

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS OF CLEARWATER

Where Seekers Find a Home

OCTAGRAM

DECEMBER 2009



On this night of nights,
We have more for which to be grateful than we will ever know;
More cause to bless and cherish
And bend our knee in wonder,
More call to lift our hearts on wings of praise.

For we, too, on this very night,
Illuminated by a story and a star,
Can witness a miracle:
A birth—heralding our birth,
Pregnant with promise and oh so surpassingly strange;
A life—no less magical than ours;
A death—to charge our days with purpose,
Helping us to live in such a way
That our lives, too, will prove worth dying for.

To enter the realm of enchantment,
We must first shed our self-protective cover,
Not, as we too often and sadly do,
Take this precious life for granted,
But unwrap the present and receive the gift,
Mysterious and charged with saving grace.

So let us, on this night of nights, set aside our shopping list
of grievances,
Resist the nattering of our grubby little egos,
And crack our parched lives open like a seed.

Let us pray.

Let us awaken from the soul-crushing allures
Of sophisticated resignation and cynical chic,
To savor instead the world of abundance and possibility
That awaits just beyond the self-imposed limits of our
imagination.

Let us awake to the saving gift of forgiveness,
Where we can, in a single breath, free ourselves and free
another.

Let us awaken to the possibility of love,
Body, mind, and spirit.
All-saving and all-redeeming love.

Let us awaken to the blessing of acceptance,
Expressed in a simple, saving mantra:
Want what we have; do what we can; be who we are.

Rather than let wishful thinking or regret
Displace the gratitude for all that is ours, here and now,
To savor and to save,

Let us want what we have—
Praying for health, if we are blessed with health,
For friendship, if we are blessed with friends,
For family, if we are blessed with family,
For work, if we are blessed with tasks that await our doing,
And if our lives are dark, may we remember to want nothing
more than the loving
Affection of those whose hearts are broken by our pain.

Let us do what we can—
Not dream impossible dreams or climb every mountain,
But dream one possible dream and climb one splendid mountain,
That our life may be blessed with attainable meaning.

And let us be who we are—
Embrace our God-given nature and talents.
Answer the call that is ours, not another's,
Thereby enhancing our little world and the greater world we
share.

That is my Christmas prayer,
Call it thoughtful wishing.
All we have to do is put our heart in it.
And there's one more bonus.
Unlike wishful thinking, thoughtful wishes always come true.

Amen. I love you. And may God bless us all.

*Rev. Forrest Church,
A Closing Prayer,
December 24, 2007.*

(Rev. Church died from esophageal cancer September 2009.
He was the Minister of All Souls Unitarian Church in New York City.)

Random Reflections

Your gifts - whatever you discover them to be - can be used to bless or curse the world. – Rebecca Parker

There's lot of fear and anxiety about what's going on around us and in the world these days. In particular, we are crippled by the fear of scarcity which seems to cause us to tighten up and hunker down. Franklin Roosevelt, in his 1933 inaugural address, called this fear "nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."

I truly believe that the myth of scarcity is just that: *a myth*. Let me suggest to you that there is always enough of what is really important. We do not need money or material goods to be generous. *Giving what you have is enough, even if it is only your heart that you have to give.*

The holiday season is an opportunity to give of our time, talent, and treasure. For some of us, it is the time of year when we feel inspired to be generous. We may give our time to a worthy cause, or contribute our hard earned treasure to some charitable enterprise.



I have seen enough of real poverty to know with certainty that we can all give something. It is within our means. The benefits of generosity far outweigh their costs, whether in terms of a friendly greeting or a generous contribution.

How can I convince you of this? I cannot. I can only tell you that if you give it a try, you may find generosity to be habit form-

ing. Once you make it a priority to give, you will find that not only is there more than enough, but it makes you feel good too.



This holiday season in the midst of joblessness and economic uncertainty let us consider the possibility that there is more than enough. Let us reject the myth of scarcity for what it is. Let us consider the possibility that there is always an abundance of what is needed, be it money, time, talents, or be it only the fullness of what the mystics call "an abundant spirit."

Let us all give. Give something of what we have, of what we are. Let us give our time to someone we love. Let us give a compliment, a hug, or a smile. Let us give to a cause that matters. Let us give to our religious community that is there for us. Somehow let us give.

When we're generous in the parts of life that really matter to us, we are reminded where our real investments are. Our real investments are in our loved ones, the communities where we find joy and support, and the worthy causes that never fail to move us. Generosity in these investments may even increase their value. And they need our contributions now more than ever.

May your holidays be filled with many gifts, both given and received, more even than you expected or dreamed. I wish it for you.

With gratitude for all your gifts that make UUC a beloved community,

Abhi Janamanchi

Making Tracks with Rev. Bill

On a recent Sunday, I experienced two things that for me speak to the importance of our religious community. The first was the lunch prepared and served by volunteers recruited by the Religious Education Committee. A little over 100 people ate lunch, including myself. This was my first lunch with you and I was struck by how much you enjoyed being with each other. Clearly you love being with each other and with like-minded, like-valued people. I saw you welcoming newcomers over lunch, helping them feel welcomed and embraced. A little bit later I happened to talk to some newcomers and as they described their search and sense of feeling that they had found their religious and spiritual home, deep emotions welled-up and expressed themselves. Passing them some tissues, I listened carefully as they described what it meant to find a religious community where they felt comfortable expressing their beliefs.



We are spiritual beings and the ways of living and expressing our spiritual selves are varied. The one thing that does not vary, in my opinion, is having a place to share and be our spiritual being, and this works best where people share similarities of expression. Finding the right fit is not easy and we Unitarian Universalist are not that easy to find. Hence once it is found, it is quite common to feel deeply and emotionally about it and to find joy in being with people we feel and share our values and ways of being. To me this is what I saw on this recent Sunday and why we are so important. We are important to each other and the institution, the Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater, is important to each and all of us. UUC and the people who are here make a difference in people's lives.

See you soon I hope!

Bill

From the UUC President



At our annual meeting in May, a discernment task force was established to determine an appropriate ministerial model for our congregation. In late August, the task force began its work and soon recognized that the options were many and the time short.

The board realized that making successful choices about a sustainable staffing model for the congregation was more complicated than originally envisioned. Having a minister leave represents a turning point for the congregation. Determining the way forward requires establishing a clear vision of the congregation's ministry: its mission, goals, needs, governance and resource. It is not a short-term process. It requires time, analysis and discussion.

Although different than we were six years ago, we are a healthy, vibrant community, and we are fortunate to have a quality staff. We have a good foundation on which to build. Engaging in a discernment process gives us a chance to find out who we are today, and what we want to be and do. Knowing ourselves will help us decide how to structure ourselves as a congregation and our staff in order to meet our needs and attain our goals.

