



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yellow Springs Newsletter March 2006

Love is the spirit of this Fellowship, and service is its law.
To dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another,
this is our covenant.

March Calendar:

Sunday, March 5:

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group: "America is acting as an imperial power. How do you feel about this, and about how religion (especially UUism) is dealing with this?"

8:45 a.m.: Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m.: "Common Funeral Myths," presented by Marie L. of the Funeral Consumers Alliance (see article following Calendar).

11:30 a.m.: Potluck lunch following the program. Bring food or beverage to share and your own table service. (Note: This is a change from the evening potluck, as published in the February Newsletter.)

Sunday, March 12:

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group: "How can just one person's life contribute to the world?"

8:45 a.m.: Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m.: "Common Concerns, Women's Edition," presented by Jewel G. Jewel is one of the treasures of our Fellowship — a retired Antioch professor, former president of the International YWCA, community activist, and much more.

Sunday, March 19:

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group: "How can we bring spirituality into the present moment?"

8:45 a.m.: Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m.: "Progressive Religion: Studies of William Ellery Channing," presented by Rev. John Carpenter of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church, Cincinnati. Channing was one of the most influential figures of American Unitarianism in the 19th century (see biographical information following Calendar).

Sunday, March 26:

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group: "How does spirituality help us in dealing with enemies of spirituality?"

8:45 a.m.: Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m.: "Patriot Pastors," presented by Mary W. Mary is currently Professor of Medical Ethics at Wright State University. Her topic will explore a group of religious leaders that have as their goal the election of Ken Blackwell as the governor of Ohio.

11:30 a.m.: Our annual "Maple Syrup Time" breakfast follows the program. Delicious pancakes hot off the griddle and real, fresh maple syrup.

Coming in April

Sunday, April 2:

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group: "What are the aspects of spirituality that you share most often with your partner or friend(s)?"

8:45 a.m.: Choir rehearsal

10:00 a.m.: "What is Really Important in Life: Thoughts from decades of being a therapist and a facilitator for life-challenging support groups," presented by Rubin B. Rubin is a wise elder of our congregation — a retired Wright State professor of chemistry, hypnotist, therapist, writer, lecturer, and world traveler

11:30 p.m.: The Religious Education committee invites everyone to enjoy a potluck lunch followed by games for all ages. Bring food to share, your own table service, and a favorite game. Last year's game potluck was great fun! Highly recommended: "Trivial Pursuit" with Aaron J. and Chris K.

Common funeral myths (March 4)

Learn the smart and safe ways to make end-of-life decisions for yourself and your loved ones. This program will provide ten tips for arranging affordable, dignified funerals, burials, memorial services, and other mortuary services without giving the funeral director a blank check. Other topics include death in one state, burial in another, informed organ and body donation, protecting your final wishes against the vagaries of Ohio law, and the benefits and dangers of prepaying your funeral.

This program will be presented by Marie L. of the Funeral consumers Alliance. Mary brings many years of secondary and university teaching experience as well as some 20 years in library administration to what can be a very personal topic, using sensitivity and humor.

**Note: E-mail Newsletter items to Ron S.:
ronbear@sbcglobal.net Deadline: March 15**

President's column

Facing facts relating to the future of the Fellowship

Last year, when Tom Osborne was President of the Fellowship, he emailed the Heartland UU District office asking these questions: "How far do you think we can grow as a lay-led fellowship? If we stayed lay-led, what do you think would be the best area to consider paid assistance?"

Mary Andrus Overley, who was District Executive at that time, replied to Tom with information that is of interest as we consider the future of UUFYS. She said that, other than a minister, congregations may hire staff for office administration, religious education, volunteer coordination, and social justice coordination. "If a congregation does some work as a group on its mission, vision, strategic plan, and understanding of church work as shared ministry, they should be able to come to agreement about which tasks require more time, effort, expertise, etc., than they can manage with volunteers only."

Overley provided the following data concerning congregational size in relationship to professional ministry:

- 35 of the 54 congregations in our Heartland District have 150 or fewer members and thus are in the small congregation category. Of these, 24 have 100 or fewer members.
- Last February, the 9 lay-led congregations in the District certified at 14, 26, 28, 35, 43, 57, 63, 64, and 94 members, respectively, the highest number being the Yellow Springs Fellowship. The three reporting membership of 57, 63, and 64, respectively, are already in the early stages of exploring the possibility of part-time professional ministry.
- Further, 15 of our congregations with 100 or fewer members already have professional ministers, ranging from as little as one-quarter-time to full-time ministers. This group of congregations reported membership of 20, 26, 28, 34, 39, 51, 54, 71, 75, 76, 81, 82, 84, 91, and 100, respectively.

