



Windmill

Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

To affirm and promote
the inherent worth
and dignity
of every person

MARCH 1, 2008

Interim Minister's Column

By The Reverend Don Vaughn-Foerster



As the saying goes, money is the "root of all evil," or at least, the love of money is. But, whether we love it or not, we still have to talk about it. Especially, when it comes time for the annual pledge drive, we must. Money, after all, is the root that feeds any religious trunk that branches out into the world to spread its leaves of faith. It follows that, if money is the root of evil, it is also the root of much good. Without money, it is hard to get things done in this very practical world. The real issue is not money itself, but how money is used.

How does this relate to a free faith? How does it relate to our liberal religion— to MVUC? In a basic way, it is a key to how realistic and worldly we are about our religion. A most interesting comparison can be made between fundamentalists and religious liberals. Fundamentalists, as we all know, are exceedingly unworldly and supernaturally oriented in their faith—until it comes to money. Then, they are hard-nosed, up-front, matter-of-fact, and exceedingly worldly. Religious liberals, on the other hand, are exceedingly worldly and pragmatic about their faith—until it comes to money. Then, they often become unworldly and exceedingly faith-centered—acting as if somehow Heaven or the Universe will pay the bills or the bills will go away if they are just ignored.

My justification for saying this is an observation under how to create a church budget in the *UU Congregational Handbook*. The Handbook reported a survey published in *Newsweek* a few years back that showed that Unitarian Universalists had the highest average incomes of twenty major denominations. However, the average UU pledge was the lowest of all groups studied. Apparently, when it comes actually to giving money to one's religious organization, Unitarian Universalists, as a group, suddenly become obsessed by faith in things not seen. It's as if fundamentalist theology is transmogrified into liberal behavior.

So, the question is just how "unworldly" are the members of MVUC when it comes actually to supporting their religion at pledge time? This is one of the few times when urging a practical attitude in a UU group is not "preaching to the choir" but a challenge to make faith practical.

—Don Vaughn-Foerster

Program Highlights

Good Companions

11:45 am–12:45 pm: BYO Lunch
12:45–1:45 pm: Speaker
Tues, Mar 11—**Mary-Carroll Potter**
Tues, Mar 25—**Dale Peebles**
and **Al Searle**
Hollin Hall

Stewardship Appreciation Dinner

Sat, Mar 15, 5:00–8:00 pm
Entertainment Included
Meeting House

Annual Used Book and Art Sale

Thur, Mar 20, 1:00–5:00 pm
Fri–Sat, Mar 21–22,
10:00 am–3:00 pm
Mansion and Meeting House

Partner Church Dinner

Sat, Mar 29, 5:30 pm
Chapel



**MOUNT VERNON
UNITARIAN CHURCH**

INTERIM MINISTER

The Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster

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Mark Your Calendar!

Good Companions

11:45 am–12:45 pm: BYO Lunch

12:45–1:45 pm: Speaker

Hollin Hall

Tuesday March 11—Mary-Carroll Potter, President of Mount Vernon At Home. We will discuss a new local nonprofit organization. It has the specific purpose of helping seniors stay in their own home. This would avoid nursing homes, living with adult children or moving to assisted living facilities. Your opinion about this venture is encouraged.

Tuesday March 25—Dale Peebles and Al Searle: *How We Didn't Go to Viet Nam*. Two freethinkers tell their tales from early life through the 1960s.

Stewardship Appreciation Dinner

Saturday, March 15, 5:00-8:00 PM

Meeting House

Fun for All Ages!—The Stewardship Appreciation Dinner is an opportunity for the whole congregation—from the youngest eager beavers in RE to our earliest charter members—to celebrate our successes in building our hill of dreams and in dreaming of what yet can be. Beverages and an entree (roast chicken) will be provided. Bring a side dish, salad, or dessert to share. Appetizers begin at 5:00. Dinner will begin at 5:30 and entertainment will follow. (See page 5.)

Annual Used Book and Art Sale

March 20, 1:00–5:00 pm

March 21–22, 10:00 am–3:00 pm

Mansion and Meeting House

Your donations are needed! (See page 5.)

