



# Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists

## Newsletter

### December 2005



## 11 a.m. SUNDAY SERVICES

### DECEMBER 4 – *Treasures of Nag Hamadi* Dr. Shirley Ranck

Gnostic Christians of the fourth century were pronounced heretics.  
Were they early kindred spirits of Unitarian Universalists?



### DECEMBER 11 - *The Rainbow Connection* Dr. Shirley Ranck

Remember the song Kermit the Frog used to sing? What can rainbows mean to us?  
New member recognition and Tabernacle Band performance.

### DECEMBER 18 - *Sharing the Light* Dr. Shirley Ranck

A celebration of the Winter Solstice.

### 4 PM SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24 - *Christmas Eve Candlelight Service* Dr. Shirley Ranck

Stories and carols for all ages.

### DECEMBER 25 - *Celebration of Christmas and Hanukkah* Dr. Shirley Ranck

More stories and songs for all ages.



### **REVEREND MEG BARNHOUSE IN CONCERT!**

On December 10 at 8 p.m., the UU Fellowship of Raleigh, N.C. presents Rev. Meg Barnhouse in a concert to benefit the Urban Ministries of Wake County. Meg Barnhouse is an ordained UU minister, an inspired and inspiring songwriter, singer, storyteller and author. She is a showstopper everywhere she appears. She will make you laugh, cry and think about life in new ways. Cost: \$10. Advance tickets are available on-line at <http://www.uufr.org/> at the "social action" link or contact Marian Sanborn at 800-549-0751.

### **FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND SPEECH**

If you are interested in Religious Freedom and Freedom of Speech, you are invited to read the Call for Free and Unfettered Pulpits at <http://www.ants.edu/about/news/2005/111005pasadena.htm> and if you are so inclined to sign the Take Action statement at <https://andover1.securesites.com/act.htm>

### **Save the Date!**

### **WORSHIP WORKSHOP**

**Sunday, January 8 at 12:30**

A light lunch will be served and child care will be available.

Leader: Rev. Shirley Ranck

## **CHALICE GAZING: NOTES FROM THE DRE**

If you go to the UUA website ([www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)) and look for information about religious education, you'll find that it's called faith development; in fact, it's called Lifespan Faith Development. Re-naming religious education, changing the name to Lifespan Faith Development, calls us to recognize two crucial facts about it: it's *not* school, and it's *not* for kids only. RE, the two-letter designation that is so deeply rooted in our vocabulary, traditionally carries some significant coded messages. Whether we're aware of it or not, RE usually means children, separate from the rest of the community except for a token 10 minutes on Sunday mornings, having information stuffed into their heads by adults.

I invite you to imagine...suppose faith development is already going on in children 5, 6, 9, 10 years old. Suppose faith development began long before school did, began with an infant getting her needs met by an adult (or not getting her needs met). Imagine that faith development is ongoing, lifelong, and just as much a valuable process for a 55 year old as it is for a 10 year old. Imagine sharing instead of "teaching", facilitating instead of "educating". Suppose Sunday mornings with younger UUs meant walking the path with people who're on a different place in their journeys from you. What could happen, what could you learn? We can teach people reading and math and science, but we can not manage another person's faith development, nor do we need to. We can support, encourage, enjoy, share, and love, and our own faith development is richer and stronger if we do those things. Is it possible that volunteering with children on Sunday morning can enrich your own understanding of your own faith? Suppose serving has nothing to do with "doing it right", and everything to do with showing up with a loving spirit?

Imagine transforming "religious education" into faith development.

How could such a transformation enrich your own spiritual life?

- Blessings, Sara



## **MORE ON THE FEBRUARY CONGREGATIONAL RETREAT**

As announced last month, the Congregational Planning Committee and the WUU Board are preparing for a Congregational Retreat, Saturday, February 25, 10-4, with lunch and child care provided.

**Why a Retreat?** The Congregational Planning Committee needs your thoughts about what really matters to you and your relationship to this religious community. This Retreat will provide a relaxed setting for an exchange of ideas among members, friends, staff and leadership - an opportunity for all to speak and to be heard, in both small groups and large.

The CPC is now working to define several key aspects of WUU life that we believe would lend themselves to long range planning. Thus far, our list includes:

- Professional Ministry
- Lifespan Faith Development (better known as "R. E.")
- Facilities
- Social Responsibilities

Two other facets of congregational life that are intertwined with all that we do - Finances and Membership - also must be talked about whenever planning is discussed.

### **How can we plan without a settled minister?**

Actually, the development of this long range planning process will be an attribute attractive to ministerial candidates. We feel we have chosen important areas in which we can formulate goals and action plans reflecting the forward-thinking environment in which our settled minister can readily participate.

