



THE FIRST Unitarian

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The Minister in *Newsweek*

Rev. Kendyl Gibbons' chapter in the book, Parenting Beyond Belief was recently favorably reviewed in the July 16, 2007 issue of *Newsweek* magazine on page 10. The text of the *Newsweek* article is reprinted below.

BELIEFWATCH How To, By Lisa Miller

Parenting books are the most useless and irresistible kind of literature. Designed to prey on parents' insecurities, they draw you in with expert claims and then disappoint with their know-it-all tone and their failure to solve even a single one of the profound struggles of family life. Same with atheism books: the authors are supersmart and their arguments engaging, but they don't ultimately resolve doubt and you are left with the feeling of having failed to get with the program. The kids are wide awake at 10 p.m. and you're still not so sure you can rule God out completely.

Here, then, is the last word in the useless and irresistible: a parenting book for atheists. "Parenting Beyond Belief," published in April by Amacom, a wing of the American Management Association, aims to help folks who are raising their kids without religion deal with the sticky questions that come up about Santa Claus and heaven, and it raises more serious concerns about how to bring up ethical, confident, nonbelieving kids in a culture saturated with talk about God. The book is enjoying a lively ride online, in spite of the fact that it's been reviewed almost nowhere and its editor is a writer and teacher from Minneapolis. Parenting blogs have raved about it, and the book's Web site is alive with confessional stories. "I am left with the feeling, after reading this book, that as long as I explain my morals, and am willing to answer even the hardest questions, my girls will be OK," writes Rachel at A Gaggle of Girls.

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Order of Service announcements are appreciated by noon on Wed. of each week. Please email your submission(s) to: info@firstunitariansociety.org

Newsletter submissions are due by the 10th of each month and should be sent to newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org

The Minister in *Newsweek*, continued

“Parenting Beyond Belief” is a collection of essays by famous and unknown nonbelievers. The most compelling chapter is “Death and consolation”: talking to kids about death when heaven isn’t an option. The Unitarian minister Kendyl Gibbons recommends such phrases as “No, honey, Grandpa won’t come for Christmas. He died and is dead for always.” And then she recommends rituals that bring Grandpa back in memory. The editor Dale McGowan has received some heat from hard-line atheists who say he’s too accommodating to organized religion. “I’ve had a few atheists look me in the eye and say, ‘Come on, when you’re dead, you’re gone. What’s the big deal?’” But McGowan, father of three, prefers a gentler approach. “I don’t think the way to handle it is to say, ‘Suck it up and go to bed’.” Parents on both sides of the culture war will find this book a compelling read.



Religious Education

Happy, beautiful summer! Maybe in the lull of these summer months you could take a minute to register for the wonderful RE program that is coming up this fall. You can easily register on line by going to the FUS web site at www.firstunitariansociety.org and then clicking on the religious education link. Having your child(ren) registered will ensure that they are on the class lists and will feel welcome this fall. Thanks for registering—it really helps us all out!

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Celebrating the Human Spirit: Summer Assemblies 2007



10:30 a.m. Lower Assembly Hall

The Summer Assemblies have been rare treasures, each and every one of them. There are more to come. Look at the line up for August and early September! There is something for everyone.

August 5 - Next—A Life Odyssey

The talk will consist of a number of “life questions”—about success, making it, the powers and traps of fame, and what to do when one’s early training and ambitions no longer seem to go “anywhere.” Questions of rethinking oneself: who and how to read, expanding ideas and thoughts, and attempting to maintain or rediscover days, where one might want to go; the paths, choices, and disciplines beyond modes of self-destruction, maybe quitting early to move toward one’s own “Next Places.”

Speaker: **Harvey Sarles**. Coordinator: Carol Koeppe

August 12 - The People in Your Neighborhood: Politics, Land, Food, and Community Economics in the FUS Ecosystem

Guest speaker: **Keith Ellison**. Coordinator: Jack Harris

August 19 - Celebrating the Human Spirit—A Global Connection

Peter D’Ascoli and **young people who have grown up in this congregation** will share the personal impact travel has had on each of them; travel in the service of others or travel to learn about other cultures. How does this kind of experience confirm or change personal perspectives? How does it touch the human spirit?

