

WILLIAMSBURG UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS

A WELCOMING, WORSHIPPING, WITNESSING CONGREGATION

WUUU NEWS

DECEMBER 2007

December 2—Rev. Preston Moore—“Our Journey: from the Edge to the Center of the Faith”. Is there an edge to our Unitarian Universalist faith? If not, should there be? From such a vantage point, looking inward, what can we see at the center?

December 9—Rev. Preston Moore—“Is Nothing Sacred?” Yes, it is. On our journey toward wholeness, there is no thing more important than nothing – that space in which creativity and self-discovery incubate. What surprises might be revealed, spiritually speaking, if we went there more often?

December 16—Rev. Preston Moore—“A Symphony Called Grace” When rewards come to us “unearned,” what meaning do we make of them? If grace defies our usual causative explanations for what happens to us, how can we trust it? There is great spiritual value waiting for us underneath this five-letter religious word.

December 23, 2007, Rev. Jennifer Ryu—“Be Still: A Winter Solstice Celebration” Come, step away from your holiday busyness. Come, listen carefully to the Earth as she invites us to be still and sit

comfortably in winter's darkness. There, you will find light and hope and a real reason to celebrate this season!

December 24—Rev. Preston Moore—“The Lost Father” – In most accounts of the birth of Jesus, Joseph is very much a background figure. But this is no ordinary Joe. Come hear the Christmas story from a different perspective – one that reveals the significance of Joseph in giving shape to the radical ministry of Jesus.

December 24 (4 pm)—Christmas Eve Service

December 25 (10 am)—Christmas Breakfast—Revs. Preston Moore & Jennifer Ryu, Sanctuary For those who find themselves alone on Christmas morning, we invite you to share a breakfast meal with the ministers. Please RSVP to minister@wuu.org.

December 30—The Worship Associates will lead an interactive family service with opportunities to bid farewell to 2007 and welcome the coming year.

CROWDED @ WUU

Last spring, the ministers gathered a Task Force representing leaders from each area of church life to explore ways to alleviate overcrowding at WUU.

They identified a three-pronged approach: 1) what are some immediate actions we can take to relieve crowding in the Sanctuary, the Lobby/Narthex, the parking lot and LFD (lifespan faith development) space; 2) analyze the option of adding a second worship service; 3) begin to plan a capital expansion campaign.

The Task Force wanted to bring the congregation into the process, so they wrote articles in the Newsletter and talked with people informally. Then they held a Café Conversation on June 3rd to educate the congregation and receive their feedback. They also conducted a survey asking how people felt about adding a second service. The survey showed that 80% of the congregation is willing to move to two worship services, but about half of those wanted to try other options first. 19% worried about losing a sense of community.

Propelled by the survey results, the Task Force worked throughout the summer to implement “other options first.” They added more chairs to the Sanctuary. They changed the way the lobby was arranged to allow more room at coffee hour. They changed the way the ushers seated people, leaving fewer single seats empty. And the parking lot was improved to add more spaces and safer ingress/egress.

With regard to the concern about “losing a sense of community,” this is a significant concern. In various ways, WUU has been creating more opportunities for people to create community. Covenant Groups (there are currently six active groups) started this

year, we scheduled several “Purely Social” community events, and we have a full calendar of Adult LFD classes. Even with just one service, as congregations grow, it is necessary to cultivate a variety of ways to cultivate community.

We feel that we have reached the limits of these interim strategies.

Now, three months into the new church year (Sept, Oct, Nov), attendance is up 15% over this same time last year. If this trend continues, the winter and early spring months will bring even more newcomers.

We believe it is now time to add a second service to Sunday morning. The most obvious reason for adding a service is to relieve overcrowding for the people who are already attending. It will also benefit those who have not found us yet.

Our mission is to serve our members and friends, and it is also to serve people who have yet to find us. We believe that there are people in the Williamsburg area who would be overjoyed at discovering WUU. We must make sure there is room for the next person who passes through our doors.

Alice Mann, a respected church growth consultant states, “When your main worship service reaches 80 percent of comfortable capacity, you may be pretty certain that you are discouraging frequent attendance by current members and presenting a ‘no vacancy’ sign to newcomers.” (from her book, *Raising the Roof*).

