

# THRESHOLD



## Towson Unitarian Universalist Church

A Welcoming Congregation

[www.towsonuuc.org](http://www.towsonuuc.org)

Lutherville, Maryland

January 2009

## JANUARY SERVICES

This month's worship theme is dedicated to acting on religious and moral questions at the start of a new year. - Rev. Clare

### January 4

9:30 and 11:15 AM

### Hymns in a Man's Life

Rev. Mathew McD. McNaught

Music: Ina Allen, piano, at both services



Sorry for the sexist language! I borrowed the title of this sermon from a fascinating essay by D.H. Lawrence who had something very interesting and provocative to say about the emotional importance of the old hymns people learned as children – not because of their theology but their capacity to evoke wonder in a child's mind before dogma intervened. Lawrence invites us to look at the old hymns in a poetic way to help refresh our own memory and imagination, so often dulled by literalism; i.e., religion as the source of poetry, not dogma!



Death Penalty Information Center

January 11, 2009

9:30 and 11:15 AM

### The Death Penalty

Rev. Clare Petersberger

Music: Joseph Gascho, piano at first service; TUUC Choir at second service

This session, the Maryland General Assembly will decide whether to abolish the death penalty. This issue raises many religious questions about the nature of human beings; how we understand good and evil; and the meaning of justice. This morning we explore these religious and moral questions that we might communicate our individual answers to our representatives for their deliberations. The League of Women Voters will offer more information at a table in the foyer after worship.

**January 18, 2009**

**9:30 and 11:15 AM**

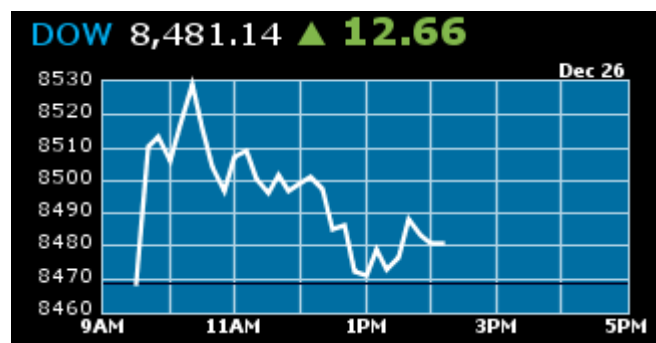
## **The Audacity of Hope**

**Rev. Clare Petersberger, Joyce Duncan, Youth Religious Education Director and the Thomas family**

**Music: Ina Allen, piano at both services**



President-elect Obama wrote a book on "The Audacity of Hope." The phrase comes from a sermon he heard one Sunday about a painting. In this painting, Hannah sits on top of the world, with all its suffering and despair, and plays a harp praising God. How does this image of a transcendent hope speak to your experience? On this Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend, we ponder the meaning of hope and how it informs our lives and our efforts to make the world a better place. In the second service, we will dedicate Keirnan Michael Thomas to the care and nurture of our religious community--- an affirmation of hope for the future!



**January 25, 2009**

**9:30 and 11:15 AM**

## **The Recession: How Ethics Affects Our Choices**

**Rev. Clare Petersberger**

**Music: the TUUC Choir with Joseph Gascho, music director, at both services**

As money becomes scarce, how government spends its money reflects our values. This sermon will look at some practical choices that are being made at a local level. Some of the decisions may surprise you.

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## **CLARE'S COLLOQUOY: CIVIL RIGHTS AND FAITH**

**By Rev. Clare Petersberger**

I recently went to see the movie *Milk* about the rise of the leadership of Harvey Milk and the movement for gay rights he envisioned. I was struck by Sean Penn's acting which conveyed the complexity of the man. At the start of the movie, Harvey Milk invites a stranger in the subway to spend the night. And yet, as the movie unfolds, he makes a commitment to move across the continent with this person to live and work and ultimately to advance the civil rights of all gays and lesbians. The movie reminded me of how far we've come as a society in the past 30 years: from the struggle within the gay and lesbian community of "coming out" to the current state struggle to recognize civil marriage for gays and lesbians.



The decision of President-elect Obama to invite The Rev. Rick Warren, founder of the fourth largest church in the United States, to give the invocation at the inauguration have left some wondering if we've made any progress at all on the issue of civil rights for the GLBT community. Reverend Warren not only does not support civil unions, his 10,000 member Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, CA, does not welcome gays and lesbians. Reverend Warren supported Prop 8 in California. He compared gay marriage to incest and pedophilia.

What would Harvey Milk have said?

He would've addressed the feelings of betrayal, anger, hurt, and fear by those who support civil rights for ALL people. But as one who saw and modeled the need to work with those who held different views, Harvey Milk might have pointed out that in the extension and acceptance of this invitation, both President-elect Obama AND Rev. Rick Warren are reaching across deep divisions in our culture.

