



Unitarian Universalist Church in Livermore

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January 2006

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in conversation

2006. We're beginning to make some progress into this new century of ours. As I've said before, I've never developed a taste, let alone an aptitude, for New Year's Resolutions. All the same, I do believe in the inherent promise each day brings.

Here are some words I rediscovered not long ago. They seem to me a fine way to christen a new spin around that sun of ours. From Robert T. Weston:

A New Year Begins Today

A year is gone.
It matters not when it began
For it has ended now.
There were other years,
And some began with a birthday
And some with a death;
Some with one day of the month and some with another.
Some began with a song and others with a lament,
But today I start another year, whatever the month or season;
It is what lies before me that concerns me now.
There will be decisions and tasks;
There will be drudgery, achievement, and defeat:
There will be joy and grief.
All the raw stuff of experience
Waiting for me to shape, to fashion as I will,
And it will never become just what I planned.
However it may appear to others
I can turn it to knowledge and wisdom
Or folly.
If it be hard, I can make of it strength:
It may become bone, sinew, and steel
Or ashes and waste.
Someone might say, "It all depends on what the year may bring,"
But what I make of it depends on me.

Happy New Year, everyone. May we make of it great things, indeed.

in peace,
Eric

President's Message

Happy New Year! One of our wishes has come true because UUCiL has received a \$5000 UUA grant for an intern minister. Eric Meter is forming an intern committee, which will soon be interviewing candidates. If we are successful, the intern will start in September of 2006.

The AIA (Accommodating Increased Attendance) Committee will soon be setting up focus group meetings to ask for congregational input on membership growth. They will also be presenting options for what to do when the Sanctuary becomes too full at Sunday services. Please see Alyce Rossow or Ron Dueltgen if you have any questions or comments.

A big vote of thanks to Board member Elona Pertica for renegotiating our insurance contract resulting in a \$1200 savings for the remainder of FY05 and even more in FY06. Our treasurer, Art Howald, recently was able to get the Little Rascal's property taxes reduced by \$1000, which will filter down to more income for the Church. Please thank them the next time you see them for their extra efforts.

Arlen Rowe

Gala Dinner and Service Auction January 28!

A scrumptious **homemade dinner** will be served at 6 pm sharp for a nominal contribution! The fearless **auctioneers** stand ready to drop the gavel at 7 pm. The **bidders (that's you)** anticipate with bated breath the year's greatest selection of practical **services** (like pet sitters, babysitters, airport transport, home repair), gourmet delicacies (who could possibly pass up "**The Last Dinner on the Titanic**"?), home-crafted items, raffle items, and much, much more.

Let Beth Dowling know what you'll be offering, and then plan to attend, enjoy dinner, and BUY! Sign up for child care and dinner for the kids at the back of the sanctuary. This is our largest fundraiser of the year (bring those checkbooks!) and loads of fun for all.

FUNdraising at UUCiL

December FUNdraisers brought in almost \$2400. Proceeds from our two Shakespeare performances netted \$1389.00. Many thanks to the Herrs for organizing and promoting this favorite event. And thank you to all who contributed and to all who purchased from the Holiday Table, which brought in around \$1000.

Yard Sale—March 18. The Pedersen family will again organize and host the yard sale at their Pleasanton home. Save good saleable items for this sale. If you cannot store items until March, please contact Joan Dickinson at 447-6454.

Paperless Scrip—When you're shopping for the holidays, remember to use your Nob Hill, Albertson's, and Safeway cards. Safeway donates a percent of your purchase to Open Heart Kitchen. Nob Hill and Albertson's send a percent to UUCiL.

Joan Dickinson

First Friday Film on Hiatus Until February 3

No First Friday Film this month. Check your next newsletter for details of the February 3 showing.

wUUrld's 2006 WhaleCoast Alaska

Five Alaskan UU fellowships invite other UUs to our eco-cultural programs in June, July and August 2006. See the *REAL* Alaska! Alaskan UUs provide B&B accommodations in their homes in Anchorage, Seward, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Sitka, lead tours and hikes, and host parties. Visit with Tlingit, Inupiat, and other Native Alaskans. See whales, sea otters, sea lions, seals, bears, moose, caribou, wolves, puffins, eagles, and other birds in the wild from the Arctic Ocean to the Inside Passage in the south, and visit Denali and other national parks. Rev. Dick & Mary Weston-Jones, leaders. Visit website www.wuurld.org, e-mail dick@wuurld.org, or phone toll-free 1-888-998-8753 for a brochure. Taking reservations now.

Potluck January 15

Thanks to the G, H, and I people who set up and cleaned up our December potluck. Our January potluck will be on the 15th and will be set up and cleaned up by people with surnames that start with J, K, and L. If you can't be there, please switch with someone who can. Those who are able to could help by putting their chairs away when they are done.



Potluck duties include setting up tables and chairs, putting the food out on serving tables, putting plates, bowls, utensils and napkins out and restocking them as needed, bringing dirty serving dishes to the kitchen, and putting away tables and chairs. If the weather is nice, the tables can be set up outside before the service. When we are eating inside, the sanctuary chairs will need to be stacked near the walls before the tables can be set up (the sanctuary chairs do NOT need to be moved back after the potluck). Here is the potluck rotation schedule.

J-L	January 15, 2006	D-F	June 17, 2006
M-O	February 19, 2006	G-I	July 15, 2006
P-R	March 19, 2006	J-L	August 19, 2006
S-Z	April 16, 2006	M-O	September 16, 2006
A-C	May 21, 2006	P-R	October 21, 2006
		S-Z	November 18, 2006

If you have questions or suggestions on potluck scheduling, please call Kim Rowe at 606-9531.

Minds on Fire

Our meetings are held at Helen Meier's at 7:00 on the first Tuesday of each month—this month on January 3. Call or e-mail Shelley Covey, shelcovey@aol.com, 449-4669, or call Helen at 373-6595 for directions.

Minds on Fire is a voluntary, intentional gathering of 7-14 people, meeting together regularly with the shared goal of mutual edification, fellowship, and service to the cause of religious freedom (our principles and purposes). We aim to provide intimacy and "ultimacy," an intimate setting that allows people to connect as individuals, and with those individuals consider the ultimate causes of life.



This open group has been meeting since February 2001, and we invite more people to participate in this program. If you would like to know more and/or are interested in joining an ongoing group or forming a new one, call Shelley Covey at 449-4669.

New Workers for Open Heart Kitchen Always Welcome

UUCiL provides the afternoon crew for Open Heart Kitchen, the Valley's hot-food soup kitchen, on fifth Tuesdays at Asbury Methodist Church in Livermore. OHK served 120,000 meals in 2005, an astonishing 900% increase in meals served over the last 5 years!

Our next shift is on January 31. We welcome new workers or one-time substitutes to cook or serve, and to help clean up. We need a minimum of six people to provide about 250 meals per shift, from 2:00 to 6:30 pm (a little shorter with speedy dishwashers and moppers), and it's satisfying work. Workers are often on their feet for most of the shift. If you want to split a shift with someone else, either arrange the split yourself or contact Jane Staehle at jtstaehle@comcast.net

“Come Take Me to the Mardi Gras”

Saturday, January 7 at the UU Church in Livermore

I. 6:00 pm--Appetizers, King Cake (and mask-making if you didn't bring one)

6:30 pm--Creole/Cajun Mardi Gras Feast

7:30 pm--Music by the Jen Jazz Band...

\$20 per person; \$45 for family (couple and children)

Reservations: Monty or Judith Herr, 443-4514, herrj@comcast.net

If you can help prepare the feast, decorate and generate hoopla, or help with mask-making or entertainment, contact Alice Bennert, Janice Paquette, Laura Pedersen, Linda Bissum, Wendy Mason, or Judy Herr.

A bit of explanation: The Mardi Gras season begins January 6 and continues until Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday. On the Christian calendar, the twelfth day after Christmas is known as "Epiphany," "Twelfth Night," or "Kings Day," the day the gift-bearing Magi visited the baby Jesus. The New Orleans tradition borrows heavily from European customs. As part of the celebration of Mardi Gras, it is traditional to bake an oval cake in honor of the three kings. Each cake is decorated in the traditional Mardi Gras colors: purple for justice, green for faith, and gold for power. A small baby, symbolizing the baby Jesus, is baked into each cake.

Mardi Gras came to New Orleans through its French heritage in 1699. Early explorers celebrated this French holiday on the banks of the Mississippi River. Throughout the years, Orleanians have added to the celebration by establishing *krewe*s (organizations) that host parades and balls throughout the season from January 7 to Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday). Jazz music is crucial at each event. The day following Mardi Gras, Lent begins and things become a lot more austere.

Buildings and Grounds

The Building and Grounds work party on Saturday, October 29, was a great success. Many tasks on the work list were completed, particularly getting the property ready for the coming rains, taking three loads of trash to the landfill, completing work on the sandbox periphery seats, and landscaping the knoll just east of the sandbox. The metal mesh fence on the north boundary of the Little Rascals playground was also replaced and the overgrown roses removed from the playground.

Thanks to all who showed up at the work party, and please volunteer to help with the following tasks, which will be continued this winter and spring:

1. Replace the toilets in the Sanctuary Building Women's Room.
2. Complete property cleanup and storm-drain installation on the NW corner of our property.
3. Continue extending an irrigation water supply line to the north side of the Green Building, and install a water supply manifold/circuit timer to provide irrigation water to areas needing irrigation circuits, such as the new Memorial Garden recently designed by Barbara Eniti.
4. Install the missing "storm window" at the top of the center window in the Sanctuary.
5. Continue construction and maintenance of the many flower and shrub areas around the buildings, along with completion of irrigation to the three planter boxes near the Green Building, and construction of a compost bin next to the north boundary.

