

# FOCUS

December 2007

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](http://www.uucdc.org)

**E-mail:**

[churchoffice@uucdc.org](mailto: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

It seems impossible that the holiday season is upon us once again. Already I've seen plenty of homes decorated with colorful lights and, before you know it, our own faith home will be "decked out" for the holidays. I hope you can join us for our annual "Deck the Halls" service on December 9, when we'll be decorating the church and celebrating the many holidays and holy days of the season.

When I think of the holidays in December, the first one that comes to my mind is Christmas. I was raised in the Catholic church, where the birth of Jesus was celebrated as a miracle. This upbringing, together with my enculturation in a predominantly Christian country of the West, has created in me strong associations between Christmas and the December holiday season. That having been said, it is also important that we recognize that the upcoming holiday season is not limited to those with a Christian heritage or belief. Although a minor holiday on the Jewish calendar, the traditions of Hanukkah are dear to many families. Earth-based religious traditions celebrate solstice, the day when the sun begins to make its long climb back into the sky after months of decline. And many African-Americans have begun to celebrate Kwanzaa as a mean of affirming their roots, their identity, and their connection to the African homeland of their ancestors. Our "Deck the Halls" service seeks to recognize, honor, and celebrate all these traditions.

Christmas can be a challenging time for some Unitarian Universalists, particularly those who have left the Christian denominations of their past in

*(Continued on page 2)*

## December Services

Dec. 2: Rev. Peter Friedrichs.

Dec. 9: Rev. Peter Friedrichs. This is our annual "Deck the Halls" Service, which includes multi-age workshops during which we decorate the church (see page 11 for details).

Dec. 16: A special musical service reflecting on Winter Gifts with Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* by the UUCDC Chorus.

Dec. 23: Holiday Pageant Service.

Dec. 24: Rev. Peter Friedrichs. Christmas Eve Services at 5 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Dec. 30: 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

**Liz Kievit,**  
Administrative Assistant

**Vicki Coupland,**  
Member Talent Coordinator

**Board of Trustees**

**Jody Malloy,**  
President

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**Lowell Young,**  
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**Julie Chuplis,**  
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**Donna Harris**

**Katy Lynn**

**Mike Mitchell**

**Bruce Wyman**

**From the Minister***(Continued from page 1)*

search of a less dogmatic and more accepting tradition, as well as those who arrived here from non-Christian backgrounds. In our search to become a truly multi-cultural congregation, we must be sensitive to the sensibilities of those who struggle with the "Christmas spirit," to make sure that they don't feel left on the fringes of our community at this time of year.

I am, however, also concerned about a troubling trend I've found in some UU churches. Sometimes, in our efforts to respect those who have either cast off or never held Christian beliefs, we can, inadvertently, discount and devalue those in our community who continue to align themselves with the life and teachings of Jesus. I dare say that some UU congregations are as hostile to Christianity as we find fundamentalist Christians are to our liberal beliefs. To be a welcoming and inclusive community requires us to respect and affirm the beliefs of all, including Christians.

Regardless of where you fall on the theological spectrum, I hope you can find room in your heart to recognize and celebrate the birth of this child, Jesus, who grew up to become a great leader and teacher. When we peel away the myths of the immaculate conception and the virgin birth, Christmas provides us with an opportunity to commemorate the birth of a man of great vision and purity of heart. Christmas also reminds us that the birth of every child is a miracle, and that within each child lies the seed of possibility: the possibility that this child -- any child, every child-- might lead us out of the wilderness, might transform the world into a more loving and compassionate place. The Christmas story is a story of hope: Hope for release from whatever bondage we find ourselves in; hope for reconciliation with those from whom we are separated; hope for our discovery of a star in the East that will lead us into a brighter future; hope that love will cast out fear and hate in our world. It is this hope that we all share at this time of year.

Now, and always, I wish you peace,

*Peter*

**FOCUS INFO:****Editors:**

Bette Austin  
& Neil Goldstein

**Production:**

Rina Jurceka

***The deadline for January is December 10.***

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.

Dec. 21. Come help!

**Staff Office Hours**

The staff members are generally in the office at the times listed below (though they do work other hours). They are also available to meet by appointment.

**Rev. Peter Friedrichs:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays

**Jean Campbell, Director of Religious Education:** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Mondays, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays

**Rina Jurceka, Administrator:** 12:30-4 p.m. Mondays, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 9—1 on Wednesdays

**Beth Youse, Music Director:** Available by appointment

## BOARD PERSPECTIVES: LET'S TALK ABOUT SPIRITUAL GROWTH

### From the President/Jody Malloy

While watching our daughters ice-skate at a recent birthday party, a mom whom I know asked me about my chalice necklace. She had never heard of Unitarian Universalism, so I briefly explained.

I started with our principles: Our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and acceptance of one another; the use of the democratic process; our goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all; and, of course, our respect for the interdependent web of life.

I answered her question about belief in God and Jesus with an explanation of our Fourth Principle, “a free and responsible search for truth and meaning,” and talked about each of us being on our own journey, and supporting one another on our journeys. Then I proudly told her of some of the famous UU’s, starting with some signers of the Declaration of Independence.

My friend’s response was, “It’s funny that you talk about the signers of the Declaration of Independence. I was thinking that it sounded more like a political group than a religion.”

She said this in an honest, non-judgmental way. I was not hurt by it. But I was disappointed, and it got me thinking.

What did I say that made her react that way? Or, maybe more important, what was it I *didn't* say?

