



Allegheny Advocate

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ALLEGHENY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

Every Sunday, 10:15-10:45

Meditation with Music in the Unitarian House

Sunday, February 4

Ginger Rumph, MSW

Living, Celebrating and Organizing in Urban Diversity

Ginger and her partner, Sandra Heard, made a conscious decision to buy a house in our diverse neighborhood and commit themselves to working for neighborhood betterment. In no time, Ginger was elected President of the neighborhood Council. AUUC has a long history of having church members serve on the Council's Board. We are proud of that. Today, Ginger will talk about her personal commitments to this process and why joining our congregation has been a part of this commitment.

Sunday, February 11

Emma Lucas, PhD

Social Justice and Biblical Images

As part of our celebration of African-American History Month, we are delighted to invite Dr. Emma Lucas into our pulpit. Emma teaches social sciences at Carlow College and is President-elect of the National Association of Social Workers, Pennsylvania Chapter. Emma is a practicing Christian and a committed academic who is passionately committed to working for justice in the community.

Sunday, February 18

Rev. Art McDonald

The Ordeal of Integration and the Role of the Faith Community

Continuing our celebration of African-American History Month, Art will offer insights on the "racial" crisis in the U.S. with help from insights of Harvard sociologist, Orlando Patterson. He'll try to apply these insights to his own work with the Tenants' Coalition and Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network.

Sunday, February 25, 11:00 am

Kris Thomas, Director of Religious Education

Celebrating Our Children

Today we celebrate Children's Day, a time to give love and thanks to our children and talk about ways in which we nurture them to become all they are meant to be. As most of you have noticed, our children's program has really developed in the past few years, thanks to the hard work of many people. Today we have asked our DRE, Kris Thomas, to share her vision with us of how this program is developing and changing.

12:30 pm

Mid-Year Congregational Gathering and Discussion

Please bring a brown bag lunch for this "town meeting" focused on congregational life. We are hoping that many of us can participate in this facilitated discussion that will end by 2-2:30.

Sunday Service at Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church Begins at 11 o'clock • All Are Welcome

Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network

PIIN meets on Thursday, February 15, beginning at 7:00 pm, at a church on the Hill. Details will be shared.

Camp Nia

Contradicting what was reported in the January newsletter, Camp Nia will not operate a Saturday school in our church this term. Nia's parent organization, YM&WAHA, under the direction of Janice Parks, has a full plate with the Nia Steelpan Ensemble, the sports academy, and renovations on what will be its new home office on Boyle Street. So the church building is now free on Saturdays until we begin construction in May.

Bulletin Board

OMD Winter Institute: *A Well-spring in Winter*

Come join your Ohio-Meadville UU friends February 16-19, 2001 for a relaxing, inter-generational weekend with the opportunity to do winter activities or to just sit by a fireplace and catch up with old and new friends. This is a *schedule-free* weekend for those that need a break from the clock. Small inter-generational groups may gather to discuss books, learn knitting, beadwork, board games, do those puzzles we never have time to put together, play charades or card games, make some music, hike, play in the snow. A community dinner will be served on Saturday night and Rev. Susan Ritchie will lead worship services.

The Institute is held at The Salt Fork Resort, a part of the Ohio State Park System near Cambridge, Ohio, about 1-½ hours from Pittsburgh. The park has a beautiful lodge with a pool, game room with pool tables, ping pong tables and video games, lounge and hiking trails. The conference cost is \$80.00 for each adult (over 18) and

\$30 for children (4-18), plus room costs (at a reduced rate) and food. See Jane Dirks for more information, or contact Sam Hens-Greco (at (412) 391-0800, 362-1786, 391-2183, or by email at hensgreco@aol.com) to register. You will also need to make room reservations at Salt Fork (1-800-282-7275 or www.saltforkresort.com).

First Unitarian Church Folk Orchestra

The First Church Folk Orchestra – including AUUC member Jane Schwarz – is sponsoring a talent show at First Church on March 31. Allegheny UU members are welcome to enter the talent show, or come to watch. Proceeds will go to First Unitarian Church and for equipment for the Folk Orchestra. See Jane if you're interested in participating in the talent show. Sign up early!

