

Windmill

Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

To affirm and promote
the inherent worth
and dignity
of every person

FEBRUARY 1, 2009

Taking Note . . .

by The Reverend Kate R. Walker



My favorite **Mary Oliver** poem is *Sleeping in the Forest*. The line that always gets to me, in typical Mary Oliver fashion, is the last one: "By morning I had vanished at least a dozen times into something better." It is a line about hope.

Winter has a way of giving pause in our lives. It slows us down and pushes us under the covers. In the midst of winter's cold embrace, we yearn for the warm, soft earth, I thought the earth remembered me ... But, before our toes touch the depths of lichens and seeds, we have an opportunity for reflection, for remembering, for hoping.

Combine our winter retreat with the harsh reality of an economic depression, and it may truly feel like our light is fading with each day. Job insecurity, retirement funds sinking, and health care costs looming, how do we face this world? Where is the hope?

Those of us blessed with the ability to keep our eyes on the long horizon of hope usually bear the wild journey from achievements to dashed dreams better than those who focus too much on the immediacy of the moment. Yes, the spiritual teachers have taught through the ages to focus on the moment—to be present for our lives rather than lose ourselves in the mists of the past or future. Yet, like so many things in life, a balance is the better advice. We walk through the present, yet we look up to the horizon for our inspiration, and remember that this too shall pass.

This morning the sunrise was earlier than yesterday, and the day before that too. This is the cycle of the earth, and our lives. This is the essence of hope. We take our sleep upon this earth each night; we rest our weary hearts and minds; and we rise again, having dreamed of something better.

Question Box (Questions Left Over from a Service in August 2008)

Q. "Star Trek is for UUs and Star Wars is for Baptists. Agree or disagree? Why?"

A. Since I like both Star Trek and Star Wars, I have to disagree. I could try to guess what the premise is on the separation of UUs and Baptists, but I'll pass on the guesswork. Star Trek and Star Wars appeal to my interests in science fiction as well as science fantasy, and they are just plain entertaining, fun and intriguing in their reflections on humanity along with a few other species.

Q. "What should we do if someone comes in with a loaded gun and makes noise about it?"

A. I can make all sorts of suggestions such as drop to the floor, tackle the person, or run. But the bottom line is, when confronted with a truly threatening situation, most of us react from our base instinct of either freeze, fight or flight. The majority of people can not over ride this instinct unless they've had extensive training to stay in their neocortex, the thinking part of the

brain. Knowing how many retired military personnel we have in our midst, there may be folks who have training and can stay in a thinking reaction. They know far more than I on what to do when confronted with a loaded gun. I should note that if someone has a gun, we don't actually know if it is loaded unless it is fired. But we should treat it as if it is loaded.

You all should know that board member **Bill Clontz** has been leading a team of folks who are interested in this kind of question and other emergencies. We met with local Mt. Vernon Police and have developed an emergency plan which includes communication between buildings, having first aid kits available including defibrillators, and talking with the children on what they should do in case of an emergency. The likelihood of a total stranger coming into our midst with threats is very low. It is far more likely that we would have some familiarity with the person. So, if you see some unusual behavior, even of someone you know, please share your concerns with someone else.

Cheers, **Kate Walker**

**MOUNT VERNON
UNITARIAN CHURCH**

MINISTER
The Rev. Kate R. Walker

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**Program Highlights
Mark Your Calendar!**

Good Companions
11:45am–12:45 pm–BYO Lunch
12:45–1:45 pm–Speaker
Hollin Hall

Tuesday, February 10—Cassie Arnold: *My New Career—Social Work.* Cassie, a long-time member of MVUC, is a professional photographer, but she has been working for the last two years at the interface of social work and criminal justice. The population she serves is composed of court-mandated drug and alcohol youths, prisoners, and sexual abuse survivors. She will discuss her work and also answer your questions.

