

FOCUS

February 2008

Unitarian Universalist Church of Delaware County

UUCDC is a liberal religious community where young and old, partnered and single, gay and straight, skeptic and believer, people diverse in background and race, come together to build a better world for ourselves, our children and the larger community. We invite those who share these values to join us for Sunday services and for events listed in this newsletter.

145 W. Rose Tree Road
Media, PA 19063
(610) 566-4853
www.uucdc.org

E-mail:

churchoffice@uucdc.org

**Sunday Services,
Nursery Care &
Church School**

(PreSchool - 8th)
10:30 a.m. Sept.-June

**Coming of Age &
High School Youth**

6 p.m. Sundays



FROM THE MINISTER

When I was about twelve years old, I remember sitting in front of the television set in our family room, watching as the Apollo 8 spacecraft made its first orbit around the moon. As it rounded the moon and came out the other side, the astronauts described the first human view of an “Earthrise.” On the grainy television picture, our planet was a small glowing dot, but their description of the sight was poetic.

We’ve now all seen enhanced pictures of this view, or one like it taken from the surface of the moon, showing the Earth with its swirling clouds, blue oceans and green forests, suspended in the black void of space. Like Copernicus’ discovery that the Earth orbits around the sun, these pictures created a paradigm shift that was in part responsible for the beginnings of the environmental movement.

A paradigm shift is a change from one way of thinking to another. It’s a revolution, a transformation, a sort of metamorphosis. And unlike a slow, evolutionary process, it usually doesn’t just happen, but rather it is driven by agents of change. That agent can be an individual, an historic event, or even a natural disaster. Regardless of its source, a paradigm shift results in seeing old things in new ways, in new ways of thinking, and new ways of being.

While not as dramatic as the first views of Earth from space or the discovery of penicillin, we here at UUCDC are in the midst of a paradigm shift. At the January congregational meeting, members of the UUCDC Board introduced the concept of “policy governance,” a new way for us to “do church.” Policy governance sets up the systems and structures that will enable the Board to set direction and policy for the church, while it empowers broader participation by church members in making operational decisions. The Board has

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February Services

Feb. 3: Rev. Peter Friedrichs

Feb. 10: Rev. Peter Friedrichs and Jean Campbell -- Intergenerational Service

Feb. 17: Dr. Joni Carley, Doctor of Ministry from Wisdom University

Feb. 24: Rev. Peter Friedrichs

Who's Who

Staff

Rev. Peter A. Friedrichs,
Minister

Jean Campbell,
Director of Religious
Education

Beth Youse,
Music Director

Rina Jurceka,
Administrator

Vicki Coupland,
Member Talent Coordinator

Board of Trustees

Jody Malloy,
President

Mark Bernstein,
Vice President

Lowell Young,
Treasurer

Julie Chuplis,
Secretary

Donna Harris

Katy Lynn

Mike Mitchell

Bruce Wyman

From the Minister

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been working diligently for several years to decide whether policy governance is appropriate for our church and how to implement it.

Part of the paradigm shift that will take place in connection with our move to policy governance is a new way of thinking about how our various committees and activities are organized and how they relate to one another. Up to now, we've been acting like a "cellular church." Our committees and activities are vibrant and dynamic, but operating largely independently from one another. As we continue to grow, it will be increasingly important for us to integrate and coordinate our activities to best achieve our objectives, whether it's to ensure that our members and friends are properly cared for, our social justice projects are effective, or our facilities are properly maintained. It will also be important for us to recognize that everything that we do at UUCDC, from teaching our children on Sunday mornings to meeting in small groups, to working to transform our world, is ministry. Ministry that is shared among all of us

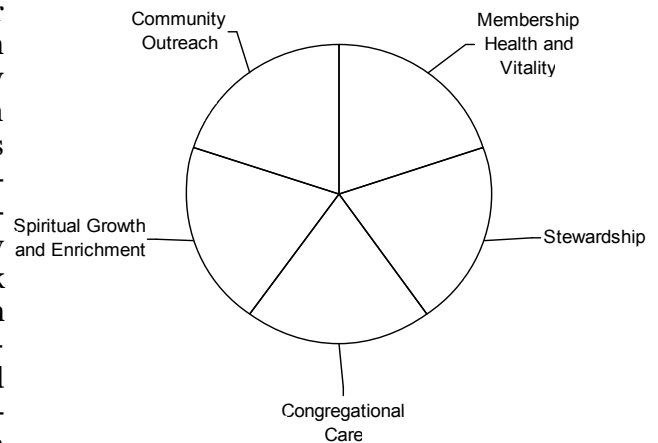
To begin to change the way we think and act, I have proposed that we organize our various interests in the church into five "Ministry Teams": Membership Health and Vitality (which includes membership council, denominational affairs and all activities groups such as the Family and Friends Group, the Book Club, etc.); Spiritual Growth and Enrichment (which includes worship, music and Lifespan Religious Education); Community Outreach (which includes all our various social justice projects, Rose Tree Day School and Interweave); Congregational Care (which includes the Caring Committee, lay pastoral care, Small Group Ministry and the Committee on Ministry); and Stewardship (which includes property and facilities, Finance Committee, Endowment, Fund Drive and Personnel).

I believe that when we consider the work we do as part of the overall effort of a larger team, we'll find that our resources are deeper, our visions wider, and our impact broader than they could ever be if we continue to work in isolation. The Ministry Team approach will also help inform how we best can structure our leadership and decision-making processes under policy governance.

Paradigm shifts aren't easy to make, and we all come to such changes with different capacities to absorb them. Perhaps the most important skill to exercise during this time of change is the art of listening to one another. I am, as always, open to your questions and comments, and I welcome your thoughts about this new way of looking at who we are and how we will be together.

Peter

UUCDC Ministry Teams



FOCUS INFO:

Editors:

Bette Austin
& Neil Goldstein

Production:

Rina Jurceka

***The deadline for
March is February 18.***

Please send your text
via email to:

Focus@uucdc.org

or put it in the Focus
box, in the church office.

