

# AlleghenyADVOCATE

Monthly Newsletter of Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church

## From The Board of Trustees' Desk

Dear Members and Friends, I serve as your Vice President on the AUUC Board of Trustees.

At this time, on behalf of my fellow and sister board members, I would like to take a moment to extend our thanks to our outgoing Trustees and Officers. John Engberg, our exiting President has given outstanding service to our Board and our congregation over the last three years, providing both strong direction and vision for our future.

After many years, Jill Brethauer is vacating the position of Treasurer and ex-officio Board Member. Over the years, Jill has exhibited a strong commitment to keeping us fiscally sound while maintaining a great working relationship with the Board Members and staff. She has also brought to AUUC a "financial sophistication" that is a large part of our vision for the future. Graciously agreeing to step up as our Treasurer is Kathy Graham.

Also leaving the board is Jennifer Russell, who served in the capacity of Board President two years ago. Her energy and strong presence will be sadly missed.

In the next few months our Board, including new members Alex West, Kim Winbush and Andrew Weber, will be conducting a retreat and strategic planning session. We're happy to hear your ideas and feedback.

Now, for the necessary financial news update. It was reported to the Board last month that we have received pledges for the coming church year from considerably less than 50% of member households and, that as a result, the total amount pledged is down from last year. Our pledge campaign ended in April, and we are concerned by the lack of responses. Hopefully, this lack of responses is due to an oversight and not an indication of something more serious. Either way, the Board wants to hear from you.

At the Annual Meeting, we shared with you some of the additional programming and services that the Board and the Committees dream of being able to offer in the coming year. In light of the current pledge situation, however, we may find ourselves instead looking for ways to cut existing programs in order to balance the budget. If you have not yet pledged, please take the time to contact Ed Kinley of the Finance Committee.

Thank you for keeping our Community viable and strong!

Sincerely,  
*Maryanne Sonick*

## Board Members

Hazel Carr LeRoy  
Diane McMahon  
Barbara Stolarz  
Alex West

Ed Kinley  
Cheryl Napsha  
Andrew Weber  
Kim Winbush

**Our pledge campaign ended in April, and we are concerned by the lack of responses. Hopefully, this lack of responses is due to an oversight and not an indication of something more serious.**

## In the Church

### Annual Animal Blessing Service

For several years now, AUUC has been holding an Animal Blessing service across the street from the church, in a shady area of the park. Please join us again this year, as we gather on Sunday 13 August to bless and honor our animal companions, and to remember those animals which have blessed us with their past presence in our lives.

PLEASE BRING YOUR PETS to this service. Dogs must be on leashes, and cats and other small critters might be more comfortable in cages. Please come prepared (plastic bags) to clean up after your pet. Bowls of water and treats will be available, as will lots of petting and praise.

Also, if you have a photograph of a deceased pet or one you don't want to bring to the service in person, please bring that along too so we can all see and honor your friend.

Please note: The Religious Education proscription against pets at AUUC services and activities will not be in force at this service. Children or other individuals who are uncomfortable/nervous/unsupervised around animals might want to avoid this service.



### Membership Directory Update

The membership committee will be working on updating our directory this summer and plan to include photos. Hopefully this will be a helpful way for us to recognize newer members and for new members to get to know some of the "old timers." If you would prefer to submit a photo for the directory, please email it to Elizabeth Bashur.

Thank you to Elizabeth for volunteering to do this.

Any corrections or updates to the directory should go to Hazel Leroy or Pat Downey by July 15th.

Thanks to Hazel for maintaining our directory database.



### New Member Dinner

The membership committee is planning a dinner for everyone who has joined the church during the past year. The Board of Trustees and Committee Chairs will also be invited to join us for this annual event. August is the targeted month and invitations will go out as soon as the date is confirmed.



**P** Please join us again this year, as we gather on Sunday 13 August to bless and honor our animal companions, and to remember those animals which have blessed us with their past presence in our lives.

