

# UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS OF CLEARWATER

Where Seekers Find a Home

## OCTAGRAM

JANUARY 2011



### Our Focus: Mission, Ministry and Growth

We minister to each other through service, education, artistic and spiritual nourishment, and the strengthening of our relationships.

In our local and world communities, we promote our vision, live our UU principles, inspire peaceful activism, and invite fellow seekers to join our quest.

#### UUC Mission Statement

Dear Members and Friends,

In the coming weeks, you will be asked to join a series of Vision Workshops. The goal of the workshops is to define how our religious community will serve UUC members, families, and community.

How will we serve the spiritual needs of our members, friends and families? Can we do more to provide a warm home and hot meal for those who live on the streets of Clearwater or St. Petersburg? What must we do to insure that every child has an opportunity to learn? What steps can we take to join people of all races, religions, and orientations, to live with dignity and in peace? It is up to the members of this congregation to provide answers to these, and many other questions.

The primary role of congregation leaders is to be “seeing eyes, hearing ears, and serving hands of the congregation” (Bergdorf and DeKoster). The Board of Trustees will be asking, “Are we in step with our member’s mandate?”

Our UUC campus and membership is much like a richly leafed tree. It is furnished with beautiful facilities, wonderful staff, and members dedicated to spiritual growth and economic/social justice. Our direction in the years to come, will depend upon our participation in the planning process. How well the Vision Plan defines our faith will determine the quality of fruit the tree will bear (Ballor).

The next few months will be extremely busy as we plan for the future of our religious home. Please keep a watchful eye on the UUC calendar, [www.uuclearwater.org](http://www.uuclearwater.org).

Thank you.

Terrence Stapleton



Terrence Stapleton

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# Random Reflections

Rev. Abhi Janamanchi



In the Hebrew Bible, the prophet Micah says, “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

As Unitarian Universalists, we get what Micah was saying to the ancient Hebrew people because for us, doing justice is a core spiritual discipline.

For Unitarian Universalists, spirituality means a deeper engagement with Life. It is that sense of aliveness we feel when we are immersed in the service of something much larger than ourselves.

And our spirituality is incarnated through our ethics. What follows are some elements of a spirituality of service and compassion.

First, we believe in serving, not saving, those members of humanity hurting in our very midst, not just people in far off places.

Second, we want to be realistic as well as idealistic in our efforts to be compassionate.

Third, our spirituality of service demands cooperation rather than lone-rangerism. This seems self-evident in addressing long term, economic-moral struggles. But authentic team work is difficult to achieve in our insulated, egotistical culture. Nonetheless, as the Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed said: "It is the church that assures us that we are not struggling for justice on our own, but as members of a larger community. The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen and our strength too limited to do all that must be done. Together, our vision widens and our strength is renewed."

Finally, our approach to justice as a spiritual discipline calls on us to welcome the stranger. Written on the walls of a Spanish harbor is the aphorism: "I am seeking God, but I do not find God. I am seeking myself but I do not find me. But I do find my neighbor and the three of us get on our way together."

In every religion, a loving and compassionate engagement with the stranger is the highest expression of faith. The ritual bond of host and guest demonstrates our common humanity.

At the core of our Universalist faith is God's unconditional love and regard for life. Whereas we humans can never repay this boundless love, we can and must return the favor. Loved, we love in reply; through active, direct service, by being carriers of compassion to Earth and its inhabitants.

As Unitarian theologian Wallace Robbins said:

"Ours is a faith of moral work not because we think morality is a sufficient religion, but because we know of no better way of showing gratitude to God, and our confidence in one another."

In faith & fellowship,

Abhi Janamanchi



# A Song For Change

Dr. David Katz

When teaching about the value society places upon music, I like to demonstrate to my students that composers, whether dead or alive, do not exist in a vacuum. Composers are real people with real lives who, through their musical output, reflect on the lives around them. Often, musical compositions are written with thematic connections to perceived injustices or justices.



Celebrating the birth and life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in January serves as a wonderful backdrop in order to discuss, study, create and listen to music which was written in the name of either justice or injustice. A quick survey of the Unitarian Universalist hymnal, *Singing The Living Tradition*, gives examples of many hymns written in the hope that it would create a call to arms for African-American rights, women's rights, and gay and lesbian rights just to name a few. The titles of these hymns create stirring images. Some particularly striking examples are "We Are A Gentle, Angry People," "Lift Every Voice and Sing," and "We'll Build A Land."

The fact that these three examples use words like "we" and "every" is quite purposeful. It would be absurd for a person to call, sing, or shout for justice in the privacy and comfort of their own living room. Rather, a hymnal for congregational and church singing is the perfect vehicle for creating the group effort for change. The words, combined with the stirring and powerful melody, give those who believe in a cause the needed strength to make it happen.