Harvey Milk spoke not only about the rights of gays and lesbians, but also about the rights of people with disabilities, the elderly, the poor. So he might have pointed out that Rev. Rick Warren (author of *The Purpose Driven Life*) keeps 10% of his salary and gives away 90% to help the poor, to treat AIDS in Africa, and to steward the environment. Warren's example of a reverse tithe is an extraordinary model of serving something larger than himself.

Finally, as an activist for civil rights, Harvey Milk would've reminded people that while Reverend Warren is giving the invocation, the benediction is being given by The Reverend Joseph Lowrey, an 87-year-old Methodist preacher, who was a leader in the fight for civil rights for African Americans in the 1950's and 60's. Today, Reverend Lowrey advocates for the civil rights of the GLBT community and supports same-sex marriage.

So if the invocation and benediction are bookends to the inauguration, then Rev. Warren offers the place from which we begin as a nation, today. Rev. Lowrey will send us forth with an inclusive vision for the future. Harvey Milk would probably have concluded, "I need to recruit you to continue to work for civil rights for the next generation." This is not only a good message for the start of a new Administration. It is a timeless message for people of faith.

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## BOARD NOTES: GROWTH AND CELEBRATION

By Linda Talley, president

The trustees regularly bring their minds and hearts to bear on behalf of our common life at TUUC. Here are a few highlights from our December meeting:

The first hour of the board meeting was spent with guests Rabbi Geoffrey Basik and Cantor George Henschel from Kol HaLev congregation. Kol HaLev is a reconstructionist Jewish congregation that is seeking a new rental space for its growing congregation. At our January meeting the Board will consider the possibility of hosting Kol HaLev, recognizing that our primary responsibility is to benefit and serve the needs of TUUC members.



Treasurer Paul Konka reviewed Income and expense information for the first five months of the budget year (42% of the budget year). Year to date income was \$152,706 (38% of budgeted); expenses were \$142,126 (35% of budgeted). Pledge payments and the collection plate are currently running behind the budget plan. The Board will continue to monitor TUUC's financial picture and work with the O-Team and staff to develop a contingency plan to address any anticipated shortfalls for this

budget year which ends June 30, 2009. The board asked that we make our quarterly fair share payment to the Joseph Priestley District and the Unitarian Universalist Association as planned. The plan for verifying inactive members' status was reviewed with the board. As a reminder the TUUC bylaws call for active members to support the church, whenever possible, by making a financial contribution of record and volunteering time in service to the church's activities.

President Linda Talley reviewed plans for the Baltimore Washington Growth Initiative with the trustees. Twenty-nine UU congregations in this area had been asked to support a supplemental funding drive to raise money for a media campaign next Fall. Subsequent to the board meeting we learned that the regional media campaign has been postponed given the impact of the current economic situation on area churches' finances. A series of area workshops focused on hospitality and marketing will go forward as planned.

Trustee Anita Cox, who is chairing the new Gifts-Based Ministry initiative at TUUC, gave a presentation to the board. Some exciting groundwork has been laid by the committee and the initiative will be introduced to the congregation in 2009.

The trustees approved submitting nominations in support of the Reverend Peter Morales and the Reverend Laurel Hallman as candidates for the UUA presidency.

The next meeting of the board will be Tuesday, January 13, 7:30 PM. All are welcome.

ALL  
TOGETHER  
NOW  
PLAN TO CELEBRATE YOUR STEWARDSHIP ON  
COMMITMENT SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2009

## OPERATIONS UPDATE: OUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

By Catherine Morris, president-elect

The economic outlook for 2009 will make it a challenging year for many of us personally and as a community, but also presents a unique opportunity to reflect on what is most important to us. Over the next 6 months, the Operations Team will be focused on TUUC's financial health, defining and working on our long-term goals, helping to launch gift-based ministry, and the more mundane but important tasks of reviewing our procedures manual. Here are the highlights of our priorities in December:

**Budget** – The O Team discussed the implications of the larger economy on our members and friends and our 08-09 budget. Like most businesses and organizations, we will be taking a hard look at the opportunities to tighten our belt so we are in a better position if there is an unexpected shortfall in pledge commitments.



**The Annual People-to-People Auction**— We have begun to solicit recommendations for use of our auctions funds. Typically we have used the funds for major building and grounds investments, purchase of new equipment, curriculum, and music. Please forward any ideas for auction funds to one of the council heads before our January meeting.

**Credit Card for TUUC staff** --\_Paul Konka attended our meeting to explain the pros and cons of using a credit card to make purchases for the office, RE and building repairs and maintenance. Paul explained that the Accounting Committee is primarily concerned with maintaining the checks and balances we currently have in place for expenditures. He also pointed out that it is a policy decision that must be referred to the board so the Operations Team will make a recommendation based on what we have learned from talking to other non-profit organizations, the staff and the Accounting Committee.

