



THE BEACON

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
SOCIETY OF CLEVELAND

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UPCOMING SERVICE INFORMATION

Musical Prelude at 10:45 a.m. Service at 11:00 a.m.*

May 29, 2011, 11:00 a.m.

How Can I Help?

Worship Leader: Christie Anderson,
Commissioned Lay Leader
Musician: Karin Tooley

Most Unitarian Universalist don't evoke an intervening God when trying to console someone. Instead, we rely upon the powerful human capabilities we each possess. Using true stories from Ram Dass and insights on the importance of presence and deep listening, Christie offers practical advice on how one can provide comfort to those experiencing emotional distress. Christie is the CLL at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent.

June 5, 2011, 11:00 a.m.

Cast the Circle Wide

Worship Leader: Rev. Colin Bossen
Musicians: The Wax Wing String Band

The final service of the year in our series on the world's religions has us exploring one of the world's newest and oldest traditions: neo-paganism.

June 12, 2011, 11:00 a.m.

To Love a Parade

Worship Leader: Rev. Colin Bossen
Musicians: UUSC Choir, Barbara Boyd,
Director, and Karin Tooley

In Cleveland late spring through early autumn is the time for outdoor festivals, street fairs and parades. Do events like Parade the Circle have a religious dimension? If so, what might it tell us about a theology of joy and celebration?

June 19, 2011, 11:00 a.m.

Flower Communion

Worship Leader: Rev. Colin Bossen
Musician: Karin Tooley

To mark the end of another year together, we gather for our annual Flower Communion. The Flower Communion originated with Dr. Norbert Capek, founder of the modern Unitarian movement in what is now the Czech Republic. Please bring a flower to be blessed during the service. The service will also include a celebration of Glenn and Pat Solomon's 50th wedding anniversary.

June 26, 2011, 11:00 a.m.

What Makes God Laugh?

Worship Leader: Pat Solomon & Friends
Musician: Karin Tooley

Ever wonder what makes God laugh, and what he thinks about goings-on down here throughout history? Find out from this rare store of correspondence between various human beings and God/Goddesses relative to this very question. Presented with the kind permission of Rev. Ned Wight.

July 3, 2011, 11:00 a.m.

American Creed

Worship Leader: Steve Doell
Musician: Karin Tooley

English writer G. K. Chesterton described America as the only nation that is "founded on a creed," one identified "with theological lucidity in the Declaration of Independence." What is the American Creed? How does it reflect and inform our Unitarian/Universalist tradition? How does it affect us in 2011?

Notes from our Minister

At the congregation's annual meeting members voted by an overwhelming margin to adopt a long range plan focused on growth (80% of the congregation voted for one of the two growth plans). At the meeting divisions between those who believe that the congregation is growing and can grow and those who think that it is not growing, not growing fast enough or in decline, were made apparent. During the meeting it was also apparent that there are divisions within the congregation over how the investment portfolio should be used and the mission/purpose of the congregation. Over the next three months I will be addressing these differences in my column. I hope that by doing this I can provoke discussion between members of the congregation that might help overcome some of these divisions. If my June, July or August columns provoke a response in you please consider writing something about your thoughts for the Beacon. This will help engender dialogue and, hopefully, help us resolve some of the differences of opinion within the congregation.

This month I want to discuss the issue of growth. The two principle questions about growth that were expressed at the meeting were: 1. Are we growing? 2. Can we grow? Let us consider both questions in turn (I apologize if my answers are a little pedantic and number driven but you have to remember that I trained as a physicist and numbers help me make sense of the world).

Are we growing?

The answer to this question is yes and it's based upon the congregation's membership records, attendance records and the information the congregation has reported to the UUA over the last several decades. In 2002, the Society reported 72 members. In 2004, the year Rev. Clason retired, the Society reported 64 members to the UUA. In 2006, the year prior to my arrival, the Society reported 59 members to the UUA. In 2011, the Society reported 88 members to the UUA. In terms of membership, this means that our congregation has grown by almost 50% in the last four years.

