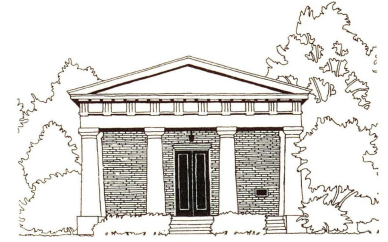


# THE ORACLE

Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville

346 Chestnut Street, Meadville, PA 16335

814.724.4023 – [www.uumeadville.org](http://www.uumeadville.org)



*"You need not think alike to love alike."* Francis David, 1568

## RevElations



I want to begin the new year with an update about the after-school tutoring program we are hosting through our support of Creating Landscapes for Families.

On Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, we welcome 20-22 students into the parish house. They are met by volunteer greeters who help them hang up their coats, unload their heavy backpacks, and direct them into the Arthur Room.

From 2:30 to about 5 PM the students work on homework and practice reading with volunteer tutors; play games; engage in an artistic/creative endeavor; and practice some kind of movement (moving kids are healthy kids!).

Around 5:30 their parents begin to arrive, and work together to prepare a healthy dinner in our kitchen (food is provided by Creating Landscapes). Dinner is shared, family style, in the dining room and everyone participates in cleaning up the kitchen, dining room, and Arthur Room.

Following dinner, the families spend time together on some kind of creative endeavor (e.g. they recently made flannel scarves and tied flannel blankets to share with others in the community – I love the scarf they made for me – it's warm, and cute!). Everything is wrapped up by 7:30 (in support of an early bedtime for the students).

As I recently posted on my Facebook page, there has definitely been a change in the parish house. Whereas Tuesday afternoons used to be "tomb quiet", the parish house is now alive (and yes, loud!) with the noise of children transitioning from school to time with volunteers who engage with the students 1:1.

Yes, it's louder in the parish house, and we are learning to share our space with people of all ages. Are there growing pains and "living together" adjustments? Of course! Will it all be worth it? I hope so...I think so...Yes!

Demographically and socio-economically, Unitarian Universalists are the most highly educated religious people. We value education, and we value the ways that a well-rounded education can make a difference in the lives of our children (think of all our YRUU youth who participate in band and theatre, as well as sports and academics). We know that a well-rounded education matters, and we also know that safe and healthy 1:1 time with these students can make a world of difference in their lives...and, it can also make a world of difference in YOUR life. As a volunteer recently emailed me, "I've fallen in love with the two students I've been working with, and I can't wait to spend time with them when the program resumes after the holidays."

Small efforts make a big difference. Do you have time to sit with a child and help with his/her homework, or to listen to them read a book to you (or possibly to you AND your dog – kids love this!)? Do you have the gift of storytelling, and would you be willing to entertain a group of children for ½ hour while their parents learn a new recipe for a healthy dinner? Do you have a creative skill that children would enjoy learning? Do you have expertise in a particular area (wildlife, art, music, movement, flower arranging, building, table manners) that you would like to share with curious children? Perhaps you could take a rotation as an official greeter – what a difference it makes in a child's life when they know that someone is happy to welcome them "home" after a tough day at school (a testament to our belief in inherent worth and dignity)!

The parents are interested in continuing education, too! Perhaps you have an idea, a talent, a skill that we haven't even thought of yet. If you're interested in supporting these educational and affirmational efforts, please be in touch. One hour a month could make a lasting difference in the life of these families, and in your own lives, too!

Thank you for your continuing support of this community outreach. We are living our faith!

See you in church,

*Rev. Carmen Emerson*

## Sunday Services

January 8, 2012

### With Purpose and Passion

As we begin a new year, we will reflect on what it means to live with purpose and passion. The service will include a candle-lighting ritual of honoring the past and letting go of what we need to let go of in order to move forward with passion and purpose.

*The Rev. Carmen Emerson*

January 15, 2012

### Source Sunday

As we near the annual remembrance of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we will reflect on the second wisdom source of Unitarian Universalism, “Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love.”

*The Rev. Carmen Emerson*

January 22, 2012

### Radical Acceptance

A sermon inspired by the work of Tara Brach’s book of the same name.