If we say that the “comfortable capacity” of our sanctuary is 250 people, then 80% is 200. In the current year, average total attendance has been 225, and we anticipate that number will continue to increase. Last year, the highest attendance was in the winter and early spring months.

Overcrowding is not always apparent to everyone in the congregation. For example, individuals who sit in front or who come early may never experience frustration at not being able to find a place to sit together as a family. And the overcrowding in Fahs House (where the K-5 children are) is not experienced by the majority of the congregation.

The feeling of being overcrowded is also subjective. Some people feel comfortable in less space, relishing the close companionship of others, whereas others need more space to feel comfortable exploring their religious views and values.

The Task Force sees the move to two services as a temporary measure until a facility is built that is large enough to hold the entire community. The WUU Stewardship Cluster also agrees that this should be a short-term solution while we embark on a facilities expansion campaign.

The Ministers and Task Force are working out the details of adding another service to Sunday mornings. We will continue to communicate our progress. In the meantime, please continue to make visitors feel at home by helping them to find a seat, engaging them in conversation and getting to know new members.

*Blessings,
Rev. Jennifer Ryu*

Chalice Gazing: Notes from the DFD

One of the comments we hear often as we seek volunteers for children, youth, and teen programming is, “I don’t know what to teach.” We have curricula to guide adult leaders, so you don’t have to figure out by yourself what to teach. Beyond that, though, we don’t focus on teaching information in

UU faith development. We teach children and young people how to live in the world according to the principles of Unitarian Universalism, even though they may be too young to articulate that. We provide experiences for them that help them learn what to do when somebody accidentally messes up their work, or when somebody needs to use the glue that they’re using, or when another kid feels bad.

Our denomination gives rise to a paradox: adults engaged in a search for truth and meaning can thrive on the freedom and companionship that they find in the company of other seekers, and on our identity as a non-credal religion. Still, parents and other adults so often ask, “What are we supposed to teach our children to believe?” We don’t teach adults what to believe; it follows that we don’t teach children what to believe.

What do you want your children to believe? And how do you want to be in relationship with them when they get to a point where they don’t believe what you believe any more? Our commitment to a free and responsible search for truth and meaning, encouragement of spiritual growth, and justice, equity and compassion in human relations opens the way for our children to develop beliefs that may not be in harmony with our own, and yet we are still called by our principles to encourage them. As we imagine what we want Williamsburg UU give to children, one of the most important questions we can ask is, “What do I believe?” May we continue to support each other as we seek the deepest answers to that question.

Blessings, Sara

Guest at Your Table

Every year, the Unitarian
Universalist Service
Committee
(www.uusc.org)

encourages congregations to raise money to assist its programs around the world. We can help by taking a UUSC Guests at Your Table box home and dropping money into it at every meal for the next month. The boxes are available on the Social Justice table in the church lobby. Please bring those full boxes back to church on Sunday, December 23rd. If you would like to write a check, please make it out to WUU, with UUSC or Guests at Your Table on the memo line.



Board Seeks Congregational Guidance

—The December Café Conversation will focus on the policy governance steps taken by the Board to date and the process ahead. Board members will be on hand to seek your input on what the Congregation's mission, vision, ends, and policies should look like. Please plan to stay after the December 9th service from 12:30 pm until 1:30 pm to speak your mind and give the Board the benefit of your thoughts. Peter Mellette, Secretary

December Share the Plate

This first Sunday of the month, December 2nd, the collection will be given in its entirety to the Williamsburg AIDS Network (WAN). WAN works to improve the quality of life for all people within Williamsburg and the counties of James City, Charles City, New Kent, and upper York through

education about HIV/AIDS and service and support for persons living with AIDS. WAN is dedicated to prevention of HIV infection by offering HIV awareness educational programs and providing moral, psychological and educational support for people who have contracted Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Share the Plate Nominations for 2008

If you know a local organization that could use our financial assistance and that you feel reflects or connects with our UU values, please fill out a nomination form at http://wuu.org/wordpress/?page_id=266 and email it to socialjustice@wuu.org or drop it in the Social Justice folder in the rack across from the nametags, by December 9, 2007.

At its December meeting, the Social Justice Steering Committee will select recipients for January to March. We will save unselected nominations of organizations for future consideration.

