



The

UNICHORD

May 2006

Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin

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A LARGER PRESENCE

Thanks to the heroic efforts of Bob Sandidge and Rusty Winchel, audio recordings of our Sunday services are now available to anyone with access to a computer by simply clicking the new link on our church home page (www.uuce.org). Beginning in mid-January, the recordings have been distributed as podcasts—audio files that you can listen to directly through your computer from the internet, or you can subscribe to the podcast to have it automatically downloaded to your computer and then to an iPod or other mp3 player.

After each recording is made on Sunday morning, Bob edits it down, removes personal information such as Joys and Concerns, and produces a condensed, sermon-centered program. The result is a dream come true for not only shut-ins and members who couldn't make it that day, but also for curious web visitors who might not otherwise find our church.

Our launch of the UUCE podcasting program puts us in the company of many other UU congregations who are stepping forward to make their sermons more accessible to internet visitors. In fact, a segment of our "This I Believe" service from January 29 made such an impression on members of another congregation that it was allowed to be included in another program.

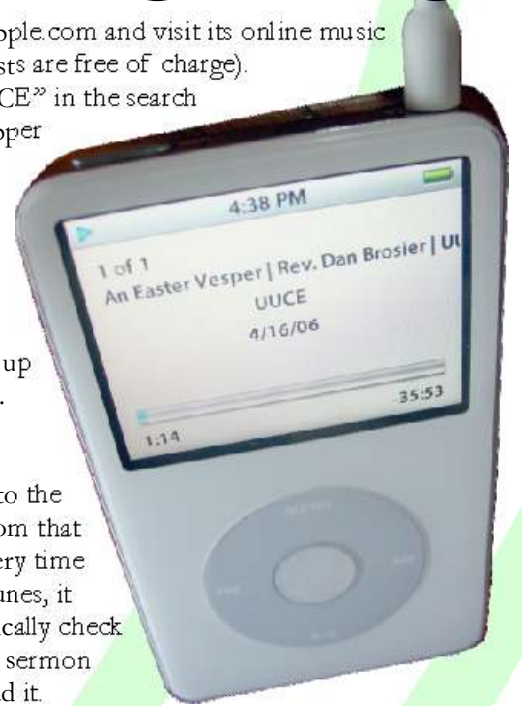
The simplest way to regularly receive these recordings on your computer is to download the free iTunes software

from www.apple.com and visit its online music store (podcasts are free of charge).

Type "UUCE" in the search box at the upper right corner of the interface and you'll see our church's podcast pop up in the results.

Click on the "Subscribe" button next to the name and from that point on, every time you open iTunes, it will automatically check for the latest sermon and download it.

Based on web traffic statistics, we've had in excess of 50 listeners to each podcast thus far. It's pretty exciting to imagine the possibilities that are available as we share our UU liberal religious message with the world.



2006 ANNUAL MEETING

The 2006 Annual Congregational Meeting of the UU Church of Elgin will be held on May 7, 2006 at 12:30 pm. All members are encouraged to attend, but only active members are eligible to vote on the budget and elections. An active member has a contribution record of not less than \$50.00 during the first eleven months of the twelve months preceding the annual meeting. They must also have been a member of the church for at least one year to vote on by-law amendments. At this meeting, members will elect new officers, vote on a proposed budget, and will be recommending the following revisions to the by-laws:

Article IV Section 3 To increase the minimum annual contribution per member from \$50 to \$100 and to also increase the contribution for members aged 16-21 years from \$20 to \$40.

Article VII Section 3 The end of the third sentence in the first paragraph to now read "The chair of all board created committees, not appointed by the board, shall be selected by the committee."

Article VII Section 3 Delete subsection (a) as we no longer have a Church Council under our new Policy Governance structure. Subsection (b) would then become subsection (a).