As we sing some of these wonderful and stirring hymns in January, what might our efforts inspire? What might the children of our congregation be inspired to do by singing these hymns as they continue to form into not only adults of good reason, but also adults with passion, hope and a fire for committing to change what they perceive as injustice in their own time?

In the book of Deuteronomy, God commands to his people, "Justice, *and only* justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you." These words express to us that to simply exist silently in a place without fully expressing ourselves is unacceptable. As tenants of our home, we are required to speak, sing and shout for justice in all we do.

Shalom and blessed be, David

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# Sunday Flowers or a Rose for RCS

Carol Heichel



As you know, you may honor a person or an occasion with flowers and an announcement in the Sunday Order of Service. You can also reserve a special date in advance on the calendar outside the office doors. You can also bring your own flowers or order an arranged bouquet or roses for \$40. But for the month of January you have a choice — you may provide flowers for a Sunday service or you can make a \$40 donation to Religious Community Services (RCS) and I will provide a token rose in a bud vase for the Sunday service. All of your money goes directly to RCS to provide for the needy and the food pantry. To date a "Rose for RCS" has contributed \$200 to the local charity. To schedule a flower contribution please contact, me, Carol Heichel at 727 738-8982 or clheichel@hotmail.com. Thank you.

## Wonderful News, Success at Long Last!



The Senate on Saturday, December 18, 2010, repealed the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy for the military, which has been in effect for 19 years. The vote was 65-31 with several Republicans crossing the aisle with their yes vote. This is a great victory for all Americans who believe in equal rights for all citizens. Our thanks to all UU's, who signed petitions, called their representatives in Congress and supported this effort. Peace — GLBT Team

## Mitten Tree Update

A thunderous thank you to all who provided gifts or gift cards to the area children, again this holiday season. You made 108 children and their families happy. Many will be warmer because of the coats and warm pajamas you donated. The Mitten Tree is one of the most successful programs on our calendar. A special thank you to Allison Snell, Marlene Calderone, Phyllis Barnett, and Lynette Wood for their hard work organizing this project.

## Nearing the End of the 2010-2011 Campaign



This is the last month to sponsor or donate to the Khasi Hills Project and help educate a child in India. Thank you to those of you who have renewed sponsorship or donated to this worthy cause already. If you have sponsored a child in the past and have not turned in your check for the current campaign, please do so. There are only about four weeks left. Abhi and several members are traveling to the Khasi Hills in mid February and would like to deliver the money in person. The children need our support. See Marlene Calderone at the Social Justice table next Sunday or call her at 727-669-9517.

## Share the Plate

In honor of the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King the January 8<sup>th</sup> Share the Plate recipient is Life Force Cultural Arts Academy. Life Force Cultural Arts Academy is a 501c3 tax-exempt corporation that was established in 1991 and incorporated in 1997, to celebrate cultural diversity by presenting the finest in cultural performing arts to broaden the educational, social and artistic perspectives of an entire community of youth, adults and families. For almost twenty years, Life Force has provided programs and activities to thousands of youth, adults and families in and outside of the Tampa Bay Area. Most recently they presented the Chocolate Nutcracker at the Mahaffey Theater and in the works is a dance presentation at UUC in April presented by Friendship Force Florida Suncoast. Please give generously.

The following amounts were collected for our Share the Plate recipients during the past few months:

October – Vincent House \$ 426.00.  
November – RCS Food Bank \$ 509.50.  
December – Boley Center, Inc. \$ 566.00

## Economic Justice Team

A huge thank you to all who contributed cash or blankets to support our distribution to the migrant workers in Plant City. A special thank you goes to our adults and youth who joined us in this very meaningful experience. We'd also like to remind you that we will again be sponsoring our "Marilyn Toman Rice and Bean collection" the last two weeks of January. Again, please bring in packages of dried beans or rice in manageable sizes or drop off a donation at the Social Justice table and we'll shop for you. Anyone who would like to participate in the distribution at various camps where the migrant workers live should contact Harriet Ha-Sidi at 398-7012 or [hhasidi@aol.com](mailto:hhasidi@aol.com) or Linda Stoller at [LStoll10403@aol.com](mailto:LStoll10403@aol.com).

# In Honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Scott Milinder

We have a weekend of activities honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Please consider joining us in our tribute to this great man. You can contact me for more information at 727-421-2818.



