



The Chalice Flame

The Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent



December 2010

Sunday Services
9:30 and 11:15 am

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Deadline:

The 15th each month

GOOD NEWS: but if you ask me what it is, I know not;
It is a track of feet in the snow,
It is a lantern showing a path,
It is a door set open.
~ G. K. Chesterton, "XMAS DAY"

I love this snippet of a poem from G.K. Chesterton. It sounds to me an invitation. Follow the track in the snow. Use the light of a lantern or maybe the stars to find your way. See, there is a door set open. Walk through. Walk through and hear the good news.

The open door is a symbol of welcome. It is a symbol of hospitality. In the dark and the cold we invite one another in through the open door. Come in and be warmed. Come in and be fed. Come in and be cheered. Come in and be at home.

As the winter holidays come we think of walking through doors or opening our own. We prepare to give and receive hospitality. It is a good gift, a good practice, a very good way to live in this world. Giving and receiving hospitality we remember the ties that bind us one to another. We remember that we have so much more in common than that which keeps us apart. We remember what it means to be human. Extending hospitality is one way to practice.

But there is more. Always. It doesn't need our intentions, our efforts, our practice. It doesn't even need us to pay attention. Though we might see, hear, taste, feel, know, understand more clearly if we do. Always there is more.

Grace – the gifts that come, though unearned and unbidden. Grace - the gifts that are ours simply because we are here. Grace – the gifts of an extravagantly beautiful world. Here on this beautiful planet we are blessed. We are blessed beyond measure.

This season I invite you to notice. Notice the gifts of grace. Welcome them in. Let them bless you. And in turn, you will be the blessing.

In faith,

P.S. The preparations for my leave this winter are all coming together. (If this is news to you, please see the November edition of this newsletter). We have hired the Rev. Katie Norris to serve as a ¼ time consulting minister while I am gone. You can pick up a brochure introducing Rev. Katie and containing other helpful information about congregational leadership during my leave on the tables in the Founders Lounge. Or, if you will not be in church, you can email the office to request that we send you an electronic copy of the brochure.

Upcoming Sermons

1 December, 6:30 Wednesday

Vespers

Holiday sing-along Led by Dani Beale and Saunis Parsons

Bring your favorite carol, for we will be getting ready for the season with a holiday sing-along! We will sing Christmas and holiday songs by request; please bring along your favorite to share and we will choose from the hymnal.

5 December

Wake Now Compassion

The Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer and Worship Associate Kathy Kerns

This morning we will commemorate World Aids Day. Remembering the millions of people around the world who are living with HIV or AIDS, we will consider again the power of compassion to change lives for the better.

12 December

Finding Enlightenment?

The Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer and Worship Associate Max Grubb

Have you heard the story about how the Buddha found enlightenment? You will today as we consider the wisdom of the Buddhist path to freedom from suffering. We will also celebrate child dedications at each of our services this morning.

15 December, 6:30 Wednesday

Singing Meditation

Christie Anderson

Relax with this calming combination of repetitive singing of simple, one verse songs followed by several minutes of silence after each song. For anyone over age 14, including those who feel they lack singing skills.

19 December

How Dickens Rescued Christmas

The Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer, Director of Religious Education Karen Lapidus and

Worship Associate Kristina Spaude

You know Dickens story *A Christmas Carol*. But do you know the story behind that story? We'll share it with you this morning as we tell you about the ways Dickens still influences the Christmases we keep today. This service will be multigenerational, interactive and lots of fun!

24 December

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer, Director of Religious Education Karen Lapidus and Worship Associate Dani Beale

6:30 pm A special family friendly service of lessons and carols to welcome the spirit of Christmas into the world.

8:30 pm A special service of lessons and carols to welcome the spirit of Christmas into the world.

