

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yellow Springs...



NEWSLETTER October 2007

A Parable About Death

adapted from a story I heard submitted by Stacy A.

Once upon a time, a woman lived by herself in a simple house she had built far away from the nearest village. She had all the necessities of a simple life - a prosperous garden, a water well that did not freeze in winter, many great books to read, and a small beehive that provided sweet honey. She enjoyed her life and the solitude of living close to nature.

Late one evening, while reading a favorite book, she heard a knock at her door. "Who could this be?" she wondered, and she opened the door. There stood two strangers. She looked at them for a long minute, and when she was ready, she asked, "What do you want and who are you?"

One stranger said to her, "Good Lady, I am God. I have come on a long journey. I am very thirsty and tired. Can you give me some water and a place to rest?"

The other stranger said, "Good Lady, I am the Angel of Death. I have come on a long journey. I am very thirsty and tired. Can you give me some water and a place to rest?"

The woman considered this for a moment. She said, "I

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October Programming... ...at a glance:

October 7:

"Aristotle's Children: When Faith and Science Lived in Holy Wedlock," a sermon by George K.

October 14:

"Just in Times Like These: On the Birth of a Center for Cultural and Intellectual Freedom," presented by Dr. Dana P.

October 21:

"Making Death Less Stressful for Us".

October 28:

"Samhuinn: Remembering our ancestors," presented by David K.

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yellow Springs is published monthly. To submit material for the newsletter please do so by the **15th** of each month. Please submit material as non-formatted text in your e-mail or as an MS Word attachment in 12 point font with no formatting (bold, italic, etc...).

Send material to David K. at: tau.athanasios@gmail.com

October Program Calendar:

Sunday, October 7

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group, "Where Do I Belong?"

10:00 a.m.: "Aristotle's Children: When Faith and Science Lived in Holy Wedlock," a sermon about how religion sponsored the rise of science in the West and how both are diminished since their divorce. The speaker will be George K., President of the executive board of the Fellowship.

Sunday, October 14

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group, "Tools for Self-Discovery"

10:00 a.m.: "Just in Times Like These: On the Birth of a Center for Cultural and Intellectual Freedom," presented by Dr. Dana Murray P., director of the Coretta Scott King Center for Cultural and Intellectual Freedom. Her presentation will trace the emergence of key social justice leaders and their ability to resonate above the noise of their social reality to a higher calling for "justice". It will align the life work of Dr. Martin and Coretta Scott King with the gift of the Center and explore its mission and goal. The recent arrival of the Center in the midst of the chaotic and frenzied circumstances surrounding it will be likened unto the historic leaders that arrived "just" in time, using the forces of love, nonviolence and peace as viable weapons in the struggle against poverty, racism and violence.

Sunday, October 21

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group, "Coming Home"

10:00 a.m.: "Making Death Less Stressful for Us". The Fellowship's Memorial Society Committee is not nearly as well known as our other committees, even though the majority of our congregation have previously decided on cremation and signed up for its services. For those who lose a spouse or family member, even one who has been in failing health for months,

the death calls for unfamiliar paperwork and arrangements, including transportation of the deceased. In those first stressful hours, a team from our Memorial Committee arrives at the bedside to comfort and guide the family. In this Sunday program, experienced volunteers describe their routine. They describe all they can do, as well as what they can't do. Following the presentation, the congregation will be invited to ask all their "what if" questions.

Sunday, October 28

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group, "The Road Less Traveled"

10:00 a.m.: "Samhuinn: Remembering our ancestors," presented by David K., a member of our Fellowship. In the Druid tradition, Samhuinn is the time of the dead, when the barrier between the worlds is let down and spirits walk the land of the living. It is the feast of death and rebirth, the beginning and end of the old Celtic calendar. Most Pagans celebrate and commemorate at this time their ancestors and elders who have passed into the Otherworld. It represents the fall of the last leaves and the heart of autumn.

It's "Souper Sunday". Plan to stay for soup, bread and conversation.

Coming in November

Sunday, November 4

8:30 a.m.: Spiritual discussion group, "Pivotal Choices"

10:00 a.m.: "Off to See the Wizard," presented by Jim F., a member of Miami Valley UU Fellowship. Jim was a protestant minister and later a counselor and director of a mental health clinic. He asks, "Is there something missing in your life? Then it's off to see the Wizard!"

11:30 p.m.: A potluck lunch follows the program. Please bring your own table service and a generous dish to share.

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have a simple home with room for only one guest. I will have to choose one of you; the other must seek refuge elsewhere."

God spoke. "Dear Lady, I have given you this green earth where your garden prospers, your well does not freeze, your bees make sweet honey, and your house is safe and strong. Through all of these gifts, you have a good life. Choose me."

The woman looked at God, who was smiling, then at the Angel of Death, who was uncomfortable and avoiding eye contact with her.

The woman spoke again. "God, you have given me a beautiful life. You have made my life rich, but you have left others to be poor. I have a beautiful home but others have no home. I eat from a prosperous garden but I know that others are hungry. In the evening I read wonderful books but I hear that other people are blind and cannot see the words. God, you bestow many gifts, but to only some of the people. We are not all alike to you. We are not all equal in this life or in your world. But everyone dies, and that is when we are all truly equal. For that reason, I choose the Angel of Death. Goodnight God."

The Angel of Death smiled at the decision, and in the morning, promised the woman a secret gift. Although she asked repeatedly what it was, the Angel of Death would not answer.

The woman went on to live a very long life. So long, that she became dissatisfied with her solitude and wanted something more. At first, she made trips to the village with food from her garden and gave it away to the people who were hungry. She discovered that she could aid and heal those who were sick. And she started a book reading program for the blind. With all of this going on, she decided that she didn't need solitude to be happy. She needed to be with people.

Through her work and her love the people of the village prospered, but one day the woman became very sick. No one had the knowledge or power to restore her health. She was going to die. One night, the woman was visited by the Angel of Death. They sat quietly together. After some time, the woman gathered strength and spoke, "I gave you water and rest, and you gave me a gift, but I never knew what it was. What did you give me?"

"I gave you time to choose between your solitude and your true calling. You chose to fulfill your calling. You chose to enrich people's lives through acts of love. You have done for the village what even God cannot do."

"Thank you for your gift; I am ready." Then she closed her eyes.

DID YOU NOTICE?

Did you see how spiffy the Meetinghouse looks on the outside? Please give your heartiest thanks to Dean L., who painted for days on the porch top and the window frames, and to Hank L., who rust-proofed and re-painted the iron porch uprights and the iron railing at the basement entrance. Others who worked on the priming and painting were Al S., Syd W., Joel G., Mary S. and one of our visitors.

THANKS FOR A GREAT JOB!

A big hand of appreciation to Samatha B. and Toby K. who taught RE classes all summer - that's real involvement and volunteerism. Samatha and Patrick D. are transferring to Miami Valley UUF - we will miss them both!

August 12th 2007 UUFYS Board Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Debbie Downey, Secretary

Present: George K., Stacy A., Mary D., Louis S., Martha G., Marianne W., and Debbie D.

The meeting was preceded by listening and responding to the following member concerns:

1. Sylvia C. expressed a desire that the Fellowship implement more energy efficient methods of operation and was informed about the Green Sanctuary subcommittee, the efforts of the Building & Grounds Committee to implement energy saving measures, and the board's commitment to energy conservation.
2. Peter W. encouraged board members to disagree without being disagreeable.
3. Mary S. took a photograph of the board for Fellowship publicity and archives.

The business portion of the meeting began at 12:15 p.m. with chalice lighting, check-in, and agenda review. The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

New books: Marianne shared some new books she is donating to our Fellowship library. It was noted with gratitude that John W. donated a bookshelf to the Fellowship and that Pat S. has volunteered to manage our library collection.

