

THE UNITARIAN NEWSLETTER a publication of

THE Unitarian Church of Staten Island

Founded in 1852

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March 22, 2009

“Spring is a tide that rises...”

10:45 AM

John Cummins wrote these words about the coming of spring and all it offers: “Spring is a tide that rises in the human heart, and will not be denied! Each of us like the small sea snail, builds our own shell of habit or illusion, erecting futile barricades against life. But then we hear the challenge from beyond...”

This morning we celebrate the coming of spring—with its multitude of colors and growing things. Like spring, something is awakening in each one of us at this moment. We explore the metaphor of spring and what it means to be awake, alive and full of promise and potential.

In the Pulpit: Rev. Susan Karlson	Music Director: Dr. Carolyn Clark
Worship Associate: Linda Santlofer	Flowers: Precious Hayes
Hospitality: Margaret and Richard Currie	
Greeters: Larry Schwabacher and Carol Lodato	

March 29, 2009

Laugh Out Loud—A Service on Healing Through Humor

10:45 AM

I did an annual service on the gifts of humor in my last settled ministry. It was among the most popular services in terms of hits received on the web and attendance on those Sundays. I think it was because something in us yearns to laugh till we cry, to feel the restraints crack in our veneer. We want to let go with a belly laugh and feel the pure joy of just being alive in the moment. Laughter heals and replenishes the barren rough places in our lives. Join us for this mirthful service where we all are free to “Laugh out loud”.

In the Pulpit: Rev. Susan Karlson	Music Director: Dr. Peter Yourke
Worship Associate: Kathy Santo	Flowers: Ellen Pratt
Hospitality: John Adrian & Rafael Martinez-Perez	
Greeters: Larry Schwabacher and Carol Lodato	

What engages you about the Unitarian Church of Staten Island? Why do you come here? Why are you a member or friend?

Imagine what the church means to you and your family. Imagine what the church means to the community. We're asking you to give us your imaginings to share with the congregation as space permits. Please send your ideas by e mail to: uucsi.org@verizon.net, by mail to 312 Fillmore St., Staten Island, NY 10301 or place in a special IMAGINE! basket on the next two Sundays no later than March 22nd.

The IMAGINE! Canvass Committee

Caring Team: Our congregation now has a Caring Team. If you or your family are experiencing an extended illness, hospitalization, family death, birth, adoption, move or other transition, please let us know so that we can send a card, make a visit, help with transportation, child care, meals or other miscellaneous needs. Please contact Ann Kalil at 718- 556-0438, or akalil@si.rr.com, or Rev. Karlson, at 718- 442-1012, (home) or 347-466-0864, with any caring concerns. The Caring Team is part of the caring ministry of this congregation

The next UCSI newsletter deadline is Monday, March 30, 2009, at 9 AM. Please get all material to Stella at the church office

Simply Susan

“In all our times of truth and triumph, of faith and fortitude. Let us celebrate what we share. We are, after all, in this together.” ~Excerpt from Richard S. Gilbert’s *What We Share*

I promised my daughter a trip to Hawaii when she got to be a teenager. I imagined we would camp in the dormant volcano, Haleakala, and witness the beauty of the Island I lived on during my young adulthood. Her teenage years were lean years financially and I didn’t live up to the promise. When she was twenty-four, she reminded me that she would like to see Hawaii with me while I was still alive, imagining I might want her to scatter my ashes there after I’m gone. So we set out on a mother-daughter journey together late in March five years ago. She inspired me to try kayaking for the first time. We watched baby whales do headstands in the water over and over again and we did cross Haleakala though we didn’t spend the night there. So many adventures, so much bonding, so much beauty awakened between us that I cherish and can visualize in my mind’s eye now even without photographs to jog my memory or a conversation to spark those memories.

In this church, we have collective memories like that for those who have been here a long time or even a few months. We have thoughts and feelings about a service, a program, or a gesture of kindness that stands out in our minds—those memories remind us why we come, what this church is all about for us. We gather together in this progressive religious community to share momentous and ordinary times of the mind, heart and spirit. We remind each other in word or deed that our journey together in this season of renewal is about wide open sky images, vast continents and rolling waves of stirrings that propel us forward.

