



What's with UUS

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalists of Sterling
A Welcoming Congregation
Sterling, Virginia



Minister's Message



**Slow
Down—
Fast!**

**UU Fast Day:
April 16th**

**Rev. Anya
Sammler-
Michael**

The practice of fasting is an ancient spiritual discipline. Nearly every faith celebrates an annual day, week, or period of fasting. While the ultimate purpose of the exercise differs between faiths, the practice itself encourages a near universal experience.

Fasting is a break from the ordinary. We are accustomed to satisfying our appetite. When we fast, either exercising moderation or abstinence, we pause, breaking from the ordinary. The pause may encourage us to see our lives or ourselves differently. Or it might help us understand the hunger pains that those who live in impoverished situations experience daily.

You may be surprised to hear that Unitarian Universalists have historically "celebrated" a day of fast in April. The spring holiday began as a counterpoint to the fall holiday of Thanksgiving. While Thanksgiving is a chance to recognize the bounty and beauty of life, fast day is a chance to consider the challenges – wars, injustice, and inequity.

Early in this country's history, the April fast day was as ardently publicized as its Thanksgiving counterpart. Through the years we have lost touch with this opportunity. If you will forgive my blatant musing – it seems like our nation has a determined preference for

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President's Message



**Spring
Forward**

Bryan George

This is my favorite time of year. Winter has its charms – there's a certain comfort that

comes with being able to take on the cold and endure it well – but it is, literally, a cold comfort. Winter after all is by definition a time of limitations, hardship, and scarcity. Spring offers a sense of renewal, energy, and endless possibilities – whereas winter, at its best, reminds us that we can survive, spring reminds us of what we are surviving for.

We are entering the springtime of our church year as well. In much the same spirit as the spring of nature, the spring of our church is full of activity and possibilities.

The possibilities of UUS have been punctuated very well by our annual stewardship drive, which has been as successful as any our congregation has experienced to date.

This is a remarkable testament to how much the members of this congregation value UUS and believe in the possibilities of Rev. Anya's ministry. We should all be proud of the results of the stewardship drive, and be sure to thank Paul Roche and the stewardship committee for their efforts to make it such a success.

We are fast approaching the time of Rev. Anya's ordination and installation on April 13. As a purely practical matter, this is a ceremony recognizing Rev. Anya's status as our called minister. But, of course, it is far more than that: It is a

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Worship Calendar

April 6th – "Politics and the Pulpit"
Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael. James Reeb was a Unitarian Universalist minister who was murdered in Selma Alabama for his stance on civil rights. As we near the anniversary of his death, Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael will explore the relationship between politics and the pulpit. An Inquirer's class (a chance for newcomers to ask questions and learn about our congregation) will follow the service at noon. Light snacks will be provided.

April 13th - "What, Me Worship?"
Rev. Chris Buice. What is it that we Unitarian Universalists do on Sunday and why? On the day when our congregation ordains and installs our new minister, we will spend some time reflecting on the meaning and the ministry of worship in the liberal church. Chris is the minister of the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Knoxville, Tennessee, and author of the book "Roller-skating as a Spiritual Discipline."

April 20th – "The Earth Is a Great Place to Meet" Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael. Scientific and religious ways of

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(Minister, Continued from page 1)

optimism. We prefer, nationally, to recognize our feats and ignore our foibles. In turn we are more accustomed to celebrating life's pleasures than considering life's challenges. Of course there are examples to the opposite, but I believe I can defend the generalization.

It seems important to me that we, as a religious community, uphold our commitment to pausing and taking stock of our lives and our world – both the positives and the negatives. Our principles affirm our connection to an “interdependent web, of which we are all apart.” As Martin Luther King Jr. so eloquently expressed – “A threat to justice anywhere, is a threat to justice everywhere.” It is a spiritual discipline to spend a day in recognition of these threats – of wars, of famine, of the aids epidemic, of in just regimes, of oppressed women and religious sects – of the places and people in our world that struggle for peace. By pausing we may experience a deeper connection to those who struggle and a greater appreciation of the diverse challenges that affect our brothers and sisters in life.

I will fast on April 16th. And I welcome you to fast as well. For some that may mean abstention from all food and drink. For others it may mean moderation. If you choose to fast, please keep your own health in mind. Only you know what your body can handle. If you will be driving to and from work, please be sure that you do so with your health and safety in mind.

At the close of the day on April 16, there will be a chance to break-the-fast with our community. At 7:00 PM we will begin an intergenerational service of prayer and reflection followed by a potluck meal at UUS. Please RSVP via the sign-up sheet in the hospitality area, or if the opportunity presents itself, join us spontaneously. All are welcome, whether you fast or not.

“Fasting” by the Sufi poet Rumi:

There's hidden sweetness in the stomach's emptiness. /

We are lutes, no more, no less. /

If the sound box is stuffed full of anything, no music. If the brain and belly are burning clean with fasting, every moment a new song comes out of the fire. /

The fog clears, and new energy makes you run up the steps in front of you. / Be emptier and cry like reed instruments cry. /

Emptier, write secrets with the reed pen.

Rev. Anya

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celebration of this congregation having found in Rev. Anya a spiritual leader who excellently matches the needs, abilities, temperament, and aspirations of our church.

