are grouped into the required categories: ministry, religious education, environmental justice and sustainable living. These ideas range from a new boiler to new trees, from “Sweater Sunday” to rain gardens.

Through your voting, the list will be narrowed to our top 12 and we’ll save the runner-ups for future action.

Four Ways to Vote:

1. Attend the December 17 Forum at which Green Team members will be on hand to answer questions and will leave time for voting on the spot.
2. Pick up a ballot from the office or during Sunday Social Hour any time between December 1 and January 7. Ballots should be returned to the FUS office by January 7.

3. Download a ballot from the website, [www.firstunitariansociety.org](http://www.firstunitariansociety.org), complete it at home and mail or fax it to FUS by January 7. (fax: 612-377-2151)

4. If none of the other methods work for you, call the office and request a ballot be sent to you.

### Six Steps to becoming a Green Sanctuary

1. ~~DONE!~~ Establish a Green Sanctuary Committee
2. ~~DONE!~~ Conduct an environmental audit
3. ~~NOTE!~~ Design a comprehensive program and Action Plan
4. Apply for candidacy
5. Complete 12 projects in the Action Plan
6. Apply for Green Sanctuary accreditation

Last year FUS began the process of becoming a Green Sanctuary, certified by the UU Ministry for Earth affiliate (formerly Seventh Principle Project). This process includes 6 steps that are designed to encourage great participation and conversation among FUS committees and membership.

# Events & Announcements

## SUMMER ASSEMBLIES

Thanksgiving is almost here - - - - could SUMMER ASSEMBLIES be far ahead?

Well, maybe they are two seasons ahead, but in the winter, when you are reading interesting books, having good conversations, hearing insightful sermons and assessing the direction of your life, it is the perfect time to be gathering ideas that could be used in a summer assembly.

A thought, poem, quotation, song, or image that has meaning for you, might also have meaning for others. This is the time to be gathering those gems and sharing them with the Summer Assembly coordinators, Adele Hansen and Carol Koepp. Your contribution might just be what is needed in someone else's assembly, or it might trigger a chain of thoughts that could lead to the theme for an entire assembly.

Summer assemblies are our congregation's opportunity to share our wit and wisdom with each other. Be on the alert for those inspiring ideas, write them down, sign them and see Adele or Carol on a Sunday or put them in the Summer Assemblies box in the office. Thanks!

## New Spot for UUs in South Florida !

Due to major renovations, the Southeast UU Winter Institute in Miami (SWIM) will actually be held in the historic West Palm Beach area.

SWIM's annual intergenerational retreat for UUs and like-minded people of all ages happens every year from December 26th through Jan 1st.

SWIM offers South Florida sunshine, outdoor adventures (including tours, hikes, paddling), workshops (including spirituality and personal growth), programs for families, singles, youth, teens, and young adults, fantastic food, and a new community of friends from across the continent.

Play, laugh, sing, and celebrate New Year's Eve at SWIM! Join UUs from all over North America for a week of fun in the sun! It's a beautiful time of year to be in South Florida.

This year's theme: **Sacred Space**. See more online at <http://www.swimuu.org> SWIM is a member in good standing of CU2C2, the Council of Unitarian Universalist Camps & Conferences, an Independent Affiliate of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

## Stewardship News

### Pledge Update

As always, we thank all of you who have increased your pledges for the 06 – 07 pledge year. As you may recall, we are still phoning members to meet our goal of \$50,000 in increased pledges to meet increased costs. For example, fuel is projected to be 20 per cent higher this year. There are

other areas where costs will rise compared to last year. Reaching that goal ensures FUS can maintain our current program and member services.

We are about half way through the alphabet in our phone calls. We have set a pledge increase goal of 20%. But we accept with pleasure whatever your increase is.

### New Member

In November we welcomed **Kay Dawson** to the Stewardship Committee. She brings significant financial skill and experience and we are lucky to have her. She joins current members Roger Clemence, Joyce Blomquist, and Susan Deveaux. Chris Bubser is our Board liaison and it has been very motivating and fun to work with him.

### Looking for New Committee Members

We are looking for new members who want to continue the success of the committee and who would like to use their skills to ensure FUS sustains current program and member services. Do you have ideas for growth you would like to make happen? Share the very satisfying experience when FUS members receive our calls for pledges with generosity and gratitude for the job we do. Just as a guideline, consider whether you want to contribute your skills in the following areas. Previous fundraising experience is always helpful. Marketing, research, event coordination, payment collections are all areas where you could work. Would you like to research best practices of other UUA (and non-UUA churches) to see if they are suitable for FUS? Our committee is always looking for members who like to use their leadership skills in essential FUS functions. Please don't be shy. Put aside any negative feelings you have; the Committee is about a lot more than asking for money. Come forward, ask us questions, and suggest ways not mentioned here where you would like to help.