**Green procurement policies** -- Carel Hedlund, Chair of the Green Sanctuary Committee, attended the meeting to recommend new procurement policies that emphasize the importance of consider the life cycle cost and environmental impact of our purchases and practices. The Operations Team voted to adopt the procurement guidelines which begins with these words: “As a Green Sanctuary congregation, we strive to follow our UU principles and live in a more sustainable manner, consciously lightening our footprint on the Earth and setting an example for others to follow.” Specific guidelines will be followed including using and buying less, using recycled and less toxic products, conserving energy and water, supporting local businesses and investing responsibly.

O-Team meetings are open to everyone the first Tuesday of every month at 7:30 PM. You are invited to our next meeting on January 6<sup>th</sup> in Room 5. Anita Cox is invited to tell us about developing plans for Gift Based Ministry.

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## OUR MUSIC: PAST AND FUTURE

By **Joseph Gascho**, music director

As the New Year approaches, it's time for me to reflect on the past year and make plans for the future. The last few weeks have had a few significant highlights - our November 30 Special Music Service was certainly one, as was the Bald Mountains Band's playing and singing on December 11. It was rewarding for me to put together the music, readings, and my own thoughts and stories about Bach and Thanksgiving. It was fun to see the bluegrass band getting more confident and creative as we put together music to go with John Milton - thanks to **Chris Kiehne** for all the research!



Our second community sing event after church on December 4 was a lot of fun - joined by the instrumental and vocal talents of **Tony Bonta**, **Chris Kiehne** and **Spice Kleinmann**. Also, thanks to **Andree Maslen** for playing cello with me during both services earlier that day. Looking ahead, I'm planning to more community music events - first, a drumming circle in March; and second, a sing-along featuring spirituals and music from the African-American traditions.

On April 5, our spring special music service will feature music from West Africa and drummer **Bob Novak**. I'm still looking for a few more serious drummers to join us for a several workshops to prepare for that service. Several weeks after that, on April 26, the jazz ensemble from the Columbia UU Congregation will join our choir and instrumentalists for a great morning of good music. I'm also still brainstorming about the Arts Sunday on May 24 - so far I've talked to a good number of people, but will be happy to work in more people. **Carol Mason** at the Book Nook has ordered a few copies of the book that are the inspiration for this service - *In the beginning...creativity*, by Gordon Kaufman.

On a personal note, Elena and I are still in the spirit of Advent, eagerly waiting for our baby girl to make her first appearance. If her prenatal activities are any indication, Elena believes she'll be the next Mia Hamm! In my other work in classical music, my ensemble, Harmonious Blacksmith, was just invited to play a concert at the Smithsonian in March - we also have concerts in Boston and Indianapolis this summer. I was also just invited to teach at the Oberlin Conservatory's prestigious baroque institute this summer, which I'm greatly looking forward to.

As always, please feel free to contact me with your ideas and feedback.

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## ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Karen O'Rourke, chair

### ETHICAL EATING: FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

#### **Sponsored by TUUC Green Sanctuary Program for UUA Certification**

**Wednesdays, January 14, 21, 28 and February 4**

**7:30 - 9:00 PM**

**Carol Hedlund and Bill Ward, facilitators**



The 2008 General Assembly of the UUA adopted this issue as one of its Congregational Study/Action Issues.

The Green Sanctuary Committee and Adult Religious Exploration Committee are pleased to present a four

week course on several aspects of this issue. Please join us as we discuss topics and questions such as:

- The American Paradox: A notably unhealthy people obsessed by the idea of eating healthfully
- The Omnivore's Dilemma: A creature that could conceive of eating anything (including, notably, other humans) stands in particular need of ethical rules, manners, and rituals
- Eating as Ritual: We are not only what we eat, but how we eat too.
- Ramifications of Eating: Eating is an agricultural act. It is also an ecological act and a political act
- Vegetarianism: Benefits and limitations
- Organic Foods: The effect on health and the environment.

Religious organizations throughout the world have discussed the production, distribution, and use of food. Some people enjoy many food choices while others remain hungry. The food industry produces wealth, but small farmers and agricultural workers are often poor. Food production and transportation contribute to environmental problems. What can we as individual UU's and as a congregation do to better understand and to foster Ethical Eating.

## THE WORLD WHERE WE LIVE SUNDAY FORUM: WOMB ENVY

**Sunday, January 18**

**Potluck begins at 5 PM, Speaker at 6 PM**

**Speaker: John Nugent / CEO Planned Parenthood of Maryland**

Reproductive freedom is fundamental to a woman's aspirations, education, financial stability and self determination, yet it poses a threat to the status of the entrenched hierarchical order and has become a primary cultural divide in our society. This program will provide a status report of this cultural divide and will review the future challenges of separating sex from childbearing in order to provide women the power to control all other aspects of their lives.