Partner Church Dinner

Saturday, March 29 5:30 p.m. in the Chapel

Adults, \$20; Children Five and Under, \$10

The menu will feature Hungarian and Indian food to celebrate our partners. Entertainment will be provided by the West Potomac Colonial Singers, featuring MVUC youth members Ilene Gillispie and James Dressing. (See page 8.)

MVUC sends its sincerest appreciation and thanks to the Anonymous Donor(s) who so kindly provided a new and much-needed refrigerator for the Commons.

Religious Education

By **Meagan Henry**, Director of Religious Education (DRE)

The seventh Principle is so much more than an environmental idea. It is nothing less than a statement on the Divine. And in that statement lies a profound hope for the healing of our world.—Forrest Gilmore

Dear Friends,

In the Children's Religious Education program, we are finishing our Jewish and Christian Heritage curriculum this month. On March 30 we begin the Green Hill Project (GHP) with a focus on the practical application of our seventh Principle: respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. This year's version of the GHP includes activities to support the Natural Playground Project, including the construction of a bamboo and cobb playhouse. In addition, the children will plant an RE vegetable garden, gain insight in to the benefits of eating locally grown food, learn how to maintain a compost pile, explore ways to reduce our use of resources, and investigate animal life on the hill. A dedicated team of volunteers created the plan and lessons, and we still have openings for adult assistants. There is a poster in the Commons if you would like to sign up. I invite you to join us in this adventure!

In our **Adult Religious Education Program**, we have two new classes beginning in the Spring semester:

Breathe, Walk, Wash the Dishes: Five Thursday evening workshops for Women led by **The Rev. Betty Jo Middleton** on Thursdays, 7:00–9:00 pm, March 27, April 3, 10, 17, & 24. You don't have to practice traditional disciplines of meditation or prayer to have a rich, full spiritual life (even though you may not call it that). Identify practices that nourish your spirit and consider ways to further develop your own everyday spirituality. We will talk and listen, be silent together, write or draw, and work with other materials. If you find that needlework, knitting, or, say, whittling, helps you to focus, you are invited to bring your works in progress with you. On April 3, you are invited to bring a small, special object, and on April 10, a poem or other reading to share. (You will take these home with you.) The Reverend Betty Jo Middleton is a long-time member of MVUC and was our first Minister of Religious Education (1984-1990). She has created religious education materials for all ages.

Spirit of Life—Nine Wednesday evening workshops led by **George Ball** and **Meagan Henry**, 7:30–8:30 pm, April 2–May 28. The *Spirit of Life* workshops offer participants space, time, and community to explore their Unitarian Universalist spirituality. Each focuses on a different aspect of the spiritual life, framed by the lyrics of **Carolyn McDade's** song *Spirit of Life*. Like the song, the workshops are designed to be welcoming to people of many spiritual sensibilities and theological persuasions. Attend one, two, or all of the workshops as your schedule permits. ~ **Meagan Henry**

March Children and Youth RE Class Schedule:

Preschool–Chalice Children

(Meets after For All Ages of 9:30 service in the Carriage House, Joseph Priestley Room.)

3/9 Passover
3/16 Easter
3/23 Intergenerational Easter Service
3/30 Teddy Bears: Friendship

K–1st Grade

(Meets after For All Ages of both services in the Carriage House, Thoreau Room.)

2nd–3rd Grade

(Meets after For All Ages of both services in the Carriage House, Children's Chapel.)

4th–5th Grade (Meets after For All Ages of both services in Hollin Hall, Morning Room.)

- *Our Jewish and Christian Heritage* -

3/9 Purim Carnival
3/16 Palm Sunday/The Last Seder
3/23 Intergenerational Easter Service
3/30 Green Hill Project Begins

Jr. High (6th–8th Grade)–Compass Points

(Meets only during 11:15 service in Hollin Hall, Fireplace Room)

3/9 Purim Carnival
3/16 Thinkers & Doers Transcendental Mystery Dinner
3/23 Intergenerational Easter Service
3/30 Universalism: What Are U Good For?

