

Birmingham Unitarian Church

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

September 2011

Last Summer Service, Sept. 4 @10:30

Fall Schedule Begins, Sept. 11 @

9:30 & 11:15

Sept. 4: “Labor and Justice”

Worship Associate Dan Kosuth is joined by guest speaker Dia Pierce from the Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice in a service that considers the relationship between our work and our faith.

Sept. 11: “Now, Voyager”

This Sunday marks the 10th anniversary of the tragedy of September 11; this Sunday also celebrates our traditional homecoming at BUC with an apple and cheese communion served by the Board of Trustees. Kathy and Worship Associate Judy Amir reflect on the nature of coming home with its joyful reunions, its painful recognition of losses, and the wisdom found when we go home again.

Sept. 18: “Making Peace with Your Parents”

Continuing the theme of homecoming, Kathy and Worship Associate Elaine Morse explore the unique challenges we encounter in the places and people we come from.

Sept. 25: “Where are You Going, Where Have You Been?”

In two different services, one multigenerational at 9:30 and the other traditional at 11:15, Kathy, Worship Associate Grace Rising, and Lifespan Team leader Pamela McAlpin look at the ways we navigate the changes of our lives in sermon, story, drama, and song.

NEW Complimentary Beverage Policy at BUC

The community of BUC welcomes you...with a free cup of coffee, tea, or juice during social hour after each Sunday service starting this September 11th. We hope it expresses how we feel and want to be – warm, welcoming, and generous – and, in a small way, demonstrates the importance of hospitality at BUC. It’s about welcoming and embracing each person whether visitor, new member, established member, leadership, etc...everyone who comes to worship on Sunday.

With many new beginnings at BUC, we celebrate our homecoming at BUC with our beloved settled minister and returning congregants. So come, and share a cup of coffee (or other beverage) with us at social hour, compliments of BUC.

Note: BUC serves only Fair Trade coffee. Bagels and donuts with continue to be offered at a modest charge.

Harvest Potluck in October

The 4th annual Harvest Potluck, sponsored by Green Sanctuary will be held at 6pm on Sat, Oct 8th in the Social Hall. You don't want to miss a chance to re-connect with friends in the BUC community after the summer AND enjoy a fantastic meal. The theme is Sustainable Food. Please contribute something that you feel fits that category with a card explaining why in addition to the ingredients of your dish for \$8. Beverages will be provided. Someone contributed locally brewed beer from a microbrewery last year & that won't be refused this year either. It is also rumored there will be entertainment again this year. So, plan on enjoying great family friendly fellowship while celebrating the bountiful harvest that Michigan has to offer at this time of year.

Whitmer Tutoring Workshop

When: Saturday, October 1st, 9:30 a.m. to noon

Where: The Birmingham Community House

Current and prospective reading tutors are invited to attend. No prior experience needed, just sign up for the training session in the church office or contact Ron Fredrick (arfredrick@sbcglobal.net; 248-644-5802). Coffee and pastries will be served.

Over the past decade, it has been a gratifying experience for scores of BUC'ers who have helped improve the reading skills of grade school children at the Whitmer Human Resource Center in Pontiac.

"Book Trolley" volunteers (they distribute books to the children) are encouraged to attend as well.

Sharing Dinner Signup

If you would like to get more connected to BUC and get to know other BUCers better, Sharing Dinners are a great way to meet the more than 100 folks at BUC who take part in Sharing Dinners—small monthly potluck gatherings held in various homes.

Dinners are held the 2nd Saturday of the month (October through May, omitting December). Although you are encouraged to attend them all, you can take part even if you can only attend a few.

You will be asked to host once during the year. The rest of the participants are assigned to one of the hosts, and each month the names are shuffled so everyone gets to meet with as many people as possible. Those unable to host in their home may host a table in the Social Hall for our February dinner.

Look for sign up sheets in coffee hours in September, in the office, or contact Carol Lee carolallmanlee@yahoo.com 248-652-9427. The more who sign up, the better it will be.

Sacred and Profane Discussions

The Sacred & Profane discussion group convened in July and August to discuss "The Virtues & Vices." There was a lively discussion of various issues including the virtue with which each participant has the most difficulty. The next meeting is on Wed, September 21, when we will discuss "Personal Relationships."

The Plate Collection

Although it was summer, BUCers have continued to be generous with donations to the charities which receive 40% of our plate collection every Sunday. We were able to donate \$1004.76 to Upward Bound, where Detroit and Pontiac High School students prepare for college; and \$1089.22 to the Ruth Ellis Center in Highland Park, which offers support services to runaway, homeless, and at-risk lesbian, gay, bi-attractional, transgender and questioning youth. We are presently collecting for Focus Hope, and would like to hear from potential participants in the annual Focus Hope Walk on Sunday, October 9 or from BUCers who can volunteer for their tutoring program in math and English.

Annis Pratt, Chair, Plate Collection Committee

Announcing a New Adult RE Offering: Rational Religion

Rational Religion: What's at Its Core?

Does the rational religion we practice here at BUC have any firmer grounding than any non-rational religion? Rev. Dr. Harry T. Cook will address this in his talk on "The Philosophical Underpinnings of Rational Religion" at BUC at 7:30 PM on Thursday, October 13. Cook enjoys interacting with his audience so a lively Q and A session will follow.

