



THE FLAME

July 2011

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Peninsula

13136 Warwick Blvd
Newport News, VA 23602

www.uufp.org

The mission of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Peninsula is to create a dynamic community that celebrates life and searches for truth

For all that is our life!

July 2011

The topic of the first Fellowship Circles I ever attended was “Spirituality”. I’d just been recruited as a facilitator in the Small Group Ministry program at the Unitarian Society of Hartford, a congregation with a proud Humanist tradition, and in some ways it was something of a bold choice of topic by the program’s directors. On the other hand, the beauty of Fellowship Circles is that people are asked to simply share what is in their hearts while everyone else listens with a loving mind; absent any fear of being questioned or diminished, such a topic is as natural as any other.

One of the first questions for sharing asked participants what spirituality meant to them. It quickly became apparent that most people in the circle were thinking about it in similar terms, describing spirituality as a deep sense of connection: to other people, to community, to something larger than oneself, to something within oneself, to the natural world around us. Spirituality as a sense of

Rev. Andrew Clive Millard

connection to the natural world was mentioned more than once, in part perhaps because we were in a chapel with large windows overlooking the woods behind the Meeting House, but in most people’s sharing there was also an ambiguity of what it was, exactly, to which they were feeling connected.

Certainly a deep sense of connection to either (or both!) something larger than oneself and something within oneself allows for a broad spectrum of personal beliefs, including a variety of worldviews based in theism *and* atheism, naturalism *and* dualism. Beyond any deliberate attempt to be theologically inclusive, though, maybe the vagueness of “something” comes more from an instinctive recognition of indescribability. Picking up on this in his article in the summer 2011 issue of *UU World*, Doug Muder defines spirituality as “an awareness of the gap between what you can experience and what you can describe.” His intention is to present spirituality in a way that focuses on human

awareness as a subjective experience, offering the sort of “big tent” inclusiveness that is the hallmark of Unitarian Universalism.

Now it’s become something of a cliché in American culture for people to claim to be “spiritual but not religious”. The subtext is a distrust of so-called “organized religion” that ultimately inhibits true spirituality by stifling that sense of deep connection to something larger than oneself and/or within oneself, when of course any genuine religion actually ought to foster spirituality. I like Muder’s definition for its emphasis on a basic human need — the urge to take our experiences and find ways to describe them so that we may understand them and make sense of the world around us — that precedes any particular set of beliefs or ethical prescriptions.

To use an analogy from my past as a research scientist, our lives are like experiments, generating results that we’re challenged to interpret and explain. It’s nice when those results confirm the theories we’ve already developed, of course, but it’s only the unexpected results that have the potential to lead to new ideas and the growth of understanding. A congregation, then, should be like a laboratory, providing the equipment needed to conduct those experiments, the tools to analyze the results and the co-workers who help one another figure it all out.

As such, each Unitarian Universalist congregation has promised to affirm and promote each person’s

“acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth”. Each one of us, after all, has different experiences, conducting a different experiment in what it means to be alive, and each of us has different tools that we prefer to use to find meaning in our lives. Sometimes, though, the tools we’re already using are not enough, and we find ourselves in that gap between awareness and describability. As unsettling as it may be, if we’re willing to spend time in that gap — if others in our religious community are willing to support and encourage us in that state of spirituality — then that’s the place where we’ll deepen our understanding and expand our vision.

July Services

July 3rd: “Independence-from-Hunger Day”

Jim Sanderson

The Wednesday Evening Fellowship Circle will sponsor a program focused on alleviating hunger. The spiritual as well as physical impact of going hungry will be considered by speakers from our congregation. Over the next 3 weeks fellowship members are asked to bring donations for the Foodbank of the Virginia Peninsula to church.

July 10th: “In Praise of Hands”

Rev. Andrew Millard

Perhaps the one thing that distinguishes us from other animals is the synergy between our brains and our hands. There’s no “chicken or egg” riddle, though: our primate hands evolved before our human brains did. Turning our attention to our hands, let’s experience our embodiment as social,

tool-using animals, capable of grasping the world and changing it to match our ideas.