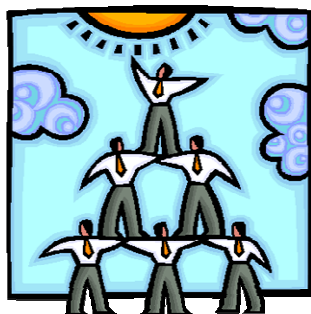
At its November meeting, the Board approved the charge of a strategic planning committee, and decided to initiate meaningful dialogue with the congregation about both our vision for the future and our near term operations. The discernment process adopted by the board includes a series of small group discussions and town hall meetings to be held in December. These meetings will discuss our vision, as well as ways in which we might proceed in the near term to make progress in that direction. We hope you will actively participate in these meetings. Details will be forthcoming shortly.

— Sue Boone, President

UUA Trustee Tidbits

The UUA Board of Trustees convened in October, and in the report written following the meeting I indicated I would write more about Rev. Peter Morales' thoughts on the "critical" issues facing Unitarian Universalism. In the Trustee report which is available on the District web page I wrote about President Rev. Morales' belief that UUs must create a new ministry for a new century. He believes our faith needs to be much more than the "tiny, fringe religion that it is today" and we have not responded effectively for the needs of the liberal spiritual community. Another opportunity we must focus our energy on is growth.

Growth of our faith is not something that is just organizationally desirable. According to Rev. Morales it is a moral and religious imperative in a time when our congregations are amidst the spiritually hungry and religiously homeless who need us. Rev. Morales believes we have failed to grow because of the misplaced attention and energy in media campaigns and costly efforts to start large churches.



Growing our faith will happen in our existing congregations through quality relationships, quality welcoming, and a sense of mission. Congregations have much to learn from each other. Congregations that have experienced growth have not done so by creating a growth plan but by being passionate about the possibilities and seeking excellence in

congregational life. These congregations realize that growth is not a goal, but is a measurement of health and vitality.



Rev. Morales says there are things we must do. We must create and sustain a sense of urgency throughout our faith by unleashing the commitment and idealism in our congregations who are on both a visionary and practical path. We need to work with our fastest growing churches in close partnership. They are the folks who know how to grow our faith. We must focus growth efforts by ensuring that our UUA staff is an effective partner to our congregations. Rev. Morales stated UUA field staff must focus their efforts on working with congregations committed to sharing our faith and serve as capable consultants who assist in unleashing the congregation's potential. Our UUA must reorganize the way we deliver services to congregations. According to Rev. Morales there is broad consensus that we should move to a more flexible regional model. New congregations need to be started in growing and underserved areas, using new approaches that build on the expertise of our leading congregations and use the opportunities of modern technology.

Whatever your congregation is doing to celebrate the end-of-year holidays I wish your congregation good health and good relationships. Please know I am available for conversation, and/or speaking at a Sunday service. I am usually only a phone call (813-931-9727) or email (jlund@uua.org) away. Happy Holidays one and all.

—Joan Lund

Light Pervades the Darkness



As I sit at home writing this article and trying to meet the quickly approaching deadline for the December *Octagram*, it is one of the first markedly cold evenings in November. Indeed, the days have grown colder and shorter and the evening sometimes appears like a long, dark veil that will never seem to lift. It is on evenings like this that I am reminded of the words to one of my favorite hymns, "In the Bleak Midwinter."

"In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone; snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago."

The light that often lifts the velvet veil of dark for many of us are the December holidays. For most of us, this includes Christmas and Chanukah. Christmas and Chanukah create the radiance which lights the way through the seemingly unending dark. Jesus Christ represents "the way, the truth and the



life" to billions of followers, both now and before this time. To believers, He represents a path to a brighter tomorrow. Chanukah is the story of a small band of resistance fighters who opposed an army which far outnumbered them in both personnel and resources. The light of the menorah is the miracle and the promise from God that



he would protect his chosen people, even against the most insurmountable obstacles.

On December 13, members of our music community will perform a music worship which centers around the idea that in spite of what might seem to be impossible darkness, there is a burst of light that comes forth. Through readings, instrumental and vocal music, the worship service will show how light pervades a thick blackness that won't seem to lift.

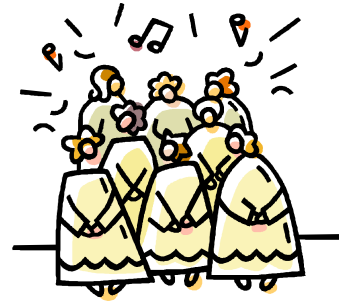
The idea of light pervading the darkness is more than an abstract religious tale of long ago. Like the headlights of our car that guide us to a far off destination on an evening devoid of stars and moon, our own personal beacons of hope lead us to a better tomorrow. Hope is the driving force which lifts us up when our lives are dark, dreary and painful. Hope inspires us and allows us to move forward in the world while creating light to help others to see.



It is my hope that the music and readings that you hear on December 13 lift you up to a brighter tomorrow, a wonderful holiday season, and a fantastic year ahead.

Blessed Be and Shalom, David Katz

Reminder of Rehearsal Dates for Chorale and Children's Choir



- (1) UCC Chorale rehearsals from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. are Wednesdays of December 2, December 9, December 16, ONLY.
- (2) December 12 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon is a Saturday Dress Rehearsal for the special December 13 holiday program.
- (3) UCC Children's Choir Rehearsals from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. on Sundays of December 6, December 13, December 20, ONLY.

RE News — Attention Parents!

Hello Friends,

With the holiday season just around the corner, we know it is a busy time for our RE families. It can also be very stressful for children, youth and adults. In order to help alleviate some of that stress, the RE committee is sponsoring a "Parents Night Out" on **December 5**. Parents will be able to get some time to themselves while their children enjoy fun and games with their friends at UUC.


On December 27 and January 3 there will be no regular RE classes. Instead, the children and youth will participate in a variety of arts and crafts activities or they may attend worship service with their parents. Volunteers are needed! Please contact me, Christine Pensa, RE Assistant, at christinepensa@att.net or (727) 442-3028 for additional information.

