



Windmill

Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

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

April 1, 2011

... MVUC is a loving and inclusive community. Our mission is to encourage one another on our spiritual journeys and to work together to build the common good.

Taking Note . . .

by The Reverend Kate R. Walker



I've been reading about young adults. Young being a relative term, I can say with accuracy, those younger than me. While I feel young in my heart and body, most days, I wasn't born in the right year, or decade for that matter, to qualify to speak on their behalf. But I'm going to speak anyway, which is why I've felt it necessary to learn more about future generations. They're headed up the escalator of life in large masses, which is why there's lots of material about the millennial generation or gen Y, along with generation X.

So far, I'm mostly confused. It appears there's a bit of sibling rivalry going on between these generations. Throw in the boomers and there's too much to take in. Very few authors are willing to make broad, sweeping statements about an entire generation with arbitrary birth years. Yet, a few have drawn broad conclusions anyway—after all, that does sell one's book—but I take these with a few grains of kosher salt.

I'm narrowing it down to church and religion. But that topic is big too. I narrowed it down again to stewardship for this column, even though beliefs and worship style are important.

According to the Rev. Carol Howard Merritt, author of *Vital Ministry in a New Generation*, most people between the ages of 21-40 have more debt than older generations at the same age. This is due to increased housing costs, resulting in higher mortgages, which are more than the long recommended 22% of a

budget (particularly in the D.C. region). For those who went to college or graduate school, student loans have become a necessary investment. Hopefully these now settled and well-educated folks find a well-paying job that can cover their debt so they can stay off the credit card merry-go-round. If married or partnered, both people likely need to work to sustain a basic life style, again, particularly if they live in our area.

This debt results in stress and anxiety whenever money is brought up. Add in the subject of raising children and this may bring up all sorts of financial anxiety pitted against one's deep human desire to raise children. In addition, women are pursuing careers more often than previous generations, making these choices all the more complex.

Imagine sitting in worship service, where spiritual exploration is sought and emotional solace is needed, but along with these wonderful messages come messages for financial stewardship. Zap, anxiety in worship service. In addition, the church wants and indeed is dependent upon volunteer service. Yikes, already working long hours and possibly taking care of young kids, more anxiety in worship.

I suspect, really, I know, important investments such as retirement are not happening, which makes it downright unethical for a church to ask for a pledge.

(Continued on page 5)

Rev. Kate R. Walker

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Program Highlights Mark Your Calendar!

Wednesday Fellowship

Wednesday, April 6

Dinner 6:00 pm, Vespers 7:00 pm

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Lunch with a Book

Sunday, April 10, 12:45 pm

Noodles & Company

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Holocaust Survivors and Their Stories

Friday, April 15

7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Chapel

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Workenanny

Sunday, April 17

10:00 am to 3:00 pm

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Good Companions

Tuesday, April 19

Lunch 12:00, Speakers 1:00

Hollin Hall Dining Room

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Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday, April 24

Between Services at 10:30 am

Boxwood Garden and the Meadow

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Lifespan Spiritual Growth By Meagan Henry, Director

What do you call a program that enriches children and adults, teaches and inspires, and is both spiritual and educational?

You call it Lifespan Spiritual Growth!

About a year ago, the Religious Education Council in conjunction with Meagan Henry and Rev. Kate Walker, began to think it might be time for a name change to more accurately reflect the role of Meagan and the council. We wanted a title less narrow than Religious Education and one that was more descriptive of our rich and varied learning programs for children, youth, and adults. We felt that Adult RE, in particular, was getting lost in the background, as many people think “RE” means only children’s Sunday school classes.

We looked at what other congregations and the UUA were doing, met with our District staff, and talked among ourselves over the better part of a year. Many names were discussed in an effort to better describe what we do, including Lifespan Religious Education and Lifespan Faith Development. This fall, the Council agreed on Lifespan Spiritual Growth as the most comprehensive title for the program and decided to “try it on for size” for a few months. The change was presented to the Board of Trustees at its retreat and to the Program Council.

We recognize that the new term will take a bit of getting used to, but hope that soon Lifespan Spiritual Growth (or LSG) will be a comfortable part of your MVUC vocabulary. Nothing has changed, except that we now have a much

broader and more flexible term that covers all of our program areas:

- Children’s Religious Education (Pre-K through 8th grade)
- Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (High School Youth)
- Adult Spiritual Growth Classes
- Multigenerational Events

Questions? Please contact Meagan Henry at dre@mvuc.org or at 703 756-5950, ext. 106.

