

The PowerLine

The Newsletter of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara



April 2007

Issue 8 Volume 8

April's Sunday Services

1 - Rev. John Rex **The Man Who Had Two Son**

A program in which we revisit a very old story, with possibilities for some very new understandings.

Ushers: Bonnie Soley

Coffee Hour Hosts: Marn Weld, Karen Labosky

Flowers: Bonnie & Bill Soley

8 - Rev. Frances Manly (Easter) **The Tomb**

Was there really an empty tomb? Or did Jesus' bones end up in a family tomb with those of his wife, Mary Magdalene? Or, possibly, neither of the above? And does any of that have anything to do with any message Easter holds for us?

Ushers: Peter Diachun

Coffee Hour Hosts: Teresa Labuszewski, Janet McKenna

Flowers: Joyce Peterson

15 - Rev. Frances Manly **Taking a Stand**

A provision in our church bylaws says that the church "shall be a forum for differences but shall not take a stand

on the issues." On the surface, it seems pretty clear what that means. Dig a little deeper, and I start wondering.

Let's wonder together.

Ushers: Ed Tormay

Coffee Hour Hosts: Joe Padlog, Carol Manson

Flowers: TBA

22 - Rev. Don Reidell **Source of Laughter: Part II**

The second of a two part celebration on the answer to anxiety and despair.

Ushers: Betsy Diachun

Coffee Hour Hosts: Barb & Jim Faller

Flowers: Joy Rowlinson

29 - Rev. John Rex **Blessings...**

Who does it? When is it done? What does it all mean to UU's?

Ushers: Bill Soley

Coffee Hour Hosts: Ed Tormay, Ed McGreevy

Flowers: Skeeter Tower



Happy Easter

President's Corner

I like to see the church building being used, and I think it is good for the community to see people coming and going from the building every day of the week, at all times of the day. I encourage members to ask for a key if they think they'll use it. Some people come in to check their e-mail or use the computer. Some just need a quiet place downtown to work or to spend time between appointments. Many are here on church business: checking their mail, working around the building or outside on the grounds. It's even nice to have a place to park your car and know there is a restroom available when needed.

A well-used building is less likely to be vandalized or to have break-ins. That element of the community will fear that they just might run into someone. So I encourage you all to keep the church in mind seven days a week and stop in for a visit.

On the subject of church business there are two annual meetings coming up: One is our own on Sunday, May 20th following our church service at 12:30. We will have a luncheon type coffee hour that day to take care of

The Big Read

The residents of Western New York are being asked to participate in "The Big Read". The book chosen for this spring's event is Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston. Some time in May we will have a discussion of the book at the church open to anyone in the community who wishes to participate.

Our own book group already read and discussed the book but we look forward to new input. The book has also been made into a movie. The book is readily available so take the time to read it and think about it and then join in a community discussion this spring. This project is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts.

April Outreach Offering

Again on the third Sunday of the month, this one being on April 15th, we will donate our outreach collection to a local non-profit group. This month the money will go to the Gay and Lesbian Youth Services run by Marvin Henchberger. This worthwhile agency reaches out to youth in WNY who may be confused and lost in the search for their identity.

Once each month a not-for-profit agency or organization is selected to receive the dedicated offering. If you have suggestions for local groups or agencies we might want to consider for next year, please contact Skeeter Tower, Betsy Diachun, or Rev. Frances Manly.

any hunger pangs. It is at that time that we set the budget for the coming year, elect new Board members and make decisions on running the church. It is an important aspect of our becoming a group bound together on the same mission: "Becoming the people the world needs." I urge all members and friends to join us.

Also, we are a part of a larger fellowship, the St. Lawrence District of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Their annual meeting is on April 27 – 28 in Utica, NY. There are brochures and registration forms in the Narthex. We are entitled to two delegates at that meeting. Peter and I are planning on going. Do join us.

Some events, activities come up between Powerline mailings. We might inform you of these via e-mail or through the phone tree. Please make sure we have the correct information for reaching you so that you can be kept informed as to what's happening.

As always, We believe in UU and You!

Betsy

Life Line Screening

On Friday, April 27, the Life Line Screening group will be holding health screenings at our church. The four screenings are as follows: Stroke/Carotid Artery, Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm, Peripheral Arterial Disease and Osteoporosis. There are sheets detailing these tests and the cost in the Narthex. Tests will be going on all day but an appointment is necessary.

Spaghetti Dinner

On April 13 we will be hosting a spaghetti dinner and basket auction to help our friends, Jim, Sam and Jeb Leighton. Their business, Cal Research, lost both equipment and records in a tragic fire in February.

