

The PowerLine

The Newsletter of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara



January 2007

Volume 8 Issue 5

January's Sunday Services

7 Rev. Frances Manly - *After the Angels*

The angel song is over, the wise men and shepherds have gone home, the tree is down, the presents already not quite new any more. What now?

Usher: Joy Rowlinson

Coffee Hour Hosts: AJ and Matt McCabe

14 Dennis Duling - A Musical Worship

Usher: Peter Nimkoff

Coffee Hour Hosts: Rosemary Sweetman, Betsy Dia-chun

21 Frances Manly - Heritage Sunday

Our church building was dedicated 85 years ago, on Sunday, January 15, 1922, with services in both morning and evening. Thanks to the detective work of church historian Janet McKenna, we will revisit those services as we reflect together on our past, our present, and our future.

Usher: Carol Manson

Coffee Hour Hosts: Erica Kopp, Sagan Malluma

28 Don Reidell - *Marking Time*

Usher: Tom Yots

Coffee Hour Hosts: Yvonne Stocker, Ann Belin

"Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

Howard Thurman



Planning for Our Future

As briefly mentioned in our last newsletter, Jeanne Crane, the St. Lawrence District Program Consultant for growth, planning and leadership development, will be with us on Friday, January 12, 2007, for a potluck supper followed by a discussion on church governance. We'll begin the evening around 5:30 with food and fellowship.

The discussion/meeting will get underway around 7:00 PM and we should be through around 8:30. Childcare will be provided. We are hoping that all of our newer and younger friends and members will come and bring new insight and ideas to our discussion.

President's corner

Betsy Diachun, President
Board of Trustees

I can't believe another month has passed and its time to write another "corner" – makes me appreciate reporters who write a column every day or each week for their newspapers.

Unity Hall looked festive with the hustle and bustle of the holidays during our mini-bazaar. This small "fun and fundraiser" brought in \$ 219.50. Plus the Sunday School raised \$47.60 selling stone soup for their project of supporting children in Afganistan.

Opportunities Unlimited was very pleased by the over \$200 their decorations raised for their horticulture therapy program that enriches the lives of 150 individuals with developmental disabilities. All in all it was a fun and festive event. If our artisans are interested I think we'll try it again next year!

Minister's Discretionary Fund

Though few if any of us are wealthy, most of us can be grateful that we have at least enough to get by on, most of the time. But emergencies can happen to any of us, any time, and sometimes those emergencies are financial. The Minister's Discretionary Fund exists to help out church members faced with occasional serious need.

Disbursements from the discretionary fund are confidential; only the recipient and the minister know to whom money is given and for what purpose. If you are a church member and are faced with unexpected (or even ordinary) expenses that you need help with, (or you know of an member who does) please don't hesitate to contact our minister about it. Members who wish to contribute to the fund are of course also welcome to do so.

Environmental Task Force

We are interested in forming a task force on the environment with a short term goal of identifying issues of concern to our congregation and focusing on them thru social action in our church as well as thru the greater UU social action network as described by Rev. Gilbert.

The long range goal would be to determine steps necessary to qualify as a "Green Congregation" and to decide as a group if we want to move in that direction. Please speak to Skeeter Tower with if you have questions, concerns or interested in being involved.

We are holding a potluck supper and planning session on Friday, January 12, 2007. (*See article elsewhere.*) I wish to encourage those of you who don't feel very involved with the church to come. We are looking for new ideas, suggestions and discussions about the church and how it might be run. What's missing which would make it more attractive to newcomers? Please join us in fellowship and fun. There will be childcare during the discussion period.

Happy holidays to you all. May you be blessed with a warm and loving environment in which to celebrate the wonders of our world.

As always, We believe in UU and You!

Betsy

Dedicated Offering

Once each month a not-for-profit agency or organization is selected to receive the dedicated offering. The following organizations will receive our offerings:

January's dedicated offering will go to Carolyn's House, on 6th Street, which is run by the YWCA. Carolyn's House, run by the YWCA, contains apartments for women, and their children, who are trying to remake their lives.

The designated offering will be made on Sunday, January 21st. Checks should be made out to the church with "Carolyn's House" indicated on the memo line

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.

Circle Dinners

Our annual get-togethers in small groups are scheduled for the month of February and into early March, depending on the weather. Joy Rowlinson and her committee are looking for hosts. Please contact her if you are willing to host such an evening, or if you want more information.

Actually, the evening can be set up for any time, anyway and anywhere the host wishes. Joy can be reached at: 693-0015 or narowlinson@aol.com

Walking Together...



The great thing about the New Year is that it offers us a chance (or maybe an excuse) to make a fresh start in places in our lives where we feel the need for change. Of course, we could do it any time, and we do—we can stop smoking, start dieting, mend a relationship, join the gym, starting meditating or journaling any time of year.

But if we need a little encouragement, here comes a New Year, every year, to say to us, NOW is the time.