### **How can I learn more before the Retreat?**

In the January and February Newsletters and in other WUU media, watch for more information and leading questions in each area. A schedule of the day and registration details will be included. Packets of background material will be available two weeks before the Retreat

**May I offer input before the Retreat? Absolutely!** Our Congregational Planning Committee is still in the formative stages, and would welcome your thoughts about the topics listed here, or any other aspect of WUU life that you would like to propose as grist for our planning mill. You can find us all at [planning@wuu.org](mailto:planning@wuu.org).

**Anything else I can do? Put February 25 on your calendar now!** Without your voice, our ability to realistically plan for the entire congregation's future is diminished.

- Roger Baldwin, Chair, Congregational Planning Committee



### **SHIRLEY'S CAULDRON**

*Each night a child is born is a holy night.*

-Sophia Lyon Fahs

As UUs we do not celebrate the birth of a divine savior. We rejoice in new life whenever it appears. What then do we celebrate at Christmas? We may wish to honor the birth of Jesus of Nazareth

because we respect his teachings. Or we may, with Fahs, proclaim the holiness of every birth. But I wonder if there isn't something more to this special season. In a very real sense, our life on this planet depends upon the light of the sun. The variety of climates in which human beings thrive is made possible by changes in the amount of sunlight that reaches us through the year. This solstice season is about that cycle of light, and the life made possible by the return each year of the sunlight.

We celebrate the longest night of the year, the turning point, the time when reliably every year the days begin to grow longer. Human beings in many cultures have seen this turning point, this return of the light, as a symbol of hope and a promise of new life. In the oldest myths the Sun Child is born, a harbinger of the new life of spring.

How awesome and how important to remind ourselves of the delicate balance of the earth and sun, which gives us life! May we pause and take note of the light, and may the season bring hope and joy to us all!

*Blessed be!  
Shirley*

### **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS**

The Membership Committee has been meeting every month and the members have been busy collecting information for the new member packet. It is now complete and available for all new members who sign the membership book. There is also a new WUU Introductory folder that is being given to all visitors on Sunday morning. A member of the committee will be greeting and talking to new visitors before and after the service in the narthex.

The 3 sessions on Introduction to Unitarian Universalism at Williamsburg UU have been completed. The first leader was Dr. Shirley Ranck who spoke about the religion of Unitarian Universalism. The second session was led by Sara Mackey and Jan Brown on Religious Education at WUU. Bunkie Righter also talked about Welcoming Congregations. The final session was on the history of WUU led by Roger Baldwin. Ruth Hopkinson gave a report and handed out information on volunteerism. David Banks talked about the importance of financial support to WUU. The next Introductions to Unitarian Universalism at WUU will be held in the spring. New Member Recognition will be December 11 during the service.

- Membership Committee

### **MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE**

For the Ministerial Search Committee the months of November and December are devoted to screening worthy applicants and participating in conference phone calls with a number of them to select the final pre-candidates. This is an exhilarating process as we read detailed applications from men and women ministers around the country who have read our Congregational Record online and now have expressed interest in Williamsburg. We will begin exchanging packets with those who seem to fulfill our congregation's priorities as expressed in surveys, cottage meetings, emails and personal conversation. Conference phone calls take us from the paper qualifications to the personal level where we can ask the ministers to expand on a number of questions we have for them and, of course, to answer any they may have for us. We plan to have eight to ten conference calls with follow-ups possible. Each committee member studies these applicants thoroughly and seriously, recognizing the trust you have placed in us. The neutral pulpit weekends will begin in January.

An exciting new development in updating the profile book for this year's search is that much of it is now online at our WUU website. Patsy Wells, our new webmaster, has graciously worked with us to make much of the information available to anyone, so take some time to browse our site to view not only the ministerial search committee activities but loads of other links that originated in the profile book and have now expanded onto the website. We really appreciate Patsy working with us summer and fall to get this online. A hard copy of the updated profile book remains in the library.

So from the members of the Ministerial Search Committee - Diane Abdo, David Doersch, Vicki Hall, Gayle Henion, Debra Hill, Jim Kent and Jane Reilly - we send holiday blessings and thank you again for your support.

### **VISITORS WELCOME ON THE WUU WEBSITE**

Thanks to Patsy Wells, the Membership committee now has two of its own pages on the WUU web site. Surveys indicate most people find a new UU congregation via the Internet, so this is an important step. If someone asks you about visiting WUU, you can refer them to these pages. Click on "[Welcome Visitors](http://www.wuu.org/welcome.html)" to go to <http://www.wuu.org/welcome.html>. This page tells visitors about WUU, what it is like to visit, what we do on a Sunday, about the RE program (with a link to the RE page), how to get a newsletter, links to a map, the UUA page ("What do UUs believe?"), etc. For those interested in membership, there is a link to the "Joining WUU.pdf: document. Click on "Membership" to see more details about WUU membership, links to the WUU Mission Statement, Covenant, and Seven Principles, and another link to the "Joining WUU.pdf" document.

