

EMERSON EMISSARY

Volume 9, Number 11

December 2008

A newsletter for Emerson Unitarian Universalist Chapel
A liberal religious voice in West St. Louis County www.emersonuuchapel.org

A Celebration of Music and Light

We find ourselves wondering again why do we get so excited about the Holiday season? Christmas decorations? Only in December food? As adults we know that this cannot be as exciting as when we were children, but there still is magic: magic of mystery, magic of waiting and of anticipation. And the music: special once-a-year music that makes the season its own.

Large helpings of this magic is celebrated in our congregation this month.

- ◆ The Madrigal Dinner returns for its Seventh Season, with the Greenleaf Singers and our own Lord and Lady of the Manor.
- ◆ The Hanging of the Greens will transform our Sanctuary into a royal Manor, with a little singing and crafting along the way.
- ◆ Our children and youth produce a play on the Buddha's path to enlightenment.
- ◆ Our services and adult RE explore the UU perspective of the holidays and how universal the themes of the season really are.

Come find your own way of celebrating the holidays.



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KRISTA'S CORNER

MINISTER'S NOTES FROM REV. KRISTA TAVES



I am often asked what Unitarian Universalists do about the holidays. We aren't Christian. We also aren't not Christian. What do we do with traditional Christmas carols? What do we do with the nativity story? What do we do with the Christ child?

Like so many people in our modern era, we take parts of the past and parts of the present and we make of Christmas something that is meaningful in the here and now.

Some see the Christmas story only as a myth. Others believe the story has true elements in it but we can't be sure what is literally true and what is not. Some of us don't really care whether the story is literally true or not. There is a deep religious, mythical or metaphorical truth in the Christmas Story. The Christmas Story is about a promise. It is about hope. It is about the power of vulnerability. It is about patience and perseverance and the ability to see a

miracle when one presents itself to you. A child is born in the most difficult of circumstances, and that child changes the world forever. It is a story of hope and possibility, a story our battered world needs so badly. That child isn't superhuman. That child can't cure the whole world. But, that child carried a message to help others live better lives in service to the world and its people.

The message of Christmas is not that some grand king or hero saves the world from its ills. The message is that each of us has the Christ child inside us and we can give birth to it, we can be reborn into it, day by day. We do this when we live beyond ourselves. We do this when we live for the world and its people.

So what do we do about Christmas then? We sing the carols and the words mean something different to every one of us. We read the Scriptures, and each of us hears them in a slightly different way. And, we celebrate Christmas Eve. It is a wonderful tradition that means so much to us.

The biggest truth is that anyone can live out the promise of that child. No one ever expected anything to come out of Nazareth, but that's where the promise came from. We're all in

Nazareth, which means we all have the same possibilities and the same promise.

Blessings to you and yours,
Krista.



Rev. Taves Office Hours

Available by appointment:
Dec. 1-7: We Th Sa Su
Dec. 8-14: We Th Sa Su
Dec. 15-21: We Th Su
Dec. 22-29: We

Rev. Taves' weekend is all of Monday and Tuesday until 4 pm.

Pastoral Care Rev. Taves is available for emergency pastoral care during the Holiday season. She can be reached at 417-343-8657, or 519-825-7671.

For regular pastoral care, please contact the Care and Concern Committee through the Church Office
(office@emersonuuchapel.org)

BETH'S DESK

Chapel Administrator's Notes - Beth Harmon

New Office Hours
M,Tu,Th,F: 8:30 - 12:30

In September this generous congregation donated a total of \$208.73 for Circle of Concern. Also on Association Sunday we donated \$249.66 to denominational programs. In October we welcomed nine new visitors.

Beth is requesting that members and friends keep her updated of their current phone, address and e-mail to be ready for the next update of the Chapel Directory.

Beth can be contacted by calling the chapel office at: 636-256-7393 or by e-mail at: office@emersonuuchapel.org

Emerson Emissary

Serving the members and friends of Emerson Unitarian Universalist Chapel. Editor: Tom Kibby

All submissions are due by the 18th of each month. All groups are requested to send their meeting notices monthly to ensure their accuracy. Send to: newsletter@emersonuuchapel.org

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LINDA'S LINES

President's Notes from Linda McAffrey



This is my 6th column which means we are half way through the church year. Where does the time go? We have had great programming this fall and as always all of the components of worship are first rate. Now comes the... but on the other side of the coin...how does this all happen? Volunteers are the life blood of this congregation. In fact, volunteers are the life blood of any congregation and we have begun to run some of our members dry of the lifeblood...or worse out the door.

I am not trying to be dramatic but, we have come to a place in our community life where we will have to take a look at when we will really want to have our church doors open for events. There is no doubt we have great Sunday morning programming and if that is all we want we can probably go on forever just as we are...but, if we want to do more and be more... each of us will need to find

what it is we are willing to give. For a change, I'm not talking about money, although it is always needed and appreciated. This time I am asking you to consider giving of your time. All of the committees need your help. It usually means one meeting a month and a commitment to help with some of the programming of that particular group. Care and Concern is definitely in need of volunteers. RE is always in need of someone to be the second person in class with our precious young people...it really is only a matter of an hour once in a while.

Here is the key, if we want to be a church community we all have to give of our resources. We get so used to being able to just write the extra check...guess what, this time we really need you! We need you to be a part of the whole church experience. Come give of yourself...your talents...your leadership... your manual labor ability... because if we all lend a hand it will be so much easier for all of us and we will be able to enjoy our beloved community with our whole self.

Linda McAffrey

A Month of Sundays

December 7 – “Three Jewels, Four Truths, and Eight Steps”

Emerson RE Committee.

This Sunday is our annual Religious Education Holiday Program, in which the children and youth of the RE Program offer insight into the many ways to celebrate this time of year. Our focus for 2008 is Boddhi Day, honoring the anniversary of the Buddha's enlightenment, featuring a skit written by Emerson's own Susan Stafford.

Musician: Ron McGowan, piano

Adult RE: Rev. Krista Taves: “Buddhism and Unitarian Universalism”

December 14 “The Things We Want To Do Right”

Rev. Krista Taves. [Youth Pew]

We all have an innate need to see ourselves as moral beings, making strong choices for the good of our lives and the good of our world. How can we be sure we're

doing that? Life is so complicated, and sometimes there isn't a wrong or a right. There's just doing the best you can, knowing that nothing can or ever will be perfect.

Musician: Leon Burke III, vocals

Adult RE: Leigh English, leading a discussion on Business Ethics

December 21 “A Time of Waiting”

Rev. Krista Taves

Waiting for the sun to return. Waiting for a lamp to burn out of oil. Waiting for Christmas morning to open presents. Waiting for a child to be born. This is a season of waiting, which make this a very special time, for one must be emptied to be filled.

Musician: Camille Herman, soprano

Adult RE: Rev. Krista Taves: “The Spiritual Discipline of Waiting”

December 24 "Finding Nazareth”

(*4:30 PM)

Rev. Krista Taves

This will be a traditional family service with music, poetry, Scripture, and an uplifting Christmas message. Childcare is provided.

Musician: Ron McGowan, piano

December 28 Annual Pancake Breakfast

10:30 - 12:00

(No worship service or religious education)
Worship Committee

Come enjoy breakfast, conversation, and fellowship with other Emerson members and friends. Children of all ages welcome. Hosted by the Worship Committee.

New Service Time!
All Services begin at
10:00 AM
Summer and Fall

Administration

TREASURY NOTES

• Our Endowment Fund was begun by a bequest from a charter member on his death (Jer VanNatta), and is currently building its principle. Several gifts have been made to it since its inception.

• Grocery Certificate Fund originally had some building maintenance fund, but has now been used (last year's needed deferred maintenance, and recently the repair of A/C unit this summer).

• Time-limited Restricted Funds, like Youth Funds for CON or our Charity of the Month, sit in general operating until paid out. These generally are used within a single fiscal year.

• If you have questions, please come to a finance committee meeting (next meeting is December 10 at 6:30 PM at the Chapel) or a board meeting (generally third SUN at 12:30, check the calendar for Dec), or stop Treasurer Barb Brown any Sunday to have a conversation (she can often be found in the office, or with our youth), or one of the finance committee co-chairs Russ Saphian or Dwight Miller.

*In faith,
Barb Brown,
Treasurer*

Money Matters October 31, 2008

Pledge Income	\$52,099.25
Total All Income	\$58,414.68
Total Expenses	\$66,106.68
Bal. All Accounts 10/31/08	\$32,823.56

THE IMPORTANCE OF A PURPOSE

A beacon of hope can not be seen if it is past the horizon. We need to look past the horizon. "If you don't know where you are going any road will take you there."

Creating a purpose statement identifies a picture of success that has been created by a group of people so they can create a deliberate future and not have a future by default. The importance of a Purpose (mission) statement is:

- It keeps a group aligned on their goals.
- It lets them say no to opportunities that do not support their goals.
- It galvanizes their resources, time talent and treasures, so they are not wasted.
- It attracts other people that share the same purpose.
- It allows them to move forward with confidence when deciding what should be done next.

• It creates a bond that is necessary for the successful achievement of their goals.

• It guides all decisions within each area of ministry, religious education, social outreach and community.

• A noble purpose is motivating and gratifying to those who share the purpose.

• Without it we are only a ship without a compass – just floundering.

• Without it Emerson cannot provide its members with what they are seeking from an affiliation with this church.

• A purpose clarifies what needs to be done NOW and in the FUTURE.

• A shared purpose increases the probability of success.

Please help us see what you see as the purpose(mission) of Emerson now and in the future.

Pam Foresman

Events

HEAR YE! HEAR YE

Emerson's 7th Annual Elizabethan Evening

Friday & Saturday,
December 12 & 13, 2008

Featuring the Greenleaf Singers & the St. Louis Recorder Society.

Friday's Lord & Lady are
(??? a TBA surprise!)
Saturday's Lord & Lady are
Andrew & Melissa Grizzle

Tickets on sale NOW - \$40/
person. Saturday is nearly
sold out. Still good seats left
on Friday.

Order forms are available at
church or on our website.

We STILL need servers and
people to help set-up/clean-
up. If you can help, please
contact Camille Herman,
Director at
Madrigal@EmersonUUChapel.org.

HANGING OF THE GREENS

Friday, December 5th
6:30-9:00 PM

This Emerson tradition
takes the everyday
sanctuary and turns it into a
festive space for the
holidays (and the
Madrigal!).

We need adults to help
decorate the sanctuary and
vestibule with greenery.
Evening will end with hot
drinks and singing. Rev.
Krista will accompany
on the piano.

CIRCLE SUPPERS

Next Circle Suppers are
Jan 9/10. Join the fun by
filling out a form in the
Hearth Room & placing in
the basket, or e-mailing
Circle@emersonuuchapel.org

Circle Suppers are held on
the 2nd or 3rd weekend of
the month. Generally 4-8
people plus the host(s)
participate in each location
The Host(s) (at their home
or at Emerson) - provides
the Entree. Guests choose
to bring either an appetizer,
salad, or dessert,
sometimes bread
You do not have to host to
participate. Singles are
welcomed along with
couples. There are family
suppers for those with
children/or who enjoy dining
with children

WEDNESDAY DAYTIMERS CLUB TO BEGIN IN JANUARY.

On November 19, 2008, 21
members and friends of
Emerson Chapel met for a
wonderful soup and
sandwich lunch, followed by
a conversation with Rev.
Taves. We had such a great
time we decided to do this
every month! Beginning in
January, the Daytimers Club
will meet on the third
Wednesday of the month
from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Bring
your own bag lunch and Rev.
Taves will bring a topic for
discussion.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

December 7 - Buddhism and
Unitarian Universalism. In
recent decades, many
Unitarian Universalists have
found great affinity between
Buddhism and Unitarian
Universalism and have
incorporated Buddhism into
their spiritual practice. We'll
explore what it means for
Unitarian Universalists to
walk down the "eight fold
path" of Buddhism.

December 21 – The Spiritual
Discipline of Waiting. In her
book, "Seven Spiritual Gifts
of Waiting" Holy W.
Whitcomb looks at the act of
waiting as a treasure that
can bring so much into our
lives. We'll be doing the
same in our class.

CAROLE BEHRER'S ART ON DISPLAY

The Emerson Aesthetics
Committee is pleased to
announce the Winter art
exhibit: "Carole Behrer -
Traditional Folk Artist."
Carole is an Emerson
member whose art is
traditional Scherenschnitte,
German Papercutting, in
False-grained frames. The
papercuttings are painted in
watercolor and tell stories
with whimsical themes. The
exhibit will hang in the
Sanctuary January 18
through February 15. You
may see examples of
Carole's art at [http://
www.bestofmissourihands.c
om/carolebehrer.htm](http://www.bestofmissourihands.com/carolebehrer.htm).



BREAD SERVICE, AND 100 BAGS PROJECT

After the traditional Bread Service, Emerson rolls up their sleeves and dons gloves for a fun hour of making food bags for the homeless.



Of many Emersonians that pitched in, pictured here are (clockwise from upper left) Becky Lancaster with Bella and Lilly; Dane James and Gage; again with dad Greg Keller; and Marilyn Ortinau.

RE VIEW

Dear Emerson UU
Religious Education
Families,

We have a rich and varied congregation! On November 16, our Junior Youth Group surveyed the congregation about our beliefs. Our Sanctuary was so full that day that we ran out of Orders of Service, so not everyone filled out a survey. But we had 41 respondents, and I think we can safely say they are representative of our congregation as a whole. We first asked about the faiths in which people had grown up. About half grew up Protestant, and another third grew up Catholic. We had four lifetime Unitarian Universalists. We asked the age at which people had begun to question their religious background, if they had ever done so. Of those who answered that question, 9 were younger than their teen years when they started having questions, 16 were teens, four were between 20 and 50 years of age, and two were over fifty. This piece of information alone is fascinating! As UU's, how can we better reach out to teens, the age at which so many start questioning their religious upbringing? Of our respondents, almost half had tried another faith, other than the religion of their upbringing and Unitarian Universalism. We are a congregation of seekers.

Of course the most intriguing question was about current beliefs. The survey offered a number of options, and invited respondents to check off as many as applied. On average, people checked off between two and three choices. The most popular selections were Mysticism (17) and Humanism (16), closely followed by Agnosticism (15) and "God is Nature" (14). "Ethical Christianity," defined as "Jesus and the Bible are my basic teachings for living," came in fifth with 10. Paganism had six checks and Christianity, defined as "Jesus is a unique revelation of God," had five. Three people selected Atheism, two wrote in Buddhism, and one person each responded as Jewish, Theist, Pantheist, and "Multiple."

These results make it all the more clear why the course "Engaging our Theological Diversity" is so important for Unitarian Universalists. We have a remarkable diversity of thought and belief, and yet, as Unitarian Universalists, we share so many values. One of our most important values is religious tolerance and our respect for each individual's search for truth and meaning. It is fascinating to see the different paths we have chosen, and yet we still find ourselves here at Emerson on Sunday mornings.

*In Peace,
Lauren Lyerla
Director of Religious
Education*

YOUTH INTERFACE

Notes for and about our Youth (Senior High)

Last month, our Senior Youth Group attended the district's fall youth conference (Fall CON) in Palatine, IL. We had a large group attending: 9 youth and 3 advisors. From all reports, it was a great weekend, and our youth returned having made new friends and reconnected with old friends.