26 December- 10:30 am service only *What Doesn't Fit in a Box?*

The Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer and Worship Associate Trish McLoughlin

Come hear some stories of Boxing Day traditions during this informal service for all ages. We promise lots of singing led by Hal Walker, time for contemplation and a wonderful brunch afterwards prepared by Elaine and Bill Bowen. If you'd like, please bring a gift to the brunch for our Boxing Day exchange. This could be a good time to re-gift or to give something handmade! Wrap your gift in a box and, if it is most suitable for a certain age or gender, please label it so.

Please note – we will have only one service today at 10:30 am. No religious education classes will be offered. Children are invited to attend the service. Nursery care will be available for infants and toddlers.



Financial Corner

Many thanks to all who made the service auction a huge success. Through your efforts and contributions, the church netted over \$17,000 and everyone had a good time.

Because of the service auction, we have money in the bank; however, pledges for the year are behind the projected amount. You should have received a quarterly report of your contributions through October. If you are behind in your payments and can make it up before the end of 2010, that would help us remain financially healthy. If you know that you will not be able to contribute the amount you pledged, please let me know so we can budget accordingly.

I am pleased to announce that a Capital Campaign Committee has been appointed and held its first meeting. Those who have agreed to serve are Esther Duncan, Amy Edmonds, Bill Eldredge, Jane Krimmer, Rhonda Richardson, and David Smeltzer. The Committee has contacted the UUA to find out about obtaining a capital campaign consultant who can help with a feasibility study. This action is in response to a vote of the congregation to pursue options for expanding our space. The Expansion Team is actively exploring a variety of options, but is hampered by now knowing how much money the congregation might be able to raise. A feasibility study will involve interviews with many members and friends to determine what options people are willing to support and what level of support they can offer. If you have questions, feel free to contact any member of the Committee or me.

Susan Goekler

Congregational Meeting December 5

Our congregation has been asked by the Rev. Renee Ruchotzke to create a relationship of affiliation. Instead of serving another congregation as a parish minister (like Rev. Melissa serves ours) Renee is serving as a Lay Leadership Development Consultant for four districts of the Unitarian Universalist Association, a ministry that she has felt called to since before she began seminary. Since her ministry is to the larger UU community and our congregational polity (governance) requires that all ministries have an institutional connection to a congregation, Renee must have an official affiliation with a particular congregation. As an affiliated minister she would not be on our payroll (since she is paid out of our district and UUA dues) but she would be an official part of our staff as "Affiliated Minister."

Our board of trustees, Rev. Melissa and Rev. Renee have all endorsed the idea and approved a covenant outlining the terms of understanding of the affiliation. This document is available for review in the church office, or you can access it here- <http://www.kentuu.org/docs/draft-ruchotzke-kent-affiliated-community-ministry-covenant.pdf>. But the board, taking seriously the responsibility of professional ministry and its relationship to congregational life, also felt that it was important that the congregation as a whole have the opportunity to be a part of this decision. Thus, between the services on Sunday, December 5th, we will have a congregational meeting to discuss and vote on having Renee and her ministry affiliated with the UU Church of Kent. If you have any questions, please contact Renee.



Pancakes Update

Pancakes will be served on December 19 after each service. The date was moved because Christmas falls on the traditional pancake Sunday. The featured flavor is gingerbread. Yum!

Holiday Share

Holiday Share is here! Come shop and donate from December 5th through the 19th. There are lots of goodies for the holidays as well as upcoming birthdays. Plan ahead and purchase a great prize for PEEK! at SI next summer. Prices are very reasonable. Call Sandy Bowers with questions.

Sandy Bowers

Holiday Giving Opportunities

Once again the Religious Education Committee and the children of our church will be helping people in Portage County to have a brighter holiday season. Because of our congregation's generosity last year, we were able to make a real difference for many.

We will be collecting monetary donations to purchase pre-paid credit cards for the residents of *Freedom House*, which provides emergency shelter and supportive services to adult male veterans who are experiencing a housing crisis. Many thanks to the PNC Bank in Tallmadge who waived the activation fee for the VISA cards.

We will be collecting gifts for children and youth to donate through *Kent Social Services*. Please bring in unwrapped new toys and books for the younger children and gift cards for the youth.

