

Birmingham Unitarian Church

"The Mission of the Birmingham Unitarian Church is to create a free and welcoming religious community that encourages lives of integrity, service, learning and joy."

March 2012

Worship Services @ BUC

9:30 and 11:15

With Childcare & Children's Ed~ something for all ages

March 4: "Birth, Rebirth, and Born Again"

Over the course of March, a time of seasonal transition, worship services explore times of spiritual transition, when our fundamental frame of reference, our faith perspective, undergoes a change. This service, led by Kathy and Worship Associate Ed Sharples, looks at images of birth used to describe an experience of transformation. Setting aside doctrinal references, what does it mean to be spiritually born again, or reborn? The 11:15 service will include a welcome ceremony for the fourteen members who've joined BUC since June of last year.

March 11: "Spiritual, Not Religious"

Cultural trends suggest that the church as an institution may be disappearing, with the coming generation seeing no need for institutionalized spirituality. Kathy and Worship Associate Kristi Fielder consider what transitions in beliefs have resulted in the shrinking of churches, and what is necessary for church to once more be an essential element in a spiritual journey.

March 18: "Who, What, and How We Art"

The 2012 Youth Sunday service, conceived, planned and executed by the 6-12 youth, will look at the role of artistic practice in defining ourselves. Expect plenty of music, original readings, and visual art, some of which will be on sale to support the BUC youth programs. Come hungry! The annual ROPE

pancake breakfast will be held after both services. Admission is \$5.

Mar 25: "When We've Been There 10,000 Years"

All of us face the challenge of coming to terms with our mortality, and profound spiritual shifts usually come in the course of wrestling with approaching death. How do we view the end of our lives and whatever might come after, if anything? Kathy and Worship Associate John Lake contemplate what may be the most critical question all spiritual traditions face, and our most difficult transition of all.

Donate Books for WHRC Library

March is Reading Month. On Youth Sunday, March 18, the youth are asking for donations of gently used (or new) books at the elementary reading level to rebuild the Whitmer School Library. There will be baskets in the Pavilion for donations. Help make a difference with the gift of books.

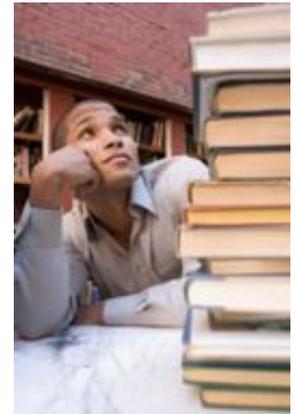


Plate Collection for March

In March we will be collecting for the 313 Project, which two of our members have established to provide pro bono legal help. Our donation will be used by 140 marginalized women in Dearborn and Detroit facing the crises of hunger, domestic violence, and lack of shelter. Any member can be a sponsor: just click on the [Common Grant Application Cover](#) sheet to submit your organization's proposal for consideration at the Plate Collection's next Quarterly meeting on April 2, 2012.

Connections - Joys & Sorrows

Vickie King continues to recuperate from two herniated discs. She does not expect to return to the Detroit Symphony until next month.

Kelly Taylor's cousin and his wife received an Academy Award nomination for their live action short film *Time Freak*. We were holding our breath with you the night of the Oscar's, Kelly!

Sherry Mullins daughter was accepted into the Oakland University Social Work Honors Society.

Annis Pratt's daughter who lives in Denver has been diagnosed with breast cancer. Please hold all of them in your thoughts and prayers.

The Arnold family is proud to announce that their daughter Heather was accepted into the Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

Cheryl and Joe Courage are expecting their first baby in July. Congratulations!

After being laid off in January, Nanette Magner is happy to let everyone know she began a new job the second week in February.

Stephanie Patil traveled to England to celebrate the marriage of her son, Anand to bride Stacey in Oxford, England on February 29.

Paul and Marie Miller celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in February. Congratulations!