Focus Folding, 10 a.m.
Feb. 29. Come help!

BOARD PERSPECTIVES: LET'S PLEDGE TO RISE ABOVE OUR BUDGET SURPLUS

From the President/Jody Malloy

In March we will hold our Annual Fund Drive for the July 2008-June 2009 fiscal year. The drive is when we, the church leadership, ask you (and ourselves), the members and friends of the congregation, to support our spiritual community in a concrete way -- financially.

The Board estimates total expenses for fiscal 2009 to be nearly \$400,000. So, what do we spend all that money on?

First off, it costs money to offer the excellent programming that we provide.

From the Sunday services and Religious Education for adults and children to Small Group Ministry and social action, the majority of our budget supports programming.

Although many of us volunteer to support those programs, we would not be able to provide the quality that we do if we relied solely on contributed work. (Conversely, we also could not provide such quality if we relied solely on our paid staff! But we're talking budget right now.) The biggest portion of our budget, 56%, goes to pay for our program staff.

Other costs are associated with programming – such as producing and mailing our monthly newsletter, buying curricula and supplies for Religious Education, and paying our fair share to the national and district Unitarian Universalist organizations for their valuable services. This accounts for 14% of our budget. Adding that to what we pay our employees, we spend 70% of the budget on programming.

The remaining 30% provides for our building. A little over half of that goes toward maintenance, repairs and utilities, and the remainder pays the mortgage and insurance.

That is what it takes, financially, to keep our spiritual home running.

We can offset some of those expenses through the rent and contributions we receive from groups that use our building, but that accounts for only about 10% of our income. An additional 5% comes

from fundraising and plate collections.

In recent years, we have not collected enough pledges to fund the remaining 85% of our budget. Instead, we have relied on a surplus from the previous year, created because we collected more income and/or spent less on expenses than anticipated during the previous year.

Having a surplus is a wonderful thing. Spending it on items that recur each year (such as salaries) is not optimal, because the following year, if there's no surplus, the congregation will have to fund that budget increase through pledge increases.

This is the year that the leadership believes it is imperative to end our reliance on a surplus, and increase our expenses by only as much as the income we bring in during the year. If, at the end of the year, we have a surplus, we will use it to build our "for emergencies" reserve fund, and possibly to fund one-time, non-recurring, large, property-maintenance projects.

Achieving this will be a significant accomplishment for this congregation. Once we "catch up," and balance our expenses for the year with our revenue for the year, we will be poised to use any increased income in following years to enhance our programming and make major improvements to our property.

To cover the costs of our current budget without using a surplus, and with only increases for fixed expenses such as utilities, health insurance and cost-of-living raises for our staff, we estimate that we would need an average pledge increase of 15%. But if we would like to fund additional programming and needed, large property-maintenance projects (such as parking-lot repairs), we need pledges to increase well more than 15%.

We believe that you do not want a status-quo budget, that you have been historically generous, and can continue to be generous to UUCDC.

That is why we are asking for a 20% increase in pledges, a target pledge total of \$350,000.

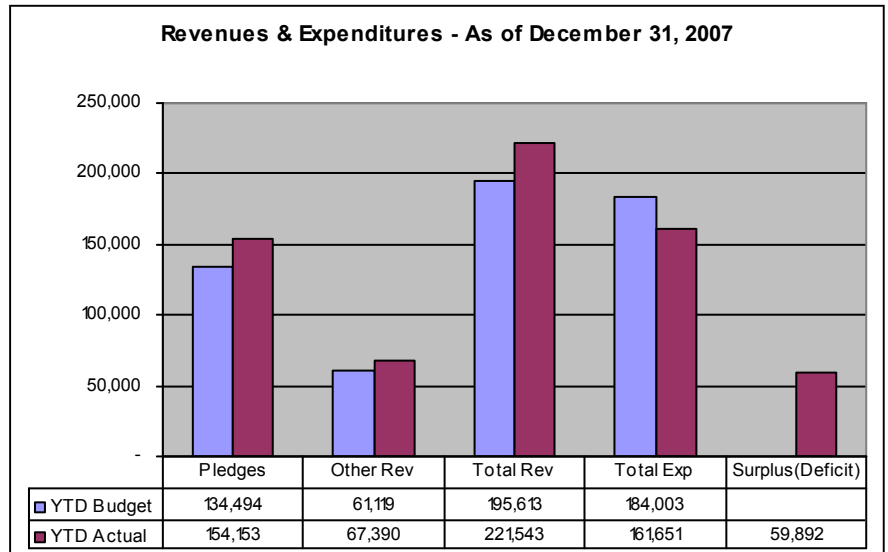
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Monthly Statement—How We’re Doing Financially

This is the fourth installment of a monthly update meant to make thinking and talking about church finances a regular part of being a congregation member.

Thanks to both the “Santa Clause Rally” (end-of-tax-year pledge payments) and a very successful auction in December, we have a healthy surplus. Keep in mind, however, that pledge payments will come in at a slower pace during the next six months, a situation that will whittle away the surplus.

The key is to keep the pledge payments coming in so that we do not end the church year in June with a deficit!



Lowell Young

Let Us Count the Many Ways to Pledge for Fund Drive

It’s almost time for the annual Congregational Fund Drive, and you are no doubt wondering how you can make your pledge to support UUCDC.

Last year, we calculated that it costs about \$1,400 per congregation member to run the church for a year. (Check Jody Malloy’s article on Page 3 to find out exactly where your financial commitment goes.) That’s a lot of money, but it keeps our religious home alive and growing.

Pat yourself on the back, because last year our congregation pledged a record amount with a record number of pledges. This year, even if you can spare only a dollar your pledge will help ensure that UUCDC will continue to thrive.

Here are several ways you can pledge.

In mid-February you will receive a Financial Commitment Form, or pledge form, in the mail. You will be contacted in February or March by a volunteer Fund Drive Visitor who will ask to schedule a talk with you about church life. Please think deeply about what UUCDC means to you before writing out your pledge. Then you may give your sealed form to the Visitor, who will not see what you’ve written and will not talk about money during the conversation.

