



JPD Newsletter

Connecting all Unitarian Universalists in the Joseph Priestley District:

Southern New Jersey, Delaware, Eastern and Central Pennsylvania, Maryland,

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District of Columbia, Northern Virginia

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UUs Give Nearly \$3 Million to UUA-UUSC for Hurricane Katrina Victims

Just as UUs responded generously to the victims of the Southeast Asia Tsunami, so did they respond to American victims of Hurricane Katrina.

As of October 20, \$2,359,587 was contributed to UUA - UUSC's Gulf Coast Relief Fund to help victims of this storm. A matching grant started on Oct. 2 from UU Congregation of Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY raised the amount to \$2,738,530.

Along with these donations have emerged some small stories of special efforts by UU churches and fellowships in the Joseph Priestley District.

UU Congregation of Fairfax, Oakton, VA joined a local effort to rent trucks and deliver non-perishable food to the Baton Rouge Food Bank and organized an "adopt-folks" angel network to provide services to a list of UUs and others on an ongoing, as-needed basis for the next year. UU Congregation of Columbia, MD also supported a Katrina family.

River Road Unitarian Church, Bethesda, MD sent clothes and personal hygiene items for children and adults to All Souls Unitarian Church, Shreveport, LA. RRUC, Accotink UU Church and others collaborated with All Souls Church, DC and UU Affordable Housing Corporation to provide housing for one evacuee family for at least a year. UU Fellowship of Pottstown, PA gave a special collection to the UU Houston, TX Church, which also received personal hygiene items, along with notes of encouragement, from UU Church of Annapolis, MD.

Along with generous donations to UUA and the Red Cross, four children from Cedar Lane UU Church, Bethesda, MD set up a lemonade stand and raised \$114. Cedar Lane also answered a call to provide food for 24 survivors staying with a local family in the area.

Members of Davies Memorial UU Church, Camp Springs, MD supported an extended evacuated family in the DC Armory and donated a computer system, printer and TV.

The Board of UU Church in Cherry Hill, NJ proposed a simple service of Grief, Memory and Hope for New Orleans, open to the church and the general community. A red beans and rice dinner, served to the accompaniment of New Orleans jazz, would follow.

"I am so angry..... Why were food and water not brought in by helicopter? Did relief have to wait five days? How long would it have taken the people in the Superdome and the Convention Center to receive assistance if they had been middle-class White Americans?" Rev. William G. Sinkford, UUA President.

Congregations Propose Study and Action on Capital Punishment Issue

UUs of the Cumberland Valley, Boiling Springs, PA plan to study death penalty issues and after a series of study sessions vote in February on a proposed resolution for a state and national moratorium on the death penalty.

The resolution, written by the congregation's Social Action Committee, is part of its new Criminal Justice Initiative, which has as one of its goals working with the Pennsylvania Prison Society and reinvigorating its Cumberland County Chapter. To date, 48 UU congregations and five other UU organizations have passed such resolutions.

In September, UU Congregation of the South Jersey Shore, Oceanville, NJ began a letter-writing campaign to state legislators, calling for abolition of the death penalty in New Jersey. The state is about to carry out an execution, the first in four decades.

Towson Votes to Aid Homeless, UUSJ for its Social Responsibility Initiatives

Towson UU Church, Lutherville, MD voted to support Sarah's Hope, a shelter for homeless persons and families, and Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice as its two Social Responsibility initiatives for the coming year.

Sarah's Hope received 62 votes and UUSJ, 42. It was felt this represented a mandate to support both agencies in terms of recruiting volunteers and

fundraising. Twenty-five church volunteers aid Sarah's Hope and 19 work with UUSJ.

Main Line Church Donates Green-Friendly Lights to Poor, Philly Neighborhoods

Along with other task forces, the Eco-Green Sanctuary Task Force of Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA began a fall project to supply fluorescent light bulbs to poor neighborhoods in the Philadelphia area.