John Nugent is the President/CEO of Planned Parenthood of Maryland and has been a health care administrator for over 35 years. John holds an MA in ethics and a BA in philosophy and has been an adjunct college philosophy instructor. John is Treasurer of the Board of the Washington Area Secular Humanists and is a Certified Humanist Celebrant. He is a member, and program chair, of Baltimore Ethical Culture Society.

### **Upcoming ... The World Where We Live Sunday Forums**

February 22: End of Life Legal Planning: Health Care POAs and Living Wills; Speaker Duncan Kier, Esq

March 22: Our Theological Diversity - Looking at the UUA By Laws Recommended Changes

April 26: Celebrating Earth Day: A Panel Presentation on Earth, Energy and Ecology

## COVENANTS, CONGREGATIONS, CLERGY, AND TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNITIES FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

**Saturday, January 24**

**10 AM to 3 PM**

**Rev. Clare Petersberger**

Last year, we explored the origins on Unitarianism in Europe. Today, we find out what happened "next" in our story of religious freedom. When and how did Unitarianism reach America? Why and how did Universalist congregations begin? Notable Unitarians and Universalists and the texts they and some our congregations created shall help us to explore (quickly!) the evolution, over 350 years, of our free faith tradition in the United States.

## SEEKING SABBATH: FINDING REST IN OUR BUSY LIVES

**One Day Retreat**

**Saturday, February 7**

**8:30 AM – 4:30 PM**

In today's world with its emphasis on success and productivity, we have lost the necessary rhythm of life, the balance between work and rest. Constantly striving we often feel exhausted and deprive in the midst of great abundance. The tradition of Sabbath creates an oasis of sacred time within a life of unceasing labor. Learn how to set aside some special time of renewal, delight, and rest. Sabbath can

have many forms but it is designed to refresh our bodies and minds, restore our creativity and regain our birthright of inner happiness. Retreat includes group time, private time indoors and outdoors, creative time, and a closing ritual. Fees include continental breakfast, refreshments and endless hot drinks, lunch, program materials and speaker fees. The program will be held at Aisling Retreat Center which offers spacious meeting and meditation areas along with many hiking trails for outdoor reflections and meandering . Look for program details in the lounge. Please send your \$50 registration check by January 20 to: Aisling Retreat Center, 4800 Hoffmanville Road, Manchester, MD 21102. Karen O'Rourke is registrar.

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## INNER LIFE COUNCIL

Mimi Marks, Chair

### HERE'S A GOOD NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: JOIN A CHALICE CIRCLE!

Missed out on joining a group in the fall? Started coming to the church recently and want to be part of a group? Or maybe your schedule has recently opened up. Whatever the reason, there is soon an opportunity to sign-up for a Chalice Circle for our second semester (February to May).

Chalice Circles are groups of six to ten participants who meet twice a month, engaging in a combination of worship, fellowship, learning and service. Currently we have groups meeting on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7:30 – 9:00 PM. If those days and times are not convenient, we are open to the possibility of starting another group, so let us know your availability.

Our Chalice Circle coordinators, **Carrie Landfried**, **Dick Scholle** and **Robin Sinn**, will be in the lounge with information and sign-up sheets after the worship services on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. Groups meet the first and third week of the month beginning the week of February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

If you have any questions, please contact us at [chalicecircles@towsonuuc.org](mailto:chalicecircles@towsonuuc.org).

### BOOK NOOK SALES SOAR

December's Book Sales were a great success -- 'Tots to Teens' made \$334 and 'Nearly New' made \$287. In addition, Solstice Sunday made \$75. This brings our total balance for the church year so far to \$1,355, \$301 more than the same time last year. Recession? Bah, Humbug - ain't no recession at the Nook! A happy customer described us as 'the best little bookstore in Baltimore'. We are only as good as the generosity of our congregation in donating, re-gifting, and buying high quality books, and in volunteering time to help out.

Thank you all -- generous 2008 donors and customers, thank you, wonderful 2008 volunteers **Carrie Landfried**, **Francie Weeks**, **Marian Michel**, **Stephanie Heard**, **Betsy Mackey**, **Kristie Saltsman**, and **Kim Marley**. Thank you splendid '08 alums **Alie Weisko** and **Marion Liebson**, and a very special thank you to uber-volunteer, **Cindy Lewis!**

Our target is to be able to give back a donation of \$2,000 by June 2009 to be divided between TUUC's General Fund and Social Action. See you next year and Happy Holidays from the Nook!

