

THE FIRST Unitarian

VOL. 91, JANUARY 2009 • THE FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF MINNEAPOLIS

From The Minister

Humanists often like to think of ourselves as exceptional, but the financial realities of the larger world affect us just as they do everyone else. Pretty much every congregation I know that operates their fiscal year according to the calendar year is in the process of scaling back their budget plans for 2009, and others, like FUS, are foreseeing shortfalls in the second half of the current program year. This is not a call for panic, which wouldn't help anything anyway; our Society's leadership created a small reserve cushion for this year's budget, and the staff and committees are all working on ways to trim expenses without injuring our vital programs. At the same time, we are depending more than ever on the commitments of support from our members and friends, so you can help by making sure that your pledge is up to date, and payments are current. We expect to be able to hold steady, and weather this difficult period together, as long as each of us does our part.

It is especially desirable for us to be able to sustain our base budget for the year, because of the great success of the board's newest staffing initiative. Having Carol Koepf to represent the Social Action program as its part time staff person has been enormously helpful to the integration of our whole planning and evaluation process. In addition to the value of her thoughtful, detail-conscious, and compassionate personal style, Carol brings a wealth of connections both within and outside FUS, a long knowledge of the congregation and our interests in social justice work, and a strong commitment to building a program that really makes a difference. We have also come to appreciate her openness to new ideas and opportunities that arise in the course of our work together. I believe we must make every possible effort to sustain the funding for this position, so that our social action programming continues to be represented as an integral part of the FUS staff and mission.

As we head into whatever is yet to come in our national economy, the direct service element of our social justice mission is likely to be especially challenged. The food shelves and soup kitchens and clothing drives that we routinely support are going to need more help than ever. Let's think about how we can make this a year of increasing awareness and generosity, so that the needs of our neighbors will not go ignored. Our congregation does not need to reinvent the wheel of the service organizations that have been doing this work well and faithfully for years, but we do need to be active allies in the efforts to protect

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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 7th of each month and should be sent to: newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org

Forum and Assembly Previews

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

◆ **1/18/09 FORUM: Book Chat: *Big Russ and Me: Father and Son: Lessons of Life*, by Tim Russert**

Discussion Host: Cindy Pichotta

Join us for a discussion of the book *Big Russ and Me: Father and Son*, by the late Tim Russert, the longest-serving moderator of NBC's *Meet the Press*. Russert, who died an untimely death last June, was known for his direct and unpretentious style, and in this charming memoir he explains why. Russert's father is profiled as a plainspoken World War II veteran who worked two blue-collar jobs while raising four kids in south Buffalo but the elder Russert's lessons on how to live an honest, disciplined and ethical life are shown to be universal. The book is available for purchase in the FUS bookstore. All are welcome, whether you've read the book or not.

◆ **1/25/09 FORUM: Peacemaking: Evaluating the UUA Draft Statement of Conscience**

Leader: Bill Weir

Please read the draft UUA Statement and take part in discussion of what it says and how to improve it. Pick up a copy from the Social Action table or access it on the UUA website at: <http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/issuesprocess/currentissues/peacemaking/121606.shtml>.



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

◆ **1/18/09 ASSEMBLY: "Seven Principles for President Obama"**

Speaker: Tim Barger, Ministerial Intern

On January 20, Barack Obama will be inaugurated president of the United States. That's African American history, but more inclusively, it's American history. Obama's inauguration is one day after the federal holiday marking Martin Luther King Jr.'s birth on January 15, 1929. Even though Obama didn't come up through the civil rights movement, without King's legacy, Obama would not be president. Unitarian Universalists have ties to the civil rights movement, and Obama has Unitarian Universalist ties through his mother and her parents, who attended a Unitarian church in Washington State. This sermon offers inaugural advice to the incoming president illustrating how Unitarian Universalist principles and humanist values can inform the issues Obama will address and can help to build the beloved community that King envisioned.

◆ **1/25/09 ASSEMBLY: "Earth Matters: Greening Our Lives"**

Speaker: The Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons

Observing that I recycle—separately—paper, plastic bags, yard waste, packing peanuts, and compost, a friend once commented that I had "kosher trash." This remark has led me to reflect upon the ancient human categories of purity, and what it means to be "proper," in the light of this era's urgent planetary issues and environmental concerns. On the one hand, we may have an evolutionary propensity to sort things into "clean" and "unclean" categories, whether or not those designations make any real rational sense—or might even be, as they have sometimes proven in the past, counterproductive. On the other hand, perhaps the impulse to know the acceptable from the unacceptable can be helpful as we strive for new ways to live responsibly upon the earth. This assembly will be followed by a sermon discussion in the Dietrich Room.

