



# Windmill

## Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

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

February 1, 2011

*... MVUC is a loving and inclusive community. Our mission is to encourage one another on our spiritual journeys and to work together to build the common good.*

### *Taking Note . . .*

by The Reverend Kate R. Walker



The media response to the shootings in Tucson has taken America and the world all over the spectrum of speculation. It's been similar to the display experienced in previous shootings: political target practice; demands for gun control; appeals for civility; and the last one, which hits home for me: renewed interest in public support for the mentally ill.

I've shared with you my personal connection to family members who have serious mental health diagnoses. My heart has long been shaped by the pain I've witnessed in my brother's monumental struggles with control over his own thoughts due to schizophrenia. My brother has schizophrenia; that does not mean he is schizophrenic. The difference is ownership of his identity. Similar to race and ethnicity, we are human beings first, with characteristics—some changeable—some not, that come second.

Understanding this distinction, and many other issues for those who have mental health illness, is fundamental to helping people who are often isolated and ostracized in our society. The flagrant and rampant names that are tossed into public by well-educated journalists and public figures is inexcusable: crazy, mad, demented, insane, lunatic are all historically cruel and betray our ignorance as a society.

Stigmatizing people who have mental illness with false stereotypes doesn't help anyone, especially not ourselves. True, compassionate help is needed.

The nation's system of community mental healthcare is struggling to provide even late-stage crisis services. They should be equipped to ensure that early, effective assistance is available to people who need it. However, the plain truth is that America's mental healthcare system is horribly broken and horribly underfunded. And across the nation, including here in the Mt. Vernon area, budget cuts continue to eviscerate community mental health programs that reach out to vulnerable individuals and put them on a path to recovery.

One of the tragedies in the shooting of Representative Giffords and her supporters is that Giffords has a long, distinguished record of advocating for accessible mental health services and fighting the discrimination that burdens people who have mental illnesses.

Whatever diagnosis, if any, emerges from the subsequent legal process, the issues are still on the table: When do we put aside our fear-based name calling, ostracism and ignorance? When do we let our humanity guide our words and actions and call for a better healthcare system for people with mental illness?

in loving kindness, Kate Walker

With gratitude to Dr. Robert Bernstein  
Executive Director Bazelon Center for Mental Health  
Law

<http://www.bazelon.org/Who-We-Are.aspx>

Rev. Kate R. Walker

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*Editor:* Dee Dee St. Louis

*Production Crew:* Phyllis Gonigam,

Dotty Ann McClelland,

Mimi Stevens,

Betsy Stephens, Sibyl Pierotti, and

Marge Witting.

*Proofreaders:* barbara barry, Curtis Hunter,

Phyllis Gonigam, Mimi Stevens,

Lynn Alsmeyer-Johnson, Karen Tyson

*Webmaster:* Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson

[webmaster@mvuc.org](mailto:webmaster@mvuc.org)

*Website Editor:* Ron Brandt

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## **Mount Vernon Unitarian Church**

1909 Windmill Lane

Alexandria, VA 22307

Tel: 703-765-5950

Fax: 703-765-1237

E-Mail: [info@mvuc.org](mailto:info@mvuc.org)

Website: [www.mvuc.org](http://www.mvuc.org)

