

## Music Schedule

### December 7

Celebration Singers

### December 14

Chris Garofalo, Piano

### December 21

Chris Garofalo, Piano

### December 24

Special Christmas Eve Service  
(4:00 Only) Celebration Singers  
(4:00 & 6:00) Henry Pleas, Tenor  
Michelle Lekas, Violin  
Mark Lekas, Cello  
Lisa Menninger, Soprano

### December 28

No Service

## Services

### December 7

9:30 and 11:00 AM

*"Reconciliation"*

Rev. Edward Searl

In the "peace and justice" realm, reconciliation has emerged as a means of moving forward—away from an unjust past and toward a more just present and future. What are the principles of contemporary reconciliation?

### Monthly Collection For Social Justice: Family Shelter Services

*(See article on page 6 for more information.)*

### December 14

9:30 and 11:00 AM

*"The (Liberal) Christ in Christmas"*

Rev. Edward Searl

Over the years we've looked at the universal, timeless aspects of the Mid-Winter Festivals that include Christmas and which Christmas has appropriated in parts. This Holiday Season we'll look more closely at the Christ in Christmas, of course, from our liberal religious perspective.

### December 21

9:30 and 11:00 AM

*"Celebrating the Solstice"*

Rev. Edward Searl

On December 21 how can we not observe the center of the Mid-Winter Festivals/Holiday Season? Let many paganisms abound!

### December 24

4:00 and 6:00PM

*"Moods of Christmas"*

Rev. Edward Searl and Pam Fodor, RE Director

For our annual high tide of the Holiday Season services, Chris Garofalo, guest musicians, Julia Beckman and the Celebration Singers along with Ed and Pam weave the music and words of the season. Typically, the first service gathers our families with children. As always, you might bring a plate of Holiday treats to share during the coffee hour held between services.

### December 28

No Services/No Religious Education Program



THE UNITARIAN CHURCH OF HINSDALE  
*THE TOUCHSTONE*

## Volume 9, Issue 4 December 2008

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# Children and Youth Religious Education

## Pam Fodor, Director of Religious Education

### We Are Many, We Are One

*Preschool Ages 3-4*

#### **December**

- 7 Different Religions Celebrate Different Holidays
- 14 Kwanzaa Celebrates African Americans
- 21 Christmas is a Time For Sharing Our Love
- 28 No Church

Unitarians have diverse religious backgrounds. Many of our families celebrate traditions from other faith traditions. During the month of December, the preschoolers will explore Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Christmas traditions. The students and teachers will celebrate the holidays and share in the love of the season.

## Haunting House

*Kindergarten & First Grade*

#### **December**

- 7 The Friendly Beasts
- 14 Christmas in the Stable
- 21 The Christmas Story
- 28 No Church

The story of the birth of a baby in a barn, surrounded by animal comfort and parental love, involves some of our deepest feelings of caring for what is little and our responsiveness to the shelter of a home, a barn. During this time the children will celebrate the religious holiday of Christmas as a time of love and hope and they will come to know the story of the birth of Jesus as a source of joy and wonder.

## Stepping Stones

*Grades 2-6*

#### **December**

- 7 Unique and Wonderful You
- 14 An Important Birthday- Buddha's and Yours
- 21 Jesus' Birth Story
- 28 No Church

It is important that children sense the wonder of their own birth and the possibilities in their own lives. It is for this reason that this new unit begins with the uniqueness of each child and that the sessions on Buddha's and Jesus' births include parallels to the children's own experiences.

## **Special People To Be Thanked**

The RE Department would like to recognize and thank the following people who helped organize and execute two special workshops for our young people. Cheryl Prescott, Susan Hebble, and Pat Miller took the fifth and sixth graders on a trip back in time to study the history of Unitarian Universalism. Roy Fleet, Luan Burton and Fred Zimmerman led the junior and senior high youth in a study of Judaism and made possible a trip to a temple. It is only possible to offer these special programs to our young people with the generous help of our many volunteers. Thank You!

## **New OWL Leaders**

We welcome Paula Sejut-Dvorak and Karin Janowski to our team of dedicated OWL leaders. We thank these fine ladies for giving up a weekend to travel to Wisconsin for the training and then committing to teach our classes for the remainder of the church year. It is great to have them!

