



The Univoice

FUUBC welcomes new music director Dan Matz

We are excited to announce Dan Matz as our new Music Director. By the time you read this, Dan will already have been working with the choir and Rev. Fees to energize our music program for the fall. We are excited about Dan's skills in music performance and composition. Dan demonstrated a sincere love of music and enthusiasm for expanding our music program in the church. Dan wants to encourage members of the congregation to explore their talent and join in worship through music.



Music Director Dan Matz

Church Office Hours:

The church office is open Tuesday through Friday from 12-5pm, but please call ahead to ensure access.

Please contact the office manager to arrange for a temporary key if you need access any other time.

Rev. Fees has office hours by appointment. Please call (610) 372-0928 or email sandrafees@verizon.net, to schedule an appointment.

Monday is Rev. Fees day off.

Some of the responsibilities of the new Music Director include consulting with the minister and worship committee to provide music for worship, directing the choir and/or supervising a choir director, scheduling musicians for Sunday services, and maintaining/caring for the instruments and music in the church. FUUBC was recently awarded a three year growth and development grant this year in the hiring of a part-time music director.

Dan holds a BA in Music and is a graduate of Kutztown University. He has performed in many school and community related theatre groups including Genesis Theatre and the Ephrata Playhouse. Of course, you will recognize his superb piano skills from our own church services. Dan and his wife, Quinn, joined the church about two years ago. They have two children, Isaiah and Grace.

Dan provided the search committee with examples of his past work and his own original compositions. Dan's references gave him glowing recommendations and felt his dedication and talent would be great assets to our church community. Dan responded to one of our questions by saying that "music is what gets me up in the morning". He said that, for him, music conveys emotions that he doesn't get through the visual arts. Dan and his family are dedicated UU's and we hope you will join us in welcoming Dan as he takes on this new role and gets to do what he loves most – making music!

Music Director Search Committee: Rev. Sandra Fees, Cheryl Gallo, Kate Lehman and Cindy Mock

Please see pg. 3 for article on new Office Administrator Susan Stewart!

Univoice Submission Guidelines

Email submissions by attaching a Word file or including your material in the body of an email message to univoice@uuberk.org. You may also put typewritten submissions in our mailbox in the new Chalice House in the box labelled *Univoice*.

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.

~Meghan Klumpp, Editor



Memorial Service for Isabelle Keller

There will be a Celebration of Life Service for Isabelle Keller, Mother of Linda McCormick, at 2pm on Sunday, Sept. 20, at the church. Immediately following the service there will be a dessert reception in the Gerber Room. All are welcome to attend.

From Sandra's Study

Toward a Vision for the Future

This year begins our sixth year together. Can you believe it? To say "time flies" would be an understatement. When I look back over the past five years, I feel a sense of love, admiration, and accomplishment for all the incredible ministry of this spiritual community. In so many ways, this year feels like a culmination of much of what we have all been working on. Our new building is a symbol of this accomplishment. And this fall, on Oct. 18, we will have a Rededication Ceremony and Open House to acknowledge the connections we have built and are building.



You'll remember that "Building Connections" was the theme of our capital campaign that has made possible our new offices, enhanced meeting space, and beautiful religious education rooms. Most of you will have seen and used the new space by the time of our celebration. But the celebration is still of utmost importance. It is a way in which our community strengthens our bond of love and purpose, and builds memories together.

The celebration will help us begin to focus on our vision for the future. As much as our building project is a completion, it is also the start of something new. As poet Denise Levertov wrote, "We have only begun to imagine the fullness of life.... So much is unfolding that must complete its gesture, so much is in bud."

This year, we will be considering what is in bud. What is at the heart of our community? What are we in a unique position to do and be? At its retreat this summer, the board affirmed its commitment to our congregation working together on a vision and mission process. This is a fitting time for us to do this work. Currently we don't have a vision statement, and the mission statement was developed about seven years ago.

I look forward to our conversations about our vision for the future and to imagining the fullness of life. Let's discover together what is unfolding in our community that must complete its gesture.

