

Services in February

February 7

10:30 A.M.

"Kickoff"

Rev. Edward Searl

Carolyn May, Flute, and Chris Garofalo, Piano

Is it a harmonic conjunction: the kickoff of this year's annual canvass of the congregation in the morning and the kickoff of Super Bowl XLIV in the evening? The general theme of this service will be our money and our values.

February 14

10:30 A.M.

"The Greatest of These"

Rev. Edward Searl

Chris Garofalo, Piano

Our social justice vision is enriched and empowered by the UUA's recently launched campaign, Standing on the Side of Love. Learn a little more about this fine program for putting our values into action. Also hear an account of a same-sex wedding performed by Rev. Searl in Iowa at the beginning of the Church Year.

Please join in a casserole lunch immediately following the service. Bring a dish to share--salad, main course, dessert, or hors d'oeuvres to serve 6 - 8. Let's make this a spectacular feast in the throes of the year's dullest month.

February 21

10:30 A.M.

"Losing My Religion"

Rev. Edward Searl

Celebration Singers and Chris Garofalo, Piano

In 2009, William Lobdell, former religion editor of the LA Times, wrote a memoir about how reporting on religion in Southern California caused him to lose his faith. This memoir offers a jumping off point for thoughts about post-modern belief and unbelief.

February 28

10:30 A.M.

Youth Sunday

Service and Music by UCH Youth Group

Our church family is one of many communities that give us strength. Family and friends help us move forward in our lives. This service organized by the youth group will remind us that we are connected to each other in ways that make us all stronger.

Visit Ed Searl's Journal: In My Estimation: edsearl.blogspot.com.

Greetings

It has been my privilege to be an advisor to our 7th - 12th grade Youth Groups and a facilitator of Our Whole Lives - sexuality education for over 18 years. It is awesome to watch our youth mature and prosper, using their UU education in both UU and non-UU environments. Religious education (RE) here and related district activities provide the best and often the only place where our youth find acceptance, camaraderie, and affirmation.

What does Youth Group do? YG's community service and social action efforts include Crop Walk, a coat drive for Head Start, and Adopt-a-Highway. YG has sponsored two district conferences focusing on anti-racism and anti-oppression, featuring social action work in Cook and Du Page counties. YG's 9 A.M. RE program features Coming of Age and OWL. YG's 10:30 A.M. meetings include discussions of current events vis-à-vis UU Principles and Purposes, Neighboring Faiths, Popcorn Theology, and use of curricula relevant to current events. YG members always have opportunities to hone leadership skills when planning and participating in YG activities. YG's other activities include conferences, lock-ins, retreats to Lake Geneva, trips to Boston, and, new this year, a service trip.

YG fundraising supports the majority of YG activities in addition to a team-building course for OWL, gifts to OWL and graduating members, and snacks at meetings. Fundraising includes sales of coupon books, seasonal decorations, and a variety of plants in the spring. Finally, YG begins each session with worship via a centering ceremony.

On a grander scale, YG hosts the annual Youth Sunday service for the congregation. This year on February 28, Youth Group will present "Our Web of Community Gives Us Strength," featuring a pre-service video collage, music and readings performed by YG members, and an original, unifying message involving all in attendance. We invite you to worship with our youth on Sunday, February 28th and see what extraordinary teenagers we have in our midst!

Roy Fleet, Youth Advisor

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February 2010

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Children and Youth Religious Education

Pam Fodor, Director of Religious Education

Religious Education for February

Chalice Children, Preschool, 10:30 A.M.	Treasure Hunting, Kindergarten And First Grade, 10:30 A.M.	Chapel Service (Grades 2-6), 10:30 A.M.	Coming Of Age (Grades 7-8), 9:00 A.M.	Senior High OWL Enrolled Students (9:00 AM)	Junior and Senior Youth Group (Grades 9-12), 10:30 A.M.
2-7 The Wonder of Snow	2-7 Play in Peace	2-7 Social Action Project	2-7 Faith (With Mentors)	2-7 Becoming a Parent	2-7 Regular Meetings
2-14 Celebrate Love	2-14 Seeing With Our Hearts	2-14 Social Action Project	2-14 No Class	2-14 No Class	2-14 No Class
2-21 Babies	2-21 What is Religion?	2-21 Social Action Project	2-21 Breakfast with Rev. Searl	2-21 Expressions of Sexuality	2-21 Regular Meetings
2-28 A Visit From A Baby	2-28 Our Universalist Heritage	2-28 Youth Service	2-28 Youth Service	2-28 No Class	2-28 Youth Sunday

Chalice Children (Preschool Ages 3-5 Yrs)

For some of us there is no wonder or beauty in snow, but for our little ones snow is fascinating and maybe even a little magical. Let's hope Mother Nature doesn't disappoint us this week! Valentine's Day is a day to recognize all the people we love. Who doesn't love babies? The two baby sessions will affirm these young children how much they have grown and learned.

