



Open Minds & Open Hearts

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill

Volume 55, Number 10
February 2012

A Month of Sundays

All services begin at 10:15 a.m. unless otherwise noted

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Consulting Minister:

Rev. Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn

Ministerial Intern: Jennifer Kelleher

Music Director: Ken Ewan

Office Secretary: Kathy Wilson

Staff Hours Listed on Page 5

February 5

**Where Science and Religion Meet
Rev. Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn**

The Rev. Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn looks at how evolution has become a meeting place for scientists and theologians in a time when theology and religion are often portrayed as having no common ground.

February 12

**Looking for Love . . . ?
Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti**

This weekend before Valentine's Day we reflect on the nature of love in our personal lives and in our community. How does the yearning for love inspire us and guide us? Join us as Rev. Mishra-Marzetti leads us in reflection on this topic. This Sunday we will be holding a special Staff Recognition Ceremony as part of our worship service. Please note that a Program Council meeting will also follow our worship service at 12:15pm.

**February 19
Extraterrestrial Musings**

**Do Martians Believe in God? And Other
Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti**

Join us this Sunday as Rev. Mishra-Marzetti leads us in worship on the theme of our 2012 church auction: outer-space! (FYI, the annual auction will be held the evening of Saturday 2/25). We promise this service will be over-the-moon! You won't want to miss it!



February 26

**Fasting as a Spiritual Practice
Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti & Rev. Marta Flanagan**

We are all hungry people. Usually we fill our hungers with food, with drink, with distractions like television, with busyness. But these do not ultimately satisfy us. Fasting is a time-honored spiritual discipline that puts us in touch with the deeper hungers within us. This Sunday we explore this spiritual practice as guest preacher Rev. Marta Flanagan joins Rev. Mishra-Marzetti in leading us in worship. Rev. Flanagan is Minister at the UU Church in Arlington, MA, and a trained Spiritual Director. We are delighted by this special opportunity to hear from her, and hope you will join us.

Reflections for the Journey

Reverend Manish Mishra-Marzetti, MMishra@aol.com

A few hours before sitting down to write this newsletter column I found out that my 18 year-old Siamese cat, Sacha, was euthanized today after being diagnosed with failing kidneys. Sacha was my first cat, and only the second pet I had ever had. Sacha's Mom was a traveling cat in a Russian circus that was passing through Muscat, Oman (in the Persian Gulf). She had given birth and her kittens stayed behind as the troupe traveled on. Sacha was the most rambunctious kitten in the litter, which at the time, not knowing any better, I had decided was a good thing (I had no idea what hell-on-wheels hyperactive kittens can be!). He became my buddy as I first navigated spending two years of my life in the Gulf, and then later, two years in Helsinki, Finland. He was truly an international cat—one that even had a spiritual side! I learned, after Sacha was already a part of my family, that Siamese cats are kept as honored guests in Buddhist shrines and temples in Thailand. That spiritual connection somehow felt right and good.

Sacha's fate became enmeshed in the realities of divorce, as so many of us have experienced with pets and more significantly with children. I had asked, some years ago, for a divorce from my ex-partner of eleven years, and felt so guilt-ridden about needing to do so that I didn't want to make a fuss over where the pets went. I knew he would probably want to keep some or all of the pets (we had three), and so I made the best decision I could at the time. I decided that Sacha would be better off staying with his playmates, and that both my ex and I would be better off not arguing about this. And, so all the pets stayed with my ex. It was the right decision, but also a heart-wrenching one. I had raised Sacha as a kitten, he had spent the majority of his life with me in it, and yet I knew that the day may come, as it did today, that he would die and I might not be by his side.

I have come to appreciate over the years that the death of a pet is, in one way, a very personal thing. It's so different from the death of a human being in your life. With the people we have loved there are often many others who loved those individuals as well. Human deaths potentially affect many. But with pets, the circle of folks for whom that pet is "family" tends to be small. It may just be you, and one or two others, who deeply connected with that pet and feel the emotional nature of that loss. Add on top of that the certain degree of self-consciousness many of us feel when we are grieving over the death of a pet—some unspoken cultural message tells us we should not be grieving as deeply for an animal as we might for a person. And, yet, for those who have truly loved a pet, the pain is just as real, and can be just as deep. So, often we grieve quietly, privately, each in our own way.