*The Rev. Carmen Emerson*

January 20, 2012

### Worship Committee Sunday

Program to be announced.

February 5, 2012

### Compassion – Part 1 of 2

February 12, 2012

### Compassion – Part 2 of 2

### Who we are ...

*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.*

## Candles of Joys & Concerns

We light a candle in our hearts for...

With respect to our Christmas Eve service, I wish to offer a special thank you to Aimee Reash, our music director; to all members of our amazing Choir; to the soloists; to our guest musicians; to Amy Wells for completing the hand-decorated “doves of hope” that graced our Christmas Tree; to the Properties folks (the autonomous collective) for decorating the sanctuary; to the Fellowship Committee for the Christmas Eve reception; to Anne Jones, Christmas Eve greeter; and to Mike Thomson and Joyce Milberg, Christmas Eve ushers. You all contributed to a meaningful worship experience, and it is great to work with such dedicated and talented people – thank you!



*Rev. Carmen Emerson*

**Our sympathies** to Mark and Debbie Salerno on the recent passing of his mother, Louise Salerno.

**A warm hello** to our snowbirds – Jerry & Carlin Almes, Bill & Fran Smith, Pat McDaniel, Miriam Bowman, and Gus Rylander – we miss you!



### R.E. Reminders

- Spirit Play classes will resume on January 8. Check the RE Board for details and monthly calendars!
- Youth Group will be held January 15 at 11:45 AM. The topic to discuss is the upcoming District Annual Assembly this March, which will be hosted by UUCM.

## Board Briefs

December 19, 2011

**Present:** Josh Searle-White, President; Laurie Parendes, Vice-President; Ron White, Treasurer; Cynthia Burton, Secretary; Deb Lehman, Mission and Outreach; Carmen Emerson, Minister; Joyce Milberg, President Elect; Rick and Carol Holmgren, visitors, resident and visiting dogs and cat. Absent and much missed: Amelia Carr, Stewardship; and Christian Maher, Vice-President Elect.



Josh welcomed everyone to his final board meeting at his home. The board checked in with each other and welcomed our new member Joyce Milberg, President Elect, and guests Rick and Carol Holmgren.

The board approved the minutes from the October and November meetings and received the Minister's report. The November Treasurer's reports were accepted.

The Leadership Committee, represented by Laurie Parendes, Vice-President, recommended that the board appoint Richard Holmgren to the post of Treasurer, effective February 1, 2012. The board accepted the recommendation with much appreciation. Ron White has agreed to stay on as Treasurer until February and will work with Rick for several months until the transition is complete.

### **Important upcoming events**

- **Saturday January 21:** Hot Dish Fest 6:59er
- **Saturday January 28:** Ohio Meadville District Planning Meeting at our church. We will provide breakfast and lunch for the attendees (about 12 people). Contact Josh Searle-White if you would like to help.
- **Friday & Saturday March 23-24:** Ohio-Meadville District Annual Meeting. We are hosting the District's annual meeting. The meeting sessions will be at Allegheny College all day Saturday. We will provide space for an ingathering worship service and reception Friday evening at our church. We will also provide some Home Hospitality for out of town visitors. More details to follow!
- **Saturday June 2:** Goods and Services Auction

**The next board meeting** will take place on Thursday January 19, 7 PM at the church. We will determine the 2012 meeting times at that board meeting when Amelia and Christian are present.

Meeting adjourned at 9:07. Josh turned over the gavel to Joyce Milberg with best wishes for her tenure as president.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Cynthia Burton, Church Scribe*

## Wild Tangents and Random Musings

It's that time again. Time to think about how another year slipped by so quickly. January always feels like a fresh start, and like many of you, I always make a few resolutions, and look back to try to gain some wisdom from the year past. As you consider the year ahead, instead of the standard "lose weight and get organized" promises that never seem to materialize, try a three part approach to create an evolving life list:



