

The Bellnote

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

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MINISTER'S OFFICE HOURS:

Monday: Her day off
Tuesday: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Wednesday: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Thursday: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Friday: Sermon-writing day
Saturday: By appointment
Sunday: 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

PRESIDENT Gratia Karmes
VICE PRESIDENT Jane Volk
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Alyce Oosting

BOARD/ELECTED NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Joyce Weatherwax

Carol Bowen

Nena Obits



Minister's Column

December is an "interesting" time to be a Unitarian Universalist. Most of the members of our churches grew up Christian and celebrating Christmas, yet a large percentage of our members no longer consider themselves Christian. For these members, Christmas can evoke many feelings from nostalgia and yearning to irritation and alienation. Some of our members are Christians and find the Christmas story meaningful and important to their religious beliefs, some taking it literally and others taking it metaphorically. Others of our members come from other religious backgrounds and may have other holidays they usually celebrate at this time of year, such as Hanukkah or the Winter Solstice. Finding ways to celebrate our diversity and celebrate holiday cheer can be challenging. My approach is to focus every-other year on various traditions of the world and their December holidays, and on alternating years, such as this one, focus more exclusively on the Christian holiday. But even focusing on the story of Jesus doesn't mean that we, as Unitarian Universalists, leave our inquiring mind at the door. We want to combine the celebration of Christmas, with all of its awe and majesty and wonder, with our search for truth and meaning, with our logic and reason, and keeping open to new historical understandings. Throughout our culture we're presented with traditional images of the Christmas story, told in the same ways year after year. Here, in our faith, we are free to explore other understandings at the same time as celebrating the beauty of the age-old story.

If you want to celebrate Christmas without leaving your mind at the door, with singing old carols while thinking new thoughts, Unitarian Universalism is one place in this community this can be done. We're unique in our celebration of Christian heritage and roots, yet non-creedal embrace of theological diversity.

Come, and Celebrate Christmas!

Peace,

Cindy



Religious Education Report

I enjoy **this time of year** because, not only is the time filled with hectic peace and frenzied joy, but there are often intergenerational services to remind us how enjoyable our church family is when we are "all together now." As I mentioned before a service recently, we're trying to teach children and adults alike to use a few hand signals to indicate "quiet requested," rather than "shushing" kids, which disrupts other individuals' enjoyment of the service; so try "quiet coyote," (see description below) whose ears are listening and mouth is closed, or "quiet rabbit," who does the same with a "scouts' honor" hand signal.

With either hand bring your ring and middle fingers together touching your thumb, and your pinkie and your pointer fingers are straight up like ears. So it looks like a rabbit or a coyote, the ears are open and the mouth is closed.

At the opening of each K-5 lesson, the kids say:
We are Unitarian Universalists
with minds that think,
hearts that love,
and hands that are ready to serve

Are our adults acting with kids in the same way? I would hope we use "nice" words instead of swearing in front of them, for instance, or, If a child is out of his/her seat and should go back to be with mom or dad, how about crouching to their height and giving them some gentle re-direction? Not to get preachy, but I think these examples demonstrate that we value the inherent worth and dignity of every person – even children, and yes, this "village" can help raise good UUs by example of tolerance, guidance and humor.

The **RE Committee** talked in November about our goal of reminding nursery volunteers before their Sunday so we don't have "No Shows," so don't be surprised when you get that reminder call. We also talked about possible fundraisers and about **curricula** for the next two years. It's a "surprise" at this point, but so far we've met Rev. Cindy's goal of having both

classes on the same "page" as far as theme goes for the next two years. Now I'll bring the proposed curricula to the committee for further planning over the next several months.

Families with children and "crafty" types: remember that **Dec. 13 is Santa's Workshop** after the service. There will be a few stations for children (and others who would like to join in) to enjoy crafting after the service in the social hall, including cookie decorating and other possibilities. We appreciate Anne Seifert's coordination of this effort.

On a different subject, do you know any families with young teens that DON'T go to our church, but may be interested in participating in **OWL (Our Whole Lives relationships and sexuality education)** in the next year or two? We hope to offer these classes outside of Sunday mornings, but to make the extensive training "worth it" we've got to drum up a full class. Parents need to attend an orientation and sign a permission slip, and they would find this well worth their children's time. I'd like to start a **list of families and/or churches** that are interested. We also want to offer adult OWL at some point – wouldn't that be fun?

Speaking of adult RE, the "**Harvest the Power**" class has only two sessions to go, and we've really enjoyed Cindy's leading this class.