June 17th: “Singing, Sharing, Listening, Laughing, and ... ?”

Rev. Andrew Millard

Attend services at almost any Unitarian Universalist congregation and you'll realize the variety of content unbound by doctrine or dogma: music from Bach to the Beatles, stories from Aesop to Shel Silverstein, topics from Resilience to Eco-spirituality. In contrast, our format is traditional, even “high church”, as is our scheduling of services for Sunday mornings. Let's talk about that!

Andrew shares the pulpit this morning with Katrina Thralls, a CNU student doing field education at the Fellowship this summer.

July 24th: “Was Jesus a Buddhist?”

Jim Sanderson

Many many things have been speculated about the ministry of Jesus including attempts to link him to Buddhist thought. Are all religions basically the same thing or are there important and valuable differences?

This is the sermon that was published in the Inquirer, the British Unitarian Magazine.

July 31st: “Between Stories”

Jack Dougher

Today's theme and talk will be **"We Are Between Stories."** Jack Dougher will be presenting this topic on the growing awareness that the Earth Community's fundamental story of where we are and how we got here is not longer functioning to our satisfaction. Yet the new story is only at the start of its being born. What is this new story: what does it ask of us? Though: our primate hands evolved

before our human brains did. Turning our attention to our hands, let's experience our embodiment as social, tool-using animals, capable of grasping the world and changing it to match our ideas.

Welcome!

President: Alan Sheeler

Vice President: Ellis Remsberg

Secretary: Pat Yaros

Treasurer: Patricia Moseley

Finance: Josh Jansen

At large: Parker Stokes

At large: Brad Harper

At large: Chris Woods [Click here](#) to contact them!

What is a Chalice Lighter?

A Chalice Lighter is someone who pledges to respond with a contribution when the call comes that it's time to light a chalice within the Southeast District. Calls support specific growth initiatives in the SE District, its congregations, and its clusters. Calls are made no more than three times a year (July-June), you will receive a letter explaining who has applied for a call and what the funds will be used for. More information:

<http://www.tjdistrict.org/services/chalichelighters.html>

Keeping up with the Green Sanctuary Committee

Chaired by Andrea D' Amico, the committee has been collecting information on where the Fellowship is in all areas of its green life. From all the many events held by Social Justice like 350.org in October 2009 and 10/10/10 in October 2010 to looking into how to move our buildings into being more energy efficient.

A report by Lin Chambers gives a snapshot on many of the areas of [Sustainable Living](#) here at the Fellowship. As part of their efforts to reduce our energy use, the committee has enlisted the help of the Young Adults to swap out the current exit signs in the sanctuary that use 40 watt bulbs with ones

that use 1 watt LED bulbs. Since these signs are on 24 hours a day, this will be a significant savings in energy use. It was discovered that 30% of the air conditioning in the annex was going into the attic! This was fixed immediately. These two efforts will save us hundreds of dollars in the next year. All of this work is part of the application process as we begin the process of becoming certified as a Green Sanctuary. [Click](#) for more information.

Religious Education NEWS

By Joanne Dingus

As we finish up this program year I would like to thank all the people who have helped make our program such a success. Of course the children are first on the list. They are the ones who make all things possible. And next, would be their parents or guardians who support them in their journey at UUFP and at home. This year I had many volunteer teachers who I would like to thank: Spirit Play—Andrea Garner, Carol Millspaw, Tris Junkins, Julie Stubbs, Jeannine Christensen, Marcy Stutzman, Rachel Bevins. The 2nd-5th grade class—Mason Moseley, Patricia Moseley, Nan Procyson, Clyde Hunter. Middle School—Brandy Bergenstock, Tara Joseph, Donna Sprock, Lucy van Tine. High School—Barbara Linde, Dan Moore, Cathy Coley, Jerry Tenney, Connie Ralston. Nursery—Jennifer Lopez, Carey Hall-Warner. I also appreciate all the people who stepped in to help do child care, provide food for special events or provided rides. I'm looking forward to a wonderful summer program and a new program this fall. Of course, we are always looking for new people to help us out so if you feel you would like to get involved with the Children's RE Program please see Brandy Bergenstock (RE Chair) or Joanne Dingus (DRE) for volunteer opportunities.

