



JUNE 2011

# Unichord



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ELGIN

## Flower Communion Celebrates Diversity in Community

The Flower Communion service was created by Norbert Čapek (1870-1942), who founded the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia. He introduced this special service to that church on June 4, 1923. For some time he had felt the need for some symbolic ritual that would bind people more closely together. The format had to be one that would not alienate any who had forsaken other religious traditions. The traditional Christian communion service with bread and wine was unacceptable to some members of his congregation because of their strong reaction against the Catholic faith. So he turned to the native beauty of the countryside for elements of a genuine communion.

People were invited to bring a flower of their choice, either from their own gardens or from the field or roadside. When they arrived at church, a large vase stood waiting. Each person was asked to place their own flower in the vase. This signified that it was by their own free will they joined with the others. The vase that contained all the flowers was a symbol of the united church fellowship.

After the service, as people left the church, they each took a flower from the vase other than the one that they had brought.

This simple service was such a success that it was held yearly just before the summer recess of the church.

The significance of the flower communion is that as no two flowers are alike, so no two people are alike, yet each has a contribution to make. Together the different flowers form a beautiful bouquet. Our common bouquet would not be the same without the unique addition of each individual flower, and thus it is with our church community; it would not be the same without each and every one of us. Thus this service is a statement of our community.

By exchanging flowers, we show our willingness to walk together in our Search for truth, disregarding all that might divide us. Each person takes home a flower brought by someone else—thus symbolizing our shared celebration in community. This communion of sharing our authentic selves is essential to a free people of a free religion.

This service has spread to many of our Unitarian Universalist congregations and has been adapted along the way. At the Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin, we ask that church members bring a living plant, from one's own garden if possible. Participants take home a plant other than the one they brought, and plant it in their own gardens. In this way, we symbolize our interconnectedness.

Along with Jews, gays, gypsies, professors, artists, and others who were considered dangerous to the state, Norbert Čapek was killed in a Nazi concentration camp in 1942.



—adapted from  
Reginald Zottoli of  
The Unitarian Universalist Church  
of Greater Bridgeport

# From the Minister

Susan Anderson sent me this quote the day after it was announced that Osama bin Laden had been killed.

**"I mourn the loss of thousands of precious lives, but I will not rejoice on the death of one, not even an enemy. Returning hate for hate multiplies hate, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."**

**—Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Susan and I had talked for a while about how we were relieved that bin Laden would no longer be a threat, but at the same time were uneasy with the street celebrations in many parts of our nation cheering his assassination. It reminded me of similar events when those who hate our nation have danced in the streets in celebration of the killing of U.S. soldiers or civilians. I find both situations disturbing in their lust for blood.

And yes, sometimes we need to resort to violence to defend ourselves or others, but even in such cases there is always a loss as the cycle of violence is continued. I hope that we as a nation increasingly refrain from greeting such death with cheers, and instead pause for a prayer of peace.



# A Month of Sundays

## JUNE

### June 5 Commencement

This is the season of graduations and commencement services. Taylor Kremer, Savannah Underwood and Sarah Stultz, our three graduating seniors, have been invited to share a few "commencement" thoughts about life, meaning and what is important. The Rev. Dan Brosier will lead the service.

### June 12 Flower Communion and All Church Picnic

We will hold our annual flower communion service and all church picnic at the Hanifls' once again. The day begins with a short service during which we celebrate our community through a flower communion. All are asked to bring a live plant/flower to place in communion. At the end of the service each member / family is encouraged to take a plant home to enjoy and nurture. Following the service we will have a picnic, games, swimming, fishing and general fun. The Hanifls have again generously offered to supply the "meat" portion of the picnic. Everyone else is asked to bring either a salad, a dessert or vegetable dish to share--and a beverage. Bring lawn chairs and any gear you need to play: swimsuits, fishing poles, softball equipment, etc. See the map on page 6 of this Unichord for directions to the Hanifls.