## DINNERS AT HOME - SATURDAY, JANUARY 10

You are invited to enjoy the companionship of fellow church members while sharing delicious food in a member's home on Saturday, January 10. There will be several dinners for groups of five to twelve people in different homes. In the spring there will be another DINNERS AT HOME with a different blend of hosts and guests. It's a splendid opportunity to spend an evening getting to know other TUUCers while enjoying dinner in the relaxed setting of someone's home. To sign up, email [dinnersathome@tuuc.org](mailto:dinnersathome@tuuc.org) or call Linda Prause at her number in the directory or sign up in December on the poster in the lobby. Let her know if you want to host and how many guests you can accommodate or if you want to be a guest. The deadline to sign up is Sunday, January 4. The host provides the setting, beverages, and bread. Guests bring the food!

## THANKSGIVING DINNER AT THE WARDS' HOME

Several members and friends without family plans for Thanksgiving dinner gathered at Bill and Salli Ward's home for a turkey dinner and all the trimmings on Thanksgiving Day. Many thanks to the Wards for opening their home and being such gracious hosts and to Murray Friend for covering the cost of a Graul's cooked turkey and stuffing.

## NOVEMBER 9 VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION SUNDAY

Volunteer Recognition Sundays, begun at TUUC in 2003, were created to acknowledge the tremendous importance of the contributions made by our volunteers. On November 9th, the first of three scheduled Volunteer Recognition Sundays scheduled for this church year took place. The focus for this first service was on Inner Life, Adult RE and the Personnel Committee. The following people were recognized for the work they have done and continue to do to keep our church alive and vital. A donation of \$150 has been given in their names to support our Social Action projects.

**Adult Religious Education Committee 2007 - 2008:** Bill Reinke – chair; Jay Hilgartner; Joan Kolobielski; Steve Maslin; Carol Mason; Len Proctor.

**Adult Religious Education Committee 2008 - 2009:** Karen O'Rourke – chair; Carol Mason; Bobbi Pehr; Peter Talley.

**Bookstore:** Carol Mason – chair; Cindy Lewis; Stephanie Heard; Linda Hinton; Marian Michel; Carrie Langfried; Sue Wetzel.

**Historian:** Jay Cherry.

**Buddhist Fellowship Meditation:** Debra Haverson.

**Caring Committee:** Helen Barshay; Eleanor Kaufman; Joan Kolobielski; Dawn Murr; Rhoda Oakley; Karin Symonds; Bette Thomson; Norma Struckhoff; Sue Walker; Joe Whitehill.

**Chalice Circles Facilitators:** Joan Kolobielski; Carrie Landfried; Dick Scholle; Robin Sinn; Peter Talley.

**Dinners at Home:** Linda Prause.

**Friday Concerts:** Tish Michael – chair; Elizabeth Glassman; Spice Kleinman; Joan Kolobielski; Mike Robinson; Herb Shankroff; Barbara Stern; Carol Watkins; Joe Whitehall; David Wright.

**Gift Based Ministry:** Anita Cox; Anne McCall; Laurie Meister.

**International Arts Coalition:** Marianna Mujica; Angela Castillo-Epps.

**Interweave Committee:** Dan Everitt; Nancy Hannah; Ansley Hamel; Lois Hybl; Michael Omelda; Bill Reichel; Mona Scott; Marilyn Thorn.

**Newcomer Committee:** Marilyn Maze - chair; Aynsley Hamel; Jane Selewach; Judy Cohen; George and Joan Harrison; Peter Liveright; Mimi Marks; Laurie Meister; Marcia Reinke; Sue Royer; Herb and Sue Shankroff; Kay Terry; Sue Walker; Susan Woolhiser; Sue Wetzel.

**Personnel Committee:** Marilyn Maze - chair; Rick Bader; Peter Liveright; Betsy Mackey; Charlie Reuland.

## INTERGENERATIONAL ARTS COALITION PERFORMS FIRST PRODUCTION

On Saturday evening, December 20th, the IAC performed a Winter Solstice ceremony for the community, followed by a Winter Solstice service the next morning. IAC leaders **Marianna Mujica** and **Angela Castillo-Epps** are grateful to the Daughters of the Meadow Coven and High Priestesses Rev. Kaylin Keith and Rev. Linda Shaw for sharing their traditions with the group. Other members of the IAC involved in the production were **Kirstie Saltsman, Nina & Tea Lorsch; Naomi & Robin Sinn; Justine Foote; Zinnia & Duane Epps; Joyce Hesselberth & Madison, Jacob & Emma Plunkert; Connie Anderson; Paul, Robin & Audrey Azzam; Joyce Duncan & EBalkoski;** and **Seth Herzog**. The meeting room was filled Sunday morning with an enthusiastic audience eager to participate in these joyous and thoughtful ancient traditions.

