



Island Passages

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF WHIDBEY ISLAND

P.O. Box 1076, Freeland, WA 98249 • 360-321-8656 • www.whidbey.com/uucwi/

December 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 8:30a World Events Discussion Group 9:00a Membership Committee meeting at Baird's	2	3	4 9:00a Caring Connections meeting at Carol's	5	6
7 2:00p Choir Practice 4:00p -5:15p Service & CRE	8	9	10 9:00a Building Committee meeting at Baird's 7:30p -9:00p Worship Committee meeting at Malcolm's	11 7:30p -9:00p Social Action Committee meeting at Nancy's	12	13 9:00a - 11:00a North End Coffee Klatch (p. 2)
14 4:00p -5:15p Service & CRE 5:15p Building Your Own Theology meeting (p. 3)	15 8:30a World Events Discussion Group (p. 2) 8:30a -10:30a Board of Trustees meeting	16 6:30p Book Club Christmas Party & Book Exchange (p. 3)	17	18	19	20 newsletter deadline
21 2:00p Choir Practice 4:00p -5:15p Service & CRE	22	23	24	25 Christmas	26	27
28 4:00p -5:15p Service & CRE	29 8:30a World Events Discussion Group (p. 2)	30	31			

Additions and updates can be found on the calendar on the congregation's web site:
<http://www.whidbey.com/uucwi/>

December 7 — Clumsiness

**with guest minister
the Reverend Amanda Aikman**

When we are learning new skills, we are clumsy. An important spiritual lesson comes when we understand and forgive our own and others' clumsiness. Also -- is God clumsy?

The Reverend Aikman is a former minister for the Marysville UU Congregation and is now part-time minister at the Sequim fellowship. She is extensively involved in local social action work.

*Facilitator: Peggy B.: Refreshments,
Joann C. ; Special Music: Kat Fritz*

Membership Representative: Roy B.

December 14 — Marching to a Different Little Drummer Boy

with the Reverend Kit Ketcham

As Unitarian Universalists, we are skeptical of the supernatural aspects of the Christmas story and the commercialization of the season, yet we sense that there is something about this season to cherish and explore.

*Facilitator: Al G.; Refreshments, John
A. ; Special Music: Barbara Dunn*

Membership Representative: Baird B.

December 21 — Traditional Service of Lessons and Carols

Our customary intergenerational service. We'll emulate the ancient Nine lessons and Carols -- alternating reading and singing. The choir will sing three prepared pieces, and we hope the children will offer a couple of pieces or accompaniments too.

The theme is the coming of love and peace upon the earth. Please offer to read something — your favorite suitable piece — and tell Malcolm Ferrier what it will be.

*Facilitator: Malcolm F. ; Refreshments:
Mavis C.*

Membership Representative: Dave M.

December 28 — Hopes and Aspirations For a Better World

Many people are away visiting family, and some have visitors for this end-of year presentation, so we'll have a gathering filled with joy and anticipation. Please let any Worship Committee person know that you are ready to contribute -- choose your favorite hymn, reading, dialog with a friend, poem, etc. The undergirding theme is your hopes and aspirations for a better world next year. Please get your selections to Mavis by December 15 so we can patch together an Order of Service. These impromptu, heart-felt services have always worked well for us, and we expect the run to continue with this service.

Facilitator: Malcolm F. ; Refreshments: open

Membership Representative: Malcolm F.

Congregational News & Events

North End Coffee Klatch – December 13, New Location!

Our first North End Coffee Klatch at Miriam's was a big success, attracting several Northenders for a couple of hours of conversation and coffee. Because the Miriam's location is a little noisy for in-depth conversation, we have decided to move to the Coupeville bakery (Coop's), just a short distance to the west of Miriam's/Video Ville. (Turn in at Sally's Garden.)

We'll meet from 9-11 a.m. on December 13. Bring a friend!

World Events Discussion Group

Every other Monday morning, this group meets at the Lighthouse Café in Freeland (next to Ace Hardware) to discuss recent news and policies. All are welcome to add their opinions, news articles, and fellowship to the mix.

