

Birmingham Unitarian Church

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

July/August 2011

Summer Sunday Services

10:30

July 3: “The Shaker Way”

BUC member and author Annis Pratt along and Worship Associate Grace Rising look at the American Shaker tradition and its unique spiritual vision. The service includes an opportunity to experience Shaker dance.

July 10: “Sabbath Time”

In the first of a summer series, Kathy and Worship Associate Kristi Fielder consider the ancient spiritual notion of Sabbath as a time when the usual activities of all the other days of our lives are suspended – for what purpose?

July 17: “Sabbath Practices I: Reverence”

All spiritual traditions challenge us to be more mindful, to pay attention to what is going on around and within us rather than dividing our attention through multi-tasking or shifting to automatic pilot. Kathy and Worship Associate Lisa Demian explore how Sabbath time affords a special opportunity to pay attention in a whole other way, and what we might discover when we summon this kind of attention.

July 24: “Go Fly a Kite!”

A multigenerational service, led by Kathy and Worship Associate Dan Kosuth, celebrating the experience of soaring in the wind, both literally and spiritually. Please bring a picnic lunch and join us at Poppleton Park in Birmingham, following the service -- that will include (of course) time spent flying kites. ☺



July 31: “When I am Among the Trees”

“The true nature of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.” In the decade before BUC constructed its sanctuary space, Summer Sunday worship met in the Pavilion. One luminous summer morning, Elaine Morse and Nancy Nordlie coordinated a service celebrating the significance and presence of trees in our lives. Join us in this collaborative exploration of the role and value of trees – real and metaphoric, in our lives.

Aug. 7: “Sabbath Practices II: Hospitality”

Like most congregations, BUC endeavors to be a friendly, welcoming place for strangers. But the spiritual notion of hospitality challenges us to be far more than simply friendly and welcoming. Kathy and Worship Associate Grace Rising reflect on our resistances to inviting strangers into our midst, and how we might overcome those resistances.

Aug. 14: “The Laramie Project, 10 Years Later” (90 minutes)

Pam McAlpin directs this special reading that features characters from the original Laramie Project production and what changes have come into their lives since that time. Members of the congregation will be featured in a variety of roles.

Aug. 21: “Sabbath Practices III: Vocation”

The notion of being called to do or be something has been a quality long associated with clergy and other religious vocations. But many traditions suggest that each one of us has a unique reason for being here, who we are, at this time, discovering and living into our calling is the whole purpose of existence. Kathy and Worship

Associate Frank Arvan invite us to answer once more the question of why we are here, now.

Sacred and Profane Discussions

Sixteen participants attended the recent discussion on "Creativity". So many aspects of creativity were discussed that the session could have continued beyond the allotted time. The topics for July (Wed 20th) and August (Wed 17th) are "Vices and Virtues". The July session will be devoted to the Ghandian "Seven Deadly Sins": Wealth without Work; Pleasure without Conscience; Science without Humanity; Knowledge without Character; Politics without Principle; Commerce without Morality; Worship without Sacrifice. The August session will be devoted to the "Virtues". The group meets at 10:30 a.m. until noon. Susan Williams will facilitate these two meetings. All are welcome.

Youth Chorus Outing

Mark your calendars for Friday, July 8th from 4-9 p.m. at Red Oaks Water Park in Madison Heights. Cost is \$7 for Oakland Residents. \$10 for non-residents \$4.50 for "children under 44". We will meet near the concession stand to the right of the entrance. Food is allowed as well as coolers but no glass. Hope to see you there! Pam McAlpin
pmcalpin2001@hotmail.com



Above, left, gift of BUC members the Ratliff's, in 1979, currently hanging in BUC's Social Hall. Image on the right a link to what was offered March of 2011 at Christie's Auction House – the piece was not sold.

Stella - A History

Who is Frank Stella, and what is the history of the large "M" panel that has hung in our Social Hall for many years? Frank Stella, (born May 12, 1936) is an American painter and printmaker. He is a significant figure in minimalism and post-painterly abstraction. [Wikipedia](#) has a fairly detailed biography on him for those interested in learning more.

