

Unitarian

VOL. 90, FEBRUARY 2008 • THE FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF MINNEAPOLIS

From The Minister

The 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps in Europe was observed in the fall of 2005. In celebration of that event, two of our neighboring congregations — the Basilica of St. Mary and Temple Israel — collaborated to commission a major musical work, an oratorio entitled “To Be Certain of the Dawn” by composer Stephen Paulus and Twin Cities poet Michael Dennis Browne. The title is drawn from the words of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, who wrote, “This is the task: in the darkest night to be certain of the dawn, certain of the power to turn a curse into a blessing, agony into song. To know the monster’s rage and, in spite of it, proclaim to its face (even a monster will be transfigured into an angel); to go through Hell and to continue to trust in the goodness of God—this is the challenge and the way.”

The sold-out world premiere of this composition featured the Minnesota Orchestra, the Basilica Cathedral Choir, and the Basilica Children’s Choir on November 17, 18 and 19, 2005 at the Basilica of Saint Mary. Since that time, Osmo Vänskä, director of the Minnesota Orchestra, has hoped to make a professional recording of the piece, and he will realize that ambition this month. As part of this process, “To Be Certain of the Dawn” will be performed again on February 12, 2008, at 7:30 p.m. with the Minnesota Orchestra, the Basilica Cathedral Choir, the Minnesota Chorale, the Basilica Choristers and the Minnesota Boys Choir, four soloists, and Cantor Barry Abelson, at Orchestra Hall in downtown Minneapolis.

I was present at the premiere of this work and found it extremely moving, so I am excited about the opportunity to hear it performed again. If you enjoy orchestral and choral music, you might want to add this event to your calendar. Members of the FUS chorus may remember performing a segment of the Oratorio, “Hymn to the Eternal Flame” several times as a chalice lighting response on Sunday mornings.

Rabbi Marcia A. Zimmerman and Rev. Michael J. O’Connell have invited the Minneapolis religious community to a special dinner in advance of the concert to commemorate Temple Israel’s 130th year, the Basilica’s 100th year, and the special friendship between these significant congregations. The social hour and dinner begins at 5:00 p.m. at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Tickets for the dinner and concert start at \$125 per person. Online ticket ordering is available now at www.mary.org. Click on the MyBasilica link and select Events.

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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

Assembly Previews

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

◆2/3/08 ASSEMBLY:

“Come Sing a Song with Me” Speaker: Steven Protzman, Ministerial Intern and the FUS Choir

Carolyn McDade, author of “Spirit of Life” writes that “it is an act of courage to sing and that when we sing with our hearts, we make our souls whole and our bodies shine”. Drawing on the musical leadership of Barb Brooks and the FUS choir, this service will be a hymn festival to hear and to sing some of the songs of our Unitarian Universalist faith, learn about the diverse religious heritage from which we draw much of our music, and reflect on the power of music to strengthen and inspire us for the journey.



◆2/10/08 ASSEMBLY: “The Way of the Sages” Speaker: Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons

Contemporary American humanism has its roots in the heritage of European philosophy, but the Confucian tradition of the east holds many interesting parallels. Some contemporary Confucian scholars are finding connections with western humanist teachings in our increasingly interwoven global culture. It is worth our while to know more about these intellectual cousins on the other side of the world.



◆2/17/08 ASSEMBLY: “The Problem with Love” and “Sweater Sunday” Speaker: Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons



“Love is not all,” says the poet Edna St. Vincent Millay, and she is correct. There is a pious sentimentality which suggests that all we need is love that ends by attributing to one human emotion the capacities formerly vested in the gods. What is it reasonable to expect from love and what else is required for our individual and collective well-being? Please note that this will be our Sweater Sunday, and the thermostat at FUS will be intentionally lowered 5 degrees below our usual. You are encouraged to dress warmly to remain comfortable. This program is part of our Green Sanctuary effort to increase awareness of the need to decrease our carbon dioxide emissions to work against global warming. We encourage you to lower the thermostat at home as well.