Cook is an author and popular lecturer in the southeastern Michigan community with series in both Mount Clemens and UU Church of Farmington where he is received with great enthusiasm. He continues his work as a peace and justice activist as well as a scholar and writer.

Sunday Morning Flowers

Flowers in the sanctuary add to the beautiful, peaceful atmosphere on Sunday mornings. You may have noticed that the arrangements are donated by BUC members and friends in recognition, celebration or remembrance of someone or some event. If you would like to donate an arrangement during September through June, please contact Rebecca Rydzewski by email at rebecca.rydzewski@gmail.com or call 248- 515-1312.

There are still a number of available dates. You may bring your own arrangement or donate \$45

Connections - Joys & Sorrows

Staying connected just got easier. BUC's pictorial directories arrived mid July and are available for pick-up in the church office.

Long time BUC member, Ruth Sercombe died on July 26. Her friends and family celebrated her life at a memorial service on August 13, at BUC conducted by Rev. Dr. Doug Gallager.

On July 24, Alexa Stanard and Richard Binder welcomed their son, Nathan into the world. Congratulations and much joy to all of you.



Carole Wiseman is well on the road to recovery from her illness and surgery. It's been a long road for someone who "never gets sick" and we're all so relieved she's doing so much better.

Larry Freedman's daughter Emily underwent a successful kidney transplant received from her sister Julie. We rejoice with all of you.

Mom, Angela Lis and dad, Greg along with big sister Ava welcomed new daughter, Kate on July 28th. Congratulations!

On August 20, Janette Andrew's mother died at the age of 91 in Arizona. We are sorry for your loss.

Kaaren Peters mother passed away in August. She was in her nineties. We are sorry for your loss.

Delores Farnworth, a longtime Rummage patio leader, is currently hospitalized at Beaumont.

Paul Miller successfully completed shoulder replacement surgery on August 22 and is home recovering nicely.

Cameron, Stuart, and Madeleine Crawford's father, David Crawford passed away from lung cancer on August 24. They wish to express their deep thanks, and appreciation for the outpouring of love and support as they experienced this huge loss.

Barbara Woolf had the joy of being in San Francisco for the birth of her second grandson. Her son, Alex, his wife Samantha and big brother Chance welcomed Grayson Young Gwong to the family on August 27.



Dick Nelson wanted to communicate his gratitude for the skilled assistance he received during his medical

emergency on August 28. He had a pacemaker put in and is recovering at home.

Rummage is Coming

Kimery Campbell

One day I opened a kitchen cupboard and a juice glass tumbled out. It fell dramatically onto another glass on the counter beneath and both glasses shattered. Understandably startled, I gave a yelp of dismay. One of my kids looked up and said, "It's OK, Mom. Rummage is coming." That night when I recounted the story to my husband, his response was, "Oh, well. Rummage is coming."

Is Rummage an institution in your house? Does a change in the seasons *chez vous* signal an opportunity to give away unwanted goods, spend a few hours or a few days processing donations, eat great meals, find new treasures, and connect with other members of the congregation? If not, why not?

Rummage has been providing funds and fellowship at BUC for more than half a century. It has seen many volunteers (and a LOT of stuff!) come and go, but we on the Rummage Committee like to think it just keeps getting better. We are learning new skills: how to reach more people, recycle more efficiently, and display our goods more effectively. We are educating the congregation, too, because we don't really want *everything* that no longer has a place in your home. (Since we have less than 12 hours of actual sale time, Rummage is not the best place for extremely cumbersome, damaged, outdated, or highly specific items. Sofa beds, for example, can go to the Furniture Bank in Pontiac; water-stained books should be recycled; analog TV screens could be Freecycled, and you might check with a Rummage Committee member regarding your great-grandmother's collection of hand-tatted antimacassars.)

Won't you make us part of your BUC traditions? This year, Rummage week begins on September 25. The sale dates are Thursday, September 29 from 6:30 to 9; Friday, September 30, 10 to 2 (half-price sale); and Saturday, October 1, bag sale from 9 to noon. Sign-up after service on Sunday, Sept. 11 or Sept. 18, ask questions freely, join in the planning, and find out why so many people smile when they say, "Rummage is coming!"

Reflections

Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt



Last summer I wrote my first newsletter column for BUC focused on my experience of relocating to this area. A year later, I write my August column for the newsletter having again moved—for what I hope will be the last time for a nice long time, given my desire both to have a long and fruitful relationship with this congregation, and my (almost) equally fervent desire to not experience the chaos of moving boxes and the disorientation of a new living space anytime soon again.

Settling into a new space also seems an apt characterization of where BUC stands at this point in time. Having lived through the chaos and disorientation of a ministerial transition, accompanied by other changes in staffing, I would imagine all of us now hope that we have reached a place where we can remain for a nice long time, without further upheavals in this community where we come to experience peace, mutual support, a respite from the often brutal pace of our lives.

But you have heard the message too often in worship services, in your own spiritual studies, seen the reality too often when the predictable course of your days are suddenly, inexplicably turned upside down, to know that it will not long be possible for BUC, for anyone of us in any way, to remain constant, unchanged. Whether we notice it or not, all is in flux all the time, and associating peace, or a spiritual community, or happiness, with an unchanging state will ultimately be an exercise in futility.