What we know: in 1969, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City was celebrating their 100th Anniversary. "According to the Stella Studio, these panels were essentially decorations made for the exterior of the Met museum while it was being renovated. The studio was unclear whether these should be classified as unique works of art or editions." (Email exchange with the Met, March 2009)

The Met has no pictures or record of the panels which led, the director of the Cranbrook Art Museum, Gregory Wittkopp to conclude that it was not a curatorial work of the museum, but rather an imaginative and lively way to engage the public and disguise construction. BUC's Art Committee, was fortunate to have a visit from Mr. Wittkopp on June 30. He concluded that it was a nice representative piece of this time period in art history. He did not feel it was appropriate for Cranbrook's museum, but that private collectors might enjoy it. He felt its real value lay in the emotional ties that people at BUC associated with this panel to important life events which took place in this space.

The Ratliff's purchased two of the "M" panels, for \$600 each. They sold one immediately, and gifted the other panel to BUC when they moved out west in 1979.

On June 29th, the board of directors received an unsolicited bid on the panel. If you would like to consider making an offer for the panel, please submit a bid in writing to the BUC offices for the board of trustees' consideration before July 22, 2011.

Laramie Project: 10 Years Later

This will be performed as a reading at the August 14th service and directed by Pamela McAlpin. There will be four total rehearsals. The first rehearsal will be a short meeting on July 10th (15 minutes) following the 10:30 service in the Sanctuary. Scripts will be handed out and we will do a quick read through.

There will be three Rehearsals- August 10th, 11th, and 12th. 7-9 p.m. in the Sanctuary. We will be Performing on August 14th for the Sunday service. This service will run longer than our usual summer fare, plan on ninety minutes. Take a moment and sign up in office or e-mail Pam at pmcalpin2001@hotmail.com

Connections - Joys & Sorrows

The buzz... BUC's pictorial directories will be mailed out to us on July 12. After they arrive, those of you who contributed a picture for the directory may pick up your free copy from the church offices.

On June 7, Nancy Jones received the highest award given to volunteers at the DIA, the Distinguished Service Award. Out of seven hundred and nine volunteers, Nancy was recognized at the Annual Volunteer Celebration for her outstanding efforts as a volunteer at the DIA. Congratulations, Nancy!

Jean Laird, a long-time BUC member, celebrated her 100th birthday on June 7, 2011. Jean lives at St. Anne's Mead in Southfield. Thanks for all the folks who signed her card after services on June 5th – the card was much appreciated.

Sandy Frincke is experiencing a recurrence of her breast cancer and is undergoing further treatment beginning the third week in June. The doctors are optimistic about treatment options. Please hold Sandy and her husband Larry in your thoughts as they face this next challenge.

Jim Bizer had a freak accident on June 18th while out walking their newly adopted rescue dog. Jim's leg was broken in two places. He underwent surgery on the 19th at Beaumont Hospital. He is on the road to recovery. Thoughts and well wishes much appreciated.

Judy Amir underwent successful knee replacement surgery in June and is recovering at Woodward Hills Rehab center.

On June 29, Tanya Roycraft Nordhaus and Mark Nordhaus welcomed their baby daughter, Amelia Claire Nordhaus into the world. Congratulations Tanya and Mark. Glad to hear you're all home, safe and sound. Let the living commence. We rejoice with you.



Congratulations, Kathy! While attending General Assembly (GA) in Charlotte, North Carolina the third week in June, Kathy's 25th anniversary of her ordination was mentioned and celebrated.

The Knitting Ministry enjoyed a summer pot luck at Margot LeRoy's house on Monday, June 27. They presented Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt with a belated welcome and housewarming afghan knit just for her. Many of the members each designed a strip using their unique knitting pattern. The strips were then sewn together with an added crocheted border. Kathy can now curl up with it on our many cold Michigan evenings.



Congratulations to Lisa Demian and Jim Clark who celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on July 4th!

Shirley Hodas, long time BUC member now living in Arizona, fell and broke her left arm. We hope you knit quickly, Shirley.