Happy Holidays!
Christine Pensa, RE Assistan

**The date of the next Social Justice Council meeting is to be determined.
If you've already set aside Saturday morning, December 5 for this, walk the Peace Train instead!**

Split the Plate, December 13

I, Marlene Calderone, was delighted to present a check for \$517 to the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) during their recent visit to UUC. Thanks to your generosity, the funds from the October Split the Plate will help the CIW continue their struggle for fair wages and working conditions. This month our recipient will be the Religious Community Services' Grace House. The mission of **Grace House** is to provide shelter for homeless families and help them assess their needs, set realistic goals and move towards self-sufficiency. Grace House provides eight weeks of apartment style shelter to homeless families along with all of life's necessities, maximizing their opportunity to reach self-sufficiency. **Please give generously.**



Help & Hope for Those in Need

Economic Justice – Linda Stoller, Team Leader

- ▶ The holidays are here and fair trade coffee, tea, and chocolate make great gifts. **Fair Trade Products will be on sale after the worship service on December 13.** This month we are featuring a new product, pecans. Fair trade practices are playing an increasing role in the United States. This is our first product from a co-op in the United States. Carrie Thomas, Gussie Bernard and Ruby Hawkins are the founding members of Southern Alternatives Agricultural Cooperative. They started the Co-op in 2004 with the goal of building an economic anchor that could provide living wage jobs for local residents and after school programs for neighborhood kids.
- ▶ We are supporting the farm workers in Plant City by **collecting blankets to give out to farm worker families on December 19.** This is a part of a large gift distribution project sponsored by the National Farm Workers Ministry. Bring new or very slightly used blankets and leave them in the designated area in the lobby.
- ▶ Many thanks to everyone who helped make our protest at Publix a big success. Almost 60 people including some farm workers from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers stood in front of Publix chanting in Spanish and English. We delivered about 150 signed letters to the manager. **Our next action will be a major march in support of farm worker rights in Lakeland, the corporate home of Publix on December 6.** We will be carpooling from the UUC after the service. We will be stopping for lunch on the way. People interested in going can sign up at the Social Justice Table or email Linda Stoller at Lstoll10403@aol.com.



Human Rights – Allison Snell, Team Leader

Saturday, December 5 is the Peoples Peace Train on the Pinellas Trail. This is part of the World March for Peace. Experience the camaraderie with people who are willing to take some time to walk, ride or stand for PEACE. Please join us and be a part of this historic event. For more details, go to www.riseuptampabay.com or call (727) 488-7473 or call me, Allison, (727) 596-7123.

News from the World March for Peace: “The World March for Peace and Nonviolence has successfully completed its first month. The base team of marchers has traveled through 21 countries on their journey, over three continents, meeting with individuals, students, groups and organizations, and heads-of-state and elected officials. After an exciting kickoff in New Zealand and Australia, the March experienced one of its emotional highpoints on the morning of October 7 when the base team members witnessed the formation of the largest human peace sign ever made, executed to perfection by more than 12,000 students from schools in the town of Lucena, in the Philippines. For one week, the students, aged 10 to 15, rehearsed forming the giant symbol inside the Olympic stadium. Astounded by the spectacle and the beauty of the event, the audience, consisting of base team members, NGOs, politicians, and cultural and artistic groups, could not hold back their tears.”

From the Peace Train People

Join RiseUpTampaBay, individuals, families and organizations concerned for peace as we walk, run, bike and skate for Peace across the beautiful Pinellas Trail.

Walk for a minute, walk for a mile or just come and cheer for a while.

People will begin the walk at two places, one southern, one northern: St. Petersburg-Park Street and Bay Pines Blvd. (meet in back of Target) or at The Boxcar at 349 Main Street, Dunedin. Walkers will meet at the midway point on the trail, Taylor Park in Largo map. It is an approximate 7 miles from either point to Taylor Park. Also, people can hop on the trail at points along the way to join the walk. We aim to meet up at Taylor Park at 3:00 pm.

There will be a gathering at Taylor Park with acoustic music, drumming, brown bag lunches and camaraderie with people who are willing to take some time to walk, ride or stand for PEACE.

Please Note:

- ▶ Dress comfortably and wear your walking shoes. Remember, this is a seven mile walk. Bring a bottle of water and sunscreen. (Water will be available along the trail.)
- ▶ Transportation will be available at various points along the trail for people who need assistance.
- ▶ Signs can be a prohibitive to the flow of traffic on the trail. If you would like to have a sign or banner for a photo-op at Taylor Park, bring it the meet-up point. Signs and banners will be transported to the park by RiseUp staff. About signs: this is not a demonstration against anything. It is a walk and gathering for peace; please bring signs to reflect that spirit.
- ▶ Wear your message of peace on the walk and don't forget to pick up a hand decorated armband at the starting point.
- ▶ Pets on a leash are welcome on the trail and at the park
- ▶ Downloadable flyer available on website. Please print a few and spread the word with them.
- ▶ To volunteer call 727-488-7473. We need point people along the march, people to distribute food and drink after the march, and help with clean up.

For more information about this and other events and actions in the Tampa Bay Area go to www.RiseUpTampaBay.com

Get on board the Pinellas Trail
PEOPLE'S
PEACE
TRAIN
...or just come and cheer for a while!

Walk for a minute,
Walk for a mile

Pets welcome

Limited shuttle back to vehicles

SATURDAY, Dec. 5, 2009 - 10 AM
FROM THE NORTH: The Boxcar at 345 Main St. in Dunedin
FROM THE SOUTH: Park Blvd. at Bay Pines Blvd., St. Pete

Gather at Taylor Park - 3pm
Enjoy live music and a brown bag lunch

Visit www.riseuptampabay.com
or call (727) 488-7473

Environmental Justice – Dotti Doyle, Team Leader

► We had a demonstration on October 24, the International Day of Climate Action, to call attention to climate change. We were part of the “350” movement in which faith communities throughout the world made “a holy noise” for the climate in preparation for talks to be held in Copenhagen in December. (350 is the allowable parts per million of CO₂ in the atmosphere. The current amount is 370 and rising.) Pictures of this event are on the Social Justice bulletin board in the Social Hall.

► A representative from RePower America will be visiting UUC to film a few members making statements about the environment. The date is to be determined.

► We are developing audit forms to see how UUC and the members use resources.

► We are exploring a proposal to obtain solar power for UUC that would not require an initial expense.

► The first half of a very important environmental film, *Coal Country*, was shown at Open Issues on November 15. Watch for the scheduling of the second half sometime soon. Several environmental films will be shown early next year, as well as some related Adult R.E. offerings.

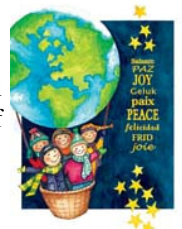


Khasi Hills, India, Sponsor-A-Student Project

Many sponsors have received letters and pictures from their student at the Margaret Barr Memorial School in the Khasi Hills of India. If you haven't received your letter please stop by the Social Justice table after services, pick up your letter and a renewal form. **The cost to sponsor a student is \$50 for an entire year.** The funds go toward providing everything from supplies to teacher salaries, to a noon day meal. Donations are greatly appreciated. Help educate a child and make a difference in their lives. For information contact Marlene Calderone at (727) 669-9517.