Peace and Joy during these chaotic times,

IUUv,

Sharon



Religious Education Coordinator

East Liberty: The Town That Doesn't Exist

The story of our church building, the Universalist Unitarian Church of East Liberty, in rural south central Michigan, is one of determination, dispute and, ultimately, harmony.

Even though our church building is over 125 years old, Universalists arrived from New York long before that, in 1834, and settled in the Clark Lake area. Worshipers met outdoors, in log cabin homes, or later in a little schoolhouse they built.

In time, they shared a church they built with Methodists in the nearby village of Liberty. Methodists would hold services Sunday mornings and Universalists, Sunday afternoon. The agreement was that the church would not be dedicated to any one faith or creed. Yet one Sunday the Universalists arrived at the church to discover that an evangelist had stirred such fervor in the Methodists that they had dedicated the church to the trinity.

Appalled, the Universalists left, never to return. They met instead back in the schoolhouse. The story goes that one Universalist, who could see the Liberty church from his farm and who had loved it, was so incensed by the Methodists that he built a barn to block his view of their church forever.

By 1881 the Universalists had built a two-story church with a sanctuary seating 100 and a social hall downstairs. They built it with their own hands. We have heard it often said that the best of materials and workmanship went into it. The builders "made the foundations deep and wide, the walls square and upright as they hoped we might build our lives."

The structure is characteristic of late 19th century churches in this area, with its rectangular shape, orange brick exterior, and tall white steeple. The steps were added later and were fashioned of fieldstone from the farms of the church pioneer families. Inside, the pews are made of white ash trimmed with black walnut.

After all the brouhaha of leaving Liberty, the Universalists designated this church *East Liberty*, even though there is no such place on the map. They welcomed people of all faiths to the dedication of the building. During that

ceremony, in the spirit of religious harmony, Baptists, Methodists and Universalists alike stepped up to donate \$2,400, guaranteeing the church would begin debt-free.

Recently, while remodeling the social hall, we pulled down a wall to reveal part of the building's foundations. The exposed wall lets us stand in awe at the handiwork of our ancestors who erected a building that would embody their dreams and that still stands over 125 years later.

Ann Green had submitted this story to the *Country* magazine.



Happy Holidays UU Friends!!!

As a fundraiser, our church is selling LIVE Holiday wreaths and swags. Each one will be trimmed simply with a bow and some berries. The greens are grown locally, and our supplier is also local. The prices are as follows:

15-inch Wreath - \$12.00

25-inch Wreath - \$15.00

30-inch Wreath - \$18.00

Swag - \$18.00 (for display over a doorway, window, etc.)

The sign up sheet is on the bulletin board in the Social Hall. Orders **MUST** be in no later than Dec. 1, and wreaths may be picked up at the church on Dec. 6. Payment can be made when you pick up your wreath(s)/swag(s). If the Dec. 6 date doesn't work for you, some other time can be scheduled.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact me.

Submitted by: Jane Volk

Meetings and Events

U.U. Church of East Liberty

First Friday Dinner

The **December 4**, first Friday dinner will be hosted by A.U.U.W. Do you have a **"Comfort Food"** – something your mother or grandmother made for you as a child? If so, please make it and bring it to the first Friday dinner on December 4 starting at 6:30 pm. This will be a potluck style dinner of everyone's favorite comfort food. You can also bring your money; remember this is also a fun fundraiser.

Still open for ideas and host/hostess in January the (8th), March and June. February 5, will be hosted by Jann Krupa, with a chili cook-off, April 2 will be hosted by Chris Keith; it will be a cook-off with voting for the best in different food categories.

What would you like to plan?

Submitted by: the Membership Comm.

Caring Committee

The Caring Committee's next meeting is **December 20** after the service.

Submitted by: Alyce Oosting

Bake Sale

On **Sunday, December 13** we will be having a Holiday Bake Sale during the social hour with no social hour host; drinks will be furnished. Please bring items ready for the sale like cookies, cakes, pies and or breads etc. Label your dishes or use disposable containers. Package your baked goods to catch the eye of the buyer, have fun with it. This is a fundraiser with 100% going to the church.

Submitted by: the Membership Comm.

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, Carnegie Branch, located at 244 W. Michigan Ave. between Blackstone & N. Jackson Street. ForUms are usually on the third Thursdays at 6:30-8:30 pm. The commUnity forUm is sponsored by the Universalist Unitarian Church of East Liberty in conjunction with the Jackson District Library.

