

The Bellnote



Universalist Unitarian
Church of East Liberty
2231 Jefferson Road,
Clarklake, MI 49234
(517) 529-4221

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December 2008

LOCATED 3/4 MILE WEST OF U.S. 127

MINISTER'S OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday: 9-10:30, 1-3:30 by appointment
Wednesday: 9-6
Thursday: 9-10:30, 1-3:30 by appointment
Saturday: 10 - 6 by appointment
Cindy works mostly from her home office

STAFF

MINISTER **Rev. Cynthia Landrum**

R. E. COORDINATOR **Sharon Pedersen**

MUSIC DIRECTOR **Nancy Cooper**

NURSERY & CHILD CARE **Vicki Haynes**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Nena Obits

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Joyce Weatherwax
Carol Bowen
Nena Obits



This has been the busiest fall I can remember in my own life. For me, I've been teaching English composition at Jackson Community College. I've been enjoying being back on a campus, learning and teaching and sharing my passion for the written word. I've made some good church connections during the time at JCC, as well. But, at the same time, I've definitely felt the pressure of having much less "free" time, with additional work of teaching and grading stacks of compositions.

And so it is with great joy that I look forward to this dark time of the year, the peaceful days of winter, and the coming holidays. Our church is busy with lots of activities and events in December, but they are fun-filled and family-friendly events, full of joy and celebration. And if, like me, you have had a busy and bustling fall, check out the yoga for Advent series sponsored by new member Peggy Smith (see p. 4). I'm always preparing for church during that time of week, so I can't attend, but it's a wonderful opportunity to take a short-term yoga class in a peaceful and relaxed setting.

Another opportunity I'm excited about this month is the Solstice Celebration. I've been wanting to hold one of these for years, as I've been inspired by stories of Solstice services from my colleagues. I've been talking to some of the local Pagan groups about ideas for the service, and we may find some collaborative participation, as well, from these outside sources. The Solstice, Yule, marks the longest night of the year, and we'll ring it in in style, I'm sure.

I know December is a busy month, as people add to their already busy calendars the additional events of office Christmas parties, school concerts and recitals, family get-togethers, and Christmas shopping. However, please take a few minutes to look through this newsletter at some of the things we've planned for you, and consider coming to those that you can fit into your schedules. You'll be glad you did, because nothing can refresh the spirit like religious community, and nothing can lift the winter blues like the circle of friends.

Lastly, when I arrived at this church I was told that a holiday tradition was a "Christmas Eve piñata" that the minister provided. Despite my love of unusual local rituals, I didn't ever bring a piñata, as I had a mental image of little children violently pummeling one with sticks. This year, however, my view of piñatas has widened, as I've learned of ones that can be opened with strings, so this year I'm vowing to revive the tradition of the minister bringing the Christmas Eve piñata! Let the mad rush for candy commence!

Happy Holidays, *Cindy* -1~

Religious Education Report

Ho Ho Ho! The calendar is racing by, and we have another holiday season upon us. That means a pageant and Santa's Workshop to keep kids busy while visions of sugar plums (and more modern pleasantries) dance in their heads.

The next few weeks will be taken up by pageant practice, followed by the holiday pageant on December 14th.

Practice schedule will be as follows:

Sun. Nov. 30th first read/sing-through (K-12)
Sat. Dec. 6 & 13: lunch and practice, 12 - 2pm
Sun. Dec. 7: practice during RE time
Sun. Dec. 14: pageant performance

We'll try to send kids' lines home to practice, and hopefully enlist the adult choir, and church-goers, in helping sing some of the songs. Most kids' "costumes" will just be Winter outerwear, like coats and gloves.

Then after the fun of that performance, we'll have Santa's Workshop—a chance for kids to enjoy making a craft during social hour, from frosting cookies to making small gifts. Let me know if you'd like to help with this! We're also having a special Interfaith Youth Meeting on Sunday night, December 7th. I'm networking with other church youth leaders and such to recruit teens (middle/jr/high school) to attend. Hopefully we can kick off some regular activities this night! I could use some other adult volunteers with this event, as well.

We'll have one "regular Sunday," December 21, where the kids will have a lesson during the church service. Don't forget Sunday night the 21st is a Winter Solstice service, and of course we'll have the usual intergenerational Christmas Eve service the 24th. I'm looking for nursery volunteers for these two nights; if we don't get two each night, the nursery will be available as a "crying room," meaning parents stay with their (hopefully happy, not crying!)

~ 2 ~

children there.

Have a happy and peace filled holiday season.