## **Program Highlights Mark Your Calendar!**

### **Wednesday Fellowship**

Wednesday, February 2

Dinner 6:00 pm, Vespers 7:00 pm

See page 5

### **Good Companions**

Tuesday, February 8

Lunch 12:00, Speakers 1:00

Hollin Hall Dining Room

See page 5

### **Lunch with a Book**

Sunday, February 13, 12:45 pm

Noodles & Company

See page 6

### **Harmony Heritage Singers**

Sunday, February 20, 3:00 pm

MVUC

See page 6

### **Understanding Immigration as a Moral Issue**

Saturday, February 26, 8:30 am

Chapel and Hollin Hall

See page 8

### **Annual Lasagna Dinner and Variety Show**

Saturday, March 19, Dinner 5:30 – 6:30 pm

Variety Show to Follow

Meeting House

See page 3



## Lifespan Spiritual Growth By Meagan Henry, Director

Dear Friends,

Our Lifespan Spiritual Growth Program is growing! We have several Adult Spiritual Growth classes on the calendar for our Winter and Spring semesters. The class descriptions are posted on the MVUC website for reference. Children's Religious Education classes continue on Sunday mornings, and we've added Coming of Age for our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and Our Whole Lives for our Middle School students. Our Multigenerational Events have been well attended this year. The Holiday Craft Workshop and Winter Solstice events in December and Games Night in January were especially joyful community events with many participants of all ages. If you have any specific questions about any of our Lifespan Spiritual Growth programming, contact me at [dre@mvuc.org](mailto:dre@mvuc.org) or 703-765-5950 x105.

*In Peace, Meagan Henry, Director of Lifespan Spiritual Growth*

### ***New Adult Spiritual Growth Classes to Begin:***

#### ***Building Your Own Theology (BYOT)***

Thursdays, February 3 - April 7, 7:30 – 9:00 pm,  
Hollin Hall Blue Room

BYOT is a rite of passage for many on the path to becoming a UU. This is a long time program, updated regularly, that invites us to think about what it means to be a UU and what we believe. For many of us, this was our first real examination of being a UU. It's a small group activity, with materials provided to foster discussion and thinking in an inviting and open atmosphere. Participants can expect to develop a clearer vision of their own beliefs and an appreciation for those of others. We are offering BYOT beginning February 3, with Bill Clontz as our Facilitator, meeting on Thursday evenings for 90 minutes. It's

a 10-week program, best enjoyed in its entirety, but each module is independent so participants are welcome as their schedule allows. Come join us and let's learn more about who we are and what we believe.

#### ***The Necessity of Virtue***

Wednesdays, April 13 - June 1, 7:30 – 9:00 pm,  
Hollin Hall Fireplace Room, led by Rev. Kate Walker

In an increasingly diverse world it becomes important to have common moral language. The study of virtue reaches back thousands of years, and is something in which Unitarian Universalists can believe. We'll watch a video presentation by the Rev. Dr. Galen Guengerich of All Souls Unitarian Church in New York City. After viewing this wonderful presentation (first done at General Assembly in 2010), we'll deepen our capacity to be courageous, just, transcendent and hopeful through dialogue.

### ***Annual Lasagna Dinner and Variety Show – March 19***

The Annual Lasagna Dinner will be held on Saturday, March 19, from 5:30 - 6:30 pm in the Meeting House, prior to the Variety Show. Dinner will include a variety of delicious lasagne as well as garlic bread, salad and beverages. Tickets, which include the Variety Show, are \$7 per person or a maximum of \$25 for immediate family members.

After dinner is the Variety Show—Get out your tutu, dust off that kazoo, and practice your juggling! Great way to break into the big time or discover that you shouldn't quit your day job! Adults and children, young and old, ALL are welcome to perform. Contact Linda Jemison (the emcee) by email at [linda@fairfax.info](mailto:linda@fairfax.info) or 703-765-0379. A sign-up sheet for the Variety Show will be in the Commons each Sunday in February.

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## Monthly Worship Theme

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PRAYER AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICE  
BY THE REV. KATE WALKER

Mahatma Gandhi wrote "Prayer is not an old woman's idle amusement. Properly understood and applied, it is the most potent instrument in action."

Is there a place in our lives for prayer, or have we rejected it along with other theological constructs too uncomfortable for use? Many people, even long out of practice, return to prayer when crisis arrives, for prayers can bring comfort and strength. Is there a place for prayer when reason is the preferred experience of life's journey? Can we pray while walking in the woods? Or swimming in the ocean?