The First Unitarian is published once a month. The deadline for submission of items is the 7th of the previous month. Items submitted may be edited for style, content and 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 Intern

One surprising thing I've learned as an intern has been the travel that a Unitarian Universalist minister does. I suppose there are congregations where the minister settles in and never goes out of town, but to conduct a vibrant ministry, trips are a requirement.

In my previous careers, travel wasn't part of my duties, with two exceptions: a children's theater tour to schools in the West (the less said about my show business career, the better) and, when I was a legal editor, one trip from my home in Austin, Texas, to San Antonio for a lawyers' convention.

My volunteer work as a lay leader required trips to Boston for meetings of the Melcher Book Award Committee, on which I serve, and to district and general assemblies from time to time. I followed the advice of a mentor who urged lay leaders to work beyond the local congregation in order to advance Unitarian Universalism. Now, as a minister, my miles are increasing.

I have gone with Kendyl to Windom, Minnesota, and southern Illinois for ministers' meetings. We've also been to Chicago for a conference at Meadville Lombard and to New York and Washington, D.C., for Humanist Institute classes where she is mentor and I'm a student.

I also went to Arkansas and Texas to be with family when my mother died. And I had another book award committee meeting in Boston.

With the new year starting, my travel will change. For starters, my girlfriend, Jewel, is coming to Minnesota December 25–January 8 to experience a thorough winter, so she'll be the one en route, not me. Then I have four trips to Chicago for school and ministry meetings and one to Salt Lake City, after I've completed my time with you as an intern, for general assembly. (In a year, I expect to be back when GA is in Minneapolis.)

I like to travel. That's good, considering how it's necessary to go places in order to support my ministry and Unitarian Universalism. In years to come, when you're in an airport, look around. You might see a minister you know.



I thank you for your words, your care, and your sympathy regarding my mother's recent death. It's good to be with a congregation at such times.

Tim Barger, Ministerial Intern

Music Notes

The First Unitarian Society Orchestra (FUSO) is a standing volunteer organization (chamber size) that has been sponsored by FUS for more than 50 years. It is comprised of members and nonmembers of the Society. FUSO stands out from other groups of its kind because of its friendly environment and constant striving for artistic excellence. FUSO's innovative programming has included Latin-American composers such as Silvestre Revueltas, Hector Villa-Lobos and Juventino Rosas; 20th- and 21st-century music, which this calendar year includes works by Igor Stravinsky, Karl Jenkins, Olivier Messiaen and Leticia Armijo; eclectic styles that have included classical, folk and film music. And even rap! Yes, we performed a cantata that included a rap singer. If you are looking for something different, this may be the right place. To join FUSO call 612-377-6608 ext. 106 or email Associate Music Director Gabriela Díaz-Alatraste at orchestra@firstunitariansociety.org. In particular, there are oboe and bassoon openings at this time.

To the youngsters:
Would you like to participate in a play/musical to be performed on April 26 during the service? *Project Rescue: Save the Planet, A One-Act Musical/Revue*



"A wonderful, well-researched musical about saving the planet, as seen through the eyes of animals on land, sea and air. Written by the successful partnership of Michael and Jill Gallina, this is a great one-act play to inspire all!"

"Through rhyming dialogue and creative characterizations, the animals teach young people on a picnic the three R's of ecology—Recycle, Replenish and Respect. The seven songs, in unison and two-part, demonstrate a variety of blues, rap, calypso, ballad and funky rock styles. Students will enjoy dramatizing the 12 animals (which are easily costumed), the eight young picnickers, the conga-line of fish and the chorus which can be any size."

Barbara Brooks, Music Director

Dr. Gabriela Díaz-Alatraste, Associate Music Director

Religious Education

Renewal is always a theme for the New Year and this year, thanks to all of you, I am taking professional renewal time in the form of a two-month sabbatical. I will be away from FUS for January and February. I will be taking the time to step away and form a new perspective and renewed energy for this work of religious education. All classes and projects will be carried on by the teachers for the Winter Term and the RE Committee who have been planning with me for this event all fall. In case you want to talk with anyone on the committee, they are: Marit Appeldoorn, chair, Molly Illes, Kerry Boese, Lily Keire, Kelly Rickard and Angelique Fredericksen. All of these wonderful committee people have been so supportive and encouraging as we try to line up all of our ducks in a row so things will just roll along in my absence. My first Sunday back will be March 8.

