



Quest

July 2009

Josh's Journal

It is hard to believe that this July marks my 12th month as the Senior Minister at First Unitarian Church! It seems like only yesterday I moved my things into a new place—OK so it was yesterday but that move was still in the area.

I have had a fantastic year this year. I am so happy serving as your Senior Minister, and my family is very happy living in Delaware. The relationship between minister and congregation has never been stronger. All of the hard work that the church did during the long years of interim ministry have definitely paid off. Great job!

As we close out this year and begin thinking about the next one, it occurs to me that I am the first minister in a while who even had the luxury of thinking about "next year." What a gift to have established oneself in a congregation and build upon the foundation that is laid. The ability to be able to say "next year we will..." is a great relief. It means that I do not have to cram in all of my dreams and visions for First Unitarian Church into a few short months.

Recently at a Board meeting, one of the members of the Board turned to me during a report I was giving and said something like, "You know Rev. Josh I hope you really move us forward with your vision. Don't be afraid to change things." Wow! What a blessing to receive. In that moment I truly felt affirmed as your minister, and felt the last vestiges of "holding back" fade away. The conventional wisdom among ministers is "don't change things too much in your first year." I think I broke that piece of conventional wisdom pretty thoroughly! But with that blessing, that charge to really dare to dream about what First Unitarian Church could and should be, I am energized about this next year.

So look out First Unitarian Church! Year one is over. Year two starts August 1. There will be no holding back from anyone; not from ministers, not from staff, and not from lay leaders. We are going to take this church to heights no one has yet dreamed of. The program staff and I have some vision for what the next year has in store, but that is just the starting point. I suspect and expect us to exceed that vision.

That being said, I am always interested in what you think. I don't promise that I can please everyone, but I do promise that I will listen to everyone. If you have thoughts or concerns about anything going on with the church, particularly with the ministry, the staff, or the Executive Team, please don't hesitate to be in touch with me. Let's talk it through together. Change is scary, and it is okay to be uneasy. But it is worse to be complacent.

Have a great summer!

May You Be Blessed Always,

Rev. Dr. Joshua Snyder

Upcoming Services

July 5: Rev. Libby Smith — "**Keeping Our Balance**" The "Slow Movement" advocates a more balanced approach than most of us manage to capture in our frantic lives. In these tense times, how might we adjust the pace of our lives — even if only a little — to bring greater balance and calm? Guest musician Linda Henderson will share her talents with us.

July 12: Rev. Barbara Gadon — "**The Joy of Doubt**" We all know we need faith. How else do we proceed with confidence - with anything? Doubt is often depicted as the enemy of faith, and some kinds of doubt can certainly get us stuck. Our faith, however, celebrates doubt as a necessary part of the spiritual life. Come explore the joy of doubt.

July 19: Rev. Barbara Gadon — "**How We Decide**" Rev. Barbara will explore the sometimes baffling enterprise of making decisions. When should we use a rational approach and when is a more intuitive one better? What is a spiritual approach to decision-making, otherwise known as "discernment"? Come and see.

July 26: H.M.M. Scott Ward — More stories and vignettes, with a message. Special music by 'Life in Balance,' flute and percussion. A special musical meditation and center session will be offered after the service.

Senior Minister's Summer Hours

Rev. Josh will be on vacation from July 1- 21. He will be back in the office from July 22- August 14. During those three weeks he will have regular office hours: 9 AM to 4 PM, and will be in the office on Fridays (normally his day off). Rev. Josh will be on Study Leave for two weeks, August 17-29, preparing for the church year. He will again resume regular office hours on August 31. If you have any question about Rev. Josh's availability during the summer, please contact the church office.

Leap of Faith

Life Experience Wanted

A long-time member of our church, Phyllis Wynn, (may she rest in peace) had once been considered the go-to person for any woman with breast cancer. She had survived it for many years, including the time when cancer carried stigma and shame. But you could talk to Phyl. She had practical advice and she was a non-judgmental listener. Most importantly, she carried hope in every fiber of her being. "You can live with cancer," her life said, "and live well."