I realize that I had focused my description on the “easy stuff”: acceptance of others, world peace, caring for our Earth. By “easy,” I don’t mean easy to do, but easy to talk about. It wasn’t until my friend asked about belief in God that I talked about our individual journeys. And even then, I probably didn’t use the terms “spirituality” or “spiritual growth.”

Why don’t I easily talk about UUCDC as a place where I go for spiritual growth? Our church is just that -- it is where I go to grow my soul.

I think part of the reason I don’t easily talk about

spiritual growth when describing UUism is that we don’t generally talk about it with one another. We go to church on Sundays, attending the service or teaching children’s Religious Education classes. We participate in social-justice projects. We listen, we act. From those activities, we begin to learn to act out of love and to pay attention to what is important. We grow our souls.

But we don’t continue that growth by talking to one another about it.

We have some structured opportunities for such talk: adult R.E., discussions after each sermon, Small Group Ministry. But relatively few of us participate in those. And we rarely have informal discussions about spirituality with one another.

I came to this realization earlier this year, after I read a couple of books that touched me deeply. I wanted to talk about those books, and the spiritual shift that I felt within me. I longed to be in conversation with others who had experienced something similar, and to discover what they had chosen to do in their daily lives to honor and follow that shift. But, other than talking with our minister, I felt very alone.

I realized that even though I have many wonderful relationships within our community, they generally do not include this kind of deep, meaningful conversation. I longed for, still long for, companionship with my fellow UUCDCers on my spiritual journey.

As we continue our yearlong all-congregation process of determining our mission, I hope that our discussions go beyond the “easy” (albeit important) topics that are already part of our daily language. I hope we also find the language to address the harder topic of how we embrace our Third UU Principle: encouraging spiritual growth in one another.

Yours in faith,

*Jody*

## How to Help Endow UUCDC's Future

Many of you are aware that an independently governed Endowment Fund was approved by the congregation at its meeting in May 2007. The fund's main objective is to assure the church's long-range stability by enabling it to manage and survive financial emergencies and to finance special projects that further its mission.

To those ends, the monies being held in the endowment account were transferred to a separate mutual-fund account that is being managed by the Endowment Committee, made up of Ed Mathis, Karen McClennen and Elizabeth Lincoln. These funds have been supplemented by a memorial gift as well as monies resulting from the Board-approved recategorizing of certain "Restricted Funds."

The Endowment Fund must have a principal value of at least \$100,000 before any distributions can be made from it. Because the current balance is about \$14,600, it will be some time before that will happen. Consequently, it is the

## Notes From the Board

As most of you know, this has been a very busy month for UUCDC. As a congregation, we are growing and reaching out in new directions all the time. In order to support this growth, the Board continues its work in developing a policy governance plan. This has included work toward developing a new administrative structure and a Board-Staff relationship. It envisions a new administrative structure and relationships that will allow staff to be more empowered to make decisions on a day-to-day basis. To do this, it is also developing the team's limitations, so they have guidance and direction about their decisions.

As part of this process, the Board also is engaging in a SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This analysis allows the Board to examine closely our assets and how they can be used to address areas that need more attention.

committee's primary objective to build the fund as quickly as possible. So we propose to church members this partial list of options for aiding the growth process:

- Leadership gifts of \$500 or more
- Memorial gifts
- Gifts of appreciated securities
- Provisions in wills and Living Trusts
- Designation of UUCDC as a beneficiary of an IRA or other Qualified Retirement Plan

Remember, that is only a partial list. In a future FOCUS we will provide details about both how to make these types of gifts and the advantages to you and UUCDC of doing so.

*Ed Mathis*

At the Board meeting, members discussed the limited parking, worship and classroom space that exists on Sunday mornings. The Board has authorized the staff to form a committee that will lead the congregation through a process to determine the best way to address this challenge. The committee will not begin its work until after the mission-covenant work and policy governance conversion has been completed at the end of this church year.

Thanks are owed to everyone who participated in the Discovery Cafes held this Fall. An important part of policy governance is developing policies that guide the church's actions. These policies are based on the mission statement, so the mission statement that emerges from work done this year will be important for future decisions made by the UUCDC Board.

*Katy Lynn*

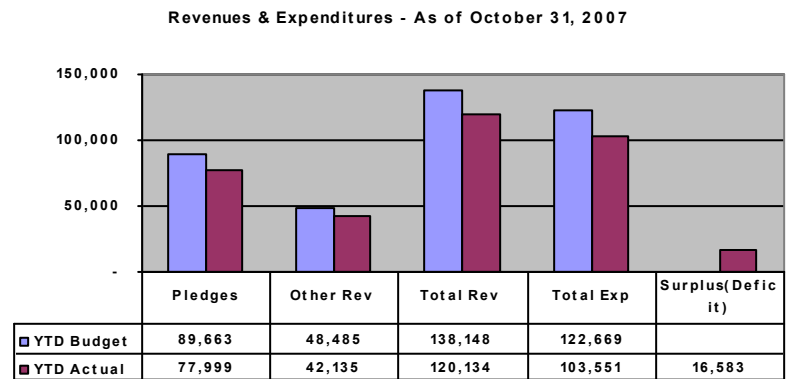
## Caring Corner

### Monthly Statement—How

This is the second of the monthly financial updates published in the FOCUS. It's part of the Board's effort to make thinking and talking about finances a regular part of being a church member, not just something that comes up once a year during the Fund Drive.

Each month there will be a bar graph like the one here. It allows you to see at a glance whether we are ahead of or behind budget in our collection of pledges and other sources of income, and whether we are ahead of or behind budget in expenditures.

