

The Oracle

“You need not think alike to love alike.” Francis David, 1568

February 22, 2010

Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville

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The *Oracle* is published bi-weekly



Our mission is to offer a welcoming and safe community that reaches out to and receives spiritual seekers. We provide a voice for religious diversity and encourage personal transformation as we strive toward a better world.

Our covenant is to be a loving, joyful community that nurtures spiritual growth and promotes compassion, social responsibility, and service in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Sunday Services

Services begin at 10:30 AM unless otherwise noted.

February 28

Lighten up!

Maybe in this time of economic difficulty and stress, lightening up is the deepest spiritual work we can do. Join us to see just how serious we can be about having fun. Special music and stories will be featured.

Josh Searle-White

March 7

On Walls

Ought we to love walls, or loathe walls? When do walls protect us? When do they imprison us?

The Rev. Betsy Scheuerman

We extend our sympathy to the family of Frederick J. Moss, the husband of Mary Alice Moss, who died at the age of 82 on Wednesday, February 17, 2010. Mary Alice is a long-time member of this congregation; Fred has been a friend.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Conneaut Lake Area Historical Society, PO Box 425, Conneaut Lake, Pa. 16316; or the Moss Family Scholarship Fund, Hastings College, 710 N. Turner, Hastings, Neb. 68901.

From the Search Committee

Many of you have asked: “Just what is a pre-candidating weekend?” The short answer is that it is a job interview on steroids. All of us are “on” for almost the entire weekend – we look for reactions, we gauge the content of interview questions and answers, we listen critically to the sermon, we study the format and organization of the service, we measure chemistry – we are usually emotionally drained by Sunday evening. If the search committee is tired, can you imagine how a minister feels after three days under a microscope?

After thorough review of a minister’s packet and an in-depth telephone interview, if the committee feels that a minister might be a good match for the UU Meadville pulpit we invite her and her significant other for a weekend in Meadville. We fly the minister into an airport that is closer to the neutral pulpit than it is to Meadville which means we have considered flights into Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Erie and even Buffalo. Once the candidate

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arrives, each of the pre-candidating weekends has been structured exactly the same way.

We begin with a relaxing, get-to-know-you dinner on Friday evening. Saturday is the day we show off Meadville with a tour of the area and a “look-see” at the sanctuary and parish house. After lunch and a brief rest, we hold a more in-depth interview that generally lasts 1 ½ to 2 hours. Saturday is capped off with cocktails and an early dinner, leaving time for the candidate to unwind and get ready for church on Sunday.

The committee arranges the date for a neutral pulpit. Then, the ministerial candidate in consultation with the minister at the neutral pulpit plans the content of the service. Each minister has been so gracious in lending his or her pulpit and guiding the candidate into what that congregation expects on Sunday. Each of the services has been a little bit different depending on the culture and habit of the host congregation. We stay for coffee hour before ending the weekend over a final luncheon.

This committee has structured these weekends a little differently from the UUA suggested pre-candidating weekend that we’ve read about. All seven of us are present for most of the meals, the interview and Sunday service. The difference is that we plan the pick-up and deliveries so that there is ample time for one on one, or two on one contact and discussion with the candidate as we travel. This gives each of us the opportunity to have some private time with the candidate; to ask our own questions and form a deeper opinion.

We all get together on the Monday evenings after the candidate leaves to fill out a rating sheet. This committee works so well together that our opinions are quite similar and the discussions are very

upbeat and agreeable. We even share some unforeseen consequences of our hospitality and the fact that Unitarians are good cooks – we estimate that the search committee has collectively gained 3 lbs x 7 committee members x each pre-candidating weekend! Lack of exercise is also contributing to our spread since we have spent over 20 hours in cars traveling throughout NW Pennsylvania and Ohio logging close to 3,900 miles.

It will all be worth the effort if we can present a wonderful ministerial candidate to you during our tentatively scheduled dates of April 11-18, 2010.

Joyce Milberg, for the Search Committee

RE News

Save the Date

Saturday March 20, 2010 the RE committee will be conducting an Appreciative Inquiry. Carrie Forden will facilitate the event geared toward exploring the congregation’s experience with religious education. The service March 21 will be built on the Inquiry. More details to follow.



We served 59 folks and 6 returns for seconds on February 12. Biscuits, hamburger stew, beverages, fruit, and desserts were featured. Helping out were:

- ★ Emmy Boughton
- ★ Cheryl Burkey
- ★ Dave DeGrange
- ★ Bob Templeton
- ★ Marty Thaeler
- ★ Ron White

Our **next date** to volunteer is **Friday March 12**; meet at 10 AM at Stone Methodist Church and plan to stay around 3 hours.

