



The Free Spirit

News from the Big Sky Unitarian Universalist Fellowship – Helena, Montana

February 2009

UU Happenings This Month....

February 1st Service – Pot Luck Sunday
“What is God?” Led by Becky Warren

Kids, Celebrate the Lunar New Year on February 1st at Exploration Works
1:00pm story, 2:00 Lion Dance Parade

Knitting for Peace-February 5th, 7-9pm
Home of Ruth Luke, 301 S. Rodney

February 8th Service - Sunday
“How to Say a Unitarian Universalist Prayer”
Led by Kelly McBride

Adult RE – February 8 “Intro. To Buddhism”,
1:00-2:30pm after Sunday Service, contact
Donna Davis at 449-7766

Knitting for Peace-February 12th, 7-9pm
Home of Ruth Luke, 301 S. Rodney

February 18th Service - Sunday
“I Was There to Hear Your Bornin’ Cry”
Quest Speaker Jane Bucks,
Florence Crittenton Home

bUUk cUUb, February 26th, 7-9pm
“Call of the Wild” One Book MT
Nisan Burbridge’s, 706 9th Ave.
Contact Georgia Lovelady 443-7204

February 22nd Service – Sunday
“Shalom Havereem” Led by Lynda Saul

Next Month...

March 1st Service – Pot Luck Sunday
Service Leader for March is **Carolyn Laceky**

Adult RE - March (4), 11, 18th
“Earthbased Spirituality-Spring Equinox
Celebration” Contact Jan Ellen Siemers
at 459-0102

Adult RE - March 7th Buddhist Meditation
Retreat, Contact Joyce Kronholm at 457-8246

Welcome New Board Officers for 2009

Your elected Board members for this year are President -Magalie Belanger, Vice President -Jan Ellen Siemers, Secretary -Carol Barnes (until Feb.), and new members Treasurer -Michele Webster, and Jeff Palmer -At Large Member. Thank you to this committed group of volunteers for taking on the task ahead. Each board does things a little differently but, with your help, we will do our best to take care of Our Fellowship.



Carol, Jeff, Magalie, Jan Ellen, and Michele



Cynthia Overturf for January

In Gratitude

The following were recommended for appreciation by you:

To those who stepped up to take **Board** positions,
Cynthia Overturf for the wonderful work as Service Leader for January, **Rebecca Hargis** for the great job she has done on Welcoming Committee and for taking over the Membership module of our database system. **Blake Gardner**, the webmaster, for our well crafted and maintained WEB page.

And...

Service Presenters: Pad McCracken, Kat Imhoff, Cynthia Overturf, and **Guest Speaker:** Scott Crichton. **Greeters:** the Palmers, Becky Warren, Carolyn Laceky and Jeanne Powell. **Coffee/potluck hosts:** Joyce and Bill Kronholm, Jeanette Uland, Rebecca Hargis and Michele Webster. **Children’s RE** volunteers, and the Board members who stay to close the church.

Many thanks to those who made our UU fellowship possible in January.

Big Sky UU Fellowship

Board of Directors

Magalie Belanger – President
Jan Ellen Siemers – Vice President
Michele Webster – Treasure
Carol Barnes – Secretary
Jeff Palmer – At Large Member

Committees

Membership - Joyce Kronholm
Religious Ed. Child – Jeanette Uland
Religious Ed. Adult – Lynda Saul
Social Justice – Magalie Belanger
Welcoming - Rebecca Hargis
Worship - Bill Kronholm

Mailing Address

Big Sky UU Fellowship
PO Box 816
Helena, MT 59624

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Services

Christian Science Church
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Helena, MT 59601

Newsletter

Jan Ellen Siemers 459-0102
JEhelena@copper.net

Webmaster

Blake Gardiner at
blake@helena-mont.us

More information at

www.bigskyuu.org



from Magalie Belanger - President

The last few times I talked to Joyce Kronholm before January, she often asked me how I felt about the Board and the Presidency? “Nervous but excited” was almost always my answer. I am excited for so many great opportunities like the General Assembly, a new board with great old members Jan Ellen Siemers and Carol Barnes, and new members Jeff Palmer and Michele Webster, and the opportunity to give back to the Big Sky Fellowship. In the few years I have been a member of this congregation I have seen it change and grow rapidly but the spirit stayed the same and so did the warmth I felt every Sunday. When I see and hear all the feedback, the support and the joy of this Fellowship for the Board of Trustees and myself I don’t feel so nervous anymore.

Celebrate Our Diversity- Upcoming Adult RE Classes:

February – 8, 11: Introduction to Buddhism given by Donna Davis following Sunday services 1:00-2:30pm, downstairs at the CSC church.

This class offers a general introduction to Buddhism including the 4 Nobel Truths, the Eightfold Noble Path, the story of the personage who became the Enlightened One, some reflections on the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, and a look at contemporary practice.

