

FEBRUARY 2005

Allegheny ADVOCATE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ALLEGHENY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

FEBRUARY 6

Imbolc: The Whispering of Spring

Jennifer Russell

Just when we think spring will never get here, we hear, see and feel the quickening of the earth waking up from her long winter's nap. Join us as we celebrate Brighid, Ceres, and Punxatawney Phil in a joyful and uplifting ritual.

FEBRUARY 13

Love & Marriage

Rev. David McFarland

In our culture's dealing with lesbian & gay marriage, rightwing spin doctors certainly seem to make a big deal out of sex, but love seems often to be missing from our public conversation. Rev. Dave dedicates this year's St. Valentine's Day Service to exploring the social and religious aspects of love & marriage while trying to separate the wheat from the chaff of the public debate, and in the process helping to develop a deeper understanding of everyone's role – gay and non-gay, single and non-single – in the institution of marriage.

FEBRUARY 20

Communion Service 10:00 AM

Reader: Susan Hillman

Working For Justice

Rev. Don Dutton

Don Dutton, known to Allegheny through his involvement at Northside Common Ministries, is a retired Presbyterian minister who served the Providence U.P. Church in Brighton Heights for 22 years. Rev. Dutton will talk about how his faith has been shaped growing up in the midwest, studying in Germany, and pastoring in Iowa and Pennsylvania. He will also speak about some of the social actions he has been involved in, including presently, PIIN and Oikocredit.

Song & Soul 5:00 PM

Rev. David McFarland

This is our community's opportunity to share our joys & sorrows in depth and in a more intimate setting, as well as share some songs and some silences along the way. If you ever thought you might like to attend a Song & Soul service, please plan on being there with us for this one.

FEBRUARY 27

Reverence for Life

Rev. David McFarland

Rev. Dave will take this opportunity to explore Albert Schweizer's concept of *reverence for life*. The concept itself is at once philosophical & ethical, religious & spiritual, ecological & social. He'll explore how this relates to our seventh principle, *Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*.

Sunday Services
at Allegheny
Unitarian
Universalist
Church begin
at 11 o'clock.
All are welcome!

FROM REV. DAVE'S DESK

Unwrapping Our Gifts

Tim & I and our six-year old yellow lab, Woody, had a great time with our folks over Christmas. Going to Michigan is always a special treat for Woody. We refer to it as his 'resort.' At Tim's parents' home there's lots of room for Woody to romp & play & chase things, a pool in the summer, snowbanks in the winter, different toys to play with, lots of different smells, and his buddy Cocoa who is a chocolate lab his age but about half again as big due to the possibly best doggy feature of the resort: table scraps! Stuff he just doesn't get at home. But this last trip to the resort was especially eventful because it was an American Christmas!

Woody got a new ball – just like the one he loves to 'steal' from Cocoa. But the present wasn't all the fun. It was the wrapping. Or more precisely, the *un*wrapping. Yes, Woody has learned how to unwrap presents. Somehow he always knows which ones are his. Yes, he does wait until Christmas. And he unwraps with great enthusiasm, thrashing the paper around before discovering the gift inside. Ah, if we could all maintain such enthusiasm! The enthu-

siasm of appreciation, of relishing the moment, of discovering what's inside, and enjoying the process – and the result! – to the fullest

Throughout these first few months that I've been here at Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church, you & I have been unwrapping each others gifts. We each bring our gifts to this church family, our strengths, our weaknesses. (Yes, even our weaknesses are gifts). But that may be another sermon. Sometimes we open them carefully – hoping to preserve the paper, or perhaps not harm what's inside; sometimes we open each others' gifts with enthusiasm and abandon; either way, cherishing the gifts, showing gratitude to the giver, and enjoying them to their fullest.

I'm enjoying the process of seeing how our gifts match each other and inspire us to give as much and as best we can. Thank you for the gifts you bring. Even when it's just the gift of presence. We all have something to give. May we each receive each others gifts with appreciation and enthusiasm.

Blessings, Rev. Dave

Don't miss the special speaker at the PIIN Banquet, February 26

IN THE CHURCH

PIIN Banquet

The second annual PIIN Banquet will be held on Saturday, February 26 at 6:00 PM. The keynote address, *Still Pursuing the Dream*, will be presented by Dr. C.T. Vivian.

Dr. Vivian has addressed audiences nationwide on civil rights issues, non-violence, racism and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., with whom he worked closely for many years. He was also the subject of a PBS special.

The event will be held at the Omni William Penn downtown. Tickets are \$45 apiece. Speak to Gregg Dietz, Jeanne Zang or Rev. Dave for more information.

