

WILLIAMSBURG UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS

WUUU NEWS

JANUARY 2007

January 7—Rev. Preston Moore

Our Uncomfortable Seats at the Head of the Class. Even as we criticize them, what is our complicity in social structures that perpetuate economic injustice? And honestly now, can you really be poor and be a Unitarian Universalist? On questions of class, is our theology showing?

January 14—Rev. Jennifer Ryu

What Will Save Us from the Seduction of Redemptive Violence? No one thinks of violence as redeeming. Yet if we look at our actions, as individuals and as a society, we can see all kinds of ways in which we justify the use of violence. See page 6 for description of preceding class.

January 21—Guest preacher

January 28—Rev. Preston Moore

Going Out of Our Minds and Coming to Our Senses. Chesterton said, “The insane are not those who have lost their reason, but rather, those who have lost everything but their reason.” Are we too rational? If we are, does that mean we’re not religious?

NEW YEAR'S UNRESOLUTIONS

Everyone wants to be resolute, right? At New Year's, we pay special homage to this desire by making resolute lists of the resolute things we resolutely intend to do.

Sure, irresoluteness can be costly. But what about the cost of hyperresoluteness? For example, what if we had an often-wrong-but-seldom-in-doubt President who fancied

affectations like “The Decider,” or admired phrases like “moral clarity” disturbingly much? (Oops. We already do -- W, that is, not our beloved Joe)

In Christianity and Judaism, there is a distinguished tradition of unresolving things. It is called jubilee – a remission of sins, debts and servile indentures, historically observed every fifty years. The word “jubilee” derives from the Hebrew word “yobel,” which describes the sound blown on the ram’s horn (shofar) at the beginning of the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It is a time of profound forgiveness. Are we in any danger of having too much forgiveness in our lives? Anybody?

Hearing no objection, for New Year’s 2007, I do solemnly unresolve the following judgments previously held by me to be final and nonappealable:

(1) that certain people are incapable of changing (including my own much-chided self – and see jab at W above); (2) that certain of my highest aspirations are unachievable and therefore unworthy of further striving; (3) that patience and compassion are finite substances, like gasoline in the tank in my car, and must be dispensed prudently; (4) that God intended for the world to cooperate with my personal plans; and (5) that you can’t have too many colorful neckties.

May our New Year be truly new. May we embrace jubilee. And may all of us begin again in love. *Preston*

President's Message

Greetings,

Recently, I put the finishing touches on a letter which you will be receiving shortly. I tried to summarize some of the progress we have made during 2006, focusing on the issues raised at the congregational retreat we held last February. There's no question that we are heading into 2007 on a high note. There is an energy level around WUU that is both exciting and challenging to see. As I told you last month, we are holding a two day workshop with a consultant next month for our church leaders to assess our growth potential. We've been reading and studying to see exactly where we go from here. You will hear lots more about all that in the months to come.

Meantime, this is a time of year for reflection and for giving thanks for our blessings. Preston and Jennifer have recommended that we donate the plate collection at our Christmas service to local charities, and the Board heartily endorsed that sharing idea. We want to thank both of them for the energy and vision they have brought to their assignment with us, and are very grateful for all their contributions. At the same time, we owe another heartfelt thank you to all of our staff members and the many volunteers who work quietly, often behind the scenes, to keep our momentum up and our programs running. To all of you who pitch in to make WUU such a special place, please accept my thanks on behalf of the congregation for work very well done.

What is the Ministerial Discretionary Fund?

The ministerial discretionary fund is a descendant of the traditional "parson's purse." These were funds donated to the pastor to be used for the good of others in the congregation or the community at large. Several years ago, such a fund was created at WUU.

This fall, Preston and I deposited our wedding and memorial fees into this fund to build up its balance. We have also distributed funds from this account to members and friends who are in financial distress. You should know that the ministers will keep confidential the use to which the money is put, and that the ministers will not personally profit from the funds.

We appreciate your generous donation into this fund.

Thank you,

Jennifer & Preston

Welcome the Stranger

In her sermon on December 17, Jennifer Ryu urged us to welcome the stranger. William Schultz also writes that the mission of our faith is to teach the fragile art of hospitality. We in this congregation are hospitable, but I ask that you do more. As part of our welcoming ministry I would ask that all of you speak to someone you don't know once every Sunday. If you are uncomfortable starting a conversation, why not just smile and say "Good Morning"? Look for those folks who are wearing stick on nametags, or for someone wearing a permanent nametag that you don't know. Since July 2006, WUU has welcomed 28 new members into our community. Please take the initiative. Introduce yourself to someone, ask if this is the first time they are visiting, ask what they liked about the service or simply say "good morning". Just those two words could make a big difference to someone who is new. Sometimes with tunnel vision, we only speak to our friends. Try to reach out, welcome the stranger and practice the fragile art of hospitality as part of our faith in action.

