



The

UNICHORD

December 2006

Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin

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A Christmas Prayer - Rev. Maureen Killoran,
Minister, UU Church of Ashville, NC

Not gold, nor myrrh, nor even frankincense
would I have for you this season,
but simple gifts, the ones that are hardest to find,
the ones that are perfect,
even for those who have everything (if such there be).



I would (if I could)
have for you the gift of courage,
the strength to face the gauntlets
only you can name,
and the firmness in your heart to know
that you (yes, you!) can be a bearer of the quiet dignity
that is the human glorified.



I would (if by my intention I could make it happen)
have for you the gift of connection,
the sense of standing on the hinge of time,
touching past and future,
standing with certainty that you (yes, you!)
are the point where it all comes together.



I would (if wishing could make it so)
have for you the gift of community,
a nucleus of love and challenge,
to convince you in your soul
that you (yes, you!) are a source of light
in a world too long believing in the dark.



Not gold, nor myrrh, nor even frankincense,
would I have for you this season,
but simple gifts, the ones that are hardest to find,
the ones that are perfect,
even for those who have everything (if such there be).



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Rev. Dan Brosier

From the Minister

It is holiday decoration time.

Most municipalities have their decorations up by now, and many of us have our homes, to various degrees, decked out for Hanukkah, the Solstice or Christmas. It is the season of lights.

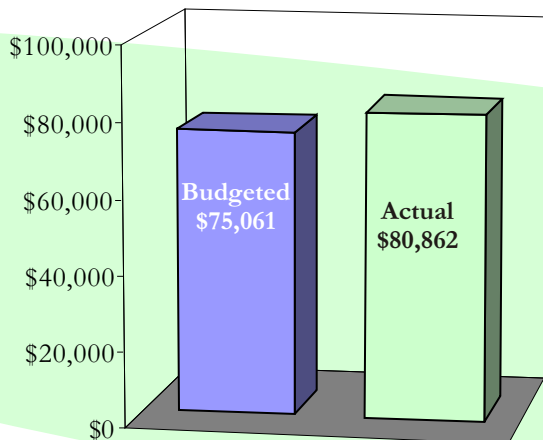
There is something in lights burning bright in the darkness of this year that touches my spirit. For me the most moving display of lights is simply the lone colorfully lit evergreen in a field of darkness. I still have vivid memories of such a tree from my early childhood.

The power in such a display lies in having small lights in the midst of enormous darkness. I am not moved when the lights are so bright that they light up the night, when they turn night into day. The lights I think so beautiful do not remove the darkness, rather they dispel the power of the dark by burning bright immersed in its midst.

It is about hope. It is an ancient and universal symbol for the power of hope—points of light among the darkness. Spring will come, life will return, the pain will ease, the alienation will end, peace will come—hope in the face of despair.

It is the season of lights. It is the season of hope. Take it in.

Member Pledges—2006-2007 Fiscal Year



The 2006-2007 budget calls for \$128,750 in pledges. Seven months' worth of this figure is \$75,061. Questions?

Contact your Finance Coordinator, Alice Macy.

(847)888-0668

Month of Sundays

December

3 - The Divine

Unitarian Universalists are encouraged to find a theology/an understanding of the universe that supports their development as compassionate beings. Central to this is having a sense of the Divine. In this service we explore what that means. Service led by the Rev. Dan Brosier.

10 - Deck the Halls

We mark the holiday season with a service devoted to decking our building out in holiday spirit and in so doing encourage it within ourselves. The morning begins with us all gathered in the sanctuary for a few minutes of opening words and music, and then we split up into various activities. It is a morning of activity and good cheer.

17 - Holiday Intergenerational

24 - Morning - A Winter Solstice Vesper

This is the holiday season—a time of the year when there are overlapping holidays. The most ancient of these, and perhaps the underlying theme of them all, is the Winter Solstice. In this service we try to capture the spirit of this holiday in words and music. Service led by the Rev. Dan Brosier.

24 - Evening - A Service On Christmas Eve

Come join us as we celebrate the magic of the season through song and story. This year's service begins at 7:00 PM. Following the service there will be refreshments and participants are encouraged to bring an hors d'oeuvre to share. Service led by the Rev. Dan Brosier.

31 - "The Sixth Principle" or "New Year's Resolutions Revisited!"

In this sermon by the Rev. Dr. Tony Larson, we will look at the sixth Principle: the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all, and consider how this may direct our vision for the New Year. Service led by Elise C. Wall.