Annual Spaghetti Dinner

Mark your calendars for the annual Spaghetti Dinner, Talent Show, and Silent Auction on Saturday, March 19. Start thinking about your talent show skit or song and your silent auction donation. The auction has been very successful based on service items individuals have donated such as tutoring, baby and/or dog sitting, food preparation (soups to scones) and many more.

See Linda Deafenbaugh about the silent auction and Jane Dirks about the talent show. Hope to see you there.

continued

Ministerial Liaison Committee

This past fall, Allegheny revitalized the Ministerial Liaison Committee with the purpose of strengthening the quality of ministry in the congregation. This committee serves as a support group for the minister and as a communication channel between the minister and the congregation.

One of our main goals has been to facilitate good communication in an open and honest manner. In order to do this, we as a committee respect and uphold confidentiality but do not believe it is in the best interest of our congregation to communicate anonymously. We encourage individuals to communicate directly with David McFarland or discuss questions or concerns with a committee member.

Currently, the committee includes Pat Downey, Andy Schwarz and Kim Winbush. After February, Pat will continue on the committee while two new individuals will be appointed by agreement between Rev. Dave and the Board of Trustees.

Save The Date

Save the weekend of November 4–6, 2005, and make it a 'UU Weekend.' Allegheny will be installing our newly called minister, Rev. David V. McFarland, on Sunday, November 6, in the afternoon.

Speakers at the installation will include Rev. Mark Belletini of Columbus, Ohio, and Rev. Forrest Church of All Souls Church, New

York City. They will be with us during a week-end-long UU Pittsburgh party, concert, worship, weekend extravaganza. (You didn't hear it from us, but somebody said that First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh's minister, Rev. Dave Herndon, is already calling it the "UU-Palooza!")

Please keep your calendar clear to be a full-throttle UU on this festive and important weekend in the life of our community.

fUUD For Thought

Last month we had our first *fUUD for thought*, an opportunity to explore Unitarian Universalism in depth. If you're interested in joining us next time, plan to join Rev. Dave for lunch on February 27, 2005. Dave will host a lunch after the social hour ends to explore a topic of our UU faith. *FUUD for thought* will feature a casual lunch (vegetarian & omnivore sandwiches provided) and conversation about the core of Unitarian Universalism.

Midlife Discovery Group

Jesse Virago is considering the possibility of starting a monthly reading/discussion group for women interested in exploring midlife as an opportunity to become more authentic and genuine in our lives and relationships.

Interested women between the ages of 35 and 55 are invited to contact her at 412/875-6170 or by email at jessevirago@yahoo.com.

Another fUUD For Thought session to be held February 27 after church

SERVING THE CONGREGATION

Greeters

February 6

Martha and Walter Brethauer

February 13

Linda LeFever and Steve Wertheim

February 20

Pat Snowden Dittig and Barbara Stolarz

February 27

Ed Kinley and Andy Schwarz

Refreshments

February 6

Sheryl Rodriguez and Lynn Glorieux

February 13

Hazel Leroy and Anne Thompson

February 20

Charlie Snowden and Kathy Graham

February 27

Sara Lickey and Betty Schwarz

Committee Goals Summary

Summaries of contributions to the Church during calendar year 2004 have been prepared and will be mailed to all members who did not pick them up in church. THANK YOU for your support. Thanks, too, to all who responded to the recent letter concerning the Church's finances. Responses are still arriving. An update will be available soon.

Efforts are underway to develop a budget for FY2006 (July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006). Each committee, task force, and individual with responsibility for a particular aspect of the life of our congregation has been asked to consider the following questions and to estimate the resources that will be needed:

- > What are your committee's goals for FY2006 and how will you achieve them and measure success?
- > Is there anything that the committee is doing now that it won't do during FY2006?
- > Is there anything new that your committee will be doing in FY2006?

Worksheets and financial information for the past 18 months have been distributed. Worksheets are due back to the Finance Committee on or before Sunday, February 20. A member of the Finance Committee has been paired with each committee to answer questions and assist with the process. The Finance Committee will use the information to develop a preliminary budget and set goals for the pledge canvass that will be conducted over the next few months. Upon completion of the canvass, the budget will be fine-tuned and then discussed at the Annual Congregational Meeting in May. The Finance Committee wants YOUR ideas about the budget. We hope that you will participate in the committee discussions or will contact us directly (Bob Follette, Jill Brethauer, Kathy Graham, Ed Kinley or Betty Schwarz).

Electronic Newsletters Available

I just finished reading an article highlighting an individual who, upon being appointed to head a well-respected national service organi-

zation, was faced with the challenge of balancing the organization's deficit budget. The organization was operating on a 'shoestring,' and the individual was concerned that further budget reductions would impair the organization's ability to fulfill its mission.