## **Teachers For The Spring Semester**

Although it doesn't feel anything like Spring, it is time to recruit our Spring Semester teachers. Please consider touching the lives of our young people by being a teacher in our program. Contact Pam Fodor at [re@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:re@hinsdaleunitarian.org) or 630-323-2885 for more information.

# Youth Group Activities

## Roy Fleet,

## Youth Director

**For new readers:**

Activities include community service, social action, education, worship, leadership, recreation and fundraising. As always, the emphasis is on having fun while applying UU Principles and Purposes.

YG's community service and social action efforts include Crop Walk, a coat drive for Head Start, and IDOT's Adopt-a-Highway. Beginning this year, YG's education efforts will feature the Neighboring Faiths program with

local visits to places of worship in addition to the usual discussion of current events vis-a-vis UU Principles and Purposes, use of curricula relevant to current events, bridging programs, and Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education Program (OWL). Junior YG and Senior YG have worship during meetings and conduct a Sunday service each year. YG members have hosted weekend diversity conferences and have current opportunities to hone leadership skills. This year, YG's recreation activities will include conferences, lock-ins, and a year-end retreat to Lake Geneva. YG will also begin developing a service trip for the summer of 2010.

Fundraising supports the majority of YG activities – including a team building course for OWL, gifts to OWL and graduating members, and snacks at meetings. Our fundraising includes sales of coupon books, seasonal decorations, and a variety of plants in the spring. Each YG member has a fundraising account to support his/her participation in conferences and the retreat. As in the past, general YG funds will be prorated by level of participation, so weekly attendance counts. Stop by our table in the AWR of the church.

Please check the following calendar for OWL, Neighboring Faiths, and Youth Group meetings and events.

### YG Activities for December

SYG = Senior Youth Group  
 JYG = Junior Youth Group  
 GCFD = Greater Chicagoland  
 Food Depository

7	Sunday	OWL: Session 9: Guest Panel Session 10: Gender Identity SYG: Meeting: Work on Youth Sunday
13	Saturday	YG: GCFD: Leave UCH @ 12:45 PM
14	Sunday	OWL: Session 11: Introduction to Relationships SYG: Meeting: Work on Youth Sunday
21	Sunday	OWL: Session 12: Relationship Skills SYG: Meeting: Work on Youth Sunday
28	Sunday	No OWL and no Youth Group Meetings
30	Tuesday	YG: ReUUnion: UIC Basketball trip & Lock-in

# UCH Connections

The Unitarian Church of Hinsdale is working to establish and strengthen our connections with guests and members. These activities fall under the Board portfolios of Membership (Dave Lloyd) and Publicity (Susan Hebble), both of which get input from the Membership Committee (Larry Price, chair). Below are some ways you can help build our community.

## Neighbor Nights – Find a UU Near You

Over the years there have been numerous local gatherings of UCH visitors, members, and friends. The Membership Committee is now planning a series of Open Houses/Coffees called “Neighbor Nights – Find a UU Near You” for all the communities served by our church to be held mid January to mid March.

We are looking for a host household in each of these nine major community areas defined with the Caring and Connections Committee:

Area 1: Hinsdale, Clarendon Hills

Area 2: Willowbrook, Darien, Westmont

Area 3: Indian Head Park, Western Springs, LaGrange Highlands

Area 4: Elmhurst, Villa Park, Des Plaines, Schaumburg, Niles

Area 5: Glen Ellyn, Lombard, Wheaton, Naperville, Oak Brook, Oakbrook Terrace

Area 6: Westchester, Brookfield, Lyons, River Forest, Riverside, Chicago

Area 7: LaGrange Park, LaGrange, Countryside, Burr Ridge, Willow Springs

Area 8: Downers Grove

Area 9: Woodridge, Bolingbrook, Lemont, Lockport, Manteno, Oswego, Plainfield, Romeoville, Homer Glen, Lisle

The hosting job is quite simple: 1) open your home and 2) prepare coffee and tea. Guests are asked to RSVP to the host and bring a simple snack or dessert and/or wine or beer, if desired. Members are also encouraged to bring a friend or neighbor. The committee will send out the invitations. These gatherings offer a simple and fun way for us to get together! Call Jane Foulser at 630-833-3028 or email her at [jfoulser@mindspring.com](mailto:jfoulser@mindspring.com) to sign on as host in your area. Please call by December 15 to host a party in your area, and be a part of this effort to extend care and connection across our UU community.