Treasure Hunting (Kindergarten And First Grade)

Unitarian Universalists treasure peace among all people everywhere. What can we do to help?! People you don't know may not seem friendly to you, but to make a new friend, someone has to take a chance. Be that person! Look at new friends with your heart! What does the word religion mean and why is it important for me to come to church? Unitarian Universalist are two big words. What do they mean?

Chapel Service (Grades 2-6)

During the month of February the Chapel Service children will be working on a social action project. The children will brainstorm a list of worthy projects and activities to help the charity of their choice. Keep on the look-out for more information regarding their chosen project!

God Images (Special Workshop for 5th & 6th graders)

This workshop will present God images that are derived from the Jewish and Christian traditions, from several world religions, and from modern science. We will meet at 10:30, during Chapel Service.

Coming Of Age (Grades 7-8)

(Meets at 9:00 AM)

There are many things to have faith in. What is truly important to you? When was the last time you had the opportunity to ask Rev. Searl any question you wanted? Now is your chance! Sorry, youth only!

Senior High Owl (Grades 9-12)

Youth enrolled in Senior High OWL will participate in a comprehensive age appropriate sexuality education course.

Youth Group (Grades 7-12)

Youth groups will have two regular meetings to prepare for youth Sunday, which will take place on Sunday, February 28th. Please come share your talents and ideas!

Youth Sunday—Feb. 28th

Be sure to join your church family on Sunday, February 28th for our annual youth Sunday service. This service is an eclectic combination of music, original writings, thoughts and ideas planned and delivered by the youth in our junior and senior youth groups. Participating in this special Sunday service is not only a wonderful way to support our youth but you will also be spiritually moved by our youth's talents and ideas. We hope to see you there!

A Special Message From The Finance Committee

After the flurry of activity in December, the Finance Committee embarks on its busiest time of the year -- preparing the Budget for presentation at the Annual Meeting and then running the annual campaign to obtain pledges of support for the church operations in the next financial year. In fact as you read this, the pledge drive will be ready to start on February 7.

Before a budget can be prepared, there are several prerequisite steps. First, we ask all the Church committees to submit their budgets -- and not just one. We request budgets at levels we call "survival" (must have), "sustaining" and "flourishing". All of this recognizes that there are many things church members want (and ask) their church to do that cannot be done when pledges and budgets are tight.

Our favorite part of our work is dreaming about all our Church home can be. In doing so, we remember what we love about our Church and its people. What do you value most? Is it.....

The thoughts that resonate with you long after one of Ed's inspiring messages?

The joy of religion providing comfort, gratitude and love instead of guilt and fear?

The focus on people instead of dogma?

The fact that your intelligence and conscience are honored?

The peace and joy you feel after listening to a particularly beautiful music program?

The satisfaction you have knowing your child is exposed to lessons in tolerance and ethics, among other things?

The kind and caring words from a friend when you needed it most?

The freedom to express doubts and concerns about religion and religious thought?

The fellowship of like - minded people?

The opportunity to share an interest in Social Justice with other dynamic people and to feel like you can help?

The satisfaction of doing your best to reduce our footprint on this planet?

Sharing your talent with others who appreciate you? or

The personal growth enjoyed from embracing diversity instead of fearing and avoiding it?

No doubt this list can go on and on. This year, we ask you to take some time to consider what it is about our Church that adds value to your life. We also ask you to dream. What can be done to make our Church home even better? Give us some feedback. Help us to dream even bigger. And help us support the dream as best as you are able with your time, talent and most importantly your pledge of financial support. We all thank you for that.

Church Events and Announcements

Restore Habitat and Meet Your New Year's Resolutions—February 6

What are your New Year's resolutions? Get more exercise? Meet new people? Learn stuff? Get outside more? Or is this the year you've resolved to do something to help the environment? You can knock out all of these at a habitat restoration workday at Bemis Woods!

