



Tapestry

December 2015

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Volunteer Recognition

Stewardship Cluster Recognizes Face Time

How do UUFA members view the Fellowship and their involvement with it? Thanks to the 2013 Face Time survey and follow-ups, we have a clearer answer to that question. Initiated by Penny Oldfather to encourage one-on-one conversations about likes, dislikes and interests, Face Time used a survey designed by Linda Gilbert. With help from nearly 30 members, called Connectors, over 130 responded to the survey.

The Face Time committee – Penny and Linda with help from Marguerite Holmes and Susan Curtis – reviewed the responses and produced reports still available [here](#) and [here](#). Dan Everett created a computer interface to share findings with committee chairs and others, an effort facilitated by Patty Freeman-Lynde. Into 2014 Face Time, with the cooperation of the Membership Committee and in particular, Car-

ol-Lee Baker, offered new members the opportunity to take the Face Time survey. Lee Cornell managed the new survey data.

In December 2015 the Stewardship Cluster led by Herb West is recognizing Penny and her committee. Barbara Leissner, a member of the Volunteer Recognition Team, is working with Herb to celebrate Face Time during the December 13 services.

Barbara and Herb will also thank the Connectors. In addition to Face Time committee members, they include Karen Solheim, Rosemary Woodel, Mary Jean Hartel, Virginia Carver, Debbie Hardegree, Marco Messori, Melanie Hennings, Hilda Kurtz, Alicia Caban-Wheeler, Kate Blane, Aleta Turner, Anna Eidsvik, Mindy McCage, Liz Weaver, Bill Horton, Denise D'angelo Jones, Carol-Lee Baker, Caryl Sundland, Myrna Adams West, and Herb West.

Annual Gift-Making Workshop Dec. 12

Nifty Gifty 2015 December 12 from 9am to noon. Join us in the Fellowship Hall for a festive crafting party. A variety of nifty craft projects will be prepared for children and adults to create. Yarn, fabric, and papers with glue, paint, and scissors just begins to describe the array of materials waiting to become gifty items. Brunch snacks and drinks will be ready to keep the crafting going throughout the morning. If you are interested in being a craft guide, please contact Hilda Kurtz (hldkrtz@gmail.com), or Fabiana Hayden (fabianahayden@gmail.com), or Liz Weaver (ejsweaver@gmail.com), or Dana Poss (dre@uuathensga.org). We are collecting clean glass jars and clean 12 oz plastic bottles.

For more Opportunities for Service, Celebration, & Fellowship through the month of December, see pages 5 and 6.

Spiritual Arts

Worship this month

December 6 – 'Tis the Season of Gifts, Food, and Fun In December we turn towards thoughts of winter holiday gift exchanges, gatherings with family or friends, special foods, and other traditional festivities that give meaning to our lives and help us keep track of our days. Service led by Rev. Alison Eskildsen

December 13 – Time for Einstein and Yoda In time for the latest *Star Wars* movie release we'll explore the cosmic connection between these cultural, spiritual, and astronomical forces. Service led by Rev. Alison Eskildsen.

December 20 – Good King Wenceslas There's a story behind this and other traditional songs of the season. Come sing and discover some of their stories. Service includes Rev. Alison Eskildsen and others.

December 21 – The Wheel Turns: Celebrate the Return of the Sun Solstice Service, 7 pm Take time to rest, reflect on the gifts of winter, and welcome the light back into your life at this special musical service, observing the Winter Solstice. Music by UUFA's Chalice Choir, directed by Amber Fetner.

December 24 – Christmas Eve, 6 pm A service filled with carol singing, story telling, and candle lighting on this magical night when anything seems possible. Service led by Rev. Alison Eskildsen and others.

December 27 – Winter Lights: A Sharing Service, one service only at 11 am. We invite you to participate in this service. Please bring a quote, poet, or thought to share that's focused on light in this season of darkness. Service led by Karen Solheim, Lay Minister.



Worship begins with everyone in the sanctuary for the first 20 minutes or so. Typically we share a welcome, light our congregational chalice, sing a hymn, and experience a storytelling or brief conversation.

Children and teachers are recessed from the sanctuary by congregational singing. Children and teachers go to their classrooms or to a special children's worship in the Fellowship Hall. Parents are welcome to accompany their children if they wish.

