

From the Minister

“Religion is the voice that says, ‘I will guide you through this minefield of difficult moral choices, sharing with you the insights and experiences of souls of the past, and I will offer you comfort and forgiveness when you are troubled by the painful choices you have made.’” - Harold Kushner



Rev. Dan Brosier

I like Kushner’s words. As I sit with them they lead me to the notion of ministry—that ministry might be considered the practice of that religion. Informed and inspired by their religion, people guide, comfort and forgive. And that is why ministry is shared by all within a religious community—we all have the power to be a healing presence in each other’s lives. I suspect we don’t realize that about ourselves enough. I believe we don’t recognize the gifts we have that, when shared, can make such a difference. I suspect we don’t see ourselves as agents for healing, peace and justice, and because of this we hold back.

But the truth is we are—we all are called to minister to the world. We are called to minister in countless ways in our daily lives. I want to remind us of that. And I want to remind us that in order to effectively guide, comfort and forgive we must see ourselves as religious people, we must take ourselves seriously in this way, and we must hold in our hearts the spirit and heritage of our Unitarian Universalist faith. The healing begins here.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dan".

BURNING THE MORTGAGE (cont. from page 1)

so unclear?

A number of members of this church still scratch their heads in disbelief when we consider what we have done. Seven years ago we moved into our new home. We moved into the first floor as the two floors above us were unfinished. Over the years we have slowly finished the second floor. The third floor is yet to be done.

As a small community we put a lot of sweat and a lot of money into turning our pipe-dream into a reality. We were generous with our time and financial resources, but even that wasn’t enough—we had to borrow money to complete the various projects. And so we created capital campaigns to pay off the debts. As those campaigns came to a close last December we realized that due to a number of circumstances we are still around \$15,000 in debt.

As capital campaigns go this is not a lot of money. But it is an obstacle to our continued growth and development. So the Board and the Finance Committee have come up with a plan to get rid of the debt. The Board has authorized a short capital campaign to raise the needed funds. The campaign will run from November to the end of December. Early in November every member and friend will receive a letter asking them to help us begin the new year free of this debt. If people rise to the occasion (as they have in the past) we will be able to celebrate the start of another year with a mortgage burning party. Get the marshmallows ready.

TENDING OUR GROWTH

by Linda Porter, UUCE Community Development Coordinator

I am happy to announce that my job title has now been officially changed from Growth Coordinator to Community Development Coordinator. Let me tell you why this has happened - and why I am happy about the change. When I began in this position last April, I was granted a great deal of freedom in defining exactly what a growth coordinator should do. One thing I knew for sure - I wanted us to continue to grow. I also believed that there was more to growth than just numbers. As I began to talk to others in the church it became apparent that I was not alone in this belief. Growth was also about building and maintaining the qualities that define a thriving church community. The question for many of our members was not do we grow, but how do we grow without giving up the strong sense of community that draws people to our church and causes them to stay?

And so, by changing my job title, the church is not ending the discussion around growth but expanding the focus. My job is about ensuring that our doors stay open to our current members and all those who choose to join us as we grow. Also involved in this work is the Growth and Development Team, now the Community Development Team. The team is continuing to study some tough questions about the future of our church such as: “How do we continue to have the kind of community that others will want to join?” and “How do we remove the barriers that could keep us from being a welcoming and growing community now and in the future?” We would love to have your input. Join us at our next potluck and meeting on November 3 at 12:30 p.m. Or share your perspective and thoughts with team leaders Lydia Larrabee and Susan Stafford. And, of course, I hope to continue and expand the dialog I have begun with many of you about our church community and its future growth.

A WARM WELCOME

by Cheren Waller

Several years ago, before we were introduced to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin, my daughter Laurie and I spent a season doing a “church search” throughout the surrounding communities, to find a place that felt like home.

During our search, we found churches that were distinctly forbidding, moderately friendly and only a very few that were warmly welcoming. At one church, the minister invited visitors to the coffee hour after church, but when we attended the gathering, no one bothered to introduce themselves or engage us in conversation. We even attended a church where the membership was so thoughtful, that they scraped two inches of snow off the windshield of our car while we were attending the social hour after the church service. Unfortunately, the fire & brimstone sermons did not fit our needs, so we did not return.

Because of our experiences, it has been important to me to take the parts of the positive encounters from our church visits that season, and incorporate them into our church.

