

## Services in December

### December 5

10:30 A.M.

*"Natural Religion: A Timeless Way"*

Rev. Edward Searl

*The Celebration Singers and*

*Chris Garofalo, piano*

I call my personal religious orientation Natural Religion, adding that it's the Way of Nature and Human Nature. I'll look at philosophies and religions that have inspired and guided me in my own evolution.

### December 12

10:30 A.M.

*"Be True to Yourself"*

Rev. Edward Searl

*Goran Ivanovic, guitar and Chris Garofalo, piano (Sponsor: Anonymous)*

Each of us has a personality that bends us in certain ways, including the religious way we should follow. Drawing on Jungian psychology and other sources, I'll recommend how you can understand and practice a way true to you.

### December 19

10:30 A.M.

*"The Spirit and Magic of Christmas"*

Rev. Ed Searl and Pam Fodor

*Chris Garofalo, piano*

The magic of Christmas is not seen, or heard, or touched or tasted. It is felt. And for those who choose to feel it, they will know its presence in all their senses. Please bring a plate of cookies to share during coffee hour.

### December 24

4:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M.

*Christmas Eve at UCH*

**\*\*Community Coffee Hour between services\*\***

Rev. Ed Searl and Pam Fodor

*Music: Celebration Singers (4:00 service only); Chris Garofalo, Piano; Henry Pleas, Tenor; Lisa Menninger, Soprano; Jin Zhang, Violin; Emily Mantell, Cello*

(Christmas Eve Music Sponsors: Carolyn & David Healy, Helene & Tom Fields, Velaine Carnall, Dr. Jim Murray, Herb & Anita Hiestand, Elizabeth & Edward Barrow, Catherine Menninger.)

With music and words, in the glow of candlelight, we gather together to celebrate, remember, and dedicate ourselves to a spirit hard to define but always palpable.

Chris Garofalo gathers incredible musicians and arranges the music. Pam Fodor has a story for our children. And Ed Searl weaves these elements into a seamless service with various forms of the spoken word.

Please bring a plate of Holiday treats to share for a common coffee hour between the two services, when friend old and new can toast the Season.

### Sunday, December 26

No church or church activities

Volume 10, Issue 9  
December 2010

#### In This Issue

Sundays in December	1
Religious Education for Children and Youth	2
Upcoming Events	4
Church News & Announcements	7
Board Briefs	10
Among Ourselves	12
Photos (online only)	15

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH OF HINSDALE

*THE TOUCHSTONE*

## Greetings

A few weeks ago, I presented my customary PowerPoint Slide Show on UCH History to the New UU class, made up of newcomers considering membership. I covered a lot of ground in a few minutes, touching upon the highlights of a hundred and twenty-four years as a religious society in the Unitarian (now Unitarian Universalist) tradition. Though a small congregation in a suburb of a great city, UCH has significantly participated in several great innovations in American Religious Experience, including the upsurge of interest in World Religions associated with the 1893 World Parliament of Religions and the mid-twentieth century enthusiasm for Religious Humanism. I also hinted at the connections of our Church Home, built in 1897, with the iconic American Architect Frank Lloyd Wright, who was good friends with UCH's first minister William Channing Gannett. (Some scholars speculate that Wright might have designed our Church Home.)

As I gave my presentation, I was thinking how much more I wanted to convey regarding our congregation's lore--and not just for newcomers, but also for the larger membership. Because of intimacy and longevity, I am the de facto keeper of the lore. In a flash, I knew what I would do. Each Sunday when I'm in the pulpit, I will present a piece of UCH Lore on a PowerPoint slide. Gradually, I will accumulate a comprehensive catalog/program of the obvious and the obscure, of the institutional and the individual, of the old and the new.

I began on November 7th with an image of recently installed rain barrels connected to the downspouts of the face of the Religious Building, a project of Green Sanctuary. I have so much more to show: an original chair used in the Sanctuary for more than half a century, part of the pulpit from which Vivekananda spoke in 1893, the natural playground to the west of the Religious Education Building designed by our own landscape architect Charlie Fischer, the Chicago Arch that became the main motif of the restoration of the main building in the 1980s, the mobile hanging in Joshi Auditorium, and so on.

