

MAR/APR  
2011

# THE LEAF

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

## RICHARD'S REFLECTIONS — *from Rev. Richard Venus*

I was invited recently, as chair of Ohio Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, to speak to a rally in Columbus organized primarily by Ohio State University students in response to the draconian cuts proposed by the Governor of Ohio and most of his Republican colleagues in the Ohio Legislature. This is what I said:

*I am here to thank you.* I want to thank those of you who organized this rally and *each* of you for being present here.

*On behalf of* women everywhere who suffer from the oppressive laws of unjust lawmakers who work to limit a woman's right to choose, I thank you.

*On behalf of* poor women and men who desperately need affordable health care and who will, due to arrogant selfish lawmakers, be denied that right, I thank you.

*On behalf of* women and men who deserve a choice in their family planning, I thank you.

*On behalf of* students who will no longer find medical care available when they desperately need it, I thank you.

*I thank you* all for being here to say to Governor Kasich, we will work tirelessly to see that you are never again elected to public office.

*I thank you* for being here to say to the wealthiest one percent of Ohioans and those in elected office, we will work to change the laws that now allow you huge tax breaks and elaborate health care benefits while the poor must go without.

*I thank you* for being here, reminding us that the wealthy will not be touched by these cuts in basic services, but many of those most in need of the care Planned Parenthood offers will be without.

*I thank you* for saying to Senator Peggy Lehner, who now holds office because of her Right to Life stance, that we will work tirelessly to see that her appointment to the Ohio Senate ends when she actually runs for that office.

To Lehner and Kasich, I say to deny a woman her Constitutional right to live her life as she chooses is morally reprehensible and they ought to be ashamed of using women's lives to foster their selfish aims.

*(continued on page 3)*

### SUNDAY SERVICES 10:00 A.M.

- MAR 6** Richard Venus  
*Our Missteps On Race*
- MAR 13** Chuck Thomas  
*Liberal Religion & Human Needs*
- MAR 20** Richard Venus  
*The Courage To Be*
- MAR 27** Richard Venus  
*Is All There Is Enough?*
- APR 3** Lonnie Valentine  
*God & The (My? Our??) World*
- APR 10** Mike Short  
*Can We Be Good Without God?*
- APR 17** Richard Venus  
*Goodness Grace*
- APR 24** Richard Venus  
*Other Resurrections*

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### FISH Offering Sundays

Mar. 6 and Apr. 3.

#### Food and Fellowship

Mar. 6 and Apr. 3, lunch at Fort Black Buffet.

#### Board Meetings

Mar. 15 and Apr. 19, 7 p.m. at church.

#### Church Cleaning

Apr. 16, 9 a.m. at church.

#### Palm Sunday Service, Lunch with Eldorado

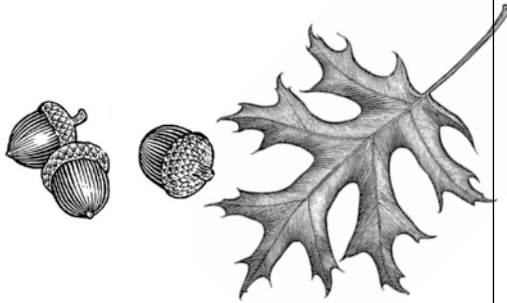
Apr. 17, 10 a.m. at New Madison church.

#### Easter Sunday Service

Apr. 24, 10 a.m. at church.

## OUTREACH — by Margaret Schryver

Personal demands have definitely put my Outreach Committee efforts on hold! Thank you, Kenny Baker, for taking over my article-writing duties in the January/February issue of *The Leaf* by contributing the Outreach Committee report. And thank you, Dave Feltman, for going forward with the Recycled Cards program during the Winter.



### Start Of Mentoring Program To Be Delayed

We laid the groundwork for our Mentoring Program, and then in October held a Congregational Meeting to explain the program. At that time, we judged that there was definitely enough interest to safely say, "It's a 'GO'"! The next step is for Julie Mancy and me to begin coordinating with Judge Julie Monnin and Dede Wissman (our first volunteer Coordinator) to work out the details and get the program started. It looks as if this process will be delayed until late Spring or early Summer when my personal life gets more stability and I can fully devote my energies to this worthwhile project. After all, if we're going to do this project, I want to be fully engaged in it! I thank each and every one of you in advance for any help you can give me as we work through the program's details.