On the first Saturday of every month, volunteers spend the morning removing non-native trees and shrubs, pulling invasive weeds, or collecting seeds of native plants, depending on the season. In the winter we burn brush piles and feast on hot food cooked on an open flame. This month's workday is Saturday, February 6, starting at 9:00 A.M. We provide the tools, the know-how, and the treats, vegetarian and carnivorous. You get exercise, help the environment, learn about our natural habitat, and meet interesting people. And you support Green Sanctuary, part of UCH's social justice program. Enter Bemis Woods at Ogden Avenue between Wolf Road and I-294, bear left, and drive to the west end of the parking lot. If you can't make it in February, our next workday is March 6. For more information or a schedule of workdays, visit www.restoringnature.org.

If you can come to this Green Sanctuary-sponsored workday, contact Dave Lloyd (708-485-2296; davelloyd@mindspring.com) so he can order more snacks.

Manna orders are due February 7th, with card delivery on the 21st.

First Sunday Social Justice Collection—February 7

The February 7th Social Justice collection will go to the Southern Poverty Law Center, located in Montgomery, Alabama. Morris Dees and Joe Levin, two Montgomery lawyers, founded the SPLC as a small civil rights law firm in 1971. Its first president was civil rights activist Julian Bond. Today, SPLC is internationally known for its tolerance education programs, its legal victories against white supremacists, and its tracking of hate groups. For more information, please visit www.splc.org.

The March 7th collection will go to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

Social Action Committee Welcomes PFLAG on February 7

Representatives from the Hinsdale Chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) will host a Social Action Table in the Alice Warren Room on Sunday, Feb. 7, to share information about issues and concerns facing the LGBT community and to offer suggestions on how we can help, reflecting our social justice values as a Welcoming Congregation. Please stop by the table before services or during coffee hour. Note that PFLAG - Hinsdale meets regularly on the first Sunday of each month from 2 to 4 P.M. at UCH.

In February, the Alliance will discuss *Someone Knows My Name* by Lawrence Hill. Be sure to reserve a copy at your local library and join us in lively conversation.

End of Life Planning Seminar—February 9

Have you been thinking about your end of life plans? Ed Searl will lead a seminar/discussion on Tuesday, February 9, 7:30-9:00 P.M. in the Library, on the second floor of the Religious Education Building. Open to everyone. To register, contact the church office (630-323-2885; office@hinsdaleunitarian.org).

Women's Alliance—February 11th

These winter days are the perfect time to curl up with a good book. On Thursday, February 11, the Alliance will be discussing Lawrence Hill's novel, *Someone Knows My Name*. In this absorbing novel, we meet our heroine, Aminata Diallo. Abducted from Africa as a child and enslaved in South Carolina, Aminata thinks only of freedom—and of the knowledge that she must get back home. Sold to an indigo trader who recognizes her intelligence, Aminata, is torn from her husband and child and thrown into the chaos of the Revolutionary War. This captivating story of one woman's remarkable experience spans six decades and three continents and brings to life a crucial chapter in world history. Please pick up a copy of *Someone Knows My Name* and join us in lively conversation. All are welcome to attend. Bring a bag lunch at 12:15 P.M., or join us at 1 P.M. in the Rutherford Room of the Church. Hostesses for the month are Nancy Keane and Betty Fischer. For more information contact Grace Abrahamson (708-485-5983; teacherspr@aol.com).

Meet Your Heart to Heart Pal—February 14th

Don't forget your Heart to Heart Secret Friend! Be ready to reveal your identity to your friend on Valentine's Day, Sunday, February 14th. If you know you will not be attending church that day please call or send your friend a note. Enjoy your new friendships!!

Valentine's Day Potluck—February 14

You are invited to share the love! Join us following the service on Sunday, February 14th for good food and friendship at a potluck luncheon. Please bring a favorite lunch/brunch dish serving 6 – 8 to share. Chase away the winter chill with a warm dish!

Non Fiction Book Group—February 18

The Non-Fiction Book Group meets at 7:30 P.M. the third Thursday of the month in the Alliance Room in the lower level of the church (behind the kitchen.) We will discuss *The River of God* by Gregory J. Riley. To learn the selections made for March, April and May, contact Jane Foulser (630-833-3028; jfoulser@mindspring.com).