In the moments after learning of Sacha's death I had this intense experience of wondering if I might see him again someday. People who've had near-death experiences say that they saw in their visions or experiences loved ones and/or pets that had passed away. I wondered if I would see Sacha again when I died. Ironically, I realized that I'm the type of professional most people would turn to for an answer to that type of question. And yet I haven't the faintest clue. It felt deeply comforting to think that I might, and I might just choose to believe that as I try to fall asleep tonight.

February is a month during which we often reflect on the concept of love in our lives. I'm reminded that such love isn't exclusively from human sources. Many of us have deeply meaningful friendships/companionships with the animals in our lives. It's in the spirit of that love that I dedicate this month's column to Sacha and all the Sachas in our lives. May his soul/spirit/essence rest in peace and abide in love.

Much love and appreciation, Rev. Manish.



Affirmations of the Spirit

Jennifer Kelleher, Ministerial Intern, jelleher@meadville.edu

Jennifer is on study leave attending classes at Meadville for the month of January.

She will return on February 1.

R E S O U R C E



Religious Education News

Reverend Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn, revja@aol.com

February is a wonderful time for families. In a typical winter, February is when we are finding ourselves getting a bit stir crazy from time trapped indoors by the cold weather outside. This year we have had the good fortune to have unseasonably warm weather, which means many of us have continued to enjoy time outdoors. As the cold finally settles in, we find ourselves seeking ways to keep our minds, bodies and spirits invigorated. Some of the best results for staving off the creeping blahs of winter come from keeping our spirits fresh, and one of the best ways I know to do that is through guided meditations. I am particularly fond of guided meditations in which I envision places and experiences that restore my soul's longing for the great out-of-doors. For me, personally, there is a dock on a small private pond in western Massachusetts that I visit regularly in my meditations. It is typically a bright summer afternoon when the leaves of the trees surrounding the pond are vivid shades of green in the late afternoon sun. There are frogs croaking deeply, and the sounds of insects and fish making bubbling sounds on the surface of the water; even just a few moments of envisioning that spot relaxes me. When I can envision myself swimming in the cold, spring-fed water after lounging in the hot sun, I relax even more. No matter how young or old we are, there are wonderful places that we can envision that help our bodies, minds, and spirits recharge. This type of guided meditation can even help us relax muscles that are tight from being cooped up, so it is great on an afternoon or evening when a cold has gotten you down . . . I look forward to hearing about the special places you choose to travel to in meditations this winter!

See you in church! Rev. Julie-Ann

CREC Subcommittees

The Children's Religious Education Committee (CREC) has decided that the best way to achieve its goals is to create subcommittees to take on some of the work that makes the program so successful. Two of the subcommittees we are recruiting for are OWL—Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education, and Curriculum.

If you are interested in serving on either of these committees or joining CREC, please let Congregation Member or Rev. Julie-Ann know of your interest.

Loss Support Group

A loss support group will begin meeting **Thursday, February 2 at 7 p.m. in the Horsch room**, and will continue to meet on alternate Thursdays. This is a group for people struggling emotionally with any significant life-implicating loss, such as the death of a loved one, the end of a marriage or long-term romantic relationship, or the loss of a job. All of these losses can precipitate grieving, which requires a process of healing that is challenging and can be lengthy. Various ways to cope with grief will be discussed at length with the help of parishioner and professional therapist Congregation Member. This group is confidential in nature and conversations which take place in the group are not intended to be shared outside of the group.

Please contact Rev. Julie-Ann with questions.

(Continued on next page)

Start-up Seminar

On Saturday, February 18 the Rev. Libby Smith will facilitate a Start-up seminar for the Rev. Julie-Ann's ministry here at UUCCH. The members of all committees that work directly with Rev. Julie-Ann are encouraged to participate. Other members of the

church who would like to have a voice in shaping the working relationship between Rev. Julie-Ann and the UUCCH community are encouraged to participate as well.

Please let Kathy in the church office know if you plan to attend or would like more information.

In Other News....

Recently, I was re-reading all the many cards of support I received from church members and friends when I was hospitalized in October, and I was filled once again with a huge sense of gratitude for the support I received from this beloved community. In addition to the many cards, I received delicious homemade meals and soups delivered to my home, and many phone calls and visits. I felt so supported by all of you and that meant so much to me and to Gordon. Thank you for everything. How could I have done this without you? No way!

