

# Windmill

Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

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

APRIL 1, 2009

... is a Welcoming Congregation. Its Mission is to inspire a transforming journey, to embrace our interconnectedness, and to build a loving community of fairness, equality and respect.

## Taking Note . . .

by The Reverend Kate R. Walker



I'm a pragmatic kind of woman. As evidence, I present that on many days when I walk out my front door, I could be an advertisement for L.L. Bean. From my shoes, socks, pants, shirt, coat and purse, I've pulled a chunk of my wardrobe straight out of the Bean catalogue. I was also a Girl Scout; something that never completely disappears in one's character: "Be prepared."

I usually have a Swiss Army knife in my L.L. Bean purse. (It does have all sorts of wonderful pockets to put all my pragmatic can't-leave-home-without-it items.) I prefer the one that has a corkscrew on it, something that amused my mother no end. I once lost a Swiss Army knife to airport security because I forgot it was in my purse. The security guard at the airport really didn't want to throw it away after it was discovered by their x-ray machine. I told him he had to; after all, these are pragmatically frightening days when we have to be prepared for anything. Except of course, we don't actually want to have that knife in hand when on a flight in case a terrorist is on board too.

I think it's hard to be prepared for life. Uncertainty is around every corner, behind every decision, and underneath everything we step on. We move forward, frankly, because we don't really have a choice.

Sitting still, paralyzed by uncertainty, unable to make a decision, we die. Or at least we become couch potatoes, a situation that then turns into some kind of bizarre story on an episode of ER. ("She just stopped moving one day. I don't understand it, Doctor. It's like her body and the couch became one entity. Can you help her?")

"To live with courage, wisdom, and humility, we must accept uncertainty," said Peter Putnam.

He's right, of course. I can buy all sorts of practical, be-prepared items and carry them around in my purse and car. (I have an emergency kit, and after living in Pennsylvania and Colorado, I also carry fluorescent orange vests for myself and my dog in case I go walking in the woods during hunting season.)

But, to be truly prepared, I need to remember to bring my courage to live a life of uncertainty, to use my very practical wisdom in making decisions, and my humility for when I get it wrong (as witness the toss of the Swiss Army knife), for the consequences are what we have to contend with.

In addition to my pragmatism, another layer exists. It's a layer of thrill-of-opportunity from the unforeseen, excitement at possibilities, and gratitude for the mysterious edges of life.

Albert Einstein said, "The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious." Also very true. Control is the key element that determines if my day is going to be ruled by Ms. Pragmatic (be prepared), or by mysterious Ms. Opportunity (can I let go of my need to control my day and its outcome?). When I let go of control and trust, I let Ms. Opportunity guide my life; then I move from L.L. Bean to become yet another large clothing chain, one catering to the silk and satin crowd—less pragmatic, and more feminine and mysterious. I like the different layers of myself, and there are more, to be sure.

Some days are L.L. Bean days; some days are silk and satin days. Some days I feel a need to be more proactive, prepared, and at least pretend I'm in control. Some days, I'm able to let go, and let mystery greet me when I open the door. Blessed be,

~Kate Walker

**MOUNT VERNON  
UNITARIAN CHURCH**

**MINISTER**

**The Rev. Kate R. Walker**

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**Program Highlights  
Mark Your Calendar!**

**Visitors' Meet and Greet Luncheon**  
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**Yee Von Ng Recital**  
Sunday, April 5, 3:00 pm (Page 4)

**Annual Easter Egg Hunt**  
Sunday, April 12, Between Services

**Good Companions**  
11:45am-12:45 pm-BYO Lunch  
12:45-1:45 pm-Speaker

**Hollin Hall**

**Tuesday, April 14—Georgeta Pourchot:** *A View from Behind the Iron Curtain, part 2.* Georgeta continues her story about life behind, and beyond, the Iron Curtain. Education and body control, media suppression, arts and resistance under communism, as well as adjustment to thinking freely after communism collapsed make the focus of this second presentation.

