



OCTAGRAM

Holiday Happenings

See Page 15



Second Service Survey Results Are Positive

On Sunday, November 13, a survey was taken from those who attended the service. The purpose was two-fold: (1) to get an idea of how many people would be interested in attending services earlier and later than our current time, and (2) to learn what questions and concerns there are among the congregation.

On the first question, the results were excellent. Of the more than 100 people who responded, approximately two-thirds indicated a preference for the later service at 11:00 a.m. and one-third preferred an earlier time. There was very little difference in the number who preferred 9:00 a.m. and 9:15 a.m. This result tells us that a significant number of people would prefer an earlier time. A number of others indicated that they would like having the choice of times and would attend the more convenient one each week.

Regarding questions and concerns, a number of responders asked about differences between the services. The plan at this time is to have the services as similar as possible. The minister, sermon, readings and hymns will be the same in both. However, the chorale will only sing at the 11:00 a.m. service twice each month. The early service will have other special music on those days. Other special ceremonies such as new member recognitions will take place only at the

Attention UUC Members!

Please attend a Special Meeting, Sunday, December 11 in the Octagon immediately following the service to discuss the proposal of a Second Service. Your feedback is important to this opportunity for growth at the UUC.

11:00 o'clock service because it will have more time flexibility. The early service will be limited to at most one hour.

A few people expressed concern that having two services may divide the congregation. This is an important issue and we certainly do not want to create two separate congregations. Special effort will be made to establish new ways for people to gather on a regular basis at times other than Sunday mornings. Events such as potluck suppers, open houses, adult education classes and concerts, as well as covenant groups and committee work will afford opportunities for members to develop and maintain relationships regardless of service time preferences. This is something we will have to work on continuously.

Continued...

President's Message



Bill Norsworthy

Most of us UUs are here because of the relationships we have with others in the congregation. We enjoy each other's company. We enjoy the varied activities we experience. We really enjoy hearing Abhi's reflections because he speaks to us about the meaning of our lives and about important issues in our troubled world. There are many reasons why we are part of this religious community.

But I have a question for you: What, if anything, about UUC gets you really excited? I would like to hear from you about that question. Please send an email to me with your response. My address is: bnorsworthy@verizon.net or you can use snail-mail: 1759 Lake Cypress Dr., Safety Harbor, FL 34695.

As a congregation, we have said that we would like to be able to welcome new people to our spiritual home. And we would like to be able to tell them about the great and wonderful things that our members are excited about. Our Board would like to encourage activities that motivate us to do more of the things that are important to the congregation. And they need to hear what you feel is important as much as I do.

Our congregation is unique in many ways. We are among the largest and most active UU congregations in the country. We have a significant presence in the Tampa Bay area because of our strong commitment to social justice. We have dozens of young people who are getting the gift of our religious education experience. We have a strong and vibrant community of adults who are on a journey of exploration and they bring their unique gifts to share. If any of this resonates in you, I would like to hear about it. Let's not keep these passionate commitments under wraps. Send me your thoughts as soon as possible. Best response will win a \$50 gift certificate to the bookstore of your choice, and it will be published in next month's Octagram.

On another note, I am sorry to report to you that one of our Board members will be leaving the board because she is moving with her daughter to North Carolina. Lois Perry originally joined this congregation in the 1970s and she has contributed to us in many ways over the years. In addition to serving on the board, she is also chair of our Partner Church Committee. Lois will be missed and, of course, we wish her the very best in her new home. Lois's replacement on the Board will be Mary Thornton. We welcome Mary and look forward to having her join us at the next board meeting, December 21.

There were numerous questions about how things will actually work from a logistical perspective. Since parking space is our main limiting resource, how will we get people out after the first service to make room for the second? Since a smaller number of people will be attending each service, at least until both grow substantially, this shouldn't be a problem. Many people depart as soon as the service is over now.

How will Open Issues be handled? Open Issues will be held during the time of the earlier service.

How will Coffee Hour be handled? Coffee Hour will be held between services and after the second service. This is sacred time for UUs and we will make sure we don't run out of coffee!

How will we get enough volunteers to cover two services? With fewer people attending each service, the number of volunteers needed will be slightly smaller than it is now. Of course, we will all need to help in whatever we can to make this successful. As we grow, of course, we will have more potential volunteers to recruit. This will be especially true in the children's religious education area. The plan for the children's RE is to offer the full curriculum program at both service times. Help will be needed!

How will the Summer Program work? During the summer, we will have only one service, probably at 10:00 a.m.

Finally, a few members asked whether it is really necessary for us to go to two services at this time and are we ready to do so. It is only necessary for us to go to two services if we want to continue to welcome a growing number of people who are searching for a religious home that only we can offer. Our parking space is virtually full at the present level of attendance. We have expanded our

professional staff in anticipation of future growth in numbers, and now we need to make space for those future UUs. We are ready to welcome them!

Please plan to attend one of the town hall meetings at which these issues will be discussed in greater detail. The meetings will be held at the following times:

Sunday December 4, Immediately following the service

Tuesday December 6 - 7:00 p.m. in the Social Hall

The congregational meeting at which we will decide how to proceed will be:

Sunday December 11
Immediately following the service

Random Reflections



Rev. Abhi Janamanchi

This is the season of Advent, Solstice, Hanukkah, and Christmas, a season commemorating miracles and the miraculous. For the ancients, the miracle was that at this time of the year, for no apparent reason, the shortening and darkening days finally began to lengthen and brighten. Perhaps they would not be cast into the cold and darkness forever, after all! Advent recollects the miracle that God has supposedly done in Christ's first coming, and the expectation of his imminent return. Hanukkah recalls the great and miraculous victory of the Maccabees over forces of intolerance, an early blow struck for religious freedom. Christmas marks the miracle of the incarnation, of God becoming human in the person of one Jesus of Nazareth. All are seasons and festivals of light, as demonstrated by the lights we burn at the time of the Solstice celebration, the lighting of the Advent or Menorah candles, and even the Christmas Star over Bethlehem, lighting the way of the Magi. All are indebted to the pagan rituals which came before and lie beneath.

