

Windmill

Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

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

MAY 1, 2005

REV-ving Up!—Words from Our Minister

by The Rev. Louis V. Schwebius

Dear Friends,

By the time you read this column, we will have held our Annual Meeting on April 24th. As I reflect on these times when we come together to report on and discuss issues pertinent to the MVUC community, I think more and more about the covenant which we recite together every Sunday morning. It begins, "Love is the teaching of this church." Even in a non-doctrinal faith like our own, I can certainly accept that statement. But what does it mean to love a community of people? More specifically, what does love mean in the religious community of people we are continually building here?



I hardly take it to mean that we each and all go around equally loving each other in some sentimental or fanciful way. In a congregation of our size it is only natural that each of you will form closer relationships with some members than with others. And in a congregation of this size, it's not too surprising if some members or friends discover that there are other folk whom they don't particularly care for. (We can always hope that such would never be the case; but must also accept that it sometimes is.)

But the phrase "Love is the teaching of this church" speaks instead to the values we hold in common and that we seek to live out, both within our midst and beyond our walls. To join this congregation is to enter into both a relationship and a covenant. It is an agreement to work and live together and to see that certain principles are upheld. Part of this agreement is stated in our first UU Principle: that we will affirm and promote "the inherent worth and dignity of every person." (This has become as familiar an expression in our midst as "Love is the teaching of this church.")

One of our many roles as a liberal religious community is to offer a wider circle of love and respect within which all of us can find acceptance and encouragement as we celebrate, or struggle with, the relationships of which we're a part. Our affirmation of inherent worth and dignity is one that calls us to be a common home for a diversity of households; to offer a common relationship for a variety of relationships that are in our midst—for the couple in the early stages of a life together with all the possibility they see before them; for those who now have as much to reflect back upon as look forward to; for those dealing with the joys and agonies of parenthood even as they look to keep love alive for themselves; for those who are discovering how to be just a couple again when the children are gone; for the single mother or father dealing with all the challenges they face; for the gay or lesbian couple or individual seeking a place where they can simply be themselves; for the single person with love to give and share; and for those dealing with the loss of relationship and who are seeking ways to love again.

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Program Highlights

Good Companions

Tue, May 3, 11:45 am
Paul Weeks—Small Boats
Meeting House

Tue, May 17, 11:45 am
Pot Luck Lunch
Hollin Hall

Flea Market

Sat, May 7, 9:00 am
Hollin Hall

Friday Nighters Dancing Club

Fri, May 13, 8:30 pm
Remington Chapel

Global Warming, Health Care, Fair and Affordable Housing

Sat, May 14, 8:45–12:00 pm
UU Church of Arlington

Legal Issues for End of Life Choices

Sat, May 14, 10:30 am
Sherwood Hall Library

Movie Night

Fri, May 20, 7:30–10:30 pm
Last Night 1998
Remington Chapel

UCM "Evening Under the Stars"

Sat, May 21, 7:30–11:00 pm
Mt Vernon Yacht Club

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Fort Hunt Preschool News and Appreciations



MOUNT VERNON
UNITARIAN CHURCH

MINISTER

The Reverend Louis Schwebius

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Mark Your Calendars

Good Companions

Elaine Bronetz and Bev Southerland, coordinators

Meetings will be held in Hollin Hall, Dining Room and Fireplace Room.

11:45–12:45 BYO Lunch; coffee and tea provided

12:45–1:45 Speaker

Paul Weeks: Doing Things With Small Boats—May 3

Paul is the Managing Director of the Alexandria Seaport Foundation on the waterfront of Queen Street. Boat building is a scheme to help at-risk students (16–21) rebuild their lives. Participants are paid for doing shop-based learning. A six-month program includes classroom study and an actual boat shop for work skills. Wooden boat building is also used as a “hook” to recruit adult volunteers to help. Are you interested? Due to preparations for the Flea Market, we will meet in the Meeting House.

Good Companions Pot Luck Lunch—May 17

Good Companions is planning a special day for May 17th, the last day before our Summer “vacation.” We will be having a **Pot Luck** lunch, with coffee and lemonade, depending on the weather. Let’s meet at the usual 11:45 am time, in the dining room of the Mansion, and spend some “down” time together just chatting and getting to know each other better before we all go our separate ways for the summer. Our first program for the Fall will be in September, program to be announced. See you May 17th.