Easter Egg Hunt

Join family, friends and the community for Easter egg hunts in the Boxwood Garden (under age 6) and the Meadow (age 6+). Between services on Easter Sunday, April 24, starting at 10:30 am. Bring a basket. Sponsored by our 6th-8th graders.

Candy donations accepted in the Commons beginning April 1.

April Youth Birthdays

Audrey Anderson	April 8
Jonathan Sampsell	April 11
Elizabeth Papp-Grebb	April 11
Iris Castro	April 12
Keller Collins	April 13
Naomi Masterson	April 14
Tatiana Gold	April 21
Faith Bossman	April 26
Alexa Sears	April 30

Monthly Worship Theme

LIBERATION

"It's as if we think liberation a fixed quantity, that there is only so much to go around. That an individual or community is liberated at the expense of another. When we view liberation as a scarce resource, something only a precious few of us can have, we stifle our potential, our creativity, our genius for living, learning and growing."

Andrea Canaan, "Brownness"

When I read this quote, I thought it isn't true. Liberation isn't a fixed quantity. However, upon deeper reflection I realized we may believe this, but that's not how we act. The idealist in me sees everyone free from oppression, no limits or restrictions. Yet, two things counteract this: our responsibility and accountability to others demands there be limits; and we have a very hard time freeing ourselves without pushing off the backs of others.

Some things to think about and explore during a month of reflection on liberation: From what do you dream of being liberated? And what do you need to do to make it happen? To whom are you responsible? What role do they play in your liberation?

Cheers, Kate Walker

Monthly Worship Services

Sunday, April 3, "A Liberal Perspective" The Rev. Kate R. Walker

In our theme for April, we're taking a look at liberation. Volumes have been written on this subject, but maybe not as a conversation between two liberal ministers, one Unitarian and one United Church of Christ, who are from different centuries.

Sunday, April 10, "The "Dis" in Discernment" Kären Rasmussen

Have you ever had to make big decisions about something difficult? Do you hem and haw and

pace and question? Come and worship today as we talk about how we all discern together!

Sunday, April 17, "Ecological Soul Check" The Rev. Kate R. Walker

It's our annual reminder to hug the earth rather than just a tree. Can we change our customs to keep our earth huggable?

Sunday, April 24, "Rebirth and Renewal" The Rev. Kate R. Walker and Meagan Henry

A multigenerational celebration of the roots of the Easter renewal. All are invited to wear their Easter bonnets.

Question Box Sunday Leftovers

From August 8, 2010

Q. "Do you think the U.S. killing of more than 200,000 people in the Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atomic bombs 65 years ago this week was justified? Why do you think that?"

A. Wow, a serious and rather timely question as Japan copes with recent devastation not seen since this bombing. The face of this question appears to be presenting a yes or no, black/white moral dilemma. I've studied ethics just enough to know morality is rarely black/white or simple. My emotional gut and ethics on the nature of war and the use of nuclear weapons responds with "No." "No" because nothing justifies this level of total devastation that carries with it such an act of brutality and long-lasting impact upon the bodies and souls of humanity.

At the same time this is a sin we all bear because I recognize responsibility is spread beyond the U.S. alone. There was a horrendous series of seemingly fateful steps leading to the worst outcome possible. Japan made decisions, Germany made decisions, the U.S. made decisions, and each increased the likelihood that thousands and then millions would die. The U.S. justified the use of atomic weapons in order to avoid more deaths in a prolonged war. A member from my previous church served during WWII in Japan just after the bombings as a liaison

officer. He told me there was far more devastation and terror from the B-12 bombers than those two horrific atomic bombs. By 1945 we had thoroughly dehumanized the Japanese, making the decision, and living with it, a little easier.

I believe humanity is not mature enough to have this type of power of destruction, and is at risk of self-destruction. Perhaps having used two bombs and witnessing the destruction helps keep us fearful of the power we hold. Perhaps we'll stop to think before taking seemingly small steps, knowing they may lead to another worst outcome possible.