A couple of years ago, I offered you a list of New Year's resolutions all of us might make for our life together at church—things that could help make our congregation stronger and healthier if each of us resolved to do at least one or two that we're not doing already, things that would make our experience at church richer and more meaningful. Since some of you weren't here then, and I'm guessing that not more than a couple of the rest of you cut my words out and put them up on your refrigerator as a constant reminder, I'd like to offer a slightly updated list to you again. Check off the ones you're already doing, and give yourself a big pat on the back if it's most of them. Then I invite you to choose a couple more—things that will stretch you just a little—and really do your best to do them in the coming year.

- Come to church as regularly as you possibly can.
- Seek out someone in the congregation that you don't know very well and create an opportunity to get to know each other better.
- Invite a friend to church.
- Once a month or so call or visit someone you haven't seen in a while.
- If you have an idea about something we should be

doing—or could be doing better—talk to others about it and figure out together how to make it happen.

- Call the minister when there's something you'd like to talk to someone about (personal or congregational)—and never apologize for “taking up her time.”
- Practice talking about what Unitarian Universalism is and what it means to your life, and then don't be shy about talking to others about it.
- If you sense a problem between you and another church member, take the first step toward sorting it out. If you've hurt somebody apologize. Forgive and ask forgiveness.
- If you're unhappy about something that's going on at church—or that you think may be going on—talk to whoever's responsible directly, not behind their back. If that's too hard, come talk to me, and maybe together we can figure out what to do.
- Take a good look at your pledge to the church and think carefully about whether your giving is really in proportion to what the church means to you and to the good the church could do in our community.
- Find out how you can put your faith to work in the world through NOAH.
- If you're mostly just coming to church, explore how you can deepen relationships and support the church at the same time by putting your gifts and talents (or growing edges) to work on a committee, task, or project.
- Work on your own spiritual growth, consciously and consistently.
- Come talk to me, or call me, if you'd like to talk about doing one or more of these.

New Year's 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.

This Month at a Glance

January 8 - Monday - 7:00 PM - Founders' Room - Board of Trustees Meeting

January 9 - Tuesday - 7:00 PM - Book Discussion Group - "Letter to a Christian Nation"

January 12 - Friday 5:30 PM - Planning for Our Future - Potluck Supper preceding prior to discussion on church governance led by Jeanne Crane, SLD Program Consultant

January 15 - Monday AM - PowerLine Deadline for February Issue

January 21 - Sunday - 11:00 AM - Dedicated Offering - Carolyn's House

Future events:

Feb/Mar - Circle Dinners

July 15 -18 - UUNEX

Canvass Drive to Begin Early Spring

Ed McGreevy has agreed to be the Canvass Chair for our 2007-08 pledge drive. The drive will be held in early spring even though our fiscal year doesn't begin until August 1. This will give the Finance Committee plenty of time to work up a budget for congregational approval at the Annual Meeting.

Communications

We are moving on with this goal for better communications. Our Website is up and running. We are hoping it will attract people to our church. Check it out at: www.firstuunf.org. Marisa, our new secretary, did a tremendous job updating our site and making it more appealing. It is an ongoing endeavor.

Janet McKenna is working on a page about the history of the church. If you have something you think should be included don't hesitate to contact the office, Frances, Yvonne or any Board member. Thanks to all who worked on, and are working on, this project.

Under the same topic, the Powerline is now going out via e-mail to most of our members and friends. Again, if you see need for improvement, please don't hesitate to contact us. Bonnie Soley, as editor, is always looking for articles and ideas. Our aim here is to bring you timely monthly news and renewal. Let us know if this is meeting your needs.

Volunteers Needed!

IINYS Legislative Action, Financial Development & Long Range Planning Committees Seek Volunteers

Members from throughout the state are needed to help three committees that are essential to the operations and future of IINYS (Interfaith Impact New York State):

a. **Legislative Action Committee (LAC):** Members of the LAC help identify and follow issues, develop strategies, and keep IINYS connected to real concerns of the membership throughout the state. This work is at the heart of what Interfaith IMPACT is all about.

b. **Financial Development Committee:** The Rev. Naomi King chairs this committee. She has extensive experience in financial development, which is crucial to our future. We are also in the process of forming a charitable 501(c)(3) Interfaith IMPACT of New York State Foundation, which will allow us to accept tax deductible grants and donations. Effective financial planning now will ensure our continued effectiveness.

c. **Long Range Planning Committee:** Chaired by the Rev. Dr. Richard Gilbert, author of *The Prophetic Imperative* and former chair of IINYS, this committee is developing benchmarks for success and a vision of our future.

Your help is needed. Much of the business of these committees will be conducted by e-mail and toll-free conference call, so you can be at the table even when you can't make face-to-face meetings. If you are interested in joining any of these committees or just learning more, call Robb Smith at 518-463-5652 or e-mail interfaithimpactnys@verizon.net.

How Long Do We Have?

