

# GOOD NEWS



"Witnessing the Transforming Power of the Holy Spirit in our Lives"

May June 2008

Rivival

www.uuchristian.org

## UUCF UNVEILS A NEW LOOK

In a recently published study by the Pew Forum, data showed that there are an estimated 600,000 plus people who identify with Unitarian Universalists within the United States. Studies completed by the UUA to analyze the theological composition of our "UU house," indicate that between 9 - 10% of UUs consider themselves Christians. That means there may be more than 50,000 self-identified UU Christians out there who need to be reached! We currently have less than one thousand in our database in some stage of membership.

Our recent situation regarding affiliate status and the relationship of UUCF with the UUA has offered us an excellent opportunity for internal reflection, and to focus our efforts on the development of the Fellowship for the future. As more and more of our mobile population avail themselves of the wealth of information online, the Fellowship leaders made the immediate decision to focus on improving the quality of our online presence.

This strategic initiative included the development of a more professional website, with a more user-friendly interface, more online materials for both seekers and current members, and access to an online store where purchases can be made of UUCF books, journals, videos, audios, etc. That website is scheduled to go online in the summer of 2008.

Along with a newly polished web presence, UUCF decided that it was time to upgrade and standardize our outward identity with one official logo that could be leveraged across the wide range of materials that we produce. In the seemingly every-busier world we live in, having a standard recognizable visual identity is more and more important.

The Rev. Ron Robinson, Executive Director of the UUCF, said: "The Webministry Team and the Board are looking for ways to reflect our more vibrant, dynamic energy epitomized by our Revivals and our increasing presence at General Assembly of the UUA, and through small groups. A new logo not only helped us in the development of the new webministry, but will be conveyed through our other mediums too. The chosen design weaves in a flowing double U focusing on the cross in an off-centered way reminiscent of the historic Universalist symbol. The tagline of freely following Jesus combines the non-creedal nature of our

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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

*freely following jesus*



movement, the importance of helping one another along our chosen spiritual path, and how Jesus is of central significance."

After review of portfolios and careful consideration, we selected a designer based in Dallas, Texas. Sarah Radicello, one of the principals with Forbes Figueroa Design has been working closely with a UUCF Identity Team to create this new logo. The Identity Team gave Ms. Radicello significant design input, including basic background of UUism, short history of Unitarian and Universalist Christianity, imagery used in both Christian and U & U backgrounds, the UUCF's past imagery, plus a lot of input regarding future directions for our Fellowship, and our desire for a new polished dynamic look that still reflects our firm grounding in our tradition.

The Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, Board vice-president and member of the team, said: "We had so many good designs to choose from, but I feel that choice that we made, with input from the Board, both honors our UU Christian heritage yet has a contemporary feel.. It's simple, clean, yet makes a bold statement about our future."

Ms. Radicello took this seemingly

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# Farewell from the President

PRESIDENT REV. DR. ANITA FARBER-ROBERTSON

As the time for the ingathering of the Unitarian Universalist clan draws near, the deep and unsettling questions for UU Christians inevitably emerge... "Do I belong here?" "Is there a place for me?" "Are these my people?" We can attribute these angst filled questions to some of the recent decisions and directives of the UUA, but as one who has been a Unitarian Universalist for 38 years through many twists and turns of my faith development, I know that these deep and difficult questions have been with us for a long, long time. I turn to Jesus for guidance and comfort.



Jesus, with us, belonged to a religious community and faith tradition with which he often disagreed and for whom he had great love. Jesus never left his faith community. He challenged it. He argued with it. He expanded its embrace and stretched a wider and more inclusive tent that his co-religionists could imagine, but he held to his faith community, and to his deep love and appreciation for all the ways in which it had paved the way for his wider ministry.

I feel a particular compassion for Jesus as I live in these challenging times within the UUA for UU Christians. I also feel his charge to me, to us, which is unequivocal.

Do not cut off. Do not sever yourself from the tradition and community which held and guided you to your new found wisdom. Neither become fully of its culture. Continue to listen to the still small voice that speaks within. Give its wisdom a clear and articulate voice in the gatherings and the studying places, in the family and in the public spaces of this faith community. Engage in dialog. Speak the truth in love...always in love.

For Unitarian Universalism to remain a faith rather than becoming a club or a non-profit benevolent institution, it needs the voice of the theologically grounded, of the lovers of God, and the lovers of God's words and deeds. It needs those who will stand and offer religious witness, unabashedly, unapologetically religious witness in our lives and in the public square. It needs those who speak from an inward piety of humility that names truth and understands its call for justice. Unitarian Universalism needs us, UU Christians, and we, for all our quarrels, need the Unitarian Universalism that has birthed us, held us, ignored us, and puzzles over us. We are cut of the same cloth, and are woven into a common garment of destiny. So my friends, know now as Jesus knew then, that for all our differences, these are our people, and this tent, our home.

Mine has been a presidency of team work born of mutual respect and affection. I extend my deepest thanks to the volunteers of the UUCF who have worked so closely with me, nurturing this fellowship. Thank you to the UUCF Board who has worked diligently, and especially to my first vice president Kathleen Rolenz whose unflagging enthusiasm often kept me going. Words cannot express my gratitude for Ron Robinson, our executive director who in the final analysis, is the one who makes sure the rubber hits the road, so that we keep on moving forward.

Yours in faith and deep-felt blessings, *Anita*

# Revival 2009, Mar. 26-29, All Souls Church, Tulsa

See more at [www.uuchristian.org/revival](http://www.uuchristian.org/revival) and check back often for updates.

## *Come experience*

**Bishop Carlton Pearson of New Dimensions Worship Center**, one of the nation's most dynamic preachers as the keynoter, telling his compelling story of his theological and spiritual journey from mega-church fundamentalist pastor to a universalist preacher of God's good news for all, the gospel of inclusion, and its controversies around the country that garnered news coverage on NPR and many other national mediums. Author of the book *The Gospel of Inclusion*. Now a United Church of Christ minister. See much more at [www.newdimensions.us](http://www.newdimensions.us).  
**One of the world's largest Unitarian churches, All Souls Tulsa.** Go to [www.allsoulschurch.org](http://www.allsoulschurch.org).

## Thursday

Pre-Revival workshop on Centering Prayer

Opening worship led by ministers of all four UU churches in Tulsa

"Images of Jesus in film" and Saving Jesus clips and past Revival clips and more

## Friday

Panel on "Christianity and the UUA."

## Saturday

--Panel on "Emergent Christianity in the 21st Century" moderated by Rev. Susan Smith, district executive of the Southwest Conference, a district of the UUA.

--Communion Service, preacher Rev. Lillie Mae Henley, minister, Universalist National Memorial Church in Washington, D.C.

---Prayer and Healing Service

---Taize Service

---Workshops

---Small Groups

---Service Project to Turley, OK, eight miles from All Souls, where the national offices and inventory of the UUCF are located

---Free time and social events

**Plan now.** Write to the UUCF office or email [UUCFOffice@aol.com](mailto:UUCFOffice@aol.com) for copies of the printed brochure. We will take reservations through printed postal mail the rest of this year and then online registration will be available beginning in January.

## Spread the UUCF Message and Support Us.

Buy a UUCF Gold Lapel Pin. \$20. For orders of three or more, \$15 a piece. Send a check payable to the UUCF, marked pin, to P.O. Box 6702 Turley, OK 74156.



*(Continued from page 1)*

unending set of ideas and ramblings and has worked diligently through 5 generations of design development over several months. The process included multiple logo concepts, revisions, selection of fonts, specification of color, alternate orientations. She did a terrific job and was very patient in helping us to create the winning design selected by the Identity Team in consultation with the Board of Directors. The Rev. Adam Tierney-Eliot, leader of the Webministry team, stressed how important it is to have a continually improving web presence, and a visual identity as part of that presence.

# The Theology of Generosity

## Rev. Ron Robinson *Executive Director of the UUCF*

I begin with a seasonal excerpt from a new book by one of our members, Rev. Sarah Clarke, minister of the oldest UU congregation, First Parish in Plymouth, MA founded in 1620. Sarah has written the new meditation book called "Out of the Fog: Meditations for Believers and Skeptics" (for more information go to [www.xlibris.com](http://www.xlibris.com) and click bookstore or call 1-888-795-4274). For me this selection is a prism not only about God's creation, the human spirit of giving, but also about the power we see in this time of the Christian year too, known as Pentecost which begins May 11, a celebration of the birth of the ekklesia of God, the church.

She writes:

"May is promise, surprise, expectation. May is generosity run rampant as the treasures hidden in the earth burst out in glory. May is a reminder that, yes, some gifts do keep on giving. Tulips bloom that were planted on crisp autumn days years ago by folks departed to other climes, even to other worlds. In Bangor, Maine, do the tulip bulbs I ordered with such discernment, and planted with gusto amidst a plethora of mud, herald spring to people I will never know? I hope so. It is good to think I left behind a trail of tulips. Just as it is good to be greeted by the blossoms of last summer's plantings. Good to hope that someday after I am gone, these flowers will cheer a fellow traveler I may never know.

"May reminds us of the generosity of gardeners, who plant not for one season, but for the cycle of the generations, not for themselves alone, but for those who come after, whoever they may be. Digging and planting, weeding and watering, putting their faith into seeds and bulbs, these gardeners bequeath gifts of beauty into the world. We cannot all be gardeners of the earth, but we can all be gardeners of the spirit, planting and nurturing gifts of beauty in our world, gifts that sustain, gifts we pass on to those who follow us. What blooms in your garden for the generations?"

The ekklesia, the gatherings of God in the spirit of Jesus, come in many forms. Ultimately it is a relationship rooted in the soil of the Jesus tradition, nurtured by the seeds planted by so many for so many centuries. We can be blinded to the beauty of what it sprouts around us if we get too focused on its organizational rather than organic relation-

ships. The ekklesia is about the mission of creating disciples of this Jesus spirit. The question is how are we seeding this spirit in our world, in our encounters with others. How are we creating blooms of the soul for those who will follow after us?

Anabaptist theologian John Howard Yoder put it well: "The work of Jesus was not a new set of ideals or principles for reforming or even revolutionizing society, but the establishment of a new community, a people that embodied forgiveness, sharing, and self-sacrificing love in its rituals and discipline. In that sense, the visible church is not to be the bearer of Christ's message, but to be the message." (Quoted in the new book, *The New Christians*, by Tony Jones).



This Pentecost season may you find ways to simply be with others to become the message of God's love for all. You don't have to make a program of it. You don't have to call it church. You don't have to be with others who are Christians. It might be a meal, a movie, a walk, picking up trash in a neighborhood that is not your own, sharing and conversing, inviting a few to join in service to the imprisoned, the

abused, the neglected, the struggling parent, the sick, or throw a party especially in a public space, maybe an abandoned lot. Knowing what to do is never the problem really. And ways to mark your experience, your time, may come--in sharing prayers, even songs, readings, rituals and disciplines as Yoder said, but they will come after, to sustain the relationship and the mission. Halleluia! Ekklesia happens!!

This summer can be a true pentecost wherever you are, no matter your circumstances, as long as you are with a few others in the spirit of Jesus. And share your experiences with others. Let me know your stories of pentecost, when the spirit of the Lord of Liberty alights in your life. Let us share them with others through our new webministry at [www.uuchristian.org](http://www.uuchristian.org) or here in the Good News.

*blessings, Ron*

# UUCF General Assembly Events

This year we have perhaps our most exciting and expansive General Assembly presence ever. We will have our large booth again this year in the exhibit hall. It will have free books, resources, along with items for sale, and computers promoting our newly launched website, and TV showing DVD programs on progressive Christian thought and biblical study, etc. The booth will be open Wednesday through Sunday, and will have expanded hours this year. We will also have meetings there for small groups leaders, seminarians, clergy, and others.



*The Rev. Elizabeth Ellis*

**Thursday, June 26, Service Project** aiding those who attend GA. Come by the booth for more information on how to help, or write to RevRonRobinson@aol.com

## **Saturday Morning and Afternoon Programs June 28th, 2008 Gathering in Renaissance Hotel 617 SE 17th StPapagaya Room, 2nd Floor**

**8 am:** Conversation: Christianity in UU Churches: FAQs. This is for all those who wonder about the UUCF, our history, our present, future, about what it means to be a UU Christian. How we can help churches grow, etc.

**9:30 am:** Morning Prayers: Come celebrate and worship God. Become centered for a busy weekend.

**11 am:** GA & UUA Issues Conversation & Prayers – led by Rev. Anita Farber-Robertson

A discussion, prayers, around and about the issues of security clearance at GA, about the controversies with the former independent affiliates.

**1:30 pm:** The GA Communion Service, "In The Land of the Living": Rev Elizabeth Ellis  
Rev. Ellis is a former president of the UUCF, one of those instrumental in the start of the UUCF Revivals, and committed to social justice throughout her ministry.

**3 pm:** Interfaith Work: Panel Discussion, moderated by Rev. Gail Tapscott  
Come hear how Christians and Jews and others are working together to make the world a better place in your local communities.

## **Saturday Evening Program**

Fort Lauderdale UU Church, 3970 NW 21st Ave

**5:30 pm** Reception--Snacks and Drinks

**6-8 pm** Catered Dinner, Hymn Singing, Annual Meeting \$20.00 For Dinner. RSVP by Thursday June 26th at booth, RevRonRobinson@aol.com or 918-691-3223

## **Sunday Program**

**June 29th, 2008 Convention Center Floridian ABC**

"Peace-Making and the Questions of Jesus"

GA Featured Lecture: Fr. John Dear, peace activist, author, priest

Come hear one of the nation's leading peace activists talk about how his faith motivates his actions. See [www.fatherjohndear.org](http://www.fatherjohndear.org). The UUA is currently in a period of study on peace-making issues. We are proud to work with the UUA Planning Commission to present this lecture by Father Dear. He is the author of the book "The Questions of Jesus" full of meditations and reflections on all of the places in scripture where Jesus asks a question. Focusing on these, the questions, and not the "answers" presents an image of Jesus challenging those around him and his society.

## **Christian Universalist Celebration 2008 in Oklahoma City**

The Christian Universalist Association (CUA) will hold a conference for believers in universal salvation, June 13-15 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The event, which is called "Christian Universalist Celebration 2008," is centered around the theme of "All God's children, no one left behind."

"The Christian Universalist Celebration 2008 will be a meaningful and exuberant gathering of Christians from widely diverse backgrounds who come together in an ecumenical spirit to celebrate God's love for all," said Rev. Felicia Urbanski, conference organizer and board member of the Christian Universalist Association. The CUA is a new interdenominational organization founded in 2007 by 13 ministers, professors, authors, and other spiritual leaders, coming from traditions ranging from Unitarian Universalist Christian to Mainline Protestant, Evangelical, Charismatic, Quaker, and Eastern Orthodox. Its purpose is to unite churches, ministries, and individuals who believe in the all-loving and all-saving God revealed by Jesus Christ, instead of the harsh and erroneous teaching of eternal hell.

The Christian Universalist Celebration 2008 will feature worship services, workshops, and 10 speakers including Rev. Ron Robinson, Executive Director of the UUCF., Rev. Lillie Henley, pastor of Universalist National Memorial Church, Rev. Rich Koster, editor of The Universalist Herald magazine. There will be various speeches and sermons on Universalist spiritual themes, an adult Sunday School class on universal salvation in the Bible, an "open mic" session for people to share thoughts and testimonies, and question-and-answer sessions with the officers of the CUA. .

On Friday, June 13, the events will be held at a hotel conference center and co-sponsored with a ministry run by Rick Spencer. On Saturday and Sunday, June 14-15, the Celebration will continue at the Church of the Open Arms United Church of Christ, only a few miles away. Both locations are in downtown Oklahoma City.

Rev. Kalen Fristad, United Methodist pastor and founding Chair of the Christian Universalist Association, said that the CUA plans to invite thousands of ministers from moderate to

liberal churches in Oklahoma and surrounding states, in the hope that some may come to learn more about Christian . "Large numbers of people are already exploring the ideas we teach," he said, "and we believe the time is right for the floodgates to open, for progressive Christian ministers to come out of the closet and openly identify themselves with the faith of God's universal love and salvation." Rev. Eric Stetson, the founding Executive Director of the CUA, has high hopes for the Christian Universalist Celebration 2008: "Decades from now, people may look back at our gathering this year in Oklahoma City as a turning point when Christian Universalism really started to become a major ecumenical movement of 21st century Christianity. This is an event you don't want to miss!"

The schedule of events, speakers list, registration form, and other information about the Christian Universalist Celebration 2008 can be found online at this website: [www.christianuniversalist.org/events/celebration2008.html](http://www.christianuniversalist.org/events/celebration2008.html) .

# UU Principles and the Teachings of Jesus

from a worship service at the UU Church of Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2005

The living tradition we share draws from many sources.

## 1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person

**Matthew 7: 1**  
 "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get."



**Matthew 25:34-40**  
 "Then the righteous will answer him, Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink: And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you? And the king will answer them, Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

## 2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.

Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and openness of the forces which create and uphold life.

**Matthew 5:1-11** The Beatitudes  
 "When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them saying:

*Blessed* are the poor in spirit, for there is the kingdom of heaven.

*Blessed* are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.  
*Blessed* are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

*Blessed* are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

*Blessed* are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

*Blessed* are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

*Blessed* are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

*Blessed* are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for there is the kingdom of heaven.

*Blessed* are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

## 3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.

Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love.



**Luke 6:35-36**  
 "But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the

Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful just as your Father is merciful."

**Luke 10:1-12** The Mission of the Seventy  
 "After this [Jesus] appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, . . . Go on your way. . . . Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. What ever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" . . . Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, . . . Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, The kingdom of God has come near to you."

## 4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

Wisdom from the world's religions which inspire us in our ethical and spiritual life.

**Matthew 5:15**  
 "No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house."

**Luke 22:25-27**  
 "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them: and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves."

## 5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.

Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.

### Matthew 5:44

"But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be children of your Father in heaven ...."



### Mark 12:28-31

One of the scribes ...asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all? Jesus answered, "The first is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our god, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these."

### Matthew 23:23

"... you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others."

## 6. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

### I Corinthians 12:12 -26 The Apostle Paul

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free –

and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, "because I am not eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you" nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you. On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

Here Paul preaches the interdependence of all of us one to the other and to all.

### Acts 1:2 – 2-4,6 Pentecost

And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to

speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. . . . And at this sound, the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.

Here the author, who is unknown but thought to be the same as the author of the Gospel of Luke, tells how everyone can understand each other within the influence of the spirit.

## 7. The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.

Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.

### Luke 10:30-35

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down the road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend."

The Parable does not tell us that the Samaritan was one who was considered neither Jew nor Gentile and one who would have been considered with hostility as an untouchable, which makes his act even more important. He is acting with humanistic care and kindness for another human being.

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**Are You Already a Member of the UUCF?** Great!

Now is the time to renew your membership. Each and every year, the leadership team of the UUCF reviews the membership rolls and hopes that you will decide that the UUCF is important enough in your life to renew your membership. **Are you not yet a member? Join today!**

**Why is it important to sustain the UUCF through your membership?**

The UUCF is a self-supporting and self-sustaining institution. The first and most important reason to stay connected to the UUCF is because we represent a liberal religious Christian presence in the Unitarian Universalist Association. We believe that Unitarian Universalism is broadened and deepened by our active presence and our faithful witness. We represent one of the few organizations in the UUA that can claim an authentic theological position, and the only one that can claim a historical tradition that dates back to the beginning of our movement. We bring to one another spiritual support, meaningful worship, intellectual engagement, and serve as a powerful witness for liberal Christianity within our tradition as Unitarian Universalists.

With the removal of affiliate status in the UUA, our expenses will be higher and our ability to have a presence at General Assembly, more expensive. We need your support. Please make a monthly pledge to the UUCF today.—*Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, First Vice President*