If you have any questions about the Share the Plate program, please contact us at socialjustice@wuu.org

UUSC Holiday Cards

Holiday cards will be available on Sunday mornings in the narthex. They are priced at \$12 per box. Please contact Pauline at pauline1snitwongse@verizon.net or 259-9601 to place orders or to ask questions.



Energy Saving Suggestion: Keep several reusable bags in your car(s) to use when shopping. Set an example for other shoppers and spread the word!

WUU Environmental Stewardship Bag Challenge

You left your new WUU bags in the car? We hear that some forgetful (*but conscientious*) WUUs struggled out of stores, bag less, with arms loaded, while others tossed loose purchases into shopping carts to get to cars—where their blue bags were waiting! Thanks for accepting the ESG bag challenge and congratulations on resisting the temptation of “paper or plastic.” You are helping to reduce global warming!

WUU Environmental Stewardship offers film* on Friday, December 7, NOVA's “Saved by the Sun” (56 min.):

Supper at 6:30 pm, followed by the film. Childcare provided. *“Can solar power help save the Earth from the ravages of global warming? In the face of steeply rising oil prices and political turmoil in the Middle East...a provocative mix of scientists, economists, and ordinary citizens are pushing the envelope of solar power's untapped potential.”*

*Licensing restrictions limit – 60 persons. Get advance tickets at the ESG Display on Sunday. (\$3.00 per person supper donation appreciated, payable the night of the event.)

Donna Stanford - Coordinator

FISH—Please bring NEW socks and underwear (infant to adult, men and women) to the FISH barrels and Dolores Moyer will see that your gift is placed under the Christmas tree this year. Any questions? Call Dolores at 564-0025. Thank you.

Tabernacle Band Opportunity Sunday, December 2

December is here and it's time for the seasonal appearance of the Tabernacle Band. Tabernacle Band is a "no-fault" orchestra for all ages and instruments that has become a semi-annual tradition at WUU. So whether you are a musician who plays regularly or someone whose instrument hasn't seen the light of day for a while, a seasoned veteran or new to your instrument, we encourage you to come out and join the fun. For more information, contact Vicki Hall.



Whodunit?

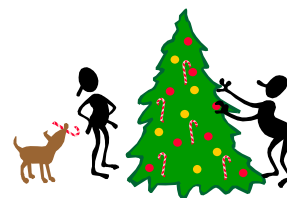
Have you seen the new railings behind Parker House? Tom Payne, Fred Bergmann and Jim Hall saw the need and put them up. Now no one can miss the presence of the stairs to the basement and fall in. Did you notice the wider driveway between the two parking lots? Who replaces the tips of sanctuary chairs (there really is someone who does that—Fred Adair.) Did you know that Beth Kennedy faithfully puts out the trash cans every week and comes back the next day to put them away?



Cool Yule Sing—a purely social evening

Saturday, December 15, 6:30–8:30 pm

All WUU members and guests are invited to our next intergenerational evening of food, song, and community in the WUU Sanctuary.

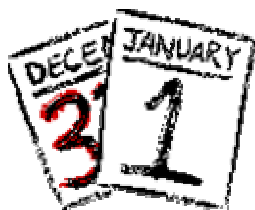


- Potluck supper—finger food, cold drinks, and holiday desserts
- Music from our very own WUU recorder ensemble
- Singing of all types of holiday music
- Decorating the church tree
- Craft projects for all to make
- Special surprise guest!!

Please RSVP to mbrecker@cox.net with number of people attending (adults/children) and what you are planning to bring for the potluck. Marcia is also looking for a volunteer to coordinate this event.

First Night FUNdraiser

Yes, it's that time again, folks. Come out to help raise money and community awareness of our church. Our First Night food concession will sell barbeque sandwiches, vegetarian chili, bottled drinks, hot coffee, and WUU contributed baked goods to raise money, and our presence at a large community event like First Night will put our name out there and put some faces with the name. We need set-up and clean-up crews, servers and cashiers the night of the event in two hour shifts from 5-11. If we get enough volunteers, everyone can be where they want to be by the stroke of midnight! Baked goods can be done in advance and delivered to church Sunday, December 30th. To sign up or to receive more information, please contact Cynn timer at celticmom@cox.net, or call 741-2415.



Our newest members



Glenn and Cindy Johnson



Chris Lakis and Laurie Andrews

How Many UUs Does It Take to Throw a Great Auction?

To start with, it takes 83 generous donors whose items and services helped up raise more than \$16,000 this year! Add to it the approximately 50 volunteers who picked up tables, decorated, modeled hats, served food, acted, played music, typed, took money, sold tickets of all kinds, auctioneered and cleaned up after spending the night in a wonderful 1940's nightclub. Speaking of the wonderful nightclub, 152 WUU's and friends celebrated the opening (and closing) of TOOTS'. Spirits were high and costumes were stunning as

this standing-room only crowd spent generously on both silent and live auction items. Susan “Rosie the Riveter” Fournier won the costume contest but the competition was fierce! Feet were tapping as the DOG Street Rhythm Kings serenaded and many of our members who lived during the 1940’s the transformation of our sanctuary into Toots’ Nightclub was amazing.

Don’t you want to be part of the planning next year? It’s more fun than you can shake a stick at and the only way we can plan an even better auction in 2008 is with YOUR help. There are jobs for all talents and time commitments. Please call Ruth Hopkinson if you’re interested in getting in on the ground floor for next year – you can even help choose the theme!

Auction 2008—November 1st—Mark your calendars now!

Purely Social Events Needs You!!

We are looking for a few good UUs to serve as “event coordinators” for upcoming Purely Social Events!

It’s a great way for new members to meet the congregation in a fun environment!

It’s an excellent way to fulfill your community service to our great UU congregation on a one-time basis.

It’s the perfect opportunity for those whose schedules or other commitments make it difficult to commit to regular committee work on an ongoing basis.

These upcoming events need a coordinator to plan and be available at the event to make sure things run smoothly:

- December 15 – Cool Yule Sing 6:30 PM

Sing Holiday Favorites with our fabulous Joelle on keyboard. The UU Recorder Consort will perform as we decorate the church with holiday sparkle.

- February 8 – Game Night 6:30 PM
- March 23 – Easter Sunday (Time TBD)

NOTE: Marcia Brecker will help to coordinate all elements to make sure it’s a success.

Please contact mbrecker@cox.net or call 565-9560. Thank you.

Calling All Artists—WUU Art Days

Would you welcome an open creative space once a week to share your artistic passion? Join other kindred spirits in painting, creating, designing and writing for two hours weekly in our own WUU environment. Beginning **January 7, 2008**, join Jennifer Ryu and Gayle Henion on **Monday mornings, 9:30 to 11:30, Fahs House** for what could be called artistic play days.



Bring your own art supplies and clean up materials. Create in the company of other WUU artists. We welcome artists of all levels to share the friendship of other creative individuals while pursuing your own particular interest. Jennifer and Gayle look forward to others joining them in creative artistic expression.

Tally to Date for Farm Fresh ABC Program \$8963.59

Thanks to all of the Farm Fresh shoppers who have been saving their ABC receipts and placing them in our bag in the Narthex. To date you’ve raised nearly \$9,000 for WUU Lifetime Faith Development programs just

by saving and turning in those little Farm Fresh ABC receipts! If you have any friends, neighbors or family who also shop at Farm Fresh and don't have another organization to save for, we'd love to have their help too! In January, all points are doubled so if you spend \$15, we get \$30 in credit! Again, thanks to all of our Farm Fresh shoppers—keep up the good work!

Annual Stewardship Campaign Dinner! It's not too early to put the date of Saturday, **February 9**, on your calendar and plan to attend the Annual Stewardship Campaign Dinner. Details will follow, but it's worth noting the name change. This event was formerly called the Canvass Dinner or other names through the years. This year we're introducing this new name which you'll be hearing more frequently in the coming months.

Notes from the Stewardship Cluster

At a November Café Conversation, discussion centered on the Stewardship Cluster, a new addition this year to the WUU organizational lineup. Chair Roger Baldwin explained the reason for this new cluster—more focus on enhancing the revenues side of our financial ledger, moving beyond fundraising, establishing a linkage between generosity and spirituality. The traditional fundraising activities are still important pieces: auction, yard sale, First Night, bed and breakfast hosting, coffee sales and memorial giving. And, needless to say, our largest source of financial support, the annual stewardship campaign (note the new name!), will be an integral part of the cluster.