Holiday Cards Still Available

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee holiday cards are for sale at the Social Justice table in the Social Hall after worship services. This year you have a choice of four unique designs. The cost is just \$10.00 for a pack of ten cards. Purchase yours before they are all gone.



Volunteer

We are still in need of Team members. If you are still sitting on the fence, jump off and join the Social Justice Council. There are openings on all three Teams, Human Rights, Economic Justice, and Environmental Justice. Take your pick. **Contact the team leaders directly.**

Contact Your Legislators

Remember to make your voice heard by contacting your elected members of Congress about current issues of importance such as: Health Care Insurance Reform, Women's Reproductive Health Coverage, Climate and Energy legislation and Gulf Coast Civil Works.

Open Issues Forum — Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

December 6 Rev. Nicholas Ozuna: Introduction to Rissho Kosei-kai. A slideshow presentation about Rissho Kosei-kai, its history, beliefs, and practices as a socially-engaged Buddhist organization. Rev. Nick is currently an intern at UUC.

December 13 Jennifer Silva: Clothes To Kids, Inc. This organization exists to provide new and quality used clothing to low-income school-age children in Pinellas County, free of charge. Their hope is to achieve this in a friendly, cheerful setting that helps build self-esteem for each child.

December 20 Catherine & John Conover: Three Months in Australia. Join us as we visit Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Adelaide, Alice Springs, Darwin, the Great Barrier Reef, the Twelve Apostles, Ayers Rock, and more in a slide show.

December 27 Kamila Jacob: Young Adults and Unitarian Universalism, a Discussion. Kamila, a UU from New York City and Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA, was dedicated twenty years ago in our sanctuary at two months of age.

—John Chase, (727) 787-3085

Worship Services — Sundays at 10:30 a.m. unless noted otherwise

December 6 **The Heart of Hanukkah**

Rev. Abhi Janamanchi

Hanukkah is only a minor Jewish holiday, a sort of a footnote in the ritual schedule of the year which fills in a big blank space between the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in the fall, and Passover in the spring. But it is a story of religious freedom, of sacrifice and hope, and of miracles. The service will explore. Music: UUC Chorale and Soloists sing a traditional Chanukah piece in Hebrew and English, "Rock of Ages"; UUC music director and baritone David Katz and pianist Linda Jones perform "Light the Legend" by contemporary Jewish composer Michael Isaacson.

December 13 **A Festival of Lights**

Rev. Abhi Janamanchi, et al

UUC Chorale, children's choir, guest instrumentalists, pianist Linda Jones and music director David Katz present a special holiday music program focusing on the theme of "light." The service will include Christmas, Solstice, and Hanukkah readings. Congregational hymns of the season centering on "light" will also be sung. The Split the Plate collection is for Grace House (see page 5).

December 17 **Coping With the Holiday Blues** Thursday, 7:00 p.m.

**Rev. Abhi Janamanchi &
Joanne Osburn**

During the holiday season we hear those same familiar songs, we see the bright lights; we behold the rich storefront displays. Perhaps this time of year is so rich with memories because we remember the people we love: both those we gather around us this season, and those who are no longer with us.

December 20 **The Holiness of Waiting**

Rev. Abhi Janamanchi

The theme of the Advent season is waiting and expectation. Of course we need to live in a spirit of hope and expectation for those things we want to happen. But how much of our lives do we spend waiting, planning, and expecting events to transpire compared to living the lives we believe we are meant to live in the present moment? As the King of Siam said "Tis a paradox!" It is one we will explore on this Sunday. Music: UUC Chorale and Soprano Kay Clark who will perform a piece from a J.S. Bach cantata which centers on today's theme of preparation and waiting.

December 24 **Intergenerational Christmas Eve Service** Thursday, 6:00 p.m.

**Rev. Abhi Janamanchi,
Rev. Bill Welch, et al**

Join us for a candle-lighting service with music, carols, readings, and stories. UUC Chorale and Children's choir perform beloved Christmas choral classics on this special evening. UUC music director and baritone David Katz and Linda Jones perform Max Reger's beloved and poignant "Maria's Wiegenlied." Childcare for infants and toddlers will be provided.

December 27 **Holding On and Letting Go**

Rev. Bill Welch

Today's sermon is an opportunity to reflect on what serves our lives and of the things we are ready to let go. Music: Linda Carroll and Van Fenstermaker.