Just a reminder that the wardrobe to Narnia opens July 3rd. The children will have previewed the BBC

version of The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe the week before. Join us for magical fun and learning at our 9:30 and 11:00 services.

Spirit Play children (11:00 service only) will be told the following stories: King Edward and the Unicorn based on the story The Prince and the Rhinoceros an Indian tale, The Magic Vase, based on the story The Magic Vase by Margaret Silf, Prince Caspian, based on the story The Green Man by Gail Forsythe-Vail, Aslan and the Wolf, based on the story St. Francis and the wolf by John Feister, The Faun in the Forest, based on the story The Frog in the Well a tale from Taiwan, Reepicheep at the Seashore, based on the story The Mouse at the Seashore by Arnold Lobel, The Blindfolded Pevensies, based on the story Six Blind Men and the Elephant an Indostan tale, Turn to Stone, based on the story Midas' Golden Touch a Greek myth, Lucy and the Land through the Wardrobe, based on the story The Boy and the Giants by Fiona Moodie.

So far this summer the teens (11:00 service only) have begun watching episodes of the Joan of Arcadia series. They are also interested in the series Firefly. They will then continue to watch approved movie or TV clips of interest and discuss UU values portrayed in each.

You may have noticed that there have been class descriptions and home activities in the order of service and weekly updates lately. Barbara Linde and I have been working together on these. Our hope is to help families feel more connected to what their students are doing in class and provide them with ways to continue the lessons at home. Please let us know if these are useful to you and your kids.

See you in the RE!

Adult Religious Education NEWS

By Dennis Shaw ARE Chair

July will be hoppin' in Adult RE as we continue our summer program designed to hear what YOU have

to say about several interesting topics. Here are some examples of what will be discussed on Sunday between 9:30 and 10:30 in the annex building: "Trying to Define the Undefinable"; "Proposed changes in wording to the UU Principles"; "Encouragement to Spiritual Growth" and one of the well-received Socrates Cafes. So come join the fun and learn about these ideas and how they relate to the UU Principles. By the way, these sessions are open to everyone, from long time members to first time visitors. Look for information on specific sessions in weekly updates and the Order of Service.

Second Sunday Lunch A new venue for our lunch outing---*THE AWESOME CAFE*: Heritage Square Shopping Center, corner of Lakeside Drive and George Washington Hwy (Behind CVS Pharmacy). Great salads, sandwiches and wraps---the favorite eating establishment of Josie Dougher. Sunday, July 10 at 12:30. Everyone welcome-- please join us for good food and fellowship.

EarthRising 2011 Schedule

All start at 7:00 PM

July 15 Lughnasad Planning
 July 29 Lughnasad Ritual
 Sep 2 Autumn Equinox Planning
 Sep 16 Autumn Equinox Ritual
 Oct 14 Samhain Planning
 Oct 28 Samhain Ritual
 Dec 2 Yule Planning

Memorials

By Pat Yaros

A contribution was made in April to the UUPF Memorial Fund, which funds current activities of the Fellowship. This gift was made in memory of Annie and Hugh Wood, Cynthia French, and David Dick. Thanks to our donor!

Both the Memorial Fund and the Endowment Fund - which will fund future outreach in Fellowship activities - can be used to celebrate an achievement, to honor someone in our midst, or to invoke the memory of someone special. Please keep these possibilities in your mind. Contact the Finance Chair or Treasurer for details.