◆2/24/08 ASSEMBLY: “Somebody Say Something” Guest Speaker: Rev. Al Gallmon

We welcome to our pulpit this morning the Rev. Al Gallmon, Jr., the senior pastor of the Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church, a largely African-American congregation on the north side of Minneapolis. Rev. Gallmon is a graduate of Howard Divinity School and was a leader in the corporate world before entering the ministry. He is also a member of the Minneapolis Downtown Senior Clergy and was one of the participants in last year’s Journey in Faith to Israel/Palestine. In addition, he is a leader in the work of social justice activism in the north side community.

No Forums are scheduled for February.

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 email to newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org.



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

From the Minister

continued

A smaller number of concert-only tickets will be available on a first-come, first served basis starting on Friday, January 18 on www.mary.org. Concert tickets are \$55 per person and there will be a four-ticket per person maximum.

As respect for religious freedom and diversity becomes a topic of increasing discussion in American culture, events and relationships like these, as well as works of art celebrating human connections across theological traditions, have ever greater importance. I look forward to the performance and it would be great to see some FUS folks there.

Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons
Senior Minister
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Stewardship Corner

Well folks, we made it over the great divide, and we did it in style.

We left 2007 with: (1) the beauty of a snow covered holiday season filling our memories (mostly with joy); (2) an income stream that has continued to exceed our monthly expenses (despite cold temperatures and higher heating bills); and (3) financial help from a core group of contributors that will let us reinforce the start of future options for our fine FUS building (our “house”) while also strengthening our sense of shared community.

Then, when January greeted us with an early warm up, we knew we also could make it through the middle months of a Minnesota winter in style. We knew, too, we could embrace 2008 with hope when reinforced by Kendyl’s uplifting Sunday message on January 6th and the always goose-bumps-encouraging piano playing of Barb Brooks. Clearly, we sensed how lucky we all were to be a part of a richly supportive FUS community.

Two other examples of that supportive community were found in George Hutchinson and Will Hegeman. George, the Buildings and Grounds Committee Chair, provided the collaborative linkage needed to seek successfully a match of up to \$10,000 from the FUS Foundation to fund critical inquiries into site and building improvement projects. Then Will, our Congregational Administrator, played the key role in identifying a source for monies to bring a UUA Advisor to FUS to help our congregation assess how we can best proceed toward starting a Capital Campaign effort that will make us greener, with a far more accessible Groveland entry, and more functional and energy efficient in other key areas of our building.

More on the details of our advances will wait for a time beyond this reporting, but be advised we are seeking and finding the growth of sufficient support from generous contributing members, from the FUS Board, the Foundation Board and the FUS Alliance to let us look with hope and enthusiasm toward a future with even greater well-being for FUS and for our lives as its members and friends.

Do stay tuned!

Joyce Blomquist, Chris Bubser, Roger Clemence,
Kay Dawson and Madeline Simon
Your Stewardship Committee

Religious Education

I have decided that I need to learn some lessons from the snow globes that I love to have around. (I moved them all recently out and then back into my office so they caught my attention.) When shaken, the globe erupts with flurries that fill the space and make the globe beautiful and exciting. But then the flurries gently fall until they are quietly at the bottom and the object in the center of the globe becomes very clear. Both the shaken mode and then the quietly falling and settling modes are beautiful. I love all of it. Once the flurries are quiet, I look at the object and I inevitably shake the globe and watch the action happen all over again.

It's like life, isn't it? Let me explain. I, like you, live a hectic life. You might think that now that my kids are out of the house, things would calm down, but nooooo. Things always pop up to fill my every moment. (Note to self, don't wait to do things for yourself when things are calm...it never happens!). All this action is the shaking part of my snow globe experience...beautiful and exciting. I tend to think that life should be that way always! I love to fill my days with action, always have. But I have to

appreciate the quiet, drifting down of the snowflakes time for it leads to that clear picture. It's the quiet settling that I have to come to grips with. I am not good with lulls...but lulls are good for me! Repetition and routine and the lulls are the settling times. I know that we all need them to get to that clear picture...that place in our lives when we know what we want and how we want to live.



I just have to remember not to constantly keep shaking the globe. I have to remember that I love all parts of the snow globe experience. Maybe you love the calm so much that you have to remember to shake the globe! Or to take the time to look clearly at the object once it is revealed. Each to their own. I just know that my little snow globes offer a pattern for life that seems pretty good...we all just need to appreciate every stage of our living. Maybe I'll do this for a children's message sometime!