We have caught a wave here at the Unitarian Church of Staten Island. I can feel the momentum gathering here as the ocean wave reaches for the shore. We are on a heroic journey and we are discovering anew what we can and do mean to each other and in ever widening circles outwards. With this surge of energy and rejuvenation, I invite your participation in a bold new course, our IMAGINE! Canvass.

Usually the annual pledge canvass takes place over a period of time where volunteer canvassers contact individuals about making a financial commitment to the church for the year. This year, we are imagining something different. As part of the first phase, we hope you will write down what this church means to you, why you come and what you envision for this congregation’s future (by Sunday, March 22nd, mail your imaginings to the church office with IMAGINE! on the envelope, e mail to PSKARL3@gmail.com or place in the IMAGINE! Basket on Sunday or whenever you come and we’ll publish them in the newsletter and other places throughout the church). We want everyone to consider what a difference this church means in your life and imagine how you want to support the church to keep it healthy and strong.

The visioning process we are going through this year is unfolding in such a beautiful way. The IMAGINE! canvass will continue each Sunday with IMAGINE! words by one of our members during the Sharing of Responsibilities—about how he or she imagines a deeper vision of this church and its place in the web of life. On Sunday, March 29th, we’ll hold an IMAGINE! budget meeting at 1 pm where people can see the proposed budget and imagine how we can all work together to support our dreams and the practical everyday realities that go into keeping the church rolling with the tide. The culmination of our IMAGINE! events will take place on April 19th with a spirited IMAGINE! Sunday Service about what we share and how we care for Unitarian Universalism here on this Island and its wider spheres. We are planning an inspiring worship service that will be different than any other service we’ve had. During the service, each of you will have a chance to place your pledge in the IMAGINE! basket to fund our vision for the church. Please put April 19th on your calendar and come to IMAGINE! Sunday.

IMAGINE what this church can be. Imagine what part you want to play in this church being able to live out our most lively and inspiring vision. We can create and live it. For “We are, after all, in this together.”

In inclement weather, please call the church office (718) 447-2204, or the parsonage, at (718) 442-1012 to find out if services or a particular program will be canceled.

Sunday Service Reminder:

Please note the following times for Sunday services:
Musical Prelude: 10:45 am
Worship Service: 11:00 am

**Welcoming Congregation Film
Screening/Community Talk: "God and Gays"**
Friday, March 20, 2009 Parish Hall, 7:00-9:00 pm

UU parents: Save the Date - Saturday, March 28th from 3:30 - 5:30 PM we will have a special parents meeting to envision a new day of R.E. and a family-friendly UCSI. Bring your wishes and ideas. We will provide refreshments and childcare.

Save the Date: 2009 Arts Festival Opening and Reception -Saturday, April 18, 3:00 PM.

Installation Ceremony Choir:

Calling all Voices for an Intergenerational Choir for the Installation Ceremony of our new settled minister. Dynamic Choir Director Lisa Kropp and a couple of fabulous songs will inspire us. There will be two rehearsals tentatively set for Sunday, April 19th at 5pm and Friday, April 24th at 7pm in the sanctuary. Please RSVP to Jill Hueckel

either at 718-448-1431 or hueckel@si.rr.com about your interest in joining the choir.

Beat the Recession Auction

Bid on luxury items you’d never go out to buy in this economy and get them at a great price!

Bid on items that can help you to keep your costs down and fun quotient up-- lessons in cooking, gardening, knitting, budgeting, feng shui.

Fun features for the kids too!

Save the date! Don't miss the fun!

Sunday, May 3, from 4:00pm to 7:00 pm

Unitarian Church of Staten Island

R.E. NEWS and NOTES:

News: R.E. Committee meeting on Sunday, March 22nd, 1:00 PM in R.E. space downstairs. Update on program, *proposed budget* for next year, news on search for R.E. Coordinator.

Notes: **Please come** to the parents’ meeting on March 28th, 3:30 - 5:30 PM - brainstorm around our quest for a family-friendly UCSI and an R.E. program fitting 21st Century lives.