Yet, in Polish Nobel Laureate Wislawa Szymborska's words, the greatest miracle of all may be "the commonplace miracle: that so many common miracles take place." Our own bard, Emerson, would have shared completely Szymborska's awakening to the miracle of "the inescapable earth." It is inescapable in both the negative and the positive senses. There is no longer someplace else for us to go. We are stuck here, in all of our paradox and ambiguity, in all of our good and evil, our love and our hatred, our peacefulness and our violence, in all the times and seasons of our being. Here is where we are, for better and for worse. Here, in this world, and not in some other, is all we can love and all we can hope for.

If only we could see it that way, on this day and on all the other days of our lives. What if we truly lived as if this "inescapable earth" were all that there is? What if the peoples who inhabit this beautiful green planet really came to understand that it is here or nowhere? What would this mean to our treatment of one another and of the good earth itself?

Perhaps this is the unthinkable thought of which Szymborska speaks at the end of her poem. She is not naive about our chances. Writing in another poem, "The Turn of the Century," she wrote, "*Whoever wanted to enjoy the world faces an impossible task.*"

But that is our task, and the holiday season calls us to it once again, as it calls us, once again and always, to think the unthinkable. Perhaps God is with us after all, though not in the way we expected or even wanted. Perhaps true freedom is possible, and we can live with each other in spite of our differences. Perhaps the Solstice will come again, even in the midst of this dark time, and our even darker activity in it. There is a light in the darkness and a star to lead; there is hope out of despair; there is the beauty which lies within and all around us. It calls us out of ourselves and into the world again, it calls us to enjoyment, whatever the impossibility. It calls us to awareness of "the commonplace miracle: that so many common miracles take place."

May we be alive to all the miraculous possibilities of this holiday season, to its promise, and even to its reality in our lives, today, tomorrow, and always.

— Abhi Janamanchi

Cares & Concerns

We were saddened to hear of the sudden death of Sue Merriam. Although a relatively new member, she was very active in a number of committees.

Norman Peterson is now at the Sunset Point Rehabilitation Center which is just west of Belcher on Sunset Point Road. Visits would be appreciated.

Bill Loomis is now at home recuperating from surgery. Cards and calls would be appreciated.

Mary Sacone, a long time active member, will be moving to Colorado to be near her daughters.

John St. Clair has broken two vertebrae, L4 & L5, in his lower back and is experiencing quite a lot of pain. He will have an MRI soon to determine treatment.

It was good to see Florence Gschwind on Sunday morning. When her children are in town, they bring her to church.

Kate Couch really does appreciate cards as she has some days when the back pain keeps her bedridden. She hopes Thanksgiving Day is a good day so she can come to the dinner in the Social Hall.

Lucille Odeneal will be hospitalized after Thanksgiving to undergo a lung procedure.

Susan Hegner, undergoing chemotherapy, although tired, is able to continue working.

We were sorry to hear of the death of the mother of Georgiann Jones.

UUA Trustee Tidbits

Happy holidays everyone. This is the time of year when the various ways of giving may be in our plans and practices. As you know, our UUA President Rev. Bill Sinkford believes strongly in giving and that our religion's future lies in reclaiming our rightful place as the preeminent voice of a giving, liberal religion. Our message is of liberating, hopeful, and justice-making love and we are about vital work in these areas. This month's and next month's column will be about the resources it will take to make our faith grow a vital, strong, liberal religion.

To this end we need to encourage the health and vitality of our congregations in their ministries. This is our Association's first priority. Specifically we need to create more programs and ministries for children, youth and young adults so that diverse interests are respected within our congregations. Free, on-line, cradle-to-grave religious education curricula and resources for all congregations must be developed. Our Association needs to continue nurturing relationships and promote spiritual growth through new programs and small group ministries. Of course lay-leadership, staff training, and improved congregational management will continue to be important.

We also need to open our doors to folks who desire a liberal religious community -- children and all families plus people of all backgrounds and cultures. This will mean advertising and marketing at several levels to make our congregations known. We will need to attract young adults through campus ministry programs and significantly financially support start-up congregations.

gations.

We also have to continue being a respected public voice for liberal religious values, going beyond resolutions to visible participation in the public controversies of our society. This will include establishing partnerships with other religious groups so that we may work together in our shared values. Congregations and individuals will need training on how to engage in important public discourses. We will need to provide training for our religious professionals and lay leaders on engaging with the media so our positions on issues may be shared. Our partnership with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) needs support and strengthening as we advance justice throughout the world.

Next month I will write about the UUA Comprehensive Capital Campaign's strategic plan to achieve the "dreams" of our President and Association. Rev. Sinkford is asking for our thoughts and care as "we" move into the coming years and beyond. You know I relish hearing from Florida UUs and can be reached at jlund@uua.org. May one and all be safe and healthy during the holidays and into the new year.

—Joan Lund

New Member Sunday

On December 18, we will be welcoming new members into our congregation. As we continue to grow, it is wonderful to get to know all the talented, warm and friendly people who choose to become a part of our community. By going back to our picture directory of 2001, we can see that the Octagon pews are much fuller and what a change in the RE membership. There were a handful of young faces sitting on the floor listening to Abhi's children's message. Now we have a crowd!! It's energizing for all of us.