Georgeta is the Program Council Coordinator for the Social Justice Program at MVUC. She has published numerous articles on social justice. Her work along with many others helped MVUC win the Bennett Award for Social Action on Human Rights at the 2008 General Assembly. Last year, she won the Lifetime Service Award for her contributions to the well-being of the church.

**Tuesday, April 28—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 drug and alcoholic youths, prisoners, and sexual abuse survivors. She will discuss her work and also answer your questions.

**MVUC UU Seder (Intergenerational)**  
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Sunday, April 26, 5:30 pm, (Page 5)

**Small Group Ministry Facilitator  
Training and Information Session**  
Saturday, May 2, 9:30-11:00 am (Page 7)

# Religious Education (RE)

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

Dear Friends,

The RE year is progressing at a rapid pace, and your RE Council and I have many items of note to share with you:

RE Notes:

- April 12—Annual Easter Egg Hunt!
- April 17—Intergenerational UU Seder
- April 19—Begin Year 3 of Green Hill Project
- May 31—End of the RE Year Picnic
- June 7—Begin Summer Fun Program

Your RE council is hard at work! We are continuing to:

- develop the curriculum matrix (4 year content plan for Children's RE),
- redefine the childcare policy,
- investigate Red Cross certification,
- initiate teacher and curriculum surveys,
- implement changes to the REC Charter, and
- plan summer programming.

We're happy to report a few recent successes:

- We were awarded money from the SBA fund to buy two iPod boom boxes and a new multi-media projection system.
- One more Elementary OWL teacher completed training, and she's joined the 4th-5th OWL teaching team. Welcome **Linda Walton**!
- Began Religion In Life, Girl Scout, and Love and Help Cub Scout programs.
- Conducted fabulous teacher training with guest presenter, **Michele Grove**, on the topic of Human Faith Development.
- Taught successful World Religions Mini-Session for grades K-5, which included Mosque and Temple field trips by the elementary classes.

We're looking forward to:

- Spring RE Worship Service & Teacher Recognition,
- Spring or Summer Camp-Out (if we can find a date!), and
- COA (Coming of Age) class fundraisers and a heritage trip to Boston.

Sincerely,

**Meagan Henry**



## RE Announcements

**Sunday, April 12—Annual Easter Egg Hunt**  
between services

## MVUC UU Seder (Intergenerational) Friday, April 17, 5:30 pm Hollin Hall

Our celebration commemorates the exodus of the Jews from Egypt and the liberation of all peoples. MVUC members and friends of all ages come together to celebrate the story of the Exodus. **Rev. Walker** will lead the event.

We would like people to sign up to bring certain foods—vegetables, roasted chicken, pasta/rice, dessert, wine/grape juice, and one dish for vegetarians. (Note: no foods that have been leavened.) Sign-up sheets will be in the Commons. There is a limit of 40 people, so please sign up early. For more information, contact **Seileen Murphy**, [smurphy@sentinelconsulting.com](mailto:smurphy@sentinelconsulting.com) or 703-283-5130.

## Stories and Music in the Garden! Sunday, May 3, 4:00–6:00 pm For All Ages

Talented MVUC members **Cheryl Sabo**, music-and-movement for children teacher, **Penelope Fleming**, storyteller, **Eric Pourchot**, instrumentalist, and friends will present folk stories and songs in our enchanting walled garden from 4:00-6:00 on Sunday, May 3. Please join us for what will be a glorious afternoon of entertainment for all ages. Families with young children are asked to bring a blanket for seating. Chairs will be available behind the blanket seating. Plan to enjoy a picnic supper with us during or after the performance. Brats, burgers, beer, and wine will be sold. Donations for the performance and profits from food sales will help fund the MVUC/FHP Natural Playground Project. (In case of rain, we will move inside to the Meeting House Chapel.)

