

Windmill

Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

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

OCTOBER 1, 2008

Taking Note

by

The Reverend Kate R. Walker



Yes, life is a bit overwhelming right now. Many of you have been very kind in asking how I'm doing, and is there anything you can do for me?

Your queries have been very sincere and most welcome. Thank you. Mostly, I need patience for when my memory freezes up; understandably it is staggering under the information overload being thrown at it.

One of the challenges to the information overload comes from living in an information age. With the ease and convenience of e-mail, text messaging, and the internet web network, it is easy for any of us to find our minds rebelling for relief. I find it helpful to shut the computer down, push back my chair and go for a walk, or to sit quietly without any stimulation.

There is also another darker side to the electronic age. We can get addicted to the continuous flow of information and find ourselves constantly seeking more and more information in an adrenaline-like drive to stay connected.

The problem is, many of us aren't really connected to begin with because it's not information we need—it's human contact. Many of us are struggling to get connected to another human being.

Take e-mails, for example. E-mails help us disseminate information in a fast and very efficient method, and save lots of time that would have gone to hours of phone calls or meetings. The problem comes with e-mail being a nonverbal and nonvocal (body language only) method of communication. There is no way to convey emotions. Humans depend heavily on nonverbal communication (there are many ways to convey emotions that does not include verbal language. Try grunting next to someone and see what reaction you get).

In fact, studies show that about 80% of spoken language is dependent upon nonverbal ways to convey truth. We depend on body language (nonvocal) along with nonverbal language to indicate if someone is telling us the truth. We may not be fully aware of it, but our senses pick it up.

The study of prosody in linguistics looks at the rhythm, intonation, stress, and related attributes in speech. Our brains are hard-wired to fill in gaps when we don't have the input of all this information. The human need for all this information can't be underestimated. This is why e-mails have what is called "emoticons." These are the little text signs we've created to help fills in those nonverbal and nonvocal gaps—i.e., :), LOL, and :o.

See Page 4, Taking Note

Program Highlights

Good Companions
11:45 to 12:45—BYO Lunch
12:45 to 1:45—Speaker
Tues, Oct 14—Del Pepper
Tues, Oct 28— Pu Chin Waide

Installation Service & Reception
for Rev. Kate R Walker
Sun, Oct 19, 4:00 to 6:30 pm

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**MOUNT VERNON
UNITARIAN CHURCH**

MINISTER

The Rev. Kate R. Walker

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Mark Your Calendar!

Grounds Committee Open Meeting
Wednesday, October 9 (Page 7)

Good Companions
11:45 to 12:45 - BYO Lunch
12:45 to 1:45 - Speaker
Hollin Hall

Tuesday, October 14, 2008—Del Pepper: *Company is Coming—Alexandria Welcomes National Harbor Visitors.* Del is Vice Mayor of Alexandria, a historic tourist city. She had initial concerns that the new National Harbor would have a bad effect on Alexandria's tourism and events. Instead of seeing obstacles, both groups saw opportunity and held productive meetings to resolve issues. Del and her husband, FJ., have been MVUC members for over 40 years.

Tuesday, October 28, 2008—Pu Chin Waide: *China—Before the Awakening of the Sleeping.* When Pu Chin first went to China to visit her aunt for six weeks, they had to get clearances for wherever they went and permits for whatever they did. Everything was in short supply. Her next trip to China was in sharp contrast. There was much prosperity and friendliness evident. As the wife of a World Bank official, she traveled with him often, including to Tanzania and India. While living in the Washington area near us, she joined MVUC and sang in the choir. She has many degrees and has had many occupations. At this time, she is a Nationally Certified Chinese Acupuncturist.

Installation Service and Reception for Rev. Kate R Walker
Sunday, October 19, 2008, 4:00 to 6:30 pm (Page 5)

FHP Rummage Sale
Saturday, October 25 (Page 5)

MVUC Leadership Seminar
Friday Evening and Saturday, October 24-25 (Page 5)

Intergenerational Activities

Big Boo Party and Bonfire: Come one, come all to our annual Big Boo Party on **October 24, 6:30-8:30 pm.** Events will include fun crafts, a costume parade, apple bobbing, scary stories, and pizza to share. Stick around and join the Fall Bonfire as we sing songs, tell tales and see who screams first. Sign up in the Commons to attend or volunteer. Contact **Linda Walton** (Party) at lwalton2@cox.net and **Steve Murphy** (Bonfire) at stephenmurphyclu@aol.com.

UNICEF Halloween Carnival: The annual UNICEF Halloween Carnival is just around the corner! The Haunting will be **Sunday, October 26, between services.** Everyone is invited! Come in costume and celebrate Halloween with games and treats. Prizes and goodies are donated; proceeds go to UNICEF. All can help by running a booth and supplying baked goods to the cakewalk and bake sale. To help with this important fundraiser, sign up in the Commons.

Religious Education (RE)

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

Dear Friends,

By now, many of you have seen our new MVUC website. I hope you find the Religious Education pages useful. When you look at these pages, think about what you would look for if you were a parent searching for a church with an RE program for you and your children, and if you have ideas about additional information to place there, please contact me (dre@mvuc.org). A new and exciting aspect of the website is an RE "blog space" that can be accessed from the home page. The challenge is that I have never written a blog before! I'm not sure what to write about, or if a blog is even needed. I would really appreciate your ideas for topics to blog.

Sincerely,
Meagan Henry

Seasonal Decoration Donations

A summer flood in the Carriage House destroyed most of the seasonal decorations used for our Intergenerational Events. If you have surplus Halloween/Autumn or Winter/Holiday decorations and would like to donate them, please drop them off in the Commons.

New Play Structure

Thanks to the Fort Hunt Preschool Cooperative, we have a beautiful new play structure! Our previous structure was very old and beginning to fall apart. The new structure is made of durable, non-toxic material that will last for years, and it was professionally installed to meet playground safety regulations. Please take a moment to thank MVUC members **Kristen Reidy** and **Gail McNulty** for their time and energy spent on finding the correct structure for our space and meeting with playground representatives.



Our beautiful new play structure!

September Schedule of Children and Youth RE Classes

Pre-K-Chalice Children (9:30 only)

- 10/5 Memory Game
- 10/12 Chalice
- 10/19 Fall Plantings
- 10/26 Popcorn Halloween Party
- 11/2 Chalice Cookie

K-1—Creating Home (9:30 only)

- 10/5 Beehive
- 10/12 Animal Homes
- 10/19 Home in Nature
- 10/31 UNICEF Social Justice Chapel
- 11/2 Hearth and Home

2nd-3rd Grades—Moral Tales (9:30 & 11:15)

- 10/5 Faith, Hope and Prayer
- 10/12 In Another's Shoes
- 10/19 Forgiveness
- 10/31 UNICEF Social Justice Chapel
- 11/2 Welcome One and All

4th-5th Grades—Toolbox of Faith (9:30 & 11:15)

- 10/5 Integrity (Compass)
- 10/12 Flexibility (Duct Tape)
- 10/19 Reflection (Mirror)
- 10/31 UNICEF Social Justice Chapel
- 11/2 Expression (Paintbrush)

Jr. Youth Group, 6th-8th Grades (11:15 only)

- 10/5 Teamwork
- 10/12 Creativity
- 10/19 Prep for UNICEF Carnival
- 10/26 Set up UNICEF Haunted House
- 11/2 Gratitude

YRUU, 9th-12th Grades (11:15 only)

- 10/5 Youth Group
- 10/12 Attend the service
- 10/19 Discussion Class—Repeal *Don't Ask, Don't Tell*,
Guest Speaker **Joan Darrah**
- 10/19 Evening Youth Worship, 6:00 pm
- 10/26 Set up UNICEF Carnival
- 11/2 Youth Group

More Notes from Kate

From Page 1, Taking Note

Even with emoticons attempting to fill in the missing input, the potential for misunderstanding and misinformation also can't be underestimated—which is why I highly recommend never using e-mails for emotional content. It just doesn't work. Emails are very limited in conveying what we are feeling. E-mail is best used for information only.

I think this is also why I'm resistant to blogging, a web-based platform for sharing ideas. I care so much and in such deep ways that I prefer to share my best thoughts in person; fortunately, I have a pulpit. The world has witnessed many brilliant writers who have had the talent to convey deep emotion in literature, but e-mails were not usually the vehicle. Most of us don't have the time, never mind the talent.

Of course, the problem with e-mails applies to newsletters as well. It's a good thing I love writing and the challenges it brings.

I think as long as I have the touch of the human heart, I shall be just fine. Thanks for asking.

Cheers, **Kate R. Walker**

Office hours: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday: 9:30am–4:00 pm; Thursday: Study Day; Friday: Day Off

I often have daytime meetings; please call to make an appointment: 703-765-5950, ext. 104.

A Date with Kate

Here are four dates for which folks are invited to sit and have an informal meal to help facilitate our getting to know each other:

Wednesday, October 8, noon-1:00 pm, brown-bag lunch, MVUC

Thursday, October 16, 7:00-8:30 pm, potluck, MVUC

Monday, October 27, noon-1:00 pm, brown-bag lunch, MVUC

Saturday, November 8, 7:00-8:00 pm, dessert and drinks, Buzz, 901 Slaters Lane, Alexandria.

Please sign up with the receptionist so I'm not waiting in vain for conversation. Cheers, **Kate Walker**

Unanswered Questions from Question Box Sunday, August 24

Q. How do you define spirituality? What do you think it means to be a spiritual person?

A. I think spirituality refers to the human connection to a deep inner feeling that there is something greater than ourselves. It is a transcendent feeling of being connected to something larger than our own body and mind. This feeling transcends our ego needs, therefore it is important to foster the spiritual life

because it is this aspect that most supports our commitment to and support for service to others. It's the primary source for compassion. So, a spiritual person is one who maintains a deep connection to that which is greater than his/herself, witnessed by others in acts of compassion.

Q. Now that you're here and have met with church leaders at various levels, how do you plan to allocate your time between ministering to the congregation and friends; interaction with UU denomination and JPD (Joseph Priestley District); and outreach outside the congregation? (This request comes with a space for a percentage on each item.)

A. I have to admit providing a percentage to the division of time is the real challenge to answering this question. One of the aspects of being a minister that I really like is its constant fluctuation from day to day and week to week. Ministry is not an exact science. Rather, best-guess work, balancing, and constant reactivity are the primary modes of decision-making. It's kind of like surfing, I think, but then I've never surfed.

That being said, ministering to the congregation through worship will always be my number one priority. On a good week it takes an average of 20 hours to prepare a sermon and its service (that's according to the Alban Institute, the leading church research and teaching organization in the U.S.). Since ministers generally put in about 50 hours a week (if they're healthy), that would put me at 40 percent on ministering to the congregation, primarily through worship.

Other forms of ministering come through working closely with lay leaders, committees, staff, writing for things, such as the newsletter, and pastoral care. These are not in order of preference, but in order of demand on any given day. I'm guessing all that takes another 35 percent.

The denomination, which includes UU colleagues, the JPD, and outreach to outside the congregation that includes social justice and non UU colleagues, gets the remaining 25 percent of my time. It's important to note, that for my first year, I'll be focusing more on MVUC and our transition, rather than outside activities.

There is one category that is not mentioned, which is actually my number one priority in my life; yes, even before the church, that's my husband and family. If my husband and family are not happy, I'm not happy, and then the church won't be happy. If things are hunky dory at home, then I'll probably devote more time to the church, but not on a long term basis. Once again, ministry is not an exact science.

Cheers, **Kate Walker**

Continued in next column.

Activities On and Off the Hill

MVUC Photo Directory—Update

Over 200 families and individuals had their photographs taken for the new MVUC photo directory. Thank you all for participating. Our new directory will be a huge help for all of us, including Kate, in trying to match names with faces. If you ordered additional photographs, they should arrive at your home early to mid-October. Every family or individual who participated will receive a copy of the new directory and a free 8x10 photo; these should arrive at the church by late November. If you did not have your picture taken, you may purchase a directory for \$10.00. We have ordered additional copies of the directory to give to people who become affiliated with MVUC after September.

Thank you so much to the following people who served as greeters and helped sign people in when they came to have their photographs taken: **Barbara Al-Turki, Terry Bradley, Nancy Barkume, Jamie and Celia Barnett, Mary Barnett, Alan Bunner, Bruce Burrows, Elaine Bronez, Liz Campbell, Betty Davis, Al and Eleanor Erickson, Lisa Gillespie, Larry and Jo Jackley, Pat Jackson, Joe Kitrosser, Paula Mathis, Annie Mechanic, Dotty Ann McClelland, Sandy Peterson, Pat Priest, Betsy Stephens, Marge Witting, and Dick and Kay Youngflesh.**

Thank you also to all of you who submitted such wonderful pictures for our activities pages and cover. Finally, an extra special thank you to **Ron Brandt, Meg Clontz, Lynne Kennedy and Annie Mechanic** for their hard work and dedication in creating this directory.

Joan Darrah, Chair of MVUC Photo Directory Team

MVUC Invites You

to the Installation and Celebration of
Reverend Kate R Walker as Our Minister
on Sunday Oct. 19, 2008, 4:00 to 6:30 pm

Participants will include **Rev. David Bumbaugh, Rev. Kenn Hurto, Rev. Linda Peebles, Rev. Betsy Stevens, Rev. Dr. Marlene Walker, and Rev. Betty Jo Middleton.** Please join us for this important and joyous occasion.

Kate's Installation will be 1-1/2 hours long and we anticipate a huge crowd. Come early to get a good seat and help us start on time. It is not recommended for children ten and under. Fun activities will be provided in the Carriage House for children of all ages so parents can attend this very special event. If you have any questions, please contact **Sandy Peterson**, Installation Coordinator, at 703-768-2565 or e-mail sandrapeterson@cox.net. To volunteer assistance, contact **Kathi McNeil**, 703-780-5939, krmcneil2105@aol.com.

Come Join Us for the MVUC Leadership Seminar

The last session for this year of the popular and always fun MVUC Leadership Seminar will be Friday evening, October 24, and Saturday morning, October 25. We'll share a communal dinner, learn how MVUC is organized, how we work together (sometimes...), talk about effective meetings and committees, play a few games, and more. Everyone is welcome, but anyone in a leadership position, or thinking about serving in one, will find this program especially useful. Over 50 of us have enjoyed this course so far. and over 30 other churches have borrowed the MVUC course—come check it out yourself. Class size is limited to ensure good interaction, so sign up early. Interested? Contact **Ron Brandt** at admin@mvuc.org or at 703-765-1237, ext 103. Questions? Ask **Bill Clontz, Tamara de la Camp, Georgeta Pourchot, Ron Brandt, or Lincoln Cobb.**

Have You Found the Nature Path to Church?

Parking at the church is limited, especially with the rather large crowds we have been getting and all the new visitors. Another place to park is on Mason Hill Drive. There is a sign pointing to the path to the church right by the fire hydrant. It is a short, lovely path that is easy to manage. Please join me taking the nature path to church, and enjoy the flowers and trees on the way. **Sandy Peterson**, Membership Committee

Parent/Child Birdhouse Building Workshop Saturday, October 18

Ed Raduazo, who helped us build our new mud daub playhouse, has agreed to lead us in building birdhouses on Saturday, October 18, from 10:00 am-1:00 pm. Each parent/child will be provided with a frame to weave and then with a mud mixture to daub on it in order to come up with their own special birdhouse to take home, hang, and welcome the birds. If you are interested in participating, please contact **Wendy Burns** at 703-780-3204. This is a fundraiser for the MVUC/FHP Playground Project. Cost for the workshop will be \$25.00.

Fort Hunt Preschool (FHP) Rummage Sale Saturday, October 25

The FHP is holding a fall Kids' Rummage Sale on Saturday, October 25, 8:00 am-12:00 noon in and around the Carriage House. They are accepting donations of gently-used children's and baby items—toys, books, games, strollers, etc.—as well as children's and maternity clothes. Donations can be brought to the preschool prior to the sale. Please do not bring donations to the Carriage House during school hours (9:00 am-12:00 pm, Monday-Friday). Call FHP with any questions at 703-768-7584.

Activities On and Off the Hill

Holiday Shop Newsletter

Several years ago **Pat Jackson**, who has been “Ms. Holiday Shop” for many years, wrote an article, *Why A Holiday Shop?* The following is a modification of that article, which I just could not possibly improve upon except for a bit of updating.

Holiday Shop has been the golden goose, which since 1986 and the advent of the Meeting House with its additional space, has provided more than \$268,629. These funds are allocated by the Susan B. Anthony Committee (SBA), which is composed of three members from the Every Thursday Group (ET), the producers of Holiday Shop, and representatives from the following committees: Buildings, Grounds, Religious Education, and Finance. The SBA convenes after Holiday Shop and reviews requests for funding from various church committees and staff and makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees for their approval.

Among the items funded in the past ten years are: telephone systems; computer upgrades; installation of garden railing; large screen TV for movies and special presentations; hearing assists; new sprinkler system; leaf blower; snow blower; carts for moving tables; folding chairs for outdoor events; wireless mikes for speakers; rewiring greenhouse electrical system; capping garden walls; file cabinets for archival storage; outdoor lights for Meeting House patio; church signage on Fort Hunt Road; observation windows in two nursery doors to meet code; round-table replacements; repair of parking lot lights; TV set with DVD/VHS; financial assistance for delegates to General Assembly; and a cart for Hollin Hall classrooms. Items funded for Hollin Hall are: chimney repairs; conversion to gas heat; overhead lighting in the Blue Room; roof repairs; additional lighting in front and behind; carpeting for the dining room; and new window blinds for the first floor.

Proceeds from the 2007 Holiday Shop were used for: four round tables; an energy efficient refrigerator for Hollin Hall; four cigarette butt cans; energy efficient bulbs, switches, fixtures and thermostats; a new microphone for services; hearing assists; a projector screen; vacuum cleaner; *Clean Up After Your Dog* and *Hollin Hall* signs; and funds in the amount of \$2,000 for the playground and \$2,000 for Property Major Maintenance.

These are just some of the things that this once-a-year, all-out effort has made possible over the past years on our Holy Hill.

“So what is Holiday Shop?” our visitors and newer members might ask. It is an all-day event that includes the Meeting House draped in red and green, full of artisan crafters who work in fiber arts, photography, wood, paper, metal, glass and clay. It

also includes an Orchid station and other plants offered by the MVUC Greenhouse. Inside and outside the Meeting House, you will find crafts from Guatemala, Africa, Indonesia, Peru, and other parts of the world, as well as a bee-keeper selling honey from Mount Vernon. The MVUC quilt group designs and creates a quilt every year that is on display in the Meeting House for a raffle held during Holiday Shop. There is also a raffle of a gingerbread house.

During Holiday Shop the Hollin Hall is turned into a Country Kitchen with our famous chutneys, baked goods, ginger bread house kits, and more. A delicious lunch of soup, sandwich, and cheese pie is served in the dining room. Helene’s Attic is set up in the sun porch, which will be full of elegant, if slightly used, decorative household items. A display of the most amazing “antique” jewelry for sale will be found in the Hollin Hall foyer.

Besides being lots of fun Holiday Shop requires effort from all of us. We cap off the day with a wine and appetizer toast to the sunset. (Yes, we always have a beautiful day with a sunset.) We will be seeking the support of everyone to make Holiday Shop 2008 (our 47th annual!) on Saturday, November 22, 9:30 am to 4:30 pm, a big success!!

How can you help right now?

- Come on Thursdays at 10:00 am to the Every Thursday Group and help make chutney, work on crafts, and have lunch. There is always something happening. No need to sign up.
- Participate in Holiday Shop cooking/baking groups. Watch for notices in the weekly church program insert or on the Our Home Community bulletin board for dates and times.
- Sign up when you are asked for baked-goods donations, such as pies, cakes, cookies, quick breads and yeast breads. We will give you suggestions for packaging and handling.
- Bring to church jewelry that you no longer wear and leave it in the Hollin Hall kitchen on the table to the left of the back door. Last year we made nearly \$2,000 just from the sale of donated jewelry.
- We are also accepting donations of decorative household items for Helene’s Attic, which is our very own upscale-resale shop. You can leave them anytime in the Hollin hall kitchen.

Mary Barnett, Coordinator of Holiday Shop 2008
703-360-7152

Activities On and Off the Hill

Grounds Committee Open Meeting Wednesday, October 8, 2008, 7:00 pm Fireplace Room, Hollin Hall

The Grounds Committee Chair, **Al Macomber**, along with the Program Council's Coordinator for Property, **Mary Barnett**, have called an open meeting of the Grounds Committee to examine the direction and requirements of the Committee's work over the coming year and beyond. Al Macomber will be leaving the Chairmanship after October 31, having been in that post for seventeen years. The purpose of the meeting is to outline and discuss responsibility areas of the Committee for job-sharing and seek recommendations for a new Chairman.

Other purposes of the meeting are to: enlist assignments for the Fall Workennany (October 26); suggest priorities for major projects to be undertaken by the Committee; examine ways to improve the Site Keepers program; discuss ways to better coordinate among various users of the property (are fixed rules needed?); and several other business items relevant to the Committee. A printed agenda is available.

If you have a working interest in our property, you are invited to this meeting, even if you want to only "listen in" because you can't commit to another thing at this time. However, if you are new, or new-ish, or for any other reason wish to become a member of the Grounds Committee, then welcome to the sign-up sheet. As background, the Grounds Committee has consisted of a small number of people dedicated to the maintenance of our church property by hands-on gardening. Communications in the past have been by direct contact between members in lieu of meetings. The Committee Chair negotiates and signs contracts with commercial firms for property maintenance. The Chair also manages, and has financial responsibility for, several budget lines, valued over \$20,000, of the Church's Operating Budget.

Note: The meeting may run about an hour and a half, but it will end not later than 9:00 pm.

Alvin Macomber, Grounds Chair

Caring Associates

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).

Leroy Merrifield

MVUC extends its deepest sympathy to the family of charter member, **Leroy Merrifield**, who died Friday, September 19, after a long illness. He was 90 years old. A memorial service will be scheduled in November.

Wednesday Fellowships

Our Wednesday Fellowships are generally held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, 6:00–9:00 pm. Join us as we gather to enjoy dinner together, then attend mid-week activities and meet others on the Hill. Dinner begins at 6:00 pm; vegetarian and non-dairy options available. The cost is \$7/person (\$21/family), which may vary. Dinner is followed by a variety of activities each month: choir rehearsal, book club, yoga, crafts, green lifestyles, and more. Childcare is available 7:30 pm–9:00 pm, \$5/child (please let us know in advance). Sign up in the Commons and watch the Windmill for more information, or contact **Louise Werner-Rhoades** at louron13@cox.net.

Movie Night: Friday, October 17

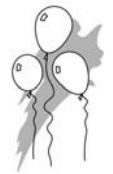
This event is co-sponsored by MVUC Partner Church Committee and Reproductive Rights Task Force. We will be watching and discussing *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*, a 2007 Romanian film, written and directed by Cristian Mungiu. The film is set in Communist Romania in the final years of the Ceaușescu era. It tells the story of two students, roommates in the university dormitory, who try to arrange an illegal abortion. This film portrays the difficulties of life under Communist rule in Romania, as well as the extreme issues for women when reproductive rights are restricted or denied. It contains very graphic and emotionally charged content. Youth under 18 are welcome, but need signed permission from parents. The film is inappropriate for young children. Questions? Please contact **Lisa Gillispie** or **Lynn Alsmeyer-Johnson**.

Preparations for Holiday Shop Can You Help?

The holiday goodies cooking and craft workshop have begun. We meet on Monday evenings, 7:30–9:00 pm, in the kitchen of Hollin Hall from September 29 to November 17. Come once; come whenever! We meet to make food items and crafts to donate or sell at the MVUC Holiday Shop. It's fun and you get to taste as well. Contact **Ruth MacCleery** at 703-360-6528 or **Sandy Peterson** at 703-768-2565.



RE Youth October Birthdays!



- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 2 Matthew Whiteside | 17 Emma Hathaway |
| 6 Devin Conway | 19 Christopher Stoll |
| 10 Claude Delamater | 19 Jeffrey Stoll |
| 11 Emilia Stapleton | 23 Lachlan Kerr |
| 13 Arwinn Murphy | |



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.

News From the Social Justice Council About Special Collections

As many of you know, MVUC raises a monthly special collection generally on the second Sunday of the month. On occasion, people ask what special collections are, and how we decide whom to support. This article answers your questions.

Special collections are taken monthly and provide financial assistance to organizations working to advance social justice, peace, and community building in keeping with UU principles. The beneficiary of the collection is a recognized agency or group that is not part of MVUC, and either provides direct services related to MVUC social justice causes, or engages in advocacy.

We support organizations whose functions help fulfill the goals of an MVUC task force or committee. The Partner Church Committee raises a special collection to benefit our two partner churches in Romania and India. The funds are used to provide winter gifts to the elderly and children, funds to the village school, or to help repair church buildings and parish house. In India, the funds have helped with a book bank, paid teacher salaries in the Unitarian school, helped pay for uniforms and books, and helped build a playground.

MVUC raises a special collection for Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, an organization that provides affordable healthcare to women, men and teens, and promotes responsible choices about sexual behavior and childbearing. This organization promotes the values on which our Reproductive Rights Task Force is based.

MVUC supports organizations such as United Community Ministries, New Hope Housing, the Eleanor Kennedy Shelter for the Homeless, Open Door Housing Fund and Beacon House, for their dedication to the cause of economic justice and educational opportunities. The first three organizations make a difference in our immediate neighborhood by lifting people out of poverty, enabling them to reintegrate into society, providing them with transitional shelter or affordable housing when they lose their own, and caring for the homeless. The Open Door Housing Fund provides low-interest loans to developers of affordable housing, and works with low-income families and individuals to enable them to own their home. Beacon House provides educational and cultural programs to at-risk families in Washington DC. Founded by a UU minister in 1991, Beacon House focuses on education programs to raise the likelihood of high-school graduation and healthy integration in productive

life paths. These organizations mirror the values of all our Task Forces and committees, and of UU churches in general.

We support Unitarian Universalist social justice organizations such as Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ), the UU Service Committee (UUSC), and the UU Ministry for the Earth. These organizations work throughout the country and beyond, to promote social justice causes, assist those displaced by natural disasters, or implement measures to ease our footprint on the earth.

We also support local and regional faith-related and inter-faith organizations that help achieve our social justice goals. Ventures in Community (VIC) helps MVUC advocate for just social change in our community in a forum of over 30 local churches of different denominations. Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy helps MVUC advocate for just causes by our state legislators in Richmond, and last year UU churches were at the forefront of faith-based advocacy to reconsider predatory lending practices in the state.

Finally, since hurricanes, floods, and tsunamis occur at an unprecedented pace, we set up a Disaster Relief Fund to raise money on an ongoing basis throughout the year to send financial support to those in need, as disasters occur. To date, we have supported the people of Myanmar and the UU Knoxville church with money from this fund.

Once a year, a special collection is taken for the Minister's Discretionary Fund. This is a fund that enables the minister to provide limited emergency assistance to our own congregants who may find themselves in a hard spot. People may contact the minister directly for help or to donate to the fund.

If you have further questions about special collections, please contact **Georgia Pourchot**, or any of the members of the Social Justice Council.

Alliances for Racial Justice 4th Annual Joseph Priestley District Journey Toward Wholeness Conference First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia October 25, 2008

This conference, inspired by this year's Ware Lecture delivered by Van Jones at the 2008 General Assembly, will bring together adults, youth, and young adults to advance social, economic and racial justice while supporting the growing movement toward a "green" economy. Full information and online registration can be found at www.JPDUUA.org.

Trustees Report

By Lauck Walton, Board of Trustees Chair

Greetings!

The church year is off to a great start. The Ingathering picnic had absolutely perfect weather (after we waited a day for a storm to blow through). The services have been excellent. The children are enjoying the new playground and their RE classes. New members continue to sign the membership book. This is a new morning at MVUC.

At the September meeting of the Board, our goals for the next year were codified. They are:

- Ensuring ministerial support.
- Ensuring healthy, vital Programs and activities.
- Solidifying our staffing and administrative systems.
- Moving towards a financial model more appropriate for an organization of our size and stature.
- Improving communications—particularly our ability to listen.

You can read more about this in the monthly meeting minutes that are posted on our new website www.mvuc.org. I hope you have all checked this out. This would not have happened without the vision and hard work of our Communications Committee led by **Gregg Early** and our webmaster **Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson**.

I would like to officially welcome **Peg Bartel** as the new Chair of the Sunday Services Committee. Peg is taking on one of the

critical, and usually thankless, volunteer positions that make MVUC great. If she calls and asks for help, please try to be receptive. It takes a lot of volunteers to make each Sunday work—ushers, greeters, coffee set-up, clean-up, chalice lighters, readers, worship associates, sound techs, RE teachers, musicians, singers, folks manning tables, and so much more. We can always use more volunteers, but even if you can't, you can help by thanking someone doing good volunteer work each Sunday when you are on the Hill.

One of the things that I enjoy every time I come to the Hill is the natural beauty of the grounds. For a long, long time, the Chair of the Grounds Committee has been **Alvin Macomber**. Alvin has decided that this is the year to pass along the mantle to a new generation. I know there are few, if any, of us who have done more to keep the grounds beautiful. There will be a meeting on Wednesday, October 8, 2008, at 7:00 pm in the Fireplace Room, Hollin Hall, to discuss the future of the grounds, and it is hoped that new leaders will step up to help us meet these goals.

I look forward to seeing you on the Hill.

Note: Board meetings are moving to the *second* Tuesday of the month. All members are welcome.

M. Lauck Walton
703 462 6590

Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) Update

On September 11, two MVUC Members, **Capt Joan Darrah**, USN (Ret) and **RADM Jamie Barnett**, USN (Ret) met with **Senator Webb** and his staff to discuss DADT. Also in attendance were **Aubrey Sarvis**, the Executive Director of Service members Legal Defense Network (SLDN), the organization leading the fight for repeal, and **Jay Fiset** from the Arlington County Board. We had been trying to schedule a meeting with the Senator for several months and I am certain that the letter from MVUC with almost 200 signatures helped to convince the Senator that he should meet with us. The meeting lasted over an hour which, according to Senator Webb's staff, is very unusual. **Gordon Peterson**, Senator Webb's Military Legislative Assistant said, "I thought that the hour-plus discussion was one of the most informative and stimulating exchanges I have heard regarding the important issues at hand. Your insights into your experiences on 9/11 especially brought home the personal impact (and unintended consequences) that policies and laws

can have on those who provide faithful service to our country." Senator Webb clearly felt that the policy was outdated and seemed very willing to discuss the best approach to move forward in a measured manner. He seemed especially supportive of conducting a comprehensive study to be completed by late next spring on the impact of DADT and how repeal has worked in other countries. He also wants to schedule hearings on DADT in the Senate. Repeal of DADT is still an uphill battle, but it is very encouraging that Senator Webb and his staff were willing to meet with us and to come up with the best strategy for moving forward. The reality is that at this point, the future of DADT depends on the outcome of the Presidential election. **Barack Obama** has clearly stated that he thinks DADT should be repealed and replaced with a policy of non-discrimination based on sexual orientation. **John McCain**, on the other hand, has said that DADT "is working."

Joan Darrah, Captain, USN (Ret)

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*

October 5

iSi, Se Puede! Yes, You Can!

Rev. Kate R. Walker

October 12

Growing Our Spirit

Sunday Services Committee

October 19

Does Religion Have a Purpose?

Rev. Kate R. Walker

October 26

*Human Rights: A Shared Agenda
for 60 Years*

Marion Connell

**Chair, Program Committee, Board
of UU United Nations Office**

**Mt. Vernon
Unitarian Church**
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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!