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Sunday Program and Service Leader Schedule

6 September

9:00—Adult R. E.—Christian Sectarianism

10:40—**Norm Horofker** will be presenting a “Blending of the Waters Service.”

Service Leader—**Norm Horofker** Opener—**Chris Nix**

Closer—**Paul Lee** Greeters—**Tanya Davis & Mona Crawford**

13 September

9:00—Adult R. E.—Christian Sectarianism

10:40—**Rick Spradlin** and the youth will present a program “The Blind Men and the Elephant.”

Service Leader—**Rick Spradlin** Opener—**Paul Lee**

Closer—**Barry White** Greeters—**Marge Hall & Connie Ussery**

20 September

9:00—Adult R. E.—Christian Sectarianism

10:40—**Laura DeCastro**, a UU Minister will, deliver the morning sermon: “Giving Away the Plate.”

Service Leader—**Mona Crawford** Opener—**Barry White**

Closer—**Rick Spradlin** Greeters—**Barry White & Ann Newland**

27 September

9:00—Adult R. E.—Christian Sectarianism

10:40—**Clela Reed** will present a program entitled “Dancing on the Rim” (poetry about the human condition).

Service Leader—**Paul Lee** Opener—**Rick Spradlin**

Closer—**Pat Hart** Greeters—**Nancy Awtrey & Nikki Rohrs**

Happy Birthday!



2 Sept.	Kayla Spradlin	16 Sept.	Julie Bouchard
6 Sept.	Sidney Wilson	22 Sept.	Don Nahley
9 Sept.	Dixie Turman	22 Sept.	Ron Ussery
		26 Sept.	Shaun Tarkington

Blending of the Waters Norm Horofker

As you will note in this month’s program schedule, we will be having a “Blending of the Waters Service” on September 6, 2009. Many UU congregations do this service each fall to mark the end of the summer and a resumption of our regular routines. This service will center around the mixing of samples of water that have been brought back by members from their travels. My contribution for example will come from Silver Beach on the shores of Lake Superior. If you are bringing a sample of water and would like to have a picture of the location included in the service, just e-mail a copy to me, or give me a call and I can scan a photo if you only have a hard copy. Contact me if you have any other suggestions or readings related to water or to the location where you gathered a sample. Norman Horofker: nhorofker@aol.com or phone: 706-577-3130 (cell).

President's Notes from Board Meeting on August 24, 2009 by John Nix

1. The next Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 21, 2009 at 7:00 PM.
 2. The next Friday night movie on August 28 at 7:00 PM will be "Fat Man and Little Boy," suggested by John Studstill. Movie relates to development of nuclear power, and it is in keeping with our theme for the month, "War and Peace." The Friday night movie on September 25 will be "Liberia: An Uncivil War" (suggested by Ron Ussury).
 3. We are making good progress on putting together an Administrative Handbook for our Fellowship. The idea is to record various job descriptions and procedures in one place so that we can more easily make transitions and gradually improve our administration. When our draft is completed, we plan to make it available to the membership for review and suggestions for improvements.
 4. Treasurer's Report -
 - (a) We were "in the black" in the amount of \$431.26 in our operational account for the month of July 2009.
 - (b) The Board previously approved a plan to donate whatever amount was collected on the third Sunday of each month to a local charity on a three-month trial basis, June - August 2009. Non-pledge amounts collected on third Sundays included \$217 for June, \$345 for July, and \$112 for August. The Board determined to continue indefinitely this program of donating to local charities the non-pledge collections from the third Sunday of each month.
 - (c) Letters have been sent out to all members who have signed pledges indicating the amounts paid to date. This is an attempt to make certain that we have given everyone credit for all contributions made pursuant to their pledges.
 5. Budget Committee Report: The Board approved the recommendation of the Budget Committee to modify our yearly budget to move \$2,400 from the amount budgeted for Child Care to Programs (\$2,000) and Conferences (\$400). The funds budgeted have not been used for Child Care, and the money is needed to insure we maintain quality programs (we pay for outside speakers and travel) and to help with expenses related to attendance of our representatives at UUA conferences.
 6. Religious Education:
 - (a) The Adult RE will have one final session on its series on Buddhism, "Buddhism in America," on Sunday, August 30. Rick Spradlin next plans to offer five sessions on "Sectarianism in Christianity," beginning September 6. The Adult RE meets at 9:15 AM prior to our regular service.
 7. Decor: We hope our decorations reflect our interests and style:
 - (a) The Buddha print will soon be returned to its usual place in our service area. Norm Horofker agreed to repair the frame. (Displaying a print of Buddha reflects our interest and respect for other religions.)
 - (b) Tanya Davis will take steps to frame a copy of "The Earth." (This photo of the Earth from outer space reminds of the "web of all existence of which we are a part."), The Board approved the expenditure of \$50.00 for this purpose.
- *Members may contact our administrator, Brenda Stevens, to obtain a copy of the official minutes for this meeting.