Article XIV Section 6 To read "The (ENDOWMENT) COMMITTEE shall report on a semi-annual basis to the Board and, at each annual meeting of the congregation, shall render a full and complete audited account of the administration of the (ENDOWMENT) FUND during the preceding year." The change is to require reporting to the Board on a semi-annual basis rather than quarterly.

INSIDE

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From the Minister

The first Sunday in May is when we traditionally hold our annual meeting. At this meeting we hold elections, approve the budget for the coming year and take care of any other business requiring a congregational vote. In preparation for the annual meeting various committees, councils and staff are asked to submit a report summarizing their activities in the past year. For me it is an opportunity to look back on the year and point out some of the things we have done that stand out in my mind. Here is my list so far:



Rev. Dan Brosier

- We have finished the third floor. It has been a decade since we moved into this building, and after a number of building campaigns we have finally completed our space. That is a milestone.
- We have seen new groups and activities rise up out of the community—more than I can keep track of.
- We have created the Wednesday evening Eat and Meet. This program has been very successful, offering more opportunity for individuals and families to get to know one another and participate in various church programs and committees.
- We have outside doors that consistently close by themselves. This probably isn't a big thing to most people but it is a big relief to me. For several years these doors haven't worked right, thus leading them to frequently not close all the way, thus leading them to be found open by late night sheriff patrols checking the building, thus requiring I be called in the middle of the night to come out and check the building with the deputies.
- We have found that our local fire department will burn our prairie for us as needed. Again, probably not a concern for most people, but from an administrative perspective having this figured out is quite a relief.
- We have a Sunday morning adult RE program that continues to be a center of interest and community building.
- We are running out of space on Sunday mornings—particularly parking.
- We expanded our summer service schedule and saw a significant increase in attendance during many of those services.
- We have begun to use the second floor vestibule as a gallery for local artists to display their work.
- We have a Sunday morning childcare program that is bustling with children and activity many Sunday mornings.
- We raised nearly \$3,500 for Gulf Coast relief efforts in the wake of hurricane Katrina.
- We have as a community reached out on numerous occasions to give support to members in times of crisis or loss.

Not bad for a year. We have a lot to be thankful for, and a lot to be proud of. I am feeling both.

FROM YOUR CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

Feather Duster Time

My mother and grandmother really believed in Spring Cleaning. Every year, about this time, I would find myself washing down walls, cleaning upholstery, then we would move outside to the garden where countless other tasks awaited. I didn't really appreciate this Rite of Spring until I became an adult. Now, each year, the feather duster and hoe call to me still.



Linda Porter

I invite you, this year, to help out with some of the Spring chores around the outside of the church. Here is a list of opportunities:

Shrub Planting: Once again this year we ordered four hazel nut bushes from the Kane DuPage Conservation District to be planted on the berm behind the church. If you can help with this planting either after church on April 30 or during the week of May 1, let me know. I can supply the shovel, if you can supply the labor.

Weeding the Gardens: We hire a landscape service to perform routine maintenance on the church gardens once a month. However, in the Spring we need extra help from volunteers to keep ahead of the weeds in some parts of our garden.

Weeding and Mulching the Labyrinth: Each Spring the weeds come back to take up residence in our Labyrinth. Help is needed to convince the weeds that they are not wanted. Usually volunteers concentrate on one section of the labyrinth and weed for an hour or so. I also plan on ordering mulch for the labyrinth this spring if we can get volunteers to help with the spreading.

Prairie Planting Spring Work Party: On May 20, we could use a few volunteers to help plant prairie forbs and grasses into parts of the prairie. If weather is not conducive to planting that day, I will need some volunteers to help with planting on Monday or Tuesday of the next week.

Watering: In addition to planting the new prairie plants, we will be flagging them to assist with watering if we have another dry spring and summer. Last year a very small group of people worked hard to keep our new plants and existing trees/shrubs alive. This year we are asking for volunteers to water approximately once a week as needed.

Please let me know at administrator@uuce.org, if you are willing to help out with any of the above tasks this year.