Chris Garofalo in Recital—February 20

Chris will present a solo piano recital at the church on Saturday February 20 at 7:00 P.M. The program will include works by Handel, Haydn, Rachmaninoff, Debussy and Reynolds. Chris Garofalo earned his Master of Music Degree in Piano Performance at the Manhattan School of Music. He has five solo recordings to his credit and was named a Steinway Artist in 2009. Tickets will be available at the door: \$20 adults / \$10 students.

Lunch Bunch—Feb. 25

At 1:00 on Thursday, February 25th, UCH Lunch Bunch will gather for true Latin dining at Guava, 800 E. Ogden Ave., at St. James Crossing Center, Westmont. Take Rte. 83 to Ogden Ave. Go West on Ogden; turn at the next stop light to St. James Crossing shopping center on North side. To sign up contact Jackie Bruns (630-920-1603; butterfly@gmail.com).

New UU Program Begins February 28

Are you new to our church? Have you been looking for more information about Unitarian Universalism? Are you thinking about becoming a member? If so, the New UU course might be for you. In four interactive sessions, participants will enjoy the opportunity to share their personal religious journeys and learn more about Unitarian Universalism and the various activities of the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale. Guests of the program will include Reverend Ed Searl, representatives of the Board of Trustees, and members of various church committees. We will meet on four consecutive Sundays, February 28, March 7, 14, and 21, from 12:00 noon until 2:00 P.M. Class facilitators will be Marian Honel-Wilson and Joey Yerger. To register, contact coordinator Jane Foulser (630-833-3028; jfoulser@mindspring.com) or the church office (630-323-2885; office@hinsdaleunitarian.org).

Flower Dedications

Flower dedications are still available for February 21, March, April and May. Commemorate a loved one, birthday, anniversary or important event with a flower dedication. See the sign up book at the Membership table or contact Jean Noble (jeannoble03@hotmail.com) for details.

Celebrate Your Special Green Space—Send in Your Photos and Stories

Where is your green sanctuary? What is the one place in nature that gives you a feeling of awe, of reverence, or serenity? This year's Green Sanctuary church service, scheduled for April, will honor the special natural spaces that each one of us finds as a refuge for our soul. We are asking everyone to send in a photo, and a brief description, of his or her favorite natural area. It can be a national park, a local forest preserve, or even a tranquil spot in your own garden. Here's an example to get you going, from Green Sanctuary chairman Dave Lloyd. It's a spot at Bemis Woods Forest Preserve, less than a mile from church, where flowers such as Spring Beauty and May Apple produce a burst of brightness after the long winter. Send your photo and description to davelloyd@mindspring.com. There's plenty of time before April's service, but why not send your photo and text now, while you're thinking about it?



Green Sanctuary celebrates 2009 accomplishments

The Green Sanctuary committee conducted a brainstorming session at its January meeting, seeking new ideas for environmental actions for the coming year. But first we reflected on the church's green accomplishments for the past year. These achievements include the following:

- We conducted a tour of the Sims Recycling e-waste recycling plant in West Chicago
- We conducted a tour of the Morton Arboretum to view native plants
- We started Cool Cities programs to work with several towns on reducing energy use
- We insulated the church attic and caulked windows in the RE building
- We shared the bounty of our gardens in our Produce Exchange Program
- We participated in Green Festivals at Navy Pier and Cantigny
- We took part in a 350 event in Warrentonville to raise climate change awareness
- We installed a bike rack at church to promote cycling to services
- We held a Green Sanctuary service in April to celebrate hope for the future
- We celebrated traditional regard for the earth at winter solstice and Beltane

Our initial brainstorming meeting produced over 80 ideas for the coming year. The committee promises an exciting set of programs for 2010 and beyond!

January Board Meeting Notes

Submitted by Board Secretary, Beth Staas

The UCH Board of Trustees conducted its regular meeting the evening of January 5th. Treasurer Shelley Hendrickson reported revenues at \$147,000, expenses \$118,000 with a net of \$29,000.

The Board welcomed Laurel Culbert in absentia as Trustee overseeing the membership portfolio. Dave Lloyd, Vice President, reported receiving a letter from Linda Hagen indicating that Head Start would use our Religious Education building through March 2010, the remainder of the lease still undetermined. Mr. Lloyd added that Gene Parvin, coordinator of building use, reported some interest in future use of the space by two other potential lessees, one tied to governmental bodies. This might enable the church to increase rent without challenging the non-profit status.