Or if you prefer, you may put your pledge form into the Pledge Box that will be in the church office during the drive. If you like to do things by Internet, you may e-mail your pledge in March to pledge@uucdc.org; several people did it that way last year.

Finally, you can submit your pledge at **Financial Commitment Sunday, March 2**. At a reception after the service, you’ll find lots of goodies you’ll also find volunteers who will accept your pledge. There will also be a pledge table on successive Sundays in March to accept your form – we’ll even have forms if you forget yours!

Speaking of Financial Commitment Sunday, we expect a lot of you will be there to enjoy tasty treats and the company of your friends. We’re going to need a lot of goodies, so we are asking for volunteers to make, bake and bring desserts to share with the congregation. Please contact Bryan or Janet Boosz and let one of them know what you will bring.

We’re confident this will be another great year for meeting our financial goals. If you have questions about how or what to pledge, please talk to Bryan Boosz or Lowell Young. They will be happy to explain the Fund Drive process and give you ideas

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Caring Corner

How Does a UU Congregation Grow? Find Out Feb. 23

Members of UU churches from around the region are invited to the “Paths to Membership Growth” event on Saturday, Feb. 23, at the Thomas Paine UU Fellowship in Collegeville.

Participants will have a conversation and share “best practices” with each other around the issue of attracting, signing and retaining members. Organizers will use “open space” technology to create an environment of shared, peer-to-peer learning, hoping that by sharing our successes (as well as some frustrations, no doubt), congregations will learn tools and techniques for growing our churches.

The event is sponsored by the Joseph Priestley District’s Philadelphia-Wilmington Growth Team, which Rev. Peter co-chairs. It is open to anyone involved with church growth (which means EVERYONE!), and not just to people who serve on membership committees. There is no cost for the event, which includes lunch and runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Please contact the church office if you wish to attend, so that we can register you and help arrange for carpooling.

Winter Parking: Back to the Future

A creative Parking Committee has met on Sunday mornings with a two-fold objective:

- To find a short-term solution to UUCDC's parking problem for the bad weather months when the lawn is not a viable choice.
- To look for long-term solutions.

The consensus of the committee is that for winter, we need to return to last winter's solution of stacked parking. For those new to the church that means parking nose of one car to the tail of another in columns on parking lots 2 and 3. The method allows an increase of 25 percent in the number of cars that can be parked on paved areas.

The disadvantage is that the first people to arrive

have to be the first to leave. With this in mind, two changes to last year's system will be implemented this year.

First, stacked parking will be used only when absolutely necessary, that is, when there are piles of plowed snow on the edges of the lots or when the grass is too muddy for parking.

Second, when stacked parking is used, people will be asked to leave their keys in the cars, so that the cars can be moved if necessary. The lots will be attended by two or three responsible people who will watch the cars during Sunday services and will be the only ones, other than the owners, to move the cars.

RE-FLECTIONS

**JEAN CAMPBELL,
DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

For anyone who was in RE Chapel in January, you heard me tell a story about a child asking what the doctrine, sacrament and prayer are for Unitarian Universalism. This is a story by Judith Campbell that I adapted for that chapel. You may also have heard me get tongue-tied at the end of the story, the part I was hoping to be the "take away" for the children and adults present. In an effort to get it right and to give you some language with which to talk about Unitarian Universalism with your children and people of other religions, I shall share the essence of that message here.

In my story, a child, Alex, is talking after school about religion. The other children do not know what Unitarian Universalism is and want to know what the doctrine, sacrament and prayer are of this religion. Alex goes home and talks this over with his parents.

The answers are in the chalice-lighting: We light this chalice to celebrate Unitarian Universalism. This is the church of the loving heart, the church of the open mind, and the church of the helping hands.

The doctrine of Unitarian Universalism is "love." A doctrine is what a religion believes and teaches. Unitarian Universalists believe and teach that love is the strongest power in the world, stronger than fear. Some people like to call this power "God," because that is the best word they know for a power that is stronger than any one thing or person. Others don't like to use the word, "God," so they have different words, but as Unitarian Universalists, whatever word we use to describe this power of love, we believe in it just as strongly. This is the church of the loving heart.

A sacrament is an object or act that is considered very special. Other words to describe these things are "sacred" and "holy." What is the sacrament of Unitarian Universalism? We consider the search for truth to be very special and important. We mean more than just never telling a lie. We mean that what might be true for us today might not be true tomorrow, if we learn something new. For example, people once believed the Earth was flat or that someone called God created the world in seven days, even though science has given us different facts to believe. Some people believe that God told the truth to certain men, who wrote the truth in a book, such as the Hebrew and Christian Bibles, or the Islamic holy book, the Koran. They believe that this one truth is the only truth they need to know about how to live a good life, so they don't question it. Other people, like Unitarian Universalists keep asking questions, because they believe there is always more to know, always new ways of thinking and acting that can make the world a better place. This is the church of the open mind.

The prayer of Unitarian Universalists is service. Most Unitarian Universalists believe words are not enough, that we have to work to make the world a better place, not just talk about it. We find ways to make the world a better place through our actions. This is the church of the helping hands.

Next time someone asks you what Unitarian Universalists believe, you can say we believe in love, we believe in searching for truth, and we believe in making the world a better place. Our doctrine is love, our sacrament is the search for truth, our prayer is service.

Jean

LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Sunday School

The fourth-grade curriculum in RE this year is "Spirit of Adventure-UU Identity." Through topics such as sports, medicine, food, science, exploring, building, and web of life, we are learning about famous Unitarians Universalists and their contributions to the world. Along with learning about what these people have done, we are discussing how their achievements relate to one of our seven UU principles.

We may have heard of many of these people, but did not know they were UUs. For example: Eric Heiden, gold medalist speed skater, and Christopher Reeve, equestrian and actor, were discussed in our sports sessions. Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, was discussed in our medicine ses-

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sion. In our food sessions we learned about Henry Bergh (doggy treats), the founder of the ASPCA, and Fannie Farmer, who introduced the concept of standard measurements in recipes, changing cooking to a domestic science. In science we discussed the inventors Alexander Graham Bell and Tim Berners-Lee, the MIT scientist who is credited with inventing the World Wide Web. We learned that all these people had a foundation in UU Principles that related to accomplishing their life's work.

