

FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
3400 DUPONT AVENUE SOUTH
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55408



THE
liberal

Upcoming Sunday Services
At 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

April 5

"The Perils of Perfectionism"

Worship Leader: Teresa Schwartz
Music: vocal soloist

April 12

Easter Sunday

Rev. Charlotte Cowtan
Music: *The Usual Suspects*

April 19

**150th Celebration
Sharing Sunday**

Rev. Dr. Lee Barker
Music: *First Universalist Choir &
Children's Choir*
Premier of 150th Commissioned Piece

April 26

**New Ministerial Candidate's
First Sermon**

Music: *The Usual Suspects*

The Web

Charlotte Cowtan

I left the Anglican (Episcopal) church at age 12 (one week before I was to be confirmed in the faith) vowing never again to set foot in a church that expected me to swear I believed things that I didn't. I visited a number of my friends' churches over the next six months in the hope of finding a new religious home, but they all expected me to believe what to me was unbelievable. On Easter Sunday, 1959, my mother suggested that we visit the Winnipeg Unitarian Church. I agreed to go with her, but did not have high expectations, let alone hopes, for the excursion.

The minister, Philip Petursson, spoke about resurrection – the rebirth of nature, the everlasting promise of new life that cannot be ignored in the springtime. My old understandings of organized religion died and I was re-born! Religion had meaning again. I could ask questions, think independently, be open to new ideas and still be part of a real church. That one Sunday literally changed my life. I found my religious home at age 13, and I've never left.

I'm always surprised to find that many Unitarian-Universalists are uncomfortable with Easter celebrations. They tell me that the central theme of the crucifixion and resurrection has no place in our theology. I disagree! All growth, all learning, all things new are born from the dissolution (death) of some earlier incarnation

The Reverend Emil V. Gudmundson, the UUA Inter-District Executive who served the Western Canadian and Prairie Star Districts in the 1970's and 1980's was one of my mentors. He was born and raised in a rural Icelandic community north of Winnipeg, but lived in the Minneapolis during the time I knew him. It is unlikely that I would have entered the Unitarian ministry without his encouragement. The following excerpt is from a handwritten sermon Emil's wife, Barbara, found among his papers after his death (1982).

I believe I am born again, not just once, but over and over again. I am born again when I discover I can achieve the goal I thought was impossible. I am born again when the good earth is warm enough to feel good under my fingernails. I am born again when I really hear the expressions of love, whether uttered or not, from a loved one. I am born again when I experience justice in the cold, cold world.

Yes, I am a born again Unitarian. But I need not say born again – that is implicit in being a Unitarian.

This Easter season, as you celebrate your first 150 years and prepare for Candidating Week (when you will meet and vote on the minister your search committee recommends as your first senior minister of your next 150 years), may we once again ponder and rejoice in the ongoing, miraculous rebirth of possibility, hope and faith.

Faithfully,

April 1-30, 2009
ISSUE NO. 13

Transitional Times

Ready to Meet Our Candidate for Senior Minister?

**CANDIDATING WEEK
is April 25 to MAY 3!**

- HEAR the ministerial candidate preach.
 - GET TO KNOW his or her ministry.
 - ASK him or her questions.
- THEN**
- VOTE to call him or her as our next senior minister!

During Candidating Week, everyone in the congregation is invited to spend time with the candidate. The week will be filled with working lunches and potluck dinners, daytime meetings and evening gatherings. S/he will also preach on both Sundays. **The congregational vote on whether or not to call the candidate will be on May 3.**

ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND! **Watch your mailboxes in early April for more information (including the big announcement of who our candidate is!).**

Nancy Gaschott (Chair),
Dan Bishop, Andrea Johnson,
Larry LaVercombe, Cindy Marsh,
Sara Smalley, Deborah Talen

Childcare will be provided on May 3 by trained First Universalist youth. Religious Education staff will be present in the building in case of emergency. **Important: In**

order to insure that we have the proper youth-to-child ratio, please RSVP no later than a week prior to this event if you will need childcare. Also, if you would like your child(ren) to have more than a graham cracker and juice snack, plan to provide your own food (no nuts, eggs, or milk please!) For questions regarding childcare or to RSVP, contact Katie Campbell at x107 katiec@firstuniv.org.

The Welcome Table

New Members (Approved at February Board of Trustees Meeting)

Roberta Avidor, Amber Berdie, Craig Bishop, Gus Bishop, Timothy Grafe, Carol Flint Kaliebe, Peggy McKenna, Cheryl & Paul Reiswig, David Richards, Elle Sachs, Mary Samuels, John W. Saxhaug, Ken Stern, Ken Stone, Mark Stone, Tami Tapani & Mark Umholtz, Lark Weller, and Tali Weller

Steps to Membership

(for anyone age 14 or older)

1. **What We're About**— overview of what UUs believe and what makes us different from other denominations. Especially for visitors. Third Sunday of every month following each service (30-45 min).
2. **Pathways to Membership**— required class before becoming a member. Next date: May 16.
3. **Application for Membership** - submitted to the Board for approval.

4. **New Member Welcome Ceremony**—individuals and families are welcomed during a church service and at a cake reception following. The next ceremony is May 31.
5. **Foundations of Our Faith**— a new monthly class with lunch for new members.
6. **New Member Family Potlucks**— four potluck dinners during the year after joining. The next potluck is on May 17.

Foundations of Our Faith

New members are invited to join the Foundations of Our Faith group for one year. This group meets monthly for lunch and topical conversation, meant to deepen your understanding of UUism and your membership at First Universalist. You must sign up to participate in this class, please call Sandy in the church office 612-825-1701 x125.

Dates and topics for 2009:

April 5: Ask the Ministers
May 3: Faith in Action
June 21: History of First Universalist
July 12: Our Hymnal
August 9: Elevator Speeches
September 13: What is Spirituality for UUs?

Invitation to Potential Members

Join us for our introduction to First Universalist and UUism: **Pathways to Membership on May 16.** You are expected to attend this class before becoming a member of the church. Call the church office to sign up.

Mission Statement

We join together at First Universalist Church in a welcoming, spiritual community that affirms our liberal religious heritage. Our ministry is to bring the Universalist message of love and hope to one another, to our children, and to the work of social justice.