The Membership Committee's request for funds approximating \$500 to pay for money spent as well as to fund an updated membership list and future "You and UU" program was passed in a resolution that the amount up to \$474 be authorized with the reminder that future requests must be part of the budget process.

Paula Sejut-Dvorak, Denominational trustee, announced the UUA's call for comments regarding its Statement of Conscience for the 2010 annual meeting's final agenda. Noting that our Social Action Committee is already in place and active, the Board moved that the Social Action Committee be asked to convey the UUA request to the UCH congregation, consolidating the results and communicating them to the UUA.

Larry Price, Finance Trustee, reported that the Finance Committee was working on three proposed budgets to be presented to the congregation before the start of the pledge drive in February. On a related topic, Treasurer Shelley Hendrickson pointed out that a census had declared our official membership to be 274, a number which suggests that we need to think about adjusting our financial obligation to the denomination.

Former intern, Lynne Garner, is about to be ordained and has asked that we at UCH act in concert with her home church to ordain her. The ceremony will be held at Third Church and our only responsibility would be that we participate. The Board moved that UCH join in with the ordination of Lynne Garner conducted at Third Unitarian Church.

The insurance claim for the floor repair of the Religious Education Building has been paid. The Board moved that the \$7500.00 realized from the insurance claim because of flooding be used to repair the damaged floor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 P.M.

*You can read the full text of Board Minutes at the church office during business hours.

Among Ourselves

In Memoriam—Jennie Frisque

Jaye (Jennie) Frisque died January 7 of complications of Alzheimer's. Jaye and Al have been long time member of UCH. A memorial service was held on January 11th with Rev. Searl officiating. Our condolences go out to Al and to daughters Sue and Alice. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Alzheimer's Association. www.alz.org

In Memoriam—Janet Rendall

Janet Rendall died at Tabor Hill in Naperville on January 12th, following an extended period of nursing care. Janet's husband, Roy, preceded her in death. Both were long-time members of UCH. A private memorial service is pending for early February. Please direct memorial gifts to the UCH Endowment Fund.

Get Well Wishes to Jay Hazdra

Jay Hazdra is home, recovering from his January 13 abdominal surgery.

Lynne Garner to be Ordained

Lynne Garner, former UCH intern minister, will be co-ordained by UCH and her home church Third Unitarian on Saturday, April 24 at 2:00 P.M., at TUC in Chicago (Austin neighborhood). All are invited to join in this celebration and reception. Congratulations Lynne on recently "passing" the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA. (On a sad note, Lynne's mother died over the Holidays, at home in New York State.)

Welcome New Religious Education Volunteers!

The RE Department would like to thank the following list of new and continuing volunteers. Thank you so much for dedicating yourselves to our children and youth. Cathy Blanford, Miriam Cleveland, Liz Reyes, Janice and Hans Lonroth, Dawn Blanco, Joe Saintcross, John Wayman-Dodd, Denise Clivaz, Linda Elliott, Mike Ferrando, Debbi Daniel-Wayman, Roy Fleet, Paula Sejut-Dvorak, Karin Janowski, Tony Meadors.

DID YoUU KNOW?

In 1851, Lombard College (later Lombard University), associated with the Universalist Church, was chartered in Galesburg, IL. This was only the second college in the US where women could earn the B.A. degree along with men. While the last class to graduate was the class of 1930, the University merged with Meadville Theological School, which we now know as Meadville/Lombard Theological School in Chicago's Hyde Park. Several of UCH's ministerial interns have been students of Meadville/Lombard.

UCH Accredited as Green Sanctuary

The Unitarian Church of Hinsdale is now officially a Green Sanctuary. On January 7, 2010, the Office of Congregational Services of the Unitarian Universalist Association notified us that we have been recognized as an accredited Green Sanctuary. UCH will be honored for our achievement at the 2010 General Assembly in Minneapolis.

This accomplishment comes after a four-year process during which we have changed light bulbs, bought organic, contracted with a recycling company, insulated the church attic, collected over two tons of electronic waste, conducted solemn winter solstice and wacky Beltane services, and taken dozens of other environmental actions. Green Sanctuary committee members are, and have been, Brant Abrahamson, Lea Augustine, William Diehl, Charlie Fischer, Laurie Goshorn, Lisa Heckler, Cory Kadlec, Dave Lloyd, Hans Lonnroth, Karen McDowell, Dennis Sejut, Dan Speziale, Athena Trout, Steve Trout, Frank Wanderlich, Nancy Weill, and Sue Williams. The entire staff of the church have provided excellent support for our efforts, and the whole congregation should be proud of this accomplishment. And we're not finished: the Green Sanctuary committee is in the middle of brainstorming even more green ideas for this year and the future. Congratulations, UCH!