Philosopher Gregory Bateson observes, “In many ways, constancy is an illusion. Of any stopping place in life, it is good to ask whether it will be a good place from which to go on as well as a good place to remain.” While I may hope my new home will turn out to be a good place to remain, I might be wise to also look around at this place and ask myself whether it will turn out to be a good place from which to go on, a fruitful launching point for wherever my life next leads me. Similarly, I know many of you have found BUC to be the spiritual home where you want to remain; do you also find it to be a solid, trustworthy place from which to go on, a place where you continue to launch yourself on an ever-deepening spiritual journey? And can we be bold enough to see the present settled state of our church not as an end point but as a place of beginning, so that we head out on new paths of service and growth?

My summertime relocation has resulted in some new contact information that may not yet show up in your directory, so here is where you can now find me if I'm not around the church: 1090 Stratford Lane, Bloomfield Hills, cell phone number 248-499-0198.

I look forward to being still, finally, here, with all of you—and I look forward to being still moving, despite the chaos it may bring. Welcome back from your summertime travels, and prepare to head out once more.

Faithfully,

Kathy

South Oakland Shelter at BUC November 6 thru 13, 2011

“Save the Dates” This is the largest Needs Network project we do at BUC. For over 20 years, members have done an outstanding job. Thank you! Can we count on YOU this year? Volunteers are needed for driving, food, facilities, host, laundry and special adult and children activities. Emerson and Paint Creek will join us again this year. Sign up begins Sunday October 9 in the Social Hall. Questions to co-coordinators: email Paul Plante at pplante@twmi.rrcom, ph: 734-464-1577 or Grace Rising at gbrising@comcast.net, ph: 248-545-2178

Religious Education

Kimery Campbell, DRE for Youth kimery.campbell@bucmi.org
Eleanor McGuire, DRE for Children eleanor.mcguire@bucmi.org

Children's Rotation Curriculum

This year's first rotation, Change Over Time, aims to share with our children how our religion helps us in seeking "truth." This rotation asks two questions: "How do we learn to respond to change?" and "How do we decide what is true?" This rotation explores how four different sources influence our decisions, each of which will be the focus of a different workshop:

1. **Personal Experience:** The Art workshop reveals how our church helps us move through life's passages, by offering, through its fellowship, the sustaining power of dialogue, memories and companionship.
2. **Familiar Authority:** The History workshop uses timelines to emphasize that change does not always mean the loss of valuable inventions or ideas from the past. Focusing first on tools & technology and then on a timeline of spiritual leaders, we will learn that we can accept new discoveries, expanding our choices, without forsaking our past.
3. **Scientific Evidence:** The Science workshop examines how vast amounts of fossil evidence reveal the tremendous changes that we and our Earth have undergone over time. This class also emphasizes how we humans, even with our own complicated evolutionary history, are only a tiny part of the Earth's story.
4. **Traditional Authority:** The Storytelling workshop explores what it means to "engage in a responsible search for truth & meaning." We will explore how important traditional ideas change over time (for example, the ancient belief – disputed by the Greeks - that the Earth was flat). We will also learn about how evolving ideas created first Unitarianism, then Universalism and finally, our present day religion.

Youth RE

I am very pleased to be one-third of our new Lifespan Religious Education program and I look forward to working with Eleanor and Pam to make meaningful learning opportunities available to our entire church community. I have been attending BUC since 1994 and have been a staff member since 2004. I was born and raised in Detroit and attended college in Michigan but lived out of the state off and on for a number of years before settling here again. My husband, Bill Fox, and I have three children who grew up at BUC. Our youngest bridged out of the youth RE program in June and is starting college but our eldest is back at home, so we are experiencing that common rotating-occupancy-nest syndrome. Here at BUC, my duties have included RE assistant, newsletter editor, Nursery director, and Rummage coordinator, plus other assorted tasks. Organizing the youth RE program will require me to expand my skills and experiences, but it is a challenge to which I am looking forward. (Most of the time.)

BUC's Youth RE program is divided into three levels of Sunday morning classes and youth groups. For the 6th and 7th graders, we offer our Sunday morning Neighboring Faiths class, which examines other faith traditions, often with a visitor and a field trip. This year, we will study Hinduism, modern-day Judaism (reformed), non-Buddhist Asian religions, Buddhism, a Protestant denomination (possibly AME Baptist), Eastern Orthodoxy, and ancient religions. The first class will take place on September 18. The Unitarian Friendship Organization (UFO) is our 6th and 7th grade youth group. They enjoy a succession of social and service events organized by parents. Our UFO brainstorming session will take place on Sunday, Sept. 11 at 9:30 a.m. Both parents and youth are encouraged to attend.

One of the most important things BUC offers is our 8th grade coming of age curriculum, the combined OWL (Our Whole Lives) and ROPE (Rite of Passage Experience) programs. OWL, which will run from 9:30 to 12:30 each Sunday from September 18 to December 18, is an intense sexuality and values education program specifically designed for middle school youth. This year, we are fortunate to have three experienced OWL teachers: Terry Blankenship, Bob Smith, and Amy Uniacke. In order for their youth to participate in OWL, parents must register their youth before the first class and participate in an orientation session led by the instructors. This year's orientation will take place on Sept. 11 at 4:30 p.m. in the Commons. Any 8th grade families who have not been contacted regarding OWL should get in touch with Kimery Campbell as soon as possible.