High School Topic-Based Discussion Class

(Meets 10:00–11:00 am, YRUU Room)

3/2 Gun Control, Part 2
3/9 & 3/30 Discussion Topic TBD

YRUU (Young Religious UUs) (9th-12th Grade)

(Meets during 11:15 service in the Carriage House, YRUU room.)

Coming of Age Class for 8th–9th Grade

(Meets Sundays, 4:00–6:00 pm, Hollin Hall, 1st floor)

High School Our Whole Lives Class

(Meets Sundays, 4:00 – 6:00 pm, Carriage House, 2nd floor)

Please check the RE page of the MVUC website for updates!
(www.mvuc.org)

Candy Donations for MVUC's Easter Egg Hunt Needed

Wrapped candy will be accepted in the box in the Commons through 9:30 am Easter Sunday. The hunt is between services on Easter morning, Sunday, March 23.

There's Music in the Air at MVUC!

Now is your chance to be a part of it with no ongoing, regular commitment required. Choir rehearsals are in full swing for ALL ages, so come join us!

Adult Choir meets on Wednesdays from 7:30–9:00 pm (contact **Melodie Feather** at music@mvuc.org, or ext 107 at the church.

Voices of Youth (6th grade and above) meets most Sundays from 12:45–2:00 pm.

Kids Choir (K–5th grade) is now meeting on Sundays from 2:00–2:30 pm and on Fellowship Wednesdays (3rd Wednesday of each month) from 6:45–7:15 pm. Contact **Angel Collins** for the youth vocal programs at: 703-341-6772 or kmadbrophy@msn.com.

Opportunities for voices of ALL ages exist, so please read the following details carefully to see if you or a family member might be able to join us in song for any or all of the following special occasions:

Easter Sunday, March 23—Lend your voices to the Intergenerational Easter services. All choirs will be singing alone and together to help celebrate this day!

Sunday, May 4—This is the annual Music Sunday for which the **Adult Choir** prepares special music.

Sunday, May 18—The **Voices of Youth** and the **Kids Choir** will be singing for the RE Service presented on this day.

Sunday, June 1—The **Voices of Youth** will participate in the service presented by the Coming of Age RE Class on this day.

Angel and I hope to hear from you soon!

Blessings, **Melodie Feather**

Interested in a Forming a New Book Club?

Are you interested in reading and discussing books in a friendly group setting? Then please contact **Louise Werner-Rhoades** to get started. Plan to come with ideas about what books you would like to discuss—fiction and non-fiction—and any other thoughts you have on the topic, and whether you prefer a weekend day or an evening. Please contact Louise at 703-619-1369 or louron13@cox.net to let her know you are interested and to learn the initial meeting date.

Retrospective on *Beyond Categorical Thinking*

There was quite a remarkable event in our sanctuary the afternoon of November 11. Though the declared motivation for the *Beyond Categorical Thinking* workshop was to support our ongoing effort to select our next settled minister, I found some very personal, not to mention powerful, lessons in this wonderful program. For example:

- There are literally thousands of categories each of us can be judged by. Every physical characteristic, every personality trait, every experience, every piece of knowledge which any of us has accumulated can be used to divide ourselves into categories. “Those over six feet tall, move to that side of the room, and everyone six feet tall or less, move to the other side.” If not our height, it could be our life philosophy, our preferences in literature, the nationality of our parents, our political party ... the list is probably literally endless.

- A delightful irony in the fact that there are so, so many ways to filter ourselves into different groups, is that each of us must then share many characteristics with every other individual on this earth. The list of categories I share with one person may be different from the list of categories I share with any other, but I can be certain that I am going to share a great many categories with each other person.

- We don't even have to know another person well to be able to come up with an enormous list of categories we have in common. I suggest you try this as a little exercise. Think of a person you know of, but do not know except at the most casual level. List everything you have in common with that person. Start with physical characteristics, for example, you are both human beings. You both have two eyes. You both have prominent Adam's apples. Then go to geography – you both live in Northern Virginia. In the area of activities, you both attend the same church. Both of you drive cars. And so on, and so on. You will literally fill pages within a few minutes. And that is for someone you do NOT know well!