### **UU TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES**

**Hear the roar! Feel the mist! See the mighty Falls! July 16-29, 2006**

Come experience the wonder of Niagara Falls including some great educational opportunities while being taken care of like royalty. The UU Church of Niagara is conducting a four day UU Niagara Experience which is a lifetime opportunity to encounter the Falls up close from every prospective, even safely riding beneath a tethered balloon. Spend four days with us exploring the rich historical and natural wonders around the falls. For information visit our web site: <http://www.uunex.net> Email : [info@uunex.net](mailto:info@uunex.net) Telephone : (716) 791-4453

### **UU're Home**

Do you dream of inexpensive vacation travel to interesting destinations where you can stay in the homes of friendly people who share your ideals & are happy to provide directions and advice for their area? The UU bed and breakfast directory *UU're Home* (formerly *Homecomings*) can fulfill your dream. For 27 years, we've provided a network of hosts in the US (and a few abroad) who enjoy meeting new friends and who are happy to open their home to like-minded people. Check the website [www.UUreHome.com](http://www.UUreHome.com), where entries are updated whenever changes are made or new hosts are added and you can charge a membership to your credit card. The 2006 edition of the annual paper directory will be available in April and can be ordered by send a check for \$18 (or \$23, along with your e-mail address, for both the directory and a year's access to the website) to UU're Home, 43 Vermont Court, Asheville, NC 28806. You can also become a host and be listed in the directory. Contact us at 828-281-3253 or at [info@uurehome.com](mailto:info@uurehome.com), and we will gladly send you information about listing your accommodations.



### **THANKS FROM DIANNA MACPHERSON**

Thank you all so much for passing on the news of my mother's death. We've had tons of calls and letters. It has been just wonderful having so many people share their memories of my mother with my father, brothers, and me. We had the memorial service yesterday, and it was so good to include many of the remembrances that people had shared with us. One horrible affect of Alzheimer's/dementia is that you begin to forget what the person was like before the disease stole them away from you. These cards and letters have brought my mother back to me and my family. Many people were interested in contributing to the memorial fund that we have started in my mother's memory. Donations to the Dorothy MacPherson Memorial Fund are being put towards the purchase of an elevator for The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Richmond (1000 Blanton Ave. Richmond, VA 23221) . Dottie put her heart and soul into helping others in many ways throughout her life. Her work with Housing Opportunities Made Equal, geriatric nursing, various environmental groups, and a number of Civil Rights and Women's Rights causes are but a few ways that she made a lasting impression on the world while alive. Dottie would truly appreciate being able to help others after her death as well. Please clearly mark your donation so that our church treasurer can accurately record your contribution. Thank you for your support,

- *The Family and Friends of Dorothy MacPherson*  
*Dianna MacPherson* SUUSI Youth Director



### **HELP WANTED!**

Take advantage of this exciting opportunity to help WUUs stay in touch. As NEWSLETTER EDITOR you get to know what's going on first.

If you can cut and paste information from emails into a word processing program (I use word) you can do this job. It takes about 4-6 hours a month to compile; then you just email it to Mary Ellen in the office. It's easy and fun. Training available. Only requirement - access to a computer and willingness to work an evening or so around the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Contact me at [newsletter@wuu.org](mailto:newsletter@wuu.org) or call the church office. Assignment begins in January, 2006. Mary/Meé

*I'd love to continue to do this, but other commitments are consuming my time and energy. I'll miss hearing from all of you every month.*

**WAL-MART: The High Cost of Low Price** takes you behind the glitz and into the real lives of workers and their families, business owners and their communities, in an extraordinary journey that will challenge the way you think, feel... and shop. **Saturday, December 3, at 7 pm at WUU.** Bring a dessert to share. For more information about the movie, see: [www.WalMartMovie.com](http://www.WalMartMovie.com)

## WHAT DOES IT COST TO SEARCH FOR A NEW SETTLED MINISTER?

Actual costs may vary widely depending on where candidates travel from, etc. To help congregations estimate costs, the UUA Settlement Handbook offers guidelines:

### A partial answer from the Settlement Handbook:

While the search committee is generally charged by the congregation with carrying out a search and recommending a candidate, it is up to the board to make adequate provisions for the committee to do its work. The board's responsibilities include: arranging for the empanelling of the search committee, budgeting for the committee's work and the expenses of the transition, and related financial matters.