See you there! MVUC/FHP Natural Playground Project Committee: **Wendy Burns, Meagan Henry, Kristen Reidy, Gail McNulty, Nancy Renner, Laura Cohn, Rachel Meadows, and Dan and Cindy Avrit**



## Activities On and Off the Hill

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### **Yee Von Ng Recital** **Sunday, April 5, 3:00 pm** **Remington Chapel**

The music program of MVUC is pleased to announce the recital of Yee Von Ng, doctoral music student at the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland (UMCP). She is assisted by three additional students from the University. They are Alexis Tantau, mezzo-soprano, Ethan Watermeier, baritone, both from the Maryland Opera Studio, and Jenny Wu, violinist.

Miss Ng received a bachelor's degree in music from the University of Newcastle, Australia, and piano performance diplomas from University College Sedaya International, Malaysia, and the Royal School of Music, London. She earned a master's in music at Bowling Green State University, Ohio. She is currently studying for her DMA in collaborative piano at UMCP. Musical experiences include accompanying singers, instrumentalists, choirs, ballet classes, opera choruses, musicals, as well as performing solo on both piano and harpsichord. Yee Von has been accompanying the adult choir here at MVUC, and looks forward to participating in the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado this summer.

Ms. Tantau (MM) has been featured in master classes with such artists as Marilyn Horne and Twyla Tharp; she is in demand as an interpreter of French repertoire. She has sung lead roles in many opera productions, including Metella in Offenbach's *La Vie Parisienne* with Opera du Periford in France.

Mr. Watermeier (DMA) holds degrees from Northwestern and Manhattan School of Music. He has sung opera roles in Santa Fe, New Mexico; Castres, France; and Honolulu, Hawaii, as well as performing in Broadway national tours.

Ms. Wu (MM), winner of many regional string competitions, both solo and trio, keeps a busy performing schedule with chamber musical and orchestras, as well as being an active recitalist in the United States and Asia.

Guest youth artists included are Hector Allen, piano, and Natalie Steenrod, viola.

The concert is open to all, and a freewill offering will be taken to benefit the church music programs. A champagne and chocolate fondue reception will follow.

~Mark Zimmerman

Interim Choir Director and Music Coordinator

### **Represent MVUC in Salt Lake City**

If you are planning to attend the UU General Assembly in Salt Lake City, Utah, June 24-28, you may be appointed a delegate representing MVUC. Send your request to **Lauck Walton**, Chair of the Board of Trustees, [lwalton4@usa.net](mailto:lwalton4@usa.net), by Friday, April 10.

### **Lunch-with-a-Book**

The last two meetings of Lunch-with-a-Book will be held after the 11:15 am service on April 19 and May 3 at Primo's Restaurant in the Belle View Shopping Center.

April's selection is *People of the Book*, by Geraldine Brooks. *People of the Book* is the story of a mysterious, illuminated Haggadah made in fifteenth century Spain and rescued from the shelling of Sarajevo's libraries.

The May book is Amy Tan's *Saving Fish From Drowning*. Told by the ghost of the tour leader who had died mysteriously, it is the story of twelve American tourists who travel into Burma.

For more information, contact [Louise Werner-Rhoades](mailto:Louise.Werner-Rhoades@cox.net) at 703-619-1369, or [louron13@cox.net](mailto:louron13@cox.net).

### **Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of North Bay Wine Country Holiday**

In a year when overseas vacations are harder on the budget, why not plan a trip here in America? There is so much to see and do in the Napa and Sonoma Valleys, e.g. wine education and tasting, art, history of the regions, gourmet dining, bicycling and hiking to explore the natural beauty of our hills and valleys, and only an hour to San Francisco! Sites of particular interest include Jack London's home; renowned and boutique wineries; numerous fine restaurants, including the Culinary Institute of America; the diRosa Art and Nature Preserve; many museums and galleries; miles of bicycling and hiking trails, etc.

We offer two choices: Comfortable lodging in members' homes with full breakfast (up to three nights), or lodging plus our renowned Wine Country Excursion two-day tour package.

