



The Univoice

Waxers, painters, and first aid box installers, oh my!

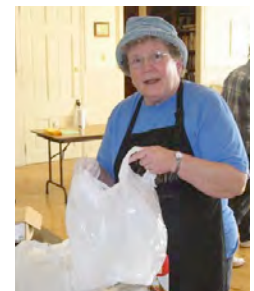
Eleven people pitched into help at the Building Keepers work day on October 12, and oh, what a difference they made.

Carol Orts and Joanne Just scrubbed the woodwork and Keith Orts waxed it. When the afternoon sun hit, it glowed! Stephanie Elliot painted the outdoor information boards. Fay Oxenreider attacked the kitchen. Please admire the clean floor, the clean window and counters. When she screamed, it was Frank Wilder to the rescue, removing the dead mouse. Mark Burton and Keith organized the workroom in the basement and later, Mark and Kelly Hartman repaired to the choir loft to destroy the old organ speaker and remove it. (Have you noticed the blond analog organ has gone to organ heaven? It was in the back of the church to the right of the front door. The old cast iron radiators are gone, too.)

Kelly and Frank installed the new first aid boxes in the kitchen and upstairs in the Sunday school area and re-hung the bulletin boards in the Gerber Room. Ruthie Epler labeled all the keys and wrote up a list. Tracy Brant sanded chip marks and took away things to recycle, as did Joanne, Ruthie and Fay. We continue to marvel how much junk finds its way to the church, just as we wonder why the Food Pantry freezer occasionally gets unplugged, destroying the bread stored in

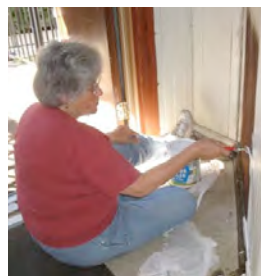
it, and the Baby Grand Piano humidifier, which must never be turned off.

Last month, during our mini-Saturday workday on September 13th the Building Keepers built a roof over the A/C condenser under the back DeBenneville Room window. This will foil any future ice missiles from flattening it in the future. We also collected bags and bags of garbage and yard waste from around the buildings, and laid down weed barrier and stone to keep weeds down around the a/c condensers.



Please join us for the next Building Keepers workday. The Church is our spiritual home and needs constant love. Please join us. We are a friendly group who works for food.

Good news! A roofer has been contracted to repair the drooping handicapped entrance roof (ramp entrance) and the leaking DeBenneville roof.



Clockwise from top: Ruthie & Keith share a happy moment, Joanne wonders whether the bag is coming or going, and Carole gets down with a paintbrush.

The church office is open from 12-5pm, Tuesday through Friday, but please call ahead to ensure access. If you need to get in at other times, contact the office manager to arrange for a temporary key.

Rev. Fees has office hours by appointment. To schedule, please call the church at 610 372-0928 or email sandrafees@verizon.net. Monday is Rev. Fees day off.

Board of Directors
 Norman Block, president
 Joe Plageman, vice president
 Doug Mealing, secretary
 Jeanne Hey, treasurer
 Members at large, Richard Bromley, Mike Mannix, Miryha Thibalt, Jeff Woodward, Cindy Mock

From Sandra's Study Rev. Sandra Fees

This is a time filled with fear and anxiety. Our troubled economy has raised many concerns for people. We want to know we will be able to pay our mortgage and rent, buy groceries, and take care of our basic needs today. Many of us also worry about the future – our own as we move toward retirement or our children's future. We want to know that we will be okay. I think the real questions we have are how long will this last and how much is it going to hurt. History would suggest that this will not last. But for those struggling now, that is little help.

The reality is none of us knows for sure where this will all lead, and when it will end. I don't know. I do have hope that we can find ways to make it through this challenging time. And the single

most important way we make it through is by being there for each other. We need each other.

I am grateful to be part of this faith community that is called to kindness, hope, compassion, and strength. I find our faith spiritually uplifting. I also know that we can turn to each other for comfort and support. Our church is a place where we can give and receive care. Sometimes this is a listening ear, sometimes a ride home, sometimes a meal. There are many ways we support each other.

I hope we will pay careful attention to the needs of those in our church as well as to those in our local community. We



sometimes are busy helping the world outside and we do not notice that the person sitting right next to us on Sunday morning is hurting. It isn't always easy to know. So we need to be attentive and sensitive to each other's lives in these vulnerable times.

