



Windmill

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

Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

February 1, 2010

... is a Welcoming Congregation. Its Mission is to inspire a transforming journey, to embrace our interconnectedness, and to build a loving community of fairness, equality and respect.

Taking Note . . .

by The Reverend Kate R. Walker



I make it a point never to complain about the sun. It's shining on the back of my head right now as I type, but this morning it was shining on the front of my head, as in my eyes. I refuse to complain. I reluctantly close the blinds when my squinting gives me a headache. I really don't like to block the sun from shining upon me. I need it.

I've lived in places like Colorado and California where the sun is a regular contributor to a beautiful day. I've lived in England and northwestern Pennsylvania where the sun can disappear for months. I yearned for the sun when it disappeared like yearning for water after a long hike in the desert.

We all need the sun's gift of vitamin D production in the body, which supports our immune system among other benefits. Recent research supports the sun's benefit even over the risk of skin cancer. They say people are so fearful of skin cancer that they're risking loss of vitamin D. It's no wonder humanity has worshipped the sun in various deity forms throughout the ages. The sun is a part of our cellular structure.

Some of us struggle with SAD, seasonal affective disorder, a recurring depression associated with the

seasons, usually starting in the late fall and going through the winter months. Loss of energy and moodiness are often reported. I've known too many people who suffer from SAD and other forms of depression to take this affliction lightly. Light therapy and medications are valuable treatments. But the sun is power incarnate.

Mary Oliver's poem titled "The Sun" calls us to look upon the sun as the most wonderful thing in our life, "... and have you ever felt for anything such wild love — do you think there is anywhere, in any language, a word billowing enough for the pleasure that fills you, as the sun reaches out, as it warms you..."

The poet ends her call for worship with the sharp recognition that any of us can forget such heavenly wonder, turning away from the world, and instead go crazy for power and things.

I desperately try not to complain about the sun. And I reluctantly block its rays from my body and soul. As we enjoy the turning of the earth, may you too let the sun remind you which direction to face in the morning.

Love, Kate R. Walker

February Theme of the Month: Love. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin calls love "the most universal, formidable and mysterious of cosmic energies." I can't help but wonder what would happen to the hearts and minds of women and men who experience the power of unfiltered love. Why we filter love is the study of psychologists; understanding love is the study of theologians. — Kate

Rev. Kate R. Walker

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Program Highlights Mark Your Calendar!

Mission/Vision Workshop

Tuesday, February 2, 7:30-9 pm (see page 4)

Sunday, February 14, 12:30-1:45 pm

Knitting Socks Workshop

Wednesdays: February 3, 10, 17, and 24

11 am-1 pm (see page 8)

First Wednesday Fellowship

February 3 (See page 5)

Dinner: -7 pm

Vespers: 7-7:30 pm

Choir, yoga, poetry, movies, etc.: 7:30-9 pm

Good Companions

Tuesday, February 9

11:45 am-1:45 pm (see page 8)

Rev. Kate Walker: Everyone Dreams

Lunch with a Book

Sunday, February 14

12:45 pm (see page 5)

Capital Punishment Forum

Thursday, February 25

7-9 pm (see page 8)

Epiphany Lutheran Church

JPD Worship Arts Festival

Saturday, February 27

8 am-4 pm

Bull Run UU Church in Manassas (see page 6)

Drumming and Spirituality with Matt Meyer

Sunday, February 28



1-3 pm (see page 6)



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

I'm so pleased to have the opportunity to introduce to everyone **Beth Summanen**, our Senior High Youth Coordinator. She works with the 9th-12th grade class, YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists). Beth has been a member of MVUC since the fall of 2008. She comes to us with lifespan UU youth experience, having grown up at the First Unitarian Church of Columbus (Ohio) with active experience in the Ohio-Meadville District Youth-Adult Council. After college, Beth became a senior high school youth advisor at First Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson and staff Senior High Youth Coordinator,

while also mobilizing the local YRUU to engage with other youth in the Pacific Southwest District. She has been trained by the Unitarian Universalist Association to co-lead (with a Youth) the Basic Youth Advisor Training. When not involved with YRUU, Beth has also assisted in Coming of Age programs both in Tucson and briefly at Arlington. Beth is dedicated to empowering our youth while engaging them in the congregation and larger denomination. Welcome, Beth!