In 2009 the program will run from April through October. Our fees for lodging are at least 25% below market rate (and include a scrumptious breakfast!) and tours are about 50% below commercial rates. All proceeds go to our small fellowship. We have limited openings, so contact us now for details. **Tom Wilson**, 707-254-7443, r [2wilsons1dog@comcast.net](mailto:2wilsons1dog@comcast.net).

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## Activities On and Off the Hill

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### **Special Collection Raises over \$2,000 for Beacon House**

A check for \$2,270.52 has been sent to Beacon House in Washington, DC, the result of the special collection taken at Sunday services on February 15. At the services, the **Rev. Donald Robinson**, founder and president, explained that Beacon House is a neighborhood-based organization that supports at-risk youth and families of the Edgewood Terrace community by offering educational, cultural, recreational, and athletic programs. For example, children go to Beacon House after school for tutoring, a snack, and games.

For many years MVUC has taken a second collection once each month to benefit a worthy cause selected by the Social Justice Council, chaired by **Georgeta Pourchot**. Council members choose non-profit organizations that do most to serve the community and are in accord with UU values. MVUC members have contributed especially generously to these requests in recent months. Besides the usual monthly collections, there were several special events last fall, and the YRUU youth group held a "Souper Bowl" on Super Bowl Sunday that yielded \$680 for United Community Ministries. In less than six months since September 1, the church has taken nine special collections raising a total of almost \$16,000.

The collection on January 11 raised over \$1,200 for Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington. A collection taken Christmas Eve raised \$2,600 for United Community Ministries, a local organization that serves the homeless and people in need living in the vicinity of the Route 1 corridor. A special collection taken in November yielded \$1,700 for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee program "Guest at Your Table." Earlier that month, a similar effort raised \$1,600 for Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice, a regional association of UU congregations in Northern Virginia, Washington, DC; and Southern Maryland.

### **Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, April 26, 5:30 pm Chapel and Commons**

Once a year church members enjoy a potluck dinner and then meet to elect new members of the Board of Trustees and conduct other church business. This year the congregation will approve plans for Social Justice Task Forces and act upon two proposed changes to the Bylaws. You must be a member by April 12 in order to vote.

### **Visitors' Meet and Greet Lunch Sunday, April 5, 12:45 pm Hollin Hall Breakfast Porch**

Are you still learning about UU and MVUC? Come join **Rev. Kate**, along with a Board member and a Membership Committee member, for a brown-bag lunch and casual conversation, following the second service at 12:45 pm on April 5. The lunch will be held in the Hollin Hall Breakfast Porch, off the Dining Room. If you forget your lunch, there will be soup, and peanut butter and jelly for sandwiches. Our nursery caregiver, **Farhat Chaudhry**, will be available to watch your children, so please bring them a snack too. We hope that you will take this time to get to know us better and for us to know you better as well. We plan to have Meet and Greet Lunches on the first Sunday of every month, so please plan for the next one if you can't come to this one.

~Membership Committee

### **In Recognition of Your Joining MVUC**

Happy Anniversary to the following members who joined during the months of December, January, and February!

52 years ago: **Margaret Edelman**

More than 40 years ago: **Rusty Clauss and Marge Witting**

30 to 40 years ago: **Eleanor Erickson, Anne Andrews, Wendy and Bill Burns, Leon Kahn, Liz Campbell, and Walter Anderson**

20 to 30 years ago: **Betty Davis, Ellen and Gil Fritz, Kay Sargent, Ruth and Doug MacCleery, George Churchill, Bill Hoover, Joe Sanders, and Nina Tisara**

10 to 20 years ago: **Laura Walker, Gloria and Dan Logan, Colleen Griffin, Scott Shepard, Suzanne Cleary, Marlene Churchill, Kristine and Steve Erickson, Nancy Reder and Peter Pocock, Karen and Herb Tyson, Deborah Carr and Steve Lougee, Linda and Terry Jemison, Deborah Matthews, Lisa and Michael Gillispie, Lynn and Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, Alan Bunner, and Lia La Piana**