In our ordination and installation festivities, UUS will recognize not only Rev. Anya's ministry, but also the renewal, energy, and endless possibilities presented at this springtime in our congregation. I hope that everyone will be able to join in that celebration – it will most certainly be a time to remember well.

The month of May will be busy as well. At the beginning of the month (Sunday May 4 from 1:00 PM-3:00 PM to be precise), the Board will host a leadership summit after church at UUS. This event (which is intended to become an annual fixture in our church calendar) will provide Rev. Anya, the UUS Board of Trustees, committee chairs, and leaders of other church activities an opportunity to consider the role of leadership in our church.

In particular, the summit will provide a time of focused reflection on the progress of the church year to date, an opportunity for a wide-ranging discussion of the state of our church leadership and what we might do to

improve its efficient and effective function, and a means to formulate a strategic leadership plan for the upcoming church year with an eye toward recommending specific changes for the Board's consideration.

The leadership summit is open to anyone in the congregation who is currently active in a leadership role or wishes to be considered a church leader, so I hope to see quite a few Members and Friends there.

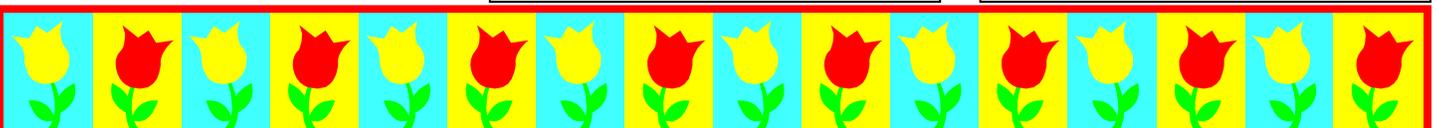
A closely related event in May will be the UUS Social Justice Forum, held at noon on Sunday May 11 after church. UUS has always been a strong social action church, active in many moral and humanitarian causes in both our local and the larger community. The forum will provide an opportunity for Rev. Anya and those interested in social action issues to meet and focus on planning for how we will organize and execute those activities in the coming church year.

Finally, on Sunday May 18 after church from noon-2:00 PM, we will conduct the UUS Annual Congregational Meeting. The annual meeting is the last major event conducted in the church year, and will focus on approving the budget prepared by the Finance Committee for the next fiscal year, hearing reports on the year from Board members and committee chairs, and electing new Board members and next year's Nominating Committee. In addition, we will consider motions to change our bylaws, and will vote on a motion to become a partner church with a Unitarian congregation in Kut, India.

The months ahead of us are indeed full of promise and new possibilities to build on what this congregation has already achieved. As always, I am proud to be associated with UUS, and am happy to have the opportunity to lead and serve this church as it thrives, grows, and springs anew.

Yours in Faith,

Bryan



Religious Exploration Schedule for April, May, and June 2008

	Date	Lower Elementary Topic	Leader / Helper	Tween Topic	Leader	Nursery Adult
April	6	Ministry of Compassion	Chandler Confoy	Paul	Rothman	James
	13	Jesus Teaches by Telling Stories	Connors George	The Gospels	Fitzgerald	Ward
	20	Taking Action 1	Weaver Thede	Taking Action 1	Weaver Thede	Need Help
	27	Ruth & Naomi	Fitzgerald Confoy	No class –Attend Youth Service	No class	James
May	4	Taking Action 2	Weaver Confoy	Taking Action 2	Weaver Confoy	M. Stafford
	11	Mothers Day / Flower Communion	No RE	Mothers Day / Flower Communion	No RE	Confoy
	18	Celebration Sunday	Chandler George	Review & Celebration	Rothman	S. McMullen
	25	RE Service Rehearsal	Weaver Thede	RE Service Rehearsal	Weaver Thede	Need Help
June	1	RE Service	No RE	Re Service	No RE	Burns
	8	Trail Clean Up	Chandler Confoy	Trail Clean Up	Chandler Confoy	Need Help
	15	Games Day	Connors George	Games Day	Connors George	Need Help



Rhinos & Raspberries

Find out how raspberries and a rhinoceros relate to Unitarian Universalism by volunteering in Religious Exploration this summer. The summer RE program will be based on *Rhinos and Raspberries*, a curriculum developed by Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. It consists of multicultural stories that introduce topics such as cooperation, friendship, making peace, reducing prejudice and standing up for justice. It is designed to help children empathize with others and understand how they can create communities that welcome diversity.

The summer program begins on June 22 and continues through August 31. Each Sunday focuses on one of the following stories:

“The Prince and the Rhinoceros,” an Indian tale of speaking kindly.

“The Clever Boy and the Terrible, Dangerous Animal,” an Afghan tale of fear.

“The Blind Man and the Hunter,” a West African tale of learning from your mistakes.

“Supriya's Bowl,” a Buddhist tale of giving.

“Papolotzin and the Monarchs,” a bilingual tale of breaking down walls.

“Rabbit Foot,” an Iroquois tale of peacemaking.

“The Fiery Tail,” a Chinese tale of true beauty.

“The Emerald Lizard,” a Guatemalan tale of helping others.

“Old Joe and the Carpenter,” an Appalachian tale of building bridges.

“The Stonecutter,” a multicultural tale of being yourself.

“Raspberries!” an American tale of cooperation.