We also learned about Frank Lloyd Wright for our building session. We learned how he designed buildings in harmony with nature and how this relates to our UU principle that respects the interdependence of all existence. The discussion was followed by a construction activity. The children enjoyed building houses out of graham crackers and icing. Architectural details were added with cereal and candies. We also discovered some of the same frustrations that Mr. Wright had making his buildings structurally sound.

YUCKIs (High Schoolers)

See Page 13 for details about the Feb. 8 Coffee House.

The YUCKIs are looking for donations of interesting "trash" for an art project at the March Lepre-CON. "Trash" might include electronics, strange-shaped glass bottles, a broken guitar. These were some of the interesting things the youth made into art last year. Check attics and basements for funny cast-offs and contact a YUCKI or one of their advisors about donating.

YUCKIs also are seeking church members with interesting and fun skills, and/or topics of conversation, who would be willing to run workshops during the Lepre-CON, March 8.

Workshops are for JPD high schoolers and last approximately one and a half hours. Former workshops have included duct tape art, Irish potato-making and geocaching 101 (technologically updated scavenger-hunting). What can YOU share with our youth?

Adult Religious Education – R.E., It's Not Just for Kids!

The Adult R.E. Program keeps on growing. Here's what's coming up.

Sunday Morning Forums. Forums start at 9. Bring your morning beverages and ideas to share. If you need child care, contact Jean Campbell, 610-566-4853, Ext. 3, or dre@uucdc.org.

Topics and facilitators for coming Forums:

- Jan. 27, "Living Through Loss," Loretta Orndorff.
- Feb. 3, "Work," Patti Fiske.
- Feb. 10, "The Gospel According to the Simpsons," Charlie Pell.
- Feb. 17, "Change and Managing It," Mark Bernstein.
- Feb. 24, "Affirmation," Loretta.
- March 1, "Humor," Patti.

The Road to Boston. (See "Explorations in UU Heritage," below.) After Sunday Services throughout February, members of the Adult R.E. Team will offer information about the April 24-27 trip and will accept applications for accommodations in Boston.

During a Trip Information Session at noon Feb. 24 in the Lounge, they'll review the activities, options and schedule. They'll also offer brochures and a digital slide show to display our accommodations at the Walker Center.

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The itinerary includes UUA headquarters, Beacon Street, gorgeous Walden Pond and Concord, lobster, the first Unitarian and Universalist churches, Harvard Divinity School and Cambridge, and Boston's Heritage Trail.

We think this will be a unique group experience for discovery, fellowship and fun. Our arrangements are extremely cost-efficient. This is a first for UUCDC and we're pretty excited about it.

For more information or to sign up, contact Jean Campbell 610-566-4853, dre@uucdc.org.

Explorations in UU Heritage

The following workshops are offered to enhance the experience of those going on the trip to Boston April 24-27, but the sessions are open to everyone, and are *not* required for the Boston group.

"What Is Faith?" is a workshop that Bryan Boosz will facilitate twice, from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 6, and 12:15 to 2:15 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 10 (the YUCKIs will host a soup lunch fundraiser before that session).

For many people, "faith" connotes a belief in something. And for some, that something may be God or the creed of a religion. Is faith something we possess – something we do or do not have? Can one choose to have faith? And, in what way is faith the means by which religious movements emerge?

This workshop is adapted from the curriculum "Our Unitarian Universalist Story." To register, contact Jean Campbell, 610-566-4853, Ext. 3, or dre@uucdc.org. Please indicate the date you will attend and whether you need child care.

"Four Apostles of Unitarian Universalism" is a workshop that Rick Gross will facilitate from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 23. (Please bring your own lunch!)

William Ellery Channing, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Parker and James Luther Adams are four of the most influential contributors to the evolution of Unitarian Universalism. This workshop will focus on the kinds of theological issues addressed by each of these men and the contributions they made.

Rick Gross, a member of UUCDC until moving to Camp Hill in the summer, created this workshop specifically for our Explorations in UU Heritage series. Those who attended Rick's workshops last year were captivated by his thought-provoking presentations, and we're grateful Rick is offering to make the trip to Media.

Although it's best to catch the start of the workshop, if you are able to attend only a portion of the four hours, you are still encouraged to attend. To register and request child care, contact Jean Campbell, 610-566-4853, Ext. 3, or dre@uucdc.org.

"UU Roots in the United States," facilitated by Rick Gross, is coming in March.

More Offerings!

"ChiWalking" returns! Instructor Craig Strimel will hold an information session at 12:15 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 3. Classes will be held here at 11 a.m. Saturdays, Feb. 9 through March 1.

Craig writes: "ChiWalking is a revolutionary technique for learning to walk with greater efficiency and less risk of injury. Whether you want to begin a new walking program, already enjoy walking, or have developed problems with walking, this program will be a fun jump-start to a regular exercise routine that is safe and truly energizing... ChiWalking is based on the ancient practice of T'ai Chi, a Chinese martial art that focuses on balance and moving the body in the ways it is intended."

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The fee for this class, back from last year by popular demand, is \$100. To sign up, contact Jean Campbell, 610-566-4853, Ext. 3, or dre@uucdc.org.

“Talk So Your Kids Will Listen, Listen So Your Kids Will Talk” will be facilitated by Laura Cleland from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 13 through March 26.

This popular parenting program is returning from last year. Its goal is to help participants and the members of their workshop groups communicate more effectively with children. Each session will introduce proven skills that will help parents cope with their children’s negative feelings, engage their children’s willing cooperation, discipline without hurting or alienating, help their children develop a positive and realistic self-image, and foster a family atmosphere of love and respect.

Child care will be available. To register, contact Jean Campbell, 610-566-4853, Ext. 3, or dre@uucdc.org.

Two classes will dovetail with Rev. Peter’s recent work groups on end-of-life planning.