Dec 16 Yule Ritual

Jane Weaver <dragonlady911@gmail.com>

Membership Update

The Membership Committee held a successful spring UU Orientation Class on Saturday, May 21st. A small, but very interesting, group gathered for breakfast, information, and discussion. At the end of the morning the UUPF had four new members. Please join us in welcoming Chris Winkley, Amber Deaton, Deane Reis, and Kathy Quayle to our community. This brings our membership count to 156! Plan to attend Sunday service on June 19 when we will recognize our newest members. If you are interested in attending a UU Orientation Class, our next one will be in the fall. If you are unable to attend on Saturday mornings or simply cannot wait until fall, please contact Rev. Andrew or Bobbie Schilling, Membership Committee Chair.

Attendance

Date	First Service/Second Service	
	Total	Visitors
May 22	40/81	3/5
May 29	45/76	3/4
June 5	29/65	1/3
June 12	28/78	2/1
June 19	41/86	3/7
Average:	96/Sunday	13

Birthdays!



3 Henry Chambers
5 Carey Hall
6 Robert Higinbotham
10 Ada Van Tine
15 Rich Glenn-Albiez
17 Mayah Moore
18 John Templeton
19 Isabella Strom
19 Ashley Dernovich
20 Michael Coirin

21 Dawn Hutchinson
22 Sally Thomas
23 Marta Mulvihill
23 Gabrielle Bevins
27 Brad Harper
28 Connie Ralston
28 Lucy Van Tine
28 Leonard Schneider



Fifty and Better

A reminder that our group will not get together again until Sept. 1st. Have a lovely summer everyone! Esther

The UUF Humanists Group seeks to explore, promote, and expand modern Humanism. We offer talks on Humanist issues, and moderated, respectful discussions about these contemporary topics. The UUF Humanist group will meet on Sunday, July 17th. Join us in the UUF Sanctuary Building for a potluck from 6 - 7 pm, and for a moderated discussion of Humanism from 7 - 8:30 pm.

FELLOWSHIP CIRCLE NOTES

Our Fellowship Circle Program will wind down this month and start up again in mid September. New Circles will form to give everyone an opportunity to become friends with a new group of people.

On Wednesday, August 24 all current Fellowship Circle participants are invited to the home of Alice and Bob Smith---those attending daytime Circles are invited for brunch at 10:00 AM and those attending evening Circles are invited for dinner at 6:00 PM. During these times, all participants will have an opportunity to sign up for our new season of Fellowship Circles.

New Fellowship Circle participants are welcome--we want to get to know you. The purpose of our Fellowship Circles

is to form long and lasting friendships. Contact Bob Smith bob_m_smith@aol.com

Goddess Circle

This is an open women's circle, so please feel free to join us. We will be having a special series this summer on deities with both genders, so **men who are interested in joining our circle for July and August are welcome.**

July 2nd will feature the Nordic gods Frey and Freya

August 7th will feature the Tao.

We meet the first Sunday of each month in the Annex after the second service for food, fellowship and fun.

Please contact Dawn Hutchinson at dhutchin@cnu.edu with any questions

4th Saturday Women's Drum & Pot Luck

7pm - A casual gathering of women to share food & friendship, & to make music together. Mark your 2011 calendar now! 4th Saturdays!

For more info, call Connie 788-8903

SOFTBALL SATURDAYS!!!

Every Saturday unless it's a downpour at **9am - 11am**

Ball field at the Mariner's Museum—at the turn across from Warwick High School, then follow Boundary Road around.

You've heard about it or you have been there, so start

stretching and find that glove. This is an informal gathering that depends on numbers not talent. We play to have fun. Oh, and bring a friend!

Share the Basket

Our year-end report. [Please click here!](#)

Denominational Affairs

Tret Fure in Concert



2 time teacher of song writing and finger-picking at SUUSI. Featured Artist of SUUSI in 2008

At 19, Tret moved to LA to pursue a songwriting and musical career. Within a year she was performing as guitarist and vocalist for Spencer Davis, touring with him and penning the single for his album, "Mousetrap". She went on to record her own album in 1973 on MCA/UNI Records, with the late Lowell George of Little Feat as her producer. With the success of that release, she opened for such bands as Yes, Poco, and the J Geils Band.