Flea Market—May 7

It’s not too late to reserve a space. Call Pat Jackson.

You can bring your donated fleas to the Mansion all week long. The big sale day is Saturday, May 7. You can help set up, price, sell, and clean up. All profit goes to the Property Major Maintenance (PMM) fund.

Mt. Vernon End of Life Choices—May 14

The next meeting of the Mt. Vernon End of Life Choices group will be on Saturday, May 14, 10:30 am at Sherwood Hall Library. Our topic will be *Legal Issues for End of Life Choices for All Ages*. Please make a note for your calendars! The Hemlock Society, Death With Dignity, Care and Compassion, and other groups, have evolved into End of Life Choices, which is holding meetings with interested parties in our area.

Continued from Page 1

REV-ving Up!—Words from Our Minister

Love is the teaching of this church for each and all of these folk and many, many more. May this community encircle them, and all of us as we travel on our journey together!

In faith and love,

Rev. Lou

Religious Education

by Barbara Gay Stoddard, Interim Director of Religious Education

I was just hummin' the tune to *Seasons of Love*, a song in the Broadway play *Rent*. "Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes, how do you measure a year in the life?" Besides a song in a play, those lyrics could make a great sermon, and I can imagine some lovely parlor chats on the whole issue. But as I was a-hummin' I was also a-lookin' and a-thinkin' about our RE program next year (Sep 2005–May 2006). One hour a week for 38 weeks plus the other 14 hours in summer. So now I'm realizing, in our basic RE program we are providing a total of 52 hours of time for our children. Now, if my math is right, that's less than 0.6% of the year. With apologies to Jonathan Larson (composer) I have changed those lyrics. Now I'm a-hummin' "Three thousand one hundred twenty minutes, how do you measure a year in the life?"

Now the purpose of my little exercise in music and math was not to have you to check my math. Yikes! Don't go there! Nor did I want someone to start thinking, Gee, we sure don't have to work too much. We all know there is so much more behind that hour a week than meets anyone's eyes, ears, hearts and souls. Rather, my thinking turned to the fact that

we've only got 3,120 minutes a year to teach masters-level courses in religion, philosophy, ethics, spirituality, and more. We have 3,120 minutes a year to show our children how much we love and respect them. We have 3,120 minutes a year to share in the joy, laughter, tears and fears of our children. We have 3,120 minutes a year to smile at a child or receive a smile back. We have 3,120 minutes a year to impart knowledge, sing songs, explore history, and to reach deep inside ourselves to discover our feelings. I could go on—but, don't worry, I won't. I'd just like you to think about those 3,120 minutes as you read the article below by **Annie Stewart**, member of the RE Council. I'd like you to think about—yes, you are right—*teaching* next year. Think about it: if you taught 9 of those 38 weeks during the regular year, we're talking 540 minutes. If you taught 20 of those 38 weeks—well you do the math. (Hint: 1,200 minutes). It is absolutely amazing what you, the incredible adults at MVUC, accomplish in those 3,120 minutes a year. It is amazing the love that is given and received in 3,120 minutes a year. So here's a toast to a few minutes of your time. Just a thought.

—Barbara

Consider Teaching RE

by Annie Stewart

Every week Reverend Lou reminds us that we should give our time, our treasure, and our talents. The RE Council leaves others to ask for your treasure, but is very interested in your time and talents as a teacher for next year. The time really isn't so much—about an hour a week. The talents you have to offer are huge and make a long-term difference. But as many teachers will tell you, teaching RE really isn't just giving your time and talent to the church, it is about getting much more back in return.

Teachers will tell you that they gain many different things. For many it is a chance to connect with their own child on another level and learn more about that child and his or her friends. For others it is an opportunity to broaden their circle of friends at the church. And for others it is that great feeling you get when you share knowledge and the ability to think and question that we value so much as Unitarians.

