

THE THRESHOLD



Towson Unitarian Universalist Church

A Welcoming Congregation

www.towsonuuc.org

Lutherville, Maryland

December 2011

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Upcoming Services

December 4

9:30 and 11:15 AM

Prepare Ye The Way Of...

Rev. Clare Petersberger, Dr. Joseph Gascho, The TUUC Choir

According to King James' translation of Matthew, what John the Baptist cried in the wilderness was, "Prepare you the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." J. S. Bach wrote an advent cantata on the idea of preparing for the coming of the savior of nations. This glorious music inspires the questions: What might Unitarian Universalists be preparing for in Advent? What do we await? What paths are we making straight? This morning, in the second service, we will dedicate ourselves to the care and nurture of Lorah Ember Hauf. And this morning we will be collecting "Guest At Your Table" boxes to support the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's work for human rights around the globe.

December 11

9:30 and 11:15 AM

Bringing Hope When Hope Is Hard To Find

Rev. Clare Petersberger , TUUC's Lay Pastoral Associates, Jan Chapin, Membership Chair, and TUUC's new members

"In the deep midwinter, frosty wind made moan..." So begins Christina Rossetti's Christmas poem. It is not hard to think of people experiencing a bleak time: those struggling financially in a weakened economy; youth who are giving up on an education because they see no future; loved ones facing a health challenge; and all who are reminded at this season of loss. Rossetti writes of the birth of a savior and wanting to give him a gift. The gift she identifies is one that we, too, give and receive. This morning, we will reflect on what helps us to navigate difficult life transitions. And we will introduce our TUUC Pastoral Associates. We will also recognize and welcome TUUC's newest members to our caring community.

December 18

9:30 and 11:15 AM

Spirit Of The Christmas Tree

Rev. Clare Petersberger, Joyce Duncan, Dr. Joseph Gascho, Sharen Camille, Angela Castillo-Epps, Wendy Werkheiser, and a cast of thousands

This morning, we celebrate the meaning of Christmas as a multigenerational community. There's movement, color, dance and pageantry for the very young. There's honesty and exploration for youth. There's a universal theology of Christmas for adults. Come share the spiritual essence of the season – the spirit of the Christmas Tree!

December 24
ONE CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICE AT 5:30 PM
The Carpenter's Gift

Rev. Clare Petersberger, Joyce Duncan, Dr. Joseph Gascho, Wendy Werkheiser

In tonight's multigenerational celebration, we affirm Eric Honeycutt's observation that "The wings of angels are often found on the backs of the least likely people." Our story begins, not in ancient Israel, but in a town in New York in the 1930's. It involves a pine cone; the beauty of the tree that grew from it; and the legacy of that tree – one which we, at TUUC, continue to carry forward. A potluck supper will follow. Please sign-up if you and your family plan to participate.

December 25
ONE CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP SERVICE AT 11:15 AM
Occupy The North Pole

Aynsley Hamel

They have been criticized for not having a clear mission and vision. Recently, they have been tear-gassed by police and kicked out of areas where they peacefully took up camp. What do the Occupy movement participants and Jesus have in common? Join us as we come to better understand the messages that both offer us, and enjoy some traditional holiday songs and a Story for All Ages.

Clare's Colloquy

Rev. Clare Petersberger



This is the season of holidays of hope; memories of love; gift giving; making promises for the future; looking for the extraordinary in the ordinary. With this in mind, I offer you a poem I wrote this fall with the hope that you will have loving holidays filled with epiphanies, meaningful memories, gifts which you would choose for eternity, and the promise of renewal. — Clare

The Cascade

As a child, I cherished
the blue ceramic hippopotamus.
Other than being blue
(and someone having drawn black lotus leaves on it,) it looked like real hippos at the National Zoo.
My parents sang, along with Flanders and Swan,
"Mud, mud, glorious mud,
there's nothing quite like it for soothing the blood."
I liked hippos.

In seminary, the original Egyptian hippo,
in the Metropolitan Museum of Art,
took on a darker, humorless hue as I read:

"The beast might be encountered
on the waterways
in the journey to
the afterlife."
I walked past
Bowls and stone vessels for eating,
combs and jewelry for dressing,
amulets and scarabs for protection,
shabti statues for household support.
If the Egyptian's were right about an afterlife,
which objects of my daily life would I need?
A photograph of my family?
My grandmother's ring?
A love letter from my boyfriend?
Louis Untermeyer's *Treasury Of Great Poems*?

