

ESUUC Newsletter

East Suburban Unitarian Universalist Church
4236 Sardis Road Murrysville, PA 15668

Sunday Services 10:30am
Religious Education 10:30am



Website: www.esuuc.org
Telephone: 724-739-ESUU

Editor: Michelle Rudnik
newsletter@esuuc.org

January 2012

SUNDAY SERVICES & REFRESHMENTS :

Sunday, January 1, 10:30am - "This is the Year That Was"- We don't usually get the chance to review the previous year right on New Year's Day, but we will this time around. Dr. Waun will help us to talk about what was important to us and to the world as we share in this informal discussion. [Refreshments: SHARING SUNDAY]

Sunday, January 8, 10:30am - "Drumming for Your Well-Being" - Come learn about and experience the benefits of drumming for your spiritual, mental, and emotional well-being. Drumming has been shown to accelerate physical healing, boost the immune system and produce feelings of wellbeing. Bring a drum or share one of our percussion instruments. [Refreshments: Ade Conway]

Sunday January 15, 10:30am - "Cognitive Therapy" - Cognitive therapy seeks to help a person overcome difficulties by identifying and changing dysfunctional thinking, behavior, and emotional responses, often by developing skills for modifying beliefs, identifying distorted thinking, and changing behaviors. This type of therapy has become widely accepted and used since its inception in the 1960's. Come and hear several members of our church community--Gayle Pamerleau, Melissa Alcorn-Ferry, and Nancy Ritsko--speak on their first-hand experiences as practitioners of cognitive therapy. [Refreshments: Maryann Dent]

Sunday January 22, 10:30am - "The World We Create" - One of the great insights of the 20th century, as reported by physicists, is that the way the universe works--how matter and energy behave--is dependent on the perspective of the observer. "What you see is what you get." Our perspective changes our world. Our everyday reality is, in large part, our own creation. What is this world we are creating? [Refreshments: Michele Devlin]

Sunday January 29, 10:30am - "American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us" Brien Palmer will lead a discussion on researched data and trends related to religion, as detailed particularly in the just-released book of that title. He will also discuss the rise of the 'nones': a notable increase in those who identify with no religion at all. This a chance to see religious affiliation as it really is, based on data, and how it correlates with positive and negative behaviors. Much of this will surprise you! [Refreshments: Tom & Leona Dunnett]

PASTOR ' S COLUMN : *By Renee Waun*

Our First Ten Years on Sardis Road!

Can you guess what ESUUC was doing exactly ten years ago? We were scampering around trying to find a lending institution that would give us a mortgage for this church because the congregation voted on January 6, 2002 (Epiphany) to purchase a building for the first time in our existence! Dwelling House S&L approved us on the day of the winter solstice, we closed on the day of the spring equinox and we had our first service the following Sunday; Easter Day (March 31)! With all those synchronicities in the dates working in our favor, we were able to start life in our first building on a very positive note!

We had to have special meetings and retreats to plan "next steps". We had to form a Transition Team to care for logistics around the timeline, finances and restructuring our committee life. We were about to go from being "nomads" in rented spaces for the previous 36 years to being "farmers" with our own property. It was a very thrilling time.

I thought it would be fun for the next three months, to include at the end of each newsletter some of the articles from the February, March and April newsletters from 2002, so we can relive the excitement and challenges of those early days. Some in our congregation were here then; others came later and have always just known us as being "here". But for all of us, it is an occasion to celebrate and be in gratitude for all we have done and are doing in this wonderful place as we commemorate our tenth anniversary in this location.

I hope you will all plan to come to our All-Church Retreat on January 21 where we will observe some of our historic milestones, and look at revising our mission statement.

(And speaking of that mortgage, it will be paid off in 2013 when we can then focus on the opportunities that will be available to us as we look to a meaningful, hope-filled future!)

PRESIDENT ' S COLUMN : *By Melissa Alcorn-Ferry*

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

When I was younger I thought the idea of making a New Year's resolution was silly. "Why wait until the new year, just do what you need to do now." Now that I have a full time job and a family the days fly past sometimes with me on auto pilot all day and night. I definitely understand now how people can get to the end of the year and realize there are a lot of changes they want to make! I feel like our retreat in January is a little like us making a New Year's resolution for ESUUC. I'm excited to hear other peoples ideas and share my own. Personally, I would like to find ways to share my spirituality more directly with my family every day. I would love to hear your New Year's resolution during refreshments. Have a safe and happy new year.



FINANCIAL NEWS: *By Marianne Jew*

The "Financial News" reports the balance of the General Fund funds relating to day-to-day operation of ESUUC:

General Fund - covers the majority of our income and expenses such as pledge contributions, building and grounds maintenance, utilities, and salaries. We are no longer reporting the estimated value of the building/land nor the outstanding mortgage principal in the monthly Financial News, although that is still being tracked and will appear on the Annual Report. This way it is easier to see how much we have to cover our Operating Expenses.

Balances (net assets) for General Fund as of 11/30/2011:

General Fund : \$ 11,501.44 (not including building/land value or outstanding mortgage)

Coming of Age/Scrip has raised \$144.75 to date selling scrip/gift cards for Giant Eagle, Panera, Target, Barnes & Noble, Applebee's, Red Lobster, Amazon, iTunes, Home Depot, American Eagle, and others - thank you to all the Book Club members and congregational members and friends who continue to purchase scrip!

Special-purpose funds such as "Chalice Lighters" and "Labyrinth" will not be reported in the monthly newsletter unless there is some specific activity of interest, but will be reported in the Annual Report. Specific questions regarding any funds or financial activity may be directed to the Treasurer. Please e-mail Marianne Jew (treasurer<at>esuuc.org) if you have any questions.



WHAT ' S HAPPENING AT ESUUC:

JOIN US AS GREAT MINDS GATHER FOR ESUUC'S ANNUAL RETREAT:

SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 9-3PM

Every January we have the fun of gathering together for a time of getting to know one another better as well as for sharing visions of our future here at East Suburban Church. This year's theme is "Mission Matters" and we will be using the opportunity to observe the tenth anniversary of being located in our lovely church building. We will go deeper into ideas of the church we can become as we find the words that will define our mission (perhaps for the next ten years!)

9:00-10:00am coffee, bagels and gathering

10:00 sharp-Annual Retreat program begins

A simple lunch will be provided by the Board. Please join us for this fun and productive time together!

JUDITH AVERS APPEARING AT FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH ON JANUARY 14

First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh has a coffeehouse music series and our talented friend Judith Avers will be singing there on Saturday, January 14 at 7:30pm! She will be performing along with another excellent and entertaining local singer/songwriter, Joy Ike.

The mission of the coffeehouse is dedicated to establishing a welcoming and meaningful space for making and listening to quality music, so we hope you will come and experience the welcome first hand.

Special Notes

** "Thanks to all those who helped put up the tree in church. Many thanks to Pat Carnahan for providing the ladder, to John Graham and Dave Schwartz for assisting with the ladder, to Brenda and Chuckie Shiring for retrieving the decorations from the attic, and to all the kids who helped decorate the tree. We truly appreciate your kindness!"*

* Save your holiday greeting cards for use next year!! We will collect the front of your greeting cards to send out as postcards next year to our service men and women. Cards with no other pen markings may be given to Brenda Shaffer-Shiring or Tabitha Riggio, or simply held until next year. Thank you!

* Since last April we have enjoyed listening to ESUUC board members and others speak at Sunday services about how this congregation has affected their lives. Now we would like to hear from you. This only needs to be a minute or two long. If you are interested in sharing at one Sunday service next month, please contact Marylyn Devlin or Dave Schwartz.

Evening Book Club

The evening Book Club is reading "Room" by Emma Donoghue

To five-year-old Jack, Room is the entire world. It is where he was born and grew up; it's where he lives with his Ma as they learn and read and eat and sleep and play. At night, his Ma shuts him safely in the wardrobe, where he is meant to be asleep when Old Nick visits.

Room is home to Jack, but to Ma, it is the prison where Old Nick has held her captive for seven years. Through determination, ingenuity, and fierce motherly love, Ma has created a life for Jack. But she knows it's not enough...not for her or for him. She devises a bold escape plan, one that relies on her young son's bravery and a lot of luck. What she does not realize is just how unprepared she is for the plan to actually work.

Told entirely in the language of the energetic, pragmatic five-year-old Jack, Room is a celebration of resilience and the limitless bond between parent and child, a brilliantly executed novel about what it means to journey from one world to another.

Discussion Date: Friday, January 13, 7 PM - Location: Brien Palmer's home

Imbolc Celebration at ESUUC

The First of February belongs to Brigid, (Brighid, Brigit, Bride,) the Celtic goddess who in later times became revered as a Christian saint. Originally, her festival on February 1 was known as Imbolc or Oimelc, two names which refer to the lactation of the ewes, the flow of milk that heralds the return of the life-giving forces of spring. Later, the Catholic Church replaced this festival with Candlemas Day on February 2, which is dedicated to the Virgin Mary and features candlelight processions. The powerful figure of Brigid the Light-Bringer overlights both pagan and Christian celebrations.