Join the children in their explorations this summer by volunteering to lead or help one Sunday. The leader will receive a copy of the story, a lesson plan and supplies. All the helper needs to do is show up on Sunday morning, help supervise and have fun! You may sign up at church beginning on April 6 or by contacting Linda Weaver.

Roving Reporter

By Susan Rose

Spring is a time for planning and renewal (and cleaning!). What plans do you have for spring break?

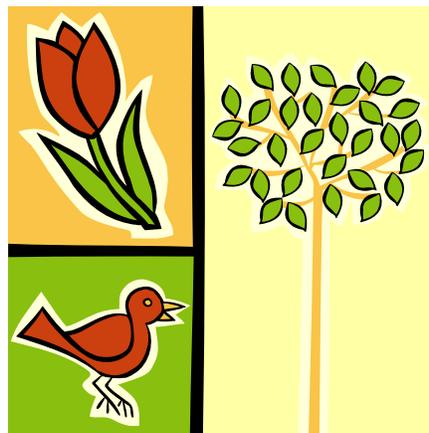
Sora and Julia (16) We're going to NYC for a day to walk across the Brooklyn Bridge!

Rachael (17) I'll be sleeping in and doing homework!

Maddie (16) and Derek (13) We're going on college visits!

Charlie (14) Doing Super Smash Brothers (video game) and sleeping!

Matthew (13) Having friends over!



RE Events

April 20 – Taking Action. During RE, children in kindergarten through 7th grade will explore ways they can make life better for others every day. They will also decide on a group social action project that will be completed on May 4, 2008.

April 27 – Youth Service. Come join the Youth! They've been working hard to make this a service to remember!

Ordination and Installation

Ordination Installation Committee

Ordination: The ceremony of consecration to the ministry.

Installation: The ceremony of installing a minister at a particular post.

On April 13, 2008, the Unitarian Universalists of Sterling will be called to ordain and install their minister, Anya Sammler-Michael. For ministers, ordinations happen only once in a lifetime. For congregations, ordinations and installations are a rare opportunity to participate in a beautiful and meaningful office of stewardship and celebration. There will be a number of ways for everyone to participate, but the most important of all is your presence. Please save the dates for:

A pre-celebration Coffee House at UUS on Saturday, April 12, 2008, from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.

The installation and ordination service will be held at Bull Run Unitarian Universalists on Sunday, April 13, 2008, from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

The Ordination / Installation Committee members are Celinda Chandler, Rosalie Clavez, and Gus Douoguih. They are supported by the Committee on Ministry members: Steve Dick, Elise Nicely, and Stephanie Roche.



Mosaic Harmony 'Let It Shine'

It's time to order your tickets for "Let It Shine," Mosaic Harmony's 15th Anniversary Spring Concert. This is their major fund raiser for the year, and enables them to continue to offer many free concerts for good causes such as Mental Health, Hospice and Habitat for Humanity. Plus they promise that "Let It Shine" will bring spring sooner with the warmth and musical excitement that they deliver with every song. You may order tickets from Judy Gruner. You may also advertise in the program as a supporter. Please see details on the Mosaic Harmony web site. So....come sing along with Mosaic Harmony and Let It Shine! We hope to see you there.

Small Group Ministry

Spring is definitely here. The days are longer, the weather is milder, and gardens beckon! Keep yourself grounded in our community by participating in UUS Small Groups. These groups keep members and friends connected - to themselves and to others in our church community. Our small group ministry program is an important part of UUS, providing that connection between Sunday services; this contact can be just what you need, especially if you can't make every Sunday service. More information on all small groups is available on our web site (www.uusterling.org). Watch for announcements from these groups. UUS small groups are always open to new members.

New Groups

It is easy to start a small group. If you like to read and would like to discuss what you read with other UUS'ers, or if you like to watch and discuss movies, or if you like to quilt or do other fabric related things, you could start a group. More information is available on our website under the drop down menu ministry/small groups, or contact Shelley Tamres (Board liaison to Small Groups) at shelleytam@aol.com.

Choir

The choir rehearses Monday evening plus Sunday mornings when we sing- at least two Sundays a month. We are rehearsing now Rev Anya's ordination/ installation service on April 13. You won't want to miss it! If you would like to join us, please see our music director, Dan Boothe, or any choir member.

Covenant Groups

Covenant Groups meet once a month during the school year to discuss a topic related to spiritual growth. Our most recent topic was "Our Gifts." We shared personal stories of how we've come to accept our own strengths. As a member of a group, you will be able to engage in these kinds of deeper conversations and you will get to know the other members of your group in a way that might not otherwise be possible. Four groups meet once a month on Monday, Tuesday, and

Thursday evenings and Tuesday at noon. E-mail Bonnie Lepoff at blepoff@cox.net or contact Rev Anya if you are interested in joining a group or just learning more. Several people have expressed interest in meeting on Saturday. If you would like to join a Saturday group, please contact Bonnie or Rev Anya.

Elder Care Support Group

The Elder Care Support Group meets for breakfast at 8:30 AM the second Sunday of each month at the Virginia Kitchen in Herndon to discuss issues related to caring for our parents. The coffee is always ready for us. If you would like to join this support group, contact Mike Berger at m.d.berger@ieee.org or just show up.