DID YoUU KNOW?

UUs are sprinkled all over Chicagoland! The Chicago Area Unitarian Universalist Council recognizes 25 Chicago and suburban Chicago UU Congregations and traces the roots of Unitarianism and Universalism in Chicago back to 1836.

Meet Three . . . UCH Youth

Lydia Zimmerman

1. Q. *Briefly describe your religious background.*
A. Before my family came to this church, we didn't go to church at all.
2. Q. *What is a first or favorite memory of coming to UCH?* A. One of my favorite memories occurred recently. It was at the latest lock-in, one we had for planning Youth Sunday. Early in the evening, while we were rocking out to some Tarzan music, one of us noticed the Legos in the play area of the Alice Warren Room. He started to build a house, and being the mature, calm, grown-up teenagers we are, we screamed "LEGOS!!" and ran over to build houses of our own. I don't think I need to say more than that we spent the next 45 minutes building Lego houses and coming up with stories about them.
3. Q. *How do you explain our beliefs to your non-Unitarian friends (or family)?* A. I usually say something along the lines of, "We are a creedless religion that accepts all people, regardless of religious views or lifestyle. Basically, you get to choose what you believe." If this does not satiate their curiosity, I pull out a handy-dandy..."what we believe" note card and tell them to read that and to ask me any questions they may have.
4. Q. *In what way has this church impacted your activities from day to day (if at all)?* A. I used to be extremely shy, but Coming of Age and Youth Group have helped me open up to people.
5. Q. *What is your all-time favorite movie and why?* A. It would have to be *The Princess Bride* because it is so funny, but also because it is a story about true love.
6. Q. *Alive or not, whom do you admire most?* A. One of the people I admire the most is my friend Anne, who is among the most collected and most talented people I know. She inspires me to beat her in school test scores, and I look up to her for ballet technique tips. She has taught me to make the most of life, even when the going gets tough.
7. Q. *If someone wrote your biography, what would you suggest as a title?* A. "Dancing in the Rain"

Evan DeLorenzo

1. *Q. How old are you and how long have you attended UCH?* A. I am fifteen and I've been coming to this church as long as I can remember. My parents have been very involved with my church experience and I have them to thank for a great deal of spiritual nurturing and education here at UCH.

2. *Q. What is a first or favorite memory of coming to UCH?*

A. Probably the youth group with Mrs. Fodor, her imaginative and engaging services always had a deeper meaning coupled with an important message that made coming to church a fun and important experience. More recently, Coming of Age was an incredible experience that led to some self-discovery that has been central to my beliefs ever since.

3. *Q. Which of the UU Principles is the most compelling for you and why?* A. I feel the strongest connection to 'the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.' It seems to neatly explain our purpose: individuals with a positive goal for ourselves and the world at large. Following the idea behind this principle seems to be a foolproof method to a virtuous existence.

4. *Q. How do you explain UUism to your friends who are of other faiths?*

A. This is a tough one. Generally I try not to bore anyone with a longwinded explanation, so it ends up something like, "We make our own creeds and are cool with what everyone else believes, dude." I realize this isn't the most accurate explanation, but people seem satisfied with a limited snapshot of this complex religion. If they really want an in depth look I am glad to elaborate, but sadly it is rarely the case with people my age.

5. *Q. Describe your typical Sunday morning at UCH. What do you like most about being in Youth Group?*

A. Good company, lots of hugs, old couches, laughter, deep talk, more hugs and then snacks. It is simple, enjoyable, friendly and safe. I wouldn't trade it for more sleep any week.

6. *Q. What would you like our church members and visitors to know about our youth and/or about our programs for youth and kids?* A. They might be surprised at the depth of our discussions and the freedom with which we can discuss our opinions and lives. The accepting atmosphere breeds a group of sensitive, responsible and open individuals that I am confident will be important people in our adult generation.

