

From the Minister

As of late I have been thinking about some of the "dumb" decisions I've made in my life-- "dumb" as in embarrassing and wasteful as opposed to tragic. The sense I am left with as I reflect on these decisions is that even though they were unwise and painful, being able to make such mistakes was actually an important learning experience.

For instance, there was a point in high school when it was determined that I needed glasses to see things at a distance more clearly. The ophthalmologist prescribed the lens and my parents allowed me to choose the frames. It was a significant decision in many respects--the cost of the glasses being one--and I was flush with a feeling of youthful independence and empowerment.

John Lennon had begun to wear round wire rim glasses so I decided that I must have a pair like his. I tried on such a frame and didn't really like what I saw--but I ignored myself. The person helping me made the comment that I might want to reconsider and choose another pair--but I ignored him. I was making the decision and I wanted a pair of wire-rimmed glasses like John Lennon.

So I got a pair of wire-rimmed glasses like John Lennon and the next day at school wore them for about 15 minutes before putting them back in their case where they stayed for the next 5 years.

Without a doubt buying those glasses was a dumb idea. But buying them and living with the consequences offered me some poignant lessons about myself, my decision making process, and responsibility. I don't think I could have articulated this back then, but over time the lessons were understood. If my parents would have intervened and forced me to make a more reasonable choice, I wouldn't have learned as much. The issue would have been them instead of how I made the decision.

We all need the freedom to try things knowing sometimes our choices won't be the best. I appreciate my parents giving me the freedom to make such choices and to wrestle with the consequences. I think it is a sign of wisdom that after giving our honest and loving opinion that we can stand with people as they try to figure out what to do--even if we think they are nearsighted. Creating space for "dumb" decisions can be a gift.



Rev. Dan Brosier

WELCOMING CONGREGATION (continued from Page 1)

Brosier and I led the sessions, and in it a handful of us began to think about the experiences of lesbians and gay men, and what it might be like to be an open ally of the lesbian and gay community (at that time, b's were only nominally included, and t's were not a part of the curriculum at all). Our participation in the workshop series had a profound impact on many of us, helping us to understand what it meant to come out as allies.

Then in 1997, a second group got together for the workshop series, this time led by Kathy Underwood and I. This group still used the curriculum's first edition, but obtained supplemental materials from the UUA Office of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Concerns regarding LGBT youth, and Bisexual and Transgender experiences. Again, our experience was profound, and it helped move us forward to found the WCC to assist the congregation in moving through the formal Welcoming Congregation process, with support from the Board, the Committee on the Ministry, and the Social Justice Committee. Betsy Olson and I have been honored to co-chair a committee which has worked tirelessly, and has networked with the larger congregation to move the process forward. Jason Backus, Jim Burnidge, Dotty Carringi, Kim Cecil, Kevin Emery, Diana March, Michael McGee, Jana Mirs, Norm Wilkinson, and Ron Williams have all served on the Committee; I'd like to take this opportunity to thank them, as well as Betsy, Dan, and Kathy, for their courage and commitment, which have inspired and moved me again and again throughout this process.

Since the formation of the WCC, we have offered an LGBT video/discussion series, marched in several pride parades, brought NAMES Project AIDS Quilt panels to our sanctuary, served as an unfolding team in the Navy Pier Quilt exhibit, hosted letter-writing campaigns for LGBT rights and legislation, brought speakers and panels, held special services, sponsored discussions, revised our church documents, including our by-laws, passed a resolution that we are and should be recognized as a Welcoming Congregation, and begun the work of sharing our process with other congregations -- and this list does not, by any means, represent all that we have done. As a committee and as a congregation, we have talked to each other and experienced for ourselves what it means to step into the sun as allies. We have also learned a great deal about larger issues of oppression, and have acted on our commitment to our UU principles and our congregational covenant. I am proud to call myself a member of this church, and grateful for the real sense that I have again been welcomed into it.