Nancy Schmitt's father underwent surgery as a form of cancer treatment on February 23. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

After a prolonged search congratulations to Nicole Boling, who wishes to share her joy in finding a job in her chosen field. Nicole and her fiancé Ryan

Gregg Bloomfield's mother's husband, Kenneth Wicka passed away on February 20. Our deepest sympathy goes out to Gregg's mother and to Gregg and his partner Jim Lewis as they experience this loss in their family.



Tipping Towards the Light

An invitation to the women of BUC to gather in celebration of the spring equinox and the connections-visible and invisible- that sustain us throughout all the turnings of the year:

Sunday, March 25, 5-8 p.m.

Ingathering in the Social Hall followed by a simple supper. Program to follow in the Sanctuary

Tickets: \$20.00

Please register in the Social Hall on Sundays, March 4, 11, and 18

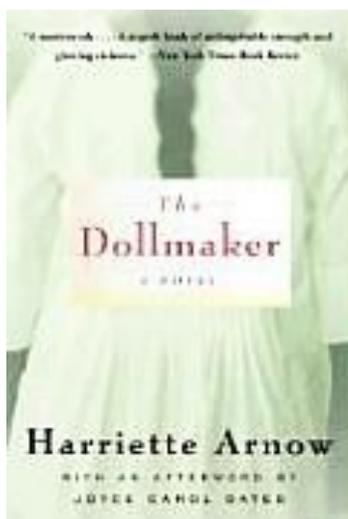
Welcome OHG!

BUC is pleased to have entered into a rental agreement with the Open Homeschoolers Group. Beginning in January going through May, and this September through December. Several BUC members and friends are part of this group meeting most Fridays from 9:00-3:00 in the Lower Level, the Social Hall & Kitchen, the Large & Small Conference Rooms, the Commons, the Green & Red Door Classrooms and our outdoor playground area. Having lost the daycare center that used to occupy our Lower Level Monday-Friday several years ago, it is good to have this great group here at BUC.

John Hammer's RheaDeal Fundraiser Postponed

Due to illness, the BUC fundraiser scheduled for Sunday March 4 has been tentatively rescheduled for April 1st. Stay tuned!

Drop-In Book Club - March 29



Thursday, March 29 (6:30 in the Red Door Classroom across the courtyard) we'll be discussing, *The Dollmaker* by Harriette Sim Arnow.

Set in chaotic war time Detroit, "Harriette Arnow's brutal, beautiful novel, *The Dollmaker*, has a permanent effect upon the reader: long after one has put it aside, he is still in the presence

of its people, absorbed in their trivial and tragic dilemma, sorting out their mistakes, rearranging their possibilities, pondering upon the fate that makes certain people live certain lives, suffer certain atrocities, while other people only read about them.... Our most unpretentious American masterpiece." Joyce Carol Oates, New York Times Book Review

Sunday Morning Discussions

Beginning Feb. 26, the Sunday Morning Discussion Group will discuss the U.S. Bill of Rights and the UN Declaration of Human Rights for three weeks. Beginning on March 18 through May 6th, we will discuss the book, "Living Buddha, Living Christ" by Thich Nhat Hanh; however we will not meet on April 8th or 29th.

Our group meets in the Large Conference Room from 9:30 to 11:00 -- everyone is welcome.

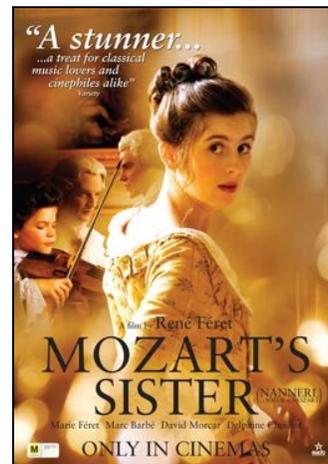
Sacred & Profane Discussions

The next meeting of the Sacred & Profane discussion group will be on Wednesday, 16 March, 2012 at 10:30 a.m. in the large conference room. The topic is "Pornography". In conformity with truth in advertising, pornographic images will not be displayed, nor will pornographic activities be demonstrated. All members of the church are invited to attend.