Remaining adults hear a sermon, special music, sing, meditate or pray, and share brief joys and sorrows within the community on most Sundays. Some Sundays all ages remain in the sanctuary for the entire service. For more on UUFA's worship services, visit the Spiritual Arts page at www.uuathensga.org.

New to UU or UUFA Meets on Dec. 5

If you're a recent visitor or newcomer to UUFA and want to learn more about our Fellowship and Unitarian Universalism, plan to attend the next New To UUFA class on Saturday, Dec. 5, at 8:45 a.m. You'll learn about the history and development of Unitarian Universalism and UUFA, and get information about programs, activities and services of our Fellowship.

The class will begin with a light continental breakfast and end by noon. Child care can be arranged with advance notice. A sign-up sheet is at the Visitor/Membership table in the foyer.

You can also sign up by e-mailing or calling the Fellowship office (uufa@uuathensga.org, 706-546-7914) or by contacting Larry Dendy, chair of the Membership Committee (ldendy@uga.edu, 706-546-0431).

Justice

Black Lives Matter Discussion Dec. 13

Come discuss whether and how UUFA might stand beside and support the Black Lives Matter movement in Athens. What are the opportunities for UUFA as a faith community to witness our inclusive values? Join this discussion in the Sanctuary facilitated by Rev. Alison Eskildsen. Watch for a special forum in January addressing these issues, as well.

Spiritual Arts

Goddess Group & Writing as Spiritual Practice

The **Goddess Group** invites all women of the Fellowship and community to the Eleventh Annual Tea with the Goddess on December 20. It will begin at 2:30 pm at the home of Myrna Adams West. Reservations are required. Space is limited to 25.

Holiday decorations, some of them heirlooms, will decorate the nooks and crannies of Myrna and Herb's house. The table will be set with Myrna's teapot collection, filled with teas of various varieties. Attendees are asked to bring a covered dish, either savory or sweet, that will complement tea. All will be served using Myrna's lovely heirloom linens, china, silver and crystal.

Participants may also bring a wrapped gift, something they have enjoyed but are ready to pass on to someone else. During the afternoon, we will each choose a gift and hear the story of the gift from its contributor.

Reservations may be made by emailing, calling, or giving Myrna a note (She won't remember if you just tell her!). For more information, talk to Myrna (myrnaaw@bellsouth.net; 770/725-5397).

Writing as Spiritual Practice will meet December 13 at 11:00 am (during the second worship service). Please join us in the sofa room behind the sanctuary to discuss and share on the December worship theme, "Time/Traditions."

You can find out more at <http://www.uuathensga.org> under the Spiritual Arts menu>Artistic Expressions, or you may contact Myrna Adams West, the Lay Minister for Spiritual Arts at spiritualarts@uuathensga.org. You

may write on one of the following prompts or make up your own or just come to the meeting to enjoy the sharing and discussion.

1. In *The Pen and the Bell*, Brenda Miller reminds us that "Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama both encourage us to go back to the religious traditions of our families and childhoods, to find in these traditions the core truths and practices that can deeply support us. We are not separate from our ancestors; we are made of them, figuratively and literally. If we can find our way back with an open heart, we might find new connections that will surprise us" (73-74). What traditions from your religious upbringing do you still (or again) find meaningful? Why? How do they support you in your current spiritual practices?
2. What traditions—good or bad—from your childhood home/family have you brought with you into your current life? How do they influence your seasonal celebrations or your daily activities? Have they evolved into something new or different? How? Why?
3. What are some of the traditions at UUFA that you value? Why? What are some of the traditions at UUFA that you do not value? Why?
4. Read the inspiration piece by Meg Barnhouse (email Myrna for a copy). In what institutions in your life do you wish some fireworks would blow a hole and let in some fresh air? Why?
5. What is the difference between "custom" and "tradition"? Give some examples from your family/community/congregation.
6. Have you ever had a "warped" time experience, i.e., time standing still or speeding up or going in slow motion? Describe and explain this experience.
7. What would you like to pour into the vessel of time? Why? For inspiration, email Myrna for a copy of David O. Rankin's poem, "Time."
8. Alternatively to #7, what would you like to pour out of the vessel of time? Why?