I want us all to feel a generous sense of community, so that today we will have visible reminders of how for a century and a quarter, and with renewed vigor today, a living tradition of members makes and keeps this beloved congregation/ church. Our community today is joined with decades of kindred spirits, who stir our gratitude and cause us to keep and build for generations to come. Each Sunday when I'm in the pulpit, I will present a piece of UCH Lore on a PowerPoint slide. Gradually, I will accumulate a comprehensive catalog/program of the obvious and the obscure, of the institutional and the individual, of the old and the new.

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Reverend Edward Searl

# Children and Youth Religious Education

**Pam Fodor, Director of Religious Education**

## **Celebrating Me And My World**

Preschool ages 3-5; 10:30 A.M.

12-5	I Can Ask Questions
12-19	All-Community Church Service

12-12	I Can Give and Share
12-26	No Church

Unitarian Universalists pride themselves on the freedom to ask questions. Our young UU's will discover that the ability to ask questions will help them learn about the world. The Holidays are a perfect time to learn the joy of giving and sharing!

## **Around The Church, Around The Year**

Kindergarten and first grade; 10:30 A.M.

12-5	Worship with Our Church Family
12-19	All-Community Church Service

12-12	I'm Unique and Unrepeatable
12-26	No Church

On the 5th, the Kindergarteners and first graders will join the adults in the first part to present the church with a special gift. "Each night a child is born is a Holy night." And each one of us is unique and special.

## **Chapel Service**

Grades 2-6; 10:30 A.M.

12-5	What Do We Believe?
12-19	All-Community Church Service

12-12	Holiday Beliefs
12-26	No Church

Our church family is an eclectic group of wonderful people who all have a different take on Unitarian Universalism. Our young people can learn so much about our religion by accepting and affirming these different thoughts. This month we will meet some members of our church family and hopefully learn a little bit about ourselves as well.

## **Junior High**

Grades 7-8; 10:15 A.M.

12-5	Introduction to Relationships
12-19	All-Community Worship Service

12-12	Relationship Skills
12-26	No Church

OWL is a comprehensive approach to human sexuality presented in an age-appropriate manner. It is based firmly on the values of respect, responsibility, justice and inclusivity. Parental permission and registration are required for participation in this course.

## **Senior High Youth Group**

Grades 7-8; 10:30 A.M.

12-5	Worship Planning
12-19	All-Community Worship Service

12-12	Holiday Worship
12-26	No Church

A favorite youth group activity is worship. This month the youth will plan their own special holiday worship service.

## R.E. News

### **Care and Share**

For several years at the Holidays, we have adopted the families of the Head Start Children that attended school during the week at the church. This Head Start program is still waiting to move into their new and improved building and the families are still in need. This year we will not provide as much support as we have in the past, but we will still provide some gifts. We have agreed to provide 20 wrapped toys. Please visit the small Christmas tree in the Alice Warren Room. Choose an ornament off the tree and provide that gift, wrapped and tagged with the child's name by Sunday, December 5th. For more information contact Pam Fodor (re@hinsdaleunitarian.org). Thank you in advance for your support!

### **Drop, Shop, & Wrap**

December is a hectic time for families! You need time to shop without your children and then another block of time to wrap those gifts. There never seems to be enough time! The Youth Group is here to help! They will host a Drop and Shop on Sunday, December 5th from 12:00 to 4:30 p.m.. For \$20 for the first child and \$10 for each additional child, Youth Group members will provide your children with fun games, activities and crafts while you have the afternoon to shop. When you return, sneak your packages in and you can have them wrapped for an additional donation. All proceeds will benefit the youth group's retreat trip. For more information or to sign up contact Pam Fodor (re@hinsdaleunitarian.org).

### **All-Community Worship**

Join us on Sunday, December 19th for a service appropriate for all ages. Experience the spirit of the season through Chris Van Allsburg's delightful and heartwarming story, *The Polar Express*. Bring some cookies to share with others during coffee hour.

## Upcoming Events

### **Friday, December 3—First Friday Fun Night, 7:00 p.m.**

Let's Deck the Halls of our church! Join us for some decorating, crafting, and snacking. Strong elves are needed to bring down decorations from the attic. Little elves are needed to decorate both the church and the RE Building. All elves are welcome! Bring along some holiday tunes for getting us in the mood. Meet at the church at 7:00. To learn more about FFFN, contact Kari Freeman (hollowcastle@gmail.com).

### **Manna Orders Due December 5—Stock Up for Christmas!**

Manna orders will be due December 5th with cards available for pickup in the AWR on December 12. Christmas is almost here and MANNA cards make great gifts. No mall crowds to fight and one size fits all! We will collect the January orders on January 2, with distribution on January 9. For more information, contact Dana White (630-910-6557).

