



The Banner

December
2003

625 North 6th Street
Burlington, IA 52601
Phone: 319-753-1895

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Burlington

Sandra Ingham, Minister

Sunday Services

DECEMBER 7 - "The Fine Art of Waiting" Advent, the four Sundays before Christmas on the Christian calendar, marks a period of waiting, in this instance, of course, waiting for the coming of the Messiah. But waiting for something can get in the way of what is happening in the present, preventing us from being in the moment. Our culture of instant gratification doesn't encourage waiting or patience. How do we achieve a balance between the kind of waiting that produces anxiety and the kind of waiting that develops a deep appreciation of the mystery of the universe? -- Rev. Ingham

DECEMBER 14 -- "It's a Wonderful Fellowship" This morning we will take a light-hearted, but critical look at the institutions within which we practice our liberal faith, including the Fellowship, the District and the UUA. A takeoff on the popular holiday film, "It's a Wonderful Life", this service might help us consider how to keep faith -- or any good idea! -- alive within institutional frameworks. Rev. Ingham & Friends

DECEMBER 21 -- "The Other Wise Man" Ever since I read Henry Van Dyck's story of the other wise man when I was a child, I have been intrigued by the tale of the fourth wise man. For a number of reasons, he didn't make it to Bethlehem in time to see the baby Jesus. The story of the other wise man actually ends with the Easter story, so there may or may not be any relevance for Unitarian Universalists in this story of the other magi. Perhaps we will even consider what part the Solstice might play in all of this! -- Rev. Ingham

DECEMBER 24 -- ANNUAL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE. There will be carols, candles, stories, readings and lots of good cheer, beginning at 5:00. Part of our tradition is to share our cookies at the coffee hour afterwards.

DECEMBER 28 -- "Roads Not Taken" Year's end, and as the long, strange trip continues, we tend to pause, perhaps to re-read Frost's first poem, and to look back at some of the turnings that have brought us here...the choices we made, those that were made for us, those that we avoided...for better or worse, here we are. Before we come to the next forks in our roads, Larry (an expert in forkology, with 98.6 degrees from Fork U) looks back at where we've been and offers some cheery suggestion for roads we might yet take. — Larry Orr

NOTE: The Minister or leader reserves the right to change or modify the topic, depending upon new ideas or circumstances.

FYI - FYP

For Your Information - From Your President

It is my belief that Unitarian Universalists like to think of themselves as open minded, not slaves to tradition, independent thinkers.

We may see ourselves as different from the mainstream churches many of us came from, but I have noticed one distinct similarity. On most Sunday mornings, people tend to sit in the same place and some people even seem to have a sense of ownership of a particular chair. An even more striking resemblance is the tendency for people to sit in the back of the "church".

In the church I grew up in, I surmised that people sat in the back because they wanted to nod off during the sermon and in the same vein they didn't want to sit up front where

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FROM THE MINISTER . . .

Not surprisingly, the subject of gifts is on my mind as I write this column -- exactly one week before Thanksgiving. My life has been full of unexpected gifts lately. In a recent one-week period, I was blessed with: viewing a lunar eclipse on a clear November evening; a visit from my sister; a trip to Lillian Snyder's house in Nauvoo for dinner, a tour of the house and the Icarian Museum, and a video about Lillian's work to preserve the Icarian heritage; a meeting in Davenport with the "River UUs" (more information about this group may be found elsewhere in this newsletter); and a chance to move into a much more spacious apartment. It is definitely the season to be thankful, to cultivate an "attitude of gratitude", as the saying goes.

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the minister might cast an accusatory eye on them. Also, sitting in the back near the door provided the option to slip out early.

So, why do we at the fellowship, where the space is already small and somewhat intimate, tend to fill up from the back? Is it the proximity of the coffee?

I myself started sitting up front because the minister looked lonely up there. Then I stayed so my kids and I could see the pictures in the children's story books. Change is good.

On behalf of the membership committee, I would like to encourage people to move up and leave spaces in the back for guests and visitors. When people come for the first time, I have noticed they are reluctant to sit up front, a feeling to which many of you can probably relate. Also, latecomers can slip in more easily, with less disruption.

Your open minded, not a slave to tradition, attitude would be helpful. -- Karla

A MEDITATION FIELD TRIP to Macomb is tentatively scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, December 3rd. If you are interested in making the trip, please let Sandy know. We will car pool to the meditation site in Macomb, then go out to eat with the Macomb group of meditators. (In case of inclement weather, we will reschedule.) This trip is part of the process of starting our own meditation group here at the Burlington Fellowship.

VOLUNTEERS, ANYONE?

Sandy is looking for volunteers to participate in a **SKIT ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 14th**. The theme of the service that morning will be, "It's a Wonderful Fellowship", a takeoff on "It's a Wonderful Life". Talk to Sandy NOW if this idea "strikes your fancy."

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!! Mark your calendars now for a VERY SPECIAL event this spring. The first annual **RIVER UUS REGIONAL SERVICE**, "Joined by a River", will be held on **SUNDAY, MAY 16** in Davenport. The newly-formed "River UUs" consists of UUs from Dubuque, Clinton, The Quad Cities, Burlington, Keokuk, and points in between -- UUs from the Mid Coast (to distinguish us from the East Coast and the West Coast!) The May 16th service will be followed by a picnic lunch on the grounds of the Davenport UU Church. Choir members from all the river congregations will be invited to sing together that morning. Children are expected -- and encouraged -- to attend. It would be great to have at least 20 people from our congregation make the trip up to Davenport for this event.

I am grateful to be your minister. I am using the word grateful as defined in "Webster's Third New International Dictionary": benefits derived from; affording pleasure or contentment. Of course, I am not always contented or pleased; who is? And, the benefits I have gained from being your minister have nothing to do with material possessions. The benefits to which I am referring are related to personal growth.

It is easy to forget or take for granted the things we are grateful for, such as this Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. We get so caught up in the busyness of our daily lives that we too often fail to give thanks for the blessings of our lives that are right there in front of us. The Fellowship at Burlington is a truly remarkable organization, despite the many challenges we face as a small liberal congregation that is spread out geographically in a rural, isolated area of the country.

A tradition in our family at holiday time is to make "wish lists". I have my wish lists started. At the top of my wish list of what I want from the Fellowship this holiday season and beyond is this: I wish that you would talk to me. I wish that you would tell me what adult religious education classes might interest you. I wish that you would tell me what times are best to meet for both classes and meetings. I wish that you would talk to me about where volunteers are needed and what committees you might consider working on. I wish that you would talk to me about how you think we can grow. I wish that you would talk to me about why you're not present on Sunday mornings if you have been absent for a long time. I wish that you would talk to me about what kind of services you would like to have on Sundays and whether or not you would like to have a congregational response time as part of the service.

'Tis the season to reflect upon gifts, thankfulness, gratitude. May your reflections include the Fellowship and how much it means to you and to the community at large. **HAPPY HOLIDAYS!** I look forward to lots of conversations with many of you in the new year. -- Sandy



Rev. Ingham tries to be in her office at the Meeting House from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. However, she is occasionally called away for various reasons. In addition, she often has lunchtime meetings outside the building. So, it is always best to call before arriving at the office to make sure she is there. Or simply call or e-mail (slingham@offex.com) Sandy to set up an appointment.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Thanks to Rick Johnson, Heather Strait, Nancy Montrone and Karla Mundt for leading Religious Education with our children in November. The principle about everyone having a vote was presented and the children talked about the governance of our fellowship. Lucy Stone, a UU who worked for women's right to vote was discussed, as well as Thanksgiving.

December will be about the roots of our Christmas and solstice traditions. Teachers will be Crestalee Meyer (Dec. 7), Tracy Bell (Dec. 14), Heather Strait (Dec. 21) and Karla Mundt (Dec. 28).



BEDTIME "PRAYER" THOUGHTS FOR UU KIDS

Think about things you are **THANKFUL** for today.
Think of something you feel **SORRY** that you said or did,
and any way you can make it right.
Think about something you **HOPE** will happen, and any
way you can help it happen.
Think about being in a **PLACE OF BEAUTY**, or a
FAVORITE place where you feel safe and good.
Think about the people you love and their love for you.
See each person's face in your mind.
Give them a good night smile.



CHRISTMAS EVE AT THE MONTRONES

After the Christmas Eve Service you are invited to come to the Montrones at 416 South Gunnison Street for a potluck. The Montrones will provide spaghetti and drinks. Please bring your own table service.



GUEST AT YOUR TABLE BOXES

Are available at the Fellowship if you didn't get one at the initial distribution on November 23rd. Don't know what "Guest At Your Table" is? Ask Sandy or anyone on the Council.

THE COUNCIL

President	Karla Mundt
Vice President	Beryl Shahan
Secretary	Heather Strait
Treasurer	Rick Johnson
Members	Gary Gidley
at	Fritz Goeckner
Large	Ruth Lindeen

TREE DECORATING POTLUCK

Everyone is welcome to share a meal and participate in decorating our "Christmas" tree on Saturday, December 6, at 6:00 p.m. We have decorations (many are momentos from fellowship members), and if you want to bring something to put on the tree, you are encouraged.



Speaking of potlucks, many in the fellowship had a *delightful* time at the potluck on November 9th in Nauvoo, where Lillian Snyder graciously shared her historic house and the Icarian history she knows so well. Thanks Lillian!



The new **Fellowship Directory** is in process. As part of that publication, it is planned to include informal pictures of members and friends. They will be taken on Sunday mornings in December, so think of what you are wearing when you come to Sunday morning!



Interested in learning a little more about **UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST HISTORY**? We will have a video on UU History available following the service on **DECEMBER 14th** for those who would like to view it.



Would you like to be more effective when it comes to talking about this liberal faith of ours to people who are unfamiliar with it? Sandy would like to offer **ARTICULATING YOUR UU FAITH**, a five-week course designed to help Unitarian Universalists be more comfortable discussing their UU tradition and beliefs. Please let Sandy know if this interests you and what day and time are best for you.



Towards the end of his long and illustrious life, in his 91st year, John Adams wrote the following to his granddaughter, Caroline. She had written to Adams inquiring as to "the quarndary over the riddles of life." Adam responds

"You are not singular in your suspicions that you know but little," John Adams wrote. "The longer I live, the more I read, the more patiently I think, and the more anxiously I inquire, the less I seem to know. Do justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly. This is enough. So questions and so answers your affectionate grandfather."

(from David McCullogh's "John Adams", via Jim Cicso)



CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER 2003

Wednesday	3	.....	Meditation field trip to Macomb in the evening (See Sandy for details)
Thursday	4	.....	Weight Watchers
Sunday	7	.....	Choir 9:30, Services & Religious Education 10:30
Thursday	11	.....	Weight Watchers
Sunday	14	.....	Choir 9:30, Services & RE 10:30
Thursday	18	.....	Weight Watchers
Sunday	21	.....	Choir 9:30, Services & RE 10:30
Wednesday	24	.....	Annual Christmas Eve Service 5:00 p.m. After the service, everyone is invited to the Montrones at 416 S. Gunnison for a potluck (spaghetti & drinks will be provided)
Sunday	28	(No choir today) Services & RE 10:30 Larry Orr will conduct this service

Happy Holidays!

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