Sharon



Religious Education Coordinator

A Repeat Reminder of the New...

...Collection Procedure Changes

During the fall retreat meeting, the Board reviewed several church procedures and decided to make minor changes in donation collections for Sunday services and after service snacks.

Volunteers providing snacks for social hour are asked to count the money that is in the "donation box." At the present time it is a tin that is on the table. Please record the amount collected on a form provided, sign the form then place it with the money in a lock box that will be provided. A second form should be filled out with the same information and placed in the treasurer's mailbox, which is located in the nursery, near the copy machine. The following week the money and form in the lock box will be given to Gary Tripp who records the weekly deposits. This process will begin the first Sunday in December.

A form to be filled out by the two ushers for each Sunday service will also be used to record the gifts of the congregation. This procedure will take effect after ushers have been properly instructed, but no sooner than the first Sunday in December.

Submitted by: Steve Beison

We Welcome Your Membership Not a member? We'd love to have you join our spiritual community. New members signify their commitment by signing the Membership Book during a scheduled church service. It is understood that members actively support their congregation through attendance, service and financial commitment. To start your process of becoming an official member of our lively, compassionate and challenging congregation, speak with Rev. Cindy Landrum, (517) 529-4221, or a member of the membership committee, including Kathy Haynes, Joan Bernstein Jann Krupa and Carole Hartsuff.

Notes from the Board

Year-End Appeal

At this time of year, I typically receive numerous mailings from non-profit agencies seeking a "generous year-end gift." I'm not sure how each agency defines generous, but it's my opinion that they will accept anything from \$1.00 on up. Sending quarters, dimes or nickels would probably cost me more in postage than the donation itself.

I realize these mailings, in part, are appealing to my holiday spirit and my recognition that these donations are tax deductible, but I have often asked myself, "don't these charitable organizations realize that people also are spending substantially more on gifts for friends and relatives and may not have the funds to donate?" Wouldn't donors be more likely to open their wallets at other times of the year? So far, I have not met anyone who could answer my questions.

My reaction to these mailings this year, however, has changed somewhat. Hearing about people who have lost their job, can't pay their home mortgage, are unable to buy clothes for their children, are forced to decide between feeding their family properly or purchasing necessary medications has made me realize how fortunate I am. The fact that I even have some discretionary money to donate to charitable organizations puts me in a far better position than those who have been harmed by a declining economy.

As I sort my mail each day, I look for those non-profit agencies that focus on helping people in need of food, clothing and shelter. Those are the agencies that rise to the top of my donor list. It is more than a coincidence that these are many of the same agencies that our church supports throughout the year. During last year's Christmas Eve service, for example, all money collected that evening went to the Interfaith Shelter.

My year-end appeal is to those of you who might be able to contribute a little extra this year to the charitable agencies of your choice or to our church. This is the season of giving.

In December you will be receiving an update as to how much you have pledged to donate to our church and how much you have contributed. Any contributions made by December 31, will then apply to the 2008 calendar year for tax purposes. A summary of your contributions for 2008 will then be provided in January.

Let us not forget that there are many ways in which we can share our gifts with others aside from financial donations. Lending a hand to help others, listening to their concerns or sharing a meal are just a few.

My wishes for you are that this holiday season and the coming year bring you peace, good health and hope for the future.

Steve Beian



Singing the Journey

The UUA hymnal supplement, *Singing the Journey*, is in the back of the pews with the regular hymnal. If you would like to make a donation for the cost of a hymnal supplement, please make out a check for \$15, payable to the U. U. C. E. L., with "hymnal supplement" on the memo line, and give it to a member of the Worship Committee: Lynn Hightower, Nancy Cooper, George Tramp, and Cindy Landrum.

A chalice bookplate will be placed in a hymnal supplement to honor your donation.

Submitted by: Worship Committee

"Go now and live your religion;

Its truth reflects in all you do.

Go, may love's presence ever guide you.

Live the good life the whole day through."

~~ Our Closing Song ~~

Meetings and Events

U.U. Church of East Liberty

AUWU Christmas Potluck Dinner

Please sign up to attend the AUWU Annual Christmas Potluck Dinner on **Thursday, December 4th**. Dinner will be starting at noon. Please bring a passing dish and enjoy the afternoon with good fellowship. Following the dinner you will have the pleasure of being entertained with music from Tom Pepper.

