

THE UNIGRAM

December 19, 2006

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Columbia, SC



December 24, 2006

11:00 Sermon Topic: "Restlessness amid Abundance" by Elaine Faithful

When we gather on Sunday morning Hanukkah will have just ended and it will be the eve of Christmas day. The annual winter holiday frenzied will be near an end--except those poor folks who wait until the last minute to buy your gifts. I don't know how you do it. Like most Americans, I am overwhelmed by an abundance of choices. On this Sunday we will cease all our hustle and bustle long enough to remember how truly abundant our lives really are.

9:30 Forum Topic:

Should Polygamy Be Illegal?

December 31, 2006

11:00 Sermon Topic:

"The Best Laid Plans of Mice and Men" by Rev. Dr. Neal Jones

The three Magi in the Gospel of Matthew followed a star all the way to the baby Jesus. Are you following any stars? How do you decide which ones to pursue? What do you do when you reach them? How about when you don't?

9:30 Forum Topic: Self and Soul

Sunday Schedule

Forum: 9:30 AM in the Library

Worship: 11:00 AM -12:15 PM followed by a Coffee Hour in the Social Hall

Nursery: Available during service for infants through age 2

Children: 11:00 AM -12:15 PM Religious Education classes for children ages 3 through 8th grade

There will be NO RE Classes on the following Sundays:

Dec 24th – Dec 31st –

There will be NO nursery on Dec. 24th.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. Children are welcome to join their parents in the sanctuary for the morning worship. Thank you for allowing our RE Teachers and RE Committee members the opportunity to spend these holidays with their families.

Preventing a Blue Christmas

It's easy to imagine that all across America, families are sitting down together at Christmas to enjoy a lovely, stress-free meal and unwrapping presents with smiles, laughter, and cheer for everyone -- everyone's family except yours. It's easy to get that impression because that's the way Christmas cards and carols, TV and magazine ads, and Hallmark movies portray the holidays. Reality is often disappointing when compared with the ideal. The best defense against the holiday blues is to plan ahead. Here are some suggestions that may help:

Stay within your budget. Some people go on a spending spree at Christmas, only to spend the first months of the New Year having to shoulder their self-inflicted debt. Don't turn your Christmas spending into "guilt money" -- expensive gifts meant to compensate for your lack of time and attention to your most significant relationships. Money can't buy love, not even at Christmas. The recipients of "guilt money" can see right through it, and they will likely feel resentful. What your loved ones want is more of you, not more stuff.

Shorten your family get-togethers. If your family gatherings always end in conflict or disappointment, it may be that your family visits are lasting longer than you and your relatives can handle emotionally. If an all-day visit leads to hostility, try visiting for just a few hours. Wouldn't it fare better for your family relations to have a short pleasant visit than a protracted unpleasant one?

Make deeper connections. At some family get-togethers, everyone is expected to do the same thing. Some may watch football all day. Others may be expected to serve as the captive audience to a conversation dominated by a few self-absorbed individuals. Unless you enjoy these group activities, you will probably end up feeling frustrated and disappointed. Find ways to engage in more meaningful conversations with relatives that you'd like to know better. For instance, arrange the family at smaller tables instead of one big table. If that's not possible, sit beside someone you want to talk with at the large table. Pull aside that special relative before or after the meal, while everyone else is glued to the tube.

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Be patient with your grief. That empty chair at the table or in the living room can be a painful reminder that a loved one who used to be there is no longer around because of death, divorce, service in the military, a move, or estrangement. If you ever miss a family member who is no longer around, you can count on missing them at Christmas because our most precious Christmas memories are typically of family gatherings. Whether the missing person has been gone one year or ten, don't be surprised if you feel sad during the holidays. It's okay. A significant part of your Christmas past is missing.

Build in some buffers. If family gatherings upset or drain you, take some time before the gathering to prepare yourself and some time afterwards to wind down. Go for a walk, read a book, watch a movie, call a friend, take a nap, take a bath -- whatever you do that soothes and pampers you. If your family visits are stressful, create your own reward for surviving them.

If your family relations aren't hunky-dory during the rest of the year, don't expect them to magically improve at Christmas. If we can keep our expectations of the holidays realistic, we may actually enjoy this time of year. Hope you have a Merry Christmas.