Social Action

Homelessness is an ever-present issue in our community. While many area agencies are available to help folks secure housing, many households lack the basic furniture to make shelter liveable.

Our local Furniture Closet strives to fill this need; however donations are currently in short supply. If you have any useable furniture, including mattresses, please consider donating to the Furniture Closet. To make a donation call 333-2924 (CHAPS).



We call your attention to a handout to be available shortly at the parish house office, relating to assisting handicapped persons – how you can help, what to do and just as important, what *not* to do. Anyone who sometimes helps our more home-bound members to attend church or other activities should be familiar with this information. *Ditto* for trying to assist others in the community.

Thank you to Francesca de Grandis for sharing her insights with us.



Book Group

Several members met on February 9 and discussed books they’d recently enjoyed. Among them were:

❖ *Parallel Play: Growing up with Undiagnosed Asperger’s* by Tim Page. Very interesting autobio-

graphy about his “life alongside, but distinctly apart from, the rest of humanity”. Finding his refuge in music, he became a music critic & a Pulitzer Prize winner. He mentions neurologist Oliver Sachs who distinguishes between full-fledged autism and Asperger’s Syndrome. Page was diagnosed as an “Aspie” in midlife.

❖ *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain* by Oliver Sachs. Another book by Sachs in which he shares his patients’ experiences, this time with their brain conditions and their relationship with music. He chronicles his cases with both a scientific approach and human compassion.

❖ *Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid: a Memoir* by Bill Bryson. For those of us growing up in the 50’s, this is one of the funniest books.

❖ *Half Broke Horses: True Life Novel* by Jeannette Walls. Born in 1901, Jeannette’s grandmother, Lily, has had an extraordinary life learning to break horses at an early age. A true pioneer woman of the southwest.

❖ *The Friday Night Knitting Club* by Kate Jacobs. A book not just for knitters; a group of women in Manhattan come to understand and appreciate themselves and each other, and grow a strong network of support as they are faced with various situations.



The Book Group will meet again on **Tuesday March 9**, at which time we will each present a synopsis of a book we’ve recently read. If you’d like to join us, we’ll be at the Artists Cup in Meadville at 1 PM.

The Meadville UU Moon Group

The next meeting of the Meadville UU Moon Group is Sunday,

March 14, 7 PM at Francesca’s. Call her, 337-2490, for her address (or other info if you need it).

Ceremonies at our monthly meetings create personal empowerment, heal the earth, and are often silly.

We have experiential rites (instead of theoretical discussion). What discussion we HAVE is about applying spirituality practically to improve our daily lives. A meeting’s ritual is often based on the events or challenges shared during a check in.

Paradox: On one hand, we work toward earthy, practical spirituality. We laugh lots, our sacred beverage is herbal tea, and sanity is invigorated by Faerie-like antics. On the other hand, during rituals we experience Gaia’s mystical wonders, center into our truths, and find spiritual wholeness.

Though we’re nominally a “moon group”, rites are not usually overtly moon oriented. Instead they’re based in the time of the month and year, Divine guidance, and attendees’ current events.

The group started in or around January 2005 All welcome. Earth Spirituality suitable to all faiths.

You are soooooo welcome if you want to join us for one meeting or regularly. Always feel free to call Francesca for the upcoming date. We continue to function as a small group ministry; it is a very supportive group.

Our meetings have changed bit by bit since 2005, becoming more comfortable, more relevant, more geared toward the needs of attendees and the earth. Please join in our fun, healing, spiritual strengthening, and camaraderie.

Upcoming Druid Events

The Druids of Snow Water Grove, ADF will be celebrating Ostara (The Spring or Vernal

Equinox) in a Norse style at the Meadville UU Parish House on Sunday March 21, 2010 at 5 PM.

This is a public event, all are welcome. For those that plan ahead, we will celebrate Beltane on Sunday May 2, 2010.

Also, don't forget that the Earth Based Religion Study Group meets the 2nd Friday of every month at 7 PM at the Parish house, with the next one on Friday March 12, 2010, open to everyone (no ritual involved).

For further details, please see Rachael or Grey, email info@snowwatergrove.org, or call 814 406 9794.

Grey Whittney, Snow Water Grove, ADF (Senior Druid)

R U a UU?

Are you considering becoming a member? Are you a recent visitor to the church, or a longtime friend? Would you like a refresher course on the history and theologies of Unitarian Universalism? If so, please join the Membership Committee and Rev. Betsy Scheuerman for Unitarian Universalism 101, Sunday, Feb. 28th, noon to 1:30, Parish House Living Room. All are welcome – even longtime members! A light lunch will be provided, so if you plan to attend, please let us know so we can provide appropriate amounts of food.

Betsy Scheuerman and the Membership Committee

Women's Group

When: First and third Fridays (this month, March 5 & 19th) 7:30 to 9pm.