All Church News

Here's the Story

By Patti Frazee, x104
Director of Administration

Stewardship Campaign

As of this writing, 437 households have pledged a total of \$691,014 for the 09-10 Invest in Your Values stewardship campaign. We're still waiting to hear from 125 households, so if you haven't already done so, please get your pledge cards in so that we may budget responsibly for 2009-10.

I want to thank Suzann Willhite and Kristin Siegesmund for their amazing work on the Stewardship Campaign! They put in many volunteer hours, and put together a fantastic volunteer team to support them!

New Staff

As of March 4, we have two new part-time custodians.

Frank Bibber joined us as Hospitality Custodian in early January. Frank's primary hours are Friday evenings and Sunday mornings.

Mike Higgins was recently hired as our Cleaning Custodian. Mike's hours will be Tuesday through Friday and late Sunday.

I feel really lucky to have found these two additions to our staff and I hope you'll join me in welcoming them to First Universalist.

New Donor Opportunities

At the beginning of the fiscal year, a list was put into *the Liberal* of ways donors could make a special contribution to support some of the programming at First Universalist. We've already had a few special donations this year, from badly needed office furniture to a laptop. These donors' names will appear in the annual report as giving special donations. If you would like to fund any of the following, please contact Patti (ext. 104).

- Fund Delegate Registrations to UUA
- New brochures for visitors and membership
- Sponsor monthly Children's Chapel worship
- Sponsor New Member Programs
- Fund presence at the GLBT Pride Festival
- Fund Pastoral Care Training and Resources
- Purchase new carpet for youth meeting room

2009 Prairie Star District Conference

"Our Blue Boat Home: Living the Seventh Tradition" is the theme of the 2009 Prairie Star District conference of the Unitarian Universalist Association **April 3-5 in Duluth.**

During the conference, we will explore our stewardship of the environment, hear from candidates for the Presidency of the UUA, and enjoy fellowship with other UUs. All information is available at: www.psduua.org/AnnualConference

No Nuts Please

Did you know that there are 14 kids registered in our RE program with severe allergies to peanuts or tree nuts? For some, exposure to nuts can cause severe, life-threatening reactions. Every day,

more and more kids find out they have a nut allergy, and for some, the onset of symptoms is very sudden. Let's keep our space safe! We have made RE classrooms nut-free for years, but now we are asking the entire community to step up and protect our kids. No nuts should be served at coffee hour. If you bring treats with nuts to a potluck, please label that product very clearly. If nuts are served at a church event, take care to wipe down the surfaces they are served on very carefully. If you have any questions about ways to keep our kids safe, please contact Heidi in the office (x124 or heidi@firstuniv.org).

Pastoral Care Means So Much to So Many

By Margit Berg

What a joy it has been to join the pastoral care coordinating team and hear first-hand the comfort that we provide. Frank Blake says that the rides we give him to church allow him to get "every last bit of goodness" from the church. He said that as his life is getting shorter and shorter, he doesn't want to miss out on anything.

Marjie Smith, upon reflecting on all the ways the church helped her through a post surgical infection, said that what she gained most was a feeling of emotional support. She said it was very hard to stay positive with such a stubborn infection.

When Sharon Quast was getting support for her cancer, she felt so tremendously grateful when people she hardly knew went so out-of-their-way to drive her to treatments and bring them meals. And now she is coming to understand why people did this—she currently visits a couple of people who aren't able to get out much, and gets a tremendous feeling

of satisfaction by providing comfort to others.

John Yoakum and partner Gary Gimmestad say that their experience with cancer has helped them “learn to rest, to be patient, and to receive.” John and Gary are very grateful for our cancer support group and weekly meals.

People can be supported in a variety of ways. When Mary Helmin had shoulder surgery, what she needed most was help with dishwashing. Her volunteer told her that he wasn’t much of a cook, but was happy to help wash dishes. So if you want to get involved in pastoral care and don’t like to drive or cook, there are lots of things that need doing. Sometimes it’s simply visiting. Please let either Julie Howard or Margit Berg know if you would like to participate. Julie Howard, 952-926-2843, whoward@aol.com or Margit Berg, 612-377-4776, margitkb@comcast.net.

Visual Arts Exhibit

“Creation: Variations on a theme of Wonder” an exhibit of art by Cheryl Anderson, will be on display in the Social Hall from April 12 - May 24. Her pieces are inspired by photographs from the Hubble Deep Space Telescope. These images filled her with awe and helped her visualize the amazing information scientists are discovering about the vastness and complexity of the universe. A few years ago they began showing up in her art and eventually took over.

The pieces in the show are selected from series worked in mosaic, pastel, encaustic, and mixed media. An opening is scheduled for Sunday, April 19. Cheryl is a member of our church and would love to talk with you about her art.

Do You Feel Like Singing?

The Children's Choir invites singers of all ages to join them in performing at the Flower Communion service on May 31.

The Intergenerational Choir starts rehearsing on Sunday, April 5, in the Cummins Room from 10:10-10:45. Music reading ability is not required. We need teens, adults, seniors, and children to add their voices and celebrate through the joy of singing! Questions contact Mary Bohman, x111 mary@firstuniv.org

SESQUICENTENNIAL NEWS

SESQUICENTENNIAL SOIREE: CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

Saturday, April 18
6:00 -10:00 p.m.

Join the parade of happy First Universalist members and friends at the big event of the spring, the SESQUICENTENNIAL SOIREE at the beautiful McNamara Alumni Center on APRIL 18. By now you should have received your very own invitation. Deadline for ticket sales is April 12,

You'll want to be there for this once in a lifetime event celebrating our 150 years as a center of progressive religion in Minneapolis. An excellent dinner by D'Amico's, cocktail hour music from the talented John Jensen, delightful entertainment by Ann Reed, along with former First Universalist kid, the Reverend Lee Barker as speaker, will contribute to the wonderful evening. And don't forget the premiere of our very own Sesquicentennial Song, composed by Ann.

Lee's tantalizing talk is titled, “The Last Living Universalist Tells All.” He

attended Church School at First Universalist until his family moved away when he was 14. He kept in touch with old friends here through Liberal Religious Youth (LRY) activities, and then trained for the ministry with a little help from First Universalist's Carl Olson Fund. Now he is President of Meadville Theological School at the University of Chicago — we welcome him proudly.

Tickets are available at the Sesquicentennial table Sundays through April 12 and at www.firstuniv150.org or www.firstuniv.org. Tickets ordered on the web can be picked up on Sundays at the table or at the McNamara Center on April 18.

A \$30 Fellowship Circle ticket covers the cost of the dinner. Leadership Circle tickets at \$50 and Legacy Circle tickets at \$100 will help subsidize dinners for guests and those unable to pay. If you need financial assistance to attend the dinner, please let Kate or Charlotte know. If you need a ride or can give a ride, sign up at the 150th table.

Come and celebrate your congregation's Past, Present and Future. See you at the Soiree!



UU Identity, Ethical Development, and Spiritual Practice for All Ages

Reminder!

April 12 is Easter. No RE classes are held on Easter, although childcare will be available for children ages 0-3. There is one service only at 10 a.m.

Explaining Easter

By Mary Bohman x111

As a Unitarian Universalist mother of two children I have a history of feeling ambivalent about Easter. How do I explain this story of political intrigue, murder, and resurrection? Avoiding controversy, my family's had fun with Easter egg hunts, spring flowers, and tales of the Anglo-Saxon goddess of the dawn, Eastre, from whom the word Easter derives. And like most Minnesotans, my family finds great joy in the greening of the earth and promise of new life each spring offers. Yet, these observances have not satisfied my yearning to find deeper meaning in the holiday and connect with the Jesus story in a way that is congruent with my UU worldview. I found words in Christine Robinson's Tennabrae Liturgy we heard at last year's Easter service useful: "Some people believe that Jesus literally came back to life after he died, but since that never happened to anyone else, most Unitarian Universalists believe that this is just another way, like the star and the shepherds, of saying that this special man and his message still lives in our hearts, and still influences the way we live and think and make meaning in our world... You can kill people, but you can't kill the spirit. There is good in us and it wells up in response to great men and women and to great stories. The spirit that urges us on to love and serve our fellow human beings never dies."

Children's Program (for ages 0-6th grade)

Book group for Parents of Boys

Raising spiritually healthy boys can be a challenge. Boys and girls have different needs. If you're interested in talking with other parents of boys about spiritual issues, we invite you to read the

book, *Losers, Loners, and Rebels: The Spiritual Struggles of Boys* by Dykstra, Cole, and Capps. Then, join with Siri Anderson, Heidi Mastrud, and other First Universalist parents to discuss what you've read. Interested? Contact Heidi Mastrud at heidi@firstuniv.org x124.

Child Dedications

Are you interested in having your child dedicated at First Universalist? Child dedications welcome and bless a child into our community. A child dedication is an affirmative rite of passage for parents and children. If you'd like to know more, or would like your child to participate in a dedication on April 12 at 10 a.m. (Easter), or May 10 at 9 or 11 a.m. (Mother's Day), contact Heidi Mastrud, Director of Lifespan Faith Development, heidi@firstuniv.org x124.

Youth Program (for Grades 7-12)

Opportunities for Graduating Seniors

All First U seniors are invited to join a new small group that will meet four Wednesdays this Spring. We'll meet for dinner and conversation to talk about the spiritual issues 12th graders are facing right now, or will be facing when you graduate. Katie Heaton and Heidi Mastrud can't wait to facilitate! This is only for high school seniors affiliated with First Universalist, and it's open to all who want to attend. The group meets from 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the Arches. Here's the schedule:

- Wednesday, April 1: Pizza and *I am just a speck of dust inside a giant's eye*. What are you feeling as you

prepare to leave your family and friends for the big, big world (even if you're not leaving town next year)?

- Wednesday, April 15: Chinese Take-Out and *Sex, Drugs, and Rock 'n Roll*. How will you make choices next year when you're out from under your parents' watchful eyes? Will your UU values influence those decisions at all?
- Wednesday, April 29: Burritos and *Animal House or House of God?* Where will you belong next year? What if you have an identity crisis and don't know where you fit? We'll discuss how to navigate the strange social world of young adulthood.
- Wednesday, May 13: Sandwiches and *It's so cliché, but-Go Now in Peace*. We'll talk about the legacy you want to leave at First U and your other communities, and spend some time leaving your mark on the First U building.

If you want to join the group, contact us by email at katie@firstuniv.org, by phone at 612-825-1701 x109, or message Katie Heaton on Facebook. There is no cost, but we do ask you to be present at all four sessions so we can gel properly.

Youth Musical Performances Shine!

On February 27 & 28 the Sanctuary was transformed into a theatre with lights, music, and set! Kids from 6th-10th grade performed in our production of "The Road," book by Elee Wood and music by Sandy Waterman. Under the direction of Jeff Wells, Byrd Shuler and Julie Hanson Geist, the cast rehearsed twice a week for six weeks polishing their skills in acting, singing, and choreography—the effort shined on stage! Thanks to David Lauth and Jim Sutherland for the musical support, Jeff Sylvestre, Kathleen

Hollinger, Katherine Little, Rod Nordberg, Bob Friedman, and Frank Bacon for technical and set support, and a special thanks to Rev. Kate Tucker who spoke the voice of "The Road." Of course we couldn't have pulled it off without the parents of the kids who did just about everything else! Many thanks to Kim Lund who made a special financial donation to keep the youth musical program happening!

Upcoming Youth Events!

On Saturday, April 4 from 2:00-10:00 p.m. the Coming of Age youth will participate in the **Spiritual Toolbox Retreat** here at First Universalist. The youth will learn about different spiritual practices, talk with Rev. Kate Tucker, and work on their "Spiritual Statements" with their mentors. In the past other workshops have included drumming, meditation, the labyrinth and spiritual art. It's not to be missed!

On April 5, the Neighboring Faiths class will visit the **Minnesota Zen Center** as a part of their unit on Buddhism. The class will attend a "dharma talk," discuss Buddhism with a guest teacher, and take a tour of the center's lovely building that sits right on Lake Calhoun.

On the 1st and 3rd Sunday of every month the **Parents of Teens** group will continue to meet from 10:00-11:00 a.m. in the Senior Minister's Office. The group gets together for an open-format conversation about the joys and concerns of parenting teens. This month the meetings are on April 5 and 19. All parents of teens grades 7-12 are welcome.

On Wednesday, April 1, the youth program is starting a **small enrichment group for high school seniors**. See the "Opportunities for Graduating Seniors" Article for more details!

"A Night on the Streets" is an annual fundraiser to end youth homelessness that takes place overnight at Plymouth Congregational Church. This year it is from 5:00 p.m. April 24 to 8:00 a.m. on April 25. The youth spend the night sleeping in a cardboard box, while learning about the issue of homelessness and raising money for affordable housing. Registration is open to all youth grades 7-12. First Universalist has 25 spots reserved. For more details contact: Theresa Schroer 763-595-9515 theschroers@earthlink.net or Greg Marita 612-377-6242 maritadavis@netzero.net

On April 26, the 7th grade class will visit the **Hindu Temple of Minnesota**. They'll tour the building, ask questions and learn about Hindu spiritual practices. It's not to be missed!

Reminder!

Seniors who would like their bios included in the order of service on June 7 - the day that we recognize graduating seniors and youth who have completed the Coming of Age program- must email their information, with a digital picture, to Kristal Leebrick, at kleebrick@mr.net, by May 4. All seniors and their families are invited to the 10 a.m. service on June 7, so that the church community can recognize you.

Young Adult Program (for 18-35 year-olds)

The young adults of First Universalist are hosting a district-wide conference for all UU's ages 18-35 on April 24-26. This year the theme is **"Continuity: Our Whole Lives for Young Adults"** and will focus on comprehensive sexuality education. Workshop topics will include relationships,

love, commitment, sexual pleasure and body image. Participant will get the chance to make raw chocolate, do a scavenger hunt, watch movies, and have fun building community together. A link to the registration forms and facebook event page can be found at: www.firstuniv.org/fuyag.html

First Universalist Young Adult Group (FUAYAG) meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month for snacks, activities and conversation. This month the meetings are on April 9 and 23 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the Arches. The first gathering will focus on Passover and what it means for UU's. The second will be a fun and adventurous activity yet to be determined.

FUAYAG also shares food together at a **monthly potluck**. It's on Sunday, April 19 this month from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the Cummins Room. Bring a dish to share!

Adult Faith Development Opportunities

Information about our Adult Faith Development Opportunity: "Foundations of Our Faith" can be found under The Welcome Table section.

Buddhist Meditation

Please join us for the Spring installment of the Buddhist meditation and study group, which continues through May 7, skipping April 9. We will be exploring Sharon Salzberg's book *Loving Kindness*, the *Revolutionary Art of Happiness*. We will be utilizing some of the many exercises in the book as well as doing a half-hour of silent meditation and 10

JOHN CUMMINS

MINISTER EMERITUS

by Marie Nordberg

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Article #13 in a special 150th anniversary series

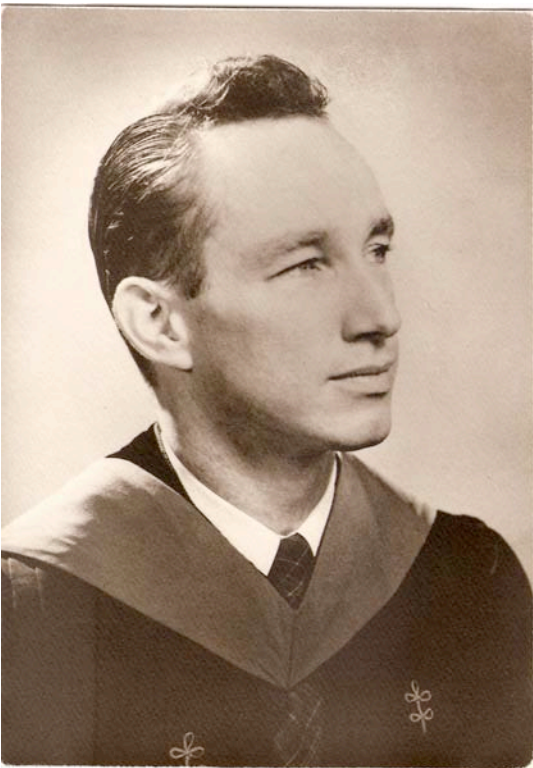
www.firstuniv150.org



*To find the true north within yourself and live to it will bring you 'round right,
no matter what life does to you. These are the important uses of the hard places in every life.*

*To use our hard places as stepping stones rather than stumbling blocks,
to be created by them rather than destroyed by them is our part in the great game of life.*

— John Cummins from his sermon *Hard Places*



John Cummins, age 36

When John Cummins, minister of First Universalist Church from 1963 to 1986, came to Minneapolis in 1963, the *Minneapolis Tribune* described him as a “tweedy New Englander,” because he often wore a tweed jacket with felt patches on the elbows. But that was wrong, says Cummins, who was born in Ohio in 1926, just 3 weeks after his father was ordained as a Universalist minister. Being a preacher’s kid greatly influenced his adult life. “A whole string of interesting guests came through our home, so I was always aware of what was going on in the world,” he says. “I was never a normal American kid. While other kids were playing baseball in a corner sandlot, I was listening to Gandhi’s speeches on the radio about liberating India.”

Cummins received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1947 from Bowdoin College. The Universalist Church of America had two major sources of ministers: St. Lawrence University in New York State and Tufts University in Boston. Because Robert Cummins was now head of the Universalist Church of America, John felt pressure from both institutions to attend their divinity school. “So I went to Harvard,” says Cummins, who graduated in 1950 and was ordained by his father on June 4 that year.

Cummins’ first congregation was a struggling little church in Brunswick, Maine, which had no minister’s study and no running water. “I fired the furnace on Saturday night, ran out in the country and collected farm kids on Sunday morning, played the piano for Sunday school, then rang the bell for church and went down and preached the sermon,” he says. The best thing that came out of that experience was his wife, Dru, whom he married in August 1951. In 1954, Cummins moved to a church in Waltham, Mass., served for a time as chaplain at Brandeis University, and in 1963, moved to Minneapolis to become the fifth settled minister for the 104-year-old First Universalist congregation.

He never shied away from controversy. Within 60 days of his arrival in Minneapolis, he heard that the Politics Club of Washburn High School had been denied the opportunity to hear a lecture by University of

Minnesota professor Mulford Q. Sibley on the virtues and vices of communism. Despite some objections from his Board of Trustees, Cummins invited Washburn's entire student body and their parents to hear Sibley speak at First Universalist Church. "I assumed I had every right and, in fact, every obligation on the principles we believe in to be open to all kinds of ideas and encourage youth to think about things," says Cummins. "How could they fight communism if they didn't even know what it was?"

Cummins was an ardent civil rights activist, and in 1965, went to Selma, Alabama, to attend the memorial service for James Reeb, a northern UU minister who had been murdered there, and march with Dr. Martin Luther King and 600 northern clergy members, of whom 200 were Unitarian Universalist ministers. After five days in Selma, Cummins was driven out of town in the middle of the night by a young black man whose acquaintance he had made. "I had to lie down on the floor of the back seat, because the state police told us flat out they couldn't protect us from the vigilantes roaming the highways outside of Selma," he recalls.

John Cummins and wife Dru



We all become atheists with regard to lesser beliefs as we outgrow and replace them with larger ones. It is a terrible mistake to categorize others who happen to be at a different place in their religious development than our own... To equate the words irreligious, immoral and atheist is only to admit the dearth of your own understanding.

— John Cummins from his sermon
The Faith of an Atheist

In 1978, Cummins was granted an honorary doctorate by Meadville Lombard Theological School at the University of Chicago. In 1991, he and Dru received the Unitarian Universalist Association's Distinguished Service Award. He considered himself an ardent humanist and described the Unitarian Universalist Association as "a brave experiment in the name of religion." He is especially proud of the 17 young women and men he helped to enter the UU ministry. Cummins served two terms as president of the United Nations Association of Minnesota and attended the White House Conference on International Cooperation at the invitation of

President Lyndon Johnson. He served on a number of denominational boards and committees, including 12 years as settlement representative for the Prairie Star District, of which he was one of the early presidents. His book, *This Strange and Wondrous Journey*, was published in 1991.

I have never believed in a hereafter. What I do believe is that each person born into the world is totally unique, a new creation, a fresh and radiant possibility. I further believe in the immortality of influence.... that each life makes a contribution that is totally unique, and which only that person can make, which becomes a part of the ongoing stream of life. I believe that our mistakes and weaknesses die with us, but that our victories of kindness and character remain to bless humanity forever.

— From his sermon *A Religion of Your Own: Another Take on the Immortality of Influence*

minutes of walking meditation at each meeting.

The fee for the session is \$40, fees reduced or waived upon request. It is recommended that those signing up do their best to come to all of the sessions. Please contact Susan Hagler at susanhagler@earthlink.net if you have any questions or to sign up.

Introduction to Chi-Gung – For Health and Peace of Mind

Wednesday Sessions Continue:
Through April 22 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Taught by Pat Gottschalk, \$5 per class, \$25 for entire season, fees reduced or waived upon request. Chi-Gung is a centuries-old form of meditative exercise originating in China that helps people increase self-awareness, build internal energy, and develop a healthy, flexible body physically and spiritually. This class is appropriate for adults of all ages and mobility levels.

Contemplative Group: An Experiment in Spiritual Practice

Rev. Kate Tucker, facilitator
ktucker@firstuniv.org, x103

On 2nd and 4th Thursdays we'll meet to practice simple modes of meditation, contemplation, and centering silence. All are welcome. Chancel Room, 5:00-6:30 p.m.

Coming of Age for Adults

On Wednesday, May 20, the 9th graders who participated in the Coming of Age program will be sharing their spiritual statements. Anyone who's ever attended this celebration knows how impressive the depth of their response to questions around religion and spirituality is. Invariably, adults protest that they never had a

chance to participate in Coming of Age. Well, here's your chance! We're putting together a group of adults to walk through the Coming of Age experience on six Sundays this summer, eventually preparing and presenting their own spiritual statements to the community. This class will be meaningful for anyone - new member, or seasoned UU. If you are interested in signing up for the group that will meet from 11:15-12:45 on Sundays, July 5-August 9, please contact Heidi Mastrud, Director of Lifespan Faith Development at heidi@firstuniv.org or x124.



Green Sanctuary

Be part of the solution. Give your input on what the church can do to be more green. An action ballot will be available on First Universalist Earth Day, April 19. Come to the EcoMinds table to fill out and receive a small gift. We are all becoming one big Green Team and are on the path to UU Certified Green Sanctuary-dom. We're following the process defined by the UU Ministry for Earth www.uuministryforearth.org. The next step in the process is to select 12 actions that will make up our Action Plan. The Green Sanctuary Committee has selected 6 actions and would like your input on the other 6 actions. These action ideas have come from First Universalist members and

committees. Ballots will also be available from the church office after April 19.

Earth Day

Sunday, April 19

Earth Day 2009 is titled "Less is More." Come visit with two of our members who use earth worms to break down leftovers to make new organic soil. They're not just saving Mother Earth, they're making Mother Earth. Learn about green home remodeling; get a tree sapling to plant; 200 free green reusable tote bags to give away; fun art project for the kids; information booths and more.

Take the Energy Challenge, make a pledge to conserve.

Please consider helping with Earth Day. EcoMinds Co-Chairs: Bob Friedman: 612 722-4705 Cecelia Newton: 612-929-0372

Earth Day Re-Gifting

Earth Day celebrations this year will have a new feature: a re-gifting event. This will demonstrate a new wrinkle to the old adage "reduce, reuse, recycle" and will help raise funds for worthy causes both inside and outside the church. There are two ways to participate. You can do either or both:

1. Bring a new (or indistinguishable from new) item valued between \$10 and \$25 to the eggroll table before Earth Day or to the Re-gifting table on Earth Day. Receive a letter for a tax donation.
2. Buy an item from the Re-gifting table on Earth Day for \$10.

Create space in your house. Receive a tax deduction. Support worthy causes. Buy things you can use. It's simple. Please participate!!

Earth Day Paper Drive!
April 18 and 19
SAVE YOUR PAPER!

The First Universalist Youth Cultural Exchange (YCE) is collecting paper from our congregation.

Proceeds from the church community paper drive will benefit YCE to raise money for air fare and the trip this July. **START EARLY!**

Please begin now to collect all household papers!

We can accept magazines, school papers, newspapers, phone books, boxes, corrugated cardboard, mail, catalogs, paper bags, etc. Bring your paper with you to service or anytime that weekend. Our goal is nine tons! Please contact Cass Ritacco with questions (612) 822-0400.

YCE Fundraiser

We are bringing our "sisters and brothers" from Nicaragua here in July! We have been planning our schedule and fundraising to pay for their airfare and activities while they are in Minnesota.

Donate your old or unused Items - Collections continue through April.

Sale Dates are Sunday April 26 & Sunday May 3 from 9:00-1:00 each day.

Contact Nona Peterson with questions or to arrange a pick-up at your place 612-825-8104.

UUs Out For Marriage

You are urged to join up with MUUSJA's campaign: UUs Out For Marriage (UU04M), organizing to support a statewide campaign to achieve marriage equality in Minnesota. UU04M has been meeting and planning effective strategies for UU involvement in this issue.

Meetings are the first Monday of each month at Unity Church Unitarian, 732 Holly, St. Paul. All are welcome to

attend our next meeting on April 6 at 7:00 p.m. Call Ralph at 612-889-6624 for more info.

UU04M is mobilizing for OutFront Minnesota's JustFair Lobby Day. **You are needed this year more than ever:** a statewide Marriage Equality effort is being publicly launched this year at Lobby Day!! Numbers will be crucial to sending a strong message! We urge you to arrange for your congregation's banner to be present at lobby day, and wear a congregational T-shirt or purchase the UUA's 'official' LGBT equality T-shirt "Standing on the Side of Love" by calling Kat Liu at the UUA at (202) 393-2255 x13.

OutFront Minnesota's *justFair* Lobby Day is Thursday, April 23

Plan now to join your voice with others for an interfaith message of support for marriage equality. Register at www.outfront.org or call Jo Haberman: 612-822-0127 ext103 or 800-800-0350 ext103.

OutFront Minnesota convenes the People of Faith Allies roundtable - people, congregations, and denominations working together in support of marriage equality in Minnesota.

FFI: on Roundtable 612-822-0127 x103.

Each year, lawmakers learn more about GLBT people, issues, allies – and the moral positions of faith-based coalitions working for equality.

Register today - bring your faith voice to OutFront Minnesota's *justFair* Lobby Day!

Unity Leadership Update

Nearly 100 youth from over 25 high schools attended the two Unity Leadership Retreats held in March. The March 7 retreat, held here at the church was supported by the efforts of 20 volunteers including most of the members of the First Universalist Foundation Board. The March 21

retreat, hosted by Metropolitan State University in St Paul provided a college experience for the youth as well. Several members of the church supported this retreat experience as well. The retreats function as our live action interview for the program—by giving the participants a taste of the program and giving us a chance to get to know them in a group setting.

April continues to be a busy month for the program. Even though the recruitment of the youth participants is completed, the applications for the Internship get turned in and the selections get made. This year we anticipate 50 applications and out of those we will select 30 youth. Our biggest program yet! And, from the quality of youth we had attending the retreats—it is going to be a hard decision selecting those 30!

In April we also finalize the placement sites for the summer program. This year as last, there will be social justice organizations from both Minneapolis and St Paul. We are fortunate to have many of the same organizations from year to year: MICAHA, Sierra Club, Community Stabilization Project, and Planned Parenthood, to name a few. In April we also hire our young adult mentors and review the curriculum for the summer program.

We are still looking for a couple people to help out the plant sale. It is an important part of our overall program budget—for the funds it contributes as well as for the recognition it creates.

Faith in Action Volunteer Opportunities

Here are some opportunities for April. Contact Debra Rodgers at X106 or at debra@firstuniv.org for more information.

PRIDE FESTIVAL AND PARADE:

June will be here before you know it and the PRIDE Festival is one of the

highlights of the month. 3-4 volunteers are needed to plan and implement First Universalist's presence in the parade and possibly at the festival in the park. There is a small budget for the event.

- The time commitment of 30 hours from May to June would probably suffice.

UNITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM:

We've made it through the retreats with nearly 100 youth involved. Now we are getting ready for the summer program and our continued expansion. Here is a partial list of what we still need...

- Maybe you are a program person and would like to be involved in the big-picture thinking for the Unity Leadership program.
- New placement sites will be added to the program this year. Perhaps you know of some organizations that would be interested in adding a summer intern to their staff. This would require more day work and would begin right away!
- In May, Unity Leadership sponsors the annual plant sale. An interest in plants is helpful. This only requires about 12-15 hours of work – some to order the plants, some to set up the sale and some to work the sale on Mother's Day. Two people would be great!

FACING RACE DIALOGUE: The vision of the Facing Race Initiative of the St Paul Foundation is to help create an anti-racist community — a more equitable, just, and open society in which everyone feels safe, valued, and respected. In order to create opportunities for individuals to talk about racism, they have developed the *New Conversations About Race and Racism*™ discussion tool.

Could First Universalist host a gathering to begin an intentional conversation on race and racism? Is there someone in the congregation who would be willing to lead this

effort? Is it you? Lots of support would be provided!

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY: Most of you are aware of the good work Habitat for Humanity does in our community. Sadly, there has been a lack of a First Universalist presence in the last year even though there is a well organized UU presence from other congregations. We need a person or two willing to put in a few hours organizing a build with the other UU churches and recruiting First Universalist congregants to participate.

- Approximately 30 hours of time would need to be spent over a 2 month period.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Summer Build June 22 - 26

Volunteers needed to:

- Work on build
- Prepare lunches

MN ALLIANCE OF PEACEMAKERS/PATHWAYS TO PEACE:

First Universalist is committed to peace but does not have an active peacemaking group. Would you be willing to help us form one? We are a longtime member of MN Alliance of Peacemakers – they have tons of resources!