- Against this limitless list of possible categories, and the smaller but still enormous number of categories each of us shares with each other specific individual, the categories we tend to use to distinguish between “us” and “them” are very, very few, and from my perspective almost entirely arbitrary. How odd it is to pick one difference, like skin color, and act like it is somehow so important that we would deny ourselves rela-

Continued on Page 7, Membership Development

Activities On and Off the Hill

Stewardship Appreciation Dinner Saturday, March 15, 5:00-8:00 PM Meeting House

Fun for All Ages

We're kicking off our annual stewardship campaign with a Stewardship Appreciation Dinner this year rather than calling it our "Fellowship Dinner." What's the difference? One answer is that we've started calling our third Wednesday night gatherings Fellowship Dinners, so we needed a new name for this event. A better answer is that "stewardship" stresses our sense of mission (see accompanying article on the Stewardship Campaign).

The Stewardship Appreciation Dinner is an opportunity for the whole congregation—from the youngest eager beavers in RE to our earliest charter members—to celebrate our successes in building our hill of dreams and in dreaming of what yet can be. As Rev. Don points out in an accompanying article, our dreams require a practical foundation, so we also hope the dinner will ease us all, ever so lightly, into the spirit of stewardship. Music and mischief will prevail.

Please join us for dinner and entertainment for all ages. Beverages and an entree (roast chicken) will be provided. Bring a side dish, salad, or dessert to share. Appetizers begin at 5:00 pm. Dinner will begin at 5:30 pm, and the entertainment will follow. RSVP to **Wendy Burns** (wdburns@erols.com or 703-780-3204), or sign up in the Commons on the next few Sundays. If you require nursery care during the entertainment, please let Wendy know that, also.

We Are All Stewards

We come together as a congregation for two fundamental reasons. First, we value support from the congregation in our spiritual and personal journeys. Second, perhaps more importantly, we value the opportunity to support others on their similar journeys. This sense of mission, of building value within the congregation through our inputs of time, talent, and treasure, is what we mean by stewardship. We are all stewards to each other.

Stewardship is worth talking about. We ask each member and friend of the congregation to set aside 45 minutes or so, within a week or two after the March 15 Stewardship Appreciation Dinner, to sit down with a visiting steward for a conversation about our dreams for MVUC and our sense of mission. During

this conversation, we'd like you to consider a stewardship commitment for the coming year—a specific financial commitment and perhaps a mental resolution regarding your commitment of time and talent as well.

If you are willing to hold several such conversations, it's not too late to offer to serve as a visiting steward. All of us who have served in that role have found it a richly rewarding experience—an opportunity to connect personally with other members of the congregation. We have no shortage of interesting people with whom to connect. For more information, contact **Al Robbert** at aarobbert@comcast.net or 703-299-9892.

Annual Used Book and Art Sale March 20, 21, 22 Mansion and Meeting House

Wanted! Your unwanted art objects, paintings, frames and used books are needed to sell at the Used Book and Art sale. Profits from the sale benefit the operating budget of the church. Donations may be left in the Used Book Kiosk in the parking lot at any time or in the kitchen of Hollin Hall. Donate early! We are not accepting magazines, records or encyclopedias. Discount coupons for the sale will be on the credenza in the Commons. To volunteer to serve as a cashier, contact **Dotty Ann McClelland**, 703-768-9223. To help set up or clean up, contact **Joan Wamsley**, 703-751-6086.

News from the Ministerial Search Committee (MSC)

We've spent the past two months bringing our top three choices for ministerial candidates here for interviews. It's been exciting and rewarding to meet these very qualified people. In March we will make our choice by consensus of the committee and make arrangements for Candidating Week in April. The Ministerial Candidate will be here for two Sundays and the week in between. This is when the congregation and staff will have the opportunity to meet the candidate, ask questions, share dreams, etc. After the second Sunday service, we will have a scheduled congregational meeting to vote on calling the candidate as our new Settled Minister. According to the MVUC by-laws, you have to be a member at the time a congregational meeting is called—generally, at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting in order to vote. If we are going to be voting for a candidate in April, it would be important to be a member by mid-March.