- **The small stuff.** This part of the list can hold a few specific do-able lifestyle changes (like flossing our teeth or recycling more). Checking off these sort of things as they become habits can encourage us to step out and make bigger changes. This part of the list is dynamic and always changing as we learn and grow. Don't overdo it. Be realistic here.
- **The big stuff.** Big stuff falls roughly into two categories: major life goals and dedicating ourselves to a specific life purpose that is bigger than ourselves. By its nature, this is more lofty and abstract than the small stuff, but it is helpful to revisit it every year, and ponder how you can move toward what really matters to you.
- **The connections.** It's not enough to tweak our to-do lists, and work toward major goals. Both will eventually lead to burnout unless all that passion is fed by a deeper source. We need to cultivate what will feed our souls. Depending on our individual personality, this might involve spending more time with family, meditating or praying, keeping a journal, stargazing, bird watching, or whatever! What is it that speaks to your heart and soul? Commit to it as a regular practice and put it on your list. It will nourish you as you work on all the other "stuff".

Take some time creating your list. Don't rush. Explore what is possible. Stretch your concept of "possible". Dream a little, but then come back to reality. What do you wish for the year? For yourself and your life? Happy New Year.

*Rebecca Hecking*

# Fellowship HOTDISH FEST

Saturday January 21, 2012

6:59 PM

It's time for another **HOTDISH** fest. In the bleak chill of January, let us gather together to enjoy the frugal comforting food of the Midwest cuisine known at the Hotdish, with its accompaniments of jello salads, rolls, and desserts.

For those unfamiliar with the doctrines of hotdish, here are some guidelines –

- Hot dishes often contain the word “surprise” in the title: “tuna surprise” for example.
- Spices are limited: salt, pepper, and “paprika for color.”
- At least one condensed cream soup must be present.
- Cheese is almost always used.
- Festive touches such as crushed potato chips or French fried onions in a can are always appreciated.
- Don't show off with a lot of fresh ingredients unless you grew them yourself. Ditto for adding exotic things like wine or tofu...ya know.

If you really don't want to bring that kind of food, that's okay too. You can bring what you like. If you insist.

- Green Salads: iceberg lettuce salads with normal dressings, mayonnaise based is good.
- Hot Dish: also known as casseroles. One dish meals such as meat/grain/vegetables, or mac and cheese.
- Jello salads: (jello molds for those of you raised in the 50's). Can be made with or without miniature marshmallows.
- Desserts: pies, cakes; whipped topping on the above jello salads....

We invite you to bring stories, poems, and anecdotes about comfort food or about the cold of winter and why it is necessary for our moral evolution as a species. Perhaps we will have a new outpouring of original haikus as a result of the evening ..... those from last year were fantastic! Remember these?

Goody Goody GOOD

We knew that we could and would  
Eat and eat and eat.

I've got to make a poem  
But I've no idea about them  
I need inspiration the most  
But alas, I'm totally lost  
This will be just a mayhem.

**Sign up in the parish house, and in the meantime,  
stay warm, and see you there!**

## Assignments

### Greeters

January – Pam & Gary Williamson

### Ushers

1/8 and 1/15 – Not known

1/22: Gladys Corpuz and Emmy Boughton

1/29: Rich and Corinne Chafey

2/5: Stu and Kathy Rothman

### Coffee Hour Hosts

1/8: Cynthia Burton; Grey Whittney and Rachael Quinet

1/15: Harry and Mary Ann Kirkpatrick White

1/22: Sarah Sargent

1/29: Deb Lehman

2/5: Milt Sipple

A big thank you to all these volunteers who help to create our Sunday morning worship and fellowship experience. **THANK YOU!!**



We did it! We did it! We survived it and we survived it with style and class! We provided hospitality and food to our guests; we provided a lovely evening of music and wine, we provided wonderful homemade crafts and goodies for all to admire and buy.

Now we need to provide a well-earned rest and thank ourselves for a job well done. We've been working and planning for the past 13 months and the effort bore fruit.

Many thanks to everyone who participated in many different ways:

Counted money (Lisbet's favorite!), made phone calls, sold quilt raffle tickets, made a quilt, baked, canned, cooked, cleaned, decorated, knitted, sewed, sold, priced, welcomed, smiled, encouraged, held the vision, contacted outside sources for publicity, donated clothes, bought clothes, and more.