It is somewhat more difficult to assess the congregation's growth in attendance over the last several years. This is because the Society's own attendance records are spotty before 2007 and the UUA did not require congregations to report average attendance until a few years ago. The information available, however, does again paint a picture of growth. In 2002, one of the few years with complete attendance records available, the Society averaged 31 people in attendance on Sunday and had an approximate yearly total attendance of 1612. In 2010, the Society averaged 62 in attendance on Sunday and had a yearly total attendance of 3319. Based upon the other attendance information available, 2002 seems to have been a typical year for attendance. If this is true average Sunday attendance over the last several years increased by 100% while total annual attendance has increased by 106%, the difference in these two percentages being attributed to an increase in attendance for the Society's holiday services and the decision to hold services in August.

So, in the past five or so years the congregation has experienced roughly a 50% increase in membership and a 100% increase in attendance. These are impressive numbers and, thanks to information provided to me by the Rev. Dr. Joan VanBecelaere, the Ohio Meadville District Executive, we can see how we stack up against other Unitarian Universalist congregations in Ohio, in our district and in the Greater Cleveland area.

There are 39 Unitarian Universalist congregations in Ohio. Between 2006 and 2011 ten of these experienced growth. On a percentage basis our congregation grew the fastest (49%) followed by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Wayne County (47%), the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Youngstown (15%), the First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati (15%) and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent (14%). On a numeric basis our congregation grew by 29 members between 2006 and 2011 which ranked 3rd for numeric growth, behind the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Wayne County (which grew by 60 members), the First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati (which grew by 40 members) and just ahead of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent (which grew by 24 members).

Notes from our Minister

In comparison to the 44 Unitarian Universalist congregations in the Ohio Meadville District (which includes parts of New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and all of West Virginia), of which 11 grew between 2006 and 2011. On a percentage basis our congregation is second and it is the fastest growing of these following the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Girard, Pennsylvania (81%) and followed by Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Wayne County and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent. Numerically, our congregation ranks second in growth behind the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Wayne County and ahead of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie (which grew by 21 members) and the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Youngstown (which grew by 16 members).

As a final comparison, we can examine how we stack up against the other Unitarian Universalist congregations in Northeast Ohio. There are nine congregations in the region. Between 2006 and 2011 three of these experienced growth (Akron, Kent and the Society) and six lost members.

So, not only is our congregation growing but it is the fastest growing by percentage in Ohio and the second fastest growing by percentage in our district. Numerically we are the second fastest growing in both our district and our state. Overall we are the fastest growing congregation in Northeast Ohio.

Can We Grow?

The question at the annual meeting was: can we grow? Since our congregation has been growing, and growing significantly, better questions are: Can we continue to grow? And can we grow at a faster rate? The answer to both of these questions is yes. Again we can turn to some numerical analysis for a little clarity.

The answer to our first question is almost certainly yes. On a gross basis the congregation has averaged 14 new members per year over the past four years. Between January and May of 2011 we gained 7 new members so there is no reason to think that people will not continue to join the Society at this annual rate. However, 14 members joining a congregation of 59 members makes a bigger difference than 14 members joining a congregation of 88 members. The reason for this is that congregation's natural attrition of 10% of their membership a year due to death, moving or other reasons. So, a congregation like ours can expect to lose about 9 members a year. That means that at our size a gross of 14 new members a year will only net us a membership increase of 5.

In other words, in order for our congregation to continue its growth trajectory we need to take an increasing net number of members every year. This is not happening. Over the last three years our average number of new members per year has remained about the same. If this pattern continues our congregation will hit about 110 members in five years and 120 members in ten years. At that point membership will remain more-or-less flat.

In order to grow at a more rapid rate the Society needs to take between 20 and 30 new members a year. If we can take on 20 new members a year we can reach 130 members in five years and 160 members in ten years. If we can take on 30 new members a year we can reach 175 members in five years and 225 members in ten years.