Worship Associate of the month – Jenn Bouchie

December 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>29 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM Open Issues (P) 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Worship Service (O) 12:15 PM - 1:15 PM Nominating Committee (W) 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM Psi Symposium (C) 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM RKK Open House (P) 3:00 PM - 8:00 PM Waldorf Event (O)</p>	<p>30 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM Duplicate Bridge (P) 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Tampa Bay Music Making (C) 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM AA (P)</p>	<p>1 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM Membership (W) 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM Loving Kindness Meditation (O) 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM Tae Kwon Do Training (S) 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM UU Buddhist Fellowship (P) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM So. Bridge (C)</p>	<p>2 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Staff Meeting (Abhi's Office) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Chorale Practice (C)</p>	<p>3 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM Tae Kwon Do Training (S) 6:00 PM - 9:30 PM Private Event - CEO Space (C) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Children's RE Committee (CL)</p>	<p>4 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Readers Forum (C) 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Art Committee Reception (O) 7:00 PM Zen Meditation (L)</p>	<p>5 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM Social Justice Committee (W) 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM RE Committee (S, P) 8:00 PM AA (P)</p>
<p>6 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM Children's Choir Practice (C) 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM Open Issues (P) 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Worship Service (O) 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM RE Sponsored Luncheon (S) 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM Young Adult Median Covenant Grp (W)</p>	<p>7 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM Duplicate Bridge (P) 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Tampa Bay Music Making (C) 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM AA (P)</p>	<p>8 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM Loving Kindness Meditation (O) 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM Tae Kwon Do Training (S) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Social Bridge (C) 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM UU Buddhist Fellowship (P)</p>	<p>9 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM Adult RE Com. Mtg. (W) 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Lunch with the Ministers (S) 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM Fin. Com. (W) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Chorale Prac (C) 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Exec Com (W)</p>	<p>10 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM Tae Kwon Do Training (S) 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Cluster Holiday Service at Tarpon Springs</p>	<p>11 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Readers Forum (C) 7:00 PM Zen Meditation (L)</p>	<p>12 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM Bake Sale (S) 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Chorale Rehearsal (O, C) 5:00 PM Holiday Open House - Shimer's Home 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Grand Opening Rehearsal (P) 8:00 PM AA (W)</p>
<p>13 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM Bake Sale (S) 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM Children's Choir Practice (C) 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM Open Issues (P) 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Worship Service (O) 12:30 PM - 1:00 PM Laughter Yoga (L) 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM UU101 (O) 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM Rishso Kosei-kai Setup (P) 5:00 - 7:30 PM Rishso Kosei-kai Grand Opening (O, P)</p>	<p>14 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM Duplicate Bridge (P) 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Tampa Bay Music Making (C) 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM Covenant Groups Facilitators Meeting (L) 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM AA (P)</p>	<p>15 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM Loving Kindness Meditation (O) 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM Tae Kwon Do Training (S) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Social Bridge (C)</p>	<p>16 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Chorale Practice (C) 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM UUC Board Meeting (P)</p>	<p>17 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Private Event (L) 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM Tae Kwon Do Training (S) 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Coping With the Holiday Blues (O) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Rudolph Steiner Class (W)</p>	<p>18 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Readers Forum (C) 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Wedding Rehearsal (O) 7:00 PM Zen Meditation (L)</p>	<p>19 Private Wedding (O, S, P) 8:00 PM AA (W)</p>
<p>20 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM Children's Choir Practice (C) 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM Music Committee Setup (C) 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM Open Issues (P) 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Worship Service (O) 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM Music Committee Mtg (W) 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM Monthly Toning Event \$5 (P) 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM Rishso Kosei-kai Service (P)</p>	<p>21 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM Duplicate Bridge (P) 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Tampa Bay Music Making (C) 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM AA (P)</p>	<p>22 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM Loving Kindness Meditation (O) 1:00 PM - 3:45 PM Covenant Group Meeting (L) 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Committee on Ministry (Abhi's office) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Social Bridge (C)</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26 8:00 PM AA (P)</p>
<p>27 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM Open Issues (P) 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Worship Service (O) 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM Psi Symposium (P) 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM Rishso Kosei-kai Service (P)</p>	<p>28 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM Duplicate Bridge (P) 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Tampa Bay Music Making (C) 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM AA (P)</p>	<p>29 12:00 PM - 12:30 PM Loving Kindness Meditation (O) 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM Social Bridge (C)</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 8:00 PM - 1:00 AM Santana Family New Years Eve Party (S)</p>	 <p>Christmas Day 1:00 PM Christmas Day Dinner (S)</p>	
						

Above & Beyond Honoree For December



The UUC Board has selected Kyle Pierson to be honored with the Above and Beyond Award for December. Kyle is a relatively new member who got involved right away...and in a big way. Kyle chaired this year's book sale, which earned more than \$3,000 toward our Ways and Means fundraising budget. She did a wonderful job of organizing both the people and the books, and that made for a very successful event. Thank you, Kyle, and congratulations on this volunteer award. (Our Volunteer of the Year award is given during the UUC Annual Meeting in May each year to one of the monthly honorees.)

Congratulations, Kyle Pierson!

Rev. Abhi to Receive ACLU Award

The Pinellas County Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union is giving the 2009 Gardner W. Becket, Jr. Friend of Civil Liberties Award to Rev. Abhi Janamanchi, minister of the Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater, in recognition of his tireless efforts on behalf of civil liberties in the Tampa Bay area. The award will be presented at the 19th annual Bill of Rights Awards Banquet, December 3.

Dorothy Wylie, Playwright in Our Midst!

Congratulations and thank you to our own Dorothy Wylie for a very successful, informative and heart wrenching production of her play *Savoring the Moment: A Play about Alzheimer's and Old Age*. It was the perfect way to commemorate November National Alzheimer's Awareness Month. Dorothy, at 94 years young, continues to be an inspiration to our members.



Kayaking Anyone?

We are starting a UUC group of people that are interested in Kayaking. We will take trips based on the group's interests and experience. You do not need to own a kayak. Just want to have fun and enjoy the water and adventure. Most trips will be taken using a kayak shop which will have rentals and will provide a guide. Please contact Dale Niemann at dale-sails@yahoo.com if you are interested.

Need to Buy Anything at Amazon.com?

If so, please do so through the UUC website. On the front page, at bottom right of www.uuclearwater.org, there is an access to Amazon.com. Use that access, and for any items you purchase, UUC gets four percent of your total purchase. That's a great fund raiser!

Pavers Make Great Gifts!

The Serenity Garden is growing but could always fit more pavers. And now, a statue of Francis of Assisi watches over them. A paver can be a great gift as a memorial for an important occasion such as an anniversary (look at Molly and Jim's paver) or the birth of a child (see Sierra's paver), or a holiday gift. If you are interested in having a paver made, contact Jeannie Shimer at (727) 517-3801 or jeannieshimer@aol.com, or contact the UUC office.

Facilities Update

As part of the continued effort to provide a safe environment for UUC members and efficiently protect the UUC property and resources, we request that everyone please help in these efforts by closing and locking doors, turning off lights, turning down the AC/Heat, avoiding entering buildings prior to 9 a.m. and after 9 p.m. without prior notice, and generally watching over each other and the building facilities.

Is Your Pledge Up To Date?

Each year we start our fiscal year in June, and that's when pledge commitments made in March begin to be fulfilled. As I'm sure you know, your spiritual home depends on you to stay up to date on your commitment so we can meet all of our congregational commitments. We know that you receive many requests for generous giving at this time of year. This is the season of giving, after all. In the midst of all the holiday spirit, please try to keep your pledge current, as well. Thanks for your support!

—Bill Norsworthy, UUC Treasurer

Cookies Needed December 24!



Cookies are needed for the reception after the Christmas Eve Service. Please bring cookies to the Social Hall before the service.

Making it Personal: We Love Who We Love

Earlier this October, the national media picked up the story of Louisiana Justice of the Peace Keith Bardwell, who has maintained a decades-long refusal to marry "interracial" couples. More than 40 years after the U.S. Supreme Court's aptly-named *Loving v. Virginia* declared anti-miscegenation statutes unconstitutional and recognized that the freedom to marry should not be restricted by invidious discrimination, such a policy seems wildly anachronistic.

At the same time, when I reflect on my personal experience, the open exhibition of such attitudes does not seem as outdated or uncommon as it should. It has taken some time for me to move past the shock, anger, sorrow and resignation the Louisiana story has provoked to write this and try to capture some thoughts about it.

I am a first-generation American of Filipino descent, married for 17 years to another American who can trace her roots to England and the Netherlands. To one another and our daughter, we are just Allen and Lisa (or Daddy and Mama), two unique and flawed individuals. Our couplehood nevertheless has been, and continues to be, subtly or openly questioned by others. Outside our home, society seems to insist on viewing (and judging) us as an "interracial" couple, as if that term has some significance in how we do (or should) relate to one another.