## Caring and Connections Committee

The Caring and Connections Committee has been hard at work. With the Membership Committee, we are recruiting volunteer captains for each of the nine areas listed above. These captains will help to address the concerns and celebrations of our members. Please watch for an e-mail message or a phone call from your area “Caring Captain” introducing herself or himself and welcoming you to become involved in the caring process. If you have questions or would like to learn more please contact Pam Fodor at [re@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:re@hinsdaleunitarian.org) or 630-323-2885.

*UCH Connections continued*

## **New UU Program** **Three Wednesday Nights in** **December at 7:00 P.M.**

We are in the midst of a “New UU” program to welcome both new members and visitors to our church. New UU is a four-night exploration of our own faith journey, the history and principles of Unitarian Universalism, and our home in the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale. The first session was held on November 19, and subsequent sessions are scheduled for Wednesday nights, December 3, 10, and 17, starting at 7:00 P.M., in the Alice Warren Room (or wherever else we move to when we get there). If you’ve missed the first session, don’t worry! You will still enjoy the other nights. To sign up, contact Pam Fodor at [re@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:re@hinsdaleunitarian.org).

## **UCH Open House —** **January 11, 2009**

The Unitarian Church of Hinsdale will host an Open House on Sunday, January 11, 2009. The schedule of worship services and religious education will be the same, and Rev. Ed Searl will conduct his regularly scheduled sermon; so what is special? We will be making a special effort to attract and greet new guests to the church. In advance of the Open House we will promote this event in a variety of ways, including placing ads in local newspapers and posting flyers around the area. So on January 11, let’s all make a special effort to meet and greet the guests sitting next to us or standing near the coffee and doughnuts!

## **Membership Matters —** **A Phrase and a Clause**

If you like something, you want to share it, right? If you enjoy the worship, fellowship, and involvement of membership in UCH, then the more, the better! The Membership Committee is working to fine-tune our efforts to attract more guests, welcome visitors, make the joining process more memorable, and make our fellowship richer. Whether you’re a UCH veteran, a new member, or a visitor, you have ideas about membership that we want to hear. Our December meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 11, at 7:30 in the evening. Check the Order of Service for the location, or just show up at church that night and follow the sounds of joy. To share your ideas without going to a meeting, contact Larry Price, committee chair, at [lprice@anl.gov](mailto:lprice@anl.gov).

And speaking of members and visitors: If you’re a member of the congregation, please make a special effort to welcome our guests. Every Sunday we have at least two or three people who have never been to our church before. After the service, find someone you haven’t met before and introduce yourself—especially if s/he have a “Guest” name tag. And if you’re a visitor, don’t hesitate to introduce yourself. Some of us may be shy, but we’re all friendly.

And a final note to visitors: All UCH activities are open to visitors as well as members. Whatever you’re interested in, we probably have an event, a gathering, a program, or a committee that you’ll enjoy. If you have any questions about any aspect of the church, ask anyone, including membership trustee Dave Lloyd, [davelloyd@mindspring.com](mailto:davelloyd@mindspring.com) or 708-485-2296.

# Upcoming Events

## December Social Justice Collection

### **December 7 Family Shelter Services**

The recipient for our December 7 Social Justice Collection will be the Family Shelter Services of DuPage county. This organization provides help and hope for victims of domestic violence. Court services, shelters, hotlines, counseling and children's programs are among the many services offered to victims of abuse. Church member, Carolyn Healy, is President of the Board of Family Shelter Services.

Please use the following guidelines in making your donation:

---If you wish to write a check directly to the organization, make it out to "Family Shelter Services."

---If you prefer to make your donation via a check written to UCH, you must indicate Family Shelter Services in the memo. Save the canceled check for tax deduction purposes, as such donations through UCH will NOT be reflected on your year end statements from UCH.

---If you are placing a pledge payment or other contribution to UCH in the offertory, please indicate your intention in the memo of the check.