Thursday, December 10 "LIVE FREE"

A Lesson on Freeganomics by local practitioners and moderator of www.freecycle.org. Come get tips on how to live on the free and cheap in these tough economic times. Also, ideas for making holiday gifts from found items & "junk," as well as growing your own food. Bring/share your personal creative ideas for non-commercial gifts of love. Come to the December Community Forum, at special date and location: Thursday, Dec. 10th, McIntyre Room of the Carnegie Library, 6:30 pm.

The **January 21** Community Forum will examine the information issue below. We will have Derrick Fries of EMU, as well as a sponsor of HB 4410, a bill to address some of the problems of the MMC, and a local school administrator to discuss Michigan's high school graduation requirements and their potential impact on dropout rates.

---In 2006, the Michigan legislature enacted the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC), rigorous statewide graduation requirements for all high school students. In order to receive a diploma, beginning with the graduating class of 2011, a student must pass four credits (years) of math, including algebra I, geometry, and algebra II. The idea is to better prepare students for the modern workplace. However, many are concerned that there is little consideration for students who struggle with mathematics, are at-risk, or have learning disabilities. Derrick Fries, assistant professor at Eastern Michigan University, did a study that projects Michigan's high school dropout rate will double by June 2011 with MMC in place.

Submitted by: Outreach Committee

Brooklyn Food Pantry

It's our turn to have one or two volunteers to work at the Brooklyn Food Pantry, 171 Wamplers Lake Road, Brooklyn. The pantry is open every Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm to fill the orders of those in need of food and restock shelves. Our work dates are **Tuesday December 8** and **Thursday December 10**. If you are available to help in this rewarding work please contact Paul Jenkins at church or give him a call. Don't forget to bring canned food or any non-perishable items for donation to the pantry. There is a basket in the foyer under the desk for your contributions.

Submitted by: Paul Jenkins

Worship Committee

We have started using a "Worship Associate" on Sunday mornings. This involves a lay person being a part of the service such as opening and closing or joys and sorrows and a reading etc. We need 5 people to take one Sunday a month. If you are interested please call Lynn Hightower, or I may be calling you!

Submitted by: Lynn Hightower



R.E. Supplies and Thank You's

Thank you to those of you who have **donated items** for RE, including Jackie Johnson and George Tramp, who donated books recently. Here is a wish list of items needed for the "We Believe" curriculum that the K-5 class has recently started:

- ~ Watercolor markers
- ~ Transparent/ "Scotch" tape
- ~ Masking tape ~ Glue sticks
- ~ Assorted sizes scissors
- ~ Multi-colored construction paper
- ~ 11 x 17 or larger artists' paper/poster board
- ~ newsprint/flipchart
- ~ business-size white envelopes ~

Submitted by: Sharon Pedersen



Jackson's "Big Read"

Have you been enjoying Jackson's "Big Read" for the past few years? If you have (or even if you haven't), you might be interested in helping to select next church year's book (March 2011). The survey to cast your vote is available at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=KPEsfdAGKTyYKuBkjbXQ5w_3d_3d or on the Jackson District Library webpage. The three finalists are The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain, The Call of the Wild by Jack London, and Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury. It's interesting to note that Mark Twain and Ray Bradbury were both Unitarians. Jack London got married in a Unitarian church, as his wife was Unitarian, but I have not seen anyone say if he ever joined.

Submitted by: Rev. Cindy Landrum

District & Denominational Meetings and Events

The Blue Cotton Gown: A Midwife's Memoir, set in Appalachia, is not primarily about birth but about the burdens, struggles and strength of women. It addresses such contemporary issues as drug abuse, teen pregnancy, menopause, mother-guilt, infertility, domestic violence, transgender change, midlife sexuality, keeping a marriage together and the difficulties in staying in private practice.

Sound like a lot? It's all in a day's work for any one who takes time to listen.

The Blue Cotton Gown is a book about women in trouble, a celebration of healing and a tribute to all professionals who struggle to survive with their souls intact. It's available now on www.beacon.org and in most major and independent book stores. Though the story is true it reads like a novel and makes an excellent discussion tool for book clubs.

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 20

SEND SUBMISSIONS TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

uucel_bellnote@yahoo.com

Kathy & Vicki Haynes

or in writing handed to Kathy.

We want to thank: Ann Green, Lynn Hightower, Paul Jenkins, Rev. Cindy Landrum, Alyce Oosting, Sharon Pedersen, Jane Volk, Outreach Comm. and the Membership Comm., for their news items this month.