Congregation Member, *UUCCH Member*

Worship Survey

In order to best serve our church community, we would like to learn more about what types of worship experiences you find interesting and engaging. Please email your response to Congregation Member or return it to the church office.

1. What personal spiritual questions are of interest to you?
2. What are the compelling or pressing questions of our time?

~ Congregation Member, Worship Committee

SEND US YOUR NEWS

Via web at <http://uucch.org/newslettersubmissions> or via email at uucchnl@gmail.com or via the "Newsletter" box in the church office

NEXT DEADLINE:
February 19 for March 1 mailing

Editors: Congregation Membera

Production & Circulation: Kathy Wilson

Mailing Volunteers:
Congregation Members



Music Notes



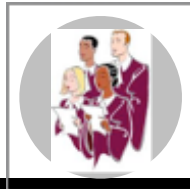
Music Notes

Ken Ewan, Music Director, kewan783@comcast.net

The end of February each year offers a great opportunity for our JPD churches. This year the JPD Worship Arts Festival will be held at the UU Church of Rockville, Maryland on Friday, February 24 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00p.m. and will resume on Saturday, February 25 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. As the name implies, the Worship Arts Festival has grown into an all-encompassing experience for the lay leader as well as the professional worship presenter. Its original intent was to offer ideas for growth and planning for the music organization of the church, but the scope has broadened to include elements of dance, drama, art, organizational matters, and a more comprehensive approach to the interconnectedness of all the facets of worship. This vital and dynamic concept has folks excited and is yielding some positive results. The festival also now includes a guest speaker. This year the Reverend Carol Howard Merritt will be sharing ideas from one of her several books, *Reframing Hope: Vital Ministry in the New Generation*. The festival is hosted in different church locations each year, and I am VERY pleased to tell you that UUCCH will be the host for 2013! UUCCH last hosted in 2004 with the festival back in its beginnings.

I encourage you to have a look, and if possible, come. Many of our UUCCH musicians attend each year and take home some good "food for thought" . . . and as you might imagine, there is a great deal of inspirational music; I regularly lead a workshop and some singing. Information is available on the JPD website. I will be glad to supply you with any additional information (kewan783@comcast.net or 609-413-1380).

~ Ken Ewan



Staff Hours

Senior Minister, Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti's Work Hours

Monday - Thursday: noon - 9p.m.

Appointments recommended. Please email (MMishra@aol.com) or call Rev. Mishra-Marzetti to set up a date/time at cell: 856-701-9302

Consulting Minister, Rev. Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn

Rev. Julie-Ann's office hours for this fall

Tuesday and Wednesday 2 p.m. - 7p.m.

Thursday and Friday 10 a.m - 1p.m.

And always by appointment

She can be reached at 203-231-8243

revja@aol.com

Ministerial Intern Jennifer Kelleher's Primary Work Hours

Tuesdays: 1 - 8 p.m.

Wednesdays: 2 - 9 p.m.

Appointments recommended. Please email (jkelleher@meadville.edu) to set a date/time.

Music Director Ken Ewan Office Hours:

Mondays: 2 - 6 p.m.: Greater SJ Chorus rehearsal **6:30 - 10 p.m.**

Wednesdays: 1 - 7 p.m.: Choir rehearsal **7:30 - 9:30 p.m.**

Thursdays: 1 - 5 p.m.

Office Secretary, Kathy Wilson's Office Hours:

Monday - Friday: 9 a.m. — 3 p.m.

From the Board of Trustees

What's New with the Board of Trustees (BOT)?

At the January 2012 Board of Trustees meeting, Board members put to use their skills in implementing Policy Governance. Instead of having long discussions about how every dollar should be spent, discussions centered on setting policy and implementing vision.

The creation of a Leadership Development Task force was discussed to help the church to identify, nurture, and support new and established leaders in the church. The improvement in the capacity of identifying new member skills has been discussed many times, but the BOT imagines that this process can be brought to full use through this new Task Force. Look for future progress on this new venture.

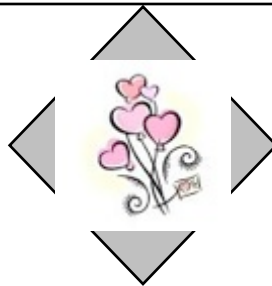
Rev. Manish brought to the Board's attention a new grant that is available to the church called Threshold Congregations. The new regional district structure of the UUA will provide staff time to selected congregations to work on a variety of growth strategies. A new effort called Beloved Communities, an extension of the work already began by Ministerial Intern Jennifer Kelleher titled Beloved Conversations, is envisioned. A proposal will be finalized in the next month.