Book Club Christmas Party and Book Exchange, December 16th

Join the UUCWI Book Club for its second annual Christmas Party and Book Exchange on December 16th at the A.'s house. Please rsvp.

The potluck will start at 6:30 pm. If you are unable to make the potluck, you are most welcome to attend the book exchange which starts at 7:30pm. Bring as many books as you want. You'll be able to trade the same number of books. This is a great way to recycle.

All are welcome.

A Note From Linda

We've had a variety of music this year. Guitarist and singer-song-writer Karen Blaine from Seattle in September and Andy Baker from Alaska in October, plus our own violinist Peggy B. first played with Mavis C. on harp and then more recently with Nola A. on piano. We had a student group the Jazz Dawgs play piano, drums and saxophone, and a young violinist, 7-year-old Gloria played with her mother on bass, and me on guitar. Our accompanist Marisa LaRue has also played special music, and November 9 we had pianist Marsha Engle as guest musician and accompanist. As part of our 10th anniversary celebration we asked our former accompanist, from the "early years" David M. to revive his keyboard skills with songs we used to do regularly. His son Trystan joined us on cello. The choir is performing once a month, with Heidi carefully choosing music we can prepare in two rehearsals. Annette Bader played special music and accompanied hymns on piano, and then picked up her guitar and helped Halim Dunsky with the Dances of Universal Peace. Coming up we can look forward to flute music with Barbara Phillips on November 30, and violin/viola music with Kat Fritz on December 7. Barbara Dunn, who recently produced a showcase of music at WICA will be our musician on December 14, and on solstice/Christmas we'll feature the choir plus instrumentalists and student musicians as well as carols by the entire congregation.

~ Linda G.

Building Your Own Theology

Does that title sound possible, probable, even desirable? A big "Yes" is the answer. The UUA has a wonderful curriculum that helps a small group of people go through the process of discovering their own theology, then helps them build and clarify the ideas into a cohesive whole. Kit Ketcham and Al G. are eager to help the group form.

There will be a brief organizing meeting for people who are interested in being in this class after the service on Sunday, December 14th. Al will be there to provide information. The members of the class will decide on meeting time and place and the exact starting time of the class (probably sometime in January). Call Sarah R., Adult Programs Coordinator with questions you may have.

Heifer International Project

The Social Action Committee encourages members to support the Heifer International Project. Heifer began in the 1930s when Dan West, a Midwestern farmer, ladled out cups of milk to hungry children on both sides of the conflict in Spain. It struck him that what these families needed was "not a cup, but a cow." He asked his friends back home to donate heifers, a young cow that has not borne a calf, so hungry families could feed themselves. In return, they could help another family become self-reliant by passing on to them one of their gift animal's female calves.

The idea of giving families a source of food rather than short-term relief caught on and has continued for more than 50 years. As a result, families in 115 countries have enjoyed better health, more income and the joy of helping others. The project now provides many kinds of animals, training in their care, and guidance in environmentally sound farming methods. More information is on their web site:

<http://www.heifer.org/>.

Sponsoring an animal for a family would make a terrific holiday gift. The SA Committee will have catalogs and more information at the coffee hours after services this month.

CRE December Update

I have enjoyed being the Coordinator for Children's Religious Education for the Whidbey Island Congregation. The CRE children are so very talented, insightful, intelligent, creative and playful. I can certainly say that I have had many "magic moments" teaching them and learning from them, too.

➤ November News. November's first two sessions were about democracy and world peace. The children had fascinating perspectives on both; participated in several games, discussions and activities and also shared their family heritages with our group. One session had eight children in attendance and the other had four.

Special thanks go out to Siri S. for sharing her musical talents and running two creative music programs in November and to CRE Committee member and parent Erin C. for leading a "We Believe" session in November.

➤ Guest Teachers. Also, thanks in advance to those scheduled to Guest Teach one Sunday in the following months (Elaine W.-December, Nikki H. January, Malcolm F.-Spring (for Earth Day). Any congregants who would like to guest-teach and share their special talents are encouraged to let the CRE Committee know.

➤ New CRE Coordinator Needed. Due to some family challenges, I am unable to continue in this position at the present time. The CRE Committee has reassured me that, although they will miss me in this role, it was helpful for me to launch the program and provide planning for a full CRE year.

A new CRE Coordinator is being sought (as of mid-November) so please refer anyone that may be interested to submit a letter of interest to the CRE Committee as soon as possible for this part-time salaried position. Perhaps you would like to come be part of this exciting and worthwhile program. I would be happy to answer any questions or provide any training as needed. This position involves two hours teaching and set-up time on Sunday afternoons and several hours a week to prepare, communicate with kids and parents, or attend related meetings. Please continue to check the

web site for future CRE news about a new CRE coordinator/teacher, guest teachers, etc.

➤ Thank you so much! I have appreciated the loving support from the church's wise and wonderful consulting minister Kit Ketcham as well as the entire CRE Committee and its supporters. I envision the continued success of the CRE program in whatever form it may take for the rest of the year. Whether children's religious education classes happen once a month or every Sunday, this program is very special indeed. My son Alex and I will attend UU services whenever possible. I certainly appreciate the phenomenal bounty of SPIRIT, friendship, wisdom, and community that I have felt from the Whidbey Island UU congregation. Thank you so very much!

~ Jeanette L.

Outgoing CRE Coordinator

A Couple of Worship Matters

➤ Meeting House layout. Things were swung round 90 degrees recently, as part of Trinity Lutheran's anniversary celebrations. (That was their original orientation 50 years ago.) Most people seem to prefer the altered layout — the room seems larger somehow. Have you an opinion? The Committee would like to try a 180 degree switch from the current one — so the pulpit area is to the right as you come in the center door. This would mean that late-comers are more likely to come in at the back of the sanctuary. The 7th Day Adventists, who meet there on Saturday, are happy with that proposal.

➤ Dancing on the Head of a Pin. The committee discussed (mercifully, briefly) what we should call our Sunday gathering. "Worship" makes some uncomfortable. "Celebration" may be better, but doesn't quite catch it. What about just plain old Sunday Service? Does it matter? A wise old UU recently told us: "focus so that the head and heart are touched and our hands are extended in praise, affection, and service. Every Sunday service must translate into the work of our hands." Opinions, please.

~ Malcolm F.

From Our Minister

Dear Whidbey Islanders,

As we head into the holiday season with its hectic schedules, expectations and celebrations, we Unitarian Universalists are challenged to examine our thinking about Ramadan, Christmas, Hanukkah, Solstice, and Kwanzaa.



These winter “holydays” are important because they call us to consider our relationships with ourselves, with others, and with nature. The winter season can be a time of self-examination, reaching out to others, appreciating nature’s cycles, or it can be a time of feeling sorry for ourselves, trying too hard to please others, and griping about the cold weather.

It’s so easy to get caught up in the commercialism of the season, trying to provide that perfect gift or food or celebration. We’re human beings, so it comes naturally to us to want to please others, to hope to be remembered by others, to strive to make this holiday season “the best ever.”

I hope you will take extra time this month to be gentle with yourself and with each other. Many world religions choose this time of year to emphasize the virtues of love, compassion, honor, respect, and living in harmony and balance.

These common values link us with all of life and are a good reminder to us, when we get frantic about all we have to do, that nothing is more important than being present in the moment, doing what fosters life and health.

In the long run, the gifts don’t matter, the food doesn’t matter, the party doesn’t matter; what matters is what happens between us, between parent and child, between spouses, between friends, between adversaries, between congregants, between ourselves and all those with whom we interact.

T’is the season!

Much love,
Kit

Building Committee Report

On Friday and Saturday, November 14 and 15, we had a giant bonfire at the church property. Tim and Paula K. were kind enough to bring their mechanical loader and their expertise at burning, and we were able to clear and burn many of the old stumps on the site. Thanks again to Tim and Paula!

Meanwhile, the Building Committee continues its work of identifying the recommended location for the church building and also the driveway and parking lot design.

