



The Leaf

September 2008

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

Sunday Services 10 AM

Sept. 7: Richard Venus, Picnic in the Greenville City Park

Sept. 14: Richard Venus, Water Ceremony

Sept. 21: John Johansen

Sept. 28: Mike Short

Youth RE & Childcare
start at 10 AM

Upcoming Events

Service and Picnic in Greenville City Park

10 AM Sept. 7, Shelter #6
Followed by a picnic lunch.
Bring a joyful spirit, a good
appetite, & a chair. Parking is
by the swing sets, and the
Shelter is near the playground.

FISH Offering Sunday

Sept. 14

Installation of RE Director

Sept. 14, during service
Lunch, music, and crafts will
follow the service.

Board Meeting

Everyone is welcome
7 PM Sept. 23

Richard's Reflections—The Election Season

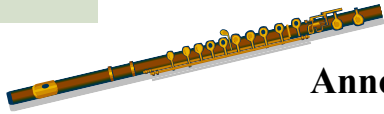
As I write, the governor of Alaska, Sarah Palin, has just been named the running mate for Sen. John McCain. I suspect this is a way of attracting Hillary supporters and may turn out to make a critical factor in the November election. I have found myself puzzled by how close the race has become, given the unpopularity of President Bush and Sen. McCain's voting record that is 90 percent with the President.

I am more concerned, however, with the growing "dissonance" in the campaign and fear that it will become, once again, a brawl between the contenders. My concern arises from my sense that instead of conversations in which the candidates try to discuss and come up with helpful solutions to the myriad of problems we face in the U.S., they will bicker about unimportant subjects. I hope I am wrong because it would be so much more beneficial to have genuine dialogue over substantive issues.

I realize that such a view is a bit Pollyannaish, but these days I find myself more inter-

ested in what makes for harmony rather than dissonance. I am reminded that at a concert the musicians all play the same piece of music but each has a different part in making that music. Whether they're creating somber minor chords or cheerful major chords, the band is working together in harmony.

Recently someone wrote: "I had a difficult time with harmony when I first became introduced to it. I thought owning my power meant crashing like a cymbal wherever I went. It took a while to learn that I could own my power more effectively by harmonizing than by being a discordant note. Harmony isn't just a value to apply in our relationships with other people. Harmonizing is more than just a musical phrase. It's more than *live and let live*. It's living together. It's compatibility, being on the same page." That is what we Unitarian Universalist are fundamentally about, building community or harmonizing with each other and the larger society of which we are a part.



Announcing Harvest Sounds VIII

HARVEST SOUNDS, First Universalist's eighth annual concert benefiting a non-profit organization in Darke County, will be held Sunday, November 2. Many deserving groups were researched in choosing the charity or organization which will be the recipient of the proceeds from the concert. It has been decided that SafeHaven, Inc. will be the beneficiary this year. SafeHaven is a Mental Health Support Center for adults, offering educational, social, and vocational support and opportunities toward mental health recovery. All services are free, and are in a safe environment in facilities in Greenville and Piqua. Financial support comes from United Way and private donations.

Performing at the concert will be an instrumental group and a vocal group. Zeta Chi Flute Ensemble consists of nine flutists accompanied by piano. The members are from the Dayton area, several of them professional musicians connected with Sinclair Community College, and members of Delta Omicron International Music Fraternity. Margaret Schryver will be performing with Zeta Chi at her third HARVEST SOUNDS appearance.

The other group performing will be the Melody Line Singers, a group of ten Greenville women who are accompanied by pianist Terri Fryman, making her second appearance at a HARVEST SOUNDS event. Terri will also be presenting a piano solo. The singers are professional musicians and teachers and are under the direction of Marilyn Light.

HARVEST SOUNDS benefit concert will be held at First Universalist Church, 331 East Washington St., New Madison, Sunday, November 2 at 3:00 p.m. Tickets are \$8, and will be available from church members, SafeHaven, and at the door the day of performance. Following the concert there will be a reception honoring the musicians. For information you may call 937-548-2480 or 937-548-7233.



Dear Friends,

This is the beginning of a new fiscal year for the church. It promises to bring some new and exciting changes for the congregation. Let's go into it with a fresh and positive attitude.

- There will be a new Board of Directors secretary. Welcome Virginia Burns.
- Laurie Shows has been hired as our Director of Religious Education.
- This year we have scheduled some new and interesting speakers. If anyone has any ideas on speakers or topics, please contact Dede Wissman or me.

At our board meeting on Tuesday, August 26, some items of interest were brought up.