### June 26 Come Out, Come Out, Wherever You Are

If you don't come out, how can anyone find you? Service led by Donna Askins.

*Services begin at 10:45 until June 26, when summer services begin at 9:45*

# June Calendar

## Worship Services

- June 5 at 10:45—last regular service of the church year
- June 12 at 10:45—church service and potluck picnic at the Hanifls'
- June 19—Fathers' Day—no church service
- June 26 at 9:45—first summer service. Note the time change!

**Adult Religious Education: Speaking Peace**  
June 5 at 9:00  
in room 302

**Adult Spirituality Gathering**  
June 6 at 6:30 (off site)

**Board Meeting**  
June 15 at 7:00 in the Fellowship Hall

**Afternoon Book Group**  
June 27 at 12:30 (offsite)

**Buddhists**  
Thursdays at 7:00 in rooms 301 and 302

**Care Team Meeting**  
June 14 at 10:00 in the Fellowship Hall

## Pledge Income

Actual:  
\$134,360

Budgeted:  
\$135,116



## Ethical Eating Class

June 26 at 9:00 in the CommUUnity Garden

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) recently called for action regarding ethical eating, and specifically urged Unitarian Universalists to:

- minimize transportation-related carbon dioxide emissions by obtaining foods locally produced through home or community gardens
- provide educational programs for all ages that address the issues of environmental justice, gardening, food preparation and nutrition

What all of this means is simply: learn to garden. Get your hands dirty. And all summer long, Sunday mornings at 9, we will.

**Executive Team Meeting**  
June 14 at 1:30

**Finance Committee**  
June 8 at 7:00

**Landscape & Grounds Work Parties**  
June 5 and 26 at 12:30

**Men's Bike Trip**  
June 20

**Pantry Sunday**  
June 5

**Religious Education and Exploration Team Meeting**  
June 13 at 6:30 (off site)

**Social Justice Council Meeting**  
June 22 at 7:00 in the Fellowship Hall

## Special Unichord Deadline

Did you know? There is no July Unichord. Neither is there an August Unichord. That's because in summer the church publishes a **Special July/August double issue!**

So please take a note or even take two. Think carefully about **ALL** of your group's **SUMMER** events. Submit your information to [newsletter@uuce.org](mailto:newsletter@uuce.org) by no later than

# JUNE 19

Thanks!

# The Perversity of Diversity: Reflections from District Assembly

by Kathy Underwood

This year's keynote speaker at District Assembly was Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed, author of "Black Pioneers in a White Denomination and In Between: Memoir of an Integration Baby." He was raised Unitarian Universalist, and lived in Chicago for a while.

Rev. Morrison-Reed asked the question:

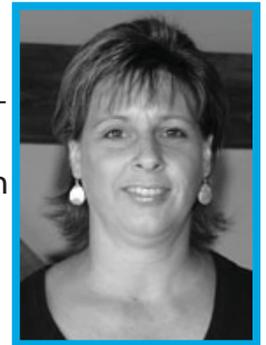
**"Why is diversity so hard to achieve in our congregations?"**

Some of the replies were:

- **We're too comfortable**
- **We want to change without really changing, and change is difficult**
- **We're afraid to make mistakes**
- **We assume that "they" (pick a racial/cultural group) don't want our kind of worship service**
- **We don't like to talk about race**
- **Our congregations are located in mostly white, suburban neighborhoods**
- **"They" don't know UUism exists**
- **"They" often face criticism from own community when participating in UU congregations**

Rev. Morrison-Reed kindly pointed out that "Who we are conflicts with who we want to be" as a congregation. Our fear of offending others lends itself to carefully-crafted conversations, which lends itself to tip-toeing around the issues and not being wholly truthful.

Furthermore, Rev. Morrison-Reed continued, the idea that salvation is a collective effort—that all must be saved—conflicts with African-American beliefs. The Universalist idea that all people are good and will go to heaven conflicts with the African-American belief that bad people should not, and how can a loving God let them? If the KKK, slave owners, etc. are going to heaven, why should I as an African-American want to be there with them?