Please contact Donna Davis at 449-7766 (So she will know how many handouts to make.)

March –(4), 11, 18: Earth Based Spiritual Practices; Spring Equinox Celebration given by Jan Ellen Siemers in 3-sessions from 7-9:00pm, gather at the CSC church.

We’ll look into the UU 7th Principal and 6th Source. We will also explore the history, heritage, and how to of seasonal celebrations; learn about our own indigenous ancestors; and prepare for and conduct our own Spring Equinox celebration the evening of March 18th.

The intent is to help UUs get back in touch with the “sacred” of this amazing planet! Please contact Jan Ellen Siemers at 459-0102. (So she will know amount of craft supplies to bring.)

March 7- “Blending Practices of Prayer and Meditation: Creating a Reflective Life”

a full-day Saturday retreat on **Buddhist Meditation** at the home of Joyce Kronholm

The session will be led by Bob Jahner, who with his wife Jan, spoke to the fellowship last fall about the week they spent with the Dalai Lama last summer. The retreat is an outgrowth of that experience. Those attending will work with small group classmates to develop a personal practice which blends the traditions of formal meditation and prayer.

The course is designed to provide you with a method through which you can perceive and better enjoy your own life in a sustained focus of gratitude and inclusion. The goal is to leave you with a personal practice of meditation/prayer that can augment and support your unique spiritual journey.

The retreat will run from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the home of Joyce Kronholm, 720 Hauser Blvd. There will be a \$20 fee. We will potluck for lunch. Space is limited to 10, so please call Joyce at 457-8246, or email her at w.kronholm@bresnan.net.

Our Top 3 Priorities for 2009:

Music Program

Quest Speakers

Growing the Membership

Introduction to Unitarian Universalism class a success

By Lynda Saul

Sixteen interested friends and members of BSUU met on the evenings of Jan 14 and 21 to learn about and discuss Unitarian Universalism. The courses covered the history of UU noting that beliefs about the unity of God and universal salvation date back to the days of Jesus. We learned that 3 of the first 6 Presidents of the United States were Unitarians or Universalists.

Other topics included early Unitarianism in Helena, did you know that the Grand Street Theater was built as the Unitarian Church in Helena and served religious education for over 200 Unitarian kids at the turn of the century? We also covered the 7 Principles and 6 Sources of our living tradition, as well as our symbols and ceremonies and the history and story behind "Spirit of Life".

Everyone had a chance to research a famous UU at www.famousuu.com and share what they learned. We also discussed the long history of social justice activism practiced by UUs and attempted to answer questions about our liberal faith. Joyce Kronholm and Lynda Saul look forward to leading this course again in September.

You Can Make Our Fellowship Grow

By Joyce Kronholm

Membership growth is a priority of our Membership Care Committee, of which I am chair. It was also one of the top three priority issues you identified in our fall congregational survey.

We're already doing many things right. We have our sign prominently displayed on the west side of the Christian Science Church. Beginning in December we have a monthly display ad in the Independent Record highlighting a special service or speaker. Blake Gardiner keeps our website up-to-date, and we often receive comments about how attractive and well laid-out it is.

Every visitor who comes to our service is warmly welcomed and receives a welcoming packet on their first visit. They will then receive a handwritten note from Rebecca Hargis, chair of the Welcoming Committee, followed by a personal phone call from a member of our Committee. We personally call and visit members and friends who have been absent from our services for a while.

Still, there's much we can do to let the people of Helena know about our fellowship and our liberal voice in the state's capital. I've taken a number of ideas from *The Membership Journey*, a resource provided by our national organization, the Unitarian Universalist Association, on ways we ALL can practice an outward orientation to potential members. -Bring someone to a Sunday service. -Talk with someone you don't know during coffee hour. -Choose to sit beside a visitor. -Tell visitors you're glad they came back. -Practice your response to the question, "What is Unitarian Universalism?" -Invite nonmembers to a special service. -Talk to nonmembers about our fellowship. -Tell a nonmember about our adult education program. -Tell nonmember parents about our wonderful religious education program for children.

Many of these ideas are already being done. But my challenge to you is that we all make a conscious effort and watch our fellowship grow.



**1983 – founding of
Big Sky UU Fellowship**
**1891 – founding of
Helena Unitarian Society**

From
"Finding a Spiritual Home"

"I can't imagine not wanting a community in which I can be open and free with my thoughts and beliefs, surrounded by those who are also seeking to improve the lives of others... My service to my community and humanity cannot be restricted to helping only those who agree with me."

--Chris Wulff, UU from Kingston, ON

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3<sup>rd</sup> Principal of Unitarian Universalism

Acceptance of one  
another and  
encouragement to  
spiritual growth in our  
conversations



Food  
Share

Show  
You Care