Both offerings will be facilitated by Linda Galbraith, a UUCDC member who has extensive hospice experience, and Judy Lemezis, a Heartland Hospice counselor who has led cancer support-group meetings here.

“How to Talk About Difficult Times” is scheduled for 6:45 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19. What difficulties are you experiencing? How do you respond to others going through a trying time? This will be an interactive session for those undergoing their own difficulties and for those who want to support others.

“Owning Your Life” will be scheduled in March. When life throws you a curve ball, how do you respond? Many times, others think they know what is best when you are going through a challenging time. This session will explore how to live your life the way *you* want to live it, both in good times and bad.

To register for either class and to request child care, contact Jean Campbell, 610-566-4853, Ext. 3, or dre@uucdc.org.

“Building Your Own Theology,” led by Rev. Peter, will run weekly on Thursdays, March 20 through May 29.

“Sessions on Relationship,” led by Larry Schwab, are planned for April. Larry will lead two sessions – “What Makes Good Relationship?” and “How to Pick Up the Pieces and Go On.”

Labyrinth anyone? There is interest in planning a labyrinth here at UUCDC. Do you like meditative walks?

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about appropriate pledge amounts.

The best advice, though, is to be as generous as you can, think of how your pledge can make a difference at UUCDC, and come on out on March 2 to celebrate our efforts to keep our spiritual “work in progress” on track!

Bryan Booszy

Notes From the Board: The Budgeting Process Has Begun

In January the Board began its budget process. In addition to talking about the general operating budget, the Board reviewed budget proposals from many of the different organizations within the church. Based on budget requests, the Board will send a fund-raising target to the Fund Drive committee. The Board will then be able to make final budget decisions after the pledge numbers come in.

One of the proposed budgets was for Lay Leadership development. This budget would help UUCDC members attend the General Assembly and UU University, as well as bring speakers to UUCDC for training. The model of policy governance being developed relies on strong lay leadership, and that means stronger programs in general.

The Board would like to thank and acknowledge the contributions of the following persons:

--Jean Shatoff, the Hagel-Riethman family, Neil Goldstein, Jean Wallace, and John and Nicole Jurceka for serving as ushers and greeters at the Christmas Eve services.

--Tabby Parsons and Laura Fetterman for leading the large RE program on January 20.

--Bea Scholz for organizing the coming adult RE trip to Boston

— Bob McClennen for working with contractors to find the source of our roof leaks and for making plans for winter parking on Sundays.

Katy Lynn

News From Rose Tree Day School

The last month has been full of fun, and work, for Rose Tree Day School.

We survived our accreditation inspection by the National Assn. for the Education of the Young Child. We're waiting for up to three months to hear whether the school passed and will be nationally recognized for the next five years. It was an arduous process, and we all grew a lot from the reflection and self-assessments.

Our Holiday Show was a great success, but we missed having Ms. Theresa with us, as she was celebrating and recovering from the birth of Liam Elliot early on Dec. 21. Mom and baby are healthy and happy, and have even visited the school already!

The new year is bringing a lot of excitement and

change. In January, we were filling the halls with winter creations, and dreaming of real snowfalls to play in. We enjoyed exciting music and gym classes as we danced and sang snow songs and made pretend snow angels. We all tried to get a lot of exercise, indoors and out.

Outside, the school was awaiting the installation of a cedar playground fence, as the old one has seen better times.

We hope you stop by to take a look at all the things happening both inside and outside the spaces we share with UUCDC.

Debby Richardson

Bernstein and Harris Elected New UUCDC Top Officers

Mark Bernstein and Donna Harris were unanimously elected president and vice president, respectively, of the UUCDC Board of Trustees at the Congregational Meeting, January 13.

They will serve for a one-year term starting May 2008.

Bernstein has served two terms on the Board of Trustees and is currently serving as vice president. Harris also has served on the Board for two years and has been an active volunteer in RE.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

First Share-the-Plate a Success!

UUCDC's first monthly Share-the-Plate Project raised \$339 for Interfaith Hospitality Network.

The contributions will be used, along with the volunteer help members are providing, to aid families transition from homelessness.

On the second Sunday in February, the Share-the-Plate contributions will be shared with the Task Force on Hunger, a program that is part of this church's effort to feed more than 100 people on the

second Saturday of each month at the Life Center of Eastern Delaware County for the homeless. The donations will be used to buy food, which UUCDC volunteers will prepare and serve at the Upper Darby center.. A big thanks for all who contributed in January.

Patti Fiske,
Chair, Social Justice Committee

Come Join the Katrina Relief Trip Scheduled for April

You're invited to join UUCDC volunteers as they head to the Gulf Coast for the fourth Katrina Relief Work Trip in April.

Some of the volunteers will be in the area April 11-20, although the work with New Orleans Area Habitat for Humanity in St. Bernard Parish will take place April 15-18.

Those who are able to remain the entire time can start with a fun weekend at the French Quarter Festival, Friday, April 11, through Sunday, April 13. The festival offers music ranging from country to zydeco to jazz, and food booths serving everything from crawfish pasta to alligator sausage.

Habitat doesn't offer work on Monday, April 14. Trip organizers are seeking work for Saturday, April 19, but that can also be a day to tour New Orleans and/or relax after a strenuous but rewarding week.

St. Bernard Parish, a county just southeast of New Orleans, suffered significant hurricane damage to

100% of its residential and commercial buildings.

The good news is that all of the homes have been gutted and stripped down to the studs. Volunteers have cleared debris from 2,047 homes. We'll refurbish residences as part of the St. Bernard Project. Although skilled workers are greatly appreciated, Habitat says unskilled volunteers are always needed.

Our group will stay at "Camp Hope," a converted school where bunk beds and meals will be provided for \$30 a day, or \$150 a week. To learn more, check out www.Habitat-NOLA.org.

Participants must register with both Habitat and Camp Hope, and must reserve their own flights.