I say a prayer whenever I hear a siren. There are a lot of sirens in the city; a lot of prayers are needed. My prayer is for comfort and strength in the hearts of those involved in the crisis. This practice is a touchstone to remind me to stop what I'm doing and remember the "other" in life who walks with me. I bear witness to their pain. Light a candle for someone tonight. This is a spiritual practice, with potent unknown effect upon you.

love and prayer, Kate Walker

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## Monthly Worship Services

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### *Sunday, February 6 "Spiritual Practice for UUs," the Rev. Kate R. Walker*

The theme of the month for February is Prayer and Spiritual Practice. Unitarian Universalists are exploring what may seem an obvious religious element to others: prayer. Yet, not so obvious for those from other churches, or the un-churched who may be uncomfortable with prayer.

### *Sunday, February 13 "Standing on the Side of Love," the Rev. Kate R. Walker*

This national Unitarian Universalist campaign is focusing on important issues such as immigration and gay rights. In our quest for the common good

(see our mission statement), we'll see just how we can harness love's power to stop oppression.

### *Sunday, February 20, "Coping with Crisis and Other Daily Events," the Rev. Kate R. Walker*

Life is a rocky road. Relying on the fundamentals when chaos hits, and the road itself disappears.

### *Sunday, February 27, "Keep Fear Sane," Young Religious Unitarian Universalists*

A worship service for the congregation, led by YRUU (The Young Religious Unitarian Universalists, MVUC High School Youth Group).

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## Question Box Sunday Leftovers

From August 8, 2010

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### **Q. Would you please include more references to Buddhism in the services?**

A. Sure. But you'll need to attend to hear them.

### **Q. What does this mean? "It's the journey not the destination."**

A. When you walk on a path in the woods, do you see the hawk? Do you catch the sun reflecting off the pond's edge? Do you catch the sound of the loon calling for its mate? Do you see the person walking with you? Do you know their story? When you get to the end of your walk, did you notice the walk?

### **Q. How can I continue to show compassion to an individual who seemingly will never return said compassion?**

A. True compassion doesn't require any return receipt.

### **Q. What will it take for us (the church) to be better stewards of our grounds and improve their appearance?**

A. The key assumption is standards: Many believe our grounds are in excellent shape. Perhaps you don't. So, sign up for a project on Workenanny this spring to pitch in wherever you believe needs help. Even better, will you sign up to be on the Property Committee?

## On and Off the Hill

### *Good Companions*

**Tuesday, February 8, 2010**

**Hollin Hall Dining Room  
and Fireplace Room**

**12:00 to 1:00 - BYO LUNCH**

**1:00 to 2:00 - SPEAKERS (Lynne Kennedy and  
Joan Darrah)**

Lynne and Joan have been partners since 1991 and MVUC members since 2005. They will talk about their life experiences and how they ultimately ended up at MVUC and why they have stayed. Lynne will discuss her experiences as a Catholic nun and a Congressional Research Service librarian at the Library of Congress. Joan will talk about her 29-½ years in the Navy and the challenges of living under Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) and their work to help get DADT repealed.

Elaine Bronez, assisted by Eleanor & Al Erickson

### ***MVUC Folk Jams***

The MVUC Folk Jams Resume Monday, February 14, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. in the Commons. We'll have some love songs (how romantic!), try some Beatles tunes (how contemporary!), as well as something old, something new, something borrowed, and something blue. The jams are NOT a performance or a rehearsal, just an opportunity for anyone who wants to sing or play an instrument with a group. Lyrics and chords are provided (most songs are in simple arrangements and guitar-friendly keys).

Additional folk jams will take place on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month: February 14 and 28; March 14 and 28; April 11 and 25.

For more information, contact Eric Pourchot at 703-721-0595 or [epourchot@yahoo.com](mailto:epourchot@yahoo.com).