The second element of BUC's coming of age program is ROPE. This class meets during second service only beginning in January. During these months, the youth will attempt to pull together the concepts from their earlier years at BUC, look more closely at core ideas in other religions, explore faith histories of family and congregation members, and eventually craft their own creed statement to present on ROPE Sunday in June. They will also travel to Boston, the seat of Unitarian Universalism in the US, courtesy of the year's various fund-raising projects.

Unlike many UU churches, BUC offers high school youth both a Sunday morning high school class and an evening youth group, the Great Unitarian Universalist Senior High (GUUSH). The Sunday class will begin on September 18 with a new curriculum created by experienced curriculum-writer Eleanor McGuire. She explains that the Principles of the UU faith draw from many sources, including "humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science". Given that road map, how does an individual actually sift through the widely differing moral opinions surrounding most modern day scientific issues? Our first unit, Faith and Science, explores four main questions:

1. What human needs may have lead to the birth of religion?
2. Given the certainty of science, is there value in "Leaps of Faith"? Will science ever be able to prove that "all men are created equal?" Or, "endowed with certain inalienable rights?" Are some of our most cherished "truths" based solely on logic, observation and emotion?
3. What are some strengths and limits of mutuality in regards to science and faith? When is it beneficial to compromise on scientific issues? When could it be detrimental?
4. Should moral beliefs be allowed to constrain science? Also, can a comprehensive set of rules be created to guide science? If yes, then who should create it?

GUUSH meets on Sunday evenings from 6 to 8 p.m. In a change from last year, the GUUSH leaders plan to expand their schedule to meet three times per month. The GUUSH co-facilitators for 2011-2012 are Jordan Larson and Alex Boutros. Adult advisors are Ilene Beninson, Lisa Crawford, Walter Dean, Bill Fox, Kat McMullen, and Paul Plante.

All high school youth are encouraged to attend the first meeting on September 11 at 6 p.m. in Red Door. There will also be a meeting for parents to present information about both high school programs prior to the first class on September 18th at 10:15 a.m. in the Red Door. This is a good opportunity to ask about youth conferences, social action, curriculum, and anything else involving the high school youth. All 9th through 12th grade parents are invited to attend.

- Sept. 11th UFO Kick-Off (9:30-11am), Blue Door
- Sept. 11th OWL Parent Orientation (4:30-7:30pm), BUC Commons
- Sept. 11th GUUSH resumes (6-8pm), Red Door
- Sept. 18th OWL begins (9:30am-12:30pm) in Commons
- Sept. 18th High School Parent mtg. (10:15-11:15), Red Door
- Sept. 25th Rummage

Postings from Pam

A round of applause for the cast of Laramie: 10 Years Later. To be "ON" on stage for over 90 minutes isn't as easy as they made it look. Thank you for your rehearsal time and performance. You kept up the stamina needed to tell this important story.

So many of you are wondering what new my position entails. I will still bring music into the classrooms on a weekly basis and occasionally share what they've learned with the congregation during worship. I will still be directing the No Fault Orchestra (December 18th) and direct occasional plays/musicals. New to my position, are monthly Multi-generational services, meaningful to both adults and children. These may include skits, readings, audience participation, etc. The first Multi-gen service will be the first service on September 25th. Our topic will be 'Change: The Art of Possibilities'. I'll also be the go to person for Rope Sunday and Youth Sundays and other RE rolls where needed. In addition, I am bringing Adult Education back to BUC. What gifts can you bring to the table and what would you like to feast on? Studying UU history, other religions, or discussion groups on Sunday's Sermons? Maybe you'd rather have more fun classes...vegetarian cooking, basket weaving, or chess? The list is endless. Please see me with ideas and thoughts.

In July I was able to attend the UUMN (musicians) conference. As a UUMN board member I arrived early and discussed in what ways we can contribute more to our congregations. It was decided that an accompaniment CD will be made for Singing The Journey (the teal hymnal). As a board, we read the UUA's recommended book, "The Death of Josseline". This book contains many accounts of what it's like to attempt to cross the border from Mexico into the United States. There is much to learn from this book. The UUA hopes to prepare us for the 2012 General Assembly coming up in Phoenix. I will soon be featured on the UUA website in a session on Contemporary Singing. I attended workshops during the week including 'Building a Vocal Community with Dr. Ysaye Barnwell', 'Congregational Singing', 'Large Church Networking', and enjoyed lots and lots of music. It was a great way to get my vitamin B-12 shot just in time to start the church year.

Pamela McAlpin, Director of Performing Arts and Adult Education

Welcome BUC's New Office Administrator, Jim Shettel

I joined BUC in 1986 with my wife Cheryl, after moving back to the area with our sons Michael and Paul. Previous stops along the way were Cuyahoga Falls, OH and Madison, Wisconsin, following graduate school in Mad City.

Among other things, you've seen me around ushering, co-founding Green Sanctuary, serving on various committees, driving for SOS, teaching RE, and helping out with a few rummages. The family has been to The Mountain in North Carolina with the BUC gang, and Cheryl and I have been on several "outdoor group" biking and skiing adventures.