Services 10:45 A.M.
Fellowship Following

UUCE Calendar

December



Friday 1st

9:15 AM E.T. Meeting
7:00 PM - Book Group

Sunday 3rd - Bring Food Pantry Donations

9:00 AM - RE Council - Room 201
9:00 AM Unichords
9:30 AM - Adult Sunday School - 302
Spiral Dynamics
9:30 AM Worship Committee

10:45 - Worship Service - The Divine - Rev. Dan Brosier
- Coffee & Fellowship Following

Monday 4th

7:00 PM Full Moon Ritual - Sanctuary

Wednesday 6th

6:00 PM - Eat and Meet
7:00 PM - Committee on the Ministry - Dan's Office
7:00 PM - Spiritual Inquiry Covenant Group - 302
7:00 PM - Barn Bells
7:00 PM Pagan Unity 301 Business Meeting

Saturday 9th

6:00 PM UUCE Holiday Road Rally and
Chili Dinner Fellowship Hall

Sunday 10th

8:30 AM Canvass Committee Meeting
9:30 AM - Adult Sunday School - 302
- The Bible Dan Hislip

10:45 - Worship - Service Deck The Halls
-Rev. Dan Brosier
- Coffee & Fellowship Following

Wednesday 13th

6:00 PM - Eat and Meet
7:00 PM - Finance Committee - Dan's Office
7:00 PM - Barn Bells
7:30 PM - APPLE - Room 301

Thursday 14th

11:30 AM Care Team
7:00 PM Board Meeting

Friday 15th

9:15 AM E.T. Meeting

Saturday 16th

11:00 AM - Rental

Sunday 17th

9:00 AM - Unichords
9:30 AM - Adult Sunday School - 302
The Bible Dan Hislip

10:45 - Holiday Intergenerational
- Coffee & Fellowship Following
12:30 PM Green Sanctuary 301
SEND UNICHORD NEWS

Wednesday 20th

6:00 PM - Eat and Meet
7:00 PM - Barn Bells

Thursday 21st

7:00 PM Yule Celebration Winter Solstice

Saturday 23rd

4:00 PM Youth Group Soup Kitchen

Sunday 24th

9:00 AM Unichords
9:30 AM - Adult Sunday School - 302
Forum - Andrea Schmidlin

10:45 - Worship Service - A Winter Solstice Vesper
- Rev. Dan Brosier
- Coffee & Fellowship Following
7:00 PM A Service on Christmas Eve
-The Rev. Dan Brosier

Wednesday 27th

No Barn Bells
6:00 PM - Eat and Meet
7:00 PM Women's Spirituality 301

Friday 29th

7:00 PM Book Group

Sunday 31st

9:30 AM - Adult Sunday School - 302 Forum
Andrea Schmidlin

10:45 - Worship Service The Sixth Principle
- Elise C. Wall
- Coffee & Fellowship Following

News & Announcements



Pagan Unity

Pagan Unity is a new group focused upon fostering the study and practice of earth-centered spiritualities, theological inquiry into contemporary Pagan traditions, and enrichment of the religious pluralism of Unitarian Universalism. The group has plans to offer monthly group business meetings, lunar calendar events, spiritual rituals, and intergenerational celebrations. Pagan Unity is also planning a presentation of the UU religious education curriculum "Paganism 101", tentatively set to begin January 2007. For more information about this group and its events contact: Joy Shores.

Pagan Unity Schedule:

- 12/4 (MON) Full Moon Ritual
~ Led by Sandy & Andrew Russel ~ 7 - 9 pm
- 12/6 (WED) Pagan Unity Monthly Business Meeting
(1st of many to come!) ~ 7 - 9 pm
- 12/13 (WED) Pagan Unity Hosts Eat & Meet
~ Menu TBA (to be decided 12/6)
- 12/21 (TH) Yule Celebration ~ Winter Solstice
~ Intergenerational Event ~ 7 - 9 pm

New View on your UUCE Web Site -

UUCE Webmaster Todd Underwood has completed some website improvements suggested by the Church's Executive Team.

- A new "Social Action" page accessible through the "Get Involved" section of the site.
- Two online forms for submitting program proposals and scheduling events can also be accessed from the left-hand side navigation of the "Get Involved" section.
- Upcoming sermon topics are now posted on the "News" page and, as before, current Announcements are located in the News section.

Please visit the site regularly and pass your suggestions and comments along to Todd. www.uuce.org.

Deck The Walls!

The artwork of local artist Alice DuBois will be on display in the gallery outside the sanctuary in December. The artist will be available after the service on December 3rd to answer any questions.