- FISH collection will not be on the first Sunday, but the second Sunday, Sept. 14.
- September 7 will be our annual service in Greenville City Park at 10 am with a picnic to follow. All food and drinks will be provided. Bring chairs and friends, if you wish.
- September 14 will be our Water Ceremony and the installation of Laurie Shows as our Religious Education Director. Lunch, music, and crafts will follow the service.

Please join me in our new year of services and events,
Fred

Building Update by Charles Godsey



A direct lightning strike July 21 broke off a corner off the Church's bell tower, destroyed electrical switches inside the building and ruined the front ramp motion detector. The New Madison Insurance Company was called and asked to come and look at it and takes some pictures.

Costs for the repairs to the tower are approximately \$3,990 by Randy Bird Construction. Estimates to repair additional damage is \$950 by 3-Way Electric. There will be additional costs yet to be determined. I walked throughout the church and saw the damage to the bell tower in the upper level and the direct hit to the electrical switches inside the church itself.

In addition, 3-Way Electric discovered that our existing electrical panel has deteriorated and needs to be replaced, including the wire from the meter box. Estimated cost is \$1,650.

Association Sunday 2008

Association Sundays are a request by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) for all congregations to recognize and support, both in spirit and financially, the national work of the Association. We envision a day—an "Association Sunday"—during which thousands of UU's across the nation are simultaneously celebrating our shared commitment to Unitarian Universalism.

At First Universalist Church, Association Sunday will be October 5th when there will be a special service lifting up the work and principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association and a special collection will be taken to affirm our connection, and to bring our resources together for greater effect. Leadership at the UUA says that this is an opportunity for us to come together to grow our faith and our influence in the world.

Like and *Mind the Gap Sunday* in 2002 (which was focused on supporting Youth and Young Adult Ministries), each Association Sunday will include a worship service based on a particular theme, and congregations will be asked to host a special collection to support the Association of Congregations. This is an opportunity for us to support the work that individuals, congregations, and the UUA do to make Unitarian Universalism a haven for those who seek a liberal religious home.

This second Association Sunday will raise funds to support projects focused on deepening our Shared Ministry. The theme is *Growth Our Spirit*. The following specific initiatives were chosen based on a survey of Unitarian Universalist leaders—to which over 1,828 responded—whose 1st and 2nd priorities are represented in this plan. Fifty percent of the funds raised for Association Sunday 2008 will support Lay Theological Education programs. Congregations, districts, and seminaries will have the opportunity to apply for grants to create programs which focus on spiritual and theological deepening. Grants will begin to be available in the spring of 2009. Grants will be for a maximum of \$100,000 each.

Fifty percent of the funds will be divided equally among the following Excellence in Ministry programs. The Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association new initiatives for continuing education programs for ordained leaders through their CENTER programs and scholarships for promising students preparing for our ministry. Students in candidate status are eligible to apply for a scholarship. Scholarships will be in the amount of \$20,000 each. There will also be funds in support of the Diversity of Ministry Team's Initiative to support our ministers of color.

Three subsequent Association Sundays (one per year) will be devoted to the following themes: growth in diversity, growth in witness and growth in leadership.

SEPT. BIRTHDAYS:

- 4 Ellen Teller
- 5 Laura Moeckel Willis
- 6 Louie Leedle
- 7 Della Cassity
- 8 Dennis Burns
- 11 Paul Britner
- 15 Barbara Burns
- 18 Bill Burkett
- 18 Lori Lucas

**SEPT. ANNIVERSARIES:**

- 5 Craig & LuAnn Dubbs
- 5 Janet & Roger Cassity
- 19 Margaret & Patrick Schryver
- 23 Jon & Tammy Ketring

Welcome Laurie Shows

New programs and special events are coming to First Universalist Church of New Madison under the direction of Laurie Shows who has recently been hired as the church's Director of Religious Education. Her plan is to welcome members of the community who may not be familiar with Unitarian Universalism or who are seeking inclusive liberal religious ideas.

"I want to introduce this religious faith to those who are searching for spiritual direction in their lives," said Ms. Shows, who comes with many years of experience directing religious education programs, serving as a teacher, board member and RE chairperson at the Miami Valley UU Fellowship in Dayton.

She is the mother of Luke, a freshman at Kettering High School and Hannah, a precocious 12-year-old kick-boxing expert.

The installation service for Laurie will be September 14th, followed by lunch provided by Fred Meyer and a concert and jam session led by "Jim's Red Pants," the Celtic/folk duo of Rick and Hillary Wagner. While Rick and Hillary are making music, hopefully outdoors, Laurie will be leading the children in a workshop to make instruments they can play during the jam session following the concert.

It will be a mighty good time and a chance to invite friends to get acquainted with our burgeoning RE program.

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