### We Need Your Outreach Project Ideas!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

As outlined in the last issue of *The Leaf*, our church had a list of outreach projects for 2010 that was quite impressive — Recycled Card Program, Haiti Earthquake Relief Effort, Valentine for Mexico, Cell Phones for Soldiers, Brukner Nature Center Wish List, Gulf Oil Spill Wildlife Rescue, Mitten Tree, and Mentoring Program Plans. Within the Outreach Committee there is always a lively debate going on — whether or not to "give the Congregation a rest" between projects, or to keep an active project going on at all times. In either case, we need your ideas and suggestions for projects! Four of last year's projects were a direct result of suggestions that were submitted from members of the Congregation. *We need your input on a continuous basis.* We hope that those of you who reside in Darke County will make a conscious effort to bring local needs to our attention. But let's not stop there! There are so many needs beyond our own "backyard," and First Universalist Church could make a difference. If each one of you could submit just one suggestion we'd have more projects than we'd know what to do with! I hope you will consider helping us out.

### Human Trafficking — Even Here In Ohio

In late March, several of us will be attending a multi-media program at the Dayton International Peace Museum: *Under Our Noses – Modern Day Slavery And What You Can Do*

*About It.* This program will examine the complex and sobering facts of human trafficking as it is conducted not only globally but within the United States and even in Ohio. Visitors will receive an eye-opening introduction to the wide-spread practice of human trafficking and learn of opportunities to personally combat this on a local, state and national level. Possibly a new outreach project for First Universalist Church will present itself — who knows? The event will be held on Thursday March 31 at 5:30 p.m. at the Dayton International Peace Museum, 208 West Monument Avenue in downtown Dayton. Free off-street parking is available, and the event itself is free. For more information, visit the Museum's website [www.daytonpeacemuseum.org](http://www.daytonpeacemuseum.org) or call them at 937-227-3223. If you would like to attend, please let me know and arrangements can be coordinated. I can be reached at 937-235-2960 or [mschryver@hafenbrack.com](mailto:mschryver@hafenbrack.com).

### Valentine For Mexico Moved To Later This Year

First Universalist Church will continue its support of Children Without, collecting donations to purchase scholarships for the poor children who live in the city dump of Puerta Vallarta, Mexico. This has been a popular project of our Congregation for the past several years. Usually we target this project in February, hence the name "Valentine for Mexico." We missed that timeline this year, but details will be announced soon.

# THINK ABOUT IT

## Living Or Dying Churches

*Adapted from Pilgrim United Church of Christ newsletter, Port Charlotte, Florida by UU minister the Rev. Sam Trumbore*

Is your church alive or is it dying? Take a look at the following whimsical narrative to see if you recognize your Congregation —

Living churches always have a parking problem; dying churches don't. Living churches are constantly changing their methods; dying churches don't have to. Living churches have lots of noisy kids; dying churches are quiet. Living churches' expenses always exceed their income; dying churches take in more than they ever dream of spending. Living churches are constantly improving and planning for the future; dying churches worship the past. Living churches grow so fast you forget people's names; in dying churches you've known everyone's names for years. Living churches move forward and outward in faith; dying churches operate totally by sight. Living churches support community work heavily; dying churches keep it all at home. Living churches are filled with healthy pledgers; dying churches are filled with tippers. Living churches have the fresh wind of love blowing; dying churches are stale with bickering. Living churches don't have "can't" in their vocabulary; dying churches have nothing but "can't." Living churches evangelize; dying churches fossilize.

— UUA.org

*("Richard's Reflections" continued from page 1)*

Finally, it is an honor to be here with you because you are willing to stand with women and men in need of affordable health care, and who want choices not limits on their lives, and who deserve to be honored by and not neglected by those who are elected to serve all members of our society.

It is an honor to be here with you because you are giving witness to the majority of women and men who favor a woman's right to choose and who are being denied that right by a minority who wish to impose their oppressive ways on us all.

It is an honor to stand with you because what we are asking for is not only health care services for all but we're also issuing a call for justice, and fairness and equal treatment for all, regardless of economic class.

Thank you for being here and for your willingness to stand for what is just and right.

*Richard V.*

ISSUE OF THE LEAF

ARTICLES DUE

MAY/JUNE

April 17

JULY/AUG

June 19

Send submissions to Margaret Schryver  
(mschryver@hafenbrack.com).

# THE ENVIRONMENT

## Our Church Garden

"Oh, aren't they pretty!" A lovely touch of springtime will greet visitors to First Universalist soon as a garden of shrubs and flowering bulbs graces the front of the building. This garden was designed by Claire Brooks Williams in 2002. She also did the planting with help from her husband, Rob, and her father, Dick Brooks.