Your MSC: **Marty Bredeck, Omran Hasan, Jane Nelson, Pam Tinker, Sandy Peterson, Vince Patton and Kathi McNeil**

MVUC Turns Out to Help Solve Global Climate Change

On January 27, more than 60 members and friends of MVUC participated in the church's first intergenerational Climate Change meeting, shared fellowship and a potluck dinner, listened to presentations and updates, and planned MVUC's next steps to address Earth's most urgent issue—climate change. MVUC has already made substantial progress in addressing our energy audit and in becoming certified as a Green Sanctuary. Yet rigorous, ongoing action is needed individually, at church, and within our larger community to keep the momentum of these positive changes growing.

Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster praised the congregation for its substantial work and urged us to continue making a difference. **RE Director Meagan Henry** inspired us with her environmental "For All Ages." Led by **Music Director Melodie Feather**, the **Voices of Youth** and **Angel Collins**, the congregation sang about the need to act together to resolve climate change and love our Earth home.

Energy Audit: Church Administrator **Ron Brandt** and **Dan Cohen** provided an overview of MVUC's energy audit in December 2007 by **Allison Fisher** of Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light (GW IPL), the many changes already implemented and those planned. Among other actions, shut-down procedures have been implemented, a new Energy Star refrigerator has been purchased and installed in Hollin Hall, and an anonymous donation is funding one in the Meeting House. Allison Fisher spoke at the event and recognized MVUC as an area leader with substantial "green" accomplishments. GW IPL featured MVUC in its February Newsletter as a "Congregation in the Spotlight."

Health Implications: Dan Cohen presented the substantial health implications of Global Warming and Climate Change, which are emerging threats to public health, the survival of the human race and many other species within the interconnected web of life.

Green Sanctuary: **Suzanne Cleary Cohen** reviewed MVUC's Green Sanctuary certification process. With "green" actions quickly spreading throughout the church, MVUC has already accomplished far more than required for certification and will soon submit its application to the UUA.

Next Steps: **Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson** and **Ron Stevens** led attendees in a two-part "what-can-we-do" activity, which included members signing up to help the church implement

energy audit changes. Forty-eight individuals made and posted their commitments to carry out environmentally friendly actions at home.

Since the meeting, MVUC members participated in a Green Sanctuary co-sponsored event on February 5 in an Alexandria Town Hall Meeting—"A Tale of Two Coal Plants," aimed at shaping a clean energy future for Virginia. The Green Sanctuary Task Force also presented its plans and requests for environmental action to the Board of Trustees, which was met with overwhelming Board support in addressing climate change.

Thanks to all who participated, those who committed to make changes at home and to help with changes at church, those who plan to link with the greater community to address climate change, and to all those who have been, and will continue, taking climate-change actions at MVUC. Also, special thanks go to all the volunteers who helped with the dinner meeting's set-up and clean-up.

Highlights of Energy Audit Recommendations

- Lighting usage
- Light-bulb replacement with CFLs
- Shut-down procedures
- Programmable thermostats
- Computer turn-off at the end of the day
- Sealing doors and windows
- Formal recycling process
- Energy efficiency and recycling requirements in rental contracts
- No more Styrofoam cups at coffee hour
- Potential solar water heating
- Refrigerator type and usage

UUA General Assembly (GA)

The annual meeting of UUA congregations, GA, will be held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, this year, June 25-29. MVUC is entitled to have eight delegates representing our congregation. If you are interested in attending, as a delegate or otherwise, please contact **Birgit Robbert** (703 299 9892).

Activities On and Off the Hill

Continued from Page 4, Membership Development

tionships with people with skin tones unlike our own, and perhaps deny that other person basic justice. Or perhaps it is religion that we use to separate ourselves from others. Or sexual orientation. Or nationality.

