



# The Leaf

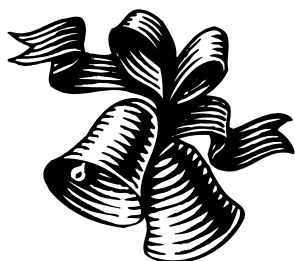
Dec. 06/Jan. 07

The Newsletter of the First Universalist Church  
of New Madison, Ohio, a Unitarian Universalist Congregation

## Sunday Services 10 AM

- Dec. 3: Richard Venus**  
**Dec. 10: Leslie Woodward**  
**Dec. 17: Richard Venus**  
**Dec. 24: Richard Venus**  
**Dec. 31: Richard Venus**  
**Jan. 7: Richard Venus**  
**Jan. 14: Chuck Thomas**  
**Jan. 21: Richard Venus**  
**Jan. 28: Nancy Bowen**

Youth RE & Childcare  
start at 10 AM



## **Church Postcards**

Looking for a gift to give someone or pretty postcard to send? The Church has postcards of its stained glass windows. Packets of 12 postcards are \$5 and can be purchased after services, at the holiday party, or by emailing [info@uuchurchnm.org](mailto:info@uuchurchnm.org).

## **Richard's Reflections**

Through Churches Acting Together and other community organizations, the Guest at Your Table program, the fundraising effort of the UU Service Committee, is helping revitalize a traditional mediation method used in Darfur to resolve conflicts. In Guatemala, the STICH program provides skills-building training to strengthen women's leadership skills in their unions with the support of UUSC. On the Lakota reservation, the "JustWorks" project involves UU volunteers and local residents rebuilding a recreation center for youth. The Service Committee has also given more than \$4 million dollars in hurricane and tsunami relief at home and abroad. Such tangible efforts make real our Unitarian Universalist values and help us answer the question, "What can we do?" We help others by direct involvement in their lives and by reaching out through UUSC.

On Sunday, December 5th we will collect the GAYT boxes and any cash that we will offer on behalf of those in need.

I can think of no better way to celebrate the Christmas holidays to come by reaching out to those in need, which is a way of introducing a couple of thoughts I've been having about the spending frenzy that most of us indulge in beginning in the next few days. It is sad to say, but I suspect that the holidays for many are a time of dread at least as much as something to look forward to. So let me offer a suggestion, one you've heard a zillion times at least, but I think worth considering again this year: how 'bout getting this Christmas. Not getting more stuff, but more music, more companionship, more contemplation, more time with friends and family and more love.

Ah, I know, its old news, but I'm considering it again 'cause I think it's a good thing to do and much in keeping with what we have been doing in November.

With that said, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a most healthy and happy New Year...imagine it's 2007 already!



Dear Friends,

Another holiday season approaches. Picture our lovely old brick church as the first snow starts to drift down on its small town, rural setting. Now, take another look: our church is not just the setting for a picture postcard. Come inside! Something is happening here. Our impact is greater than our size; this little church community is making a difference.

I encourage you to support our annual Christmas special collection. As you read through this letter, I hope you'll be reminded of the many ways in which the First Universalist Church puts your giving to good use.

From our traditional annual Harvest Sounds benefit concerts to Guest at Your Table to our ongoing support to F.I.S.H., we continually raise funds to help others. In addition, many of our members are active in the wider community, adding their voices and hands to making this area and our nation a better place. I have begun to think that this type of outreach is somehow built in to the genetic structure of people who are attracted to Unitarian-Universalism and the First Universalist Church.

Sunday Services are varied and interesting. The Reverend Richard Venus and guest speakers offer messages which challenge us spiritually and intellectually. The music lifts our spirits. Coffee hour gives us the opportunity to welcome visitors and get to know each other better. The First Thursday Theological Society meets the first Thursday evening every month for religious education. This year First Thursday is exploring each of the UU principles.

Finally, we love our fine old church building. We consider its stewardship an important responsibility. As you know, upkeep of the building and grounds requires constant attention and funding. This fall we added a chimney liner to preserve the chimney and safely carry off fumes. The building continues to need attention, but we are rewarded with a beautiful place in which to gather.

Please give generously this season. Attached is an envelope for your Christmas donation. You may bring it to church and drop it in the regular offering or put it in a mailing envelope addressed to First Universalist Church, P.O. Box 315, New Madison OH 45346-0315.

May you have a wonderful holiday season!