The WCC will soon be wrapping up its duties -- framing and hanging the UUA poster and establishing a local chapter of Interweave, the UUA organization for LGBT people and their allies. As the formal process draws to a close, the informal process sees its commencement -- i.e., both a graduation and a new beginning. I hope that each one of us will feel empowered to act on our congregational resolution; with the dissolution of the WCC, it is key that each one of us sees ourselves as part of the informal welcoming congregation committee. Congratulations to all of us on this important achievement.

Dan

UUCE Calendar December 2000



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 9:00a Unichord Rehearsal -203 9:30a Conflict Mediation Team 12:00p PANTRY SUNDAY 12:15p Sun. Serv. Com. -M 12:30p Simple Living	4	5	6 7:00p Barn Bell Rehearsal -203 7:00p Labyrinth Com. -M	7 7:00p Publicity Com. -M 7:00p EICA -M	8	9 7:00p Coffee House
10 9:00a Unichord Rehearsal -203	11 7:00p Wiccan Rental -M	12 7:00p Church Council	13 7:00p Barn Bell Rehearsal -203	14	15	16 7:00p Wiccan Rental -S
17 9:00a Social Justice Com. -M 9:00a RE Council -M 9:00a Unichord Rehearsal -S 12:00p Newsletter Deadline 12:30p Adult Spirituality Com.	18	19 7:00p Board of Trustees	20 7:00p Barn Bell Rehearsal -203	21 7:00p Reliability Potluck	22	23
24 10:45a No Morning Service 7:00p Christmas Eve Service	25	26	27	28	29 7:00p Book Group -O	30
31 9:30a Mmbrshp/ Hosp Com. -M 8:00p New Year's Eve Party						

Month of Sundays

December

3 Together

In this service we celebrate how we nurture each other through community. We will do this through words, music and our annual bread communion. During the service we will also hold a welcoming ceremony for those who have joined our community over the last several months. Words by the Rev. Dan Brosier.

10 Deck The Halls

Time to kick-start our holiday season. We begin with a short service and then organize ourselves around such activities as decorating the evergreen tree in the Sanctuary, decorating the sanctuary and multipurpose room, helping the young people make tree decorations, preparing a lunch, singing in the choir This is a morning filled with activity and companionship. Coordinated by Joyce Becker and the Rev. Dan Brosier.

17 Holiday Intergenerational

This is our annual holiday intergenerational during which we invite into our lives the spirit of this season. There will be stories and music and maybe something special from the North Pole.

24 Christmas Eve

Please note that there will be no morning service on this day.

Our annual Christmas Eve service will begin at 7:00 PM. It is a time to celebrate the holiness of the night and all that it stands for. After the service we share food and good cheer. All are welcome. Please bring an hors d'oeuvre to share. Words by the Rev. Dan Brosier.

31 Profound Changes in the 20th Century

Consider these two questions:

What was the most significant scientific discovery in the last century?

What social change has had the most pivotal impact on our world?

For this program, we have decided what our choices are. How about you? Presented by the Sunday Services Committee.

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

Service Auction 2001



Service Auction Co-Chairs Doug Pratt and Kim Cecil

Submitted by Doug Pratt

With all of the preparations for the upcoming holiday season there is one celebration that UUs at UU Church of Elgin must not overlook. It's our annual Service Auction, scheduled for Saturday Evening, February 3, 2001. Members of the congregation are sure to mark their calendars for the Service Auction, it's one of the major events of the church calendar. It's always a night full of memorable moments, bargains, suspense, opportunity and fellowship.

Last year's event brought in around \$15,000 for the church. Some of the more notable items up for sale included a low mileage, one owner used car, a week long time share anywhere in the world, jewelry, artwork and much, much more. But don't be fooled by the headline items, the backbone of the service auction depends on you. Each year we receive a broad range of donations, from yard work, to elegant dinners, from babysitting to moonlight skiing outings. They are all important as each contributes to the overall success of the event and many provide unique settings where you can get to know the other members of the congregation better.