Leadership

Ministry Council Notes

The Ministry Council met November 17th, though four members were pilgrims to Rumania. The remaining members discussed:

- * The possibility of upcoming Black Lives Matters activities at UUFA;
- * upcoming Kwanzaa events to be held in the Athens Community and at UUFA;
- * the Ministry Council fundraising policy covering all non-budgeted fundraising activities at UUFA, which underwent a revision at an earlier meeting that evening;
- * a mini-mid-January (January 17 and 24) activity fair that will focus on Adult RE and Small Group Ministry (SGM) sign-up;

- * preparing for 2016-17 through Lay Ministers consulting their cluster groups regarding budget requests, goals, needs;
- * establishing February 6, 2016, as the next Leadership Council meeting.

For further information or to share ideas for UUFA's programs, ministries, and activities, please contact any of the members of the Ministry Council (Minister, Music Director, Director of Religious Education, or the Lay Ministers). ~Submitted by Vivian Preston Sellers.

Music Ministry

When Our Heart is in a Holy Place

Holiday Musical Traditions

December is filled with music! The sounds of holiday concerts, carolers, and the ubiquitous Christmas muzak in stores fills the air. What do UU's sing at this most wonderful time of the year? We sing it all! We draw from many sources, and you will get to enjoy participating in a wide variety of music this month. Here are some highlights:

- Come see the Chalice Choir sing at the **Holiday Benevolence Market** on Sunday, Dec. 6th at

First Presbyterian Church (185 E Hancock) @ **1:00pm** eat, enjoy music, and do some holiday shopping that's good for your soul.

- **Caroling, caroling!** Join members of the choir and other revelers as we spread some holiday cheer to our elders and other members on Sunday, **Dec. 13th**. Meet in the UUFA fellowship hall at 12:30.

UUFA will celebrate **Winter Solstice** at a special evening service on **Monday, Dec. 21st @ 7pm**. We will celebrate the 'turning of the wheel' through music and readings. After the service, all are invited for warm beverages and fellowship after the service. There will also be a donation-based **bake sale** to support the music program.

Come take part in these and other musical events this season. Let the sounds of December warm your heart.



Amber Fetner

Pilgrimage

By Clela Reed

It was what we thought
and it was not.
Our buzzing brains too full
of preconceptions,
we stepped into the journey unawares
as pilgrims often do.
We sought to find what lay beyond,
what sights and facts,
what historic space
might illuminate our thinking,
what roots in Transylvania's soil
would prompt a fertile knowing.

It was what we thought
and it was not
for facts were not the prize.
The journey turned within.

And thus along this path—
the singing children in the ancient church,
the peaceful village beneath the sleeping giant,
the muddy path up the sacred mountain,
each step chosen with intent,
our stones placed solemnly in the churchyard,
the dignity of the old Jew,
the resolve and hope of the woman priest,
the extravagance of homemade foods
spread before us like treasures,
the host's finest,
the cowbells and church bells of the village,
the humble cows in their homeward trek—
to these our core responded,
for they emerged as *holy*.

What we found at journey's end
in ourselves and in each other
was our own humanity,
leavened as fully
as the great round loaves in the village bakery,
warm and ready for sharing.

Fun & Fellowship

Scrabble, Books, 2nd Lookers

All levels of players are welcome at the **second Friday Scrabble games!** Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 7 pm. Often there are cookies! Dec. 7



Book Talks meets every 2nd Sunday at 12:30 pm in the Admin Office—

November 8. Contact Clarissa Finco (706-543-6064) for more information. A complete list of books

to be discussed this year is here:

<http://uuathensga.org/fellowship/fun-fellowship/> This month's discussion will be on 84 Charring Cross Road by Helen Banff



Second Lookers Are you a Second Looker, retired from your job but not from life? Second Lookers are UUFA members and friends who meet monthly on the second Tuesday, for conversation and fellowship. We will be traveling to residential facilities and members homes, join us December 8 at Morningside (1291 Cedar Shoals Drive) and in January, at Lanier Gardens (801 Riverhill Drive). If you would like to come, but don't have transportation, please call Sally Randall (706.769.7540) or Hester Meyers (706.548.4182).

Governance

Get on Board!