Another member of our church was telling me about the time he was getting divorced. He had no idea what to do, or how to handle his new life with all its changes and difficult emotions. He said that he approached anyone he could find at his office who had been divorced, took them to lunch, and asked for advice. He learned all sorts of things about journal-writing, getting support, and finding one's way back to life, and it helped him to survive.

I have wondered lately if there aren't more Phyl Wynns - or healed divorcees - in our congregation. I thought they could be bearers of hope for others. They could pass along hard-earned wisdom to people who could really use it - if only I could get folks together.

So I imagined a sort of want ad. It goes:

Life Experience Wanted:

Survivors of divorce, bereavement, domestic abuse. People living with cancer and other chronic or debilitating illness. Spouses and family members of those struggling with alcoholism, mental illness, imprisonment. Those who have lived with, or continue to live with, dementia in themselves or in their family. People with disabilities. Parents of children with hard-to-handle behaviors. Survivors of financial crises.

The list could go on. I want people who are good listeners and can keep confidences. They must have had some time to heal, so that the wounds are not fresh, and their perspective has begun to ripen. I imagine people confidentially contacting me - by writing to me at the church, or e-mailing me or phoning me. Likewise, I imagine people struggling with such difficulties also telling me about them, and expressing interest in having a caring friend from church who had been through the same thing.

I would offer some brief training in what to do and not do in helping someone. I would ask the helpers to report to me how things were going. Then I would sit back and see what could happen.

What do you think? If this appeals to you, either from the giving or the receiving end, (and I imagine such a relationship being rich enough to have both people feel like they were giving AND receiving) please let me know. Write to Rev. Barbara Gadon, First Unitarian Church, 730 Halstead Road, Wilmington, DE 19803. Or email me; barbara@firstuuwilm.org. Or call me at 302-478-2384.

Let's see what happens.

In Faith, Rev. Barbara

SUMMER CYRE

Gardens, Butterflies

and Bugs... Oh My!

Join us in July! We're exploring butterflies and bugs that are helpful to our gardens and ways we can help provide a good habitat. We are going to watch butterflies develop from caterpillars and raise lady bugs! We are also planning to work in our butterfly garden and other gardens needing attention at First U.



CYRE REGISTRATION 2009/2010

Keep an eye out for the 2009/2010 CYRE Registration forms. Registering helps us plan appropriately for the coming year.

COMING OF AGE 2009/2010

Is your child entering 8th or 9th grade? Then be sure to include Coming of Age in your schedule! This fall First Unitarian Church of Wilmington is offering Coming of Age on Sunday evenings. This program includes regular Sunday evening workshops, community service, retreats and a recognition worship service.

SAVE THE DATE:

Sunday, August 30

10:30 am - Noon

**Coming of Age Orientation
for Parents and Rising Youth**

Sunday morning services begin at 10:30;

*Children's Religious Education
starts at 10:30*

Childcare is available from 10:00 to 11:50

Susan's Membership Message

Already four prospective new members have requested mentors to assist them as they become acclimated to the church! We are thrilled to know their lives as newcomers will be made easier and more enjoyable through the guidance and care of their mentors.

We are still seeking mentors to help us in this newest radical hospitality effort. Our mentorship program was launched last month and, as you can see, is off to a flying start! For those of you considering mentorship as part of your ministry to the church, we welcome your interest and enthusiasm. A mentor is anyone who assists new members in finding their way around the church, meeting other members, and learning about programs and activities. It may be sitting with a new member during the worship service, accompanying them to coffee hour and introducing them around, or visiting the playground after church if the new members have children.

This program has the potential to become one of the most dynamic ministries of radical hospitality at our church, and a helpful, friendly way to integrate new members into our community. Will you help? Will you risk becoming radically hospitable? Will you become a way-shower for others? If you will, please contact Membership Coordinator Susan Madison (susan@firstuuwilm.org)

Caring and Sharing

Since our last QUEST newsletter printing—

We have kept in our prayers:

- Don Beskrone-recovering from heart surgery
- Bill Wier-recovering from back surgery
- Subu Subramanian – recovering from surgery
- Rev. Bob Doss — recuperating at home

We offered our sympathy to:

- The Pinson Family upon the recent death of Paul's father who passed away on June 2.
- The friends and family of Sandy Merriman, a former member of many years. A service was held here on June 14th.
- The staff and congregation of our neighbor church, Westminster Presbyterian Church, upon the loss of the Rev. Chad Miller.