The search committee needs a budget to work effectively. The congregation will not want to limit the selection of ministers or to assess them superficially to save a little money. The recommended budget for a search committee is \$8,000 or 16 percent of the projected salary (plus housing); whichever is greater (*for us that is \$10,400*). If the next minister stays with the congregation for seven years, this amounts to just over 2 percent of its direct investment that period.

The search committee's budget should cover the following:

- A facilitator and site for the search committee retreat
- Printing and materials for the information packet
- Committee members' expenses, including telephone, mileage to pre-candidating sites, meals, and lodging as required
- Postage and stationery for correspondence and packet mailing
- Pre-candidates' expenses, including travel, meals, and lodging (typically there are three or four pre-candidates). Increasingly, search committees invite the candidate's spouse or partner for the pre-candidating weekend
- Candidate's expenses, including travel, meals, and lodging during candidating week
- One visit for the candidate's immediate family, either for candidating week or at some other time

### A partial answer from the Ministerial Search Committee:

We spent just under \$5000 last year.

Retreat (facilitator) \$200, Survey \$300, Packet expenses: Books and postage \$1,300 and other costs \$3,150\*

*\*Includes phone call interviews and travel costs, lodging, and meals for precandidating weekends. It cost about \$1000 for each weekend. The rest of the money was earmarked for candidating week.*

Some of the expenses last year will not recur. We did not have a retreat or survey. The profile book is being updated but remaining mostly the same. We have put a lot of information on the website and are hoping that the people we phone interview will be comfortable using the website rather than asking to see a book.

### WHY ARE WE ASKING WUU MEMBERS AND FRIENDS TO CONTRIBUTE AT THIS TIME?

It was initially planned (in 2004) that the search expenses be covered by a supplemental canvass such as this one, rather than being in the operating budget. This was not done last year: expenses were covered from reserves. We are now in the second year of the search and expenses continue. It was decided to continue--as planned--with the supplemental canvass to raise the estimated \$10,000 for the Ministerial Search.

### WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T RAISE \$10,000 IN THIS CAMPAIGN?

Frankly, we dig a little deeper into the reserves. We don't want to do this--the reserves are there to cover unplanned expenses such as a new roof, a new furnace, etc. But of course we will do so. The MSC will have the funds needed to do their job--to find a new settled minister this year!

### WHICH IS WHY WE ARE ASKING YOU TO SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN OF 100 AND GIVE WUU AN ADDITIONAL \$100.00 ABOVE YOUR PLEDGE FOR THE YEAR.

If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to ask me or another member of the Finance Committee.

- Dave Banks, Finance Chair

## Significant Events Calendar December '05

**Saturday, Dec 3**

**Documentary Film: Wal-Mart: *The High Cost of Low Prices***

**Friday, Dec 9**

**Family Yule Sing**

**Sunday, Dec 11**

**New Member Recognition and Tabernacle Band Performance**

**Thursday, Dec 15**

**Board Meeting @ 7:15 pm**



## Please join us for folk roots duo Wishing Chair

"Wishing Chair has a passion about the truth, about being emotionally available to tell it, and that for me, is the essence of folk music."

in concert at Sacred Grounds  
Sunday, December 4, 3 pm  
6927 Richmond Road, Williamsburg 220-8494

Free and open to the public  
[www.wishingchair.com](http://www.wishingchair.com)



### FROM THE TOP

A couple of things have happened since my last column that especially caught my attention and I wanted to compliment those involved in them. The first one was the Auction which happened on November 5<sup>th</sup> and what an auction it was! The two chairpersons responsible were Wendy Owens and Ruth Hopkinson with much help from Bunkie Righter and others, and they are due the thanks of the whole congregation! They raised in excess of \$10,000 with their efforts and at a time when it is very badly needed. Those who set up and broke down the tables and reset the sanctuary are too numerous to mention but their work was equally valuable over all. The cooperative mood of the gathered crowd was evident in the spirited bidding for all manner of things from small to large and from vacations in Maine to B&B's in Charleston, South Carolina. Congratulations to all involved on a job well done!

The second thing was the St. Cecilia concert put on by our excellent choir, directed by our own Jamie Bartlett. Of course she had the able assistance of performers both from our own choir and the student choirs at the College of William and Mary. The orchestra, made up of musicians from all walks of life, was also ably directed by Jamie. The church was filled with a standing-room-only audience of appreciative listeners who gave the group a well deserved standing ovation at the end. We were all so filled with the beautiful music that was performed that we could only clap until our hands hurt in appreciation. Our sincere thanks go to all who provided us with a memorable concert.

These are just two of many enjoyable and profitable experiences that come from a very talented congregation of members who devote their time and efforts to the furtherance of our mission. May our tribe increase!

**Fred L. Adair**  
**President, WUU**

## **WILLIAMSBURG UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS**

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