At its November 10, 2015, meeting, your Board of Trustees accomplished the following:

Discussed: strategic planning for the remainder of the 2015/16 fiscal year; Target dates for tasks and events related to the facility feasibility study in conjunction with events already on the calendar. Working with the Committee on Shared Ministry and SGM to provide Congregational discussion opportunities. Liaison between the Green Sanctuary Committee and Architect Task Force. Target dates for tasks and events related to the Annual Budget Drive in Spring 2016 and for development of the 2016/17 fiscal year budget.

Congregational Events – SAVE THE DATE: November 15, 2015, 12-12:30, Conversation on Facilities, and Survey; November 22, 2015, 10:15-10:45, Conversation on Facilities, and Survey; March 20, 2016, All-Congregation Sunday Service and Potluck; April 24, 2016, Town Hall; May 22, 2016, Annual Congregational Meeting

Passed the following motions: To remove Bylaws text from the Policy and Procedure Manual and add a note to refer to the Bylaws.

Accepted the following reports and discussed when necessary: Treasurer Report

Established the following as future agenda items: Policy and Procedure Task Force to complete review and updates of Manual.



To read the adopted October 13, 2015, Board minutes, please click [HERE—October 13 minutes](#). The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is December 8, 2015, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Comments are invited. You are welcome to attend this meeting, or please share any feedback you have with any Board member.

Respectfully submitted, Barbara Teskey, Secretary, UUFA Board of Trustees. Please contact UUFA Secretary Barbara Teskey with any questions or concerns.

(Secretary@uuathensga.org)

Justice

Social Action Committee

Be the Change You Want to See in the World! Join the UUFA SAC (Social Action Committee) in body and/or spirit: **in body:** The next meeting of the UUFA Social Action Committee (SAC) is the **first Sunday of each month—next on December 6—beginning at 12:30 pm** in the admin office. Open not to just committee members, YOU are invited to attend this meeting to see what this group is all about. Make a difference in our world, locally and globally.

in spirit: If you would like to know what transpires in the UUFA SAC, go to http://lists.uuathensga.org/listinfo.cgi/social_action-uuathensga.org to join the listserv. This will let you know what transpires not only in the UUFA SAC but also in the local Athens area in terms of social action. Everyone is encouraged to sign up!

CAUSE OF THE MONTH:

The Cause of the Month Share the Plate recipient for December is the Athens Nurses Clinic. On Sunday, **December 6**, a pulpit commentary will be given about this program.

CANtributions to the ATHENS AREA EMERGENCY FOOD BANK:

"We're #3; we're #3!?" After nine months of competition among the 25 area faith communities CANtributing to the Athens Area Emergency Food Bank, UUFA continues to be in **THIRD PLACE**. With our total CANtributions of 2154 items, we are 1013 items out of second place so if everyone brought just **20 non-perishable food items between now and December 25**, we could easily move up to second (if not first) place!

Not a fan of grocery store shopping but still want to CANtribute? Donate any amount of money at the Grocery



Card table before and/or after the morning worship services, and savvy SAC shoppers will convert your cash or check to cans.

CAN YoUUr Birthday!

How can you CAN YoUUr Birthday?

Whenever you celebrate your birthday, bring enough nonperishable food items to match every year you are celebrating.

For example, turning 60? Bring 60 cans! Turning 16? Bring 16 cans.

The wicker basket as you enter the sanctuary is willing and able to receive your CANtributions whether you are celebrating your birthday or not!

Not a fan of grocery shopping, see John at the Grocery Card table! (Details earlier in this column.)

All CANtributions will be donated to the Athens Area Emergency Food Bank.

Service, Celebration, & Fellowship

Sunday, Dec. 6 ~ Holiday Benevolence Market

Tired of buying sweaters for uncles who will never wear them? Do you need something to bring a sparkle to your sister's eye? Then please join us for the annual Benevolence Market, which will be held this year on December 6th at First Presbyterian Church of Athens, 185 E. Hancock Ave, from Noon to 2:30 in the Fellowship Hall. UUFA's Choir Sings at 1 pm!

Tuesday, Dec. 8 ~ The Athens Economic Justice Coalition is hosting its second annual Holiday Assistance Program reception on Tuesday, December 8, 2015. The purpose of the Holiday Assistance Program is to help spread joy to low income families. We are collecting Unopened Toys, Athens Transit Bus Passes, Gift Certificates (Grocery, Clothing, Gas, Etc.) and Cash Donations (Checks made payable to Economic Justice Coalition). Donations can be dropped off at the Athens Clarke County Library (1st floor, Multipurpose Room A) from 6-8pm. Want your donation picked up prior to December 8? Need further information? Contact Ricky Roberts (rickyrob@uga.edu or call [706.372.3161](tel:706.372.3161)).