Which objects of your daily life would you choose for eternity?

What I did not learn in seminary
was what to do with the empty super sized box of Cascade:
the one my husband purchased in November
with only the thought of clean dishes, not death;
the one from which white crystals fell faster
than his cancer cells multiplied in January;

the one which, in February, rinsed away lemon cake
from the forks of the two home nurses;

the one which easily filled the dispenser
that March day after the hospital bed
had been picked up;

the one which created a citrus breeze
after Easter dinner;

the one from which, in July,
I shook the last blue and white flakes
onto the opened door of the dishwasher.

What to do with this object
which my husband had touched,
which outlasted him?
Should I guild the green box?
Save it for his granddaughter?
Send it to the Met to be put behind glass?
Give instructions that I should be buried with it?

A blue ceramic hippo once symbolized control
over forces over which humans had no control.
So, too, an empty green box of Cascade.

Which objects, in this life, will others need when you're gone?

President's Missive

Melissa Reuland



TUUC will convene a Congregational Meeting on January 29 (5 PM potluck, 6 PM meeting). The agenda will address use of the auction money, Clare's sabbatical, efforts to increase membership and develop safe congregations policies, and news from the Auburn School rental and each Council.

Early indications are that the auction on November 19 was a rousing success. In other financial news, the monthly Profit and Loss Statement shows that we are on track for this point in the year. November is the first month we will begin to pay back the members' loans.

We all continue to prepare for Clare's sabbatical, which begins on January 1, 2012 and ends on May 31, 2012. Clare and the Committee on Ministry are preparing a "Sabbatical Brochure" detailing procedures to follow in Clare's absence, including whom to call for pastoral care needs.

Clare reported on findings of the committee that worked on the "Building the World We Dream About" last year. Two board members will review the committee's recommendations to identify action steps for the Board in achieving increased diversity in our church.

This month the board welcomed Kathie Court as the new at-large board member (Aynsley Hamel stepped down in October). Paul Konka and the nominating committee are working to fill other openings on the Operations Team and committee chairs, as well as on a leadership plan for the next several years.

Youth Religious Exploration

Joyce Duncan, director



Sunday Service December 18

YRE classes from Kindergarten through 6th grade have been learning about one of our sources this year, our Jewish and Christian heritage, through Bible stories. To further our knowledge of the story of the nativity, YRE classes will be learning songs and parts for a pageant that will be presented as part of the service on December 18 entitled Spirit of the Christmas Tree. We also welcome participation from middle and high school students and adults as singers, readers, and dancers (we can always use help behind the scenes also). Parent emails will send more details. Rehearsals for younger students will take place on December 4 and December 11 (unless they opt in for extra singing, moving, or playing instruments).

Singing Connects Us!

We have been working with Joe Gascho, TUUC music director, to include more singing in our classrooms. Volunteers who have been downstairs to help classes learn such songs as the UU Principles and Sources (to "Doe, a Deer"), "Jacob's Ladder," "Rise and Shine" (a song about Noah's Ark), and other favorite traditional songs that reinforce the characters and stories they are learning. Thank you to: Amy Koren, Sharen Camille, Lelah Mahoney, Tom Zeller, and Lelane Schmidt.

New adults in the middle and high school groups

The *Coming of Age* class welcomes Michelle Collins to the teaching team and looks forward to getting to know her better! Michelle has worked with this age group at her previous congregation.

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) is going to miss the leadership and energy of Jen Larson, who will be present much less frequently due to her move to North Carolina for work. We wish her well and are glad that she will still be coming back to TUUC on some weekends. Adan Ayala will take on some of the roles for our high school group that Jen has filled. *We need more adults to volunteer for adult chaperone positions* at weekend youth conferences that help our teens connect with the wider world of Unitarian Universalism and build leadership skills. If you want to see the next generation of UUs, contact Joyce for details about this (district rules require adults to be 25 or older to be adult advisors at cons).

Winter Semester starts in January

If you volunteered to teach a YRE class during the winter semester, please save January 14, from 9 AM to 1 PM for a teacher training event. We will be sending out emails to confirm the teaching teams for classes. Please confirm as soon as possible that you can teach that semester. We will send more details and request for RSVP for the teacher training later in December or early January.

YRUU Social Action/Habitat for Humanity Service Trip

We thank the representatives of each of TUUC's social action projects who have met recently with the teens in YRUU to discuss their projects. Some possibilities currently being considered are working with Marilyn Thorn to provide supplies for Families in Transition donations and possibly taking monthly parties to Eastside Shelter. Sheila Malenski has been researching possible dates and sites for a service trip to West Virginia for those 16 and older. For more information and deadlines to register, please contact Sheila; her contact information is in the church directory.