I worked for EDS for eighteen years as a Project/Business/Client Manager, with one highlight being an over 5-year assignment at Focus: HOPE. I then took a plunge into the small business world, as co-owner of the local Breadsmith franchise, and after selling the store did part-time things like catering delivery and youth lacrosse officiating. Most recently I served for a year as the administrative manager for the US Census Bureau office in Oakland County, responsible for all the hiring, personnel and payroll. Since then I have been actively seeking an opportunity like this one, along with volunteering at the Michigan Humane Society.

My personal interests include travel with Cheryl, particularly to visit the boys (Colorado and DC), as well as biking, cooking, photography, investment research, and sustainability.

I look forward to seeing you when you stop by the front desk and saying "Hi!"



Music @ BUC

Hello from the Music Directors!



It is hard to believe how fast this summer went by, but what an exciting one it was at BUC. It was great to see so many folks on Sundays experiencing new things including interactive services, a rearranged sanctuary and the like. It was delightful to have Barbara Woolf at the piano for most of the summer, and we were privileged to hear Christina Dragone and Soo Choe. We also had cellist Leigh Rudner (from North Carolina) play some lovely Baroque selections. Thanks to all for sharing your talents.

During the last week of July, Abha and I attended the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network (UUMN) conference. We were able to meet up and share ideas with other music directors, sing new repertoire, perform, and participate in daily workshops, which focused on deepening the spiritual experience via music. We are eager to implement the new ideas learned in our services together.

This fall we welcome back from Bulgaria our beloved pianist Angelina and extend a warm "Thank you" to Barbara Woolf for her piano playing at choir rehearsals and in services these past many months.

If anyone wishes to become more involved in music making as a singer or instrumentalist, please contact me so I may include you. I hope to form small ensembles of instrumentalists, so if need be, dust off those old horns, strings or winds and let's ponder how we can form groups. I hope to have all you jump aboard the music plane toward a heightened spiritual experience. steven.dearing@bucmi.org

From Abha: As Steven has endeavored to coordinate all musical aspects of the service with all of the other parts, in addition to playing guitar; it has been fun for me to craft worship with so many creative folks on staff and various committees. I am working on ideas for the fall regarding the Children's Chorus, the Teen Choir, an excellent, enthusiastic Adult Choir and other activities to get as many BUC-ers singing as possible. Please e-mail me suggestions, thoughts or questions abha.dearing@bucmi.org. We look forward to making lots of great music with you. It is a delight and a privilege to be among you again and start the new church year off with a musical bang.

ADULT CHOIR: Great things are in store for you, Adult Singers! We shall meet first on August 31st from 7:30-9pm to rehearse and visit a bit. I look forward to hearing your voices singing lots of new songs from various cultures. We shall start off as one big Chancel Choir. Then, as we get more into the year, you can anticipate October 1st as the audition day to be in the more select Chamber Choir. The big work in preparation for the Holiday Services Dec. 11th is Conrad Susa's "Carols and Lullabies", a beautiful collection of songs from various Spanish-speaking countries. We shall be accompanied by classical guitar, harp and marimba for this piece. Nothing feeds the soul like singing together!

KIDS CHOIR: I am really excited to start the year off with a whole group of singers in "Kids Choir" this year. I love working with kids of all ages and have the highest respect for their innate musical natures, their ability to be expressive and how quickly they pick up new musical ideas. Let me begin by saying Kids Choir will officially be 2nd through 7th grade singers. I will be glad to invite other, younger children to be a part of the group if they are interested, which means that are welcome if they want to sing in a choir setting. The 8th-grade and high school students will have a Teen Choir--we're still ironing out the schedule. This year, we will have Projects that are calendar-chunks. Kids and their families can sign up to sing in Kids Choir for all of the Projects or whichever ones fit into their schedule. Here are the dates:

Project 1: 9/25 thru 11/6 (sing in church both services 11/6)

Project 2: 11/13 thru 12/24th (the 5pm service only)

Project 3: 1/15-3/4 (sing in church both services 3/4)

Project 4: 3/11-5/6 (both services 5/6)

BUC Board Grains



What would be lost to you personally, to the Detroit community and the Unitarian Universalistic tradition if BUC ceased to exist?

Board members were challenged to think about this question in preparing for our August meeting. It's a disturbing, but good question for all BUCers to consider. It challenges us to generate creative, energizing, effective thinking about how to insure that would never happen. You might consider talking about it in your small group fellowships, your sharing dinner groups, your book clubs, committee meetings, and choir groups, and sharing your ideas with the board.

With direction and inspiration from our minister, Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt, the board has been focusing in its meetings on questions of this type. How can we strengthen our governing processes, develop a long-range plan, stabilize our new organizational, committee and staffing structures, and improve communication with the congregation?

We were also challenged to consider whether our current BUC Mission Statement provided the guidance and basis for decisions we needed to make in doing this work. We worked together and individually on this issue. At our July meeting we unanimously approved a new provisional mission statement to be presented for approval at the Annual Membership Meeting:

The mission of Birmingham Unitarian Church is to create a free and inclusive religious community that encourages lives of integrity, service, learning and joy.

What do you think? We need your opinion - and your ideas, commitment, energy, intelligence, questions, and support as we do this exciting and challenging work.