10 years ago: **Barbara Jacobs, Georgia and Eric Pourchot**

5 years ago: **Lisa Guide and John Passacantando, Vince Patton, Laurie and Marty Hayden**

## Activities On and Off the Hill

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### Looking through a Green Lens

**Easy Green!** Purchase orange juice that states "not from concentrate." Orange juice that is made into concentrate is often produced in orchards that were once rain forests. Also, buy orange and other juices in paper cartons. Why throw away/recycle more plastic? Just a thought. ~Wendy Burns

**Share a Green Tip?** An "Easy Green" tip will be shared in the newsletter each month in this column. If anyone has a tip he or she would like to share, please contact **Wendy Burns**, 703-780-3204, or [wdburns@erols.com](mailto:wdburns@erols.com).

Correction: Sale of green products occurs on the third Sunday of each month, not on the fourth as reported in the March Windmill.

### Spring Workenanny

**Sunday, April 19, 10:30 am-4:00 pm**

Please plan to reserve Sunday, April 19, for our semi-annual Workenanny: weeding and needed work, which are essential to maintain and improve our wonderful grounds (our "Holy Hill!"). You may sign up for specific projects on the Workenanny Clipboard in the Commons the week before—or just appear that Sunday ready to help; attend either service, and come to the sign-in table for assignments. Jeans are appropriate; bring your favorite hand tool and stay for as long as you can. By implication of Board of Trustees' actions, the Congregation chooses to be its own steward in maintaining our gardens, boxwoods, and trees. Workenanny is the best vehicle for this truth. So, now is your chance. Free pizza lunch for all workers will be served at 1:15 pm. Families are welcome! Hope to see you there! ~Alvin Macomber

**Joseph Priestley District (JPD)  
2009 Spring Conference, April 24-25  
Wilmington, Delaware**

MVUC is entitled to eight lay delegates to attend the JPD Spring Conference. Visit the JPD website at <http://jpduua.org> to see the conference brochure, read descriptions of workshops, and to register. Just click *JPD Spring Conference Navigating Through Changing Times*. Important topics during this Spring Workshop are Membership Development, Social Action, Green Justice, Religious Education, and Care Umbrellas. Please request an MVUC Delegate Card from Lauck Walton, and join the MVUC Leadership in creating the Dreams at MVUC this coming year. Registration is already under way!

### MVUC Spring Greenhouse News

The MVUC Greenhouse is gearing up for its Spring Plant Sales held every weekend in April and May. Check us out when purchasing plants for special occasions, such as Mother's Day, Easter, and Memorial Day.

Many of the seeds we selected at our potluck dinner in January are now planted. Since mid-February we have been delving into Pro-Mix, and now the greenhouse is full of seedlings, including tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, lettuce, basil, cilantro, and a variety of annuals and perennials. Cuttings of fig, coleus, and a mix of tropical house plants, as well as geraniums, fill the greenhouse with a rainbow of colors.

We will continue planting as we still have heirloom tomatoes, herbs, nasturtium, morning glory, cosmos and zinnias to get started, to say nothing of all the ongoing transplanting.

There is always room for more of you who enjoy playing in the dirt. Besides planting seeds, tending seedlings, and transplanting, we also need help at our weekend plant sales with selling plants and keeping ourselves knowledgeable about them. We would love to have you join us. Call **Mary Barnett** at 703-360-7152.

### Invitation from Baltimore's First Unitarian Church

The First Unitarian Church of Baltimore invites our leadership and members to attend its annual Union Sunday service, at 11:00 am on Sunday, May 3, 2009. Union Sunday commemorates the "Baltimore Sermon" given by Reverend William Ellery Channing, setting forth his theological ideas on "Unitarian Christianity" that transformed Unitarianism.

This year, the Rev. Peter Morales, a candidate for president of the UUA, is the speaker and will be honored with a reception immediately after the service. Peter will have an opportunity to discuss his campaign platform and ideas, and will take questions.