"May it be true that a joy shared
is a joy doubled and
a sorrow shared is a sorrow halved"

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
- ~ 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

1 Tue.	Adult R. E. class "Harvest the Power: Developing Lay Leadership" ~ 6:30 pm
2 Wed.	Board Meeting ~ 6:30 pm ~ (canceled for the month)
3 Thurs.	AUUW Meeting ~ 12:30 pm
4 Fri.	1st Friday Dinner ~ Hosted by the A.U.U.W. "Comfort" Food" ~ 6:30 pm
6 Sunday	~~~~ Service ~ 11:00 am ~ Rev. Cynthia L. Landrum
8 Tue.	Meet Your Neighbor Coffee ~ 9:00 - 11:00 am
8 Tue.	Brooklyn Food Pantry ~ Workday 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
8 Tue.	Last of Ad. R. E. "Harvest the Power: Developing Lay Leadership" ~ 6:30 pm
9 Wed.	Worship Committee Meeting ~ 5:30 pm
9 Wed.	Religious Education Committee Meeting ~ 7:00 pm
10 Thurs.	Brooklyn Food Pantry ~ Workday 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
10 Thurs.	Membership Meeting ~ 1:30 pm
10 Thurs.	JDL/UUCEL commUnity forUms ~ "LIVE FREE" @ Jackson District Library, Carnegie Branch McIntyre Room~ 6:30 pm
13 Sunday	~~~~ Service ~ 11:00 am ~ Rev. Cynthia L. Landrum
13 Sunday	Holiday Baked Goods Sale and Santa's Workshop ~ After the Service
20 Sunday	~~~~ Service ~ 11:00 am ~ Rev. Cynthia L. Landrum
20 Sunday	Special Solstice Celebration ~Rev. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ 7:00 pm
20 Sunday	Caring Committee ~ After the Service
24 Thurs.	Candlelight Christmas Eve Service ~ Rev. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ 7:00 pm
27 Sunday	~~~~ Service ~ 11:00 am ~ Lay Leader - Sharon Pederson

Upcoming Events

Jan. 8	1st Friday Dinner on the 2nd Friday of Jan -- not on Jan. 1st ~ Host needed
Jan. 21	JDL/UUCEL commUnity forUms ~ Statewide Graduation Requirements ~ 6:30 pm

Sunday	Dec. 6	Dec.13	Dec. 20	Dec. 27
Greeters	Alyce O.	Grace M.	Joan B.	Lynn H.
R.E. Greeter		Sharon P.	Sharon P.	Sharon P.
Nursery Helper	Paul J.	Open	Becky B.	Open
Ushers	Steve J. Gary T.	Steve J. Gary T.	Steve J. Gary T.	Paul J. Gary T.
Social H. Host	Open	Baked Good Sale	Sharon P.	Lori B.
R.E. Teachers	K-5 Youth			

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

Dec. 6 - "O Holy Night? – A Historical Look at the Nativity Story"

-Rev. Cynthia L. Landrum, Minister

On this Sunday, we will explore the nativity story through a historical lens. Just what do Biblical scholars think happened when Jesus of Nazareth was born?

Dec. 13 - "What the Dickens? - Discovering the Unitarian Meaning of Christmas"

-Rev. Cynthia L. Landrum, Minister

Unitarian author Charles Dickens brought our faith into the season's celebration and changed our culture's understanding of Christmas. A look at what we all learned about the "meaning of the season" from Ebenezer Scrooge.

Dec. 20 - "An 'Impromptu' Christmas Pageant
- Rev. Cynthia L. Landrum, Minister

Instead of a children's pageant this year, we'll all join in the fun as we create a holiday story together. (Don't worry, introverts, you don't have to do anything if you don't want to!)

Dec. 20 - 7:00 pm - "Special Solstice Celebration"
– Come join us for our second annual Solstice Celebration! We'll join in story and song as we spread Yuletide cheer. Bring a plate of holiday treats or snacks for the social time following.

Dec. 24 – 7:00 pm – "Candlelight Christmas Eve Service"

-Rev. Cynthia L. Landrum, Minister

Join us for our traditional Christmas Eve service of singing, lighting candles, and telling the age-old story of the birth of Jesus. Bring a plate of holiday treats or snacks for the social time following.

Dec. 27 - "Light and Love"

-Lay Leader - Sharon Pederson

Where people care about each other and care about the world.
http://kernit_21049203.tripod.com/the-bellnote-ucel.html
www.libertyuu.org

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2231 Jefferson Road
Clarklake, MI 49234
Return Service Requested