March 16, Mozart's Sister

Friday, March 16, BUC Film Buffs, beginning at 7 p.m. in the Commons. "The tantalizing, ingeniously conceived *Mozart's Sister* is a re-imagined account of the early life of Maria Anna "Nannerl" Mozart, five years older than Wolfgang (David Moreau) and a musical prodigy in her own right. Originally the featured performer, Nannerl has given way to Wolfgang as the main attraction, as their strict but loving father Leopold (Marc Barbe) tours his talented offspring in front of the royal courts of pre-French Revolution Europe. Approaching marriageable age and now forbidden to play the violin or to compose, Nannerl chafes at the limitations imposed on her gender. But a friendship with the son and daughter of Louis XV offers her surprising ways to challenge the established sexual and social order. In French with English subtitles." - *Detroit Film Theatre Fall 2011 Film Guide*

(France, 2010, 120 minutes) was not rated by the MPAA. Snacks provided by Margot Leroy. For more information contact Larry at [248-569-0965](tel:248-569-0965) or LarryWisniew@att.net.



Adult Drum Circle, March 11

Facilitated by David Sabbagh
Sunday March 11th, BUC Commons
6:00 - 6:30 Beginner's Orientation
6:30 - 8:30 Open Drumming

This drum circle is a one-time event. We are getting together just to enjoy connecting and interacting through rhythm. Dancing is also welcome although the facilitator will most definitely remain in his chair. Questions? Contact David at dsabbagh7@gmail.com

Be sure to check out the other fellowship opportunities mentioned on Page 11.

Reflections

Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt



I am not quite sure when it happened, nor do I entirely understand why, but sometime over the course of the last few years our culture underwent a profound shift in the direction of soliciting feedback. Virtually any experience you have now, from staying in a hotel to watching Dancing with the Stars to restaurant dining to internet shopping to simply reading the latest post on Facebook, will include the request for feedback about your experience. Thumbs up? You liked what happened? You agree with the opinion being expressed? Thumbs down? You had a bad exchange with your server, the shoes were the wrong size, you think the idea is stupid? Lately I notice that some vendors are asking for my feedback before we have even begun our transaction, wanting to know if I will agree to be polled once the transaction is done. I typically decline, but wonder whether I might get better service if I agreed to take the poll.

Feedback seems to be a helpful element in interactions, a way to check in on how we are hearing and being heard. I always appreciate feedback on my sermons; a committee meeting devoid of feedback about programs and plans would seem an exercise in futility. How can any of us speak better, listen better, do better work, become better people, without getting feedback from those around us?

Yet this wholesale shift to becoming a culture of feedback may be too much of a good thing, given that it encourages us to be more judgmental of just about everything. Spiritual teachings warn of our tendency to judge, to want to evaluate each experience, each person, as being good or bad, happy or unhappy, positive or negative. Better to simply let an experience unfold without trying to attach a judgmental label to it, such teachings say, for in being eager to evaluate we miss the fullness of what is happening. I also often find myself unable to make a judgment about the quality of a person or an experience until some time has elapsed, until I have some distance and the chance to reflect on what happened. But the cultural pressure to decide now, to make a judgment right now, allows no such time for reflection.

Ultimately I do believe giving more attention to feedback, both providing it and soliciting it, is a step in a positive direction, helping us grow in sensitivity and care. Perhaps what we need is discernment that enables us to know when and how best to ask for feedback and then put it to good use. I do want your feedback about any and all elements of BUC life, including your feedback about this column—just be sure to read it all the way through before signaling thumbs up or thumbs down.

Faithfully,

Kathy

Facebook Tutorials - the Commons, Sunday March 11 at 12:30

Facebook tutorials... with some lovely new technology, Lisa Crawford is able to do screen capture videos. Here are three mini tutorials (about a minutes each) that deal with various questions. If you have a particular question, email lisa.crawford@bucmi.org and she'll create a mini-tutorial answering your question. Chances are, it's someone else's question, too. Any and all are invited to attend our live tutorial Q & A after second service on March 11. Come check it out. See what all the fuss is about.