First Unitarian is located at the corner of Charles and Franklin Streets. It's the big white building with the "Civil Marriage Is a Civil Right" banner, just past the basilica and overlooking the Pope Paul Peace Garden. Street parking is free on Sundays. The garage across the street on Franklin is free until 1:00 pm; afterward there is a \$4.00 fee. For further information, contact [office@firstunitarian.net](mailto:office@firstunitarian.net), or 410-685-2330.

## Activities On and Off the Hill

### Memorial Service Paul William Stumpe

A memorial service for **Paul William Stumpe**, son of **June and Russell Stumpe**, will be held on April 11 at 11:00 am in the Chapel. Paul was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in January 2009, and died on February 11, 2009 in Redwood City, California, at the age of 52. Members of his family were with him during his final days, including his sister **Julie Stumpe Dressing**, and other siblings.

Paul moved to California when he was a young adult and had carved out a successful career in the bicycle industry. He was an adventuresome person and had spent much of his life in the outdoors. He was known for his long-distance bicycle rides. One of his hobbies was building and flying radio-controlled model gliders on the coast.

All are invited to the memorial service, and friends who would like to visit with the family are invited to a reception following the service at the home of **Julie and Steve Dressing**, 1799 Rampart Drive, Alexandria.

### Seeking Members for a Prayer-Shawl Ministry

Do you enjoy knitting and helping others? If so, would you be interested in participating in a prayer-shawl ministry here at MVUC? Started in 1983 as a group-roots movement, the Prayer-Shawl Ministry is devoted to knitting shawls and donating them to groups such as the elderly, ill, and homeless. Throughout the country, hundreds of groups meet each week to knit, enjoy fellowship, and give something back to the community. If you are interested, please contact **Michelle Coon** by email at [mjcoon95@gmail.com](mailto:mjcoon95@gmail.com), or by telephone at 703-960-2484. All ages and level of knitting experience are welcome.

### Grief Recovery Group

**April 21-June 9, Tuesdays, 9:30-11:00 am**  
**Hollin Hall Breakfast Porch**

With the loss of a loved one comes a broad range of universal feelings, and yet the way we grieve is unique to each of us. The support of others experiencing a loss and struggling to cope with the confusion and sadness of death can help us to mourn and to heal. The group provides a safe, gentle, supportive and confidential environment to express the many emotions associated with grief and to share each other's experiences. We work as fellow travelers in your grieving process and offer coping skills to help you in this difficult time. Free individual consultation is required before joining the Group, which will be limited to ten people. The Caring Associates and Rev. Kate Walker are the sponsors.

Cost: \$30/week, pay as you go. Please call **Kathi Fertig**, 703-768-3355, or **Maria Anastasiou**, 703-768-3333, for individual consultation. Clinical supervision is provided for this group by **Kris Rosenthal**, LPC.

### Small Group Ministry (SGM) Facilitator Training and Information Session Saturday, May 2, 9:00-11:30 am Hollin Hall Morning Room

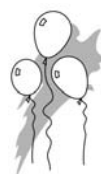
Through the pursuit of ultimacy and intimacy, Unitarian Universalist churches all over the country are being transformed and energized by SGM. MVUC is gearing up to start the SGM program in the fall. If you're interested in being a part of this adult program as a facilitator, please join us.

The purpose of SGM is to offer a path to better realize our mission as a congregation and a religious community. Individuals benefit by deepening their spiritual experience, and engaging in meaningful relationships with other members.

Time commitment for facilitators depends on each facilitator, but is generally 8-10 hours per month. Please let **Rev. Kate Walker** know by calling, 703-765-5950, ext. 104, or e-mailing [minister@mvuc.org](mailto:minister@mvuc.org).



### RE Youth April Birthdays!



8 Ian Anderson	14 Naomi Masterson
11 Elizabeth Papp-Grebb	15 Devin Power
12 Jacob Clark	16 Boede Offringa
12 Griffin Colaizzi	21 Nate Sinn
13 Devon Des Jardins	26 Faith Bossman
13 Keller Collins	30 Alexa Sears

### 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](mailto:betsys2@verizon.net)) or **Meg Clontz** ([megclontz@cox.net](mailto:megclontz@cox.net)).