Review of meeting minutes: The 7/8/07 board meeting minutes were unanimously approved following a motion by Louis, seconded by George.

Treasurer's report: Louis reported that a \$2,000 deficit represented an accounts payable entry for dues owed to the Heartland District and the national Unitarian Universalist Association. The cash reserves and expenses are otherwise in balance.

The annual treasurer's report for the 2006-2007 fiscal year was reviewed and approved.

Board retreat: The summary of the 7/22/07 board retreat including 2006-2007 board accomplishments and 2007-2008 goals was reviewed, amended and approved.

Open meetings: Board members reviewed and amended a draft policy. Although approval by Fellowship members is not strictly required on this policy as it pertains to board procedures rather than to the Fellowship as a whole, to increase board transparency input from Fellowship members will be sought.

Old Business

Apartment: Louis and Mary S. have cleaned out the apartment to a significant degree, but more volunteers are needed to complete this job. The apartment space has been dedicated to the Religious Education program. The board is responsible for making any final decisions about space usage following member/committee input.

Personnel Committee: Martha reported on progress in the search for an Administrative Coordinator.

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The Board will meet the top finalists prior to making a hiring decision. The PC Chair continues to work on RE employee issues.

50th Anniversary: Marlene M. has begun creating photo album(s) of UUFYS photographs and other memorabilia.

Green Sanctuary: This topic was tabled until the September board meeting.

Committee oversight: The board will develop a policy about committee communication with board members so they can fulfill their fiduciary oversight responsibility. Board members volunteered to take an active role in Fellowship committees as follows:

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|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Mary—Religious Education | George—Program |
| Marianne—Social Justice | Debbie—Membership |
| Louis—Finance | Stacy—Finance and B&G |
| Martha—Personnel | |

Antioch College closing: Following discussion of the current status of this situation, it was agreed that George will continue his Sunday evening services/discussion groups with Antioch students when school resumes in the fall. Members debated about whether the board should issue a statement on behalf of UUFYS about the planned closing of the college. A decision will be made at the September meeting.

New Business

Member withdrawal: Board members expressed concern about the recent withdrawal from the Fellowship of a valued member of the community.



[Left Front] **Debbie D.** (secretary), **Martha G.** (member at large), **Stacy A.** (past president). [Back] **Mary D.** (president-elect), **George K.** (president), **Marianne W.** (member at large), **Louis S.** (treasurer).

- Below is the TENTATIVE agenda for the October board meeting:**
- Chalice lighting and check-in.
 - Discussion of the policy for open Board meetings.
 - Review of the September minutes.
 - Treasurer’s report.
 - Apartment rental/space use.
 - Report on the progress of the B&G Committee and architect.
 - Media publishing policy.
 - 50th Anniversary photo album project.
 - Green Sanctuary Committee.
 - Committee oversight and volunteer recruitment.
 - Personnel Committee matters.
 - Situation involving a former member.

Conflict and How to Manage It

By Kathryn V.

I have been attending the UUFYS since for 2 years. It is quite probable that I have been a closet UU for at least 30 years but I tend to be slow at joining organizations of faith having been burned in the past in church environments. To date I have been pleased with my membership at our small but vibrant Fellowship. The focus on social action, issues of diversity has been interesting and engaging. There are programs, at times, that I find less interesting and on those Sundays I have chosen to do something else. On balance I have been attending rather regularly and was honored last Spring to be asked to fill in as Secretary for Sandy L. who could not complete her term of office. Sitting on the governing board gave me a renewed appreciation for the challenges that face us and the differences in opinion that fuel our passions. Being in the position of governance is always a challenging task and an opportunity for self-discovery while striving to make a positive difference in the present and future of the organization; in this case the Fellowship. I was asked to be on the conflict resolution team and know that group grew out of an attempt of the board to respond to the fellowship needs for dealing with issues that can be hurtful and divide us. I continue as a member of that team.