A limitations waiver was adopted by the Board to allow Rev. Manish to extend an invitation to a new Ministerial Intern for the next church year. As the current intern is supported through money that was raised outside the annual church budget, the Board needed to address the issue of obligating funds that have not been already approved. After a recommendation by Rev. Manish and consultation with Lay Minister Leader Congregation Member, who is responsible for Finance and the Finance Committee, the Board approved the one time waiver.

Finalization of a new contract for Consulting Minister Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn was also completed for her review. The terms of the new contract, that will begin July 1, 2012, establishes Rev. Julie-Ann as an Associate Minister with UUCCH. No additional financial incentives were added.

The Ministerial Evaluation Task Force reported that a survey has been sent to 102 members with a 65% response rate. The task force is culling the responses for themes and hopes to have a report ready for the March Board meeting.

~ Congregation Member, BOT



After the Service February Offerings

February 5 at 12:15 p.m. in **Hillside H202**, UUs and World Affairs will be featuring a discussion of "The Rise of China" led by Congregation Member.

February 12 at 12:15 p.m. in **Classroom C102**, Anthropological Approaches to Religion will discuss Warren Jeffs.

~ Congregation Member



Programs & Events

On Friday, **February 10 at 7:00 p.m.**, The Green Team presents the Oscar Nominated film, *GasLand*.

In this film, director Josh Fox journeys across America to examine the negative effects of natural gas drilling: from poisoned water sources, to kitchen sinks that burst into flame, to unhealthy animals and people. "Fracking" for natural gas is an issue for the Delaware Valley and Pennsylvania, and is one of the issues the environmental group of the New Jersey Legislative Ministry (UULMNJ) is addressing this year.

Bring your own drinks and snacks to share (if you wish).

After the film we will have a discussion of *GasLand* for those who wish to stay. For details about the film go to <http://www.gaslandthemovie.com/>. For more information about the event, call Congregation Member.

~ Congregation Member, The Green Team

Fifty Years Ago

From the February 1962 Newsletter (Vol. 6, No. 9): Peter Warburton reported to the Board that the Church Bookstore has been very successful and is gradually building an inventory. The Board voted to have all Church School classes take up an offering at each session in order to achieve a uniform program for all classes. Volunteers are needed to paint the R.E. building, with sessions scheduled for Saturdays until the job is finished. Bill Taylor, Property Chairman, is coordinating the project. A committee consisting of Ray Jubanyik, Bill Taylor, and Howard Boyd was appointed to formulate ground rules for the use of our new Fellowship Hall by outside organizations. The Adult Programs Department obtained nationally-known speakers for the Sunday Evening Lecture Series held at Unitarian House.

~ Congregation Member, UUCCH Archivist

Friday Morning Book Discussion Group

The Friday Morning Book Discussion Group will meet on Friday, **February 17 at 10:30 a.m. in the Horsch Room** to discuss *Shanghai Girls* by Lisa See. For more information, please contact Congregation Member.

~ Congregation Member,
The Friday Morning Book Discussion Group

Sanctuary to view ONE. The Movie on February 15

Sanctuary will meet on **Wednesday, February 15, at 7:15 p.m. in the Horsch Room** for its first-ever movie night, featuring a screening of ONE. The Movie. This 2005 documentary film, created by first-time filmmakers Ward and Diane Powers, asks a broad cross-section of humanity—including "everyday people" as well as Deepak Chopra, Robert Thurman, Ram Dass, Thich Nhat Hanh, Father Thomas Keating, Mantak Chia, and the Dalai Lama—life's ultimate questions. "Seeking to increase awareness of the connections we all share, remind us of our similarities, [and] celebrate our differences . . . ONE reminds us that we are all on a journey to better understand ourselves and our connections with others, as well as our ultimate truth, meaning and destiny." All are welcome; please join us at 7:15 p.m., slightly earlier than usual, to accommodate the movie's running time.

~ Congregation Member, Sanctuary

Everyday Spiritual Practice Discussion Group

At the February meetings of the *Everyday Spiritual Practice* Discussion Group, we will discuss the essay, "Yoga" (pp. 125-130).