Mary Cay Dietz, Trustee marycaydietz@yahoo.com

The Facility @ BUC: Building Update

With completion of the new carpet installation, interior painting, auto door opener installation, and several other small projects around BUC, the Facilities "to do" list is getting shorter. Projects Facilities is working on include:

ROOF SURVEY & REPAIRS: Last year and again this year, Newton Crane Roofing Co. performed a detailed roof survey. Of BUC's seven roofs, one is in need of replacement at a cost of \$10,700. The other six are in reasonably good condition and with minor repairs each year should last several more years. This year, total roof repairs cost \$3,030 (average of \$500 per roof). We hope to replace the one roof next year.

MARSHALL COURTYARD: The new concrete steps are finally installed. New railings are on order. New landscaping for this area is part of the landscape master plan.

DUMPSTER PAD: A dumpster pad was poured next to the previous pad. Originally intended to support a recycle dumpster, the Green Committee has developed a plan that will recycle more types of materials and bring in a small amount of revenue so the recycle dumpster will not be necessary. While the pad is not needed for a recycle dumpster, the concrete pad can be used for other purposes including a future single stream recycle dumpster.

RESTROOM FLOORS AND DÉCOR: Plans are in progress for renovations to the restrooms. New

ceramic floor tile has been purchased for the entry restroom and the Pavilion restroom. (Floor tile \$600 plus installation) Other changes planned include new mirrors, lighting and where needed, new toilets and sinks.

BUC CAMPUS - EXTERIOR LANDSCAPE PLAN: RFP's were sent to four local landscape firms to design a landscape master plan for the entire BUC campus. Each firm presented their vision for BUC's landscaping. In addition to reviewing each presentation, several members of the Facilities committee visited several Metro Detroit sites designed by each of the architect firms. Facilities has selected a firm to develop a BUC campus master plan which must be confirmed and approved by the BUC Board.

PARKING LOT: The BUC parking lot is in poor condition. This year the cost to fill in the potholes is \$2,220; however, the parking lot needs to be replaced. Estimates for this work will be obtained and the cost presented to the congregation along with the BUC campus landscape ideas and plans. Replacing the parking lot will be an expensive project and is tentatively planned for 2012.

OTHER PROJECTS IDENTIFIED:

Other projects we have identified a need for and hope to tackle in the near future include: Security – system for locking the church; Repair to main entry skylight glass – leaks around windows and into church; and Interior Design Standard Guidelines – standardize colors, style, etc for furnishings, wall colors, artwork, etc. for the church interior. While our list is getting shorter as projects are completed, it also grows with new projects and ideas.

Together with you in service, the BUC Facilities Committee

Leadership Updates and Resources for Members

Your Leadership Development Committee, elected each year at the annual meeting, serve two main functions on behalf of the members: We identify, interview and nominate trustee and officer candidates for the Board of Trustees, Program Council and Leadership Development Committee, as well as identifying best practices and resources to support our lay leaders in their elected volunteer roles.

In January, LDC hosted two half day Leadership Seminars for current BUC leaders at all levels as well as any member of the congregation who was interested in attending. We had over 50 members attend each event. After each seminar we surveyed the attendees to get feedback and assess if the information provided was helpful and where we could look down the road to support BUC leaders on all levels as you work towards fulfilling BUC's mission.

With this input we set our goals to assist our current leadership, identify new leadership, mentor new leaders and share resources with the hope all members are more engaged and connected in their individual membership experience as UU's and as leaders of our congregation working with our new minister.

Leadership:

- Occasional all leadership meetings to discuss issues.
- Leadership Tools (or web or files that can be accessed remotely).
- Leadership "packet" given to new leaders.
- Role and purpose of committees (establishing goals and procedures).
- Assistance with populating committees as members rotate off.

Communication:

- Workshop on communication, all types.
- Communicating open committees, volunteers needed and description of tasks.

- Communication dealing with changes from all levels (minister, staff, lay leaders and board).
- Feedback, culture of feedback and how to share feedback effectively.
- Grievances and violations of covenants.
- Connecting with new people or those who appear to be isolated.

Recruiting:

- New Members
- Committee members
- Recruiting workshop- How do we recruit?
- Effective recruiting, matching volunteers with the right role (mutual benefits for member and BUC)

LDC has been working this year to address many of these concerns and requests and can report the following updates:

Congregational Leadership Input

-In April we created a new format to engage members in the leadership and nominations process by inserting something we called the “Congregational Input Form” into orders of service on three Sundays (it was too big to include in a newsletter). Members could recommend themselves or others for committees or leadership positions. As a result of congregation feedback, LDC identified a recommendation for a board committee leadership role, members for committees needing new blood and a candidate for Program Council.

Adaptive Leadership- Leadership is a verb, not a noun.

-A member of our committee as well as Rev. Hurt, attended a workshop at the District Meeting in March on Adaptive Leadership; a new model for congregations to use in problem solving and conflict resolution involving a change in approach from labeling or compartmentalizing a problem towards quick resolution, or a “technical challenge” to being more deliberate in the approach with non-technical or “adaptive” challenges. The Adaptive model tackles challenges without easy solutions, it’s messier, can be more confrontational, but that’s the point. Adaptive leadership acknowledges the need to be messier, keep discussions open and inclusive so that we can reach consensus and understanding while respecting difference of opinion.

Identifying and Mentoring New Leaders:

-As part of our nominating scope of work, LDC has tried to cast a wide net in identifying new members with leadership potential or interest and recommended them to committee leaders looking for new members. A sub-committee is also identifying mentoring options for these future leaders.