## In the Church

### Racial Justice News

The AUUC Racial Justice Ministry will be setting up an information table at the July 22nd North Side Community Fair in the Park. This is a great way to let the folks in the neighborhood learn about our church and for us to learn about what community racial justice needs there are that our group can work to address in the future. Volunteer greeters at the table will be very much welcomed! In August our group hopes to do an information drop door-to-door at homes in the neighborhood; again, with a goal of helping local folks learn more about what the church has to offer.

We are looking forward to a follow up to our very successful Potluck dinner which happened in June with Bidwell Church and New Hope Church. The follow-up event will likely be a movie night at Bidwell Church in September.

Our book club meets at our church on the last Wednesday of the month from 7-9pm and has been attracting great groups of very enthusiastic bookworms. Watch the AUUC Yahoo Groups for the title of the book for July. Also, watch the email for information on our efforts to re-energize the Anti-War vigils in the North Side and about all the other opportunities to work with the Racial Justice Ministry.

AUUC's Racial Justice Ministry meets the third Saturday of each month from 12:30-2:00pm at the Resaca Place building. For information about any of our activities just stop one of our Racial Justice meetings at church or email Jay. Peace!

### Support Renewable Energy and Help Prevent Global Warming

For several years, Allegheny UU Church purchased 100% renewable energy through Green Mountain Energy Co. Last year the company stopped directly providing energy in our area, so the church's energy once again comes from Duquesne Light.

However, Green Mountain still offers a way to support the environmental benefits of cleaner electricity with their new pollution-free renewable energy product. When you purchase their new Green Mountain Energy product for one year, they ensure that enough renewable energy is generated on your behalf to avoid over 8,000 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO2) pollution.

The cost of this program is only \$9.95/month. A church member is paying on behalf of Allegheny UU Church and encourages church members and friends to help the environment by signing up as individuals. The annual impact you can have on CO2 emissions is equivalent to not driving your car over 9,000 miles! Simply sign up by calling 1-888-685-7691 or go to [www.greenmountain.com](http://www.greenmountain.com) and select Pennsylvania.



**AUUC's Racial Justice Ministry meets the third Saturday of each month from 12:30-2:00pm at the Resaca Place building. For information about any of our activities just stop one of our Racial Justice meetings at church.**

## In the Church

### Fundraising Baskets

Look for a special community theme for the August basket raffle. The basket will contain gift certificates from North Side businesses like Urban Gardener, Breadworks and Finger Lickin' Good Barbecue. Also, free admission to Northside attractions like the Aviary and the MWSS House Tour. This may be a basket you can sell tickets to friends and coworkers for! The basket has a value well over \$100 with more to come!



### UUs United For Faith In Action Picnic

Come join other UUs in the Pittsburgh area for an afternoon of fun and fellowship. Last year the UUs United for Faith in Action held their first area-wide picnic at the UU Church of the South Hills. It was a great success, with UUs from all the area churches in attendance, so it was decided to make it an annual event. This year's picnic will be at the UU Church of the North Hills on Saturday, August 12 from 1-5 pm. Come for the whole afternoon, or just drop by for part of it. There will be food, music, and conversation throughout the day. This is a kid-friendly event. One activity will be making a large peace dove that we can use at public events.

Bring a side dish or dessert. UUUFA will provide burgers (meat and veggie), hot dogs and drinks. Directions will be sent to the AUUC Yahoo Group later in the summer and made available at church. Or call Jeanne Zang for more information.



### Cell Phone and Inkjet Cartridge Recycling/Fundraising

Jeanne Zang is collecting old cell phones and ink cartridges for a recycling/fundraising program. Ecophones will pay the church for each item collected. Unlike other programs, they will even pay a small amount for broken cell phones and will recycle and/or safely dispose of the toxic elements. Since the batteries are among the most toxic parts of a cell phone, please include the battery and any extras you may have. Do NOT bring chargers, cases, etc.