## LAUGHTER YOGA GROUP FORMING AT TUUC

Laughter Yoga is a revolutionary idea – simple and profound. An exercise routine, it is fast sweeping the world and is a complete wellbeing workout. It is the brainchild of Dr. Madan Kataria, an Indian physician from Mumbai who started the first laughter club in 1995 with just 5 people. Today, it has become a worldwide phenomenon with more than 6000 social laughter clubs in 60 countries.

Laughter Yoga combines unconditional laughter with yogic breathing (Pranayama). Anyone can laugh for no reason, without relying on humor, jokes or comedy. The concept of Laughter Yoga is based on a scientific fact that the body cannot differentiate between fake and real laughter. One gets the same physiological and psychological benefits. The Laughter Yoga Club will be meeting on January 4, 11, 18 and 25 at 2 PM. People should plan on an hour and wear comfortable clothing. Any questions, please contact the church office.

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## OUTREACH COUNCIL

**Bill & Salli Ward, co-chairs**

The TUUC Community has been very generous with our various "giving projects" in the months of November and December. We wish to thank everyone for their tremendous efforts.

**Banner Reading Club** volunteers are so grateful to TUUC donors of gifts for students to "buy" for their families using points earned for attendance and good behavior. With contributions from TUUC, First Unitarian Church, and the Church of the Resurrection (on the grounds of the Banner Community Corporation), there were plenty of gifts of all kinds for Santa's Workshop on December 3. After snacks of cider and cookies, the "shopping" and wrapping began. Lois Hybl had intended to take a picture of the gift tables and the kids wrapping gifts, but volunteers were frantically setting up and helping with gift-wrapping the whole time. Leftover gifts were given to the Southeastern District Police for their distribution to needy families. Looking back, we add our thanks to Bob, Cole, Chris, and Trish from the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia for the delicious November 19 Thanksgiving dinner they cooked for the students.

**Assistance Center of Towson Churches (ACTC)** was able to distribute 2300 Thanksgiving Baskets. TUUC gave 53. Thanks for all the food donated to ACTC in December, our assigned month to stock the shelves. This year the supply of food has been at its lowest. Requests for food have risen sharply, reflecting the current economy. Because the requests for food have increased so dramatically in the past year. Please continue to fill our ACTC basket every Sunday, the need is there.

There were **64 casseroles for Our Daily Bread** delivered on November 30th. TUUC met our goal of donating at least 60 every month there is a 5th Saturday. Please return to your kitchen as January has 5 Saturdays. Casseroles of our traditional Texas Hash, a vegetarian option or a bought Mac & Cheese party size from Stouffers are due at TUUC by 8:30 AM on Saturday January 30.

**Alternative Gift Cards** have been a popular option for the TUUC community who want to support our Social Action Projects with a donation in the name of a loved one. This gift giving option will continue into 2009. Please consider this gift choice for birthdays, anniversaries, Valentine's Day, or any other occasion. Contact the Social Action Committee for a card to honor someone special.

**Earl's Place Adopt a Resident & Stocking Stuffing Collection** was a fabulous success. Many of the residents of Earl's Place had a happy holiday because of the generosity of many people from TUUC. Men got gifts from their wish lists and a full stocking of items that make life easier.

**UUSC Guest At Our Table Collection and UUSC Christmas Card sales** were very successful due to TUUC. Social Action will take place on a global scale because of the number of people who gave to support the causes. The needs are so great worldwide.

**Mitten donations at service on December 20 and the Special Collections at the Christmas Eve Services** were very much appreciated as our community reaches out to make life better for those who don't have as much as we do. Many of us are very blessed with the ability to share with others.

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## GIFTS BASED MINISTRY

By Anne McCall

The GBM Committee is up, running and eager to engage your help to implement a vision of Gifts Based Ministry at TUUC. Representatives from the GBM committee will be meeting with groups throughout the church in early 2009. Look for GBM presentations to the Board, the Operations Team, the Congregational Meeting, and many other programs and committees.

So what is Gifts Based Ministry? Gifts Based Ministry occurs whenever a person uncovers his or her unique and precious gifts of temperament, ability and calling, and then uses those gifts in acts of service or ministry. When ministry is truly gifts-based, there is a superb fit between the person and the ministry undertaken. Supported by loving community, individuals see their inherent gifts flourish in valued acts of service.

And why do we need a Gifts Based Ministry Committee? The GBM Committee exists to help individuals discern their gifts, and then match their gifts to opportunities for personal growth and service. In addition, the GBM Committee exists to help TUUC's many programs and committees provide excellent training and support to members who serve.