## Social Action Committee Meeting

**December 7, 12:30 P.M.**

The Social Action Committee is a committee of shared responsibility within UCH. Participation and contributions of all UCH members and friends are most welcome. December meeting of the Social Action Committee: Sunday, December 7, 12:30 p.m. to 1:15 p.m. in the R.E Building.

## A Religious Journey Toward the Life Beautiful, Part II

**Monday December 8 at 7:30 in the Alice Warren room**

What is your religious journey? Has it been Protestant, Jewish, Islam, or just indifference? Come join with others as they explore Phase II: the period of early schooling where you might have been exposed to new ideas relating to God, Jesus, Allah, or the little boy on the corner who told you that Satan lived under the sidewalk. The meetings begin with discussion, followed by a time to write in a journal, ending with comments and sharing if appropriate. For added information contact Beth Staas at (630) 271-1833 or beth@staas.com

## Women's Alliance Potluck Luncheon

**December 11, Noon**

Women's Alliance Holiday Pot Luck Luncheon will be at noon on Thursday, December 11 at Joan Prims'. Her address is 1401 Burr Oak Rd, Apt. 317B, Hinsdale and phone 630-323-5257. In the past we have had some of the most savory culinary delights this side of Chicago, and the conversations are equally interesting. Bring a dish and some of your favorite CDs. Jeri O'Brien and Jackie Bruns are hostesses this month.

## Greater Chicago Food Depository

**December 13 1:30 - 4:30 pm**

NO COMMITMENT - COME ONCE AND TRY US OUT. This makes an excellent project to bond with friends, kids, grandkids; kids must be over 13. Volunteer work is not strenuous and includes packing boxes, sorting food items and lots of fun. Plus, for every hour/person worked, \$5 in food credits is given to the Canaan Food Pantry.

Meet at GCFD, 4100 W. Ann Lurie Place (42nd Place), Chicago. Call Jean Noble (708-485-0281) for directions/further information.

Upcoming dates for 2009: Jan 10, Feb 14, Mar 14

## Care and Share Party

**December 13, 1:00 – 3:00 P.M.**

Please join us on Saturday, December 13th from 1-3pm in the Alice Warren Room and the church sanctuary for our Third Annual Care and Share Party. This party will provide a chance for our church family and the Head Start families to come together and share the holiday spirit. There will be refreshments and games for the kids! Please bring a plate or package of cookies to share and come for the fun!!

Please contact Pam Fodor [re@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:re@hinsdaleunitarian.org) for more info or to volunteer to help!

## UCH Lunch Bunch

**December 18, 1:00 P.M.**

The UCH Lunch Bunch, for those new to us, is a gathering of friends and members at a restaurant once a month, where you can order what you want, while enjoying the company and conversation of other folks from our church. This event also offers great opportunity to try a new restaurant or revisit an old favorite.

DECEMBER Lunch Bunch will meet at 1:00 on Thursday Dec. 18 at William Tell Restaurant, (Holiday Inn) 6201 W. Joliet Rd., Countryside. (West of LaGrange Rd and East of Brainard) For more information, e-mail Jackie Bruns at [Butterfluffy@gmail.com](mailto:Butterfluffy@gmail.com) or call Cathy Goering at 630-325-0310.

## Winter Solstice Celebration

**December 18, 7:30 P.M.**

The Winter Solstice celebration will be held on Thursday, December 18, at 7:30 P.M., in the Joshi Room in the RE building. Our annual Solstice ritual includes saying good-bye to the habits of the past and lighting candles of hope for the future. This is an all ages service; families with kids, and adults without kids, are welcome and will find meaning. If you wish, bring a snack to share.

## Non-Fiction Book Discussion Group

**December 18, 2008, 7:30 P.M.**

The Non-Fiction Book Discussion Group will meet Thursday, December 18 at 7:30 p.m. in the Alliance Room, in the lower level of the church. Contact Jane Foulser at 630-833-3028 or [jfoulser@minspring.com](mailto:jfoulser@minspring.com) or Jack Uretsky at 630-323-5990 or [jlu@anl.gov](mailto:jlu@anl.gov) to find out the book to be discussed and to confirm meeting time details.

# Church Messages

## Entertainment Books Available at the YG Corner in the AWR

The Youth Group is selling "E" books covering Chicagoland's West/Central, North/Northwest, and South/Southwest areas. The 2-for-1 coupon books offer great savings on dining, movies, attractions, travel, and shopping.