Jan Devor

Director of Religious Education

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Bingo and Lasagna Night for everyone in the FUS community! Friday, February 22

Friday evening is a great time just to roll up to church and have a wonderful lasagna dinner and play some Bingo! All ages welcome! Dinner will be at 6:00 with Bingo starting at 7:00! Great food, great company and great prizes! Adults are \$7.00 and kids eat free!!!!

UU Playgroup

February 9 and 23 in the Chalice Room. Big toys and big fun on winter days!

Mark Your Calendars! Dale McGowen

Dale McGowen is the main author for *Parenting Beyond Belief: How to Raise Moral and Ethical Children Without a Belief in God*. Dale will be at FUS on March 1 from 1:00 until 4:30 doing a seminar about issues from his recent book. (This is the book that Kendyl did a chapter for and was so well received by the public.) He offers encouragement and practical solutions for secular parenting in a religious world. Price for the afternoon is \$55.00 a person or \$75.00 a couple. See the flyer and you can register online for this afternoon course. Scholarships are available for FUS members by talking with Jan Devor.

Membership News

Hello All! I hope you will join us at the February 24 service, as that is new member Sunday. It is important to meet the newest inductees to this society, to greet them during the coffee hour that follows, and involve them with their interests and passions, which are probably similar to yours. They are a great group and I think you will enjoy them!

Our Wednesday night Spring Eat n' Meet program is upon us! We would love to see you for dinner and stay for the program. Dinner begins at 5:45 p.m. in the lower assembly hall. The program is held in the Dietrich Room. Please sign up to help us out in the set up or kitchen areas. A sign up sheet is on the Ask Me table. See enclosed schedule for menus and program topics.

February Birthdays! Seek out your fellow members and friends that are celebrating this month and congratulate them.

Clara Asp
Roberta Beach
Marian Behrend
Barb Belew
Lily Bubser
Yleen Joselyn
Brianna Libby

Bob McCoy
Tony Perpich
Matt Schwalbach
Ron Staff
Lee Schreurs
Marshall Thompson



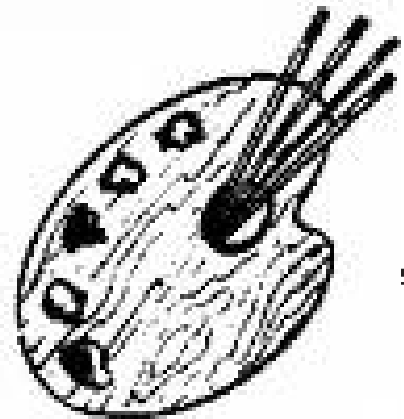
Teresa West
Membership Coordinator
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membership@firstunitariansociety.org

Music Notes

As many of you know, my dear brother Kevin passed away on December 26th. I tell you this because it impacts my world, my perspective on life, and what is ultimately important. I have come to realize how important family, friends and community are to all our fragile hearts. Nothing is as important as how we relate and connect to one another. We are all one. I have looked into so many people's eyes and seen such love and grace. Thank you all for your sweetness.

I thank the universe for music at this time. It is a healing force. On February 3 the FUS Chorus will join Steve Protzman, our intern minister, as we explore our hymn traditions. Dust off those vocal pipes as we are gonna sing! I have chosen some great American folk hymns and spirituals to inspire and lift our hearts. Please join us in this uplifting Sunday morning!

Barbara Brooks
FUS Music Director
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Port Cities Exhibit:

January 13 through February 17

Your Art in the Gallery Committee has arranged, for your viewing pleasure, a delightful exhibit of sketches from Port Cities of Portugal and Italy. The artists, Dean Abbott and Lance Neckar, are two of the faculty members in the Landscape Architecture Department at the College of Design, University of Minnesota, who guided students of both architecture and landscape architecture in studies of the cities during the spring semester of 2007.

Although Dean and Lance are excellent artists with a love of famous buildings and spaces, most of the sketches they have assembled for this exhibit focus on the humanity of people in street conversation or on buildings and spaces the artists found appealing rather than famous. These original drawings mean to show the "everyday worlds" of these Port Cities and their inhabitants, not their elegant parts. We hope you will find the experience of looking at the images as enjoyable as the artists did during their quick sketchings.