7. *Q. If someone wrote your biography, what would you suggest as a title?* A. "The Man who Knew Just Enough"

Samantha Tilbrook

1. *Q. How old are you and how long have you attended UCH?* A. I am fifteen years old and this is my third year at UCH.
2. *Q. What is a first or favorite memory of coming to UCH?* A. My first memory of UCH was when I was a little girl and we would visit with my grammy, Jean Kapuscik. I loved the fact that everyone was so welcoming and nice, which were things I wasn't used to on Sundays.
3. *Q. Which of the UU Principles is the most compelling for you and why?* A. The third principle (acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations) speaks to me the most, mainly because that's the one I feel the world needs more work on. A lot of people still don't accept one another, and rather than encouraging others to find their own path, they try to force their path on others. Without acceptance, we can't reach any goals of peace or justice that we set.
4. *Q. How do you explain UUism to your friends who are of other faiths?* A. I try to explain the seven principles as best I can while including all the fun we have at UU Youth conferences, but generally after a confused look appears on their faces, I just say "Google it."
5. *Q. Describe your typical Sunday morning at UCH.* A. Well, first I arrive either five minutes late or just on time for OWL, the sex education program. Whenever someone comes in, we have a sort of unspoken ritual of giving/receiving hugs to/from everyone. After the advisor decides it's time to start, the mood remains light with everyone casually draped over each other on the many mismatched couches. After OWL, we generally stay in the room and eat some of the many snacks until Youth Group begins, repeating the hug ritual with anyone leaving or coming in. We get back into our cuddle puddle formations to start check in, where we light a candle if we so choose and just say something that we did this week that we're proud of, or just some news that's worthy of sharing. After that, we light the chalice and proceed to attempt to plan our summer service trip, although we get distracted very easily. When YG is officially pronounced as over, we repeat with the snacks and hugs until there are a small number of us left, when we just go across the alley to steal the cookies set out. My favourite part about youth group is that everyone is friends with everyone; there's no drama, no bad feelings, nothing. And we're all very close, like if someone tries to escape without any hugs, we run after them yelling haha. And there aren't very many inside jokes where if you've missed a Sunday or two, you're not totally out of the loop. It's a very caring environment, and these are definitely the people I'm going to remain friends with my entire life.
6. *Q. What would you like our church members and visitors to know about our youth and/or programs for youth and kids?* A. I think a lot of the adults who aren't involved in YG or don't have kids in YG don't know our Youth Conferences, commonly called CONs. In our district, they are twice a year and the thing to be at for any UU youth. There are close to 200 kids at each one, generally high school aged, although eighth graders are allowed at Spring CONs. They're great opportunities for us to get to know other UU youth in the area, see how other Youth Groups operate, and make more lifetime friendships outside of the people we see every Sunday. To assure that we meet people outside of our Youth Group at CONs, there are Touch Groups, organized by the hosting church. These are groups of people deliberately created of different congregations, and we have time dedicated to getting to know one another. These CONs aren't only fun and games, although the fun is a giant aspect of them, but each one helps me personally further my faith and keeps me questioning everything.

Dates to Remember

February 7—MANNA orders due

February 7—First Sunday Collection for the Southern Poverty Law Center, located in Montgomery, Alabama.

February 7—SAC Welcomes PFLAG

February 9—End of Life Planning Seminar with Ed Searl (7:30-9:00 P.M.)

February 11—Women's Alliance (12:15/1:00 P.M.)

February 14—Meet your Heart to Heart Pal

February 14—Valentine's Day Potluck after church service

February 15—Touchstone submission deadline (sjhebble@comcast.net; office@hinsdaleunitarian.org)

February 18—Non Fiction Book Group

February 20—Chris Garofalo in Recital (7:00 P.M., \$20 adults/\$10 students)

February 21—MANNA cards available

February 25—Lunch Bunch at Guava Restaurant, Westmont (1:00 P.M.)

February 28—New UU Program Begins

Touchstone Submission Guidelines

The Touchstone submission deadline for the February issue is February 15. E-mail submissions to Susan Hebble (sjhebble@comcast.net) and copy Office Administrator Luan Burton (office@hinsdaleunitarian.org). Article submissions should be no more than 150 words and are subject to editing for length and/or clarification. Always include specific contact information (name, e-mail address, and/or phone number) for readers' reference. We format the Touchstone draft using size 11 Arial font, so we would appreciate receiving articles using this font to save some editing time!

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.

Contacts

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

Church Administrator — Luan Burton (ext. 101, office@hinsdaleunitarian.org)