COMING UP IN JANUARY!

- ☼ RE Classes resume on January 4 with new teachers and new programs!
- ☼ MYSTERY PALS! The sign-up for this wonderful program is on January 11 and 18, and pals start trading letters on January 25. In this program adults from the church community sign up to be a Mystery Pal to a child at FUS. They trade letters for five weeks and then meet at the Mystery Pal Party on March 1. This is always a favorite program and I would encourage you to do it so that you can extend the hand of friendship between the generations.
- ☼ SUPERCON: Our high school youth, along with the youth at the First Universalist Church, are planning a district-wide youth conference Friday January 16–Sunday January 18. All youth must be registered ahead of time. Since the DRE will be on sabbatical, contact the ministerial intern, Tim Barger, or Brynan Thornton, who is the youth cochair of the event, with any questions.
- ☼ Mark your calendars! LASAGNA/BINGO NIGHT is coming on February 21!



Jan Devor, Director of Religious Education

BINGO!

Saturday, February 21

6:00–9:00 p.m.

Lasagna dinner
and bingo for all!

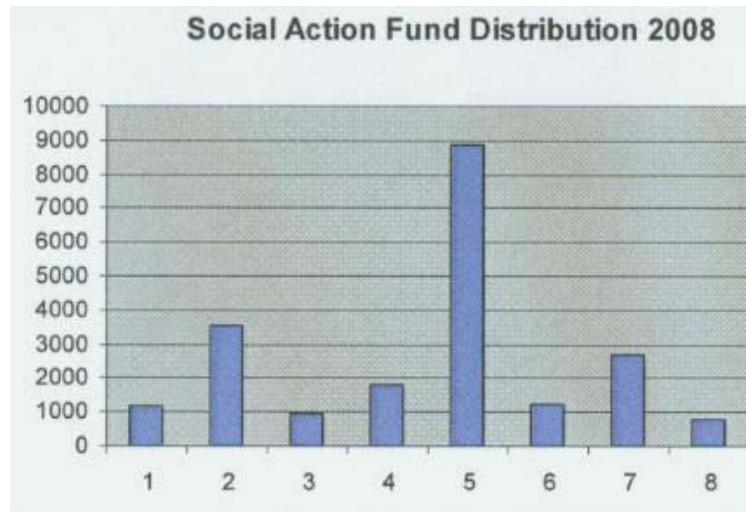
\$5 adults
\$10 for families

Sign up for this fabulous and fun **multigenerational** event in the Lower Assembly Hall on February 1 and 15.



Social Action News

A YEAR IN REVIEW FOR SOCIAL ACTION



(1) Economic Justice (2) UU Action/Advocacy (3) Environment (4) GLBT/sexuality
(5) Children/youth (6) Peace & Justice (7) Housing (8) Other

The Social Action Committee (SAC) receives funds by sponsoring soup lunches, social justice collections, from the service auction and from the FUS Board of Trustees. Service Auction proceeds account for the height of bar five above. Because our funds are limited, the committee has developed criteria for consideration of these requests. (1) Does it relate to UU and humanist principles and the SAC mission? (2) Does it provide an opportunity for education and raising awareness? (3) Does it show effective use of resources? (4) Does it help build alliances? (5) Does it have built-in sustainability (interest and relevance)? (6) Does it respond to current events or issues? SAC thanks **Becky Munson** for her help with developing these criteria. For more details on the above funding or other SAC activities check the SAC table, talk with Carol Koepp, Social Justice Coordinator, or any member of the committee; sac@firstunitariansociety.org. SAC meets on the second Sunday of every month, at noon, usually in the Heritage Room.

PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT: Thanks to **Bill Weir** for organizing volunteers and for collecting reactions to the day from the volunteers. Early reports indicated that it was a valuable experience for volunteers and for their clients. ON-GOING SERVICE TO THE HOMELESS—Watch for information about volunteering and learning opportunities in upcoming *The Unitarian FLASH* alerts and on the SAC table.

