

THE REPORTER

The Unitarian Church of Harrisburg • December 2008 • Vol. 44, No. 4

Listening Assistance Devices available, see an usher for assistance. The building is handicap accessible.
Child care for children under age 6 is available during both services.

December Services

Wednesday December 3	7-7:30 PM	☉ Mid-Week Service
Sunday, December 7	9:15 & 11:00 AM	☉ Advent - a Time of Renewed Hope
Wednesday, December 10	7:00 PM	☉ Dark of Winter This will be our last mid-week service.
Sunday, December 14	9:15 & 11:00 AM	☉ Love Your Neighbor As Yourself
Sunday, December 21	9:15 & 11:00 AM	☉ Light One Candle - Hanukkah Pageant
Sunday, December 21	7:00 PM	☉ Winter Solstice Service
Wednesday, December 24	5:00, 7:00 & 9:00 PM	☉ Follow a Star Christmas Eve Services
Sunday, December 28	9:15 & 11:00 AM	☉ Learning to Say No

From Your Minister

*The Reverend
Howard N. Dana*

In the spring of 2000, after accepting a call by the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg to be its minister, I was left with three difficult questions. Was the church I was coming to serve too inwardly focused? Was it only a haven for white, educated Democrats? And, why did the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg have no connection to the City of Harrisburg? Now, eight years later we have been through much together, you and me. Our congregation has gone from hurtful crisis to a place of health and strength. We have grown in numbers and spiritual depth. And, we have steadily moved toward greater involvement in the wider world.

Hopefully all of you know by now that our congregation is considering buying the Shared Ministry church at 16th and Market Streets in the City of Harrisburg. Our conversation is certainly about whether or not to invest in this particular building with all of its promise and its problems. And, even more, our conversation is about our church's work in the world. It is a conversation about how to take our health and

(Continued on page 4)

Well folks, I see we're at a crossroads. A watershed moment. One of those times in life when it's Put-up or shut up, Do or die, Raise or fold. I wish I were just being over-dramatic, using hyperbole to make a point, but this really is a pivotal moment for us as a community, and I guess it's my job as your duly elected crossing-guard to point out the various route options before us.

We face no small financial trouble and of course, as this mischievous universe often conspires, the amazing, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity comes along at precisely this time when it seems we are least able to take advantage of it. We have some real and valid fears about our ability and willingness to do what we are *called* to do. So what shall we do?

Last spring we addressed our deep need for a second minister by voting to call an Associate Minister, and we hired Yvonne to spend this year laying the groundwork for that position. Also last spring, we decided *not* to continue working towards a new multi-million dollar facility, even though we are desperately out of space. We thought the Associate Minister

(Continued on page 3)

President's Message

J.D. Stillwater

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Yoga 6:30 pm Building World We Dream About 7 PM Hellmann COUCH 7 pm Assoc Minister Search Cmte 7:15 PM	2 Dooley COUCH Noon Mindfulness Meditation Group 7 pm FINANCE CMTE 7:30 Helping Women in Prison 7:30	3 Tone Chimes 5:30 Queen Spirit Potluck & Circle 6 pm Mid-Week Service 7 PM Community Cmte 7:30 Faith & Reason 7:30	4 Ziegler/Tyger COUCH 9:30 am Unisingers 7 pm	5 UCH Playgroup 9:30 AM	6 Deck the Halls 6 PM
7 Services 9:15 & 11 AM Path to Membership 10:15 & Noon 5-6th Grade Pizza Lunch 12:30 PM Doyle COUCH Group 7 pm	8 Yoga 6:30 pm Special Clover Lane Coffee House 7:30 pm	9 MMG 7 pm QUESTERS 7 PM	10 Reporter deadline Family Choir 5:30 pm Dark of Winter Service 7 PM Board Mtg 7 pm	11 Unisingers 7 pm	12 UCH Playgroup 9:30 AM	13 Congregational Meeting 4 - 6 pm
14 Services 9:15 & 11 AM 2-4th Grade Holiday Social 12:45 PM Phil&Lit Potluck 6 pm	15 Yoga 6:30 pm Building World We Dream About 7 PM Hellmann COUCH 7 pm	16 Dooley COUCH Noon MMG 7 pm PRIDEFEST MTG 7 PM	17 Clover Grove 7 pm Community Cmte 7:30 PM	18 Ziegler/Tyger COUCH 9:30 am Unisingers 7 pm	19 UCH Playgroup 9:30 AM Coffeehouse 8 pm	20 Craft Group 8 am to 4 pm Yoga Auction event 1:30 & 3 PM
21 Services 9:15 & 11 AM Path to Membership 10:15 & Noon Solstice Service 7 PM Doyle COUCH Groups 7 pm	22 Yoga 6:30 pm	23 MMG 7 pm QUESTERS 7 PM Membership Cmte 7 PM	24	25 Christmas	26 UCH Playgroup 9:30 AM	27
28 Services 9:15 & 11 AM	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	DECEMBER 2*0*0*8		

JOYS & CONCERNS

*This information is reserved for
members of UCH*

Directory Updates

*This information is reserved
for members of UCH*

President's Message

J.D. Stillwater

(Continued from page 1)

position a higher priority, and decided to wait and look for better opportunities to address our bulging, over-crowded building.