Tuesday, February 24—Mark Gorman: *Paradise Lost: Common Causes in Conservation and Social Justice.* Mark is the husband of our minister, **Rev. Kate Walker**. In addition to having been a volunteer, he was also employed in various environmental and social justice endeavors over many years in Pennsylvania. Now that Mark has moved to Virginia, he has taken a position as Director of Development and Communications at United Community Ministries.

RE Teacher Training—New Date!
Saturday, February 7, 9:30 am–12:30 pm
Hollin Hall, First Floor (Page 3)

Rock & Roll Baby: A Family Dance Party
Saturday, February 28, 3:00–7:30 pm
Meeting House (Page 3)

February Lunch-with-a-Book
Sunday, February 8
After 11:15 am Service
Village Wharf Restaurant (Page 4)

Religious Education (RE)

By **Meagan Henry**, Director of Religious Education (DRE)

Dear Friends,

I had a great, albeit very busy, time over the holidays, and I remember thinking that things around the church would calm and settle in January. Boy, was I mistaken! January has been an exciting and vibrant month in Religious Education at MVUC. The High School Youth are busy planning their youth service, and they had a lovely retreat at Wolf Run, thanks to **Pam** and **Bruce Tinker**. With the dedicated leadership of their teachers, the Jr. Youth Group hosted their families at a Sunday brunch, complete with waffles and a chocolate fountain. The eighth grade students and parents attended their *Coming of Age* orientation with the teachers, **Jacki Arnold** and **Reid Adler**. We began two OWL classes: one for Middle School students and another for our fourth and fifth graders. In all, we have over 25 kids taking OWL this winter. Our Kindergarten-fifth grade RE classes are continuing their *Tapestry of Faith* classes, and the Pre-Kindergarten class helped serve cookies during a coffee hour between services. In addition, parents continue to gather on Sunday evenings in support of one another, and some are taking the *Being a UU Parent* class on Thursday evenings. Other adults in our community have the benefit of attending Adult RE classes; *Choices for Sustainable Living* meets Sunday evenings and *Great Decisions* begins February 1.

I think I was looking forward to some quiet time for reflection during the month of January, but I'll take the alternative of vibrant Religious Education programming and loving community building any time. There will be time for reflection over the summer!

~Warmly, Meagan

RE Teacher Training—New Date!
Saturday, February 7, 9:30 am–12:30 pm
Hollin Hall, First Floor

All RE teachers are encouraged to attend a three-hour training, including a preview of the *World Religions* mini-session and a special presentation from guest speaker, **Michele Grove**. Ms. Grove is an experienced Director of Religious Education, and her presentation focuses on human faith development.

Rock & Roll Baby: A Family Dance Party
Saturday, February 28, 3:00–7:30 pm

The **Joy Troupe** and MVUC are working together to bring you Rock and Roll Baby: A Family Dance Party. Children, ages zero-five, will love the opportunity to boogie the night (okay, the afternoon!) away. As those of you who call MVUC your church home know very well, our facility features safe, convenient parking; a clean, family-friendly environment; and an excellent nursery space for feeding and changing young children in comfort. In other words, it features everything required for truly family-friendly entertainment!

This fun event for families with young children is sure to delight you and your little ones; we'll have a dance floor, interactive activities (including a musical play area by *Music Together* from our very own **Cheryl Sabo**), refreshments, and lots of opportunities for you to get to know other families with young kids from MVUC and elsewhere! You can share your love of music and fun with your child, create some wonderful family memories, and meet new friends for yourself and your kids. Does it get any better than this?

Yes, it does! The funds raised from this event will go toward our very own MVUC Natural Playground Project! So the cost of your admission is actually an investment in a sustainable play space that will benefit your children and our local area indefinitely. This is the event that keeps on giving!

Tickets are available now via the Rock and Roll Baby Website. Advance tickets are \$8.00 **Joy Troupe** and MVUC members qualify for discounted tickets! See our website for details. Ticket quantities are limited! *Don't wait until we're SOLD OUT.* We are still recruiting volunteers and sponsors for this event. To order tickets, or for more information on volunteering, visit www.rockandroll.joytroupe.com.

(The website will be continuously updated as we confirm arrangements with our sponsors.)

