



The Univoice

A Newsletter of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Berks County

The mission of the First UU Church is to be an open, nurturing community that encourages respect for and knowledge of all spiritual paths, promotes generous giving of time and resources, puts Unitarian Universalist values into action, and acts as a strong voice for social justice.

Church Office Hours:

Monday through Friday
9:30am – 3:30pm
(Please call ahead to ensure access)

Please contact Office Administrator Susan Stewart to arrange for access any other time.

Rev. Fees has office hours by appointment.

Please call or email:
(610) 372-0928
sandrafees@verizon.net
(Rev. Fees is off Mondays)



Univoice Submissions:

Email submissions in a word file to: office@uuberks.org.
Typed submissions may be put into the Chalice House's Univoice mailbox. The deadline is the 15th of each month. Please include your full name, phone number, and email address.

UU Singer-Songwriter Jim Scott to Lead Music Service

Acclaimed acoustic guitarist Jim Scott will lead the July 24 worship service at 10:30 a.m. This family-friendly service will incorporate songs of peace, the environment, and positive values.

Scott is best known as a member of the Paul Winter Consort. Paul Winter said of his long-time collaborator, "His music sings of the life spirit."

Scott's long connection with Unitarian Universalism started at the Universalist Church of Norwell, MA, where his father sang in the choir. His hymn, "Gather the Spirit," has become a staple for many UU congregations. Over the past 15 years, he has performed and led worship services at more than 300 UU congregations.

He has been active in UU earth ministries, having co-chaired the UU Seventh Principle Project and helped to develop the ecologically focused "Green Sanctuary" program. Scott recently completed an anthology of songs about the earth and peace, entitled the "Earth and Spirit Songbook."



The vision of the First UU Church of Berks County is to be an inclusive community that nurtures people's spirits, supports their spiritual journeys, and serves the cause of justice and love in the world.

From Sandra's Study

"The Times They Are A-Changin'"

Rev. Sandra Fees



Summer is traditionally a time of transition. The pace of life becomes a bit more laid back for many of us. Teachers and young people complete the school year and take the summer off or participate in summer programs. Many families take vacations.

Our church is also experiencing transitions. One significant change will be to our music program. Our music director, Dan Matz, has resigned his position for personal reasons. We're grateful for Dan's consistent presence for the past two years, directing choir, writing original music, providing weekly music for the services, and coordinating other musical pieces. He will continue as a church member and be involved in the music program as a volunteer. No plans have yet been made to fill the position, but the summer months will provide some time for us to have conversations about our vision for music going forward.

In other staffing areas, we have made some important changes that were voted on by members at the May congregational meeting and which take effect with the new fiscal year, beginning July 1. We have added two hours to the sexton position held by John Showalter, bringing him to 12 hours per week. Another important change has been a provision to allocate funds toward health care costs for Susan Stewart, our office administrator. Staff members have also received salary increases.

The summer is also an important time for planning. Staff and committees will be planning worship services, religious education, and other programs for the fall. The board will hold its annual retreat in the summer. This year we'll be focusing on long-range planning with the specific goal of developing a new five-year plan.

With my return from sabbatical in June, I will be preaching more than usual in the summer months. In particular, I will be leading worship the first three Sundays of July. We will still have guest and lay speakers, including UU singer-songwriter Jim Scott and members, Judd Bortz, Rebecca Glenn-Dinwoodie, Lisa Frank, and Joanna Groebel. I am personally looking forward to hearing each of these fine speakers, and expect to attend on the Sundays when I am in the local area. I will be taking a combination of study leave and vacation from July 19 through August 20 and from August 30 through September 4.

I hope to see many of you at church and in the community throughout the summer.

Yours in faith,
Sandra

5th Annual Reading Pride Celebration:

Centre Park – Sunday, July 17th

It's summer time again – that time when we have less meetings inside and turn our focus outside as we move out into our community in a number of ways: Free concerts in the park, area folk festivals and fairs, and of course Reading's Annual Pride Celebration – this year is our 5th Annual! Come for an hour or two or spend the whole day with friends and enjoy the show but PLEASE come and take a shift at our UU information table as our membership committee again spends the day talking to folks about our UU faith and our Reading congregation specifically.

Please call Nadine Smet-Weiss ***omitted from online version***. Or, look for the sign up sheet in the Gerber room to volunteer for the First UU of Berks County Information Table.

If you are also able to volunteer with the Silent Witness PeaceKeepers (we have had a solid showing each year but Silent Witnesses also travel to Reading from Harrisburg and Lancaster areas to assist with Reading Pride), please email Alanna Berger at ***omitted from online version***, if you haven't already.