Linda Porter
Church Administrator

UUCE Calendar

May

2006



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 6:45p Barn Bells 2 7:00p C.O.M. 7:00p APPLE 7:00p Cakes for the Queen of Heaven 7:15p Barn Bells 1	4 7:00p Spiritual Inquiry Covenant Group -301	5 6:30p Women Cooking for Women	6 3:00p OWL -301-302
7 9:00a Unichords 9:30a Adult SS 10:45a New Member Ceremony 12:15p Fundraiser Lunch 12:30p UUCE Annual Mtg.	8	9 7:00p Covenant Group	10 6:00p Eat/Meet 6:45p Barn Bells 2 7:00p Finance 7:00p Lessons of Loss 7:00p RE Council 7:00p CUUPs 7:15p Barn Bells 1	11	12 9:15a Executive Team 11:30a Program Council	13
14 9:00a Unichords 9:30a Adult SS	15	16	17 6:00p Eat/Meet 6:45p Barn Bells 2 7:00p Cakes 7:00p Board Mtg 7:00p LessonsLoss 7:00p Compassion for Animals 7:15p Barn Bells 1	18 7:00p Intentional Living Covenant Group	19	20 9:00a qUilters -302
21 9:00a Unichords 9:30a Adult SS 12:30p Green Sanctuary <i>Newsletter Deadline</i>	22	23 7:00p Covenant Group	24 6:00p Eat/Meet 6:45p Barn Bells 2 7:00p Women's Spirituality Group 7:15p Barn Bells 1	25	26 9:15a Executive Team Meeting 11:30a Program Council	27
28 9:00a No Bells 9:30a Adult SS	29	30	31 6:45p Barn Bells 2 7:00p Cakes for the Queen of Heaven 7:15p Barn Bells 1			

Month of Sundays

May

7 Dear Rev. Dan

Periodically I look over the numerous letters I imagine I receive asking my advice on profound religious questions. In this service I will share with you some of those letters and my responses. Service led by the Rev. Dan Brosier.

14 Mother's Day and the Great Mother

We celebrate Mother's Day this year by digging below our current perceptions to uncover some interesting history. Service led by the Rev. Dan Brosier

21 Is Happiness a Moral Obligation?

Guest speaker Kathryn Norcross Black comes to us today from the North Shore Unitarian Church. She will help us explore the nature of happiness and whether or not we are obliged to embrace it. Service led by Elise C. Wall.

28 Memorial Day

Memorial Day traditionally is a day set aside to honor those who have died in the wars of this nation. In this Memorial Day service we will take a different approach; we will speak about the realities of war and what impact that has on those who serve. There will be an opportunity for the congregation to share their own personal stories or the stories of family and friends. Service led by the Rev. Dan Brosier.

SERVICES BEGIN AT 10:45 A.M.
WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU

FANNING THE FLAME—FUNDING OUR FUTURE

Final Canvass Update

Thanks to all of the members and friends of UUCE who pledged to support the Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin, the 2006 Fanning the Flame—Funding Our Future Canvass was quite successful! As of April 15, we had a total of \$133,569 pledged to support UUCE for the coming year. Although this amount is short of our canvass goal of \$159,000, it is the most money ever pledged to our church and an 8% increase from last year!

In addition, responses to the four canvass questions have been compiled and forwarded to the Executive Team and the Board of Trustees. These are the most common responses to the canvass questions:

#1 What positive changes have you seen in our church?

New members, new faces - 32

More activities and programs - 21

Wednesday Eat & Meet - 20

Third floor completed - 20

Adult Sunday School - 12

Increased environmental, peace, justice, and social action concerns - 10

#2 Are there other things you would like to see happen in our church community?

Stronger youth (high school) program - 11

Improved communication to congregation and community - 7

More covenant or small groups wanted - 5

More emphasis on living our values through activism - 3

Separate statements for the annual pledge and capital fund drives - 3

#3 Why are you a member of UUCE and what in our church do you find most valuable?