THANK YOU to **Allen Callender, Ruth Agar, Jennifer Halter, Viv Rengstorff, Caroline Lappin, Lee Gremillion** and **Jay Bozicevich** for volunteering to deliver donated food items to food shelves. THANK YOU to **Jerry Edwards** for taking on the job of volunteer coordinator for Habitat builds at FUS and in other UU congregations. THANK YOU also to Jerry for his willingness to be on the Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness (DCEH) Interfaith Team. More about that later.

VOLUNTEERS IN THE COMMUNITY: **Chris Darnall** volunteers at a Somali education center tutoring children. **Gretchen Clemence** volunteers weekly with Steeple People.

Carol Koepp, Social Justice Coordinator

Stewardship

We who write this Stewardship Column for the monthly FUS newsletter are consistently challenged by being a bit out-of-date with our budgetary information. We know we need to look back as we prepare each of our writings, but we always want to see ahead. And it's the seeing ahead into January that will direct our words today.

January 2009 will be our month for hope, OUR "YES WE CAN" MONTH. And because your writers are charter members of the FUS "yes we can" company, we're writing with the assumption that December will have been such a strong month for financial contributions it will have erased the shortfall we saw in November.

We've already seen a wonderful response to the December 7 Music Sunday request for support and some very generous checks in the regular offering on that day. And we know that December has always been our best month for follow-through on member pledges. We also have seen signs of hope throughout the world that portend the start of a recovery from what has been the deepest monetary slide in decades. SOOOOO, WE ARE OPTIMISTIC!!! And we hope you are too.

On January 20, 2009, we will see one of the most important presidential inaugurations in this country's history. And we'll be looking forward to a growth in hope and commitment from all who have carried the burden of worry for much of 2008. During the month, we'll be calling on many of you to think about increasing your support for the many missions of an FUS membership, and we'll be asking for your counsel as we look ahead to the final six months of the current fiscal year and the beginnings of the 2009–2010 period.

So, FELLOW FUS FOLKS, Share our Hopes, Maintain Spirit and Resolve, and let the FUS 2008–2009 be our Best Year Yet!!!

**Chris Bubser, Roger Clemence, Wendy Jerome,
Betty Mast, Boyd Mast, Madeline Simon;
Your Stewardship Committee**

Membership

January Birthdays

Happy Birthday to the following members and friends.

Jonathan Asp	Jim Lynskey
Linnea Asp	Anton Markwart
Tim Barger	Mary Lou Nelson
Susan Barton	Suzie O'Connell
Braden Beck-O'Sullivan	Nasser Pooladian
Kellen Beck-O'Sullivan	J.D. Rickard
Joyce Blomquist	Bridget Rock
Neil Clark	Aaron Ropers-Huilman
Roger Clemence	Anson Ropers-Huilman
Kendrick Davies	Kathleen Ruona
Susan Deveaux	Ellie Schmidt
Eric Eng	Matthew Stark
Cyrus Heimlich	Angie Tix
Lola Heimlich	Lily Ubbelohde
Wyatt Heimlich	Aman Vaughan
Elizabeth Hutchinson	Zsolt Vincze
Heidi Lajoy	Barbara Weatherhead
Anne Walker Langaard	Erin Westenberg
Olive Leikvold	Aron Zheng
Wendy Lyman	

Teresa West, Membership Coordinator



Events & Announcements

Forecast for February:

FUS Enters the Matrix

The Matrix trilogy comes to FUS as an adult religious education offering each Friday evening in February from 7:00–10:00 p.m. These films, made from 1999–2003, brought theology and philosophy to sci-fi moviegoers. Ministerial intern Tim Barger will show the films then lead a discussion of the theological content. Look for a special appearance (at FUS, not in the movies) by Rev. Kendyl Gibbons. The series starts February 6 with *The Matrix*. *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions* follow, and the fourth Friday we'll wrap up with DVD extras or special programming. All are invited, but viewers are reminded that these films received R ratings for sci-fi violence and brief sexuality and language.

Book Chat

Calling all book lovers and movie buffs! Join us for an open discussion of a book or a movie on the third Sunday of the month at 9:30 a.m. Titles are available in the FUS bookstore.

Here's the lineup for this year:

January 18

Big Russ and Me: Father and Son: Lessons of Life, by Tim Russert

February 15

Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance, by Barack Obama

March 15

American Dream: Three Women, Ten Kids, and a Nation's Drive to End Welfare, by Jason DeParle

April 12

Challenging Nature: The Clash of Science and Spirituality at the New Frontiers of Life, by Lee M. Silver

May 17: Movie TBA

Trustee Tidbit

Kendyl's sermon "Of Leadership and Change" presented on November 9, 2008, called for us to consider how we are going to "be there" for one another through these difficult financial times. The Board is thinking deeply about this and invites members and friends to offer their best suggestions on how members of our community can support one another.