If you are not a member, and would like to be, please contact the office at 531-7704 and they will refer you to either Lucille Odeneal or Marie Chapman, co-chairs of the membership committee. We will both be out of town for a time, but the office will be able to reach us and we can contact you. There will be an orientation meeting on Tuesday evening, December 13, at 7:00 p.m. in the social hall that we hope you will attend.

As UUs, we feel an obligation to do our part to make the world a better place for everyone. Our congregation has proven over and over that our commitment to social justice is strong. There is so much that needs to be done, and doing whatever we can to make a difference makes each of us feel a little better. Join us and become a part of this "deeds, not creeds" action group.

Social Justice Committee

Our brothers and sisters from the First Unitarian Universalist Church of New Orleans (FUUNO) will not be celebrating the holidays together in their church because they had to evacuate out of the city and their church has been ruined by the high waters. The District has organized UU congregations into groups of partner churches with one church being the managing church. The UUC has been asked to be a partner church for the FUUNO. The First Parish UU Church in Cambridge Massachusetts is the managing church for our group.

Over the coming months our congregation will be asked to give our support to the church. Life is still very chaotic in New Orleans. The Board members have just begun to meet with a consultant provided by the UUA to assess the damage to the building. So far they have asked that their partner churches send some hymnals since a few people who have returned have begun to worship together. We will be splitting the offering at our Christmas Eve service with FUUNO. If you will not be at the service on Christmas Eve and would like to donate please send a check to the UUC and write "New Orleans church" in the memo line.

"Guest at Your Table" boxes can be returned at the Christmas Eve service. Boxes will also be collected on following Sundays in January at the Social Justice table after the service. Also please remember to continue to bring canned goods for the RCS Food Bank. These are busy months for RCS and they need your support to make this a good holiday for people in need in our community.

Did you know UUC has a "Better World Fund"? It was established as a memorial fund to help the homeless and others in great need. Each year, \$1,000 is distributed by the minister to help UUC members and friends in need. Another \$1,000 is made available to the Pinellas Opportunity Council of Clearwater which screens requests from homeless people. In 2004, the fund contributed money to the relief efforts necessitated by mud slides in Dominican Republic and hurricanes in Florida. In 2005, \$500 was sent for immediate food delivery to Niger. To date, this fund has been supported by memorial gifts. However, all members, friends, groups, and committees are also encouraged to make non-memorial donations.

Fair Trade coffee, tea, cocoa and chocolate will be on sale on Dec. 11 after the service. These products make great holiday gifts. Remember when you give and use fair trade products you are benefiting the farmers in developing nations and the UUSC.

Our next Social Justice Committee meeting is on Dec.3 at 9:30 a.m. in the Westwood room. Join us!

– Linda Stoller, Chairperson

Stewardship

There is change in the air at UUC. In the past year, we've implemented such positive changes as welcoming Millie Rochester to our spiritual home, and improving our Religious Education program. In the coming months, we can look forward to having the option of selecting one of two services to attend – the result of the growth our fellowship has experienced over the years.

As we grow and progress, our religious community and its programs must also grow to fit the needs of a larger congregation. Our fellowship can feel proud in regards to involvement in general societal outreach, as well as programs within the spiritual community itself. However, there is always room for improvement. For example, can our outreach to the community also include outreach to the members of our own spiritual home, who can no longer attend services on Sundays? What about a theater group, or an upgrade of facilities? What if we could provide lecture tours or more Inter-faith activities? Our fellowship is growing and changing, and our needs are also changing. There's just one catch -- paying for all of it.

That's where stewardship comes in. As we begin looking toward the New Year, we should also look to the future of our community and congregation. These programs are a vital part of community involvement and commitment to justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. Please keep stewardship in mind during the holiday season and beyond, and be sure to mark your calendars for the UUC social event of the year, the Stewardship Dinner, which will be taking place on the evening of March 4, 2006.

– Sarah Ewbank,
Stewardship Committee

Announcing Continuation of the Khasi Hills, India, Sponsor-A-Student Project

Approximately a year ago the Social Justice Committee (SJC) agreed to sponsor a school in India, specifically, the Margaret Barr Memorial School in Lawsohtun, a semi-rural, semi-urban area of the Khasi Hills. Established in 1982, the school has approximately 92 students and five teachers. The grades are pre-primary and primary up to Class Four. The Khasi vernacular is used and English is taught from Class One on.

The program began in 2001 to provide humanitarian support to a Unitarian school in the Khasi Hills by linking sponsors in the US with individual elementary school students in India. Each sponsor supports a child in a Unitarian school according to a budget that is jointly developed by the SJC and the school administration.

To be a sponsor, pick up a brochure with donation form from the SJC table in the Social Hall, write a check to UUC (for \$35.00 per student per year) and write "Khasi Hills Sponsor-A-Student" in the memo section. Send it to the attention of the SJC along with your donation form. We will pair you with a student. Each year, sponsors write letters to their students. The SJC will help you with ideas. The committee will collect the letters and send them to the school. In return, students who are old enough will write a letter to his or her spon-

sor and the SJC will distribute them. It is just that simple. Just \$35.00 can send a child to school for an entire year. Donations are gratefully accepted and holiday gift sponsorships are a wonderful idea.

You might ask why we should support a school in India? The Khasi Hills Sponsor-A-Student Project supports education and builds understanding with students and families. Unitarianism has helped the Khasis retain much of their tribal culture and many of their values. Unitarians have established schools open to children of all denominations. By choosing things they find valuable and leaving the rest behind, the Khasi Unitarians find a balance between traditional values and the modern world. They stress the importance of education. They maintain their heritage of strong families and communities, including respect for elders and women.