### ***Wednesday Fellowship February 2, 6:00 - 9:00 pm***

Join us for the Wednesday Fellowship on February 2. Our "romantic meal" will include dishes for both meat lovers and

vegetarians. Dinner is from 6:00 - 7:00 pm, followed by a Vespers service led by Rev. Kate Walker from 7:00 - 7:30 pm in the Fireplace Room of Hollin Hall. Cheryl Sabo will offer a drumming and yoga circle after Vespers, same room; and the choir rehearses in the chapel. Dinner \$7/person, maximum \$21/family. Child care \$5/family, available upon request. Please sign up in the Commons, especially if you need child care.

For more information, contact Sandy Galletta, [gallettas4@verizon.net](mailto:gallettas4@verizon.net).

### ***Used Book Sale AND Used Art Sale***

This year once again we are including the sale of used art, frames and art objects with the Spring Book Sale. If you have donations, they can be left in the Kiosk with the used books or better yet, in the kitchen in Hollin Hall. We are looking for donations at this time. So as you are cleaning out bring up your donations. Save those dates: March 24 - 26 for the Annual Used Book AND Used Art Sale.

Sandy Peterson - coordinator for the Used Art Sale

### ***Buy Books Now***

Books in the Fireplace Room of Hollin Hall are for the Spring Book Sale. They are available for purchase NOW at \$2.00 each. Please put your money in the box on the shelf. More books will be added, so check frequently to see the latest arrivals. The money goes to the operating budget.

Joan Wamsley

### ***February Youth Birthdays***

Jenna Downey	February 3
Luke Mullin	February 4
Jillian Downey	February 5
Matthew Stover	February 7
Ian Anderson	February 8
James Sampsell	February 15
Connor Sadler	February 17
Dolan Napier	February 18
Mila Mullin	February 24

## ***Lunch With a Book***

February's Lunch With a Book will be meeting Sunday, February 13 at 12:45 pm at Noodles & Company. This month we will be discussing *Mennonite in a Little Black Dress* by Rhoda Janzen, the memoir of a 40 year-old woman who broke with her Mennonite past. She goes home after a serious car accident and after her husband left her for a man. There she lives again with her father— "the Mennonite equivalent of the Pope"— and her breezy, cheery mother. The book has been described as being both funny and profound. The book provides insight into the Mennonites.

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

## ***Community Health Screenings***

In March, MVUC will host preventive health screenings for members and the local community.

Life Line Screening, the nation's leading provider of preventive health screenings, will offer their affordable, non-invasive, painless health screenings on **March 28th**. Five screenings will be offered that scan for potential health problems related to: blocked arteries, which are a leading cause of stroke; abdominal aortic aneurysms, which can lead to a ruptured aorta; hardening of the arteries in the legs, which is a strong predictor of heart disease; atrial fibrillation or irregular heart beat, which is closely tied to stroke risk; and a bone density screening, for men and women, used to assess the risk of osteoporosis. Register for a Wellness Package with Heart Rhythm for \$149 .

Add Disease Risk Assessment with blood testing & biometrics for \$79 more. Screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. Call 1-800-324-1851 (code HSC3549) to pre-register.

Contact Nancy Fox for more information, [nancyefox@verizon.net](mailto:nancyefox@verizon.net) or 703-780-3815.

## ***Concert by Men's Chorus February 20 to Benefit UCM***

The 40-member Harmony Heritage Singers will present a concert of barbershop music at MVUC on Sunday, February 20, at 3:00 p.m. In honor of Presidents' Day, the program will emphasize patriotic music such as "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Armed Services Medley." There will also be popular songs from days gone by such as "That's Life" and the Beach Boys hit, "Barbara Ann." 97-year-old soloist Bix Doughty will sing an audience favorite, "Old Bones." The members of the Harmony Heritage Singers present about 25 performances a year in the Washington area. Most are veterans, and many are retired from a career in military service. There is no admission charge for the February 20 concert. A free-will offering will be taken to support the work of United Community Ministries. For more information, contact Ron Brandt, 703-765-4779, [brandtron@verizon.net](mailto:brandtron@verizon.net).