## **December 5—Social Justice Collection for Walk-In Ministry of Hope**

The Walk-In Ministry of Hope, located in the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Downers Grove, was formed in 2000 by six area churches, the LOVE Christian Clearinghouse, and several community members. Now incorporated as an independent agency, this organization seeks to meet the need for emergency assistance for individuals and families in crisis in Darien, Downers Grove, Lisle, Westmont, Willowbrook and Woodridge. Its website states that there are 34,599 people in DuPage County with incomes below the poverty level. The WIMH serves its clients with voucher assistance for food, gasoline, prescriptions and clothing. It gives referrals for eyeglasses, health care, utility bill problems and other agencies that can be of help. UCH member Tinker Harvey is an active volunteer for the WIMH.

Please use the following guidelines in making your donation:

---All cash donations go to the monthly social justice collection.

---If you wish to write a check directly to the organization, make it out to "Walk-In Ministry of Hope."

---If you prefer to make your donation via a check written to UCH, you must indicate Walk-In Ministry of Hope 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.

## **Women's Alliance Holiday Potluck—December 9**

'Tis the season for the Alliance's annual holiday celebration! We will gather at noon on Thursday, December 9 at Joan Prims's lovely condo in Graue Mill. Be sure to bring one of your favorite potluck dishes and join in the festivities. In addition to a delicious lunch, we will be treated to a poetry reading by Carolyn Sibr and Marvin Young. They will read from their books *Tapestry in Time* and *Sacred Rivers: A Walk Along Divergent Waters*. The themes of both books are appreciating nature and making the most of our environment. Mark your calendar and ring in the holidays with this always enjoyable event. Jeri O'Brien will assist Joan with the setup. For more information contact Betty Mathias (708-482-0892; [bettyloumathias@yahoo.com](mailto:bettyloumathias@yahoo.com)).

## **Volunteer Greater Chicago Food Depository—December 11 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.**

Please call Jean Noble (708-485-0281) in advance if you plan to attend.

Upcoming dates for 2011: Jan. 8, Feb. 12, Mar. 12, Apr. 9, May 14.

### **Non-Fiction Book Group to Meet December 16**

The Non-Fiction Book Group will meet Thursday, December 16 at our usual time, the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the Alliance Room, lower level of the church building. This month, we will discuss the 2008 Pulitzer Prize winner for general non-fiction, *Slavery by Another Name; The Reenslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to WWII* by Douglas A. Blackmon, (2008). You are welcome to join the lively discussion even if you have not read the book.

Please bring your suggestions for books to read from January to May, 2011. Our practice is to have each participant review and recommend a book or books to the group. We then compile a list and vote. The top five vote-getters will be our selections for the next five months. For more information, contact Jane Foulser (630-833-3028; jfoulser@mindspring.com).

### **Another Picture Directory Photo Opportunity on Dec. 21. . .**

Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2:00 – 9:20 p.m. is the final opportunity to have your Olan Mills photo in our new picture directory. This extra day was negotiated to accommodate late-comers and families with college students home for the holidays. Schedule your appointment on line <http://signup.olanmills.com/familyinfo.aspx?contract=52561> or after church each Sunday in the Alice Warren Room. You may also call Olan Mills at 800-866-2263 to arrange a sitting at another church in the area before Dec. 21st.

*For members and friends who are unable to meet any appointment schedule, you may send in a personal photo for the "Not Available" page. Send a glossy print or digital photo to the church office.*

### **. . . And Help Needed with the Picture Directory Project on Dec. 21**

Dec. 21st. we need help staffing the Picture Directory appointment table in the Alice Warren Room. We need four people to work a 2 ½ hour shift from 12 noon to 10 p.m.

<b>Noon – 2:30 p.m.</b>	Photographer needs two hours for setup. Appts. at 2 p.m.
<b>2:30 – 5 p.m.</b>	Check in appointments
<b>5 - 7:30 p.m.</b>	Check in appointments
<b>7:30 – 10:00 p.m.</b>	Last appointment 9:20 p.m., photographer take-down 1 hr.

If you can help, please contact Jane Foulser or Pat Miller.

### **Celebrate the Winter Solstice With Green Sanctuary, Monday, December 20th, 7:30 p.m.**

Our annual event welcomes the winter solstice in a festive ceremony in Joshi as we celebrate the return of the Sun! All ages are welcome. Please bring a snack to share.

## **We Invite You To Attend A “Neighbor Nights” Gathering In Your Area**

Call the hosts listed below to RSVP to this invitation. Hosts will provide coffee and tea. Guests are asked to bring an appetizer or dessert or dish specified by the host.

AREA 3 Indian Head Park, Western Springs—Sunday, January 9 at 6:30 p.m., hosted by Noreen Costello (708-784-9244; noreencostelloe@sbcglobal.net)

AREA 4 Elmhurst, Villa Park, Park Ridge, Buffalo Grove—rescheduled to Dec. 4, 6:30 p.m., hosted by Dave and Jane Foulser (630-833-3028; jfoulser@mindspring.com)

AREA 5 Glen Ellyn, Lombard, Oakbrook, Wheaton, Lisle—Host Needed

AREA 7 La Grange Park, La Grange, Countryside, Burr Ridge, Willow Springs, Hodgkins—Dec. 5, 4:00 p.m., hosted by Larry Price (708-352-0373, lprice@anl.gov)

AREA 9 Woodridge, Bolingbrook, Lemont, Lockport, Oswego, Plainfield, Romeoville, Naperville—date to be determined, hosted by Jeri O’Brien (815-834-1142, jaobriens@yahoo.com)

## **Church News and Announcements**

### **Remember the Endowment Fund**

Putting Santa’s list together? Don’t forget to remember our Endowment Fund at year end. Donations are tax deductible. Tidying up your estate planning? This is a good time to include the church Endowment Fund in your financial plans. Name the Endowment Fund as a beneficiary of your IRA or in your will or trust. Either way, your gift will ensure the long-term viability of our congregation. For assistance or advice, contact the church office (office@hinsdaleunitarian.org; 630-323-2885) or Rev. Ed Searl (minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org; 630-323-2885).

### **Let’s Welcome the New Fellowship Committee!**

A new committee has been organized at our church! It is called the Fellowship Committee, and it organizes the First Friday Fun Nights, Lunch Bunch gatherings, Neighborhood Nights, Potlucks, and Silver & Gold Dinners. The goal of the Fellowship Committee is to provide opportunities for members and friends of our church to gather socially at least once a month. If anyone has an idea for a new activity or would like to help with one of the scheduled events, please contact Fellowship Committee Chair Kari Freeman at hollowcastle@gmail.com. See the church Facebook page (Unitarian Universalist of Hinsdale IL) for pictures from events.

## How Holiday Harvest Works and Succeeds

Everyone wants to have a good time, know that their spending benefits the church, and maybe bring home a bargain or make it onto a hot sign-up event. And everyone is eager to know the net. But how much do most folks know of the machinery that produces the evening?

Holiday Harvest has become a tradition at UCH, and over the years it just keeps getting better. How does all that happen? It is thanks to some very dedicated, returning workers and a lot of planning. Here's the scoop:

It takes Jay Van Cura to do all things database and Karen McDowell to be project manager (recruiting and overseeing operations). They kind of work at these jobs throughout the year. Steve Trout heads up the business solicitation letters, updating the list and sending out the appeal by early June. Church members are encouraged also to take letters to their favorite places then, so that by September, many of the donations have already arrived, and we can avoid last minute donations.

It takes a crew, headed by Nancy Weill and Suzanne Williams, to receive and process all the donations. The donation items needs to be stored, and Karen enters the donation information into a Googledoc. She and Kathleen Cantwell edit and embellish these; then Jay transfers the entries to his catalog databases. Donations have to be received about two weeks prior to the event so the catalog can be finalized and printed for distribution the Sunday prior to the event. So the auction's success requires everyone to be aware of how the time flies and to work ahead of the deadline!

It takes Lisa Heckler updating the ticket and catalog cover graphics, and Darline Peterson to number the tickets. It takes people to sell tickets over several weeks, and it is best if there is a chairman of that domain to supervise each Sunday, although Noreen Costelloe and Shelley Hendrickson have been regulars at that task.

It takes Sherpas, lead by Dennis Sejut, to cart all the goods from storage to the staging room in RE and to move tables and chairs to the various rooms. Debbi Daniel-Wayman then sets up in RE and lays out all the bid sheets. Then a crew comes to methodically place final labels on everything and move them into place.