Alice's work is a colorful combination of symbolism and figurative painting inspired by many different elements such as nature, literature, music and other artists. She indicated that all her work is available for holiday gift giving

Women Cooking For Women

New time: Doors open at 6:00 p.m. Food should be ready to be served by 6:30 p.m. Friends and family members are welcome to attend. There is no sign-up or membership required. Just come!

Keep your calendar free the first Friday of each month for WCFW dinners (no Dec. dinner meeting): Fri., Jan. 5th: "Night of Passion" — one woman will share a cause that she is passionate about. HOPE YOU'LL JOIN US! See Laurie Kiesewetter or Andrea Schmidlin for more info.

Recycling

Please do not put plastic bags or styrofoam in the recycling bins in the kitchen. There is a list of what can be recycled over the bins.

Thanks for Helping

One of the biggest challenges to keeping the church building looking clean is coffee and other drinks being spilled on the carpet. This is why we encourage people not to consume such beverages on the second and third floors. The reality is that some people when they have gatherings before or after church do drink beverages in the classrooms. This is understandable and we encourage those people to be very careful. Where we ask beverages never be brought is into the sanctuary. Please, before entering the sanctuary, deposit your beverage container either downstairs in the kitchen, or if disposable, in a trash receptacle.

Fund-raising Guide Lines

A reminder that all fund-raising activity within the church must receive prior approval of the Executive Team. Some fund-raising activities are approved for an indefinite period of time—like RE bake sales and the Quilt Raffles. Recently we have had a couple of groups plan bake sales on the same Sunday. To avoid this any group given approval for holding repeated bake sales needs to get these on the calendar by contacting Mila Brinker, the Church Administrator.

Supervising Our Children

There are a lot of activities and programs at the UUCE. The church attempts to provide childcare during a number of these activities but to do so for all of them is not feasible. For the sake of safety, when children are not in a childcare program or religious education program, we ask that they be supervised by their parent(s). This means children should be in proximity to their parents (at least on the same floor), with the parents knowing where they are and what they are doing. In general, children should not be roaming the building on their own. Conversation between adults is a big part of our community life, but this should not mean that children are unattended.



Kathy Underwood
Director of
Religious Education

Religious Education

Last month, Anne Bedard arranged a social action project for the religious education program.

During fellowship hour, young people were invited to fill gift baskets and make cards for them. Then the older youth brought them to the homes of senior citizens in a low-income apartment building, and cleaned up their apartments for them. Unfortunately, only three of the eight senior citizens remembered that we were coming to clean. However, the ones who did were appreciative of our efforts. Afterwards, Anne and Bob took the youth out for pizza. Overall, they enjoyed the experience.

This month, we have another opportunity for social action. The Bedards have arranged for all young people in grades 6-12 to help at the local soup kitchen on December 23. They will be serving dinner and cleaning up afterward. If you have a young person who would like to participate, please let me know.

In Faith,
Kathy Underwood

Congregational Survey Results

A big thanks from the Board of Trustees to those of you who completed and returned a Congregational Survey that we conducted in October. The purpose of the Survey was to gather the congregation's assessment of how well we are ministering to our members and friends. Surveys were returned from 65 people.

Categories with the highest average ratings were **Worship (4.2) and Feeling Tone (4.1)**. The lowest rated categories were **Community Involvement (3.1) and Stewardship (3.5)**.

This informs us that many of you are pleased with our worship style and have a positive feeling about our church. Many of you also feel that our church should be more involved in our larger community and improve our financial stewardship. Complete Survey results are available in Fellowship Hall, on the Kiosk, and were also sent as an email to uus@uuce.org. Again, thank you!

- the Board of Trustees

December Religious Education

December 3

Preschool: Mary Had A Baby
K-2nd: A Gift Making Time
3rd-5th: Jingle Bells
6th-8th: Putting Love & Joy into the Season
High School: Buddhism

December 10

Deck the Halls Intergenerational – no classes

December 17

Winter Intergenerational – no classes

December 24

Preschool: How Many Days Until Christmas
K-2nd: When We Were Babies
3rd-5th: Charles Dickens
6th-8th: Birth Legends
High School: Buddhism

December 31

Preschool: Candles For Winter
K-2: More About Babies and Us
3-5: A Visitor/Kwanzaa
6-8: Chalice In A Bag
High School: Buddhism

Adult Sunday School Schedule

First Sunday of each month Bob Sandidge and Anne Ward will present Spiral Dynamics—December 3rd we take a closer look at the second two spirals. All are invited to come and learn what it is and how it applies to your life.