To all who have helped on the Buildings and Grounds in 2005, many thanks.

Chilli Barlow—Buildings

Bob Stearns—Grounds

News from Religious Education for Children & Youth

Greetings and Happy New Year from the Children's and Youth's Religious Education Corner.

We had a **very enjoyable Holiday Program** on December 18. Because the youth group isn't often in with us, it was especially good to see twelve of our sixteen youth in the sanctuary with us! I heard several murmurs about what a large group we had at those ages. All classes did a great job on that day, and I received a great deal of feedback about what a good service it was. Thank you for taking the time to mention it to me.

Our Youth Group hosted a very successful Parent's Night Out on December 16th. Nine members of our youth group took care of 13 children from 5 to 11 years old while their parents finished shopping or enjoyed a night out. The group raised about \$200 dollars, which they will put into their budget to use for field trips or fun adventures. Thank you to everyone who participated.

Sunday January 1. We will not have our regular Religious Education classes. Children and youth of all ages are invited to join us for a low-key popcorn and movie morning. We will have a selection for the younger children and a different one for the older children. Hope to see you there!

Due to the Mardi Gras dinner and the Service Auction in January, we will NOT be having a game night, but **game night will resume in February**, the last Friday of the month, February 24. We hope to see all families at the Mardi Gras dinner and also again at the Service Auction.

The "**Our Whole Lives**" curriculum is coming up in March for our 4th, 5th and 6th graders. The parent meeting will be held in late February. A letter will be going out to all eligible families shortly after the first week in January with more information.

We have talked for a couple of years now, at the committee level, about the possibility of a week-long **summer Chalice Camp**. To that end, we have ordered a curriculum to further explore this idea. We need your input, however! Think about

these three items, and talk to Leslie Lemieux, Alyce Rossow or Julie O'Brien with your feedback.

- 1) Would you be interested in having your elementary-school-aged child attend a week-long 1/2 day program in the summer?
- 2) What month would you like to see this planned for? June, July or August?
- 3) What specific content, if any, would you like to see during this week?

(The curriculum is very complete, but we still would like to hear what YOU have to say.) And, if your child is out of elementary school, and is a middle- or high-schooler, would your youth be interested in working as a "Camp Counselor" for a week during the summer? We think this could be a real opportunity to offer our children a fun and active program that helps them learn more about what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist, so we are excited to move forward with this. But we need you to tell us that this is something you desire for your child.



I am in the office most Wednesday mornings, and you can reach me there at 447-8747. Thursdays and Saturdays are my days off, most weeks, but I am always interested in hearing what you have to say about our programming. You can also call me at my home number (see the church directory).

Warmly,
Leslie Lemieux, Director of RE

From the RE Committee

RE Table at Potluck this month. Parents: We would like to encourage more fellowship among our RE Families. This month at Potluck, we will have a special area for you to sit together with other parents and teachers. Please plan on staying, enjoying the good fellowship, and joining in an informal conversation centered on our children and their Religious Education.

(Continued)

Update on Childcare Availability from the RE Committee. Children are a welcome and wonderful part of our religious community. If you wish to participate in congregational activities but have been reluctant due to childcare requirements, the Religious Education Committee is here to help. We will gladly arrange to have childcare available for church meetings and functions. Please contact Leslie Lemieux, Julie O'Brien, or Alyce Rossow at least one week in advance with your requests. We ask that all children and young adults be supervised by at least one adult or RE designated caregiver whenever they are at the church. This includes the unstructured times before and after Sunday services.

Next RE Committee Meeting. Wednesday, January 11, 2006 at 7 pm in the Tot Green Room. Parents, caregivers, young adults, grandparents, church members, and friends are all welcome to join us at our monthly meeting. We need your energy and creativity to make our Children's Religious Education Program a success! Why not come and see what we are all about? Childcare can be provided. Questions? We'd love to talk to you about how you can contribute to our children's religious community. Contact: Leslie Lemieux, Julie O'Brien, or Alyce Rossow.

UUCiL Book Group

January 12, 7:30 pm
Tot Green Room

Into the Forest by Jean Hegland
Reviewer—Hildy Pehrson

Two teenage girls live alone in a northern California forest home 30 miles from the nearest town. The gas and electricity fail, and their society falls apart, leaving them to lead a stripped-down life. Please join us.

Alyce Rossow



Membership Committee Meets Jan. 8

The Membership Committee will meet Sunday, January 8, at 12:00 in the Round Table Room.

Lois Dueltgen and Chilli Barlow, Co-chairs

Recycle Those Christmas Cards!