So now is the time to start to thinking about your contribution. Be imaginative. We have had gifts like hot homemade bread delivered to the purchaser once a month all year, batik wall hangings from the far corners of the world or from a local artist, and selections of children's books. A complete list of last year's offerings will be available on the sign up table. It's a great source of inspiration. There are two components to the auction. The silent auction precedes the live auction and focuses on tangibles. And the live auction, complete with our team of lightly trained Auctioneers, and our Master of Ceremonies. It is a night of laughter, excitement, music and most importantly, a fiscal shot in the arm for our favorite church

For those of you who thoughtfully donated last year, this is a good time to make certain that you have completed last year's service obligation. For everyone, it is time to think creatively about what you wish to offer this year. The co-chairs for this year's service auction are Kim Cecil and Doug Pratt. Volunteers who can help with the event are always welcome, and there will be signup sheets out after the first of the year. If you want to make sure you get to help out, you can contact Kim or Doug in advance. If you have any questions concerning the Service Auction, ask Kim, Doug or one of last year's planners They include Alice Macy, Jim Burnidge, and Chris Davis.

News/Announcements

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

Do you enjoy partying hard on New Year's Eve? NO? Neither do we! Would you rather spend the evening with friends and family? YES? Then please join us at the annual New Year's Eve Party at the church, beginning at 8:00 PM.

Bring a dish to share, a beverage, and your favorite board or card game. We'll have lots of good food and conversation and play a game or two if you'd like. At about 11:30 there will be a vespers style worship service appropriate to the occasion, followed by a champagne toast at midnight (there will be pop for the kids and those who don't drink champagne). This is a gathering for all ages; singles, couples and families are welcome. Look for the clipboard at church, or contact Andrea Schmidlin (847-741-9056) for more information.

SIMPLE LIVING

The Simple Living Group will be hosting another potluck after the service on December 3. The focus of the program that day will be viewing the video "Affluenza" which addresses our culture's degree of material consumption. All are invited to attend.

The following book was recommended for reading at the Simple Living Group meeting on November 5. We hope to discuss the ideas presented in the book at a future meeting. Mary Alice Masonick has a couple of copies available for loan.

The Consumer's Guide to Effective Environmental Choices: Practical Advice from the Union of Concerned Scientists

The first comprehensive look at the full range of modern consumer activities, identifying those that cause the most environmental damage and those that cause the least.

By Michael Brower and Warren Leon. Three Rivers Press, 1999. 304 pp. \$15.00.

To order contact:

UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS
2 Brattle Square, Cambridge, MA 02238
617-547-5552 or www.ucsusa.org

CROP WALK UPDATE

As a church, we raised \$700 to help feed the hungry of the world and the Elgin Area. The Social Justice Committee thanks all of the walkers: Sarah Davis, Tim Davis, Chris Davis, Charlie Schmidlin, Kyle Underwood, Kathy Underwood, Andrew Pratt and Scott MacDuff. We also send out a special thanks to all who made a pledge.

ETHNIC DINING ADVENTURES

Twenty UU's sampled Korean cuisine at the Koreana Restaurant on November 4. The next Ethnic Dining Adventure is scheduled for January 27. Watch for details in the next Unichord and in the Sunday morning service announcements.

Kudos to:

Bob & Charmaine Hamill for cleaning the 1st floor carpet

The anonymous donor of the metal wall sculpture on the 2nd floor

Scott MacDuff for coordinating the UUCE CROP walk effort

Alice Macy & Todd Underwood for their work on the Unichord



Book Group

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

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| December 29 | "The Red Tent" by Anita Diamant. At the home of Barbara Sugden. |
| February 2 | "How We Die" by Sherwin Nuland. At the home of Helen Maxwell. |
| March 23 | "Ahab's Wife" by Sena Jeter Naslund. At the home of Shirley Wolin. |
| April 20 | "Rosa Parks" by Douglas Brinkley. At the home of Jackie Van De Warker. |

NEW UU

The New UU is a three-part introduction to Unitarian Universalism and this church community for all those wanting to know more about each. This winter the New UU will be held three consecutive Thursday nights beginning January 11 and running through the 25th. Each session begins at 7:00 PM and last under two hours. If you are interested, sign up on the designated clipboard in the Fellowship Room. For more information contact Dan Brosier at 847-888-0668.

