

East Suburban Unitarian Universalist Church



Sunday Services - 10:30 AM
Religious Education - 10:30 AM

Telephone
(724) 327-5872

Website
<http://www.esuuc.org>

Volume 42 No. 5

December 2004

Editor: Marianne Jew
newsletter@esuuc.org

ESUUC Sunday Services

Sunday, December 5, 10:30AM- *“Crossing Spiritual Boundaries”*

Rev. Dr. Renee Waun has participated in many different religious traditions as part of her world travels and interfaith work. Is it possible to truly engage another’s spirituality or religious practice? Or can we only reverently observe? Can we be bi-religious in the same way as some people are bi-lingual?

Sunday, December 12, 10:30AM- *“The Seven Days of Unity”*

Come one, come all to a very special Intergenerational Service introducing "The Seven Days of Unity". As UU's, we are encouraged to explore the beliefs and convictions of many religious groups, and during the month of December we often celebrate the special days sanctified by other religions. This year, we are taking a different path. The Seven Days of Unity are based on our Seven Principles. We offer the concept, and this day’s celebration, as an alternative to the many other festivals that we are likely more familiar with. This is UUniquely ours. The Seven Days of Unity are not celebrated in a rigid way. They can be celebrated in as many different ways as there are UU's! We offer suggestions and invite you to join us as we present our version of the celebration.

In keeping with our principle of World Community (with Peace, Liberty, and Justice for all), the kids will be bringing special food dishes from their heritage to share at coffee hour. If you have a special dish from your heritage that you would like to share, please bring it. The more the merrier!
We hope you will join us for this special day.

Sunday, December 19, 10:30AM- *“A Message for a Mestizaje People: The Story of the Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe, Mother to the Americas”*

There are more than 12.6 million people of Mexican descent in the United States and everywhere Our Lady of Guadalupe is known to them since her appearance to Juan Diego in 1531: a brown-skinned woman, a mestizo surrounded by the sun, cloaked in a blue mantle covered with stars, standing on a crescent moon held by an angel. She looks down, and the expression on her face is one of kindness, compassion, and strength.

To be of Mexican descent is to recognize the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Her image has given an oppressed people dignity and she has been with them in their greatest sorrows and joys. In the barrios and businesses of Mexican Americans, Our Lady of Guadalupe has a home. The name "Guadalupe" is given to

both girls and boys and is bestowed not only on parishes and churches but also on streets, towns, cities, rivers, and mountains.

A Mestizaje People: The Spanish word mestizaje has no precise equivalent in English. To be a mestizo/mestiza is often translated as being of mixed race or mixed ethnic origin. In English this has often had a negative ring. However, in Spanish the word mestizaje has a richer connotation, meaning "to intermingle, to synthesize while maintaining the sense of one's origins."

Join **Wanda Guthrie** and **Leona Dunnett** in a discussion of what the message to the "new people", the mestizaje in the Americas, means today.

Friday, December 24, 7:30pm - Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

This is a traditional service for gathering with family and friends in the spirit of joy and love. **Dr. Renee Waun** will read the story of Ukrainian Jewish family members who bring Christmas to their ill neighbors and discover new miracles of meaning and friendship. There will be an old fashioned Christmas carol sing, ending with Silent Night and hand held candles.

Sunday, December 26, 10:30AM- "Creative Spirit"

Facilitated by **Maureen McHugh** and guest, **Linda Fleming**. Join us for this intergenerational hands-on celebration of the creative spirit. We will explore the connection between community and creativity as we produce handiwork that celebrates and serves members of our community. We will collaborate in the creation of a fabric "quilt" that is a gift to the community. (Individuals with portable sewing machines, please contact Linda Fleming: 724-325-3492)

Sunday, January 2, 10:30am- "Loveable Heretics"- Dr. Renee Waun will start a series of sermons that introduce us to people in the history of western culture who have been considered heretics, including those first proponents of Unitarianism and Universalism. This will be an introduction to the topic, followed by parts two and three on the first Sundays of February and March.



Pastor's Column: Our Timeless Teachers

by Rev. Renee Waun

We are entering the season of increasing darkness—a time when our hemisphere tilts away from the sun again, giving us more and more dark winter nights, as we await the mysteries of light returning. In each of the world religions that lift up this darkness/light polarity, there were foundational teachers who once lived to teach about the triumph of the light as it dispels the shadows and brings new life. The Jews still remember the miracle of the lights in the feast of Chanukah. Christians refer to Jesus as the light coming into the world, which the darkness cannot overcome, etc. But the people from whom these teachings came forth are no longer physically with us. These foundational teachers have passed on, and it falls to their followers to remember those persons and their stories and to pass them along.

The pagans, however, have always based their beliefs upon our timeless teachers: the sun, moon and stars, the trees, mountains, earth, wind, water and fire. These teachers will never pass away as long as this planet exists, and thus, they will always continue to impart their wisdom to us.

Perhaps that is why so many of the Christmas traditions found their hitching post on the ancient practices involving trees, fire, the re-emerging sun and the stars—practices and rituals that pre-dated even their own foundational teacher.

In this season of growing darkness, may we be especially aware and appreciative this year of our timeless teachers. Let us find in them strength, hope, sustenance, and the promise of the ongoingness of life. And may life be abundant, loving and good for you and for those whom you love, in this and every season of your life.



mUUsings from the President:

by Maureen McHugh

Yuletide Greetings

We, along with people around the globe, look forward to winter holidays. Whether called Hanukkah, Winter Solstice, Las Posadas, Ta Chiu or Christmas, the ideas are the same. Mid-winter holidays provide people with a time for reflection, resolution and renewal. Celebrations may or may not involve gifts, but they inevitably involve goodwill and community. Most importantly, holiday rituals around the world celebrate the balance of light and dark. The days grow short, the darkness expands, and as humans we resist the dark by lighting a candle. Whether we observe the season by lighting the menorah, marching in the parade for St. Lucia, or by decorating our houses with strings of lights, we are all acknowledging the importance of the seasons on human existence, and we are “welcoming the healing power of warmth back into the world.” (Dorothy Morrison, 2000, p. 3)

According to Dorothy Morrison in *Yule, A Celebration of Light and Warmth*, the winter festival began 4000 years ago in ancient Egypt with a party in honor of Horus, the Sun God. Sun-welcoming ceremonies were also held in ancient Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Persia, Greece and Rome. The custom of holding a 12-day winter festival began with the ancient Egyptians, where the festivities began 5 days before Winter Solstice and lasted 6 days after. The twelve days of the holidays are recognition of the 12 months or wheel of the year. Solstice traditions around the world include light and fire. Candles were exchanged as gifts in the ancient form of Roman Winter Holidays called Saturnalia. And in Iran, for example, the celebration known as Yalda involves keeping vigils by seaside fires through the night to encourage the Sun to defeat Darkness. Lights and candles are a call to the sun to return to us.

I hope you will celebrate this winter holidays with us. Within the UU congregations we celebrate in the varied traditions of the world religions including the ancient pagan rituals. And, as you light your holiday lights or candles at home, consider offering this Yuletide wish (from Dorothy Morrison, p. 48):

*Fire of Sun with light so warm
With good fortune, our lives now charm
Open possibilities
And windows of opportunity
Fill our environment with new success
And with positive energy, this home please bless.*

New Member Recognition

On Sunday, November 7, we recognize our newest members: Jenifer Cheripka, Rayna Faigen (junior member), Twila Katilius, Michael and Natalie Mendik, Jim Osborne and Jenn Trout-Osborne, and Sara Schein. We are glad to formally welcome each of you to ESUUC!

Plants at Church

THANK YOU DR. AND MRS. KHAN for donating several leafy plants to the church. WANTED--some one to see that the plants are watered and lovingly cared for each week, or a month at a time. Please contact Jean Robl if you are willing to be one of several (hopefully) indoor plant persons.

World AIDS Day

Dr. Waun to Preach at Annual World AIDS Day Service December 1

The Pitt Men's Study of Pittsburgh and other sponsoring groups hold a World AIDS Day observance every year as a way of remembering those who have succumbed to AIDS, as well as offering hope to those living with and affected by AIDS. This year Rev. Renee Waun will be the guest preacher in a service organized around the theme of "*Women and AIDS*". It will be held on **Wednesday, December 1 at 7:30pm** at Heinz Chapel on the campus of the University of Pittsburgh in Oakland. A social hour will follow the service.

"AIDS for Life" Series at Allegheny UU

Allegheny UU Church in Pittsburgh's Northside will be presenting "AIDS for Life," a series of events in commemoration of World AIDS Day, 2004. On World AIDS Day itself, **Wednesday, December 1, from 4:30-7:00pm**, pieces of the AIDS Memorial Quilt (courtesy of the NAMES Foundation) will be on display in the church sanctuary. The public is invited to view this moving tribute to the resilience of love and the power of remembrance and hope. At 7:00PM there will be a brief, casual service remembering those who have died with HIV/AIDS. The Quilt pieces will again be available for viewing throughout the day on Saturday, December 4. That Sunday's celebration and worship will focus on the spiritual impact of AIDS on folks in Pittsburgh and on the world. A volunteer from Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force will speak and the sermon will be offered by Allegheny Unitarian Universalist's new minister, the Rev. David V. McFarland, former minister of Provincetown AIDS Ministry on Cape Cod, MA. All events will be in the church sanctuary at 416 West North Avenue on Pittsburgh's Northside and are open to the public.

Holiday Party

It's that time of year again to pass around the gag gifts, laugh, drink, eat and be merry with your Unitarian friends!

When: Saturday December 11th

Time: 8:00-?

Where: East Suburban UU Church

Adults Only

What to bring: please bring an appetizer, BYOB (sodas and dessert will be provided) and a gag gift for a female, male, or both. Make the gag gifts as funny or outrageous as you like, this is your opportunity to pass along last year's gag gift too. The gift tags are often as funny as the gifts.....be creative! If there are two of you coming to the party, you might bring two gifts so that each of you will receive a gift. Any questions, please call Kate Codd-Palmer (724) 325-3903.

Christmas Tree Pick-up

Christmas Tree pick-up will be **Friday, December 17 from 7-9pm** at the church. Extra wreaths, garlands, and swags will be available for purchase at that time. Tell a friend!

If you have questions, please contact Merritt Bailey (724-887-0952 or tbailey@worldnet.att.net).

ESUUC Volunteers at the local Food Bank

When: Saturday December 18, 2004

Time: 9am until 12 noon

Place: Westmoreland County Food Bank
100 Devonshire Drive, Delmont, PA 15626

Sign Up: in the community room

Age: due to safety concerns and OSHA regulations, volunteers must be a minimum of 14 years of age.

Ever wonder where our donated canned goods and money go from Stone Soup Sunday? Consider helping out at ESUUC volunteer day at the Westmoreland County Food Bank to find out. We will be helping to sort, repack and label grocery products in the Food Bank's Repack Center in anticipation of redistribution to needy families.

We will carpool from church gathering at 8:30am in the church parking lot. Contact Kate Codd-Palmer (724) 325-3903.

Dress in layers and wear clothes suitable for warehouse work. Oh yeh, just in case you might be a sandal wearer in the winter, no open-toed shoes are permitted! Hope to see you!

Directions:

Travel east on Route 22 through Murrysville into Delmont.

You will pass a McDonald's on the left and a movie theater on the right

You will come to a light where there is a Giant Eagle Get Go Gas station on the left---this is Cloverleaf Rd.

Make a right on Cloverleaf Road

Travel a short distance

Make a left on Devonshire Drive (You will see a sign for the Westmoreland County Food Bank)

Park in the parking lot

DownUnder Coffeehouse, Allegheny UU Church

You are invited to attend the DownUnder Coffeehouse on **Saturday, December 18 from 7:30-9:30pm** for an Open Mic night featuring some of best local acoustic performers, including First Church's own Rich Wells. Any wanting to be added to the playlist, should send email to downunder@alleghenyuu.org by December 5th.

The DownUnder Coffeehouse is open the third Saturday of every month in the basement of the Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church, 416 West North Ave, North Side. Suggested donation is \$3.00. Call 412-322-4261 or see www.alleghenyuu.org for more details.

Tapestry Dedication and Artist Reception

We have been eagerly anticipating the completing of the sanctuary tapestry that has been under way for the past several months, in the capable hands of renowned, award winning artist **Adrian Heinrich**. On

Sunday, January 2 we will have the official unveiling of the tapestry, during our worship service. The artist will join us for the dedication of her masterpiece, and we will have a special reception for her following our service that morning.

The tapestry is a privately funded project with the design and artist selection under the purview of the Aesthetics Committee, Jane Longdon, Chair. The project was selected as an artistic solution for masking the glass block cross in the chancel area. The tapestry incorporates some translucent panels, allowing the natural light to filter through, and highlight the design.

All-Congregation Retreat: "Building Community"

The annual church retreat is scheduled for **Saturday, January 15 from 9:15am to 3:00pm**. Members and friends of ESUUC are invited to reserve this date and plan on joining us for this all day workshop (with lunch). We will share ideas about the meaning and purpose of community, and how we can create a community for ourselves while fulfilling the mission of ESUUC in relation to the broader community. Having settled into our new church, how might we as a church identify ourselves to others? How might we connect to the community? Help us identify areas of community service/outreach/activism for ESUUC. For more information, or to make a suggestion, contact Maureen McHugh, 724-733-3620.

ESUUC Book Club

Read any good books lately? Would you like to? If the answer to either of these questions is "yes", then the ESUUC Book Club may be just the thing for you. In recent months the club has read such diverse titles as: "The Gender Knot" by Alan G. Johnson, "The Sparrow" by Mary Doria Russell, and, "the five people you meet in heaven" by Mitch Albom. The conversation about the books has been lively and thought provoking.

We meet once a month to discuss the selected reading for that month and to select a title for the coming month. With the holiday chaos around the corner we have not scheduled a meeting for December, but have set January 20th at 7:30 PM at Panera Bread Company in the Monroeville Miracle Mile Shopping Center as our next get together. The book for January is the novel, "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood. If you are interested please plan to attend.

Book club events are also posted on the ESUUC website: www.esuuc.org

C.T. Vivian, "The Children", and the PIIN Banquet

Here's a wonderful way to learn more about PIIN's 2005 banquet speaker, Rev. C. T. Vivian. Enjoy the inspiring story of faith and dedication of the young generation of early civil rights activists in the book that reads like a novel, "The Children", by David Halberstam, a New York Times Notable Book. Rev. Vivian's participation is part of this story and I learned about his contributions and personality. I was surprised at the common roots of so many African Americans who are prominent yet today and appreciated the characterization of cities in the south where I grew up and attended college in the 1960's. It gave me some perspective on history in my own lifetime and appreciation for what I share with Gloria Johnson-Powell, an accomplished physician, who was one of the Nashville kids trained in non-violence and consensus decision-making by James Lawson. I highly recommend you get this book at the library and enjoy before February 26th! And put **Saturday, Feb. 26, 2005** on your calendar for a wonderful PIIN banquet and speaker!!
Nancy Fitzgerald

Drumming Circle

The drumming circle will NOT meet in December due to the hectic season for the church and people. We will meet again in January. May you all be lucky enough to receive a drum during this season. We wish you all Good Health, Joy, Laughter, Love, and PEACE in the New Year!

Karen Katilius and Kathy Ruffing (drumming@esuuc.org)

Refreshments

(Also posted on the bulletin board in the kitchen)

Each Sunday immediately following service we gather in the community room for coffee, juice, a tasty treat and spirited conversation. It is an opportunity to catch up with old friends and meet some new friends at church. Each member of ESUUC is asked to take a turn throughout the year. When we all take a turn it is only once or twice that each of us is asked to help out in the year. Don't worry if you are not a cook—store bought treats work quite well. There is a “guide to setting up refreshments” posted in the kitchen. If this is your first time, please review it a couple of weeks before you take your turn to get an idea of the flow. Also, a copy is included at the end of this month's newsletter. Feel free to tear it off and save it for reference. If you have any questions or are daunted by the thought of serving refreshments, please call Kate Codd-Palmer at 724-325-3903. Don't think she will let you off the hook from having to do it, however, we all seem to like to eat. If the week you are assigned doesn't work with your schedule, please try to switch with someone else for that month.

We are trying something a little different in an attempt to clear away some of the congestion in and out of the kitchen entrance. The refreshment table has been moved to the far end of the community room. Please try to prepare the table before service starts. There is a cart in the kitchen under the sink that you can use to place food items on to be brought in after service ends.

Dec 5	Kim Jumper
Dec 12	Mehernosh Kahn - set up and clean up. (Everyone please see the “Sunday Services” section for details on bringing food)
Dec 19	Karen and Gerard Katilius
Dec 26	Sharing Sunday (bring along something to share at coffee hour)

Jan 2	Kate Codd-Palmer/Brien Palmer
Jan 9	Helen and Bill Kavalkovich
Jan 16	Glenn and Marcia Klepac
Jan 23	Pancake Breakfast (stay tuned for details from the program committee)
Jan 30	Mary Kukura-Straw

RE Class Schedule

Nursery:

<u>Day</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
Dec 5	Merritt Bailey
12	Maria Luczkow
19	Merritt Bailey
26	No Nursery Provider today

Early School Age:

<u>Day</u>	<u>Class Description</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
Dec 5	Kids will attend first part of service. Practice for Intergenerational Service	Kathy Begg
12	Intergenerational Service	
19	Christmas is a Time for Sharing Our Love	Kate Zingarelli
26	No RE Class today	

Elementary:	Day	Class Description	Teacher
	Dec 5	Kids will attend first part of service. Practice for Intergenerational Service	Kathy Begg
	12	Intergenerational Service	
	19	Celebrating Kwanzaa	Lew Ruffing
	26	No RE Class today	

Middle School:	Day	Class Description	Teacher
	Dec 5	Kids will attend first part of service. Practice for Intergenerational Service	Kathy Begg
	12	Intergenerational Service	
	19	Racism in the Media	Laurie Montgomery
	26	No RE Class today	

OWL (Our Whole Lives) Programs

OWL Program for K-1

By the time you read this note we will be finishing up the first OWL class we have ever offered at our church. This class was for K-1, and has been ably taught by Susan Goodis and Matt Mathis. Please take time to thank them for their willingness to educate themselves on the program and commit 8 weeks of their time to sharing it with our children. OWL is a wonderful program, supported by the UUA, that is designed to help all of us understand and make well thought out decisions on our own sexuality. We are proud to have been able to hold the classes here, at our own church.

OWL Program for 5th and 6th Graders

Beginning in February of 2005, we will be offering the OWL program for 5th and 6th graders. This will be preceded by a parent meeting. We don't have exact dates for the meeting yet, although it will likely not be before Feb. 12. Class schedule will be determined at that time. Any parent who may have an interest in having their children attend OWL is invited and encouraged to attend the parent meeting. Susan Goodis and Matt Mathis, who will be teaching this session, will both be available to answer any questions you may have. Please begin thinking about this very worthwhile program now. If you have any questions in the meantime, please let Susan, Matt or me know. We are all available to help.

TO THE PARENTS OF KIDS WHO WILL BE IN 4TH AND 5TH GRADE NEXT YEAR (2005 to 2006) - we do plan to offer OWL for this age group in the fall of 2005. We will provide more details closer to the start date for this group.

Youth Group

NOTE CHANGE IN TIME: Youth group meetings for December are scheduled for Dec 5 and Dec 19, both Sunday evenings, from 6-8pm.

YRUU Update (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists)

On Wednesday November 10th, some of the youth and I had the pleasure of being invited to attend an interfaith gathering of local area youth. We arrived at Temple David in Monroeville to meet up with a group of Catholic youth from Serra High School, youth from the Monroeville Islamic Center, and youth from Temple David. It all started with this Catholic senior Phil's vision of starting an open dialogue between religions. We all got together and ate pizza while discussing the philosophical differences in our beliefs. The one commonality that the youth found was the idea of charity. Giving to the needy or less fortunate. The

Fri. Dec 17	Pick up Christmas Trees – 7-9 pm at the church
Sun. Dec. 19	Youth Group – 6-8 pm at the church
Thurs. Jan 6	Board Meeting – 7:15 pm at the church
Sun. Jan. 2	Youth Group – 6-8 pm at the church
Sat. Jan 15	ESUUC Annual Retreat