Men's Spirituality Group

The Men's Spirituality Group is meeting on second Fridays for conversation and camaraderie. Watch for meeting announcements or contact Tony Thede or Al Swett for more information.

Stream Monitoring

The UUS Stream Monitoring Group monitors Beaverdam Run in Ashburn. Members get together periodically to conduct a habitat survey and a protocol-based biological survey. Results are submitted to the Loudoun County Wildlife Conservancy and the Loudoun County Watershed Watch and used for the annual "The State of Loudoun Streams" report. The Stream Monitoring Group encourages environmental stewardship, and is an opportunity to learn, interact, and commune with our local environment in a family-friendly, fun outdoor activity. Contact Scott Findley at sfind39@aol.com for more information.

Women's Earth-Based Spirituality Group

In this circle of UUS women, we explore the UUA sixth source of wisdom - "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." The UUS WEBS Group usually meets the fourth Friday of each month. Watch for the announcements. For information contact Kim Fitzgerald at kfitzger99@aol.com.

New Member Profile

One of our newest members is Laurie Capps. Laurie and her daughter, Grace, moved to Sterling about eight months ago. Laurie also has a rat terrier named Emma, whom she walks to Grace's dad's house nearly every morning.

Laurie says, "I got an Associate's Degree in Commercial Art but soon thereafter realized that I had mistakenly chosen a field where I might actually earn a living. So, I quickly signed up for classes at the Corcoran and the Torpedo Factory and took many classes in studio art and life drawing, etc. Thus, I became happy and inspired, yet curiously lacking cash.

I do storytelling, visual art, singing and writing. I can't do much else besides these things. I used to think that artists who claimed to be unable to do anything besides art were being charmingly modest. Now, I realize they were being brutally honest. My bad.

Even though I am a thorough chicken, I have actually had a few adventures – some on purpose, some not. In 1986 I quit my job (money, who needs it?) and hitchhiked up to Maine with a friend. Once there, we took care of a wilderness lodge that was so remote, we would have had to helicopter out if one of us had gotten ill. There was no electricity and no phone but plenty of outhouses. It was one of the best adventures I ever had. In 1976, I got lost in Nut Cave with a group of friends from high school. We were rescued after being in the cave for sixteen hours. I'm still friends with some of them. In 1962, I got typhoid fever (after having gone to South America). They had to give me ice baths to reduce the fever. In 1970, I got Hepatitis A in Colombia. My little brother and sister also got it as we were all together. In 1991, I was diagnosed with a brain tumor two weeks before I got married. They did surgery and seven weeks of radiation. I gave the brain surgeon a copy of the song I wrote while recovering: The Brain Surgery Blues.

I am fine now."



Grace, Laurie, and Rev. Anya

Greeter/Usher & Coffee Cleanup

April/May 2008

There are only seven more chances to help greet and be an usher during Sunday services! For your edification, greeter and usher duties are listed below.

Greeter Duties

1. Arrive by 10:10.
2. Greet new or unfamiliar visitors.
3. Give Order of Service to all and New Visitor Packet to first-timers.
4. If first-timers have kids, introduce them to Linda Weaver and show them where the RE rooms are.
5. Ask first-timers to fill out a visitor form and put this in the basket on the greeter table.
6. Show first-timers where they can sit, introduce them to other people, make them feel welcome.
7. Sit in the back until at least around 10:45 to greet/usher latecomers.
8. Try to make contact again after the service to follow up and answer any questions.
9. Put new visitor forms on Lori Stevens' desk.

Usher Duties

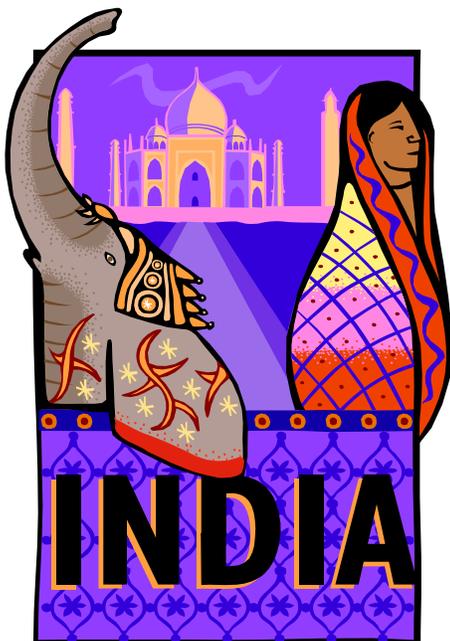
1. Help latecomers find seats, especially if they are new.

Date	Greeter/ Usher	Cleanup Person
April 6	1. Maureen Burns 2. Terry Dick	1. Terry Dick
April 13	1. Cathy Tucker 2.	1.
April 20	1. Terry Dick 2. Maureen Burns	1. Terry Dick
April 27	1. 2.	1.
May 4	1. Terry Dick 2. Maureen Burns	1. Terry Dick
May 11	1. Laurie Capps 2.	1.
May 18	1. Terry Dick 2. Maureen Burns	1. Terry Dick
May 25	1. 2.	1.

2. Pass the baskets during the offertory.
3. Count the money after the service, fill out the paper in the blue zipper bag, and give it to one of the Treasurers or a Board Member.
4. Count the number in attendance in the sanctuary and in RE, enter the count on the paper in the blue zipper bag.