Notes



Joseph Gascho, music director



Dec 4: The TUUC Choir and Joseph Gascho, with Janet Kuperstein and family chamber orchestra

Dec 11: Chungwon Chung, piano

Dec 18: The TUUC Choir, IAC, Instrumental Ensemble and Joseph Gascho

Dec 24: Joseph Gascho, piano and friends

The big news of this month is the release of the 50th Anniversary CD. I hope you've had a chance to hear it; it sounds great and is a truly unique testimony to all the great musicians here at TUUC. It was a fantastic team effort by dozens of people, and the latest update is Jay Herzog's video of Spice Kleinmann's song which I saw posted on his FaceBook page. Check it out!

I'd also like to thank the many musicians who participated in music over the last month – Paul Azzam for many appearances and guitar playing, Lelane Schmitt on vocals, the indefatigable Spice Kleinmann, jazzers Donn Teubner-Rhodes and Asher Herzog, the TUUC choir of course, Larry Smith singing Springsteen again, the Bald Mountain Band with Tony Bonta, all the folks who participated in the Helen Smith Memorial concert including past music director Philip Olsen, and all the musicians who helped in our recent special music service.

Looking ahead, I'm looking forward to doing a Bach cantata on December 4, with a small chamber orchestra, the TUUC Choir, and soprano soloist Nancy Hannah. On December 18, we'll have a special service with Angela Epps and members of the Inter-generational Arts Coalition (IAC) dancing, an instrumental ensemble, and RE singing led by Sharen Camille in a pageant about the Spirit of the Christmas Tree. Singers and instrumentalists of all ages and abilities are welcome to perform, but you must get in touch with me ASAP and attend two rehearsals on Saturday December 10 at 10 AM and Saturday December 17 at 10 AM. Please get in touch; we'll have a lot of fun.

In other news, I'm looking forward to the December release of two other CDs I worked on this fall – first my own debut solo recording, and then another recording I produced and edited by the Folger Consort and singers from the National Cathedral in DC. Both promise to sound fantastic, and I am excited about this new facet of my musical life.

Hope you've all had a great Thanksgiving Holiday!

Words, Words, Words

Mickie Grover, church administrator



In an age where there is much talk about "being yourself,"
I reserve to myself the right to forget about being myself, since
in any case there is very little chance of my being anybody else.

Thomas Merton

After reading my last screed, one congregant suggested I change the title of this column to “Word, Sword, Swords.” I laughed – at myself and at all of us. A church community, any committed community, is always awash in conflict, major and minor. A UU community, whose very substance is democratic governance and the “free and responsible search for truth and meaning,” is bound to ride the rapids frequently. I belong to the Association of Unitarian Universalist Administrators and I will tell you the news from the frontlines: coffee hour causes heartburn in most UU churches.

This month however I write at the end of November, and although this is a December note, I feel drawn to gratitude. Perhaps the impetus is not Thanksgiving, a rather secular holiday, at all. Perhaps as the days draw in, I feel the turn inward that the cold and dark seem to call forth. I await, in this time of Advent, for the solstice’s turn that brings returning daylight.

And perhaps I am inspired by the words of a friend at the last meeting of our writing group. The topic was dreams deferred. My friend wrote that she did not suffer from any sense of dreams deferred – she had accomplished what she set out to accomplish, is in a loving, committed, long-term relationship, and saw no need for any sort of bucket list. In our striving culture with always one more thing around the corner, it was a shock and the rest of us laughed.

She then went on to write that she loved going to the Giant; everything about it, including being bumped by other people’s carts and the people who cut in line. We laughed and laughed – who loves the supermarket!

She read on: she is grateful that she could still drive there; she is grateful that she had the means to have transportation; she is grateful that she had the money to buy food; and she is grateful that the shelves are fully stocked with food. She ended by saying she likes that the man at the check-out sings to her: “I shot the sheriff...”

To acknowledge our accomplishments, to always be aware of the importance of love in our lives, to remember where we started, to know our great fortune in living at this time and place, to revel in simple encounters with others of our species! Who knew that our small writing group harbored such an enlightened one?