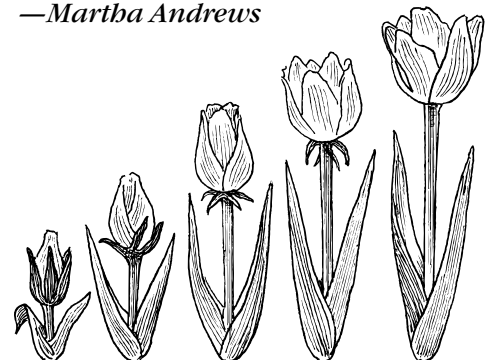
The focal point of the garden is a Red Twig Dogwood at the corner of the entrance ramp. It is surrounded by day lilies. Enhancing the church sign is a colorful and fragrant mix of candytuft, various spring bulbs, lily-of-the-valley and several annuals.

Some of these plants and other supplies were donated by Claire, her parents, Dick and Christel Brooks, and Charles and Paula

Godsey. The church financed major purchases with funds from memorial contributions honoring longtime member and benefactor Gertrude Jones and Beth Michel, wife of former pastor, Ray Michel. What better memorial than a lovely garden!

Over the years weeding and other maintenance chores have been done by those involved in the garden from the beginning. More recently Dede Wissman and Roberta Feltman have helped. We are grateful to all of them for this enduring gift.

—Martha Andrews



# GETTING TO KNOW YOU — JEANNETTE BURNS

**As it continues to feature the biographies of its members, this month The Leaf introduces Jeannette Burns, whose 60th wedding anniversary on March 7th is discussed on the opposite page.**

Jeannette grew up on a Darke County farm in a family of seven boys and seven girls. She seems comfortable talking about her 79 years, saying she was born August 10, the same date as a brother and a niece, although obviously in different years.

“My mother and father didn’t go to church,” she said, “but were Universalists before they knew it.” And although it was Doyle’s aunt who introduced her to the Democratic Party, it is likely from her parents that she inherited her appreciation of the Democrats, whom she continues to support with her time and money today.

Jeannette says it is the Golden Rule that guides her life, something she gained from the Rev. Wells Behee, the minister who introduced her and Doyle to First Universalist Church. They were living in an apartment in New Madison with a very young daughter when Wells came calling around 1958. She most appreciates the friendliness of the people in the New Madison church. “I always felt like I didn’t have to dress up to fit in,” she says, “and we didn’t have much money so I always felt comfortable there. You can be yourself.”

She and Doyle worked at Neff

Lettering Company for 32 years, beginning in 1949, just a few months after the plant opened in Greenville. She reports that “Doyle was the boss for eight hours, then I was the boss at home for the rest of the time.”

Together they raised five children, and are proud grandparents of eight grandchildren, two great-grand-daughters and three step-grandchildren. The great sorrow she and Doyle share however, is

the tragic death of their daughter Cynthia and her husband Michael Studebaker, who were killed in a car crash on Labor Day weekend 2006. “The loss never goes away,” Jeannette said.

“I was never a joiner,” Jeannette said, but it is clear that she has a very special way of caring for others. She has been a steady blood donor since 1976, and reports that in March she will have contributed her 84th unit of blood to the Red Cross.

We in the New Madison Church are very familiar with how she was the main transportation for Norma Kuhnle, whom she deeply misses every time she drives to church. Transporting folks “started when I began taking Dorothy Brumbaugh,

who worked at Neff’s,” she said.

There was a beautiful floral arrangement on the church altar on March 6th given in thanks and in honor of the Burn’s 60th wedding anniversary by Elsie Young, another with whom Jeannette has become a close friend and whom she transports regularly.

I am not the only person who has said, “If I ever needed help I know I could count on Jeannette to be there.” That is so very true. Thank you, Jeannette, for all the good you bring to our church and our community.

— Richard Venus

“My mother and father didn’t go to church but were Universalists before they knew it.”

— Jeannette Burns

## EASTER 2011

### A Special Easter Offering

Unitarian Universalists celebrate Easter as a time of new birth, of renewal, of hope.

We celebrate the life of Jesus of Nazareth as a man who gave his life on behalf of others that we might all understand the nature of love and forgiveness of which he so often spoke. We at First Universalist Church of New Madison take a special offering at Easter in response to the gifts that this man of love gave us. We honor him by offering a gift in return for all that he means and has been for the world, just as we support First UU Church and all it offers us and our community.

