



# The Leaf

January 2006

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

## Sunday Services 10 AM

**Jan. 1: Richard Venus –**  
The Weight of a Snowflake

**Jan. 8: John Graham**

**Jan. 15: Richard Venus –**  
The Community that Binds Us

**Jan. 22: Bonnie Brazil-Davis**

**Jan. 29: Mike Short**

Childcare starts at 9:50 AM

## Richard's Reflections

Even we religious liberals can become fundamentalists when it comes to tradition. We cherish our history, especially the way things have been done. In fact, most all human beings prefer the known to the unknown and will often accept hurt and pain rather than change and do something new. I confess to being one of those who likes the familiar for it is what is comfortable to me, not different or strange. I also know that what I once saw as true some years ago I now longer see the same way. I hope that I can change when new information is presented to me or when the need arises to do things differently.

Loren Mead is a church consultant who writes books about churches and how they function. In one such book he writes, "When I got a new of-

fice chair, I felt a momentary pang. I loved the old one...My bottom was comfortable in it, and I knew which of the casters would fall off if you picked the chair up. But after one day in a new chair, which really did feel better and worked better, I lost my loyalty...Our current church structures are strangling us, but we love them. More than that, they feel holy to us. To change them feels like disloyalty...even though we know it's just a chair...."

Our church board and others have set for us all some new plans and goals. They will require change. I hope I'm up to the challenge, and I hope all of us will join in the programs and share the work your board has set for us all. It can be a way of greeting the New Year: welcoming the new that will bless us all.



## Seeking New Board Member

Sue Searls has resigned her seat on the Board of Directors, saying, "I have enjoyed the experience but can no longer participate in the manner I feel is necessary to grow the church." The church warmly thanks Sue for her contributions and will miss her keen insights at board meetings.

The board will appoint a new member to fill the remainder of Sue's term, which ends July 2006. If you would like to volunteer, please see Christel Brooks.

## Upcoming Events

### First Thursday Theological Society

January 5, 7:30 PM

February 2, 7:30 PM

Advance reading is available at the church or on the Upcoming Events page at [www.firstuniversalistchurch.org](http://www.firstuniversalistchurch.org)

### FISH Offering Sundays

January 1

February 5

### Board of Directors Meetings

Everyone is welcome!

January 24, 7 PM

February 28, 7 PM

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS:

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



## JAN. ANNIVERSARIES:

4 Steve & Marion Moeckel

**Subscribe to The Leaf online  
by emailing  
[info@firstuniversalistchurch.org](mailto:info@firstuniversalistchurch.org)**

## Herman II: A Leadership Conference

On December 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, thirteen church members participated in the church's planning and leadership conference (a.k.a. Herman II). The conference was convened to address questions such as, "What do we want our church community to be? What actions do we need to take to get where we want to go?"

Marcia Venus facilitated the session, quickly getting into a SWOT examination of our church's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The exercise prompted energetic conversation and led to generating "priorities for action." To further focus efforts we then whittled down the list of priorities to the top three. We selected: 1) Mission: Create a new action-oriented mission statement, seeking input from church members. 2) Public Relations: create new written materials to let visitors and the community and visitors know more about us. 3) Social Action: partner with an existing social agency in volunteer efforts to help the larger community.

Watch for more information on all of these action priorities. For example, we'll start looking for input to the new mission statement on January 8<sup>th</sup>. Are you interested in learning more or volunteering to work on one of the action priorities? If so, please see Christel Brooks.

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