So how do we become more diverse? First, we need to acknowledge that by "diversity" we typically mean African-Americans. We exclude from this the Hispanics, Latinos/as, Inuit, all Native American tribes, not to mention women, GBLTQ, developmentally disabled, learning disabled, physically disabled, etc. Therefore, we need to broaden our definition of diversity in thought.

Rev. Morrison-Reed gave a lot of statistics on different races' presence in UUism. All have increased over the last 50 years, doubling roughly every 15-20 years. As more African-Americans get post-secondary educations, more are finding UUism. This leads to the question of classism. The average UU has 17.5 years of education—or almost a master's degree. Our roots are still deep in elitism.

However, our congregations are mirroring a changing society. Diversity is happening, and will continue to happen no matter what we do or don't do! So why worry? It's because we are concerned about self-image and self-esteem. We want to feel better about ourselves.

## Some things we need to do:

1. **Our efforts should be about what we yearn for—what comes from the heart**
2. **We must be honest**
3. **We need to appreciate the diversity we've already got—the more we celebrate it, the more we attract others**
4. **We must accept that we're caught in a paradox—we don't want to change—we like our congregation as it is, since that is what brought us there**
5. **We must strive to heal the hurts that have been caused by all isms. People cannot move forward until they do so.**

In conclusion, Rev. Morrison-Reed exclaimed, "We yearn to feel connected and whole. Some who come through our doors will leave—let them! The ones that stay—give them the freedom to find healing and wholeness."

His closing remark was a bit of a surprise to some. After all, how can we just let folks leave? When we hear of those who have come through our door and left, we feel like we failed, that we're not good enough. We are concerned about our self-image and self-esteem. And yet, it is impossible for us to achieve that goal. Rev. Morrison-Reed says that we simply need to let it go, and be the beacon of hope for those who do stay.

## From the Director of Lifespan Religious Exploration and Education

With the end of the church year, the tempo has picked up considerably in the task to wrap things up and also plan for the summer and following year. As a result, I am hoping to fill as many volunteer openings as possible, as well as get input from you for next year's programming.

For Adult Spirituality, we will gather on June 6 at 6:30pm to decide what we will offer next church year. If you have a passion for our program or an idea to share, I hope you will join us!

For the summer, I am looking for high school students or adults who have a skill or hobby that they would like to share with a small group of young people during the worship services. Some past activities have been: collecting bugs and exploring their habitats, making birdhouses, playing water-related games, tie dying t-shirts, gardening, etc. If you have a passion you'd be willing to share, let me know!

For the young people, I also need classroom helpers as well as teachers. I am hoping to fill 75% of these openings before the year's end, which may be a bit ambitious, but certainly attainable! What's involved, you ask? A willingness to interact with young people for two Sundays per month. All lessons and supplies are given, as well as tips on working with youngsters. Copies of Dan's sermons are available, too, so you can read what he spoke about in the worship service. My hope is that we can get more of them as podcasts, too.

The saying "it takes a village to raise a child" is so very true—especially in our fast-paced world. The unfortunate thing is that we don't see the results of our efforts for 10-20 years! Be assured of this: you do make a difference!

In Faith,  
Kathy

# Green Corner Avoiding Toxic Food

Buying organic produce lowers your risk of pesticide exposure from fruits and vegetables, since organic growing practices use few or no pesticides. For a full list of 49 fresh fruits and vegetables that have been tested, visit [www.foodnews.org](http://www.foodnews.org).