Jacqui Winther, Membership Chair

Newest Members



Connie Skidmore



Betsy Powell and Paula Pannoni

New UU orientation session—save these January dates!

Are you considering membership? Join us on January 16, 21, and 28 for an introduction to Unitarian Universalism and to the Williamsburg UUs. Twenty people attended this three-session orientation when it was offered in October and found it to be highly valuable. The first session will be held at the home of our co-ministers from 6:00 to 8:30 pm on January 16 and will begin with a light supper. The second and third sessions will take place after Sunday services on January 21 and 28, starting with a light lunch

and then commencement of the program at 12:45. The session will conclude by 3:00. Child care will be available for all three sessions if you notify us of your need for it at least a week in advance.

The orientation program will be led by our co-ministers and members of our Membership Committee. They will make UU history and theology come alive for you, provide a guided tour of life in our spiritual community, and make clear the meaning of membership. We'll get to know each other better. Come spend some time exploring whether WUU is where YOU belong. For more details, contact Peter Mellette.

Chalice Gazing: Notes from the DRE

As we begin a new year, our WUU calendar is already filling up fast. Please be sure to watch for the Welcoming Congregations workshops, and make it a point to attend them. If you have questions, ask a member of the committee, or a minister, or me. One question that gets asked frequently when congregations are engaging in the Welcoming Congregations process is this: why are we doing all this work just for bisexual/gay/lesbian/transgender people? We don't want to focus on only one group; we want to welcome everybody. We don't have committees and programs to welcome African Americans, or immigrants, or people with special needs.

That's right. We don't. And here's why: even during the worst times of chattel slavery in the United States, the Africans still had church. It was forbidden to them, so they had it in secret, but they had church. Indeed, the civil rights movement in the last century emerged out of the church. Through all the horrors that African Americans had to endure at the hands of their oppressors, from chattel slavery to dogs and fire hoses, they still knew they were God's children. They still had church. Immigrants have church.

People with special needs have church. It is BGLT people who don't have church...who get kicked out of church, who are refused the possibility of ordination, or even of participating as lay leaders. It is BGLT people who are told that they are sinners, not because of anything that they do, but because of who they are, by no design or choice of their own. What does one do, where does one go, as a BGLT person whose spirit longs for church?

Let's create a true welcome for those who have been turned away from other churches. Please plan to attend the Welcoming Congregation workshops, and ask questions when you have them. This is such important work.

Blessings, Sara

Have You Gotten Your "Passport for Adventure" Yet?

The most exciting trips to exotic lands are taking place at WUU next summer. Using their new special WUU **Passport**

for Adventure, our children will have access to cultures that they (and we) have only read about or heard of. Our summer RE program is heading in a

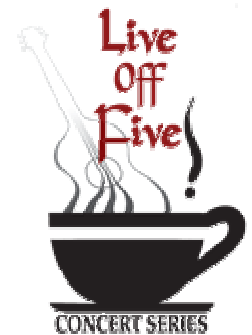
new direction next year. After two summers at Hogwarts, we're leaving England to explore the cultures, myths, and mores of other countries in our world. Right now we're seeking other intrepid travelers to join us on this adventure. Think of a country that you have spent time in, or that intrigues you. Volunteer to share that country and its people with our children for one Sunday next summer. Grab some friends (or maybe some of our older youth) and have fun "traveling" to your country. We're not sure who is going to have more fun on this adventure – you or our children. Interested in learning more or signing-



up? Contact Charlotte Bush or Tracy Shackelford. This is a trip you won't want to miss!

Souper Supper/Live off Five! Concert,

January 19: A concert featuring David Roth will be preceded by a soup and salad supper. "Dinner" at 6 pm, concert at 7:30. Combination tickets for both dinner and concert are \$15 for adults, \$10 for students and no charge for children under 5 years of age. David Roth has a wonderful website— www.davidrothmusic.com. Check it out!!



Should be a great evening right on our own campus!! Come and join the fun. Please make your reservation and advance payment to Bobbi at social@wu.org.