Cleanup Duties

1. Take down the fellowship table after coffee hour; return supplies to shelves and wash out coffee pot.
2. Take the trash out to the dumpster.



UUS Partner Church FAQs

UUS is exploring the prospect of becoming a partner church with a Unitarian congregation in the small village of Kut in the Khasi Hills of N.E. India.

This is the third in a series of articles to provide more information about that opportunity.

What is the UU Partner Church program?

The UU Partner Church Council (UUPCC) was formed in 1993 to foster partner relationships between North American congregations and UU congregations and schools around the world. This includes countries with many years of active partnerships, such as Romania, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, as well as other countries where partnerships are beginning, such as the Philippines, India, and Poland. We as UU's have a unique opportunity

to learn about other cultures and deepen our faith and understanding through direct relationship with our counterparts in other countries.

Why do congregations decide to be a partner church?

Congregations participate in partnerships primarily as a means of moral and spiritual engagement with people who share our Unitarian faith, but have very different lives than ours. It provides an opportunity to learn about other cultures and deepen our faith and understanding through direct relationship with our counterparts in other countries.

It is an open-ended opportunity that evolves as you and your partner church get to know each other.

What do partner churches do?

There are as many answers to this question as there are partner congregations. There is no prescribed plan of action or rulebook on how to partner, and many creative models for partnership exist today. In general, once a congregation decides to partner, a core group will meet regularly to guide the relationship and, in collaboration with their partner, recommend specific ways the congregation can become involved.

The projects depend entirely on the specific challenges and opportunities of each partner village. One of the most common activities is for the children and youth from each church to exchange drawings, crafts and stories. This can lead to long-distance friendships over the years. Examples of partner church projects include collecting books and knitting sweaters to send to the villagers, helping establish a medical clinic to attract a doctor to the village, supporting local handcrafts by selling them in the US, providing seed money to start a piggery, and paying for piano lessons so that one church could have an accompanist. (The things we take for granted!) The amount of money needed in India to make a big impact is stunningly small. For example, a Unitarian orphanage for 24 children is being built and furnished for \$20,000!

What is community capacity building?

The UUPCC recommends a model of partnership that identifies and develops capacity within the village itself. Giving residents the skills to take charge of their own development creates long-term and sustainable improvements. Community capacity building is a method used to bring people together at the grassroots level to build consensus and identify their own strengths and resources. The outcome is a documented and prioritized community action plan developed by the residents over the course of several days of facilitated meetings.

The UU Fairfax church sponsored a community capacity building workshop March 13-15 for the villages of Puriang and Kut. Information learned about the projects that the residents plan to take on and how the partner churches can get involved will be available soon .

It is important that the American partner be a facilitator and not merely a benefactor. The Community Capacity Building paradigm is useful in this regard.

What is the specific partnership opportunity that UUS is considering?

Kut is a small Khasi village in NE India that has 29 Unitarians who are seeking a North American partner. They have a small church building and a tiny school with two teachers. After grade 3, the children of Kut walk to the neighboring village of Puriang, where they attend an upper primary school. Puriang is home to the partner church of the UU Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF).

Why would Kut be such a good fit for UUS?

Kut would be an ideal partnership opportunity for UUS for several reasons. First of all, we are a small congregation, and Kut is a very small village. Most churches in India looking for partners are too large for a congregation of our size, but Kut is a perfect size for UUS. Secondly, Kut and Puriang are sister villages and work together on many projects. This means that UUS could

work with the UU Fairfax church, which has many years of experience as a partner and would provide valuable guidance. There would be many overlapping opportunities for exchange between the Sterling and Fairfax churches here and the Kut and Puriang churches in India. Lastly, UUS already has a number of members who are deeply involved with the partner church program in Fairfax, and so the foundation of collaboration is already in place.

Are congregations expected to donate a certain amount of money to their partner church?

No. All financial support is at the discretion of the partner church. Partnership is about much more than monetary donations. It is true, however, that the American churches usually desire to provide some type of financial assistance. This is normally targeted for specific projects or needs, such as books for the school. A dollar goes a very long way in that part of the world. It is hard to pass up the opportunity to make such a big difference with such a small amount of money. Also, it is important to note that any financial assistance provided does not come out of the operating budget of the church. The money is obtained from fundraising and donations, as needed.

What can I do personally to make a difference in the village of Kut?

Sponsoring a student is one of the most popular and direct ways to participate in a church partnership. For only \$35-50, you can sponsor a student for an entire year! Most of our children could easily save or earn that amount of money and have the experience of connecting with a child their age. Letters and pictures between sponsor and student are typically exchanged twice a year.

This type of sponsorship would provide books for the student and contribute to a living wage for teachers. Kut has two young teachers (who make approximately \$20 a month), and are trying to continue their education through distance learning. The money also contributes to a safe and healthy

building (the school facilities are very simple but in need of significant repairs and upkeep), classroom supplies, a nutritional daily meal, and a warm sweater or shawl (there is no heat in the school at Kut). Many sponsors develop long-lasting relationships with students and bear witness to the positive outcome of education in the lives of these children.

What UU churches have partnerships in India?

New partnerships in India are being formed all the time. Here are some of the congregations in our area that have partnerships in the Khasi Hills.