Fort Hunt Preschool (FHP) Currently Accepting Applications for 2009/2010 School Year

Enrollment season at FHP is here! FHP is a parent-run cooperative preschool in the Carriage House of MVUC with classes for two-, three- and 4-year old children. Our philosophy of "learning through play" encourages children to grow and explore in a way that is in harmony with each child's unique personality.

February Lunch-with-a-Book

Come join Lunch-with-a-Book on February 8 when we'll be discussing the 2008 book selected by *All Fairfax Reads*, **Alan Bennett's** *The Uncommon Reader*.

The basis of the story is: What are the consequences when Queen Elizabeth's corgis stray into a mobile library parked near Buckingham Palace? The book can be seen as a celebration of reading and enjoyed for its counterpoint independent thinking. Join us at the Village Wharf Restaurant after the 11:15 am service. You need not have read the book to enjoy lunch and the discussion. Please contact **Louise Werner-Rhoades** at 703-619-1369 or louron13@cox.net for more information.

Partner Church News

Thanks to everyone who attended the Partner Church brunches in November and December. The after-Christmas brunch was so successful and well attended, we ran out of food. Sorry about that! It won't happen again!

Our generous congregation and friends contributed \$1,200 to Alternative Gifts this holiday season; \$450 toward Transylvania scholarships and \$750 toward the Mawlat school expansion. Thank you so very much. We are sending \$2,700 to our partner church and school in Mawlat in January—thanks to your generous support.

Please save the dates for our annual Partner Church service and special collection, Sunday, March 1 and our annual Partner Church dinner, Saturday, March 21. We will serve delicious Hungarian and Indian food, and our own **Jane Nelson** will give a presentation on her recent trip to the Khasi Hills.

~Lisa Gillispie

Update on MVUC's Recent "Green" Activities

The *Looking through the Green Lens* column (page 6) will post monthly updates about MVUC's latest church-wide "green" improvements. If you're helping to "green" the church, please forward information about your activities.

—Coffee Mug Rack: Help keep our coffee hours "green" by bringing a mug to keep at church, then washing it in the bathroom or nursery sink. Thanks to **Wendy Burns, Lynn Alsmeyer-Johnson** and **Dorothy Brandt** for installing cup hooks behind the door in the copy room.

—"Green" Product Sales: Last December, All Souls Church in Washington, D.C. came to MVUC to share their successful "green" product sales program. Starting this spring, two Sundays each month during coffee hour, MVUC plans to begin selling "green" household goods, including Earth-friendly cleaning products, tissues, and toilet paper, etc. Fair Trade coffee and chocolate bars are currently being sold.

—Field Trip to the National Building Museum: Coming soon! A "green" field trip, open to all, will tour the new exhibition, *Green Community*.

Teach us love, compassion and honor that we may heal the Earth, and heal each other. ~Ojibwa prayer

Annual Spring Book Sale

The Annual Spring Book Sale will be held March 26-28. Books on the shelves in the Fireplace Room of Hollin Hall are for the sale. They may be purchased now at \$2.00 each. Please leave money for purchases in the church office mail slot with a note that it is for the book sale. For information on the sale or to volunteer to help, contact **Joan Wamsley**, 703-751-6086.

Northern Virginia Legislative Unitarian Universalist Preview (NoVA LUUP) Web Site

NoVA LUUP's web site is now truly up and ready for you to visit. Visit the NoVA LUUP web site <http://www.novaluup.org> or just google "NoVA LUUP!" Once there, be sure to bookmark the site for future visits. You'll find the site packed with information about our new effort to bring a UU Voice of Love and Justice to the Virginia Legislature. Sign up for any or all of our three Lobby Days, or become an "Armchair Lobbyist" and sign up for our Action Alerts.

Laura Dely, UU Church of Arlington Member and
NoVA LUUP Instigator

Becoming Our Hill of Dreams

We have taken big steps toward becoming the church we all dream of, a caring community of faith on a common journey. We become a community through mutual care and respect, listening, caring for each other, providing a place to search and grow, and by common endeavor—also by investing a portion of our money in each other by our contributions. As spiritual beings, we actually need to give, a continuing act that is good for the soul and binds us to the community. Our community needs your monetary stewardship of this holy hill to continue its work, to lift its voice of justice, and to expand its care to others.