## ***Unitarian Universalist History***

February 3, 1811 Horace Greeley was born in Amherst, New Hampshire. An active supporter of education and social reform, he briefly served in Congress. He was a stalwart Universalist.

February 7, 1812 Charles Dickens was born in Landport, England. He wrote *A Christmas Carol* while a member of a Unitarian Church in London.

February 15, 1820 Susan B. Anthony was born in Adams, MA. A nationally active suffragist, she was also active in the temperance and abolition movements. She was raised Quaker, but she and her family were active members of the First Unitarian Church in Rochester.

February 18, 1719 The English Parliament repealed the Schism Act, which set severe penalties for anti-Trinitarian clergy.



## Social Justice Programs at the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

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

### ***Thank You for Your Generosity!***

On the second Sunday of the month, MVUC has been holding a second collection to benefit organizations that this church cares about, organizations that we have worked with for a long time, who serve those in need and advocate against discrimination of any kind. It is befitting to take a look at 2010 and see how your generosity, despite a time of economic hardships, supports various organizations.

In 2010, we collected and disbursed \$19,893 to organizations such as United Community Ministries (\$2,577), New Hope Housing (\$1,290), Open Door Housing Fund (\$705), and Beacon House (\$1,162). These organizations provide services to those in need, such as the low-income population on the Route 1 corridor, teens at risk in the Washington area, low-interest loans for affordable housing, or support and training to those who are on the brink of losing a home or a job. Your generosity supported agencies that offer health care to encourage responsible choices about sexual behavior and childbearing, such as Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington (\$766), strive for equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Virginians, such as Equality Virginia (\$1,435), and organizations that advance human rights around the world, such as the UU Service Committee (\$1,150).

The \$2,792 you donated on Association Sunday is being used by the UUA for programs to grow Unitarian Universalism nationwide, and the \$1,181 for UUs for Social Justice (UUSJ) grows social justice awareness and advocacy in the Greater Washington area.

The total amount also includes support for the Katie Tyson Fund (\$2,525), our two partner churches in Romania and India (\$1,898), and the

UU Ministry for Earth (\$951). Your generosity added \$1,110 to the Minister's Discretionary Fund, money used by the minister to help those MVUCers who are severely affected by the economic times we all experience.

A heartfelt THANK YOU from your Social Justice Council, who organizes these collections, and your Minister.

### ***Real Food for Real People***

(This is a summary of Mark Bittman's excellent article "Chop, Fry, Boil: Eating for One, or 6 Billion," published in *The New York Times*, on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010; edited by Georgia Pourchot).

New Year's resolutions tend to be about weight loss. The market abounds in dietary choices, yet one thing that people seem to forget is that real diets start with ... real food. Part of the problem with overeating is eating out, and/or eating ready-to-go foods. Increasingly, Americans no longer cook at home, and this simple, yet largely forgotten change in our life styles has profound consequences. We have lost the connection with the food we put in our mouths, and the earth that feeds us. Yet there is hope, if we are open to it.

Statistics tell us that people no longer cook because they do not have time, yet Americans watch 35 hours of television a week. Ninety percent of American households own cars, which enable them to drive to McDonald's, a supermarket, or a farmers' market. The choice they make more often is the easy drive-through of a McDonald's or Hardee's, not a grocery store. The restaurant and food industry have created ready-made and served choices for us that no longer put us in contact with the basic fruits of the earth, but with trans fats, additives, preservatives and food flavorings. None of them

grow in a garden; they are human-made and lab-created. In order to reconnect with the food we eat, we need to make a deliberate decision to provide a cooked meal to our families, touch the ingredients we put into the meal, smell the vegetables and fruit, and remember where they come from.