Reviewing Structures and Leadership Job Descriptions

-LDC has been attending board and program council meetings through the year as well as interviewing all board and program council member to gain insight into function and structure and where we can do a better job fitting candidates to roles and giving them the proper tools for the job.

BUC Board Transitions Correction

An update semantic/constitutional correction/clarification to the July/August newsletter about the Board of Trustees transitions in early summer. When the President is unable to perform their duties or steps down, our Constitution calls for the Vice President to move into that role and the Board, not LDC, makes the appropriate adjustments to their leadership (Vice President) and replacement trustees.

As such, Walter Dean was asked and agreed to step in for the remainder of the year as VP by the Board, not LDC as was communicated to you previously. However, given the urgent tasks and timing of this

transition, new Board President Pauline Mengebier, asked the LDC to assist with finding a replacement trustee for the Board to continue its' work with a full team while she focused on quickly getting up to speed in her new role.

As LDC was already in process beginning to contact candidates for 2012, on behalf of the board, LDC asked Clark Bell to join the board to fill Walter Deans open trustee role for the remainder of 2011 and Clark agreed. The board voted unanimously to accept Clark in that capacity and he joined the board in July. We are indebted to them and to the continuing board members for their leadership and service to Birmingham Unitarian Church.

2011 BUC Leadership Development Committee: Scott Farrar, Larry Freedman, Debbie Fordree, Ron Frederick, Diane Lake, Grace Rising, Brian Schandavel, Barbara Woolf. Carol Lee & Susie Sherman-Hall, Co-Chairs

Has BUC made a difference in your life?

*We build on foundations we did not lay,
We drink from wells we did not dig,
We sit in the shade of trees we did not plant,*

*We warm ourselves at fires we did not light,
We profit from persons we never knew:
All our lives, we are bound in community.*

-- adapted from Peter Raible

To hear how you can help ensure that BUC will continue to make that difference in the years to come, the Endowment Committee invites **everyone** to join us for brunch and briefing at the home of Marilyn Webster, on **Sunday, September 18 at 1:00 p.m.** The Rev. Kathy Hurt will help us understand why an endowment is of such importance in strengthening our church community. Matt Chope will give a brief financial report, and outline some simple ways that you can help to keep BUC financially strong, through membership in the Hallock Heritage Society.

Do come---for information, for refreshments, and for camaraderie. Just RSVP to Nancy Jones, njones255584MI@comcast.net or 248-626-4058.

Many years ago Clark and Nan Hallock willed their estate to BUC, and that was the beginning of our Endowment Fund. Now all who have named BUC the recipient of part of their estate are members of the Hallock Heritage Society—you may notice them wearing the ribbons on their name tags.

Members of the Endowment Committee will be staffing a table at coffee hours in the Social Hall in September to answer any questions you might have about putting BUC into your estate plan and becoming a Hallock Heritage Society member.

---The Endowment Committee: Betty Blair, Donna Cunningham, Ron Fredrick, Dick Schwing, Nancy Jones (Chair)

Words and Spirit

The written and spoken word is central to our Unitarian-Universalist faith. And reflection is part of who we are as religious people. This Fall we will be launching two groups that are designed to cultivate our relationship with the written word. One will focus on hearing, reflecting on and learning “by heart” the words of others. The second group will focus on writing as a means for spiritual reflection. The groups will meet monthly at BUC and will be facilitated by Penny Hackett-Evans.

Living by Heart

7:00 – 8:30pm – first Monday of every month.



“Nearly every day, poetry saves me. Some favorite line or surprising image will rescue my vagrant attention from the careening bandwagon of my thoughts and redirect it to the path of my soul. My mind quiets, my breath deepens, and I remember what matters most to me.” - Kim Rosen

Is there a line or a poem that has touched your life? A poem, a song, a reading can become a teacher. It can change you from the inside out. This monthly gathering will be a place to reflect on the meaningful words of others that cross our paths. We will read words, hear them out loud, reflect on them and then try to take them into our lives in a deeper way than merely reading them. Using an ancient practice, “Lectio Divina”, we will attempt to un-tether words from the written page and take them into our lives.

This is an open group – BUC members and non-members, readers and appreciators of words of any sort are all welcome. You can feel free to drop in or attend regularly. We will attempt to create an environment of reverence for the written word and for each other as we explore ways to deepen our own relationship with words. Please bring with you a poem or other short literary piece that resonates deeply for you.

“The great thing about poetry is that no matter what lonely street you are on someone has been there before you. And survived.” -- Guy Johnson

“Poems are not words, after all, but fires for the cold, ropes let down to the lost, something as necessary as bread in the pockets of the hungry” - Mary Oliver

Writing as Spiritual Practice

7:00 – 8:30pm – Third Monday of every month

“In this insistence of writing, who I want to find is myself.” -- Humberto Ak’abal

Are you interested in finding a regular practice that will help you come into contact with the deepest part of who you are? In this group, we will explore ways of using writing as a tool to do that. We will do some writing while we are together as well as being encouraged to do our own writing in between sessions. The emphasis will be on finding and sustaining a personal writing/spiritual practice rather than on writing techniques per se. Writers may choose to share their words or to keep them private. This monthly group is open and ongoing and will be for BUC members and non-members and to experienced writers and to those with no previous writing history.

