



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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JPD Churches Gear Up for September Call for Justice and Anti-War DC Events

JPD UU Churches are circling the date – September 24-26 – and the place – Washington, DC – and gearing up for participation for two weekend-long events.

The first is UU Service Committee's STOP (Stop Torture Permanently) Campaign for its Call to Justice Weekend, a protest against U.S.-sponsored torture at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, that violate international and US laws.

The program will include: Saturday, Sept. 24, a series of educational workshops and panel discussion; Sunday, Sept. 25, Citizens' Trial of high-level U.S. officials (Rumsfeld, Gonzalez, Tenet) responsible for current torture practices; Monday, September 26, advocacy work with national leaders, representatives.

While DC area churches may be involved in this event, other JPD congregations are arranging transportation and publicizing a huge march Sept. 24 to end the war in Iraq, sponsored by United for Peace and Justice.

This weekend Peace and Justice Festival, originally called the Anti-War Fair, will have more than 12 tents for displays by veterans, military and Gold Star families, counter-recruitment, global justice and Palestinian groups and one showing the impact of the war on the Iraqi People. "Operation Ceasefire" will offer a late-afternoon and evening free concert.

Among those expected to attend are 200 families of active-duty military personnel (Military Families Speak out), 20 buses from New York City, organized by local 1199 of Service Employees International Union, and groups organized by the National Organization for Women, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and churches.

*"To be a Unitarian Universalist
is to be active in repairing the world."
– Rev. Richard S. Gilbert*

DelCo UU Church Plans Labor Day Concert for Peace to End the War in Iraq

UU Church of Delaware County, Media, PA has planned a Concert for Peace on the church grounds on Labor Day, September 5.

Sub-text for the event is: "Support Our Troops, End the War, Bring Home the Guard, Fund Homeland Priorities."

The program will include a band and other musicians and as speakers: Patrick Resta, Iraq Vets Against the War; Pat Gunn, Military Families Speak Out; and Michael Berg, an area resident and father of Nick Berg, who was assassinated in Iraq.

Collection-Plate Sharing Extends Outreach, Supplies Small Change for Big Needs

Call it Split Plate, Change for the World, Change for Change, many JPD churches are sharing their Sunday collections with a wide range of local, often volunteer agencies, meeting critical social needs, as well as with the UU Service Committee and UU Committee for Social Justice.

These funds go for such disparate agencies as community centers, housing and counseling services for rape victims, battered women and abused children, Native American missions, nature and environmental projects, overseas educational and book programs, hospices caring for terminally-ill patients, summer camps for urban children – a dazzling list in its complexity and reach.

Among JPD churches (not a complete list) reporting recently on uses of their shared "change" are Accotink UU, Burke, VA; UU of Annapolis, MD; UUs of Cumberland Valley, Boiling Springs, PA; UU Congregation of Fairfax, Oakton, VA; UUs of Bull Run, Manassas, VA. Starting this month, First Church of Baltimore, MD will adopt its own Change for Change program.

The amounts may be small each Sunday, but for the benefiting agencies and the people they serve, they equal big expressions of caring and help.

River Road and Baltimore Vote to Become Teaching Congregations

First Unitarian Church of Baltimore, MD voted in June to become a teaching congregation and accept a ministerial intern. The intern will join the church a year from this September.

Earlier in the year, River Road Unitarian Church, Bethesda, MD also voted to become a teaching congregation and this fall will welcome Amanda Poppei, a student at Wesley Seminary in DC. as its part-time intern. She will serve for two years.

Hiring Site, Pesticide Kits Aid Farm Workers

UUs of Sterling, VA in cooperation with Project Hope and Harmony, an interfaith and community agency coalition, are supporting a proposal to use a future vacant police station as a hiring site in the town of Herndon for day laborers, who must wait on the street for job opportunities.

The site will provide some privacy, restroom facilities, protection from the weather, with on-site social workers offering training, health services, English classes, and other services.

Bull Run UUs, Manassas, VA are also working on a plan for a housing site for day laborers.

RE children, staff and other members of River Road Unitarian, Bethesda, MD assembled and funded pesticide kits for the children of Maryland Eastern Shore farm workers.

Children decorated the kits, made posters and gave sports equipment, and a play teaching the dangers of pesticides was presented at a Sunday service.

About Our Ministers

John T. Crestwell, Jr., will be installed and ordained as the called co-minister of Davies Memorial UU Church, Camp Springs, MD, September 25. UUA President Rev. William Sinkford will attend the ceremonies....Rev. James M. Bank was installed as called minister of UU Fellowship at Easton, MD....Rev. Matthew McDonald McNaught is new part-time minister at UUs of Sterling, VA....Rev. Heather Lynn Hanson began service as interim senior minister at First Unitarian Church, Wilmington, DE.... Rev. Amber Beland became assistant minister at UU Church of Annapolis....Rev. David Hunter and Rev. Kerry Mueller, husband-wife ministerial team, are serving Dorothea Dix UU Community, Trenton, NJ.

What's Happening...

UU Congregation of Fairfax, VA sponsored two summer performances of *Clarence Darrow: the*

Legend, the Man, Gary Anderson's one-man show, that netted \$2,600 in ticket sales and raised nearly \$900 for civil and human rights advocacy in Virginia... River Road Unitarian, Bethesda, MD will apply for Green Sanctuary Candidacy.

Joseph Priestley District's First Annual Conference
for Advancing Racial Justice

October 15, All Souls' Unitarian Church
Washington, DC

Worship, workshops, sharing —“to deepen faith
toward racial justice for all people.”

What We Care About....Fifteen members of Bull Run UUs, Manassas, VA are signed up to begin work this fall on a house for Habitat for Humanity. Its Social Justice Committee also plans to set up a food pantry on the church premises. One in five children in Northern Virginia risks being hungry....A bake sale at BuxMont UU Fellowship, Warrington, PA raised \$350 toward the purchase of a boat for a fisherman who lost his own in the tsunami...Towson UU raised \$8,917, surpassing its \$8,500 goal toward support of Sarah's Hope Resource Center for the Homeless and 14 Towson volunteers worked 260 hours at the center.

From a General Assembly 2005 Sermon

“Liberal religion has gone all but mute in all too many places on behalf of causes that we like to think would once have pulled our people out of the pews and put them to work...Our ministry has no moral right NOT to speak of these issues, no matter who you might make uncomfortable in the pews. What's a pulpit for?”

— Rev. Patrick T. O'Neill

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