The program does not include large laser cartridges, such as those used in businesses. If in doubt, inkjet cartridges are the small things that easily fit in your hand. All types are acceptable except for Epson.

Please collect these items from friends, neighbors, and family and bring them in to church. Give them to Jeanne or put them in a bag with her name on it and leave them in a corner of the minister's study (in the back of the sanctuary).



### Ohio-Meadville District Summer Institute

Sunday 9 July - Saturday 15 July 2006

This year's theme speaker: Rev. Gary Kowalski from Burlington, VT.

The theme topic will be *Befriending Nature: Enlarging Our Family of Belonging*.

<http://www.omdsi.org/>

## Sundays in July and August

### July 2

#### Confessions of a Revolutionary Patriot

Rev. David McFarland

### July 9

#### An Ecological Vision Quest

Tim Nuttle

Tim will recount his personal journey, explaining how his outlook on life, science, and spirituality has evolved over the years.

### July 16

#### A Point of Prevention

Renée Cox

Renee, Executive Director of Prevention Point Pittsburgh, will talk about the role of needle exchange and overdose prevention as a measure of social justice and share her reasons for being a part of this movement.

### July 23

#### "There, but for the grace of God..."

Michael Glass

Michael is interim Executive Director of Northside Common Ministries. He will share his thoughts on poverty, wealth and other social ills.

### July 30

#### The Left Hand of God

Wanda Guthrie

Above the rhetoric, below the spin, the lowest whisper of the human voice can be heard when it's telling the truth. Wanda will talk about the Network of Spiritual Progressives.

### August 6

#### First Harvest

Rev. David McFarland

### August 13

#### Animal Blessing

Jane Dirks

Jane will lead this annual service in the park across from the church. Please join us again this year, as we gather to bless and honor our animal companions, and to remember those animals which have blessed us with their past presence in our lives.

### August 20

#### From Tennessee to Tanzania: A Dust Angel's Journey

Liza Barley

Liza will talk about how adapting to a completely different culture has had a profound effect on her life.

### August 27

#### What We Did on Our Summer Vacation

Kim Winbush

Join Kim Winbush and other members of Allegheny as they talk about their experiences visiting other churches this summer, and what those visits taught them about the "Allegheny Experience."

**Sunday Service at Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church starts at 10:30 am. During the summer, childcare in Founders Hall is provided during the service.**

**All are welcome!**

## July 2006

<b>2</b> ▪ Order Giant Eagle certificates ▪ Service 10:30am	<b>3</b> ▪ NA 7pm ▪ Board of Trustees 7:30	<b>4</b> <i>Independence Day</i>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> ▪ Tai Chi 8pm	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b> <b>8</b>
<b>9 OMSI</b> ▪ Pick-up Giant Eagle certificates ▪ Service 10:30am	<b>10 OMSI</b> ▪ NA 7pm	<b>11 OMSI</b>	<b>12 OMSI</b>	<b>13 OMSI</b> ▪ RE committee 7:30 pm ▪ Tai Chi 8pm ▪ PIIN meeting	<b>14 OMSI</b>	<b>15 OMSI</b>
<b>16</b> ▪ Service 10:30am	<b>17</b> ▪ NA 7pm	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> ▪ Tai Chi 8pm ▪ Shelter Meal 9pm	<b>21</b> ▪ Newsletter Deadline	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> ▪ Service 10:30am	<b>24</b> ▪ NA 7pm	<b>25</b> ▪ Program Committee 7:30pm	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> ▪ Tai Chi 8pm	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> ▪ Rev. McFarland will conduct service at North Hills UU Church "Reality Based Ethics" ▪ Service 10:30am	<b>31</b> ▪ NA 7pm					

## August 2006

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<b>20</b> ▪ Rev. McFarland will conduct service at North Hills UU Church "Powered by Faith" ▪ Service 10:30 am	<b>21</b> ▪ NA 7pm	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> ▪ Tai Chi 8pm	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
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## From the Community