Sometime after January 1 the committee will present the recommended plan to the full congregation.

The next meeting of the committee will be at 9 am on December 10 at Baird's.

From the Membership Committee

The church goal of adding ten new members by the end of this church year will utilize the well known tools of “bring a friend Sunday”, making the presence of our unique liberal religion known in the community and encouraging members and friends to be more integrated into the activities of the church including attendance at church services.

The heart of our church is still the friendliness and welcoming attitude that we all demonstrate to visitors at Sunday Church Service. We have a reputation of being an open and warm church. I’m proud of what we are.

~ Baird B.

Meeting Minutes Online

Minutes of the Board of Trustees monthly meetings are posted on our web site
Committees page: <http://www.whidbey.com/uucwi/committees.html>.

Caring Connections Survey

We, as a committee, are trying to establish needs and ways to meet them. On the back of this page is the survey Sandy W. promised in the last newsletter. Please take a few minutes and fill this out. You may return it to church, e-mail me, Sandy, Al, or Susan. Or mail it to me. Thank you for your participation.

~ Carol B., chairman

UU Caring Connections
(Formerly called Pastoral Committee)

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____

Can you help out your fellow UU congregants? Please check one or more services and support ideas suggested below, and/or add your own.

- Driving (to and from services, appointments, etc.) _____ Regularly _____ once in a while
- Food delivery and/or preparation _____ regularly _____ once in a while
- Listening _____ regularly _____ once in a while
- Reading aloud _____ regularly _____ once in a while
- Pet witting _____ regularly _____ once in a while
- Dog walking _____ regularly _____ once in a while
- Yard work. _____ regularly _____ once in a while
- Odd jobs (e.g. fix-it tasks, hauling) _____ regularly _____ once in a while
(Heavy lifting _____ Yes _____ No)
- Moving
- Teaching/helping computer skills _____ Mac _____ Windows _____ Both
- Grocery shopping _____ regularly _____ once in a while
- Errands _____ regularly _____ once in a while
- Respite care _____ regularly _____ once in a while
- Visiting shut-ins _____ regularly _____ once in a while

Other – please list any additional skills you have to share, or would like to see made available to you and/or other congregants:

Your thoughts, questions, ideas, needs and concerns about making connections are appreciated:

Please feel free to call or e-mail the following *Caring Connection* committee members:

Carol B.; Al G.;
Susan C.; Sandy W.

Social Action Report

from the November 13 Social Action Committee meeting

➤Relief Fund. The committee decided to send, on the church's behalf, \$100 to the San Diego Pacific Southwest District Fire Relief Fund for congregations, their members, and their communities burnt out in the recent fires. More information about the relief effort can be found at <http://www.pswd.uua.org/>.

➤Adopt-A-Road. Our Mutiny Bay Road clean-up program (right behind our property) has started, with several members viewing the required training video. The first clean-up was October 18th, with 12 bags of trash collected from the 1.5-mile stretch. Many thanks to Jack M., Bob L., and Nancy S. for their efforts! The next clean-up will be in May, 2004. We hope the county puts up our UUCWI sign soon.

➤GAYT. We'll again support the Guest at Your Table UUSC end-of-year program. That's where, all through the holiday season, you act as if you have a visitor to share a meal. It's a virtual visitor, however, and you put money in the box in lieu of food. The program has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars over the past two decades. See the related article on page 9 for more information. We hope to hand out the boxes by mid-December.

➤Sharing/bartering. We'd like to do more on this wonderfully helpful program. You simply have a loosely organized network within the church — though it could be amongst any group of people — and find what you can do for others and they for you. Discussion with our Services Auction and the Caring Connections Committee are in progress. People wearing tags at our monthly pot-lucks (I'll be glad to chop your firewood; I'd like someone to set up my Web page) might be a place to start.