Joys and Concerns

Congratulations to Dick McMichael on his reporting of Lt. Calley being picked up by news agencies world wide.

The Fellowship would like to welcome two new members William and Van Ely. They joined to Fellowship recently. Will is in the Army and was born and reared in Seattle, Washington. His wife Van was born and reared in Huntsville, Alabama.

Remember the members of our Fellowship who have not been in attendance on Sundays because of health concerns, in your thoughts and prayers.

Pride Celebration

You are invited to participate in the upcoming UU celebration at the Pride Festival in Piedmont Park, Atlanta the weekend of October 31 to November 1st. Whether you are interested in showing your smiling face as a volunteer at the Georgia UU booth, marching in the Pride parade, working the event to raise money for the 2010 UU Pride, or simply lending your support by attending. There's room for all! You can contact Tricia Page at wrknprogrez@yahoo.com or 404-374-6922 if you are interested in lending your support for any of the UU events planned in conjunction with the celebration. The Pride Festival is one of the annual events that focus on the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. The annual Black Pride event is being held on the Labor Day weekend in Atlanta.

He Who Loves Also Worships

Sermon originally given by Rick Spradlin on March 30, 2008.

Out of the night that covers me,
 Black as the pit from pole to pole,
 I thank whatever gods may be
 For my unconquerable soul.
 In the fell clutch of circumstance
 I have not winced nor cried aloud.
 Under the bludgeoning of chance
 My head is bloody, but unbowed.
 Beyond this place of wrath and tears
 Looms but the horror of the shade,
 And yet the menace of the years
 Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.
 It matters not how straight the gate,
 How charged with punishment the scroll,
 I am the master of my fate;
 I am captain of my soul.

Invictus

By William Ernest Henley

When I first read that poem in college it greatly inspired me and yet mildly offended me. The idea that man could control his own destiny was at odds with the belief I had then of God's plan. I was raised with a deep and committed belief in the existence of a loving, fatherly God who created the universe and whose very being permeated every particle of it. Furthermore, I believed that the Bible was an inspired book that was without significant error or contradiction and could be used to determine right from wrong and establish a moral compass. I read the Bible often and would reread whole chapters at a time to try and understand the circumstances in which the events unfolded. I never put much store in the wholesale memorization of verses partly because I was never impressed by people who could recite but not explain, and partly because I've always had such difficulty memorizing anything. I also read the arguments of bible critics and looked for plausible explanations to their objections. I often found myself caught between literal believers and skeptics whose objections were also based on a literal reading. But, over time I found so many contradictions and irrational impossibilities that my personal attempts at Christian apology became exhausting and I felt that I was stretching the limits of plausibility beyond the breaking point.

The New Testament often refers to the church as the Bride of Christ. Well, I became like the young bride married to the powerful pillar of the community when she is first told that her husband has been unfaithful to her. She confronts him and is given a reasonably plausible story which she is all too eager to believe. She accepts his explanation and assurances that the accusation is untrue and her life goes on with her believing that this test of faith has made their bond stronger. And then, she learns of new accusations of infidelity followed by more and yet more. In time, the explanations coming from her husband seem less plausible. She subconsciously knows that her allegiance is based on a faith that isn't real but she is reluctant to give it up because to do so would turn the world as she knew it upside down.

Change is an ongoing part of our lives. Changes that we are asked to make may be inconvenient, seem unfair, and cause us stress, but we must learn to adjust if we are going to continue to grow and advance. When that change is of our own choosing, it is less traumatic but when change is brought about by circumstances beyond our control it leads to a cycle of grief described

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Kubler and Ross as the Seven Stages of Grief: the Shock stage, followed by Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Testing, and finally Acceptance. When an old tradition is challenged it is often met with the same form of resistance. People are shocked that anyone could question such a revered and time honored component of our moral structure. They deny that anyone could live a truly meaningful life without belief in the deity of our forebears. Some will become angry and lash out at the brash upstarts and warn others of the dangers and moral pitfall of such thinking while cooler heads will begin bargaining with the new philosophy and merge it with the old. At last, some will truly test the new way of thinking and either accept it or reject it without becoming overly emotional or misrepresenting the new position.