## Friday, January 14th:

*Race in the 21st Century: A Sacred Conversation*, 7 p.m. (Movie and Discussion)

Join us for a two day "sacred conversation on race," led by national facilitator Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, United Church of Christ Minister for Racial Justice. Today, race is not just a black and white issue. We live in a time of racial pluralism and have hundreds of diverse "friends" on Facebook - yet most of our everyday experiences are mono-racial, especially after 5 pm and on Sunday mornings. What conversations about race are we not having? Where is the energy coming from that isolates us? Bring your hopes and fears, questions and wondering, to this safe space. Please let us know you're coming; call 727- 531-7704 or e-mail [uucracialjustice@gmail.com](mailto:uucracialjustice@gmail.com). A \$10 donation at the door is requested.

## Saturday, January 15th:

*Race in the 21st Century: A Sacred Conversation - Workshop*, 9 am - 1 pm.

*Annual Interfaith Concert*, 7 - 9 pm.

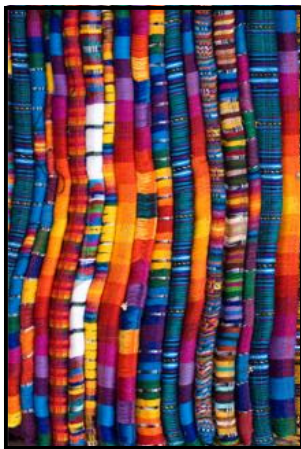
Join us at this year's concert celebrating Martin Luther King's birthday , with theme "**Living the Dream and Defining the Spirit of Change.**" Host Fred Johnson will be joined by talented artists from the Tampa Bay Area as well as those from our own congregation for a joyful evening of music, dance and celebration. Please contact Catherine Costa or Barry Skeete for more information at [catherine@redtailedmusic.com](mailto:catherine@redtailedmusic.com) or 727-235-7228.

## Sunday, January 16th:

Join us in worship as Rev Abhi Janamanchi and Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson share the pulpit.

## Monday, January 17th:

Walk with the Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater in the MLK Day Parade in Clearwater. Volunteer opportunities also available. Contact Denise Seeber and Marlene Calderone.



## “Religulous” Luncheon

INTERWEAVE celebrates the new year on Sunday, January 16th, with a luncheon and Bill Maher’s movie “*Religulous*.”. Join us after the service for tasty food, fellowship and fun with Bill Maher’s handling of religious zealots. Lunch will be followed by a brief meeting in the Chorale Room at 12:30 pm. The movie will begin at 1:15 and last until 2:45 pm. Everyone is welcome to participate. For more information please contact either Joe Weinstein at [joeweinstein@yahoo.com](mailto:joeweinstein@yahoo.com) or call Robert Italia at 727-822-0636.

## Open Issues Forum — Sundays at 9:30 am

**Jan 2nd.** General discussion: "What is the mission of the Open Issues Forum?" Is it to search for the truth that underlies contentious issues, or is it to take a stand? Or both?

**Jan 9th.** Jolie Baetzel. "Pre-planning the worst day of your life -- your death." Jolie comes from a long line of Boston Unitarians and values personal responsibility in conducting one's own affairs. She works full time as a Family Service Counselor.

**Jan 16th.** Nan Owens. "Comfort and Challenge in End of Life Issues." Nan attended a biblical college after graduation but now she is the vice president of the Atheists of Florida; is the editor of *Common Sense*, the Humanist Association newsletter; and was the former executive director of the Center for Inquiry Florida.

**Jan 23rd.** Lary Crews. "How I Became A Baby Boomer Blogger." In 64 years, Lary Crews held many jobs, such as a radio announcer and published author to a magician and a Las Vegas casino concierge! Now add blogger.

**Jan 30th.** Thom Foley. "From the Butterfly to the Thunderstorm: Environmental History and the Unitarian-Universalists' Seventh Principle." Thom is a Florida historian who discovered that his chosen field of study -- environmental history, is the academic expression of "Respect for the Interdependent Web of All Existence of

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## Worship Services — Sundays at 10:30 am

### **Jan. 2 Social Justice: Spirituality in Action**

**Rev. Abhi Janamanchi**

*Worship Associate – Carl Hansen*

The service will explore the second UU principle: to affirm and promote “justice, equity, and compassion in human relations” and make a case for why social justice is an important spiritual practice for Unitarian Universalists.

### **Jan. 9 Who Is Our Neighbor?**

**Rev. Abhi Janamanchi**

*Worship Associate – Bill Dishongh*

Issues concerning immigration policies in this country are complex and, for some, deeply emotional. We can, and should, discuss the critical issues relating to U.S. immigration policies and deeply consider the implications of our collective responses. The service will explore why immigration is a moral issue.

### **Jan. 16 Honoring Dr. King's Legacy**

**Revs. Abhi Janamanchi & Karen G. Thompson**

#### ***Bring-A-Friend Sunday***

Celebrating the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is a good time to explore how we are doing — as both a nation and human beings, on the issues of race and racial justice. We welcome the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, Minister for Racial Justice in the United Church of Christ. The service will be preceded by a pancake breakfast at 9 am.