➤World AIDS Day, December 1. The UUA Washington Office for Advocacy would like to help anybody who'd like input on education, community work service, etc. to Stop Global AIDS, an effort coalescing around December 1. More information is at <http://www.uua.org/uuawo/new/downloads/flierforworldaidsday.pdf>. (Editor's note: The Whidbey AIDS Support Fund

has scheduled a program on November 30th at 6:30 at Trinity Lutheran Church. The program includes a memorial candle lighting, a concert by the Shifty Sailors, conversation, refreshments, and the Whidbey AIDS Quilt.)

➤Study/Action Issue. The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is promoting the Study/Action Issue chosen at the UUA General Assembly in June: Criminal Justice and Reform. A suggestion from the SA group: Maybe at one or more movie nights we could view *Dead Man Walking*, or *The Green Mile*, or *The Shawshank Redemption* or some such awareness-raising film, then see where discussion leads? See the article on page 8 for more information.

➤Giving for Social Change. UUs — indeed most everybody — have a difficult time deciding how to allocate their charitable giving each year. Mostly we end up with a non-UU-approved guilty feeling as we make a series of ad hoc decisions in face of the scores of worthy appeals we all receive. There may be a better way: a workshop where we try to analyze where to put our priorities, what are the projects we like best to support, which have the lowest admin expenses etc etc. Each family would end up with a controllable, planned chart of this year's giving. Worth a shot? Please contact a SA Committee member and make your views known. If enough interest, we'll hold a 2-hour workshop early in the year, or maybe at Income-Tax time.

New Volunteer Coordinator

Nancy . has been confirmed as our new Volunteer Coordinator by the Board of Trustees. In this role, she'll be creating a database to help match up volunteer positions in the congregation and members' interests and abilities. If you have a job description for your committee or individual position within the congregation, she'd be very grateful if you could send her a copy. Once all the volunteer positions are identified, she'll start contacting members to help define and focus volunteer energies.

Thanks to You

By Dave C., President

This month I am going to forego providing an edifying discourse and resist the urge to inform or cajole or coach.

Instead, I simply want to thank you – each of you – for everything you have done to support me in this job so far this year and as treasurer and search committee chair last year.

Thank you for your generosity of spirit, and your generosity with your time, and talents, and resources.

Thank you for “being there for me” and being so open to different viewpoints and new approaches.

Thank you for your patience in pointing out what I did not know and explaining what I have not understood. Sharing your wisdom and experience has helped me tremendously.

Thank you for so swiftly moving to do what needs done, whether asked to or not.

Thank you for including me in your lives and your prayers.



preventing (them) from achieving their hopes and dreams. Here are the top responses:

- We don't want to offend anyone
- We are too self-absorbed and concerned only about ourselves.
- Membership here is too easy.
- Money is a limited resource, very closely held.

If you — and your congregation — care, look carefully at this list. See if the shoe fits. And if it does, do something! You may want to start by sending your congregation's Membership Committee to the PNWD Membership Conference on April 17th. Mark the date and watch for details! Or call or email me.

Anne Odin Heller, District Executive

email: heller@interisland.net

phone: (800) 313-PNWD (7693) This phone number is the toll-free PNWD number. Our District Administrator will let me know you want to talk to me and I'll call you back on our nickel. Or quarter. Or whatever!

From the UUA

From the PNW District

A View From the District

People sometimes say to me, "Why grow? We like things as they are!" Here are two interesting reasons, both from the UU Voice, fall 2003.

First, at the time of the Unitarian and Universalist merger, in 1961, we had 151,968 adult members. In 2001, twenty years later, we had 156,968. This is, says the Voice, "a gain of a few thousand members during a time in which the US population increased by 50 percent.

Second, the Voice quotes Dale Bullard: "Denominations in which two-thirds or more of churches draw less than 100 at Sunday worship, will be little more than remnants in another generation." That description applies to us, to the UUA.

If we care about our future, we will care about growth. Michael Durall, the Voice's new editor, asked clergy and lay leaders what is

2003 Study/Action issue: Criminal Justice and Prison Reform

Criminal Justice and Prison Reform was selected as the new Study/Action Issue (SAI) at the 2003 UU General Assembly. An SAI is a question — a challenging question of social justice. The challenge is for all congregations and districts: How can Unitarian Universalists successfully advocate for reform of the criminal justice and prison systems, even as the prison industry expands to accommodate more people and becomes increasingly inhumane and unjust?