My hope for our community is that we will take good care of each other. My hope is that we will be there for each other's spiritual, physical, and emotional needs. My hope is that we will be there for each other.

Yours in faith and love,

Sandra

Children's Holiday Gift Project

This year we could all use a way to reach out to those who are feeling lonely and in need. The Holiday Gift Project provides gifts for children whose parents are in prison or involved in the criminal justice system. For many of the children, this is the only gift they receive at the holidays.

Our church has signed up to provide gifts for about 20 children, and Rachel Gutzler will be coordinating the project. A sign up sheet will be available in early

November. Specific gift ideas will be provided for each child. The gifts must be wrapped, labeled with the child's name, and delivered to the church by Wednesday, December 3. The project is hosted by Berks Connections/Pre-Trial Services. Contact Rachel for more information.



Stewardship: Nurturing our spirits and helping to heal the world

By Jeff Woodward, Chair, Stewardship committee

What is Stewardship and why is it important to FUUBC members? Yes, it has something to do with managing resources. But Stewardship is more significant and meaningful than the management of money, important though that is.

Understanding what Stewardship is can be a catalyst for change and growth in our Church. It can help us focus on our goals, assist in our efforts to attract new members and be instrumental in allowing us to increase our giving levels so that we can grow as a church.

The Stewardship philosophy involves growing and nurturing a spiritual life, as well as the giving of time, talents, energies and monies to the church to support the goals and activities of its mission. While stewardship does of course involve the giving of monies, it is as

importantly about the development in the congregation of a sense of gratitude and a willingness to give generously in whatever ways one is able, to support the church's worthy goals.

Stewardship thus flows from a clear vision of what our church is about embodied in our Mission. This means that it is important for our UU church to develop a clear Mission Statement, a declaration of how we want to promote the spiritual and moral growth of our members and how we intend to address the surrounding Berks County community in terms of our values and moral mission. For instance, we might spell out our intention to grow as a congregation, and to be a congregation that is active and influential in the community, in partnerships that engage across differences. Whatever Mission

statement we decide upon, it should clearly spell out our goals and indicate what we are about, and thus offer visitors and newcomers the sense of "Yes that is what UUs in Berks County are all about and these are their goals."

During this Church year, we will begin to start the process of considering our Mission statement to see how we might improve it so that it better reflects our values and moral mission. Reverend Fees and an ad hoc team will begin the process later this Fall. Members will have a variety of opportunities to make suggestions and have input into this project as it moves forward. When our mission is clearly articulated and understood, newcomers as well as long-term members will be inspired to support the church's goals, including our financial needs.

Contributing directly from an IRA

The favorable tax rule that permits charitable donations directly from an IRA has recently been extended to apply to 2008 and 2009. As a result, persons age 70½ and older can give up to \$100,000 per year from their IRA directly to charities, such as the UU Church, and avoid paying income taxes on the money.

Basically, the extended tax rule benefits retirees age 70½ and older who are required by tax law to take minimum distributions from their IRA accounts and also wish to make charitable contributions. If the distribution is transferred directly to the charity it counts as a required distribution but is not included in taxable income.

The rule may be particularly helpful if the retiree's IRAs have increased significantly in value through the years and

may result in a big income-tax bill on their withdrawal. In that case, this tax rule would be ideal, especially if the retiree does not otherwise need the money to live on and is interested in making charitable contributions.

This special tax rule could be a win/win situation for a retiree looking for a tax smart way to contribute to the church, including someone interested in making a contribution to the capital campaign. While it may be too late in the year for 2008, you may want to consider this for 2009. If you are interested or need more information, please contact Barry Groebel.

Dear UU Parents and Friends,

Indian Summer is in the air... YAAY! The weather is gorgeous and the excitement is rising here at UU Berks. I want to first thank everyone for their warm welcome and their support on helping me through the transition here. Our many helping hands and minds will build a beautiful intergenerational community here in Berks County.

We have been busy starting up RE and building a RE committee to support our new and ongoing ideas. We have teachers in place, and many children to teach.

What we need more than anything right now is for volunteers to sign up to be Sunday Helpers in the classrooms. As a Sunday Helper you are the extra set of hands, the warm body that makes everyone safe and sound. As you can tell, anyone over 18 can be a Sunday Helper, so maybe you have an hour you would like to donate and spend some time getting to know our children and youth.