For more information or to get involved now contact anyone on the GBM Committee -- **Anita Cox (chair), Laurie Meister or Anne McCall.**

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## STAFF SNAPSHOT: NANCY HANNAH, TUUC ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

by Linda Talley, president

*This article is the third in a series of staff profiles. I thought you might like to know a little bit more about the dedicated and able folks who serve our congregation.*

Only one member of our church staff can lay claim to 39 years of membership at TUUC – Nancy Hannah. Most of us would recognize Nancy as an ever present member of the TUUC choir's soprano section but since 2006 she has also been working part-time in the church office as a member of the administrative team that keeps the “business” aspects of TUUC's operations on track.

Nancy was raised in Monroe, Ohio, a small town in the southwest corner of the state. After graduation from Miami (OH) University with a bachelor's degree in education, she “went West”, joining her husband-to-be in Denver, Colorado and becoming a member of First Unitarian Church.

1969, when her husband's new job with Westinghouse brought them to the Baltimore area she was welcomed to TUUC by long-time member Sharon Hewitt and has been here ever since. Ensuing years saw the birth of her son Matthew, a two year stay in Iran where she taught in the American School, a divorce and 25 years of teaching mathematics at North Harford High School.

When Nancy retired from teaching in 2004 she and her partner Lea bought an old house in the greater Lauraville area and settled in to city life.

Nancy's main tasks each week are the Weekly News and Order of Service. After that, it's on to Threshold copies, Gallery Unicorn labels, and any and all office support tasks that flow over from church administrator Mona Scott's desk. When asked: what is the most rewarding aspect of your work for TUUC, Nancy was quick to say it is being part of the administrative team with Mona (Scott) and Martha (Clasby). She finds satisfaction in playing her part in the running of the church, helping to make it all work.

Nancy's passion is singing. Starting off as an alto in her junior high vocal trio and singing with various church choirs throughout her growing-up years, it wasn't until Nancy was teaching at North Harford High that she discovered her soprano voice, a voice that has graced TUUC's space for many years. Nancy also sings with the Handel Choir of Baltimore.

Nancy gives generously of her gifts, vocal and otherwise, to sustaining the health of our vital congregation. Brava Nancy. Thanks for jobs well done.



## UPCOMING EVENTS AT TUUC

### MEMBERS ART SHOW

Calling all TUUC artists! The annual Member's Art Show will be Jan. 11th through Feb. 8th. There will be a reception on Jan. 11th, 12:30 -2, with light refreshments. All artwork must be submitted by January 6th. This exhibit is for the adults only. The annual YRE art exhibition will be held Mar. 29th through Apr. 26th. If you have any questions, please contact Dawn Murr or Gail Ogin.

### MUSIC IN THE GREAT HALL

The wonderful chamber music series, Music in the Great Hall, presents pianist Michael Berkovsky on Sunday, January 25 at 3 PM. It is their annual presentation of the latest Yale Gordon/Peabody Competition winner. Canadian-Israeli pianist Michael Berkovsky made his New York debut at Avery Fisher Hall after winning Juilliard's concerto competition. He has won numerous awards, including the Russian Music Competition, IBLA Grand Prize, Toronto Music Competition, Jacob Flier International Competition, and has performed under the baton of Vladimir Feltsman and Stefan Sanderling.



### EVENING BOOK GROUP

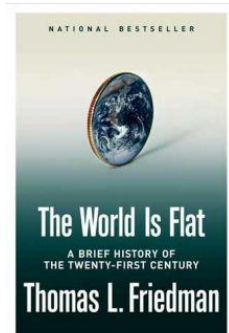
On Wednesday, January 7 at 7:30 PM we will discuss *The Complete Persepolis*, a graphic novel by Marjane Satrapi. As *Time* wrote, "a memoir of growing up as a girl in revolutionary Iran, *Persepolis* provides a unique glimpse into a nearly unknown and unreachable way of life... that Satrapi chose to tell her remarkable story as a gorgeous comic book makes it totally unique and indispensable." All are welcome! Please call **Mike Robinson** at number in directory if you have any questions.

### ANITA GREGORY BOOK GROUP

Join us on Tuesday, January 5, at 2 PM to discuss *Hot, Flat and Crowded* by Tom Friedman.

About our future.

Everyone is welcome!



## FRIDAY NIGHT CONCERT – JANUARY 30



**Klezzazz** It's dancing time again as you enjoy this raucously wonderful seven piece band playing Klezmer music from Eastern Europe combined with modern jazz. They've evolved from an informal group at the Bolton Street Synagogue jamming together for dances, holidays and family events, to a professional ensemble that has performed at many venues in the Baltimore-

Washington area including the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Washington Jewish Arts Festival and Baltimore's Creative Alliance. Come enjoy this infectious music as these musicians lay down those funky rhythms.