— Richard Venus

## CATCHING UP

### Thank You

I have always appreciated the way we at First Universalist of New Madison honor folks who are celebrating birthdays and anniversaries. I also am pleased that we sign cards of condolences or get well. However, I came to a new understanding of the importance of a get well card and flowers following my rotator cuff surgery. I found a deep sense of appreciation for your thoughtfulness. Thank you very much.

—Richard Venus

### Both Of You Are In Our Thoughts And Prayers

For those not at Service on February 20, Derek Parker was our guest speaker. We learned that Derek's mother's condominium building burned late the night before, totally destroying her unit and its contents. She got out safely and was staying with a friend. Derek's brother lives in a nearby town and was there quickly. This happened in Clarkston, Michigan. The Service that Sunday was very emotional for Derek and our entire Congregation, but he gave a wonderful talk that was fitting — it spoke of the unpredictability of life.

Added to that, Martha Andrews called the rescue squad that same Sunday morning around 9 a.m. and was taken to Wayne Hospital. She had tests that showed she had had a "small" heart attack.

We will remember you both in our thoughts and prayers.

—Dede Wissman



*Dede Wissman will enjoy her retirement gift!*

### I'm retired!!!!

*I am no longer a librarian.* My last day of work at Greenville Public Library was February 11. I asked that there be no party but the staff ordered pizza for lunch, and I got a swell gift from them: just what I asked for — *beer!* I received a wooden be-ribboned wine case filled with 34 bottles of imported or microbrew beers selected by Aaron Cox at Montage. I've now sampled a dozen bottles, and I know my gift choice was a delicious one and was as varied as my job had been.

Though I was always a Reference Desk Clerk, I was able to do many kinds of tasks on my off-desk hours. I was never bored because I chose to be busy. And better yet, my tasks were both productive and helpful to our patrons. I felt well-liked and respected by both co-workers and patrons. I was good at my job and could help folks with almost any of their library needs. What better job could I have had? *None!* It suited me so very well.

Who will I be now? I will be a person who can rest on the laurels earned in her career and civic

contributions. What will I do now? I would like to do more of what I have done before — read, visit with friends, exercise, be outdoors and work in the library as a Friends of the Library volunteer. Perhaps I will learn something new (like not to eat late at night), or re-learn something old (like playing my violin). Finally, I hope to have a few more moderate adventures before I am gone.

—Dede Wissman

### Jeannette and Doyle Burns Celebrate Their 60th Wedding Anniversary

Doyle and Jeannette Burns were married March 7, 1951 at St. Paul United Methodist Church of Christ by the Rev. Louis Minsterman. Jeannette is the daughter of the late Ray and Marie Marshall and Doyle is the son of the late George and Leola Burns.

They are parents of five children; Barbara Burns, Sharon (Duane) Robbins, Dennis (Carol) Burns of Arkansas, Cynthia (Michael) Studabaker (both deceased) and Susan (Robert) Hutzell, of Virginia. They have eight grandchildren: Justin (Holly Burns, Lisa (Kevin) Hawley, C.J. Robbins, Cathy (Darick) Pelfry, Scott Studabaker of Arizona, Kristin Studabaker, of Columbus, and Alison and Nicholas Hutzell, of Virginia. There are two great granddaughters: Hayley and Paige Burns. There is a step-granddaughter in Arkansas, Deana (Michael) Smedlund and three step-great grandchildren in Arkansas: Kayla, Aaron and Eric.

—from Greenville Daily Advocate

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## CELEBRATIONS

### March Birthdays

- 1 Mary Behee
- 1 Dede Wissman
- 6 Kenny Baker
- 16 Marion Moeckel
- 18 Miranda Hamelberg
- 29 Matt Searls
- 31 Deetra Huntington
- 31 Ken Beers

### March Anniversaries

- 7 Doyle & Jeannette Burns
- 22 Richard & Nanette Fritsche

### April Birthdays

- 1 Shea Huntington
- 4 Patrick Schryver
- 5 Mike Buccicone
- 10 Richard Fritsche
- 17 Jon Ketring
- 22 Gretchen Price
- 28 Mary Evelyn Geeting



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## FISH

### FISH Wish List

FISH has asked that our donations focus on the following:

- ***Soups (tomato, cream of chicken, cream of mushroom, chicken noodle)***
- ***Macaroni and cheese***
- ***Cereal***
- ***Canned corn and green beans***
- ***Canned fruit***
- ***Peanut butter***
- ***Jam or jelly***
- ***Hamburger extenders (spaghetti or other sauces, Hamburger Helper, chili beans)***
- ***Baked beans***
- ***Tuna***
- ***Sandwich spreads***
- ***Salad dressing***
- ***Mayonnaise***