There are sign up sheets in the Narthex for bringing simple desserts and working that day. The time has been divided into two -three hour shifts. Even if you can't help out, we do hope you will come and support this event. Donation is \$15.00 for the evening with all proceeds going to the Leightons. Call Marie or Rob Howard if you have any questions: 745-7149.

Walking Together...



Rev. Frances Manly

Two thousand years after the first Easter morning, the modern scientific worldview and good biblical scholarship have come together to discredit the literal notion of a corpse restored to life. To some, that may seem to threaten the very foundations of faith. To many of us, however,

it makes the Christian story of Easter even more powerful, for it invites us to reclaim the power of the metaphor of resurrection and so return to the real mystery of the story. For the mystery is not that a miracle-working deity chose to defy the laws of nature that he himself had ordained in order to bring a dead and mutilated corpse back to life. The mystery lies rather in the realization that there is good in this world—that there is a spiritual power in our lives—that nothing in this world, not even death itself, can conquer.

And that realization comes to us, as no doubt it came to the bereft followers of Jesus, not because somebody says so, but through living the stories—the story of Easter, and the story of our own lives, the two stories in conversation with each other. As we do that, the ancient story saves us—saves us from our entombment in the smallness and particularity of our own lives and egos. It offers a kind of archetypal pattern that allows us to understand, interpret, and celebrate our own experience in the light of something much larger, the universal experience of the human spirit, and it holds us a promise that there is something

within us, something in the human spirit, that can never die.

For me, it comes down to this: I believe the Easter story. I believe that this story is true in a way that is deeper and more mysterious than any historical fact, that it is a truly sacred story about the meanings of our lives. The first part of the story is about love and compassion and hope and justice seemingly crushed to death, a story we see played out again and again in the world around us, a story that we experience in small ways or large ways in our own lives. But the second part of the story, the Easter part of the story, is about love and compassion and hope and justice risen up again, in our own hearts and in the world.

We gather on Easter to sing “Alleluia!” not because one man was literally and physically (however miraculously) resuscitated nearly two thousand years ago, but because there is that within us that can and does rise up again in spite of despair, of humiliation, of death—in spite of all that the world (and our own psyches) can do to crucify it. It’s a mystery, as great a mystery as we will ever experience. We don’t know how it happens, we can’t make it happen, and we are as startled and amazed when it does happen as Jesus’ disciples were on that storied morning long ago. All we really know, for sure, is the story. And so we tell ourselves the story, every year, and we let the story live in us, because its promise is that it is our story, and at every moment, we are living our way into it.

Blessings,
Frances



The minister is available at the church office by appointment and to visit members, especially those who are ill or unable to travel easily, in their homes. If you would like to speak with her, or you know of someone who would like a call or a visit, please call her at home, at 837-9230, or e-mail franly@mac.com. She is usually available at church on Thursdays, 10 am – 2, but it’s a good idea to call ahead and make sure.

Church Governance Task Force

The Church Governance Task Force met on March 7 as scheduled. It reviewed suggestions of things which could be improved. These are being consolidated and summarized together with some suggested alternatives for making changes. This list will be distributed for input from members to be sure that all concerns and ideas are considered. Members who attended the first meeting and any additional interested members are planning to meet after Church March 18 to work on this process.

Peter Diachun

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Lucile McElwain, on the day after her 92nd birthday, will be playing the piano for the Sunday Service on April 1! This is no April fool's joke. She'll also be back on April 8 while Adrienne and her family enjoy a vacation in Europe - with 30 high school students to chaperon.

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Chautauqua

Founded 1979

2007 Season Speaker Schedule.

Sunday Services

- Jun 24 Rev. Alison Wohler Amherst UU Society, MA
July 1 Rev. David Bumbaugh Professor, Meadville/Lombard Theological School, University of Chicago
July 8 Rev. Paul Johnson UU at Shelter Rock, Manhasset, NY
July 15 Rev. Michael McGee UU Church of Arlington, Va
July 22 Rev. Frank Hall U Church in Westport, Ct.
July 29 Rev. Martha Munson First UU Society of Syracuse, NY
Aug 5 Rev. Lisa Ward Churchville UU Fellowship, MD
Aug 12 Rev. David Weissbard Rockford UU, IL, Emeritus
Aug 19 Rev. Richard Gilbert Rochester UU, NY, Emeritus
Aug 26 Rev. Daniel Budd First U Church, Cleveland, Ohio

Special Programs

Our one week of daily morning programming will occur during the second week-9:30 AM at the Hall of Philosophy from July 2-6, when The Rev. Bumbaugh and his wife, Beverly (who is also an ordained UU minister) will dramatize chapters from his book "The Education of God" in which God conducts imaginary thoughtful dialogues with various Biblical characters. With charm humor and insight, the stories come to life.