We do many things in our lives, but surely educating a child is one of the most important ones. You never know where this could lead. People here in our community could have a positive affect on a child in a country in another part of the world. The Reverend Eva Cameron originator of the program at the Ann Arbor UU said it best. "In this time of a heightened sense of danger, I feel we are the ones doing the real anti-terrorist work, connecting people around the world, giving

kids an education. These are the things the world really needs right now."

Abhi Janamanchi, our minister, is going to India in early January 2006. He will visit "our" school and deliver sponsor letters. He hopes to bring pictures and letters back to us. This is a great opportunity to have Abhi present the collected funds, thereby saving bank fees, so we are asking that renewals and new sponsorships be submitted by December 25.

We are very excited about this project. We hope you will be too. If you would like a brochure or additional information, please call the church office at 531-7704 or Marlene Calderone at 669-9517 or ask any member of the SJC. We will also have a table in the Social Hall every Sunday through December or until we reach our quota of 100 sponsors.

Committee on Ministry – Who? What? Why?

The Committee on Ministry is probably the least known and most misunderstood of all congregational committees. It is a five member committee that meets each month with the Minister and Assistant Minister. Two members are chosen by the Senior Minister, one by the Board of Directors and two are elected by the congregation.

Members serve two years and overlap one another for a continuity of knowledge and function. Each month our names and contact numbers are printed on the back of the Octagram. That is WHO we are.

The Committee's function, or WHAT and WHY, is set forth in the UU by-laws. I'll try to make this short and then let you know more of what we do and why:

1. We continually assess the nature and scope of the Church's ministerial needs and articulate those needs to the Ministers.
2. We interpret to the congregation the nature and scope of the work of the Ministers.
3. We aid the Ministers in carrying on an effective ministry by being available for counsel and responding to cares and concerns the Ministers or their families may have.
4. We try to keep the Ministers advised concerning conditions within the congregation in order to strengthen and improve relationships.
5. We work with the Ministers on their continuing education pro-

grams, sabbatical and any professional development they plan and advise the Board and congregation of such plans.

6. We work with the Ministers, Board, and appropriate committees concerning both the general terms and compensation package of any ministerial contract.
7. We consult with the Ministers on candidates that may be recommended for any other open ministerial position.

The above is technically what the Committee is charged to do. In addition, we try to be an advocate for the Minister and Assistant Minister. We listen to their concerns and try to help where we can. Sometimes we forget that ministers are people too. They give and give but they have needs like you and I have. In that regard the Committee tries to support them or just listen if that is what is required.

The Committee has a goal and a shared vision with the Ministers that directly relate to number one, above. We want to help open communications with the Ministers and among the members of the congregation. Our purpose is to foster a caring, loving congregation; a congregation that supports one another, takes care of one another and encourages the best from each other. In order to facilitate a shared ministry with a more open congregation the Committee asks for your help. Communicate with us. In every effort we undertake in life we all need feedback. We need to hear honestly how we are doing or we may assume that things are fine as they are. Our Committee wants to help Abhi and Millie do the best job they can just as they want to do

their very best. For this to be accomplished we need your input.

Soon there will be an e-mail site where anyone may make suggestions, anonymously if desired. We also appreciate letters or notes and will keep your comments confidential. Messages can be left safely in the Committee on Ministry mailbox. You are also encouraged to seek us out at the UUC or call one of us directly.

If you have something that is bugging you or want to say what you think about an issue but are not sure who to go to, our Committee will direct your message to the appropriate person. Of course if you want to say that all is wonderful, perfect, glorious just as it is, we want to know that as well. Please help us grow our congregation in the best possible way. UUC is our spiritual home; it is what you and I make it.

– Ina Alexander, Chairperson,
Committee on Ministry
531-6110
or
ialexander@knology.net

Worship Services

Dec. 4, 2005

Tending the Hub

Abhi Janamanchi & Will Tuttle

The Holiday season is a meditative time, made more so by the shortening days and lengthening nights of early winter. Yes, the world needs us, but it will certainly overwhelm us if we do not take the time to care for, and deepen, our own spiritual lives. I will be joined by musician and meditation-teacher, Will Tuttle, for a reflective service.

Dec. 11, 2005

Selections from Handel's Messiah

UUC Chorale

Dec. 18, 2005

Are you Ready?

Abhi Janamanchi

The advent season is characterized by watchfulness, waiting, and readiness. As we know, waiting can be difficult. How do we hold ourselves in a state of constant readiness? Why? How do we wake up? The service will investigate.

Dec. 24, 2005, 7 PM

Intergenerational Holiday Service

Abhi Janamanchi, Millie Rochester, & Others

Join us for our annual holiday service that celebrates Winter Solstice, Hanukkah, and Christmas with music, readings, stories, and candles. A special offering will be received to support the rebuilding of our sister congregation in New Orleans, LA. Childcare for infants and toddlers will be provided.

Dec. 25, 2005

It's Christmas (Carols & Readings)

Abhi Janamanchi & Frank Wells

An intergenerational service with carols, readings, and music celebrating the many moods of Christmas. Following the service, there will be a congregational Christmas dinner in the social hall.

January 1, 2006

An Open Door

Millie Rochester

The beginning of the year is associated with starting fresh – but in truth, every day can hold such an invitation. The service will explore the implications of New Year's resolutions on spiritual discipline and what is divine within us all.

Open Issues Forum

December 4 "Coping With Holiday Stress"

Dottie Doyle,

December 11 "How to Dialogue with Fundamentalists"

Dorothy Wylie,

December 18 "World Population/Health - An African Experience"

Doug Cooley,

Doug was a United Nations pilot delivering food, medicine, and doctors.