Service Auction

Bridging the Gap — Service Auction, 2008

The annual SERVICE AUCTION at the First Unitarian Society will be Saturday, March 8. It is the largest fundraiser held by the congregation — a combination of fun, food and shopping all for a good cause. The theme for this year's auction is "Bridging the Gap." The proceeds will be shared between the Social Action Committee and the Audio Visual Team. For details about the social justice "gaps" seen as priorities by the Social Action Committee, please see the Social Action column in this issue of *The First Unitarian*. The Audio Visual team is raising money to cover costs that exceeded its sound system improvement budget and for some additional microphones for the upper assembly hall.

The social benefits continue all year when we attend the dinners, picnics, barbeques, plays, concerts, etc. we buy on March 8, donated by other members. Start by filling a plate with appetizers prepared by Mark Gibbons, served with a glass of wine or soft drink. Walk between the tables in the silent auction and view an array of donated items: hand made jewelry; gift certificates for theaters, museums, concerts, clothing, landscaping; hand-knit sweaters, hats and mittens; food baskets; photography; babysitting; lawn care and many other services and items.

Check out the Boutique where no bidding is necessary. Later the scene changes to the live, fun-filled auction conducted by the entertaining auctioneer Kurt Johnson. Ethnic dinners, vacations, boating excursions, pool parties, your choice of sermon topics and the item with the most tradition - Margaret McCoy's fabulous chocolate chip cookies. Before going home, end the evening with coffee and dessert.

Become a Service Auction Sponsor!

Can't think of an item or service to donate? Can't attend on that date? Want to pledge your support beyond your donated item or service? Consider becoming a sponsor at the following levels: Community Hero \$500; Superstar \$350; Happy Humanist \$300; General \$50.

During the Bid-Need portion of the live auction we will be earning funds to purchase a defibrillator needed for the building. (Last year we bid to purchase our *Living Tradition* hymnal supplements)

Put it on your calendar now and fill out your donation form soon.

Donations

Send it in or drop it off in the FUS office or the Social Action table by Feb 10 to have them included in the Auction catalog.

Tickets

Ticket sales begin 2/17: \$10 advance sales, \$15 at the door. Child care available - \$5 per child. Ticket sales cover the cost of food and drink.

Questions?

Call Carol Koepp @ 952-893-2383 or Jane Deitl @ 612-332-0829

NEED INSPIRATION TO THINK OF A DONATION? Look through the Auction catalogs from previous years on the Social Action table to get some ideas.



Eat 'n' Meet

Spring 2008 Menu & Program

Dinner 5:45 p.m. Lower Assembly Hall

February 13	Italian	Mark Gibbons
Linguine with classic tomato sauce or spicy chicken sauce, Fettuccini Alfredo, green salad, Italian dessert.		
Feb 20	Thai	Adele Hansen
Thai green salad, spring rolls, cucumber salad, garlic chicken, rice, fruits & Thai dessert (banana in coconut cream)		
Feb 27	Chili Bar	TBD
Chicken green chili, classic beef chili, vegetarian chili, tortilla chips, shredded cheddar cheese, onions, sour cream, green salad, corn bread, cookies and brownie.		
March 5	Guatemalan Dinner	Wanda McCaa & Clara Asp
Roast chicken, refried black beans, guacamole, rice, fresh cheese and fried plantains.		
March 12	Home Style Chicken	Mark Gibbons
Baked organic chicken with home style potatoes, green beans, mixed green salad, a vegetarian entrée, pies.		
March 19	Boston Baked Fish	Mark Gibbons
White baked fish, Boston baked beans, cut corn, red potatoes, clam chowder, Boston Bibb lettuce salad, macaroni and cheese, corn bread, Boston cream pie.		
March 26	Middle Eastern	Katy and Hossein
Greek salad, hummus with pita bread, tabouli, chicken, rice with vegetable, fruit, cookies		
April 2	Mongolian Stir Fry	Mark Gibbons
Choice of chicken, beef, shrimp, or tofu - stir fried with your bowl of vegetables (carrots, broccoli, onion, scallions, water chestnuts, snow peas and/or sprouts - in choice of sauces (kung pou, oyster, ginger, garlic served with jasmine rice, egg rolls, and mandarin orange dessert.		
May 14	Indoor Picnic	Mark Gibbons
Ham, bratwurst, hot dogs, paella, macaroni and cheese, cole slaw, potato salad, bean salad, sliced tomato, cake and ice cream.		