Bethesda, MD (River Road)

Fairfax, VA

Mt. Vernon, VA

Wilkes-Barre, PA (This is a small church – 70 members, part-time minister)

Charlottesville, VA

Roanoke, VA

Some of these churches have older partnerships in Transylvania and were so enthusiastic that they wanted second partnerships in India!

What is the GWA-PCC?

The Greater Washington Area Partner Church Council is an organization of churches in our area with partnering interests. It meets quarterly to discuss all aspects of partnering projects, in progress and contemplated. Anyone interested may attend. (see Rosalie Clavez, Mike Berger, or Linda Reeder).

How do we proceed?

A partner church group has been formed at UUS to explore and develop the idea of partnering with the Unitarian church in Kut. Anyone who is interested is encouraged to join the group.

On April 20 after the service, there will be a town hall meeting where members of the congregation can learn more about Kut and the partner church opportunity there. Linda Reeder will have pictures, stories and lots of information based on



her visit to the Khasi Hills in March.

May 20 will be a partner church Sunday at UUS. The service will include a presentation on the partnership opportunity with Kut. Afterwards, at the UUS annual meeting, the congregation will vote on whether to become a partner church and take this important step in the development and outreach of our church.

How do I get more information?

If you have questions or want to get involved, please contact any of the following individuals: Mike Berger, Rosalie Clavez, E.B. Kirkbride, Linda Reeder, Susan Rose, Al Swett, or Shelley Tamres.

There is also more information at the UUPCC website at www.uupcc.org.





The Unitarian church in Kut. Note the chalice window at the top.

Notes from Kut

(An email from Linda Reeder, send to UUS-Announce on March 20th.)

Greetings to everyone.....

As many of you know, my son, Britton, and I are in India gathering info about the UU partner church program and the possibility of UUS partnering with the small village of Kut in the Himalayan foothills. Although we have left the Khasi Hills (we are now in Sikkim), part of my heart remains behind with these gentle and friendly people who embraced us with warmth and hospitality like neither of us has ever known.

The village of Kut sits on top of a mountain at the end of a winding road. The Unitarian church is the first thing you see as you approach the village. There are about 40 Unitarians out of approx 200 households in the village. Like us, the Unitarians there are definitely in the minority. The Presbyterians and Catholics also have churches in the village, and some of the villagers still practice their indigenous religion. (Part of the reason Unitarianism took hold in the area is that it was very compatible with their indigenous beliefs centered on the oneness of God.)

Last Sunday they invited us to their service. Although the church is very simple, it has a beautiful stained glass

window of a chalice. Seeing that familiar symbol in these otherwise unfamiliar surroundings made me feel more at home and focused on our shared beliefs and values. (As I spent more time in the village, this feeling only intensified.) Part of the service was led by a 19-year old young man named Kordor, who is also the teacher at the Unitarian school. From what I gather, he seems to be a rising village leader. However, he makes only \$12.50 a month as a teacher, and there is concern that he may leave the village in search of better pay.

After the service (in which Britton and I were invited to make speeches – which was true everywhere we went – they

seem to enjoy ceremonies and look for any excuse to organize them), we had time to talk as a group because the visiting minister was there to translate. It is important to note that these people have probably seen only a few Westerners in their lives and do not have access to information about the rest of the world. They were eager to learn more and asked many questions. A few of the more interesting ones were how much a hen cost in the US and whether there was a lot of sand. They were very concerned about me because I do not have daughters. In Khasi culture, which is matrilineal, inheritance (primarily land and dwelling) pass to the youngest daughter who, in turn, cares for the parents in their old age. Then when they found out my only sibling has only sons as well, they clucked in disbelief! However, when I told them not to worry – that I would come live in Kut in my old age – they seemed very happy and told me I would be welcome.

I need to wrap this up and haven't even gotten to the school visit where the children sang "This Little Light of Mine" and won both Britton's and my heart. Suffice it to say, there will be more to share, and many pictures which I think will help convey some of the essence of the place and people. These simple villagers have a communal spirit that is palpable and I believe can teach us things we have lost in our modern and busy lives.

Until I return, I wish you khublei....goodbye....and many blessings.



The family of the founder of the Unitarian church in Kut. They had us to dinner in their home and are waving us farewell. Kordor is the young man in the red shirt in the middle.

May – A Month of Forums

As our community calendar year draws to a close we are invited to reflect and to plan. The month of May will house three important forums for this purpose. Please save these Sunday afternoon hours for UUS.

Leaders Summit

Sunday, May 4, 2008. 1:00 P.M.

All staff members and community leaders (incoming and outgoing) of committees and small groups are strongly encouraged to attend or to send a representative. Come prepared to give a short report on your committee or group's strengths and struggles and what you believe might help you in the coming year. Also come prepared to add your committee or group's important dates to our 2008-2009 calendar. (*For example: Small Group Sunday, Auction, and Fall New UU Class, Music Forums, your chosen meeting day and time etc.*) The Summit starts at 1:00, so you may choose to lunch with your group or committee from 12:00 to 1:00 for a last-minute meeting.

Social Justice Forum

Sunday, May 11, 2008. 12:00 Noon

How should we organize our social justice effort for 2008-2009? Would you like to lead a Social Justice Committee or Task Force? What issues call you to action? What do you believe our congregation is motivated to work on or for? Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael will present some suggestions, but the community at large will work to determine our social justice future. Attendees are encouraged to bring savory goodies to the coffee hour, so that we will be sustained in body as well as social-justice spirit!

