



Newsletter

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Easton

December 2006

Sermons

The Pilgrimages of Life

Dec. 3

The theme of pilgrimages is as old as Chaucer and older, as new as a dozen Hollywood film stories released this year. All of us are on a pilgrimage from birth to death, but we are on other pilgrimages, too. So let us come together this afternoon and talk of these pilgrimages of life.

Dec. 10, Questions, Please

Every year in early December, we include a Sunday when the sermon time is devoted to answering your questions. Jim will answer any question you care to ask with the modest reservation that he is free to answer that he doesn't know or that he chooses to reserve the answering for a separate Sunday, when it will be the sermon of that day.

Dec. 17, Winter Festival

In the midst of the high holy days of this darkest season of the year, we pause to listen to stories of the season. Hanukkah, Solstice, Christmas—come with your memories to share and ready to hear some new stories. Jim will share another of Ken MacLean's special stories of the season as a part of the service. There will be no children's RE this morning. UUFE Choir sings.

Dec. 31, Ring Out the Old, Ring in the New

We will take time out from holiday revels to gather in a spirit of quiet and reflection to close the old year and welcome the new. Leader: Nancy Orr

Read the weekly sermons and continue our after-sermon multilogues at <http://uufe-dialogue.blogspot.com>

A Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service

**Sunday
Dec. 24, 3 p.m.
@ Third Haven**

Bring the children and come to this special service to hear the old Christmas story retold with our own understanding of what the season means. Then, as we go out after the service, we will light candles at the door and join in singing "Silent Night" outside.

See you there!

Sunday Service and School, 3:00 p.m.

Third Haven Friends Meeting House
405 South Washington St.



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Minister's Office Hours

Tues. & Wed., 9:00 a.m.-12 p.m.
Mon., Thurs., Fri. by appt.
410-822-8103 (Office)
410-770-9772 (Home)
410-253-8881 (Cell)
jmbatmd@aol.com
Appointments encouraged.

With a Profound Sense of the Honor...

...that has been conferred, I accept the call to the settled ministry of our Fellowship. May we work together well and benefit from our ministry to each other....Any "letter of agreement" is based on a covenantal commitment between the signers—in this case between a congregation and the minister they have called. My hope is that this bond of faith in each other will deepen with every year.



Welcome to New Members

December 3

During our worship service, we will welcome our newest members. We would be happy to include anyone who would like to sign our UUFE Membership Book by that date. Please talk to Jim Bank if you are interested in becoming a member of our congregation.

Ministerial Thoughts

Anniversary

Three years ago this month I used the words you see in the sidebar to the left to accept the call of our congregation to be the Unitarian Universalist minister here in Easton. The decision was difficult but joyous on both sides. Six months later in a special celebration that looked toward the refurbishment that is going forward right now, I became our settled minister.

Since then, wonderful things have been accomplished. With new roof and windows, doors, and siding, our old building seems completely changed already, though it will still be months until we are back inside its spaces once more. Our attendance has been diminished by the change in time and place of our services, but we can trust that our return to our Fellowship building, coupled with the many inquiries we have been receiving from members of the greater community, will mean an increase in worshippers and members during the coming year. Some of us have been calling this period away from our land and building a "Babylonian Captivity," in reference to the period the Jewish people spent away from Israel when their nation was overthrown by the Babylonians. We, of course, have been made welcome during this time, first by the Jewish congregation, now by the Friends. But I think that all of us look forward to the moment when we will be able to go forward to the new look of our old Fellowship. It will be a big change and a good change.

I hope that you will be able to join us during this holiday season for our special services. They won't be the same as in former years, I'm sure. But they will be what we make of them as we hear the old stories and tell our own, as we sing together, and as we light candles. May all of us have a wondrous holiday season—by ourselves, with our families, and in our Fellowship community!

See you at the Meeting House and at our offices in the Stewart Building downtown!

Jim Bank

President's Corner

See You at the Fellowship, Wherever It Is

Although I write this in November, before Thanksgiving, you will not be reading it until December. And, wow, then we will be in the thick of the holiday season, with all its hustle and bustle. I hope that you find joy and peace amidst the many activities. I am blessed to have family and friends nearby, and as the years go by, I appreciate my blessings more and more.

The building on route 50 has certainly taken form, and we no longer have to imagine how it will look. So far, we are on track money wise and timing wise. And so halfway through the church year we are also probably halfway through our time away from our own Fellowship home. It's been a huge adjustment, but we are making it.