The Membership Committee has been meeting to discuss our goals for this church year. We decided we would like to do our best to make visitors feel welcome. As part of the process, we would like to begin by escorting visitors up to the church sanctuary, invite them to coffee hour and spend time visiting with them after church.

Since there are only a few of us on the committee, we need your help in meeting our objective. If you are near the table in the foyer, the greeter may ask your assistance in guiding visitors upstairs to the sanctuary.

Also, we would ask you to invite them to coffee hour after church and encourage you to spend a few minutes getting to know them and sharing a little of yourselves with them.

The Membership Committee would like to thank you in advance for your assistance in welcoming guests to our lovely Prairie Cathedral.

The Membership Committee- Rhonda Merritt, Bob Jones, Mila Brinker, Jim Hermann, Linda Porter & Cheren Waller

UUCE Calendar November 2002



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 7:00p Book Group -O 7:30p Drumming Circle -S	2 5:00p Halloween "Day of the Dead" Party
3 9:00a Unichords 9:30a Worship Com. 12:30p Communty Dev. Potluck	4 7:00p Buddhist Meditation Group -S	5	6 7:00p Public Relations Committee 7:00p Committee on the Ministry 7:15p Barn Bells -203	7 7:00p Tai Chi	8	9
10 9:00a Unichords -203 9:00a RE Council	11 7:00p Buddhist Meditation Group -S	12	13 7:00p Church Council 7:15p Barn Bells -203	14 7:00p Tai Chi	15	16 9:00a Quilting Group 9:30a Soul Painting Workshop
17 9:00a Unichords 9:00a Soc. Justice 10:00a Barn Bells 12:15p Brunch Fundraiser 12:30p World Religions Newsletter Deadline	18 7:00p Finance Com. -FH 7:00p Buddhist Meditation Group -S	19	20 7:00p Board of Trustees Meeting -FH 7:15p Barn Bells -203	21 7:00p Tai Chi	22	23
24	25 7:00p Buddhist Meditation Group -S	26	27 7:00p Membership Com.	28	29	30

FH - Fellowship Hall

S - Sanctuary

O - Off Property

L - Library

www.uuce.org

Month of Sundays

November

3 **Our House**

In this service we will look at some of the history of this congregation and the buildings that have housed us over the years. Particular emphasis will be placed on the construction of our present building and our memories of that process. *Service led by the Rev. Dan Brosier.*

10 **Bowing To Each Other**

Living well has a number of aspects to it. One that is too often overlooked in our culture is humility. In this service we explore the power and freedom which comes in humbling ourselves. *Service led by the Rev. Dan Brosier.*

17 **Music Sunday**

Twice a year we devote a service to celebrating and enjoying the rich variety of music we have in this church. These services are always a highlight of the year. Come and enjoy. A special collection will be taken in support of the music program.

24 **Making Ethical Choices**

How do we apply our Principles to the ethical decisions we are facing since September 11? Come and discuss your views at this service. *Service led by Susan Stafford.*

SERVICES BEGIN AT 10:45am
WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU

WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE NEW? (continued from page 1)

to find their parents do not know what it is for. The mysterious beauty grown from simplicity deepens as we begin to experience our very first service.

We are a little nervous. Having never been to a church before, our kids have no expectations, but as adults the two of us are wondering what the sermon will be like. Will it be too preachy? Will it be too political? We're really hoping to fit in here. I flip over the program and read the mission statement. It sounds wonderful. It sounds like we will fit in here but...

Music draws our attention. It is beautiful and poetic yet highly accessible. The Reverend Dan Brosier lights a chalice and I am touched by the simple words. He asks us to greet one another and we meet our first Unitarian Universalist friends. They introduce us to the congregation and we blush as everyone claps. Then the Reverend calls us all to share our joys and concerns. One by one people step up to the chalice and light a candle and share with the rest of us something astounding in their lives. We sit quietly listening, understanding how we have been taken in to something sacred. It is here that the true heart of this church comes forward. We are being trusted with pain and laughter of an intimate nature. We are all here to explore life together. As we read and sing the words to Voice Still and Small for the first time, we feel truly a part of something.

The announcements and offering come next. They do not detract from this feeling of sharing. They are simply the business end, the practical side. We hear of classes and seminars, workshops and quilts. We realize these people aren't here just to ponder life. These people are here to live life. These people are not just concerned with each other for a couple of hours once a week. These people are here to help out the neighborhood, the earth, each other. Through the nuts and bolts of announcements we learn these are people we'd like to know better. These are people we'd like to become.