Silent Witness PeaceKeepers Alliance: Central PA Summer Pride Festival Schedule

Reading, PA	July 17 th	Centre Park
Harrisburg, PA	July 30 th	Riverfront Park
Wilkes-Barre, PA	August 14 th	Kirby Park
Lehigh Valley/Allentown, PA	August 21 st	Cedar Beach Park

Silent Witness Peacekeepers Alliance (SWPA) is an organization of gay and straight allies dedicated to providing a non-confrontational buffer between the LGBT (lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender) community and those who would protest LGBT events. We are peacekeepers, not counter-protesters, protecting everyone's right of free speech. We provide visual protection from "street preachers" and protesters at events such as Pridefests, the showing of films such as *Jim in Bold* and *For the Bible Tells Me So*, or staging of plays such as *The Laramie Project*, using our bodies and rainbow umbrellas as shields. Where there are those who publicly promote hate, we will be there to help provide a loving, supportive front opposing them. We provide a visual representation of support for those in our society who may feel marginalized, while simultaneously protecting everyone's rights of free speech and religion.



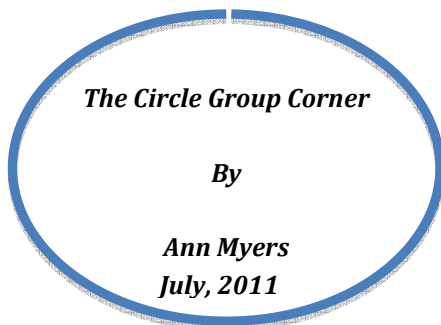
Discerning Our Paths – Sharing The Journey

You are invited to join us for a monthly small group experience in discernment. Based upon Nancy Bieber's "Decision Making & Spiritual Discernment: the Sacred Art of Finding Your Way," this 6 session group will be a time of deep personal sharing as we accompany each other on the journey. We will explore the themes of willingness, attentiveness and responsiveness – the three strands of discernment Bieber teaches us to recognize – as we seek divine guidance in our personal decision-making.

Confidentiality and a commitment to attend are essential to the spirit of this group experience. Participants will also need access to Bieber's book. Planned dates are: Tuesday 9/6, Monday 10/3, Monday 11/7, Monday 12/5, Tuesday 1/3/12, and Monday 2/6/12 from 7:30-9:00pm. Group size is limited to 8 participants. Please contact Jane Rohrbach at ***omitted from online version*** to register.



HAPPY SUMMER!



Most of the circle groups are having a change-of-pace for the months of July and August. Some are meeting with an agreed upon topic to discuss, and others have opted for picnics or other social gatherings so that the group members can stay in touch with each other. So, please enjoy the break from the normal routine, but I hope you will be looking forward to the fall and our September topic of "DOUBT" to start the new church year.

UU GALA: A Special Thanks

Thank you to all who helped transform the June 5th Coffee Hour into a gala celebration of Sandra's return from sabbatical. A special expression of appreciation goes to Laurie Grelle for baking a delicious cake which was also a gorgeous work of art. Kudos to Pat Getz who pulled it all together. And of course, we can't forget the Group II Coffee Group: Bonnie Block, Tracy Brant, Pat Cavanaugh, Joanna Groebel, and Sally Marr. We anticipated a large attendance and we were not disappointed. The refreshments you provided were obviously appreciated, as evidenced by how little was left over.

Thank you so much,
John and Mary Jo Weishampel

Religious Education

Dear Friends,



Even though our children aren't spending all day in school now that it is summer, it doesn't mean that children aren't still doing important work. Hopefully you will have some quiet time to do things like go swimming, poke around in a creek, catch fireflies, and gaze at the moon. And according to UU Religious Educator, Sophia Lyon Fahs, those types of activities are a big part of a child's natural religious development. She describes 12 important types of experiences:

1. Experiences with the great forces of nature, such as rain, wind, snow, sun, and moon.
2. Experiences with animal and inanimate things, sensing their differences and wondering at the mystery of life, the power within a thing to grow, to feel, and perhaps to think.
3. The discovery that living things have a beginning, that they are born; and the discovery of one's own birth
4. The discovery of death.
5. Experiences with sickness, suggesting constructive attitudes that may be developed in time of crisis
6. Play with one's own shadow.
7. Experiences with dreaming...the realization that the world of reality sensed during wakefulness is different from the reality sensed in sleep, leading to a feeling for what is invisible in the personality.
8. Experiences in cooperation, first within the home circle and later in the larger community, from which feelings of security and love arise.
9. Negative experiences in social relationship challenging one to observe and consider cause and effect.
10. Experiences in making choices, weighing present good against future good.
11. Experiences in overcoming difficulties alone, bringing a sense of inner strength.
12. Experiencing personal achievement – creating something new and valuable or doing something original. *

* *Chalice Children* – Introduction. Thanks to Cory Ness, DRE at UUCY for this idea.