Neal

UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

December 24 Evening Service

"A Unitarian Universalist Christmas" Gather at 7 PM with your family and friends on Christmas Eve to enjoy a holiday celebration that is uniquely Unitarian Universalist filled with lights, stories and song.

CHRISTMAS EVE DROP-IN

The Mohrs will have a drop-in at their house after the Christmas Eve service for those who would like a little company. Join them for a cup of coffee or cider, glass of wine, Christmas snacks, and conversation. (Bring your favorite Christmas snacks if you would like.) Driving directions will be available at the Fellowship after the evening service.

Holiday Office Hours

Office will be closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1. Will be open Tues. - Fri. 10:30 - 3 PM. Deadline for the Unigram Dec. 31, and Unigram Folders will be on Wed. Jan. 3.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

HOLIDAY OUTING



The informal, ad hoc walking/hiking group will meet on Sat. Dec. 30th at 10:30 at the Visitor's Center at Congaree Swamp for a walk on the boardwalk. The boardwalk accomodates both baby strollers and wheelchairs so all are welcome.

Boardwalk is approximately 2 1/2 miles long. Bring your lunch & water, there are NO concessions in the park and no food available. Free admission. Directions call Joe Long at 695-0309 or Ann Johnson at 799-8022.

They're Back!

The winter session of our Wednesday Family Nights will resume February 21-March 21. Details will follow.

Interior Plants

Ruth Thacker has loving cared for our plants for many years and would like to pass this joy on to someone else. Anyone interested please contact the office. Thank you, Ruth.

Harvest Hope Food Bank

Starting December 24, we will be collecting non-perishable food items for Harvest Hope each week. This is the season when we think of sharing with others. A basket will be on the stage, and volunteers will deliver all donations to the Food Bank on Monday.

Knitting, Crochet, Or Rya Tapestry Arts

Are there any people out there interested in knitting, crochet, or Rya tapestry arts? If you are a beginner, intermediate, or experienced at any of these or if you would like to learn, you may contact Carita Barr (xxx xxx) or Joyce Rodgers (xxx xxxx) or email Joyce at jrrodgers@bellsouth.net. Please let us know your interest, skill level and what times and days would be good for you. If there is enough interest, we hope to get something started after the first of the New Year.

A big thank you to Jean Arrants who crafted some banners for the Fellowship and special appreciation to Danielle Marx Conwell for inspiring me to help with the project.

- Carita Barr



Community Chalice

Laurel Sutton has decided to forego further chemotherapy for her leukemia and is focusing on enhancing her quality of life. She will continue to receive platelet and blood transfusions as needed.

Congratulations to **Rob Harper**, he has received wonderful job promotion. **Rob, Cindy & family** will be moving to Huntsville, Ala. very soon.

BOARD BULLETIN: November 8, 2006 Motions Passed

Non-pledge monies collected between November 19th and December 17 will be donated to the Heifer Project and Hannah House.

Agreed to hire Juha Seponin to repair the wall and paint Neal's study per bid.

Decisions Made

Religious Education Minutes will include the names of teachers.

Buildings and Grounds asked that November 18th be a workday.

Sej will get estimate for painting the inside and outside of Minister's door, exterior trim around sound room windows, and front doors of the Sanctuary.

Request for free use of social hall for piano recital by non-member denied as per our policy for facility use.

John should do custodial work only and not repairs, make coffee, or spend time doing kitchen kinds of things.

John has December 1st deadline to decide whether he will agree to the guidelines in Sara Stinson's custodial evaluation. Mike Kelly overseeing John.

Reaffirmed desire to be a Welcoming Congregation. Cheryl will donate the manual, which lays out the process.

Agreed to replace Karen Koprowski on the Board.

Submitted: Jessica Kross

Congratulations

Don Mohr received official word that he will be nominated to serve on the Unitarian Universalist Associations Commission on Appraisal. The election for new members of the Commission and other UUA officials will take place at next summer's General Assembly in Portland, Oregon. If elected, the appointment is for a six-year term.