On every Monday morning except July 2, there will be a discussion with the Minister from the previous Sunday service. The discussion led, by Bob Adams, starts with the Sermon topic. 9:30 AM in the lobby of the Methodist House Chapel.

We would also like to call your attention to the Fellowship's contribution, through our membership in the Interfaith House Group, to the Ecumenical Community discussion series programs which are presented once a week at the Hall of Missions Community room. We will be presenting one or two of the 9 programs. See the Daily for details. These talks deal with the theme of the week.

Cheers,
Nancy Bechtolt

April Birthdays

- 4 - Ruth Padlog
5 - Marian McAlpine
6 - Rosemary Sweetman
20 - Peter Diachun
22 - Yvonne Stocker
29 - Rev. Frances Manly

Festival of Faiths at Stella Niagara

The Network of Religious Communities comes to Niagara County with its popular Festival of Faiths program on Sunday, April 29, 2-5 PM, at Stella Niagara. Participants are invited to learn about various religious traditions from members of those traditions. At this writing, the exact schedule is still being developed, but previous Festivals have included workshops on Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Baha'i, and Judaism as well as Unitarian Universalism and varieties of Christianity. The schedule allows each participant to attend two workshops. The Festival is open to all at no charge.

Opportunities to Help Community Missions

Beginning March 1st and running until April 30th, Community Missions is holding a special food drive for the Food Pantry and Community Kitchen. We are participating in the National \$1 Million Giveaway sponsored by the Feinstein Foundation (<http://www.feinsteinfoundation.org>). For every can or one pound of food donated to Community Missions the Foundation will donate \$1.00 to Community Missions. This is a national campaign of the Feinstein Foundation in which \$1 million dollars will be given to participating organizations.

Community Missions fifth annual **Feet or Famine Walk** takes place on Saturday, May 5th, 2007 at Whirlpool State Park. Check in and registration begin at 10:30AM. The **Feet or Famine Walk** is a 5K walk where participants solicit sponsors. The money raised goes to support the Food Pantry and Community Kitchen that the Mission runs. It is especially an great mission opportunity for youth groups. There are other activities at the walk along with a fundraising auction as well as prizes for participants who raise \$50.00 or more and special prizes for top fundraisers. The flyer and sponsor form are attached. The form and poster can also be found online at:

<http://www.communitymissions.org/fffwalk.htm>.

For more information about these events, contact: Don Luce 716-285-3403 ext. 2226 (dluce@communitymissions.org)

General Assembly Looks to UU's Future

This June, an estimated 4,500 Unitarian Universalists will gather in Portland, OR, for the 46th General Assembly, the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association. You could be among them.

In addition to a myriad of programs, worship services, business events and exhibitions, this year's GA will feature an unprecedented opportunity to shape the mission of our Association. GA attendees will engage in a unique open space meeting process where our own questions and passions will determine our direction for

or Lynne Smith 716-285-3403 ext. 2225

lmsmith@communitymission.org

Also coming up in May is Community Mission's 9th Annual Gospel Fest being held on May 11, 2007, from 7:00PM - 8:30 PM at the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church (Michigan Ave. and 10th St., Niagara Falls, NY). ! Since the event this year is so close to Mother's Day, our theme is "Honoring our Mothers!" This annual event features an evening of music performances by choirs, soloists, and bands from various churches, ministries, and organizations in Niagara County. And it is not just Gospel music! There is always a wide variety of musical styles. The main purpose of the event is to raise awareness within the Niagara Faith Community of the work of the Mission and to encourage increased participation in that work. The event also serves as a food drive and a limited fundraiser. The Food Drive is accomplished by having "Admission" be a donation of a Non-Perishable grocery item.

The best way to learn more about Gospel Fest 2007 is to visit our website at:

www.communitymissions.org/gf07wh.htm

or contact me at 716-285-3403 ext. 2259 or e-mail at

mbreese@ecunet.org.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Mark Breese

UU Bed and Breakfast in Main

The friendly folks of the UU Church of Belfast, Maine, invite UU visitors to the Penobscot Bay area of Midcoast Maine to take advantage of their bed and breakfast hospitality program. The area is known for its beautiful harbors and lakes, exceptional arts, crafts, music, dance, and theater, plus antiques, hiking, farmers markets, and small town New England charm.