For more information, please contact Chair Susan Deveaux, 612-928-0951 or any member of the committee.

## UU Art Exhibition

First Unitarian Art Exhibition Committee will be presenting the following artists work in the Gallery.

Sunday 12-3-06 thru 1-7-07: Vern Anderson, woodcuts

Sunday 1-14-07 thru 2-18-07: Elizabeth Erickson, paintings; Katherine Rogers, paintings

Sunday 2-25-07 thru Sunday 4-01-07: Cate Whittemore, paintings

Sunday 4-08-07 thru 5-13-07: Wet Paint staff, paintings

Sunday 5-20-07 thru 6-24-07: Roger Clemence, photography; Roger Martin, pen and ink; Anna Claussen, photography

*The First Unitarian* is published once a month (except July). The deadline for submission of items is the **10th** of the previous month. Items submitted may be edited to fit the space available. Submissions may be left with Doug Abbott in the FUS office, or made by mail, fax (612-377-6608) or e-mail to [newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org](mailto:newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org)



This newsletter is printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper with soy-based inks.

# Social Action

## MUUSJA news!

The Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance endorsed **two new working groups** at its October 22nd General Meeting: ***Voting Rights/Sacred Franchises*** (contact Jenny Thomas [jjthomas@skypoint.com](mailto:jjthomas@skypoint.com) or Carol Johnson 612-825-3322) & ***Reproductive Rights/Sacred Choices*** (contact Pam Vincent at [pbvincent@mn.rr.com](mailto:pbvincent@mn.rr.com) or Cathy Apostle at [caquilt51@aol.com](mailto:caquilt51@aol.com))

The groups were organized by the Women's Justice Campaign of the Association of Universalist Women of First Universalist Church to engage UUs in working collectively to live out our UU values, while deepening our spirit and strengthening leadership skills in community with other UUs.

The ***UU Voting Rights*** campaign team went into immediate action by engaging UUs in Minnesota's first post election audit - organized by campaign partners, *Citizens for Election Integrity* and the *Minnesota League of Women Voters*. Other strategies will be used to promote fair and honest elections locally and nationally.

The ***UU Reproductive Rights*** will engage UUs, including youth and young adults, in bringing their moral and religious voice to the public square in support of reproductive choice. The *Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice* and *UUA's Clara Barton Internship Program* are key campaign partners.

Upcoming campaign events focus on (1) raising awareness and reflecting on what it means to be UUs working to protect reproductive and voting rights and (2) bringing our UU voice to the public square in support of reproductive rights, comprehensive sexuality education, and family planning as a sacred choice supported by historical religious theology. Interested UUs are invited to learn more about both campaigns.

Although not new, third and fourth MUUSJA working groups are ***UU EcoMinds***, working on global climate change (contact Chris Burda [cburda@earthlink.net](mailto:cburda@earthlink.net)); and ***UUs Out For Marriage***, working on marriage equality (contact Jo Haberman [jojane@juno.com](mailto:jojane@juno.com)).

**Sign up for MUUSJA's weekly Online Event Update to keep posted on current campaign events at [lculbert@comcast.net](mailto:lculbert@comcast.net).**

## Social Action response on Habeas Corpus and the Military Commissions Act

Kendyl's sermon on Habeas Corpus and the Military Commissions Act (October 8th) not only prompted a standing ovation from our membership ... it also spurred us to action! On October 11th and 12th, a group of about 20 Unitarian Universalists from four metro congregations visited the offices of Senator Dayton and Coleman and Representatives Sabo, Ramstad, and McCollum as acts of witness against the passage of this bill. Senator Coleman and Representative

Ramstad voted for this bill; Senator Dayton and Representatives Sabo and McCollum did not.

First Unitarian Society's action was reported in the online UU World article, "UU Groups say Military Commission Act allows torture and strips detainees of habeas corpus rights." UU World writer, Jane Greer, described a large action by 200 people, including many Unitarian Universalists, who gathered in mourning attire in front of the White House around a coffin draped with a black shroud bearing the words "Here lies the corpse of habeas corpus." Protesters signed a statement decrying the Act at the same time that President George W. Bush was signing the bill inside the White House. After the group read the statement aloud at the White House gate, 16 people, in an act of civil disobedience, were arrested for refusing to leave the area.

Her article continued with reports from other parts of the country and

included: Members of the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis visited the offices of their U.S. senators and three Congressional representatives on Wednesday and Thursday with copies of a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons denouncing the Military Commissions Act. "The sermon got us so fired up, we needed to do something," said Madalyn Cioci, a member of the church's social justice program. "We did this as an act of social witness. We realized that silence wouldn't get us anywhere." The group met mostly with office staff. However, in one case, they met directly with Rep. Jim Ramstad (R-Minn.), who voted for the bill. "Initially he received us very graciously," said Cioci. "And then he got defensive. We explained that we were there as a faith organization. After talking with him he did admit that there were provisions in the bill that he was uncomfortable with."