For Georgia Pourchot it is a chance to get back in touch with her own spirituality. As she puts it: "It is the children of this church who bring spirituality back to me, with their wonderful comments during *For All Ages*, and their youthful forgetfulness to all the pressures of modern life. That is why I return to teaching RE next year, I simply miss the spirituality of children." Please consider signing up to teach next year. You'll have a team to teach with so you are covered when you can't make it. The curriculum is clearly laid out, easy to follow, and a great way for you to learn, too. Any one with an interest can teach. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the RE Council or Barbara Stoddard. During May we will set up in the lobby after services to answer your questions.

Activities, On and Off the Hill

Sunday Services Committee Thanks

Many, many thanks from the Sunday Services Committee to those who offered suggestions of topics, speakers, and/or offered to speak themselves, for MVUC's Summer 2005 Sunday services. There is definitely not a shortage of ideas for good church services and speakers. The Summer schedule is nearly ready to be published! Look for it in the May *Stirrings*.

—Janice Fitzpatrick, Chair

Special Collection to Benefit "Guest House"—May 15

At both services on Sunday, May 15th, there will be a special second collection taken to benefit "Guest House". Guest House is located at 1 E. Luray Avenue. It was founded to provide a temporary house for women charged with or convicted of a criminal offense who are in the need of basic human services to facilitate their new start in life and adjustments to the community at large. Their mission is to provide female ex-offenders the structure, supervision, support and assistance they need so they can become self-sufficient responsible members of the community. It is the only facility within 150 miles of Northern Virginia that serves female ex-offenders from the State system and/or local and regional jails. Rev. Lou has visited the property and discussed the program at length with its Executive Director, Maria McBride.

Hardly a week goes by that Guest House does not receive a request for admission from an incarcerated woman facing release or from a concerned family member. The program at Guest House is designed to empower the women by providing the tools necessary to achieve self-sufficiency, including, housing, food, individual and group counseling, as well as assistance with employment, medical, legal and social services. Guest House offers its services to women who sincerely desire assistance when released from confinement and to women who seek an alternative to incarceration. These services are provided without discrimination as to race, religion, color, age, national origin, marital status, or disability.

If you cannot make the May 15th service, checks can be sent to Rev. Lou at the church made out to "MVUC" with "Guest House" in the memo line. Please feel free to contact Rev. Lou for further information.

MVUC'S 50th Anniversary Annual Holiday Shop—Saturday, November 19
Seems a long way off? Plans are already under way to recruit principals and apprentices to make the 50th Anniversary Holiday Shop the best ever.

General categories for helping are:

Country Kitchen	Kids Only Shop
Lunch	Vendor relations
Jewelry sales	Quilt project
Greenhouse	Gingerbread House
Holiday greenery	Logistics and more!

Want to be part of MVUC's major fund raising and community building event? It's not just for retired people! Contact **Mary Barnett**.

The Planning Group is meeting regularly.

We welcome you to join us!

Attention Handcrafters

If you are a knitter, embroiderer, wood worker, paper-crafter; weaver, seamstress, photographer, etc. and don't know what to do with all your projects, consider donating them to the church to sell at Holiday Shop. **Mary Barnett** and **Pat Jackson** would like to review your donations prior to the November 19 Holiday Shop.

Thank You!

Many thanks to **Jack Hinman**, **Eben Kuhns**, and **Doug MacCleery** for their service on the Board. As I step down from the Board to allow my daughter Katie to serve as youth member, Doug returns to serve the remaining year of my term. Special thanks to **Joanne Masterson**, **Doug MacCleery**, and **Ric Sears** for their service as Board officers. Welcome to the new Board members—I'm confident that MVUC is in good hands!

—Karen Tyson

Clarification of April 15 Stirrings Article, The Board in Brief:

At its April meeting, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved a letter of agreement with the Fort Hunt Preschool, covering the 2005–06 school year only. The Board pledged to work cooperatively with FHP to address its possible future occupancy, but made no assurances concerning the construction period or subsequent annual agreements.

Fort Hunt Preschool News and Appreciations

by Gioia Chilton, FHP Church and Community Liaison

Much appreciation is in order for the great teamwork shown by members of both the church and preschool boards as we begin working through the challenges the new construction will bring. The process of discussing the construction safety issues has helped us all to know each other better. I attended my first MVUC Board meeting and learned a lot about the brilliant hard work and true dedication that our MVUC staff and board embody. I already knew about the professionalism and passion those on the Preschool Board bring to their work as champions of the needs of our smallest community members. Special thanks to members of the **MVUC Board Preschool Subcommittee** for their hard work and all the church members who joined and continue to join in productive dialogue as we ensure the safe continuation of the preschool at MVUC in a way that works for all.