Attention Gardeners & Weeders

On the first and third Wednesdays in July, August and September a small group will meet at BUC from 9:30-11:30 to help maintain our grounds. We will NOT meet if the temperature is over 85 degrees. If you have questions, or know you can help on another day, please call Nancy Duffy 248-647-3108 or email at wduffy33@sbcglobal.net

BUC Website News

We're getting a new website! The funds obtained in the 2011 budget to build a new website for BUC. We want your input. Join Lisa Crawford for a website focus group meeting in the Commons on Sunday, July 17 immediately following the service (around 11:30). Come share your thoughts and ideas about what you'd like to see in BUC's new website and follow along as we take the next steps in making it a reality.

Reflections

Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt



Many of you are urging me, as the church year comes to an end, to be sure to “take some time off this summer.” Good advice, given the propensity of ministers to fudge the boundaries between work and personal life, to the detriment of both—and advice I might also extend to you, that you be sure to “take some time off this summer.” The increased pace of busyness in our lives, and the pressures of our culture to always be on the move, going somewhere, doing something, make the simple choice of taking time off far more difficult than it once was.

Since the earliest days of tending crops, farmers have understood the necessity of allowing land to have time off, to lie fallow for a season or more rather than continually being seeded and pressed into the process of growing. Lying fallow made it possible for fields to continue being fertile, as the time of being fallow was time spent regenerating, resting from the intensity of seedtime and harvest.

When was the last time you let an area of your life lie fallow? Do you deliberately take time off from productivity, or do you only take a break when forced to by illness or injury or family pressures or misfortune that makes it impossible for you to be productive for a time? And if you do manage to choose to lie fallow, how long can you maintain that choice before anxiety about not producing, not being busy, spurs you into action once more?

I promise to take some time off this summer as you advise, and encourage you to do the same. May we all lie fallow in some parts of our lives, out of respect for the creativity and fertility that requires time of resting in order to blossom in the next season.

Faithfully,

Kathy

BUC Community Picnic and Kite Flying - July 24



Join us after the service on July 24 for a time of BUC community fun. We'll head off to Poppleton Park, just south of BUC, off of Woodward Avenue, north of Maple in Birmingham. Pack yourself and those you enjoy spending some time with a picnic lunch and we will provide the lemonade. Bring your kite – let's see how many we can get in the air all at the same time!

If you don't have a kite, we'll have a few that can be borrowed for the occasion. Hope you can join us, as we “Go Fly a Kite!” Invite some friends ☺ come on, it'll be FUN.

Image courtesy of Google Images

Summer Time Religious Education

Laura Ross, Director of Religious Education for Youth
Eleanor McGuire, Director of Religious Education for Children



Summer Religious Education experiences at Birmingham Unitarian Church are slightly more laid back, to go along with the relaxed nature we hope summer provides for everyone.

Children Preschool – 5th grade will have class beginning at 10:30 (don't go into the Sanctuary, come directly downstairs to the lower level classrooms) 6th – 12th graders can join adults in service, or help out in classes with the younger children. In class, we will be reading several great books and doing fun activities which may be too long, messy or downright engagingly involved to fit into our regular religious

education programming. So come dressed for fun! We hope you can make any or all of our summer experience.



R.E. Activities ~ Summer 2011

	Preschool	1st thru 5th
July 3	Fourth of July / fireworks	Fourth of July / flags
July 10	Robin's Nest	Kaleidoscopes
July 17	Outside games and bubbles (weather permitting)	
July 24	Multi-Generational Service - Kites	
July 31	Apples & Cheese/T-Pick Con	Ice Cream
Aug 7	Pocket Fairy	Recycled Paper
Aug 14	Outside games and bubbles (weather permitting)	
Aug 21	Blow-out Frogs	Stained Glass Cookies
Aug 28	Bear-in-a-cup	Egg Drop
Sept 4	Multi-Generational Service	

Try your hand at leading a Preschool or K-5th grade multi-age classes this summer. It takes sixty volunteers to make a Summer RE program possible. The RE staff does all the prep for you, walks you through the activity before the class starts and then cleans up after you! Please look for the sign-up board in the Social Hall or contact Eleanor or Laura at the office. Eleanor and Laura share some Sundays off during the summer, so you will see Laura at church on Sundays through July, and Eleanor Sundays through August. As always, you can reach us anytime with questions or concerns.