Congregational Meeting

Sunday, May 18, 2008. 12:00 Noon

This is the annual congregational business meeting where we will consider the budget for 2008-2009; celebrate our

2007-2008 successes; consider proposed changes to our bylaws; hear reports from the Board of Trustees, consider a proposal to become a partner church to a small Unitarian community in Kut, India; and as always, hear from the gathered community. Please do come. Members will have the opportunity to vote; all will be encouraged to express their hearts and minds.

Around the UU Region

Goodloe Celebration

Sunday, April 27, 2008, at 2:00 P.M.

Goodloe Memorial Unitarian Universalist Congregation 1540C Pointer Ridge Place Bowie, MD

Second annual Goodloe celebration in remembrance of the Rev. Don S.S. Goodloe and the dedication of the building housing Goodloe Memorial Unitarian Universalist Congregation. See the congregation's web site at www.bowieuu.org. The address will be "Up, Up and Away Toward Freedom" by Dr. Christopher Bell as Frederick Douglass.

RSVP to Tisha Richardson at tisharichardson@hotmail.com or 410-768-5462. Please let them know if you will need childcare.

"The Exonerated"

March 28, 29, 30, and April 4, 5, 2008, at 8:00 P.M. (Sundays at 3:00 P.M.)

All Souls Unitarian Church 1500 Harvard Street, NW at 16th Street

The KUUMBA Players present "The Exonerated" by Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen. This docu-drama follows the true stories of six people, exonerated from death row, as they struggle to make sense of their lives in the face of extreme injustice. Raw, funny, brutally honest and distinctly human, the six voices in "The Exonerated" guide us on an intimate journey through America's justice system. How does a person maintain hope in the depths of darkness? How does he or she rebuild trust and intimacy after a life behind bars? And, where is God in this? These questions

and more are explored in "The Exonerated." Because of explicit language and graphic situations, "The Exonerated" is not recommended for audience members under the age of 13. \$15/\$10 (Students w/ID) www.kuumbaplayers.org 202 332-5266 x 142

Construction Skills Needed for TUUL-Belt, a New Disaster-Relief Ministry

Contact Scott Sammler-Michael, Director, TUUL-Belt Ministry emichael@uuma.org 443-807-2899

Ministers and laity with electrical, plumbing, and other construction skills are needed to form a TUUL-Belt Ministry, a new UU ministry designed to respond rapidly to local and national disasters, to provide spiritual care to relief-workers and victims, and to coordinate long-term reconstruction relief.

Transformation, Race, and Healing Workshop

Saturday, April 5, 2008, from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.; Sunday, April 6, 2008, from 9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Festiv2l Center (1640 Columbia Road, NW), Washington, DC

The Transformation, Race, and Healing Workshop is a shared experience that transforms relationships, families, and organizations. Within a safe space, participants are free to express themselves and to educate their minds and their hearts. You'll be introduced to the Eight Stages of Healing, which have universal application. Using the latest scientific and social research, as well as historical information, you'll learn how healing happens across race lines. Trainer: Milagros Phillips. To register, contact Dawn Longenecker (202-328-1102). A small donation is requested but not required. No cost for volunteers and unemployed persons. Lunch will be provided both days.

UUS Board Meeting Highlights

March 6, 2008

Facilities (Judy Gruner)

All new keys have been distributed (thanks, Bryan) and I have extras if anyone still needs one.

We are leasing our space to Comite Santa Marta (group of Salvadorians) sponsored by River Road UU on the evening of March 15, 2008, for the cost of \$200. There will be a sponsor from UU River Road and someone from UUS will meet them and supervise their set-up and give instructions for cleanup and reset-up. I have all the forms signed and need the Event Request Form signed by a Board member to return to them.

I have interviewed another possible cleaner (a client of mine) who would clean twice a month and if possible between our leasee's service and our Sunday service on Saturday evening or early Sunday for \$95 each cleaning.

Finance (Paul Roche Alyssa Lum)

UUS continues on a stable financial path.

During February I paid the usual assortment of salaries and bills including paying the post office box for another year. This month I paid the final installment in our UUA dues so we are once again a "Fair Share" Congregation, which seems fitting given our emphasis on Fair Share in this year's Stewardship Drive.

From Social Action funds collected, I have paid \$550 to the Pottstown Relief Fund,

\$297.50 to the Darfur Solar Cooker Project,

and we split \$220.50 between Meadville Lombard and Starr King Seminaries.

The finance committee has authorized me to open a Fidelity Account to invest in Cash Reserves (very safe money market) so we can get from 3-5 percent

on our cash rather than the current .68 percent we earn at Wachovia Money Market - this needs Board authorization and a resolution of such.

We are experimenting with the online submission of reimbursement requests and so far so good. I will have a report on a possible "PayPal" account at the Board Meeting.

We have experienced a surge in attendance. Over the last six services we have averaged 63 adults and 18 children, which is similar to the averages we enjoyed five years ago during our "boom" time.

Minister (Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael)

My grasp of our community's history is limited and less detailed than any of yours. I appreciate all I have learned from you in conversation and from reading old newsletters and reports. As always, I am open to learning more.