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A Gathering to Usher in the Holiday Season

December 17, After Service

We will hold our Annual Holiday Potluck in the Third Haven common room immediately following the service. Bring a dish to share and come prepared to have a festive experience. Sue Loweree will sing and strum her guitar and lead us in songs to celebrate the season. *We will also have a chance to say our final goodbyes to Rene Bond as she prepares to leave for her new home in Charlottesville, VA.*



Gatherings

Men's Lunch Bunch, Dec. 6 & 20: Men from the Fellowship gather promptly at 11:30 a.m. at the Easton Airport Cafe.

Back, Thanks to Third Haven!

Dinner and a Movie Night, Dec. 8, "Duma" (PG). This family drama explores the bonds of friendship between man and beast. A young boy, Xan (Alexander Michaletos), befriends a cheetah named Duma and commits a true act of selfless love: He traverses the southern region of Africa, a long and difficult journey, just so he can help his pal return to his one true home—the wild. Although he may never see Duma again, Xan discovers that love lingers in spite of distance. Dinner is potluck with an African theme. *Showtime:* 6:30 p.m. at Third Haven.

Women's Lunch, Dec. 14, Noon: There were 12 of us together this last time, and the choice for this month is to carpool to Kent Island and The Narrows Restaurant. The food is very good, the prices are reasonable, and the restaurant sits right on the water. We will need reservations, so call Edie Swallow (410-745-5170) if you can come, and we'll plan our carpools then. In January, we are going to try a brown bag lunch at Sheila Lanahan's. Stay tuned!

Drumming Circle, Dec. 15: Join us at 7 p.m. if you want to learn or just have fun. There are always extra instruments. For more information on meeting location, please contact Debra Hathaway (410-770-9057).

Women's Spirituality Circle, Dec. 18: All women are invited to come together at 7 p.m. to honor the female divinity in this monthly circle. For more information and meeting location, please contact Beth Hansen (410-253-0214; sagefirebeth@yahoo.com).

Calendar

Men's Lunch Bunch

Wed., Dec. 6 & 20, 11:30 a.m.

Dinner and a Movie Night

Fri., Dec. 8, 6:30 p.m.

Women's Lunch

Thurs., Dec. 14, 12 p.m.

Drumming Circle

Fri., Dec. 15, 7 p.m.

Women's Spirituality Circle

Mon., Dec. 18, 7 p.m.

Children's RE Calendar

Dec. 3, RE classes

Dec. 10, RE classes

Dec. 17, Intergenerational service

Dec. 24, Intergenerational service

Dec. 31, No RE classes, child care will be provided

Choir Calendar

Dec. 3, Uufe choir at Uufs

Dec. 7 & 14, 7–8:30 p.m.

Thursday choir rehearsals in the Third Haven common room

Dec. 17, 1:30 p.m.

Uufe choir rehearsal in the Third Haven brick meetinghouse

Rehearsals resume

January 4, 2007.



Chakra Tai Chi On Hold

The Chakra Tai Chi group will resume meeting once we're in the new building. People who have attended are encouraged to do Chakra Tai Chi on their own at 9 a.m. on the first Saturday of the month or to light a candle at that hour to join—in spirit—with those who are gathered elsewhere in the world.

Backup Child Care

The RE Committee is looking for a few members or friends to agree to be on hand to sit kids



if our regular person cannot make it. Please contact Nicole (nicole@rainmakercreative.net) or Amy (beansnbear@hotmail.com) to sign up.

(President's Corner, continued)

I hope each of you will look for an opportunity to participate in our move back and in the planning of our program for the future. We can all be proud of the commitment and dedication that have made our dreams a reality. And we can look forward to welcoming the community to UUFE and spreading the word about our inspiring, tolerant, and enriching religion and community.

See you at the Fellowship—
wherever it is!

Jean Rhian
UUFE President

Thoughts for All Ages

Hands-On Religion

The last few weeks we have had a messy good time in our Religious Education program. We've colored our journals, mixed up a chocolate cake, and made our own fizzy soda pop. Doesn't sound very religious does it? But it is. Besides the inherent spiritual joy the children can get from baking or coloring, they are learning about what it can mean to be Unitarian Universalist.

Our activities have been inspired by influential UUs throughout history. When we baked our cake, we learned about Fannie Merritt Farmer and her quest "to elevate the human condition" through safe, standardized cooking methods. During our explorations with baking soda and citric acid, we made soda and discussed how Joseph Priestly, who discovered oxygen and, thus, "fuzzy bubbles," could be both a minister and a scientist. We explored why he was forced to leave England because of religious persecution as a minister and how his friendship with Benjamin Franklin helped further with creativity as a scientist.