AS THE RIVER WE FLOW

This year's Winter WomanSpirit Conference will be held Friday, January 26 through Sunday, the 28th in South Bend, Indiana. See the flyer on the Kiosk for more information.

CIRCLE OF LIFE

We are saddened by the news of the death of Jackie Van De Warker's granddaughter in an automobile accident.

Suzanne and Paul Hanifl are pleased announce the birth of their grandson Paul Oscar on November 12.

NEW MEMBER'S CEREMONY

During the service on December 3rd we will hold a brief ceremony welcoming those who have joined the church over the past several months. Anyone who has been thinking about becoming a member might consider doing so prior to this occasion so that they can be included. If you have any questions, contact Jim Hermann (815-455-6911) or Dan Brosier (847-888-0668)

Religious Education

December is here! With the many holidays, the winter solstice and a new millennium, it promises to be a fun and busy month.

On the 10th there will be our first "Deck the Halls" intergenerational which is being coordinated by Joyce Becker. Following a brief service, everyone will get to help decorate the church for the season. There will be crafts, singing, cookies to decorate (and eat!), and a luncheon. It is the spontaneity of this gathering that will make it a good time for all.

Then on the 17th, we will have our Winter Intergenerational service. I don't want to spoil the element of suspense by giving anything away.

Christmas Eve gives us yet another chance to celebrate the season as a faith community. There will be an intergenerational service in the evening, but no religious education classes or service in the morning.

I hope that the holiday season finds you and those you love safe, warm and happy.

In Peace,
Kathy Underwood
Director of Religious Education



Kathy Underwood, DRE

MEMBERSHIP AND HOSPITALITY ACTIVITIES

Submitted by Jim Hermann and Paula Zeugner, Co-Chairs

Jessica Brandstetter joined the Church Membership during at the end of October. She and her husband A.J. have been attending services since last year. Also, she performs with the Unichords Bell Choir. Al Spiteria signed the Membership Book during October. He has been attending services for several months and attended the Newcomers Luncheon in October.

The Newcomers Luncheon was held on October 22. Experienced members shared lunch and discussion with Diane McFarlin, Ann & Mitch Kremer, Jon & Amy Sebastian, Nellie & Brad Moore, Leslie Russ, Christina Yustman, and Beth Anda. These newcomers have been attending services during this fall and are regular participants in Church activities. Ann and Mitch have attending Church with their children. Jon and Amy were married in the Church during the summer. Nellie Moore is the new Co-Chair of the Labyrinth Committee with Lydia Larrabee. Leslie Russ has been attending services with her husband Rob. Beth Anda lives in Mexico and visits the Church with her daughter Christina when they are together.

Please introduce yourself to these Members and Friends, as well as visitors, during Church Services and the Fellowship Hour.



Frieda Anderson shows off the new Raffle Quilt

This year's multi-colored quilt will be raffled off Sunday, December 3. Each year the quilt raises between \$700 and \$1,300 through raffle tickets sold by UUCE members, with the proceeds going into a fund to provide a stained glass window for the church.

The Quilting Group will meet to work on next year's raffle quilt on December 2 and January 13. The colors of the 2001 quilt will be green and brown.



Our annual Halloween party was a big success with activities for young and old. Esther Hermann told an excellent scary story at the bonfire.



The Kindergarten-2nd Grade class had a great time last month on their chosen excursion to Chuck E. Cheese's in Batavia.