So don't worry about drilling those multiplication tables—let summer activities be your at-home religious education program!

Blessings,
Elizabeth

RE Calendar of Events for July 2011

Sunday, July 3 – No kids activity during the service. Children remain in the sanctuary. Nursery care will be available for babies and toddlers.

Friday, July 8 - Family Morning Out—Playground Day! Weather permitting; let's meet at Mohnton Playground at 9:30 am.

Sunday, July 10 - A group activity for elementary-aged children will be offered. Nursery care will be available for babies and toddlers.

Sunday, July 17 – No kids activity during the service. Children remain in the sanctuary. Nursery care will be available for babies and toddlers.

Sunday, July 24 – Intergenerational musical worship with UU Musician & Composer Jim Scott. Remember that great rainforest song that the children sang last year? Well, it was written by Jim Scott—maybe he will sing it for us!!

RE Committee Members Needed

Here are some of the tasks that an RE committee member might help with:

- Evaluating our RE spaces and helping to make sure that they are safe, comfortable, organized, and inviting.
- Planning special events like our annual RE kickoff breakfast, game nights, and field trips.
- Creating opportunities for children and youth to participate in worship—doing things like lighting the chalice, saying the opening words, singing, playing an instrument, acting out stories.

As a committee, we will meet in the summer to pick curriculum and plan the year and then touch base about once a month, in person or via email, to evaluate the progress of our RE program. RE committee members are asked to commit to a two-year term of service.

Please contact Elizabeth Kaufmann or RE committee member Stephanie Elliott if you would like to help create meaningful religious education experiences for our young people.

July's Volunteers

CARING CIRCLE

Suzanne Bado

GREETERS

July 3	Carol Orts
July 10	Vince O'Brien
July 17	Jane Nase
July 24	Linda McCormick
July 31	Nadine Smet-Weiss



COFFEE CORPS

July 3	Carol & Keith Orts
July 10	Randy Newnham
July 17	Walter & Wilfried Axsmith
July 24	Mike Szjana & Nadine Smet-Weiss
July 31	John & Mary Jo Weishampel

The Univoice: Editorial Changes

We would like to thank Meghan Cocuzza for her service as the editor of the Univoice for the past two years. Meghan's efforts have been much needed and greatly appreciated. We wish her well as she turns her attention to being a new mom. With this month's edition, Ed Myers has taken over the editorial responsibilities of the Univoice. Ed has attended the First UU Church of Berks County since the late Fall of 2008. He resides in the city of Reading with his wife, Jessica, and three children: ***omitted from online version***. For all Univoice needs and concerns, Ed can be reached by telephone : ***omitted from online version*** or email.

JULY 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 Sunday Service 10:30am Painting Workshop 6:30pm-8:30pm	4	5	6	7 Food Bank 8am - 12pm	8	9 Arts & Craft Group 11am - 2pm
10 Sunday Service 10:30am	11	12 Board Meeting 7pm-9pm	13	14	15	16
17 Sunday Service 10:30am Build. Keepers Meeting 12pm - 1:00pm	18	19 Reiki Share 7pm-8:30pm	20	21	22 Wedding Rehearsal 6-8pm	23 Wedding 12pm-3pm Arts & Craft Group 11am - 2pm
24 Sunday Service 10:30am	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 Sunday Service 10:30am						

July 3 "No Great Things"

Rev. Sandra Fees

We've all heard the saying, "don't sweat the small stuff." On the other hand, Mother Teresa said, "We can do no great things; only small things with great love." How do we decide which small things warrant our great love and which don't?

July 10 "The Bible: Holy Book or Overrated Bestseller?"

Rev. Sandra Fees

Unitarian Universalists consider the Bible a religious text, but sometimes find they have a complicated relationship to it. This morning we'll explore ways we can draw on its wisdom to enrich our spiritual lives.

July 17 "For a Reason"

Rev. Sandra Fees

There's a human need to find reasons for our struggles. It has even become a commonplace belief in our culture that "things happen for a reason." Is this a view shared by religious liberals? What are its implications? How else might we make sense of life's difficulties?

July 24 "Gather the Spirit"

with Jim Scott

Join acclaimed acoustic guitarist Jim Scott for this family-friendly music service. It will feature his hymn, "Gather the Spirit," which has become a staple for many UU congregations as well as other songs of peace, the environment, and positive values.

UU singer-songwriter Jim Scott is best known as a member of the Paul Winter Consort.

July 31 "The Reality of Idealism"

Rebecca Glenn-Dinwoodie

Being an idealist in the modern world is a trying proposition. Media outlets, community circumstances, and even financial realities can dampen the spirit. But taking these challenges into consideration may be the only way to enact the change the idealist wants to see.



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