The second and third Sundays of each month Dan Hislip facilitates Bible Study. Bring your Bible.

On the fourth and on the occasional fifth Sunday of each month Andrea Schmidlin facilitates a discussion Forum.

Do join this lively group any Sunday at 9:30 am on the 3rd floor.

New Member

Since our last Unichord **Jo Kinnard** has signed the membership book. We joyfully welcome her into our community.

Who Am I?



This UU, the son of a UU Minister, wrote a famous carol originally entitled "One Horse Open Sleigh."

This easy one is a seasonal gift for you.

(answer will appear in the next Unichord)

November Who Am I is Whitney Young

There are forces at play this time of year—and they're not all magical! Outside forces are determined to tempt us to overspend, overeat, overindulge, over-gift, over-decorate, over-entertain and in all other ways overdo. To make sure that your personal holiday wishes are granted, pretend it's already Sunday, January 7th. How do you want to look back at your Christmas holidays?

Personally, I'd like to greet my friends in church on January 7th relaxed and refreshed, knowing I have no holiday debt hanging over me, satisfied that my home is in order and all the decorations are put away where I'll find them easily next year, savoring memories of time spent with special people, and confident that the gifts I gave conveyed the message I intended, satisfied that I gave away only what was truly mine to give, and pleased to have touched the lives of several people I do not know.

Approaching every aspect of this holiday season with the end in mind will surely give us a new sense of confidence -- the kind of security that exists when boundaries are clear and a vision is strong. Here are some Internet resources to help you live consciously, buy wisely, make a difference and celebrate!

The Center for a New American Dream: www.newdream.org

Union for Concerned Scientists: www.ucsusa.org

Alternative Gifts International: www.altgifts.org

Heifer International: www.heifer.org

- Elizabeth Olson - The Green Sanctuary Committee

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.

- December 1 - "Wicked" by Gregory Maguire - Alice Macy's home
- December 29 - We will each review a favorite book. Pat Pecho's
- January 26 - "The Memory Keeper's Daughter" Kim Edwards. TBA.
- February 23 - "Dreams From My Father" by Barack Obama. TBA.

Planned Giving

Consider one of the simplest and most rewarding gifts you can make to Unitarian Universalism: a bequest in your will or other estate plans. Many of us want to provide generously for the organizations we cherish, in addition to our loved ones. A bequest of any size in your estate plans can shape the future of this congregation and ensure its vitality for generations to come. Contact Tim Davis, Carol Schoengart, or Jim Burnidge, members of the UUCE Endowment Committee, for more information.

Giving Tree

In the first floor lobby is a giving tree for the children at the Larkin Center. To participate in this holiday opportunity take a tag from the tree, fill out one of the sections on the register sheet (should be on a clipboard near the tree), buy the gift, and return it unwrapped with tag attached by December 20. If you have any questions contact Mila Brinker or Dan Brosier.

~

Where Your Food Pantry Donations Go -

The Pantry's official name is All People's Inter-Faith Pantry. It is an emergency food assistance program for the greater Elgin area. The Pantry, in existence in some form since 1969, is located at the First Congregational Church in Elgin. Referral slips (distributed by local churches and agencies, such as the Community Crisis Center) are needed in order to receive food. Participants may receive food up to six times in one calendar year. They will be given a three-day supply of food for each family member at each visit. Last October, the Pantry served 229 families with a total of 699 members. **Sunday, December 3, is our Pantry Sunday.** The Pantry coordinator indicated a need for powered milk, soymilk, toiletries, toothpaste and dish detergent. As always, your donations are welcome anytime during the month.

~

PSST- Listen, do you want to know a secret?



Do you promise not to tell? Don't start singing. Yes, I know the Beatles did that. But I'm serious. The Spiritual Inquiry Covenant group is opening its membership to interested members of the congregation who would like to

explore an exciting new DVD entitled, "The Secret." So you can either learn the secret or don't complain to me when you're out of the loop, still looking for the secret. The group will commence this new avenue of inquiry at its first meeting on the first Wednesday of the New Year (January 3rd) at the Church after the Eat & Meet dinner. So, how about it? Is your interest piqued? Come and join a great group of spiritual seekers in an exciting new approach. How do I know it's a great group? I'm in it, aren't I? Who am I? That's another secret! (Didn't we start here?)

~

Childcare Available Sundays

Childcare is provided for those parents attending Adult Sunday School, Church, Fellowship Hour and committee meetings. Debra Schmidt and Julie Smith staff the childcare service. Please sign up on the table outside the nursery on the first floor.