December 25 None

January 1 None

Open Issues Forum Committee

Dot and Chuck 797-7784 Marion Davis 527-1192
Sollinger Herb Blume 461-5414

Dorothy Wylie 797-5736 Joseph Kolb 733-1420

John Chase 784-1234 Charlene Carnes, Liaison

DECEMBER 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>27 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM Open Issues (P) 10:30 AM Service (O) 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM PSI Symposium Meeting 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Kelly Reeves Reception (O, Lobby) 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM Suncoast Dress Rehearsal (O) 5:30 PM Sunset Ritual at Indian Rocks Beach</p>	<p>28 9:30 AM Duplicate Bridge (P) 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM Toastmasters (S)</p>	<p>29 11:00 AM - 1:30 PM Eurythmy Class (P) 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM Meditation (O) 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Cares and Concerns Committee (L) 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM AA (W)</p>	<p>30 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM Stewardship Committee (P) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Chorale Rehearsal (O/C)</p>	<p>1 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM Hanging new art show (Octagon) 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM Music Committee (W) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Children/Youth RE Committee (L) 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Covenant Group Facilitator's Meeting (P)</p>	<p>2 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM Lunch with Ministers (W) 5:00 PM - 10:00 PM Assembly of Friends Party (S) 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Singles 40+ Reception (W) 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Dorothy Gardiner Reception (O, Lobby) 7:00 PM Zen Buddhist Meditation (L)</p>	<p>3 9:30 AM Social Justice Comm (W) 8:00 PM AA (P or W)</p>
<p>4 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM Open Issues (P) 10:30 AM Service (O) 11:45 AM Town Hall Meeting on Second Service 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM Spiritual Food Fair Buffet (S) 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM HIV Testing (E) 12:15 PM - 1:00 PM Visitor Orientation 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Will Tuttle Spiritual Practice Workshop (S) 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM Suncoast Spiral Garden (O)</p>	<p>5 9:30 AM Duplicate Bridge (P) 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM Toastmasters (S)</p>	<p>6 11:00 AM - 1:30 PM Eurythmy Class (P) 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM Meditation (O) 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM Town Hall Meeting on Second Service (P) 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM AA (W)</p>	<p>7 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM YAC Council (L) 7:00 PM Program Buddhist Discussion (S) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Chorale Rehearsal (O/C)</p>	<p>8 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM Waldorf Play (O)</p>	<p>9 7:00 PM Zen Buddhist Meditation (L)</p>	<p>10 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM Suncoast Holiday Faire (Playground) 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM UJWU Bake Sale Setup (S) 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Chorale Concert and Reception (O,W) 8:00 PM AA (P)</p>
<p>11 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM Open Issues (P) 10:30 AM Service 10:30 AM - 5:00 PM UJWU Bake Sale (S) 11:45 AM - 12:30 PM Special Congregational Meeting on Second Service (O)</p>	<p>12 9:30 AM Duplicate Bridge (P) 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM Sr. Adults Committee (L) 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM Toastmasters (S) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM UJWU Games & Card Night (P)</p>	<p>13 11:00 AM - 1:30 PM Eurythmy Class (P) 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM Meditation (O) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM New Member Orientation (P) 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM AA (W)</p>	<p>14 5:00 PM Finance Committee (P) 6:30 PM Executive Committee (P) 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM BBUFBuddhist Discussion (S) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Chorale Rehearsal (O/C) and Means Committee (at Brandts)</p>	<p>15 12:00 PM Religious Services Com (W) 2:00 PM Women's Book Club (L) 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Adult RE (L) 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Cluster Holiday Celebration (O,S)</p>	<p>16 12:00 PM - 11:00 PM Art hanging and reception (O,W,C) 7:00 PM Zen Buddhist Meditation (L)</p>	<p>17 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM 2005 UUC Holiday Party (offsite) 7:00 PM - 11:00 PM Single's 40+ Foreign Film Series (P) 8:00 PM AA (P or W)</p>
<p>18 OCTAGRAM DEADLINE New Member Sunday 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM Open Issues (P) 10:30 AM Service (O) 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM RE Sponsored Lunch \$5.00 (S) 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM PSI Symposium Meeting</p>	<p>19 9:30 AM Duplicate Bridge (P) 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM Toastmasters (S)</p>	<p>20 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM Meditation (O) 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM AA (W)</p>	<p>21 6:30 PM Board Meeting (P) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Chorale Rehearsal (O/C)</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23 7:00 PM Zen Buddhist Meditation (L)</p>	<p>24 8:00 PM AA (P or W)</p>
<p>25 10:30 AM Service (O) 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM Christmas Dinner (S)</p>	<p>26 9:30 AM Duplicate Bridge (P) 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM Toastmasters (S)</p>	<p>27 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM Meditation (O) 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM AA (W)</p>	<p>28 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Chorale Rehearsal (O/C)</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30 7:00 PM Zen Buddhist Meditation (L) 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Men's Night Out (E)</p>	<p>31 8:00 PM AA (P or W)</p>

For the most current information please refer to the online calendar at:

<http://www.uuclearwater.org>

UUC In Search of

Please read the ads and see where you might fit. Perhaps you are looking for a way to benefit our community or perhaps you have a passion that you can express, a skill you want to share or something you want to learn or try. To “apply” please contact Peggy Long or Barb Buckland at the UUC office, 531-7704.

Match Maker: An individual is needed to bring their knowledge of the community to match our members with volunteer opportunities. This person will, in collaboration with the Business Office, recruit and coordinate the time and talents of UUC members to help with ongoing activities and special events.

Lights. Action. Camera: Our sound booth is in need of people to work with the professional equipment and staff. You will be trained to work with sound, video, and recording as well as reproduction, during the Sunday service, for concerts and other events.