Coordinator: Peter D’Ascoli

August 26 - Wanderlust . . . and Coming Home

We are drawn to travel for so many reasons . . . for learning, for inspiration, for escape, for fun (the list goes on). And still, coming home is many times the sweetest reward. Both travel and coming home have inspired a lot of wonderful music. This Music Sunday will feature the music of travel and discovery, interspersed with thoughts on why we travel, and why we love so much to come home. Music performed by **The Eclectics and friends**.

Coordinator: Cindy Pichotta

September 2 - Summer’s End or “You Can Take It With You”

Your most relaxed and least studied moments, the least anticipated days may be the memories you look back on with joy and that support you into the future.

Speaker: **Wendy Jerome**

Chalice Camp is provided for school-age children up to age 12, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Child care is available for preschool children and infants.



Jane Evershed “Socially Conscious Art for the World”

Exhibit and sale of Jane Evershed’s framed posters
July 1 through August 31



Ms. Evershed has generously donated 16 signed posters to the First Unitarian Society for exhibit and sale. Each poster sells for \$60 and all profits go to FUS. You can also view her work on her website, www.janeevershed.com. If someone else buys your favorite, don’t worry; Jane will replace them as they are sold. To order a framed poster, please contact Carol Koeppe, 952-893-2383, by the end of August. Posters will be ready for pick up on the first Sunday of the program year,

Stewardship Corner

An Attitude and a Commitment

Well Folks, it's the start of a new fiscal year here at FUS, and your Stewardship Committee is back on paper again, bringing words of happiness about 2006-2007, coupled with words of challenge for '07-'08.

First, the happy words: May and June brought solid enough payments on fiscal year pledges to complete '06-'07 with expenses and income nicely in balance. In that context, the year's best news may have been heating costs that were well below the original budget; but there also were increases in rental and other sources. This combination, coupled with added contributions from the FUS Foundation, helped in major ways to keep us "in the black" for the full year.

And there was critical input from members who raised '06-'07 payments above '05-'06 levels and/or made special contributions between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007. New members also pitched in quickly, and often very generously. So to all who helped in these ways, we offer particular praise! Finally, as is always the case in a congregation as large as ours, a number of members left us during the year, while others told us they would be moving away from the area and therefore not extending a pledge into '07-'08.

Now, the challenge: Budgeting is always a demanding task for your Board of Trustees. But it has become a greater challenge than usual as we head into the '07-'08 year with too many member pledge forms that have not been updated since 2006, 2005 or even 2004, and, in some cases, do not properly reflect current levels of commitment or potential. Furthermore, there will be physical plant needs, in '07-'08 and beyond, that will require new levels of funding and demand a greater certainty in monthly cash flows to insure solvency throughout the year. Your Stewardship Committee (collaborating with the FUS Trustees, Foundation Board and Membership Committee) will be seeking a broad base of financial support to meet these various concerns. To better identify current levels of commitment, all FUS members and friends receiving this newsletter will find enclosed a new pledge form on which to record a pledge for the '07-'08 fiscal year. "For every \$100 you now pledge, could you instead commit to \$108?" Obviously, larger increases also will be happily received; and we know that some folks will not be able to raise their pledges at all. But given the size of the budget supported at the May, 2007 Annual Congregational Meeting, it

seems clear that significant overall revenue increases will be needed in the upcoming months if we are to meet all FUS needs for '07-'08.

All of us who commit to the missions of membership at FUS know that our quality programs require the many forms of financial and volunteer support that complement our excellent staffing and ministry. We also have to appreciate that boiler work, Groveland entry upgrading, and a necessary response to storm water and sanitary sewer separation, mandated by the city of Minneapolis, will be big issues before the end of this decade. All will be costly and will require special support. All will also be essential investments in the long-term future of our Humanist community.