Sunday, August 28th, 3:00 PM at the UUF

Tickets are only \$15 and are available from www.tomboygirl.com for a nominal fee of \$1 or purchase directly from Lauren Furey.

See Tret's [biography!](#)

The UUF is having this concert as part of the "Living the Welcoming Congregation" program kick off

Please email Mason Moseley at [mbosox at cox.net](mailto:mbosox@cox.net) to get updates.

Thousands hit Charlotte, NC for the UUA General Assembly. Next month's Flame will have lots of information about it, but for now, check out some of the pictures by [clicking here](#).

Biography

A Philosophical Homecoming; or Why I Became a Unitarian Universalist.

By John Kelly

"Some people may claim", as the song goes, "that there's a woman to blame, but I know it's my own damn fault." My formal introduction to the UUF came in 1989 when I was dating a woman who was a member here. She is now long gone, but I was intrigued by what the UUF offered and stood for, and I have been a member ever since.

That was not my first encounter with the UUF, but the earlier attempt to interest me did not take root. Long-time member Steve Yaros had told me about this neat church he joined when we were both members of the Peninsula Ski Club. At the time, I was not interested in any church, so I declined his offer. I did not realize that the UUF was the church he was talking about until I showed up at one of the services with my girlfriend.

My journey to become a part of the Unitarian Universalist community did not start with my first visit to the UUF. I have been philosophically aligned with the Unitarian ideals for most of my life; I just did not have a title for it. I grew up in the college town of East Lansing, Michigan. My parents had no strong religious beliefs that I knew of, but they thought it was important that I be exposed to the enculturation of mainstream religious education. We were members of a large interdenominational Protestant church, the Peoples Church. It featured Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, and Congregationalist elements, with a Congregationalist

minister. I had no real idea what constituted what in any particular denomination, and to this day, I don't know the difference between them.

As the largest church in town, the Peoples Church was the hub of many traditional community activities, including a Boy Scout troop. I became an enthusiastic and dedicated member of the Boy Scouts, and my father, a Michigan State policeman, became the scoutmaster and went on to be a key adult leader in the local Boy Scout council long after I had moved on. The small sub-group I included myself in was very competitive and sought greater challenges beyond just being a member of the group. One of the extra awards we sought was called "God and Country". This required special religious instruction at the hands of the Church's youth minister, and elderly gentleman whose name I have long forgotten. Part of this instruction was detailed examination of certain aspects of the Bible. He pointed out its many contradictions and inconsistencies, especially in the early books. I am not sure how this was supposed to make me a more deeply religious person; it certainly opened my eyes to the alternatives and made me skeptical of religion in general. I later learned that my mother, who was a teacher in the Lansing School System, had arrived at a similar skepticism when she was a child in Southern Illinois. Her father was a local merchant, and after the fashion of the day, they would invite one of the town's various preachers to Sunday dinner. The topic at the dinner table usually revolved around the preachers railing about how wrong the other preachers were! My mother concluded from this that if some of them were wrong, probably all of them were wrong, and that deep religious beliefs were not worthwhile. I eventually concluded she was a Unitarian in spirit, if not formally. When she passed away some years ago, I hired the UU minister in East Lansing to conduct her funeral service.

I stayed connected to the church and my Boy Scout activities throughout high school, but I saw no particular reason push myself further. In high school I was, to be polite about it, a slacker; I was too lazy to be an athlete, and tradition high school activities bored me. In college I finally found an intellectual calling that attracted me. I majored in history. More specifically, I

focused on Medieval history. One cannot study the middle ages without becoming deeply involved in theology and the history of the Catholic Church. It was the study of the early church that reinforced and deepened my religious skepticism. I was mystified and bemused by the inexplicable violence of the religious riots in the early years of the Christian era, intrigued by the Arian heresy (the first true Unitarianism? - well, maybe not) as an alternative to the Trinity, and fascinated and repelled by the crusades and the corruption of the Medieval church. I found more and more reason to doubt the veracity of religious thought. As an undergraduate, I ran out of history courses to take, so I branched into philosophy and anthropology. My undergraduate advisor talked me into entering graduate school, so I went on to get a MA at the same school, concentrating on Medieval Irish history.