### Legislative Advocacy with a UU Face – Coming Soon to a State Near You

Several points are clear about our UU identity. We are activists, have reached our activist conclusions – like our spiritual ones - from a variety of starting points, but we believe in contributing our efforts toward the improvement of society and the world at large according to our Seven Principles. As we came from different directions, we contribute in different directions, usually by participating in other organizations and coalitions that submerge our UU identity. This is taking place against a background of a loud and aggressively influential Religious Right, at a time when Unitarian Universalism is largely misunderstood in American society – we have gone from being a historically very influential faith to one that is classed by many as a “cult”; our congregations are shrinking and in many parts of the country have closed. We do not evangelize, and we practice growth by attraction – but how do we maintain or grow our congregations when our very substantial contributions to society are submerged under other identities?

This has concerned me since I arrived at UU in my own spiritual quest 3 years ago. Although activism based on ethical behavior was the major attraction for me, the visible aging of our congregations wherever I have visited or joined troubled me. My previous experience in organized medicine and its Political Action Committees in Florida had shown me models for exerting positive social influence while leveraging a strong identity, and I began to explore ways in which this could be done within UU.

These explorations led me to the model of the UU Legislative Ministry in California, which was developed to provide a visible

and specifically UU presence at the state capital to advocate for the broad range of our concerns. In a conversation with Rev. Lindi Ramsden, the Executive Director of UULMCA, I found that similar networks were beginning to take shape across the country (10 states at last count), and were being fostered by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, which has dedicated a full-time staff position to developing such organizations. Network coordinators meet monthly with UUSC staff by conference call, and a national meeting under UUSC sponsorship is scheduled for August in Boston. E-mails and calls to Jackie Ladd at UUSC put me in touch with Pat DeBrady in Philadelphia, who was at the same point as I was in exploring and beginning to develop this concept for Pennsylvania. After conversations with Pat, we have joined together as the joint Network Coordinator for this startup effort for Pennsylvania.

Why not just do this through the districts? Pennsylvania is a mosaic. We all realize that the West is in Ohio-Meadville and the East is in Joseph Priestley...., but in the Northeast corner there are three churches either in St. Lawrence or Metro NY districts. If this structure is going to work to bring UU issues with a UU face before our legislators, it must cross those boundaries and represent all the faces and interests of Pennsylvania Unitarian Universalism.

We feel we face a two- to three-year time frame to flesh this out and bring it to full function. In its infancy this year, these are the key points the Pennsylvania UU Legislative Advocacy Network must address:

## From the Community

- We are organizing the network within the structures and based on the principles and ethics of Unitarian Universalism. This is to have a specific UU identity and will be organized to have a durable and visible presence among the legislators in Harrisburg, the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation in Washington, and in our cities. The final legal structure will probably be a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization and we will need to find grant support and do our own fundraising as we proceed.

The issues we address will be the issues of advocacy and social justice as defined by UUA and its related organizations (Commission on Social Witness, GLBT Affairs, UUAWO, UUSC).

Our immediate need is to make the Pennsylvania UU community - lay and clergy - aware of our existence, attract participation, and develop and implement strategies to bring and keep our issues before our legislators (and during election cycles, before candidates.) Pat and I have divided the State map between us.

Through e-mails, telephone calls, and visits across the state in the next few months, we will seek to bring UU s across the state together at the same table to learn from each other and develop common strategies for legislative victory on our issues. To be credible, we will need both statewide participation and both clergy and lay involvement.

Based on the issues, we will develop:

- a network of issue "experts" within UU who are trained in the issues and capable speakers who are prepared to take the issues to legislators and candidates
- a network of "key contacts" - more general committed representatives of UU Social Advocacy who will establish long-term relationships with individual

legislators and candidates and be our consistent first point of two-way contact with the legislators and candidates

- a network of issue-oriented UUs to track our issues in the legislative process and legislator's relevant voting records

As we address issues we should participate in strategic coalitions with other advocacy organizations with whom we can make common cause to amplify our voice - but we must retain our UU identity and our autonomy to act at the same time with other coalition partners on other issues and to select our partners.