Spotlight on: David Roth

When David Roth takes the stage on January 19, it will be "as if folk, comedy, coffee house, and a bit of heaven all came together for one evening." One presenter says "David's unsurpassed instrumental ability, humor, and heart-piercing, intelligent lyrics brought an (indescribable) feeling into our concert hall". *Chicken Soup for the Soul* includes his lyrics; the author states "David will...make you laugh and cry, inspire you to rise and fly." David's ability to strike hearts and minds made him a perfect fit at the United Nations' 40th Anniversary; his music was also performed at Carnegie Hall's 100th Anniversary.

Dinner/Theater: Plans are being made for WUU to attend “The Importance of Being Earnest” in February. Dinner will precede the theater at one of the local restaurants. Look for details in the list of Sunday announcements.



Safety Matters

On December 17th there was a false fire alarm during the fellowship time after the church service. It was caused by a child pulling the alarm in the nursery. Upon hearing the alarm most of us headed for the same exit.

Please be aware that there are three exit doors in the sanctuary itself, two doors on the side of the narthex, and one in the nursery, as well as the double doors at the entrance. In case of an alarm, use the nearest exit. Remember to leave enough room for fire engines when parking. Do not park on any of the circles and do not park on the Fahs House side of the driveway. There is a second parking lot (gravel) and extra parking in front of Parker House.

Williamsburg Area Learning Tree

Continue the giving spirit in 2007

You have a special talent, hobby or skill. Why not share it with others! The Williamsburg Area Learning Tree (WALT), sponsored by WUU, provides the opportunity to introduce your special knowledge and ability to others in the Williamsburg area.

You develop the class outline, deciding how many sessions it will take to cover your topic. We assist you in the process. Between us we come up with a location for the class. We advertise, handle the registration and provide you with the sign-up list.

The registrants, typically, are adults who are curious about your subject. Classes are informal, fun and participatory.

Many WUUers have already stepped forward and found that they, too, have fun in sharing by “teaching” a class.

If you need more information, take a look at the WALT web pages on the WUU site <http://wuu.org/walt/>. You can also call our Program coordinator, Jill Whitten at 220-9975.

Board motions, December 21

MOTION: That the Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists be a sponsor of the Equality Virginia Lobby Day, January 17 in Richmond. Moved by Joe Fidler. Seconded by David Stanford. Approved unanimously.

Tabernacle Band, December 17, 2006



Money Matter\$

What is a “liberal tithe”? It is something that many Unitarian Universalists give. They pledge 5% of their income to their UU congregation and another 5% to other causes of the heart.

The liberal tithe is a new concept at WUU, but one which we hope will become popular this coming year. Remember, 5% of the median income in this area (\$55,000) would be \$2,750. Think of the possibilities and increase your commitment this year!

First Night Fundraiser

Come join your fellow WUUs in raising money for, and community awareness of, our church. We will run a food concession at Williamsburg's First Night celebration, which is a community-wide New Year's Eve event. We need volunteers to serve at the concession, act as cashiers, set up and clean up, and to bake goodies to sell. Shifts at the concession last for two hours each, beginning at 5 p.m. and ending at 11 p.m. This is a great way to raise some money for the church, increase WUU visibility in the community, and foster camaraderie among WUU members. Please join us! For more information, contact Cynn timer.

Dinner and movie on New Year's Day

Come enjoy dinner and a movie at WUU on January 1st! There will be a light dinner at 6:00 pm in the sanctuary, followed by an unusual, delightful movie at around 6:30. The movie is called "Ushpizin". It's about an orthodox Jewish couple who are real, complex and imperfect characters trying to live out their faith in their daily lives. The acting is great; reviews call it a "hidden gem", and several of us WUUs who have seen it have loved it. That's why we want you to see it, too! Come start out the New Year with us. Please RSVP to the office by Friday, December 29th. We will collect \$5 each for dinner (won't it be nice not to have to cook?) Bring beer and/or wine if you so desire.

Equality Virginia annual lobby day and reception, January 17

Several WUUs, including the minister, are planning to go to Lobby Day this year on Wednesday, January 17th. Training will begin tentatively at 8:30 am and the legislative reception begins at 5:30 pm. Both events are free; you may register at the Equality Virginia

website at www.equalityvirginia.org. The big issue on tap for this year is a bill to outlaw Gay-Straight Alliances in high schools because "they are clubs that promote sexual activity". We are hoping to get students, parents, and teachers to attend Lobby Day so they can explain to legislators that GSA are student-led groups that prevent bullying and promote tolerance and understanding of diversity.