Community, friendship, support, connections - 47

Liberal religion, principles, acceptance, tolerance - 38

Sermons, services, and music - 18

Dan Brosier's leadership - 12

Opportunities to serve and be involved - 5

Thanks again to all of the canvassers who volunteered their time to discuss your pledge and ask your feelings about UUCE. I also want to give a big thanks to our Canvass Committee who worked very hard coordinating the canvass: Paul Anderson, Cameron Kirk, Alice Macy, Leslie Sawyer, and Rusty Winchel. Thanks much!

And finally, thank you all for your generous support of UUCE!

-Joe Masonick (Canvass Committee Co-chair)

HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR TIMES

UUs for Social Justice, the social justice affiliate of the Chicago Area UU Council, will hold its spring quarterly meeting on Sunday, May 28, beginning at 2:00 p.m. The site will be Third Unitarian Church, 301 N. Mayfield (5900 west) in Chicago. The program portion of the meeting, between 2 and 3 p.m., will feature Sheila Murthy of the Center for Constitutional Rights, speaking on "Human Rights in Our Times." The UUSJ Board meeting, which is open to all, will follow the program part of the meeting.

Announcements

WHEEL OF LIFE

We are saddened by the news of the deaths of both Sandy James' mother and father, Jan Underwood's brother and Andrew Russel's brother. Our thoughts are with them.

BOOK GROUP

You are warmly invited to join the members of the Book Group at any of their upcoming meetings, which begin at 7:00 p.m.

June 30 - "Collapse" by Jared Diamond, parts 1 and 2.
At the home of Alice Macy.

July 28 - "Collapse" by Jared Diamond, parts 3 and 4.
At the home of Shirley Wolin.

BOSTON BOUND BABES

May is a busy month for the group! They will be providing a lunch during the annual meeting on May 7. Included in the meal are meat/veggie sandwiches, salads, chips and drinks for \$5. They will also be hosting Eat & Meet on May 17, which will be a cookout. And just in time for gardening, they will be selling packets of flower seeds during coffee hour in Fellowship Hall.

POWDERED MILK AND BREAKFAST CEREALS

Yes, the Interfaith Food Pantry needs powdered milk and breakfast cereals. Of course, all other donations of non-perishable food, baby needs, toiletries or checks are welcome. Try to bring your donations on our Pantry Sunday, May 7, or anytime during the month.

PRAIRIE FEST BOUTIQUE

Don't forget to save those special nature related items for the boutique. Garden items and books, baskets, any decorative item that features animals, plants, or natural materials will be welcome and will help to raise funds at Prairie Fest.

ARE YOU GOING NATIVE THIS SPRING?

Are you transforming your yard into a natural haven for birds and butterflies, with low maintenance, drought resistant, native perennials? Here are some resources for buying native plants:

- Native plant sale May 7, 1 - 4 pm, at McHenry County College.
- Kane-DuPage annual plant sale - LAST DAY TO ORDER is May 5 www.KaneDuPageSWCD.org
- Harmony Creek Farms, Hampshire, IL www.harmonycreekfarms.com
- The Natural Garden in St. Charles.
- Prairie Nursery, WI mailorder www.prairienursery.com
- Red Buffalo Nursery, Hebron, IL www.redbuffalonursery.com
- Possibility Place, Monee, IL www.possibilityplace.com.