Last month, those two things came crashing together. The Finance Committee made it clear to the Board that while the congregation had enthusiastically supported the budget that included Yvonne's position, we had failed to raise pledges enough to pay for it. Without timely action to either cut expenses or raise pledges, the church will run out of money sometime in March. We considered our options, the most obvious of which is to lay off staff. At the same Board meeting, we considered an amazing opportunity to partially solve our space problems, while also providing unparalleled opportunities to live our principles in the community of Allison Hill. After much discussion late into the night, we considered a way to meet both needs. It's a stretch, but we believe this congregation can do it, wants to do it, and will live up to its reputation for bold action. So the crossroads in short, are thus: Go forward, putting our money where our mouths are, or pull back, hunker down, and let our dreams wait.

When I try to sort this out for myself, I am drawn back to the deepest purposes of the church...why am I part of this congregation in the first place? What is it that makes Ann and me give so much money and time to this Work? What *is* this congregation's Work, anyway? It's a little open to interpretation, but I find clear guidance for myself from the UCH mission statement: "The Unitarian Church of Harrisburg strives to be a beacon of love, tolerance, justice, reason and spiritual exploration as we worship together and foster growth in ourselves, each other, our community and our earth." I don't think our use of the word "beacon," with its connotations of brilliance and constancy, was accidental. In this case, it suggests that we will keep our welcome mat out, our doors and hearts wide open, and the lights on in the windows... not *except* during storms, but *especially* then. I believe we, ourselves, have a deep spiritual need to let that beacon of Love "move in our hands, giving life the shape of justice."

By the time you read this, the December 13th special congregational meeting will be approaching. Please do what it takes to be present as we choose which road will serve our mission better in the long run: to stretch some more, rising to meet the tasks at hand, or scale down, cut back, and play it safe until times improve. Either decision is valid, both have consequences that are uncomfortable. Whatever we decide will set a course for the future of this church like few other decisions we've faced previously.

In love,

JD

From Your Minister

Rev. Howard N. Dana

(Continued from page 1)

our success and share it more widely. We are seriously talking about our mission. This alone makes the conversation exciting.

Let me be the first to say that buying a church in a poor neighborhood in the City of Harrisburg scares me. It scares me to think about the mistakes I will make trying to do good work. It scares me to think about adding further burden to the UCH budget. It scares me to think about the ways buying this church might bring out our racism and classism. And I am scared of the work this new project will entail. It will certainly take me out of my comfort zone. It will require of me both leadership and humility. It will change our congregation and my ministry. It would be an adventure, after all. And a journey wouldn't be an adventure if it were safe.

Buying the Shared Ministry building is the right thing to do. Whether I am scared or not, it is the right thing for us to do now. And we are ready for this big step. This daring purchase might be the thing that saves our congregation from obscurity. It might be the thing that saves us from our stereotypes. It might be the thing that allows us to do the work we are called to do. The book of Proverbs tells us, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." If we humans are to thrive, we must be drawn forward by a compelling vision. If we have no direction, we flounder and die. The opposite of courage is not fear, it is malaise. Much more deadening than danger is safety. As lovely as our building and grounds on Clover Lane are, I want us to move beyond them. We need not give them up, but we cannot stay sequestered either.

The best part of buying the Shared Ministry building would be that we would have faithful and competent guides. The congregation of the Shared Ministry has earned the love and trust of its neighborhood through decades of faithful service. They would teach us how to become good neighbors. They would help us see with new eyes. They would help us recover from our inevitable mistakes. We would not come in as a savior, but as a companion. We would come in to befriend others. And through befriending others, the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg would grow in both numbers and spiritual depth.

I ask you to go to 16th and Market Streets sometime in the next few weeks. Park. Walk around. Talk to somebody you meet on the street. Eat at the taco truck in front of the Shared Ministry building. Their tacos are the best in the area. Yes, they speak English, too. And see if you can imagine the ways our congregation could befriend this neighborhood. Notice both your fear and your courage. If you want to see inside the Shared Ministry church, ring the doorbell and tell whoever answers the door that you are from UCH and would like to look around. And then come to the congregational meeting on Saturday, December 13th from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Pray for our congregation, speak your mind, cast your vote, and move into the future knowing your church is brave enough to seriously consider its mission in the world. Keep the faith.

Love, Howard

Yule Ritual

December 21

Come join Clover Grove, QueenSpirit and the Unisingers for a different kind of solstice ritual. At 7:00 PM Sunday, December 21, join us in the sanctuary, and then on to a bonfire outside. Child care will be available. Refreshments to follow, please bring finger foods to share at the bonfire if desired. This will be a light-hearted celebration, Rev. Howard Dana will be leading a Dark of the Winter service earlier in the month, for those wishing a more contemplative service. It is fine to come to both!