Submitted by Joan Bernstein

Hungarian Dinner

Our First Friday Dinner for December is a Hungarian Dinner. It will be **Friday, December 5th** at 6:00 pm. We will celebrate the roots of Unitarianism in the Hungarian culture with Hungarian food, decorations, music, and a special presentation on Christmas traditions in Hungary with Carrie Landrum. December 6 is St. Nicholas' Day, which is the gift-exchange day in many cultures, including the Hungarian culture, so, since our dinner is on the Eve of St. Nick's, we will celebrate *Szent Mikulás together*. If you are interested in cooking a dish for the Hungarian Dinner, contact Cindy Landrum.

Submitted by: Rev. Cindy Landrum

Visitor's Q. & A. Orientation

Question & Answer - If you would like to learn more about the church, please join the minister after the service for a short, informal conversation on **Sunday, December 7th**. Meet in the foyer after the service, following the Q. and A. there will be a tour of our buildings.

Submitted by: the Membership Comm.

Yoga for Advent

Our newest member, Peggy Smith is creating a Yoga for Advent class. It will run the four weeks of Advent **Nov. 30th, Dec. 7th, 14th & 21st**. The focus will be on the positive and spiritual meaning of the season. Class will take place at 9:30 - 10:20 am each Sunday in the schoolhouse. The price is a suggested "love offering" of \$10.00 per class. If that is out of your budget, bring what you can if only yourself! (and a mat if you have one). And having this class gives me "reason for the season" and I will be giving the church funds raised at this event. If you are interested, please talk to Peggy.

Submitted by: Peggy Smith

~ 4 ~

commUnity forUMs

...are free and open programs to facilitate dialogue about the challenging issues of our time. ForUMs are usually held at the Jackson District Library, located at 244 W. Michigan Ave. between Blackstone & N. Jackson Street. ForUMs are usually on the third Thursdays at 6:30-8:30 pm. This month's forum is at a special time and location. The commUnity forUM is sponsored by the Universalist Unitarian Church of East Liberty in conjunction with the Jackson District Library.

There are two commUnity forUMs in December the first is **Thursday, Dec. 11th at 6:30 pm** "**Loving the Unhappy: a program on Holiday Sadness**" In this time of increasing economic stress, home foreclosures and job anxiety, we want to share information and practical tips on living with depression. Matthew Murphy, of Allegiance Health, will educate us on depression, suicidal thoughts and holiday stress. Jeannette McDonald will focus on the issues of living with a loved one who has depression. Discussion and comments will follow.

Submitted by: Debby Sears,
of the Jackson District Library

The second commUnity forums in on **Sunday, December 14th**. As part of the *commUnity forUM* series co-sponsored by the East Liberty Unitarian Universalist Church and The Jackson District Library we are holding this December forum at a different time and venue. In the spirit of community and last minute holiday shopping our forum will be held at Art 634 N. Mechanic St., **Sunday December 14th** at 2:00 pm wrapping up the "Art Walk" (Sat. Dec. 13th, 10 am - 3:30 pm & Sun. Dec. 14th 12 pm - 4:00 pm) with a forum hosting a speaker from "**JXN Local First**." This group is a member of the American Independent Business Alliance (AMBIA) and is designed to support and cultivate local business by educating the public about the socio-economic benefits of buying local.

Submitted by: Kindra Wicklund

Santa's Workshop and Potluck Dinner

Join us on **December 14th** after the service, which is a 'R.E. Winter Pageant' for Santa's Workshop. Where the children will have the opportunity to decorate holiday cookies and/or make a holiday craft. It's free! An also there will be a potluck dinner at the same time, come and enjoy.

Interfaith Youth Event

Calling all interested teens:

Interfaith Youth Event

Tell your neighbors and friends!

Join other middle, junior and high schoolers
for pizza, fun and conversation!

Sunday, December 7th at U.U.C.E.L.

5:00 - 7:00pm

Submitted by: Sharon Pedersen

Caring Committee

Our next Caring Committee meeting will be on
Sunday, December 7th after the service.

Submitted by: Nena Obits

White Elephant Gift Exchange

On **Sunday, December 28th**, join us for some fun following the service. We'll be having a white elephant gift exchange. Bring something you got that you want to get rid of, or bring a funny or real gift of under \$10. Bring it wrapped, with no name on it.

Brooklyn Food Pantry

Volunteers are needed on **December 23rd** (only one day this month) from 10:00 am 2:00 pm. One person is needed to help fill the orders of those needing food and stack shelves. If you are available to help in this rewarding work please contact Paul Jenkins. *Don't forget* to bring canned food for donation to the pantry. There is a basket in the foyer for your contributions. Canned fruit is especially appreciated. *Thank you!*

Submitted by: Paul Jenkins

Craft Day

Please plan to attend the **Saturday, December 27th** Scrappin' & Craftin' Day (any kind of craft project you are working on, bring it and your supplies to work on it; as others do theirs). Our monthly get togethers are on the 4th Saturday of each month. Contact Caroline if you are interested in coming. The time is from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm. There is no charge for participating, but donations to help cover the church's costs are welcome.