In the longer term, the Legislative Advocacy Network will need to:

- act as a central rallying point within the UU community on key issues;
- conduct and encourage supporters to attend trainings to ensure that our contacts and speakers within UU are as capable and effective as possible as spokespeople and representatives on our behalf;
- conduct UU "Days at the Legislature" for intensive contact and lobbying;
- publicize within UU the voting records of sitting legislators statewide and nationally on our issues; and
- become "ground zero" in encouraging UUs to run for public office.

The task sounds daunting – but it's going to be a fascinating trip and very worth the effort. Right now, I need to invite the support and involvement of each one of you. There is much work to do, but each of us we has intimate knowledge of the issues we have been most involved with – and the more of us who participate in building the Legislative Advocacy Network the more effective we will ultimately be.

*Barry Tepperman*

## General Assembly 2006 Excerpts from 5048 Closing Ceremony

Speakers: Rev. William Sinkford, Gini Courter

*Prepared for UUA.org by Dan Harper, Reporter; Jone Johnson Lewis, Editor.*

While Clint Blandford lit the flame of the chalice, the Reverend Dr. Daniel O'Connell told a humorous fantasy story. Blandford is the Chair Elect of the Eliot Unitarian Chapel in Kirkwood, Missouri, and O'Connell is the Lead Minister at the same congregation.

"It is said this week that Satan, the devil, found out that we Unitarian Universalists were meeting in St. Louis," began O'Connell. Satan decided to send one of his minions to corrupt the Unitarian Universalists. One of the minions who volunteered said it would corrupt the Unitarians by saying there is no heaven, but Satan said that wouldn't work because Unitarians know "there is a bit of heaven in every human heart." A second minion said it would tell the Universalists that there is no hell, but Satan said, "The Universalists already have that one down." Then a third minion stepped forward, and said, "I will tell the Unitarian Universalists that there is no hurry!"

"And Satan said, 'Go!'" exclaimed O'Connell, to general laughter from the congregation. "And now let us fire up our commitment, let us fire up our ceremony. Say 'Amen!' somebody!" The congregation responded with a chorus of "Amen!"

The first hymn, "Then May I Learn," had words and music written by Unitarian Universalist Shelley Jackson Dunham. The Children's Choir and the adult choir sang the first verse together: "When I am frightened, will you reassure me?" The congregation was invited to join in on the second and third verses.

"This week, we have come together in community once again, some 4,300 of us, from some 600 congregations," said the Reverend William Sinkford, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). "If you read the UUA Bylaws, the purpose of General Assembly is to do the business of the Association." Reflecting on what the business of the Association involves, Sinkford said that business includes not just the business that takes place in the Plenary sessions. But in addition, because Unitarian Universalism is a relational faith, Sinkford asserted that part of the business of the Association is to tend the relationships of individuals in congregations, and the relationships between congregations.

"Right relationship is about a bedrock respect for others, and at the same a bedrock respect for the community," said Sinkford. "Safety is an issue in creating and sustaining right relationship. As is forgiveness." In closing, Sinkford quoted Mahatma Gandhi, saying, "We strive to become the change we want to see."

Gini Courter, Moderator of the UUA, joined Sinkford to say a few last words. They reviewed all the different activities and events that had gone on, and they pointed out what people might be taking back to their home congregations: a renewed sense of energy, a deepened sense of commitment, new learnings and new ideas, new connections.

The Reverend Krista Taves gave the benediction. "Our time together has ended and the harvest is at hand," she said. "As we scatter back to the places where we have come from, may these seeds be planted and nurtured."

<http://www.uua.org/ga/ga06/5048.html>

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### Allegheny Web Site

[www.alleghenyuu.org](http://www.alleghenyuu.org)

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 Lisa Carvajal or Chris Stygar.

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Universalist Church  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania