



The Phoenix

January - 2012



Ministerial Musings

Dear Friends,

Well, astonishingly, the year is drawing to a close. I'm not quite sure how that happened. If I look back, I can see the remarkable milestones along the way, but it seems a little quick, don't you think?

December brings us many UUCSV traditions. We had our wonderful Jazz service provided us by that generous and talented duo Phil Haynes and Steve Adams. We laughed and listened and sang and ate cookies at the Holiday Service. And then the Christmas Eve service twinkled and soared. More wonderful music offered by Al and Jean Lumpkin. I was thrilled to sing lead on a couple choruses so that their harmonies could shine. If I were the type of person to keep a bucket list, singing with the two of them would have been on it, so it set me up for a very merry time. I'm happy to say that Christmas will not fall on a Sunday again, necessitating back to back services, until 2016. (Don't you love Google?)

People have been fairly healthy: most hospital stays have been for improving health rather than repairing illness. The economy and life's stresses has had more than a few of us rocking and reeling, so let us keep one another in our thoughts in the time ahead.

The big difference in my work is that I have started writing daily prayers. So far the response has been positive. If you're unhappy to be receiving the prayers and deleting them is too much work, we'll have to figure up a way for people to sign up. I had very carefully called them Advent prayers so I wouldn't have to make a commitment to them, but I'm considering a year's worth...

I've also completed a major writing project for my own work and am considering what to do with it once it gets a bit more polished.

For the marriages, babies, and recoveries of this past year, I am truly grateful. May this be a year of good health, reinvigorated careers and deep friendships. Thank you for the opportunity to be doing work I love with people I adore.

Love, Peace and Blessings, Ann

Susquehanna Valley Leadership Program

December's Topic for the Leadership program was the Healthcare Industry. We visited the hospital (where they're hard at work on their new surgery wing) and Albright Footcare (where we learned that consistent wearing of high heels will help the Surgery Center pay for itself.).

We also learned how to wash our hands (yes, we're all doing it wrong). I did pretty well on the hand stuff, but under black light it was revealed that I wasn't scrubbing my wrists and 6 inches of forearms (fore-armed is forewarned!) well enough to remove black-light lotion. When asked about epidemiological studies that suggest that perhaps, everyday humans might be washing hands too frequently, they did not have much response. It was made fairly clear however that the most important education work going on in hospitals concerns hand washing. Hospitals concentrating on increasing hand washing rates are seeing very important declines in in-hospital infection rates. Their focus is a result of concern for their patients and the fact that medicare is now refusing to reimburse treatment costs for infections gained in-house. Look for those stats to be improving soon.

We visited the Free Dental Clinic in Sunbury. This is a wonderful place that provides dental care to

people with Access cards. They've recently obtained more funding and are about to hire a full-time dentist and hope to add another hygienist soon. The working poor and the unemployed remain an underserved population. But you can't fault them for what they don't do when what they do is so wonderful.

A new very exciting program finally being rolled out in PA (we're #49 in the nation) is the 211 Program. Calls to this number can supply information on health and human services available in the area. The United Way has been helping to pay for this. It's a wonderful resource.

There were presentations on the conservative and liberal viewpoints about single-payer health care. As you can imagine this raised some interesting discussion.

It was my turn in December to present my Leadership Credo. It was an interesting exercise in reflecting on my life and what's important to me in the work I do. Let me know if you want to read it. No big surprise to anyone, I wrote a story rather than did a powerpoint.

I continue to be very grateful for the UUCSV's support that allows me to attend this program. I'm learning a lot about both the problems and the resources in this area. I'm making unlikely allies. It's particularly helpful that Sue Jamison is going through the program at the same time so we can keep the discussion going after class and examine things from a theological viewpoint.

Bits From the Board December Meeting

Present: Jen Curley, Brenda Harrison, Hope Kopf, Joann Yano, Paul Schaffer, Claire Lawrence

Fire extinguishers need to be replaced. David Campolongo has gathered prices. We're also investigating the responsibilities of our landlord regarding this and other safety code concerns.

Serious Farm share pick up at UUCSV was discussed and the board agreed that as long as no mess and no interruption of services is

created it would be a nice opportunity to support and enjoy locally grown goodness! The RGL coordinator position has ended. The board is exploring an alternative. Megan McGovern is no longer our coordinator.

Jen Curley will not be present at next month's meeting. Her son is having major surgery and she will likely be unavailable. In the meantime please feel free to take your concerns or matters that need attention to any member of the board.

SOCIAL CONCERNS UPDATE

January's charity of the month is the Lewisburg Prison Project (LPP). The LPP is a prison advocacy program entirely driven by volunteers. It's advocacy spans 4 federal prisons, 11 state prisons and 34 county prisons. Visiting with prisoners, through this program, involves some training. However, with one training session, volunteers from our church might be able to help screen letters. LPP receives hundreds of letters requesting help in all kinds of situations. Volunteers are needed to screen the letters for violence, etc. We are currently exploring the possibility of a one hour training session after church one Sunday. Participating in this session would not obligate anyone to volunteer. We are hoping, however, that it might spark interest in volunteering. It would also be useful for us to better understand the plight of prisoners, and how we, as UUs, might support them.

Haven Ministries expressed a desire to accept a CSA from our church, should we desire to give them one. A CSA is a share in the community garden run by Harvey and Jen Partica. It would cost \$500. We will request an extra collection at some point to raise money for this. A CSA share would help Haven Ministries to feed its residents fresh, nourishing food.

More to come next month.
Lois Passi for the Social Concerns Committee



Evening news is where they begin with 'Good Evening,' and then proceed to tell you why it isn't.

January 2012 Charity of the Month

Our charity of the month for January is the Lewisburg Prison Project (www.lewisburgprisonproject.org). This organization is recognized nationwide for its unstinting advocacy for the human and constitutional rights of incarcerated individuals. LPP covers four federal prisons, 11 state prisons and 34 county jails in the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

In addition to our financial support, the Lewisburg Prison Project also affords us opportunities for volunteer work. LPP receives hundreds of inmate letters and calls every month. Volunteers help by opening and screening correspondence, filing, and performing other office functions. A member of the Lewisburg Prison Project will provide a brief training workshop here at the UU for prospective volunteers.

If you think you might be interested in actively supporting this local social justice effort, please contact the Social Concerns Committee at social_concerns@uucsv.org by Sunday, January 8, so we can set a date for the training. Remember that participation in the training comes with no obligation to volunteer.

First Sunday Program at Priestley Chapel on Sunday, January 1, 2011

Priestley Chapel Associates presents an informal program of words and music from 9:30 to 10:10 am on Sunday, December 4th at Joseph Priestley Memorial Chapel, 380 Front Street, Northumberland, PA. This Sunday continues a multi-year recognition of the US Poet Laureates with the reading of several poems of Daniel Hoffman (1974-76). The program will include poems about the new year.

The music portion of the program will be provided by Charles Phelps on the historic John Wind organ and the chapel piano.

Priestley Chapel Associates is a secular, non-profit 501 (c) 3 corporation established in 1977 to care for and manage the Joseph Priestley Memorial Chapel, the beautiful memorial garden and the historic 1811 John Wind organ located in the chapel. This lovely country chapel was built in 1834 by descendants of Joseph Priestley and members of the Unitarian congregation in Northumberland. Currently, the chapel is open to the public the first Sunday of each month for a program of words and music. The chapel is also used for wedding ceremonies, memorial services, and community events. For more information visit: www.priestleychapel.org.

UUCSV Book Group

The UUCSV Book group will meet on Wednesday, January 4 at 7 pm at UUCSV to discuss *God's Bits of Wood* by Sembene Ousmane. Discussion leader will be Jennifer Patrica. The tale is set in colonial Senegal in 1947 and deals with a railway strike and the role of women in village life.

Upcoming books and discussion leaders are

Discussion Leader(s) Meeting Date Title and Author

Tom Bresenhan Feb 1, 2012 *God of Animals* by Aryn Kyle

George Manning Mar 7, 2012 *Exiles in the Garden* by Ward Just

Paul Schaffer Apr 4, 2012 *Wolf Hall* by Hilary Mantel

Pat Williman May 2, 2012 *Cane River* by Lalita Tademy

Barbara Schaffer Jun 6, 2012 *The Tiger's Wife* by Tea Obreht

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A clear conscience is the sign of a fuzzy memory.