Three basic recipes that involve affordable and healthy ingredients are a stir-fry, a chopped salad, and a basic combination of lentils and rice. If you know how to chop, fry or boil, you can learn these recipes easily, and enhance them with any number of additions to create a good dinner for vegan and meat-eater alike. With time and perseverance, if you choose to become a cook, you will eliminate take-outs and the (fattening) ingredients they contain that cannot be purchased by normal consumers anywhere (such as 'chicken pot-pie flavoring,' or MSG). You will be able to control the amount of fat and sugar that you put into your body, lower your food cost, and reconnect with the earth, a win-win all around. Consider doing this because you are a real person, and you deserve it.

Note: The Ethical Eating Group at MVUC is starting to work on a cookbook of easy, mainly vegetarian recipes. We will organize a visit to a farm in our area in spring, and will start cooking classes soon. If interested, contact Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, [bill@alsjohn.com](mailto:bill@alsjohn.com).

## ***Understanding Immigration as a Moral Issue: From UU Principles to Effective Action***

***Saturday February 26, 8:30 am  
Chapel and Hollin Hall***

Please join us for a morning of discussion and training in immigration advocacy. Organized by UUs for Social Justice (UUSJ), this workshop brings a variety of excellent community organizers and UU lay and religious leaders at MVUC. Five Northern Virginia UU ministers join representatives of Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations, Capital Area Immigrant Rights Coalition, and Immigrants First representatives for this workshop. Topics include why UU

congregations are responding to immigration as a matter of conscience and morality, the lives and needs of immigrants, detention and law enforcement issues, rights, resources and congregational tools for action, and federal and state advocacy. To register, send name, congregation, and contact info to [info@uusj.org](mailto:info@uusj.org).

## ***Partner Church News***

### ***Transylvania Pilgrimage--Summer 2011***

The Partner Church Committee is sponsoring an intergenerational group trip to Transylvania July 20 to August 2, 2011. The trip will include a 3-4 day stay in Szentháromság, our partner church village, as well as visits to sites of Unitarian and historical significance. We will start in Budapest, one of the glittering jewels of central Europe, and travel over-land to Kolozsvár, the center of the Unitarian church in Transylvania. The trip will be led by John Dale, who is the UUPCC travel coordinator. John and his wife Csilla have escorted hundreds of pilgrims on these trips and they are expert in their knowledge and capability. We will be joined by our minister, Kate Walker, for this exciting trip. The land costs are \$1,485 double occupancy + \$150 registration fee. The cost will potentially be reduced by \$100 if we have 11 or more travelers. Contact Lisa Gillispie for more information, an itinerary, and/or to register: 703-799-1847, [lisagillispie@earthlink.net](mailto:lisagillispie@earthlink.net). Deadline for registration is April 1.

### ***Scholarships***

We still have a few students seeking sponsors for scholarships in our partner village in Transylvania. Please let Lisa Gillispie know if you would like to help.

### ***Our Partner Church in the Khasi Hills in Northeast India***

I had the privilege and joy of visiting our partner church village and school in Mawlat in the Khasi Hills in early January. Nangroi Suting, our partner minister, and Recover Sawian, the school headmaster, as well as the congregation send

their greetings and sincere thanks for the friendship and financial help MVUC has provided. With MVUC's help, the church was able to buy an electronic keyboard, which they played during a special welcome service during my visit.



Keyboard Purchased with MVUC Assistance

I also toured the construction of the new school building which will enable them to add grades 7 and 8 to the school. Their next goal is to build the only high school in the area of 5 surrounding villages.



Lisa Gillispie with Thank You Plaque

I plan to have a program soon to share the details of my trip and lots of photos!

### ***Save the Date***

The annual MVUC Partner Church Dinner will be held Sunday, March 27 at 5:30 p.m.

Lisa Gillispie

### ***MVUC Celebrates Don't Ask Don't Tell Repeal***

In 2007, Joan Darrah, Lynne Kennedy, Vince Patton, Al Robbert and Bev Southerland organized a social justice task force to advocate for the right of LGBT persons to serve in our military. At our 2007 General Assembly the task

force spurred the Unitarian Universalist Association to approve an Action of Immediate Witness to repeal DADT. MVUC members have marched to the White House and the Capitol, testified before the House Armed Services Committee, lobbied our Representatives and Senators, and briefed the Obama transition team.