When the last basket is collected, the Reverend reads a few words to introduce the topic for the day. The words roll around in my head making connections with incidents from my life. Sparking new ideas. Music follows and carries my ideas along. All hint of nervousness has disappeared. I feel as though I have been meditating. When the Reverend stands again and begins to speak, the things I've been thinking blend in with these new words. He is funny and serious and though he does not know the answers, he asks the questions well. These questions join my thoughts and send me spiraling even higher. When the music comes again, my own thoughts and questions have created my own sermon. We listen as people begin to share their own insights and reflections. Some of them are along the lines I have been thinking and some of them are far away. But that is the beauty of this place. We do not have to believe what someone tells us. We only need accept that they believe it.

When everyone who desires it has spoken, a circle closes everything. The whole congregation joins hands and sings a closing song. Our nervousness returns a tiny bit but only a tiny bit. People spill out into the hall and make their way down to the kitchen. They stand around in small groups and though we know no one, we do not feel uncomfortable. We feel peaceful.

We walk outside to our car smiling to people we pass. Soon we'll know their names. We'll know their history and they'll know ours. We'll make friends here. We'll grow roots.

"So what did you think?" I ask as we pull out of the parking lot.

"I really liked it. Let's come back."

Janet Richards, her husband Jeff, and their children Mike and Meagan began attending our church in September. We're very glad they found us!

Announcements

WHEEL OF LIFE

We are saddened by the news of the death of Rusty Winchel's mother. We hold him in our thoughts.

NEW MEMBER

In October Jack Berry signed the membership book. We welcome him into the community.

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 pm.

November 1 - "The Color of Water" by James McBride.
At the home of Helen Maxwell.

A MONSTER MASH

Saturday, November 2, will be our intergenerational Halloween party "Dia De Los Muertos" or "Day of The Dead." The potluck party will take place from 5-8:00pm. We will have chili, games, a craft, a traditional "Day of the Dead" altar (to honor loved ones who have passed away), haunting music and a bonfire with spooky stories. So plan a costume (if you wish), bring a remembrance for the altar, bring a dish to share and have a hauntingly good time. We are looking forward to seeing you!

ADULT SPIRITUALITY - DRUMMING CIRCLE

Everyone who likes drums, has a drum or who has wanted to try drumming is invited to a drumming circle at the church on Friday, November 1, 2002, from 7:30 -9:00 pm. We will learn about drums and beats, and play together. Come even if you don't have a drum! If you have drums, rattles and other percussion instruments you would be willing to share, please bring them along! For more information call Lydia Larrabee or Pat Nuccio.

GET SCREENED

In honor of National Diabetes Month, blood sugar and blood pressure screenings (for diabetes and hypertension) will be offered November 3 after the service in Fellowship Hall. Uncontrolled diabetes and hypertension cause heart disease and stroke, as well as many other health problems. The cost is \$1.00 for the blood sugar test to cover the cost of strips. Fasting is not necessary. Service provided by Mary Alice Masonick, RN, Certified Diabetes Educator.

GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE

We have officially applied for candidacy in the Green Sanctuary Program of the Unitarian Universalist Association. We are now in the process of achieving the specified goals required in order to become recognized as a Green Sanctuary. This process will take the entire church year.

Helpful colored handouts are available on the Social Justice table in the Fellowship Hall regarding Earth-friendly ideas and activities. Prepared by the Environmental Task Force of UUs for Social Justice, Chicago area, they address how we can reduce our contribution to global warming, which are the most effective choices consumers can make, and what volunteers are doing to make a difference in the Chicago Wilderness. *Mary Alice Masonick.*

Kudos to:

Norm Wilkinson for creating the new stained glass window in the sanctuary and for handling light bulb maintenance throughout our building; **Diana March** for starting a successful Buddhist Meditation Group; **Emily Waldron** for organizing the puzzles in the nursery; **Mila Brinker** for coordinating the "Day of the Dead" Halloween Party; **Donors and Walkers** at the CROP Walk; those who have donated artwork to the church.



PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Are you interested in helping the Programs & Activities Committee plan social events for UUCE? Please contact Andrea Schmidlin, Alice Macy, or Kathy Underwood.

SOUL PAINTING

Allow your spirit to flow through you to create an abstract watercolor collage in this two-hour workshop. All materials will be provided and *no drawing, painting or art experience is necessary.* Leave your art critic behind and join us as we tap into the creative spirit. Facilitated by Lisa Kerpoe, this workshop will be held on Saturday November 16 from 9:30 to 11:30. A sign up sheet will be located in the Fellowship Hall.