In regards to the third stage, anger, consider the website, Jesus-is-savior.com. There you will find a strong condemnation of Unitarian Universalism. It reads:

“Unitarian Universalism is a scam! How can any organization claim to follow God, when they have NO set beliefs? Is God undefined? To say such a thing is to throw away the Word of God (which defines God). It is extremely odd for any religion to claim to believe nothing as a group. The only thing agreed upon is that anything goes. Tragically, you can believe anything you want. To no surprise, 18% of all Unitarian Universalists profess to be Atheists! Put forth as a religion, the Unitarian Universalist Association is nothing more than a social club for anyone who wants to join.”

Obviously, this man does not appreciate the value of a welcoming social club. He also disregarded our Seven Principles. As to his accusation that “anything goes”, I have this to say: if you believe that Fascism is superior to democracy, then there’s the door. If you believe in denying human rights based on ethnic background, there’s the door. If you believe in restricting freedom because of a biological orientation, there’s the door.

Jesus-is-savior.com further quotes the homepage of a UU website. “On the homepage of the First Unitarian Universalist society of San Francisco, we read the following statements . . . Since 1850 Unitarian Universalists have been a prophetic and progressive voice within our city. Our church is a place where individuals are free to explore the ultimate questions in a community of other seekers and find their own answers. We are . . . Christians, Jews, Humanists, Agnostics, Pagans, Buddhists, Taoists, Hindus, Muslims, and many other faith traditions. Straight, Gay, couples, singles, young, and old. Bound together not by dogma, but by shared values, social concerns, common interests, and friendship. We invite you to learn about our beliefs and activities by exploring this site, visiting us in person, and getting involved in our community.”

Then, Jesus-is-savior.com says, “The above written statements are ANTI-Christian in every sense. The Word of God is truth (John 17:17). According to the Word of God, anyone who denies that Jesus is Christ is a liar (1st John 2:22). Thus, the Bible condemns Muslims, Pagans, Humanists, Agnostics, Taoists, Hindus and all others who deny that salvation is found in Jesus alone. John 14:6 plainly states, Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven! Furthermore, the Bible condemns homosexuality as a horrible sin (Leviticus 20:13; Jude 7). Please do not be deceived, religion never saved anyone. Only through the blood of Christ can anyone be saved. Shockingly, they hypocritically call themselves a church, while admitting that most of their members don’t believe in a Divine God. The gods they worship are self and Satan.”

Worship is a matter of love, devotion, and service. In a sense, what you love, what you truly love is what you worship. Your love, service, and devotion define your values or, if you will, your gods. And in our world, the god that receives the most worship from the most people regardless of what creeds they profess to on Sunday, is the god of power. Whether it’s in the form of money, youth, fame, political clout, or a more visible standing in the community, Americans worship power 24-7. Even those who recite creeds based on biblical traditions seem to spend far more time and energy expounding the advantages of their god’s power and might rather than the virtues taught by the founder of their faith, the builder rabbi from Nazareth.

As far as Unitarian Universalism, it may not be a religion in the traditional sense, I’ll let others debate that for now, but it’s a way of being religious. It’s a way for me to proclaim the values that I hold dear. Do I worship? Yes, but not in a magical, mystical, fearful servant who “isn’t worth so much as to gather up crumbs under thy table” sort of way, but I gaze reverently at the deep blue sky with wondrous awe and gratitude that I can be a part of this. The younger me would feel that it was essential that I direct that gratitude to a higher power; to know who I should be thankful to. But, now I see as a man who finds an expensive present at his doorstep, an item of irreplaceable value but he doesn’t know who left it for him. Is he any less thankful not knowing who gave it to him? Is his gratitude diminished in any way? If anything, the anonymity makes the gift all the more wondrous. If the giver had wanted recognition and gratitude, it would have been a sign of vanity.