Service Auction

Please mark your calendars and start planning for the FUS 2009 Service Auction on March 14. While many details are still being determined, we expect both a record attendance and an outrageously fun evening of food, music and bidding on both the useful and extreme items and events. More information is on the way, and if you would like more information or want to help on the many opportunities, please contact Allan Callander or Barbara Weatherhead.

Habitat For Humanity Dedication Pictures

On November 15 Habitat for Humanity held a dedication of the homes we worked on during the summer. Rev. Kendyl Gibbons was invited to do the opening reading. Check out the photo album of the event in the Lower Assembly Hall. A big thank-you to Lois Edward for the pictures.



The Alliance

Alliance members want to thank all who purchased "Holiday Temptations" and gift table items at the FUS Holiday sale December 14. The next Alliance meeting will be Wednesday, February 4, when Gretchen Anderson will give "A Conservator's View of the Science Museum of Minnesota." Luncheon tickets for \$8 go on sale at 10:45 a.m. The program begins in the Dietrich Room at 11:00 followed by a lunch catered by the Wedge. The Alliance welcomes new members at any time. If you are interested in becoming a member, please call Joyce Blomquist or Gretchen Clemence for more information.

Events & Announcements

A Performance of Interest

FUS Membership Coordinator Teresa West calls our attention to a concert by Will Bauermeister on January 15, 7:00–10:00 p.m., here at FUS. It is an all-ages concert. The cost is \$5.00 per person. For more information visit Will's website at: www.myspace.com/willbauermeister.com.

Women's Awareness Group

The January meeting of the Women's Awareness Group will be held on Monday, January 12, at the home of Wanda McCaa, 1235 Yale Place, #402, Minneapolis.

Helen Thompson is the cohost. FUS women are invited to join us at 6:30 p.m. for a potluck supper, followed by a discussion of "Nine Things I Want to Accomplish in 2009." Please call Wanda or Helen to RSVP and for directions.



New Exhibit in FUS Gallery

View the new exhibit of paintings by Laura Eng and photography by Allison Callahan in the FUS Gallery, Sunday January 11–Sunday February 8.

Housekeeping

If you've sponsored flowers for an FUS assembly and taken home one of the Boulevard Gardens' arrangements in a vase, please return the vase to FUS. Thank you!

January MUUSJA Meetings

- * MUUSJA/AUW Sacred Choices—Reproductive Justice Meeting. Saturday January 3, 9:30 a.m. social time, meeting 10:00 a.m.–noon. First Universalist Church, 3400 Dupont Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: Sara.
- * MUUSJA/AUW Voting Rights Planning Meeting. Saturday January 10, 1:00–3:00 p.m., First Universalist Church, Library, 3400 Dupont Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: Jenny Thomas or Carol Johnson.
- * MUUSJA EcoMinds Meeting. Tuesday, January 13, 7:00 p.m., First Universalist Church, 3400 Dupont Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: contact our new MUUSJA EcoMinds chair Sammy.

FUS Staff

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Building Steward: Cirilo Vail Hernandez

Office Hours: Mon. – Fri. 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.;
Sunday, 9:00 a.m.–Noon.

Main phone number: 612-377-6608

*On sabbatical until March 8



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January 2009

Mark your calendar and join us!
Details on these events,
and more, inside.

*January 11 & 18:
Sign up for the Mystery
Pals program*

*January 11:
View the new FUS Gallery Exhibit*

*January 12:
Women's Awareness Group meets*

*January 16-18:
SUPERCONN meeting*

*January 18:
Book Chat Forum*



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.

Board of Trustees

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Beth Gohdes (Vice-Chair), Liaison to Sunday Assemblies, Denominational Affairs

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Ruth Agar, Liaison to Alliance, Caring Circles, History, Discovery Groups

Adele Hansen, Liaison to Social Action, Summer Assemblies, Bookstore/Library, Ministerial Relations

Dan Hunt, Liaison to Stewardship, RE, Greater Community

Elizabeth Hutchinson, Liaison to Youth/Adult Committee, Art in the Gallery, Emergency Preparedness

Bruce Nelson, Liaison to Building & Grounds, Special Events, Foundation

Tim Palmquist, Liaison to Music, Forum

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