Religious Education

Toddlers

We are pleased to announce that Becky Anderson will be caring for our toddlers each week. We are asking for one adult volunteer to assist Becky. Please see Kris Thomas to sign up.

Preschool/Kindergarten

Michelle Bilyk, Karen Larson, and Benita Campbell

First/Second Grade

Joe Chekanowski and Lynn Yocum

In January, the class celebrated New Year's Day by making Janus books, and we also did a timeline project for Martin Luther King's birthday. We also celebrated Chinese New Year and the Feast of St. Brigid. This month we will continue learning about holidays by making valentines and celebrating Black History Month.

Third/Fourth Grade

Melanie McDonald and Charlie Snowden

After learning about Moses and the 10 Commandments, and Joshua, in February the 3rd/4th grade class will be covering David and Goliath, Solomon, Jonah, and Job. We will also be preparing for and celebrating Valentines Day.

Fifth/Sixth Grade

Jane Dirks and Linda Voytko

The fifth and sixth graders have been exploring "God Images." To put into practice the idea of God as Love, we lovingly baked the morning refreshments for the congregation on January 21. Upcoming God images will be: God is One (Judeo-Christian and Islamic), God is Growing/Fertility, God as Creator/Destroyer. We are also thinking about the possibility of creating a major art project which will express our explorations into the God Image theme.

Youth Group

Claudia Neely and Becky Anderson

Our Youth Group meets on the second and fourth Sunday evenings of each month. The group is open to youth in the sixth through ninth grades and is led by Claudia Neely with the assistance of Becky Anderson. During the month of January, the group went to hear Ruby Bridges speak at East Liberty Presbyterian Church. Upcoming plans include a trip to the Schenley Park ice rink and an overnight in the Unitarian House. For more information, please see Claudia.

Northside Common Ministries Annual Fundraiser at the Public Theatre

On February 15, NCM will co-host a fundraiser with South Hills Interfaith Ministries at the Public. Andrew Lloyd Weber's *By Jeeves* will be presented. The second annual event will again include a private, pre-performance reception, an auction, and a media personality as host. The cost is steep but the cause great (\$95 and \$70). Call SHIM for reservations, 412-854-9120.

UU Urban Church Conference, March 8-11

The biennial UUA Urban Church Conference will take place in Chicago on March 8-11. Art will be going and would love some company. It's a great chance to network with other urban church folks.

Convo 2001: A Personal, Political, and Spiritual Odyssey

Explore personal, political, and spiritual questions at this 17th Annual Assembly of Interweave. This odyssey will provide a wealth of openings for people of differing sexual orientations (GLBTs) and their allies to connect and advance their concerns. It will take place on February 22-25, at the UU Church of Arlington, Va. See details in the Emerson Room.

Persad Center Parents Group

If you are the parent of a gay or lesbian adult and need support and understanding, think about joining this group by calling Judith at 412-441-9786, ext. 220. The group will meet on eight Thursdays, February 15-April 5, from 6:30 until 8:00pm.

WomenSpirit Conference

The Ohio-Meadville district is sponsoring a conference entitled: Weaving It Together: Mind, Body and Spirit, on March 2-4, in Painesville, Ohio. See details in the Emerson Room.

Men's Retreat

Rev. Renee Waun and Ms. Mary Ann Crabtree will facilitate this weekend retreat titled, *Understanding One Another: The Gender Gap*. It will be held at the Sandcrest Retreat Center, near Wheeling, W.Va. on Friday, February 2 through Sunday, February 4. The Cost is \$115. Talk to Greg Dietz or call Bill Kroesser at 304-744-3114.

The Historical Jesus at the Millennium

On February 9, 10 and 11, biblical scholar John Dominic Crossan will speak at Sixth Presbyterian Church, Squirrel Hill. Information can be found in the Emerson Room.

Whale Coast Eco-Spirituality Tours

Five Alaskan Congregations are sponsoring these tours for 10 or 17 days in July or August. Stay with UUs and experience Alaska. Brochure: uu-whale@aol.com; call toll free 1-866-889-4253.

Apartment Available

First Floor, studio apartment available in Spring Hill, near AUUC. Great view of the city, new appliances, new carpet, freshly painted - \$450, includes laundry and all utilities. Call Michelle or Karen at 322-5939.