Beyond the UCSI ~~~ the Building Bridges Coalition is sponsoring the Unity project in all Staten Island junior high and high schools - youth are invited to compete in several categories on the subject of fostering unity on our island. Carol

Lodato and I have represented the UCSI on the youth-oriented committee and our church will be the repository for projects. Clergy members of Building Bridges will judge the young people's efforts. Some of us will also attend the Seder at St. Teresa's.

Beyond Staten Island ~~~ for the past 3 years we have been active members of the Liberal Religious Educators Association, LREDA, meeting nearly monthly with other educators to provide ideas and support to and for one another. This year I have served as the Convenor for the non-NJ Cluster and a member of the Metro District By-Laws Committee. Often on Staten Island we might feel isolated as UUs, but we need only to reach out to other UUs. Without my participation I would never have committed funds for the Spirit Play curriculum and training nor learned many positive techniques for managing an R.E. program. Our new religious educator will have that commitment as part of the job description.

Special trip to hear Christopher Clark with the Men and Boys Choir of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Manhattan, March 29th. Travel detail will be sent to parents later; all kids MUST have a specific permission slip.

In faith and friendship, Patricia Murphy, DRE

We have 3 free tickets available for the Inter-Faith Seder on March 26th, at 7 pm, at St. Teresa's Conran Hall. A kosher catered meal will be served during the service. Please let our minister know if you are interested in a seat at the table so she can make reservations (see contact information above).

Summary: Board of Trustees Meeting, March 11, 2009

Presentation of Plan for IMAGINE! Canvass:

Tom Seluga presented the plan for the IMAGINE! Canvass which will culminate on Sunday 4/19/2009, after a few weeks of campaign publicity, to collect the financial pledge of members/friends towards the next operating budget for UCSI. This fundraising church service will replace our traditional person-to-person canvass (stewardship) drive.

- Testimony regarding church importance will be presented in multiple formats from congregation.
- Proposed Operating Budget will be developed with congregation input.
- Pledge campaign literature will be disseminated to congregation.
- Sunday Service of 4/19 will be devoted to the annual operating budget campaign.
- Members and friends will be asked to pledge their financial support for the next operating

budget at 4/19 service by submitting sealed pledge in basket with fanfare.

- Additional refreshments will supplement the regular 4/19 hospitality after service.

Church Auction:

Tom Seluga also reported that the Church Auction will have a "Beat the Recession" theme, focusing on service items that can teach "how to do it yourself", i.e. cooking, kitting, jewelry making, budgeting, organizing clutter, or luxury items that might not be in the family budget. The Auction will take place on Sun, May 3 from 3:00 to 8:00 pm.

Treasurer's Report – June 1, 2008 through February 28, 2009:

Total Income YTD	\$87,007.77
Total Expense	\$115,420.58
Deficit	(\$28,412.81)

Task Force on Committee on Ministry:

Maureen Curran presented a small brochure that explains the function of the COM, which will be distributed to the congregation. There will be no more than three members selected for service on the COM; these members cannot serve on the Board or on church committees.

The Task Force will:

- Use the UCSI newsletter to continue to notify the congregation about the development of the COM.
- Make announcements at the end of Church services.
- Make presentation to the congregation.
- Make recommendations for selection of COM members and present slate to the congregation for a vote at the annual meeting.
- Ensure that COM members will be people of integrity whom the congregation trusts to remain objective and unbiased in matters affecting the shared ministry of the church.

Welcoming Congregation "Statement on

Affiliations": Approval of a modification to the Welcoming Congregation Committee Statement on Affiliations makes it clear that the statement refers to the position of the UCSI as an institution, so that it reads as follows:

As a Welcoming Congregation church, it is important that our affiliations with outside groups, initiated on behalf of the Unitarian Church of Staten Island, support our first UU principle of affirming and promoting the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Ruth Benson

JUST A REMINDER: Please update preferred or new e-mail addresses by informing the church secretary, Stella Fishman, at 718-447-2204, or, e-mailing her at uuci.org@verizon.net. Thank you.

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

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