HOW YOU CAN HELP MOTHER NATURE IN MAY

- May 14, Mother's Day: Monitor With Your Mother, 10-2, Fox River Shores Forest Preserve, Carpentersville (Gary Swick 847-426-1322)
- May 20: 9-11:30 am, Fox Rescue litter clean up at Voyageur Landing, Elgin (Mary Alice Masonick 847-931-4363)
- May 20: 1-3 pm, Burnidge Forest Preserve volunteer workday (Mary Alice Masonick 847-931-4363)
- May 6 and 20: 9-12, Bluff Spring Fen volunteer workdays. Fen is south of the Bluff City Cemetery on Elgin's east side (manner@foxvalley.net)
- May 13 and 27: 9-12, Trout Park volunteer workdays. Trout Park is on Duncan Ave. in Elgin (Susan Bohne 847-697-4929)

Kudos to:

Andy Carey and **Rich Ridley** for building shelves in RE closet; **Trisha Dean** for coordinating the Easter Egg Hunt; **Louette Rogers** for coordinating the Birthday Potluck; **Bob Jackson, Sandy Webster, Norm Wilkinson** and **Day Waterman** for painting the front foyer; **Carl Deitrick** for conducting an audit of the Endowment Fund; **Bonnie Schwank** for assisting with the production of the new church directory; Outgoing Board Members: **Dan Hislip** (President), **Debbie Prebys, Mitch Kremer, Kevin Webster, and Lydia Larrabee** (completing the first year of Karen Olesch's term); Outgoing RE Council Members **Trisha Dean, Stan Forrester** (serving another term), **Babette Colburn**.



COMPASSION FOR ANIMALS DOCUMENTARY FILM: PEACEABLE KINGDOM

Did you miss the first showing of this award-winning and touching documentary? Well, now you will have another chance on Wednesday, May 17th to view Peaceable Kingdom. This documentary film depicts individuals helping animals in unique and inspiring ways. In sharing the life-changing journeys that brought these individuals to their calling, Peaceable Kingdom demonstrates how one person can make a difference, and how each of us can play a role in creating a kinder world for both animals and people.

Please join us on Wednesday, May 17, as Peaceable Kingdom explores the interconnected life journeys of farm animals, former farmers, and animal rescuers struggling against an out-of-control factory farming system. This film will be shown in the sanctuary at 7:00 following the optional "Meet & Eat" dinner at 6:00. Following the film, there will be time for open sharing and discussion.

There will be literature and free DVDs given to all participants. Church members, friends, and guests are welcome. There will be childcare available. Due to some sensitive material, this activity is not recommended for children under 13. Sponsored by the Green Sanctuary Committee and the Intentional Living Covenant Group. Questions can be directed to Leslie Sawyer.

2006 MEN'S BICYCLE TRIP

This year's annual UUCE Men's Bicycle Trip is open to any interested men from the church. We will be leaving from Elgin on Thursday morning, June 15, and riding to downtown Chicago via the Illinois Prairie Path/Grand Illinois Trail. We'll stay at a hotel in the River North area that night and then ride up the Lakefront Trail the next day before cutting over to Libertyville, where we'll spend Friday night.

On Saturday, the 17th, we'll take roads over to Crystal Lake and then ride the Fox River Trail back down to Elgin. The whole three-day route is approximately 115 miles. Due to the need to finalize lodging, we want to have our roster set by May 7. For more information or to join us, contact Todd Underwood or Joe Masonick.

Religious Education

Thanks to everyone who came and celebrated everyone's birthday at the May Day Birthday Potluck on April 30! Fun was had by all ages. As usual, the maypole was a bit of a challenge!

This month will be a busy one. It is filled with end-of-the-year excitement. On May 14 we will be honoring our 8th grade youth with a coming of age ceremony. What a wonderful way to celebrate Mother's Day! Then on May 21, we will be recognizing the youth and leaders of the Our Whole Lives (OWL) Sexuality Education program. This group committed to meeting monthly this year with a group from the Woodstock church to explore issues related to sexuality.

During the month, the Boston Bound Babes have several activities—look for a separate article in this newsletter for more information. At the end of the month, we have our annual nature hike at Burnidge Woods. This is an opportunity for everyone in Religious Education to experience the beauty of nature in our “back yard” and learn about our seventh principle. If any adults are interested in chaperoning, let me know.