Wednesday, Dec. 9 ~ The next (Food, Responsibility and Enjoyable Eating) **FREE dinner** will be on Wednesday, Dec. 9th, potluck at the Fellowship, which begins at 6:30 p.m. The world is changing and our diets are changing too. Come explore the food revolution as we seek a compassionate, healthful and delicious diet. *New members are always welcome. If you eat, join us!*

Thursday, Dec. 10 ~ Deadline to donate: The **Christmas Tree Santa Project** as featured in the current issue of "UU World" will deliver 75 fresh cut Christmas Trees with stands to 75 families that have signed up with the Mercy Health Center on Saturday, December 12th from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. The project is in need of lights and decorations for the families trees. Please bring these items to the fellowship and they will be delivered to the Mercy Health Center for distribution. Please bring all donations to the Fellowship no later than **Thursday, December 10th**. Rev. Allison, I will bring a bin or a box to the fellowship on Saturday. What hours are good for drop off? Alex, who is one of the founders of this project has many friends in Athens and they will also want to drop off donations. My con-

tact information is [770-307-8120](tel:770-307-8120). I'll also create a flyer and email that to you tomorrow. Thanks for saying yes and allowing us to help with this project.

Saturday, Dec. 12 ~ Nifty Gifty 2015 from 9am to noon. Join us in the Fellowship Hall for a festive crafting party. A variety of nifty craft projects will be prepared for children and adults to create. Yarn, fabric, and papers with glue, paint, and scissors just begins to describe the array of materials waiting to become gifty items. Brunch snacks and drinks will be ready to keep the crafting going throughout the morning. If you are interested in being a craft guide please contact Hilda Kurtz, or Fabiana Hayden, or Liz Weaver, or Dana Poss. We are collecting clean glass jars and clean 12 oz plastic bottles.

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Monday, Dec. 21 ~ The Wheel Turns: Celebrate the Return of the Sun Solstice Service, 7 pm Take time to rest, reflect on the gifts of winter, and welcome the light back into your life at this special musical service, observing the Winter Solstice. Music by UUFA's Chalice Choir, directed by Amber Fetner.

Thursday, Dec. 24 ~ Hike with UUFA'ers at Hard Labor State Park 10 am at visitor center, or 9 am UUFA to carpool. Dogs, guests welcome. 3 hr moderate pace hike, a fast group may split off. Bring lunch to eat on trail. RSVP by Wednesday 12/23 to Kathy Stege [478.955.3422](tel:478.955.3422) kath22steg@gmail.com

Thursday, Dec. 24 ~Christmas Eve, 6 pm A service filled with carol singing, story telling, and candle lighting on this magical night when anything seems possible. Service led by Rev. Alison Eskildsen and others.

Friday, Jan 1, 2016 New Years Day Hike Ranger led Covered Bridge and Power Plant history hike (at Watson Mill Bridge State Park) 9-10 am, then a 1.5 hr moderate pace hike. \$5 parking. Dogs welcome. Bring a picnic lunch for after the hike. Meet at 8:15 UUFA to carpool, or at the park by 9:00. Let me know if you want to carpool from the east side. RSVP by Wednesday 12-30-15 to Kathy Stege [478-955-3422](tel:478-955-3422) kath22steg@gmail.com

Governance

Board Member Reflections

Merriam-Webster defines tradition as “an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior”. When I was a child we, as many families did, had a tradition that each Christmas we loaded all our presents from under the tree into the car and made the six-hour drive to my grandparents’ home in north Florida. My sister and I didn’t think anything of this. In fact, we anticipated it with excitement and energy as most kids do. All that changed when I had my first girlfriend during the holidays. All of a sudden I was readily discarding tradition, fighting with my mom, and generally being as ass because I was “in love” and “growing up”.