Submitted by Ann Stillwater

Lay-Led Addictions Ministry?

In our liberal religious communities, addiction and alcoholism still remain a taboo subject...so let us break that silence and help UUs talk about this silent plague amidst our congregation. Let us form a lay lead addiction ministry to carry the message to those who are suffering from this "spiritual" malady. If interested, or curious, please contact Terence Sillett at 564-5370 or email lionheart@pobox.com.

Submitted by Terence Sillett

The REPORTER

PUBLISHED MONTHLY
UNITARIAN CHURCH OF
HARRISBURG
1280 CLOVER LANE
HARRISBURG, PA 17113

Yes! Dear Harrisburg Unitarian Universalists,

I'm on retreat with a large group of UU ministry colleagues gathered at a lovely lodge in West Virginia. Outside the lodge's living room, where I'm sitting near the fireplace, snow is flurrying. We are here for three days of mutual support, fun, and professional deepening, at the annual retreat of a ministers' study group that has been gathering for years. Scholarly, thoughtful papers have been prepared for presentation and discussion on this year's selected topic.

This is my second year in attendance. Last year's study topic was the meaning of ordination and the authority to ordain in our UU tradition. As one who is not yet ordained and aspires to be so, I personally found the discussion quite timely.

This year, the chosen topic is congregational polity. Once again, authority is front and center. What is the source of authority in our UU faith, and how does power play out within our congregations and in the Unitarian Universalist Association of congregations? To whom or what are we accountable? What calls to us to which we must respond?

We've reviewed the Puritan origin of congregational polity in the pre-Revolution colonies, captured in a document known as the Cambridge Platform. In contrast with religious hierarchy in English and European churches then, the Cambridge Platform centered authority in and among individual congregations. Often taken too simplistically today to mean only that our UU congregations are free to make their own decisions, there is much more to it than that. It is about freedom, yes, but in the context of covenant - the sacred connection that binds us as individuals to each other, as congregations to our association, and as people of faith to the Source of Life and to the wider, fragmented world that yearns for justice, healing, wholeness, and peace. There is accountability at every level.

Chosen interdependence is a better way of conceiving of congregational polity than pure-and-simple independence. In other words we are free to make explicit the terms of our covenant, but we are not free to not engage with each other and be

accountable to each other in keeping with our deepest values and our identity as people of faith.

The very real and tangible choices before the UCH membership at the moment come to mind in this context. Will UCH proceed towards the acquisition of the beautiful building available to us at 16th and Market, on Allison Hill? And will UCH fully fund the Associate Minister position in order to be able to proceed with the search for a candidate to present for calling by the congregation to the very necessary second minister position?

Covenant, calling, responsibility, and accountability - all pertain to these UCH decisions that are imminent. I am sure that the decision about the Allison Hill church building will significantly impact the search should you decide to proceed with it. Choosing boldly and responsibly will speak volumes to ministers in search, who will certainly be excited about the ministry possibilities it will afford the congregation.

Choose wisely, dear ones. May we listen well, address all fears, and move ahead together with faith and strength in keeping with our deepest values, highest aspirations, and the blessings of our capacities. It is in making important decisions like this one that people of faith can save themselves, their communities, and the world.

*Love always,
Yvonne*

Yvonne Schumacher Strejcek, Acting Associate Minister

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. It turns problems into gifts, failures into successes, the unexpected into perfect timing, and mistakes into important events. It can turn an existence into a real life, and disconnected situations into important and beneficial lessons. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow." – Melodie Beattie

De-Stress for the Holidays

December 20

Chair yoga and gentle yoga classes were an auction item. There are still spaces available. The date has changed to Saturday, December 20 with Chair Yoga from 1:30-2:30 and Gentle Yoga 3:00-4:30. Engage in gentle, level-appropriate stretching with a certified yoga instructor. Become more aware of emotional & physical sensations and relax deeply at the end of class with guided imagery. Chair Yoga is \$13 and Gentle Yoga \$17. Contact Ann Stillwater for more information.

Submitted by Ann Stillwater

Come Hungry to Deck the Halls; Help the High School Youth Do Justice in the World!

Have you ever been in the church kitchen? Now imagine that same place filled with twenty energetic high school youth, an onion smell that will make you cry, ten huge pots of bubbling soup (each a different kind), and the desire to make the world a better place. This is what you will find in the UCH kitchen in the hours leading up to the festive holiday family event, Deck the Halls. When you arrive at Deck the Halls you will find many types of warm and yummy soups to fill your bellies before making some great UU holiday crafts. Please be generous in filling the donation baskets. The youth donate all of the ingredients, labor, and love to make the soup. We ask you to donate money to send them on a social action trip to Washington D.C. in July 2009. During this trip, they will learn about urban poverty through hands-on social action projects and engaging workshops to process the experiences. Check out www.thepilgrimage.org. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Submitted by Wendy Shaver

Religious Growth & Learning

Dear Friends,

In late October, I attended the annual conference of the Liberal Religious Education Association, LREDA, which is a national organization for religious educators. It's always interesting and exciting to interact with other religious educators. We exchange ideas and resources. We learn from one another. The four day conference focused on three major topics - early Christianity, multi-generational programming, and staff leadership in large congregations

Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, President of Starr King School of the Ministry, author and noted theologian, gave a series of lectures based on the research and highlights of a new book she co-authored, *Saving Paradise*. Her gift for storytelling and soothing voice held my attention as she spoke of the first thousand years after Jesus. It was a time before the cross was the image of Christianity, women and men were priests, and Christianity was about imitating the life and teachings of Jesus. She is planning to be in central PA this coming May. I highly recommend attending her presentation. Details of her visit will be provided as they become available.