When this community was young, it was constructed in a manner that would enable growth. The committees and responsibilities were designed to sustain a small community through rapid change.

UUS did grow, then stabilized, then diminished (in size - but not in its commitment to its members, friends, and the values of Unitarian Universalism).

At present we have approximately 70-75 members/committed friends. This is a relatively small size congregation. There is a good possibility that we will grow by 10-20 members per year over the next few years if we maintain energy and vitality.

Vitality is the result of inspiration. When members, friends, and visitors are inspired by experiences they have in the congregation, the congregation becomes a vital institution. Individuals want to be a part of an inspiring community so that they may add their energy to the creative efforts that the community undertakes - like worship, committees, RE, etc. A vital community is community that is "doing the religion" - a community that is living its values and dreaming its future.

I have been astounded and encouraged by all that our members and friends do to support this community. The "Hair!" service is a beautiful example of the hard "work" that sustains and nourishes vitality.

It is my assessment that the UUS leadership can engage in the shared responsibility to nurture and sustain vitality. No one body has the ultimate ability to create vitality, as vitality is a holistic process - the result of a shared experience. However, leadership can work to build structures that support our members, friends, visitors, and staff, so that they are best prepared to take part in building and dreaming an inspiring community.

Coffee Hour

We all enjoy coffee and conversation after the service ... and we really enjoy all the scrumptious treats! Below is the schedule for your family's turn to bring in something wholesome to share. Try to avoid crumbly things that will drop on the floor. Non-sugary things are also appreciated.

Month	Last Name
April	A - C
May	D - F
June	G - K
July	L - P
August	R - S
September	T - Z

April 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 6:30 PM Understanding the World's	3 7 PM Board of Trustees Meeting	4 7 PM Cleaning	5 5 PM—10 PM AAFJ 7 PM—11 PM Bonnie and Rosalie Turn 60!
6 10:30 Religious Exploration 10:30 Worship Service 12 PM Inquirer's Class 12 PM Partner Church Meeting	7 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	8 7 PM Covenant Group	9	10 7 PM Covenant Group	11 7:30 PM UUS Men's Group	12 7 PM—9 PM Installation and Ordination Pre- Celebration 5 PM AAFJ
13 8:30 AM Elder Care Support Breakfast 10:30 Religious Exploration 10:30 Worship Service 4 PM-8 PM Rev. Anya's Installation and Ordination 3:30 AAFJ	14 7 PM Covenant Group 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	15	16 7 PM Prayer and Reflection Service followed by potluck supper	17	18	19 5 PM—10 PM AAFJ
20 10:30 Religious Exploration 10:30 Worship Service 12 PM Partner Church Q & A	21 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	22 12 Noon Covenant Group	23	24 7 PM Membership Committee Meeting	25 7 PM WEBS Group	26 5 PM—10 PM AAFJ 10 PM Youth Sleepover
27 10:30 Religious Exploration 10:30 Worship Service 3:30 AAFJ	28 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal	29	30 7 PM The Spirituality of Food	<p>Please visit http://uusterling.org for current and additional information.</p>		



Unitarian Universalists of Sterling
PO Box 1632
Sterling, VA 20167
(703) 406-3068
<http://www.uusterling.org>



Your Church Leadership

Minister: Rev. Anya Sammler-Michael

Director of Religious Exploration: Linda Weaver; **Music Director:** Daniel Boothe

Board of Trustees: *President* - Bryan George; *Vice President* - Dave Miller; *Secretary* - Jeff Chandler;
Co-Treasurers - Alyssa Lum and Paul Roche; *At-large* - Gus Douoguih, Judy Gruner, Scott Findley, Shelley Tamres

UUS Mission Covenant Statement

The Unitarian Universalists of Sterling offer a place where reason and spirituality converge. We welcome members of the community who are seeking such a religious home. Our mission is to make the community a better place to live by promoting a variety of religious expressions, working toward social justice, and fostering diversity. In order to carry out this mission, we covenant to listen to each other, encourage the exchange of creative thought, and respect our differences.

UUS Sunday Services 10:30 a.m.

Unitarian Universalists of Sterling meets at the Sterling Oaks Commerce Center Sterling, a handicapped-accessible 24-7 facility, located on 22135 Davis Drive near Route 28 and Church Road in Sterling, Virginia. Child care and children's religious education are both provided during worship services. Dress is casual. Children are encouraged to wear play clothes.

From Northbound Route 28: Take Route 28 North exit from the Dulles Toll Road. Turn right at Church Road. Turn right on Davis Drive. Go about one block and turn right into the parking lot.

From Southbound Route 28: Take Route 28 south from Route 7. Turn left at Church Road. Turn right on Davis Drive. Go about one block and turn right into the parking lot.

From Westbound Route 7: Turn left at Sterling Boulevard. Turn right at Church Road. Go three miles. Turn left on Davis Drive. Go about one block and turn right into the parking lot.

What's with UUS

Communications Committee Chair: Terry Dick; **Editor:** Linda Reeder

Production: Jeff Chandler, Susan Miller

Board Liaison: Jeff Chandler

To submit material for publication, send by email to uus-newsletter@googlegroups.com

Submission Deadlines

4/18/08 for May

5/23/08 for June

6/20/08 for July/August

8/22/08 for September