## Highest in Pesticides

- Peaches
- Apples
- Sweet Bell Peppers
- Celery
- Nectarines
- Strawberries
- Cherries
- Pears
- Grapes (imported)
- Spinach
- Lettuce
- Potatoes

## Lowest in Pesticides

- Onions
- Avocados
- Sweet Corn (frozen)
- Pineapples
- Mangos
- Asparagus
- Sweet Peas (frozen)
- Kiwi Fruit
- Bananas
- Cabbage
- Broccoli
- Papayas

Source: [Environmental Working Group](#) and the [Organic and Natural Experience \(ONE\) Tour](#)

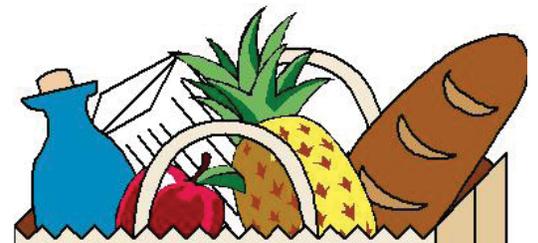


## The Perfect Gift for Dads & Grads

Wear your faith on your sleeve all summer long with this shirt from

[www.cafepress.com/UUCE](http://www.cafepress.com/UUCE).

100% of proceeds support the church's operating fund.



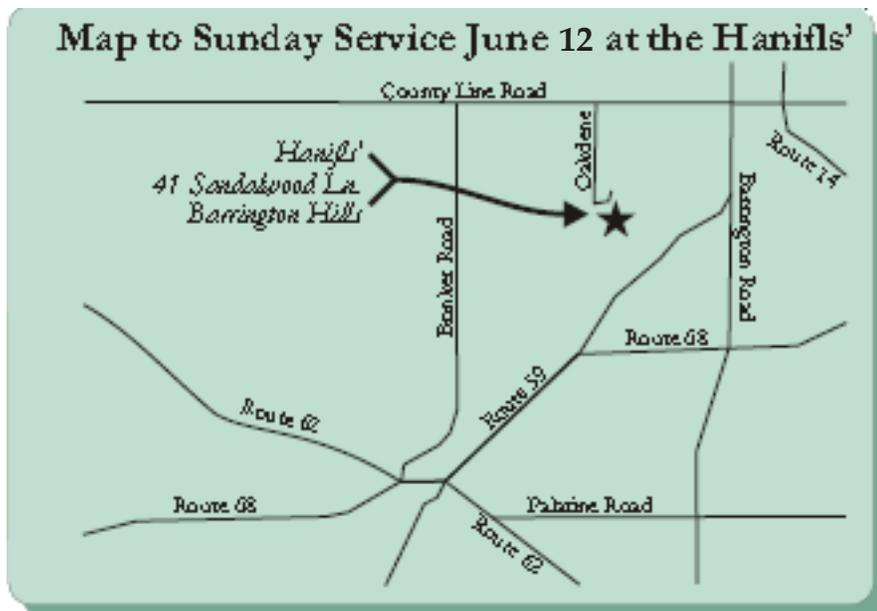
## Shopping List

The All People's Inter-Faith Pantry needs all kinds of cereals, except oatmeal.

Additionally, the Pantry needs:

- toilet paper
- tooth paste
- shampoo
- hand soap
- dish detergent
- laundry detergent

Try to bring your donations for the Pantry on our Pantry Sunday, June 5.



# Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

18 April 2011

## I. Reports

- Budget and Earmarked Funds Reports approved by consensus. Executive Team and Nominating Committee Reports reviewed.

- Discussed the Community Garden earmarked fund. The Garden is separately funded now. K. Sweeney will speak with D. Askins about the remaining funds.

## II. Unfinished Business

- Task Force for Measuring Minister / Church Performance.

T. Davis will provide some information from the Canvass questions. The Board would like to complete and present the evaluation to the minister before he leaves for his summer break around the end of June.

- Website update. T. Underwood estimates new site will be completed by May.

## III. New Business

- There may be additional state funding for the solar panels. The Board previously discussed & approved the installation of solar panels, as long as the Executive Team can secure funding.