Although we have no reason to explain ourselves, we like telling our story as much as any couple. We "met cute" when my future wife was dragged across UCLA by her family's Great Dane; the dog had been draped with student government campaign signs in a cheap publicity stunt, and was eager to visit every corner of the campus. The dog made the student newspaper, the candidate (a mutual friend) won, and we started dating. My wife says I'm the first man she met who read as avidly as she did, and was interested that I had traveled the world. In her, I saw not only a quirky sense of humor and dazzling intellect but a kindred spirit committed to social justice work.

Nevertheless, when we started dating, there were subtle hints from my fellow Filipino-American student activists that they ascribed some improper motivation to our relationship. One suggestion seemed to be that I was not committed enough to our cause, or proud enough of my identity, because I was dating someone outside our culture. I hesitate to ponder what motivations they ascribed to my wife. On the flip side, other comments presumably were meant to be compliments, doozies like "mixed children are the cutest!"

Judgments come from all corners. Looking for an apartment in an area of Los Angeles populated by many Japanese-Americans, I knew we were in trouble when the landlord asked if I was Filipino. Sure enough, when my wife toured the empty and advertised unit, we were told it was no longer available.

Ironically, friends of ours who already lived in the complex were a Japanese-American and Filipino-American couple, and in the eyes of many Japanese-Americans and Filipino-Americans, they were in a "mixed" marriage although other Americans might not see them as anything other than an "Asian" couple. Either way, such classifications put them outside the majority norms in this country.

Frequently, we get surprised looks from people who meet my wife first, and then are introduced to me later. Once, a white coworker told me that he wasn't used to Filipino men married to white women. What did that mean? Was he only comfortable when white men date "exotic" Asian women, not vice versa? Was he nostalgic for the 1930s, when California law specifically barred marriage between Filipinos and whites? Was he essentially harmless, but just rude? If anything, people seem even more comfortable expressing such judgments here in Florida, where we moved several years ago.

But my wife and I are adults who have chosen our own path. As doting and protective parents, we do everything we can to insulate our child from harm. As a result, the Louisiana Justice of the Peace's assertion that "mixed-race" marriages must be prevented because they cause problems for the children that result was most galling and anger-provoking. How dare he cloak his prejudice with a purportedly noble concern! Obviously, children like our daughter will face problems due to their "race" only to the extent racists and society at large impose problems on them.

The consensus of experts is that race is a social construct without basis in science, and varies from era to era and country to country without any fixed meaning. Yet, perhaps nowhere else are racial categories imbued with more seeming permanence and importance, or given more legal research, and social significance, than in the United States. Let our UU congregations be at the forefront of those who ask why that is so, and whether it needs to be. And let them be places where members see one another as "we" instead of "they," consciously and unconsciously, at every level.

—Allen Ongchangco, Member of UUC and the
Racial Justice Council of the UUA Florida District

Events in December and Beyond

Town Hall Meetings/Discernment Process, December TBD

See article, "From the UUC President", on page 3, for reference.

Membership Committee, December 1

Committee meeting is in the Westwood room, 11:00 a.m. to 12 noon. All are welcome.
Marty Thornton, Chair



UU Buddhist Fellowship, December 1 and 8



Location: Social Hall. Time: 7:00 p.m. Past experience with UUBF attendance indicates that the Christmas and New Year holiday season finds people busy with travel and family concerns and little time for Buddhist practice and discussion. As a consequence, we will meet for the FIRST TWO TUESDAYS, December 1 and December 8 and suspend UUBF meetings at UUC for rest of the month. I will show educational films about Buddhism featuring Robert Thurman and other notable academics. Depending on the interest of attendees, we may also show films about intentional communities and compassion to animals at other times ONLY IF a group of individuals appeal to me to do so. We may meet at my home or another's as we desire so as to allow space for other activities in the Patio Room at UUC.

Frank will be teaching two evening courses at USF in Tampa next term beginning January 11 so he will have less time to schedule weekly Tuesday UUBF meetings until the end of May. We may have monthly meetings but time and place has yet to be determined. Consider Frank a "Buddhist consultant-minister on call" to answer questions you may have about Buddhist traditions, blessings of animals, Buddhist marriage, trauma and PTSD counseling, hospice and Buddhist funeral services.

Don't forget the opening of the Rissho Kosei-kai at UUC Sunday December 13 at 5:00 p.m. in the Patio Room. It will be a wonderful opportunity to learn about and participate in a modern development in Buddhist history right at home! Rev. Nicolas Ozuna has much to offer the community in the future and deserves the encouragement of your presence at the ceremony. The guest speaker Rev. Dr. Gene Reeves is a long term UU leader and astute translator of the extraordinary Lotus Sutra. It will be a special treat to hear what he has to say at the opening event.

And don't forget the IARF conference at UUC in January! For any questions about the UU Buddhist Fellowship, contact Frank at (727) 391-1152; truedharma108@gmail.com. See www.uubf.org for news at the national level.

Women's Night Out, December 3

The next dinner will be held December 3 at 7:00 p.m. at the Thirsty Marlin in historic downtown Palm Harbor. The Thirsty Marlin is a little bit of Key West right here in Pinellas County. The address is 1023 Florida Avenue, 34683. More information is available on the website at www.thirstymarlin.com. **Please RSVP by Tuesday, December 1 to kathyrosenberger@tampabay.rr.com.**



Readers' Forum, Fridays, December 4, 11, and 18

Join us for coffee and lively book discussion. Starting December 4, from 10:00 to 11:30 am in the Chorale Room (located behind the sanctuary) and continuing December 11 and 18, the group is reading the book *Living Without God* by Ronald Aronson. The author has a mission: to demonstrate that a life without religion can be coherent, moral, and committed. In the last few years, the "New Atheists" - Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett, Richard Dawkins, and Christopher Hitchens - have created a stir by criticizing religion and the belief in God. Aronson moves beyond the discussion of what we should not believe, proposing contemporary answers to Immanuel Kant's three great questions: What can I know? What ought I to do? What can I hope? Grounded in the sense that we are deeply dependent and interconnected beings who are rooted in nature, history, society, and the global economy, *Living Without God* explores the issues of 21st-century secularists. Reflecting on such perplexing questions as why are we grateful for life's gifts, who or what is responsible for inequalities, and how to live in the face of aging and dying, *Living Without God* is less interested in attacking religion than in developing a positive philosophy for atheists, agnostics, secular humanists, skeptics, and freethinkers. Books are available after worship services in the UUC Social Hall and at the Friday Readers Forum sessions. Leaders: Catherine & John Conover. Cost: \$20 (\$5 if you already have the book); No registration required to be part of the Readers Forum, just come along.