Who Am I?

This celebrity UU was born in Washington, D.C. on April 9, 1939. During the early part of her career, she appeared in several guest roles in shows such as *The Doris Day Show*, *Ironside*, *Gunsmoke*, *Police Story* and *The Streets of San Francisco*. She also appeared on stage, with roles in many plays.

(answer will appear in the January Unichord)

November's *Who Am I* was Alexander Graham Bell

Connections

Because of the Thanksgiving holiday, I am writing this column prior to the November Board Meeting. To find out what took place at that meeting, please see the Board minutes, which will be posted on the kiosk.



Andrea Schmidlin
Board Co-President

We continue to focus on the future. Dan Brosier, Laurie Kiesewetter and I are working on follow-up to August's Leadership Retreat. We will be seeking involvement not only from Board and Church Council members, but from YOU. Please be thinking about the future of our church community and what your visions are.

As many of you know, we have begun a discussion of when it is appropriate for individuals or committees to make decisions on behalf of the church and act on them, and when additional input is needed. Let me say that we begin this discussion with the assumption that everyone acts in what he or she believes to be the church's best interests. We do not doubt the sincerity or commitment of any one or any committee. Having said that, we need to remember that we are a diverse community with many views. This is not an effort to disempower members or committees; we see it as a protection for the decision-maker.

At Church Council it was agreed that, when an action is likely to result in changes that are PERMANENT AND HIGHLY VISIBLE, the involved person or committee should consult with other committee chair(s) or Church Council. Not every decision needs a consultation; simply those which would create PERMANENT AND HIGHLY VISIBLE CHANGES to the church. Of course, you are always welcome to bring any issue or concern to Church Council or the Board meetings. We encourage input from anyone!

Andrea Schmidlin
Board Co-President

Giving Tree To Benefit Larkin Center Group Home

Submitted by Roberta Nauman for the Social Justice Committee

Once again this year a Larkin Center Giving Tree will be in the Fellowship Hall from November 20 through December 18. The tree contains tags with names and gift requests of the children and staff of the Creekside group home that we sponsor.

While the group home and Giving Tree are Social Justice Committee projects, anyone in the congregation may take a card and buy a gift (return it unwrapped) to brighten Christmas for these children who cannot live in their own homes or have no home.

The congregation has been very generous the past two years, and SJC hopes that this year will be no exception. This is a great opportunity to share the spirit of Christmas.

Ways to Get in Touch

Church Office	847-888-0668
Jackie Van De Warker (home)	847-429-1602
Web site	www.uuce.org
Newsletter Submissions	newsletter@uuce.org

Co-Presidents:

Laurie Kiesewetter	847-742-7253
Andrea Schmidlin	847-741-9056

Deadlines

Order of Service	Thursday PM
Unichord	December 24

December Birthdays

7	Linda Porter
11	Paul Hanifl
11	Jordan Goldberg
20	Roberta Nauman
20	Barbara Sugden
20	Maxine Saunders
22	Megan Landauer
23	Helen Maxwell
23	Linda Rodda
27	Marilyn Hendry
30	Doug Pratt
31	Ed Wall



Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin
P.O. Box 1032
Elgin, Illinois 60121

(847)888-0668

www.uuce.org

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

DECK THE HALLS!

On Sunday, December 10, we're going to have an intergenerational Christmas celebration.

During the service, we'll break into interest groups including:

- Limerick writing
- Singing carols (with the help of our musicians)
- Putting the lights on the tree
- Making decorations for the tree
- Making cookies
- Hanging greens in the sanctuary

Then, we'll all come back together to listen to a limerick or two, a carol or two by our "New" choir, and view "The Lighting of our Tree".

After the service, we'll have "sandwich lunch" and try out the cookies!

A sign-up sheet is located downstairs, so that we can get an idea of who might be interested in the various groups. Please contact Joyce Becker at 847-608-9457 for further information.