Yours in faith and love,
Sandra

Meg Barnhouse Keynotes Association Sunday Service

Sunday, Oct. 4 is Association Sunday. We will be worshipping in Lancaster with Unitarian Universalists from the Lancaster, York, Harrisburg, Gettysburg, Boiling Springs, and other congregations. This is a unique opportunity for us to gather regionally with fellow UUs. Our speaker will be minister Meg Barnhouse and will include a performance of "Old Turtle." A middle-schooler event will be held in the afternoon at a Lancaster park. More details will be available soon. A service will also be provided in our sanctuary, but members are encouraged to carpool to Lancaster.



Meg Barnhouse, who will be speaking at the Oct. 4th meeting in Lancaster.

Please welcome new Office Administrator Susan Stewart

The Office Administrator Search Team is proud to announce that Susan Stewart will be joining our staff with the title of Office Administrator, beginning Sept. 8. Five very qualified persons were interviewed, after reviewing nearly 50 resumes.

Susan has extensive experience as an executive assistant in a corporate climate. She is a church member who has taken on multiple volunteer responsibilities, including serving on the Religious Education Committee. When the Office Administrator position was advertised, Susan identified our need for someone with her skills and realized that our position fit her principles. Susan is very excited to utilize her skill set and work ethic for the congregation and to help foster organization and growth in our church mission. As Office Administrator, she will manage office procedures, facilities use, and schedules; maintain and update member information; perform bookkeeping functions; and complete other functions for the smooth, efficient administration of the church. The position is part-time, 25 hours per week.

Susan lives in Wyomissing with her husband, Peter Ostergen and daughter, Sara. Her daughter, Briana, is in graduate school. Susan's appointment to this position will be rewarding for her and for every one of us Berks County UUs. Please welcome Susan to our staff.



The Office Administrator Search Team: Rev. Sandra Fees, Board President Joe Plageman, and Board Treasurer, Jeanne Hey.

A ride with a guide through Chalice House

By Gene Goodwin

“I could use your help,” was all Walter Axsmith had to say when he came up to me during the after-the-service coffee one Sunday last summer. Sure,” I said quickly, because Walt is on my list of most admired First Berks UU members for the work he has done as our liaison with the contractors and workers on our Chalice House project. A former chief engineer, Walt has quietly, without fanfare, looked out for our best interests as the “old building next door” has been converted into beautiful as well as functional offices and meeting rooms. What he wanted from me was for me to test the new carpet that had been installed on the wheelchair ramp in the DeBenville room. I had already heard that a question has been raised about replacing the carpet with linoleum. So, with Walt pushing me in my manual wheelchair off we go to try out the new ramp. We found no problem with this carpet. It is firm and tightly loomed, easy to propel a wheel chair on (unlike the soft, thick and fluffy carpets I have struggled with in so-called handicapped rooms of many motel chains). As my reward, Walt pushed me on a guided tour of the first floor of our new addition. It was my first look at the completed but at that time still unfurnished rooms, and boy was I impressed! I was first impressed by all the natural light flooding all the rooms. I thought our Chalice House was one third of a row house. And from my high school days in Baltimore, I knew about row houses—even lived in one. The interiors of most row houses are dark because unless you are in an end unit you get no natural light from the sides.

But our one third of a row house is hooked up to the other two thirds only at the front, so except for a few feet in front, we've got windows galore on both sidewalls. All the new rooms, including offices for our minister, office administrator and RE director—even the unisex bathroom—have windows. My favorite is a general meeting room in the rear, which has windows on all but one side! The light at high noon is almost blinding!


I can't tell you about the new RE classrooms on the second floor, but you stair climbers can check them out during the Open House and Rededication of Chalice House set for Oct. 18. Please let me know: Are they well lighted?



Gene Goodwin and his “pusher,” Walter Axsmith, find the carpet on the new ramp leading to the Chalice House works fine for wheelchairs.

Religious Education

Welcome Back!

 Autumn is upon us and as school and activities ramp back up, so do Religious Education classes at First UU Berks. This year brings some exciting changes to our program as the students in grades 3-12 move into new classrooms in the Chalice House. The PreK students will also have more space in their existing classroom. We are very fortunate that our church community values our young people and has undertaken this expansion of our Religious Education facilities. I also have a new office on the first floor of the Chalice House where there will be an in-box by the door if you need to contact me.