The task force also invited church members to buy three lights for themselves and three others for this outreach program.

UU Ministers Lend Support to Current, On-Going Social Concerns

As part of an honorary committee of Planned Parenthood of Maryland, Rev. Clare L. Petersberger, minister of Towson UU Church, Lutherville, MD supported the First Annual Luncheon and Symposium: Reproductive Justice in American Politics in late October. She was joined by five other UU ministers, including TUUC's Minister Emeritus Rev. Matthew McNaught and Rev. Terry Ellen. The speaker at the symposium was Rev. Barry W. Lynn, Executive Director, Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

Rev. Melanie Morel-Ensminger, minister of UU Church in Cherry Hill, NJ was among a group of interfaith clergy who signed a "friend of the court" brief in favor of equal marriage rights for same-sex couples. The brief will be submitted to the New Jersey State Supreme Court.

The brief will argue that civil marriage for same-sex couples ought to be a civil right, outside "traditional values", religious prohibitions and public bias against homosexual couples. It will also include a statement that because of the prohibition against same-sex marriage, many clergy are unable to give appropriate pastoral care to their members.

More About Our Ministers.... Rev. Sandra Fees was installed as minister of UU Church of Berks County, Reading, PA.....Rev. Stan Sears is serving UU Congregation of Wyoming Valley, Wilkes-Barre, PA.

What's Happening...

A fall birthday party marked the 40th anniversary of UU Fellowship of Lower Bucks, Langhorne, PA and among events for its 140th anniversary celebration, Unitarian Society of Germantown, Philadelphia, PA will sponsor a November guided trolley-bus tour of Unitarian roots in that city.....Accotink UU Church

received a Certificate of Appreciation from New Hope Housing for the community services provided by one of its Covenant groups. Members planned recreation activities for young residents of this emergency shelter for the homeless.UU Fellowship at Easton, MD received \$19,739 for its Capital Fund from the Joseph Priestley District Chalice Lighters. It will mean the fellowship can pay off the mortgage on its original building and grounds by July, 2006. ...Cedar Lane UU Church, Bethesda, MD approved lending \$50,000 to the Sugarloaf Congregation of UUs, Germantown, MD to complete construction of its worship space, a column-free, 35-foot diameter round yurt, with a central skylight .

What We Care About.... As part of its on-going work with PROGRAM, assisting women prisoners, UUs of the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg, PA continue to donate work-place clothes, contribute to an Underwear Fund, provide life skills training, teach basic computer skills and "time and paper" management, and collect Sunday classified ads, to help women find jobs as they turn their lives around....Each Saturday, a small, committed group of the UU Congregation of the Susquehanna Valley, Northumberland, PA holds one-hour vigils for peace and ending the Iraq War, in front of the Lewisburg, PA post office...Cedar Lane UU Church, Bethesda, MD launched a Social Justice Project to bring children of Chernobyl to the U.S. Studies show children are less likely to become ill after a summer away from Chernobyl....UU Congregation of Wyoming Valley, Wilkes-Barre, PA continues to work with Heifer International for the purchase of a cow, whose recipient they plan to visit in Kenya next summer.

Joseph Priestley District of the UUA
100 W. 10th St., Suite 1008, Wilmington, DE 19801
302-778-4564; Fax: 302-778-4590; office@jpduua.org
District President: Elyse Reznick
District Executive: Rev. Dr. Richard G. Speck
District Administrator: Cristina Sanchis
Administrative Assistant: Jill Conway
Director for Growth and Extension: Bob Johnsen
Dir. for Lifespan Faith Dev.: Rev. Carol Ann Taylor
Director for YA & Campus Ministry: Kim Mason
Development Director: Joan Priest
Coordinator of Youth Activities: Jan Taddeo
District UUA Trustee: Rev. Linda Olson Peebles
JPD web: www.jpduua.org
Editor: Bette Austin, E-mail: office@jpduua.org
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