Luckily, I did not have to make a living as an Irish historian. I was commissioned in the Army through ROTC, so after a one-year leave without pay or allowances to get the MA degree, I entered active duty at Ft. Knox, Kentucky and went through the Armor Officer Basic Course. To be successful in the Army, as in any career path, you have to be driven and obsessed. I was not. I served at Ft. Hood, Texas, South Vietnam, Ft. Meade, Maryland, Turkey and Ft. Eustis, Virginia. I was one of the many people the Army decided it could do without in the great post-Vietnam drawdown, so I left active duty with few regrets and transferred to the Reserves while beginning a career as a Training Specialist (among other things) at the US Army Transportation School at Ft. Eustis. I retired from the Reserves as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1994 and from the Civil Service in 2000.

The Army is greatly misunderstood by people who have never been exposed to that life-style. You don't have to worry about whether your clothes are the latest style and you generally have interesting things to do. It is not as regimented as most people think, and education and original thought are generally encouraged – up to a point. There is the occasional drawback of being in places where people try to do you harm, but at least you get to return the favor. It afforded me a lot of

free time to study and read on my own. The Army is generally unconcerned about its members' religious beliefs. We were required to list our religion on the metal dog tags we were issued in those days, and I started by listing my religion as "Presbyterian", mostly because I was proud that I had learned to spell it. We were issued new dog tags from time to time, and at the end I listed my religion as "none." After years of reading and study, I had reached a conclusion: I could find no use for organized religion. At one time in the history of humanity, it offered comfort and answers, but humanity had outgrown it.

When I was introduced to the UUFP in 1989 I was happily "unchurched." I did not feel the least bit guilty for sleeping in on Sundays mornings and my investment account appreciated the money I was not donating to churches. By this time I called myself a secular humanist (I still do), and I was becoming concerned by the societal swing toward more fundamentalist ideals. I had discovered the Libertarian party, which seemed to fit my politically conservative – socially liberal outlook. The aforementioned former girlfriend apparently decided that I was ready for the next step, and she persuaded me to attend a service. I do not mix easily in new groups, and I was reluctant to become involved in something that seemed so different. I quickly discovered a like-minded anti-religious religious community. It was something of a revelation and I became a nearly instant convert.

Philosophically, I felt that I always belonged to this church. I shared many of its ideals. We were lay-led then, and I appreciated the idea of not having a minister. I did not care for the Christian fundamentalism that was gaining popularity at the time, and I felt my voice joined in this community was more effective than my voice alone. I was an environmentalist back in the days when we were called conservationists, although I am repelled by the virulent anti-capitalist tone that the current environmental movement has adopted, I still think we should do all we can to preserve and steward our planet. I believe in personal freedom and responsibility. The seven principles come as close to a personal philosophy as I have ever been able to articulate.

Over the years I have proudly carried the title "Unitarian". Most people don't know what it means, but when I declare that I belong to a Unitarian church, they seem impressed, and I am seldom asked to pursue the issue. My careers with the military and civil service had instilled in me a profound dislike for meetings, so I admit I don't serve on many committees. In the past I have served as the Fellowship treasurer and I have been on the Finance Committee. I am currently the deputy administrator of the Endowment Fund. I was asked by the nominating committee to be on the board again, but I regretfully declined. At this stage in my life, I prefer to be a silent (financial) supporter rather than an active participant. Somebody has to be. I have spent a good portion of my life being in charge of things, and now just I want to be part of the crowd.

I expect to remain a member of the UUFP from now on. I have arrived at where I have been all along. That does not mean that there may not be temporary separations. My wife (who is also a former member of the Peninsula Ski Club, but is a member of a different church) and I like to travel, so I won't be at every service. But where ever I am, even if it is only a late breakfast on Sunday, or a cruise to Hawaii, I will be there in spirit. It is where I was supposed to be from the beginning.

[Top](#)