We are looking for parents, grandparents and aunts and uncles, friends and neighbors, men and women (do you fit into one of those categories?) We are all a part of this process... no discrimination here! Please help us make this RE Program a huge success by helping out our teachers so they can focus on their curriculum and not bathroom runs! Please see Lisa Wilder or myself, Paula Rosenberg, if you can help. Also there is a schedule on the bulletin board for you to fill in as well. Thank you in advance!

As always I am here to share your joys and concerns with RE please do not hesitate to contact me. dreuuberks@aol.com

Yours in Faith & Fun!

Paula Rosenberg, DRE

November is an educational, spiritual, fun-filled month!

November 2 : Day Of The Dead Service~

Halloween Party for toddlers thru 6th grade hosted by the youth (9th-12th grade)~ Haunted House sponsored by the youth donating the money to UNICEF. So please Bring A Friend! Everyone start in sanctuary.

November 9: Children's Chapel All Children

toddler to 5th grade and teachers are welcome. 10:30 sharp upstairs.

November 16: Youth Worship All Youth 6th -12th

grade and their teachers are welcome. 10:30 sharp upstairs.

November 23: Breads of the world, sharing for

all, everyone start in Sanctuary

November 30: Everyone starts in the Sanctuary.



Paula Rosenberg

Adult Programs

Getting to Know UU

Sunday, Nov. 16, Noon-1 p.m.

Join our minister, Rev. Fees, for an informal conversation about the church, Unitarian Universalism, and your spiritual needs. This is a great way to get to know other members of the church and to meet our minister.

Lunch Bunch: Memory

Tuesday, Nov. 18, noon-1:30 p.m.

Join with Rev. Fees and other members and friends over a brown bag lunch. You are invited to bring a memento, photo, or object that brings to mind an important memory from your childhood or another time in your life.

New Member Ceremony

Sunday, November 23

We will welcome new members into the church during our worship service on Sunday, November 23.

Scrip: the gift that keeps on giving

The holidays are around the corner. Do you need grocery scrip for special family meals, parties, and baking? Please see Randy Newnham or Diane

VanBodegraven after church to buy scrip or to place an order for scrip to be mailed. Holiday scrip cards will be mailed November 15th and December 15th. Contact Diane with any questions or to place an order.

Dear Friends,

I want to express my deep gratitude to the congregation for the dedication of the wonderful new piano in the sanctuary in my name. Most dedications are in "memory of ----" but I'm here to enjoy and use this instrument!

My thanks go to Sherri Gallo, especially, for being the moving force behind all the complexities of finding a home for the old piano and having this one installed in our sanctuary.

It has been my pleasure to be involved in the music program of this church, and I thank all who have been faithful in our choir and other musical endeavors. Bless you all.

Sincerely,

Caroline Simonson

The Universalist Herald

The annual Fall Meeting of the the **Pennsylvania Universalist Convention (PUC)** was for many of us a chance to "touch our roots". There have been a number of questions about the Universalist part of our Unitarian Universalist heritage. Nice to see that interest.

Consider a subscription to *The Universalist Herald*, the oldest continuously published liberal religious magazine in North America! Articles in the September/October issue include *The Gospel According to Bruce* (Bruce Springsteen); *All Roads Lead to Heaven - The Pew Report*; and *Guide to Universals in Religion*.

A one-year subscription (6 issues) costs \$12.00. To review an issue, or for questions contact Nelson Simonson.

Spectrum to benefit from Plate Collection

Our Special Plate Collection for this month will be for Spectrum at our Sunday, November 16th Service at the Church. SPECTRUM meetings offer positive role models, peer support, education and recreation for LGBTQA youth and their allies ages 14-18. These meetings are held every Wednesday from 5:30 – 7:30 PM at Planned Parenthood , 48 South 4th Street, 2nd Floor, Reading (use the Franklin Street entrance). For further information (including non-cash donation ideas) contact Zane Szurgot.

This month's VOLUNTEERS

Coffee Corps

November 2

Group VII, Mindy and Judd Bortz. Richard Baker, Ann Meyers and Jeff Woodward, Kim and Brian Nice, Cindy Mock, and Yolanda and Amaro Reyes.

November 9

Group VIII, Carol and Keith Orts. Vince Chiles and Deb Kemmerling, Paul Haggard, Robin Lucas, Jane Rohrbach, Rob Schaeffer and Susan Stewart.

November 16

Group IX, Fay Oxenreider. Henriette Alban, Ruth Epler, Karen Nierle, Michele Post, John Showalter, Ron Smith and Kelly Wiegand.