The focus for our RE program this year will be UU Identity. We have chosen curricula that explore the ideas of what makes Unitarian Universalism unique? What is our history? Who are some famous Unitarian Universalists and what did they believe? We hope that you will enjoy learning more about UUism along with your children

PreK (ages 3-5): Chalice Children

Kindergarten- Grade 2:

UU Superheroes (Fall)/Celebrating the Rainforest (Spring)

Grades 3-5 Tool Box of Faith (Fall)/A Stepping Stone Year (Spring)

Grades 6-12 will follow a rotation schedule:

1st Sundays: Worship/Music Share/Game Day

2nd & 3rd Sundays—Curriculum

4th Sundays—Faith in Action (work on social justice project)

5th Sundays—Exploring the Arts (guest artists)

The Middle Schoolers will be using a curriculum called Popcorn Theology which gives them the opportunity to explore theology and ethics from a UU perspective using clips from popular movies. High school students in grade 9-12 will select a curriculum on the first day of class.

Class Placement

If you have a concern about your child's placement within a particular class, please let me know. We want your child to be in the class that is the best fit for them developmentally, regardless of their age or grade.

Looking forward to seeing you,

Elizabeth

and the RE Committee

Elizabeth Kaufmann,
Director of Religious Education

RE Committee

Lisa Wilder, Chair

Emily McNulty

Susan Stewart

Kent Gutzler

Stephanie Elliott

Tracy Brant

Celeste Galanos,

Youth Representative



Making "dirt" pudding with chocolate pudding, cookie crumbs and gummy worms to finish up a session on the helpful creatures, such as earthworms, that contribute to soil fertility.

Religious Education Calendar of Events

Sept 13—Water Communion/Homecoming (All Ages Service)

Join us as we celebrate our church community, the amazing gift of water, and the blessings of the past summer.

Sept 20---First Sunday of Religious Education Classes

Come for a light breakfast at 9:30 am so that you can check out your child's curricula for the year, reconnect with old friends, complete your registration form, and meet some of our Sunday School teachers.

Oct 4 -Association Sunday in Lancaster/Middle School Cluster Event

Travel to Lancaster to celebrate our liberal religious heritage in a worship service with other area UUs. Middle Schoolers will have an environmental education outing after the service with students from Harrisburg, Lancaster, York and other area churches.

Why do I need to register my child for Sunday School?

Your completed registration form is very important for maintaining a successful RE program. The forms help us to gather information about your child such as hobbies, allergies and medical information, and contact information for your family.

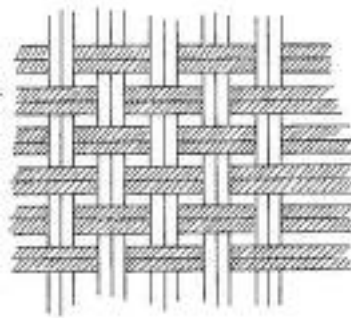
Having this information is important so that we can keep you informed about upcoming activities and schedule changes, set up class groupings with a manageable number of students, and keep any children with health or developmental issues safe and comfortable during Sunday School classes.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this form!

Weaving the Fabric of Diversity

The first workshop was designed to introduce the workshop series as a means to create more welcoming and inclusive congregations, discuss participant goals and learn about identity. Since identity difference is the main cause of oppression, we need to understand our own identities before exploring identities which are different from our own. Through activities and discussions in the first workshop, we came to realize that we have multiple and overlapping identities, and that we have the right to live our identities; no one should tell me, for example, not to be a woman because someone does not approve of or like my identity as a woman. I am, after all, unable to stop being a woman. We also talked about how it feels to have someone not recognize or accept one or more of our identities. The main goal of these workshops and any good diversity training is to become interculturally (person-to-person) and multiculturally (across an institution or organization) competent so that we affirm and validate the multiple, overlapping and salient identities of the "other" in any situation or communication.