Learning about these Unitarians and/or Universalists benefits the kids in several ways. First, it demonstrates that our faith has an incredible, lengthy history that kids should be proud of. They are part of a faith that has helped build and improve the world we live in today. Secondly, we can explore our principles through the work or service of our religious ancestors. Priestly, for example, is a wonderful embodiment of the UU love for scientific inquiry and our acceptance of both faith and reason in religious life. Finally, these activities get us away from the "talky" classroom-type lessons and give the kids a fun "hands-on" experience. The kids tend to be more involved and remember the lessons better when they can DO something instead of just talk about something. Plus, it is pretty fun for the adults to pick a UU and create a relevant project. It makes RE a fun, creative experience for all of us, and we can't wait to come back next week!

Nicole Meehan
Director Religious Education

Social Action

Winterization Volunteers Needed

Some of our members are participating in the Interfaith Winterization Project. Jim Richardson and Eric Henry-Stocker are team leaders, and other participants are Dan Higgins, Sandra Henry-Stocker, Ken Court, and Jim Bank. The teams are spending one or two Saturdays during the winter months winterizing windows and doors as well as making referrals for more extensive repairs that are noted. More volunteers are needed; anyone interested in being part of this project can contact Kelley Malone at kelleymalone@goeaston.net. Kelley is a member of Trinity Episcopal Church and the volunteer coordinator.

The UUFE Social Action Committee voted to continue supporting the Web site: whatsoeveryou.do.com.

Adult Religious Education

Dec. 6, Theology of Film Series: “Joyeaux Noel”

This movie is set during World War I that is in no way about the glorification of war but, instead, tells a tale of a group of human beings who see past their differences for one night. Based on true events known as the Christmas Truce of 1914. Leader: Gail Woodall



Dec. 13, A Solstice Program

As we approach the shortest day of the year, join us in a contemplation of how our ancestors set aside this day as especially holy. Leader: Beth Hansen

Music Notes

Beauty in Harsh Harmonies

In this time, as we welcome light back into the darkness, the choir works to find beauty in both harsh harmonies and their resolutions.

In November and December, the UUFE choir will be singing several pieces from Benjamin Britten’s *A Ceremony of Carols*. Although they are pieces of beauty, they are not the usual comfortable holiday fare. The texts are from 15th and 16th century English poetry, so the language is often unfamiliar, but reminiscent of modern meanings. Even more, the music is an edgy blend of medieval and modern harmonies, with prolonged and complex dissonances. The movement between tension and resolution, in music, between notes that do not sound “nice” together, and those that do, is the basis for beauty in many art forms. It is so difficult to deliberately and accurately sing pitches that clash, but so necessary to make and hold that uncomfortable space to allow for the revelation and release of the eventual resolution. As singers and listeners become more used to being in that dissonant sound, it can take on a value of its own. From W. A. Mathieu’s *The Listening Book: Discovering Your Own Music* on listening to Schoenberg string quartets for the first time:

“In the diffused winter light of the listening room we sat for two hours, holding hands, dissonances streaming through our earphones....I didn’t tighten up against the harshness. I learned to relax and allow the sharp edges to pass through me like wind through fiber. This opened a new world of music and sound.”

These times are uncomfortable spaces for some of us, in different ways: the Fellowship, in its changing and borrowed spaces; friends and members for whom holidays bring some degree of distress; for those whose life rhythms are driving or unsettling. I wish for us a sense of beauty in the midst of our challenges and, especially, for those eventual moments of peace and resolution.

Patty Rubin
Music Director

Starting in January

Films About Social Action

The Interfaith Social Action Coalition plans to present films about social action issues on the third Fridays of the month, starting in January. These films will be selected and provided by the Coalition and will be shown in the common room at Third Haven Friends under the licensing aegis of UUFE. More information to be provided later.

Saying Goodbye to Rene

Saying goodbye to a member of our UUFE community is never easy. It is particularly difficult to say goodbye to Rene Bond. Her contributions are so many that it would be pointless to list them all. (Who will ever again look at the choir and not see her smiling face putting everything she has into the song?) Our Membership Committee and the Caring Committee will have holes in them that will remain empty for a long time. However, Rene’s presence will be missed in more subtle ways. She steadied us and often brought us back in touch with our best selves. For many, she provided a lifeline and pointed them in the right direction to find a way out of their crises. In these endeavors her professional training and background experience was invaluable. But what we will miss most and what cannot be replaced is not what she did but who she was and what she meant to us: Just plain Rene.