Increasing our gross membership gain may seem daunting. The good news is we already have everything we need to do so. We have enough visitors and we have dedicated members. In 2010 we had 211 visitors to the congregation and the number of visitors we get on annual basis is increasing (it is up 9% this year compared to last year). Our challenge is getting more of our visitors to join the congregation. Right now only about 1 out of every 19 visitors joins the Society. The national average is 1 out of every 10 (which would get us to a gross of 20 new members a year) and some

Notes from our Minister

congregations reach the level of having 1 out of 7 people join (which would get us to a gross of 30 new members a year).

The most important thing we can do then to grow our congregation is to become better at getting the people who visit us to join. Most people come to visit a congregation are already interested in joining it. It takes a lot of nerve to visit a new congregation and people who get up the nerve often have already researched the congregation extensively. When they come they are waiting to see if they will be welcomed and made to feel like they belong. If they are, then chances are they will join the congregation. If not, then they probably won't.

I know that as a congregation we can get better at welcoming visitors and helping them feel like they belong to our community. This is why the Board and I will be encouraging the congregation to study membership, which includes welcoming, over the next twelve months. If we tackle the challenge together I am confident that we can resolve it.

In conclusion, let me say that I treasure being part of a growing dynamic congregation and that I look forward to striving for and experiencing future growth with you in the coming years.

love,
Colin

From our President

What a year! I have learned so much being a part of the Board of Trustees and serving as Board President, and have enjoyed the challenges and working with my fellow Board Members. One area I have heard a lot about is how we move forward with becoming the community in our mission, our map forward. Please understand what is below is my opinion, I am speaking from the heart.

When I use the phrase, "Map for the Future," I am alluding to the fact that we have come a long way in the past five years and it is time to chart the course for the next portion of our journey at the UUSC. We made the decision to bring in a full-time minister, and we have moved forward with that plan. We have come a long way, but there is still so much we can do as a congregation to get us to our goal of our annual giving covering the costs of our annual budget, without relying as much – or at all – on our investments. I hope the board can continue having meaningful discussions about what we can do as a congregation to improve and grow and have that conversation with members.

To start, we do have two areas we can focus on: Membership and Stewardship. The Board of Trustees has started a program to select a study theme to focus on each year. Next year's Board of Trustees study theme will be membership. Rev. Bossen and our Membership Coordinator will be facilitating this conversation with the board and members. The conversation will be philosophical and spiritual (What does it mean to be a member of the UUSC?) to the more practical (How can we help make new visitors members?). Encouraging and advancing stewardship among our community is also of the utmost importance for the UUSC's plans for the future. This is work that must be done in conjunction with the adoption of a long-range plan. These are goals that are certainly within our reach if we continue to have meaningful discussions on what we would like this community to look like and what we want the UUSC to become. I hope we can continue to work with the Board of Trustees and the Finance, Membership and Stewardship Committees to have these conversations and bring them to the membership. With this in mind, we can continue the course we have been traveling for five years and establish a clear path for the future.

Rachel Webb

RE-VIEW

The RE committee is starting our volunteer search and we want you! Having a successful religious education program is vital to bring new families through our door and to keep them once they're here. Our religious education program needs a lot of people to keep it running smoothly but most people are asked to volunteer once a month or less. Here's a breakdown of our volunteer positions and the commitments required of them.

- Coming of Age – Volunteers will be asked to teach twice a month
**This class only happens every three years.*
- Substitute Teachers - Volunteer as needed but normally only 2-3 times a year.
- RE Committee – Meetings once a month with minor additional work outside of meetings.
- Nursery Volunteers – Asked to volunteer once every 6 weeks.
- Teachers/Advisors— Asked to teach twice a month and prepare one lesson per month.

We've worked very hard to make sure that our volunteers can have an active spiritual life in the congregation outside of volunteering in the RE program and if you have concerns chances are that we can alleviate them. Volunteering is easy, it's not a huge commitment and most of all it's fun! If you have questions please contact dre@uucleveland.org or talk to anyone on the RE committee.