We celebrated:

Our Coming of Age students, our Youth in a Bridging Ceremony, The Snyders' new home, Fritzi Busse's 100th birthday, Graduates, and the recognition of Karel Toll and Chris Kane by the JPD.

Office Ministration

As you know, the budget for 2009/2010 included a cut in pay for the staff of 2.5%. This is equivalent to a half day off per month for a full time employee. In order to provide our staff some relief in the face of the salary cut, we will start closing the church office on the First Tuesday of the month at noon. This change in office hours will continue through the fiscal year 2009-2010.

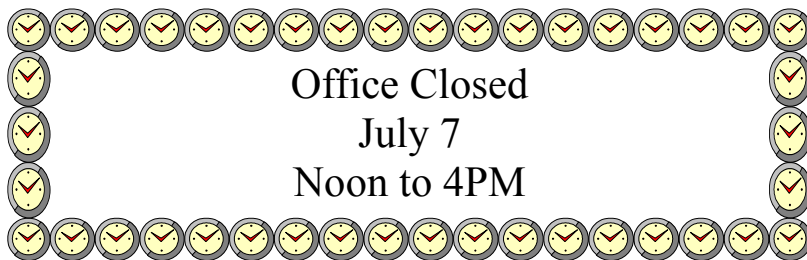
Afternoon closures for the first half of the fiscal year are as follows: July 7, August 4, September 1, October 6, November 3, and December 1.

We hope that continued improvement in the economic situation and growth in our congregation will help all of us ride out this difficult time. Thank you for your understanding.

Taking care of business,

Marina VanRenssen

Business Manager



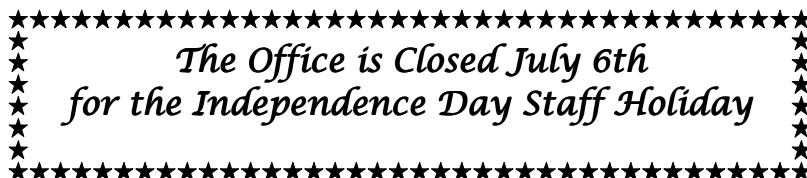
D-DoSER book collection in our Library

Coming soon to our First U Library are 29 books by lecturers in the popular D-DoSER series held at First U from 2006-2008. Delaware Dialogues on Science, Ethics and Religion examined many perspectives and issues. Thanks to Parry Norling for this collection, to be cataloged and placed on the shelves over the next few months. Have a look!

Other new titles to enjoy:

- *In Sunlight or in Shadow: How a little café in a little town in Michigan touched hearts around the world with a 50-hour Danny Boy Marathon* (2009). Author Karen Wilhelm is Rita McWhorter's daughter!
- *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants* (2009, updated edition), by Douglas Tallamy, professor and chair, Dept. of Entomology & Wildlife Ecology, University of Delaware. Thanks to Hetty Francke for obtaining a signed copy for us.

The First U Library is open on Sunday mornings in the RE wing. Books may be borrowed by following posted instructions, and are due back within 4 weeks. Interested in joining the Library Committee? Contact Judy Windle or Nan Norling.



Board Planks



Summertime is here, time to slow down and relax.

Well, that is indeed true, **however** your board members are actually quite active this summer.

We've begun to focus our energy and attention on:

- Our board retreat in August which will provide an opportunity to prioritize the goals and objectives for the coming year.
- Planning for the November 2009, Policy Governance workshop sponsored by the JPD, which will be held at First Unitarian (stay tuned more details).
- Reviewing and updating our First UU By-laws for acceptance by the membership next year. This will be a yearlong project, as we ensure the By-laws reflect our policy governance model and our memberships ideas and suggestions.
- Our Board meetings are the third Monday of the month, we hold meetings all summer, come visit, we value your ideas and comments.

Enjoy the summer—take time to spend with your families and friends.

No Summer “Chats with the Leadership”

“Chats with the Leadership” will be taking a hiatus this summer, and return in the fall with a new format. If you have suggestions, let us know. It's time to try something new!