The UUA asks congregations to study this issue and take action if we choose. Possible approaches include forming a study circle, creating an ARE class, presenting a service on this theme, or even creating a protest action. Our Social Action Committee has suggested viewing a relevant movie and perhaps building from there (see page 7). If you have ideas or interest in this topic, please contact Malcolm.

UUSC Guest At Your Table

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee works for human rights in the world, so that everyone is treated fairly and with respect. When you participate in the Guest at Your Table program, you help make the world better for adults and children. The pictures on your Guest at Your Table box show the difference you make when we work together.

➤ In Southern Mexico. Indigenous women and their families are discriminated against because they are poor, native people. The women you see on the side of your box are members of a UUSC partner organization, the State Assembly of Women of Chiapas, that took part in a demonstration demanding their rights. Our work with indigenous people gives us hope that the girl from Chiapas on the top of your box, whose mother also participated in the demonstration in San Cristobal de las Casas, sees a future where all children are treated equally and where people from different cultures can live together in peace.

➤ In The United States. UUSC brings together young people from different cultures such as those on the side of your box. Stephanie is a UU teenager who worked with David, a youth member of a Boston-area community group, to fight racism in their communities. They participated in UUSC's *What's Your Profile?* program to learn how people from different races and religions can live and work together in peace and harmony.

Your Guest at Your Table support helps UUSC assist people around the world in their struggle for basic human rights. For more information, see <http://www.uusc.org/>.

Other Bits & Pieces

Salmon Farming Documentary December 4
NET LOSS: The Storm Over Salmon Farming, Melissa Young and Mark Dworkin's latest completed film, will be shown at the Langley Methodist Church social hall Thursday, December 4 at 7 p.m. Co-sponsored by the Whidbey Peace and Reconciliation Network and Maxwellton Salmon Adventure. Admission free, but donations welcome.

Investment Ministry

Oikocredit is an international microcredit organization supported by socially responsible investments from a variety of religious constituencies and people of faith, including a small cluster of UU churches and individuals. Oikocredit is hoping to identify 1,000 individual UUs to participate in the ministry through an investment of at least \$1,000 which will pay 2% interest. The investments are then used for Oikocredit loans, which are directed at groups: cooperatives of small-scale coffee farmers, for instance, who need their own coffee mill for increased income. Or microfinance institutions that split up the Oikocredit loan into thousands of small loans to very poor people. But also alternative trade organizations that provide third world producers with a fair market for their products. Oikocredit now supports some 300 groups of marginalized people in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Central and Eastern Europe. More information is available at <http://www.oikocredit.org/>.

When the song of angels is stilled,
 When the star in the sky is gone,
 When the kings and princes are home,
 When the shepherds are back with their flock,
 The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
 To heal the broken,
 To feed the hungry,
 To release the prisoner,
 To rebuild the nations,
 To bring peace among the brothers,
 To make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman

~ submitted by Baird B.

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**Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of Whidbey Island**

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If you wish to contact any of the Board
members, call
UUCWI voice mail at (360) 321-8656.

Minister: Kit Ketcham (206-931-6709)

Chaplain: Al Grapel (678-0919)

Both our minister and our chaplain are available
for rights of passage ceremonies (including
ceremonies of commitment or union) and
pastoral visits.

Newsletter Information:

News, announcements, events, and other items of
general interest to members of the congregation
should be submitted in writing by the 20th of each
month to editor Nancy S, uucwi@whidbey.com
or at 4350 Witter Road, Langley 98260. Short faxed
items may be acceptable; call 221-8664 for more
information. Items submitted after press time will
appear in the following month's newsletter if
appropriate. Time-sensitive late items will be
posted with the announcements and/or on the
calendar on our web site.

Current and past issues of this newsletter are
available online at [http://www.whidbey.com/
uucwi/newsletter.html](http://www.whidbey.com/uucwi/newsletter.html). Last names, phone
numbers, and addresses are deleted from the online
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