The Commission's charter is to "review any function or activity of the (UU) Association which in its judgement will benefit from an independent review and report its conclusions to a regular General Assembly." Its current study topic is Section 2.1 of the UUA By-Laws, which are the principles and sources of Unitarian Universalism. This nomination is an honor for Don and is a tribute to the support and the fertile environment he has found here at the UUFC.

We could never learn to be brave and patient, if there were only joy in the world.
Helen Keller

ACTING Director Religious Education NEEDED FOR SPRING 2007

We have the children. We have the schedule. We have the teachers. Religious Education program needs an Acting Director of Religious Education to help keep our RE program running smoothly for the remainder of the program year. Responsibilities include welcoming new families, working with current families, coordinating Sunday School activities, recruiting additional volunteers for special activities/summer, and planning the bridging ceremony in May. *You will be supported by the UUFC administrative assistant, the RE committee and volunteers.*

The position is part-time, for 10 hours a week, from January 1 through the end of May. *Background check and references are required.* Please contact Caroline Eastman; Chair of the RE Committee, to apply or to request additional information. Home phone: 803-xxx-xxxx. Cell phone: 803-xxx-xxxx. Email: Eastman@sc.rr.com.

Update on Facility Planning

One of the major recommendations of the Long Range Plan is to renovate our building and grounds. In October the board created the **Facility Planning Committee** (FPC). Members include Shawn Conwell, Caroline Eastman, Don Mohr, Susan Siegel, Dillard Thompson, Larry Witkowski, and Mike Paget, chair. The committee has been meeting to develop and present recommendations to the board.

So that members of the UUFC will be aware of the progress with the plans, the FPC plans to periodically give an update in the Unigram, and occasionally in brief comments during Sunday services.

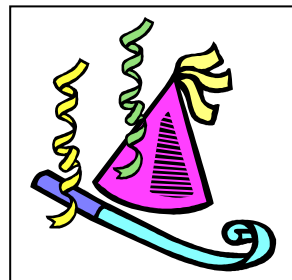
Beginning in the next few weeks you will begin to see a bit of action, as the initial survey is completed. We will also be soliciting interest from architectural firms to develop our Master Plan. We hope that the Master Plan is unveiled before, or shortly after, our annual meeting in June 2007.

During the second half of 2007 we expect to begin the process of planning for construction to begin. We anticipate that construction may begin in late 2007, or early 2008.

As described in the Long Range Plan we look forward to a building and grounds that are designed according to Green Design principles, a building that has updated utility systems, including comfortable and safe heating, air conditioning, and ventilation, and a facility that supports and teaches our members and our community how to live in a more environmentally friendly manner. We are excited about the future of the UUFC!

New Year's Eve at the UU Coffeehouse

On December 31st the UU Coffeehouse will celebrate New Year's Eve with a performance by Jack Williams, Danny Harlow, and Lis and Lon Williamson.



The show begins with a concert of Jack's original music. Then we make room for the dance floor, and Jack and the band return for a wonderful set of danceable music. Tickets are \$25 per person, payable at the door, and include beverages and a champagne toast at midnight to bring in the New Year. Everyone who attends is asked to bring a small finger-food style dish to share with others.

This show will be limited to 125 people. Reservations are highly recommended, and may be made by calling the events line at 1-888-849-4224 X4. Include your name, phone number, and the number of tickets you need.

For more information, visit our website at www.uucoffeehouse.org

Doors open at 8:00, and the music begins around 8:30

\$25 per person

For advance reservations, call the events line at 1.888.849.4224 extension 4

The UU is a smoke free listening room located at the corner of Heyward and Woodrow Streets in the Shandon area of Columbia.

Sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Columbia

SEASON'S GREETINGS

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

MERRY CHRISTMAS

HAPPY NEW YEAR

The Unigram

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Columbia
2701 Heyward Street
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Special Events Line: (888) 849-4224 ext.4

The Mission of our Fellowship is:

- To nurture and respect each other in our spiritual growth and pursuit of meaning,
- To create a welcoming and engaging environment through which we work for positive change in our community and the world.

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Unigram Deadline

The e-mail deadline for the next Unigram is **5:00 p.m., Dec. 31, 2006.**

Please submit articles and announcements for the next issue to UUFC@bigfoot.com

Typed or neatly handwritten copy must be received in the office by 12:15 p.m. the same day.