## 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.*

### UNO Advocates for US Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

In 1989 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted for ratification the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Every member state of the United Nations has ratified this Convention except the United States of America and Somalia.

The Convention recognizes each child's political, cultural, social and economic rights as descended from important assumptions reflected in the preamble paraphrased below:

*... recognizes (that) the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, ... the UN has, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenants on Human Rights, proclaimed and agreed that everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, ...the United Nations has proclaimed that children are entitled to special care and assistance in order to achieve full and harmonious development of their personalities, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding, that children should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity, ...that children need special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protections, before as well as after birth, and...recognizing that in all countries in the world, there are children living in exceptionally difficult conditions, and that such children need special consideration, taking due*

*account of the importance of the traditions and cultural values of each people for the protection and harmonious development of the child....*

The actual declarative sections run for several pages, but essentially are designed to assure compliance with the sentiments in the preamble. You can access the entire document at <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>.

The main reason the US has not ratified the Convention is because the State of Texas allows children to be given the death penalty, which the Convention would not permit. By refusing to sign the Convention, the US continues to condone the execution of children. President Obama has described the US failure to ratify the convention as "embarrassing" and has promised to review this. Now is the time to hold the President to his promise and urge him to stand up for Human Rights and to protect children world-wide.

Please take action on this matter! Write today to President Obama and to Congress and advocate early ratification of the Convention. You can find contact information on our website, under *Social Justice/Activities and Media*.

The Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office supports full ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Support the efforts of the UU-UNO by donating at <http://uu-uno.org> or send donations to: UU-UNO, 777 UN Plaza, Suite 7G, New York, NY 10017.

~Dan Cohen, MVUC UNO Representative

### Over 200 Signatures—Thank you !!!!

Thank you to the over 200 people who signed the petitions to accompany the letters from MVUC to Senators Warner and Webb, and Representative Moran, regarding repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT). The letters to our Senators asked them to support repeal; the letter to Representative Moran thanked him for his continued support and for signing the new House Bill calling for repeal (H.R. 1283). If you didn't get a chance to sign the petition, or even if you did, it would be great if you would send a personal letter or an e-mail supporting repeal to our Senators (especially) and Representative. The more frequently our elected officials hear from us, the more likely they are to support repeal. Our MVUC voices can make a difference in this fight. Thank you for your continued support. ~Joan Darrah

### MVUC Commended by the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia

On January 14, 2009, Senator Toddy Puller introduced Senate Joint Resolution No. 320 to commend Mount Vernon Unitarian Church for its efforts for social action and change, as an

*See next column*

*From MVUC Commended ....*

expression of the Senate's admiration for MVUC's achievements and its best wishes in the church's future endeavors. Sometime this spring, Senator Puller will present MVUC with this Commendation, which was occasioned by our receiving the Bennett Award; stay tuned. Congratulations to all of MVUC's Social Justice Program representatives!

### Partner Church News

Thanks to everyone who attended the Partner Church dinner on March 21. Save the dates for the summer Partner Church brunches: June 7, July 26, and August 30.

I am joining the Greater Washington Area Partner Church trip to Budapest and Transylvania, July 9-22. The trip includes three days in our partner church village in Szentháromság. I would really like to have other participants from our church on the trip, so please let me know as soon as possible if you are interested.

More information can be found at: [http://www.uupcc.org/trips/gwa\\_pilgrimage.pdf](http://www.uupcc.org/trips/gwa_pilgrimage.pdf). The deadline for reservations is the end of April.

## Social Justice Activities

### Freedom to Serve Rally

On Friday, March 13, several people from MVUC joined with hundreds of other Americans at a "Freedom to Serve" rally on Capitol Hill. People from all across the country—military, retired military, federal workers, and civilians—gathered to raise their voices for equality and call upon Congress and President Obama to repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell, and replace it with a policy of non-discrimination. The message was clear: The time for repeal is now. Guest speakers included MVUC member RADM **Jamie Barnett**, USN (Ret), and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton.