When it comes to multi-generational issues, our congregation is generous in financial support of the children and youth program. There is also an acceptance of children and youth in the sanctuary and at church events. However, we need to work on developing meaningful interactions between our youth and adults. I was inspired to hear of vibrant programs where mature congregants with the wisdom that years of participation in church life provide, work with children and youth. I am anxious to try a model of multi-generational programming which has been successfully used in the St. Paul MN congregation. People of all ages come together for a meal and at the same time learn, do, and share with one another. The Rituals in the Home program on November 14 modeled the format as will the Darwin Day event on February 8, 2009.

The third major topic of the conference, presented by Rev. Robert Latham, was designed for leaders from large churches. It was about the critical imperative for a congregation to have an inspiring mission. Everything in the life of a church flows from a common, clear sense of mission that welcomes diversity in our unity of mission. It is particularly relevant and poignant for me as we discuss the future ministry of our congregation.

I appreciate the financial support in professional expenses that allow me to go to conferences and other professional development opportunities. I also appreciate the support of volunteers that help out in my absence. Thank you for the support and confidence.

*In faith,
Trish*

REGIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMPING TRIP

Imagine passing a twelve year old through a small hole in a web of rope perpendicular to the ground and six feet in the air. A group of twelve participants had to work together so that they all passed through the web, which stretched from the ground to seven feet high, without touching the ropes. This was one of the many team work and trust building activities middle schoolers participated in over their November regional middle school camping trip.

Fourteen middle schoolers from our congregation spent the weekend with peers from Lancaster and Boiling Springs at the South Mountain YMCA. Thank you to Rev. Howard Dana and Tracy Richards for participating in the trip. The weekend was fun, educational, and relationship-building in a beautiful setting, glorious in its fall splendor.

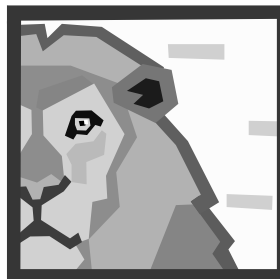
POST-ELECTION GATHERING

The post-election gathering drew about 125 people who enjoyed a spaghetti dinner hosted by the 7th and 8th grade class families. Thanks to the generosity of diners almost \$500 was raised for the Boston Heritage Trip they will take Memorial Day weekend. Thanks to coordinators and cooks Lynne Davies and Maria Gregg, and to bread chef Jane Bechtel and all the families who brought desserts and pitched in on the amazingly fast and efficient set-up and clean-up.

THANK YOU!

Many thanks to **Nancy Pratt** for making and donating beautiful ceramic chalices for the six week store and the new Fuller Chapel! Proceeds from the sale of the chalices will be donated to the Amani Children's Foundation which serves children who have been orphaned by AIDS in Africa.

The Cowardly Lion reflections and revelations on the power of fear



Mark your calendars in advance for what promises to be a warm and transformational group experience anchored on this age old phenomenon. Come prepared to witness the living testimony of personal development and spiritual growth. Session recommended for adults only. This will be held in

the Margaret Fuller Chapel, to the left of the Sanctuary, at UCH.

Saturday, February 7, 2009 9:00 - Noon
Saturday, February 14, 2009 9:00 - Noon

Submitted by Felicia Louise Gaines

First LaGrone Scholar Receives Business Recognition

Leland Nelson, the first LaGrone Scholar, 1992, has been spot-lighted in the Central Penn Business Journal. Nelson is one of **Forty Under 40** notable young entrepreneurs.

Leland Nelson, 34, is president and co-founder of Dirty Dog Franchising Group, LLC. Perhaps you've seen the trucks around town. It's a junk removal service, serving both residential and commercial clients. Nelson and his partner are now awarding franchises in 27 states. See: www.dirtydoghauling.com or 717-232-4175.

UCH member Joan Hellmann, an accountant, was his LaGrone mentor. Nelson graduated with an accounting degree in 1996, joining KPMG accounting. In 2004 he started a clothing line, Many Milez Traveled. Since college, he has also been active with several community service projects.

Thanks to Mary Lou Harris, former LaGrone Scholarship Committee member, for spotting the coverage and providing the material now in the LaGrone display case in the Common Room.