"It's important for lay-led congregations to know that, more and more these days, people seeking a religious home are looking for spiritual nurture and deepening, high-quality worship led by professional ministers, and

high quality programming and staffing in other areas of congregational life.

"Unless the Yellow Springs Fellowship has done a careful assessment of it's untapped market in the community and found something to the contrary there, they will need to incorporate the information coming from the researchers and consultants providing information about congregational trends nationally into their thinking and planning about how best to serve the seekers in their community who want a liberal religious home. The lay-led fellowship model of UU congregations from the 1940s through the 1960s is not the model that will attract and retain these seekers now and in the foreseeable future.

"I don't yet have any data on a magic number at which congregations have to add professional ministry, but my guess is that the Fellowship will soon reach its capacity to function without staff and to attract more members without a minister, specifically. Then, they'll have to choose to make needed changes or settle for staying small and unable to meet the larger needs of the community for a liberal religious home.

"All too often, congregations don't make the changes in staffing, governance, communications, decision-making processes, etc., that are needed to support a larger membership size. As a result, some members leave and newcomers don't stay. All too often, as well, members who don't want growth precipitate some sort of conflict that causes the congregation to lose members or to fail to retain newcomers, taking them back to the size that's comfortable. We often see congregations move up and down in size for a long time, unable to break through to the next level, as a result of the structural and/or relational deterrents to growth."

What shall we do with this information? Are we ready for a breakthrough, ready to commit to moving to the next level? Where are we going? Shall we keep growing?

Judy Williams

Tar Hollow

The dates for our annual weekend at Tar Hollow State Park this year will be May 19-21; that's the weekend before Memorial Day weekend, so mark your calendars. Our camporee at Tar Hollow is a great time in the woods of southeast Ohio. There is a fully equipped lodge for our meals and general hanging out place, and we spend the nights in cabins up in the woods. It's a great place to relax, swim, hike, and do woodsy activities. Invite your friends and neighbors. Kids love Tar Hollow. Registration forms will be part of the April newsletter. For more information, contact Hardy Ballantine, 767-7417.

Religious Education

Note: Noon potluck luncheon and games at the April 2 meeting are being hosted by the Religious Education Committee. Enjoy the good food and conversation during lunch and games afterward. Please bring food to share, your own table service, and a favorite game. Last year's game event was great fun!

March schedule

Nursery schoolers will be cared for by Ashanta R. and Malaika C. with the UU curriculum, "Celebrating Me and My World," and free play.

Jo W. will be teaching the 6-10-year-olds yoga and Hebrew bible stories.

The older group will be studying peace and social justice with Stacy A.

RE News

Thanks to Sylvia C. and Byron D. for working with our older youth this winter; George K. for pinch-hitting while they were away occasionally; Willa D. for sharing her experiences in social justice activities with our youth; and all our Secret Friends volunteers whose identities must necessarily remain a secret until the next newsletter! Also, thanks to community members Bill H. and Hazel T., who came and talked with our Older Group about their involvement in peace and social justice causes.

The Secret Friends program is in full swing with 30

adults and children! Mark your calendars now for the March 19 luncheon at noon here at the Fellowship. (If you didn't participate this year and would like to know what all the excitement's about, feel free to attend the luncheon as a helper or talk to some of the Secret Friends when their identities are revealed.) Participants, for the luncheon, please bring a gift for your friend (hand-made or something worth under \$5), your favorite music to share, a healthy appetite, and of course a willingness to play games and have fun!

Oops!

The RE committee signed up to host the March evening potluck only to discover that our youth have OWL (Our Whole Lives) class that night at Miami Valley Church. Oops! So we'll be hosting a noon luncheon in April instead. Come join us then for fun and games!

Coming-of-age program

One of my longtime dreams has been to develop a Rites of Passage program for our youth. Currently I'm gathering information about this and plan to work with the RE committee so that we have something in place for our older kids in the fall. Currently, we're looking for someone to attend a conference about coming-of-age programs and mentoring on April 7-9 (Friday-Sunday) in Philadelphia. Course registration would be paid for and other financial assistance might also be available. Please let me know if you're interested.