Of course I went to Florida that year. The world didn’t end, I had fun, received many presents, was loved, and the tradition continued for many more years. When we married and had our first son Karen and I anticipated continuing our traditions of taking our children to their grandparents for Christmas, but the tradition changed. Karen’s mom wanted to have everyone over on Christmas Eve. My mom, feeling guilty for always uprooting my sister and I on Christmas, wanted to come to our house on Christmas morning. So that is the tradition our boys grew up with. On Christmas Eve we went to Karen’s parents’ for dinner and presents, when we got home I read *’Twas A Night Before Christmas*, on Christmas morning the boys opened presents (some years as early as 5:30!), mid-morning mine and Karen’s parents showed up with more presents and we had a big lunch.

Now the tradition is changing again. Travel has gotten hard on my mom so she doesn’t come up anymore. Matthew is considering going with his girlfriend to her dad’s on Thanksgiving day rather than to Karen’s parents’. Garrett plans to have moved into an apartment by next Christmas.

UUFA experiences similar changes in tradition. We broke from our “traditional” leadership model and transitioned to a Ministry/Governance model. A few years ago we broke the tradition of a Forum and service on Sunday and began having two services. This year we broke the tradition of weekly Forums to have a 2nd Sunday Forum and then a Community Forum. Our “traditional” chalice has been replaced with many varying chalices that reflect a theme or season. We may be embarking on a path that changes our “traditional” flow of activities by changing/improving/expanding our facilities.

Through all of these changes in tradition, both within my family and our Fellowship, there is one constant though. We continue to come together in love, to celebrate together our joys, to grieve together our losses, and support each other through life changes whether they be within the individual, family, or community.

~Lee Cornell

More Opportunities

The Bigger Vision of Athens is in CRITICAL need of more overnight volunteers! If you or someone you know is looking for a rewarding experience please contact Jim Meunier for more information. Jim may be reached at (706)338-4707 or by email at JimMeunier@gmail.com.

Flower Donations Want to honor someone during the holidays for a birthday, anniversary, or another event? Want to thank someone or a group? One way to do so is to donate flowers to beautify the sanctuary on Sunday mornings. You or the person honored are able to take the wonderful bouquet home following the services, to enjoy for a few days at home. Please complete a flower

donation form, located on the small table near the stained glass doors, and place in the clear box nearby, or contact Vivian Sellers at vpsellers@gmail.com for more details.

SAVE THE DATE: UUA Common Read Book Discussion On Sunday, January 31, UUFA will be discussing the 2015-16 UUA Common Read *Just Mercy*, in the Fellowship Hall following the second service. Want to reserve your own copy of this book? Click [here](#). **For further information about the Social Action Committee, contact David Jarrett (daviduufa@gmail.com).**

Religious Education Class Notes

9 am Service There is no formal religious education during this time; however, children through age 9 are welcomed to join our nursery staff, Erin Favre and Marcus Prince for combined-age children's activities. Children will be dismissed from the sanctuary to children's activities, or you can drop them off at the nursery before the service.

11 am Service Chalice Children (PreK-K) meets in the Forest Room for Wonderful Welcome, in the Tapestry of Faith curriculum series by the UU Association of Congregations. To learn more about the curriculum and view specific lessons, visit the UUA's Wonderful Welcome curriculum page. Teachers are: Betsy Smith, Jen Kay-Williams, Paul Schliekelman

Children are ready to move up from nursery into our Chalice Children group when they are potty-trained, and when their family feels they are ready to be in a 4 - 5-year-old environment with a structured lesson. Please speak with Dana Poss, Acting Religious Education Coordinator, if you are considering "graduating" your child up from Nursery care.

Rainbows (grades 1st-2nd) meets in the Rainbow Room for the *Signs of Our Faith* curricula, in the UUA Tapestry of Faith program. To learn more about the curriculum and view specific lessons, visit the UUA's Signs of our Faith curriculum page. Teachers are: Dianne Baggett, Deb Keys.



Seekers (grades 3rd-5th) meets in the Ocean Room for the Sing to the Power curriculum, in the UUA Tapestry of Faith program. To learn more about the curriculum and view specific lesson, visit the UUA's Sing to the Power curriculum page. Teachers are: Fabiana Hayden, Liz Weaver, Kip Tanner, Sherri Tanner.