Submitted by Cordell Affeldt

A Holiday Gift that Gives & Gives

For many, December holiday rituals involve giving gifts to friends and to those who are in need. This season, we will be selling \$25 Giant Grocery Gift Cards as part of the church's ongoing fundraiser. In addition, you may choose to donate purchased gift cards to either the food pantry or the women of Promise Place. This would allow your gift to give 10% of the purchase price to the church at no additional cost to you, and to give again to the recipient, whether that is a friend or a friend in need.

Anne Moore will be selling these \$25 gift cards at Coffee Hour after both services on November 30. Cards will be sold for cash or check and will be available for you immediately at the time of purchase. Boxes will be available for you to donate cards to the Ecumenical Food Pantry or Promise Place.

Cards may also be sold on additional dates which would be posted in the Weekly Reminder. **The \$25 denomination of Giant gift cards will be sold only during this holiday season, while supplies last.**

\$50 and \$100 cards for Giant, Weis, and Karns continue to be available through the mail order program. Your pre-ordered gift cards are sent on the 1st

and 15th of each month, along with an order form for your next order and a postage-paid envelope for your payment. UCH earns 10% for Giant and Weis and 5% for Karns cards.

Please stop by and see Anne at Coffee Hour on November 30. Or, if you have questions about the special holiday gift card sale or our regular fund raiser, call Anne Moore at 717-877-8576, or e-mail gift-card@harrisburguu.org.

Submitted by Anne Moore



LaGrone Scholarship Fundraiser a Success

Chalk up \$3795 generated for the Oliver LaGrone Scholarship Fund. That's the total contributed to the Fund during the recent Cordell Collection Plus fundraiser. *Sincere thanks to all who gave money to the Scholarship*—as well as to those whose work supported the project.

Contributors could choose premiums linked to their level of contribution. Each premium was a hand-crafted artwork by a UCH member: Cordell Affeldt, textile wardrobe accessories; Megan Borrer, quotable note cards; Randa Todd, decorative accessories; Janet Widoff, framed line drawings and collages. Anne Gerlach offered an art quilt as a premium.

Other UCH members were involved too. Mary Ann Rhoads took photos of each premium and artists. Lilo Mueller created and printed graphics for publicity and item tags. Della Hoke-Uvick created a web presence for the project. Laura Burdette monitored online reservations daily and supported publicity. Julianna Sillett gave steady logistical help. Margaret Carrow was liaison to the LaGrone Committee. Numerous other individuals supported the work as well over two years of development.

All of the contributions will be used solely for Scholarships. UCH covers all standard annual expenses. See the LaGrone display case in the Common Room for more information on the four current Scholars and their UCH mentors.

AND—we would welcome rounding that \$3795 up with your spontaneous contribution!

Submitted by Cordell Affeldt

Late Breaking Joy:

Add \$190 to the funds raised, bringing the total to \$3985.

**A donation of just \$15
would bring
us to a total
of \$4000!**

December Solstice Concert

Our monthly coffee house features Camilla Widad Kramer, a Sufi-inspired folk musician based in Western Maryland. Well known on the college coffee house scene, she has also performed at larger venues across the U.S., including the Berkshire Mountain Music Festival (Massachusetts), the Health & Harmony Festival (California), the Takoma Park Folk Festival (Washington, D.C.) and the Strawberry Festival (Pennsylvania). Widad plans to present a concert focused on the mid-winter theme.

The coffee house takes place Friday, December 19, at 8:00 PM in the Common Room. Tickets are \$5 at the door.

Submitted by Bart Carpenter

Throat-Singers of Tuva

UCH is pleased to present Alash Ensemble from Central Asia in concert, Monday, December 8, at 7:30 PM. Tickets are \$10 at the door; all proceeds go to the artists. The concert will be held in the sanctuary.

The members of Alash are masters of Tuvan throat singing, a remarkable technique for singing multiple pitches at the same time. What does it sound like? Imagine a human bagpipe-a-person who could sing a sustained low note while humming an eerie, whistle-like melody. For good measure, toss in a thrumming rhythm similar to that of a jaw harp, but produced vocally, by same person, at the same time.

Tuva is a small country at the southern edge of Siberia, with Mongolia to its south. Over the centuries, Tuva has been part of Chinese and Mongolian empires, and shares many cultural ties with Mongolia. In 1944 it became part of the USSR, and until the late physicist Richard Feynman drew attention to it, was largely unknown to westerners. Tuva is now a member of the Russian Federation. Alash Ensemble toured the U.S. last year with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. This is their second U.S. tour.

Submitted by Bart Carpenter

QUESTERS MEET TWICE A MONTH

The inner meaning of life does not readily reveal itself; it must be searched for. Such a search is the Quest. - Paul Brunton

Questers will meet on December 9 and 23 at 7 PM.

Submitted by Terence

COATS TO REFUGEES

As I write this note, I am preparing to take our first donation, 28 coats (and assorted gloves and boots), to the Burmese refugees currently living in Harrisburg. I feel very fortunate to be able to help deliver these generous donations on behalf of the RGL Youth program here at the church. In a very real way, we are helping to welcome families who have experienced years of incredible hardship by providing these new neighbors with coats to help them through the cold Harrisburg winters.