- 1) [How to Delete a Comment Posted in a Thread](#)
- 2) [How to Change Your Profile Picture](#)
- 3) [How to Change Your Status to "Offline" in Chat](#)

Lifespan Religious Education

Pam McAlpin, Director of Performing Arts & Adult Education pam.mcalpin@bucmi.org

Kimery Campbell, DRE for Youth kimery.campbell@bucmi.org

Eleanor McGuire, DRE for Children eleanor.mcguire@bucmi.org

Adult & Multi-Generational Religious Education

I wish to express my thanks to all the youth involved in the February 19th Multi-generational service. Noah McMullen you did a wonderful job as Worship Associate. Ali Smith, your portrayal of a teenager in the “Glee” skit was spot on fantastic. Bernadette Magner, you had everyone who’s ever had a child misplace something holding their sides in “Where’s My Coat.” Elijah Bruening and Matthew Baker-Grunza, you two nailed the portrayal of pre-adolescent boys arguing in “Checker Fight.” You were all generous with your time and talents. You entertained and educated – many thanks.

Pamela McAlpin

Performing Arts Director

March 9th will be the next Fridays: Food, Faith, and Fun Game night. You may sign up in the Social Hall after services on Sunday morning March 4th, or you may email me at pam.mcalpin@bucmi.org if you plan to join us for this lively potluck event.

Children’s Rotation Curriculum

April’s Creating Equity rotation explores the ways that our church teaches us to practice our faith. It looks at activities undertaken by BUC to promote equity in both our community and our world. This rotation asks: “Why does our church work to help other people succeed?”, “How do you recognize what the need is?” “How do you decide how to help...what path to take?” and what does it mean, “Teach a man to fish and he’ll be fed for the rest of his life?”

This rotation asks the children to contemplate for themselves four different aspects of equity:

- 1) Recognizing differences and needs: What are the differences in peoples’ material experiences? Could there be greater equity? What things do we really need and what makes us truly happy in life?”
- 2) Patterns of consumption: What habits lead to the preservation or depletion of the earth’s limited resources? What could be done to save resources for future generations?
- 3) Local distribution of opportunities/resources: What does BUC do locally to create equity by supporting organizations in neighborhood communities?
- 4) Global distribution of opportunities/resources: What does BUC do in the larger world to create equity?

Youth Religious Education

In March, the 6th and 7th graders and teachers Debbie Fordree, Stuart McAlpin, and Eric Sargent will take a look at traditional African American Protestant religion. The UFO group is planning a Progressive Dinner on Saturday, March 3rd.

ROPE (Rite of Passage Experience): The ROPE youth have had lots of opportunity to get to know the congregation, with interviews and a visiting panel. In March, they will take a look at God stories and their own beliefs. Plus, the tickets have been purchased and Boston is getting closer, so our fundraising continues to be important. Scrip will continue all year but our special Carruth outdoor sculpture fundraiser will wrap up on March 4th. On March 18th, the ROPE families will

host a fundraiser pancakes breakfast in between Youth Sunday services. For \$5, enjoy a delicious breakfast and help the ROPE youth get to Boston. Special prices for children 10 and under.

In March, the high school youth will be continuing with their Environmental Awareness workshops on Sunday mornings. The youth may also attend regular GUUSH meetings on March 11th and 25th, with a small group night tentatively scheduled for March 18th.

All 6th through 12th grade youth: Youth Sunday is March 18 (rehearsal March 17) Please join us for the Youth Sunday planning sessions on March 4th and 11th. The theme is artistic expression. The plate collection will go to Paint a Miracle, an organization that works with disabled kids and art. We will also take a Practical Stewardship offering of new (or gently used) books for the WHRC library. Youth Sunday will be March's multigenerational service; it is also the youth's best opportunity to speak to the congregation. All 6th-12th graders are welcome to join in.