This sounded all too familiar; our Trustees and the congregation as a whole have contemplated similar prospects. The individual highlighted in the article wisely recognized that the challenge was not just a matter of finances.

Focusing on the mission of the organization, the individual developed a formal growth plan that included 'taking the organization to scale,' that is, transforming every aspect of the organization to handle a larger number of clients. Focusing on quality and 'stretching dollars' also were part of the solution; as the number of clients served doubled, expenses increased by a much smaller amount. What was exciting was that the organization doubled in size within 4 years and has a formal plan to double again within 3 years and to double yet again within 3 years after that.

Over the past 15 years, our congregation has grown, and we have made calculated decisions to expand our programming, to add professional support for social advocacy and ministry, religious education, and music, and to change the way we use our facilities. We've seen considerable success. As we continue with the second half of our current church year and make plans for next year, we will be looking at growth, at taking the organization to scale, and also at stretching dollars.

One way that you can help with stretching dollars right now is to receive the *Allegheny Advocate* online. Over the past year, the newsletter editors have cut our printing and mailing costs by delivering the newsletter copy to the printing company electronically, by making the addressed newsletters available for pickup at church before the mailing date, and by including on the mailing list only those folks who wish to continue to receive the newsletter.

One way to help stretch our dollars is to receive the *Allegheny Advocate* online

continued

Right now, the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter to a household is about \$15 per year. A public version of the newsletter (that excludes certain, more private information) is always available online at the Church's website. For the past few months, the full newsletter has been available to individuals who sign up by contacting Steve Hirtle, webmaster, at:

webmaster@alleghenyuu.org. After signing up, you will be notified via e-mail each month as soon as the newsletter is available. You can then read the newsletter online or download it. The process is easy and quick, it reduces paper and postage and the volunteer time needed to fold and mail the newsletters – and it guarantees that the newsletter will be available to you ASAP.

FROM THE COMMUNITY

Winter Institute!

The 5th Annual Winter Institute will be held on the weekend of February 18–21, 2005 at the Salt Fork State Conference Center in Cambridge, Ohio.

This relaxing and 'schedule and stress-free' weekend is an intimate gathering for UUs of all ages. There are frosty outdoor activities like sledding, hiking and cross-country skiing. For those that choose to stay indoors, there is a beautiful lodge with many cozy corners and fireplaces. The pool and hot tub are truly a wintertime treat. There are fellow UUs always ready to play board games or to join in the community jigsaw puzzle. We have wonderful community worship services and great conversations.

Check in is on Friday after 3:00 PM. You can stay for one, two or three nights. You can call now and reserve your room directly with Salt Fork. Call Ohio State Park Reservation Center 1-800-AT-A-PARK or visit them online at www.atapark.com. You may also make conference reservations with Cheryl Napsha. Make checks payable to OMD-WI and mail to: Cheryl Napsha, 35 Highland Road, #4310. Bethel Park, PA 15102. Include the following information: name, people attending with you and ages, 'phone number, address and e-mail.

Conference fees are \$90/Adult and \$40/Ages 12 and under. The Conference fee covers the Community Room and the Friday night pizza, Saturday and Sunday morning breakfast and Saturday night dinner.

If there are any questions, please call Cheryl Napsha at 412/400-9162.

Night To Fight Hunger

The UU Congregation of Greater Canton invites all District UU friends to join them for a special event to help the hungry. They have organized an event that will bring attention and needed funds to the Stark County Hunger Task Force.

Coming to Canton is nationally acclaimed folk singer/songwriter Andrew McKnight. Joining him in a night of wonderful music will be Cincinnati's *Wild Carrot* and Cleveland's *Silent Lion* and *Willoughby Run*.

The concert will be held at downtown Canton's Palace Theatre on Saturday, March 5 at 6:30 PM. The cost of a ticket is only \$10, and half of the proceeds will go to the task force.

There is a flyer posted on the bulletin board outside of Founders Hall. Check it out!

Enjoy a relaxing weekend at Winter Institute, February 18–21

MUSIC NOTES

Kiki Barley, Music Director

Great Performance

The Allegheny UU Church Choir performed at the Hazlett Theater Open House on Sunday, January 16. It was part of a program designed to help raise awareness around the use of the facility by the local community.

The choir is growing, and we are very pleased to welcome Linda Deafenbaugh and Tom Roberts to our group.

There's still room for more! If you enjoy singing, just come to one of our Sunday morning rehearsals, usually at 9:30 AM.