Please then, when you review your new pledge form, do be as generous as you possibly can, selecting the type of payment option that works best for you. (Automatic monthly debiting has now become a "rock solid plan" for members who use it. We recommend it.) We realize that you may be surprised at the inclusion of a pledge form in this first newsletter mailing of the new fiscal year, but we hope you will also be sufficiently pleased to want to get the form back to the FUS office by the end of August. If you do, we will be delighted! We will also be pleased to try to help with any questions that you may have. Do contact a Stewardship Committee member or a supporting staff member if you wish.

And again, THANK YOU!

Stewardship Committee:

Joyce Blomquist; Chris Bubser; Roger Clemence, chair;
Kay Dawson; Jim Lynskey

Staff Support:

Will Hegeman, FUS Administrator
Bob Calgren, Finance Manager

This just in: Total pledge income for the last fiscal year is 7 percent higher than the year earlier. Total income is \$33,000 over the prior year. Expenses are under budget. We ended the fiscal year with a surplus of \$2,605.

Congratulations and Thank You!!

The FUS Foundation

Getting to Know the Foundation Funds

The Kurt Pearson Social Concerns Fund

What is the Kurt Pearson Social Concerns Fund?

This Fund was established by his parents as a part of the Foundation of the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis (FUS) in 1992 in loving memory of Kurt. A lifelong Unitarian and member of FUS with an active social conscience, Kurt's life was cut short by AIDS. He died on August 13, 1991 at the age of 29. Grants are made each year in October near Kurt's birthday.

Why should I contribute to this Fund?

It is the only Foundation Fund devoted exclusively to social concerns at the Society. Its annual grants reach out to needy people and groups in the community.

How can I contribute to this Fund?

There are different ways you can donate. If you want to honor a special person or occasion *now*, it can be as simple as a check made payable to the FUS Foundation with a designation for the Pearson Social Concerns Fund. You can also arrange for a donation after your death with a bequest in your will, and there are other ways as well—including an annuity during your lifetime.

Who can apply for a grant?

Members and friends of FUS are invited to nominate a worthy group or organization to receive a grant. Applications for grants are available online and at the FUS office during the summer and early fall each year. Grant requests (to the attention of the Foundation President) should be received by the Foundation by September 30. The Grant Committee usually meets during the first week of October to consider the nominations. Applications are now being received for grants to be awarded in October 2007.

How much money is awarded in the grant(s)?

The amount can vary each year, depending on the monies available and the number of requests that are granted. In the past, individual grants have been anywhere from \$100 to \$1000, and the number of grants in a year anywhere from one to four, with total amounts in a single year from \$500 (in the early years) to \$2000. Of course, as the Fund grows, so will the amount available for grants from year to year. A 15-year history of the grants is available online and at the FUS online at: www.firstunitariansociety.org/newsletter

Social Action

Successful Habitat For Humanity Build

Members and friends of the First Unitarian Society combined forces with other Unitarian Universalist Affordable Housing Partnership volunteers to work on a twin home in Heritage Park, Hwy. 55 and Lyndale Ave., for the week of June 25–29. In spite of some very hot weather, at least 75 volunteer days were contributed to frame twin homes located on the corner of Fremont and 11th Aves. North. It's worth noting that many of the volunteers were young adults ranging in ages from the teens through the early 30s.

Good progress was made on the construction and it was especially satisfying for a couple of reasons: We worked with and visited with the future home owners of both units, and our work added to the model mixed-income housing development, Heritage Park, which has replaced low-income housing torn down years ago.

First Unitarian Society members and friends provided a site host, site coordinator, and construction workers daily as well as the noon meal on three of the five days. Special thanks go to those meal providers: Yleen Joselyn, Barbara Wallace, Mibs Pearson, Lilly Bubser, Olive Sarkinen and Dorothy French.

Watch the Social Action Table and the FUS Newsletter for another Habitat opportunity in the fall.