So many good things have happened to MVUC, and it gives us hope for the future. But we face some real challenges, and we need to keep the momentum. Here are the interconnected MVUC goals that your contribution will make real, to become Our Hill of Dreams:

- Continue improving programs and services benefitting our congregation and our larger community.
- Hire and retain a talented professional staff to ensure the quality of programs and services.
- Broaden and deepen our awareness of paths toward spirituality.
- Carefully manage our financial operations.

To achieve our dreams, we need a solid and sustainable financial foundation. Income in the current year is covering expenses, but that is only because volunteers fill the church administrator position. That expense and others now become real. To solidify our financial foundation, we need a distribution of pledges like that shown below. Please consider where you are in this year’s distribution and, if your circumstances permit a larger commitment, help us step up to our stewardship objective for next year. We are asking that everyone consider stepping up to the next level in giving. That is how we become Our Hill of Dreams.

If our stewardship commitments reach this goal, they will be combined with other expected income to allow us to hire the skilled staff of professionals who can help us meet our program and service needs, such as expanding our website, maintaining our vibrant social justice programs, increasing our award-winning green initiatives, offering outstanding religious education classes, and broadening and deepening our spiritual awareness.

Number of Stewardship Commitments

<u>Amount</u>	<u>This Year's Actual</u>	<u>Next Year's Objective</u>
\$10,000 or more	2	2
\$9,500 - \$9,999	0	0
\$9,000 - \$9,499	0	0
\$8,500 - \$8,999	0	1
\$8,000 - \$8,499	1	0
\$7,500 - \$7,999	1	2
\$7,000 - \$7,499	1	0
\$6,500 - \$6,999	2	3
\$6,000 - \$6,499	2	1
\$5,500 - \$5,999	0	1
\$5,000 - \$5,499	3	3
\$4,500 - \$4,999	4	5
\$4,000 - \$4,499	8	8
\$3,500 - \$3,999	9	10
\$3,000 - \$3,499	5	5
\$2,500 - \$2,999	6	6
\$2,000 - \$2,499	22	26
\$1,500 - \$1,999	22	26
\$1,000 - \$1,499	35	52
\$500 - \$999	43	33
Less than \$500	<u>28</u>	<u>16</u>
Total Number	<u>194</u>	<u>200</u>
Total Amount	<u>\$355,000</u>	<u>\$400,000</u>

MVUC offers a vital message that is in line with the more liberal policies expected under our new President. With our new minister and the growing success of our social justice and religious education programs, we should expect to provide meaning and community to many new members. We need more of your time, talents—and treasures—for MVUC to become Our Hill of Dreams.

Our first major event is “Commitment Sunday” on February 22. **Rev. Kate** has planned a special service to help us celebrate who we are, where we’ve been, and where we’re going. We’ll feed you, entertain you, inspire you, and we promise there will be no canvassing! It will be fun for the whole family. Please join us and please help us become Our Hill of Dreams.

Jamie Barnett and **Jim Potter**, Co-Chairs
Stewardship Campaign Committee

Looking Through the “Green Lens”



MVUC Windmill Unlikely to Generate Usable Energy

Last August, the Green Sanctuary Task Force asked the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Virginia Tech (VT) to investigate the possibility of harnessing energy from our beautiful spinning windmill. Having started early in October, the VT engineering students recently presented their interim findings to church members, including members of the 1999/2000 Windmill Committee.