The graph compares the year-to-date (YTD) budget with the YTD actual revenue and expenses — in this case, for the four-month period that ended Oct. 31. The "Surplus (Deficit)" bar shows net income (total revenue minus total expenses) for the YTD actual.



An important note about a fact that isn't shown on the graph: The "other revenue" amount of \$42,135 includes prior-year surpluses of \$23,219. Without those surpluses to draw upon, we would be running a deficit of \$6,636 instead of the \$16,583 surplus.

*Lowell Young*  
Treasurer

### For Those of a Certain Age—How to Donate From Your IRA

A special provision in the tax laws permits a person who is over 70.5 years of age to make charitable contributions directly from their IRAs. The advantage of doing so is that the distribution is not reported as taxable income to the donor.

While the donor cannot take a charitable contribution for the amount, this type of gift will benefit those who normally do not itemize deductions on their Form 1040, as well as those higher-

income taxpayers who have some of their itemized deductions phased out (disallowed). **This provision of the tax law expires on Dec. 31, 2007. If you want to make this type of gift, time is of the essence.**

For questions or assistance, contact any Endowment Committee member. (See article on page 4.)

*Ed Mathis*

## RE-FLECTIONS

JEAN CAMPBELL,  
DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### The Benefits of Intergenerational Services

Our church is lucky for many things. One of these is the R.E. Council. If you haven't already seen the article about the R.E. Mission/Vision statement written by Rick Cairncross, R.E. Council chair, please look at it. It's important to the R.E. Council that congregants deepen their understanding of, and the enthusiasm for, UUism and that they share their faith with the wider world.

R.E. pervades all aspects of congregational life. What we do, how we behave, does not go unnoticed by those around us in this faith community. A significant part of our UU education comes from our experience with each other. We absorb what happens and how we are treated. Whatever we experience while in our building and on our grounds becomes integrated into our being as Unitarian Universalists. Our children and youth don't stop hearing about UUism because they left the R.E. classroom, just as we adults don't stop being UUs because we left the Sanctuary or the UUCDC building.

The first listed vision of the R.E. Council is the "UUCDC R.E. program, an inclusive program inspiring all ages to become engaged in our Faith Community by embracing diversity and discovering common connections and interests." Our intergenerational services present us with the opportunity and challenge to live this vision and to be inclusive and embrace the diversity that we are.

Intergenerational services provide us with an opportunity to come together as a community, see each other face to face, and share a meaningful time together. As with any service, each person draws something different from this experience, something unique to that person. What a child is receiving may be very different from what an adult receives. It is also true, that the person who enjoys the service varies with age. Our young people may be drawing, watching bugs or playing with pipe cleaners. Someone else may sit very quietly. What is important is that we be respectful of each other's styles while we take in the worship experience and leave with a positive experience.

Living in this Faith Community takes effort, as does learning and worshipping in this community. I challenge you to think about your intentions when you choose to come or not on a particular Sunday. Each person is important to the worship experience; choosing to come benefits all of us. By participating and tolerating our differences, we learn to worship and to be together.

*Jean Campbell*

### New Mission and Vision Emerge from R.E. Retreat

At a recent retreat, the Religious Education Council redefined the Mission and Vision for the R.E. Program at UUCDC.

The new Mission Statement is: *The UUCDC Religious Education Program inspires and challenges persons of all ages to explore and engage the Unitarian Universalist Faith as they travel on their spiritual journey.*

To help fulfill this mission, we drafted a Vision Statement (below) to guide changes in the R.E. program. We believe this Vision reflects how a healthy UU congregation should encourage people of all ages to engage in spiritual development.

R.E. is not merely a way to keep the kids busy while parents attend services – R.E. is an integral part of Unitarian Universalism at all stages of life and all points along the spiritual journey. We will revisit the Mission and Vision after the congregation completes the Mission-Covenant process.

The new visions for the Religious Education Program are:

- It is inclusive, inspiring all ages to become engaged in our Faith Community by embracing diversity and discovering common connections and interests.

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- It teaches and clarifies the UU Faith through its Principles, Sources, History and Heritage. The program uses exploratory and experiential opportunities and curricula that encourage everyone's spiritual growth while supporting whole church programming.
- It provides guidance in the definition and articulation of personal faith based on the UU Principles and Sources. UU Faith is consciously and intentionally incorporated by individuals into their daily lives and the community.
- The whole church affirms the importance of Religious Education as an integral part of our religious community.
- Personal spiritual growth of UUCDC members, visitors and friends is a life-long process of engaging in church and community activities.
- We provide meaningful R.E. Chapel Worship that supports UU Faith.
- All members of the UUCDC community are confident in their UU identity and shameless about sharing their UU identity as they act in the greater community.  
The R.E. Council retreat was held on Oct. 20 at the Main Line UU church. The one-day session was facilitated by Cathy Muller, a former R.E. director from Columbia, Md. She did a great job helping the Council members define what is important to us.

## LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Sunday School

#### Fourth Grade Class Has "Gone to the Dogs"

Each month we describe one of the R.E. grade's lessons. In November, the fourth grade class was involved in man's best friend. Mary Beth Hoffman introduced her dog, Bailey, along with presenting a valuable lesson.

Mary Beth talked about Unitarian Henry Bergh, who founded the American SPCA in 1866. Before that time there were no animal cruelty laws in the U.S.

Bailey was happy to be petted, groomed and chased around the church lawn. At the end of the lesson, no one was sure who was more tired, Bailey, or the children, but it was a fun class and a plus to learn some denominational history as well.