Lydia Larrabee
Board President

President's Reflections

We come into special times in December. The cycle of the seasons turns this month with the approach of the Solstice - the shortest day and longest night. The end of the calendar year comes soon. Annual celebrations of these events and of

Christmas, Chanukah and Kwanzaa come around again. And through it all, the wheel of life turns in its own time, as birth and gain is accompanied by death and loss.

I am particularly aware of this latter wheel because I lost my Dad last December. I have a special bond with everyone who has lost a loved one—which is all of us. I am another reluctant member of the club of mortality, the club of all living beings. With loss comes sorrow and change, and an enhanced awareness of what really matters.

This season I am doing what I can with the holidays. I am not dreading them; rather, I am looking forward to being with my brother, mother and other family during the holiday week. The most important thing is to spend time with the people I love, to connect with them as fully as I can, and to tell them of my love. The experience of loss brings that so much into focus.

I am grateful to this community for the connections I have with so many, the opportunity to serve, and recently for opportunities to acknowledge and deal with my experience. I participated in the Remembrance ceremony in November and recently completed the Lessons of Loss class. In both, my fellow participants and I had a chance to tell our stories and to hear each other's. The sharing in both venues has been a real gift to me this season.

My wish for everyone is for real gifts and blessings this winter and in the holiday season. I hope that you can spend time with the people you love. I also hope you enjoy some good food, some rest and relaxation, some fun, and not too much craziness with preparations. May you find much for which to be grateful.

Thank you for being in my community and sharing life in this season.

Lydia

Wheel of Life

Congratulations to Babette Colburn and her husband Todd on the birth of Sylvie Emmeline on Friday Nov. 10.

Kudos to: Margot Cusimano for having the leaded glass transom from the former church on Randal Road refinished, repaired and installed in our history area.

Everyone who donated to the interfaith food pantry in November making it our most successful food drive yet!

Todd Underwood and **Joy Shores** for co-chaperoning the 6th - 8th grade lock in, and **Todd** for tech support for the screening of "Selling of Iraq" and for web mastering our UUCE.org world class web site.

To **Bill Wilson** for an outstanding presentation on Permaculture and to **Masonicks'** for hosting Bill while here. To **Donna Askins** for her many contributions including baking the Communion Bread.



"I am not interested in weapons, whether words or guns. I want to be part of the rescue team for our tired, overcrowded planet. The rescuers will be those people who help other people to think clearly, and to be honest and open-minded. They will be an antidote to those people who disconnect us. They will de-objectify, rehumanize, and make others more understandable and sympathetic."

- Mary Pipher UU World Contributor

Ways to Get in Touch

Church Office	847.888.0668
Web site	www.uuce.org
PodCast	uuce.libsyn.com
Schedule an event	uuce.org/event-scheduling.html
Newsletter submissions	newsletter@uuce.org

Board President:

Lydia Larrabee

Newsletter Editor

Bob Sandidge Newsletter@uuce.org

Deadlines

Order of Service	Wednesday PM
UNICHORD NEWS	December 17

December Birthdays

3	Bob Sandidge	20	Roberta Nauman
4	Tim King	20	Barbara Sugden
6	Rusty Winchel	20	Maxine Saunders
7	Linda Porter	23	Helen Maxwell
7	Mike Moutrie	27	Marilyn Hendry
10	Kole Talaga	27	Avery Bedard
11	Paul Hanifl	30	Doug Pratt
11	Jim Bottino	31	Ed Wall
15	Kassia Lesiewicz		
19	Ethan Fincher		



The Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Meditation on Winter Celebrations - Elizabeth Strong

We are in the midst of the season of celebration.

Celebrations:

Of the birth of new hope,
Of the festival of lights,
Of the triumph of freedom.

The darkness of the year is lifting and the time of light grows longer. We have gathered with an anticipation of hope for peace on earth and in our homes.

We have gathered in this season of celebrations seeking comfort to soften the pain and the losses our lives have suffered in the fast retreating year.

We have gathered to worship joyfully within this season of celebrations with the tenderness and love of family and friends around us.

Let us be embraced by the strength and power of this sacred space that we each bring as we create this beloved community.

Let joy and sorrow join in the fullness of our living.

Let the power and strength we embody join us together as we move through the seasons of celebration into a new year with a new vision of hope for peace on earth.

Let us be silent together.

So Be It



Lighting this chalice, we invoke the presence of Love in our hearts, to share it today among us and then spread it to the world.

Therefore, let nobody feel a stranger in this circle and may all feel welcome.

—the Sociedad Unitaria Universalista de España