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So, rather than worship in the traditional form, I have replaced that form of worship with a set of values that emphasizes the best of what humanity can be. Do I have faith? Not in the religious sense, but I do have faith. My faith isn't based on scriptures written by unknown scribes claiming to speak for the divine, but I have faith none the less. I have faith that life's gifts are available to everyone, not just the chosen or saved. Only human artifice or blind ill fortune can separate us from the source of blessings. I have faith that the most precious parts of life are evident not in the miraculous or otherworldly, but in the simple and everyday. We do not need to look to the heavens or the afterlife for our meaning, but to the exuberance of life's unfolding.

Whatever abundance there may be is lodged right here on Earth. I have faith that the future is never fated. Human beings themselves are responsible for the planet and it's future. Social justice is a religious obligation. I have faith that the interdependent web of existence offers an embrace to everything and everyone. Every one of us is held in creation's hand. We share its burdens and its radiance and because of this strangers need not be enemies. Our only inherent enemies are violence, poverty, injustice, and oppression. I have faith that an honorable and impassioned life is all that's required to rob death of its victory. Because death confronts us all, we love life all the more because we will someday lose it.

Creating a Multigenerational Culture *by Michelle Richards*

Families with children no longer feel a sense of obligation to attend church. Participation in a religious community is often considered one option among many competing interests. Since these families have a limited amount of time and an unlimited number of choices, what makes them decide that church is a priority in their lives? Their precious time together as a family needs to be well spent, or it will be spent elsewhere. So if your congregation is serious about welcoming families with children into your community, you must intentionally create a multigenerational culture.

The benefits of doing so can be well worth it, particularly for small congregations. In 2007, the First Unitarian Church (in South Bend, Indiana) created such a culture and 25 new members joined – a 25% increase. And it also made a difference for their bottom line – their stewardship campaign brought in a record 33% increase in giving, despite the economic crunch that many congregations experienced that year.

So how do you go about creating a multigenerational culture in your congregation? Since worship is at the heart of what we do in our churches, then finding ways to incorporate children into the worship service with adults is one of best ways to do this. Krista Taves, minister of Emerson Unitarian Universalist Chapel (in Ellisville, Missouri) ties her small congregation's recent growth to their decision to move to a two-hour format with one hour of worship for people of all ages, and one hour with religious education programs for both children and adults.

Although the change was adopted so that families with children could worship together on Sunday mornings, the most significant positive effect that the Emerson church has experienced is that the new format of the morning encourages newcomers to be more connected to the larger community. Visitors no longer have to hang around during coffee hour to get to know members of the congregation. Instead, they are able to meet people and make connections during the religious education time that follows the service.

Many congregations are reaping the benefits of having children present for just the first fifteen minutes of each worship service. And if that time of worship is truly geared toward people of all ages, then this can be more effective than having the children present for the entire service, unless an intentional effort is made to accommodate the needs of children as well as adults. Other congregations plan special worship services specifically created for children and their families. Often these additional services are outside of Sunday morning and may be paired with a potluck meal and special activity. Even small congregations can present a monthly multigenerational night, and those that do find that persons of all ages really do attend, including empty nesters, grandparents whose children live far away, singles, and couples without children.

Beyond providing opportunities for families with children to worship together, there are many other ways to offer a welcoming atmosphere and create a multigenerational culture that affirms people of all ages. Congregations that hold monthly dinners, game nights, or social gatherings for their members could designate some as "multigenerational." While these programs will naturally attract those parents who can now attend without having to obtain child care for their children, they will also attract people who like the high-energy atmosphere that is generated when young children are present.

Another successful way to build a community of all ages is to engage in social justice projects that intentionally invite youth to participate and have specific ways to involve children. Through working together to achieve a common good – such as serving meals at a soup kitchen, collecting canned goods for a food pantry, or growing a community garden – children and adults have the chance to get to know one another on a much deeper level. Even rather simple things – like offering juice as well as coffee during hospitality hour, having child-size hangers in the coat closet, and making high chairs available during potlucks – go a long way toward making the statement that children are not only wanted; they are expected to be present in this place.

Small congregations are in the unique position of truly offering a chance for those persons who regularly participate in community life to build a bond with one another. Often, there are not many children at the congregation. But those children have the opportunity to truly feel an important part of the community, where adults know who they are as individuals. Creating this multigenerational culture in your congregation can not only affirm those children as unique and respected individuals, it will also bring many more to your doors.