Other fourth grade teachers are Jason Koelwyn, Chris and Honnie Townend. They follow the "Spirit of Adventure" and "Honor Mother Earth" curricula.

As far as we can tell, the children are enjoying their lessons and activities during R.E. Feel free to check our curricula. Thanks also go to teachers who generously dedicate some of their free time to teach the younger generation. See next month's FOCUS for the next featured grade.

#### Coming of Age (9<sup>th</sup> graders)

Congratulations to our '07-08 Mentorship Pairs. They are: Amy Bartlett and Liss Small, Megan Kennard and Barbara Wray, Anne Haines and Mary Beth Hoffman, Kohji Lincoln and Adam Preset, James Youngman and Sean Roach, Ian Campbell and Mark Shay, Kyle Yerger and Skip Seelaus. We wish them a happy journey together!

#### COA Holiday Bake Sale & Soup Lunch on Dec. 9!

Plan on staying after the Intergenerational "Deck the Halls" Sunday Service on Dec. 9. Have soup with friends old and new, and take some great baked goods home with you. Funds from the sale will support the COA Boston Heritage Trip in April.

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## YUCKIs (High Schoolers)

The YUCKIs thank everyone who bought pies from its second annual Great Pie Bake. They hope everyone enjoyed devouring the pies as much as the YUCKIs enjoyed making them. Thanks also to those who allowed use of their kitchens.

Two December fundraisers are:

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16

If you didn't get all the gifts you needed at the December 15th auction, or need a break, YUCKIs will baby-sit Sunday, December 16, 12 p. m. to 6 p. m. YUCKIs and children will have a good time watching movies, playing games, munching snacks.

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23

Time to try the YUCKIs' soup lunch of spectacular home-made soups, bread and drinks. Enjoy the company of church friends for an hour before heading off for the holidays while you support UUCDC's high school youth group. Twenty per cent of all 2007-2008 YUCKI fund-raising supports programs in Darfur.

## Adult Religious Education -- R.E. Is Not Just for Kids

Adult Religious Education continues to offer engaging classes and programs.

Forum sessions meet at 9 a.m. most Sundays in either the Lounge or the Youth Room. Please bring your breakfast beverage and join us!

Here are the next several Forum offerings.

Dec. 2: **“Simply Put – Bumper Stickers for Life,”** facilitated by Patti Fiske.

Dec. 9: **“The Gospel According to the Simpsons,”** facilitated by Charlie Pell.

Dec. 16: **“Hindsight and History,”** facilitated by Clement Smith.

Dec. 23: No forum.

Dec. 30: **“December Holidays – The Good, the Bad and the Ugly,”** facilitated by Loretta Orndorff.

Jan. 6: **“Learning From Failure,”** facilitated by Patti Fiske.

So far, our 2008 offerings are:

**“A Good Death,”** facilitated by Rev. Peter Friedrichs.

Is there such a thing as a “good death”? What does that term mean to you? What have been your experiences with death? And how do you feel about your own mortality?

This three-part workshop will explore these and other questions of death and dying, as well as provide participants with the opportunity to plan their own memorial services.

The workshop will be held on **Tuesdays, Jan. 8 through 22**. Bring your own lunch at 11:45 and we'll eat together before the session begins at 12:30. We plan to end at 2 p.m. To register and request child care, contact Jean Campbell, 610-566-4853 or [dre@uucdc.org](mailto:dre@uucdc.org).

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# SOCIAL JUSTICE

## Ways to Help Others at Holiday Time

For about 30 years, UUCDC has cooperated with the Delaware County Children and Youth Services agency to supply Christmas-time gifts and food for 10 of the poorest families in Chester and Upper Darby.

To participate in **Adopt-a-Family**, please sign up for clothes or gifts or food on lists in

the lobby. If you cannot shop, money contributions are welcome.

Clothes and gifts are due at church Sunday, Dec. 9; food is due Sunday, Dec. 16. .

Also, our Rose Tree Day School is a **Toys for Tots** drop-off location this year. Please place your

unwrapped new gift in one of the two barrels available. The last day to drop off a gift is Friday, Dec 14.

## *Getting Ready: 2nd Round of Hosting Homeless Families Starts Dec. 2*

From Dec. 2 through 9, UUCDC will host its second round of guests as part of the Delaware County Interfaith Hospitality Network. More about that in a bit.

First, we report about the week of Oct. 21-28, our initial week of hosting homeless families. We had two families consisting of nine people, seven of whom were children under age 8! That made for an active week for both guests and hosts.

Although we considered our first week to be a success, it was not without its bumpy spots. We learned many lessons along the way.

For example, we scheduled food donations before our guests had moved in. We learned quickly that neither family was a big breakfast eater, but by that point we had many times the amount of food we'd need for the rest of the week -- and there was more to come. We donated perishable

items to a local food bank and saved the other items.

Since then we have found that other churches would appreciate any leftovers we have, so we can pack up our remaining food next time and send it along with the families to their next home. This time we're planning on taking fewer donations of breakfast items but will also check in more closely as the week progresses to see how our food stock is shaping up.

During the week, we also heard from many of our volunteers about how they were feeling about their experiences. Many of us had some mixed feelings about the work we were doing and how we could be most effective in hosting. Some volunteers expressed a desire to talk about their feelings. In January we will be hosting, with Rev. Peter's help, a meeting for all of the church's IHN volunteers to reflect on our experiences and feelings, both as individuals

and as a congregation. For a scheduled date and time, please refer to the Orders of Service and the e-mail Digests in the new year.