February 2005

		1 Program Comm. 7:30 pm	2	3	4	5
6 Choir 9:30 am Giant Eagle certificate sign-up District NA 1:30 pm	7 Board of Trustees 7:30 pm NA 7:00 pm	8	9 Ash Wednesday	10 PIIN monthly meeting RE Committee 7:30 pm	11	12
13 Choir 9:30 am G.E. cert. delivery Sharing & Music Service 5:00 pm	14 NA 7:00 pm	15	16	17 Shelter Meal 9:00 pm	18 Newsletter Deadline!!	19 Winter Institute
20 Choir 9:00 am Communion Service 10:00 am	21 NA 7:00 pm	22	23	24	25	26 Coffee House 7:30 pm PIIN Banquet
27 Choir 9:30 am	28 NA 7:00 pm					

March 2005

		1 Program Committee 7:30 pm	2	3	4	5
6 Choir 9:30 am Giant Eagle certificate sign-up District NA 1:30 pm	7 Board of Trustees 7:30 pm NA 7:00 pm	8	9	10 PIIN monthly meeting RE Committee 7:30 pm	11 Newsletter Deadline!!	12
13 Choir 9:30 am G.E. cert. delivery Sharing & Music Service 5:00 pm	14 NA 7:00 pm	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day Shelter Meal 9:00 pm	18 OMD Men's Retreat opens	19 5:30 pm Pasta Dinner & Silent Auction & Talent show/ Coffee House
20 Palm Sunday Choir 9:00 am Communion Service 10:00 am RE Vernal Equinox Celebration	21 NA 7:00 pm	22	23	24 Maundy Thursday Service 7:30 pm	25 Good Friday	26
27 Easter Sunday Pancake Breakfast 9:00 am	28 NA 7:00 pm					

BOARD BUSINESS

Jennifer Russell, President

Happy February!

I hear so many people talk about the ‘post-holiday’ blues, and how there is nothing to celebrate except snow days for the rest of the winter. To that, I say Bah! Humbug!

There is much to celebrate within Allegheny UU Church right now! Our *From the Heart* evening honoring Jill Brethauer and Donald Zeilman was a fun, fantastic way to end January; our annual canvass is starting soon, we have defined and offered solutions for our short-term goals and are working toward longer term goals of outreach and building needs.

Some of the short-term goals are being met by members like Andy Schwarz and Hazel Carr Leroy who are offering time in the office to help Reverend Dave with administrative duties; Kim Winbush is putting together a yellow pages-type of resource guide for the Church. If you have any special skills you would like to include, please let her know. I know there are some hidden talents among us! I think it would be terrific to host a ‘bring-a-friend’ Sunday for outreach, and let’s implement some of the dinner parties that we did last year!

For our long-term goals, like the physical space our church (realizing, of course, that our centennial is less than a year away!), the Board has approved seeking a 501(c)(3) non-profit status for a ‘friends of the church’ organization specifically for major building needs and restoration. Thanks to the Sacred Places task force, we now have new ideas and insights on how to develop a plan to meet our needs.

Have a wonderful month, I look forward to seeing you in church!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Kris Thomas, DRE

Valentine Party

The RE program will have it’s annual Valentine’s party on February 13. Please bring valentines to church that day – enough for forty children. The valentines can be placed in the children’s bags, which will be in the Emerson Room before the Service. They will then be distributed during coffee hour.

Youth Conference

The Ohio Meadville District Social Justice Youth Conference will be February 25-27, at the Shaker Heights Church. This YRUU ‘Con’ is a way for our youth to connect with the social justice work of other regional UU youth.

Any youth in grades 9–12 who are interested in attending this conference should speak with Maryanne Sonick or Kris ASAP!

Volunteers Needed

We are still looking for volunteers to lead RE workshops and also to bring Sunday morning snack. To sign up, please see Kris, Lynn Yocum, or Kim Winbush.

**Remember
to bring valentines
to church on
February 13**

MON’ SHEIKS AT THE DOWNUNDER

You are invited to attend the DownUnder Coffeehouse on Saturday, February 26 from 7:30–9:30 PM, when the Monongahela Sheiks, Pittsburgh’s premier jug band, returns to the coffeehouse. Come and listen to the acoustic blues, ragtime, and popular American music from the early 1920s, ‘30s and ‘40s.

The DownUnder Coffeehouse is open one Saturday of every month in the lower level of Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church, 416 West North Avenue, North Side. Suggested donation is \$5. Call 412/322-4261 or see www.alleghenyuu.org for more details.

CONTACTS

The *Allegheny Advocate* is published monthly (except August) by Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church. Submissions must be received by the third Friday of the month preceding publication.

Contributions or inquiries may be directed to Jaime McLeod or Donald Zeilman

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Allegheny Unitarian
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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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Allegheny Web Site

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WE ARE A SPIRITUALLY DIVERSE, ACTIVIST CONGREGATION