TO CELEBRATE IMBOLC TODAY . . .

This is traditionally a time of purification — clean your house!
If you have any Christmas greenery lingering, burn it now.

Make your own Brighid's crosses and hang them up,
especially in the kitchen where her influence can bless your food.

Put out food — cake, buttered bread and milk will do — outside your door:
Brighid and her cow walk through the neighborhood tonight, and will appreciate your offering.

Leave a silk ribbon on your doorstep for Brighid to bless:
It can then be used for healing purposes.

Meditate upon what you would like to see grow in health and strength this year:
for yourself, your family, your community, the Earth,
and ask for Bride's blessing upon your prayers.

We will celebrate Imbolc on Friday, January 27, 7PM, at the church. This celebration will be indoors.

You may wish to bring drums and a dish to share.

We would love to have you join us!

Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting

The Green Sanctuary Committee will be having a meeting on Sunday, January 15 after church. The purpose is to discuss where we go from here. If you are on the committee, or have an interest in it, please come – and bring your ideas! One project we do want to discuss at some length is the next Green Fair.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Begg

The Most Precious Thing: Creating Belonging

Mark your calendar. The first Adult Religious Education Session of 2012 is coming February 25 from 9:30-11 a.m. Rev. Renee Waun will discuss such questions as:

What does it mean to belong?
How do you know when you belong?
Do we have a sense of belonging in our congregation?

As well as other powerful questions that create a sense of belonging and can make an important difference in our congregation. It promises to be a challenging, provocative and stimulating series of sessions. And it's the first time we've had any adult RE in who knows how long.

Session two on Possibilities, Ownership and Dissent will follow on March 17 with the final session on Commitment and Gifts in April.

You can make a big difference by being there. A continental breakfast will be available at each session.

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS: *By Renee Waun*

LITTLE DRESSES FOR AFRICA

Hundreds of new articles of clothing—dresses and shorts—made by hand at the Ligonier Valley UU Fellowship will go with Dr. Waun to the children in Uganda when she visits the school there at the end of this month. It's great to feel the connection with another congregation in our cluster that is so supportive of the mission in Africa. Here are a few photos of volunteers making dresses out of pillow cases.





CARING AND CONCERNS: *By Nancy Ritsko*

Happy New Year--another 12 months; 52 weeks; 366 days; 8,784 hours; 527,040 minutes; and 31,622,400 seconds of: blessings, challenges, opportunities. Time. Moments. What will you do with yours? Here is something that was given to me by a custodian, Ora, when I taught at SRU. . . and I feel happy to sharing it with all of you. It's called "Take Time. . ."

"Take time to pray. . . it helps to bring God near and washes the dust of earth from your eyes. Take time for friends. . . they are the source of happiness. Take time to think. . . it is the source of power. Take time to read. . . it is the foundation of knowledge. Take time to laugh. . . it is the singing that helps with life's loads. Take time to love. . . it is the one sacrament of life. Take time to dream. . . it hitches the soul to the stars. Take time to play. . . it is the secret of youth. Take time to worship. . . it is the highway to reverence." (author unknown)

New Members: Welcome! If you have joined our family this past year, please let me know the date(s) of your birthday and anniversary. Thank you.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to: Alyssa Ruffing, Connor Warwick, Gayle Pamerleau, Heath Ferry, Julia Begg, Laurel Noe, Marilyn Devlin, Matt Mathis, Steve Ewart, and Tabitha Riggio. "May you live all the days of your life."

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY to Susan Goodis and Matt Mathis. May you enjoy your old love in your new nest.

Finally, speaking of beginnings and new nests and making memories: as of December 17th, my new address is:

4776 Doverdell Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15236-1860. My phone number and email address will remain the same. Thank you for helping to make the dream come true with your prayers, positive thoughts, and words of support and encouragement.

This column is intended to inform our "ESUUC Family" of anniversaries, birthdays, honors, illnesses, memorials, and any special events/occasions in our members' lives. As you can see by the entries, it can also serve as a forum to "stay in touch" and to help us stay connected. Since I do not attend every Sunday service, I rely on emails and phone calls to let me know what is happening so that I can share it via this column. My email address is nlrisko@hotmail.com and my phone number is (814)952-4964. Of course, you can always drop me a line at 4776 Doverdell Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15236-1860.

ESUUC CALENDAR:

Sun January 1	9:30am – 10:30am Choir Rehearsal for today's Service - ESUUC 12pm – 1pm Program Committee
Wed January 4	1pm – 2pm Wednesday Book Club - Panera's Penn Center
Fri January 13	Evening Book Club: "Room" by Emma Donoghue Brien Palmer's home
Wed January 18	1pm – 2pm Current Events Group - Paneras in Penn Ctr.
Sun January 21	9am – 3pm ESUUC all-church Retreat: "Mission Matters"
Wed February 1	1pm – 2pm Wednesday Book Club - Panera's Penn Center

SNACKS & SOCIAL HOUR:

One of the most popular Unitarian traditions is the social hour after each service. Here at ESUUC, many of us welcome the chance to enjoy some light refreshments while we discuss the service (and other things!). To ensure fairness, each member or partnered couple is assigned a week during the year to take a turn at providing those refreshments.

Please note the "light" in "light refreshments" – you don't need to provide a lunch, just a snack. And, while homemade treats are always welcome, store-bought ones are more than acceptable. If you haven't brought refreshments before, or are unfamiliar with how things are set up, you may want to come in the weekend before your turn to see how it's done. There are also instructions in the kitchen on how to use the coffeemaker and hot water pot. (Please use the small coffee pot for most services.) If you are still confused, or need assistance, contact Erica Miller at erica.miller106@gmail.com or Tabitha Riggio at tabithariggio@comcast.net. If either are at the service and you want a hand, just ask.

If you cannot bring refreshments on your assigned week, please make arrangements to switch dates with someone else who's scheduled that dates.

January Refreshments

1	SHARING SUNDAY
8	Ade Conway
15	Maryann Dent
22	Michele Devlin
29	Tom & Leona Dunnett

† CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEES :

Committee	Chair
Facilities Manager	John Graham
Caring & Concerns	Nancy Ritsko
Committee on Ministry	Gayle Pamerleau
Community Facilitators	Tabitha Riggio and Erica Miller
Social Justice	Marylyn Devlin & Judy Graham
Finance	Chris Priano & Marianne Jew
Membership	Marylyn Devlin
Music	Alan Halperin
Communications	Natalie Mendik
Religious Education	Mary Kukura-Straw
Program Committee	Brien Palmer

Newsletter	newsletter@esuuc.org - Michelle Rudnik
Calendar	calendar@esuuc.org - Leona Dunnett & Kathy Ruffing
e-Blasts	Marianne Jew

EXERPTS FROM THE FEBRUARY 2002 NEWSLETTER: HOME AT LAST

From the Pastor Renee Waun's Column-"Home At Last!"

Some of the long time members of ESUUC have learned to not hold their breath when it comes to prospects for a home of our own. Too many times we have been so close, and yet, so far. But this time, I see people not only breathing in anticipation, but folks are talking excitedly about what it will be like when we finally move into our very own church building on Sardis Road. Once called the "Blood Bought Church", the building's rough path to purchase has some members wondering if we shouldn't keep that name! Or perhaps call it the "Blood, Sweat and Tears Bought Church". Whatever your response is to the news that we will soon own a building, surely we are all celebrating a Home At Last!

From the President Andy Manhardt's Column

On January 6th we voted overwhelmingly to purchase the building on Sardis Road. The thought of having our own space after all these years of searching is a reason for great excitement and rejoicing. Now we have to get down to the business of turning that vote into a reality. The board and many of our members have been working hard to prepare and gather the documents that we need to obtain a mortgage and close the deal. It is truly amazing how much paper is required just to buy a building.

Others are starting the gathering process. We not only need to gather the funds to complete the sale and to meet our increased operating expenses in the coming years, but we need to gather each of our visions and ideas for this facility...this process will require a great deal of effort and patience...we will need the participation of each of you to staff the committees that will make all of the decisions, small and large that will turn our dreams into reality.

From the Treasurer's Column (Note: there was a lot of information about the mortgage, the Capital Campaign, the First Home Grant from the UUA, etc.)

The red brick church at 4326 Sardis Road in Murrysville has our name on it!...The home site is a level lot bounded by a bubbling brook. There's a separate welcoming area at the entrance to our new home where Sunday services will be in a spacious sanctuary with flexible seating for up to 85, supporting a greater variety of innovative programs. There's lots of space for our fledgling choir to practice and perform. Three or 4 classroom are ready-to-go for religious education for children and adults. People are excited about conducting RE, chalice circles and youth activities in the evenings in our new building where food service can come out of the kitchen!

(Note: Along with the Board, two invaluable people who researched and did the paperwork for the mortgage are Chris Priano and Nancy Fitzgerald.)