

Windmill

Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

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

MARCH 1, 2009

Taking Note . . .

by The Reverend Kate R. Walker



My mother used to talk about the weather all the time. And, I admit, it sometimes got on my nerves. I think I yearned for deeper, more profound topics that had meaning and sustenance for me. Now that Mom is gone, I miss talking about the weather. So, here is my profound and meaningful weather conversation:

Okay, the snow is a bit disappointing, and I get it that very few people in this area know how to drive on snow and ice. (I've noted it's always everyone else, not the one speaking.) Considering the heightened reaction to President Obama's comments about closing schools when ice hit the District, I won't make any public comments about the hardiness of the locals.

Having spent the last ten years in northwestern Pennsylvania (average snow fall is 90 inches per year), and a lot of winters in New England and Colorado where the snow removal system is sunshine, I'm actually adjusting to the lack of snow quite fast. I keep going outside with a light jacket on and no hat. Pennsylvania's winters and the two winters I lived in the Oakland, California area, taught me that this sunshine girl needs to see the great god in the sky on a regular basis.

We humans talk a lot about the weather. Having lived in a lot of places, it isn't hard to notice that most folks think they have the oddest weather patterns, and they love to talk about it. From New England, where everyone really does talk about the weather all the time, to Costa Rica where it's either mud season or not, the weather brings humanity together in a cross-cultural, multi-class, race-irrelevant fusion of common interest. Weather may be the one topic that everyone agrees is a human-bonding element. Witness the weather with its own dedicated 24-hour cable network. (Mom loved to watch it.)

Weather can stop all arguments, from the petty to the powerful, when survival demands immediate interest. Weather can bring families back together from separate bedrooms where computer and television game screens rule rather than board games ... "Hey, who turned out the lights?"

Weather can build relationships between neighbors as basement flooding forces us out of our homes and into the streets

seeking a bucket brigade. Front porches can serve as a front view for brilliant thunder storms rather than just a place to display flowered plants and attractive empty chairs.

Weather may be the one thing that gets humanity to finally focus its collective energy on global warming and what needs to be done in haste. Basements will be flooding soon, so buckets and sandbags may be a good investment along with getting to know your neighbors. Katrina, the humdinger of wake-up storms, showed us the dark underbelly of America's racism, classism, and incompetent government function. The cost was high, but we learned a lot from that storm. May we actually apply our lessons. We also witnessed humanity coming together in stunning acts of sacrifice and compassion.

The weather may not resolve our wars, but at least enemies have something of common interest to talk about. Weather and humor can ease tension in just about any dispute. For generations, a woman's family lived on a farm in Manitoba on the border with North Dakota in an area that was in dispute between Canada and the U.S. One day her grown kids came in and told her that the dispute had been settled, the international boundary line ran right through their farm, and the family could choose whether to be Canadians or Americans.

After some thought, the woman declared that they should become Americans. Her reason was that she couldn't stand another Canadian winter!

So, the next time the weather comes up as a topic, smile and know you're a part of humanity and have a great conversation. Also, know that Mark and I still have our trusty all-wheel-drive Subaru, so just call us the next time you're stuck in the snow, happy to rescue.

Cheers, **Kate Walker**

P.S. Worth Noting: I have a small Minister's Discretionary Fund for the purpose of financially helping church members who are experiencing financial distress. During this difficult economic challenge, please know you can contact me to see if I can help. Confidentiality is ensured.

**MOUNT VERNON
UNITARIAN CHURCH**

MINISTER

The Rev. Kate R. Walker

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**Program Highlights
Mark Your Calendar!**

Barbershop Chorus

Sunday, March 1, 3:00 pm

No admission charge; free-will offering for Bryant Early Learning Center

Annual Lasagna Dinner and Variety Show

Saturday, March 7

A dinner of delicious lasagna, as well as garlic bread, salad, and beverage, will be held 5:30-6:30 pm in the Meeting House, followed by the Variety Show. Tickets, which include the Variety Show, are \$8 per person, or a maximum of \$25 for immediate family members.

Lunch-with-a-Book Meeting

Sunday, March 8, After 11:15 am Service

Village Wharf Restaurant

Good Companions

11:45am-12:45 pm-BYO Lunch

12:45-1:45 pm-Speaker

Hollin Hall

Tuesday, March 10—Longtime Members Recall Early Years of MVUC. Many exciting stories of, fun, hard work and community building. Participants will be discussing such activities as art, theater, music, success of buying the beautiful hilltop, plus working to help the poor in Gum Springs and fighting in the cause of civil rights.

Tuesday, March 24—No meeting; spring book sale setup.

Small Group Ministry Training

Saturday, March 14, 1:00- 2:30 pm

Interested in deepening your relationship with other members of MVUC? Commitment is usually six-seven hours per month. Please contact **Kate Walker**, minister@mvuc.org

Partner Church Dinner

Saturday, March 21, 5:30 pm, Chapel

Annual Climate Change Event and Potluck Lunch

Sunday, March 29, 1:00-4:00 pm

Family fun, food, singing, activities, and informative presentations. For more information or to help, contact **Suzanne Cleary**, scleary3@cox.net or 703-768-4967.

The **Rev. Kate Walker** will be on vacation March 1-8. Inquiries during her absence may be directed to **Ron Brandt**, Church Administrator

Why We Like S.E.X.

by Celia and Jamie Barnett

Okay, this is a shameless gimmick to get you to read this short article. But we do like S.E.X., which stands for Stewardship Experiences Xposé, the subject of Kate's sermon on February 22. The title is a good indication that we UU's are more comfortable talking about sex than we are talking about what we give to the church! But here are a few thoughts about why we like talking about stewardship, about what you give to us, and what we give to you.

We have a favorite story that we used to read our children, and Captain Kangaroo used to read it to us when we were children: *Stone Soup*. There are many tellings of this story, but they all include hungry strangers coming into a town that is suffering an economic downturn. With no stimulus package in sight, each of the townspeople refuses the strangers' request for food. So the strangers set up a big cauldron of water on a fire in the middle of town and make a show of carefully selecting stones. When they start boiling the stones, the curious townspeople come out to see what is going on. "The stone soup is delicious!" the strangers say. "If only we had a bit of potato." And the townspeople, one by one, volunteer ingredients for a wonderful soup that the whole town shares with great gusto.



At MVUC we all share that communion of soup, made of the ingredients that each of us brings according to what we have in time, talent and money. We have inherited a marvelous heritage from the UU tradition, from A. Powell Davies and our founders, and from all that is on our holy hill. But the "now" of that tradition and heritage is what we do for each other and what we give to make sure that the work of MVUC continues. Not only does MVUC need our gifts to survive, to grow and reach out to others, but we also need to give. We need the attitude of gratitude that giving engenders. Giving to each other, in our common purpose, is one of the bonds that bind us in this loving community.

In the light of our care for each other, we don't mind talking about stewardship. How much you give is your private decision, but the reasons we all give, the

community it builds, and what it means in our lives—that is a joy to discuss.

How can you help make a savory MVUC soup? Here are some ways:

- **Accept the visit from your Visiting Steward.** All you are doing is meeting someone with common interests to explore for a few minutes what you find meaningful about MVUC. It is a way to build community and perhaps meet a new friend, or get to know an old friend better. You don't have to go over your bank statements with them, for Pete's sake!
- **Appreciatively inquire about what MVUC means to you.** It is good to reflect on what we have been given at MVUC and what it means to us.
- **Consider giving what you can in gratefulness and hope.** When we think of all of the wonderful people at MVUC, each with their own personal stories; the inspiring, challenging sermons and services; the great programs; social justice work; and message of MVUC, we want to contribute to and be a part of this community. If you aren't a contributor yet, this is a good time to start where you can. If you are already a contributor, consider increasing your pledge to the next level, or at least towards it. Step by step, each of us could aspire toward being a fair-share giver (2% of adjusted gross income).
- **Turn in your commitment card.** Okay, this is on the administrative side of soup-making, but it is also a good liturgical act. You are making a commitment to the community, and each member of the community is making a commitment to you. Don't be afraid of it! It isn't a contract. If things in your life change, you can change it any time you want to.
- **Enjoy the soup!** After all, you made it. You should enjoy the fact that your contributions make the great programs, staff, work and community of MVUC possible! Thank you!

Activities On and Off the Hill

Nominees for 2009 Annual Meeting

The Nominating Committee is very pleased to present the following candidates for your consideration for the Board of Trustees, Program Council and Nominating Committee. We think you will agree that these are very impressive individuals. We are fortunate to have them as members of our MVUC community, and we are grateful that they have agreed to be nominated to serve MVUC in the coming years. Nominees (and their bios) for all of the positions to be considered at the annual meeting on April 26 will soon be available on the MVUC website and in the Commons after services.

Nominees for the Board of Trustees (Three-year terms expiring in 2012):

James Arden Barnett, Jr. ("Jamie")
Lisa Gillispie
Daniel Cohen

Nominee for the Youth Representative (One-year term expiring in 2010): **Ian Anderson**

Nominees for the Program Council (Two-year terms expiring in 2011):

Ron Brandt (Administration)
Vince Patton (Worship)
Still Recruiting (Property)

Nominees for the Nominating Committee (Two-year terms expiring in 2011):

Tom Griffin
Ken Pilkenton
Paula Mathis

Partner Church News

The annual Partner Church Dinner will be held on Saturday, March 21, at 5:30 pm in the Chapel. Enjoy homemade Indian and Hungarian food, a selection of Hungarian and Romanian wines, and delicious dessert. Our entertainment will consist of two parts: first, two short films—a documentary on the building of the bathrooms in the school in Szentháromság and another about the day in a life of a young Khasi boy; second, our own Jane Nelson will give a presentation with pictures about her recent trip to the Khasi Hills and to Mawlat, our partner church village in India. Adults, \$20; children, elementary through middle school, \$10; children 5 and under, \$5. Look for the sign-up sheet in the Commons; reservations preferred, but walk-ins are welcome. Child care will be provided upon request; please let us know by March 7.

Book Nook News

The amount of \$631 was raised for the UU Service Committee through the sale of Holiday Cards this year. This is the largest amount we have raised in one year; our total for the past 15 years is \$4,792. Thank you all for your participation.

The Book Nook is open most Sundays between services. In addition to a rich selection of books, we continue to sell items such as bumper stickers, MVUC histories, MVUC license plate holders, and lapel pins/buttons with our Hill of Dreams logo. Stop by and have a look!

We are always in need of help to run the Book Nook on Sundays—one hour a month or bi-monthly. Training takes one-half an hour. Call **Sonja Bloom**, 703-768-2238.

Annual Book and Art Sale March 26-28

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Sunday, March 22: Move boxes from basement, 9:30-11:00 am or 12:30 pm (until done)

Monday, March 23: Set up books in Hollin Hall, 9:30 am-3:00 pm; move boxes to Meeting House, 7:30- 8:30 pm

Tuesday, March 24: Set up books in Commons and Chapel, continue work in Hollin Hall, 9:30 am-3:00 pm

Wednesday, March 25: Continue set-up, both buildings, 9:30 am-3:00 pm

Thursday, March 26: Sales Cashier, 1:00-3:00 pm or 3:00-5:00 pm

Friday, March 27: Sales Cashier, 10:00 am-12:30 pm or 12:30-3:00 pm

Saturday, March 28: Sales Cashier, 10:00 am-12:30 pm or 12:30-3:00 pm; clean up both buildings, 2:30 pm until done

To cashier, contact **Dotty Ann McClelland**, 703-768-9223; to volunteer for other areas, contact **Joan Wamsley**, 703-751-6086. Please call us so we don't have to call you! We have an extensive collection of books for sale this year! Children's books, art and individually priced merchandise will be in the Meeting House. Flat rate books, CDs, videos, DVDs, cassettes, puzzles, and games will be in Hollin Hall.

Lunch-with-a-Book Meeting Sunday, March 8, After 11:15 am Service Village Wharf Restaurant

Lunch-with-a-Book will be meeting on Sunday, March 8, after the 11:15 am service, at the Village Wharf restaurant. Come join us as we discuss *The Gathering*, by Anne Enright. The 2007 Booker Prize winning novel traces the story of betrayal and redemption through three generations of an Irish family. For more information, contact **Louise Werner Rhoades**, louron13@cox.net, or 703-619-1369.

Activities On and Off the Hill

MVUC Online Photo Directory

In addition to our new printed directory, Lifetouch has provided MVUC with a free password-protected, online directory that is available through the MVUC website under "Members." Ultimately, the online directory could become a very useful tool, especially for the Church staff.

It is a very secure, customizable site. Each member family will have his/her own unique log-in identification and password and will control what information is displayed. Initially, only the names and photographs (if you are in the new directory) will appear. With easy-to-follow directions, each family will be able to decide what information, if any, they want to be displayed.

For now, the online directory is identical to the printed directory you already have. Eventually, as some addresses and phone numbers change and new photos are added, the online directory will become more valuable. When you are ready to access the online directory to update your profile, please send an e-mail to admin@mvuc.org with "Online Directory" as the subject line. Within a few days, you will receive your unique temporary log-in name and password. ~Joan Darrah

Annual Lasagna Dinner and Variety Show Saturday, March 7

The Annual Lasagna Dinner will be held on Saturday, March 7, from 5:30-6:30 pm in the Meeting House prior to the Variety Show. Dinner will include a variety of delicious lasagna, as well as garlic bread, salad, and beverages. Tickets, which include the Variety Show, are \$8 per person, or a maximum of \$25 for immediate family members.

The Variety Show follows at 7:00-9:00 pm. Get out your tutu, dust off that kazoo, and practice your juggling! It's a great way to break into the big time, or discover that you shouldn't quit your day job! Adults and children, young and old, ALL are welcome to perform. To register to perform, e-mail your act to dre@mvuc.org, or call 703-765-0379. Proceeds from this twenty-year tradition will benefit the Coming of Age class trip to Boston. ~Meagan Henry

Easy Ways to Pay Your Pledge

There are now several new ways to conveniently fulfill your financial commitment to the church. Rather than writing checks yourself, you can authorize an amount to be taken each month from your bank account, or you can make contributions by credit card. Forms are usually available on the credenza in the Commons, but if you don't find them there, ask the church office. We'll gladly mail them to you.

Barbershop Chorus Sunday, March 1, 3:00 pm Chapel

Enjoy your favorite songs sung in the unique style known as "barbershop." The Harmony Heritage Singers, a local men's chorus, has fun performing such standards as *Top of the World*, *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, *That's Life*, and believe it or not, the Beach Boys' gem, *Barbara Ann*. Their 95-year old soloist will probably do a George Burns number, *Old Bones*. There is no admission charge; a free-will offering will be collected for BEL (Bryant Early Learning) Center, a preschool sponsored by United Community Ministries. For further information, contact **Ron Brandt**, ronbrandt@cox.net, or 703-766-4779.

Greater Washington Area (GWA) UU Pilgrimage

The Greater Washington Area UU Council is organizing a pilgrimage to Transylvania and Budapest from July 9 to July 22 to explore and experience the historic roots of Unitarianism. We will discuss the origin of our faith with Unitarian ministers; visit Unitarian schools and churches and other historical Unitarian sites, including: Torda, where the first act of religious tolerance was signed in 1568; the rock in Kolozsvár that Francis David spoke from when he "converted the whole town's population to Unitarianism;" Széekelyderzs, the frescoed church, which is the only Unitarian UNESCO World Heritage site; Gyulafehérvár, where a 1000-year-old church shelters the remains of the Unitarian King John Sigismund and his mother Isabella; Meszko, the "Alabaster Village" made famous by the book of the same name; and Deva, the ruins of the prison where Francis David died.

Beginning and ending in the lovely Hungarian capital city of Budapest, the trip will include three days and nights in your congregation's partner village. GWA pilgrims will discover the warmth and loving hospitality of Transylvania Unitarian families during a home stay, attend church, share a relaxed picnic and experience rural village life. The pilgrimage will consist of 14 days/13 nights. Land packages offered by UUPCC Pilgrimage Service are \$1,475 standard or \$1,650 upgrade-double occupancy (add \$250 for single supplement) plus \$150 per person non-refundable registration fee. These costs *do not* include airfare to and from Budapest. Read the entire itinerary here: http://www.uupcc.org/trips/gwa_pilgrimage.pdf.

Please let **Lisa Gillispie** (lisagillispie@earthlink.net) know if you are interested.



Annual Climate Change Event and Potluck Lunch

Sunday, March 29, 1:00–4:00 pm

Chapel and Commons

(Potluck lunch served after second service)

Join Rev. Kate Walker, Meagan Henry, Virginia Tech Engineering Department students, and others for this annual “green” event and potluck lunch. Bring the entire family to share fun, food, singing, activities, and informative presentations. Find out the latest news about all that MVUC has been doing lately to help reduce its carbon footprint, including:

- Virginia Tech Engineering Department students’ presentation of their study of MVUC’s windmill and exploration of other energy options.
- Discovery Circles at MVUC: Simplicity, Menu for the Future, and Sustainability.

• MVUC’s “Green Year” plans, progress to date, and what’s next.

• Green products for sale during coffee hour on the fourth Sunday of each month: Fair Trade coffee and chocolate, cleaning products, tissues, and toilet paper.

Please bring your old cell phones and printer cartridges to the event for recycling. For more information, contact **Suzanne Cleary**, scleary3@cox.net or 703-768-4967.

Green Tip–Community Recycling Event Saturday, March 28, 9:00 am–2:00 pm South County Government Center

Fairfax County will accept household hazardous waste, televisions, computer and electronic recycling, bicycle recycling, and document shredding. Bring items to the South County Government Center, 8350 Richmond Hwy. For more information, contact Becky Hunger at dhunger@cox.net, 703-704-6000.

Susan B. Anthony (SBA) Budget Report

SBA recommendations have been approved by the Board of Trustees. Holiday Shop profits have been transferred to the church operating account for the following items:

- \$4,000 for property major maintenance, to include property-line fencing
- 3,000 for the Natural Playground
- 300 for Leadership Seminar costs
- 3,150 to install power in the Walled Garden
- 950 for a MovieMate projector for the Meeting House
- 1,000 for an energy-efficient refrigerator for the Hollin Hall entry pantry
- 200 for two Ipod docking stations
- 500 for building signage
- 340 for four resin bridge tables
- 1,600 for two powered speakers for the Chapel
- 2,400 for two defibrillators
- 1,200 for a humidifier for the piano and two wedge-shaped risers for the choir

\$18,640 Total

~Joan Wamsley, SBA Treasurer

Coming of Age (COA) Fundraiser

On Sunday, March 1, the COA class will sell “Shout-Outs” during the coffee hours. What’s a Shout-Out? Your message will be personally carried by a member of the COA class on a poster board in front of the audience at the Variety Show on Saturday evening, March 7. How about telling someone in the audience you love them? Wish them Happy Birthday? Advertise your website? Invite the audience to a church function? Each Shout-Out is only \$5. All the proceeds will help fund the COA kids’ trip to Boston this spring. Come to the Variety Show/Lasagna Dinner on March 7 and make sure you have purchased a Shout-Out for the show. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Virginia Cluster Meeting of UUs for Social Justice Saturday, March 14, 8:30 am–1:00 pm Meeting House

The program will include three workshops; one on regional interfaith advocacy programs, one on what area congregations are doing on affordable housing homelessness issues, and one with Chesapeake Climate Action Network on environmental possibilities in northern Virginia. Rev. Kate Walker will lead the opening worship. Attendees are invited to bring a bag lunch if they wish to stay and eat and network following the program. For further information, refer to <http://mvuc.org/pages/Directions.html>.

Activities On and Off the Hill

Foster Parents Are Needed in Our Area

Have you considered fostering or adopting? Our area has a great need for foster families, both temporary and permanent placements. If you love children and have space in your home, please call for details. ~**Rhonda Newman**, 703-519-7965

NoVA UU Transitions Support Network

Life is a challenge! That is what makes it worth living. However, sometimes the challenges can be worrisome even when they are good changes such as retiring. When they are difficult transitions such as job loss or divorce, they can be overwhelming and lonely. Don't take the journey alone.

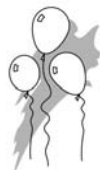
The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF) is sponsoring a Transitions Support Network open to all individuals regardless of religious affiliation or locality. The first meeting will be held on Wednesday evening, March 4 at the UUCF Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton VA 22124. The meetings will occur every Wednesday starting at 7:00 pm. From 7:00-7:30 pm, there will be a coffee and social networking. At 7:30 pm, the actual meeting will start and go until 9:00 pm. The first meetings will be organizational meetings and discussions on transitions in general. For further information contact the Transitions Support Network leads at novauut-sn@cox.net or call Roy Seabolt at 703-880-6692.

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).



RE Youth March Birthdays!



2 Tyler Machanic	14 Jace Snedecor
4 Jessica Robbert	24 Katherine Marsh
4 Benjamin Roberts	27 Jason Venzke
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

Thank You—And You, And You, And You, And....

We all know that MVUC runs on Volunteer Power, but sometimes we forget just how much time, energy, and care some put into service to the rest of us. Three of our long-serving volunteers are taking a well-deserved respite, and a fourth has marked quite a milestone. The Board of Trustees and Program Council Coordinator **Kim Cullen Cobb** recognize and thank them; we hope everyone else will as well.

If you had coffee on a Sunday over the last three years, chances are that **Sally Montanari** and **Betty Davis** provided the set-up and the smiling service. They made Coffee Hour a pleasure for all of us. After a *lot* of Sundays as servers, they are going to try Coffee from the Commons side of the counter for a change.

For the better part of two decades (!!!), **Barbara Al-Turki** has graced our chapel with fresh flower arrangements. Barbara coordinated with many others in bringing in flowers, but most Sundays, she provided the flowers herself, at her own expense. Her contributions and steadfastness have added beauty and warmth to our services. Thank you, Barbara, for doing so much for so long. What a gift you gave us!

Many of us have thoroughly enjoyed the famous MVUC New Members Dinners. These are terrific gatherings of long-term, mid-term, and brand-new members; we get to know each other, share what we hope for MVUC, and seriously overeat. They are instant bonding events. You probably know that **Sandy Peterson** has been arranging these. You probably did not know that the January 2009 dinner was the 20th consecutive New Members Dinner organized by Sandy. Now *that* is commitment. Sandy continues to serve, but she no doubt would welcome a helping hand from someone looking for a fun way to contribute.

If you would like to honor the service of these great members, do so. First, thank them when you see them! Second, take a turn yourself at these important services. There is no better way to honor service and express thanks than to pick up the ball yourself for a bit. If you might be interested in helping, contact Kim (kimjcc@mac.com) about flowers, or **Kay Youngflesh** (rkyflesh@comcast.net) about coffee service, or Sandy (sandrapeterson@cox.net) about the New Members Dinner. And thank you in advance! These people have served us all, setting the example for us. They represent what is special about MVUC.



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.

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Update

With the transition to the new administration, the UUSC is particularly optimistic about future efforts of our government in four focus areas: Economic Justice, Environmental Justice, Civil Liberties, and Rights in Humanitarian Crises. UUSC Public Policy Manager Shelley Moskowitz recently remarked that “the human rights community is no longer at the gates protesting from without, but now has a seat at the table, to work in partnership for a better world.” A UUSC national teleconference was held in January to discuss human rights prospects under the new administration, and those interested can access a recording at 888-203-1112, pass code 63093183#. Key elements included:

In Economic Justice, President Obama’s economic recovery package will include funding for energy conservation and green sustainment jobs, as well as Gulf Coast projects.

In Environmental Justice, it is hoped that the new administration will support the human right to water before the UN Human Rights Council and will support UN initiatives on climate change.

In Civil Liberties, the administration has promised to end US-sponsored torture and to close down the Guantanamo Detention Center.

In Rights in Humanitarian Crises, the administration has promised to focus on diplomatic foreign policy efforts to end the forgotten wars in Africa and to finally bring peace to Darfur.

Regarding current world events, the UUSC has launched a Gaza Humanitarian Crisis Fund and is soliciting donations via the Gaza Crisis link at www.uusc.org.

“It is important to remember that we cannot only invest power of leadership in [President] Obama, but we must also take the responsibility of leadership on ourselves to create change,” noted Martha Thompson, UUSC’s manager for Rights in Humanitarian Crises.

Finally, many of you may know that March 29 is Justice Sunday. This year the UUSC is devoting the day to the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As my personal testament, and also as testament to Holocaust Remembrance Day (April 21), I will be hosting private tours of the Permanent Exhibit of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum on Saturdays (dates to be determined). Group size is limited; so, interested members should contact me at cohendl@cox.net. The tours will last about three hours and are suitable for family members over age 12. I am also available at other times for special group tours.

~Dan Cohen, MVUC UUSC Representative

Social Justice Upcoming Activities

Spring is always busy with activities for all ages and social justice interests. Please join the Social Justice team for any or all of the following:

–**Sunday, March 1**, 3:00 pm, Meeting House: Barbershop Harmony Benefit Concert. We heard them before, let’s enjoy them again, as they sing to benefit the Bryant Early Learning Center (BEL Center).

–**Friday, March 6**, 7:00 pm, Hollin Hall Morning Room: Peace and Justice Film Series: *Promises* (2001). A documentary portraying the lost innocence of Jewish and Palestinian children, as they tell their story of growing up in Jerusalem.

–**Saturday, March 14**, 9:00 am-12:45 pm, Hollin Hall: UUSJ Cluster Meeting. Sponsored by Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice, with the participation of UU churches in the Virginia segment of UUSJ, this event features a series of workshops about effective social justice activities (interfaith advocacy, affordable housing, greening the earth and more).

–**Saturday, March 21**, 5:30 pm, Meeting House: Annual Partner Church Dinner. Enjoy Romanian, Hungarian and Indian food, and hear updates on our work in Romania and India.

–**Sunday, March 22**, 7:00-9:00 pm, Meeting House: “For Ever Wild, Walkin’ Jim Stoltz Concert.” Award-winning multimedia concert celebrating our connection to nature and the inspiration we get from it. Proceeds will benefit social justice programs at MVUC.

–**Sunday, March 29**, 1:00-4:00 pm: Annual Climate Change Event; see details on page 6.

–**Thursday nights, through the end of March**: Help feed the homeless through VIC-HOP. The program is in dire need of overnight volunteers. If you can help, please contact **Helen Lounsbury**.

–**Fourth Sunday of the month after each service**: Sale of green products in the Commons.

–**Ongoing**: Recycle printer cartridges and old cell phones of any kind, shape or size. Proceeds help low-income families in our community. Food drive of non-perishable items or gift cards to Giant, Shoppers or Safeway help Route 1 and are in great demand at this time of year. Finally, bring your mug from home and help turn our coffee hour green. Hang it on the mug rack behind the door in the copy room and use it when you need it.

For more information, please visit the Social Justice page on our website, check Upcoming Activities.

~Georgeta Pourchot

Social Justice Activities

Pro-Choice Lobby Day

On Thursday, February 5, six members of MVUC braved the cold to travel to Richmond to lobby our legislators during this year's session. This is the fourth year in a row that a group organized by the Women's Reproductive Rights Task Force has participated. **Rev. Kate Walker, Sandy Peterson, Joe Sanders, Louise Werner-Rhoades, and Bill and Lynn Alsmeyer-Johnson** made the trip, joining over 400 pro-choice activists from across the state.

The highlight of the day was our presence in the Senate Gallery for the day's session. Our group was admitted to the very limited public seating area. State Senator Toddy Puller formally recognized us from the Senate floor as members of Mount Vernon Unitarian Church led by Rev. Kate Walker. We stood up together and were on camera.

We also witnessed Senate Bill 1270, which would require clinics that provide abortions to meet hospital standards, being defeated in committee earlier in the morning. This was a standing-room-only hearing of the Health and Education Committee. Then we split up and met with our individual legislators. We participated in the People of Faith Gathering on the Capitol grounds, and then joined the statewide group for lunch at the Richmond YWCA. It was a great day in spite of the cold!

To those who were there, to those who were with us in spirit: Thanks for your time and effort and energy and support. ~Lynn Alsmeyer-Johnson



Pictured above are MVUC's attendees **Bill Alsmeyer Johnson, Rev. Kate Walker, Sandy Peterson, Louise Werner-Rhoades, and Lynn Alsmeyer Johnson.** Not shown is Joe Sanders.

Activities On and Off the Hill

Ethical Investing for Congregations

Are MVUC's funds ethically invested? We'll have an opportunity to explore this issue, along with other local congregations, at a May 9 conference, entitled *Money, Values and Impact: A Conference on Ethical Investing for UU Congregations*, to be held at All Souls Church in the District. Sponsored by Joseph Priestley District, Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ), and the All Souls Church Investment and Seventh Principle Committees, the conference will explore investment vehicles, exemplary practices and policies, case studies of individual congregations that have made a major positive impact in their community, and opportunities to help build a more green and just economy. Watch the UUSJ web site for forthcoming information on registration.

Tax Opportunity for Contributions

If you are age 70.5 or above, you have an opportunity (through the end of calendar year 2009) to make a contribution to MVUC, UUA, or other charitable entities, directly from your IRA, without including your withdrawal in taxable income. This is particularly advantageous, from a taxation perspective, if you contemplate a large gift that would exceed 50 percent of your adjusted gross income. To see if this would be advantageous to you, please read more on the UUA web site at <http://www.uua.org/giving/plannedgifts/120693.shtml>.

~Al Robbert

Oops! Correction to Sunday, February 1, 9:30 am Service

I made a mistake during my sermon regarding the history of the doxology of the Lord's Prayer. The original text in Matthew and Luke did not have the last lines: *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

It is not clear when it was added to the Lord's Prayer, but some scholars believe it was added later due to Jewish history having a doxology at the end of their prayers. Protestants have traditionally used it. Catholics added it later as a separate piece of the liturgy until it was informally attached after the Second Vatican, with many services including intercessory prayers.

Thank you to everyone who brought my mistake to my attention.

Cheers,

~Kate Walker

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 1

*Finding Common Ground
Partner Church Service*

Jane Nelson and Mimi Stevens

March 8

To be announced

Sunday Services Committee

March 15

*If Spirituality Is the Answer,
What's the Question? (Part 1)*

Rev. Kate R. Walker

March 22

*If Spirituality Is the Answer,
What's the Question? (Part 2)*

Rev. Kate R. Walker

March 29

Liberal Church Growth
Rev. Kate R. Walker

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

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**Reminder to All MVUC
E-Mail Users**

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