What I found most exciting about the “Beyond Categorical Thinking” workshop was the reminder that no matter what arbitrary choice I make about how to see myself as different from someone else, there are many, many other ways in which we are the same. Having thought about this since the workshop, I will make a bold prediction. No matter how long the list of differences you see between yourself and another person, you can come up with a list of similarities which is longer. I cannot argue that there are in fact more similarities than differences – certainly I can’t think of a way to test that idea – but I can and do assert that you share enough with any particular individual to list one more similarity than the number of differences you have identified. Any way you look at it, you have a great deal in common with every other individual you ever come across.

I suggest that these observations are scalable from the individual level to the congregational level, and beyond. Let’s be open to the differences among us, but not just as an expression of acceptance of those distinctions. Behind every place where we feel different from another, there are other ways we are the same. At any moment we have the capacity to choose to see the similarities between us and others, and to make those similarities the most important elements of our relationships with them, in much the same way we have, until now, been choosing to treat a few arbitrarily selected differences as of primary importance.

Deepest thanks to our Ministerial Search Committee for bringing “Beyond Categorical Thinking” to MVUC!

—Lincoln Cobb, Chairman, Membership Development

The Easy Way to Pay Your Pledge to MVUC

You can make regular payments to MVUC without having to write checks or remember when they’re due. Just fill out a simple form authorizing the money to be debited each month from your checking or savings account. To automate your contributions, contact **Ron Brandt**, Administrator, admin@mvuc.org or **Al Erickson**, Treasurer, aerickson@cox.net.

MVUC Greenhouse News

The MVUC Greenhouse is gearing up for the Spring Plant Sale held every weekend in April and May. We will have plants available during the Spring Book Sale, Mother’s Day, Easter, and for our Earth Day celebration.

Our first seed planting was held Sunday, February 10, after Sunday Services. We planted eggplant, peppers, some early annuals and perennials—twenty-three plant varieties in all. **David Napier**, **Meg Clontz**, **Linda Lloyd**, **Marinka Tellier** (and daughter **Sofia**), **Tish Tyson**, and **Mary Barnett** were up to their ears in Pro-Mix before we finished at 4:00 pm. Just in case you were thinking this is an all-work-no-play group, we selected our seeds at a delightful potluck dinner in January.

We will continue planting on Wednesdays and Sundays and some other days in between, as we still have heirloom tomatoes, herbs, unique varieties of annuals and perennials to get started. There is always room for more of you who enjoy getting your hands dirty. Besides planting, there is ongoing seedling tending, transplanting and keeping ourselves knowledgeable about the plants we offer for sale. We would love to have you join us. Call **Mary Barnett** (703-360-7152).

Caring Community Notes

Our thoughts and best wishes are sent to **Mel Fox** and **Hal Holtzclaw** for a speedy recovery from their surgeries.

Contact information for the Caring Associate for the week and Caring Associate Coordinator (CAC) can be found each week in the Order of Service and in the Member Services area of the church website. As always, the MVUC staff and volunteers are willing to assist you during normal business hours. Please direct any questions or concerns to **Betsy Stephens** (betsys2@verizon.net) or **Meg Clontz** (megclontz@cox.net).



RE Youth March Birthdays!



- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| 4 Alexi McHugh | 21 Kelsey Dressing |
| 4 Jessica Robbert | 27 Jason Venzke |
| 4 Benjamin Roberts | 29 Stephen Stern |
| 5 Anjum Choudhury | 29 Helen Joy Kitrosser |
| 7 Tristan Colaizzi | 29 Ethan Tashima |
| 9 Isabel Tashima | 30 Alice Thompson |
| 10 Duncan Turner | 31 Kelly Watson |
| 12 Lila Reidy | 31 Tierney Offringa |
| 14 Jace Snedecor | |



OUR LARGER WORLD NEWS

Social Justice Programs at the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

Love is the teaching of this church, and service is its prayer.

Partner Church News

Thanks to everyone who attended the Partner Church service and **Khlur Mukkim's** sermon, *A Global Family*, on February 3. Our committee would also like to thank everyone who gave so generously to the special collection to benefit our partner churches in Romania and India.