HEAR MY DRUM

I'm beating the drum again to get you to bring donations for the food pantry. If each person/family would bring one or two food items, our church would have a fantastic donation to the All Peoples Inter-Faith Pantry. We designate the first Sunday of the month as Pantry Sunday, but your donations are welcome any time during the month. Donations of canned meats, tuna, spaghetti sauce, rice, cereal, juice, peanut butter and jelly are always needed.

WISH LIST

- Snacks for coffee hour.
- Lend an ethnic Santa to the R.E. classrooms.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

- *Mulch a tree with leaves from your yard*
- *Volunteer to help with routine maintenance*
- *Sell/buy quilt raffle tickets*
- *Have a blast at the "Day of the Dead" party on November 2*

Religious Education

With the conclusion of registration, we have 52 children and youth enrolled in our religious education program, and six regular attendees who have yet to register. This will bring our total to 58, which is a 16% increase from last year. More significantly, however, our classrooms are full, and sometimes overflowing!



Kathy Underwood, DRE

On October 20, there were six children in the nursery, ten in preschool, seven in K-2nd Grade, ten in 3rd-5th Grade, five in 6th-8th Grade and High School. And our OWL (Our Whole Lives) class had ten youth. Although attendance does fluctuate from week to week, these numbers have been more the “norm” so far.

Which means that the inevitable has finally happened—we need teaching assistants! As of this writing, I am presenting two ways to handle this to the Religious Education Council. Until our course of action is spelled out, I am asking anyone interested in helping in a classroom to contact me. More details will be forthcoming in the next few weeks.

Looking ahead, the Religious Education Council is having a Halloween party and potluck on November 2 from 5-9pm in Fellowship Hall. The theme is “Dia de Los Muertos” or “Day of the Dead”. Bring something in remembrance of a loved one for a special altar, and a dish to share. And don’t forget your camera!

On November 10, a group of high school youth from Rockford will be making a special presentation to our high school youth group. With money collected in memory of Keith Wall, they had a chalice made, which the high school group will use for many years to come.

All classes will be attending the entire service on November 17 for Music Sunday. Here’s what they will be doing the rest of the month:

- Preschool:** November 3 “I Can Ask”
 10 “I Can Share”
 24 “I Can Say “Thank You””
- K-2nd:** November 3 “The Mystery of God”
 10 “The Different Points of View”
 24 “UUs Ideas About God”
- 3rd-5th:** November 3 “Dussehra”
 10 “Divali”
 24 “Wampanoag-Native American Thanksgiving”
- 6th-8th:** November 3 “Nonviolence & Hinduism”
 10 “Flavors of Hinduism”
 24 “Introduction to Jainism & Sikhism”
- OWL:** November 3 “Gender Identity”
 10 “Introduction to Relationships”
 24 “Relationship Skills”

Kathy Underwood



Thirty adults and youth participated in an October 13 workshop facilitated by our own Ann and Mitch Kremer. The workshop focused on finding better ways to integrate our youth into the congregation. As a result of the workshop, an ambitious list of next steps and

activities was generated, and a smaller group of interested persons agreed to continue the necessary work needed to carry out their dreams. If you’re interested in joining them, contact Kathy Underwood or Mitch Kremer.



COVENANT GROUP GOURMET BRUNCH

The Tuesday night Covenant Group invites you to enjoy a GOURMET BRUNCH following the Music Sunday service on November 17. The brunch is a fundraiser for the group’s service project, providing equine therapy scholarships for children from the Creekside Home of the Larkin Center. Tickets can be purchased after church on November 3 and 10 (or from Alice Macy or Helen Maxwell) for \$10 for adults and youth over 12, \$6 for children 5-12; children four and under are free. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door on November 17 for \$12 and \$7.

An agreement to engage in service to the congregation and the larger community is an essential element of a Covenant Group, which is a group of six to twelve people who meet regularly to establish and nurture themselves in their own beloved community. There are currently two Covenant Groups at UUCE. The “Living the Seventh Principle” group focuses on environmental issues and meets once a month on a Thursday evening under the leadership of Mary Alice Masonick. Another group meets on alternate Tuesdays to discuss topics selected by the group, such as living consciously, good and evil, guilt, etc. This group is facilitated by Helen Maxwell and Alice Macy.

To learn more about joining a Covenant Group, contact Mary Alice Masonick, Alice Macy or Helen Maxwell .