- Here is what is happening in religious education this month:
- | | | |
|--------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| May 7 | Preschool: | “Where the Wild Things Are” |
| | K-2nd: | “God Wants Forgiveness” |
| | 3rd-5th: | “Japanese Children's Day” |
| | 6th-8th: | “The Four Noble Truths” |
| | High School: | Discussion of choice |
| May 14 | Preschool: | “Tico” |
| | K-2nd: | “Love Your Neighbor” |
| | 3rd-5th: | “Mother's Peace Day” |
| | 6th-8th: | Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup |
| | High School: | Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup |
| May 21 | Preschool: | “Benny Bakes a Cake” |
| | K-2nd: | “God Is In Each One of Us” |
| | 3rd-5th: | “Our Own Celebration” |
| | 6th-8th: | “Experiencing Buddhism” |
| | High School: | Discussion of choice |
| May 28 | | Nature Hike at Burnidge Woods |

In Faith,
Kathy Underwood



Kathy Underwood
Director of Religious Education

GREEN CORNER

Tax Credits for Purchasing Energy Products

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPACT) creates tax credits for consumers who purchase fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles or who make certain energy-efficiency upgrades to their homes. The tax credits take effect in January 2006, and most will only be available through 2007. In addition, the state of Illinois recently restored funding for its program that provides rebates for solar energy investments.

Buying and driving a fuel-efficient vehicle and purchasing and installing energy-efficient appliances and products provide many benefits such as better gas mileage meaning lower gasoline costs, fewer emissions, lower energy bills, increased indoor comfort, and reduced air pollution.

A tax credit is generally more valuable than an equivalent tax deduction because a tax credit reduces tax dollar-for-dollar, while a deduction only removes a percentage of the tax that is owed. Beginning in tax year 2006, consumers will be able to itemize purchases on their federal income tax form, which will lower the total amount of tax they owe the government.

Automobile Tax Credits

Individuals and businesses who buy or lease a new hybrid gas-electric car or truck are eligible for, and can receive, an income tax credit of \$250-\$3,400 depending on the fuel economy and the weight of the vehicle.

Home Energy Efficiency Improvement Tax Credits

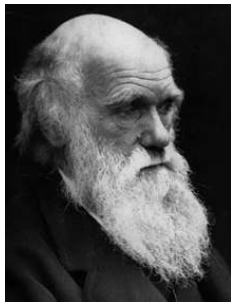
Consumers who purchase and install specific products, such as energy-efficient windows, insulation, doors, roofs, and heating and cooling equipment in the home can receive a tax credit of up to \$500. The EPACT also provides a credit equal to 30% of qualifying expenditures for purchase for qualified photovoltaic property and for solar water heating.

For more information go to the Alliance To Save Energy website: www.ase.org. To learn more about state rebates for solar energy investments, go to www.commerce.state.il.us/dceo or contact the State of Illinois at (217) 785-3420.

Stay Cool and Save this Summer

Don't let your air conditioner break your budget this summer! On Tuesday, May 23 the Community Energy Cooperative will present a free workshop on saving energy and money during the summer, while still staying comfortable. Learn how you can make your home more energy efficient and keep your summer electricity bills under control. The workshop will take place at 7 p.m. at the Batavia Public Library. To learn more or to RSVP, go to www.energycooperative.org or call the Cooperative at (773) 269-4037 or info@energycooperative.org.

Thank you! -The Green Sanctuary Committee



Who Am I?

This revolutionary British UU's visit to the Galapagos islands on the *Beagle* led him to turn the world's thinking upside down in 1859.

(answer will appear in the next Unichord)

April's Who Am I was Susan B. Anthony



Dan Hislip
Board President

President's Report

Last month, the webmaster gave me a bit of trouble for the length of my article. This month I am going to have some excess space to give back. This is not because this month's message is not important. Quite the contrary—it's absolutely critical, but brief.