## Coat Drive

The Youth Group will be collecting coats and other warm clothing for Head Start families all year long. You can help by donating clean items. Look for the collection bin in the RE building and by our table in the AWR.

## UUSC and UNICEF Christmas Cards

Louise Noble, stalwart sales steward in recent decades of UNICEF greeting cards, encourages the purchase of year 2008 holiday greeting cards the 21st Century Way: ONLINE!

UNICEF cards: <http://www.shopcardsandgifts.unicefusa.org/>

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee cards: <https://secure.uusc.org/store>

## No More Turning Away—A Multi-Church Social Action Project

Each year, area UU religious educators recognize and celebrate the social action projects of the various religious education programs. Last year, these Directors of Religious Education enthusiastically decided to collaborate on one social action project for the church year. This multi-church project has been titled “No More Turning Away,” and its focus is to create awareness, education, and action to end homelessness.

Here at UCH, Pam Fodor, and the Religious Education Committee are coordinating opportunities for worship, curricula, and activities for children and youth. Also scheduled are

monthly All-Community social action activities such as movie viewings and hands-on projects so that we can learn and work together as a church. Our efforts will serve Bridge Communities ([www.bridgecommunities.com](http://www.bridgecommunities.com)) and Sharing Connections ([www.sharingconnections.com](http://www.sharingconnections.com)), two local organizations that provide services for the homeless and those in transitional housing.

The RE Committee invites and encourages all church members to participate in this important collaborative project! Check out what we have already done and what is coming up!

Contact Pam Fodor for more information re@[hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:hinsdaleunitarian.org) or 630-323-2885

### October

*Sunday 26th* Project Kick-off and fleece blanket making

### November

*Monday 10th*

*Tuesday 11th* Painted ceramic bowls

*Sunday 23rd* Stone Soup Sunday and selling of bowls

### December

Care and Share Gift and Food Giving project

*Saturday 13th* Care and Share Party from 1-3pm

### January

*Saturday 10th* Work at Greater Chicago Food Depository from 1:30-4:30pm

### February-March

To be announced

### Ongoing Collections

Head Start Food Pantry Collection

Youth Group Coat Collection

Small toiletries Collection

## **UCH Members Volunteer for Cool Cities**

The Unitarian Church of Hinsdale hosted Lonnie Morris, Cool Cities Chair for the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, at both services on October 12. Cool Cities is a program for municipal governments to reduce energy use and carbon emissions. This involves both improving energy efficiency in municipal buildings and vehicles and also encouraging citizens to reduce energy use through voluntary campaigns and building codes. Lonnie brought a video about the progress made in a number of towns in Illinois, and a lot of passion about fighting global warming.

Because UCH has members from over 30 different towns and villages, we are uniquely suited to support Cool Cities. The Green Sanctuary Committee is asking all members of the church to work in their own towns to help get Cool Cities adopted. The Sierra Club already has campaigns started in many of our communities; so most likely, if you decide to help, there is a coalition already working on the issue in your town.

A key component of our Green Sanctuary plan is the social justice component—working with a program like Cool Cities to help solve an environmental problem that impacts everyone, but especially those least able to cope with it. We need to pitch in to meet this goal and get ourselves certified as a Green Sanctuary congregation.

For more information about Cool Cities, go to <http://coolcities.us/> To find out what's going on in your town, or to join the effort, contact Dave Lloyd of the Green Sanctuary Committee, at 708-485-2296, or [davelloyd@mindspring.com](mailto:davelloyd@mindspring.com).

## **Message from the Finance Committee**

Charitable IRA Rollovers' Favorable Tax Treatment Through 2009

Currently, IRA owners age 70 ½ and older may make gifts directly from an IRA to qualified public charities (such as UCH). The favorable tax treatment for these gifts, originally authorized for years 2006 and 2007, has been extended through December 2009. The gifts may be as much as \$100,000 per year and may also qualify towards the IRA owner's required minimum distribution (RMD), yet will not be included in taxable income. IRA owners who would like to donate and take advantage of the tax savings this year should contact your IRA administrator and request that a check be written directly to the charitable organization (to be considered a "rollover"). Please consider making a contribution to UCH's Capital Fund, Endowment Fund, or General Operating Fund. For more information, you may refer to [www.uua.org/giving/plannedgifts](http://www.uua.org/giving/plannedgifts) or contact Donna Milord at [dmlord@aol.com](mailto:dmlord@aol.com).