Unfortunately, though wind energy is certainly available at the top of the windmill, we learned that after conversion there will be insufficient energy to accomplish very much at the bottom. It all boils down to the first law of thermodynamics, which states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed—it can only change form. At each stage in the change process, energy is lost as heat through friction, resulting in less usable energy at the end. In the case of our windmill, the wind (kinetic-motion) energy that can be measured at the top of the windmill can be harnessed, but at each step in the harnessing process, there are losses. The sustained and average winds at the top of the tower are insufficient to generate, after transduction, much usable energy at the bottom. MVUC might be able to harness about 1700kWh/year, amounting to a potential savings of about \$120/yr, but we would need to invest perhaps \$1,500-1,800 to “harvest” this energy.

This result was not unanticipated. A previous study of our windmill in 1999 resulted in a similar conclusion, though the intent of that study was primarily to ascertain whether the windmill could once again be used to pump water from the well beneath, which was deemed impractical for other reasons. Even if new technologies are discovered that can dramatically alter the ability to convert the wind

energy into electrical energy, there is insufficient wind energy at the top of our windmill to generate much in the way of usable electrical energy. We will continue to have a lovely decoration and symbol in our beautiful windmill, but it will not “harvest” energy.

The VT students will be continuing their project and will be providing MVUC with their assessment of what new strategies might be employed to harness sustainable wind energy. We have asked the students whether other kinds of windmills might be more practical and useful, though given the nature of the winds and terrain induced turbulence that also seems unlikely.

Though we are disappointed, the more important point is that MVUC has made a concerted effort to look at its energy utilization through a *Green Lens*. Everything we do as a church community, regarding modifications to our church or even routine maintenance, should be viewed through a similar Green Lens; we should push, where economically feasible, to consistently apply conservation and sustainment principles. Everything from coffee cups and cleaning materials to major renovations should be viewed through the Green Lens. This is the ethical obligation we assume and intend to invoke community-wide through our social justice commitment. We should serve as the example for others.

Once again MVUC has partnered with a world class university in order to study opportunities for improvement in environmental conservation practices. Though this particular project may not lead to long-term benefits, it is a testament of our commitment.

~Dan Cohen for the Green Sanctuary Task Force

MVUC's Environmental Practices Featured in *Washington Gardener*

MVUC's storm water management water gardens are featured in the January/February edition of *Washington Gardener*, the premier gardening magazine in the metro area and a prominent advocate for natural and environmental practices. Our own **Steve Dressing**, the driving force behind the completion of the gardens and the caretaker of the gardens today, wrote the article in collaboration with the publisher when the magazine expressed an interest in publishing a feature about the water gardens in its *Before and After* column. Copies of the print edition will be posted in the Meeting House. You may check out *Washington Gardener* at www.WashingtonGardener.com.

Mug Rack Available!

Yes, MVUC made the switch to paper cups last year, although they are much costlier up front than styro-foam cups. But, many of us would like to use ceramic mugs. Now we have that option. There are cup hooks in the Copy Room, behind the door. Bring a mug to church. Use it. Wash it out in the bathroom or nursery sink between or after services. Hang it up for next time. Sound simple? Hope so!

Wendy Burns, Lynn Alsmeyer-Johnson, and Dorothy Brandt for The Green Sanctuary Task Force

Activities On and Off the Hill

Our Home Community News

The Thursday Readers will be meeting on February 26, 10:30 am, in Hollin Hall Fireplace Room, to discuss *The House of the Spirits* by **Isabel Allende**. You may pick up a reserved copy at Sherwood Hall Library by telling them you are a member of the Thursday Readers. We hope you will join us for the lively discussion.

Thanks to all those who gave us wine corks last year. We do not need any more.

The Every Thursday group does need yardsticks, so please don't throw or give them away; bring them to the church and leave them in the Hollin Hall Kitchen.

The March Book Fair will also include the selling of unwanted art, art objects, and frames. If you have a donation, leave it in the white kiosk in the parking lot or in the Hollin Hall kitchen.

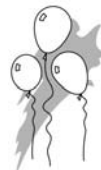
The Caring Committee reminds you that if you need rehab equipment (wheelchair, walker, crutches, commode, shower chair, or raised toilet seat), contact **Sandy Peterson**, Our Home Community Program Chair, at 703-768-2565. We may have in our supply of rehab equipment just what you need, and you are welcome to borrow it for as long as it is needed.