### **Jan. 23 Is Lying Always Just?**

**Rev. Roger Fritts**

*Worship Associate—Jenn Bouchie*

In conjunction with this month's theme of Justice, the sermon will include three true stories about lying. Rev. Roger Fritts is the Senior Minister of Cedar Lane UU Church in Bethesda, Maryland.

### **Jan. 30 The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism: Spirited Worship**

**Rev. Abhi Janamanchi, Christine Pensa, Charlotte Olson, Kari Fenstermaker and others**

A spirited worship that explores the deeper meanings of the seven UU principles through stories, songs, energizing music, and readings.

# 2010-2011 Program Focus for UUC

“Building the Beloved Community” is our worship and lifespan learning program year focus for 2010-2011. This year we will reflect, consider, and act upon nine religious and spiritual themes. Each theme plays a part in the development of a well-grounded religious and spiritual life. They provide us with a set of common stories and ideas that become elements of an ongoing community conversation.

September: **Mission and Ministry**  
October: **God**  
November: **Gratitude**  
December: **Hope**  
January: **Justice**  
February: **Unitarian Universalism**  
March: **Faith**  
April: **Salvation/Resurrection**  
May: **Growth**



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## MONTHLY THEMED RESOURCES - Justice

### Books:

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* and  
*Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*

Cornel West, *Race Matters*

Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*

Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley & Nancy Palmer Jones, editors, *Soul Work: anti-racist theologies in dialogue*

B. McLaren, E. Padilla, & A. B. Seeber, Eds. *The Justice Project*

Sharif Abdullah, *Creating a World that Works for All*

David Danelo, *The Border*

Aviva Chomsky, *They Take Our Jobs (And Other Myths)*

Margaret Regan, *The Death of Josseline: Immigration Stories from the Arizona-Mexico Borderlands*

### Movies:

*Amistad*, Starring Djimon Hounsou, Matthew McConaughey, Anthony Hopkins, et al

*Glory*, Starring Matthew Broderick, Denzel Washington, Cary Elwes, et al.

*Invictus*, starring Morgan Freeman, Matt Damon, et al.

*Crash*, starring Don Cheadle, Sandra Bullock, Thandie Newton, et al

*The Visitor*, starring Richard Jenkins, Hazz Sleiman, and Hiam Abbas

*Green Card*, Gérard Depardieu, Andie MacDowell, Bebe Neuwirth, et al

*District 9*, Starring Sharlto Copley, David James, Jason Cope, and Nathalie Boltz

*Milk*, starring Sean Penn

### Websites:

[www.communitytampabay.org](http://www.communitytampabay.org)

[www.splcenter.org](http://www.splcenter.org)

[www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/buildingworld/index.shtml](http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/buildingworld/index.shtml)

# My Deep Appreciation

Rev. Nick Ozuna



As the year comes to an end, so does my internship. I began my role as intern minister of UUC in September, 2009 and from that point it has been a life-transforming experience. As a seminarian at Rissho Kosei-kai, when I heard the news that I would be taking on this kind of internship, I had many reservations, to say the least. I didn't know how well I would be accepted or how I would adapt to learning from a different religious tradition, and I wasn't even sure how much I could feasibly contribute to them. It didn't take long though for me to recognize that in the end we were all seeking the same thing, truth in our pursuit of happiness.

Serving as the Summer Minister this year and assisting with pastoral care and youth programs, as well as the other areas of my internship, I learned so much about what it takes to lead a religious organization. With the many learning opportunities, either direct or through observation, I believe this experience has been by far more valuable than anything I could have learned through traditional scholastic study.

In retrospect, I feel incredibly lucky for this unprecedented opportunity to learn from an organization like UUC, which is so well balanced in its identity and mission and so accepting of all religions. Truthfully, I don't know how well this kind of relationship would have worked in a different religious tradition, but here it seemed that the conditions were all just right for this kind of undertaking. I never felt the pressure of converting or doing something that would make me feel spiritually uncomfortable.

The members were always very warm and accepting of me and encouraged my efforts as an intern minister. I was also blessed with an exceptional internship committee, chaired by Susan Hegner, which served as a wonderful support, helping me through personal challenges, as well as the process of developing the Rissho Kosei-kai presence here as well as keep me focused on my internship work and developing relations with the congregation. And last but certainly not least, Rev. Abhi Janamanchi, my mentor in this internship, served as an enormous support, both embracing and challenging me. He was also very respectful of my Buddhist background and always thought about how I could develop myself as a leader in Rissho Kosei-kai. For these and many other reasons, I am forever indebted to this congregation and extend my most humble and deep appreciation.