Advocacy Report

Rev. Art McDonald
Minister/Social Advocacy Director

For those of you who were in church on January 7, you heard the story of how I was working at my computer that morning (I started about 6:30), putting my rough notes into some coherent sermon form when I suddenly slipped on the keys and lost the entire document. Needless to say, I couldn't retrieve it because I had neglected to save. It was 8:45 when that occurred, 10 or so minutes from completion. Melanie and I had to leave for church by 9:30 and all I could do was look again at my rough notes and try to reconstruct my outline. The feeling was terrible. When will I get this high tech world straight?

What I didn't say that morning was that while in Boston visiting my brother in mid-December, I did the same thing shortly before completing my column for the Advocate. Nearly 3 hours of work disappeared!

One of the pieces I never resurrected for the January newsletter was a reflection on an article I read in the Boston Globe regarding homelessness. The article was an interview with a major shelter operator in Boston who described the overcrowding in the shelter. Boston reported in December that the homeless population was up by nearly seven percent over the previous year (nearly 6,000; no one knows for sure the extent of homelessness in Pittsburgh; estimates seem to suggest 1,000 to 2,000). The article's author suggested that rising real estate prices were part of the explanation, for despite stereotypes of who the homeless are, it seems that shelters are more and more the option for the WORKING poor. In Massachusetts, 29 percent of shelter dwellers work, most of them full time. "Until we address the issue of creating housing that's targeted to very low income people so they have a place to stay, you can be sure that next year we'll have the same results, with more people homeless," said the executive director of the shelter alliance. The "stuffed" shelters in Boston seem to include more and more families.

One solution for this crisis that is being considered in Massachusetts is that of creating permanent housing for

homeless people, not just shelter beds. The new housing would be modeled on the rooming houses of old. So strange! The Northside used to have significant amounts of rooming houses, single-room occupancies which have slowly been eliminated! So the homeless population is growing and folks ask why. Duh! Hello!

One of the things that I hope the recently organized mayor's task force on homelessness might come up with is exactly this: the insight about the need to create very low-income housing. My fear is that is exactly what the mayor is trying to decrease in the City? I hope I'm wrong.

At any rate, our partner in this work, Northside Common Ministries (where two of our members, Di and Mac McMahon, work) is moving in the direction of long-term and permanent housing. The ministry has two programs begun in the past few years, one is a 2-3 year residency for former homeless men who are able to live independently but need a support system (there are approximately 12 men in this program), and the second, a permanent residency program for men with various handicaps; currently there are four in this program which also might have a capacity of 10-12 eventually. These efforts seem very important to encourage and support, though I suspect that there will continue to be a need for shelter support as well. As is the case with poverty in general, it does not seem as if there is the political will to address these issues which effect so many of our citizens. Our work is ongoing.

WQED/WQEX

Speaking of QEX/QED, you might have seen in the news that the WQED board is once again entertaining an offer to sell QED. But, once again, this will involve changing its license as a public station. The Pittsburgh Chapter of the Citizens for Independent Public Broadcasting is gearing up again to attempt to block this sale. I recently received correspondence from Matthew Cone, the local coordinator for this project, stating that the campaign is committed to provide a "voice for groups in the community that may otherwise be unheard." CIPB is planning some upcoming meetings to re-energize and re-organize its efforts. Stay-tuned for details.

Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network

At the last meeting of the PIIN group, we decided that while we are trying to build capacity and increase memberships up to about 40 congregations/religious organizations, we need to start giving people work to do. Right now we are hoping that we have foundation monies by April/May to hire a full-time organizer; this is a key piece. Once that is accomplished, we can begin planning a major issues' conference to determine what projects to undertake. Meanwhile, the Executive Committee thought it would be good to choose some preliminary issues and begin researching the problems. The wider membership went along and we chose 5 issues: Low-income housing, education, transportation, economic development and criminal justice. We split into these groups and each has planned a separate session to define further the focus of research. At our next gathering, each group will report and we'll be seeking to add additional members to increase interest and widen perspective. Please consider joining one of these groups. The next meeting of PIIN will be held on Thursday, February 15, from 7-9:00 pm, at a church on the Hill. Stay tuned.