So today on a dark day of rain, the bare branches arching over the piles of their fallen leaves, I remind myself to pause, to remember how grateful I am for my daily life, for all the people in it – even the ones who run their carts into my heels at the Giant. I remember how grateful I am for my writing group, for friends near and far, for family (which is far away in San Antonio, Texas), and “for all that is our life,” as the hymn tells us.

I remember how grateful I am for my work here at TUUC and for all the people who cross the threshold, who e-mail, who call, who are concerned about the continuation of this place, and who tend to the light it brings to so many. And I remind myself that gratitude turns us outward, towards the community, away from the modern obsession with the self and the self's limited view. As Fr. Louis (Thomas Merton's religious name) wrote, there is very little chance of any of us being anyone other than who we are – good and ill mixed together.

Enjoy the darkening days. Enjoy whatever holiday(s) you celebrate – or enjoy your refusal to celebrate any winter holiday.

And from me:

A MERRY SOLSTICE

to you all.

Wise Gardening & Pest Management

Louise Harmony



A BIG THANK YOU to Warren Cherry, Jen Larson, Robin Sinn, Tom Farrell, Dick Scholle, Neil Porter, Bill Ward, Carel Hedlund, Bobbie Miyasaki, and Catherine Morris. Leaf raking is done for now and both the vinca bed and the

pachysandra bed have had the leaves blown or raked out of them which should prevent disease next spring. All shrubs have the leaves blown out of the center which should prevent insect growth if we get at least a week of hard, cold weather. I am all for letting Mother Nature kill off some of the insect populations as a form of natural control.

Many people at TUUC have been thanking me for doing the grounds work/organizing for the past couple of years. I very much appreciate having my efforts acknowledged and I want to again say THANK YOU TO ALL OF YOU WHO EVER HELPED IN ANY WAY. Without you the grounds would not be in the shape that you see them today. It takes a village to raise a child and it also takes a village to maintain 2 to 3 acres of managed garden/ground space and 5 plus acres of woods.

NEEDED DESPERATELY: a writer to continue this part of the threshold newsletter. This will involve networking with Jason Hauf, me, and the Green Sanctuary Committee. There are plenty of things in the works about the grounds and I would very much like to see the congregation informed of what is going on. If you like to write, contact me and let's talk. My contact information is in the directory.

On the To Do List: work with webmaster Al Peabody to update the "education corner" of the web site in an organized fashion; thank Claudia Sumler who is growing and donating holly tree babies in her back yard which I will transplant to the forest so that when the pine trees die (in 10 -20 years) the replacement trees will be established; talk with appropriate people at TUUC to check out the feasibility of replacing the pachysandra bed with a Buddhist-type garden design or a walking maze garden design either of which will have no plants and be easy to maintain; check with appropriate people at TUUC to see about the feasibility of using some of the auction money to get trash trees along the driveway sides at TUUC cut and treated so they will not sprout and to remove the leaning tree in the pachysandra bed; and temporarily patch the leaky gutter over "the shed" (the permanent patch can be dealt with when the roof is on the agenda).

Auction a Great Success!

It looks like we made well over \$18,000 at the auction again this year. And we had a wonderful time doing it! The weather was great, the potluck was scrumptious, and everyone seemed to be having a really good time. The raffle was generously supported with a \$100 gift card to Christopher Daniel as the grand finale. Sign-ups and the voice auction with lively bids offered fun times and interesting items.

Our great Master of Ceremonies, Barry Marsh, started us off with the children's auction, set up by Jason and Bess Hauf. Barry carried us through three raffles and three rounds of the live auction, ably auctioneered by Eric Beatty, Marilyn Maze and Barry himself. Justine Foote helped her dad, Alan, set up the computers and then joined Nick Troxel, Kathie Court, Mike Malenski and Tim Boniface entering all the data. David Sumler, Linda Talley, Jason Braspennickx and Bill Reinke gladly took your money as cashiers. Neil Porter coordinated the sale of raffle tickets. Erin Hancock arranged for the childcare. Thanks to George Harrison and Bob Niemann at the registration table.

The before and after auction tasks are not as visible. A team of volunteers contacted TUUC members for donations. The call team included: Carel Hedlund, Anne Lee, Alta Haywood, Marilyn Thorn, Mary Beth Brizzolara, Kim Peabody, Samantha Saalfield, Neil Porter, Judi Clague, Susan Woolhiser, Jane Selewach, and Linda Talley. Neil Cohen handled the donation database. Patty Smith, Marilyn Maze and Linda Talley worked on the auction booklet. Samantha Saalfield and Bethany Taylor were the auctioneers' assistants. Karin Symonds organized the potluck and Susan Woolhiser set up the silent auction. Mary Beth Brizzolara and Jan Chapin tended the new buy-it-now corner. Most everyone already mentioned helped with the set-up starting at noon. We can't forget the raffle ticket sellers and runners.