I recently received this "article" via e-mail and thought it was worth pondering until I got to the third paragraph and began to realize it's purpose. I haven't come to any conclusion as to what my position on "illegals" is, but I certainly cannot agree with the author who remains "anonymous." In my opinion it borders on hate mail. (This might be a good topic for a discussion group.) Editor

About the time our original thirteen states adopted their new constitution in 1787, Alexander Tyler, a Scottish history professor at the University of Edinburgh, had this to say about the fall of the Athenian Republic some 2,000 years earlier: "A democracy is always temporary in nature; it simply cannot exist as a permanent form of government. A democracy will continue to exist up until the time that voters discover they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always vote for the candidates who promise the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that every democracy will finally collapse due to loose fiscal policy, which is always followed by a dictatorship."

"The average age of the world's greatest civilizations from the beginning of history, has been about 200 years. During those 200 years, those nations always progressed through the following sequence:

1. From bondage to spiritual faith;
2. From spiritual faith to great courage;
3. From courage to liberty;
4. From liberty to abundance;
5. From abundance to complacency;
6. From complacency to apathy;
7. From apathy to dependence;
8. From dependence back into bondage"

"When you eventually see through the veils to how things really are, you will keep saying again and again, 'This is certainly not like we thought it was!'"

(Rumi)

Book Discussion Group. . .

continues its lively exchanges. On Tuesday at 7pm January 9 we will be discussing *Letter to a Christian Nation* and any other book by Sam Harris. This is a nonfiction response to letters he received from Christians after publication of his previous book. It presents some Ideas many UUs have in a clear and concise way. It is a short easy book. Come join the discussion (even if you haven't read any of Harris's books.

Adult Sunday Discussion Group. . .

continues its wit and wisdom sharing on Sundays at 9:30 AM in the Founder's Room. Come one, come all.

Professor Joseph Olson of Hamline University School of Law, St. Paul, Minnesota, points out some interesting facts concerning the 2000 Presidential election: Population of counties won by: Gore: 127 million; Bush: 143 million square miles of land won by: Gore: 580,000; Bush: 2,427,000; states won by: Gore: 19; Bush: 29; murder rate per 100,000 residents in counties won by: Gore: 13.2; Bush: 2.1 (*Editor's Note: How relevant is this?*)

Professor Olson adds: "In aggregate, the map of the territory Bush won was mostly the land owned by the taxpaying citizens of this great country. Gore's territory mostly encompassed those citizens living in government-owned tenements and living off various forms of government welfare..."

Olson believes the United States is now somewhere between the "complacency and apathy" phase of Professor Tyler's definition of democracy, with some forty percent of the nation's population already having reached the "governmental dependency" phase.

If Congress grants amnesty and citizenship to twenty million criminal invaders called illegals and they vote, then goodbye to the USA in fewer than five years.

Included was the message: "Pass this along to help everyone realize just how much is at stake, knowing that apathy is the greatest danger to our freedom."

Sharing Our Good Fortune

This holiday season was made a bit brighter for three families through the generosity of our church and anonymous members' donations. At the November board meeting it was voted to appropriate up to \$100 to adopt a family through Community Missions. The generosity of some of our members enabled us to adopt three families.

Ten children -four girls and six boys - ranging in age from four months to 16 years received gifts of clothing and toys. In addition, each family received a \$25 Tops Gift Certificate.

Bonnie Soley volunteered to do the shopping, wrapping and delivering of the gifts to Community Missions. She reported that she and her granddaughter, Jill, had a great

CRE CORNER

Special thanks to everyone who contributed to our holiday celebrations and programs.

Thank you to our young people: Alex, Bryce, Lily, Isabella, Jeremy, Keara, Madison, Shyria, and Teresa for their energy and enthusiasm whether decorating cookie houses or performing so beautifully in our holiday intergenerational service.

Thank you to Ed Tormay our star camel and Ann Belin our star storyteller.

Thank you to AJ McCabe our costume mistress and Ed McGreevy our costume procurer.

Thank you to Reverend Frances for her leadership and support.

Thank you to Betsy Diachun and Pat Loretto for creating and supervising our CRE Christmas craft service project.

Thank you to Skeeter Tower for working with our young people on the Stone Soup sale at the mini bazaar which raised forty more dollars for the Afgan children service project.



What's happening in January?

January 7 - Mandela painting, Stonehenge sculpture....What's next?
Kirstin Dixon continues her series on the Arts and Religion.

January 14 - AJ McCabe and our young people continue their work on their special year long project.

January 21 - Fresh from China and Costa Rico our yoga gurus Gary McCunn and Teresa Labuscewski resume their yoga sessions.

January 28 - Work begins on our February intergenerational service.

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 extend 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.

UUNEX

Please mark your calendars to save Sunday, July 15 through Wednesday, July 18, 2007, for our UUNEX event. Guest reservations are arriving.

For more information check out our special UUNEX website: www.uunex.net

Liberal Religious Hour Available on Podcast

For music and interviews on topics of interest to religious liberals, including peace, justice, interfaith communications, fair trade and labor practices, community action, environmental justice, dialog with other faith communities...

Go to UURadio.org

“For people who think about religion.”

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PowerLine
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