Events in December and Beyond (continued)

Art Show Reception, December 4

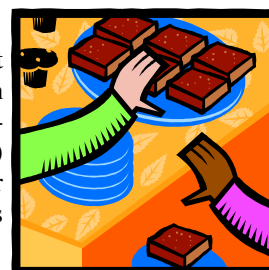
"Evolving" the current art show by Shirley Frank will have a reception Friday, December 4, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Shirley will have a short artist's talk about her art at 7:45 p.m. She taught many years in the Pinellas County School District and at the Gulf Coast Art Center in Belleaire. There will be refreshments and entertainment by the UUC Folk Circle. Giclee on canvas reproductions of the paintings of the mother and grandmother of Felicity Coddington, our previous art show, are still available for sale. Contact Charlene Carnes, Art Committee chairperson, for details, (727) 789-3536.

Sixth Annual West Central Cluster Holiday Service, December 10

UU Holiday Radio Special! Our Ultra Low Power Radio Station will broadcast once again within the walls of the Tarpon Springs Unitarian Universalist beginning at 7:00 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Church of Tarpon Springs, 230 Grand Blvd. A Holiday Celebration like No Other! Featuring Joyful Music of the Season, the Famous Cluster Players. Surprises Galore! Bring socks and underwear for children. Bring a Holiday Treat to Share. Childcare provided.

Holiday "Open House," December 12

The annual UUC Holiday Open House will be held Saturday evening, December 12 starting at 6:00 p.m., at the home of Jeannie and Chuck Shimer at 14190 Valentine Trail, Largo. Valentine Trail is west off Indian Rocks Road. Drinks and entrees (including vegetarian) will be provided. Please bring a side dish or appetizer. Directions from UUC: right (west) onto Nursery Road; left (south) onto Belcher Road; right (west) onto East Bay Drive; left (south) onto Indian Rocks Road; and right (west) onto Valentine Trail. Number 14190 is on the second SE corner of Valentine and Shawnee Trail. Park on Shawnee. It is about 20 minutes from UUC. If you need more directions, contact Jeannie at (727) 517-3801 or jeannieshimer@aol.com.



Holiday Bake Sale, December 13



For this Fun, Festive Fundraiser, everyone is invited to create and bring in their favorite home made goodies. Make your favorite recipes to share with the congregation like cakes, cookies, pies, breads, brownies, jams, etc. Pack the items in small, air tight plastic bags tied with a colorful ribbon and **bring them** to the Social Hall Saturday, December 12 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or Sunday, December 13 from 8:30 a.m. on. These delicious goodies will then be sold in the Social Hall after worship services on Sunday, December 13. This day is also an opportunity for easy, reasonable, holiday shopping for you for gifts for your family, teachers, friends, and neighbors. Help is needed with selling and packing on the morning of sale, December 13. Contact Anneliese Ekberg (727) 531-2219 or donek97@verizon.net

Grand Opening RKK Dharma Center, December 13

Twenty-five hundred years ago in Bodhgaya, India, while sitting under a bodhi tree, Siddartha Gautama became enlightened to the reality of nature. From there, he went on to teach five ascetics in a place called Deer Park the very truths to which he had become enlightened. He became known as the Buddha, or awakened one, and this teaching marked the beginning of Buddhism. Many people think that after his enlightenment the Buddha immediately went to expound the wisdom of the universe; however, this is not the case. Instead, the time between his enlightenment and his teaching of the Dharma, an extensive period of preparation was necessary for him to know just how to express these unfathomable truths.

Last month Rissho Kosei-kai (RKK) of Tampa Bay had its enshrinement ceremony. It was an event that was expressed as opening the eyes of the Dharma in the Tampa Bay area -- an awakening. However, an awakening alone without dissemination is futile. In the same way, hasty dissemination without preparation is just as ineffective. With this in mind, we at RKK have been making our best efforts practically and mentally to prepare for the upcoming Grand Opening of our services, scheduled for December 13 at 5:00 p.m. This also marks the same week in which the Buddha became enlightened 2,500 years ago.

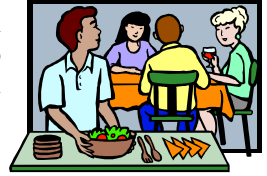
The Grand Opening will be held in the RKK Dharma Center in the Patio room and will include a prayer service, meditation, and special Dharma Talk by Dr. Gene Reeves, a renowned scholar on the Lotus Sutra and former president of the UU Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago. Refreshments and small gifts will also be offered, so please come and join us on this "GRAND" occasion and help us welcome in a new form of Buddhism to Tampa Bay....Buddhism for Today.

— Nicholas Ozuna

Events in December and Beyond (continued)

Christmas Day Potluck Dinner, December 25

Join the Janamanchis and your fellow UUs for a sumptuous holiday dinner at 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. in the Social Hall. Please sign-up to bring a dish to feed 10 people. Sign-up sheets will be in the Social Hall after worship services starting Sunday, December 6. For more information or to volunteer to help, call Lalitha Janamanchi at (727) 723-7252 or email lalithajy@gmail.com.



SWIM, December 26 to January 1

SWIM is the Southeast Winter Institute in Miami. Join us for a week of fun, fellowship and worship between Christmas and New Years Day. Enjoy a low-cost vacation in the South Florida sun with like-minded UUs and kindred spirits. Choose from a wide variety of workshops to relax, reflect and stimulate your mind. Outdoor adventures feature the unique beauty of the Florida Everglades and range from strenuous to relaxing. We provide special programs for children, teens and young adults. Dec 26 – Jan 1. Great news! The price of SWIM has dropped by \$25 for adults from last year. And the price for children and teens is also lower. Adults \$425, Teens \$298, Children \$194. For more information and to register, go to <http://www.swimuu.org/Home.html>. SWIM had been hosted by Camp Owaissa Bauer for three decades but had to be relocated to temporary quarters while renovations were being done over the last three years. Now we are back at Owaissa Bauer and enjoying the weatherized cabins, attached bathrooms, refurbished and accessible bath house, plenty of camping, paved walkways, and major kitchen and dining hall improvements including air conditioning and heat. Four of the six cabins have been renovated and are handicapped-accessible, have AC, lavatories, and new furnishings. There is tent camping in a grassy field for the more adventurous. Marianne Davis (727-734-9136) and Dotti Terpening (727-532-1610) are the Contact Points for SWIM and will be glad to answer any of your questions.

PSI, December 27

Meetings are the fourth Sunday of every month in the Patio Room starting at 12:30 p.m. For additional information, contact Roberta Watson, (813) 251-2991.