Submitted by: Caroline Landrum

~~Visitor Tips for Everyone~~

Here are some ways to make people feel welcome that everyone can follow:

- Introduce yourself and get to know a visitor by name.
- Invite a visitor to social hour.
- Wear a nametag.
- Sit toward the middle of the pew or nearer to the front of the church so visitors can be more anonymous if they choose.
- Watch for people who may be alone during social hour and ask them about the sermon or their faith journey. **Thank you!**

Church growth is everyone's responsibility

Where did all those extra books go?

Great news! Our used book sale in November netted almost \$600 (it was \$599 and some change)! But, of course, we had lots of used books left over. They were all picked up by The Book Exchange, a used bookstore in Jackson <http://jacksonbookexchange.com/>. Our church has an account there (130 E. Washington) which our members and friends are welcome to use. If you give them our name you will get a \$1 deduction off any used book you purchase there.



Amazon Shoppers – You Can Help the Church!

If you're shopping on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) during the holiday season, remember to go first to our church's webpage and click on the "shop" link www.libertyuu.org/shop.html. If you click from there to Amazon.com, our church will receive a percentage of the profits! It's a simple and easy way to support the church while doing your holiday shopping from home.

Cooks needed

Looking for volunteers to step up and take a turn at cooking the 1st Friday dinners for the months of February, April and June. Tell someone on the membership committee you would like to do so.

Submitted by: the Membership Comm.

FROM THE EDITOR:

IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST COPY OF THE CHURCH'S NEWSLETTER "THE BELLNOTE" WELCOME ABOARD, AND HAPPY READING. OUR CHURCH CALENDAR YEAR RUNS FROM JULY 1-JUNE 30, THE CHURCH BOARD ASKS THOSE THAT RECEIVE THE PAPER VERSION OF THE NEWSLETTER TO PAY A \$17.00 PER-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION FEE AND WE STARTED THIS IN AUG., 2007. NEW VISITORS WILL GET 3 MONTHS FREE, AFTER THAT A SUBSCRIPTION FEE WILL BE ASKED FOR, OR CHANGED TO AN ON-LINE VERSION THAT IS NO CHARGE.

THANK YOU – KATHY AND VICKI

THE DEADLINE FOR THE JANUARY NEWSLETTER IS:

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

SEND SUBMISSIONS TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

uucel_bellnote@yahoo.com

Kathy & Vicki Haynes

or the Bellnote mailbox.

We want to thank ~ Rev. Cindy Landrum, Sharon Pedersen, Steve Belson, Peggy Smith, Caroline Landrum, Kindra Wicklund, Debby Sears, Nena Obits, Joan Bernstein, and the Membership Comm., *for their news items this month.*

OUR 7 PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES

WE, THE MEMBER CONGREGATIONS OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION, COVENANT TO AFFIRM AND PROMOTE:

- ~ THE INHERENT WORTH AND DIGNITY OF EVERY PERSON
- ~ JUSTICE, EQUITY, AND COMPASSION IN HUMAN RELATIONS
- ~ ACCEPTANCE OF ONE ANOTHER AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN OUR CONGREGATIONS
- ~ A FREE AND RESPONSIBLE SEARCH FOR TRUTH AND MEANING
- ~ THE RIGHT OF CONSCIENCE AND THE USE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WITHIN OUR CONGREGATIONS AND IN SOCIETY AT LARGE
- ~ THE GOAL OF WORLD COMMUNITY WITH PEACE, LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL
- ~ 6 ~ RESPECT FOR THE INTERDEPENDENT WEB OF ALL EXISTENCE OF WHICH WE ARE A PART