Questions about Youth RE can be addressed to Kimery Campbell at kimery.campbell@bucmi.org

Alliance March 21 - Presidential Elections

Our program is entitled "The 2012 Presidential Election and the Primary/caucus system of nomination." Our speaker, representing the League of Women Voters, will be Barbara Suhay, past President of the Michigan Conference of Political Scientists. She will give us information about this rather confusing process facing us every four years: Why Michigan has a closed (or open) primary, why the Democrats have super delegates and their conventions are larger than the Republican's. In general, what determines how many delegates a state gets and why parties choose to have a primary or a caucus. And tell us WHY the rules of the nomination process are constantly changing!



Please join us at Noon for our Brown Bag lunch in the Pavilion. The program will begin at about 1:00 p.m. – you are welcome to come only for the program event. Everyone is cordially invited to all our Alliance events. We hope to see you on Wednesday, March 21!

Words & Spirit March

Living by Heart -- a group dedicated to reflecting on the written word as a means for deepening our own lives. Bring a poem or piece of short prose to share. We meet the first Monday evening of the month, this month on March 5, from 7:00-8:30 in the Large Conference Room.

Writing as Spiritual Practice -- a group focused on using our own writing to deepen our living. Bring paper and pen. We meet every third Monday of the month, March 19 this month, from 7:00-8:30 – this session we will begin meeting in the Blue Door Room. Drop ins welcome to both groups!

Prague Partner Church with BUC

The Unitarian Church in Prague, Czech Republic, has been our partner church for several decades but the relationship has been dormant in recent years. Their minister, Petr Dolak Samojsky, has urged that the partnership be revitalized and towards that end a Partner Church steering committee has been formed at BUC. Look for announcements in future weeks about potential projects including visits between the two congregations. The partnership does not involve any financial commitment. If you are interested in participating in Partner Church projects, call Barbara Woolf at 248-626-8868.

Norbert Capek after whom our Capek Woods is named founded the Prague Unitarian Church in 1921. The congregation of over 5,000 was the largest UU church ever but the depression, Nazi occupation and then Communist domination all but destroyed it. The Nazis murdered Capek in 1942, a martyr to the cause of liberal religion. Our hymnal contains several of his works and the Flower Communion ceremony he originated is observed in UU churches all over the world each spring.

The BUC choir travelled to Prague in 1988 and again in 1992. The Reverend Doug Gallager and Ron Fredrick, grandson of Capek, visited in the late 1990's to help the congregation regain possession of their headquarters building near the Charles Bridge which had been expropriated by a rogue minister. Prague visitors to BUC have included Capek's daughter, Reverend Bohdana Haspl, and the congregation's president, Iva Kocmanova.

Partner Church Steering Committee: Helen Spangler, Elson Spangler, Barbara Woolf, Grace Rising, and Ron Fredrick

BUC Volunteer of the Month: Elaine Morse

All religious traditions trace a lineage through prophets, teachers, founders, et al. I trace my 'lineage' at BUC to Betty Haro who, in turn, 'found' BUC through Miyo O'Neill. Betty invited me in the early '80s to a daytime Alliance program which featured the beloved (and now late) jazz pianist Bess Bonnier. I thought this could be my kind of church! My first model as to what a congregation could mean to the nurture and encouragement of a young person was the First Methodist Church in "Grover's Corners" [Conn., not NH as in Wilder's Our Town].

Betty had put me on BUC's mailing list, even though I had demurred. She later said she knew a Unitarian when she saw one. [Give Bob Marshall a mimeograph & he would organize the world.] So in those early days due to my high profile in my small 'burb as a community activist, I was urged to take on some significant roles & responsibilities at BUC. Newly divorcing, I wasn't really emotionally ready to do this.*

*a caveat here: when new folks first find us, it's not likely they're looking for a place to do church work right away. We are people of action who dearly want to make this world more fair and just. But the work of the church, our church, is also about the work of transforming the afflictive energies that rest on the surface of our hearts.

To my everlasting gratitude, there was a newly forming Women in Religion circle that came to include 40-50 women throughout the '80s. It is they who truly deserve this volunteer recognition, for without that exploration, ferment, reading, sharing, planning Sunday services together, I wonder if I would have formed such a loyal bond to our congregation.