All the hard work has finally borne fruit. The repeal cleared its final legislative hurdle on December 18. MSNBC showed newlyweds Joan Darrah and Lynne Kennedy watching the final vote, and Joan wrote a CNN column on the repeal. On December 22, at the invitation of the White House, Joan Darrah and Jamie Barnett witnessed President Obama signing the repeal at the Interior Department. "Everyone at MVUC should take great pride in your contribution to this decision," Darrah said. "You were willing to take a stand."

### ***Easy Green***

I often find myself trying to figure out how to reduce my impact in any way I can. Along that line, for years I have been purchasing 100% recycled brown paper towels from Seventh Generation. Every time I use them, I see them as different. It keeps me from using many, and others who come to my house know they are different, too. But, I heard an even better idea this week from a friend. She has put her paper towels under the sink, so she needs to look for them to use them. Both of us have also switched to washable dish cloths and dish towels. I also find that much of what I did routinely when I was a child is now considered conservation. We have gotten awfully spoiled! Please, keep thinking!

Just a thought ~ Wendy Burns

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## Church Life

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### ***Small Group Ministry Program Update***

Designed to enhance the individual spiritual experience in a small group setting, the Small Group Ministry Program (SGM) is in its second year at MVUC. Below, please find a brief summary of the wide range of topics addressed in these groups. If any of these topics sound interesting to you, look for sign-up sheets in the Commons and contact the facilitator of the group you are interested in. *If you wish to start a new group, or for any questions, please contact Rev. Kate Walker.*

Our Spiritual Journey SGM explores the depths of members' spiritual roots, where they have been, where they currently are, and where they think they are going in their faith journey.

The Personal Writing SGM undertakes creative spontaneous exercises to open participants to become non-critical writers, and do directed reflective writing stimulated from readings.

The Spirituality in Diversity SGM explores the impact of (racial, xenophobic, homophobic, etc.) prejudice on our spiritual development, and our public and private personae.

The Teen Parenting SGM discusses the spirituality of teens, their anguish, social skills – or lack thereof, successful parenting techniques, responsibility and accountability, and how to make it through this age as a parent.

The Young Adults SGM designed primarily, but not exclusively, for adults ranging in age between 18 and 40, explores topics such as The Road Not Taken, Success, Marriage, Raising a Family, Pets, Approval, Finding Balance in Life, Acceptance.

### ***From Your Intern Love as a Spiritual Practice***

Ah February! Right now the stores are filled with red valentines and cards and candy. Love is in the air. We'll see a thousand advertisements for flowers and jewelry too. And cars. Somehow ads for new cars will be tied into this holiday of love. I just saw a commercial for M&M's where you can have

your face printed on the little candy. Just think of it, bags of little faces of you going to the people you love!

I remember giving valentines in school. I'd get that big box of little ones and we all had to fill out one for everyone in the class. Everybody got a little love that day.

What do you do for Valentines Day? My partner and I usually make a decision to go to a movie, or dinner or some kind of fun outing. We try and mark the day as special, just as our love is.

The theme for this month at MVUC is "Spiritual Practice" and I have an idea you might want to join me in. Whatever I spend on Valentines Day this year, I'm going to sponsor a dog online for the same amount. I'm not sure which one of the animal rescue organizations I'll choose yet, but I like the one-time sponsor options.

Maybe as a spiritual practice this month you might spread a little more love around? Some organization out there could use a little more. Pick one of your favorites and as a spiritual practice donate a matching amount that you spend on this holiday. Maybe just the same amount you would spend on a card for someone, or maybe the cost of a bag of M&M's with your face on them.

Just a thought...to spread a wee bit more love around.