Children's Worship Service (CWS)

On the first Sunday of each month, the Acting Religious Education Coordinator leads a worship service just for children, with singing led by a Children's Music Leader, worship elements, storytelling, and activities. Each month introduces the monthly congregational theme. Parents are welcome to join their children in the Ocean Room for the CWS or stay with the "big kids" in the sanctuary when the children are dismissed.

Where are the Enjoyable Entertainment events?

Enjoyable Entertainment Events--Hosting! Would you like to host a Spring Enjoyable Entertainment Event? What are Enjoyable Entertainment Events? Enjoyable Entertainment Events are a great way to engage in fellowship and fun! Many members hosted events at their homes or at the fellowship.

What are some examples of past Enjoyable Entertainment Events? Brunches, Tea Parties, Poetry readings and dinners of any kind: Mexican, Vegan, Gluten-free, Southern, barbecue, Italian...but any kind of event is welcomed!

Watch for ticket sales for Enjoyable Entertainment events in early 2016! Please contact Susie Weller, swellertree@hotmail.com, if you are wanting to host!

thank
you!

Thank you, Dana!

December 13 is Acting Religious Education Coordinator Dana's last Sunday at UUFA! Please join us in thanking her for successfully steering the helm of UUFA's Religious Education ship while DRE Morgan has been on sabbatical.

Wondering with AWE

Rev. Alison Wilbur Eskildsen

At a worship service in November I shared a couple of reflections on our recent pilgrimage to our Unitarian partners in Oklând, a village in the Transylvania region of Romania. At that service Clela Reed and Bud Newton, two of our group of ten pilgrims, also shared some of their thoughts and Robin Williams previewed a short video of our trip. But there was more to share than the service allowed, so I'll add a few thoughts here. (And if you want to read our remarks from that November 15th service, [please go here.](http://uuathensga.org/sermonsarchive/pilgrimage-reflections/)) <http://uuathensga.org/sermonsarchive/pilgrimage-reflections/>

For those new to our Fellowship here's a bit of background. We've fostered a connection to Oklând for nearly 25 years, soon after the fall of communism and the death of the Romanian dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu, in December 1989. Only then did American Unitarian Universalists discover how oppressed and persecuted Transylvanian Unitarians had been since the end of World War One and the division of territories that resulted in shifting Transylvania from Hungarian authority to Romanian. As Unitarian villages struggled to get back on their feet, assistance from Americans was crucial to their emergence.

Though much of our early support was financial, along with occasional visits from them to us and us to them, as time as passed they've become more independent. And in Oklând, with Rev. Levente and Eva Kelemen's entrepreneurial spirits, the Unitarian Church and its members are seeing better days. They gratefully receive our continuing support of students with scholarships and with our Cause of the Month collection contributing to church community needs. In past years we have supported the building of a youth house for summer English camps, a dairy and cows, and more.

During our pilgrimage I discussed with Rev. Levente

and Eva what project was most in need of financial support. In response, Eva showed me the condition of their church van a view truly worth a thousand words.

The metal body of the van is rusting so badly in one or two places that I expressed fear for its structural integrity. But Eva confirmed that the engine is in great shape and that with a little new exterior metal it will be safe and will meet for their needs. UUFA's Partner Church Committee will be meeting soon and will likely confirm that our collection will be sent for van improvements. "Thank you" to all who contributed in August when we held that collection.

As I indicated during the service, I believe we made progress in forging a more equal partnership among our two congregations. A relationship primarily determined by financial support is an unequal relationship. But I believe they see more clearly what they give back to us, a greater sense of rootedness to our shared history. They remind us that Unitarianism is not some recent phenomenon that will go away. We have established church history as old as 1568; we have established theological history as old as Jesus' lifetime. But because this not as tangible as money, it is harder to grab onto.

Besides connecting with the people in our partner church, when we walk the footsteps of our Unitarian ancestors and hear about our Radical Reformation history I become very moved. I am proud to say that our faith tradition has stood up against ethnic oppression and for religious freedom since the 16th century.

I encourage you to explore more of our history both on our website and elsewhere on the worldwide web. And if you haven't been to New to UUFA newcomer orientation where I share a few more historical details, please sign up! Our next session is scheduled for Saturday, December 6.

Rev. Levente and Eva hope to visit us in February 2016. I hope you join me not only in welcoming them but in getting to know them and what being a Unitarian in Romania is like. ~ Blessings, *Rev. Alison*

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Athens

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