*Debbie D.
RE Director for Youth*

Social Justice news

The deadline for submitting nominations to the 2006 Social Justice Lifetime Service Awards is Sunday, March 19. Please put your letter with the service, educational programs, or advocacy/witnessing accomplishments of your candidate in the Social Justice box in the Fellowship office. The Awards ceremony will be at the Oxfam Lunch following the Annual Business Meeting on May. 7.

Social Justice Committee unanimously accepted Louis S.s' revision of the First Unitarian Church of Richmond, VA resolution as the proposed UUFYS Congregational Resolution for a moratorium on executions. Copies of the proposed resolution will be available throughout March and April at the Fellowship and online.

Comments and questions are welcome and heard at the beginning of the March 19 SoJus Meeting after the Sunday Program. The proposed Resolution will be voted on by the members of the fellowship at the May 7 Annual Business Meeting.

Feedback and discussion of the roles, goals, actions and activities of Social Justice at UUFYS are welcome at the beginning of every SoJus Committee Meeting (the 3rd Sunday of the month) Come in March with your ideas, comments and energy. We love your input !!

*Joan C.
jmchappe@earthlink.net*



William Ellery Channing (March 19)

(from p. 1)

William Ellery Channing (April 7, 1780-October 2, 1842), was minister of the Federal Street Church in Boston, Massachusetts, 1803-42. His published sermons, lighting a path between orthodoxy and infidelity, were widely influential abroad as well as throughout the United States. His Christian humanism inspired both religious and literary features of the Transcendentalist movement. An exemplar of Christian piety and a champion of human rights and dignity, he effectively fostered social reform in areas of free speech, education, peace, relief for the poor, and anti-slavery. His pulpit orations made him, according to Emerson, "a kind of public Conscience."



Board approves Mission Statement

The UUFYS Board approved the following version of the UUFYS Mission Statement at the February 12 board meeting:

The mission of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yellow Springs is to provide a diverse, spiritual, and caring community that emphasizes the ethical issues of social justice, peaceful solutions, environmental harmony, and respect and compassion for others.

This mission statement will be read at the annual meeting in May for approval by the congregation. After its adoption, the mission statement will be kept in view on one of the walls in the Fellowship.

Covenant Group seeks food

The Covenant Group is looking for as much help as possible to stimulate folks to remember to bring their gifts for the hungry on Sunday mornings.

We give double hugs free to anyone who brings food for the hungry when they come to Sunday meetings! Yes, it's true! In exchange for your thoughtfully purchased goodies for the Food Pantries you will receive grateful hugs on Sunday mornings through March. (Hint: Car keys left with food on the night before helps the memory.) Any extra effort is worthwhile. We deliver.

Thanks.

*Sylvia C.
for your faithful Covenant Group*

Board actions

The UUFYS Board spoke with several members during the up-front time for guests at the meeting concerning these issues: a public policy on the death penalty (a version will be drawn up and presented to the congregation for voting on at the annual May meeting), improved communication of board activities with the members, the hope that those people who left the UUFYS during happenings in the past will return, and the creation of an endowment focusing on social responsibility.

Our 2005-06 pledge income will fall short of budget projections; \$4,800 is predicted. As of now, we are in the black because many committees have not spent their budget. We discussed the fact that we have this problem frequently since the budget has to be created before pledges are in. The Leadership Development Committee continues to talk to various members about positions for next year; Building & Grounds plans to buy a system for the hearing impaired: a transmitter, four receivers, four headphones, two rechargeable batteries per unit, and a recharging unit for the batteries. The \$450-\$500 purchase will be a capital expense and will not come out of the operating budget. The endowment resolution was passed and a smaller committee will work to create an official Endowment Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra L.

CENSUS RESULTS

If it sometimes seems a bit crowded on Sunday mornings, there's a simple explanation — we're growing. Lots more kids and "grups" (grown-ups).

Since the January 2005 census, we've grown from 94 to 102 members, including 13 newcomers. In addition, seven former friends have become members or renewed their memberships.

During the year we have also been saddened by the loss of five members of the Fellowship family: Mary C., Doris D., Elaine J., Yolie M., and Bev V.

We've lost touch with a few people who have left the area or not responded to our renewal solicitations. If you are one of those folks, we'd love to hear from you.

We're the largest congregation in the Heartland District that "does it all" without paid staff.