- Nominations for Annual meeting: S. Fincher for Endowment Committee (3-year term), B. Cooper-Zobott for a 2-year term (2011-2013), J. Day for another 3-year term (2011-2014). Either we will have a President for a year (a past president or someone with strong prior leadership in the church) or we will have a President-elect who would then become President without having another election. D. Caruso is considering the President-elect position. K. Cecil continues efforts to find a past President who might be

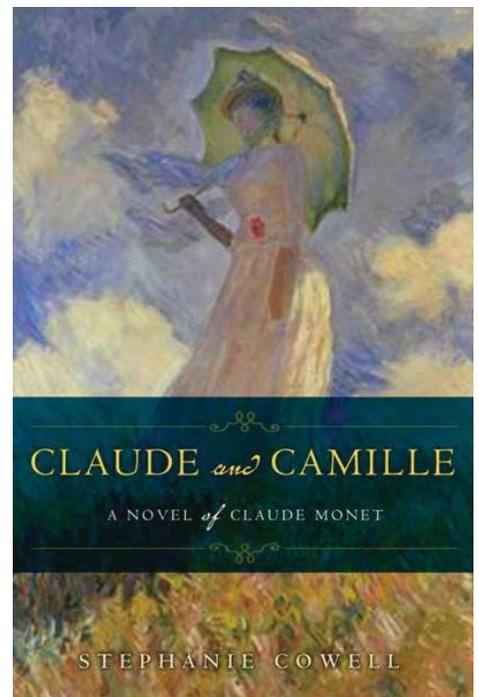
interested in serving for one year.

- Budget for Annual Meeting. The recommended budget is based on a significant decrease in the budgeted amount for unpledged donations, no salary increases for staff, a decrease in the Minister's professional expenses, and a 10% reduction for most committees. B.

Thrasher moved that the Board recommend the budget to the congregation; A. Budasi seconded. Passed unanimously.

- Annual Report. K. Sweeney will submit the Board's Annual Report to the Annual Meeting.

## UUCE Readers



The Afternoon Book Group will meet at 12:30 on Monday, June 27, at the home of Henry DuBois to discuss "Claude and Camille: A Novel of Monet" by Stephanie Cowell.

# Happy Birthday

- |                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>1 Kevin Sweeney</b>       | <b>13 Gordon James</b>    |
| <b>1 Serena Schidt</b>       | <b>13 Andrew Pratt</b>    |
| <b>3 Maxwell Seiberlich</b>  | <b>14 Todd Underwood</b>  |
| <b>3 Jane Kimball</b>        | <b>14 Mitch Kremer</b>    |
| <b>5 Stephen Day</b>         | <b>16 Laura Masonick</b>  |
| <b>5 Marissa Burger</b>      | <b>17 Gretchen Conway</b> |
| <b>6 Rick Yucuis</b>         | <b>21 Lydia Clough</b>    |
| <b>10 Mollie Kiesewetter</b> | <b>25 Hannah Waldron</b>  |
| <b>12 Tod Waldron</b>        | <b>30 Debbie Caruso</b>   |

## Ways to Get in Touch

### WEBSITE

[www.uuce.org](http://www.uuce.org)

### E-MAIL

[minister@uuce.org](mailto:minister@uuce.org)  
[administrator@uuce.org](mailto:administrator@uuce.org)  
[newsletter@uuce.org](mailto:newsletter@uuce.org)

### PHONE

847-888-0668

### PHYSICAL LOCATION

39W830 Highland Avenue  
*three miles west of Randall Rd.*

### POSTAL MAIL

P. O. Box 1032  
Elgin, IL 60121

## Our Closing Circle

*attr. to Louis Bourgeois, pub. 1551*

Let peace en - cir - cle all the world; Let all on earth walk hand in hand.

A liv - ing bond of fel - low - ship; A voice of love in ev - ery land.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Our Closing Circle'. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a treble clef on the top staff and a bass clef on the bottom staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the notes in red text. The first system of music corresponds to the first line of lyrics, and the second system corresponds to the second line. The music is simple and melodic, typical of a hymn tune.



## The Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin

P. O. Box 1032 • Elgin, IL 60121