November 23

Group X, Nelson and Caroline Simonson. Kent and Rachel Gutzler, Nadine Smet-Weiss, Mike Szajana, and Sam Tyson.

November 30

Group I, Joanne Just. Joan and Richard Bromley, Barbara and Greg Burdan, Raydell Hymon, Kim McGarvey, and Doug Wray.

Ushers

November 2, Mike Szajna and Nelson Simonson

November 9, Keith Orts and John Showalter

November 16, Robin Lucas and Joe Plageman

November 23, Laurie Gerson and Miryha Thibault

November 30, Walter Axsmith and Sam Tyson



Note to coffee servers: Consider serving light snacks rather than a sumptuous buffet. When cleaning up, please sweep the floors, remove the trash from the kitchen and the bathrooms, and place it in the dumpster outside the building. Thank you!

Pantry recipients triple

Our pantry served 57 new families on October 2, triple the usual number.

We assisted 662 children and adults from 166 households. Our next pantry will be held on Thursday, November 6.

We are sorry to report that one of our most dedicated volunteers, Marcia Graff, will no longer be able to help at pantry. Marcia was a mainstay for many years and she will be greatly missed.

New volunteers are always welcome, anytime between 8:30am and noon on the first Thursday of every month. Duties include unloading the Greater Berks Food Bank truck, stocking the shelves, distributing the food, cleaning up and recycling the cardboard. For more information please contact Liz Eshelman. Thanks.

November		
Nov 1, 2008	New Member Class	9-11:30am
Nov 2, 2008	Silent Auction Getting to know UU Deadline for submissions to Live Auction	Coffee Hour 12-1pm
Nov 3, 2008	Spiritual Practice	7-8:30pm
Nov 6, 2008	Spirit of Life	7-8:30pm
Nov 9, 2008	Silent Auction	
Nov 11, 2008	Board Meeting	7pm
Nov 12, 2008	UUJEC	5:30 PM
Nov 12, 2008	Spirit of Life	7-8:30pm
Nov 15, 2008	Auction & Asian Elegance Cafe	7pm
Nov 18, 2008	Lunch Bunch PFLAG	12-1:30pm
Nov 19, 2008	SJT	7:30 PM
Nov 21, 2008	Drum Circle	
Nov 23, 2008	Auction/Raffle Tickets Sold	
Nov 26, 2008	UUJEC	5:30 PM

Univoice Submission Guidelines

Email submissions by sending a Word file, or including your material in the body of an email message, to univoice@uuberks.org. You may also put typewritten submissions in our mailbox in the deBenneville Room. The deadline is the 15th of each month. Please include the date, time and location of events, and the full name and phone number or email of contacts.

--Jane Palmer and
Erika Bricker, co-editors



Worship Services in November

November 2 Day of the Dead Family Service

Rev. Sandra Fees, Paula Rosenberg DRE, and Mena Hautau, Worship Associate

We join in our annual celebration of the Mexican Day of the Dead holiday by remembering our own loved ones who we have lost. Individuals are invited to bring a photo or memento of loved ones to place on the altar. Children and youth will join us for the ritual and will then go upstairs for a holiday party.

November 9 The Spirituality of Skepticism

Dr. Lee Barrett, Professor of Theology, Lancaster Theological Seminary, and Nelson Simonson

We will consider the spiritual benefits of continually questioning one's own deepest convictions in order to prevent stagnation and to create room in one's soul for radically divergent viewpoints.

November 16 Remembering Ourselves into Being

Rev. Sandra Fees and Zane Szurgot, Worship Associate

We all agree that memory is important. But why? How can our memories change us? How do our memories help us retain our identity individually and collectively?

November 23 Breads of the World

Rev. Sandra Fees and Mena Hautau, Worship Associate

Eating is one of the ways we participate in the interdependent web of life, and this morning we celebrate Thanksgiving with the Breads of the World Communion. It is a way we join ourselves with each other and with the natural world.

November 26, 7 p.m. – Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

Our church is hosting this year's Interfaith Thanksgiving Service. Steve Elmarzouky, President of the Islamic Center, will offer the message.

Representatives from the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions will also participate. A reception will follow.

November 30 The Immortality of Influence

Rev. Sandra Fees and Judd Bortz, Worship Associate

We Unitarian Universalists don't spend a lot of time talking about what happens to us after this life. But we can't help but wonder. What are the possibilities of how we live on?

First Unitarian Universalist Church
of Berks County

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