Donations will be accepted during Social Hour. The toy collection for KSS ends on Sunday, December 5th and the collection for Freedom House will extend later into December.

Thanks in advance for your generosity!



Brighten the Chancel

Brighten the Chancel with your flower arrangement or share your potted plants for a week.

The Aesthetics Committee is seeking weekly volunteers to set up an arrangement of their blooms, branches, wreaths or plants in front of the podium. Most anything is suitable, simple buds in a vase, or fancy wreaths are all welcome.

To sign up to do one of the arrangements call Melissa Campbell or send an email.

Social Justice Committee Protests Targeted Killing

On October 15, 2010, the letter below was sent on behalf of the Social Justice Committee to President Barack Obama. As of November 15th we have had no reply.

Dear President Obama:

The Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent in Kent Ohio is sending you this letter in protest of your planned targeted killing of a U. S. citizen, Anwar Al-Awlaki.

Neither our Constitution nor international law give you the authority to direct a killing outside of a war zone. Such action may only be taken as a last resort to protect against specific and imminent threats of death or serious physical injury. Even the President of the United States may not presume to be both judge and jury without a public trial.

Targeting individuals for execution who are suspected of terrorism but have not been convicted, charged, or offered due process of law is plain wrong.

Furthermore, publicly defending this extrajudicial killing policy – as you have done – offers free publicity to lawless terrorists to recruit others to their cause. There is also the risk that the wrong person may be killed in error.

We all want a safe tomorrow. But without the protections of judicial due process and habeas corpus, lawlessness is justified and none are safe. We must act within the law and the provisions of the Constitution and stand on our moral convictions.

Please reconsider your action in this matter.

*Respectfully, Caroline Arnold, Chair
Social Justice Committee*



Isa Thomas and Lila Goehring at the Kent State Folk Festival.

Religious Education Program Update

I am using this month's article about religious education to offer an update on what has been happening in the classrooms so far this fall. We are all blessed that we have such dedicated and loving RE teachers working with our children and youth. Their names are included in this article. I encourage everyone to offer them some well-deserved expressions of gratitude!

The nursery is a warm, busy and bright place on Sunday mornings! Our nursery care provider, Michelle Bores is assisted by volunteer care providers. Many thanks to the team of folks who share this important responsibility.

Our Spirit Play group continues to gather in their circle every Sunday to hear stories of timeless themes and wonder. During their "work time", I often see the children getting a story box from the shelf and telling their own version. The children in that group and their teachers, Mary Leeson, Evelyn Sperry, Isabel Farnsworth, Randy Leeson, Laura Teagle, Laura McCrystal, Trudy Diehl and John Bores have created a warm, loving and comfortable circle in which to gather together each Sunday morning.

The Grades 3-5 group that meets during the 9:30 service is in the midst of re-assessment. As any effective group knows, it is good to be realistic about what is going on and move forward to address it. We are finding that the attendance numbers for this class made it difficult to do the planned curriculum, so we are looking at religious education curricula that has sessions that stand alone. By the time you read this, the teachers, Leslie Barrett, Cheryl Spoehr and Shana Steinhouse, will have already implemented the new program.

Windows and Mirrors is the theme for the Grades 3-5 group that meets during the 11:15 service. They are con-

sidering the concepts of truth, fairness, justice and love within the framework of diversity. And, they are creating *window frames* decorated with original art work that reflects their engagement with these themes. (Their frames will be displayed in the sanctuary during the month of May.) Their teachers are Liz Bright, Joe Kuemerle and Andrea McSherry.

Our Middle School group has been busy creating. Their *You the Creator* curriculum encourages them to look how their own creative forces impact their lives. Their creativity was certainly evident in the room that they transformed for the Haunted House and Halloween Party! The Middle School teachers are Beth Kuemerle, Colleen Norris and Kathie Slater.