Each month we pick one of the 38 essays from *Everyday Spiritual Practice* and meet to talk about it and draw out its implications for our lives. To accommodate people's differing schedules, we have two monthly meeting times: (1) the third Thursday evening of each month and (2) the third Saturday morning of each month.

No preparation is necessary for these meetings—we read the essay aloud before we discuss it and have copies of it available for those who don't have the book. All are invited, please join us!

The February meeting times are:

- **Thursday, February 16, from 7:30—9:00 p.m. in the Horsch Room**
- **Saturday, February 18, from 10:00—11:30 a.m. in the Horsch Room**

You can purchase a copy of *Everyday Spiritual Practice* for \$10 at our book table in the Commons before and after Sunday services on February 12.

For questions, please contact Congregation Members.

~ Congregation Member, *Everyday Spiritual Practice* Discussion Group

Secular UUs Continue Discussion of UUA Seven Principles

Please join the Secular UUs at **7 p.m. on Tuesday, February 7, in the Horsch Room** for a discussion of the fourth principle: *A free and responsible search for truth and meaning*. All are welcome.

~Congregation Member, for Secular UU's

Countdown to 2012: A Space Auction

Scheduled for Blast Off **February 25!**

This year's auction is going to be out of this world with food, fun and fellowship.

New in 2012: the Children's Auction, where our little Jedi will enjoy their own intergalactic entertainment, games and snacks. **Tickets are just \$15 per adult, children are free**, but please send a note to Gina (guitarchic78@gmail.com) with your children's ages so we can plan for adult supervision and activities.

Calling all donations . . . Calling all donations . . . Come in donations! Our goal is \$20,000. We hope to raise an average of at least \$60 from each one of you!

Please make at least one donation to any of the following categories:

Voice/Silent Auction Item: A Dinner, a Party, Handmade Items, Art

Children's Auction: New or gently used items, valued up to \$50

Cargo-Bay Cleanout: Garage Sale items, valued under \$20. We'll price them for you!



Please get your donation form in by February 5:

1. Drop your form off at the Auction Table during coffee hour. Forms will be available each Sunday through 1/29
2. Fill your form out online at <http://uucch.org/annual-auction>
3. Write in your donation below and mail to: UUCCH-Auction, 401 North Kings Highway, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034

Your Name: _____ Tel #: _____ Email: _____

Item: _____ Minimum Asking Bid: _____

May the Force Be with You!

Your Fearless Auction Organizers:
Congregation Members

IMMEDIATE NEED for large baskets for making gift baskets, tins, and . . . the use of your monochrome laser printer

Thanks for your generosity, and, "May the force be with you."

~ Congregation Member, 2012 Auction Committee



Committee Corner

Social Justice Committee to Get Facelift

It's been two and a half years since I took the chair of the Social Justice Committee (alone for two years, with Congregation Member as my capable co-chair this last year). At the start of my tenure, we were charged by the Board of Trustees to identify a few areas in which the church could focus its social justice work. We decided on a democracy of passions, setting the tone for church members to pursue what they believed in and see what would evolve. This has happened, and in the end, the following major projects came to bear.

At the beginning of this process, we heard passionate concerns about the plight of women around the world. From this, we decided to direct David Kalkstein Memorial funds to bolster the efforts of a small UU Kiva Giving Team. As a result, our church is now lending over \$34,000 to Kiva, making us the number one UU church making Kiva microloans.

For years we have had a connection to the Cherry Hill Food Pantry, fostered by individuals, but with limited church-wide participation. To bolster involvement, the Social Justice committee arrived on the Food for the Fourth program, causing us to increase both our donations and our direct participation in the food pantry's efforts to feed the hungry in these economically desperate times.

Next, we expressed concern for the people of Camden, and saw the need for a vehicle to direct outreach work. We supported the expansion of COW to a year-round committee and fostered a partnership with Sacred Heart through St. Vincent de Paul.

Finally, we have maintained our commitment to LGBT work. We've supported marriage equality (an issue

which is now coming up again), organized the UU-wide Mazzoni Center project, and worked hard to welcome our transgender friends.

These major Social Justice Committee priorities have taken place while other social justice work—our Transylvania connection, the green sanctuary group, and other work on projects such as affordable housing and immigration reform – have also gone on.