From my Methodist youth fellowship days in the '50s, participating & preparing worship services is my favorite 'work of the church.' You have no idea of what I receive from you whenever I speak from my heart to yours as a worship associate....your trust, your receptivity, your loving kindness. Blessed be.



Music @ BUC



As usual, there are lots of musical activities occurring at BUC. In February we continued the SoundBites series with Wisaal who had the sanctuary mesmerized, and the afterglow was full of both BUCers and newcomers who ate and drank amongst the artists. Thanks to all of the folks who helped with this event. It wouldn't have been so successful without all of you! We also heard our own Jim Bizer at services in February who played and sang with a glowing spirit as always. Thanks for sharing your talents Jim.

The Adult choir has just begun work on their Choir Sunday theme, which explores what it means to be a UU. There will also be a 10 UU-Choir Festival this June hosted by the Ann Arbor Church. Almost 200 singers will come together and learn many new songs for this performance. It is a wonderful day of music and fellowship. I will give the congregation more information, as we get closer! The Teen Choir will be rehearsing two songs for Youth Sunday: "Galileo" originally by the Indigo Girls and "Where Are You Going?" by the Dave Matthews Band.

The Kids Choir is also working on two songs for singing in church on March 4th! Parents, please check your emails to be sure your young singers are present for the early rehearsal that Sunday and do keep bringing them at 10:35 for our Sunday rehearsals till then.

We welcome your thoughts! Email: abha.dearing@bucmi.org or steven.dearing@bucmi.org

BUC Music Committee

The BUC Music Committee meets monthly to discuss all issues pertaining to church music with emphasis on Sunday morning music in worship. Staff members in regular attendance are co-directors of music Steven and Abha Dearing, pianist Angela Pashmakova and senior minister Kathy Hurt.

Together, we review the co-directors' plans, advise and support Steve and Abha in their initiatives, and continually ask ourselves how music can continue to enhance worship and strengthen the bonds of community.

Our Charter specifies these objectives for the committee: 1) We administer the Special Music Fund provided through the Music Endowment Fund. 2) We develop long-range planning for church music. 3) We are charged to handle fund-raising for "ambitious projects that may require the purchase of music and the hiring of outside musicians." 4) We work with the co-directors to develop annual budget requests, including compensation for our professional staff. 5) We bring concerns, questions and ideas from the congregation to the committee for discussion. And all of these functions are handled through our status as an advisory group, not a supervisory one. Supervision is in the purview of the senior minister.

If you have any concerns or ideas you would like to have the committee address, please discuss them with any committee member or attend a committee meeting. If you would like to speak on an issue in person, please call our chairman, Mary Jo Larson, for date, time and place. You are always welcome to attend our sessions.

Committee members: (For staff, see above.) Carol Forrester, Margot LeRoy, Betty Blair, Kathy Ransome, Ed Sharples, Mary Jo Larson (Chair)

MAMA's Coffeehouse, Saturday, March 17

Almost four decades as a touring professional have found Michigan native Claudia Schmidt traversing North America, as well as Europe, in intimate venues, theaters and festival stages. She has recorded fourteen albums of mostly original songs, exploring folk, blues, and jazz idioms featuring her acclaimed 12-string guitar and mountain dulcimer playing. Songs that range from lying on sandy beaches under an endless barrage of northern lights to the expected anguish and frustration of spinning tires on cars stuck deep in snow, Claudia interweaves music, poetry, story, laughter, drama, and celebrating the moment into every performance.



"Claudia Schmidt is a true artist-she has talent AND the fire of genius." - The Boston Globe

Luti Erbeznik will open. Raised in the multiethnic milieu of the former Yugoslavia, Luti grew up immersed in diverse European folk music. This influence, combined with exposure to melodic rock and classical music, helped forge Luti's eclectic music style filled with harmonious vocals, intricate guitar work and sophisticated percussion.

- General admission is \$12 unless otherwise indicated. Seniors (62 and over), and those under 18, are \$10. Children 12 and under are free.
- Open mic starts at 7:30pm with 2 reserved spots available. Please e-mail Jim Bizer at jb@jimbizer.com if you wish to reserve a spot. Walk-ins can sometimes be accommodated.