Where: Parish House Living Room
What: A time of ritual, with a reading, silence, and sharing.

Why: To re-imagine, re-myth, and re-claim herstories and theologies; to share our own stories; and to connect with one another.

Who: Any woman who is interested and willing to commit to participating as able.

Contact Rev. Betsy Scheuerman, if you would like more information.

Allegheny Happenings

On Feb. 25 **Michael Pollan**, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and other publications, will speak at Shafer Auditorium, Allegheny College, 6-7 PM. His topic is "In Defense of Food: The Omnivore's Solution". A book signing will follow.

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On March 3, **Ben Lowe**, Christian Environmentalist and author of *Green Revolution*, will speak at Ford Chapel at 7 PM.

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Mark your calendars for an **Environmental Workshop for Congregations** on Saturday, April 17, to help congregation go green. Open to people of any faith, the workshop is offered by Allegheny College in partnership with Meadville Unitarian Universalist, Stone United Methodist, and First Presbyterian churches.

Schedule:

9:30-12:30 PM - Workshop
 12:30 pm - Local Foods Lunch
 1:30 pm - Community Earth Day Service
 Afternoon - Service Project for Youth

Location:

Sessions will be offered at Meadville UU and Stone United Methodist churches, with the Earth Day Service in Diamond Park.

Contact Allegheny College Office of Religious Life (814-332-2800). Registration fee is \$10, with special rates available for students and youth groups.

OMD Events

Growing Branches, Strong Roots: Transformational Living

District Assembly 2010 on March 26-27 will focus on social justice issues. We will have a special Interfaith Youth Leadership Training for youth and youth allies; theme speaker Rev. Meg Riley will talk about Standing on the Side of Love; the Friday night panel discussion will focus on anti-racism efforts; and workshops on anti-racism, peacemaking, the green sanctuary program and helping others during the current economic crisis will be offered.

Additional workshops focusing on leadership development, multi-generational programming, covenant groups, pastoral care and healthy congregations will be offered. Early Bird Registration wnds Feb. 26; Advanced Registration ends March 13. For details visit <http://www.ohiomeadville.org/annmtg/index.html>

Transforming Whiteness

Ohio Meadville District and West Shore UU Church are pleased to sponsor a workshop on April 24 using material from the new UU adult curriculum *Transforming Whiteness* by Rev. Bill Gardiner. The workshop will be led by the author Rev. Bill Gardiner and co-facilitator, Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer of Kent. *Transforming Whiteness* offers UU congregations, for the first time, a comprehensive overview of the evolution and workings of white identity both historically, as a current agency of oppression, and as a positive identity for the future. Youth and Young Adults are encouraged to attend. For more information visit <http://www.ohiomeadville.org/confrence/transformwhite.html>

Find A Training!

The annual Curriculum Fair will be March 13 at the North Hills church. A Jr/Sr High *Our Whole Lives* Training has been scheduled for April 23-25, 2010. Chaplain Training for youth and youth allies has been tentatively scheduled for April 23-25, 2010. Webinars on Behavioral Covenants, Multigenerational Religious Education and Social Media Use in Congregations are also scheduled. Check the OMD website for details for all of these events and more. www.ohiomeadville.org

Assignments

Here is your 'heads-up' for the next two weeks. Thank you, everyone, for your participation!

Greeters

Feb 28: Sarah Sargent & Val Valore

Mar 7: David & Cheryl Burkey

Ushers

Feb 28: Sue Mallick & Cindy Snyder

Mar 7:

Coffee Hour Hosts

Feb 28: Cindy Snyder

Mar 7: Matt Burchfield, Hap Hollabaugh & Val Gilman

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As always, if you are not able to serve on this date, please make an attempt to find someone to replace you. Thank you.

Oracle Deadline

Next deadline for submitting items for the newsletter is **Friday March 5, 2010**. Email your articles to mthaeler@zoominternet.net, or leave items in the *Oracle* folder in the parish house **by noon** on Friday. The hard-copy or email at hand on Saturday morning will appear in the subsequent *Oracle*. When emailing material, please write "oracle" in the subject line. Phone: 877-580-3760. Thank you.

2010 Church Officers

President: Josh Searle-White
Vice-President: Laurie Parendes
Secretary: Cynthia Burton
Treasurer: Ron White
Coordinator of Mission and Outreach: Deb Lehman
Stewardship Chair: Cheryl Burkey

Church Staff

Interim Minister: The Rev. Betsy Scheuerman
R.E. Director: Kristin Schroeder
Administrative Assistant: Carole Schenberg
*Office Hours: Mon-Tue-Wed-Fri 8:30-12:30;
Sunday 10:30-12:30*
Music Director: Aimee Reash
Custodian: Doug Schenberg