During that set-up week, Cathy Zimmerman is decorating the church building, a crew pretties up the baskets, Debbi handles final arrangement and decorating in RE, Ray Masterson and Fred Bloss purchase bar supplies, and Chef Tim Dvorak, Darline Peterson, and Gene Parvin purchase food supplies.

It takes a merry band of kitchen aids coming in Friday and early Saturday to prepare all the scrumptious goodies. It takes check-in workers, and room monitors; it takes folks to rearrange everything after the silent auction closes, readying everything for a smooth checkout. That is a HUGE task, and Kathleen Cantwell tackled it this year. Then, when most everyone has left, there are the elves who return decorations to the tower, put the church back in order for Sunday morning, and bring all unclaimed or unsold goods over to AWR for Sunday morning post sale liquidation. Finally, Velaine Carnall calls any stragglers, and Shelley Hendrickson sorts through all the receipts, deposits the monies, and figures the net. In the following week, Jay and Karen handle any anomalies and get some rest.

After the holidays, the principal players meet to plan for improvements the following year. If you have any comments for them, feel free to contact Jay or Karen or any of those named in this article. We know check-in was a bit confusing, but generally it went smoothly in RE, and next year will be even better. (Anyone remember when check-out used to be in AWR? Look at how much better that is now!)

It takes a lot of people willing to do their fair share, whether bringing a business solicitation letter to one favorite place, being creative in their donation ideas, signing on to do tasks, planning to attend and even bringing friends, or coming with a "for the benefit of the church" attitude, even though getting a bargain is fun. So save Nov. 12, 2011 on your calendars!

With all that in mind, Karen needs to divide her workload that night, and is seeking a "stage manager" to oversee the night-of activities in RE. She'd love to explain it all to you!

Look for an announcement of the Holiday Harvest net in a December Friday email announcement blast.

## **UCH Social Action Committee Report**

The Social Action Committee would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the monthly Social Justice Collections. Your generosity has been truly heart-warming, especially during these difficult economic times.

Following a trend in our denomination, the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale instituted the monthly social justice collection in October 2007. Over the three years our church has donated over \$28,000 to mostly local charitable groups, including among others, DuPage PADS, Inc., Access DuPage, Hinsdale Community Service, Pillars, and the Greater Chicago Food Depository, for a total of 26 recipients over the three-year period from 2007 to 2010. A number of our recipients have been national or International organizations, such as the Katrina fund-Camp Coast Care, Southern Poverty Law Center, Amnesty International's Maze of Injustice, our own Unitarian Universalist Service Committee and the UUSC/UUA Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund.

We invite you to become a more involved participant by joining the Social Action Committee and helping us plan new social action projects for the church. We meet after church the first Sunday of the month.

An ongoing project has been the toiletries collection for PADS. Please bring toiletry items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, lotion, especially hotel samples, and place them in a marked basket at the south end of the Alice Warren Room.

### **WhaleCoast Alaska 2011**

Have you always dreamed of visiting Alaska? Are you curious about the lifestyles of Alaskan UUs? Do you enjoy getting to know your fellow travelers? If so, WhaleCoast Alaska 2011 is for you! Four Alaskan UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural and spiritual program this summer as we celebrate our 15th year! See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Sitka with friendly homestays and unique tour activities. See wildlife, including moose, bear, whales, bald eagles, seals, and caribou. Visit Denali National Park. Experience Native Alaskan culture. Enjoy all that our beautiful state has to offer. Programs led by Dave Frey and Bre Griffin, members of the farthest north UU congregation, with 36 years of Alaska living between them. To find out more about your Alaskan trip of a lifetime, visit [www.WhaleCoastAK.org](http://www.WhaleCoastAK.org), email [info@whalecoastak.org](mailto:info@whalecoastak.org), or call 907-322-4966. We would love to share our Alaska with you!

# **Board Briefs**

## **November Board Notes**

Submitted by Secretary of the Board, Beth Staas

Debbi Daniel-Wayman suggested Fair Trade be addressed beyond just the use of Fair Trade coffee at the church. Discussion related to sponsoring a sale of Fair Trade items at UCH after a Sunday service before the holidays by 10,000 Villages, promoting Fair Trade items from here and abroad. Ms. Daniel-Wayman moved and Paula Sejut-Dvorak seconded that a 10,000 Villages sale be held at UCH on a date to be arranged. Motion passed.