The high school Youth Group has spent the first part of the year bonding as a group with new members, new leaders and new structures. They also did a wonderful job transforming the RE classrooms in a Haunted House for the annual Halloween Party. They will be doing a variety of activities this year including Chalice Group programming and planning to lead the worship services on Sunday, May 22nd. The Youth Group Advisors are Bobbi Beale, Joel Slater, Kristina Spaude and Ann VerWiebe.

The OWL group (*Our Whole Lives*, the comprehensive program on human sexuality) meets at the University most Thursday evenings. This group of 7th and 8th graders engage in a wide range of topics which increase knowledge and promote respect and responsibility. Our trained and experienced leaders, Saul Flanner, Kat Holtz, Fred Smith and Kathy Walker, report that the group is bonding well.

In faith and with love, *Karen Lapidus*, Director of Religious Education



Willow Campbell's head as the main course at the church's Halloween party.

New Books in the Library

Out of the Flames: the Remarkable Story of a Fearless Scholar, a Fatal Heresy, and One of the Rarest Books in the World by Lawrence & Nancy Goldstone. (New York, Broadway Books, 2002) This book is a fast-paced intellectual history giving Michael Servetus the recognition he deserves as a martyr to the cause of free expression.

Serving with Grace: Lay Leadership as a Spiritual Practice by Eric Walker Wikstrom. (Boston, Skinner House Books, 2010) Discover how to experience congregational work as an integrated element in a fully rounded spiritual life.

The Growing Church: Keys to Congregational Vitality edited by Thom Belote. (Boston, Skinner House Books, 2010) Here we experience the progress of some of our fast-growing congregations and see ministry through the eyes of those who have led their congregations toward vitality and expansion.

Voices of Alzheimer's: Courage, Humor, Hope and Love in the Face of Dementia edited by Betsy Peterson. (Da Capo, 2004) The book is a collection of quotations from people who have Alzheimer's, or have received a diagnosis of a similar disease, or people who care for them.



Book Club News

On Tuesday, December 14, at 7 pm we will meet at the home of Pat Pownall. It is the first building on your right as you drive into the apartment complex. Our book selection will be *Half Broke Horses* by Jeannette Walls. This is called "a true life novel." Walls, the author of *The Glass Castle* about her upbringing in poverty, writes here about her mother's mother, Lily Casey Smith, who was quite a character.

Thanks From Judy

Dear Congregation,
Thank you so much for the delightful coffee hour reception you honored me with! The cakes, the people, and the Geezers' music! The cards, the good wishes, the gifts! I thank you all so very much for everything.
Judy Brannan

T'ai Chi

An ancient Chinese meditative practice, t'ai chi is sometimes referred to as "meditation in motion." It draws upon the principles of Yin and Yang – harmony and the integration of mind and body. The class meets Monday evenings in Fessenden Hall. Beginners can start any Monday at 8 p.m. We invite donations to the church, at a recommended level of \$5 per session. The leader is Susan Goekler, a certified instructor with the Tai Chi Association of Atlanta.

Game Night

Join your church family for an old-fashioned Family Game Night on Friday, December 3rd at 7:00 pm. Please bring your favorite card and table games. Some card and table games will be provided. Please bring snacks to share before the games begin.

Mark Stephens

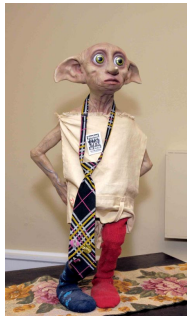


Sydney Haines with a handy pair of glasses.

Xmas Cookies and Movies

December 17th is our annual holiday cookie exchange, followed by our first annual Xmas Movie Marathon. It will be held in Fessenden Hall beginning at 6 pm. Bring your favorite cookies and treats for a sweets potluck at 6 pm in Fessenden Hall. There will be plenty for those who don't cook as well! Then stay for some of the strangest Christmas movies you will ever see. We will have no less than two different versions of "Santa Claus Conquers the Martians," plus Jimmy Durante in "Rupert the Great Xmas Squirrel", about a bagpipe playing, kilt wearing dancing holiday squirrel, "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe", followed by some TV shows, "Christmas in Space with Ventriloquist Paul Winchell and Jerry Mahoney", plus super-spies John Steed and Emma Peel in "Too Many Christmas Trees", and Christmas cartoons from around the world. It will be fun, fun, fun! Bring the family for cookies and the movies, Dec. 17th, Fessenden Hall, 6 pm.

Highly recommended by the Kultur Vultur - Ed.



Hogwarts Winter Session

The Hogwarts Winter Session has been scheduled for January 15-17, 2011. This is MLK Jr. Weekend. The applications can be found on the website if you did not get one in the mail. The deadline for them to be postmarked is December 27, 2010. Sign up now to reserve your place. Any questions, contact Joe.

Out To Lunch Bunch

Join us for food and fun at China City restaurant after second service. We don't meet when pancake breakfast or other church lunch is held after church.

Adult Religious Exploration for December

On Sunday mornings during second service (11:15 – 12:25), the adult Sunday forum will continue to explore Immigration Issues. Immigration is a major national issue. It is also the most recent topic selected by the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly for 4 years of study and action. This discussion series complements the excellent forum the Social Justice Committee hosted November 13. This discussion series allows a more in depth look at some of the issues. You are welcome to come for the series or to drop in when you are available.

November 28	What are the issues/concerns?
December 5	Connections to racism, hate, and intolerance
December 12	Are we enriched or impoverished by immigrants joining us?
December 19	Using UU Principles and values, what would be just and humane Immigration policies?



I think this is a zombified Cordelia Wheatley at the church Halloween party. Hard to tell once they cross over.

Creative Financing at West Shore

In 2007, a member of West Shore UU Church approached our Finance Committee with a challenge. He argued that we could save hundreds of thousands of dollars of interest payments on our twenty-year mortgage if we could find a way to make a significant paydown. A paydown was not part of our plan although the church had a significant capital reserve of funds from capital funds and building loans that we had been planning to use to make the mortgage payments over half the life of the loan. Our visionary member argued that we should use a significant portion of that money (\$600,000) as a matching fund to challenge the congregation. If the congregation could match that amount, we would be able to completely pay-off the more expensive of our two mortgages, amounting to \$1.2 million. To make this challenge viable, this generous member offered to put up half the \$600,000 challenge amount himself. As a result of this visionary proposal, and generous action, the rest of West Shore's members were inspired to come up with their \$300,000 portion of the challenge, making possible a payoff of one of our mortgages after only four years instead of twenty. What was most impressive about this challenge is that it wasn't just an innovative idea one member put forward inviting us to take a risk to save interest payments, but it was an innovative idea that this generous member was willing to back up personally. His personal commitment made all the difference.

From the OMD Newsletter

Winter Institute

Winter Institute is a weekend at Salt Fork State Park when folks in the district get together to share and just have fun together. This year it will be held February 18-21, 2011. Details and registration can be found www.ohiomeadville.org/conference/omdwi.html.


Kent Community TimeBank

Perhaps you've heard the buzz.... There's a timebank right here in Kent, Ohio. What is a timebank? Is it volunteering? (no) Is it a barter system? (no) Does it cost money to join? (no) How does it work? In a nutshell, timebanking involves a group of people who support each other by exchanging skills, talents and passions in response to individual and community needs. When you spend an hour doing something for someone in the timebank, you earn a Time Dollar. You can then use that Time Dollar on any of the hundreds of offers within your timebank! It's that simple and that profound. Kent Community TimeBank is excited to meet with members of the UU church to discuss how our timebank is operating and changing lives, one hour at a time. Please come to our informational meetings on November 30, December 30 and January 19 in Fessenden Hall from 7-9. Pies and snacks (bakers earning Time Dollars!) will be provided! Should you like more information before then or cannot attend a meeting, email Abby Greer. To find out more about the origins of timebanking, visit www.timebanks.org.



