



August, 2007

JPD Newsletter

Connecting all Unitarian Universalists in the Joseph Priestley District:
Southern New Jersey, Delaware, Eastern and Central Pennsylvania, Maryland,
District of Columbia, Northern Virginia Vol. 12, No. 6

Some 2007 GA Highlights

The 46th annual 2007 UUA General Assembly in Portland, OR turned out to be the second largest, next to Boston, MA a few years ago, with 5,697 attending. Of that number 2,428 were delegates, representing 643 congregations, or 60 percent of all congregations in the U.S.

Actions of Immediate Witness Voted by Delegates:

AIW 1: Support for the UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

AIW 2: Support Immigrant Families— Stop the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) Raids.

AIW 3: Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education Legislation.

AIW 4: Stop U.S.-Sponsored Torture—A Religious Call to Action.

AIW 5: Repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”

AIW 6: Pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act With Transgender Inclusion and Protection.

Debated, amended, and approved was the **UU Statement of Conscience** on “Moral Values for a Pluralistic Society.”

The statement emphasized that the moral values of Unitarian Universalism correspond to those in the founding documents of our nation, such as the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, with their emphasis on freedom of religion, the right of conscience, and the worth and dignity of every person. From these principles come such UU values as compassion, justice, equity, the right of conscience, reason, and respect for others. Among the actions the statement urged individuals, congregations and the association of interdependent congregations to take were these: to speak out on moral issues, to articulate UU values and their application to living with respect and compassion, to support civil liberties and the separation of church and state, and to apply these moral values to improve society and to make them known in the public square.

And on to 2008 GA to be held in Fort Lauderdale, FLA.

UUs Continue to Provide Post-Katrina Rebuilding and Support

Although it is nearly two years since New Orleans and the Gulf Coast were devastated by Hurricane Katrina, JPD churches continue to meet the need for rebuilding and assisting families in those areas.

Rev. Kent Matthies and five other members of the Unitarian Society of Germantown, Philadelphia, PA spent six days on a spring building project in New Orleans.

A contingent of 23 members from UU Church of Delaware County, Media, PA, Lansdowne PA’s Garden Church and First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia also headed to that city for two weeks of reconstruction work.

Eighteen teenagers and ten adults from UU Congregation of Columbia, MD spent spring break rebuilding a New Orleans duplex and home.

A trio from UU Congregation of York, PA repaired houses in Mississippi, with one working in a free medical clinic in Biloxi. Two other UU contingents working in the area were from UU Church of Lancaster, PA and UU Church of the Restoration, Philadelphia, PA.

Braving Gulf Coast heat the third week in August are members of the Adult Religious Education Committee, Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA. This group will partner with community groups from the UUA-UUSC Gulf Coast Relief Fund.

Cedar Lane UU Church, Bethesda, MD will join with Am Kolel Jewish community for a January 2008 house-building stint in New Orleans.

York Congregation Undertakes Urban Forest Project

UUs from the UU Congregation of, York, PA will create an urban forest, as part of its Native Plant project, to be located in the northwest quadrant of its property. Drought-resistant trees that are high in “wildlife value,” providing food, shelter, and nesting places, will be selected.

After the initial trees are established, under-growth trees and shrubs will be added, along with native wildflowers.

Native trees are defined as those existing before the arrival of Europeans; an urban forest aims to save existing trees or initiate a program of tree and shrub-planting.

Each UU family and individual participating in the project will receive five seedlings to nurture for the next two years

while the quadrant is prepared for planting. At the end of that time, a grand and glorious tree-planting and celebration are planned.

River Road UUs Contemplate Name Change

Since the congregation was formed in 1959, it has been River Road Unitarian Church, Bethesda, MD, having grown out of Cedar Lane Unitarian Church. With creation of a "Name Evaluation Working Group," River Road is considering several possibilities.

Among these are adding Universalist to its name, dropping "church" from its designation, calling itself a congregation, or becoming simply River Road Unitarian Universalist or adding an "s" to Universalist. Other possibilities are out there as well.

Easton Fellowship Shouts "Hurrah at Last!" for Newly-Refurbished Building

Members of UU Fellowship of Easton, MD had cause for celebration: By the start of the summer they were able to move hymnals, furniture, hundreds of boxes, stored in garages and attics, back into their newly-refurbished Fellowship building. The grand opening was the first Sunday in June.

The year-long renovations added a new façade, refurbished all the rooms, re-designed its sign, and installed a new birch and cherry pulpit, designed and created by a member of the UU church in Grosse Pointe, MI. Hurrahs in order, all around.

Harrisburg UUs Turn Out for Pridefest

As this issue went to press, members of Unitarian Church of Harrisburg, PA were busy preparing for that city's 2nd annual Pridefest July 28.

Members will man UCH or Pridefest booths for the festival, march in the parade with other Central PA UU churches or with the UCH's recently-created marching band.

Joining UCH will be UUs of Cumberland Valley, UU Congregation of York, and UUs of Gettysburg.

News About Ministers: Newly-settled ministers: Rev. Nathan C. Walker, First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia, PA; Rev. Anya Sammler, UUs of Sterling, VA; **Interim Ministers:** Rev. Lyn Plumb, Accotink UU Church, Burke, VA; Rev. Dr. Maureen Killoran, Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA; Walter Braman, UU Church in Cherry Hill, NJ; Rev. Don W. Vaughn-Foerster, Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, Alexandria, VA; **Acting Minister:** Rev. Paul

Langston-Daley, UU fellowship of Pottstown, PA...**Other News:** First Unitarian Church of Baltimore, MD endorsed Rev. Dale Lantz as its community minister....Main Line engaged a Parish Nurse to assist the minister in pastoral care and Lyn Hanson as Social Action consultant.

What's Happening...New Welcoming Congregations are: UU Church of the Restoration, Philadelphia, PA; UU Church of Berks County, Reading PA; UU Fellowship of Greater Cumberland, MD....UU Legislative Ministry of Maryland celebrated a major victory with the passage of the Clean Cars Act, reducing carbon dioxide and other toxic emissions.

What We Care About...Social Justice, Bull Run UUs, Manassas, VA resolved to support United Farm Workers' boycott of Charles Krug/Mondavi wines. Rather than renew their contract, the corporation fired most of its UFW employees. The contract provided a minimum of decent working conditions and workers' protection—too much for the corporation to support....About 20 members of **UU Congregation of the South Jersey Shore**, Oceanville, NJ turned out for the Spring, 4th anniversary Iraq War Peace March on the Atlantic City boardwalk....**UU Church of Lancaster, PA** joined with Common Roads of Harrisburg in providing each month a safe space for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender youth, 14-22 years old.... A production of *The Vagina Monologues* by Social Action Council of **UU Congregation of Columbia, MD** raised \$6,093. Proceeds were divided among two domestic violence centers and the V-day Worldwide Campaign fighting violence against women and girls.

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JPD Newsletter is published six times a year.
Deadline, Sept.-Oct. Issue: August 10, 2007.