Youth Groups

- ◆ BUC-Sponsored High School Conference (Con-note). August 5 – 7
- ◆ September headlines:
 - OWL: Mandatory Parent orientation Sept 11, 5 – 8p
 - OWL first class session September 18 9:30a – 12:30p
 - Teacher REnewal session September 17, Saturday 9a – 12n
 - UFO Parent and Youth Orientation and planning session 9:30a Sept 11
 - GUUSH first meeting of the year: September 11, 6-8p
 - First class for all youth: September 18

Music @ BUC



Hello from the Music Directors!

What an exciting musical end to the regular church year we had at BUC. The choir has been invigorated under Abha's direction and has established its presence and importance during worship. Thanks go out again to Barbara Woolf for sharing her music with us each Sunday. We had youth sing and perform at ROPE Sunday, and heard Jorah Huntington on trumpet and Mae Rooney on piano for the Bridging service. We also had John Hammer and Brian Schandavel, alongside guest bassist Dan Pliskow performing with the choir which was great fun. I am so proud of the wonderful pool of talent we have at BUC, and many heartfelt thanks to all of those who share their gifts with us on Sunday mornings.

Looking ahead, Abha and I will go to the Unitarian Universalist Musicians' Network Conference in Arlington, Virginia this summer. We are sure to come back with many new ideas to combine with our vision for fulfilling, inclusive, excellent music at BUC. Submitted by Steven Dearing, steven.dearing@bucmi.org

From Abha: it has been a joy to be in service to you again as choir director. It was great to work with the teens and to push the adult choir to a high level of musicianship. During the last couple of months, Steven has endeavored to coordinate all musical aspects of the service with all of the other parts, in addition to playing guitar! A warm "Thank you" to Barbara Woolf for her piano playing at choir rehearsals and in service. It has been fun to craft worship with so many creative folks on staff and committees. I am working on many 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.

The Plate Collection

It continues to be very heart-warming when, Sunday after Sunday, BUCers donate so generously to the plate collection. As a result, during the last several months we were able to donate \$855.23 to Forgotten Harvest; \$1006.97 to THAW (The Heat and Warmth Fund); \$1275.89 to Common Ground, and \$2,511.90 to Upward Bound. In this way, we have been able to help people have enough to eat and keep warm, and we have contributed to the well-being and further education of youth and adults in the Detroit Metropolitan Region.

We are presently helping gay, lesbian, and transgender youth by supporting the Ruth Ellis Center. In the coming months we will be making Plate Collection donations to Focus Hope and Communities United for Children, both long time BUC allies.

The way it works is that ten percent of a Sunday intake goes to the minister to donate at her discretion. Of the remaining total, sixty percent goes to BUC and forty percent to the charity we are sponsoring.

Please remember that

1. Checks for the plate collection must be marked 'special plate collection' on the memo line.
2. Cash donations go to the plate.
3. Checks with no memo line advice or saying 'pledge' go to your pledge.
4. If you want the entire check to go to the designated charity you should make it out to that charity so that one hundred percent of your donation will go there.

The Plate Collection Committee is currently accepting applications. If you would like to sponsor a local charity please go to the website www.bucmi.org and find the link to download the application in the business section. Either send it to avpratt@aol.com or put it in the Plate Collection Committee mailbox in the copy room.

Annis Pratt, Chair, Plate Collection Committee

Board Grains...



Thank you for all the good wishes I have received as your new President. It is a great honor to serve my church family.

We have love and gratitude to Tom Cranston for his generosity in stepping down as President. His health issues and work commitments made his attention to BUC difficult. Although no longer President we expect him to continue his strong role in youth activities and denominational relationships.

We forge on with our senior minister, Dr Kathy Hurt. These are exciting times ahead for our church. The Board is now considering how to move, with her, to a policy governance structure which will need to engage all of us in a conversation.

This is a call to all committees and groups in the church, our wonderful choir, small group fellowships, sharing dinner groups and the congregation as a whole to look at who we are and where we are going. There is such energy and enthusiasm among our congregants, visitors, young and old, liberal and conservative, humanistic and theistic to mobilize for our future. The conversation will also be about how we can more actively engage the community around us and create the excitement of a new tomorrow.