Lori McGee and Jo Fatchet at the church Halloween party. Yo Jo, Guido has a place for you in da family.

December Church Events

28 10:30 Pancakes 11:15 Adult RE <i>EA</i> 12:15 more Pancakes 3:30 Writing Group <i>EA p5</i> 6:30 Choir <i>S</i> 7-9 AA <i>FH</i>	29 7:00 Tai chi	30 Thread/Web and eNuus deadline 7-9:00 Timebank <i>FH</i>	1 1-7:00 Kitchen used 5:30-6:30 dinner <i>FH</i> 6:30 Vespers <i>S</i> 7:30-9 Religious Past <i>EA</i>	2 7:00 Green Sanctu- tuary <i>EA</i>	3 7-11 Mystery Game Night <i>p6</i>	4 9:30-2 Hanging Greens 2-5 Master Plan Con. <i>S</i>
5 10:30 Holiday Share 10:30 Congregation mtg. <i>S p3</i> 11:15 Adult RE <i>EA</i> 12:15 Parents group 12-4:40 12:30-2:30 SJC <i>EA</i> 6:30 Choir <i>S</i> 7-9 AA <i>FH</i>	6 7:00 Tai chi	7 Thread/Web and eNuus deadline	8 7-9:00 SPAN Ohio <i>FL</i>	9	10	11 11a—9a OWL over- night
12 10:30 Holiday Share 11:15 Adult RE <i>EA</i> 3:30 Writing Group <i>EA</i> 6:30 Choir <i>S</i> 7-9 AA <i>FH</i>	13 Newsletter deadline 7:00 Tai Chi	14 Thread/Web and eNuus deadline	15 Newsletter deadline 1-7 Kitchen used 5:30-6:30 dinner <i>FH</i> 6:30 Vespers <i>S</i> 7:30-9 Surviving Holidays	16	17 4-6:00 Master Plan <i>EA</i> 6-9:00 Christmas Movies <i>FH p7</i>	18
19 10:30 Holiday Share 10:30 Pancakes 11:15 Adult RE <i>EA</i> 12:15 more Pancakes 6:30 Choir <i>S</i> 7-9 AA <i>FH</i>	20 7:00 Tai chi	21 Thread/Web and eNuus deadline	22 	23	24	25 4am—Stockings filled
26 10:30 One service only 11:15 Adult RE <i>EA</i> 11:30 Boxing Day brunch 3:30 Writing Group <i>EA p5</i> 6:30 Choir <i>S</i> 7-9 AA <i>FH</i>	27 7:00 Tai chi	28 Thread/Web and eNuus deadline	29 6:45 RE cmte. <i>FH</i>	30 7-9:00 TimeBank <i>FH</i>	31 12pm blow horns	1

Tai Chi: 7:00 Advanced, 7:30 Intermediate, 8:00 Beginner - Yoga and Tai Chi are held in Fessenden Hall
EA- Eldredge Annex; *FH*- Fessenden Hall; *FL*- Founders' Lounge; *L*- Library; *S*-Sanctuary; *N*- Nursery;
CB- Christie and Brad's house

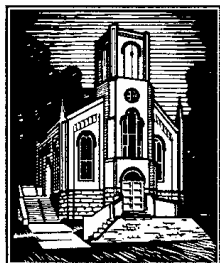
Calendar does not reflect changes or additions after November 21

A complete and up-to-date church calendar can be viewed at
<http://www.localendar.com/public/uukent> or through a link on our website at www.uukent.org.



John Kluth and Erika make art
 during coffee hour.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent
228 Gougler Ave.
Kent, OH 44240



Return Service Requested
Return Postage Guaranteed

Call the office to cancel your *Chalice Flame*

December for the Celtic Clan

12/6	7pm	Stow Glenn
12/13	7pm	Long Meadow Care Center
12/20	7pm	Kent Health Care Center
12/27		No practice



The world-unknown Geezers wish Judy Brannan a happy church office retirement