And we always value your input, so don't hesitate to come to any Board or Executive Team member with your ideas and comments.

SOCIAL JUSTICE OFFERING

FAITH CENTER — JULY 2009

FAITH Center's primary purpose is to involve the greater Wilmington religious community in efforts to serve fellow human beings in crisis by way of counseling, referrals and financial assistance for various human needs.

For over 10 years, FAITH Center has served the working poor who are facing a one-time financial difficulty. They are prepared to provide modest crisis alleviation grants for basic needs such as help with housing costs to avoid eviction and homelessness; help with utility costs to avoid disconnection of services; help with unexpected and/or uninsured medical costs; help with expenses to obtain or keep employment, and help finding assistance for special needs.

First Unitarian is a founding sponsor of this organization and has contributed consistently for many years to this interfaith organization. Please give generously.

JPD 5th Annual Anti-Racism Conference

**Joseph Priestley District of the UUA
Announcing the
5th Annual Joseph Priestley District
Anti-Racism Conference!**

www.jpduua.org.

MULTICULTURAL FAMILIES

Saturday, October 17, 2009

Programming from 8am to 7:30pm
Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis
333 Dubois Road
Annapolis, MD 21401

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Emmanuel Dining Room

We're still cooking up a storm at Emmanuel Dining Room! If you can help in the church kitchen on the 19th of the month (typically we're there from 9 am to 1 pm), or would like to help serve at Emmanuel on the 20th (11 am to 1 pm) we would love to have you. Contact Cindy Cohen (cindyscohen@comcast.net) to sign up.



UUSC President and CEO Published in Boston Globe

Dr. Charlie Clements, the President and CEO of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), recently had an article published in the Boston Globe. The article can be found at http://www.uusc.org/content/salvadoran_resurrection which is part of “UUSC Values in Action.” The article summarizes Dr. Clements' experience in El Salvador during its civil war in the early 1980ies, a war that finally has a humanitarian and peaceful outcome. It also suggests a new way to look at the idea of “resurrection.” This article reminds us of the far-reaching work of UUSC in our world and why UUSC is worthy of our support. Contact D.Dobbins@verizon.net

Social Justice at First Unitarian

First U's Social Justice Team includes all who work "under the umbrella of social justice." Do you have information to share about your social justice activity? Next Quest deadline is July 15. Contact: lynningersoll@hotmail.com

Coalition for Climate Change Study and Action (C³SA)

- Energy and Climate Change: (from an article by Chad Tolman) Scientists have been issuing increasingly urgent warnings about the climate change that is occurring as the result of human activity – primarily the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas) and forests. The global average temperature has already increased by about 1.5°F since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, resulting in sea level rise, more intense storms and floods, property loss, drought, melting of glaciers and sea ice, the spread of tropical diseases, the extinction of several species of plants and animals, and armed conflicts over land, water, and energy resources. The temperature increase by the end of the century will depend on how soon and how aggressively we reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other pollutants that cause global warming, and could go as high as 10°F if we deny and delay. Fortunately, both President Obama and Governor Markell are aware of the increasing danger and also of the opportunities for a clean, healthy and sustainable economy if we invest in education, conservation, energy efficiency, and the transition to a society based on renewable energy sources.

Delaware is especially vulnerable to ocean storms and sea level rise, since it has the lowest average elevation of any state in the country (about 65 feet). It is also vulnerable to increasing and unstable energy prices, since it ranks in the top 20 states in the U.S. in per capita energy consumption. We can do better, especially since we have very capable people, outstanding colleges and universities, a huge renewable energy resource in the form of offshore wind, and political leaders who understand both the danger and the opportunities. Delaware can and should become a national leader in reducing emissions and in fostering the creativity and innovation we need for a sustainable future. Let us leave this legacy to our children and grandchildren. For information, contact Chad Tolman: ctolman@udel.edu.

ILYA (Independent Living for Young Adults)

We are delighted when ILYA has been able to provide support for a young adult who achieves success. This spring, we are proud to share the stories of three of our young adults who have aged out of foster care, overcoming many challenges, and have completed post secondary programs!