We had a lively discussion about the spiritual foundation for financial support of

the church. Preston Moore described our aspiration of moving away from a model of altruism and conventional charitable giving and toward a model in which spiritual growth is the animating force for stewardship. The group attending this café conversation responded positively to the idea underlying this shift.

A newly-formed Stewardship Cabinet will assist in developing strategies and guidance to build a spirit of generosity that will influence things people do for their faith community.

Also at this gathering, Lee Hougen, chair of the Endowment Committee, gave an overview of how that fund fit with other major financial activities such as annual drives and capital campaigns. In fact, the endowment fund, which has long been an independent entity, will become part of the Stewardship Cluster if actions being considered by the WUU Board are approved by the congregation early next year. This would result in close coordination of all related stewardship education and campaign efforts while providing oversight through Board policy governance.

\$Money Matter\$

Much of the WUU Treasurer's time is spent managing cash flow. Most expenses (salaries, utilities, mortgage) are monthly, while pledge income is often irregular: payments in late December, and at the end of the WUU year. This creates major problems in cash flow from time to time, and requires temporary use of cash reserves.

Members make the job much easier when they use monthly electronic funds transfer (VANCO). Regular monthly payments are recommended for those using checks or credit cards.

December 2007 Program And Events Calendar

<p>1 Saturday All day Women's Retreat-Chanco</p> <p>2 Sunday 11:00 am Worship Service-S New Member Sunday Share the Plate collection 11:00 am LFD all ages-FH, PH</p> <p>3 Monday 7:00 pm Dream Group-PH 7:00 pm Global warming-S</p> <p>4 Tuesday 6:30 pm Silent Meditation-S 7:30 pm Jazz Band Practice-S</p> <p>5 Wednesday 7:30 pm Choir practice-S</p> <p>6 Thursday 7:30 Worship associates-S</p> <p>7 Friday</p> <p>8 Saturday</p> <p>9 Sunday 11:00 am Worship Service-S 11:00 am LFD all ages-FH, PH 12:30 pm Café conversation-S</p> <p>10 Monday</p> <p>11 Tuesday 6:30 pm Silent Meditation-S 7:30 pm Jazz Band Practice-S</p> <p>12 Wednesday 7:00 pm Social Justice steering-A 7:30 pm Choir practice-S</p> <p>13 Thursday 12:30-2 pm Separate Checks-S 7:15 pm Board meeting-A</p> <p>14 Friday 4:00 pm Finance-PH</p> <p>15 Saturday 6:30 pm Yule Sing</p> <p>16 Sunday 11:00 am Worship Service-S 11:00 am LFD all ages-FH, PH</p> <p>17 Monday 7:00 pm Global Warming-A</p> <p>18 Tuesday 6:30 pm Silent Meditation-S 7:30 pm Jazz Band Practice-S</p>	<p>19 Wednesday 7:30 pm Choir Practice-S</p> <p>20 Thursday 7:15 pm Board meeting</p> <p>21 Friday 12:00 noon newsletter deadline</p> <p>22 Saturday</p> <p>23 Sunday 11:00 am Worship Service-S 11:00 am LFD all ages-FH, PH</p> <p>24 Monday Christmas Eve 4:00 pm Christmas Eve service-S</p> <p>25 Tuesday Christmas 10:00 am Christmas morning breakfast</p> <p>26 Wednesday No choir practice</p> <p>27 Thursday</p> <p>28 Friday</p> <p>29 Saturday</p> <p>30 Sunday</p> <p>31 Monday New Year's Eve 5:00 pm onward First Night Fundraiser-William and Mary University Center</p> <p>Key: S –Sanctuary L – Library A –Activity/Multipurpose Room PH–Parker House FH–Fahs House</p> <p>Website: www.wuu.org Blog: www.wuu.org/wordpress/</p> <p>Covenant group meetings (no drop-ins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Men's group, 1st and 3rd Mondays 7 pm ▪ Men's group, 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 7 pm ▪ Mixed group, 2nd and 4th Sundays, 7 pm ▪ Mixed group, 2nd and 4th Mondays, 7 pm ▪ Mixed group, 2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 7 pm ▪ Mixed group, 2nd and 4th Thursdays, 2 pm <p style="text-align: center; color: red; font-style: italic;">Happy New Year!</p>
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