The second workshop was designed to examine oppression, including its dynamics (racism, homophobia, classism, ableism, ageism, sexism, etc.) and its elements (discrimination, stereotyping, tokenizing, economic power, privilege, etc.) evident at the personal, interpersonal, inter-group and institutional levels in continuous cycles. We also talked about ways to break out of the cycles. The success of this and any of these workshops depends upon everyone's active participation in activities designed to facilitate meaningful discussions. ~Bonnie Block



Get Your Books Before They're Gone!

The book sale shelf in the Gerber Room will soon be removed. Please visit the bookshelf and take what you would like this month. The remaining books will be donated to the Berks County Public Library System. We will not be collecting any more books until further notice. Thank you for your support!
Cindy Mock and Ruthie Epler

Justice advocates gather for annual meeting

Members of the Unitarian Universalist Pennsylvania Legislative Advocacy Network (UUPLAN) will gather at First Unitarian Universalist Church in Reading on Sept. 12. The all-day annual meeting will include: Agenda setting for the coming legislative year, which issues will we rally our UU troops to work on in Harrisburg, and training on how to talk to your legislator, with role playing exercises. We will also discuss: calendar setting for the in-district visit days and teleconference meeting for UUPLAN liaisons, as well as tending the roots by developing UUPLAN infrastructure. If you want to pursue progressive policies for all Pennsylvanians! We are already working on GLBT and health care issues and will select an additional issue based on the passion expressed in Reading on Sept. 12. Join us! Contact Kimberly McGarvey at kimberlydoug@comcast.net if you would like to attend UUPLAN's annual meeting. Visit www.uuplan.org to learn more.

URL for Reading church's website.
<http://www.uuberks.org/>

2. Our contacts in Harrisburg tell us that health care is not moving this session, because all eyes are on Washington. If you feel strongly about this issue, show your advocacy. See the link below to learn what you can do to push America toward a healthier health system. The supporters of the status quo have all the money in the world to throw at misleading television ads. If you want a fairer system, fight for it!
<http://www.familiesusa.org/august-recess-tool-kit/>

Thanks for being part of the UUPLAN network!
Casey Aspin UUPLAN president



This Month's Volunteers

Coffee Corps

Sept. 6, Cold drinks - Keith & Carol Orts

Sept. 13, Group II - Norm & Bonnie Block, John & Mary Jo Weishampel, Tracy Brant, Joanna Groebel, Zane Szurgot, Patricia Cavanaugh

Sept. 20, Group III - Joe & Paula Plageman, Carol Gonzalez, Susan Pena, Brad Richardson, Kim Schittler, Brian & Krissy Bonning

Sept. 27, Group IV - Walter & Wilfriede Axsmith, Sandy Deemer, Linda McCormick, Mary Jane Vance, Rachel Liberatore & Kate Lehman, Diane Van Bodegraven



Ushers

9/6 Debroux/McLeish

9/13 Lucas/Axsmith

9/20 Oxenrider/
Plageman

9/27 Thibault/
Showalter

The Food Pantry

On Aug. 6th, there was very good response to the need for volunteers from the congregation. At least 9 adults and 3 young persons were able to give some time in the effort. Thanks to all! With their help, and about 8 volunteers among clients, we were able to provide food to 148 persons, 130 of whom were new to our Pantry. They represented families including 207 children, 258 adults, and 49 seniors who benefitted from the church's effort.

The next Pantry Thursdays will be Sept. 3rd, Oct. 1st, and Nov. 2nd. If you join in, you will likely find it to be a rewarding experience.

For further info, contact
Walter Axsmith w2ax-smith@comcast.net.



Splinters from the Board

Chalice House dedication set for

Oct. 18 By Gene Goodwin

At its monthly meeting Aug. 11, the Berks UU Board had a hard time finding enough weekends for all the important events they had to schedule this Fall. Board members had earlier figured on holding the Open House and Rededication of Chalice House the last weekend of September, until Board President Joe Plageman pointed out that he and other key leaders from our church had to be in Athens PA for the annual convention of Pennsylvania Universalists that weekend.

OK, let's move the Chalice House celebration to the first weekend in October. Can't do that, said Rev. Sandra Fees, because we are committed to join other UU churches in our area that first Sunday, Oct. 4, to celebrate our UU association. Members from the five churches are invited to attend a special service at the Lancaster church to be led by a visiting minister from South Carolina. The Board finally decided to schedule the Chalice House rededication for Sunday, Oct. 18.