Q. "I know that coming from a place of love and compassion is how to live life, yet what do I do when that's not what I'm feeling?"

This too shall pass. Positive and negative feelings are normal and pass when we're healthy. The Buddha taught that we need to be persistent and intentional in replacing our negative feelings with positive ones, for this represents true reality and is the path to happiness. Don't get attached to negativity, let it pass and focus on that love and compassion. If the negative feelings are not passing, then a good psychotherapist may be needed.

Q. "What should be our attitude toward other religions which may advocate conduct that we deplore?"

A. Preach, teach, and demonstrate our commitment to our Principles and Purposes. Tolerance has limits making "to each his own" or religious freedom an unethical excuse to look the other way.

(Taking Note, Continued from page 1)

Then we have our dedicated founders representing pre-baby boomers, having survived their own wars and economic stresses, sitting in the same worship service, in the building they have paid for and helped build with many hours

of volunteer time. Yikes, who is going to take care of their pride and joy? Expectations are rising, resulting in anxiety in worship service.

Multiple generations with multiple and sometimes competing needs. Each with expectations, hopes and dreams. Then there's me, the minister in the middle.

I invite you, those younger than I, and older than I (I'm pretty much at the mid-way point), to join me for an informal conversation about our church's present and future needs through the lens of generational needs and desires.

What: Multigenerational Conversation with a Potluck Barbecue

When: Saturday, June 4, noon-3 p.m.

Where: TBD

In the meantime, I also invite you to take some time to read up. I'm currently reading: *Tribal Church: Ministering to the Missing Generation* by the Rev. Carol Howard Merritt, and *Big Questions: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith*, by Sharon Daloz Parks. There's lots more out there. Dig in.

Cheers, Kate Walker

Unitarian Universalist History

April 2, 1805 The Universalist storyteller Hans Christian Andersen was born at Odense, Denmark.

April 7, 1780 William Ellery Channing, "the father of American Unitarianism," was born in Newport, RI.

April 19, 1813 Benjamin Rush, a physician, devout Universalist and signer of the Declaration of Independence, died in Philadelphia at age 67.

Correction to March UU History: James Reeb was a white minister who supported civil rights.

On and Off the Hill

Musical Notes from Mark Zimmerman, Director of Music



Ah, spring! Can't you just feel the music of the Earth growing?

Our All Music Sunday "Earth Elements" will be June 5th at 10:00 am. Plan to stay for Partner Church Brunch after.

I would like to thank so many for gifts to the Piano Preservation Fund. We started with a grant from SBA for a new heavy-duty cover, and two \$1,000 donations from Gertrude Kornfeld and Annie Montanari, in honor of her mother Sally. Many, many kind gifts in memory of Leila Goodman have recently arrived. So we will soon begin projects of key regulation, cabinet repair, and careful protection to ensure many more years of fine music from this wonderful instrument.

Children's choir for Easter: Open invitation for children to sing with us on Easter! Rehearsals are after 2nd service Sunday April 3, 10, and 17. We sing on April 24th. See Mark or Meagan.

We have a new project for May: A Family Choir! We sing for the multi-generational service on May 22. Short rehearsals May 1, 8, and 15 after 2nd service. Easy music for parents and children to learn and sing together!

GOOD COMPANIONS

**Hollin Hall Dining Room & Fireplace Room
12:00 to 1:00 BYO lunch, 1:00 to 2:00 speaker
Tuesday, April 19, 2011
THOMAS HIRSCHFELD: "MUSLIM INTEGRATION"**

Tom will discuss how Muslim minorities fare in Europe and the United States.

Tom has been a member of MVUC since 1977. He is a retired Foreign Service officer, with Embassy service in southeast Asia and Western Europe. He is a former member of the State Department Policy Planning Staff, a former Deputy Assistant

Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. He was the head of the U.S. delegation negotiating withdrawals from Central Europe between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

After retirement he was a professor at the University of Texas and a senior analyst at the RAND Corp. in Santa Monica, as well as the Center for Naval Analyses in Alexandria.

Elaine Bronez assisted by Eleanor & Al Erickson

Wednesday Fellowship April 6, 6:00 - 9:00 pm

Join us at our Wednesday Fellowship on April 6 for an evening of food and fellowship. Our main dishes will include Barley and Mushroom Soup and Macaroni and Cheese. Dinner from 6 - 7 pm will be followed by a Vespers service led by Rev. Kate Walker from 7 - 7:30 pm in the Fireplace room of Hollin Hall. At 7:30 pm the choir will rehearse in the chapel, and Cheryl Sabo will lead a Family Yoga Dance, and Sing-Along. Dinner \$7/person, max. \$21/family. Child care \$5/family, available upon request. Please sign up in the Commons, especially if you need child care. For more information, contact Sandy Galletta, gallettas4@verizon.net.

Lunch with a Book

April's Lunch with a Book will be held Sunday, April 10, at 12:45 pm at Ruby Tuesday north of Sherwood Hall Lane on Route 1 near IHOP.

This month's selection will be Billie Letts' book *Where the Heart Is*, a story of a down-on-her-luck southern girl who lives in a Wal-Mart and has her baby there. She meets a number of quirky strangers who help her.

Please contact Louise Werner-Rhoades at louron13@cox.net or 703-619-1369.

Workenanny**April 17, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm****Please come and help! We need you!**

Round-and-about the grounds in 2010/11: Much of what has happened with our grounds the past few months is very noticeable to the general congregation, given all the digging up and piles of dirt created by the geothermal project. You may have even noticed the grass-green hard-scape parking spaces installed recently around the Mansion Circle. We lost a major limb in a winter storm, from the large maple tree near the kitchen entrance to Hollin Hall. Also, three support cables were installed in another large maple, near the church offices, that was damaged by the same storm.

Small things that need doing: Vines and weeds have thrived in the boxwood and in the gardens, creating a negative image. Mulch added in various places would be a good improvement, as not all garden areas are covered in our maintenance contract. Brick or stone work on pathways also would be an improvement. The boxwood is always in need of pruning. We can use your help; there is always something that needs fixing. Look for a jobs list in the Commons.

Alvin Macomber, Property Committee Member

**Joseph Priestley District Assembly
April 9-10, Harrisburg, PA**

Stewards of Faith: Justice Making, Leadership Development, and All-Ages Ministry. A copy of the conference brochure is available on the JPD website at www.jpduua.org. As you may know, MVUC is entitled to have seven lay delegates and one automatic Ministerial delegate. If you are interested in being one of the seven delegates, please leave your name with Carol Graves at admin@mvuc.org. See notice on the bulletin board.

Healthy Food for Healthy Families Garden

This organic garden for low-income families continues. We are planting the spring garden; the garlic and herbs we planted last fall are doing

great. If you are interested in planting, maintaining, or harvesting food from the organic garden, and donating it to UCM, New Hope Housing or Rising Hope, please contact Isabelle Arnold at mi_arnold@msn.com.

**Unitarian Universalist Association
General Assembly
June 22-26, 2011 Charlotte, North Carolina.**

Information about the 50th General Assembly, including registration, planned activities, hotel reservations, etc. can all be found online at www.uua.org/ga. Please note that registration & housing reservations are now open and that registration for General Assembly is the same process for delegates as it is for non-delegates. If you are planning to attend, please leave your name with Carol Graves at admin@mvuc.org.

**Holocaust survivors and their stories,
Friday, April 15, 7:00 – 8:30 pm, Chapel**

Join us for a video presentation and discussion with Gail Weigl, of the Holocaust Legacy Partners. We will watch a video of a first person testimony of a Holocaust survivor, who has since died, who was rescued as a young girl by Evangelical Christians in Ukraine. The story raises issues of resistance on the part of those who actively put their lives at risk to rescue others.

The story raises questions such as: What motivated those who rescued Jewish men, women and children? It's a difficult question because we have very little data on rescuers, and it opens consideration of altruism and how--or if--it can be taught. How many of us would have acted to rescue others? Even at the risk of our own or our family's lives?

For more information contact Georgia Pourchot, gpourchot@yahoo.com, or call 703-721-0595.

**Through the Garden Gate, the first 40
Years of MVUC"**

Keith Keener did us all a big favor by transferring a VHS tape called "Through the Garden Gate, the First 40 Years of MVUC" to DVD format. Now it is

not only better preserved but in a format that we can use on today's computers. Copies are available for purchase, at cost, in the Book Nook, while supplies last. Thank you, Keith!

MVUC/FHP Natural Playground Project Update – Spring 2011

We are excited that our Natural Playground is taking shape nicely and is certainly well-used. The kids love the play structure and sandbox area. The Fort Hunt Preschool kids are beginning to use the composters and water the gardens with the rain barrels. This spring, we hope to expand the swing set with a horizontal tire swing. A new raised stage will go where the mud hut was. (Unfortunately, we chose a very wet spot for the mud hut and it mildewed quite badly. But it was a great project and we all had fun constructing it!) We will also add a shade tree, construct new picnic tables from recycled plastic lumber, add raised garden beds, keep weeding, trim hedges, and work on musical instruments.

Much of this work will take place on the FHP Maintenance Day, April 2, and MVUC's Workenanny, April 17. We would appreciate your help! Contact any committee member to volunteer – Wendy Burns, Meagan Henry, Nancy Renner, Laura Cohn, and Liz Kintz. And come to Stories and Music in the Garden on May 1, 4:00-6:00 pm for a great time and to support the Natural Playground Project.

Stories and Music in the Garden Sunday, May 1, 2011, 4:00 – 6:00 pm Annual Natural Playground Fundraiser

Talented performers from MVUC and FHP parents will present stories and songs in our enchanting walled garden from 4:00-6:00 pm on Sunday, May 1. Please join us for what always is a glorious afternoon of entertainment for all ages. Families with young children are asked to bring a blanket for seating. Chairs will be available behind the blanket seating. Plan to enjoy a picnic supper with us during or after the performance. Brats, hot dogs, sweet treats and more will be available.

Beer and wine will also be sold. Donations for the performance and profits from food sales help fund the ongoing MVUC/FHP Natural Playground Project. (In case of rain, we will move inside to the Meeting House Chapel).

See you there! MVUC/FHP Natural Playground Project Committee: Wendy Burns, Meagan Henry, Nancy Renner, Laura Cohn, Alison Oquinn, Liz Kintz

Helping the Critters We Love

Stay tuned as we work with the Alexandria Animal Shelter to find a service project to lend the critters a hand. Dates and project for May will be announced soon!

Jewelry Donation Program April 1, 12:00 – 5:00 p.m., and April 2, 1:00- 5:00 p.m., Commons

If you would like to give to MVUC without breaking the bank, just go through your jewelry box and find the old rings, broken chains, class rings that you haven't worn since you graduated, old coins in the cookie tin in the back of the closet, even fine jewelry gifts you have received, but never really wear any more. The proceeds from the sale of these pieces will go directly to MVUC, or the amount can be disbursed at your direction.

Terry Bradley's sister, Marian Holt from Perry's Estate Jewelers in Charlotte, NC, will be here April 1 & 2 to collect any items you would like to have evaluated for donation. She will give you a receipt for your belongings, and she will take them back to the buyers at Perry's, where the pieces will be evaluated and priced. Checks will be issued and the church will be notified of your donation amount. MVUC will issue a tax receipt for that amount.

Perry's has been in Charlotte for over 30 years. Please visit their website www.PerrysJewelry.com for more information, or contact Terry Bradley, 703-577-3657, Bradley.terry226@gmail.com, or Marian at 704-364-1391.



Social Justice Programs at the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church
Love is the teaching of this church, and service is its prayer.

Easy Green

Once the weather starts to warm, I often think I should do some spring cleaning. Every once in a while, I actually do! So, here are some guidelines that might be helpful as we try to become a little more "green." The best "chemical" in our cleaning arsenal is plain water. And, if you want boosters, plant-based surfactants and acids can help water do a better job of dissolving and rinsing away dirt and grime. Any cleaners that contain petroleum-based fragrances compromise indoor air quality and increase the chances of respiratory disease. Bleaches and ammonia also add unnecessary chemicals to indoor air and can damage cells in our lungs.

Our decisions about which cleaning chemicals to use have consequences far beyond our homes, especially on a municipal sewer system. The dyes and foaming agents that look pretty in the sink don't look so nice in the Potomac River. Anything that kills germs in our house will also kill the beneficial bacteria that help break down our waste. Rather than trying to kill every bacterium in the home (an impossible task), concentrate on removing the dirt, grime and water they need to grow.

One final consideration to bear in mind when buying cleaning supplies is unnecessary packaging. How many 16-ounce spray bottles do we really need? Buying in bulk saves money, cuts down on trips to the store, and keeps literally tons of plastic out of the waste stream. Remember: refills, not landfills! (From F. W. Horch & Co.)

Just a thought ~ Wendy Burns

UUA Japan Relief Fund

As news from Japan worsens, Rev. Peter Morales and other clergy have reached out to their

colleagues in Japan, to send heartfelt sympathies and offer support. The UUA has been working with their religious partners in Japan: Rissho Kosei-kai, Tsubaki Grand Shrine, the Konko Church of Izu, the Tokyo Dojin Church, and the Japan Chapter of the International Association for Religious Freedom.

As they struggle to assess the needs in this overwhelming disaster, the UUA established the UUA Japan Relief Fund to support the recovery efforts of religious partners in Japan. Anyone wishing to contribute to this crucial effort can do one of two things: 1. Find out more about the Fund and contribute directly at <http://www.kintera.org/TR.asp?a=mqIRLZOllmLVLcl&s=ijlVL6OLleJVI5MLLuG&m=etJXLaMNJiWLiK>, or 2. Contribute to the MVUC Disaster Relief Fund which was set up in the aftermath of Katrina, to respond to emergencies of this nature. Make your check to MVUC, with Disaster Fund in memo line, and we will pool all the contributions and send an institutional check to the UUA Fund. The checks can be placed in the Sunday morning basket, mailed to the church, or placed in the mail slot on the church office door. Thank you for your generosity!

The Social Justice Council

Church Life

From Your Intern, Kären Rasmussen The Changes in Our Lives

Spring Ahead? As I write this, we have moved our clocks ahead an hour. I find it all little disorienting! I don't remember as a kid having trouble sleeping when the clock changes, or being hungry when I'm not supposed to be or yawning at odd times. I liked it being light in the morning, but now that's changed.

But change happens, doesn't it? I might not like the changes sometimes. My body as it ages might not adjust as well as it used to either. But the change is going to happen anyway.

It's how we recognize change that I think matters. We grow, we learn, we adjust. We open our eyes and our hearts to new possibilities. We reach out and maybe grumble a little with each other. And the changes will still happen, but maybe with some joy.

As we gain a couple minutes of light every day and our evenings stretch just a little longer, I invite you to acknowledge the changes in your life. And maybe take a breath and try to welcome them. I know I am....

Along the path, Kären

Annual Contribution of Record

One of the items of business at the annual Congregational meeting next month will be to vote on by-law changes. The Membership Development Committee (MDCOM) has proposed amending the by-laws to add an *annual contribution of record (COR)* as a requirement of church membership. The BOT and the Program Council have agreed that this amendment should be brought to the congregation for a vote because a COR will enhance both the membership and stewardship functions of MVUC.

The present requirements for membership in the by-laws are: being 15 years of age or older; being in sympathy with the church's purpose and programs; and signing the membership book. The bylaws state that it is an *expectation* of membership to support the church financially, but this is not a requirement.

Why change? A COR reinforces stewardship and it raises the bar for membership, which results in more involved and committed members. It means that those who are eligible to vote and make decisions about MVUC's future have a vested interest in the

church. According to Rev. A. Powell Davies, most votes of membership have something to do with money. Thus, it only seems logical that those who are deciding how to spend MVUC money should be contributing to the MVUC coffers.

For the MDCOM, having a COR will facilitate the process of maintaining an accurate membership list, important for internal church use and for denominational reporting. We'd know who has continued interest in the church even if they are not actively participating in church activities.

Waivers can be made for those in hardship situations and/or those no longer having control over their finances. Anyone choosing not to be a member due to the contribution requirement or reluctance to accept a waiver could still participate in MVUC activities. However, as non-members they would not be eligible to vote or hold elected office.

For more information or to discuss this amendment, please contact Birgit Robbert at 703-299-9892.

Recognizing 50 years of Membership

On March 12, 1961, Dotty Ann McClelland signed the membership book at MVUC. We celebrated her 50th Anniversary on Sunday, March 13, after service during coffee hours where she received our heartfelt thank-yous for her support of MVUC, participation in the Every Thursday group and leadership in Holiday Shop, years of being a Volunteer receptionist, Monitor for events here on the hill, Maintainer of contracts for renters, Baker of many thousands of cookies and monthly birthday cakes, and Storyteller of the history of MVUC. As one of the cakes said, "Our Pot of Gold is Dotty Ann". Congratulations and thank you from all of us for your 50 years of membership and service here at MVUC. Membership Committee

Congregational Conversations "Let your voice be heard"

When: April 3 and 10, 12:30 - 1:30 pm

Where: In the chapel.

Let's join together for a light lunch as we share our views on spirituality, membership and stewardship. Sponsored by the Committee on Ministry as part of our Appreciative Inquiry for 2011.

Babysitting will be available.

Committee on Ministry

From Our Board of Trustees

Joan Darrah, Chair



First, I am delighted to announce that the Board has approved a balanced FY 2012 budget that continues to fund all of the essential programs at MVUC. I would like to extend a special thank you to Lauck Walton and the entire Finance Committee for the hard work and perseverance that went into preparing the budget. Some of the changes include 1) formalization of the position of Young Religious UU (YRUU) Advisor, 2) allocation of funds to continue the summer music program, an expense that was covered last year through the generosity of the Susan B. Anthony Fund, and 3) increased employee health care which brings us into full compliance with the UUA fair compensation guidelines, a goal we had committed to reaching by the end of this fiscal year

Of course, to accomplish all of this and keep our budget balanced, we are counting on everyone's continued strong financial commitment. The Spring Stewardship Campaign has been in full swing for several weeks and although we still have a way to go, the preliminary signs are very encouraging. It is heartening that so many of you understand that the responsibility for keeping MVUC going strong is ours. The motto of the Revisit Campaign needs to continue to be our guide, "MVUC is our church - we welcome the joys and accept the responsibilities." Thank you all for your continued support!

Those of us who are very involved in the Church clearly feel MVUC is a great place to be and find it very worthwhile and rewarding to be part of an organization that is trying to make the world a better place. Unfortunately, those who are not as involved are drifting away for various reasons. This is in no way a uniquely MVUC challenge. In order to better address this issue, the Board unanimously approved the transformation of the membership committee into the Membership

Development Council. As a Council, Membership Development will take a more comprehensive and methodical approach to membership. For more information or to get involved, please contact Dianne Brown who has stepped up to chair the new Council – thank you, Dianne.

In another development, Al Robbert is chairing an ad hoc committee to review where we stand with respect to our Building Renovation Project. The major issue to decide is if we should continue to defer action until we can launch a major renovation or proceed with smaller-scale projects. To help address this question, subcommittees have been formed to explore three "limited project" proposals: a new stage for the Meeting House (spearheaded by Jeanne Gayler), expansion or improvement of the Commons (spearheaded by Doug MacCleery), and improvements to the kitchen in the Meeting House (spearheaded by Tamara de la Camp). If you would like to join the committee or its subcommittees or express your opinion on these proposals, please contact Al or the other subcommittee chairs. For a more detailed explanation of the building renovation project please go to the MVUC website under *Church Life, Governance, Building Renovation Plans*.

Finally, I am pleased that the Board has selected the following church members as our delegates to attend this year's General Assembly: Bill Clontz, Meg Clontz, Sandy Peterson, Georgia Pourchot, Eric Pourchot, Dick Schaffer, and Karen Tyson. Thanks again to the Susan B. Anthony Fund which generously paid their registration fees.

With love, respect, and appreciation, Joan

Sermons for Your Re-Hearing

Each Sunday's service is recorded and available within a few days on the MVUC web site (www.mvuc.org - worship/sermons) The services are also available on CD; if you would like a copy, please speak with **Raleigh Romine**.

A Month of Sundays

**Two services at 9:15 am and
11:15 am unless otherwise
noted**



Sunday, April 3
"A Liberal Perspective"
The Rev. Kate R. Walker

Sunday, April 10
"The "Dis" in Discernment"
Intern Minister
Kären Rasmussen

Sunday, April 17
"Ecological Soul Check"
The Rev. Kate R. Walker

Sunday, April 24
"Rebirth and Renewal"
The Rev. Kate R. Walker

See Page 4 for Sermon
Descriptions

**Mount Vernon
Unitarian Church**
1909 Windmill Lane
Alexandria, VA 22307

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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.

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!