Listening anew to Martin and Malcolm X

Ever wonder why there's so much hype around "Violence"? This Lifespan Faith Development course examines the highly charged word "violence" through the writings of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. The class will take place on Sunday, January 14, from 9:00 am until 10:30 am. The class will be facilitated by Eileen O'Brien, Ph.D. and Rev. Preston Moore. For those of you who haven't gotten to know Eileen yet, she is a WUU who teaches college-level sociology, focusing particularly on issues of race. We are very pleased to have her leadership in this program.) Please register for this program at programming@wuu.org so that we can make appropriate preparations, in terms of sufficient space and copies of materials. This program is related to the worship theme for the service that begins at 11:00 that day.

JANUARY 2007 PROGRAM AND EVENTS CALENDAR

1	Monday	New Year's Day 6:00 pm Light Supper-S 6:30 pm Movie "Ushpizin"-S	18	Thursday	7:30 pm Board Meeting
2	Tuesday	Office Closed 6:30 pm Silent Meditation-S 7:30 pm Jazz Band Practice-S	19	Friday	6:00 pm "Souper" Supper-S 7:30 pm Live Off Five Concert-S
3	Wednesday	7:30 pm Choir Practice	20	Saturday	
4	Thursday	10:30 am Staff Planning Session-PH	21	Sunday	11:00 am Worship Service-S 11:00 am RE all ages-FH, PH 12:30 pm Lunch and New UU Class-S
5	Friday	7:00 pm Parent Support Group-S	22	Monday	
6	Saturday		23	Tuesday	10:00 am Staff Meeting-PH 6:30 pm Silent Meditation-S 7:30 pm Jazz Band Practice-S
7	Sunday	11:00 am Worship Service-S 11:00 am RE all ages-FH, PH 12:30 pm Meeting for Past Board Members-S	24	Wednesday	7:30 pm Choir Practice-S
8	Monday	7:00 pm Dream Group-PH	25	Thursday	9:30 am Tai Chi-S
9	Tuesday	10:00 am Staff Meeting-PH 5:00 pm Communication Committee-PH 6:30 pm Silent Meditation-S 7:30 pm Jazz Band Practice-S	26	Friday	Sunday Morning Team Thank You Potluck
10	Wednesday	6:15pm LOF Steering Committee-L 7:30 pm Choir Practice-S 7:30 pm Social Responsibility Committee-A	27	Saturday	
11	Thursday	12:30 pm Separate Checks-S	28	Sunday	11:00 am Worship Service-S 11:00 am RE all ages-FH, PH 12:30 pm Lunch and New UU Class-S
12	Friday		29	Monday	
13	Saturday		30	Tuesday	10:00 am Staff Meeting-PH 6:30 pm Silent Meditation-S 7:30 pm Jazz Band Practice-S
14	Sunday	9:00 am Finance Committee-PH 9:00 am Adult RE (MLK) Class-S, A 11:00 am Worship Service-S 11:00 am RE all ages-FH, PH 12:30 pm RE Committee-PH	31	Wednesday	7:30 pm Choir Practice-S
15	Monday	MLK Day, Office Closed			
16	Tuesday	10:00 am Staff Meeting-PH 6:00 pm New UU Class-home of Ministers 6:30 pm Silent Meditation-S 7:30 pm Jazz Band Practice-S			
17	Wednesday	7:30 pm Choir Practice-S			

Key: S – Sanctuary
 L – Library
 A – Activity/Multipurpose Room
 PH – Parker House
 FH – Fahs House

WUU Newsletter Content Policy

* Approved by the Board, March 2006

INCLUDED:

- Official WUU news
- List of upcoming services
- Columns by the Minister(s), DRE, and President
- Committee announcements (grounds day, fundraisers, new members)
- Personal announcements such as births, deaths, weddings
- Official announcements (e.g., Congregational meetings)
- Limited community social action announcements as space allows and retaining intended sense.

NOT INCLUDED:

- Announcements of events unrelated to the church, taking place elsewhere
- Letters to the editor
- Classified ads

GUIDELINES FOR ARTICLES:

- General events of church-wide interest (such as, social action activities, all church parties, church sales and special presentations—100 word limit
- Announcements of interest to a smaller group of people (clusters, committee meetings —75 word limit
- Focus articles—church program areas, board news, auction, pledging, written by staff or board member—300 word limit
- Attachments preferred to email.
- Events must include date, time and place.
- Submissions must be related to WUU.

Send submissions to newsletter@wuu.org, not to office@wuu.org

WILLIAMSBURG UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