Bring used Christmas cards to church, and place them in the designated box in the rear of the sanctuary. We'll deliver them to a special education class that makes gift cards. Thanks!

Marion Stearns and Chilli Barlow

Yoga Basics

A new class will be offered Sundays January 8, January 22, and January 29 from 3:30-5:00 pm at UUCiL led by student-teacher Yvonne Konneker.



Learn foundation yoga poses as well as breathing and centering exercises. Wear clothing that makes you feel comfortable, and bring a yoga mat if you can (I'll have a few extras available). I'm working on my 200-hour yoga teacher certification and look forward to sharing what I've learned with you. These classes will be gentle and geared toward students with little or no yoga experience. \$5 suggested donation to UUCiL.

Yvonne

Book Signing

Rev. Stephen Edington, minister of the UU Church of Nashua, New Hampshire, will read from and sign copies of his recently published book, *The Beat Face of God: The Beat Generation Writers as Spirit Guides* at Black Oak Books in Berkeley on January 16, at 7:30 p.m. Black Oak Books is located at 1491 Shattuck Avenue.

The Beat Face of God is an exploration of religious and spiritual themes found in the writings of many Beat Generation writers, including Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gary Snyder, Diane DiPrima, Michael McClure, and others.. The final chapter deals with the relevance of the messages of the Beat Generation writers and poets in the social, political, and cultural scene of America today.



Mardi Gras

“Come on; take me to the Mardi Gras.....”

Saturday, January 7, 2006

6:00 Appetizers & King Cake

6:30 Dinner

A celebration of the first day of the Mardi
Gras Season

...at the Unitarian Universalist Church in
Livermore

\$20 per person

\$45 per family

Cajun/Creole Dinner and music by the Jen Jazz Band
Wear a mask or make one at UUCiL

RSVP: Monty or Judy Herr: 443-4514

Or Alice Bennert: 634-2615



January 2006 Services

Beginning at 10:30 AM

Sunday, January 1 *Socrates Was Right*

The Socratic Method benefits everyone. In question and answer sessions, both student and teacher learn and grow. What better way to start a new year than with—you guessed it—“Ask the Minister” Sunday Rev. Eric Meter presiding.

Sunday, January 8 *In the Name of Faith*

This morning we are pleased to welcome into our pulpit the Rev. Dennis Serdahl. A friend of our congregation for several years now, this will be Rev. Serdahl’s first time speaking before us. Rev. Eric Meter presiding.

Sunday, January 15 *The Faith That Can Save the World*

Why are UU’s reluctant to proselytize? And why are so many of us uncomfortable with reverential language? We are a “saving” religion; how can we share it without using common language? Bob Meyerson of the UU Church in Hayward presides. Service Leader, Judy Herr

Bob Meyerson was born in New Jersey, and moved to California in his 40’s. He says he is a lifetime UU, but only discovered “his” church 5 years ago. Since joining Starr King Church in Hayward, he has preached several lay services at Starr King and the

Sacramento Community (UU) Church. Bob is a retired insurance executive, a US Navy Veteran, and a graduate of Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey..

Sunday, January 22 *Love and the Language of Anger*

We get miffed. We vent or stew over hurts and missed opportunities. While we may consider anger a negative emotion, it serves a real purpose. Perhaps if we are willing to listen, anger has much to offer. The question is, are we willing to risk the teacher? Rev. Eric Meter speaking.

Sunday, January 29 *One Down and Eleven to Go*

Looking back to 2005, what had the most impact on you? Looking forward to the rest of 2006, what urges you on? As is our tradition, this Sunday service of the year is set aside for our annual homegrown “Beginnings and Endings” celebration. If you would care to read for us, bring a poem, a story, an article from a newspaper, or a quote that rings true for you. Consider sharing a reading, a song to sing, a dance, an instrument to play, a craft or photo to show—something that has meaning for you. We offer each other these gifts and discoveries that influenced us in 2005 and give thanks for the inspiration we gather to carry into 2006. Service Leader, Linda Bissum. Music coordinated by Pat Mielke.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 Minds on Fire	4	5	6	7 Choir 9:30 Mardi Gras Dinner 6 pm
8 Membership Comm. @ 12 Yoga 3:30-5 Green Bldg.	9 Men's Group 7:30 pm	10 Board Meeting 6 pm	11 RE Committee 7 pm	12 Book Group 7:30 pm Green Room	13	14
15 Potluck	16	17 Finance Committee 7 pm	18	19	20 Newsletter deadline Stargazers 7 pm	21
22 Yoga 3:30-5 Green Bldg.	23 Men's Group 7:30 pm	24	25	26	27	28 Dinner and Auction 6 pm
29 Program Council 9 am Yoga 3:30-5 Green Bldg.	30	31 UUCiL @ OHK				