In each following monthly newsletter a member of the Board will offer a letter telling about what the Board is doing and the parts of our work that particularly interest them. We will be having Town Hall meetings monthly on a regular Sunday of the month on topics on which we want to hear from you. Also each month the Leadership Development Committee will recommend to the Board their suggestion for Volunteer of the Month. This will be one way to celebrate at least one of the amazing number of volunteers who give so much to our church family and, who feel they also get so much in return. We need contributions of time, effort and ideas from everyone here.

Again, thank you.

Pauline Mengebier, President of the Board and the Congregation

BUC Board Transitions ~ 2011

Tom Cranston stepped down as BUC's Board President effective June 1. Vice President, Pauline Mengebier, moved to fill the role of president. The Leadership Development Committee has asked, Board Trustee Walter Dean, to fulfill the roll of Vice President, and BUC member Clark Bell to become a Board Trustee. They have both agreed to step into these positions for the remainder of 2011.



Walter Dean, Vice-President



Clark Bell, Trustee

Rummage Redux

What? A Rummage article in *July*?

Well, sure. Although the sale happens only twice a year, faithful workers and donors have, like Ebenezer Scrooge, learned to keep Rummage in their hearts all year long. They put a box in an out-of-the-way corner and each time they identify unwanted goods, they make a deposit. Come September (or April), they're halfway there!

More importantly, the Rummage faithful know that, come September (or April), BUC can count on them to perform the duties they have done in the past. All that experience helps Rummage function well.

The down side of this, however, is that we are in danger of wearing out the Rummage faithful. Did you know, for example, that the same person organizes both set-up and takedown-- with many of the same helpers? These are two intense operations. Opening night sales, day and night managers, Friday night Consolidation, the kitchen, and various departments all have their regulars. We love our volunteers-- we just wish we had more of them.

So, during the crazy, hazy, lazy days of summer, please turn your thoughts to BUC's favorite and oldest fundraiser. If you are one of the faithful, please think about recruiting a friend to help in your area. If you are still feeling your way, think about what you might like to do. There are jobs for everyone-- people with dust allergies, for example, might help in the kitchen; those who cannot lift might sit at the Layaway desk; young people in need of community service hours can help deliver intake; those with a practical bent can set up shelves and tables or store and clean up at the end; techno-geeks are badly needed in Electronics; parents who are authorities on the hot trends in kids' goods are a boon to Toys. And if your schedule just doesn't allow you to be on the premises, we welcome new ideas about reaching a broader community, increasing our recycling component, boosting our profits, and benefiting more non-profit groups with our leftovers. If you have questions, suggestions, or want to reserve a spot at the Rummage table, please contact Kimery Campbell at kimery.campbell@bucmi.org. And remember-- Rummage Sunday is September 25, just three months away!



Attention BUC Athletes... (or those who like to do athletic type stuff)

We are currently creating an Athletic Group here @ BUC. This club is open to all ages and abilities. The goal is to get some like minded folks together and have some fun trying our hand at various sports. Sound fun?

New member, Lauren Glover is organizing this venture in association with the Congregational Development Committee. You can contact Lauren at glover.lauren@student.oaklandcc.edu for more information. We'll gather in the Pavilion following the service on July 10th to make a few decisions. Bocce Ball, soccer, kickball, non-tackle football, badminton, golf, tennis, softball... what's your pleasure? Perhaps a little capture the flag? Did you just think, croquet? If you're intrigued, let's talk after the service on July 10th in the Pavilion. Decisions made that day will be communicated to the office, so you may call the office after July 10th if you are unable to attend the initial set-up meeting and find discover the scoop. It's summer -- let's play!



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SOO CHOE *PIANO CONCERT*

SUNDAY, JULY 17, 2011
3:00 P.M.

Birmingham Unitarian Church
38651 Woodward Avenue
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
(west side of Woodward; north of Lone Pine)

A portion of all concert proceeds will benefit
Birmingham Unitarian Church Music Committee

Single ticket price \$15; two for \$25

Contact 248-357-5434
For tickets and further information



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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