**The holidays are coming and The Alliance will help you get ready with...**

Good things to eat Holiday Temptations Sale on Sunday December 3rd Gifts, cards, knit items, calendars Holiday Gift Sale on Sundays December 3rd and 10th  
Look for sales tables in the Lower Auditorium after the Assembly.



# The First Unitarian Society

OF MINNEAPOLIS

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Senior Minister: **Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons**  
Minister Emeritus: **Khoren Arisian**  
Music Director: **Barbara Brooks**  
Director of Religious Education: **Jan Devor**  
Associate Music Director: **Dr. Gabriela Diaz-Alatrisme**  
Membership Coordinator: **Jo Franco**  
Building Manager: **Jennifer Kohl**  
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Finance Director: **Bob Clagren**  
Admin Asst/Publications Coordinator: **Doug Abbott**

DATED MATERIAL  
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The official FUS calendar is online at  
[www.firstunitariansociety.org](http://www.firstunitariansociety.org).  
Choose "Calendar" under the  
"News & Events" top menu  
to view weekly events

## December 2006

Repeating Weekly Events:

**Sunday:**

9:30 AM - 10:15 AM Forum  
10:00 AM - 11:45 AM Sunday School  
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Assembly  
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Coming of Age  
10:00 AM - 11:45 AM Sunday School  
8:00 AM Ecumenical Catholic  
7:00 p.m. CUUPS Weekly Ritual  
7:30 p.m. Men's Awareness Meeting  
7:30 p.m. AA Big Book Meeting  
7:00 p.m. Buddhist Meditation

**Friday December 1, 2006**

6:30 PM Eclectics Rehearsal  
6:30 PM Eclectics Rehearsal Childcare

**Saturday December 2, 2006**

6:00 AM Holiday Temptations  
7:00 AM CUUPS YuleFaire  
10:00 AM Coral Readers Rehearsal

**Sunday December 3, 2006**

9:00 AM FUS Foundation Trustees  
9:00 AM ReFirement Group Meeting  
9:30 AM Holiday Temptations  
12:00 PM Holiday Temptations  
4:00 PM Solstice Carolers - Rehearsal  
6:30 PM Orchestra Rehearsals

**Tuesday December 5, 2006**

4:00 PM MTC Nursing Farewell

**Wednesday December 6, 2006**

6:45 PM FUS Choir

**Thursday December 7, 2006**

7:00 PM Peacemaking Congregational Study/  
Action Issue

**Friday December 8, 2006**

5:30 PM Social Commentary Through the  
Arts DG  
7:00 PM Arts & Crafts Discovery Group

**Saturday December 9, 2006**

8:00 AM Compassionate Group  
10:00 AM Coral Readers Rehearsals

**Sunday December 10, 2006**

9:30 AM Holiday Gift Sale  
12:00 PM New Member Discovery Group  
1:00 PM Gay Men's Prostate Cancer Group  
4:00 PM Solstice Carolers - Rehearsal  
6:30 PM Orchestra Rehearsals

**Tuesday December 12, 2006**

10:30 AM Caregivers Support

**Wednesday December 13, 2006**

6:45 PM FUS Choir

**Thursday December 14, 2006**

7:00 PM Pagan Spirituality Discovery Group

**Saturday December 16, 2006**

10:00 AM Coral Readers Rehearsal

**Sunday December 17, 2006**

9:00 AM ReFirement Group Meeting

11:30 AM Soup Luncheon

1:00 PM Kids N Kin Pagan Family Sunday School

4:00 PM Solstice Carolers - Rehearsal

**Monday December 18, 2006**

7:00 PM Foundation Board

**Wednesday December 20, 2006**

6:00 PM Regular Board of Trustees Meeting

7:00 PM Membership Committee Meeting

**Thursday December 21, 2006**

7:00 PM Stewardship Committee

**Friday December 22, 2006**

2:00 PM Set-up Winter Solstice

6:00 PM WSC Food Set-up

6:00 PM Parents Night Out Child Care

6:00 PM Winter Solstice Celebration

7:00 PM Arts & Crafts Discovery Group

**Saturday December 23, 2006**

5:00 PM Yule

**Sunday December 24, 2006**

No additional events scheduled beyond Ecumenical  
Catholic Community, forum, and assembly.

**Thursday December 28, 2006**

7:00 PM Pagan Spirituality Discovery Group

**Sunday December 31, 2006**

No additional events scheduled beyond Ecumenical  
Catholic Community, forum, and assembly.