Family Group Features Foreign Flavors and Fun on Feb. 2

Please join the UUCDC Family and Friends Group for an evening of international food and festivities on Saturday, Feb. 2, from 6 to 9 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Celebrate our diverse cultural heritage by bringing one or two ethnic/international items for the potluck buffet: entree, salad/side, dessert or beverage (OK, don't worry about thinking of an ethnic beverage -- soda or juice will do!). Family-oriented activities will have a Chinese New Year theme. All are welcome!

IN OUR BACKYARD

A Creative Examination of Aging at 2 S. Jersey Retreats

The Murray Grove center in South Jersey invites you to "Seasons of Sage-ing: Equinox Retreats" in May and November .

Recognizing aging is part of the natural process of life, participants will reflect on the challenges and blessings of their life journeys. The paradoxes of spring and autumn will be explored through images of life's seasons – birth, growth, death, and new birth – with poetic beauty.

You may attend one or both of the two-part Equinox retreat pro-

grams, May 15-18 and Nov. 6-9 at Murray Grove. That beautiful spot at Lanoka Harbor, where the Pine Barrens meet Barnegat Bay, is where John Murray preached the first Universalist sermon in America.

Each program will begin with a meditation and journal-writing exercises. Contemplative practices will complement interactive learning opportunities and group sharing experiences. Participants will engage in creative activities led by artists using various media, from poetry and art

to yoga and mandalas.

The leader is UU minister Pat Hoertdoerfer, one of 300 Sage-ing Leaders in United States and Canada who have been trained in a new philosophy of aging developed by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, author of *From Age-ing to Sage-ing*.

For more information on Pat, the artists who will be joining her, and the details of the Seasons of Sage-ing program, go to murraygrove.org, call 609-693-5558, or e-mail murraygrove@murraygrove.org.

Yo, UUUCDCERS

Attention to Detail Is Appreciated When You Write a Check to Church

Jamie Cancro, the Depositing Treasurer, has some reminders for us:

When you write a check to the church, please make sure to state in the Memo line what the payment is for – such as "pledge 07-08" or "plate cash." Also, please use "UUCDC" in the Pay to the Order Of line. (It's not necessary to write out the entire church name, which barely fits anyway!)

And note: Our bank will not accept third-party checks, meaning you are not allowed to endorse over to UUCDC a check that another party has made payable to you.

Any questions should go to cancroja@gmail.com.

Calendar Girls of 2008 Earn Money for UUCDC

"This is the first time in seven months that I haven't been doing something related to the Calendar Girls."

That is what Nancy Gibbons said when she handed over the results of her brainchild, Calendar Girls of 2008, each month beautifully depicted by all those luscious UUCDC femmes of a certain age.

The result for UUCDC was a windfall of \$1,830 through the sale of the calendar.

It was Nancy's idea, her creativity, and photography that made all the women who agreed to take

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The question now is: How will you contribute to make it happen?

Some religious institutions calculate costs, and set a specific amount of dues required to be a member. We don't do that.

What do we ask you? We ask you to consider what is needed.

We ask you to think about what UUCDC means to you -- and what it means that UUCDC is here for everyone in Delaware County who needs a religious community like ours.

And then, we ask you to give as generously as you can.

Yours, in the spirit of giving,

Jody

ARTS, BOOKS & MUSIC

South African Writer is Choice for February Book Club

UUCDC's Book Club will read Doris Lessing's "The Golden Notebook" for its meeting February 29 at 7:30 p. m.

Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature for 2007, Lessing has created in "The Golden Notebook," a fictional collection of four notebooks that detail different parts of the life of the main character, Anna. The notebooks cover her life in Africa, her political activities, a personal diary, and a fictionalized version of her life.

In January, the Book Club discussed, "What Is the What," by Dave Eggers, the autobiography

of Valentino Achak Deng in novelized form.

Deng was one of the Lost Boys of Sudan, a member of the Dinka people, who survived a brutal assault on his remote village by Arab Baggara raiders. By a stroke of luck, Deng escapes and joins a group of boys that are marched out of Sudan and into Ethiopia. The story also reports on the difficulties Deng has adjusting to America, where he lives as a sponsored refugee. Eggers is donating all proceeds from the sale of this national bestseller toward helping Sudanese people in Sudan and America. We invite you

to read and support his work.

The Book Club meets once a month on Fridays at 7:30 p. m. to discuss interesting books selected by members of the group. This is an ongoing endeavor to engage in friendly and stimulating adult conversation and is open to all adults. Like to read and talk about what you have read? Come, join us!

Enter "book club" in the UUCDC website search engine or see the schedule on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall for specific dates and times.

YUCKIs Hold Second Annual Aquarius Coffee House

Great food, drinks and fun are planned for UUCDCers, family and friends for the YUCKIs second Annual Aquarius Coffeehouse, February 8, 7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

It's also a time to sing, dance, put on skits, and tell jokes. If UUCDCers would like to perform, contact a YUCKI or one of their advisors. We are looking forward to a full evening of exceptional (and not-so-

exceptional) talent.

Entrance fee is \$5; keep in mind 20 percent of all YUCKI fundraising in the 2007-2008 church year goes for relief projects in Darfur.

Bravo! 10th Annual Opera Gala is March 15

The Arts Council is pleased to sponsor the 10th Annual Opera Gala at 7:30 p.m. March 15 in Fellowship Hall.

The \$10 admission includes an evening of opera arias and ensembles sung by local vocalists accompanied by William Gatens. Admission also entitles you to

delectable snacks and set-ups from the sumptuous feast table! Feel free to bring a beverage with some kick.

The candlelit cabaret setting is comfortable and informal for the audience, but the singers will be dressed to the nines out of respect for the music.

Proceeds from the Opera Gala benefit the Arts Council. The event grew out of the more informal "quarterly" cabaret entertainment.

Small Group Ministry: Fair Trade Coffee Goes to MicroFinance

This is a story about the evolution of our Small Group Ministry's Fair Trade Coffee sales at UUCDC. SGMs are asked to develop outreach service projects. These projects help our groups develop and guard against becoming too insular. The project of ordering and selling coffee is a good project and it's getting better through a MicroFinance project with Main Line Unitarian Church.