Vegetarian options are always available.

Program 7:00 p.m. Dietrich Room, FREE

Feb 13	The Pen is Mighty—Influencing Public Policy by Letter Writing...Heather Martens & George Hutchinson
Feb 20	A Visit to Israel and Palestine...Barbara Weatherhead
Feb 27	Family History Research, A Humanist Activity... Lois Edwards
March 5	Can We Build the Beloved Community through Political Action?... Steven Protzman
March 12	“Understanding Generational Differences”...Deb Magnuson
March 19	Ballroom Dancing Lessons, Uttara and Thue Rasmussen
March 26	Book Discussions on 3 Cups of Tea...Greg Mortenson, Carol Koepf
April 2	Sharing the Personal Journey...FUS members
May 14	Annual Meeting



From The Intern

Kenneth Patton writes of the church “This house is for the ingathering of nature and human nature. It is a house of friendships, a haven in trouble, an open room for the encouragement of our struggle. This house is a cradle for our dreams, the workshop of our common endeavor.”

As I reflect on the beginning of a new year and the swift passage of time, I realized that my internship here at the FUS house is half finished already! To mark this point in our journey together, it seems very appropriate to again say thank you for the gift of this internship that you have so graciously given me and to look back on a few of the many highlights of being a part of this beloved community and learning what it means to be a minister.

One of the many things I really enjoy about FUS is the music program, whether it's the energy of the Eclectics, Barb's ability to pick just the right music at the right time, the beautiful sounds of the orchestra, the soul and spirit of the choir, or singing festive fun songs during the Solstice service. I have also really enjoyed the pipe organ and it is thrilling to play it as I listen to you lift your voices in jubilant and hope filled singing.

There's been a lot of wonderful food (I've given up trying to lose any weight for awhile!), many conversations about theology and world view and how we seek to make meaning of life, the joy of meeting each of you as we worship, socialize and work together, the capable and gracious staff we have, and the amazing transformation of the office into a beautiful revitalized space in which to work, thanks to the generosity of the Alliance.



I really enjoy working with Kendyl and Jan and I have learned so much from both of them. I appreciate Kendyl's patience, her commitment to help me understand and practice the arts of ministry as fully as possible, and her uncanny ability to ask the right question at just the right time as I struggle with my formation. I also appreciate Jan's deep care and compassion for the children and youth of our community and her invitation to me to engage in the work of religious education and learn what it means to pass on the wisdom of liberal religion. This house is truly blessed by their leadership, their compassion and wisdom, and their commitment to your shared dreams and common endeavors.

The most powerful part of this internship has been watching you minister to each other through moments of joy and sorrow as we've faced challenges and experienced hurts and disappointments and celebrated our achievements together. You've shown me time and time again what it means to create beloved community, to build together this house of hope and love where we can seek to transform ourselves and our world. You've challenged me to engage in our shared work together with my deepest, fullest, most authentic self and you continue to gently teach me that the art of ministry begins with my presence, an open heart and mind, and patient, compassionate listening.

For all of these gifts of learning and challenge, your enthusiasm and joy in being a teaching congregation, and your commitment to the future of Unitarian Universalism, thank you. I look forward to the second half of my internship as we continue our journey together exploring what it means to be Unitarian Universalists and human beings seeking to be our fullest selves.

Steven Protzman
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Social Action

The Social Action Committee will receive at least half of the proceeds from the Service Auction this year which helps explain the theme for this year's Auction, "Bridging the Gap", referring to the social justice gaps identified as priorities by the Social Action Committee. The largest portion of money earned by Social Action at this year's Auction will go to supplying basic needs for an infant room in a new child care center being developed by Agape Child Development Center. Agape has provided a much needed 24/7 childcare service in North Minneapolis for 20 years. Building on this success, they are opening a new center in St. Paul. We are pleased to help support them in this major undertaking. It requires at least \$6,000 to supply the basics for an infant room.



The daily, round-the-clock service is unique, but essential when parents work odd shifts and on weekends. All the parents are working and/or going to school and pay something for the service based on a sliding fee scale. FUS has a long relationship with the Agape Centers.