Shown above, standing left to right, are Joan Darrah, Jamie Barnett, Sandy Peterson, Peggy Cousins, Lynn Alsmeyer-Johnson, Lynne Kennedy, and Barb Brehm (Fairfax UU), with Georgia Pourchot in front.

### WhaleCoast Alaska 2009

The WhaleCoast Alaska registration deadline has been extended to April 15. Five Alaskan UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural and spiritual program this summer in our 13th year! Our program features UU homestays in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Seward, Juneau, and Sitka. We experience Native Alaskan culture and see lots of wildlife, including bears and whales. Dave Frey, a 28-year Alaska resident, leads the programs. For more information, visit [www.whalecoastak.org](http://www.whalecoastak.org), email [dfrey@whalecoastak.org](mailto:dfrey@whalecoastak.org), or call 907-322-4966. Alaska UUs would love to share our awe-inspiring state with you! (*Editor's Note: The current economic downturn hit the Alaska UU program hard, and they are asking for help. WhaleCoast Alaska involves 150 volunteers from five Alaska UU congregations. It is their biggest fundraising event, and a great way for UU's to experience Alaska.*)

### A Personal Way to Help in Zimbabwe

We have all read about the tragic situation in Zimbabwe, where food scarcities and hyperinflation have made so many people desperate. Two of our church members, **Dave** and **Sara Emmert**, are there in the U.S. diplomatic service. I asked Sara if there was a way we could help. Here is Sara's reply:

*I spoke to the lady who runs the Self-Help program. She knows any number of extremely desperate people who could use anything anyone can give. My mailing address is diplomatic pouch. We're allowed up to 250 pounds a week, but we are not allowed to run a charitable organization through pouch.*

*That being said, my mother sends me donations all the time—usually left over garage sale items. So, if anyone from the church would like to send out a box every couple of weeks, that'd be fine.*

*School supplies, clothes, and shoes are desperately needed. Just don't send us fifty boxes a month weighing 1700 lbs. If someone wants to send cash, I can deal with that too, but you'll have to trust me. You can make out a check to me, and I'll send it on to my bank, cash a personal check at the Embassy, and then pass it on.*

*Cash would probably make it too, but conceal it well. No dangers to it in Zimbabwe—diplomatic pouch is basically a zip code that goes to a central mailroom in Dulles, then it gets sent in dip bags (non-searchable by locals) to the Embassy via whatever airline has room for the cargo.*

*So here's a way anybody could help—I am more than willing to move things along and be MVUC's contact person. Here's my mailing address:*

Sara Emmert  
2180 Harare Pl  
Dulles VA 20189

Dave and Sara expect to be back here at the end of this year, and Sara is looking forward to re-joining our Choir!

~Alan Bunner, 703-660-6488

### Join UUs from Around the Country in Niagara Falls, July 19-22, 2009

Come experience the wonder of Niagara Falls, including some great educational opportunities, while being taken care of like royalty. The UU Church of Niagara is conducting a four-day UU Niagara Experience, which is a lifetime opportunity to encounter the Falls up close from every perspective. Spend four days with us exploring the rich history and natural beauty around the Falls. For information visit our web site <http://www.uunex.net/>.

*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*

April 5

*Random Kindness?  
How About Wildly Intentional?*  
**Rev. Kate R. Walker**

April 12

*Awake! Imagine the World  
without Music?!*  
**Rev. Kate R. Walker**

April 19

*The Tide Is Turning*  
**Rev. Kate R. Walker and the  
Green Sanctuary Task Force**

April 26

*Never Going to Break My Faith  
Part Deux*  
**Vince Patton**

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

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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](mailto:esther-gertrude@verizon.net)) whenever your e-mail address changes.

*Thank you!*