Membership Coordinator

Spring is passing into Summer, and our doors are wide open to welcome not only the beautiful weather, but also the many guests and newcomers who visit us every Sunday morning. They need *you* to welcome them individually so we can grow!

Please call or email Zelda to sign up for a welcome slot. You only need to arrive a little earlier, and the joy you will receive from sharing your smile with someone new as they walk into the front doors, past the welcome table, and into the Sanctuary will be more than worth it!

Zelda MacGregor, Membership Coordinator • 216.640.6180 / zeldamacgregor@gmail.com

UUSC News/Announcements

UUSC Podcasts: Interested in hearing the Sunday service online, and more? Listen to podcasts by visiting <http://uucleveland.podbean.com>.

UUSC Office Closed: Rev. Bossen will be out of the office on Tuesday, May 31st. Office Administrator, Shirley Nelson, will be on vacation starting May 31 and will return on June 7.

First Sunday Potluck – June 5: We will be having a First Sunday Potluck after service on June 5th downstairs in the Fellowship Hall. If you don't bring a dish, the cost is \$3 per person or \$5 per family. First time guests are free.

Memorial Service for Bill Hutchison – June 5: The Hutchison Family invites you to join them in remembering Bill on Sunday, June 5, at 3:00 p.m. at Kendal at Oberlin, 600 Kendal Drive, Main Building, Heiser Center Auditorium, Oberlin, OH 44074. Light reception to follow.

Reading to Refugees – June 7: We will be going to Green Road to read to the Bhutanese refugees at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, June 7. If you would like to help, please contact Claire Brugnoletti at clairebrugnoletting@comcast.net or Rev. Bossen at minister@uucleveland.org.

Memorial Service for Louisa Horvath – June 12: A Memorial Service for Louisa Horvath will be held on June 12th at 2:00 p.m. at the Society. Cards and acknowledgements can be sent to her sister, Eleanor "Ellie" Manire-Gatti, at 53 Iduna Lane, Amherst, MA 01002. Phone: 413-835-1897.

Earth Centered Spirituality Group – June 25: The Earth Centered Spirituality Group will meet on Sunday, June 25, to celebrate the Summer Solstice. Details to follow.

Pastoral Associates

Pastoral Associates, applications enclosed with this Beacon, are now being accepted. Pastoral Associates assist the minister with the ongoing pastoral care of the congregation. Under the supervision of the minister, they visit and coordinate aid for sick and shut-in members of the Society. Pastoral Associates meet on a quarterly basis and communicate regularly about the pastoral needs of the congregation. Please complete your application by June 30 and put it in the mail box of Rev. Colin Bossen. Please let Rev. Bossen know if you would like an electronic version of the application. You may also submit applications electronically to minister@uucleveland.org.

Worship Associates

Worship Associates applications, enclosed with the Beacon, are now being accepted for a two-year term beginning in September. The Worship Associates have opportunities to create and write elements of the worship service such as chalice lightings, opening words, offertory introductions, meditations, stories, or messages/homilies. They may assist with researching appropriate readings for sermon topics. During services they may be asked to contribute or read any of these elements of a service. They communicate with service leaders and, when appropriate, compile orders of service, coordinate with musicians, and communicate with the office regarding service information. On designated weeks, they participate in the logistics and set-up of Sunday morning services such as supplying candles, changing microphone batteries and distributing hymnals.

Additionally, as a team, the Worship Associates lead Sunday service about four times a year. The program is an excellent opportunity for worship participation, collaborative worship development and spiritual growth. Please complete your application by June 30 and put it in the mail box of either Rev. Colin Bossen or Amy Collins, CLL. Please let Amy know if you would like an electronic version of the application. You may also submit applications electronically to amymcollins@sbcglobal.net and minister@uucleveland.org.

Qualifications

- Has an Ability to work effectively as a team member
- Has a commitment to shared ministry
- Has an ability to communicate effectively
- Is willing to be a public presence at the Society as part of regular worship participation
- Considers the Society a source of personal and spiritual growth
- Is capable of effective conflict resolution
- Is able to receive constructive feedback to further growth as a worship associate

Expectations

- Commitment and Responsibilities
- Serve as Worship Associate during services for 8-12 services throughout the year when the minister or a guest speaker is leading the service
- Work collaboratively with other Worship Associates to lead 4 Worship Associate lead services interspersed throughout the year
- Attend and participate in a ½ -day Worship Associate Training in the Fall
- Attend and participate in a 1 day Worship Retreat in the Winter
- Attend quarterly Worship Associate planning meetings
- Attend majority of Sunday services throughout the year
- Average estimated time commitment = 5-10 hrs. per month

Application Process

Candidates complete a Worship Associate Application which is reviewed by the Minister and the Commissioned Lay Leader. Candidates will be notified of their acceptance into the Worship Associate Program. Terms begin in September.

June 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Shifting Gears 1:30 pm Joseph Campbell RT 7:30 pm	3	4
5 1st Sunday Potluck 1 pm Bill Hutchison Memorial Svc. 2 pm	6 UUSC IAF/ GCC Founding Assembly - Masonic Auditorium 7 pm	7 Reading to Refugees 7 pm	8	9	10	11 Circle Supper 6:30 p.m.
12 Louisa Horvath Memorial Svc. 2 pm	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 Board of Trustees Mtg. 7 pm	24	25 Earth Centered Spirituality (Time TBD)
26 <i>Beacon Deadline</i> Movie Night 5 pm	27	28	29	30		

**THE UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
SOCIETY
OF CLEVELAND**

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www.uucleveland.org

Rev. Colin Bossen
Minister

Tues. 9:00 - 11:15 a.m., Wed. 9:00. - 3:15 p.m.
Thurs. 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Shirley Nelson
Administrator/Beacon Editor
Tues. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Wed. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Thurs. 9:30 a.m.- 5:30 p.m.

Amy Collins
Commissioned Lay Leader

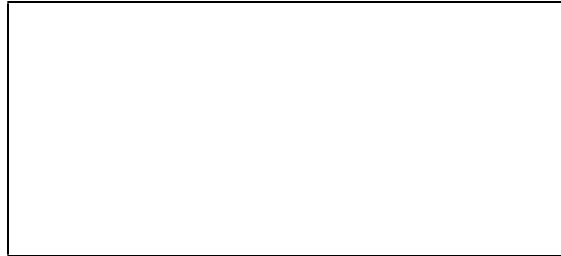
Nathan Staples
Director of Religious Education
Thurs. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and
Sun. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Zelda MacGregor
Membership Coordinator
Thurs. 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Sun. 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

William Shorter
Custodian

Barbara Boyd
Choir Director

Rev. Peggy C. Clason
Minister Emerita



UUSC DEADLINES:

Beacon Articles: Deadline for July is June 26th.

Order of Service/Announcements:

Wednesday a.m. before the Sunday Service

Board Reports: Tuesday a.m. before the Board Meeting

Birthdays and Anniversaries

This is only a partial list, to make it complete, send your special dates to the Office at office@uucleveland.org or just call and leave a message on the machine. Thanks!!

June

Richard Wortman	14
Peggy Lagodny	17
Amy Collins	21



UUSC Board of Trustees

Rachel Webb	President
Mary Schatzman	Vice President
Beverly Austin	Secretary
Karin Tooley	Treasurer
Ben Faller	
Glenn Solomon	
Sarah Thuerk	
Elaine Weaver	

Board Meetings are held on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

On Facebook?

If so, check out the Society's Facebook page. A link to it can be found on our website at www.uucleveland.org.

UUSC Podcast

Listen to Sunday services online, and more. Visit: <http://uucleveland.podbean.com>.

Wheelchair Available

The Society has a wheelchair available for use during congregational events.