Through our work on social justice priorities, whether through direct service or by trying to influence public policy, we become better informed citizens and have an opportunity to make Unitarian/Universalism a more visible part of the inter-faith social justice network in the metro area. Our humanist values become part of the community discussion.

The social action program at FUS is all volunteer driven at this time. We are very appreciative of the recent recommendation by the Strategic Planning Committee to, in the future, bring on board an assistant minister with the expectation that part of the job description would be to support an expansion of the social action program.

Currently, our priorities focus on race and white privilege, economic disparities, affordable housing, achievement gaps in education, early childhood education, safe neighborhoods, civil rights, peace and preserving and restoring a quality environment.

We see ourselves as being partners/allies to community organizations providing good leadership, for example:

The PEACE Foundation, Girls in Action, Habitat For Humanity, Masjid An Nur Mosque Food Shelf, Avenues Homeless Shelter for Youth, Agape Child Development Center and Oasis Crisis Intervention Center. We have a long-standing relationship with Sabathani Community Center Food Shelf in S. Mpls. and recently provided some support for Jefferson Community School. Out-Front Minnesota is an example of a state-wide group we partner with. Our working committees are part of MUUSJA, Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance.

You may wonder how we make our choices regarding issues to focus on. We have developed some guidelines including: 1) Is it filling a need not met by other religious organization; reflecting our humanist values? 2) Does it reflect the passions and energies in our congregation? 3) Is it responsive to an emerging issue? 4) Does it reflect our mission statement? 5) Does it provide potential for building relationships? 6) Is it sustainable?

The Social Action Committee meets on the 4th Sunday of the month during the program year, noon to 2:00. All FUS members are welcome to attend. If you would like to have something included on the agenda, contact one of the Executive Committee members: Carol Koepp, Marcy Leussler, Jo Haberman, Adele Hansen or Polly Peterson.

Looking ahead - - -

A representative from the Minneapolis chapter of MAD DADS will speak at the March 2nd Forum. There will also be a social justice collection for them that day.



MAD DADS Mission Statement

The Minneapolis Chapter of Men Against Destruction- Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder (MAD DADS) seeks to bring about positive change, and encourages, motivates and guides committed men and women in the struggle to save children, communities and themselves from the social ills that presently plague neighborhoods.

Events & Announcements

Volunteer Tutoring Opportunities

The Urban League, North Minneapolis, is organizing a tutoring program for students. They are looking for volunteers to work with students during after-school hours. To learn more contact Lisa Bryant, 612-302-3143. If you become active in this program, the Social Action Committee hopes you will contact one of them. You will be invited to help rejuvenate a small group of FUS members who are tutoring in other settings, to share and learn from each other.

FUS Library

The FUS Library committee would like to announce that the FUS Library catalog is available online through our website www.firstunitariansociety.org and can be searched with your browser. The exact URL is: <http://firstunitariansociety.org/library/libcatalog2006.htm>.

Save the Date - The Evening of February 21st Faith Family Fairness Alliance (a partner group of UUs Out For Marriage, Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance), the aMazeworks and Institute of Welcoming Resources are organizing a resource fair at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in St. Paul on February 21st. This will be an excellent opportunity for clergy, religious educators and lay people to check out materials that promote GLBT education within the congregation. We will be displaying materials for elementary through adult audiences addressing how to become a welcoming congregation, encourage advocacy work and inform people about aspects of the GLBT community through various mediums. Come and meet other congregational leaders working on GLBT equality within the faith community.

FUS Generosity

At the Light Sharing Celebration service on December 24 FUS collected \$385 that will be converted to food cards for people in need by the Minnesota Nurses Association. The mittens collected on the mitten tree went to Northside Adult Basic Education to be given away to families in need of them.

Recipients and The Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency wrote to thank FUS participants in the Sponsor-A-Family program for gifts for families in need that took place in December.



"To be adopted by you all is the best thing to happen to us. This MIRACLE is incomprehensible."
- from 2007 MVNA Adopt A Family recipient.

"I would really like to thank you and everyone involved in helping to give myself and family a wonderful Christmas. My daughters really loved the books a lot. I have started reading some of the books and they're great. Oh! And the art kit was the best I have ever seen. So many pictures! My mother and I both loved our towels and drinking glasses. It feels great to drink out of real glasses instead of Styrofoam cups. We also hve family night every Saturday and we have so many Disney movies we don't know which one watch first and they love it. I can never thank you enough for the beautiful Christmas you have given us. You and everyone responsible are truly special people. Thank you and thank you again."
- from 2007 MVNA gift recipient.

