



# The Leaf

Dec. 07/Jan. 08

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

## Sunday Services 10 AM

**Dec. 2: Jim Gish**

**Dec. 9: Chuck Thomas**  
**“Scrooge Revisited”**

**Dec. 16: Richard Venus**  
**“Of Darkness and Light”**

**Dec. 23: Richard Venus**  
**“What About Joseph”**

**Dec. 30: Richard Venus**  
**“Weight of a Snowflake”**

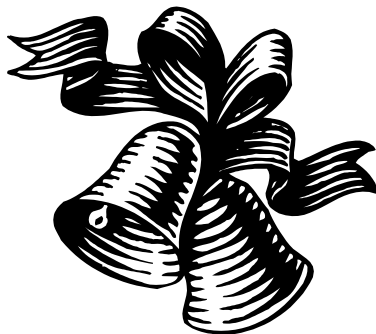
**Jan. 6: Julie Monin**

**Jan. 13: John Searls**

**Jan. 20: Richard Venus**  
**“We Share This Dream”**

**Jan. 27: Richard Venus**  
**“Pain Got Us Here”**

Youth RE & Childcare  
start at 10 AM



## **Richard's Reflections**

The First Universalist Church of New Madison has been served by ministers and members whose beliefs about God, or god, or goddess range from no belief at all to firm conviction of the existence of a supreme being beyond their complete knowing. Early Universalists assumed there was a God, an all-loving being whose love for creation meant that no one should suffer pain after death, namely that there was no Hell to which one would forever be assigned.

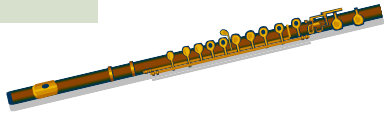
Over the years, Unitarians and Universalists lifted up their questions about life and community and the changing face of god. Throughout history, people have created many images of god, which becomes a word for the cosmos, or love, or the good, or an omnipresence that guides our behavior, or many, many other ways of understanding what is ultimately a mystery.

While I suspect many members of the New Madison congregation would consider themselves humanists with little or no belief in a creator god, there are others who hold to a firm belief in a spiritual guide, or a personal god who is a guide and helper for his or her life.

As we enter into this holiday season, where Christmas has become a commercial celebration for Wal-Mart, Target, and Lowe's, I would invite us to reflect on the nature of the god we do or do not believe in. The story of a babe in a manger is most likely pure fiction, but it speaks to the nature of a god who came to be among his creation. As the Rev. Jane Rzepka reminds us, “If we do need gods, we create the gods we need...No two Unitarian Universalist theists conceptualize their gods in exactly the same way.”

The church in which we celebrate is open to all who seek after spiritual guidance and truth, and we honor those whose search takes them to a place where god, or the goddess, is very real, or to a place where no god exists at all.

However you celebrate this holiday season, I wish you a Christmas and New Year filled with hope, health, and hearty laughter.



## Encore, Encore!

by Roberta Feltman

November 4 was a big day in the life of First Universalist. That was the day the church presented its seventh concert benefiting a deserving nonprofit area organization. The Harvest Sounds concert was performed by top-notch musicians to benefit Darke County Center for the Arts' Arts-in-Education programming. AIE annually serves 7,000 Darke County students, plus many area retirement community residents, with shows by high quality professional performing artists.



Richard Venus welcomed the audience and spoke briefly about First Universalist. Christel Brooks acted as M.C. and introduced the artists. Keith Rawlins, Artistic Director of Darke County Center for the Arts, talked about DCCA and AIE, then introduced Julie Strait, DCCA Executive Director who thanked the church for choosing their organization to receive the proceeds from this year's concert.

The artists performing at Harvest Sounds were pianist Betty Lou Johansen who played *Theme* from *Concerto, A Minor, Op. 16* by Edvard Grieg, causing Christel to remark, "Grieg and Betty Lou can certainly do wonders with 88 keys!" Margaret Schryver, piccoloist, with Lloyd Ketring on piano, amazed the audience with their duet entitled *Winsey* by Ricky Lombardo. Ending the show was the four member cast of Versailles Towne & Country Players' *Forever Plaid* - Ken DeMange, Doug Gordon, Keith Rawlins, and Ben York, accompanied by pianist Marie Daugherty. The "Plaids" brought down the house with their songs and choreography, sang an encore, and received a standing ovation – a first at Harvest Sounds!

Following the show, proceeds were tabulated while everyone enjoyed a cider and cookie reception and met the musicians. It was exciting to present \$902 to DCCA for the 2007-2008 Arts in Education programming. A special thanks to all who made the concert possible, and to all who attended. We appreciate your support and hope you enjoyed the show.



## Not such a Mystery Man –Church Steward Extraordinaire and Veteran

I round up the crew for church maintenance projects and give everyone else the credit. For bigger jobs, I find contractors, get bids, explain options, and oversee the work. I am in and out of the church many times a week, checking to make sure things are okay. **Who am I?** Answer: Charles Godsey, of course.

It comes as no surprise that our church is not the only beneficiary of Chas' energy, persistence, and skill. Chas was recently honored at a New Madison Veteran's Day program. Tri-Village students sang patriotic songs and read letters to veterans. By all accounts it was a wonderful program, but the best was yet to come: Charles Godsey and Delbert Braund were caught off guard when they were specially recognized as veterans who give back to the community through volunteer work. Chas and Delbert were presented plaques signed by President Bush. A well-deserved honor! We are proud of you, Chas.

To quote Chas, "Keep that in your data banks. See you when I see you."



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

### FISH Offering Sundays

Dec. 2 & Jan. 6

This time of year monetary donations are especially appreciated. Cash is used to pay for items such as milk and eggs. To make a donation bring canned food, cash, or checks on FISH Sunday or mail a check to the church made payable to FISH.

### 1st Thursday Theological Society

7 PM Dec. 6

### Board of Directors Meeting

Everyone is welcome

7 PM Tues., Jan. 22

There will be no meeting in December

### Holiday Party

6 PM Mon. Dec. 3

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. 9.

### Cookie Carry-in

December 23, coffee hour

Everyone bring cookies

### Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 6 PM

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




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## The President's Column

Dear Friends,

As mornings grow frosty and the last of the harvest is brought in from the field, snow cannot be far behind. The chill outside makes it feel even warmer inside. Join us for the warmth of our traditional family Christmas Eve service on Monday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

New Year's is a natural time to reflect. Think of all our church has contributed to the community in 2007. Every month First Universalist is an important source of monetary and food donations to the F.I.S.H. food bank. This year we initiated the Community Outreach Fund, which has made its first contribution. Next year will bring even greater opportunity to help. Finally, let's not forget the Harvest Sounds Concert (see article in this issue). What a delightful way to raise funds and enjoy ourselves at the same time.

I'm sure you noticed the Christmas offering envelope. Each year, we encourage you to make a special contribution over the holidays. Each contribution helps this very small church do BIG things. Thank you for all that you already contribute by giving of your time and your funds.

On behalf of the Board as well as myself, I wish you all the best in the New Year.

-Fred Meyer

President, Board of Directors

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**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:**

1 Danielle Fritsche  
5 Marcia Venus  
6 John Price  
10 Steven Willis  
11 Wilma Rutan  
14 Courtney Pulfer  
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, music, music will be a major part of First Universalist Church's candlelight service Monday, December 24 at 6 PM. In addition to special readings, organ and piano, there will be mandolins, guitars, and violins offering special seasonal carols. Candlelight will conclude the service that will celebrate the Christmas themes of joy, hope, and love.



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