Along the path, Kären

### ***Opportunity for Purchasing Hymn Books***

We have a need for about 30 additional grey hymn books. The cost is \$30 each. If you would like to dedicate a new hymnal to a loved one, or purchase one for yourself, or make a donation towards this important need, please consider this chance to help. If you wish, donated books can have a bookplate showing the donor's name, and dedicated books will have an artistic bookplate showing the dedication. See Sonja Bloom at the Book Nook or Alan Bunner (choir member).

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## From Our Board of Trustees

### Joan Darrah, Chair

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As most of you know, on December 22, 2010, President Obama signed into law the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT). It is impossible for me to quantify my joy – this is a huge step forward for our military and our country. This victory was the result of an amazing amount of hard work and determination by thousands of people. MVUC deserves a great deal of credit for this historic step. The Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) that MVUC created and which was accepted by the General Assembly in 2007 calling for repeal of DADT was the key to energizing UU's around the country to join this fight. The letters, phone calls, e-mails, and congressional visits from UU's were invaluable in making repeal a reality.

Other good news is that we continue to make great progress converting the Meeting House to geothermal and solar energy and our contractor, Shenandoah Sustainable Technologies (SST), is confident that the project will be completed by the end of March. During a groundbreaking ceremony in late December, Representative Jim Moran congratulated MVUC for its effort and noted that we were an excellent example of putting our values into actions and that this initiative makes us a "national symbol of faith-based leadership."

During my time as BOT chair, I have tried to expand my understanding of all that goes on at MVUC. So, on Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup> of January, I "tagged along" with Meagan Henry, our Director of Lifespan Spiritual Growth. We visited almost all of the Religious Education (RE) classes. I was very impressed with the wonderful program that we have and the enthusiasm and dedication of the teachers and the energy of the students. Of course, RE could always use more volunteer instructors. So, if you are looking for an opportunity to really make a difference, please let Meagan know and she will be happy to help you get involved with our RE program.

Finally, as you all know, this Fall, we had an open and frank dialogue about the financial costs and responsibilities of sustaining *Our Hill of Dreams* and an extremely successful revisit campaign. Thanks to your generous response, our budget is balanced. We will now go back to our normal Spring Campaign schedule. At that time, we will again ask each of you to examine the importance of MVUC in your life and your level of financial support. Those of you who made a significant increase in your 2010-11 commitment during our revisit campaign will not be expected to raise your commitment for 2011-12, unless you are able and willing to do so.

With love, respect and appreciation, Joan

## ***Sermons for Your Re-Hearing***

Each Sunday's service is recorded and available within a few days on the MVUC web site ([www.mvuc.org](http://www.mvuc.org) - worship/sermons) The services are also available on CD; If you would like a copy, please speak with **Raleigh Romine**.

## **A Month of Sundays**

***Two services at 9:15 am and  
11:15 am unless otherwise  
noted***



***Sunday, February 6***  
***"Spiritual Practice for UUs"***  
***The Rev. Kate R. Walker***

***Sunday, February 13***  
***"Standing on the Side of Love"***  
***The Rev. Kate R. Walker***

***Sunday, February 20***  
***"Coping with Crisis and Other  
Daily Events"***  
***The Rev. Kate R. Walker***

***Sunday, February 27***  
***"Keep Fear Sane"***  
***Young Religious Unitarian  
Universalists***

\* See Page 4 for Sermon  
Descriptions

**Mount Vernon  
Unitarian Church**  
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## **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, MVUC staff and volunteers are willing to assist you during normal business hours. Please direct any questions or concerns to Betsy Stephens [betsys@cox.net](mailto:betsys@cox.net).

Leila Goodman died peacefully at 8 p.m. on January 23, 2011. She was surrounded by Riad and Bonnie and Melissa and Nidal. They send their sincere thanks to everyone who took time from their busy schedules to come and visit and are grateful for the support of her many friends.

## **Reminder to All MVUC Email Users**

To receive emailed newsletters, weekly bulletins, and special notices, please notify Esther Dickinson if your email address changes, [esthergertrude@verizon.net](mailto:esthergertrude@verizon.net).

***Thank you!***