Thank you all for donating, as able, to this worthwhile cause! If you are interested in helping these individuals more, please contact Genny Chirdon or Trish Brandon. We will be considering other possible ways of helping them in early 2009.

Together, we really can make a difference!

submitted by Genny Chirdon



UCH Youth Are Saving the World...

...One Bead at a Time

by Youth Reporter Audrey Stydinger

Asked what her favorite part of the Amani Project is, Janay Carelock, 18, who has been helping with it for a year and a half, responds with, "Knowing that it's not for us, it's for the kids. Each bead reminds me of a child's life that we saved." The Amani Project is the Harrisburg chapter of a wider foundation called the Amani Children's Foundation. This foundation was established to raise money for New Life Homes in Kenya, which cares for AIDS orphans and abandoned infants in Africa. The Amani Project raises money working with mothers in Kenya who make beads to earn a living. The seconds are brought, free of charge, to America. The Amani Project then uses these beads to make beautiful jewelry which it sells, and 100% of the proceeds go to New Life Homes.

Several members of this group visited the youth group on Sunday, November 9. The youth had the opportunity to make bracelets and key chains, which will be sold at the Six Week Store. (All the money earned at the store, not just money from the beads, will be given to the Amani Project.) About 19 youth participated. Everyone enjoyed the project, using their creativity to put together their own creations and discovering some very interesting beads. Franzin Montgomery, one of the youth, said, "We can show different designs that we like." Jean Corey, director of the Amani Project, was also present to help the youth. Her favorite part of the project is that it brings people together that wouldn't normally work together, united in one common goal. Izaak Oliphant probably said it best, summing up the whole project: "It was awesome."

The Amani Project meets every Wednesday from 6:00 to 8:00 pm to make jewelry. They meet at the Harrisburg Institute downtown on Dewberry Street.

Philosophy & Literature Group

The Philosophy and Literature Group will meet on December 14, at 6:00 PM in the Joseph Priestley Room at the church for our annual pot luck, and to select the books that we will read in the coming year.

The discussion of books will begin around 7:00 PM.

Submitted by Dick Hoke

The Amrit Yoga Group meets every Monday night from 6:30 to 8:00 pm in the UCH Preschool Room.

It's free. Bring a yoga mat and a blanket, and wear loose-fitting comfortable clothes. Yoga is a great way to exercise, offering stress release and relaxation for those of us with busy schedules. Come join the fun. For more details, contact Ed Sykes at 975-9946, email esykes@state.pa.us.

The Unitarian Church has done more than any other church to substitute character for creed, and to say that a man should be judged by his spirit; by the climate of his heart; by the autumn of his generosity; by the spring of his hope; that he should be judged by what he does; by the influence that he exerts, rather than by the mythology he may believe.

Robert Ingersoll, 1892

Mindfulness Meditation Group



©Patrick McDonnell 2008, distributed by King Features Syndicate.

There is nothing like the holiday season to remind us how we repeat the same thing over and over again. Whether we approach the year end festivities with a touch of wonder and awe or as a disdainful rerun of days gone by, there is an invitation to sit up and notice the patterns we create for ourselves. Please join us Tuesday evenings at 7:00 in the Margaret Fuller Chapel on the upper level of the church to do just this. Should we choose to meet the holidays as a miracle, a raging assault, or somewhere in between we all sit as beginners together practicing one simple formula:

Be still...Breathe...Relax...Breathe Again...And Again...Letting A Little Time Pass Doing Nothing.

In order to instill this New Year with the intention of your choosing, a rerun of the Soup and Meditation Supper will be held on Thursday, January 1, 2009 at 6:00 PM in the Sanctuary. Please see our larger announcement on page 10 in this month's *REPORTER*. For questions about our group please contact Jeanne at 774-1479 or mmg_of_uch@comcast.net.

Submitted by Jeanne Shellman

Associate Minister Search

Are we ever busy! The online survey that you took in September and was used in completing our congregational record is available for you to read. We sent you an e-mail with the survey attached. We also made copies available in the church lobby in November. If you have not seen the survey results, you can call the church office to receive a copy. Very briefly, the survey confirms in detail that we are well educated, relatively well off, overwhelmingly white, with many newer members. We appreciate the common beliefs and values that we share but also realize that we are an eclectic bunch religiously. That's why we are UUs!

In trying to meet a November 30 deadline, the Associate Minister Search Committee has been extremely busy in November gathering material for our search packet, under the able editing direction of Carolyn Stine. This packet is an eye-catching binder about us - our facilities, history, letters of welcome, RE, adult education, the music program, social justice, the Harrisburg area, our staff, board, our finances, and more - and what we want in an associate minister. Hopefully, prospective ministers will have read our online congregational record and want to know more about us. When that happens, we will exchange packets with them. Thus, in December, your committee will be setting criteria in preparation for reading ministerial packets. It will be a fun reading time. Within appropriate limits of confidentiality, we will keep you posted on our progress. If you have questions or concerns, please look for us at church or e-mail/phone us or send us a letter. We are all in the church directory.

The Associate Minister Search Committee: Joan Hellmann, Chair, joan_elizabeth@comcast.net, 236-6749, Dawn Duffins, Dick Hoke, Nels Johnson, Phyllis Slater, Caroline Stine and Libby Tisdell.

QueenSpirit POTLUCK & CIRCLE

Wednesday, December 3
6 to 9 PM

Unitarian Church of Harrisburg
Common Room & Joseph Priestley Room

- ⊙ Bring a favorite dish, dessert or beverage to share
- ⊙ Bring your place setting and serving spoons and plates
- ⊙ Bring a wrapped gift to give to another sister (regifting and homemade gifts are encouraged)

- SOLSTICE -

CONTEMPLATING THE SACRED SEASON

Kandy and Randa will facilitate a look into Solstice traditions and their origins.

QueenSpirit is a co-created
women's spirituality circle.

Submitted by Anne Moore

Soup & Meditation Supper

Thursday, January 1, 2009
6:00 PM in the Sanctuary

The Mindfulness Meditation Group is offering an invitation to all members and friends of the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg to join us for our annual Soup and Meditation Supper.

In the spirit of mindfulness we will meet in the sanctuary to create intention for the New Year with a brief discussion and meditation period.

This will be followed by a supper of soup, bread and light dessert. The start of a new year... a perfect time to experience our community, as beginners together.

In order for us plan accordingly an RSVP is suggested by noon on January 1, 2009 Call Jeanne at 774-1479 or email MMG_OF_UCH@comcast.net

Submitted by Jeanne Shellman

Helping Women in Prison & Their Families

December's Success Story is about Vanessa Jefferson. Vanessa graduated three months ago from Promise Place, and now rents a house. She started working for a temp agency part-time, and now works full-time in the cold room at Verdelli Farms. She has her sons back with her, and her three grandchildren most of the time. I could hear the smile in her voice when she said she and her grown daughter "help each other a lot." Tammy Johnson of the PROGRAM saw her recently and she is 'doing fine.' Tammy is really proud of her for all she has done. We can be proud of her perseverance, and we should be proud to have supported Promise Place and The PROGRAM to help make her success possible.

Lunch with Edith? She was an intense speaker. Those who joined us on November 2 after church heard Edith Cook, and met one of the several young women she is mentoring. Her story was our success story in October, but that only scratched the surface.

December Meeting: We'll be planning for Christmas gifts for the women at Promise Place, and creating a spring speaker series with people like Edith Cook who spoke in November. Why not join us as we gather on December 2, to work on ways to help the women celebrate Christmas? And we'll be creating an after-church speaker series (building on "Lunch with Edith") so church members can meet someone who has succeeded - or is on the road to success - after spending time at Woodside or Promise Place.

Can you help the UCH members who take turns delivering the Sunday classified ads to the PROGRAM on Derry Street? Dick Hoke and Nancy and Felicia would love to have more folks in the rotation. Ask Dick Hoke for details. You can call Dick at 737-3973.

UCH folks like Anita Mentzer have helped Alice Winner with the monthly class in "Time and Paper Management" she presents to women at Woodside Family Center, and you can too. Having

a volunteer helper gives three benefits: 1. The volunteer meets the women we are helping, in a structured situation; 2. He/she gets some ideas on managing his/her own time and paperwork, and 3. Makes the class easier for Alice. Contact her at SilkSpinnerAW@verizon.net or (717)533-2775 for details.

Or, you can drive women from Woodside Family Center or Promise Place to the monthly breakfast - which will be on December 6 at Word of Grace Ministries, 3414 N. Progress Avenue, Harrisburg. Many UCH folks have driven, like Chris Dutton, Mary Ann Rhoads, Margaret Carrow, Marilyn McHenry, Fred Burton, Jim Cavanaugh and Dick Hoke to name a few - talk with them to learn what it is like. Tell Chris Dutton if you'd like to drive.

For more information contact Margaret Carrow, Chris Dutton, Dick Hoke, Jim Cavanaugh or John Hargreaves, or visit the Church web site at harrisburguu.org

Submitted by Jim Cavanaugh

IRA Charitable Rollover Opportunity for Older Americans with IRAs Extended

Submitted by Marielle Hazen

Older Americans are once again able to contribute directly to charitable organizations from their individual retirement accounts, thanks to a provision in the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (H.R. 1424), which was signed into law on October 3, 2008. The IRA Charitable Rollover tax incentive, which is available through 2009, allows individuals aged 70½ and older to donate up to \$100,000 from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) to public charities without having to count the distributions as taxable income. Rollovers were allowed for some taxpayers in 2006 and 2007; the extension permits them for all of 2008 through 2009. The distribution limit of \$100,000 is per person, so for married couples each spouse can make qualified distributions of up to \$100,000 provided both spouses have IRAs and both are at least 70 ½ years of age. Qualified taxpayers must make the distributions directly to the charitable organization. The taxpayer will not be able to take a charitable deduction for the contribution, but the distribution amount will not be includable in the taxpayer's taxable income for the year. If the taxpayer were to withdraw the funds from the IRA and then make a charitable contribution with the withdrawn funds, the taxpayer would be able to take a charitable deduction, but the amount withdrawn would have to be included in the taxpayer's taxable income for the year. Because charitable deductions are limited according to the taxpayer's adjusted gross income (AGI), in most cases taxpayers come out significantly ahead by utilizing the IRA charitable rollover rather than withdrawing the funds from the IRA and then donating them to the charity.

Taxpayers who have not yet taken their required minimum distribution for 2008 may want to use the charitable rollover to satisfy their minimum distribution requirement. The taxpayer needs to direct the IRA provider to distribute the funds directly to a specified charity or charities (*such as the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg*) by December 31, 2008. This will satisfy the taxpayer's required minimum distribution without increasing the taxpayer's AGI. The charities will need to know the taxpayer's name and address, and the funds must be distributed directly to the charities. As is always the case when making charitable contributions, the contribution must be supported with a receipt and a statement from the charity that no consideration was received. Unfortunately, taxpayers cannot reverse a required minimum distribution that has already been taken.

This article was submitted by Attorney Marielle Hazen, a member of this congregation and principle of Hazen Elder Law, an estate planning and elder law firm in Harrisburg.

DECK THE HALLS

December 6th at 6:00 PM

HOMEMADE SOUPS FOR SUPPER

Make and take ornaments

ORNAMENTS FOR OUR CHURCH CHRISTMAS TREE

12 Days of Christmas tradition

GINGERBREAD HOUSES

Holiday Songs

YEAR-END TAX INFORMATION

Cash, check or in-kind contributions to UCH to be included as part of your 2008 income tax report **MUST** be received by the Church office by December 31, 2008 (or postmarked by that date). Contributions/pledge payments received or postmarked **AFTER** December 31, 2008 will be reported as received in calendar year 2009. Contributions to our church during 2008, and recorded in our contribution database, will be reported to you by letter in early January so that you may use it for your 2008 income tax report.

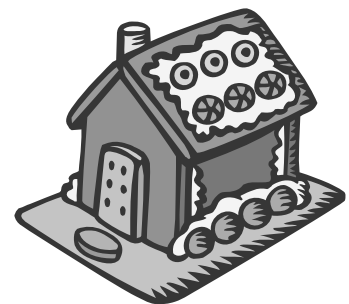
Submitted by Don Hoskins

Association Sunday picnic chicken barbeque leftovers fed the hungry. Extra meals were paid for by sponsorship donations of picnic attendees. Thank you!

Dear Unitarian Congregation,

Thank you so much for the food you donated to our Sunday Dinner Program here at St. Patrick Cathedral. Our guests were delighted with the wonderful food from your picnic.

With Warm Regards,
Mary Ann Shetty
Director for Parish Ministries



The Unitarian Church of Harrisburg
1280 Clover Lane
Harrisburg, PA 17113

Time Dated Material: **PLEASE EXPEDITE**

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit #812
Harrisburg, PA

DECEMBER 2008

Return service requested

Check here & return unopened
if you wish to be removed
from our mailing list.

The Unitarian Church of Harrisburg

Phone: 717-564-4761

FAX 564-4780

E-mail: office@harrisburguu.org

Web site: <http://www.harrisburguu.org>

MINISTER

Rev. Howard N. Dana

ACTING ASSOCIATE MINISTER

Yvonne S. Strejcek

CHILDREN & YOUTH RELIGIOUS

GROWTH & LEARNING

Trish Brandon, Director

Wendy Shaver, Youth Advisor

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

Sandy Wilbern

MUSIC MINISTRY

Sparkie Radcliffe, Director

Jim Haines, Associate Director

Julie Slaybaugh, Unisinger Accompanist

STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR

Alanna Berger

SEXTON

Bob Kershner



Affiliated with the
Unitarian Universalist Association

**Wondering if a church service or event has been delayed
or cancelled due to the weather?**

When inclement weather is expected, call the Church at 564-4761 for any special announcements regarding delays or cancellations of services or events or tune in to one of the following stations.

Radio: WITF 89.5

Television: FOX 43, WHP-CBS 21, The CW15, WITF

Websites: abc27.com, fox43.com, whptv.com, cw15.com, WITF.org

Use your best judgment about driving. Closures will be posted on our website whenever possible.

Newsletter Information

The REPORTER is published monthly by the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg. Della Hoke-Uvick is the Editor.

Submissions to *The REPORTER* are due **on the 10th of each month**. Please include a name and phone number in case of questions.

Submissions may be

- ♦ **Mailed to or dropped off at:** 1918 Princeton Avenue, Camp Hill, PA 17011 (by 8:00 PM);
- ♦ **emailed to:** dellahoke@yahoo.com. *Please note that there will be a return reply acknowledgement* - if you do not receive an acknowledgement within 24 hours, please call Della!
- ♦ **or** dropped off in *The REPORTER* mail slot at the Church by 2:00 PM;
- ♦ **Call** Della at 737-9251 with questions, please, no calls after 9:00 PM.