Darline Petersen asked that the Alliance program on PADS on 11/11/10 at 1:00 include an all-church invitation, asking volunteers to help with the problem of homelessness in our area. Ms. Petersen will report further action at the next Board meeting.

Pam Fodor suggested looking into the Bridge Communities program for sponsoring a homeless family for housing. It was agreed that only asking for money for such a program might not be the best course of action to get people involved in poverty issues. Dave Lloyd suggested Urban Gardening with produce from our own gardens or in a church garden plot to contribute to a food pantry. Faith in Place might also involve working with poor people in their own garden plots. Investigation of these alternatives will continue after the first of the year. Mr. Lloyd also highlighted an up-coming show on Micro-Finance.

The question of canvassing Friends of the church during the pledge campaign was raised by Pam Fodor and Luan Burton, reporting that we have about 140 Friends who gave no gift to the church last year and only 21 giving more than \$100. In addition, there is no clear definition of Friend nor of their church obligations and privileges. After discussion it was moved that Dave Lloyd be authorized to send a letter to all Friends before the pledge campaign committee begins to solicit their financial pledge and that the pledge committee send pledge packets to all Friends. The motion was seconded and passed..

## **UCH Board Focuses on 2010-2011 Theme of Wealth, Poverty, and Class**

Submitted by Board President, Dave Lloyd

Your Board of Trustees met on November 2 and discussed, among other things, the year's theme of Wealth, Poverty, and Class. The Board decided on three initiatives to involve the entire congregation in realizing the year's theme.

The first initiative is Fair Trade. At the request of the Youth Group, we are already serving only fair trade coffee on Sundays. At the November 2 meeting, we decided to invite 10,000 Villages to hold a fair trade market at the church on Thanksgiving weekend; this will have already happened as you are reading this. Next we will invite the congregation to participate in micro-finance. Micro-finance, or micro-loans, provides a way to support small businesses and farms in developing nations. Very often the purchase of a few head of livestock or a few pieces of machinery can make a big difference for a family, small business, or even a whole village. Micro-loans are not donations; they are loans to be repaid with interest; applicants go through a credit check and an approval process. Micro-finance can be a serious option for anyone with an investment portfolio. Watch this space for details on micro-finance.

The second initiative is PADS, Public Action to Deliver Shelter, which provides shelter for homeless people in our communities. We have raised money for PADS in the past, and several of our members are long-time PADS volunteers. The Board has decided to invite every member of the congregation to spend a day or evening helping out at a PADS shelter. Wouldn't it be great if a quarter, a half, or even more of our congregation could be PADS volunteers? We would be proud to point to the thousands of hours that our members have given to PADS by the end of the year. Such action would result in good publicity for the church, as well. In the next few weeks we will give a presentation on how to get involved in PADS and start signing people up.

The third initiative is urban gardening. Urban gardening is a phenomenon sweeping cities across the country and is reminiscent of the victory gardens that provided so much food during World War II. Cities like Chicago have vacant and abandoned space, young people who need jobs, and whole neighborhoods without access to fresh produce. Urban gardens provide jobs, make fresh food available at low cost, and improve the urban landscape. UCH's urban gardening program will have three components. First, people who have gardens will bring some of their produce to church for delivery to food pantries. Second, we'll scout out some vacant space close to where our members live to use as UCH's own community gardens. Finally, we'll volunteer with existing urban gardens in Cook and DuPage Counties. When seed catalogs start showing up to brighten the depths of winter, we'll start putting our urban gardening program into action.

I'm excited about these opportunities to put our hands and hearts to work in service of our UU principles, and to put our money where our mouths are. I look forward to our whole congregation making a difference in the lives of those in our community and around the world.

# Among Ourselves

## Meet Two New UCH Members.....

### Amanda Vasquez

1. *You recently joined UCH, which prompts a couple of questions: How long have you been a UU, and what appealed to you most about our church?* I would consider myself a new UU; I have only been exploring UU beliefs for the past several months, since I began attending this church. I am particularly drawn to this church's focus on humanism.

2. *In what faith/church (if any) were you raised? How does that experience inform your UUism?* Catholic. Not very much at all. I don't really prescribe to any religious doctrine and at this point in my life I would characterize myself as a non-believer.

3. *Which of the UU Principles is the most compelling for you and why?* I find the first principle [the inherent worth and dignity of every person] to be the most compelling. This principle speaks to the type of research I am currently involved with, the experiences of sexual assault survivors who have turned to others for support, and the research I am interested in conducting in the future, the unfair treatment of the LGBT community by the criminal justice system.