As I look towards the future, though I know I still have so much to learn, I feel confident that I have many of the necessary preparatory skills to become successful in my ministry. My only regret was that I could not reciprocate even half of the many benefits I have received back to the UUC. Even though my internship is over, I will continue to have a presence here at this church and I hope to continue this wonderful relationship with UU and all of you!

With sincere gratitude,

Rev. Nick Ozuna



# Membership Events

Bill Snell, Membership Chair

**CONGREGATION POT LUCK IN CELEBRATION OF UUC's  
60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY & NEW MEMBERS  
FRIDAY JANUARY 7, 2011  
6:00 PM  
UUC SOCIAL HALL**



The Membership Committee will be sponsoring a Congregation Pot Luck Dinner on Friday, January 7, 2011 to welcome new members and begin the celebration of our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. We will enjoy a Soup & Salad dinner, 1950's music, good fellowship, and a good time. Be there!

## Membership News

Two new members joined us at the last New Member recognition ceremony. They are Kathy Griffin and Mike Thomas. Both had been visiting for a while and decided to join our community for the spiritual uplifting they find at UUC and the warm welcome they receive from our members.

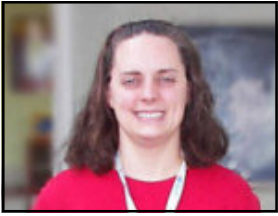
Lynette Wood has joined the membership committee. We are pleased to welcome her and her wonderful talents to our efforts to attract and retain new members.

If you have been visiting us for a while or are a Friend of UUC and would like to join our wonderful spiritual community plan to attend our next series of educational programs. Our next UU101 Class will be held on January 9th at 1pm in the Chorale Room. This one and a half hour seminar introduces people to Unitarian Universalism, UU principles and purposes, sources of religious and spiritual inspiration, and UU theology. A Free Pizza lunch will be served. **Session Leader – Rev. Abhi Janamanchi.** The next Pathways to Membership class will start on Thursday evening at 7 pm and end at 9 pm on January 13th and the following two Thursdays, January 20th and 27th. **Rev. Abhi** also leads these sessions along with lay leaders. Both courses are interesting, inspiring, and a wonderful way to meet people who just might share many of the values you do. Remember joining is not a requirement of these classes.

If you have any questions about these courses please see me at UUC, email me at [wescon@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:wescon@tampabay.rr.com) or call me at 727-596-7123. You can also speak to any members of the Membership Committee; Sage Chaney, Diana Fraser, Faye Paris, Ann Scott and Denise Seeber, Barb Shimer, Lynette Wood, and Tricia Weimer.



The new covenant group for snowbirds will meet and dine together on the third Wednesday of the month through March. The next meeting will be on January 19 at 4 pm. We meet at UUC in the Library just off the Social Hall. After the meeting, the snowbirds will dine together at a local restaurant. Anyone interested in covenanting with "Snowbirds" is welcome, just drop in. For more information please email Gene or Susan Walker at [walk2000@paonline.com](mailto:walk2000@paonline.com) or Tiffany Boggs at [puggirl417@gmail.com](mailto:puggirl417@gmail.com).



Hello Friends,

Have you made your New Year's resolution yet? Do you want to exercise more, learn a new skill, or give more of your time? Well, look no further because the children's Religious Education program can help you! Our children and youth will keep you busy and your mind sharp. All lesson plans and supplies are provided. Teaching teams work together and support one another so you are never on your own. Our youth group (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade) now meets from 12-1pm and could use some additional support as well. We are also looking for at least 2 dedicated individuals to join the Religious Education Committee.

Our December Parent's Night Out was a great success! The kids had a wonderful time and so did the adults. I would like to thank Laura Gervasi, Kathy Krohn and Kyle Pensa for their hard work and cheery spirit. We couldn't have done it without you. Be on the look-out for another Parent's Night Out in the spring.

Even though it's still cold and dreary outside we are already planning for our annual Easter Egg Hunt. Let's make it eggs-tra special this year for all ages. We welcome your ideas, donations and time.

I hope to see you on Sunday with a smile!

*The Religious Education Committee meets the first Thursday of the month in the Children's Library from 7pm-9pm. Our meetings are open to the congregation and encourage people to attend. If you would like to know more about the Religious Education program at UUC, join our UUCRE yahoo group: [UUCRE-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:UUCRE-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) or contact Christine Pensa at: [christinep@uuclearwater.org](mailto:christinep@uuclearwater.org)*

## **A WORD for your consideration:**

Consecration [kon-si-krey-shuhn] – noun

This is a word that many of us think of in a Christian or religious context, such as, the act of consecrating; dedication to the service and worship of a deity. But its original meaning is to dedicate (one's life, time, etc) to a specific purpose.

We will be using this word, frequently, in January and February as we consider what UUC means to us and we would like you to think about consecration in its original form.

Susan Hegner and Mary Thornton.



# Unitarian Values Underscore Gaskell's Novels

English novelist Elizabeth Gaskell wrote about social issues and the role of women in society.

By Kimberly French, Winter 2010 11.1.10

Gentle reader, if you lament that Jane Austen penned but six novels, there may be a solution: Elizabeth Gaskell.

Gaskell, a Victorian novelist whose 200th birthday is being celebrated throughout England this year, is Jane Austen with a social conscience. When she died in 1865, the London literary journal *The Athenaeum* called her “if not the most popular, with small question, the most powerful and finished female novelist of an epoch singularly rich in female novelists.” Though less well known on this side of the pond, her popularity has been increasing in recent years, thanks to several recent BBC productions of Gaskell's work.

Her novels—best known is *Cranford*, produced as a miniseries with Judi Dench and Imelda Staunton in 2007 and 2009—feature smart, lovable heroines who, like Austen's, know how to deliver a zinger and appeal to the sensibilities of a liberal persuasion today.

The daughter of a Unitarian clergyman, the young Elizabeth Stevenson was raised by an aunt in the country market town of Knutsford, the model for *Cranford*, after her mother died. Some of the situations in her novels, such as a cow who is dressed in flannel pajamas after it falls into a lime pit, are based on true incidents. At age 21, Elizabeth married the Rev. William Gaskell, minister of Cross Street Chapel, a Unitarian church in Manchester. They had four daughters, and both Gaskells were active in the ministry, teaching Sunday school and championing the plight of the poor.

Gaskell lived in the English Midlands during the Industrial Revolution, and her religious and political leanings hone the edge of her prose. Starting with her first novel, *Mary Barton*, a love story set in the Manchester slums, Gaskell provoked outrage, even among the more enlightened cotton mill owners attending her husband's church. But her witty narratives and pointed subtexts quickly found an audience. Some compared her social observation skills to Friedrich Engels. Charles Dickens invited her to contribute to his journal *Household Words*, which published many of her stories. On one occasion, he called her “my dear Scheherezade.”

In *North and South*, which depicts the formation of a union and a violent strike, the opinionated heroine falls in love with a mill owner, and her minister father questions the Trinity and leaves the church. Though Gaskell didn't want to be pigeonholed as a Unitarian writer, she betrays her affiliation in passages such as: “Margaret the Churchwoman, her father the Dissenter, Higgins the Infidel, knelt down together. It did them no harm.”

Her multilayered fiction seamlessly weaves together story lines, sometimes even showing conflicts between workers' and women's rights. At the same time, she portrays a wide range of everyday characters—women and men; landed nobility, industrialists, poor servants, and workers; conservative and liberal—with a good degree of sympathy to all. Therein lies her skill and readers' delight in her work.

Twice, Gaskell's books brought her public scandal. Her novel *Ruth*, an indictment of the moral rigidity that forced unmarried pregnant women into prostitution, shocked even some among her more tolerant readership. Some Cross Street parishioners burned the book. Gaskell stirred up more serious trouble with a biography of her friend Charlotte Brontë, which Brontë's father asked her to write. She apparently repeated statements made by family members about others and avoided a libel suit only with a retraction and withdrawal of the second edition.

Today Gaskell's reputation as a beloved novelist is enjoying a revival. In September, her name was added to a stained glass window in the Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey in London. And throughout this year, special events celebrating her life and work will be held in Manchester and Knutsford.



English novelist Elizabeth Gaskell  
(1810–1865).  
(New York Public Library)

# Congregation-Based Community Organizing



Congregation-Based Community Organizing (CBCO, also called Faith-Based, Broad-Based, or sometimes Institution-Based) is a movement that seeks to establish inter-faith, cross-class, multi-ethnic and multi-racial grassroots organizations for purposes of increasing social integration and power in civil society and for making civic, regional and state-wide changes for social improvement.

## Getting Started

More times than not, Unitarian Universalist congregations get involved in Congregation-Based Community Organizing (CBCO) when the minister, either as a member of a group of local clergy, or individually, is approached by another minister or an organizer and told of organizing efforts either beginning or currently underway. The minister then takes the question of participation to her or his congregation, typically through representation, frequently with the support of the relevant network and congregational understandings are reached. Projects frequently involve 20 or more congregations of various faiths and signing on means a commitment to work cooperatively and support interfaith organizational efforts financially.

If this has not happened, it is not likely that there is an active CBCO project operating in your area. Then, to confirm whether or not organizational efforts are in effect, contact each of the five networks listed below to see whether or not they are active in your area. If there is a CBCO project in your area, it makes sense to find out all you can about that project and consider participation. It is quite possible that there will be more than one, or none at all.

Either way you have to choose a network. You may want to know who is working nearby, the opinions of your colleagues who are working with one or another of the five networks, the financial cost of involvement and how each of them see the tasks immediately ahead and how all of that "fits" your congregation. This may seem like a terribly big decision, but our survey indicates high satisfaction with all five networks. Assuming no preexisting organization, among the first tasks will be work to organize a substantially large number of congregations as the umbrella organization for community organization efforts. This activity will be guided and supported by the national network you chose.

It is a good idea that interested people take some training. All networks offer training at various sites across the country at various times, and publish their training schedules. Some offer training targeted for clergy. Training may involve a workshop or two, or as much as two weeks of full-time engagement, followed by advanced training. A minister or members of a congregation having received training, having made a good connection with a network, and having worked within and between congregations, have started several successful projects.

For more information contact <mailto:socialjustice@uaa.org>.

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This article is on the UUA.org website. Reprinted from <http://www.uua.org/leaders/justice/cbco/index.shtml> and <http://www.uua.org/leaders/justice/cbco/27240.shtml>.

# Above and Beyond Award - Anneliese Ekberg

Sue Boone

The Above and Beyond Recipient for January is **Anneliese Ekberg**. Anneliese is retiring as the Chairperson of the annual Christmas Bake Sale. Under her tutelage this has become a much anticipated money-raising event every holiday season. She begins planning months ahead for the event, and gets commitments from bakers and workers ahead of time. She is very organized and precise, which makes it easy to volunteer with her. But best of all is her perky, wonderful sense of humor.

Thank you Anneliese!



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## Circle Dinner

Judy Wade

Around the world, and throughout time people have gathered to break bread together. This practice has come to represent the affirmation of trust, confidence, and comfort with an individual or a group of people. Like many UU congregations, UUC has a history with circle dinners. In January, we will resume the monthly circle dinners. We will carry on many of our traditions and maybe add a few new twists.

For those new to the circle dinner concept, let me explain that the focus of the shared meal is on fellowship, not the extravagance of the food or the elegance of the place settings. The dinners will be held the third Saturday of each month at 7 pm. Prior to the second Monday of each month, those wanting to participate in the dinner will visit the UUC website and sign up to either “host” or “attend.” The circle dinner coordinator will then assign six to eight “attendees” to each of the “hosts.” The coordinator will attempt to rotate all the participants so that everyone has an opportunity to host and to dine with different people each month. The host will provide the entrée and each attendee will be asked to bring an appetizer, side dish, dessert, or wine. It will not be the host’s responsibility to meet individual dietary requests. If you have a special diet, please feel free to bring your own meal. Remember, it’s all about the fellowship, not the menu.

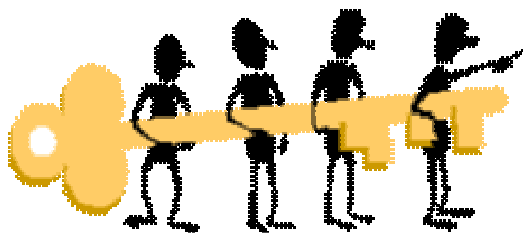
### Little Known Facts About Circle Dinners

1. Meals shared with friends taste just as good on Hefty paper plates as on Wedgewood china.
2. Food and fun go together like gravy and biscuits!
3. Upholstered dining chairs and folding chairs will both support the goal of developing and deepening personal relationships.
4. Don’t have a formal dining room or even a lot of space? Great circle dinners can be held around picnic tables in public parks. Just fire up the grill!
5. Wouldn’t subject your worse enemy to one of your home cooked meals? No problem, stop by Olive Garden and pick up a lasagna casserole to feed six to eight friends.
6. The farther you drive to attend a circle dinner, the more calories you will burn!

Remember - conversation, companionship, and hospitality are the secret ingredients to a successful Circle Dinner. Watch for the January Circle Dinner signup sheet to be posted to the UUC website. Bon Appétit!

# UUC Leadership Development Class

Denise Seeber



Congratulations to those who participated in the Fall 2010 class — Jeff Anderson, Ricardo Guice, Lynn Kenchel, Sharon LaPlume, Dale Niemann, Cindi Nohe, Allen Ongchangco, Heike Smith, Judy Wade and Randee Williams.

The Leadership Development Class is offered each year for UUC members who have been involved with the congregation and may consider taking on a leadership role. Through presentations, guest speakers, exercises, quizzes and role-play, participants have the opportunity to learn about leadership and develop special relationships with others at UUC. Participants agree to attend four or five 2-hour classes and to complete about ten minutes of homework each week. (The homework is easy and there's no grading.)

Classes generally include topics such as: leadership styles & focus, traits of a high-trust leader, stages of group development, team building, how to run effective meetings, understanding and recruiting volunteers, training and recognizing volunteers, UUC's organizational structure and finding volunteer opportunities that work best for everyone. For more information, please contact Denise Seeber (Denise\_Seeber@tampabay.rr.com) or Bill Norsworthy (bnorsworthy@verizon.net).

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## UU're Home

Vance and Jean Reese

Do you dream of inexpensive vacation travel to interesting destinations where you can stay in the homes of friendly people who share your ideals and are happy to provide directions and advice for their area?

The UU bed and breakfast directory, UU're Home, can fulfill your dream. For thirty years, we've provided a network of hosts in the United States (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and who are happy to open their home to like-minded people.

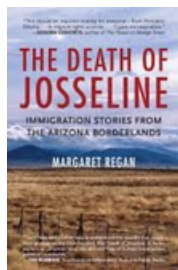
You can also become a host and be listed in the directory. Contact us at [info@uurehome.com](mailto:info@uurehome.com), and we will gladly send you information about listing your accommodations.

Host listings on the UU're Home website at [www.UUreHome.com](http://www.UUreHome.com) are updated whenever changes are made or new hosts are added. The last paper edition will be published in April 2011. Most members now use the website, exclusively, for a cost of only \$10 for a year's access to the current listings. For a copy of the 2011 paper directory plus a year's access to the website listings, please click on the "become a member" link to pay by credit card or send a check for \$25 with your e-mail address to: UU're Home, 43 Vermont Court, Asheville, NC 28806.



# Events in January

## Readers Forum – *The Death of Josseline* by Margaret Regan



The weekly Readers Forum read and discuss books selected by the group from a variety of genre. On Friday **January 21** we will begin discussing **The Death of Josseline**, one of the books recommended by Rev. Abhi on "Justice," the religious and spiritual theme for January. In preparation, please read the Prologue, the Introduction, and chapters one and two. This book is available in the Pinellas Library System and on Amazon.com. We will also have copies available for \$15 beginning on January 1st. In the mean time, we are continuing our discussion of *The Gospel According To Jesus Christ* by Jose Saramago.

With a sweeping perspective and vivid on-the-ground reportage, Margaret Regan tells the stories of the escalating chaos along the U.S.-Mexico border. A varied cast of characters emerges as she rides shotgun with the Border Patrol, interviews deported Mexicans and angry Arizona ranchers, visits migrant shelters in Mexico, and camps out in the thorny wilderness with “No More Deaths” activists. Using Arizona as a microcosm, Regan explores a host of urgent issues: the border militarization that threatens the rights of U.S. citizens, the environmental damage wrought by the new border wall, the desperation that compels migrants to come north, and the human tragedy of the unidentified dead in Arizona’s morgues. Margaret Regan writes for the *Tucson Weekly* and has won a dozen journalism awards for border reporting, including two national prizes. She lives in Tucson.

Catherine & John Conover lead the group that meets on Fridays from 10 am to 11:30 am in the Chorale Room of the UUC Octagon. The fee is \$5 if you already have a book, or \$15 if we should provide you one. Join us for coffee and a lively book discussion at the Readers Forum!



## Team Trivia Night

Joe Myers

On what interesting date did both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson die? If you knew it was the Fourth of July, you might be on the winning trivia team in the competition that will be held on Saturday, January 29th at 7 pm in the social hall. Tickets will go on sale on January 9th for a small fee of \$10. You can wow your friends with your vast knowledge of unimportant information. And the proceeds will go to support our Ways and Means efforts. See you there!

## ART SHOW

"Paper Solo"  
Patsie McCandless

no paint, no pen, no ink  
only layers of exquisite paper

January 14 - February 23

Reception January 23, 2011  
1- 3 p.m.



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS  
OF CLEARWATER

2470 Nursery Road, Clearwater, FL 33764



**SUUSI 2011**

Joy!

July 17-23 Radford, VA  
Southeast Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

**TIME DATED MATERIAL**

## OCTAGRAM

The Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalists  
Of Clearwater and the Octagon Arts Center

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### DO YOU HAVE A COMMENT OR A QUESTION RELATING TO THE MINISTER OR MINISTRY?

If so, please contact one of the Members of  
the Congregational Committee on Ministry:

Jenn Bouchie	470-9422
Sue Boone	531-5236
Jackie Brown	772-6764
Pat McGiverin	771-1529
Lucille Odeneal	743-1304

*Please send OCTAGRAM submissions by email to  
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month's issue is midnight of the third Sunday of the  
month prior to the month of issue.*

**Sunday Worship Service  
information is on centerfold.**

*Visit: [www.uuclearwater.org](http://www.uuclearwater.org)*