Khlur asked me to pass on his thanks for everyone's kindness and the fellowship lunch at Dishes of India. He also asked me to express words communicated from our partner minister in the Khasi Hills, **Nangroi Suting**. Nangroi and the congregation of Mawlat send their gratitude for our partnership, and for the funds which this year will enable them to buy a plot of land to enlarge the Unitarian school to include grades five through eight.

We also hope to help them build a joint playground for the villages of Mawlat and Wahmawlein. The Unitarian church in Wayland, Massachusetts, partnered with Wahmawlein, has sold brooms made by the Wahmawlein youth. The proceeds enabled Wahmawlein to construct a retaining wall in the playground area. They hope to receive additional funds from their local government.

Please mark your calendars for this year's Partner Church Dinner on Saturday, March 29, in the Chapel beginning with appetizers at 5:30 pm. We will feature Hungarian and Indian food to celebrate our partners. Entertainment will be provided by the West Potomac Colonial Singers, featuring MVUC youth members **Ilene Gillispie** and **James Dressing**.

—Lisa Gillispie

Help Host Children of Chernobyl

Our program is made up of five-six local churches who sponsor approximately 70 children from Belarus in Eastern Europe who come for a health respite visit for 6 weeks each summer. The children are between the ages of 8-12 years old. Their country lost 1/3 of its arable land following the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident in 1986. The resultant contamination continues to devastate the economic, mental and physical health of the Belarussian population.

We are recruiting host families between now and March 15th, which is our cut-off date due to the turn-around time needed to process the children's visas and flights. I am one of two Host Coordinators for Christ Church in Alexandria. I have been to Belarus, am going again this spring and can personally attest to the extreme need for this program. My family has been hosting two children from the Chernobyl area of Belarus in Eastern Europe for the last five summers. They are brother and sister, the same ages as my own two children. Although these two children come from a very horrific family situation, they are full of fun and very well behaved. I don't know who has benefited more from the visits! My own children have learned so much about sharing and caring for others!

At this time, we are looking for a few new host families who are willing to have an exciting adventure this summer! We have all the funds needed, but have more children than homes at this point. To volunteer or request more information, please contact me at 703-772-5080 or kvandyck@cox.net.

Kate Van Dyck, Host Parent and Host Coordinator
for Alexandria Christ Church

Whale Coast Alaska—2008

Five Alaskan UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural program this July, our 12th year. See REAL Alaska, with UU home-stays in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Seward, Juneau, and Sitka. UU's host the events and lead tours. We visit Tlingit and Inupiat Native Alaskans, and see much wildlife, including bears, moose, caribou, whales, sea otters and bald eagles. We visit Denali and other national parks. **Dave Frey**, a 27-year Alaska resident, leads the programs. Visit our www.wuurld.org website, e-mail waltonfrey@gci.net or phone 907-322-4966 for a brochure. Reservation deadline is March 15.

Meals On Wheels

Volunteers are critically needed for the Manchester Lakes Senior Apartments. The job involves picking up meals at Manchester Lakes Senior Apartments and delivering them to eight to ten residents. It takes about 30 minutes to deliver the meals. Meals are delivered Monday–Friday. Volunteer drivers can deliver on a weekly, biweekly, monthly, or substitute basis. Other volunteer opportunities include providing transportation to and from medical appointments or the grocery store, making friendly visits, helping with light household tasks, and making social calls. For more information, please call Fairfax Area Agency on Aging's Volunteer Intake line: 703-324-5406; TTY: 703-449-1186; or email DFSAAAvolunteer@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Board Chips

by Jim Potter, Chair, Board of Trustees

There is an old saying: "The more you put into something, the more you get out of it." That has been my experience at MVUC. I joined MVUC in 2001 at one of the low points of my life. My former wife, whom I loved, had recently left me, and I was recovering also from a hip replacement. Now, thanks to my loving wife **Betty** and the support I have received from MVUC, I am happier than I've been since I was a teenager.

I know several of you have had similar experiences. I hope more of you find that by giving more of your time, talents, and treasure to MVUC, you will increase the warmth and meaning in your life.

