



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

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Partner Church Program Alive and Well and Expanding to New Countries

During the past year, JPD churches continued to extend the hand of fellowship and support to their Romanian Partner churches and to reach out to new parts of the world.

Some of the support was achieved with festive dinners, summer brunches and musical events for fundraising. For its Partner Church in Varfalva, the first church to use the word Unitarian in 1613, Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA raised \$5,000 to help families pay for high school costs for their children and to pay for labor and maintenance of the village church.

An evening of music, dancing and Hungarian desserts at UU Church of Annapolis, MD raised \$2,000 for its Partner Church in Rava, which UU members plan to visit in October. Annapolis also gave a laptop to the Rava church, so they are now connected via cyberspace.

Last year Cedar Lane UU Church, Bethesda, MD raised scholarship funds for 16 students and has done the same for an equal number this year. This aid helps families, with very limited means, pay the costs of high school education for their children.

In recent years funds raised by River Road Unitarian Church, Bethesda, MD have gone, in part, to make the RE building in Fiatfalva habitable and support English language lessons, a program now in its second year. The local UU minister, recently elected to the city council, has been a catalyst for modernizing the sewer and water systems in the village.

Fifteen members of Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, Alexandria, VA visited their Partner Church and village in July, taking along gifts for scholarship students. Summer brunches helped raise funds for their Partner Church.

Now that its Partner Church has acquired e-mail, UU Church of Rockville, MD has weekly contact with that minister. Rockville has provided ongoing funds for a scholarship project and the minister's

stipend.

At UU Congregation of Fairfax, VA, 114 members raised funds for scholarships for its Partner Transylvania school, and for a new partnership with a school in Puriang, Khasi Hills, India. Several Fairfax members visited the Indian church last year.

Over the summer, UU Church in Cherry Hill, NJ voted to re-establish its relationship with its former Partner Church. Before the partnership was discontinued by the Romanian church, Cherry Hill had provided funds for building repairs, medical supplies and teenage scholarships. A new minister and lay leadership now wish to re-establish the relationship.

As a newcomer to this program, UU Congregation of Wyoming Valley, Wilkes-Barre, PA is developing a partnership with a 30-member Unitarian church in Sohka India. A UU member visited the Indian church this summer. In the fall, Wyoming Valley plans to meet the Indian minister on his visit to the U.S. and develop future fundraising efforts.

Bull Run and Accotink Churches Support Marriage Equality Statements

Bull Run UUs, Manassas, VA voted overwhelmingly to support a statement for Marriage Equality for Virginians. It is a response to the Marshall-Newman amendment to the State Constitution that would discriminate against unmarried straight and gay couples.

It reads in part: "Therefore, in support of all loving and committed couples, we call on the voters of Virginia to reject the proposed amendment which denies any recognition of legal status to the relationship of unmarried individuals, which intend to approximate the design, qualities, significance or effects of marriage."

Bull Run UUs plan to follow up by publicizing its stand, helping to educate the public and joining with other like-minded groups.

The congregation of Accotink UU Church

also approved a Statement of Conscience, supporting same-sex marriage and opposing the marriage amendment.

Accotink members attended a forum at the UU Church in Reston, VA focusing on defeat of the amendment. In other developments, the UU Service Committee awarded a grant of \$3,000 to the UUs for Social Justice, to hire a part-time person who will assist Virginia UU congregations in educating the wider public about the implications of the amendment.

Members of UU Church of Silver Spring, MD took part in a peaceful vigil, organized by Christ Congregational Church, to express opposition to the "Love Won Out" conference presented by Focus on the Family in Montgomery County last summer. The conferences present the view that LGBT persons must choose between their Christian faith and their sexuality and that homosexuality is a mental disorder that can be cured.

BuxMont Re-Dedicates Stolen Marriage Equality Banner

For nearly a year, BuxMont UU Fellowship, Warrington, PA has flown a banner supporting marriage equality over a major local street. In July, the banner was cut down and stolen.

A new banner that reads, "Civil Marriage Is a Civil Right," was hung and rededicated in August with UUA President William F. Sinkford and BuxMont's Rev. Dan Schatz taking part in the ceremonies. Members of several area JPD churches also attended.

Notes About Our Ministers

Installations of newly-settled ministers: Rev. Peter Friedrichs, UU Church of Delaware County, Media, PA, October 29, and Rev. Tricia Hart and Rev. Peter Newport, co-ministers, UU Church of Lancaster, PA, November 5.... For UU Church of the Restoration's (Philadelphia, PA) fall auction fundraiser, Rev. Chester McCall will bake 100 sweet potato pies for sale at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Last spring Rev. McCall also celebrated 27 years of ordained ministry.

What's Happening..... Bull Run UUs, Manassas, VA celebrate their 25th anniversary on October 21.... Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, Alexandria, VA received the "YES" (Youth Empowering and Supportive Congregation) Award at the JPD Spring Conference for its integration of youth in the life of the church through committee/leadership participation, youth worship, membership and participation at the district level.... UU Congregation of Columbia, MD

received the James Luther Adams award of the UU Service Committee for its congregational commitment to advancing justice worldwide. The award is given to congregations that make a budgeted gift of \$1 per member to UUSC.... UU Church of Hagerstown, MD "planted" a Social Action Tree at the entrance of its worship building. Leaves will bloom on the tree as members write on blank leaves what they have done to help the church, community, or larger world.

What We Care About... UU Society of Mill Creek, Newark, DE received financial aid and support from First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, DE when it was getting started. Now Mill Creek has donated \$750 to UU Congregation of the South Jersey Shore, Oceanville, NJ in the process of building a new church...In two weeks South Jersey Shore collected 353 toothbrushes and toothpaste tubes distributed to area migrant workers.... In July, members of UU Congregation of York, PA turned out for the 6th annual Youth Unity March, promoting tolerance in York County and remembering a civilian and policeman killed during the 1969 race riots.

Joseph Priestley District's 2nd Annual Racial Justice Conference Tools for the Journey Saturday, October 21 at Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA

The 2006 conference will feature workshops on specific approaches that have worked at the national level and in individual congregations.

Send suggestions and proposals for workshops to: JPD Office, 100 W. 10th St., Suite 1008, Wilmington, DE 19801; e-mail: office@jpduua.org.

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