As noted, we are gearing up for our second week of hosting. Our first week can be considered such a success because of the generosity of all the people -- both from UUCDC and our "supporting" congregation, Reformation Lutheran -- who donated items, food, money and time to our endeavor. This time, we have more than enough donated items, but we may need people willing to prepare food, and, most important, give their time to hosting our guests and making them feel at home in our church.

We will be looking to all of you to give again so we can work toward making this week even better than our first for those who will be staying with us.

*Tiffany Hanulec*

## Help Interweave Celebrate Solstice with Sacred Crossroads Dec. 21

As you may know, the Sacred Crossroads Coven holds its Sabbats here. Its Winter Solstice Ritual is especially beautiful, celebrating the longest night of the year and the return of the light. The coven's rituals are open to anyone on a positive path.

This year, the ritual comes on Friday, Dec. 21 at 7:30 p.m. All are invited to join UUCDC's Interweave Group on this special eve-

ning for an early dinner before attending the ritual.

Contact Interweave via [Interweave@uucdc.org](mailto:Interweave@uucdc.org)

Interweave works to provide an environment that is sensitive to and supportive of the presence, needs and concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and allied heterosexual members of our congregation and

the larger community.

Interweave wants to become a more visible and active presence in our church and the county. The group welcomes your participation.

*Jean Lenke*

## Lavender Women to Make Annual Visit to Longwood Gardens

This month, the Lavender Women will gather for a holiday visit to Longwood Gardens.

The Lavender Women – the les-

bian and bisexual women's social group supported by UUCDC's Interweave chapter -- will gather at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2, to take in the sights and enjoy the after-

noon together. Contact [Interweave@UUCDC.org](mailto:Interweave@UUCDC.org) for more information.

## Focus Wants Your Personal Essays For New Series, "This I Believe"

*From the Editors,*

We want you to tell us what you believe.

Specifically, we're starting an occasional series titled, very unoriginally, *This I Believe*. It's modeled on the National Public Radio series of that name. That series, in turn, is based on a program hosted by the great Edward R. Murrow in the 1950s.

We'd like to publish your concise statement of your core belief. We hope that through these short essays, we'll all get to know each other better. Plus, we'll get provocative food for thought.

Here are guidelines and ground rules, liberally adapted from the book *This I Believe* by Jay Allison and Dan Gediman:

**Tell a story:** Be specific. Ground your belief in the events of your life. Your story need not be heartwarming or gut-wrenching – it can even be funny – but it should be *real*. Consider moments when your belief was formed, tested or changed. Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and to the shaping of your beliefs.

**Be brief:** Your statement should be between 350 and 500 words. The relatively short length forces you to focus on the belief that is central to your life.

**Name your belief:** If you can't name it in a sentence or two, your essay might not be about belief. Rather than writing a list, consider focusing on one core belief.

**Be positive:** Say what you do

believe, not what you don't believe. Avoid preaching or editorializing.

**Be personal:** Make your essay about *you*. Write in the first person. Read your essay over several times, each time editing and simplifying until you find the words, tone and story that truly echo your belief.

Using the UU Principles as a guide, the FOCUS co-editors reserve the right to edit submissions and evaluate their suitability.

Please submit your essay to [focus@uucdc.org](mailto:focus@uucdc.org), and watch for the inaugural installment in the January FOCUS.

*Bette Austin &  
Neil Goldstein*

## How You Can Help Deck the Halls During Dec. 9 Service

On Dec. 9 we will hold our holiday "Deck the Halls" intergenerational service. We still need a lot of help with the service's several multi-age workshops, during which we decorate the church (we decorate cookies, too!).

We especially need help with the greens in the sanctuary and

beams in the lobby.

And speaking of cookies, we need about 24 dozen of them, so please e-mail Irene Friedrichs ([iefriedrichs@gmail.com](mailto:iefriedrichs@gmail.com)) if you can bake a dozen or so.

Last year we were lucky enough to feed not only the congregation

at coffee-hour but also our congregants residing at Assisted Living communities. They were delighted to get goodies from their friends at UUCDC. Please ask how you can help, and let me know about cookies.

Thank you!

*Irene Friedrichs*

## Views From the Coordinating Council

One of the goals of the Coordinating Council this year is to support the anti-racism, anti-classism initiative begun at our church last year. At its November meeting, the Council discussed various ways in which we can do that. Stay tuned. The Council also approved the installation of a red cedar picket fence for the playground, which the Rose Tree Day School will pay for. We also discussed options for winter parking and, in the absence of alternatives, will probably go with the stacked parking system. Your anticipated patience and cooperation are great appreciated.

*--Mark Bernstein and Craig Harris*

*(Adult Religious Education continued from page 8)*

**"The Road to Boston," an adult trip to Boston, April 24-27.** Save the dates, and watch for more information about this fabulous, fun trip for adults that is fashioned after the annual Coming of Age trip.

**"Four UU Apostles,"** facilitated by Rick Gross.

This "Road to Boston" workshop offers a history of the four UU "apostles": William Ellery Channing, James Luther Adams, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Theodore Parker. The workshop will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. **Saturday, Feb. 2.**

Stay tuned for more opportunities to learn and share what you know about our faith and community in our coming Adult R.E. programming.

### ChiWalking Was Fun!

*From Loretta Orndorff, the Adult R.E. Team leader:*

I registered for the ChiWalking class taught by Craig Strimel, which ran four Tuesdays here in October. Craig is a runner who was always experiencing injuries before he discovered ChiRunning. The study of ChiRunning improved both his general health and his performance.