[www.klezzazz.com](http://www.klezzazz.com)

Potluck dinner at 7 PM, concert at 7:30 PM, \$15 donation suggested. Bring a dish to share and TUUC will provide sodas and coffee.

Please make a reservation by contacting **Tish Michel** at [fridayconcerts@towsonuuc.org](mailto:fridayconcerts@towsonuuc.org) or call the Church office at 410.825.6045.

## WIDER CONNECTIONS

### UU NIAGARA EXPERIENCE

Hear the roar! Feel the mist See the mighty Falls! July 19 - 22, 2009

Come experience the wonder of Niagara Falls including some great educational opportunities while being taken care of like royalty. The UU Church of Niagara is conducting a four day UU Niagara Experience which is a lifetime opportunity to encounter the Falls up close from every perspective, even safely riding beneath a tethered balloon. Spend four days with us exploring the rich historical and natural wonders around the Falls. For more information: [www.uunex.net](http://www.uunex.net) , [uunex@yahoo.com](mailto:uunex@yahoo.com) (716) 745-7149 or (716) 791-4453.

### DEATH PENALTY IN MARYLAND

The 2008 legislature specified that a special committee be formed this year to study the issue of capital punishment and report back in December 2008. After holding five public hearings, the committee voted 15 to 7 to abolish the death penalty in Maryland and has recently released their report. The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry (UULM) of Maryland at their annual meeting discussed the issue and voted to support legislation abolishing the death penalty. Charlie Culbertson is active on this issue for UULM and for our Social Action Committee. Contact him for further information and/or to get involved and take action. Our minister, Clare Petersberger, is giving a sermon on this issue January 11.

# JANUARY 2009 CALENDAR

[HTTP://MY.CALENDARS.NET/TOWSONUUC](http://my.calendars.net/towsonuuc)

January 2	Friday	Men's Breakfast Group 8:30 AM Caring Committee 10 AM
January 4	Sunday	Social Action Committee 10:30 AM Public Speaking Class 1:15 PM Laughter Yoga 2 PM
January 5	Monday	Meditation Group 7:15 PM Chalice Circle 7:30 PM
January 6	Tuesday	Anita Gregory Book Group 2 PM Operations Team Meeting 7:30 PM BCCC 7 PM Chalice Circle 7:30 PM
January 7	Wednesday	Improv Group 7 PM ARE Committee Meeting 7 PM Evening Book Group 7:30 PM
January 8	Thursday	Chalice Circle 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM YRE Committee Meeting 7:30 PM
January 10	Saturday	Dinners at Home
January 11	Sunday	Gallery Unicorn Reception 2 PM Laughter Yoga 2 PM
January 12	Monday	Meditation Group 7:15 PM
January 13	Tuesday	Board Meeting 7:30 PM
January 14	Wednesday	Ethical Eating Course 7 PM
January 15	Thursday	Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM
January 16	Friday	Men's Breakfast Group 8:30 AM
January 18	Sunday	Social Action Committee 10:30 AM Public Speaking Class 1:15 PM Laughter Yoga 2 PM ARE Potluck & Class 5 PM
January 19	Monday	Chalice Circle 7:30 PM
January 20	Tuesday	Chalice Circle 7:30 PM
January 21	Wednesday	Improv Group 7 PM Worship Program Assoc. Mtg. 7:30 PM Ethical Eating Course 7 PM
January 22	Thursday	Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM Chalice Circle 7:30 PM
January 23	Saturday	ARE Class 10 AM
January 25	Sunday	MIGH 3 PM
January 26	Monday	Meditation Group 7:15 PM
January 28	Wednesday	Women's Breakfast Group 8:30 AM Ethical Eating Course 7 PM
January 29	Thursday	Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM
January 30	Friday	TUUC House Concert

## Our Minister

Reverend Clare L. Petersberger  
[revclare@towsonuuc.org](mailto:revclare@towsonuuc.org)

## Our Leadership

Board of Trustees:

President, Linda Talley  
President-Elect, Catherine Morris  
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Trustees: Anita Cox, Mary Ellen Haisfield-Wolfe  
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Operations Team:

President-Elect, Catherine Morris  
Communications Council, Susan Seim  
Finance Council, Jason Braspennickx  
House and Grounds Council, John Venables  
Inner Life Council, Mimi Marks  
Outreach Council, Bill & Salli Ward  
Religious Education Council,  
Melissa Reuland  
Sunday Services Council, Mike Robinson

## Our Staff

Youth Religious Exploration Director:  
Joyce Duncan  
[tuucdre@towsonuuc.org](mailto:tuucdre@towsonuuc.org)

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Pianist:

Ina Allen  
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Custodian:

Joseph Ellis

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Website: [www.towsonuuc.org](http://www.towsonuuc.org)

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM

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