(A glance at the Church calendar for September elsewhere in this issue of Univoice gives you some idea of the difficulty

Board members had trying to squeeze another big event in late September.) Our minister drew smiles of agreement from Board members when she expressed her good feelings about the events on the Fall schedule, which she sees as the opening of a wonderful and exciting year for our congregation.

Rev. Fees enjoys her working vacation

Some of you may have noticed that although our minister, the Rev. Sandra Fees, was supposedly on vacation July 1-Aug. 15, she seemed to be doing things for our church that sure looked like work.

Things like taking part in the monthly Board meeting Aug 11, the week before that helping move church offices into new Chalice House quarters, and interviewing candidates for and then hiring our new office administrator and music director, whose appointments are chronicled on page 1 of this issue. You ask her about this, and she says something about this summer being different and how much she enjoyed doing such things.

Current Board Members

President Joe Plageman, Vice President Ron Smith, Treasurer Jeanne Hey, Secretary Doug Mealing, Mike Mannix, Miryha Thibault, Jeff Woodward, Karen Nierle, Gene Fizz, and Sandra Fees.

Adult Programs

Fourfold Soul's Journey

Tuesday Sept. 15, 22, 29 & Oct. 6, 7-9 pm – Chalice House 1st Floor Meeting Room;

Facilitator: Rev. Sandra Fees

This program takes us on a journey of reflection and transformation, using an ancient four-fold journey:

- I. Beginning – What intention do we bring to the journey?
- II. Journey - How do we move through difficult issues and questions?
- III. Opening - How do we receive joy?
- IV. Calling - How do we mature in service?

The course will be woven with poetry, prayer, simple art projects, movement, meditation, chant, and active listening. To receive the fullest benefit, participants are asked to attend all classes. Class size limited to 12. Register by Sept. 9 with Rev. Fees.

Lunch Bunch With Rev. Sandra Fees

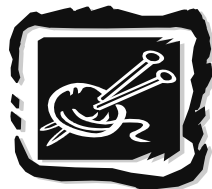
3rd Tuesday, Sept 15, Noon-1:30 pm – Gerber Room

The Lunch Bunch meets monthly over a brown bag lunch for a conversation on a focused topic. This Fall the focused topic will be the monthly sermon theme. September's theme is Recommitment.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Saturday, Sept 19, 10 am-Noon – Gerber Room; Facilitator: Rev. Fees

The Shawl Ministry knits and crochets shawls for members and friends of our spiritual community who are experiencing a significant life event – an illness, birth or death. Beginners welcome.



Coming In October: Film & Theology, 4 Thursdays Beginning Oct. 15th

UU Books

On Sunday, Sept. 14th at 9:15 am at Church, we will be discussing *Womenomics* by Claire Shipman and Katty Kay.

The October 11th meeting will focus on Rachel Naomi Remen's *Kitchen Table Wisdom*. She writes, "Everybody is a story . . . The stories we tell give meaning to our lives." Using a series of stories about persons dealing with real life issues and experiences, she shows, "Life is not broken and in need of fixing, but rather needs to be savored and celebrated." She listens carefully, and finds in others' stories the message of the ultimate spiritual teacher – life itself.

Members are encouraged to make suggestions for a book they have found of especial value, inviting us all to share in its reading.

For further information contact Nadine Smet-Weiss or Kelly Hartman.

Rededication Ceremony and Open House

On Sunday, October 18, we will celebrate the completion of our new space with a Building Rededication Ceremony and Open House. Join in the festivities!

Attention Plant Lovers!

The two Ficus trees and the Norfolk pine in the Gerber room desperately want to be adopted by a loving and caring family. They need fresh soil, larger pots, trimming, and regular watering with lots of room to grow! Please consider taking one of these majestic trees home today. Contact Cindy Mock, Rev. Fees, Joe Plageman, or Ruthie Epler if interested.