Craig studied with Dan Dreyer, the originator of ChiWalking/Running, and now Craig teaches runners and walkers how to use their bodies to the best extent possible. The basic principle of ChiWalking (<http://www.chiwalking.com>) comes from Tai Chi, which helps develop strong "core muscles" and excellent balance.

I found the class very useful, and I encourage others to take advantage of the opportunity if we can arrange for Craig to return in early 2008.

## Is Small Group Ministry for You?

If you enjoy spending a pleasant time discussing interesting topics, you probably would love Small Group Ministry!

We have four SGM groups. They meet on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings and on Thursdays during the daytime. Each group registers as many as 10 members who meet once or twice monthly for an hour of fellowship and an hour of topic discussion. Each group is responsible for keeping the confidentiality of discussions. Confidentiality is a cornerstone of SGM, so that people within a group feel they can share frankly. While Small Group Ministry is *not* therapy, the groups are a source of support and friendship.

Among the many topics you may encounter: Friendship, Forgive-

ness, Dance, Desire, Work and Worship.

Small Group Ministry “lives” within our seven Unitarian Universalist Purposes and Principles. The SGM covenant reads:

*We covenant to create a safe environment where we can express our individual views, to listen to and be tolerant and courteous with others within our group, and that all personal discussions of our group will remain in our group and we will protect that confidentiality.*

Small Group Ministry is not just a collection of groups of people that enjoy meeting with each other. SGM requires that each group participate in service activities that benefit UUCDC and

the larger community. For instance, Loretta Orndorff’s group serves coffee after Sunday Services each month. Phoebe Cassidy and Len Finegold’s group sells Fair Trade coffee, teas and chocolate each month. Jean Shatoff’s group has hosted a showing of the film *Crash* and a discussion afterwards.

During December, we will register new members.

See you in Small Group!

*Loretta Orndorff*

## Rose Tree Day School in High Gear for the Holidays

Rose Tree Day School is a busy place throughout the year, but when November and December arrive, activities move into high gear.

November means thinking about what we are thankful for and learning to consider about others. The children have created wonderful artwork celebrating the gifts of nature in the Fall. Each class hosted Parent Visitation Day with special foods made by little hands, such as cookies, muffins and even homemade butter. The kindergarten class spent hours preparing a wonderful full Thanksgiving repast to share with their parents and the staff. We are all

pleased to see the children so involved with learning about the harvest and how to work together for a celebration with friends and family. The activities also included collecting canned goods delivered to Chester Eastside Ministries. It was a learning experience for the children who saw that not everyone has enough to eat and how important it is to share with those outside family and friends.

In the days ahead, we shall be having our family craft night, having fun making varied winter crafts with parents and siblings. Children and parents will

be encouraged to contribute to the Toys for Tots collection barrels placed on the school hallways, as a way to continue sharing and reaching out to others in need. Each classroom will invite families to come and to share special family holiday traditions.

As a climax to the activities, classes will prepare for a Winter Wonderland holiday program for family, friends and church members, December 21. Stop by for entertaining music and fellowship as we celebrate together.

*Debby Richardson*

## ARTS, BOOKS & MUSIC

### December 18 Solstice Celebration to Feature Vocal Ensemble

The Winter Solstice will arrive a little early this year here. Friends.

At 8 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 18, the Pagan Arts Initiative, in conjunction, with UUCDC, will present a Winter Solstice Celebration featuring the Spiral Song Feminist Spirituality Vocal Ensemble and

This program, which is on its way to becoming a holiday tradition at UUCDC, celebrates the turning of the season in both words and song and will feature among the readers a couple of UUCDC members.

All are welcome to the celebration, produced by the Delaware Valley Pagan Network. A donation will be requested. For more information, go to <http://pagan-arts.org/>.

### A Meditation on the American Wilderness Is Book Club Selection for Dec. 28

The Book Club has selected "Desert Solitaire" for its next meeting, Friday, December 28, 7:30 p.m.

This is Edward Abbey's meditation on the harsh landscapes of the American West. It is a poetic, nerve-tingling, and passionate reflection on the American wilderness. Join us for a stimulating conversation.

For its November selection and discussion, the Book Club read Norah Vincent's "Self-Made Man: One Woman's Year Disguised as a Man."

Vincent, a lesbian feminist, dis-

guises herself as a man and infiltrates the world of men. To her surprise, she discovers that she had misunderstood that world. Vincent finds that the lives of men are filled with pecking-order conflicts, subtle bonding, restriction of acceptable displays of emotion, and a general desire to please women. Interestingly, she sees that her own gender is rooted more in its biology than in its culture, class or nationality. While happy to be a woman, Vincent gains a sympathy for men and the world they struggle in.

The Book Club is composed of

men and women and meets once a month to discuss interesting books. It is open to everyone, even if you only want to drop in now and then to discuss a book that interests you. Of course, you are welcome to join us on a regular basis. Our reading list is posted on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall and on the UUCDC website. (Plug in "book club" on the website search engine.)

*Bryan Boosz*

### Promising Beginning for Social Justice Film Festival

With more than half representing the community, about 20 persons attended the first of the Social Justice Committee's film series, a Real-to-Reel documentary in November, proving it's one way of reaching out to the community and introducing others to UUCDC.

A second film showing will be held in January, on a date to be

announced later, at 7:30 p. m. , a half hour later than the November showing.

Two films under consideration are "Supersize Me", a humorous and biting commentary on fast food and nutrition (the documentarian eats only food from a McDonald's menu for 30 days and sees his health deteriorate as a result) or Michael Moore's film

"Sicko," about the U.S. health care system and its failings.