The church and preschool communities overlap in many ways. A growing number of us belong to both groups—and aren't we lucky to have two such wonderful, magical and powerful institutions of which to be a part. Last summer *MVUC's Green Sanctuary Program & Fort Hunt Preschool* members organized and enjoyed the delicious, all-natural Piedmont Organics farm produce through the Community Supported Agriculture program. (Thank you, **Bill and Kelly!**). In the fall, we were all invited to the *Preschool's Fun Fall Festival*. We shared tables and glaze at the *Empty Bowls* family fundraiser for UCM. (Thanks, **Kathi!**). The *Heritage Night Potluck* and just recently the *Greek-themed Silent Auction* were fun community events. The advertising teamwork for the *Preschool Kids' Rummage Sale* and *MVUC's Yard Sale/Flea Market* was amazing. (Great flyer, **Kendra!**). I know the combined advertising will help both events be a complete

success on May 7th. (And isn't that **Pat Jackson** a miracle to behold!) And I've been telling everyone at the Preschool that those lush plants in the *Greenhouse* are actually for sale! Thank you to **Mary Barnett** and the other wonderful green thumbers who make just walking past the Greenhouse a delight. Did you know the Preschool has built a Children's Garden tucked behind the playground? Soon my **Tabitha, Annabel** and all their classmates will have a place to grow their own special plants. I know all of our kids (and grown-ups) will enjoy it.

As we move into the quiet summer months, I want to let any parents of little ones know that there is still room for enrollment in several Preschool classes. So if you didn't use the Priority Enrollment back in January, it's not too late! I want to remind all those terrific volunteers at MVUC's RE program that if there is anything the Preschool can do to make your Sundays sweeter, please let us know. Tell me or **Suzanne and Kiki**, or any of the folks you see around. By the way, thanks to **Suzanne MacDonald**, the Carriage House downstairs sink now has a water filter so all of our little ones are getting the best possible water; thanks, Suzanne.

Have a great Summer, and remember all are invited to the Summer Play dates that happen on Thursdays, 9:30ish 'til noon at the playground throughout the summer months. **BYO** peanut butter and jelly and see you at the swings!

Caring Community



Our church community is saddened by the death of **Jean Hinman** on April 15. There will be a Memorial Service for Jean on Sunday, June 5th at 3 pm; Rev. Lou will officiate.

Barbara Morrill is now residing at the Mt. Vernon Nursing Center, room 208. She welcomes calls, cards, and visitors.

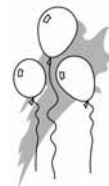
Pete Solt continues to hold her own at home despite her serious illness.

The **Caring Associates** provide support for members of the congregation who may need temporary assistance. This includes help with a ride to an appointment, shopping, picking up prescriptions, or delivery of meals due to an emergency. Caring Associate members wear green name tags during Sunday services, and there is always a member on call to respond to your needs, as noted in the Order of Service. Kindly notify the on-call associate or the church office if you know someone who may need assistance. Call **Betsy Stephens** if interested in joining us.



RE Youth Birthdays!

— May —



1 Lucy Neer	25 Kiah McGhee
9 Tabitha Chilton	26 Emily Irish
10 Alex Johnson	27 Becca Roberts
Ken Johnson	30 Benn Mellinger
23 Sarah Jesup	Dylan Mellinger
24 Caitlin Stewart	

Activities, On and Off the Hill

Global Warming, Health Care, Fair and Affordable Housing—May 14
Interested in working together on these issues? Come to a gathering on Saturday, May 14, 8:45 am–12:30 pm, at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington to meet other UUs with like interests. Find ways to work together to enlarge our voices and efforts and to develop strategic goals. There will be presenters from UUs for Affordable Housing, the Seventh Principle Project, and the Health Care. Facilitated by UUs for Social Justice, the event is free. Registration and other information is available at www.UUSJ.org, 301-588-1951, or info@uusj.org.