The Bellnote Calendar

All events are at the church, unless otherwise noted

December

3 Wed.	Board Meeting ~ 6:30 pm
4 Thurs.	AUUV Annual Christmas Potluck Dinner ~ 12:00 noon
5 Fri.	1st Friday Dinner, "Rev. Cindy's Hungarian Dinner" ~ 6:00 pm
6 Sat.	R.E. Winter Pageant ~ Play Rehearsal ~ 12:00 - 2:00 pm
7 Sunday	Yoga for Advent ~ 9:30 am ~ In the schoolhouse
7 Sunday	~~~~ Service ~ 11:00 am ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum
7 Sunday	Caring Committee meeting ~ After the service
7 Sunday	Interfaith Youth Event ~ 5:00 -7:00 pm
9 Tue.	Meet Your Neighbor Coffee ~ 9:00 - 11:00 am
10 Wed.	Worship Committee Meeting ~ 5:30 pm
10 Wed.	Religious Education Committee Meeting ~ 7:00 pm
11 Thurs.	Membership Meeting ~ 1:30 pm
11 Thurs.	commUnity forUm ~ "Depression" @ Jackson District Library ~ 6:30 pm
13 Sat.	R.E. Winter Pageant ~ Play Rehearsal ~ 12:00 - 2:00 pm
14 Sunday	Yoga for Advent ~ 9:30 am ~ In the schoolhouse
14 Sunday	~~~~ Service ~ 11:00 am ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum
14 Sunday	R.E. Holiday Pageant, Santa's Workshop and Potluck Dinner
14 Sunday	commUnity forUm "JXN Local First" @Art 634 on N. Mechanic Street ~ 2:00 pm
21 Sunday	Yoga for Advent ~ 9:30 am ~ In the schoolhouse
21 Sunday	~~~~ Service ~ 11:00 am ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum
21 Sunday	~~~~ Service ~ 7:00 pm ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ Solstice Celebration
23 Tue.	Brooklyn Food Pantry ~ Work Day ~ 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
24 Wed.	~~~~ Service ~ 7:00 pm ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ Christmas Eve Candlelight
27 Sat.	Scrapping & Crafting ~ 9:30 am - 5:30 pm
28 Sunday	~~~~ Service ~ 11:00 am ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum
28 Sunday	White Elephant Gift Exchange ~ Bring a wrapped gift
Before the 4th	The Decorations need to come down and put away

Upcoming Events

Jan. 2	<u>No</u> 1st Friday Dinner is Planned
Jan. 8	Next AUUV Meeting (Not on the 1st)

WEEKLY VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE:

Sun.	Greeters	Ushers	Social Hour Host	Nursery Helper	R.E. Teachers
Dec. 7	Alyce O.	Gary T. & Alyce O.	Jon H. & Nancy S.	Margaret E.	Practice during RE time
Dec. 14	Grace M.	Gary T. & Paul J.	Potluck Diner	Joyce W.	RE—Winter Pageant
Dec. 21	Joan B.	Gary T. & OPEN	Kathy & Donna H.	Open	Pre-Kerry H. & Jane H. K-5-Peter M. & Rob G. Teens-Lynn H. & Sharon P.
Dec. 21pm	OPEN	Gary T. & Paul J.	Bring Cookies	OPEN	Intergenerational
Dec. 24pm	OPEN	Gary T. & OPEN	Bring Cookies	OPEN	Intergenerational
Dec. 28	OPEN	Gary T. & Paul J.	Joyce W.	OPEN	

A. M. Sunday Services Start at 11:00 am ~ Celebrating Over 150 Years of Liberal Religion

Dec. 7 - "St. Nicholas Day"

- Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum -

On this service, the day after St. Nicholas' Day, we will celebrate the historical and the cultural St. Nick.

Dec. 14 - "RE—Winter Pageant"

- The Children of Religious Education Classes-

Please join us for "The Legend of Polar Mountain" a children's Winter pageant during the service. (No, this is not about the Polar Express train--but still full of magic!)

Special Collection: Brooklyn Food Pantry.

Dec. 21 - "A Celebration of Lights"

- Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum -

Our morning service on this Solstice Sunday will weave together themes of light and dark from multiple religious viewpoints, paying particular attention to the Solstice and Hanukkah.

Dec. 21 - "Solstice Celebration"

- Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum -

7:00 p.m. Join us on Sunday evening for a special Solstice celebration featuring an evening of music, poetry, and story-telling, as we celebrate the longest night of the year.

Bring cookies to share for after the service.

Dec. 24 - "Christmas Eve Candlelight Service"

- Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum -

7:00 p.m. Join us for our traditional Christmas Eve service of singing, lighting candles, and telling the age-old story of the birth of Jesus.

Bring cookies to share for after the service.

Dec. 28 - " And a Happy New Year"

- Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum -

This service will include a look at New Year's celebrations in different cultures and religions.

Where people care about each other and care about the world.
http://www.geocities.com/kemit_210/the_bellnote_uucel.html
www.libertyuu.org
eastlibertyuu@yahoo.com