*Dan and Pat Hardy*

# Yo UUCDCERS!

## When Winter Comes, So Does Snow

At some point in the coming months, snowfall will coincide with a busy day or a Sunday morning here at UUCDC. How do you know whether to dig out your car or snuggle up with a blanket and a cup of cocoa?

First and foremost, use your own good judgment. No matter what is happening at church, if you are nervous about road conditions in your area, choose the cup of cocoa every time. If it is at all dangerous for you to be out, stay home! But if you are wondering whether to dig out the car and come on over, here's how things will be decided and communicated:

--The Sunday service will be held if at all possible. If it becomes necessary to cancel a service, the church phone message will be changed by 8 a. m. We shall also send out an email message.

--If you are planning to attend a meeting on a day when conditions become bad, the chair of the committee determines whether or not to hold the meeting. You may call that person or the church office. If we have information regarding cancellations, the message will be on the answering machine. Committee chairs should make every effort

to contact the church office so that the correct message can be given.

Stay safe! Each person in this community is precious and we want all of you to come to church when the weather clears.

## Wanted: Ushers and Greeters on Christmas Eve

Regular ushers and greeters receive a holiday gift on Christmas Eve: They have the evening off from their regular greeting and ushering duties. We also give a gift to some wonderful people in our congregation: They have the chance to represent our church to members and visitors! There's a certain synchronicity about all this. The tasks are easy. Ushers and greeters receive clear instructions and it's only one time per year.

So, step forward! Let the church office know whether you prefer to be an usher or a greeter and which service you plan to attend. It's not often members receive such an easy job, with such great rewards.

*Rina Jurceka*

## *Holiday Pageant Offers Roles for All*

**WANTED:** Children, youth and adults to perform in and help produce the Holiday Pageant on Sunday morning, Dec. 23.

## Gifts That Give Back

What to get the person who has everything? A present that helps someone who doesn't. Check out these websites.

**DonorsChoose.org** Help supply pencils, reference books, and field trips to public schools in need. Purchase a gift certificate for any amount and it will be sent to the recipient, who then selects the project to donate to. Gold stars all around. [www.donorschoose.org](http://www.donorschoose.org)

**MarkMakers** Geared toward kids, this website makes donating fun. Choose a gift card from \$10 and up and print it out or e-mail it directly to a child, who can return to the site and allocate the money to a cause of his or her choice. [www.markmakers.org](http://www.markmakers.org)

**Mercy Corps** Select from more than 20 "Mercy Kits": aid packages (from \$20 to \$1,000) that support such causes as Hurricane Katrina relief and aid to African refugees. Your friend receives a card containing your message. [www.mercycorps.org](http://www.mercycorps.org)

**Arbor Day Foundation** Money may not grow on trees, but it can help save them. For \$6 the foundation will plant a tree in your recipient's honor and mail you a greeting card that you can send her for the holidays. [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org)

**Habitat for Humanity** A low-flow toilet isn't on his wish list, but a family served by Habitat for Humanity home builders will appreciate one. Make a donation of at least \$10 in your loved one's name and he'll receive a greeting card detailing your gift. [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org)

**Changing the Present** Save an elephant. Vaccinate a needy child. Like a charity shopping mall, this site offers 33 causes to donate to. Choose one of its cards (sent directly to the recipient) or write a caption to create your own. [www.changingthepresent.org](http://www.changingthepresent.org)

*Real Simple Magazine*

## BE GREEN, DO GREEN

### Bottled Water Anyone? How About Standard Tap?

How and when Americans became so addicted to bottled water is one of those baffling mysteries. Never mind. According to "The Green Guide," last year Americans purchased over eight billion gallons of bottled water and then tossed more than 22 billion empty bottles in the trash.

To produce a year's worth of plastic bottles, it requires 1.5 million barrels of oil, plus more to transport it. Bottled water is, of course, a \$10.9 billion-a-year industry.

Many groups are taking a stand against bottled water, including the local chapter of the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom. The League has launched a three-year "Save the Water" campaign, based on the idea that drinking bottled water encourages privatization, which may lead to wars over water. It also hopes to prompt a boycott by spreading the word at schools and at plastic-unfriendly places, such as Weaver's Way in Mt. Airy.

Bottled water, said Salt Lake City Mayor Ross C. Anderson, "very clearly reflects the wasteful and reckless consumerism in this country."

The Container Recycling Institute reports that 86 per cent of water bottles --close to two million tons of plastic a year -- end as litter or in landfills instead of recycling bins.

So, back to the water tap, you Green World enthusiasts, and everyone else.

(Thanks to info supplied by an article in "The Inquirer.")

*Bette Austin*

- help with donation collection, catalog creation, computer data entry, hospitality, setup and cleanup. It's a long list. Help shorten it, make it disappear. Stop by and sign up at the auction table after Sunday Service in the next few weeks.
- Here are some of the exciting offerings so far:
- Barbecue feast
- Baseball day at Citizens Bank Park
- Bicycle built for two
- Catered sing-along
- L.L. Bean canoe
- Fisherman's excursion
- Flat-panel TV
- Hand-knit apparel
- Handmade jewelry
- Murder-mystery dinner
- Music lessons
- Original paintings
- Time at a vacation home in Williamsburg, Va.
- Tour of the Philadelphia Water Works

## *Get Your Bids Ready for the Auction on Dec. 15*

**How Can You Help?**  
Running the auction requires many hands, and the Auction Committee welcomes help. It needs

Give some thought to what you have to offer and stop by the auction table after the Sunday services to fill out a contribution form. You can also call Skip Sealaus (evenings: 610-565-0331).