Thank You For All You Do

It's really amazing how many people pitch in and in a great variety of ways to keep UUFEB the growing and thriving religious community that it is. Here are just a few examples of folks who deserve big THANK YOUS for the work they have done recently:

* *Jim Richardson* for new signs at our home on Rt. 50 and for the sidewalk at the Friends Meeting House * *Jerry Fairbanks, Frank Greenburg, and Dick Doughty* for ditch digging and electrical work for parking lot lighting at our home on Rt. 50 * *Eric Stocker, Gail Woodall, and Tom Anovick* for the Fall Festival * *Barbara Doughty and Beth Hanson* for the Extended Capital Campaign potluck supper * *George McManus*, our "mailman," who picks up mail and delivers it to the office regularly * *Jane Terebey and Nancy Dimond* who drove to Towson to attend a workshop on the Church as Employer * *Liz McGrory and Tom Anovick* for continuing service as temporary quarters and move gurus

Check in next month as we again thank more of our special volunteers.



**Chalice Keepers is the JPD Endowment Fund for Growth designed to help our churches with loans for major capital expenses, such as land and buildings. It offers a creative and rewarding way to perpetuate your UU values.*

Board News

Building Oversight Settles Several Details

The Building Oversight Committee has approved an audio plan for the meeting room that Sandra Henry-Stocker submitted as well as a key plan for the doors. The committee authorized Sue Loweree to engage a digger to relocate the evergreen shrubs and spread the pile of dirt located to the north of the building. We will continue to use Verizon for the Internet service but will not install a separate TV cable. Commercial vinyl will be used for our flooring. Jean Rhian has asked the staff and committee chairs to develop a space utilization plan. Dick Doughty reported that the siding was going on, the soffit was nearing completion, and the duct work and insulation for the meeting room was being installed.

Extended Capital Campaign. Nancy Dimond reported that \$239,000 has now been pledged in the Extended Capital Campaign. The Board expressed its great appreciation to Nancy for all of her hard work and accomplishment as chair of the campaign. It was noted that our Fellowship has raised more than \$500,000 for our new building. For a congregation of our small size, this is a remarkable achievement.

Annual Canvas. Our canvas will begin on Sunday, March 4, 2007. Don Barker is planning on a zero budget; hence, after committee input, he plans to submit it to the Board at its April meeting and have the Board's recommended budget published well in advance of our annual meeting scheduled for May 21, 2007. Our service auction has been tentatively scheduled for February 16, 2007. It was decided that henceforth, individual pledge status reports would be sent out six times a year rather than only four times a year.

New Business. The Board discussed publicity and agreed to Jim Bank's suggestion that we invite the public to attend Friday afternoon or evening functions at our new building, which would feature various artistic, musical, or other subjects. It was agreed that a committee should be established in January to pursue this plan and that the Friday functions should begin in September and perhaps extend into December of next year.

Consider Giving Through Your IRA

There's a new way to make a generous, tax-free donation to the church or to Chalice Keepers.* The Pension Protection Act of 2006 allows members to make donations directly from their IRA and avoid any penalty on early withdrawals. Taxpayers are allowed to donate up to \$100,000 per year from their IRA. The new rule is especially attractive for members who are 70 1/2 years of age and required to begin taking distributions.

Because the distribution will not be included in taxable income, you will not be able to claim a tax deduction for the charitable contribution. *A few words of caution:* It doesn't work to take distribution and then make the donation or to park the contribution in a donor-advised fund.

(Continued, p. 8)

UUFE Contacts

Minister	Rev. James Bank, 410-770-9772 or 410-822-8103
President	Jean Rhian, 410-822-5807
Dir. Religious Ed.	Nicole Meehan, 410-745-5959
Music Director	Patty Rubin, 410-745-2000
Minister Emeritus	Daniel G. Higgins, Jr., DMin, 410-745-3462
Newsletter Editor	Amy Eutsey, 410-820-7971 uufenewsletter@hotmail.com

Many thanks to the Folding and Stamping Crew. *We can't get the Newsletter to you without them! :o)*

The deadline for the January Newsletter is December 15.

(IRA Giving, continued from p. 6)

The IRA holder must instruct the bank or brokerage firm to give the money directly to a charity, and it needs to be done swiftly because these transactions can take time and the new rule is only in force for 2006-2007. For more information, visit the JPD Web site (www.jpduua.org) and click on Chalice Keepers. If you have questions or comments, contact Joan Priest (joan.priest@fundraiser9.com).

Unitarian Universalist Principles

Unitarian Universalism is a faith for those who want the freedom to develop their own religious values and beliefs without being bound by creed or dogma. These are the principles that we share:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part.

We Want To Hear From You!

UUFE is always interested in hearing from members and friends about new ideas for small group activities. Contact President Jean Rhian, and let' make your ideas a reality!