Which brings me to the issue of conflict and how to manage it when it arises. I have come to believe and to know that there is no perfect faith organization, ours included. Sometimes issues will arise that bring up our dissatisfaction and disappointment. Sometimes we will get our feelings hurt advertently or inadvertently and we tend as humans to want either to fight back or to withdraw. Neither one of those positions leaves us empowered nor resolved; though they may give us time to know our own mind. As I mentioned before I have had the experience of being "burned" by the church where I felt unheard and disrespected. I left for years fleeing from considering any possibility of putting my faith in jeopardy again. The fleeing, though giving me time to reflect, left a spiritual longing for connection. In the meantime I also grew up and came to understand that I alone am in charge of how I allow others to affect my faith, my presence and my growth. It is not that I cannot be hurt; I can. It is just that fighting or fleeing is not the only option. Humanity is part and parcel of the faith experience, I think and because humanity is imperfect so is the experience of engaging in community. Easier said than done though.

I miss the people that have chosen to walk away from conflict and the hope of resolving it and have left our Fellowship. I enjoy the programs that teach me more about myself and the world we live in. I am challenged by programs that present something that I do not agree with. I am proud to be a member of the Fellowship and I hope that those who have left in anger or in pain will come back and try again. I hope that those who are unhappy with the programming will speak up and offer other alternatives. I hope that we continue to grow together in an atmosphere where we respect and value open communication. I am glad to be here.

Noble Laureates Praise Bold New Book By Unitarian Universalist Evangelists

Rev. Michael D. and his science writer wife, Connie B., are America's UU evolutionary evangelists. They have spoken in more than 250 UU churches and fellowships over the past 5 years and were recently featured on the cover of the UU World.

Rev. Dowd's forthcoming book, "Thank God for Evolution!", has been endorsed by five noble laureates and 120 other luminaries, including prominent UU ministers:

<http://thankgodforevolution.com/nobel>

Advance copies can be purchased for \$15 each (40% off retail) from Dowd's website:

<http://www.ThankGodforEvolution.com>

Workbee is Coming!

From B&G Committee

Please join us on Saturday, **October 6**, in a work party to prepare our meetinghouse for the coming winter. We'll work from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Here are some of the tasks we need your help for:

- Caulk/putty exterior window panes.
- Paint the new putty.
- Replace damaged sash cords in 5 windows.
- Reorganize the "program" room and clean out hutch.
- Clean old notices from bulletin boards and rack in parlor.
- Replace all fluorescent tubes in meeting room and parlor lights.
- Organize all lost-and-found items for showing.
- Take down damaged basketball hoop.
- Clean out storage shed and reorganize.
- Help Chris load the junk in truck & dispose at dump.
- Segregate usable items for showing on Sunday.
- Finish packing tenant's items in apartment.
- Move tenant's boxes in apartment to shed.
- Clean out basement store room - one pile for Chris to take.
- Organize items Fellowship members might use.
- Move old doors away from electric box to comply with fire regulations.
- Move remaining items and shelves into apartment bedroom.
- Cut the pokeweed down; paint stems with full strength Roundup.
- Pile weeds to dry and later burn.
- Clean apartment and make ready for RE use.
- Wash windows and exterior doors.

See you on October 6!

From Religious Education:

There will be an **RE Committee meeting October 14th at Noon**. This is an IMPORTANT meeting for Religious Education at YSUUF. We will be reviewing our past goals, setting new goals, and evaluating our progress. If you are interested in Religious Education please attend this important meeting.

— David K.



From Mitzi Manny:

On October 14th at 2:00 PM we will be providing service for the residents of Friends Care Center, Mary M. organizes it. We would appreciate anyone who can come and distribute music and help with singing.

The word "spirituality" is difficult to define. I recently came across this quotation from Jaron Lanier which may be helpful: "A workable definition of spirituality is "one's emotional relationship with unanswerable questions." It is possible to find you in them."

The Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association

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 living tradition which we share draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Yellow Springs

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