- Keisha completed her program at Schilling Douglas School of Cosmetology. ILYA volunteers supported her with College Care Packages during her program, including gift cards from a hair care product shop to support her studies.
- CeCe graduated from Delaware Technical and Community College with a degree in Occupational Therapy. ILYA supported her with rent supplements and an emergency package when she aged out of transitional housing at age 21. Her College Care Package Contact Person provided her with many useful items for school and apartment.
- Dane completed his bachelor's degree in vocal studies at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He will continue his studies at Manhattan School of Music. ILYA folks who attended Dane's senior recital were delighted with his range of talent – classical to rock music and production of the recital show. ILYA volunteers first met Dane at the original ILYA HS Graduation Celebration where he entertained us with a song from "Oklahoma." Over the next four years, the First U choir supported him with College Care Packages, including anthologies of tenor arias. ILYA also provided Dane with a supportive grant for an application to graduate school.

Welcoming Congregation

First Unitarian's Welcoming Congregation Team has been among UU's across the state who were working hard for the passage of HB5, the "gay rights bill." After making many contacts among our senators trying unsuccessfully to lobby to get it out of committee, we are looking toward success! A new bill, SB121, with language identical to HB5 was introduced with enough votes in both the Senate and the House for passage. By the time you read this, Gov. Markell should have signed it into law - a long road for legislation that was first proposed in 1999! The Team also lobbied hard for SB 84, a bill that would allow the Family Court to consider evidence of a person's assumption of parental responsibilities over a child and relationship with a child in determining the maternity and/or paternity of a child. This de facto parent bill would have direct impact on several members of our church community and whose plight engaged our support for this effort. The Welcoming Congregation Working Group meets regularly at First Unitarian. Helen Foss is the interim contact. Feel free to reach her at helenfoss@verizon.net.

Church Staff

Reverend Dr. Joshua Snyder	Senior Minister Josh@firstuuwilm.org
Reverend Barbara Gadon	Minister of Adult Programs and Pastoral Care Barbara@firstuuwilm.org
Scott Ward	Honorary Minister of Music iamscottw@aol.com
Catherine Williamson	Director of Religious Exploration Catherine@firstuuwilm.org
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Fran Grubb	Administrative Assistant Fran@firstuuwilm.org
Karen Rockhold	Program Administrator Karen@firstuuwilm.org
Terry Walls	Building Supervisor Terry@firstuuwilm.org
Susan Madison	Membership Coordinator Susan@firstuuwilm.org
Reverend Dr. Robert Doss	Minister Emeritus

Board of Trustees

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Marilyn Hyte	Vice President
Cindy Cohen	Recording Secretary
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Maggie Duffy	Trustee
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Jeff Lott	Trustee
Michael Toll	Trustee
David Weiss	Trustee

Non-Board Officer

Steve Cohen Treasurer

Executive Team Portfolios

Rev. Snyder — Finance, Personnel, and Leadership Development
 Rev. Gadon — Pastoral Care, Adult RE, and CYRE
 Helen Foss — Social Justice, Growth, and Denominational Affairs
 Ruth Mette — Strategic Planning, Membership, and Buildings & Grounds

This *QUEST* covers July 1 to 31, 2009. The next *QUEST* newsletter will cover events from August 1 to 31, 2009.

QUEST is a monthly newsletter publication of the First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, Delaware.

Submission deadline for *QUEST* is by noon on the 15th of each month for events the following month.

Any announcement suggestions for the **Order of Service** and the **Broadcast E-news** must be in by Tuesdays at noon and may also be sent to **Karen@firstuuwilm.org** and will be placed according to available space. If possible, please make submissions via E-mail. Otherwise, neatly prepared copy can be submitted to Karen Rockhold's mail box in the church office.



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July 2009

WELCOME:

The First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, Delaware, inspires lifelong spiritual growth. We promote religious freedom and joyfully offer the transforming message of our Unitarian Universalist principles to our community and the world. We share a freely chosen faith that opens minds and deepens understanding of life's enduring mysteries. We rely on reason, intuition, personal experience and diverse religious traditions. As individuals in community, we commit our hearts, minds and resources to this mission. Sunday morning services begin at 10:30; Children's Religious Education starts at 10:45.