Nick Page: Songs in the Summer!—July 14
We are all in for a treat this summer! On Sunday, July 24th, Nick Page is coming to MVUC! Nick is a UU musician, songleader, author, composer, arranger, choral director, and founder of *The Mystic Chorale*, Arlington, MA. There will be two opportunities to be inspired by Nick and his music-making power. First, his theme for our one service at 10 am will be *Singing Our Compassion*. Instead of a choir for Sunday morning, Nick invites everyone including choir people and youth (3rd grade on up) to join the *Nick Page No Fault Singers*. Simply show up at 9 am! Then, in the afternoon we'll have a *Nick Page Zestfest*. What's a Zestfest? Well, you'll just have to sing on by

to find out. Zestfests are suitable for all ages. There will be a modest cover charge. Listen here for more details. (Joe Kitrosser, bass).

We are honored that Nick is swinging by Mount Vernon on his way to a week of teaching *Music as a Way of Knowing* at Lebanon Valley College in Annville, PA. This week-long course is all about using the creativity of music for teaching reading, writing, math, and other academic skills—also for the pure beauty of music itself. Here's what their catalog says about his class:

“Nick Page presents a unique and practical fusion of ideas and skills, combining multiple intelligence and multicultural theories to create a powerful vision for music education. Using his book, *Music As A Way of Knowing*, Nick Page will show how music can come alive in a creative, positive environment with music as the center of a school's curriculum to teach history, culture, and science as well as an amazing aid to listening skills, memory, and emotional well-being. Nick is a master song leader who has inspired music educators throughout North America. He is also the author of *Sing and Shine On! An Innovative Guide to Leading Multicultural Song* and he has a CD of songs for group singing, *The Nick Page Songbook*. 3 credits.”

Thank You, Mimi!

What a great idea and what a great turnout for Mimi Stevens' *Give me the roses while I live ...* concert on April 9 in celebration of her first 65 years. The idea was to hear the music she would like to have sung at her funeral *now*, while she is “still around to hear it.” The concert included music that has been important to her life, music that has some special meaning for her, and music that she wrote herself. Practically the entire church community turned out to honor Mimi and to enjoy the concert performed by her friends from *Musikanten*. Following the concert, there was a gourmet buffet set up in the Commons which we were able to enjoy on the patio on a beautiful Spring day. Happy Birthday, Mimi! And thank you for the inspiring music, the delicious buffet, and the opportunity for fellowship.



Chips from the Board

Karen Tyson, Chair, MVUC Board of Trustees

In community we see our emptiness filled by the other. It is community that calls me beyond the pinched horizons of my own life and gives me the gifts I do not have within me.
—Joan D. Chittister

This year, we took important steps toward our further development as a congregation.

After a successful capital campaign, we established a Building Fund. This summer, our architect will be working on design development. When we return in the fall for Ingathering, we will eagerly anticipate the results of that work and further decisions about our facilities.

Our social justice program is strong and vital. At the annual meeting, we voted to begin a process toward further strengthening and expanding it. Our social justice task forces work superbly, and all parts of the church community must be represented in the visioning process.

We voted to support the JPD Vital Congregations Initiative, a plan to help all congregations enliven their programs, as well as to increase our outreach to the world at large and to position Unitarian Universalism as a denomination for growth. Ron Brandt has volunteered to spearhead MVUC's communications program. I think we should celebrate the vibrant community we have here. I'm delighted that my family found a church like MVUC. But celebration isn't enough. We should also reach out to those who have not yet discovered the comfort and joy of liberal religion. The religious freedom and the zeal for justice that we have must be made available to all.

To learn more about how UUism can prepare to shine its light to the world, I commend to you Michael Durall's marvelous book *The Almost Church: Redefining Unitarian Universalism for a New Era*. Durall defies UU convention with chapter headings like "A Church of the 1950s?" and "Making Manual Typewriters." He argues for regular assessment of church ministries, asking not just, is this a good thing for us to do, but what is the best thing we could be doing? He also contends that respect for the democratic process and for individual opinions does not justify inertia. He writes: The value we assign to, "The inherent worth and dignity of each individual" suggests that whatever anyone has to say warrants consideration...At times, we act as though uninformed opinions are as valuable as informed opinions. The antidote? As we grow as a community, we should challenge ourselves to use effective methods of group decision-making and problem-solving, and to empower our leadership to move us forward.