For more information, visit their webpage at www.uubelfast.org/bb, email bb@uubelfast.org, or call (978)997-0502.

FUNN WINE TASTING CLUB

Next tasting: Friday, April 27, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

Wine: Bring a bottle of Chardonnay

What a wonderful variety of wines we had for our introductory wine tasting! I tasted a fruity and bright Pinot Grigio, an oaky, Texan Chardonnay, a Sauvignon Blanc that was like a fresh spring day, an off-dry Mosel-Saar Riesling, a juicy Sonoma Pinot Noir, a tight Merlot, a complex NY Meritage, a big Australian Shiraz, and more!

For April, we will scale it down a bit and focus on one variety—Chardonnay. Now, I know many of you say you don't like white wine. But give it a taste! Chardonnay can be so varied in style that it is an excellent way to build your wine knowledge. Each person, OR pair can bring one bottle to share. You can bring home what we cannot finish. Or, if you prefer, you can bring a light snack.

So that I can have enough glasses ready, RSVP by April 25th. Call 283-6112, or send an e-mail to Kirstin_Dixon@msn.com



CRE

What's Happening in April

- April 1 Learning and Listening Erica Kopp and Kathy McCunn
- April 8 Easter Celebration Kathy McCunn
- April 15 Special Craft Project Sheen Rajmaira and AJ McCabe
- April 22 Earth Day Sheen Rajmaira
- April 29 Yoga Gary McCunn and Teresa Labuszewski

Thank you to all who contributed in March to the Children's Religious Education Program: Erica Kopp, Kirstin Dixon, Frances Manly, Gary McCunn, Teresa Labuszewski, Sheen Rajmaira, AJ McCabe, Isabella Dixon and Alex Kopp

About Our Curriculum

This year, the kids and I have been exploring how different world religions express their faith through visual arts. In September, following the visit of the Dalai Lama, we discussed how the Buddhist monks placed primary importance on the meditative process of creating their sand paintings. Then the monks sweep it up and return the sand to the river. We wondered why the ancient people of England created Stonehenge; was it just a massive calendar on a hill, or much more? We talked about the intricate, repeating geometric patterns found in Islamic mosques and what it might symbolize. We noted the absence of

figurative images in Islamic art. By contrast, Christian churches are filled with frescos, sculptures, mosaics, and stained glass images that teach church-goers about Jesus and other Biblical figures.

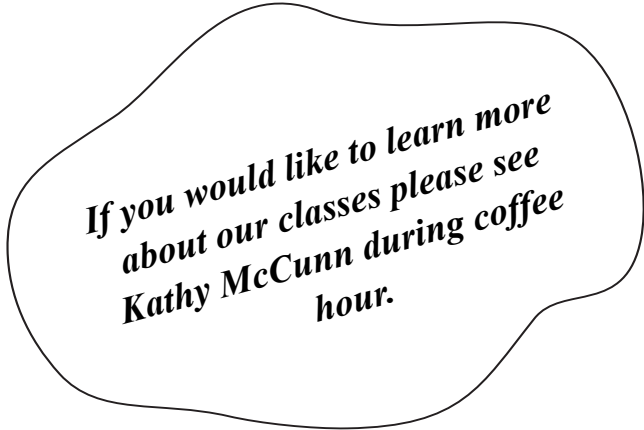
I asked the kids, "If Unitarian Universalists were to create some art or art form that was an expression of our faith, what would it look like? Quickly I had at least three replies. "The Chalice and our banners," said one. "Helping hands" said another, with arms outstretched. A third student cheerfully added, "Nature".

How would you answer this question? I've asked the kids to think about this some more in the coming weeks. -Kirstin Dixon

India's Holi Festival

On March 4th Some of you might have noticed the beautiful T shirts the children created with Sheen Rajmaira and AJ McCabe. The T shirts were our way of celebrating the Holi Indian Festival that they were learning about that Sunday. Sheen shared the following about Holi:

Holi also known as the Festival of Color is an Indian festival celebrated with family and friends to honor the coming spring and the triumph of good over evil. It is sometimes celebrated by spraying colored water on friends and family and by bonfires that symbolize the destruction of evil, the warmth of days to come.



***If you would like to learn more
about our classes please see
Kathy McCunn during coffee
hour.***

Our Youth Speak During Canvass

On two Sundays two of our youth, in our CRE program told the congregation during a special time in our service what our church meant to them. The following is what Isabella Dixon related to us. We will hear what Shriya had to say next month.