Caring Associates

Contact information for the Caring Associate for the week and Caring Associate Coordinator (CAC) can be found each week in the Order of Service and in the Member Services area of the church website. As always, the MVUC staff and volunteers are willing to assist you during normal business hours. Please direct any questions or concerns to **Betsy Stephens** (betsys2@verizon.net) or **Meg Clontz** (megclontz@cox.net).



RE Youth February Birthdays!



2 Rachel Morgan	14 Grace Alexander
4 Thomas Norman	17 Connor Sadler
5 Jillian Downey	17 Hannah Jeng
8 Audrey Anderson	17 Jaelin Picado
8 Raven Des Jardins	18 Dolan Napier
12 Johannes Lee	22 Audrey Snedecor
13 Joshua Turner	28 Rilke Burgiel

Social Justice Activity

Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) Update

On January 12, RADM **Jamie Barnett**, USN(Ret), MCPOCG **Vince Patton**, USCG (Ret), CAPT **Joan Darrah**, USN (Ret) of MVUC, RADM **Alan Steinman**, USPHS/USCG (Ret), and former USAF SSgt **David Hall** briefed **President-elect Obama's** Transition Team on the issue of DADT. The five members of the Transition Team with whom we met were all part of the staff managing Department of Defense and national security issues. President-elect Obama's position on DADT, as outlined on his web site, www.change.gov, is:

Repeal Don't Ask-Don't Tell: Barack Obama agrees...that we need to repeal the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. The key test for military service should be patriotism, a sense of duty, and a willingness to serve. Discrimination should be prohibited. The U.S. government has spent millions of dollars replacing troops kicked out of the military because of their sexual orientation. Additionally, more than 300 language experts have been fired under this policy, including more than 50 who are fluent in Arabic. Obama will work with military leaders to repeal the current policy and ensure it helps accomplish our national defense goals.

The Transition Team made it clear that President-elect Obama is firmly committed to repeal of the current law. We all left the meeting very encouraged by everything that we heard and very optimistic that the end of DADT is finally in sight. However, there is still work to be done.

As most of you know, during the 110th Congress, there was a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives (H.R. 1246) that called for replacing DADT with a policy of non-discrimination; 149 Representatives signed on as co-sponsors, including **Jim Moran**. A new bill will be introduced shortly (bills do not carry over from one Congress to another), and a similar bill will be introduced in the Senate in a couple of months. We must all reach out to Senators **Webb** and **Warner** and ask them to support repeal of DADT. We should also express our appreciation to Representative Moran for his strong support.

Ideally, it would be great if each of you would send a personal letter or e-mail to our senators and representatives. However, in addition, we are going to ask all of you to sign a petition to send to Senators Webb and Warner and Representative Moran. These petitions will be available in the commons on Sundays in early February. Thank you all for your continued support. Because of it, I am optimistic that repeal will be a reality in this Congress.
~CAPT Joan Darrah, USN (Ret)



OUR LARGER WORLD NEWS

Social Justice Programs at the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

Love is the teaching of this church, and service is its prayer.

Mid-Year Social Justice Update

The Social Justice Council is proud to offer a summary of its fall activities, undertaken with the active participation, and on behalf of the members of MVUC. Since September 2008, our various social justice groups accomplished the following:

1. Held three social-justice services with the guidance and support of our new minister, **Rev. Kate Walker**: one on immigration (sponsored by the Civil Liberties Task Force); one on UUs for Social Justice (UUSJ), with **Rev. Terry Ellen** as a guest speaker; and one featuring the work of the UU Service Committee (UUSC).
2. Collected \$8,568 in special collections for the following: Open Door Housing Fund, American United for the Separation of Church and State, UUSC Guest at your Table, Walk for the Homeless, United Community Ministries, UUSJ, and Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington.
3. Donated over \$2,000 to UCM from money collected by the Candy Machine Project.
4. Established a Disaster Relief Fund that dispensed financial aid expeditiously, to victims of Myanmar (\$800), and to victims of the tragedy at the UU Church of Knoxville (\$360). We have \$700 remaining in the fund at this time, ready to be dispensed as the need arises. Note: Funds are dispensed based on available money in the fund at the time of a disaster; eg. when the Knoxville tragedy occurred, we had \$300 available in the fund.
5. Donated food and clothing weekly to UCM and Rising Hope. Collected and distributed school supplies in the fall, and Christmas gifts in December, for UCM families.
6. The MVUC Partner Church Committee supported its partner in Transylvania by providing holiday food packets to elderly parishioners, subsidized church heating costs, provided internet fees for the minister, bus transportation to the Annual Unitarian gathering, and Christmas gifts to the students in the village school. Our generous congregation provided scholarships to 38 students, for a total of \$23,000. In the Khasi Hills, we provided \$3,000 in financial support for the Unitarian church and school, enabling them to provide uniforms, books, teacher salaries and expand the school to include upper grades.
7. Together with RE families, provided Thanksgiving food baskets to families in transitional housing at Mondloch House.
8. Started feeding the homeless in the format of VIC-HOP (Ventures in Community Hypothermia Project). MVUC is the only VIC church that provides dinner and overnight shelter once a week for the entire duration of this program, December through March. Over one hundred MVUC members and friends are involved.
9. Provided elections registration information and forms, and mobilized our members to vote.

10. Walked for the Homeless in the National Mall walk as Neighborhood Sponsors, a 'first' for our church.

11. Launched a Living Green year, to educate ourselves about the importance of changing our habits to lower our imprint on the environment. Educated the congregation about the effects of overuse of plastic bags and sold MVUC tote bags. Circulated flyers on 50 ways to lower our carbon footprint. Watched **Van Jones** deliver the Ware Lecture at the General Assembly, focused primarily on establishing a green economy. Held *Menu for the Future* class to further educate the congregation about ethical eating and sustainable consumption habits.

12. Met with **Senator Jim Webb** and his staff on Capitol Hill, to continue work to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell. Educated our youth about this legislation.

13. Invited New Hope Housing representatives to educate our RE children about homelessness.

14. Provided support for UCM's *Transitional Life Skills Program*; held year-around food drives to benefit UCM and Rising Hope.

15. Held Congressional debate for Virginia's 11th district race between the Republican and the Democratic candidates.

16. Participated in two blood drives, one hosted by MVUC.

17. Participated in VOICE rally.

18. Educated the congregation about women's issues via a movie night co-sponsored with the Partner Church Committee, and a brochure on the candidates' positions for the November issue.

19. Organized a Legislative Preview of legislation coming up in Richmond, with **State Senator Patsy Ticer** and several advocacy institutions in attendance. The Virginia Interfaith Center, SALT and Equality Virginia representatives joined UU representatives of Northern Virginia known as NOVA-LUUP.

20. Supported the UNICEF carnival, an annual event organized by the RE Council to support UNICEF and educate our children about the fate of other children around the world.

21. Invited Virginia Tech students to undertake a study of the feasibility of turning the windmill energy to our use.

Considering that planning for this busy fall started in May, we continue to walk the walk of social justice initiated by our founding members over fifty years ago, and to demonstrate our commitment through service, advocacy, education and financial assistance. For more, please visit our website, and check the Social Justice page.

The Social Justice Council meets on the first Tuesday of the month, and its meetings are open. Please join us! Sincerely yours: **Lynn Alsmeyer-Johnson, Marybeth Bernhard, Ron Brandt, Dan Cohen, Joan Darrah, Gregg Early, Lisa Gillispie, Lynne Kennedy, Helen Lounsbury, Jim Potter, Georgeta Pourchot, Al Robbert, Dick Schaffer, Alison Stevens.**

Board Notes

The Board's monthly meeting was held January 13, and we are pleased to report the following events that are worthy of note:

- The most recent report on membership and attendance indicates there is a beginning upward trend in new members and attendance in church and religious education classes. We are a church that seeks growth and diversity, and we joyfully welcome all newcomers and visitors to MVUC.
- **Mark Zimmerman** will continue to serve as our interim choir director and music coordinator through June 14. The search for a permanent Director of Music has been suspended temporarily, but will resume in early fall. We are delighted to have Mark and his inspiring musical leadership with us for as long as possible.
- Action continues to fill the positions of church administrator and church bookkeeper; this is an ongoing item for the Board. We use this as an opportunity to express again our thanks and appreciation to our able volunteer, **Ron Brandt**, who has efficiently served as our administrator and bookkeeper for over a year.