The Board is laying out a path for MVUC to become an excellent liberal church and build our "Hill of Dreams" in the next few years. We are confident of success because we are in the process of reaching most of our major objectives, namely:

1. **Ministerial Support**—MVUC has established and maintained a highly capable professional staff, including our Interim Minister, DRE, DOM, and Church Administrator. The Search Committee is now negotiating with several candidates to become our Settled Minister and expects the congregation to call an outstanding Settled Minister sometime this spring.

2. **Put Fiscal House in Order**—The Finance Committee has done an excellent job managing our income and expenditures, aided significantly by **Ron Brandt** and **Al Erickson**, who have donated their time helping to run our office and clean up our files. **Al Robbert** has done an amazing job planning and executing our Stewardship Campaign, and **Bill Clontz** and the **Program Council** has relieved the Board of most of the administrative burden of running MVUC's programs.

3. **Develop and Execute a Strategic Plan**—**Reid Adler** is leading a small team of visionaries who are identifying MVUC's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to improve our programs, and helping the Board execute the plan. Many factors will continually shape the plan over the life of the church—pledge income, Sunday service attendance, participation in children's and adult RE, and support of new program initiatives. There will always be room for creative, enterprising souls to start new programs, such as **Meagan Henry's** Wednesday Fellowship Dinners, **Peg Bartel's** Contemplative Group, and **John Henrehan's** Shoe Leather Project. Reid and his team will begin consulting with the congregation about the Strategic Plan in April.

4. **Establish and Maintain Sustained Leadership Training**—Your Board believes that leaders are trained, not born. **Bill Clontz, Lauck Walton, Lincoln Cobb, Ron Brandt,** and **Georgia Pourchot** have established a Leadership Seminar to "serve those who serve." Training was provided in October 2007 and February 2008, and was very well received. It will be offered periodically to anyone interested in improving their leadership skills and learning more about how to get things done at MVUC.

5. **Establish and Maintain Programs that Will Make MVUC More Effective/More Visible as a Local and World Leader**—Social action is part of our UU fabric. **Gregg Early** has hosted five Sunday lectures that have given the congregation the opportunity to question prominent world leaders. **Dan and Suzanne Cleary Cohen** are leading a grass-roots effort to make MVUC a "Green" church and the congregation a force for dealing effectively with climate change.

We are making progress becoming an excellent liberal church and building our Hill of Dreams. If you become more involved at MVUC, we will get there faster, and I believe that you will add warmth and meaning to your life. Please support MVUC's Stewardship Campaign generously.

You Can Herd Cats- If You Have a Can Opener

This was one of the funny and true comments shared by a graduate of MVUC's Leadership Seminar, conducted in February. Ten more great members (see photo) invested a couple of days in friendship, community-building; poking a little fun at own limitations, and personal growth. We addressed the importance of process, of listening to one another, of balancing personal attention-needs with church needs, and a host of practical tips for being a part of the MVUC community. The course will be repeated in a few months. Questions? **Contact Tamara de la Camp, Lincoln Cobb, Ron Brandt, Georgeta Pourchot, or Bill Clontz.**



Sermons for Your Re-Hearing

Each Sunday's service is recorded and available on CD. If you would like a copy, please speak with **Raleigh Romine** or **Joanne Ell**.

A Month of Sundays

Services at 9:30 am and 11:15 am
in the Remington Chapel

March 2

The Magic Rabbit

Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster

March 9

The Vision and the Act

Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster

March 16

Where Your Treasure Is

Mimi Stevens

March 23

Christ Beyond Christianity

Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster

March 30

*Whatever Happened to
"In-Your-Face" Liberalism?*

Rev. Don Vaughn-Foerster

**Mt. Vernon
Unitarian Church**
1909 Windmill Lane
Alexandria, VA 22307

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Alexandria, Virginia
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**Large-Type Version of
Windmill Available**

A large-type version of the Windmill is available for those who are visually impaired. Copies may be picked up on the credenza between the two front doors in the Commons.

Reminder to All MVUC E-Mail Users

To receive all weekly bulletins and special notices, please promptly notify **Esther Dickinson** (esthergertrude@verizon.net) whenever your e-mail address changes. Thank you!