With warmest regards,  
*Christel Brooks*  
Board President



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## The Service Committee Brings Hope and Relief

Congress has allocated billions of dollars for long-term housing recovery in New Orleans since the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina. As of August 29, 2006, a year after the hurricane hit, not a single house had been built with public funds.

As the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) reports, "While survivors

were waiting, a starkly uneven recovery has resulted in brightly lit cafes bustling in Uptown and the French Quarter while wide swaths look just as they did right after the storm with block after block of mold-filled homes on streets lined with abandoned cars and shuttered businesses."

*Continued on page 3*

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## Upcoming Events at the First Universalist Church of New Madison

### FISH Offering Sundays

Dec. 3 & Jan. 7

This time of year monetary donations are especially appreciated. In addition to providing food, FISH assists people with heating bills. There is a limit of \$25 per year for each household and checks are written directly to the utility company. To make a donation bring canned food, cash, or checks on FISH Sunday or mail a check to the church made payable to FISH.

### Guest at Your Table

December 3

Bring your boxes with donations to service

### 1st Thursday Theological Society—revised format

7 PM Dec. 7 & Jan. 4

### Board of Directors Meetings

Everyone is welcome  
7 PM Tues. Dec. 26 & Jan. 23

### Holiday Party

6 PM Mon. Dec. 4  
Potluck and Bingo  
Bring \$5 man's or woman's gift  
Sign-up sheet for potluck at the church

### Mitten Tree

Bring new children's mittens and gloves anytime until church service on Dec. 10.

### Cookie Carry-in

December 24, coffee hour  
Everyone bring cookies

### Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 6 PM

The above events will take place at the church unless otherwise stated.



### *Service Committee continued from page 2*

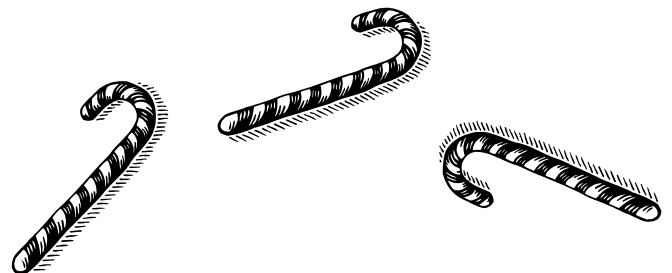
Indeed, it is important to rebuild the financial district and the French Quarter, but the question remains, why is there no plan for rebuilding. Affluent neighborhoods have been better able to access resources for recovery than low-income neighborhoods, where voices have not been heard in envisioning how the city is to be rebuilt.

The 4X4 GUEST AT YOUR TABLE boxes that we received at the Sunday service in early November are to collect your coins and bills and checks to help organizations like PICO-ACT, Coastal Women for Change, the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance, and others do the work of our hands. The UUSC's mission is to help those who are working to save and restore lives in cooperation with local grassroots organizations rather than create organizations of

its own to duplicate the work already being done.

At our December 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday morning service the boxes you have taken home will be collected and the money sent to the UUSC office where it will be distributed to groups such as these and others doing similar work.

We have also distributed boxes to the UU students at Earlham College who in turn are organizing a GAYT fund-raising drive.



## In Our Thoughts

### Burns and Studabaker Families

On September 2, 2006 at 10:35pm, Mike and Cindy Studabaker were killed in a head-on auto accident in Phillipsburg, Ohio. They were on their way home from the Ohio State football game. Their son Scott was in the back seat of the car and was rescued from the burning car by two brave Phillipsburg Police Officers, Brooks Glidwell and Darren Roth, with the help of a nearby resident.

Scott was critically injured and spent the next 3 1/2 weeks in the intensive care unit of Miami Valley Hospital. He continues his therapy and rehabilitation in Columbus, Ohio and is improving. He is living in Columbus with his sister, Kristen.

Cindy is the daughter of Doyle and Jeanette Burns and Mike is the son of John and Catherine Studabaker, all of Greenville.

The Burns and Studabaker families truly appreciate all the cards, visits, and remembrances from all our friends during this most difficult time.

### Laura Willis and Family

Please join us in celebration for Laura Willis (Helen Arnold's Granddaughter) and her family. Her husband, Andy, became officially, legally, and forever Daddy a year ago on Oct. 14th when he adopted Daniel and Steven.