Special kudos go to Marilyn Maze who had her hand in all aspects of the auction, especially the hours of data entry after the auction, helped by Mary Beth Brizzolara and Linda Talley. I hope I haven't missed acknowledging everyone.

Thanks to all those that donated items, events and activities. Special thanks to all those that attended, brought great food to share, and purchased the many auction selections. Because of you and the many helpers we had a wonderful fund-raiser and a great time.

Update on Reverend Clare's Sabbatical

We are fast approaching the beginning of Reverend Clare's sabbatical on January 1, 2012. The Committee on Ministry (COM) and Reverend Clare (mostly Clare) have been diligently planning and collaborating with the TUUC Board president, lay worship associates, lay pastoral associates, Music Director, Youth Religious Exploration Director and the Church Administrator to make sure that all aspects of the Sunday services, Clare's ministries within the Church, and her work/involvement with the TUUC community can be addressed in her absence. The COM will continue its collaboration with other Church committees and the Board during the sabbatical.

The COM has been developing a detailed sabbatical brochure which will be available both in hard copy at Sunday Services and on the TUUC website the first week of December. The brochure will cover details regarding the purpose of the sabbatical, the management of all important aspects of church functioning including Sunday services, pastoral care, church operations, rites of passage, and contact information for issues and concerns during Clare's sabbatical. If you have any questions, you may talk with any of the COM members. Along with myself, these include: Eric Beatty, Claire Hruban, Victor Rodriguez, Neil Porter, and Alan Foote. Our contact information is in the directory.

—Rob Canosa, Chair, Committee on Ministry

Come and Join a Chalice Circle

Some participants speak of deepening relationships, some speak of expanding personal horizons, some speak of meaningful service to the wider community. What would you bring to a circle? What would you take away from it? How do you think it might change you?

Now is the time to come and find out what more and more TUUCers are experiencing. Come and join one of our circles for a little bit of fellowship, a little bit of worship and celebration, a little bit of service, a little bit of spiritual exploration, and a lot of deepening relationships and meaningful times together.

Sign-up time is coming! Chalice Circles will meet two times a month beginning in February. If you have any questions or to sign up for a circle, please visit our information table after the worship services during **January** or email us at chalicecircles@towsonuuc.org.

TUUC Members Art Exhibition

It's that time of year! Yes, yes, we know it's the Holidays BUT we are busy planning for the annual TUUC Members Art Exhibition. Please prepare to dazzle your fellow TUUC congregants, friends and family with your talents. The art exhibition is January 8 through February 12, 2012. A reception will follow the second service, from 12:30 to 2:30 PM on January 8. Please drop off your artwork on Tuesday, January 3. This exhibition is for adult members only. The annual RE Youth Art Exhibition will take place in April. Please contact Gail Ogin or Emily Tarsell if you have any questions about this exhibition.

Upcoming Events

Guest at Your Table Program Ends December 4

On Sunday, December 4, we will close our Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's GUEST AT YOUR TABLE program. Our financial support of UUSC allows us to help provide justice, equity, and compassion in human relations throughout the world. We work in partnership with grassroots organizations in four areas: economic rights, environmental justice, civil liberties, and humanitarian crises. We treat these partners as equals – we don't make them become like us, or part of us. We join them!

For those bringing back Guest at Your Table boxes, please put your name on your box. For those bringing a check, please make it out to UUSC.

Here's a reminder of UUSC yearly memberships: General \$40; General (dual) \$75; Student/Youth \$10; Senior \$20.

Green Sanctuary Committee December 11

Our next Green Sanctuary meeting will be on December 11. Contact Samantha Saalfield if you would like to be added to the Green Sanctuary email list.

Green Sanctuary is offering organic, fair trade chocolate, tea, and almonds, along with coffee, during our December sales. Perfect for holiday gifts – get them while they last! Look for our table in the lobby on December 18, and possibly other Sundays as well.

Also on the topic of environmentally and socially responsible gifts for the holiday season, Green Sanctuary Committee would like to encourage you to promote environmental and local economic

sustainability with your gift giving. Here are some suggestions for thinking outside the proverbial box in selecting holiday gifts. Who says a gift needs to fit in a box?