		RE Youth February Birthdays			
8	Ian Anderson	17	Connor Sadler	18	Dolan Napier
12	Yohannes Lee	18	Margaret Pomykala		
14	Chelsea Hoover				

Yours in Community, Meagan Henry

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES, WINTER 2010

Bible Course — Peg Bartel

First and third Mondays, through May 17, 7:30 to 9 pm in the Hollin Hall Morning Room

This class focuses on the Jesus Seminar research and study on the five gospels (Mark, Matthew, Luke, John and Thomas). The approach is both scholarly and based on spiritual messages contained in the gospels. We look at the historical context to understand why a particular gospel or passage was written the way it was. Outside videos and materials are used to enhance our understanding of the time and culture in which the New Testament was written. Information from Peg Bartel, 703-799-1208.

Facing Death with Life — Rev. Kate R. Walker

Sundays, 1:30 to 3:30 pm, March 21 to May 23, (no classes on April 4 or May 9) in the Fireplace Room in Hollin Hall.

This curriculum is to facilitate a combination of personal reflection, learning, and growth on the topic of death and dying. This is not a grief support group, nor is it an academic analysis. However, there are intellectual components that can stimulate personal reflection. In addition there are some pragmatic components, including writing advanced directives.

This class will: help participants discover personal meaning and develop a personal theology regarding death; aid participants in preparing for their own and another's death; provide information about cultural and religious perspectives on death; offer reflection on the stages of grief and bereavement; provide information on how to prepare children for death; provide information on how to prepare ourselves for the death of a child; provide information on how to cope with a suicide, or a death where dignity has been lost.

This is an 8-week course and each session is two hours. In addition, there will be two field trips. We strongly encourage people to commit to attending all eight sessions. The course will culminate in a final project presented during the last week. Information from Kate Walker, minister@mvuc.org.

Sitting Meditation — Dale Peebles

Sundays, 7 to 8:30 pm in the Carriage House

This class practices sitting meditation and studies readings from Jack Kornfeld, Thich Nhat Hanh, Sharon Salzberg and others. The readings provide encouragement, instruction and support for those with no previous experience in Buddhist meditation. We practice for our own benefit and the benefit of others. Introductory instruction is available for newcomers. You do not need to register in advance. Information from Dale Peebles, 703-780-2243.

Global Warming: Changing CO₂urse — Wendy Burns and Kathy Seikel

Sundays, 7:30 to 9 pm, February 21, 28, March 7, 14 and 21 in the Hollin Hall Fireplace Room

Global Warming: Changing CO₂urse is a four-session course exploring the history and science of global warming, personal values and habits as they relate to climate change, and personal actions aimed at curbing the effects of global warming. Wendy Burns from Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church and Kathy Seikel from St. Aidan's Episcopal Church will facilitate this Northwest Earth Institute course. We ask each participant to commit to attending all sessions. Class size is limited to 12 participants. Please bring \$21.00 to the first class to pay for the book we will use. See www.nwei.org, or contact Wendy Burns, wdburns@erols.com or Kathy Seikel, seikel.kathy@epa.gov for more information.

Monthly Worship Theme

LOVE, BY THE REV. KATE R. WALKER

Sunday, February 7, the Rev. Kate R. Walker

“The Changing Face of Love” — Love is the theme of the month for February. The UUA offers us “[National Standing on the Side of Love Day](#).” In this service, we’ll take a look around and see if our perceptions of love are keeping up with reality.

Sunday, February 14, the Rev. Kate R. Walker

“Love Each Other to Death” — As we explore love this month, I feel compelled to ask: Is love all good? The MVUC choir will sing for first service. For second service we will have the combined choirs of MVUC and Paint Branch UU Church in Adelphi, MD.

Sunday, February 21, Annual YRUU Service

“SpiritUUality” — Presented by Mount Vernon Unitarian Church’s YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists)

Sunday, February 28, the Rev. Kate R. Walker

“Seat Belts On. It’s Time for Takeoff” — Imagine you’re on a plane and the pilot says, “We’re all set for takeoff, but we don’t have enough money to buy the fuel; we’re passing the plate.” We will have music by special guest percussionist Matt Meyer from Boston, the MVUC Choir, and Voices of Youth. All set for takeoff!

Question Box Sunday — by the Rev. Kate Walker

(These are the last of the questions from Question Box Sunday in August 2009.)

Q About how many other ministers were there in Meadville, and how did you relate to them? How are you finding interfaith ministry here?”

A I never counted the ministers and their churches in Meadville, but there are a lot of churches in the town, particularly in the downtown area where the UUs are based. I used to joke that folks in Meadville were either in church on Sunday or at Wal-Mart. There are two groups of ministers — those who would sit with liberals such as me, and those who would not. In the Mt. Vernon area I have found the area clergy to be very friendly and welcoming. They meet for breakfast once a week at a noisy diner on Route 1.

Q Do you have a favorite prayer or daily prayer ritual?”

A I have several prayer rituals. One is whenever I hear a siren, I pray for peace for all those involved in the emergency. On Sundays, I say a prayer for my colleagues as I’m putting on my robe and stole. Before I officiate at a wedding or memorial, I pray for the families that they find connection and harmony during this time of transition.

Q Why our concern in building a new “house”? I’ve pledged regretfully. We have not grown, and quantitatively bigger

does not qualify as “growth.” Put the money into staff, people, etc.

A I had trouble reading this question, so please pardon any misinterpretation of the writing. As I’ve noted since arriving here, I believe it is important to maintain and to have a spiritual home that we can all celebrate in. The Commons is not adequate for socializing due to its limited size and very difficult acoustics. Religious Education and programming are continually struggling with space limitations, and much of our RE and program space is not accessible. Our choir and music program do not have adequate space for preparation and storage of their tools of their trade. Staff are separated between two different buildings, which makes for less cohesive teamwork, and three of the offices are not accessible. I agree that quantitatively bigger does not qualify growth. Quality and quantity are both important, which is why the Personnel Committee and the board have made staff salaries a priority over the past two years ensuring we are a “Fair Share Congregation” according to UUA standards. Staff are key to quality programming and worship. For this in particular, I thank you for your pledge!

Envisioning Our Hill of Dreams— Mission/Vision Update

It’s important to ask ourselves periodically: What is our mission as a congregation? What do we most value about the church? What do we want this community to become? What are our top priorities?

One interesting and fun way to get started in discussions about these important questions is to share our responses with each other to the question: “Recall a time when...”

If you were not at one of our January events, we encourage you to attend one of the following workshops, in the Chapel:

Tuesday, February 2, 7:30-9:00 pm

Sunday, February 14, 12:30-1:45 pm

Facilitators led by Sue and Howard Lamb will stimulate discussion, and there will be note-takers to record your thoughts. We need everyone’s ideas!

The Theme Team, led by Joan Darrah and Karen Tyson, will work to crystallize your ideas, dreams, and wishes into statements of MVUC’s mission, vision and values. We’ll circulate a draft in March, and we’ll ask people to vote on adopting these statements at the Annual Meeting in April. In the coming months, church members will work out an action plan to help guide us as we move into the future.

To sign up for these important and stimulating sessions, please email Joan Darrah at jedarrah@aol.com or call 703-768-5751. Please let us know if you’ll need childcare.

If you cannot make any of the workshops, there will be an opportunity for you to provide input at our website (<http://www.mvuc.org/Mission>) and by sending written comments to the Church office.

On and Off the Hill

Wednesday Fellowship

If it's February, it's time for a romantic dinner, complete with candles, chocolate and love songs! Please join us on February 3rd for a romantic dinner from 6 to 7 pm, followed by a vespers service, from 7 to 7:30 pm. Choir, yoga, poetry, movies, and kids' activities follow from 7:30 to 9 pm. For information, contact Georgia Pourchot, 703-721-0595, gpourchot@yahoo.com.

Recession Takes Bite Out of MVUC Finances

As the headline indicates, MVUC has not been immune to effects of the ongoing recession. Our stewardship giving is meeting expectations, but our revenue from wedding rentals is significantly lower than it has been in recent years.

We started the current church fiscal year (which runs from July 2009 through June 2010) with an unobligated balance of about \$127,000 in our operating fund. Our operating fund budget for this year includes a forecast of \$100,000 in wedding revenue net of expenses. So far, our net of wedding revenue over expenses is only \$5,000, with relatively few bookings for the rest of the fiscal year. Consequently, we have seen a \$71,000 deficit in our operating fund revenue and expenses so far this year and the unobligated balance in our operating fund has dwindled to \$39,000.

We are not in danger of running out of money. We have significant assets within our operating funds that are

obligated in various ways but could be tapped in an emergency, including \$100,000 earmarked for property major maintenance. We also have significant assets, segregated from our operating funds, that are reserved for special purposes and should not be tapped to cover operating fund shortfalls. These include \$452,000 in our building fund, \$706,000 in our endowment fund, \$43,000 in our memorial walks fund, and \$53,349 in our windmill preservation fund.

If you'd like to follow the church's financial condition in more detail, please consult the balance sheets and revenue and expense statements that are attached to monthly Board of Trustees minutes, available on the MVUC website.

Lunch with a Book

The next meeting of Lunch with a Book is Sunday, February 14th 12:45 pm at the Village Wharf Restaurant. The book we will be discussing is the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Strout. It's about a retired school teacher and her attitude towards the small town where she lives in Maine, as well as the world at large. You don't have to have read the book to join us for food and conversation about books. For more information contact Louise Werner-Rhoades at louron13@cox.net or 703-619-1369.

SUSTAINING THE DREAM

JAMIE BARNETT, STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Our Holy Hill is at a crossroad. After years of uncertainty, our faith, vision, and work have returned MVUC to a strong position and a good place. We are a welcoming, caring community of faith on a common journey. Our membership is growing once again, due to our ministry, our programs, and the warmth of our community. To sustain our dream, we must ensure that MVUC endures and grows into the future.

By giving generously and by increasing our giving over last year, we show our commitment to the ministry of Kate Walker, to the ministry of our great staff, to the work and care of our dedicated volunteers, to the lifelong benefits of our vibrant Religious Education program, and the life-changing results of our social justice program.

A percentage increase of 5% to 10% in your pledge will ensure that we meet our program and service needs, offer outstanding religious education classes, and deepen our spiritual awareness.

For February 28, Rev. Kate has planned a special service to help us celebrate who we are, where we've been, and where we're going. Please join us and please help us Sustain the Dream.



Musical Notes **from Mark Zimmerman, Director of Music**

February holds much excitement for music here at MVUC. On the 14th, Paint Branch UU choir will be here to sing with our choir during the 11:15 service. Nearly 55 singers! The following week, while our youth create wonderful services here, our choir goes to Paint Branch to sing with them. It's a great exchange program. On February 28, our children and youth choirs will be singing, along with guest UU musician Matt Meyer, to celebrate Stewardship Sunday.

Saturday, February 27, is the JPD Worship Arts Festival "Lighting the Fire of Faith" 8 am to 4 pm at [Bull Run UU Church](#) in Manassas. Great ideas for teachers, group leaders, and lay worship leaders. Registration closes February 15th: see Mark for information.

Drumming and Spirituality with Matt Meyer **Percussion and Drum Circle Workshop** **Sunday, February 28, 2010, 1 to 3 pm** **MVUC Chapel, \$8 Suggested Donation**

Drumming and Spirituality workshops provide a unique opportunity for people of all skill levels to discover the spirituality that rhythm has to offer through hands-on experience with drumming. Participants leave with a greater understanding of not only the mechanics of rhythm making, but a much broader sense of how rhythm and music can positively affect our lives and relationships.

Workshops consist of games, exercises, stories and discussions, which allow participants to begin to look at and experience the power of drumming to bring people together and build community. Workshops also include some basic instruction on how to get the fullest sound from the instrument, how to listen more attentively and participate in an ensemble of musicians, as well as some background information on the origins of various kinds of drums and their original roles in the cultures that developed them.

Matt Meyer is an artist of percussion, knowledgeable and experienced in a variety of styles, including Latin-jazz, Brazilian, folk, funk, hip hop, and pop. He is a graduate of Berklee College of Music and has studied in Cuba, Ghana, and Central America.

A love of music and a deep respect for its ability to stir and transform audiences is at the heart of Matt's continuing devotion to understand more of the world's cultures through the vocabulary of rhythm.

Men's Chorus to Sing March 21

The Harmony Heritage Singers will present a concert of traditional and popular songs at MVUC on Sunday, March 21, at 3 pm. Proceeds benefit the BEL (Bryant Early Learning) Center. Information is available from Ron Brandt, 703-765-4779.

Spring Book Sale Is Coming!

The Spring Book Sale will be March 25, 26, & 27. The bookshelves in the fireplace room of Hollin Hall are

already filling up with books for the sale. You may purchase these books now for \$2 each. Please leave the money in the box on the shelf. We have lots of books and are happy to sell these books now to make room for more.

We will need help for the sale: moving boxes from the basement, setting up for the sale, cashiering, and cleaning up. What I really need is someone to recruit volunteers to fill the staffing needs for the sale. Can you help? Contact Joan Wamsley, 703-751-6086.

Church Life

Annual Lasagna Dinner And Variety Show Saturday, March 6

The Annual Lasagna Dinner to benefit the Coming-of-Age trip to Boston will be held on Saturday, March 6, 5:30 - 6:30 pm in the Meeting House prior to the Variety Show. Dinner will include delicious lasagna — meat and veggie — 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 pm. Adults and children — young and old — all are welcome to perform. So, break out your bongos and dust off your tutu. A sign-up sheet for the Variety Show will be in the Commons each Sunday. Everyone should attend this at least once! Contact Linda Jemison (the emcee) by email at linda@fairfax.info or 703-765-0379.

Dear MVUC Friends,

After some significant soul-searching, I resigned from the Board of Trustees on January 10. When I was elected to the Board, I did not know the job I now have even existed. Once I took my position at the FCC as the Chief of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, I thought that I might be able to do both.

But after several months, it has become apparent to me that I am not doing justice to the Church and the Board. I know that we are all busy, but I am finding that I am not able to focus on important Church matters and reliably attend meetings and other MVUC events. I think that it would be better to allow the Board to replace me now with someone who can give the job the energy and time that it deserves.

I am hopeful that I will be able to stay involved with the Stewardship campaign and, I hope, an upcoming building project. I can't tell you how much I regret leaving the Board now, especially from the standpoint of the many important things that MVUC has on its plate. I believe in what MVUC and the Board are doing. I wanted to ensure that no one mistakes my resignation for some dispute or disagreement. Thank you for your friendship and understanding.

—Jamie Barnett

Games Night A Winner!

Our annual Games Night on January 9th was a winner! Participation and enthusiasm were the best in recent memory. "This was the best games night ever, and I've been going for years and years," said one participant. Almost 30 children of all ages and 25 adults (also of all ages) participated. The pot luck was varied and yummy! We all applaud **Katherine Johnson**, who not only coordinated the event but provided an incredible selection of pastas from Noodles and Co. A memorable night!

Holy Order of Boxwood Pickers!

Thanks to all of this year's "Holy Order of Boxwood Pickers" — Lisa Guide, Carl Lohmann, Mary Barnett, Betsy Stephens, David Napier, Helen Haltzel, Kristen Rich, Jim Kerr, Meg Clontz, Nancy Barkume, and Wendy Burns. Their picking skills provided the boxwood for the Holiday Workshop wreaths and wreaths for MVUC friends in need. We also picked enough boxwood to create a number of wreaths that were sold by the Greenhouse Group. Boxwood picking is a very satisfying activity and one that some say is their favorite time on "The Hill." We pick the boxwood to provide boxwood for our needs, but it is also necessary to pick it to keep the boxwoods healthy. We are a very welcoming group (we're not "picky") and will quickly induct you into the Holy Order with just a little instruction. Please join us next year! —Wendy Burns

Bob Schultz

It is with much sadness we bring the news of the death of Bob Schultz, on Monday, January 11, 2010. Bob's health had recently declined due to complications from heart disease and cancer. A memorial service will be held at MVUC on a date to be determined by the family.

Letters of condolence can be sent to:

Donna and Dennis McDowell
24308 Hipsley Mill Rd.
Gaithersburg, MD 20882

Carol and Gary Hockaday
3105 Normandy Ave.
Fredricksburg, VA 22401

Robert Schultz and Allison Pinckney
12749 Bradwell Rd.
Herndon, VA 22071



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.

Haiti Support

As you all know, Haiti was hit by a devastating earthquake on January 12th. National and international agencies are helping in any way they can. MVUC has a Disaster Relief Fund set up to dispense financial aid whenever a situation like this occurs at home or elsewhere in the world. If you wish to donate to support the people of Haiti, please place a check in the Sunday collection basket, made out to MVUC with 'disaster fund' in the memo line. We will send a check to the UUA/UUSC Fund for Haiti. For more information, contact Georgia Pourchot at gpourchot@yahoo.com or 703-721-0595.

Capital Punishment Forum

On Thursday, February 25, from 7 to 9 pm, you are invited to meet, discuss, and share your thoughts on capital punishment and the justice system. Meet and hear an exonerated death row prisoner. Meet the mother of a young man currently on death row. Meet and share your ideas with a member of the Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission. Express your opinion on this important issue. The event will be held at Epiphany Lutheran Church, 5521 Old Mill Road. Questions? Call Herb (703-768-2380) or Bethany (703-509-8806).

Easy Being Green

Did you know that a third of households' total environmental impact is related to food and drink consumption? To help reduce the footprint of the foods you buy, there are a few things you can do when at the grocery store. First, reduce consumption of meat. More than a third of all U.S. fossil fuels go toward producing meat. Animal agriculture is highly correlated with pollution and natural resource depletion.

Also, be willing to shop in the organic section, since fewer pesticides and other polluting chemicals are used to produce the items sold there. Look, too, for where and when a product was produced. Buying food produced and grown locally and in season reduces the miles your food has to be shipped to get to your shopping cart and the amount of energy used to store it. Examine whether what you're considering buying is over-packaged; if it is, leave it in the store as a statement of disapproval that'll hit corporations' bottom lines. I have to put in a plug for avoiding plastic drink bottles. And, use your own reusable shopping bags. Just a thought... Wendy Burns

Good Companions

Hollin Hall Dining Room & Fireplace Room
Elaine Bronez, assisted by Eleanor & Al Erickson
BYO Lunch 11:45 - 12:45 | Speaker 12:45 - 1:45

Tuesday, February 9, 2010

Rev. Kate Walker: Everyone dreams, even if they don't remember the dreams

There are techniques for remembering dreams and for using them to deepen understanding about one's life. I've been in two dreams groups and found dream analysis helpful. I'll use the work of the Rev. Jeremy Taylor, a Unitarian Universalist Community Minister who has been teaching about dream analysis for

several decades. Please bring a recent dream or a recurring dream which you're comfortable sharing with others.

Tuesday February 23, 2010—Not meeting

Lunch with a Sock (Knitting Socks Workshop)

Hand knit socks were a good seller at the Women's Group table at Holiday Shop. Brush up your sock knitting skills. Come to the Hollin Hall dining room on Wednesdays in February from 11 am to 1 pm. It is not too early to start making things for Holiday Shop 2010. For more information contact Joan Wamsley at 703-751-6086

From Our Board of Trustees by Reid Adler, Chair



Our holiday celebrations and reunions with family and friends are still warm memories, while life for most of us too soon has become something more usual. Yet the chilling news from Haiti reminds us that our community and interconnections are global and that fellow voyagers on our fragile planet desperately need help. The UUA and UU Service Committee have organized a joint relief effort, and here is a mail address and an online link for contributions:

UUSC/UUA Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund c/o UUSC
P.O. Box 844001, Boston, MA 02284-4001

or
https://secure2.convio.net/uusc/site/Donation2?df_id=1720&1720.donation=form1. This program deserves our support, and you will hear at the Church about other opportunities to help. Earthquakes on the East Coast are relatively rare, but this particular tragedy could also happen to us!

Looking at our connections closer to home, in my opinion, the most important and far-reaching community activity on our Hill of Dreams this church year will be the Mission and Vision program described by Karen Tyson elsewhere in this Newsletter. We are fortunate to belong to an organization that is populated with generally like-minded, compassionate, welcoming and questioning brothers and sisters. MVUC has a Covenant that inspires and challenges us, Sunday services that nurture and educate us, a beautiful campus, a superb staff, talented choristers, dedicated volunteers, social justice programs that make a huge difference in the lives of many, an excellent religious education program, many new members, a generous endowment and other abundant riches. Truly, we are blessed.

However, it is not clear to me, and probably not too clear to many of you as well, exactly what are the most critical priorities and issues and opportunities for our Church. I know my personal views, as we each know our own, but we simply haven't talked *as a community* about our vision for MVUC in today's world. What specifically are we committed to accomplish? What are our most imperative values and beliefs about our role? And what are our top priorities as we strive to implement our mission and vision? By the time of our annual meeting in April, we will have a new and collective statement of mission and vision and priorities. This is a vitally important tool, and we will sharpen and make great use of it.

The key benefit to this exercise is the process of imagining and sharing *in community*. The talking and focusing on what we might want to make happen is much more significant than any particular vision priority that emerges. Please try to join one of the sessions that are scheduled by Karen Tyson and Joan Darrah. And if the meeting schedule doesn't suit, you can participate on-line or by submitting written comments. I promise that you will be very glad to participate!

I would also like to thank Jamie Barnett for his many contributions to the Church, including service as a Board member until January. He resigned because of a very heavy workload in a critical homeland security position. And I'm very pleased to welcome Becky Brandt to the Board!

Last, but not least, I need help organizing a small, short-term task force to recommend safety enhancements to the Church, particularly including improved communications between our buildings in case of emergency. Please let me know if you are interested and available!

Need Help with a Church Activity?

We have established a place on the church website, mvuc.org, to list [Volunteer Opportunities](#) under the heading "Church Life." If your committee or activity needs people, let others know by posting the information. Be as specific as possible about the nature of the work, qualifications, time required, etc. Send your notice to Ron Brandt, brandtron@verizon.net.

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 and 11:15 am
unless otherwise noted****

February 7

"The Changing Face of Love"
The Rev. Kate R. Walker

February 14

"Love Each Other to Death"
The Rev. Kate R. Walker

February 21

"SpiRitUUality"
MVUC's Young Religious
Unitarian Universalists

February 28

**"Seat Belts On.
It's Time for Takeoff"**
The Rev. Kate R. Walker

*See Page 4 for Sermon Descriptions

**Mount Vernon
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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, MVUC staff and volunteers are willing to assist you during normal business hours. Please direct any questions or concerns to Betsy Stephens betsys@cox.net or Meg Clontz meg@theclontz.net.

Reminder to All MVUC Email Users

To receive emailed newsletters, weekly bulletins, and special notices, please notify Esther Dickinson if your email address changes, esthergertrude@verizon.net.

Thank you!