Living Wage Campaign

You have received many reports and updates on the progress and victories of this very important issue of justice. But we are not there yet. Though one million dollars has been included in the County budget for increasing wages, the actual legislation has not passed. This piece is complicated and involved. The details of just how it will effect employers are being negotiated and debated. A current issue of great concern is that of how the final legislation will effect the social service sector. Some of the larger non-profit social service providers and the Living Wage Campaign staffers have been meeting to negotiate the areas of difference, but there is not a total agreement as of yet. This may not be easy but the issues are very important. We'll keep you posted as the legislation reaches its final phases.

UUs for a Just Economic Community

Since AUUC has a significant history with UUJEC I thought I would mention that the group seems to be moving along in its new headquarters in Boston. Currently, UUJEC is planning on piggybacking on the Urban Church Conference in Chicago, in May, and is sponsoring a three-day visioning process preceding the Urban Church. UUJEC has program initiatives in these areas at the moment: Working Family Agenda, Globalization and Fair Trade, Media & Democracy.

Related to UUJEC's efforts, the United for a Fair Economy group is suggesting that we begin writing letters and lobbying against President Bush's likely effort to repeal the federal estate tax. We can start to discuss this right away, though, of course, the issue has not yet been presented as a piece of legislation.

For our part, our work with the Living Wage Campaign, PIIN, the Tenants' Coalition, and the QED/QEX public television struggle are all related, on a local level, to what UUJEC is doing nationally. So I feel that we as a congregation support their work pretty directly. Another way to be supportive is to send money. UUJEC is still operating with a dollar-to-dollar match from the UU Veatch Program when UUJEC receives donations of \$350 and above. If AUUC pooled our donations as individuals into a \$350 figure, we could double that with the match. Anyone interested in matching my \$25?



Northside Forum

Ginger Rumph, Lynn Glorieux and I are involved in a working committee trying to improve communication and cooperation among the various constituencies on the Northside: residents, businesses, churches, service providers and clients/consumers. It is a very positive attempt to understand better the issues and concerns of each of us who work, live and visit the Northside community. There are significant dilemmas and opinions but a great deal of energy and goodwill. Our aim is to improve the overall quality of life in our community.



Child Dedication

Above I mentioned the joy of dedicating Jacob Taucher, son of Tammy and Nancy Taucher. We had a very large attendance on January 7th for this Sunday service, which I was very pleased with. There are very few rituals that are more exciting for me to be part of than that of welcoming a new life into the community. What I was especially happy about was the family support that these two moms and their son received, most especially that there were so many male family members who participated. It was clear to me that Nancy, Tammy and Jacob are deeply cherished by family members. How great.

My one regret was that I didn't let the RE folks know of the dedication and invite all of our children into the service. One of our kids found out about the dedication and mentioned to a parent that this child wanted to be there. I agree. My fault. Next time we'll do it. The whole experience needs to involve the entire community. How blessed we are. Bye for now.

Contacts

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Finance
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AUUC Activities Calendar

February

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 10a Children's Choir 10:15a Meditation Service 11a Sunday Service 5p Open Arms	5 7p Membership Cmte 7:30p NA Meeting	6 12p Pgh. Cluster 7p House Committee	7	8	9 6-8p Family Fun Night and Potluck	10
11 9a Adult Choir 10a Children's Choir 10:15a Meditation Service 11a Sunday Service 5p Open Arms 6-8p Youth Group	12 7p G&D Committee 7:30p NA Meeting	13	14 7p RE Committee	15 7p PIIN Meeting, Hill District 8:45p Pleasant Valley Shelter Meal NCM Annual Fundraiser	16 OMD Winter Institute	17 OMD Winter Institute
18 10a Children's Choir 10:15a Meditation Service 11a Sunday Service 5p Open Arms OMD Winter Institute	19 6:30p Program Committee 7:30p NA Meeting OMD Winter Institute	20 NCM Board	21 7p Board of Trustees	22	23	24
25 9a Adult Choir/10a Childrens 10a Finance Cmte. 10:15a Meditation Service 11a Sunday Service 12:30p Congregational Mtg. 5p Open Arms 6-8p Youth Group	26 7:30p NA Meeting	27	28			