Women's Awareness Group

The August meeting of the Women's Awareness Group will be held on Monday, August 13, at the home of Adele Hansen, 4101 Raleigh Avenue, St. Louis Park. The cohost is Carol Koepp. FUS women are invited to join us at 6:30 p.m. for a potluck supper, followed by a discussion on "Ethical Eating." Please call Adele (952-927-6035) or Carol (952-893-2383) to RSVP and for directions.

Membership News

Happy height of glorious summer! I'm Teresa West, the Membership and Outreach Coordinator as of July 1. I have been a member here for almost two years, but let me tell you a little bit about myself for those whom I have yet to meet. I have been in the Twin Cities since 1998, mostly working at Target HQ, and am now continuing on a path to switch careers. I am headed back to school this fall to study graphic design, to land a job more on the creative side of business, and leave my Excel/number crunching days behind.

I'm extremely excited to be a part of the staff here, as I have found a welcoming community in FUS and claim many members to be close friends. My goals are to continue to build on the vibrancy and community that can be found here, and to keep building the connections between current members so that we can support each other. The health of any community also depends on fresh ideas and new people; hence my focus will also be on new members and visitors, to welcome them in and help establish them in our society. I am very open and interested in hearing from everyone about the programming that we have available here. Are we missing a discovery or support group that covers a topic near and dear to you? Are we missing important topics?

Are programs not scheduled at convenient times for you? Please feel free to give me any feedback, wishes or concerns. Drop me an email, leave me a rambling phone message, or catch me at the service to let me know. I am not a genie from a bottle, but I want to hear what your unmet needs are.

Now, a one person welcome-wagon is hardly enough to go around, so I am asking for everyone's assistance. Don't think of it as doing me a favor when you strike up a conversation with a stranger at coffee hour. Think of it as a chance to meet a new friend, a new business contact, a new client, or a co-chair for a future social action event. Voila! You have just deputized yourself to be an associate membership director. What does that sort of power feel like?! I am taking the bumper sticker I inherited from Jo to heart. It reads "The most radical thing we can do is to introduce people to one another." Go forth and greet your fellow humans!

I hope to see you all around this fall!

Teresa West,
Membership Coordinator
612-377-6608, ext. 104
membership@firstunitariansociety.org

Orientations and New Member Sunday

We will be holding Orientations for inquiring folks who would like to know more about FUS, Unitarian Universalism, and our community. You do not need to RSVP; just show up. New Member Sunday will follow these meetings for those who would like to join our society. We will also have two more orientation sessions scheduled in early 2008, in January and May. If you know of visitors who may be interested in joining, please let them know, and direct them towards Teresa West, Membership and Outreach Coordinator, for more information.

☛ Fall New Member Orientation dates are Sundays, Oct 21 and 28 at 4 p.m. in the Dietrich Room.

☛ New Member Sunday is November 11.

Soup Lunches Are Back!

(And no, it is not the Great Depression—we just have really good soup here!) The Soup Lunch schedule will be in full swing starting in September, giving you a chance to practice your skills of meeting new people. Below is the schedule for the year.

Please see me, Teresa West, Membership and Outreach Coordinator, (or email/call me) to sign up your group to sponsor one of them. Many slots are still available.

Soup Lunch Dates for 2007-2008

September 23
October 14
November 11
December 9
January 13
February 10
March 23
April 13
May 11

Membership News

Happy August Birthdays! Many happy returns to the following who are celebrating the collection of another year in their life and all the stories and life experiences that come with it.



Theodore Bubser
Kathy Sundeen
Gabe Aderhold
Mark Gibbons
Maria Vincze
Ray Deveaux
Art Higginbotham
Becca Justiniano
Nancy Jones
Gordon Asselstine
Gretchen Clemence
Kyle Redelsheimer
Vivian Rengstorff
Jeanete Link
Margaret McCoy
Elaine Qiang Service
Shirley Losie
Anika Carlson
Lars Carlson

Devin Raynor
Karen Rowehl
Odin Russell
Ilo Leppik
Richard Seurer
Maxine Dickson
Christie Eller
Neal Gault
Jan Robin
Dan Tix
Wanda McCaa
Nicki Victora
Zach Fisher
Carter Greene
Will Anthony
Matthew Schneider
George Illes
Lyle Rossman
Alexander Joselyn

We would like to extend congratulations to two couples who were recently married here. Matt Mayfield and Rachel Broten, who were united on July 21. And Craig Smith and Beth Frampton were joined together in marriage on July 28. We wish them peace, love and joy.



The Kurt Pearson Social Concerns Grants

Applications Needed by September 30, 2007

The Foundation of the First Unitarian Society invites you to submit an application to nominate a group or organization to receive a grant from the Kurt Pearson Social Concerns Fund. If you know of a group or organization which you think would be a worthy recipient of a grant, please pick up an application today and complete it as soon as possible. Applications, additional information about the grants, and a 15-year history of grant recipients are available online, in the FUS office and on the Foundation bulletin board in the Lower Assembly Hall at FUS.

Your applications for grant requests can be submitted online at <http://firstunitariansociety.org/foundation/pearson-application.htm>, dropped off at the office, or mailed to FUS (attention: Shelley Shreffler, Foundation President, 900 Mount Curve Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403). Applications to nominate a group for the grants must be received by September 30 to be considered for the 2007 awards. The Grant Committee meets in early October to consider nominations.

This Fund was established as a part of the FUS Foundation in 1992 in loving memory of Kurt Pearson. A lifelong Unitarian and member of FUS, with an active social conscience, Kurt's life was cut short by AIDS. He died on August 13, 1991 at the age of 29. Grants are made each year in October near Kurt's birthday.



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 in the "Newsletter" folder in the FUS office, or made by mail, fax (612-377-2151) or e-mail to newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org.



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The First Unitarian Society

OF MINNEAPOLIS

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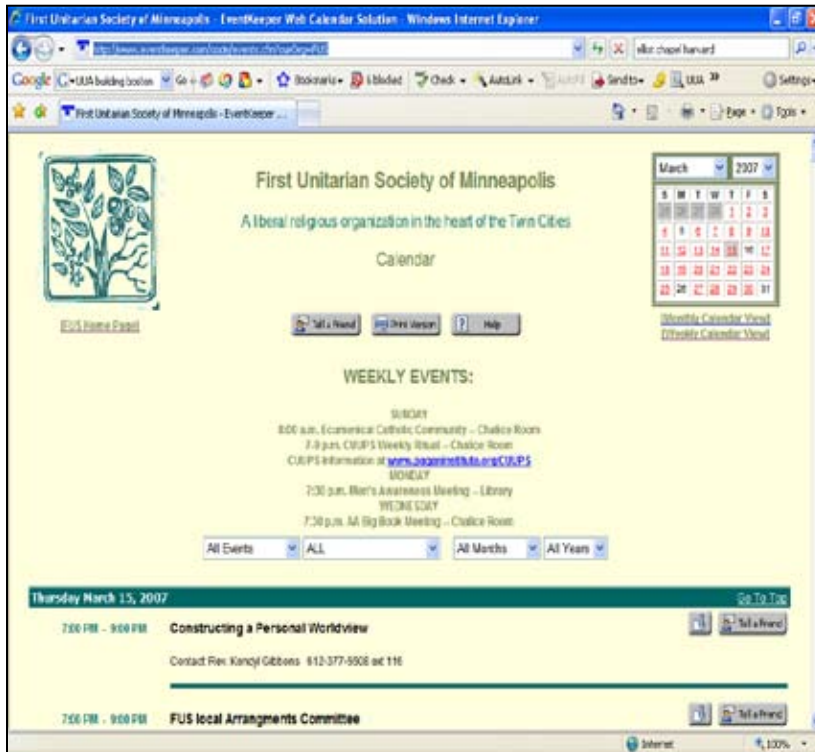
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August 2007



For an up-to-date listing of events at FUS check the calendar online at the FUS website.

1. Go to www.firstunitariansociety.org
2. Click on "Calendar" on the left menu bar.

If you do not have access to the web, contact the FUS Office at 612-377-6608 for event information.