The best success I can dream for my life: to have spread a new vision of the world.

—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

It Takes A Village

The work undertaken to plan and complete the Annual Canvass is one of the most vital, and least appreciated, volunteer tasks needed to be done for MVUC. This year about 50 church members contributed to the campaign. I don't have the space to tell you about the many things that were done for this year's Annual Canvass, but I can at least tell you who contributed to the effort.

The Annual Canvass Committee planned the campaign; created, produced, and distributed the canvass materials; organized canvass events; managed the canvassing efforts, kept track of pledges, and did a lot of canvassing as well. The members of the Committee were: **Rev. Lou, Al Robbert** (next year's Canvass chair), **Karen Tyson, Wendy Burns, Al Erickson, Georgia Pourchot, Betsy Roderick, and Ron Brandt.**

The Canvassing Team had a lot of listening to do; they had to listen to Wendy Burns and me peppering them up to do one more campaign and they had to listen to many, many answering machines (our 21st century "butler at the door").

The canvassers were: **Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, Mary Barnett, Marty Bredeck, Alan Bunner, Meg Clontz, Linda Davidson, Esther Dickinson, Rob Dickinson, Janice Fitzpatrick, Hal Hotzclaw, Larry Jackley, Eben Kuhns, Gloria Logan, Carl Lohmann, Doug MacCleery, Joanne Master-son, Jane Nelson, Helen Patterson, Sandy Peterson, Sally Remington, Sharon Roberts, Kris Rosenthal, Karna Schwimmer, Ric Sears, Betsy Stephens, Laura Walker, and Lauck Walton.**

We also had a number of brave souls that gave us inspiring testimonials at services and events about the importance of pledging; these were: **Bill Clontz, Lisa Gillespie, Mike Walker, Lauck Walton, Ric Sears, Joanne Ell, Marty Bredeck, and Al Robbert.** Finally, **Linda Jemison** did a beautiful pledge reporting chart for the campaign.

Please take a moment to say thank you to these folks if you get a chance.

—Tony Barkume

Sermons for Your Re-hearing and Reading

Each Sunday's service is recorded on audio tape. If you would like a copy for yourself, a friend, or one of our church's shut-ins, please speak to **Raleigh Romine** or **Joanne Ell**. The texts of most of Rev. Lou's sermons are also available at www.mvuc.org.

Stirrings From Windmill Hill

Deadline for the mid-month newsletter, *Stirrings from Windmill Hill*, is the 5th of each month. Material should be submitted to **Mimi Stevens** by email (newsletters@mvuc.org) or left in the Newsletter box by the Church Office.

A Month of Sundays

*All services at 9:30 am and 11:15 am
(except where noted)
in the Remington Chapel*

May 1

"Making Music With All That We Have"
Rev. Louis V. Schwebius

May 8

One Service at 10 am

"A Service of World Music"

Dr. Lisa Billingham and MVUC Choir

May 15

"Beliefs and Principles"

(Special Second Collection to benefit
"Guest House")

Rev. Louis V. Schwebius

May 22

"Difficult Choices: End of Life Issues"

Rev. Louis V. Schwebius

May 29

One Service at 10 am

(Summer Single-Service Format Begins)

"As Long As We Remember. . ."

(A Memorial Day Reflection)

Rev. Louis V. Schwebius

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To the Congregation of
Mount Vernon Unitarian Church

I want to thank you all for being a part of my journey into the UU ministry and helping with my ordination. I am grateful for the support and encouragement many of you expressed over the years. The ordination has been one of the most amazing events in my life. Many of you helped make it happen. I put my faith and trust in your capable hands to make it happen. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

I feel it is clear from your presence at the ordination that the covenantal vows we took together demonstrate your commitment to encouraging and supporting the development of new Unitarian Universalist ministers. This development has been a strong tradition in our church. I am proud of all of you in keeping it in our mission. I hope, in the future, as a teaching congregation, you can continue to strengthen our UU ministry.

Blessings to all of you. With love and gratitude,

—Rev. Steve