Our Bazaar is the product of each and everyone of us doing his/her job and doing it with efficiency and good humor.

So thanks to each and every UU staff, member, and friend who made the Bazaar a success. We met our goal for this year's fund raising line in the budget and will be able to pay some forward to 2012 after all expenses are totaled.

*Lisbet Searle-White and Deb Lehman,  
2011 Bazaar Co-Chairs*

# Ohio-Meadville District

## Save the Dates for These Ohio-Meadville District Events

**January 28, 2012**

**March 23-24, 2012**

We are a member congregation of the Ohio-Meadville District of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. The OMD sponsors many programs, events and webinars throughout the year, including the District Annual Assembly. Given our geographic distance from many of the events, our attendance is sometimes “light”. However, we have two great opportunities to participate in OMD events in 2012!

**January 28, 2012 – OMD Board Meeting.** On Saturday January 28 we will host the OMD Board Meeting in our parish house. If you’re interested in attending the Board Meeting, please be in touch with Joyce Milberg or Carmen Emerson.

**March 23 & 24, 2012 – OMD Annual Assembly (like a mini General Assembly, close to home).** On Friday March 23 and Saturday March 24 our Congregation will co-host the OMD Annual Assembly to be held right here in Meadville! Friday’s events will take place at the UU Church of Meadville (including an overnight with the YRUU youth groups from the District), and most of Saturday’s events will take place at Allegheny College (with the exception of children’s programming and childcare, which will take place at our Congregation).

Saturday begins with a worship service led by ministers from our “cluster” in the District (including Rev. Carmen Emerson), and continues with a business meeting, a keynote speaker, and programming/workshops related to all areas of life together in Unitarian Universalist Congregations (leadership development, lifespan religious education, worship, etc.).

Stay tuned for more details, and for opportunities to shine as part of our cadre of volunteers!

## Volunteer Spotlight



Friday December 9 – another morning at the soup kitchen. UUs just kept showing up to volunteer, it was great, and fun to connect with each other’s activities. We served chili macaroni, fruit, corn, breads, beverages and desserts to a big crowd of hungry people. This probably hasn’t been mentioned previously, but – when you volunteer, you also get to eat! You get to taste-test the coffee beforehand, and lunch on what we’ve prepared. So, you don’t go away hungry by any means!

Today a gang of nine assembled for the activities –

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| ★ John Bender   | ★ Ruby McFerren |
| ★ Emmy Boughton | ★ Tom Ritchey   |
| ★ David Coy     | ★ Marty Thaeler |
| ★ Jim Emerson   | ★ Ron White     |
| ★ Deb Holland   |                 |

**Our next date is Friday January 13, 2012 at 10 AM at Stone Methodist Church on the Diamond.** Come in through the Thoburn Chapel entrance on S. Main Street. Emmy Boughton is our official soup kitchen representative, and you may contact her or any of the above folks for more information.

*Marty Thaeler*

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**2012 Church Officers**

President: Joyce Milberg  
Vice-President: Christian Maher  
Secretary: Cynthia Burton  
Treasurer: Ron White / Rick Holmgren  
Coordinator of Mission & Outreach: Deb Lehman  
Stewardship: Amelia Carr

In the event of an  
emergency, please call:  
Joyce Milberg at  
814.755.7766; or  
Cynthia Burton at  
814.333.8541

**Church Staff**

Minister: The Rev. Carmen Emerson  
*Mon-Tues-Fri 9:30 AM -4:30 PM*  
*Wed: Study & Sermon Day*  
*Thurs: Day Off*  
R.E. Coordinator: Ariel Denman  
*Mon & Fri: 10:30 AM-2:30 PM*  
*Wed: 12-3 PM*  
Music Director: Aimee Reash  
Administrator: Carole Schenberg  
*Mon-Wed-Fri 10 AM-2 PM*  
*Tues: 8:30 AM-12:30 PM*  
Custodian: Doug Schenberg

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
CHURCH OF MEADVILLE**

*346 Chestnut St.  
Meadville, Pa. 16335*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED