



UU Update

Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Santa Rosa

• June 2011 • Volume 55 • Issue 6 •

Sunday Services at 9:15 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

June 5

STEWARDS OF THE EARTH

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell

Worship Associate: Susan Bartholome

The Choir performs at 9:15.

We'll pick up the story of the Universe a little closer to home this week, as we consider how to live in right relationship with the Earth, and in right relationship with ourselves. Particularly, as tornadoes rage and water rises, how do we work constructively and passionately for our Mother without growing frustrated by the slow pace of human change? The answer is found in Earth herself...

June 19

ON FATHERHOOD

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell

Worship Associate: Scott Miller

Special Music by the UUsual Suspects.

Today we will explore the spiritual dimension of parenting from the perspective of a dad. Several of our members will share their reflections about the challenges of faithful, loving parenting, the lessons that come from it, and how our wives or husbands, and our congregation, can support those of us who are fathers. We will also engage in a Child Dedication Ceremony during the 11:00 service. (Hooray!)

June 12

REINVENTING UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

Service Leader: Rev. Chris Bell

Worship Associate: Frances Corman

The Choir performs at 11:00.

I've got a strong desire, and a few ideas, to help transform Unitarian Universalism into the vibrant, hopeful, spiritual world-wide faith it once dreamed of being. But I'm going to need your open minds, loving hearts and helping hands to help me prove it can be done. Today we share our dreams for our congregation and our tradition. Stick around for the Congregational Meeting to discuss it more. Today we will also conduct a Bridging Ceremony for our graduating high school seniors.

June 26

GROWING UP IN UU RE

One service only! 10:00 a.m.!

Service Leaders: Rev. Chris Bell, Rita Butterfield

Worship Associate: Izzy Fischer

What was it like being in UU Sunday School, or growing up within a UU Youth Group? How is it shaping or informing your life now? How can UU congregations take care of young adults? These are the questions we're asking everyone we can find who grew up UU. Get in touch with Rita or Chris to share your experience as we celebrate the value of religious education and faith development. We particularly want to hear from our 18-to-25-year-olds. We will also hold a New Member Recognition Ceremony today. Please contact the office if you are interested in joining.

DON'T FORGET: ONE SERVICE ONLY, AT 10:00, UNTIL SEPTEMBER 11!!!

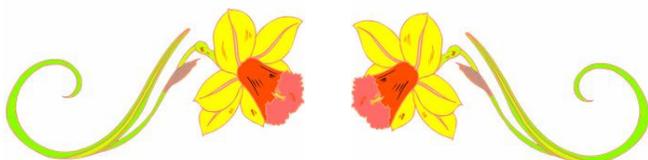
July 3

DEMENTIA AND DIGNITY

10:00 a.m.

Service Leader: Frances Corman

Worship Associate: Susan Bartholome



Showing Some Pride

Rita and I are fans of the HBO series *Big Love*, which we watch on DVD, a season behind the current episodes. It's a thought-provoking adult soap opera about a polygamous Mormon family trying to survive undercover in the mainstream. Our hero, Bill, tries to live as normally as anyone might expect from a casino-owning candidate for state senate with three wives and nine children, who lives in constant fear of exposure by the monogamous Church of Latter Day Saints. I tell you, if I'm ever feeling stressed out I just watch a little *Big Love* and it puts everything back in perspective! I can't say that I'm fundamentally against polygamy or polyandry, all things considered, but the emotional energy it seems like it would take to have multiple, equally-intimate partners is beyond me, that's for sure. Most of us find one enduring partnership to be challenging enough!

In the most recent episode I viewed, however, another form of partnership was addressed. One character, a deeply closeted gay man who is having an illicit affair with an equally closeted sociopathic gay polygamist (I *told* you this was a soap opera!), was making a plea for help and understanding to his LDS church elders, whose only advice was that he must deny himself, and face the challenge that God had allegedly put before him. He would be judged not just on the quality of his dive, but its difficulty. But he had tried, he told them through his tears. He had tried the "re-alignment" programs, had tried to condition homosexuality out of himself with harsh "behavioral therapy," and still bore the scars from the electro-shocks he had received. Nothing had made him feel any differently, or prevented his sexual urges. He was, as Lady Gaga reminds us, simply born that way. And yet now, driven mad by the misery of self-denial and judgment, his very life seemed at stake.

Such a situation is very real, folks. Just before watching this episode, I was lucky enough to appear on KRCB radio to promote the upcoming Pride Festival on June 5th, and the Interfaith Pride Service on June 12th. Here, too, I was re-awakened to the difficulty that many gay people have in being a part of religious tradition, or even of accessing their spiritual sides, because of similar experiences of judgment and condemnation, both in public and in private. This is a deep wound. We can and should help heal it.

It gets really easy to take equality for granted if you largely confine yourself to groups that at least try to be accepting and welcoming, and I realized that that had happened to me, drifting lazily along in my happy sea of inherent worth and dignity. Perhaps I might be forgiven – I'm a straight healthy white dude, so my lived experience is limited. But, also, my childhood ministers told me God loved everybody, and I believed them. I had GLBT friends

in high school. Furthermore, my UU tradition has spoiled me. I am close to many GLBT colleagues. The first ordained minister of any religion in the U.S. and Canada to come out was a Unitarian Universalist, the Rev. James Stoll in 1969. I was two! Jory Agate, the former Minister of Religious Education at First Parish, Cambridge, who helped us raise our children is an out lesbian. She is now the Director of Ministerial Development at the UUA. Heck, *our* Director of Religious Education here at UUCSR is an out lesbian, and our congregation was unambiguously supportive of marriage equality when Prop. 8 was on the ballot. I am proud of these things. But, it can also be too easy for me to forget how much rejection GLBT folk can feel from society, and particularly from various religious traditions. There are people who have never in their lives known what it is to be OK just the way you are, who have never heard faithful, worshipping people say "God don't make no junk!" And friends, sometimes a person's survival is literally in question. "You are loved, lovable, good, natural and whole no matter what" is a message that must still be proclaimed loudly in the public square by religious communities, even here in Sonoma County.

That's why, even when we live in a liberal, GLBT-friendly place like Sonoma County, we still have to show up at Pride Festival, and we have to show up in great numbers so that somebody who is searching for a safe and accepting religious home might just realize we really mean it. The other thing you can do is to invite your GLBT friends to worship with us, particularly if you are such yourself. Many people may have never even considered "going to church." In fact, in Sonoma and Marin most people don't attend any religious services on a regular basis at all, so we ourselves are a bit on the margins, too. We have an opportunity to show people a better, more accepting way of spirituality, for which so many hunger. But if we don't stretch ourselves, and seek to learn the experiences of others with curiosity and respect, we can never know what it is like to be disabled, or undocumented, or black, or brown, or white, or poor or rich, or whatever else we happen not to be. And the less we know of others, I might argue, the less we know of ourselves. Our understanding can never be perfect, but a willingness to listen deeply, and thereby to re-evaluate our own situation, goes a long way to bridging the chasms that too often divide us. I know that the relationships I have cultivated across various boundaries, within this congregation and beyond through community organizing and activism, are among the most nourishing and transforming I have, and I wish such blessings for you, too. Let us openly welcome all who hunger for meaning and love into our faith, and let us help all people feel their natural pride in being children of the Great Big Thing.

Peace, Rev. Chris

On Love and a Presidency

Reality is ultimately social. —Robert Bellah

So, where were we? Oh yeah—I was facing the daunting prospect of following in the footsteps of the estimable Linda Proulx and trying to figure out what kinds of things a board president does and how one is supposed to do them.

The problem was I really didn't have much of a clue, but golly, that baby was coming unrelentingly down the birth canal anyway, so I was going to have to figure a few things out no matter what. "Oh well," I thought: "I can manage almost anything for a year."

That was a brief blip of three years ago now, three revolutions of our earth around its sun, three congregational budget wrasslin's ago, 35-and-counting board meetings ago, eight congregational meetings with one more still on the docket. I feel ready to exhale.

Several board meetings ago, when we were trying to sniff out (and encourage) the interest of individual board members in assuming the presidency next year, Rev. Chris asked me to reflect on some of the salutary things that a presidency brings, besides the inherent joys of squinting at budget spreadsheets in 6-point type. The question was unexpected, but it took only a few seconds for an answer to begin forming.

All of us know what this thing we're doing in religious community is really all about. Love is the be-all, end-all, make-sense-of-it-all, as Chris reminds us in one way or other from the pulpit virtually every Sunday. Indeed, as I considered what the presidency had given me, I was struck with how it brought me into a deeper, more rounded, more intense love relationship with this community.

More concerned with its overall well-being, its place as an entity in the larger community around us, its role as spiritual refuge, beacon of hope, symbol of an unclenched mind and heart.

More concerned with its future, and the future of the tradition in which it is held.

A recent *UU World* posting online related that our denomination has shrunk again in the past year, down some 1,700 members nationally to 162,800. This is distressing news for all those who can look beyond their own noses of individual spiritual concern. Without a vibrant and coherent tradition to stand and bathe in, without a common hymnal (both literal and metaphoric) to sing from in our celebration of and challenge to the world, we are reduced to spiritual islands, tending our own hearts and manicuring our own souls.

The paradox (well, just *one* of the paradoxes!) of the religious quest is that however much its roots spring from individual longings and glimmers of transcendence, of the delicious, soul-satisfying oneness to be found in nature, contemplation and solitude, its true flowering happens in community, where we are but a small part of a larger whole. (Given my primarily mystical bent, it required most of my life to come to this realization, but I'm glad for it now...)

It turns out that we're natural huddlers, just as most creatures are. I marvel at a regular scene in our home, when the three of us, joined by both our dog and cat, manage to occupy about three square feet of couch in a 2,300-square-foot house. And this distinction is crucial, I think: the *house* is the surrounding 2,297 square feet; *home* is what happens in the other three.

It has been said too often to count that all love begins with self-love, that no outreach and acceptance and care for others is possible until those qualities are applied to ourselves. True enough. But that is just the neonatal stage, with all the riches of mature other-love still to come.

When we gather in community, whether at Sunday service, a monthly board meeting or a potluck fundraiser, our love is directed outward, at both the well-being of the individuals we are sharing this time and place with *and* at the well-being of the more faceless entities of our congregation and denomination, of a tradition we are carrying on for unborn, unnamed individuals still to come.

This is the very definition of faith, it seems to me: to keep tending the small grains of sand that we are, humbly mindful of the infinite ocean out of which we emerge so fleetingly and to which we will all too soon return. But in this moment, on this stage, our presence and intention are required, to do our part to help change the nature of the beach, however slightly, that we are privileged to occupy.

And what a beach it has been, my grain all clumped together with y'all's, cycling through the seasons of storm and sunshine, the beautiful and the sublime. All the worry and hope and laughter (and more worry), leaving us...where? Still *here*, that's where—with our collective shoulders still set hard and lovingly to the task of sustaining this remarkable, worthy, infinitely important, perfectly imperfect community.

—Andrew Hidas
President, Board of Trustees

Treasurer's Report

June may be the beginning of summer but it is also the last month of our 2010/2011 fiscal year. Now is the time to reconcile all of our income and expenses and bring the congregational year to a close. In order for our administrator to do this task properly, we need to have all pledges paid in a timely manner. Please check your records and make sure that your pledges and gifts are up to date.

While you are doing your part to close the fiscal year successfully, the Treasurers, Board of Trustees and various financial gurus are working toward presenting a completed 2011/2012 budget at the Congregational Meeting. We hope to see you at this meeting on June 12 following the Sunday Service.

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnie Daines, Co-Treasurer

Committee on Shared Ministry

We are charged with monitoring the health of the congregation as well as being support for and a sounding board for the minister. If you have a conflict with a fellow member or member of the staff please feel free to contact one of us.

Please give a big thank you to Elizabeth Marrs who is stepping down from the Committee on Shared Ministry. Elizabeth has been on the committee for 5 years and was also our chairperson.

We are pleased to announce two new members of the committee, John Chenoweth and Mary Lil Lee.

The rest of your committee is comprised of Cathy Read (Chairperson), Rev. Chris Bell, Nancy Hargis, Andy Levine and Mary Wagner.

Please don't hesitate to contact one of us if you need to talk.

In fellowship, Andy Levine

Congregational Meeting—June 12

Please plan to attend!!

Sunday, June 12

12:30 p.m.

in the Sanctuary

The Advocates for Social Justice

Will be serving lunch for a small donation.

Religious Education for Children and Youth

It is amazing what you can find when you clean a closet! About a month ago, Aly Holloway and I tackled cleaning out the RE closet and the cupboards in the RE Common room. We found a wide array of useless items; a stack of playing cards a few short of a full deck, petrified play-dough, faded posters and display boards from *way* back in the nineties, a ceramic Santa that looked more scary than jolly, and even a box of deflated and moldy donuts. But as we purged through the piles of stuff, we also discovered some gems: A small stack of illustrated Jataka tales, a photo album from the Stony Point days (way cute pictures of little Zoey, and Chloe, the Olney kids, the Noe Triplets and others), and a little gold mine called "Young Peacemakers Project Book." Published *way* back in 1988, it is a book full of activities and projects that teach children to care for the environment, develop compassion for others and work for a peaceful world. The activities are simple and fun-perfect for a summer program in R.E! And so our summer program was born!

Summers at UUCSR are more laid back than during the other seasons of the year. With families taking vacations, our numbers tend to be smaller, so the program is designed for children of all ages to meet in one group. Each session will include a component of worship and ritual, but most of our time will be spent on games and art projects related to the theme of making peace in the world.

There are two special events in the 11:00 service this month: on June 12 we will honor Jeremy Cummings and Corey Ford in a Bridging Ritual to mark their transition from the world of high school to the world of young adulthood. Jeremy will be heading to San Jose State in the fall and Corey will be off to Cal Poly. The following week, June 19, we will celebrate the Dedication of baby Noah Miller. I hope everyone will make a point to be present to celebrate these sacred rites of passage.

Below is the schedule of classes for the month of June. You will notice that the second teacher slot is wide open each week. Please call or email to sign up to help with a class. In faith,
Deborah

Free the Children Fundraiser

Bake Sale - Sunday June 5, after the 11:00 service.

Come buy some gooey, yummy, sweet treats made by RE families.

All proceeds will benefit Free the Children serving children in need around the world.

Programming note: The Free the Children Talent Show has been postponed. The new date will be announced in the fall.



| DATE | THEME - -ACTIVITY | TEACHER | TEACHER |
|------------------------|---|---------|---------|
| 06/05/11 | Understanding People: No Two Are Alike - Hand Print Mural | Deborah | |
| 06/12/11 | (30 min in worship/Bridging) Art Project/Games | Deborah | |
| 06/19/11 | (30 min in worship/Baby Dedication) Art Project/Games | Deborah | |
| 06/26/11 10:00 a.m. | One service at 10am Begins All Kinds of Families - Family Trees | Deborah | |

Advocates for Social Justice

Share the Basket:

Once upon a time there was a little boy named Jamie. He was two months old and his 19-year-old mother, Sue, was homeless.

She was angry and scared and ashamed for herself and her baby. She was so angry and scared that she didn't talk to anyone. **She didn't even talk to Jamie.** She did the bare minimum to take care of him. She ignored the rules of the shelter and wouldn't talk to the other women, and she was belligerent with the staff. Sue and Jamie were asked to leave the shelter. They were back on the streets. She didn't know what to do next. Someone suggested that she go to **The Living Room.** And so she did.

The day that Sue and Jamie showed up The Living Room their lives began to change. At first Sue behaved as she had at the shelter. She didn't look at the staff or volunteers when they talked to her. She mumbled answers when she absolutely had to. Jamie fussed and cried. But Sue and Jamie kept coming. Every day they would join the other mothers and kids in the Mother and Child program where they

shared breakfast and lunch, where they participated in art therapy, where they sat, usually quietly, through parenting group.

All the while, **Jamie was growing and beginning to thrive.** He got to be out of his stroller; he got to roll and then crawl, and then take his first steps. He got to play with other babies and toddlers. He got to be part of a singing circle and story time. His days had some consistency. Then **Jamie began to jabber and smile.**

Sue also began to smile, and talk! She had started taking classes at SRJC, was blossoming in art therapy sessions, was talking with the other mothers, and was making suggestions about how to better arrange the playroom.

Sue and Jamie still come to The Living Room. They are staying in another shelter while Sue looks for permanent housing. Jamie is walking and smiling and beginning to talk. He has a mother who not only loves him (as she always has) but who has also learned how to play with him and who puts his welfare first; a mother who has worked hard to change her circumstances and continues the hard work of build-

ing a better life for herself and her son.

The story of Sue and Jamie is one of the many stories of mothers and their children who come to The Living Room. The mothers come depressed, sad, or angry. They come frustrated, afraid and lonely. The children come shy and quiet, or angry and loud. The Living Room offers consistency and respect, models healthy boundaries and limits, and offers emotional and physical support. So when the Basket comes your way on **Sunday, June 12**, please do all you can to help The Living Room help families like Sue and Jamie!

On **Sunday, June 19**, one half the collection will go to support our Saturday Breakfast program. Your generosity is astounding, and it looks like with your monthly gift we will be able to sustain this project at the same level of quality that we have become known and loved for!

* * * *

In May we gave \$528 to Becoming Independent; \$1,410 to the Saturday Breakfast; and \$430 to the West County Senior Center! Wow!!!

Hot Topics

On **Sunday, June 26**, we will have our last of the Standing on the Side of Love series. Colin Close will speak on "Love Is a Many Gendered Thing." Some of you may remember him from a forum we had several years ago when he talked about

the realities and life of being transgender. His openness and honesty were beautiful. He is eager to answer any and all questions. We will meet in the Board Room at 11:30. Hope to see you there!

Please Join Us for a House Party!!

PLEASE JOIN US for a fundraiser house party and potluck supper featuring David Lerner's "As The Crow Flies" (folk, rock, bluegrass and original music) and Marilyn O'Malley, original & Celtic music. Proceeds go to the UUCSR operating fund.

Join us on Saturday, June 25 anytime from 2 p.m. Sliding scale \$20 - \$200.

Where: Brian and Kitty's on the Russian River in Healdsburg—with beach access!

Please RSVP for us to arrange parking and jitneys. Call Kitty at 953-0620 or email Micheline at justinemichaels@hotmail.com.

Join us at this lovely venue for a great event!



Nominations for UUCSR Leadership



The Nominating Committee of Ben Ford, Millie Tripp, Maureen Wallace, and Shirley Williams is excited to present the following nominees for UUCSR leadership positions.

For the Board of Trustees, for a two-year term to begin July 1, 2011:

Incumbents, nominated for a second term: Lois Nagle and Mary Louise Jaffray

Nominated for a first term: Jeannie Bates, Joe Como, Alan Proulx, Peter Wilson

Continuing Board members whose terms are not expiring are Ann Chambers, John Farison, Laura Jean Hageman, Cathie Wiese, Craig Work.

For the Nominating Committee, for a two-year term to begin July 1, 2011:

Incumbent, nominated for a second term: Ben Ford

Nominated for a first term: Bob Barrows, Kathy Norman

Continuing on the committee is Maureen Wallace.

The list of nominees for the Endowment Committee is not yet complete, and will be announced at the congregational meeting.

We had a long list of outstanding leaders to choose from—this congregation is full of remarkable people! If you are interested in becoming more involved in congregational leadership, perhaps leading to Board service, talk with a Nominating Committee member about leadership development opportunities.

Many thanks to the nominees for being excited to serve our congregation!

—Ben Ford, Nominating Committee chair

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 2011

Newsletter@uusantarosa.org

E-mail Submissions

Greatly Appreciated!

Newsletter Assembly

10 a.m.—June 29, 2011

TIE Groups—Together In Exploration

TIE groups are a wonderful way to connect with a small group of people and have meaningful talks about a variety of topics. In some congregations they are called *Covenant Groups* or *Small Group Ministry*, but by any name they are the perfect way to get to know new people and feel a sense of belonging.

There will be at least one TIE group meeting this summer. Look for signups the first two weeks in June. There will be many more groups starting in October. Signups for those groups will be in September.

Submitted by Mary Wagner



UUCSR Writers

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation Santa Rosa, Glaser Center, 547 Mendocino Ave., 707-568-5381.

Information: Georgette G. deBlois, GGdeB@aol.com
<http://uucsrwriters.blogspot.com>

Next Regular Monthly Meeting - Presentations and Feedback:

Monday, June 6 from 4 - 6 p.m. Participants give presentations and receive feedback on a "Work in Progress".

UUCSR Writers Presents:

Monday, May 23, from 6 - 8 p.m.

David Templeton - "Film Noir and the Screen Writer"

"UUCSR Writers Literary Laureate 2010-2012"

Presentation and discussion about the Balance between the Work of the Screen Writer and the Need of the Craftsperson to find his/her audience.

Monday, June 20, from 6-8 p.m.

Juan De la O, Independent Film Maker - "Making a Film Trailer"

"UUCSR Writers Screen Writer-Film Maker Laureate 2010-2012"

Presentation and discussion about bringing more imagination, more experimentation, new faces, new

ideas and better quality to his production of "Mindless".

Saturday, July 16, from 10-4 p.m. UUCSR Writers Forum

Writers, Poets, Panels and Special Presentations are being confirmed. Details to be announced. Save the date.

Thursday's at the "Haven Coffee House"

Every Thursday morning, 10 a.m. - 12 noon

Located in one of the few remaining authentic video stores in Sonoma County, the Video Droid on 1901 Mendocino Avenue in the Santa Rosa JC area. It's in the same parking lot as CVS Pharmacy. Parking is free.

Buy yourself a good cup of coffee or hot chocolate and a morning pastry of your choice. Enjoy the ambiance at the "Haven" as well as the pleasure of our humor, clever conversations and the periodic, spontaneous outburst of laughter that permeates the atmosphere.

Take Care,
 Georgette G. deBlois
 GGdeB@aol.com

Music Notes

As the choir season comes to a close, I would like to thank all those who sang in it. Choir members devote a good amount of time to rehearsals, learning music, and, on occasion, waking up early to practice before a 9:15 service. Sometimes they do what is difficult for any choir —perform without a conductor. And adhering to my belief that a choral experience here should be a learning one, we've done pieces with words in Swahili, Hebrew, French, and Romanian.

(On a side note, when we rehearsed the Romanian piece, Erika Demeter, guest Unitarian minister from Transylvania, remarked that she could understand every word. When I told this to the choir, Craig Work replied, "Now if we could only get that kind of response when we sing in English." Well, by golly, we're going to!)

This year's choir is made up of members with varied experiences—from those with years and years of choral singing to those who haven't sung in a choir since high school and those who've never even been in a choir before. Such a variety of musical backgrounds does make it challenging to find repertoire and teach the music. But, as is wonderfully typical of this congregation, everyone helps out. More experienced members catch rhythm and pitch problems and less experienced singers work hard by studying their music during the week.

That's one of the things that is so remarkable about the choir: this working relationship

where everyone contributes their talents, skills, and jokes. But most of all I appreciate the wonderful feeling of collaboration as we create musical versions of the worship message.

Even though the choir season is ending, that doesn't mean the opportunities to sing or play music for services ends with it.

Early in summer is this year's annual Pride Interfaith service. The service will take place at Shomrei Torah on June 12 at 7 p.m. In previous years, numerous congregations have had their choirs perform a piece. However, this year there will be one big choir made up of all those who want to lend their voices to this celebration of peace and diversity. There is a rehearsal of the piece scheduled on June 6, 7 p.m. at Shomrei Torah. For those interested in singing, come and see me for a copy of the music and to find out about rehearsals. Or you can download the music and hear an mp3 of the piece from the UUCSR choir practice site at www.nancymh.com/uucsrmusic.html

Also, when we switch to single services for the summer I will be teaching a beginning music class after the service. For those who have wanted to learn to read music, this is the class for you. We'll start with the very basics and see how far we get over the summer.

Yours musically,
Nancy



Women Together Potluck Lunch

Calling all UU women and their women friends! Let's carry on the spirit of the Retreat and have a potluck lunch with all you beautiful women on **Saturday, June 25 from noon to 2:00 p.m.!** (We're hoping that those who are going up to Kitty

and Brian Wells will have lunch with us first before they go!) We'll share delicious food and have some fun activities. Please bring a dish to share. If you have any questions, contact Linda Harlow at 526-3528 or lmh1937@sbcglobal.net.

So NOT the Cleavers

Comedians Stand Up To Repeal Prop. 8

June 23, 2011—8:00 P.M.

at the Glaser Center

www.sonothethecleavers.com

Big laughs during Pride Week from comics "all grewed up!"

Four veteran headliners—gay parents Kevin Meaney and Vickie Shaw and straight parents Maryellen Hooper and Dan St. Paul—come together to show that parents are parents regardless of sexuality.

Tickets—\$20

Half the proceeds go to the American Foundation for Equal Rights to

REPEAL PROP 8



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes Unitarian Universalist Congregation Santa Rosa 21 April, 2011

Meeting Called to Order at 6:00 p.m. by Board President Andrew Hidas

Members Present: Bob Barrows, Ann Chambers, Bonnie Daines (Co-Treasurer), John Farison, Laura Jean Hageman (Co-Treasurer and President-Elect), Phyllis Heagney, Andrew Hidas, Mary Louise Jaffray (Vice President), Lois Nagle, Cathie Wiese (Secretary), Craig Work

Non-members Present: Chris Bell (Minister), Terry Graham (Recording Secretary), Betty Miller, Rose Saint John (Financial Stewardship Council [FSC] rep)

Opening Words: Chris - Reading of "Liberation is Costly," Desmond Tutu

Minutes of 17 March 2010 were approved as corrected and annotated.