Women Who Read

Women Who Read (and eat potluck suppers together) meet in a casual manner on the fourth Monday of the month. Please RSVP to the host and get directions.

March 23, **Shelter Half**,

by Carol Bly.

HOSTS: Sylvia Rudolph & Nancy Browne at Church

RSVP: 612-929-0273

Sr0art@hotmail.com

TRUST Plant Sale and Swap

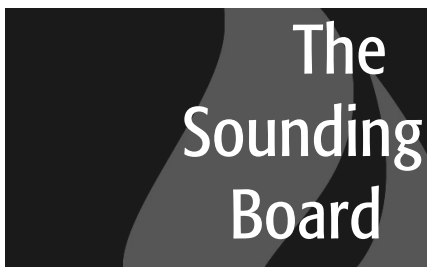
WHAT: TRUST's annual garden event; WHEN: Saturday, May 9, 2009 8:00-noon; WHERE: Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parking Lot, 4100 Lyndale Ave. So.; WHY: To "swap" plants for something new; to buy homegrown perennials, house plants, herbs, vegetables; to get advice from Master Gardeners; to raise money for TRUST's programs. Call TRUST for more information, 612-827-6159.

AUW Events

April 10, Friday Get Connected, potluck and discussion: "Caring for Self" in these busy, stressful times, how do you find time to nurture and restore yourself? Facilitated by Jeni Klotz. 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Library. Bring a dish to share. For more information, contact Jeni Klotz at jklotz1@cs.com.

Saturday, April 18, Mini workshop. Ruth MacKenzie, award winning UU singer and playwright returns for a follow-up to her highly praised workshop "Finding Your Voice" held in January. Suggested donation \$5-10. 12:00-3:00 p.m. in the Cummins Room. Includes refreshments, but not lunch. Sign up at the AUW table. For more information, contact Jeni Klotz at jklotz1@cs.com.

Thursday, April 30, "Meet & Greet our New Minister" at a special dessert/wine/coffee reception from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the home of Betsy Allis. Sign up at the AUW Table or email your RSVP to Betsy at erallis@aol.com by April 26th. Directions to Betsy's home will be emailed before the event. AUW women (both members and friends) are warmly invited to participate.



By John Jensen

I am losing my trumpet section to Easter gigs far and wide. Universal Jazz was originally slated to provide the music for services. No trumpet section, really, no big band. Impossible to hire ringers—all the good trumpet players are hired in this Lutheran land. Next best bet are the Usual Suspects augmented with a couple of our stellar sax improvisers—trying to secure Chris Moore and Alan Kolderie. So, jazz will happen, just in more intimate dress for April 12.

The First Universalist Choir is beginning serious work on our commissioned piece to be presented on April 19. David Evan Thomas has written a challenging work for chorus and keyboard—eminently doable thanks to our talented forces. Couched in a tonal idiom, the piece will warm the heart and also the mind. This is also the work of our church in this 150th celebration.

Thanks to neighbor and musical colleague, Joan Griffith,

for subbing for Harry Pontiff recently. Joan directs the MacJazz band and you will remember her from our early November big band battle.

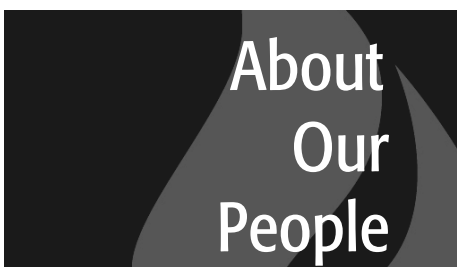
Sundays:

April 5: Vocal Soloist and music TBA

April 12: Jazz with Usual Suspects

April 19: Children's Choir,
First Universalist Choir

April 26: The Usual Suspects trio



Please Note: announcements written March 8 or earlier:

Byron Richard successfully defended his dissertation February 27 at Temple University, where he began a Ph.D. program in dance education in 2000.

Dick Saunders had day surgery February 18 to repair two dislocated toe joints suffered in a fall a year ago. He expects impairment for 6-8 weeks.

Joan and Dick Niemiec became proud grandparents of Max Niemiec Tomfohr on January 31.

John Yoakum and Gary Gimmestad extend thanks for the many ways this congregation has expressed their caring (meals, cards, prayers, support) while John has journeyed with Cancer this past year.

Cody Connel was hit by a car while on his bicycle on Friday, February 13. Cody is OK except for face injuries.

Carol Jackson had major surgery on January 28. After spending a few days in the hospital and many more at home, she is slowly getting back to work. We send healing thoughts to Carol, who appreciates our cards and letters.

James Schanen's mother, Annette Schanen, passed away on February 14 following treatment of stage 4 cervical cancer. We hold the Schanens in our thoughts and prayers.

Marilyn Daggett died peacefully on February 16, according to her daughter, Cynthia. The family is thinking they'll have a small private service in Marilyn's backyard in the spring when her garden is blooming.

Longtime member **Hildegarde Holtz** died Sunday, February 15. A memorial service is set for Hildegarde on April 11.

Mary Guzowski's father-in-law, John Lindbeck (father of her husband James), has begun hospice care in Kalamazoo, MI. We hold Mary, James, John and all the family in our hearts.

Nancy Erickson's mother Andrea Rohmer, age 75, became seriously ill in January and is now in hospice care. Our thoughts and prayers are with Nancy and her family.

Congratulations to **Deborah Morse-Kahn**, who has received a nomination for the twenty-first annual Northeastern Minnesota Book Awards 2009 for her recent publication *Lake Superior's Historic North Shore: A Guide*, written for the Minnesota Historical Society to promote and protect one of Minnesota's most treasured heritage districts.

John Lindbeck, father in-law of Mary Guzowski and father of James, died peacefully on March 2.

Nora Whiteman and Tom Rush are proud to announce that their daughter **Emmy** just had a baby girl – Alexis Paige Marie St. Clair and she is beautiful! Emmy and Tyler are thrilled to be Alexis' parents.

We also remember **those who are in employment transition**. We extend to them our best wishes as they face challenges and changes.