The focus will be on writing for one’s own personal enrichment. Regular commitment is encouraged but not mandatory. Please bring a journal (or pieces of paper) and a favorite pen.

“I write poems to find out why I write them.” -- Stephen Dobyns *“Writing is the geometry of the soul.”* - Plato

Film Buffs Presents: *Keeping Mum* Friday, Sept. 16, 7:00 p.m.

“Walter Goodfellow (Rowan Atkinson), the absent-minded husband, father and vicar of the rural village of Little Wallop (pop. 57), is too distracted by the pressures of his job to notice his wife's (Kristin Scott Thomas) fling with her studly, sleazy American golf instructor (Patrick Swayze). To the rescue comes their charming, grey-haired new housekeeper, Grace (the incomparable Maggie Smith), a sweet little old lady with her own distinctive—and hilariously macabre—method of cleaning house. *Mum* is dark comedy of a very high order, as well as a marvelously witty portrait of a woman's determination to keep a family together—by any means necessary.” - *DFT Fall/Winter 2006 Film Guide*

Keeping Mum (England, 2005, 90 minutes) was rated R (Language and some sexual content/nudity) by the MPAA. Hope you can join us in the Commons at BUC for this film.

Snacks provided. For more information contact Larry at 248-569-0965 or LarryWisniew@att.net.

Volunteers of the Month ~ Don & Nancy Johnson



Don and I are truly honored to be chosen as BUC's "Volunteers of the Month". When we came to BUC over eleven years ago, we had both recently retired and were looking for a liberal spiritual community where we could find meaningful opportunities for involvement. BUC proved to be the perfect fit for us in countless ways!

Shortly after joining, our first volunteer tasks were as servers and chefs for BUC's 50th anniversary celebration. We fondly remember making huge pans full of "Church Roasted Vegetables"!

Since then, we have offered our time and talents in a variety of ways but seem to always gravitate to anything surrounding food. We have sponsored service auction dinners and classes and have prepared meals for SOS and rummage as well as on

special occasions for BUC members and their families. In addition, we have participated in food service for the South Oakland lunch program, the BUC service auction, and of course, major celebratory events such as Doug's retirement and Kathy's installation.

To summarize, the following exemplifies how we feel about volunteering at BUC:

"From you I receive, to you I give, together we share and from this we live." (Hymn #402, [Singing the Living Tradition](#))

Fondly,

Don and Nancy Johnson

September Artist: Carolyn Vosburg *Variations on a Theme*

Sonia Molnar, head of the Art Committee, announces the fall show featuring Carolyn Vosburg Hall, local artist and UU member. Called "Variations On A Theme", the show opening September 1, exhibits thirty of her recent paintings.

The artist's reception will be on Friday September 16 from 6 - 8 p.m. in the Pavilion and Gallery at BUC.

Carolyn Vosburg Hall's work has been shown in numerous juried competitions as well as group and solo shows locally and nationally and won many awards. She is a founding member of the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center. A BFA and MFA design graduate of Cranbrook Academy of Art, she has worked in many media, in particular design and fibers. She taught at North Dakota State College in Fargo, at the BBAC and elsewhere. She has written 16 craft books for Doubleday, Chilton, Van Nostrand Reinhold and Simon & Shuster/Prentice Hall and co-edited four books, two for the BBAC and two for Detroit Women Writers, the latter distributed by Writers Digest.

She has served on many boards in the community such as the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center, Detroit Women Writers and Cranbrook Writers Guild, as well as headed several DWW Writers Conferences at Oakland University. Most recently she created twelve large bears for the Bloomfield Township Library fundraiser, a smaller version of her life-sized bear sculptures hanging in the children's section for 20 years. Carolyn is a native Michigan Artist living in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan and she and her husband Cap are Unitarian church members.

Alliance 2011-2012

The opening event of Alliance for 2011-2012 will be on Wednesday, September 21. As the longest-standing social and service group at BUC, we are beginning our 58th year of luncheon programs monthly during the church year.

We meet on the third Wednesday of the month September thru April, exceptions being our Holiday Luncheon on December 7 and our Annual Meeting Luncheon on June 6, 2012. We have “Brown Bag” lunches twice in the fall and January through April. These meetings are in the Pavilion at Noon with our programs starting at about 1:00.

On September 21 we will have a “Board Catered” luncheon (in the Pavilion at Noon). Our speaker will be the Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt, our “settled Senior Minister”, as she looks forward to her first full church year in that role.

Lunch will be quiche, garden salad and dessert. The cost is \$10, paid at the door – no reservations needed. Bring the membership card you will have received in the mail in August. Come early to join and socialize before lunch.

Future fall dates for your calendars: October 19 we will have a special off-site program. We will visit and tour the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills. Tentative plans are to meet at BUC at 11:00 a.m. to carpool – bring your brown bag lunch. Specific details to follow in the next newsletter.

On November 16 we are delighted to present Susan Safford who was Alliance President in 1984=1985! She will tell us about her two years in Romania as a member of the U.S. Peace Corps.

It will be good to be together again at Alliance. Everyone is quite welcome to join and/or attend, so mark your calendar. We hope to see you Wednesday, September 21!

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Birmingham Unitarian Church

All Submissions for the Newsletter must be received by midnight on the 20th of each month for the following months newsletter to the editor lisa.crawford@bucmi.org