Open Mic: Chris announced that Cathy Read, chair of the Committee on Shared Ministry (CSM), had nominated John Chenoweth and Mary Lil Lee as candidate members

of that Committee. John and Mary Lil were unanimously (11-0) accepted as members via show of hands.

Rose Saint John, representing FSC, presented a copy of an e-mail of 17 December 2010 to Andrew and members of the FSC declaring her lack of understanding concerning the BOT policy regarding the separate bank account requirements of the Emergency Fund and requesting clarification of that policy. Discussion dealt with the interpretations of that requirement. As discussion proceeded without resolution, Andrew cited time constraints of the agenda in tabling the issue, requesting it be taken up again as an agenda item at the 5 May meeting.

Annual Pledge Drive Update: Bob and Laura Jean reported that 215 pledges have been received, totaling \$372K, approximately \$15K greater than 2010-11. The drive is largely concluded although there remain a handful of members still needing to finalize pledges.

Cont. on page 11

Cont. from page 10

Treasurer's Report: Laura Jean provided a brief overview of the current fiscal year: outlook is generally on target, with some favorable events (lowered property tax, unexpected gifts) raising the possibility of a small surplus at the fiscal year's end accounting.

Laura Jean then provided extensive details regarding the budgeting status and process as developed by the Budgeting Task Force (BTF). Revenue and expense comparisons of the 2010-11 and 2011-12 were delineated in four categories: pledges, donations, fundraising and interest. The budget process was outlined with specific tasks listed to be performed at the April & two May BOT meetings. Assignments to BOT members to review with committee/council leaders regarding their respective 2011-12 budget revenue and/or expense requests are: (1) Commitments - Dues, Lois & Phyllis, (2) Commitments - Reserves, Mary Louise & Bonnie, (3) Staff Compensation, Laura Jean & Ann, (4) Computers, Andrew & Craig, (5) Buildings & Grounds, John & Bob, (6) Programs, Cathie & Mary Louise. At the 5 May BOT meeting, each BOT pair will present detailed budget requests from their area of focus. BOT will then prioritize and establish possible scenarios under which a balanced budget can be achieved. At the 19 May BOT meeting, the Board will finalize their 2011-12 budget proposal to be presented at the June congregational meeting. The challenge is to resolve the approximately \$40K revenue shortfall vis-à-vis the "goal budget."

And last, an 18 April 2011 draft of the UUCSR FSC Organizational Charter was distributed for further review to be addressed at the 16 June BOT meeting.

Governance/Councils: Discussion on the evolution and current status of our governance structure touched upon the following:

- The history and development of the current system was outlined.
- Is rethinking/restructuring of the system required
- Problems of execution have been experienced.
- There is a perceived general lack of communication between the Councils/Committees and the Board.
- FSC has successfully broadened its engagement and self-identity.
- FSC's relationship with and authority relative to BOT requires further clarification.

- BOT is not receiving Council meeting minutes, which would be helpful in enhancing communication and dialogue.
- What are the specific responsibilities of the BOT/Council liaison officers?
- BOT meeting agendas should regularly include liaison reports.
- The current system seems weighted down to varying degrees by ill-defined responsibilities and authorities.
- There exists no command media defining the system.
- BOT should establish goals and set limits, establish guidelines to empower the "doers."
- How is the drafting of the new bylaws currently in process addressing this issue?

Goal Status Report - RE Task Force: No report.

Goal Status Report - New Member Contacts

Members reported successfully executing contacts. Related suggestion from the 17 March meeting: Mary Louise suggested that a feedback report from the BOT members would be appropriate.

Goal Status Report - New Bylaws Report: Craig reported that the bylaws are expected to be drafted by fall.

Goal Status Report - Youth Group Interaction: Mary Louise repeated that Deborah Mason intends to address the issue with the Youth Group members.

Goal Status Report - Board Transparency: Processes ongoing.

Maintenance Planning: John reported that a detailed capital inventory is being constructed. He queried as to whether applicable insurance covers depreciated value or replacement value. Also, several options for lighting fixture upgrades to increase efficiency are being defined.

Concluding Remarks/Concerns: Betty Miller suggested that "Friends House," a continuing care retirement community where various UUCSR members reside, perhaps be considered as a "share the basket" candidate, given reported financial difficulties there.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Graham

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