Fair Trade Coffee began at UUCDC at an SGM meeting when we read and discussed an article in UUWorld on modern slavery. My SGM meeting was disturbed and bought books on slavery, discussed and then donated to the UUCDC library. That didn't seem to be sufficiently proactive. Later, we saw an article on Fair Trade Coffee. (At that time Media was not a Fair Trade town.) We decided that selling Fair Trade Coffee at UUCDC would be a way to make a difference in the lives of small farmers. By joining the UU Service Committee's Coffee Project and buying fairly-traded products from Equal Exchange, we help ensure that the growers receive a fair price. Beyond the fact that the farmers are paid a premium above world community prices, the label means that coffee was grown and exported by a democratically-run cooperative of small family farmers and that direct financing was available to the farmers.

Through the efforts of the Monday SGM meetings, UUCDC has sold Fair trade coffee, tea, chocolate and cocoa for over two years. Some of the profits allow us to provide FTC at no cost to the church,

coffee hour and other church functions, such as memorials. We have additional profits and we are investing this money to help sponsor a Village Bank that will extend microloans or microcredit to people who lack access to regular financial services.

MicroFinancing can make a big difference to many people, and this is how it worked for one woman who was part of an early microbank. She made beautiful dresses for little girls. Each dress took a week to make by hand and she struggled to make ends meet. With a sewing machine and additional materials she purchased with her loans, she now makes 23 dresses a week. This income helps move her family out of poverty. That's the potential of MicroFinancing.

Main Line Unitarian Church has created four Microbanks under its Central American Project. The minimum is \$5,000 to establish a bank. UUCDC is adding \$500 to the fund-raising for their fifth Microbank. It seems fitting to re-invest our profits in a Central American village bank, as much of the coffee and, therefore, the profits, comes from that area. My Monday evening Small Group Ministry group is pleased to participate in establishing a MicroFinancing option that will help so many people.

Phoebe Cassidy,
co-chair, Monday Night Small Group Ministry

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part in this venture look so fabulous.

Nancy claims all she used for lighting was an overhead light bulb. (What!) She also oversaw every last detail of putting the calendar together.

Nancy said: "The Calendar Girls of 2008 thank all who have 'supported' us in our endeavor." As for 2009--we'll just have to wait and see.

Recapping the Successful Auction

Our recent auction fund-raiser was wonderful evening. Everyone had a fine time and ... oh yeah, we raised \$15,800, which met our financial goal.

A big "Thank You" goes out to everyone who aided the success of this important event -- contributors, volunteers, and all those who shared the evening (especially those who left with skinny wallets).

If you offered a service, dinner or adventure as an auction item, you should have received a notice of who won it. If you have not received that information, please contact Skip Seelaus, 610-565-0331.

Concert at Unitarian Germantown in February

The Unitarian Society of Germantown will be host to a concert by Jeannie Gagne on Feb. 23 at 8 p.m. She is voice professor at Berklee College of Music in Boston, where she teaches a variety of styles. She has performed with Philip Glass, comedians Penn and Teller, and reggae performer Franklin Paul, and was the singer for the soundtrack for the feature film "Anima Mundi" (1993). She has also recorded two albums, "Wide Open Heart" and "Blues me, Baby." She is music director of the UU Society in Middleboro, MA and was part of the team that created the new hymnal, "Singing the Journey."

THIS, I BELIEVE / Mardys Leeper

From the Editors,

This is the second installment of the occasional series This, I Believe. We invite you to send us a concise statement of your own core belief. We hope that through these short essays we'll get to know each other better, and we'll enjoy provocative food for thought. Please submit your work to focus@uucdc.org. It should run between 350 and 500 words. For the full guidelines – and for an easy, one-step way to submit your work to the FOCUS – go to <http://uucdc.org/thisibelieve.html>. For more information, contact Bette Austin or Neil Goldstein.

I cradled that skinny, bony baby on my lap, day after day, praying to a God whose very existence I had questioned for the prior decade. My prayers were as long and convoluted as my sorrow was deep. Why me? Why was my little baby on the brink of death? As time unraveled, she began to thrive, but new health problems surfaced repeatedly. My prayers got shorter and to the point: “God, you gave her to me, now what do you want me to do for her?”

That essential question forced me to reevaluate my faith. It brought me to read UU greats, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, and take solace in his admonition to “Place yourself in the middle of the stream of power and wisdom that animates all whom it floats, and, without effort, you will be impelled to truth, to right, and a perfect contentment.” I shortened that to “Go with the flow.” Try not to fight what came my way, but find the most natural ways to deal with it. Relaxation, meditation, prayer, all showed ways gently to find the most natural solutions to life’s difficulties, if I would listen.

For answers, I found many sources: Our UU Purposes and Principles challenge us to look in many places for ever-unfolding truths. The Sanctuary was at the core of the search, particularly at Sunday services, which allow for listening, contemplating, sharing, and hope. During the rest of the week, I found that answers abound from books, to games, to organizations, to people.

Having two beautiful little girls, one of them a painfully sick baby, somehow grounded me and compelled me to find a path. The truth and direction one day might differ from the next, but I kept trying to listen and to move forward one step at a time. No place would have allowed me to experience such a breadth of religious views over time without expulsion, other than a Unitarian Universalist Church, so I continued searching guiltlessly.

My beliefs are still evolving and unfolding. However, I now firmly believe that there is an underlying force for creation, for “positivity,” for the Greater Good. Working together we can maximize what is good for every individual and for humanity as a whole. That belief drove me to work hard with my children and family, with my students in the School District of Philadelphia, and with the Social Justice Committee at UUCDC. That belief helps me sustain the faith that my youngest daughter will find her way as an adult, despite the difficulties in her life. That belief drives me to be a better communicator with my oldest daughter and to be a better grandmother. That belief frames what organizations I belong to, how I behave with all my family, whom I vote for, who my friends are. My daily goal is to make my life flow in harmony with that force for GOoD.

Mardys Leeper



Unitarian Universalist Church of Delaware County

145 W. Rose Tree Road, Media, PA 19063

Focus

February 2008

Committee on Ministry Plans Listening Sessions

feel we're adequately meeting the needs of our members through pastoral care, Small Group Ministry and the Caring Committee? Peter is interested to hear your honest opinion about whatever aspect of church life you might like to speak about. Each discussion will be facilitated by a member of the Committee on Ministry.

No sign-up is necessary, just drop in on either date.

In its effort to support the shared ministry of UU/DC and to maintain open communications among us all, the Committee on Ministry is sponsoring two Listening Sessions with Rev. Peter in February.

Peter has expressed his desire to make himself available to everyone and to hear how people feel things are going at church so far this year.

The first Listening Session is February 24, noon-1 p. m. and the second, February 26, 7:30-8:30 p. m.

Do you like the changes that Peter has made to our Sunday service? What's your reaction to our intergenerational services? Do you

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Calendar

February 2008*

Date	Name of Event	Time			
2/1	Imbolg- Pagan Ritual	7:00 PM	2/9	Thespis Move In	9:00 AM
				Madrassa	10:00 AM
2/2	COA Retreat w/Mentors			Chi Walking	11:00 AM
	Madrassa	10:00 AM		MS Youth Activity	5:00 PM
	The Road to Boston	10:00 AM			
	Family Group	5:30 PM	2/10	RE Family Breakfast	8:00 AM
2/3	COA Retreat w/Mentors			Adult RE	9:00 AM
	Adult RE	9:00 AM		Worship Service & RE	10:30 AM
	Worship Service & RE	10:30 AM		Sermon Discussion	11:45 AM
	Sermon Discussion	11:45 AM		COA Mentors	12:00 PM
	Chi Walking Info Session	12:00 PM		COA/YUCKI Soup Lunch	12:00 PM
	Gun Violence Group	12:00 PM		What is Faith?	12:00 PM
	Adult Ed Planning	12:30 PM		Personnel Committee	12:45 PM
	SGM Facilitators	2:00 PM		Thespis	2:00 PM
	Independent Catholics	6:00 PM		Independent Catholics	6:00 PM
	YUCKI	6:00 PM		YUCKI	6:00 PM
				Social Justice Forum	7:00 PM
2/4	Voice Lesson Rental	8:30 AM	2/11	Voice Lesson Rental	8:30 AM
	Muslims	4:00 PM		Thespis	6:00 PM
	Thespis	7:00 PM		Board of Trustees	7:15 PM
	RE Council	7:15 PM			
2/5	Yoga	5:45 PM	2/12	Thespis	5:30 PM
	Medians Rental	6:00 PM		Yoga	5:45 PM
	Social Justice Committee	7:15 PM		DBSA	7:00 PM
2/6	Independent Catholics	6:00 PM	2/13	Living With Cancer Support Group	11:30 AM
	Muslims	6:00 PM		Muslims	6:00 PM
	MCC Rehearsal	7:00 PM		Thespis	6:00 PM
	What is Faith?	7:00 PM		MCC Rehearsal	7:00 PM
	Mission Committee	7:30 PM		Talk/Listen Class	7:00 PM
2/7	SGM	1:00 PM	2/14	Chorus Rehearsal	7:00 PM
	YUCKIS Coffee House Rehearsal	5:00 PM		Parent Support Group	7:00 PM
	Chorus Rehearsal	7:00 PM		SGM	7:00 PM
2/8	YUCKI Coffee House Set Up	3:00 PM	2/15	Thespis Set Up	6:00 PM
	YUCKI Coffee House	7:00 PM		Thespis Performance	8:00 PM



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*Printed January 21, 2008

February 2008

2/16	Madrassa	10:00 AM	2/24	Sunday School Assistants	8:30 AM
	Chi Walking	11:00 AM		Adult RE	9:00 AM
	Thespi Set Up	6:00 PM		Worship Service & RE	10:30 AM
	Thespi Performance	8:00 PM		Sermon Discussion	11:45 AM
2/17	Adult RE	9:00 AM		Listening Session	12:00 PM
	Worship Service & RE	10:30 AM		Road to Boston Info Session	12:00 PM
	Sermon Discussion	11:45 AM		Thespi Set Up	1:00 PM
	RE Planning	12:15 PM		Thespi Performance	2:00 PM
	SGM	12:30 PM		COA	6:00 PM
	Thespi Set Up	1:00 PM		Independent Catholics	6:00 PM
	Thespi Performance	2:00 PM		YUCKI	6:00 PM
	COA	6:00 PM	2/25	Voice Lesson Rental	8:30 AM
	Independent Catholics	6:00 PM		Coordinating Council	7:15 PM
	YUCKI	6:00 PM	2/26	Yoga	5:45 PM
2/18	Voice Lesson Rental	8:30 AM		DBSA	7:00 PM
	DRE-AC	7:00 PM		Fund Drive Committee	7:30 PM
	Mission Committee	7:30 PM		Listening Session	7:30 PM
2/19	Yoga	5:45 PM	2/27	Living With Cancer Support Group	11:30 AM
	How to Talk About Difficult Times	7:30 PM		Muslims	6:00 PM
2/20	Thespi Set Up	6:00 PM		District 54 AA	7:00 PM
	MCC Rehearsal	7:00 PM		MCC Rehearsal	7:00 PM
	Talk/Listen Class	7:00 PM		Talk/Listen Class	7:00 PM
	Thespi Performance	8:00 PM		Worship Associates	7:00 PM
2/21	Chorus Rehearsal	7:00 PM	2/28	Chorus Rehearsal	7:00 PM
	Mission Committee	7:30 PM	2/29	Rental	6:00 PM
2/22	Thespi Set Up	6:00 PM		Book Group	7:30 PM
	Thespi Performance	8:00 PM			
2/23	Fund Drive Committee	9:00 AM			
	Madrassa	10:00 AM			
	Chi Walking	11:00 AM			
	Four Apostles	11:00 AM			
	Thespi Set Up	6:00 PM			
	Thespi Performance	8:00 PM			