## **Interested in Joining a Food Cooperative?**

Liberal Pantry has called UCH its home for over 11 years and draws its membership from the congregation and surrounding communities. The coop buys organic and environmentally friendly produced products in case lots from United Natural Foods ([www.unfi.com](http://www.unfi.com)) and repackages the products according to advance orders. Deliveries are received and processed in the Alice Warren Room every 4 weeks on a Monday. Contact Roy Fleet at [FRFINC@gmail.com](mailto:FRFINC@gmail.com) for membership information.

## A Message from The Endowment Committee

It's December already. The end of the calendar year is the end of the tax year too. Many of our members and friends complete their pledges for the year in December for tax reasons. Others decide it's time for a special gift, also usually for tax purposes.

May we suggest that there are several sorts of monetary gifts you can provide to the church, particularly as a year ends.

One is a gift to the operating fund of the church, which helps with immediate needs and shores up the cash position of the church. This is a gift for the shorter term.

Another is a gift for a special purpose fund. We have had many such funds in the past. The fund for the RE Building elevator is an example.

A third type of gift is one for the long-term benefit of the church, one that becomes part of the church's Endowment Fund. The principal in this Fund is inviolable. The earnings from the Fund can be used for special purposes and projects or can be included into the principal and kept in the Fund to help it grow.

We have been re-introducing The Endowment Fund to our congregation in special gatherings, by invitation. Don't worry if you haven't received an invitation. You will. We are keeping the gatherings small so that we can have useful, lively discussions about the Fund and how it works.

Among the things we've been emphasizing are the solidity of the Fund itself and the commitment of the Endowment Committee. One of our tasks has been to assure that the Committee will have ongoing continuity and institutional credibility, to say nothing of serious intent about growing our Endowment.

We humbly suggest that you consider helping the Endowment Fund grow. Please look at your current situation to see if there is a gift of substance that you can give that will benefit the Endowment Fund and the long term life and health of the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale, as well as benefiting you for 2008.

If you haven't already, we also ask that you include The Endowment Fund of the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale in your will or estate plan. This is very important.

And finally, though you may have heard differently, it is, indeed, possible this year if you are 70 1/2 or older to make outright gifts using IRA funds without tax complications. If you must take your IRA distributions but do not need them, please consider using the distributions as a charitable gift by transferring them to The Endowment Fund of the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale.

Thank you, everyone! May your holidays be joyous and fulfilling.

*The Endowment Committee*

Joel Stein, Chair

Dennis Mason

Bud Poulson

Sally Packard

Ed McDevitt

## A SMALL Way to Make A BIG Difference

The families that attend the Head Start program here at church need our help. Far too often, these parents have a difficult time making ends meet from week to week, usually at the end of the month before they receive their food stamps. In order to help, we are setting up an Emergency Food Pantry here at the church so that the Head Start Director will have food to send home to the family when needed. We would like to stock canned and boxed goods:

canned soup	rice
jarred or canned pasta sauce	jelly
canned vegetables	pasta
instant oatmeal	boxed mashed potatoes
canned fruit	boxed dinners (macaroni and cheese, Rice-a-Roni, etc.)
peanut butter	

Please consider adding these items to your shopping list to help us keep this cabinet well stocked. Bring your donations before, in between, or after services to Room 3, lower level of the RE Building, and put them in the gray cabinet just inside the room. For more information please contact Pam Fodor re@hinsdaleunitarian.org or 630-323-2885.

Thanks in advance for your participation!

## Among Ourselves

### From The Women's Alliance

**Thinking of our Dear Friend, Edna Fredericks**  
Edna Fredericks was a beloved member of our Church and a dedicated member of Women's Alliance. Because we want Edna's memory to have a tangible presence, the Women's Alliance has provided funds and dedicated to Edna's memory three armchairs in the Rutherford Room (the living room). A small brass plaque with a suitable dedication is attached to each of the chairs.