**What Can You Contribute?**  
Diners, game nights, vacation-home weeks and weekends, home-baked goodies (brownies, carrot cakes, apple pies), musical performances. Services such as tax preparation, simple wills, child care, gift-wrapping and pet-minding are high on many lists. Everyone has something to offer.

Of course, the goods-and-services auction is an important church fund-raiser, and its success depends on your support and participation. Enjoy the expert craft of our veteran auctioneers, Brian Campbell and Mark Bernstein, while you both help out the church and have a good time.

For a fun evening and a great opportunity to spend social time with other UU/CDCers, come on down to the Church Auction here at 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 15 – and bring your checkbook!



**Unitarian Universalist Church of Delaware County**  
145 W. Rose Tree Road, Media, PA 19063

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**Focus**  
**December 2007**

# Calendar

## December 2007\*

Date	Name of Event	Time	MS Youth Activity	5:00 PM
12/1	Madrasa	10:00 AM		
	Thespi Performance	6:00 PM	12/9	Adult RE 9:00 AM
12/2	Adult RE	9:00 AM		Deck the Halls 10:30 AM
	Worship Service & RE	10:30 AM		COA Lunch Fundraiser 11:30 AM
	Sermon Discussion	11:45 AM		COA Mentors 12:00 PM
	Adult RE	12:00 PM		MCC 2:00 PM
	Gun Violence Group	12:00 PM		MCC 4:00 PM
	Mission Covenant Discovery Cafe	12:00 PM		Independent Catholics 5:00 PM
	Thespi Performance	12:00 PM		YUCKI 6:00 PM
	Independent Catholics	5:00 PM		Thespi 6:30 PM
	IHN Hosting	5:00 PM	12/10	Voice Lesson Rental 8:30 AM
	COA	6:00 PM		Thespi 7:00 PM
	YUCKI	6:00 PM		Board of Trustees 7:15 PM
	Mission Covenant Discovery Cafe	7:00 PM		
12/3	Voice Lesson Rental	8:30 AM	12/11	Yoga 5:45 PM
	IHN Hosting	5:00 PM		DBSA 7:00 PM
	Thespi	6:30 PM	12/12	Cancer Support Group 11:30 AM
	RE Council	7:15 PM		Muslims 6:00 PM
	Mission Committee	7:30 PM		MCC Rehearsal 7:00 PM
12/4	IHN Hosting	5:00 PM		Membership Meeting 7:00 PM
	Yoga	5:45 PM	12/13	Chorus Rehearsal 7:00 PM
	RTDS Holiday Craft Night	6:00 PM		Parent Support Group 7:00 PM
	Social Justice Committee	7:15 PM	12/14	Auction Set Up 12:00 AM
12/5	IHN Hosting	5:00 PM	12/15	Auction Set Up 12:00 AM
	Muslims	6:00 PM		Chorus Rehearsal 10:00 AM
	MCC Rehearsal	7:00 PM		Madrasa 10:00 AM
12/6	SGM	1:00 PM		Auction 6:00 PM
	IHN Hosting	5:00 PM	12/16	Adult RE 9:00 AM
	Chorus Rehearsal	7:00 PM		Worship Service & RE 10:30 AM
12/7	IHN Hosting	5:00 PM		Sermon Discussion 11:45 AM
	MCC	7:30 PM		YUCKI Babysitting fundraiser 12:00 PM
12/8	Madrasa	10:00 AM		Adult Ed Planning 12:15 PM
	IHN Hosting	5:00 PM		Independent Catholics 5:00 PM
				YUCKI 6:00 PM



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\*Printed Nov. 27, 2007

# December 2007

	Thespis	6:30 PM		
12/17	Voice Lesson Rental	8:30 AM	12/27	Muslims 12:00 PM
	RTDS Board	12:00 PM	12/28	Book Group 7:30 PM
	DRE-AD	7:00 PM	12/29	Madrassa 10:00 AM
	Thespis	7:00 PM	12/30	Adult RE 9:00 AM
	Caring Committee	7:15 PM		Worship Service 10:30 AM
	Coordinating Council	7:15 PM		Sermon Discussion 11:30 AM
	Mission Committee	7:30 PM		Thespis 6:30 PM
12/18	Muslims	4:30 PM	12/31	Voice Lesson Rental 8:30 AM
	Yoga	5:45 PM		
	Solstice Celebration Set Up	6:00 PM		
	Solstice Celebration	8:00 PM		
12/19	Muslims	6:00 PM		
	Executive Limitations Subcommittee	7:00 PM		
	Membership Council	7:00 PM		
12/20	Chorus Rehearsal	7:00 PM		
	DBSA	7:00 PM		
12/21	RTDS Holiday Event	8:00 AM		
	Yule Pagan Rental	6:00 PM		
	DRE-AC	7:00 PM		
12/22	Madrassa	10:00 AM		
12/23	Worship Service & RE	10:30 AM		
	YUCKI Soup Lunch	11:30 AM		
	Sermon Discussion	11:45 AM		
	Thespis	12:30 PM		
	Independent Catholics	5:00 PM		
	YUCKI	6:00 PM		
	COA Movie	6:30 PM		
12/24	Voice Lesson Rental	8:30 AM		
	Christmas Eve Service	5:00 PM		
	Christmas Eve Service	8:00 PM		
	Independent Catholic			
	Christmas Eve Service	10:00 PM		
12/26	Cancer Support Group	11:30 AM		
	Muslims	6:00 PM		