Murray Grove Homecoming: A Mid-Atlantic UU Celebration

Saturday, September 26, 2009, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Minimum suggested donation \$24

Rev. Meg Barnhouse, Unitarian Universalist Evangelist, Storyteller and Musician, new interim minister at Princeton, on “All Fire, No Brimstone”

Workshops:

Healing and Community Building with Interplay: Learn how to change your life and your world through movement: an active, creative way to unlock the wisdom of the body. With Pamela Michel Altoffer LCSW, Certified Interplay Leader, and Donna Renfro, Interplay Leader in Training

Sing Yourself Well: A participatory workshop exploring how singing positively affects body, mind, and spirit. With Marjorie K. Herman, D.M., Music Director at the UU Congregation of Princeton

An American Courtship – Universalists and Unitarians: A look at the history of the relationship between Universalists and Unitarians over the years, especially as they led to the merger that created Unitarian Universalism. With Rev. Dr. Peter Lee Scott

Transitioning Our Views on Gender with UU Principles: Explore how gender shapes who we are and how we interact. With Debbie Duncan and Allison Woolbert

Music by uu4ia

Fellowship and Fun under the big white tent!

Very special Pre-Homecoming Concert – “Songs, Stories and Illumination” – featuring Rev. Meg Barnhouse and Kiya Heartwood

Friday, September 25, 2009 - 7:00 pm

Minimum suggested donation \$12; package of concert, overnight and breakfast \$48

Post-Homecoming Service Party – Wind down from the excitement of Homecoming, in fellowship and service, together with others of like mind and heart. Sunday morning service in the historic chapel by Rev. Dr. Michael Tino
September 26-27, 2009

Minimum suggested donation \$48: package of overnight and breakfast

Save the dates:

Work Weekend – October 11-12, 2009

Uu New Years at Murray Grove, with Rev Craig Hirshberg – December 31, 2009-
January 1, 2010

For information and registration:

Murray Grove Retreat and Conference Center

PO Box 246, Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734

609-693-5558

murraygrove@murraygrove.org

www.murraygrove.org



Sept. 2009



Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 Food Pantry 10-12pm	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12* SJT Workshop 9-12pm
13	14 UU Books 9:15-10:15am	15 Lunch Bunch 12-1:30pm Soul Journey 7-9pm	16	17	18* Drum Circle 7-8pm	19 Prayer Shawl Ministry 10-12pm
20 Memorial for Isabelle Keller	21	22 Soul Journey 7-9	23	24	25	26 SJT Workshop 9-11am
27	28	29 Soul Journey 7-9pm	30			

*Sept. 12th UUPLAN meeting. Please see page 5 for more details.

* Sept. 18th Great Traditions Phoebe Group: Members of Phoebe Berks will visit First UU as part of their Great Traditions program. Rev. Fees will speak about Immortality.

See the last page for the Sunday service schedule.

Sunday Service Schedule

September 6 **Befriending Your Belly**

Joanna Groebel

We live the life that is ours instead of the life we think we should live, not by thinking our way there, but by gut feeling. An aspect of living from our center involves awareness of our literal center...our much judged and maligned belly. This morning we will compassionately honor the shining soul power of our bellies as a gateway to awakening the aliveness of our embodied selves. An experiential workshop will be offered after the service, see description in the body of the Univoice.



September 20 **Where Do We Place Our Trust?**

Rev. Sandra Fees

In what or whom do we place our trust and confidence? Do we have faith and trust in the universe, God, each other? Have we lost faith, and if so, what commitments are possible without it?

September 27 **The Invention of Air**

Rev. Sandra Fees

Part of the heritage of our faith is a spirit of radical thought, heresy, and scientific innovation. It came together in a distinctive way in Joseph Priestley. Considered "the most hated man in all of Britain," he was integral in the discovery of oxygen, the invention of ecosystem science, and founding the Unitarian Church in America.



September 13 **The Living Waters**

Rev. Sandra Fees

This morning, we join in a unique Unitarian Universalist ritual: the water communion. We will gather the waters of our journeys – troubled water, healing water, and living water. Individuals may bring a bit of water to share from the pool, tap, summer travels, or a special place. There will also be pitchers of water so everyone can participate.

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Berks County

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