Calendar of Events April 1-30

available online at:
www.firstuniv.org/calendar.html

~Denotes an event to which more info
can be found in this issue of The Liber

*Event is closed.

Wednesday, April 1

10:00 a.m. Chi-Gung
6:30 p.m. Senior High ARC
7:00 p.m. Transcendentalist Treats

Thursday, April 2

7:00 p.m. Buddhist Meditation

Friday, April 3

PSD Conference in Duluth
4:00 p.m. Support Group
6:00 p.m. AUW Potluck & Disc:
Rain Gardens and Compost Heaps

Sunday, April 5

PSD Conference in Duluth
Services & RE at 9 and 11 a.m.
10:00 a.m. Parents of Teens Group
10:00 a.m. Intergenerational Choir
10:00 a.m. Comfort Shawl Group
12:15 p.m. Foundations of Our Faith

Monday, April 6

12:00 p.m. Career Transition Group
7:00 p.m. Band Rehearsal
7:00 p.m. Caregivers Support Group
7:00 p.m. UU Stitchers
7:30 p.m. Young Adult OWL

Tuesday, April 7

6:30 p.m. Open Labyrinth
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
7:00 p.m. Men's Support Group*
7:00 p.m. Yoga

Wednesday, April 8

10:00 a.m. Chi-Gung
12:30 p.m. SPIFF Meeting
7:00 p.m. 150th Communications
7:00 p.m. Transcendentalist Treats

Thursday, April 9

5:00 p.m. Contemplative Group
5:30 p.m. Executive Committee
7:00 p.m. Buddhist Meditation
7:00 p.m. Young Adults Group
7:00 p.m. Lifespan Children Comm.
7:00 p.m. Women's Ritual Circle

Friday, April 10

4:00 p.m. Support Group
6:30 p.m. Caring for Self: Jeni Klotz

Saturday, April 11

8:45 a.m. AUW Board Meeting
10:00 am Hildegard Holtz Memorial

Sunday, April 12

Easter Sunday & Child Dedication
One Service at 10 a.m.

Monday, April 13

12:00 p.m. Career Transition Group
7:00 p.m. Band Rehearsal
7:00 p.m. Stewardship Committee
7:00 p.m. Visual Arts
7:30 p.m. Young Adult OWL

Tuesday, April 14

7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, April 15

10:00 a.m. Chi-Gung
6:30 p.m. Senior High ARC
7:00 p.m. 150th Steering Comm.
7:00 p.m. Nominating Committee
7:00 p.m. Transcendentalist Treats

Thursday, April 16

6:30 p.m. Board of Trustees
7:00 p.m. Buddhist Meditation

Friday, April 17

4:00 p.m. Support Group
6:00 p.m. Drumming

Saturday, April 18

150th Soiree (offsite)

Sunday, April 19

Earth Day Events & Sharing Sunday
Services & RE at 9 and 11 a.m.
10:00 a.m. Intergenerational Choir
10:00 a.m. Parents of Teens Group
11:15 a.m. Youth Adult Committee
2:00 Reception: Rev. Dr. Lee Barker
7:00 p.m. Young Adult Potluck

Monday, April 20

12:00 p.m. Career Transition Group
7:00 p.m. Band Rehearsal
7:00 p.m. Caregivers Support Group
7:00 p.m. UU Stitchers
7:30 p.m. Young Adult OWL

Tuesday, April 21

7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
7:00 p.m. Library Committee

7:00 p.m. Men's Support Group*

Wednesday, April 22

10:00 a.m. Chi-Gung
7:00 p.m. Transcendentalist Treats

Thursday, April 23

5:00 p.m. Contemplative Group
7:00 p.m. Buddhist Meditation
7:00 p.m. Young Adult Group
7:00 p.m. Foundation Committee

Friday, April 24

"Continuity" the Young Adult Conf.
4:00 p.m. Support Group

Saturday, April 25

"Continuity" the Young Adult Conf.
Candidating Week
7:00 p.m. Women's Ritual Circle

Sunday, April 26

"Continuity" the Young Adult Conf.
Candidating Week
Services & RE at 9 and 11 a.m.
10:00 a.m. Intergenerational Choir

Monday, April 27

Candidating Week
12:00 p.m. Career Transition Group
3:00 pm Conversation w/New Minister
5:30 p.m. New Minister Potluck
7:00 p.m. Band Rehearsal
7:00 p.m. Women Who Read
7:30 p.m. Young Adult OWL

Tuesday, April 28

Candidating Week
3:00 pm Conversation w/New Minister
5:30 p.m. New Minister Potluck
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, April 29

Candidating Week
3:00 pm Conversation w/New Minister
5:30 p.m. New Minister Potluck
6:30 p.m. Senior High ARC

Thursday, April 30

Candidating Week
3:00 pm Conversation w/New Minister
5:30 p.m. New Minister Potluck

First Universalist Church Is Served By:

Interim Minister

The Reverend Charlotte Cowtan

Associate Minister

The Reverend Kate Tucker

Minister Emeritus

The Reverend John Cummins

**Director of Lifespan Faith
Development**

Heidi Mastrud

**Youth and Young Adult
Ministry Coordinator**

Katie Heaton

**Children's Program Coordinator/
Children's Music Coordinator**

Mary Bohman

**Lifespan Assistant and
Childcare Provider**

Katie Campbell

Debra Rodgers

Director of Administration

Patti Frazee

Member and Facilities Coordinator

Chrystal Teachout

Communications Coordinator

Kevin Watson

Office Support

Sandy DiNanni

Music Director

John Jensen

Choral Director

Janice Hunton

Hospitality Custodian

Frank Bibber

Cleaning Custodian

Mike Higgins

Upcoming Events:

Sunday, April 12

Easter Sunday
ONE SERVICE ONLY

Saturday, April 18

Sesquicentennial Soiree

Sunday, April 19

150th Celebration: Sermon by
Rev. Dr. Lee Barker

Sunday, April 26

New Ministerial Candidate's
First Sermon

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Saturday Closed
Sunday 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Phone: 612-825-1701

Fax: 612-825-8879

firstuniversalist@firstuniv.org

www.firstuniv.org

FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
3400 DUPONT AVENUE SOUTH
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55408

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