Publicity: To ensure that our community and events receive media coverage and to increase public awareness, we are in need of someone to be in charge of our publicity. Publicity serves an ongoing and critical role in our growth.

Front Office: The Office is in need of additional people for coverage. The minimum time commitment is 3 hours a week. Duties include answering the phone, greeting visitors and clerical tasks. The office is

open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. We would like to also have phone coverage available Saturday mornings from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon and Sunday mornings from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.

Back-Up: The Order of Service is produced weekly and special programs are produced as needed. Our wonderful and dedicated Sy Bluestone formats and prepares them for printing every week and he needs to be able to take a vacation!

New Announcements Procedure

Having our minister, Abhi, read most announcements at the service has worked well. We are staying within the allotted time frame. However, many have suggested they would like to come into a quiet sanctuary and prepare for a worship service. Beginning the service with announcements does not foster that experience. So we are moving announcements to the time of the service when we are disrupted and disruptive anyway – the welcome visitors and greet your neighbor segment.

Abhi will read your announcement at that time and he would appreciate it if you could get your text to the office by Wednesday. For last minute announcements, fill out one of the forms to be found in the lobby before the service and give it to Abhi before the service begins.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Save the Date for a Fantastic Workshop

The weekend of January 20 – 22, 2006 we will host the Rev. Davidson Loehr, minister of the UU Church in Austin, TX. He is the author of *America, Fascism and God* which is reviewed in the current issue of UU World. He will conduct a workshop here on the subject “2500 Years of Liberal Religion”. Details will be in the January Octagram, More information about Dr. Loehr and some of his sermons will be found on the website www.austinuu.org.

Results of the 2005 Book Sale

This year, the book sale was open on Friday evening, November 4 (combined with the dessert party artfully organized by Soledad Loba), on Saturday from 9am to 3pm with coffee and donuts for sale at the Chalice Café (again, Soledad), and on Sunday after the morning service and after Millie's covenanting service in the afternoon. We even sold books during the Monday morning bridge session, going on while we were packing up.



We are very pleased to report that our net profit was \$3,457! We started with 6,140 books plus many videos, tapes and CDs. Christine Shea's guess of 6,234 was the closest guess and so she won a free book.

Equally important to the profit was the wonderful support and involvement of so many members of the congregation. It's gratifying to see how an event can come together successfully because of the efforts of so many.

To those who helped before, during and after the sale and especially to all of you who so generously donated books and other materials, a big THANK YOU from the Book Sale Committee. *Arlene Alldredge, Barbara Brandt, Judy Mercer and Pat St. Clair*

Discounts for SUUSI

SUUSI Scholarship applications are accepted between April 15 and May 15.

Scholarship applications and information may be found on the website www.suusi.org

The Southeast Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute is the second largest gathering of UUs in the world and meets during the third



week of July in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. You can experience the best vacation week of your life and get a discount, too!

UUC Needs a New Banner

The present UUC Banner will be retired in 2006. As a result, we would like to have a new banner quilted in time for the next General Assembly. In order to do this, we invite you to submit your ideas and drawings to Teri Dassing, no later than January 15, 2006. This is a perfect time to get your creative juices flowing and provide our congregation with a banner that will promote and represent our Congregation and the UU Principles in the coming years. Please contact Teri at Teri_Karma@hotmail.com or call 727-772-7216 if you have any questions. Thanks!

MEN'S NEWS!

Another successful Pancake Breakfast! "Thanks" goes out to the professional job done by Co-Chairs Carl Krave and Chuck Shimer and all of UUC's Way-Above-Average-Men! aka WAAM! It was a true fundraiser and "fun raiser." Thanks guys!

Next Pancake Breakfast is Sunday, February 12th at 9:00 a.m., so start planning to eat big and don't peak too soon!

Annual Men's Retreat

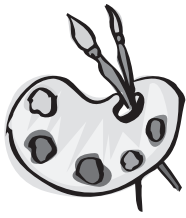
April 7 - 9 at UU in the Pines! Mark your calendars. It's our fourteenth or fifteenth! All UUC men are invited. Contact Paul Langrock 784-6597

Serenity Garden Planned at UUC



Jeannie Shimer and Ashlyn DeCosta-Ponnudurrai have drawn up plans for a Serenity Garden to be located in the space west of the Octagon where the air conditioning units are located. The plans include a walkway and Florida native plants that would attract butterflies and birds. The cost of materials will be covered

by contributions and the sale of commemorative blocks for the walkway. Physical labor is to be done by Jeannie, Ashlyn, their families, and volunteers. The project will begin in December and should be finished by March. Any questions, suggestions, to make contributions or to volunteer, please contact Jeannie Shimer at 517-3801.



Art Committee News

Revealing the Land, a first-time invitational exhibit

by members of Plein Air Florida, a state wide group of artists that paint on location, will open with a reception December 2, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Entertainment will be by the folk group "Dharma Bums Band" - UUC members Dean Mogelgaard, Donna Ballard, Fred Seidl, and Dorothy Gardiner. The artists are Dorothy Gardiner (UUC), Melissa Miller Nece (UUC), Deborah Paris, Linda Blondheim, David Johnson, Brenda Hofreiter, Mary Jane Volkman, Gainor Roberts, Markissia Billiris, and Stephen Schatz. Publicity for the show is in the December issue of Plein Air Magazine, a world wide publication.

See www.pleinairflorida.org for information about the group and links to participating artists' web pages. *Charlene Carnes, Chair of Art Committee* (New email address: charlene75@verizon.net)

Update on Contributions and Pledges

Pledges are \$11,000 behind budget for this fiscal year. If you are able to catch up that would be good. Remember, contributions for inclusion in your 2005 tax year must be received by December 31, or mailed with a postmark date of December 31. If you have any questions call Sue Boone at the church office. Sue can also help with debit or credit card payments. Your continued financial support of our programs and activities is appreciated.
Ken Suggs, Treasurer

UU Singles Fellowship 40+

Thanks to each and every one who has contributed to the enormous success of our Fellowship, enhancing our ability to gather and share in the spirit of true friendship and strengthening our bonds within this spiritual community.

Friday December 2

Welcoming Reception
Westwood Room, 6:00 p.m., \$3

We will welcome new members and invite everyone to our December activities. Then, we will join Dorothy Gardiner, one of our loyal fellowship members and distinguished artist, at the Art Show Exhibit and Reception in the Octagon. This is a special event and we will extend the invitation to everyone in our fellowship.

Friday, December 16

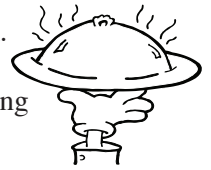
Foreign Film & Soiree Discussion
Specialty Coffees & Desserts
Patio Room 7:00 p.m. \$5

Central Station (Brazil 1999)

Dora is a poor and retired teacher who writes letters in the Rio de Janeiro train station. Illiterate people pay Dora to write and mail the letters, but she decides at home with the help of her neighbor if she will send them or not. One of Dora's clients, died in front of the station. Her son, Josué, ask Dora for assistance to find his father. Will she?

Sunday December 18

Pot Luck Holiday Feast
Soledad's Place, 5:00 p.m.
\$5 Donation
and a Special Meal Offering
Reservation Required by
December 15.



All Fellowship members and Sunset Ritual participants are invited to share in a Holiday Feast.

Each should bring their own Special Meal Offering of either an appetizer, main dish, or dessert. We welcome a \$5 donation or your assistance in the preparations for the event.

For more information and to make your reservations, contact Soledad Loba at 576-8003 or via email at soledad_loba@hotmail.com.

New Year's Eve Party

Do any of our Fellowship members wish to host a New Year's Eve Party? If you do, please, contact Soledad Loba and she will make sure to share the information with the rest of the Fellowship members.



PSI Symposium Upcoming Meetings

December 18th – Part II of The Elegant Universe, followed by a discussion.

January 29th – Fritzie Redmond will lead a Meditation and a discussion on Meditation.

February 26th – Rosie Warburton, a friend of Susan Golden, will lead a discussion on “Sound Body” (exact

title to be announced).

March 26th – Linda Woodend will arrange for a showing of the movie about the Indigo Children, followed by a discussion.

Topics are subject to change. Please contact Roberta Watson for details at (813) 251-2991 or email rwatson@trenam.com

National Farm Workers Ministry Update

The National Farm Workers Ministry has registered 359 children in the labor camps in Hillsborough County for Christmas gifts. The most asked for gifts are dolls, t-shirts, and tennis shoes. When I was registering the families, they told us they have only been working one or two days a week. Dried

beans, rice, canola oil, and sugar are also needed. I will not be at church services for the next month. I will be speaking at other congregations. So if you can help me in any way, please contact me at 443-2330.

Peace and love, *Joe Morgan,*
Pinellas Support Committee of the National Farm Workers Ministry

Peak Oil Conference Draws in Larger Community

More than 70 people attended the all-day conference on November 19th to learn about and discuss the issue of “Peak Oil.” The conference was jointly sponsored by UUC’s Bay Area Responsible Consumption Coalition (BARCC) and the Tampa Bay Post-Carbon Council. Of those in attendance, more than 50 were not UUC members.

The issue was brought into focus with the showing of a video, “The End of Suburbia,” an excellent presentation of the challenges we will likely face at some point in the not too distant future as the world supply of cheap oil rapidly depletes.

Following the video, a panel of experts discussed the implications of the video, and that led into afternoon breakout sessions on the topics of transportation, alternative energy sources, our food supply and maintaining order and social justice in the world of the future.

If you would like a bibliography or additional information on this important issue, please contact the UUC office. Many thanks to the UUC office volunteers for their help, to Cheryl Long for her assistance with the sound system and to Janine Tomkins for setting up everything so nicely.

IARF CONGRESS IN TAIWAN

March 26-30, 2006

The International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF), the world’s oldest interfaith organization, is holding its next Congress at the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Monastery in Taipei, Taiwan. The theme of the Congress is “Dignity in Diversity.” The Congress will bring together members and friends from various faith traditions and cultures. It will feature worship services and rituals from various faith traditions, workshops, key note speeches by Harvey Cox, theologian at Harvard, Dr. Welton Gaddy, President of Interfaith Alliance, and circle groups which provide opportunities for participants to get to know one another. There will also be cultural entertainment and local tours during the Congress. Post-Congress tours to Japan and the Philippines are also being organized for those who are interested. For more information, visit the IARF website at www.iarf.net or talk to Abhi who serves on the International Council of the IARF.

Buddhist Events at UUC and UU Tampa

Spiritual Food Fair Buffet.

There will be another famous Vegetarian Luncheon Buffet served by the Dhamma Wheel Buddhist Meditation Society on December 4, 2005. Enjoy the tastes of Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, India and other distant lands all in the UUC Social Hall immediately after Sunday's service. The public is welcome, so bring your friends and all others who like to eat well, plentifully and peacefully. Bhante will give a dhamma blessing as well.

Donation \$7.00 per person 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. *Good Food without Cruelty and Killing in the Spirit of Ahimsa!*



The UU Buddhist Fellowship of Tampa Bay will have a modified meeting schedule at UUC for December. We will meet in the Social Hall for the first two Wednesdays only, Dec. 7 and Dec. 14, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. We will have both sitting and walking meditation, discussion, and a film. We will discuss possible schedule changes for 2006 at both meetings. Bring your suggestions.