*Charlotte B.
for the Finance Committee*

Hearing enhancement fundraising (and other B&G news)

The Buildings and Grounds committee is striving to improve audio conditions for Sunday services. We plan to buy a transmitter and earphones that will send sound from the microphone straight to your ears or to people in other rooms. The base unit, four transmitters, four sets of earphones, a charger, and a supply of rechargeable batteries cost approximately \$500, but will allow people in the classrooms, kitchen, and parlor to hear the presentation while working, and anyone in the meeting room to hear much better. To buy these items quickly, we need donations earmarked for the new system. If you are willing to donate, please call or e-mail to Mary K.

The Show Will Go On! We have been shopping for a video projector to use with *PowerPoint* slide shows during presentations. The bad news is that they are very expensive, but the good news is that we now have one on "permanent loan." Our generous financial consultant, Ron S., is sharing his projector with us. If you need it for a Fellowship program, please talk with Ron.

Work Bee Coming! Help make your meeting house clean and good-looking. Join Buildings and Grounds committee members for work projects on Saturday, April 1, starting 10:00 am. (Rain date is April 8.) It'll be a great day for the outdoor projects!

The Fourth Thursday Discussion Group is a drop-in discussion of articles in the Spring issue of the UUA's *World* magazine. Join George K. at 7:30 pm on March 23 for free-wheeling discussion where everybody knows your name!

Benefactor needed for new chalice: Both of the ceramic chalices we use for Sunday morning programs are cracked and glued together — and scary to handle. (How embarrassing will it be if you are lighting the chalice and it breaks in your hands?) Is anyone able to either make or buy a new chalice for us? Please talk with Mary K. about this.

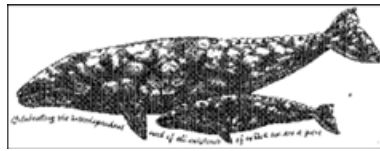
Chris K.

2006 General Assembly

Housing reservation and registration information for the 2006 General Assembly in St. Louis June 21-25 have been sent to all UU congregations and are available in person or on the UU web site at www.uus.org.ga. In the interest of increased environmental and fiscal responsibility, the UUA has decided not to mail the information to individual past registrants as it has done in the past.

wUUrld's 2006 WhaleCoast Alaska

Five Alaskan UU fellowships are offering a \$100 discount for reservations postmarked between February 20 and



March 20 for summer 2006 UU eco-cultural programs. Limited space left. Programs include UU homestays and parties in Anchorage,

Seward, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Sitka, visits with Tlingit, Inupiat, and other Native Alaskans as well as wildlife tours to see whales, sea otters, sea lions, bears, moose, caribou, wolves, puffins, and eagles and visit National Parks. Rev. Dick & Mary Weston-Jones, leaders. Details at www.wuurld.org; e-mail dick@wuurld.org, or phone 1-888-998-8753 toll-free for a brochure.

Heartland Spring Conference

The Heartland District of the UUA is holding its Spring Conference and Annual Meeting from April 7 to 9, 2006, in Indianapolis. The registration deadline is March 15. Registration forms are available at the Fellowship or online at www.heartlanduu.org. UUFYS will pay for registration costs; attendees are responsible for their own meals and lodging. Information about hotel accommodations is available online.

Informational programs and talks fill the day on Saturday, April 8, from 8 am to 5 pm. Topics include: Creating Alternative Worship; Dare to Grow; Small and Liking It; Growing Green, Being Green; Nurturing Children and Youth; Funding UU Programs and Dreams; and Writing as a Spiritual Practice.

Registration forms should be turned in to Judy W. or Martha G. by Sunday, March 12.

The Help One Another committee

For the month of March, please note that some members of the Help One Another committee will not be available. As you know we all agree to help one another as part of our Covenant. You may ask for assistance of any person in our fellowship community with whom you feel comfortable. However, we do have designated persons whom you may ask for help. These include Sylvia C. as the primary person for March, plus Martie J., Elizabeth D., and Judy W.

Joy F.

Thanks to Dave Turner

We extend our sincere thanks, and retract all previous expletives, to Dave T. for his work to restore the heating unit of the older group classroom to proper working order. With weeks of winter temperatures yet to be suffered, this will make all the difference for everyone using that room. Our wool caps are off in a salute to you, Dave!

Stacy A.

Editorial apology

Time and space constraints made it impossible to include the new leadership list, which was available for this issue of the Newsletter. I'll make sure that things work out for the next issue so that it will fit.

It's particularly important to make room for this document because of the amazing willingness of these folks to give their time and often immense energy to make the wheels of UUFYS turn, so that the rest of us can enjoy the full benefits of this remarkable Fellowship.

— *Ed.*

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