As most of you know, my name is Isabella Dixon. I started coming to this church when I was six or seven years old in first grade. Rev. Frances was our minister and Mrs. Jeanne Van Tassel was just starting the Sunday school. My mom brought my sister and me here after she had been coming for the summer services. When I first came here I was nervous because I didn't really know anybody here. As we came here more often, I grew to know more people, recognized their faces and learn their names, as they did mine. I've learned that the church is like a family, and I feel like I've have two families. I like the fact that, because the church is smaller than most, we have the ability to be closer.

In Sunday school I've learned various things; we have learned about famous Unitarian Universalists, the "Heroes of the Bible", different religions, yoga (which is sometimes painful), and many other valuable life lessons like...sharing, how to say you are sorry, how to think of other people first, and how to love unconditionally. My favorite Sunday school memories are the plays we do in church because we get to show the rest of the congregation what we have been learning.

I love the songs we sing in the hymnal and I find myself singing the tunes long after the last piano chords have stopped. The church as given me the opportunity to sing at services, which has given me the confidence to sing at school, to take voice lessons, and to perform on stage without being a nervous wreck.

The church has encouraged me to do my best in whatever I'm doing. I want you to be proud of me, so it makes me want to try even harder. I'm extremely grateful for everyone's encouragement and guidance.

Sharing our Ministry

Where do you put your talents to work in our church? Do you embrace your role as a steward of our faith, our building, our growth, our future? What can you do in our community? Do you collaborate with others to enrich our experience here? Do you reach out and build the bonds of fellowship among us?

There are many ways to contribute to the Shared Ministry of our Church. You have been working on this ministry already, whether you realize it or not! Here are a few ways:

- Cleaning & Organizing
- Working on building improvements
- Researching and preserving our history
- Raising money (UUNEX, Canvass)
- Pledging financial support
- Serving on the Board of Trustees
- Teaching Children's RE
- Planning Worship Services
- Participating theatrically or musically
- Hosting a Circle Dinner

- Writing a note of encouragement
- Visiting someone who is sick
- Enriching fellowship (Book Club, Adult RE, Coffee Hour, Knitting group)
- Strengthening communications (Powerline, Announcements, Website)
- Reaching out to our community (Habitat, NOAH)
- Organizing community forums
- Building connections with local organizations & charities

The Committee on Ministry is a relatively quiet committee. Our main purpose is to provide counsel and assistance to Rev. Frances Manly, and help her meet the goals of her professional ministry here at First UU Church of Niagara. Also, we review and advocate for fair compensation, discuss continuing training and professional development, and look for ways to strengthen and improve relationships. And we "take the pulse" of the congregation and our Shared Ministry.

Talk to us if you would like to be more active in our community, but you are unsure where to best apply your talents. Each of us have been active in this church, and we might have a few ideas for you. If you would like to discuss our shared ministry or another topic, please contact us.

The Committee on Ministry

Kirstin Dixon
Kathy McCunn

NOAH General Meeting

Thursday, April 19
7 P.M.

Catholic Charities
256 Third St., Suite 15,
Niagara Falls
Parking lot is next to building.

Rumi-Turning Ecstatic

presented by

Turkish GSA & Rumi Dialogue Group SA
April 14, 2007
7PM

Woldman Theatre-112 Norton Hall
University at Buffalo-North Campus

a film screening

for more info go to www.RUMI800.net

Invitation to Membership

If you are looking for a religious community in which to seek spiritual growth...

If you are eager to consider religious questions with others who are not always certain they have all the answers but who are determined to keep searching with an open mind...

If you would like the fellowship of others for celebration and worship, discussion and education, friendship and mutual support

If you want children to be helped to develop their own religious beliefs...

If you wish to preserve and extent the traditions of personal freedom and human dignity against the dangers they face today...

You may find that this church fills your spiritual and human needs.

If you wish to know more about us as you consider membership, please speak with our minister.

8



PowerLine
Editor:
Bonnie Soley
Photographs:
Bonnie Soley
To submit an article for the
PowerLine, please e-mail it to:
bonnie.soley@verizon.net or call
316-5863.
The PowerLine is a monthly
publication of the First Unitarian
Church of Niagara. All articles or
photographs must be received no
later than the 15th of the month
previous to publication. When pos-
sible, articles should be submitted in
Microsoft Word.

The PowerLine
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara
639 Main Street
P.O. Box 2566
Niagara Falls, NY 14302

Non-Profit
US Postage Paid
Niagara Falls, NY
Permit No. 434