Frank Tedesco will present a sermon on Unitarianism Universalism and Buddhism at UU Tampa, Sunday service, on December 11. All are welcome.

For information about any of the above events, call Frank Tedesco at 512-4805. For more information about national UU Buddhist Fellowship activities, see www.uua.org/uubf

Workshop on Intuition Development, Dec 4

“Opening the Intuitive Gate, The Keys to Developing Your Intuition” is a workshop being offered on Sunday, December 4, from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. at UUC by Will Tuttle, Ph.D. A donation of \$20 will be gratefully appreciated. An acclaimed pianist, composer, and educator, Will Tuttle unites both Eastern and Western meditation traditions. Uplifting, philosophical, musical, inspiring, challenging, and reassuring, this is a seminar that can change lives, as we invite spirit to work its wonders on the ultimate frontier: the human heart. Dr. Tuttle's insights include:

- Discovering your unique ways of accessing your intuitive wisdom
- Effective inner & outer practices for developing joy and spiritual awareness
- Techniques using meditation, imagery, music, and art that inspire intuitive insights
- How to respond to the global “intuitive imperative” and meditate more effectively
- Ancient secrets for awakening the love, compassion, joy, and peace within.



Holiday Bake Sale

A Bake Sale, sponsored by the UU Women's Umbrella, will be held after Sunday services on Sunday, December 11. Please bring your donations of cookies, pies, nuts, jams, brownies, etc to the Social Hall on either Saturday, December 10 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or Sunday, December 11 from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. This is a fun, festive fundraiser. *Anneliese Ekberg, Chairperson, 531-2219*





HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS AT UUC

Pot Luck Supper

Saturday, Dec. 10, 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

A pot luck dinner will be held in the Social Hall. This is an inter-generational dinner to include children, parents and grandparents. There will be story telling for the children and adults as well as musical entertainment.

Please bring a main dish, side dish, hors d'oeuvres or dessert.

A-H - Main Dish

I-Q - Side Dish

R-Z Hors d'oeuvres
or Dessert

Coffee and Punch will be provided. Please feel free to help us in planning, set-up and clean up. Contact Ruth Samuel at 791-1216.

Handel's Messiah with UUC Chorale

Saturday, Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m.



The UUC Chorale presents a holiday performance of the Christmas portion of Handel's Messiah, a perennial favorite of both audiences and musicians.

Come out to the Octagon and enjoy the wonderful music and start your holiday season right and support our wonderful UUC music program! There is no charge (a freewill donation will be collected) and refreshments will be served after the performance. Please call the church office at 531-7704 for more information.

Seeking the Season

Thursday, Dec. 15, 7:00 p.m.

A UU Holiday Service presented by the West Central Cluster and the UUC with an All Cluster Choir. Come join us in this original production as we travel through time with famed Universalist P.T. Barnum seeking the meaning of the holidays for UUs. The service will feature an all cluster choir and cast, and a surprise guest from way up north. A reception will follow in the Social Hall. Please bring a holiday treat to share at the reception following the service. Child care will be provided.

Party at the Shimers'

Saturday, Dec. 17, 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.

The UUC annual Holiday party will be held at the home of Chuck and Jeannie Shimer. The address is 14190 Valentine Trail, Largo. Valentine Trail is west of Indian Rocks Road just North of Walsingham and south of Suncoast Hospital. The house is located on the southeast corner of Valentine and Shawnee Trails. Please call the Shimers at 517-3801 if you need further directions. Drinks, entrees and appetizers will be provided. You may bring side dishes or desserts if you wish. We are looking forward to seeing everyone there in their best holiday spirit!

Intergenerational Holiday Services.

**Saturday, Dec. 24, 7:00 p.m. and
Sunday, Dec. 25, 10:30 a.m.**

See the "Worship Services" section for details.

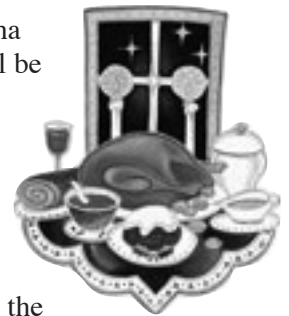
Christmas Day Dinner

Sunday, Dec. 25, 12 to 4:00 p.m.

Abhi and Lalitha Janamanchi will be hosting the annual Christmas Day dinner in the Social Hall.

There will be a sign up sheet in the office in December so that we can organize the menu.

All are welcome to attend. For more information, call Lalitha at 723-7252.



Give Me Cookies!

We will have a lot of cookie monsters at the Christmas Eve service and they need to be fed. Or else! Please bring in a plate or box of your best homemade (or purchased, we're not particular) cookies for the reception. Call the office by December 22 to sign up and Santa will take care of you a few days later.





UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS OF CLEARWATER

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Subscriptions: An annual donation of \$15.00 to cover publishing and postage costs is requested from non members who do not make contributions of record to UUC. Thank you for your support.

OCTAGRAM

The Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalists
of Clearwater, Inc. Octagon Arts Center

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Facilities Manager **Janine Tompkins**

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Editor **Nancy Warner**

Graphic Artist **Wayne Barrette**

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

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

Ina Alexander 531-6110

Sol Winner 397-1935

Dorothy Wylie 797-5736

Steve Poekert 804-4735

Chuck Shimer 517-3801

*Please send OCTAGRAM submissions to the church
office by mail, drop off in the Octagram mailbox,
or by email to mail@uuclearwater.org. Deadline
for January 2006 issue is December 18th, 2005.*

**Sunday Worship Services
are at 10:30 am**

Visit: www.uuclearwater.org