- Gift certificates from your local hair salon or barber
- Gym membership
- Gift certificate (or book of certificates) for car washes or oil changes at a local business
- Gift certificate to a locally-owned restaurant, café, book shop, etc.
- Gift certificate for house cleaning services
- On the more extravagant side, driveway sealing, lawn mowing services for the summer, winter plowing services, or rounds at the local golf course
- Gift certificate from a local business for computer help
- Charitable donations in your loved ones' names
- Membership to a local museum or other organization
- Scarves, jewelry, pottery, wooden boxes, etc. created by local crafts people
- A nice tip for the mailman, trash guy, babysitter, etc.
- Insert your own creative idea!

Philosophy Bites – Monday, December 12, 7:30 PM

Philosophy Bites November meeting is Monday, December 12 at 7:30 PM at the home of PB facilitator Peter Talley (431 Old Trail in the Rodgers Forge community near Towson University). Watch and discuss a thought-provoking lecture from Harvard University professor Michael Sandel's series *Justice* – an introduction to moral and political philosophy. The December session topic is Aristotle's discussion of "the good citizen" and freedom vs. fit. Newcomers are welcome. Contact Peter (info in church directory) if any questions.

Winter Solstice Ritual – December 18

Save the date! TUUC will be having a Winter Solstice ritual on Sunday, December 18. Celebrate the Yule in the tradition of pre-Christian Europe. Time and details to follow in the *Weekly News*. We look forward to seeing you there.

Aging Together – Tuesday, December 20, 1 PM

The aging together group will meet at the church on Tuesday, December 20 at 1 PM. The topic for discussion will be 'thoughts and plans for the holidays.' All are welcome. Call Joan Kolobielski if you have questions or suggestions. Her contact information is in the directory.

TUUC Concerts

Saturday, January 14 – The Hillbilly Gypsies and the Bald Mountain Band

The Hillbilly Gypsies are a West Virginia native string band who specialize in playing their own homegrown style of Appalachian old time music, mixed with a hard drivin' bluegrass sound. In addition to their original material, The Hillbilly Gypsies play an eclectic mix of traditional and quite often, not-so-traditional bluegrass standards and catchy old fiddle tunes. The Hillbilly Gypsies are best appreciated jamming at a live show. They perform in the old fashioned style, around a single vintage style large diaphragm microphone. This "Old Timey" approach adds a high energy barn party atmosphere to their show. Watching the whole band work around the mic is like taking a trip back in time. It'll sure make you want to get up and dance!

The Bald Mountain Band, opening the show, has been called the house band at TUUC since they first formed at one of the services back in 2008. They play a wide spectrum of music from traditional gospel and bluegrass numbers to folk and progressive rock numbers. They perform often in the Baltimore area at parties, festivals and even theatrical productions. The Baldies are: Jane Beatty, vocals and guitar; Tony Bonta, banjo and guitar; Joseph Gascho, bass, cello and keyboard; Jay Herzog, guitar, vocals and autoharp; Chris Kiehne, fiddle, guitar and mandolin; Bud Dickens, bass; Jon Ackerman, Dobro and special guests including Spice.

Purchase advance tickets for \$15 if postmarked by the Monday prior to the concert. Door prices are \$20 per person. Please bring something to share. Potluck starts at 6:30 and the show runs from 7 to 10 PM. Please come for our first concert of the new year and be prepared to dance the night away!

Please make checks payable to TUUC (noting "Concerts" on the memo line) and mail to TUUC, 1710 Dulaney Valley Road, Lutherville, MD 21093. Call TUUC at 410-825-6045 for additional information or contact Tish Michel at concerts@towsonuuc.org.

TUUC SATURDAY CONCERT SERIES '12

January 14 – Hillbilly Gypsies & Bald Mountain Band

February 11 – Chalice Messengers

April 14 – An Evening with Spice and Friends

Outreach Council

Salli Ward, council head



Thanks to everyone who made it possible to take three cartons of clothing, books and games to the eight people whose apartment was destroyed by fire earlier this month. We will now be continuing with this year's new outreach project – to assist with the needs of homeless families. The collection basket will remain in the foyer for laundry soap, toiletries (shampoo, toothpaste, tooth brushes, deodorant, razors, etc.), gloves and socks, small toys and games, and non-perishable snack foods. Certificates at grocery stores, dollar stores, etc. would be very helpful.