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## Applause! Applause!

by Roberta Feltman

The November 5 Harvest Sounds 2006, benefiting State of the Heart Home Health & Hospice "left 'em wanting more"! Jeannelle & Terri, the Ragtime Quartet, and Simple Gifts Duo presented numbers by composers ranging from Joplin to Puccini to Helfrich. When Jeannelle Benek, accompanied by Terri Fryman on piano, sang "Bless This House," sunlight streaming through the stained glass windows created a truly magical moment. As the Ragtime Quartet, Margaret Schryver and friends chose to play a Scott Joplin Suite, with flutist Margaret telling the story of Joplin and his compositions. Closing the concert were Joseph Helfrich and Dale Musser as the Simple Gifts Duo. The audience of 70 joined in the fun by singing a "familiar sea shanty" with Joe and Dale – the theme from Gilligan's Island. This was Joe's second appearance at a Harvest Sounds concert, and he again brought his own touch of humor, musical skills, and unusual compositions.

Christel Brooks acted as emcee, and Richard Venus was the photographer. Enhancing the afternoon were the beautiful programs designed

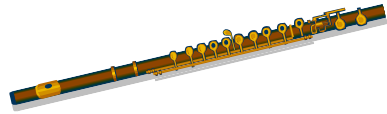
and given by Margaret Schryver, and the reception at which audience and artists mingled and enjoyed fall refreshments. Hospice has been presented with \$603 from ticket sales, and \$50 from the raffle for a quilt made by Rosie Pierron.

This was our sixth concert providing help to local agencies. The first was for area food banks in autumn 2002 and featured The Flat Mountain String Band and Phil 'n the Blanks. In 2003, two concerts were given – Spring Sounds for area youth programs with music by The Flat Mountain String Band and Aaron Nell & Friends - and Harvest Sounds for Habitat for Humanity with Joseph Helfrich, Eric Loy, and Phil 'n the Blanks. The Cancer Association was chosen for Spring Sounds 2004 with music by Bantry Bay and The Dixie Rhythm Kings. Jim's Red Pants and Ann & Phil Case played for the American Red Cross benefit, November, 2005.

The concerts are important and popular events in the life of First Universalist Church, providing enjoyment and assistance to area residents and agencies. We look forward to seeing you at an exciting Harvest Sounds 2007!

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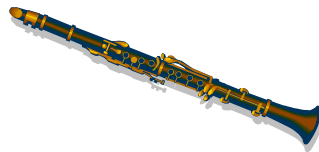
### A Note of Appreciation

A BIG thank you to First Universalist Church of New Madison, for hosting Harvest Sounds 2006 benefiting State of the Heart Home Health & Hospice. The agency is observing 25 years of service and compassionate care to the area, and never turns away a hospice patient due to inability to pay; therefore, gives away many thousand of dollars in charity care each year. Donations, planned giving, quilt raffle ticket sales, and fundraisers such as the Harvest Sounds concert help to assure continuance of patient care.

“The generosity of the church body and the musicians inspired what this season of harvest is all about – abundance and thanksgiving,” said Beverly Hughes, Marketing Director for State of the Heart. “Many more patients and their families will be assisted because of this day of music and fellowship.”



Simples Gifts Duo—Dale Musser and Joseph Helfrich



Jeanelle Benek singing



Margaret Schryver performing

**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:**

1 Danielle Fritsche  
5 Marcia Venus  
6 John Price  
10 Steven Willis  
11 Wilma Rutan  
14 Courtney Pulfer  
16 Phyllis Dubbs  
25 Jesus Christ  
25 Lloyd Ketring  
27 Megan Cass  
29 Mark Searls



**DEC. ANNIVERSARIES:**

8 Charles & Paula Godsey  
14 Roberta & Dave Feltman

**JANUARY BIRTHDAYS:**

2 Steve Moeckel  
8 Maureen Wissman  
9 Chelsea Lucas  
10 Lisa Feltman Spring  
15 Lyle Baker  
16 Jeffrey Feltman  
18 Roger Cassity  
19 Derek Lucas  
21 Norma Kuhnle  
26 Lyn Baker

**JAN. ANNIVERSARIES:**

4 Steve & Marion Moeckel

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**Christmas Eve  
By Candlelight**

Music by flute, guitar, mandolin, and all our voices will be central to this year's Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at the New Madison Church, Sunday, December 24 at 6 PM.

There will also be stories for children and adults and a time for hymns and candle lighting.

Rick and Hillary Wagner, Margaret Schryver and perhaps several young adults will bring instrumental music to accompany our caroling.

There will be delightful treats following the service and child care will be provided for young children.

First Universalist Church  
P.O. Box 315  
331 E. Washington  
New Madison, OH 45346-0315