Who Am I?

This influential UU was the president of our church during the tumultuous decision to sell the downtown building and move out west to Randall Road.

(answer will appear in the next Unichord)
 October’s Who Am I was Rev. Dan Brosier.

Kim's Korner

The Board has recently set a goal to embark on a Strategic Planning Process during this church year. It's an ambitious goal, and it will help the congregation navigate the changes in our community and world as well as prepare for internal changes as we grow into the congregation that we want to be.

There are several things that everyone should know about this:



Kim Cecil
Board President

- A strategic plan is a living document that is based on our vision for the future of this church and specifies steps to make our vision a reality as well as concrete details like tasks, deadlines, and responsibilities.
- It has been at least six years since our last long-range plan, and the last vision statement on record is looking forward to the year 2000.
- Environmental changes and organization developmental benchmarks are often reasons that an organization needs to undertake a strategic planning process.
- Such changes in our community include the influx of people who have come to live in the area as well as the changing world that includes globalization, terrorism, and multiculturalism.
- The church has been making efforts to grow into a "mid-sized church". When we say growth, we don't mean numeric growth exclusively; we mean that we want to become a better community of faith where people get what they need and feel pleased with their contribution to the community as a result of their membership and participation. It also means we have to "act" like a more grown-up organization and have more policies and structure that help people navigate.
- Every person in our congregation should have an opportunity to participate in the development of the vision and the plan, and a small group of people will coordinate and synthesize the efforts to be presented to the congregation for feedback and approval.

So, open your minds and your hearts. Dare to dream a little about the congregation you want to be a part of in several years. Consider the realities that you could help realize. You will be invited soon to share your thoughts.

Be a part of our vision for the future, and build this church into *your* faith community.

In Peace,
Kim

BUDDHIST MEDITATION

Anyone high school age or older is welcome to participate in the new meditation group which meets in the sanctuary Monday evenings from 7:00 to no later than 9:00 pm. Inspired by Zen master, monk, poet and peace advocate Thich Nhat Hanh, the practice format includes focusing on the breath during three 20 minute rounds of sitting and walking meditation followed by shared reading and discussion time. *The Miracle of Mindfulness* has been chosen as the first book to be read together; copies will be available for purchase at UUCE or can be borrowed from most area libraries. For more information please contact Diana March.



Parents and kids enjoyed a Preschool field trip to Goebbert's Pumpkin Farm in Huntley.

Ways to Get in Touch

Church Office	847-888-0668
Web site	www.uuce.org
Newsletter Submissions	newsletter@uuce.org

Board President

Kim Cecil

Newsletter Editor:

Todd Underwood

Deadlines

Order of Service	Thursday PM
Unichord	November 17

November Birthdays

2	Henny DuBois
2	Zachary Benson
6	Mary Alice Masonick
7	Kay Kummerow
10	Noreen Halberstadt
10	Aloel Deng
12	David Brooks
15	Andrea Schmidlin
16	Susan Sitter
18	Jeffrey James
19	Jim Navadomskis
20	Louise Molitor
22	Samantha Merritt
23	Laurie Waller
26	Norm Wilkinson
26	Helen King
27	Betsy Olson
29	Maureen Navadomskis



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

MWLS MEMORIES

by Alice Macy

Intense. Exhilarating. Exhausting. Informative. Challenging. Fun. These words come to mind when I remember my week at MidWest Leadership School, July 17-24, on the lovely campus of Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin. Twenty-nine participants and ten staff members, including our own Linda Porter, gathered from nine states in three districts of the UUA, from North Dakota to Kentucky, from Kansas to Minnesota.

The week included lectures, discussions, small group exercises, worship services, and fun. Topics covered were UU history and theology, elements of worship, organizational development, systems theory, leadership styles, consensus building, conflict management, communication, decision making, group and team dynamics.

Kim Cecil and Lisa Kerpoe attended the second session, July 27-August 3, and we got together recently to reminisce and compare notes. We all agreed that Leadership School was a great experience, but that so much of what made it so meaningful is hard to translate, because it is the sense of community that developed, and how quickly the group jelled and how productive it became because of our shared purpose.

UUCE can send two people to each session of Leadership School. Candidates are recruited by the Committee on the Ministry in its role of leadership development.



The 2002 UUCE Leadership Retreat held on October 19 focused on the philosophies of "Healthy Congregations". Angela Merkert from the UUA Central Midwest District facilitated wonderfully.