Feeding the Hungry in December

December has a 5th Saturday so TUUC has an obligation to provide at least 60 casseroles to Our Daily Bread soup kitchen. At Our Daily Bread, the hungry are served a hot meal 365 days a year. Even though it is a VERY busy time of year, people are hungry every day, even at holiday times! So please help sign up to provide at least one casserole, and do your part to make a difference. You can donate casserole(s) by making one, buying a Stouffers Mac and Cheese or donating \$10, and we will purchase a Stouffers' Party size Mac and Cheese in your name. Challenge yourself and your family to help. Can we donate even more than the 74 that were provided by TUUC in October?

Earl's Place Activities

Resolution Run

Sunday January 1st is the date of the annual Earl's Place Resolution Run. This is a 5K run and 1 mile walk to benefit the men of Earl's Place. Run, walk, make baked goods for the chili lunch after the run, or volunteer at the event. Please contact David Schwartz (phone and email in the church directory) for information.

Adopt a Resident

TUUC will again be participating in the Adopt-a-Resident program for Christmas. We will get wish lists from each resident "adopted," and individuals or families who choose to participate will get one of the lists. Bring a wrapped present to church, and it will be delivered to Earl's Place. This has been very much appreciated in previous years. Please contact David Schwartz by December 1 if interested.

Holiday Stockings

YRE will be collecting personal care items for residents of Earl's Place on December 4 and December 11. These include: razors, shampoo, deodorant, bar soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and batteries.



Special Activities At Banner Reading Club

Banner Reading Club students have enjoyed some special activities in the last two months. On October 20, they traveled to Larriland Farms where they enjoyed the Boo Barn, maze, Halloween characters and a hayride to the pumpkin patch to pick their own pumpkins. While we were waiting for the hayride, we noticed that a worker was spreading chips made of recycled roof shingles to cover the mud on the farm roads. The following week students decorated the pumpkins and took them home.

Reading stories and having students act them out is Judi Clague's specialty. She read *The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything* by Linda Williams. After the story reading, children first acted out that story and later made up their own play to present.



Banner's traditional Thanksgiving dinner on November 14 was prepared and served by Trish Steinhilber, Bob and Betty Jackson, Kim and Cole Wiggins, and Chris Crandell from the UU Congregation of Columbia. Before enjoying a complete dinner from the salads to turkey to dessert, everyone shared what they were thankful for and checked of the menu items they wanted. Plate scraps were saved for Trish's free-range chickens and extra food went home with students in reused plastic containers.

December brings Santa's Workshop on December 14. Children "purchase" gifts for family members with "dollars" representing points earned for attendance, promptness,

and good behavior. **We are asking TUUC members for donations of adult gifts because other donors will be providing toys. We will be collecting costume jewelry, candles, dish towels, cologne, lotions, hats and gloves for men, etc. in a special box in the foyer on December 4 and 11.** Questions: Contact Betty Lou Anderson or Lois Hybl.

Occupy Baltimore

While Occupy is leaderless, there are great statements online put out by some of the occupations, and the consistent center has been both a commitment to democratic process in arriving at decisions and a fundamental objection to the egregious and widening economic split between the very wealthy individuals and corporations (1%) in this country and the rest of us, made even worse by the tax loopholes and bailouts.

You should also be aware that there is now a UU blog about Occupy at www.standingonthesideoflove.org, since, after much dialogue, it has been woven into the Standing on the Side of Love campaign. Also, in the DC area, the UU congregations of Fairfax, Arlington, Reston, Rockville, All Souls, and Cedar Lane have now provided two weeks' worth of suppers to the occupiers, one week to the Freedom Plaza group and one week to the McPherson Square group. Further, the UU Service Committee has crafted a letter of support signed by over 4000 UU's (on their site); about 130 UU ministers in the Mass Bay and Clara Barton districts signed another letter of support; and UUA President Rev. Peter Morales has also issued a statement of support found on www.uua.org. There is a lot going on rather quickly.

Donations for Occupy Baltimore

There will be an info table before and after Sunday services on providing donations to the protesters at Occupy Baltimore. The protestors have been demonstrating at Pratt and Light Streets since October and plan on remaining there throughout the winter. Suggested donations include coffee (through sales from the Green Sanctuary Committee), and possibly hot cocoa, tea, food, clothing, and blankets. Donations can be made throughout the coming month, to be delivered the week of December 18.

Habitat for Humanity of the Chesapeake –TUUC

“A world in which everyone has a decent place to live.” <http://habitatchesapeake.org>

Habitat is currently working on several construction projects in Baltimore City in various stages of completion including the 10th Women's Build House in East Baltimore; 75% built by women. That's empowering! Come join us and experience the reward of making a difference in our community. Checkout the Habitat website for information on the activities offered over the winter months and on how to donate.