4. *The holidays are coming up: what are some of your favorite holiday traditions? Or what do you look most forward to during the holidays?* I really enjoy the baking that my husband does around the holidays. He likes to say he mass-produces homemade pumpkin and apple pies. What I like about this experience is the time we spend together as a family gathering the fresh ingredients ... going apple picking and going to various pumpkin patches.

5. *What was your favorite course in high school or college and why?* I think my favorite class thus far in my graduate student career has focused on the issue of human trafficking. For me this class was especially powerful because it highlighted the fact that trafficking is an extremely pressing issue domestically as well as internationally. As a result, I feel moved to seek out volunteer opportunities that would aide agencies in their fight against domestic trafficking.

6. *If someone were to write your biography, what should the title be?* Academically Motivated, Domestically Satisfied

## Brian Chenowith

1. *You recently joined UCH, which prompts a couple of questions: How long have you been a UU., and what appealed to you most about our church? When you look at UUism as a worldview, I would have to say that I have been UU for a very long time. Two things appealed to me most about UCH: 1) The quality and diversity of sermon topics, and 2) The humanistic focus.*

2. *In what faith/church (if any) were you raised? How does that experience inform your UUism? I was raised loosely (culturally?) Catholic and spent a good portion of early adulthood as an Episcopalian. Catholicism fails to inform my current religious worldview. It simply was not important or significant in my life. The Episcopal Church, however, always valued (until recently) the difficult questions of faith, practice and history. That rational outlook will always inform my future questions and actions as a UU.*

3. *Can you identify at least one defining spiritual moment in your life? Reading Emerson's "Nature" for the first time as a sophomore in college.*

4. *Which of the UU Principles is the most compelling for you and why? I would have to say that "a free and responsible search for truth and meaning" is the most meaningful of the principles for me. Often in matters of faith and spirituality the emphasis is placed on a "free" search for truth, however, the responsibility of that search is overlooked. The implication that all paths must be responsible is a necessity, especially in our current political and religious climate.*

5. *What was your favorite course in college and why? That's a difficult one to answer. My degree is in Theology, and I'm inclined to say my course in Patristics was by far the most interesting...however...I did take a study abroad trip to Turkey that was phenomenal. The hospitality, culture and environment of that country is unlike any other experience and it leaves you with a persistent desire to return.*

6. *If someone were to write your biography, what should the title be? Well... I wanted the title of my biography to be "Going Rogue," but someone from Alaska already took it. I guess I'll just have to settle on "Decision Points." Oh wait...*

## **Touchstone Submission Guidelines**

The deadline for the January Touchstone Quarterly is no later than **December 15**. Please keep all submissions under 150 words, and include a contact name and number/e-mail.

Send submissions to Susan Hebble ([sjhebble@comcast.net](mailto:sjhebble@comcast.net))  
and Luan Burton ([office@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:office@hinsdaleunitarian.org)).

## **Communications / Posting Policy**

If any member objects to the posting of his or her name, image, actions or voice on the Church's website, *Twitter* or *Facebook* pages, or in Church-prepared press releases, please advise Steven Trout, Trustee for Communications ([steven\\_trout@sbcglobal.net](mailto:steven_trout@sbcglobal.net)).

## **Contacts**

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Minister—Reverend Edward Searl (ext. 111, [edsearl@gmail.com](mailto:edsearl@gmail.com))

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

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

## Julia Beckman's Birthday



Our beloved choir director celebrated her 70th birthday with the entire congregation on Sunday, the 21st, with an enormous birthday card created by John Cooperrider and a delicious birthday cake from the Celebration Singers and Music Director Chris Garafolo. The top photo shows Suzyn Mills, Julia Beckman, Chris Garafolo and John Cooperrider. Julia and Ed Searl (slightly her junior) were born on the same day, November 22, and Ed's birthday was also acknowledged, though not a "decade" event.

## Landscape Garden "Notes"

With many thanks to everyone's energy and enthusiasm, here are several photos to remember year 2010 by....

Watch for written remarks in the March 2011 Touchstone Quarterly, and maybe some brief notes in Touchstone's before then. 2011 promises to be an exciting year, some of which has been foreshadowed in Touchstone's past. Stay tuned! Charlie Fischer [cfis@sbcglobl.net](mailto:cfis@sbcglobl.net)