Now that I've reviewed what has happened, let's talk about the future. The priorities have been set and the work is taking place, most of it now outside the social justice committee meetings. So what's next for Social Justice? What do you want your Social Justice Committee to look like? In fact, with so much already started, do we need a social justice committee at all? Should we be going to meetings every month or are we better served just doing social justice work? We don't know the answers, but we know we're at a crossroads as a social justice church. I am proud to look back and see all we have accomplished. Now is the time to look forward, and figure out where we want to go (and what are the best structures for us to get there).

For over two years, I've ended my articles with an invitation to join us at the next social justice committee meeting. I'm not doing that this month; we've canceled that meeting. Instead, look forward to news about a social justice mega meeting, perhaps a social justice retreat—scheduled at a commonly agreeable time to bring all interested parties to the table to map out the plan about where we plan to go next. Contact Congregation Member or me with your interest in participating in that meeting when it takes place.

~ Congregation Member, The Social Justice

Speakers in the Kitchen

Help is always needed in the kitchen on Sunday mornings, before, and during coffee hour. For those of you who hesitate because you don't want to miss the music and the sermon, know that Congregation Member has installed speakers in the kitchen so that all the music and sermon can be heard by those who are setting up for coffee hour.

~ Congregation Member, UUCCH Member

New Member Mentors

Have you heard about new member mentors? Mentors play an important role for our new members as they move into the UU community. A mentor may accompany a new member to coffee hour, be a resource for events and committees, as well as listening for ideas and interests that the new member might have. It is a special service to our church that the Welcoming Team asks of established members. If you would like more information about mentors, please contact Congregation Member.

~ Congregation Member, The Welcoming Team

Diaper Drive Update

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our St. Vincent's diaper drive. As of January 15 we collected 21 packages of diapers in various sizes and \$60.00 in cash. We will continue to collect diapers and children's clothing (up to teen sizes) to donate to the Clothes from the Heart Thrift Shop. These items can be left underneath the COW table in the Commons. In February we will be sending St. Vincent's a check from the David Kalkstein funds for their heat and rent assistance program. Check out the COW table and pick up a handout of volunteer opportunities available through St. Vincent's. If you have any questions about COW activities look for a COW committee member; we have a cow sticker on our nametags. All are welcome to our monthly meetings that are held on the 3rd Sunday of the month. Many hands and voices are needed to carry out our mission of outreach and social justice.

~ Congregation Member, COW Committee

Friends for Food News

One of the strong points in our church is its commitment to local social justice projects. One of these is The Cherry Hill Food Pantry which is run by the Cherry Hill Food & Outreach Council. We began in May 2006 with six churches and served 30 families. We are now a group of 12 religious congregations whose mission is to provide groceries to more than 800 families.

We are nonprofit and use volunteers to distribute donated food to our clients. If you would like to host a food drive, let us know. We also purchase food from Aldi's, Philabundance, and the Food Bank of South Jersey, which serves over 220 agencies. The money we raise goes to buy more food. Clients come once a month for food and can also get a meal, a blood pressure check, and diabetes testing. More nurses are needed. Our newest service will be the addition of social workers who will help alleviate other problems or needs our clients may have.

We are currently planning our yearly **Friends for Food Fundraiser on March 24** at Marion House on Kings Hwy. This year we will have a delicious buffet dinner (BYOB), band, auction, and a gift basket and money raffle. Please see Congregation Member to purchase dinner and/or raffle tickets. If you would like to donate items for the raffle (e.g. time at a vacation home) services or gifts, please also contact Congregation Member.

Congregation Member and I would like to thank this congregation for their generous support in our monthly food collections. Congregation Members have been the leaders of this successful venture, but we need more volunteers. This would require less than two hours of your time on the 4th Sunday of the month, receiving, sorting, and taking the food to the pantry just a couple of blocks away. We are so proud to represent our church in this important work.

~Congregation Member, *Social Justice and The Cherry Hill Food & Outreach Council*

Transylvania Trip Plans

For the first time, our summer visit to our partner church in the Transylvania section of Romania will be led by our minister, Manish Mishra-Marzetti. Eight other travelers (youth and adults are welcome) will round out the group. The visitors will stay in our partner church members' homes in Szekelyderzs, a traditional farming village. They will visit with the mostly Unitarian villagers and explore the historic fortress church. Get-togethers such as dances or picnics will give visitors and hosts a chance to get to know one another. There may be visits to the stunning underground salt mines and "Dracula's Castle" as well.