Construction date Saturday January 7: Sign-up for this volunteer day in Baltimore City by December 18. No skills required and minimum age 16. Contact Sheila Malenski (info in directory).

Women Build House Dedication, Tuesday, December 6

You are invited! We are dedicating our 10th Women Build home on Tuesday, December 6, 11:30 AM at 2412 E. Fairmount Avenue. We'd love for you to join us as we celebrate Sequoia Gaylord achieving her goal of becoming a homeowner and thank our outstanding volunteers and sponsors! You will also have the opportunity to learn more about our 2012 Women Build project. For more information contact Sheila Malenski, TUUC's Habitat coordinator.

DECEMBER 2011 Calendar

Dec 1	Thu	Chalice Circle	7:30 PM
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30 PM
Dec 2	Fri	Men's Breakfast Group	8:30 AM
Dec 3	Sat	ARE - <i>Who is a Messiah?</i>	
		Music Rehearsal	7:30 – 10 PM
Dec 4	Sun	Worship Service	9:30 & 11:15 AM
		Social Action Committee	10:45 AM
		Open Discussion Group	12:30 PM
Dec 5	Mon	Mindful Way Meditation Group	7 PM
Dec 6	Tue	Anita Gregory Book Group	2 PM
		Operations Team	7:30 PM
Dec 7	Wed	Improv Group	7 PM
		Evening Book Group	7:30 PM
Dec 10	Sat	Decorate for Christmas	10 AM – 12 N
		Music Rehearsal	9 AM – 12 N
Dec 11	Sun	Worship Service	9:30 & 11:15 AM
		Green Sanctuary Committee	10:30 AM
		Open Discussion Group	12:30 PM
		Fisher Memorial Service	3 PM
Dec 12	Mon	Mindful Way Meditation Group	7 PM
		Chalice Circle	7:30 PM
Dec 13	Tue	Chalice Circle	12 N
		Board Meeting	7 PM
		Chalice Circle	7:30 PM
Dec 14	Wed	Improv Group	7 PM
Dec 15	Thu	Chalice Circle	7:30 PM
Dec 16	Fri	Men's Breakfast Group	8:30 AM
Dec 17	Sat	Work Party	9 AM – 12 N
		Music Rehearsal	9 AM – 12 N
Dec 18	Sun	Worship Service	9:30 & 11:15 AM
		Social Action Committee	10:45 AM
		Open Discussion Group	12:30 PM
Dec 19	Mon	PFLAG Steering Committee	7 PM
		Mindful Way Meditation Group	7 PM
Dec 21	Wed	Improv Group	7 PM
		Worship Program Committee	7:30 PM
Dec 22	Thu	Choir Rehearsal	7:30 PM
Dec 24	Sat	Christmas Eve Service	5:30 PM
		Christmas Eve Potluck	6:30 PM
Dec 25	Sun	Christmas Worship Service – ONE SERVICE	11:15 AM
		Open Discussion Group	12:30 PM
Dec 26	Mon	HOLIDAY – Church Office Closed	All Day
Dec 27	Tue	PFLAG	7 PM
Dec 28	Wed	Women's Breakfast Group	8:30 AM
		Improv Group	7 PM

See calendar at <http://my.calendars.net/towsonuuc>

TOWSON UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

1710 Dulaney Valley Road
Lutherville, MD 21093-9705

Phone: 410-825-6045

Email: churchoffice@towsonuuc.org

Website: www.towsonuuc.org

Office Hours: Mon - Fri, 10 AM - 3 PM

Sat-Sun: Closed

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Editor: Al Peabody

Submissions for the **Threshold**: send by
Midnight on the third Sunday of the month to:
threshold@towsonuuc.org

Our Minister

Reverend Clare L. Petersberger

revclare@towsonuuc.org

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Sunday Services Council, Tara McIntyre

Our Staff

Youth Religious Exploration Director:

Joyce Duncan

tuudre@towsonuuc.org

Music Director:

Joseph Gascho

music@towsonuuc.org

Church Administrator:

Mickie Grover

churchoffice@towsonuuc.org

Administrative Assistant:

Nancy Hannah

assistant@towsonuuc.org

Bookkeeper:

Mary Kay Baker

bookkeeper@towsonuuc.org

Custodian:

Joseph Ellis