Update on Unitarian Universalist Association Media Campaign

From the UUA's Marketing team: *There have been many conversations among ministers, lay leaders, the growth team (BWGC) and the UUA and Joseph Priestly staff about the right course of action. Collectively we have decided to postpone the larger mass media campaign until the economy recovers and instead implement a more modest, interim 'phase 1' campaign designed to keep the momentum going.*

The BWGC will be sharing that plan with you shortly. It's a good plan—with lots of low-cost marketing ideas. I think you'll be pleased and excited.

Enthusiasm for marketing remains high and is a testament to how deeply all of us feel about sharing our faith with others. Certainly we know that now is an opportune time to share our good news with not only those who may be moving to the area during the transition to a new administration, but to those in need of a nurturing community during these difficult times.

Let's invite our friends—and welcome the stranger—to our church. Together we can grow our faith by our own actions of outreach, kindness, and hospitality.

- **Ian Anderson** has been accepted to serve as the Youth Representative to the Board. Ian will complete the term of **Doug Jemison**, who resigned in November. Thank you for your service, Doug, and welcome to our group, Ian!

The Board reviewed its progress in meeting the objectives/priorities it established for this year. It agreed that progress had been made in areas of staffing, programs and activities, ministerial support, financial matters, and communications, but that more involvement in denominational affairs was needed.

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be February 10, at 7:30 pm. It is anticipated that the next fiscal year budget will be reviewed. The meetings are open to all interested congregants, and you are welcome to attend.

~From Board of Trustees' Minutes of Meeting

New Features Added to Website

When looking for information about the church, remember to check the website www.mvuc.org. Technical team members **Joanne Masterson**, **Lisa Gillispie**, and webmaster **Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson** are reviewing the design implemented in September and will be making recommendations for further refinements. In the meantime, new features are being added from time to time, especially in the Members section.

To view the section, click on the word "Members" at the top of the screen. This produces a list (called a "dropdown menu") of available screens. For example, "Calendar" takes you to a page from which you can view a full calendar of coming meetings and other events. From the Calendar page, you can also schedule future meetings of church groups.

In the Members section, you will also find back copies of the Windmill and Board of Trustees minutes, along with trial audios of a few Sunday services (more in the future). Members looking for governance resources will find committee charters along with the full set of church policies and bylaws. As explained in another article in this issue, a web-based photo directory is available. And we are considering posting commonly-used blank forms.

For questions or suggestions regarding content of the site, contact Church Administrator **Ron Brandt**, 703-765-5950 x 103, admin@mvuc.org.

Sermons for Your Re-Hearing

Each Sunday's service is recorded and available on CD. If you would like a copy, please speak with **Raleigh Romine** or **Joanne Ell**.

A Month of Sundays

*Services at 9:30 am and 11:15 am
in the Remington Chapel*

February 1

Is This the Lord's Prayer
Rev. Kate R. Walker

February 8

YRUU Service

February 15

Divine Disunity
Rev. Kate R. Walker

February 22

Let's Talk About SEX
Rev. Kate R. Walker

March 1

Finding Common Ground
Partner Church Service
Jane Nelson and Mimi Stevens

**Mt. Vernon
Unitarian Church**
*1909 Windmill Lane
Alexandria, VA 22307*

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Alexandria, Virginia
Permit #658

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**Reminder to All MVUC
E-Mail Users**

To receive all weekly bulletins and special notices, please promptly notify **Esther Dickinson** (esther-gertrude@verizon.net) whenever your e-mail address changes. Thank you!