"We would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts. This is truly a blessing for us. All of us will be happy, especially the children. Thanks to all of you this will be a wonderful Christmas. Again, we would like to thank you for what you have done for us."
-from 2007 MVNA gift recipient.

"It is hard to expand on the heartfelt gratitude as exemplified in the words of an MVNA Adopt A Family recipient. As staff and nurses, we are humbled and grateful for the gracious support of donors like you."
- from The Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency

Events & Announcements

MUUSJA EcoMinds Strategy Session

Tuesday, February 12, 7 - 9 p.m. at the First Universalist Church In the Social Hall

Meet with us EcoMinder's from multiple UU congregations as we determine our strategy for the Legislative session and the remainder of the program year taking what we learned about Environmental Justice at the MUUSJA Annual Meeting and about the 2% solution on Jan 30th (plus our many accumulated wisdoms!). Contact Ralph at rwmusja@gmail.com or 612-998-6624 for more information.

New UU Social Justice Fund in Prairie Star
Prairie Star District has added to its Chalice Lighters Program new Social Justice Grants (up to \$1,000) to strengthen, empower, or integrate the social justice role into the full life of a congregation. Deadlines for submitting applications for Chalice Lighter grants are February 1 and October 1. Details and application are on the Prairie Star District website:
<http://www.psduua.org/ChaliceLighters/>

Applications

UU Social Justice Training coming up in April!

If you're going to Omaha for the Prairie Star District Annual Meeting April 11-13 plan to arrive by 1:30pm on Friday and attend the Social Justice Preconference Workshop—an exciting skill-building opportunity!

Interfaith Congregation-based Community Organizing

Trainer: Willie Bennett, community organizer, Industrial Areas Foundation: “How can we leverage congregational and community power to bring about important and needed social change?”

Mr. Bennett is the Lead Organizer of Dallas Area Interfaith. DAI is an affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation, a 60-year-old network of congregations and community organizations committed to social justice and the common good. He has been a community organizer with the IAF for over 12 years and has worked in cities across the southwest including Fort Worth and Austin, Texas. There is no charge for this workshop.

FUS Planning Meeting is Sunday, February 17

The first annual FUS Planning Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 17, in the Chalice Room from 12:00 to 3:00 pm. At this meeting, the Minister, Staff and Program Chairs (representing Music, Religious Education, Sunday Assemblies, Forums, Membership, Social Action and Seasonal Celebrations committees) will discuss their plans for the 2008/09 program year. Although specific committees have been requested to attend, member guests are welcome. Please RSVP (no later than February 10) to bobader@comcast.net

Annual Women's Retreat is April 4th-6th

Join us for a weekend of fun, reflection, friendship and learning at Koinonia Retreat Center, near Annandale. This retreat is co-sponsored by the FUS Alliance and the Association of Universalist Women at First Universalist Church. Registration begins Jan. 27, with forms available in the FUS office. There will also be registration forms downstairs after the Assemblies on Sundays, February 3rd and 10th. For more information, please contact Dianne Rowse at 952-894-8185.

online at: www.firstunitariansociety.org/newsletter

Women's Awareness Group

The February meeting of the Women's Awareness Group will be held on Monday, January 14, at the home of Jan Scofield, 3656 Colorado Ave. N., Crystal, MN. Helen Thompson is the cohost. FUS women are invited to come at 6:30 p.m. for a potluck dinner, followed by discussion of “Humor and Fun — What Makes You Laugh?” led by Mibs Pearson. Please call Jan (763-533-3355) or Helen (763-537-6797) to RSVP and for directions.

Moving a Northside Public Policy Agenda

February 28 is the Northside Day on the Hill. Join the PEACE Foundation - together with Northside leaders and broader community allies - to make a successful presence at the legislature in 2008! Strategies have been developed for moving a Northside agenda. There are specific ways in which everyone can be meaningfully involved. Watch the Social Action table and/or call Carol at 952-893-2383.

The First Unitarian Society

OF MINNEAPOLIS

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February 2008