This is my last column as President. It's not that I don't have a lot more to say, it's that they won't let me. So before they remove the pen from my hand, I want to say three things:

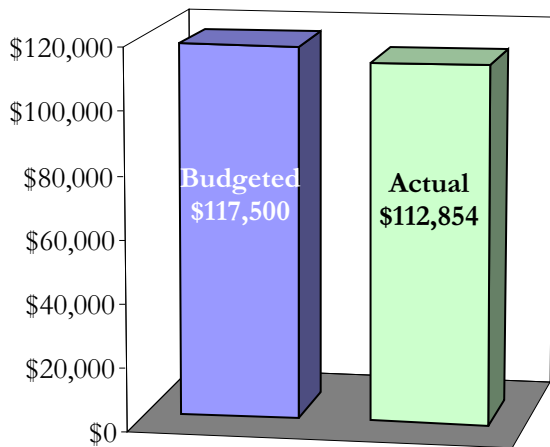
First, I'm sorry—to anyone whose feelings I may have hurt or bruised during my term of office. While it is certainly no excuse for inflicting harm, I would only tell you that I was acting from the best of intentions to make our worship community the best I could dream it to be. It's just we don't all have the same dreams.

Secondly, thank you—to everyone who has worked, contributed, participated, attended, assisted, supported, listened, encouraged, questioned, confronted or in any other way helped me in pushing our community forward. We've changed from a small pastoral church to a mid-sized governance community and, while not every aspect of the change was easy, it would not have happened without folks caring. Your participation has made the job rewarding and memorable. A special thanks to the two Boards with whom I was privileged to serve during my term of office.

Finally, as I return to other roles in our community, goodbye to each of you. I'll see you around campus.

With love,
Dan

Member Pledges—2005-06 Fiscal Year



The 2005-2006 budget called for \$117,500 in pledges. Actual pledges paid totaled \$112,854. Questions? Contact your Finance Coordinator, Alice Macy.

WOMEN COOKING FOR WOMEN

The next "Women Cooking For Women" dinner will be held on Friday, May 5, 2006 at UUCE. Women, 13 and older, are invited and asked to bring a dish to share, and to donate (\$5) to the focus cause or project of the evening. You can come and not cook, but then we ask that you increase your donation to \$10.



This month, Rebecca Novak will be joining us to speak about Planned Parenthood. She will present an overview of the organization and discuss current issues regarding sex education, policy, etc.

Food should be ready to be served by 7:00 p.m. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Friends and family members are welcome to attend.

No R.S.V.P.s needed. If you have questions, please contact Laurie Kieseewetter or Andrea Schmidlin.

The next (and last for this church year) potluck will be:

Friday, June 2: Just for fun...at the Kieseewetter home.
HOPE YOU'LL JOIN US!

Ways to Get in Touch

Church Office	847-888-0668
Web site	www.uuce.org
Newsletter Submissions	newsletter@uuce.org
Board President	
Dan Hislip	
Newsletter Editor	
Todd Underwood	

Deadlines

Order of Service	Thursday PM
Unichord	May 21

May Birthdays

5 Dave Underwood	20 Kyle Underwood
7 Rhonda Merritt	20 Babette Colburn
7 Keith Ginn	22 Frieda Anderson
9 Joe Masonick	22 Dennis Schwank
9 Sarah Davis	24 Carol Schoengart
11 Jameel Abdur-Rafia	25 Timothy Forrester
14 Gretl Kramer	26 Jax Sherrell
14 Paul Masonick	29 Emily Waldron
16 Esther Hermann	29 Brandi Talaga
16 Jasper Spayne	29 John Foster
19 Matthew Rodda	29 Gavin Foster



The Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin

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www.uuce.org

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



The hard work is already beginning to pay off for the commUUnity gardeners as the first signs of lettuce started showing up in late April.



Janeen Vanko helped her K-2 class learn about Native American traditions during a class-time walk through the labyrinth on Sunday, April 23.