December 27 – We will show the 1-hour DVD "Conversations About Oneness," starring Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee and his son.

January 31 – Marcella Zinner will lead a discussion on "What is Past Life Regression? Why it is important and how we can heal our blocks and struggles." Helpful guidance on how one can access memories that may be the reasons for difficulties with health, relationships, career, and prosperity today.

February 28 – Susan Golden will lead the discussion on music healing, based on www.WisdomoftheWorld.com.

U.S. Chapter IARF Conference at UUC, January 14-17, 2010

Three Reasons YOU might want to know NOW about the IARF Conference: (1) By volunteering to do what you love to do, you will help generate a little income for UUC as the host for this event. (Volunteers are needed to serve meals, work at wine & cheese receptions, home host, transport, help with registration, and on-site last-minute whatever needs to be done people). (2) You can register now to hear amazing speakers from around the world and interact with people from other faiths in our community. Early bird registration will save you \$25. (3) By helping spread the word now, we can be sure that others we know who may be interested in religious freedom and reconciliation will have a chance to attend.

Here's a bit of information about the Conference: 'Reconciliation with the Earth, Each Other and the Stranger'

U.S. Chapter of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF), January 14 – 17, 2010. Some of the speakers and presenters are: ► Rev. Abhi Janamanchi, former President of the U.S. Chapter of IARF; ► Mr. Thomas Mathew, IARF Council President from India; ► Dr. Paul Rasor, Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies; Director of the Study of Religious Freedom at Virginia Wesleyan College; author of *Faith Without Certainty: Liberal Theology in the 21st Century*; ► Dr. William Schulz, Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress in D.C.; former E.D. of Amnesty International USA; former UUA President; author of *In Our Own Best Interest: How Defining Human Rights Benefits All of Us and Tainted Legacy: 9/11 and the Ruin of Human Rights*; ► Dr. Hal French, Preston Emeritus Professor of the University of South Carolina, Dept. of Religious Studies; serves on advisory boards of International Center in Oxford, England and the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN); author of *Zen and the Art of Anything*; ► Rev. Jopie Boeke (U.K) and Kathy Matsui (Japan) from the International Association of Liberal Religious Women. (IALRW); ► Dr. Mozella Mitchell, University of South Florida, re: racial reconciliation; ► Irene Keim, UU Ministry for Earth.

(Schedule, fees, registration information and form, volunteer information and form, etc. are available on the UUC website. You can also contact Denise Seeber at (727) 474-2647 or Denise_Seeber@tampabay.rr.com for information.

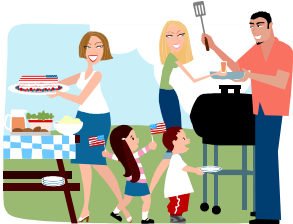
Events in December and Beyond (continued)

Stewardship Kickoff Carnival/BBQ, February 27, 2010

Each year we take a month to celebrate the stewardship that keeps UUC a vibrant congregation. As the co-chair of the Stewardship Committee I, Owen Thompson, thought I should find out more about stewardship. Naturally I went to the Internet and found that stewardship has a long religious heritage and is a strong component of many of the main-stream religions. For example, a Lutheran site defines stewardship as “giving *ones time, talents and treasure for the unconditional love, salvation and grace of God*” and endorses *Biblical Tithing*: giving one tenth of income for the work of God. I smiled when the article noted that giving time and talents seems natural while giving treasure is more difficult.

Our UUC stewardship is also a sacred responsibility - to support and nurture the resources of people, property and finances that enable us to meet our UUC goals and to make progress towards our visions. Our job as the Stewardship committee is to raise your awareness of the programs and activities that make UUC such a strong religious community that meets not only individual spiritual needs but social needs and the desire to make a difference through our lives. We will provide information on resources that support our programs and activities including where the money comes from and how it is spent.

A key part of the Stewardship Celebration is the annual renewal of pledges. The UUC principles do not include Biblical tithing but we do want every person to look carefully at what UUC means to them, what is needed to maintain UUC, and how each individual contributes their time, talent and treasure. We, the Stewardship Committee will do our best to have you fully informed.



The Stewardship Celebration is started with a kickoff event for the entire congregation to gather for fellowship and, of course, good food, drink and entertainment, in appreciation of everything UUC means to us. In past years we had an evening event for adults. With the large increase in the number of children in the congregation this year our kickoff event will be an afternoon **Carnival/BBQ for the entire congregation to celebrate together on Saturday, February 27, 2010, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.** This will be another opportunity for building relationships irrespective of age, length of membership, employment or any other differences there might be.

For the Carnival/BBQ we will get a DJ/announcer with sound system and music; trailer grill for cooking various meats, delicious support dishes, including vegetarian, by Cook Team leader Helga Reeves, carnival-type games for kids, perhaps a bounce house and a clown with balloons, along with entertainment by our own UUC musicians, and adult-participation events. All who would like to be part of making this exciting event happen should contact one of us. Everyone else should just plan to come and celebrate.

Owen Thompson, (410) 730-3494; theowenthompson@gmail.com, co-chair, along with Bill Snell, (727) 596-7123; wescon@tampabay.rr.com, co-chair, Stewardship Committee

All Congregation Retreat, March 12-14, 2010

Remember to mark your 2010 Calendars for UUC's first "All-Congregation Retreat" at Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center in Lithia, FL which is about an hour away. To get a preview of the potential this facility promises go to: www.cedarkirk.org



SUUSI, July 18-24, 2010

Are you looking for a great, affordable experience for you and/or your family, one with lots of adventures and filled with friends? If so, then come to SUUSI! July 18-24 2010. www.suusi.org. Sign-up for a FREE catalog! www.suusi.org/catalogrequest

THIS IS THE LAST OCTAGRAM CREATED BY NANCY WARNER

Thank you to everyone who helped produce the last 53 issues! The new editor is new member Karen Witham. The format for the *Octagram* will change, but the spirit will stay the same. Please give her your full support.



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OCTAGRAM

**The Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalists
Of Clearwater and the Octagon Arts Center**

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**DO YOU HAVE A COMMENT OR A
QUESTION RELATING TO THE
MINISTER OR MINISTRY?**

If so, please contact one of the Members of
the Congregational Committee on Ministry:

Elly Kelly Baker 848-7910
Jenn Bouchie 470-9422
Pat McGiverin 771-1529
Lucille Odeneal 743-1304
Eliseo Santana 366-7106
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*Please send OCTAGRAM submissions by email to
Octagram@uuclearwater.org. Deadline for each
month's issue is midnight of the third Sunday of the
month prior to the month of issue.*

**Sunday Worship Service
information is on centerfold.**

Visit: www.uuclearwater.org