Manish's sermon on January 8, featuring Transylvania, helped inspire people to attend the Transylvania reception which followed that worship service. People who wish to make the trip to Transylvania are encouraged to contact Congregation member) as soon as possible to see if there are still openings, and to make plane reservations before the cost becomes prohibitive.

Our fundraising goal is to provide scholarship money so that people from our church who are passionate about visiting our partner church may visit regardless of possible financial difficulties. The **Transylvania Dinner on February 4 at 6 p.m.** is our current focus.

Because our partner church villagers are ethnic Hungarians, the menu will feature traditional Hungarian food, and includes appetizers, entrée, sides, wine, and desserts, as well as a movie. The cost is **\$35 per person**, and **tickets must be purchased in advance**. Everyone is encouraged to come for good food, socializing, entertainment, and to help fund our summer visit to Transylvania; please plan to attend.

This fundraiser follows a successful Christmas Transylvania calendar sale and a fall sale of mums.

~ Congregation Member, *The Transylvania Partnership Committee*

Imagine a service without music...

It's Sunday morning at UUCCH, but there's no prelude to set the tone. No hymns are sung. The offertory is taken in silence. There's no postlude to help illuminate the words shared during the service. For many of us, such a service would be missing a vital part of the spiritual experience: music. Music can reach us on a deeper level than any concept of the divine ever will.

While we're fortunate enough to have church members who volunteer their time and musical talents, UUCCH's music program wouldn't be what it is today without the efforts of our music director, Ken Ewan, and our accompanist, Natasha Steinmacher—paid professionals who contribute far more time and skill than they're compensated for.

Just as church membership is growing, so is the choir. As great as this is, more members means purchasing more music, which on average costs \$1.90 per copy. Less than you might think—until you multiply it by 30 choir members who sing up to 15 new pieces per year. Photocopying is an illegal alternative.

While our church has been experiencing significant growth, the music budget has not grown in proportion. In fact, in 2007 the music budget was cut in half, from \$8,000 to \$4,000, making it difficult to maintain the level of quality. It was only through the generosity of an anonymous congregant and

fundraising by the Music Committee that we were able to avoid cutting back on the invaluable services Natasha provides.

Last year, we were pleased to have the music budget restored to its previous level. However, given UUCCH's recent growth, \$8,000 is no longer enough to cover accompanist fees, sheet music purchases, supplies (i.e. choir stole fabric), and special musical event programming.

There was lots of praise for Vivaldi's Gloria at the last All Music Sunday. At present, however, the Gloria is the kind of program we can afford to do only once in a great while. Our ability to hire a professional group like the Fairmount Ensemble was due to the financial contribution of a church member; choir members reached into their own pockets to help cover the costs of the scores.

If the musical life of our church is important to you, please consider joining the Music Committee, which contrary to popular belief is not one and the same as the choir.

If you're interested in learning more, please join us at an upcoming meeting (normally the second Sunday of each month at noon in Hillside, room H201) or contact our committee chair, Congregation Member.

*~ Congregation Member,
The Music Committee*

For UUs, From UUs

Murray Grove News Update

Murray Grove Retreat and Renewal Center: Open year-round for your UU gatherings and family retreats. Visit our Facebook page to see Brooklyn UUs playing on our new ga-ga court. Copies of our new 8-minute DVD are now available.

Ocean County Cultural & Heritage Commission Musicians Legal Rights Workshop: Monday, February 6.

MUSICIANS/WRITERS: What rights do you retain when selling your written or musical piece? How about when putting your work on the internet? How do you protect your original work? Tracey Batt, Executive Director of New Jersey Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, will be facilitating this evening session on the legal rights of musicians and writers. Call or write us for more information.

Universalist Convocation: May 18-20

The annual gathering held "to explore and draw from the heritage of Universalist experience and faith to inform Unitarian Universalism today and help light its way toward the future" will be at Murray Grove this spring. Presenters include Rev. Richard Gilbert, Rev. Kalen Frisstad, and Rev. Rosemary Brae McNatt.

Don't miss our new quarterly electronic newsletter, the Hand-in-Hand! To receive it, email murraygrove@murraygrove.org, or call us!

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