Memorial Glen Inscription Requests Due by April 1

The BUC Memorial Glen in our Capek woods is a special, sacred space devoted to remembering and memorializing our members and their family members who have died. If you've never seen the Glen, take a stroll along one of the wooded paths at the northwest end of the property and read the names inscribed there of many who helped lay the foundations of what BUC is today.

Once a year we hold a service of dedication in the Glen to honor those whose names have been inscribed that year. This year's service will be on May 27th. If there is a loved one you'd like to memorialize in this way, pick up the forms and guidelines from our church administrator, Jim Shettel. The forms must be returned to him before April 1 for inscription this year. There is also a form, called a pre-need agreement, to reserve a space for yourself or a family member. Each request needs to be accompanied by a \$350 check.

The Memorial Glen is designated for use by past and present members of Birmingham Unitarian Church, their partners, parents and children, and other persons deemed appropriate by the minister and the Memorial Glen Committee.

If you'd like to know more about the Memorial Glen, pick up a booklet from the literature rack by the office, or speak to the minister or a member of the Memorial Glen Committee: Keith Brown, Dick Halsted, Stephanie Patil, Fred Straky or Sylvia Whitmer.

Green Sanctuary and YOU!



BUC's recent Green Sanctuary Certification (more news coming soon) means that the work for our congregation is just beginning! Our task is to "live our values" by expanding the ways we care for our earth. What can you do? Recycle! There are blue recycle bins in almost every room of the Church. You can find a large grey collection station in the Social Hall, double-decker bins in the Copy Room, and containers under the island in the Kitchen. Paper, cardboard, glass, metal, plastics, CD's, video and cassette tapes; put 'em in and they'll be recycled.

In 2012 we are looking into CFL recycling, making meals and trash collection at BUC greener with plates, cups, utensils, and trash bags that are made from recycled or biodegradable materials. Look for an income line in the budget showing dollars coming back to BUC for paper and MI beverage deposit returns. Have a question on recycling at BUC or at home? Contact Annette Sargent 248-792-2278. Go greener!

Special thanks are due to: *The Stroup family for recycling 15-20 lbs. of BUC paper/cardboard each week.

*Amy Smalley for taking plastic and glass to SOCRRA weekly from the Copy Room.

*Eleanor McGuire and RE kids who consolidate recycle from the classrooms to the Copy Room on Sundays.

*Carol Weisman and the Kitchen/Coffee regulars for the providing and emptying the kitchen recycle containers.

*Barb Schandavel for taking over 40 pounds of holiday lights to Jackson for recycling.

RAVENDALE REVISITED, Sunday March 25 @ BUC

The Ravendale Neighborhood in SouthEast Detroit: Past, Present, and Future

From 1988 – 1997, the BUC Needs Network committee and Ravendale block club volunteers worked side-by-side to clear alleys, plant trees and flowers, set up street lamps, and more. Toni McIlwain, an award-winning champion for change in Ravendale, fostered Block club partnerships. Toni's initial community organization efforts have now expanded under the umbrella of Ravendale Community, Inc. This neighborhood-based nonprofit offers education support, youth programs, Forgotten Harvest food delivery and more. Hear the story. Guest speaker: Toni McIlwain, President & CEO, Ravendale Community, Inc.

Please join us in the BUC Commons from 1:00-2:30 p.m. to hear this dynamic community leader, as we rekindle old relationships and look to the future. Light refreshments will be served. An RSVP helps us plan, but last minute drop ins are welcome too!