## Holiday Harvest Results From Karen McDowell

Anyone who has ever “done” theater knows the importance of a rousing cast party after closing night. I almost felt that was what our volunteers needed - a mighty celebration of a job well done, a toast to the camaraderie that developed, even a good thought about doing it all again next year.

The evening was, by any measure, successful: there was plenty of time for food (and plenty of good food), more goods for sale than ever before, a lively live auction, entertainment that flowed uninterrupted, dancing in the aisles, raffles and door prizes that made for happy surprises, a swift check out, and lights out by 11:00. It always takes at least a week for the dust to settle and the last of the boxes to get to the tower; to deal with the unsold, unpaid, unclaimed goods, and to count the money and pay reimbursements. Every effort has been made to announce an accurate net, so (drum roll) here it is - even better than last year! The net was \$19,710.61. The balance this realizes for the reserve fund will be revealed in next month's Touchstone, but we are better than half way to the \$100,000 goal.

For next year, Jay and I encourage EVERYONE to 1) reserve the date of Nov. 14 2) vow to take at least one business donation solicitation letter to a place you frequent next spring 3) make every effort to join the ranks of volunteers who make this all possible - there's always room for a few more names on the lists. Our most pressing job is that of inventory receiving, chaired so well this year by Nancy Weill and Suzanne Williams. We likely will be looking for one more person to help with this in '09. If you would like to discuss what it involves, speak to Nancy, Suzanne, or me. Much gratitude goes to all who put their skills and time to good use! We hope a good time was had by all! (Can we top this next year?!!)

## Have Yourself an Eco-Friendly Christmas!

As our neighborhoods begin to blaze with the bright tidings of the season, it's easy to get caught up in the "me-too" mindset of more, bigger, and better, especially when it comes to holiday decorations. Anymore, it seems like Halloween lights, giant inflatable Thanksgiving turkeys, and winter wonderland displays that rival a movie set can be found on most any residential street. Sure, they're fun. But they use a lot of energy, too!

This year, the Green Sanctuary committee is asking every UCH household to consider a kinder, gentler approach to seasonal decorations. Think of ways you can reduce your carbon footprint over the holidays by using fewer lights, choosing lower-wattage bulbs, and keeping your holiday lights lit for a little less time each day. Better yet, replace one electrical decoration with an old-fashioned decoration that relies on its own simple beauty to convey holiday cheer.

Another way you can reduce your holiday impact is by simplifying your gift packages. What can you reuse and recycle to create interesting and memorable gift wrappings? When buying papers and ribbon, try to choose recycled and recyclable products, and recycle what you can when the packages are all unwrapped.

If you have a live tree, instead of putting it in a plastic "body bag" destined for a landfill come January, consider setting it up in your yard with treats for wild birds, and come spring, composting it. Some communities will chip or compost trees as well; look for information about collection dates in your local paper or community bulletin.

The holidays don't have to be a season of reckless abandon when it comes to impact — they offer an opportunity to make better choices and teach our children to consider alternatives to the mainstream consumer culture. Our gift to the planet can be the best gift of all!

## **New Touchstone Submission Guidelines**

Have some information to share with the congregation? Then please submit your article for publication in The Touchstone. Submissions should be sent to Susan Hebble at [sjhebble@comcast.net](mailto:sjhebble@comcast.net) with a copy to the church office at [office@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:office@hinsdaleunitarian.org). Susan will collect all submissions and send them to Dan Speziale for formatting. Because our goal is to make the Touchstone available in a timely manner, all submissions must be received by the 15th of the month.

## **Order of Service Announcement Deadline**

The Order of Service is printed weekly on Thursday, so announcements for the Sunday bulletin must be received at the office by Wednesday. Send the text to Luan Burton at [office@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:office@hinsdaleunitarian.org).

## **Contacts**

Unitarian Church of Hinsdale, 11 West Maple, Hinsdale, IL, 60521  
630-323-2885                      [www.hinsdaleunitarian.org](http://www.hinsdaleunitarian.org)

Minister – Reverend Edward Searl (ext. 111, [minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org))

Director of Religious Education – Pam Fodor (ext. 110, [re@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:re@hinsdaleunitarian.org))

Office Administrator – Luan Burton (ext. 101, [office@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:office@hinsdaleunitarian.org))