**Part II - Sunday April 29 in
Ravendale, 12:30 - 4:30 pm**



Make the connection Carpool to Ravendale for a driving tour of the neighborhood • Small group box lunch in a Ravendale home • Dessert and debriefing at the Ravendale Community Center • Cost: \$15.00

Questions? Call, or stop by our table in the Social Hall after services **Lillian Dean** LFDean@aol.com **248.546.5818** / **Pat Hammer** patriciajhammer@gmail.com **248.644.6568**

Moses Annual Banquet

Thursday, March 15 at the Fellowship Chapel. Join a group of us to enjoy an evening of fun and inspiration. You may purchase your ticket from Lucille McNaughton or Pat Hammer. Tickets \$40. Contact lucillemcnaughton@att.net or patriciajhammer@gmail.com for more details

Memo from the BUC Board of Trustees

The BUC board meets monthly to review and discuss the fiscal health, mission, and program of the church. Issues we have been discussing have included:

Policy Governance - in this model of church administration, the Board of Trustees cedes the responsibility for church organizational details to the Executive (Reverend Dr. Hurt) and instead takes responsibility of setting broader organizational goals and themes and monitoring the outcomes achieved by the Executive. In this model, a primary role of the Board is to serve as a communication conduit between the congregation and the Executive/Minister. This will be an ongoing, evolutionary process.

Goal Setting - The Board is engaged in a process of envisioning the church we'd like to be in, for example, 5 years. This process is informed by the ideas of BUC members shared during 2011 town hall meetings, in committees and in small group gatherings. We need input from everyone in the church to develop a long-term plan. Please let us know your comments, ideas, and concerns when you visit the Board table in the Social Hall.

Financial Oversight - The initial outcome of the pledge drive was \$442,000. Through the generosity of a relative few BUC members, additional pledges and gifts has brought the total to \$457,000. Unfortunately, this leaves a gap of \$52,000. We have discussed a number of options, including making the Auction an annual event, setting goals for Rummage, and holding additional fund-raising. At the end of May, the Board will have to decide, based on the results, whether to recommend cuts in program and/or personnel. We plan to keep this issue in the awareness of the church membership through a variety of channels.

Congregational Covenant - the Board has requested that the Ministerial Committee review and revise the covenant passed when Reverend Duhamel was our temporary minister to succinctly express the aspirations and expectations of the interaction with our fellow congregants and with the church as a whole.

Please visit the Board Table in the Social Hall during coffee hour. We need your suggestions, observations, and questions to meet our goals.

Written by Board member Eric Sargent (sargente@me.com)

Additional Fellowship Opportunities

As Fellowship Chair, I'd like to suggest two new fellowship groups for fun-in-wintertime diversions: First is a Wednesday Walkers Group. I'm thinking of beginning at Somerset Mall (since I presume we'll have cold winter weather soon). It takes about 40 minutes to make it around both sides of the mall. If the interest is there we could break up into groups of like-pace and distance. I'm thinking of about 10:30 a.m. and perhaps have lunch after (to make up for the weight we will have lost), but it is all up to the group as to time etc. I'd like to begin on March 7.

Second: Is there any interest in a group to attend the theaters that present the [Met Opera Productions](#)?

One theater is on the East side, near Lake Side Mall, and others are out West. The experience of being able to kick back and relax in jeans with snacks even, and watch a first class production of opera is really fun. If the interest is there I'll get schedules and names of productions. Please e-mail me on either or both suggestions: margotintroy@comcast.net.

Hopefully I'll see and hear from those of you who are interested. If you can't participate in these activities, but know of someone who might be interested, be sure to let them know about them. ~ Margot LeRoy



Tony Ficchio and other patrons at the Regal Union Square watch a Met production in 2007. Via NYT online

Return Address Correction Requested

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Birmingham Unitarian Church

ENVIRONMENTAL SPEAKER SERIES

First Thursday of each month, Now meeting at BUC

Free, All Welcome! Speaker line up:

**March 1: “The Controversial Coyote”
Holly Hadac and Bill Dodge**

April 5: “Ah, Wilderness! The 25th Anniversary of the Michigan Wilderness Heritage Act” Anne Woiwode

May 3: “World Without Ice” Dr. Henry Pollack

June 7: “Live Raptors! What We Can Learn from Birds of Prey”
Sarah Gillmore

6:30-7:00: Light Refreshments, Meet & Greet

7:00-7:30: Announcements

7:30-8:30: Guest Speaker

8:30-9:00: Volunteer Sign Up, Merchandise Sales, Meet the
Speaker

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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