November's Youth Pew saw huge turnout of people of all ages. Krista spoke about "Staying on the Ground: Even When It's Moving" to a packed house – including several guest youths from Eliot, who even stayed for the Religious Education hour. That same week the youth group had an astoundingly successful bake sale to cover a shortfall in travel funds. Immense thanks to all who baked and all who bought, and special thanks to the Sweet Success team who organized and publicized the sale!

Upcoming events include a visit from Faith Aloud's Autumn Romer, who will help prepare our youth for participation in Faithful Presence (formerly Peaceful Presence), supporting reproductive justice on the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, in January.

The big event of the spring will be Spring CON, held at Eliot Chapel in Kirkwood, April 17 – 19, and co-hosted by Eliot and our own Emerson Sr. Youth Group. Planning is already underway to make this a successful and enjoyable youth conference.

In peace,
-Lauren

RE Sunday Schedule

- 10:00 – 11:00
Worship hour
- Younger children leave sanctuary about halfway through, for Children's Chapel in the Hearth Room.
- 11:00 All-church social time, coffee and snacks available
- 11:15 – 12:15
Religious Education hour for young people preschool – high school
- 11:30 – 12:15 Adult Religious Education "hour"
- Nursery care available all morning, 10:00 - 12:15
- See our Web page for more details; <http://www.emersonuuchapel.org/education.shtml>

Upcoming RE Events

December 5: Hanging of the Greens: decorating, singing, who knows what else?

December 14: Youth Pew

December 21 After Service, an all-church social action project.

Jan 11: Faith Aloud representative visit

April 17-19: Spring Con

Religious Education Hour for Children and Youth: December 2008

December 7

PreK: Winter brings changes to our Earth

K – 2nd: Lent: A time to help others

3 – 5th: Exploring the Biblical creation story..

Junior Youth Group (6th – 8th): Conflict resolution in the style of King David and King Solomon.

Senior Youth: Roger Baldwin, Founder of the ACLU: how his Unitarian values informed his life

December 14

PreK: Different religions celebrate different holidays

K – 2nd: Hanukkah, a time for freedom of worship.

3 – 5th: Hanukkah

Junior Youth (6 – 8): Isaiah, tied into UN Sunday

Senior Youth: Following Youth Pew, Rev. Krista Taves will lead class, and discuss her sermon topic in greater depth.

December 21

After the Worship Service, Preschoolers through High Schoolers work on a social justice project.

December 28

No worship service and no religious education classes: pancake breakfast, all ages, instead. (Note: no nursery childcare this week – bring infants and toddlers to breakfast!)

FROM THE RE COMMITTEE

Thank you to everyone who volunteers their time and effort to work with the youth at Emerson as a teacher or assistant in our RE classes. Your work is greatly appreciated and you are making a difference in our children's lives.

This next semester we will again have the opportunity for more teaching positions. Please consider sharing your gifts with the youth at Emerson and help to become another positive influence for our children attending RE.

Thank you

Greg Keller
RE Committee Chair

Unitarian Universalist "Six Sources"

- Transcending mystery and wonder
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men
- Wisdom from the world's religions
- Jewish and Christian teachings
- Humanist teachings
- Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions

Bulletin Board

Kudos This Month Go To:

All who helped make the Book Sale a Success:

- ★Dorothy Newell (and her assistants Becky, Bella and Lilly Lancaster)
- ★Carol, Jo, Caroline, Tom, Jeff, Barb, Linda, Phyllis, Pat, Pam, Leigh, Charles & Victor, James Lyerla
- ★Our efforts netted \$279 for the Chapel!

Green Thoughts

Looking for some fun this holiday season? Try making your own gift wrap. It can be fun, inexpensive, eco-friendly, and a great project to do with kids of all ages.

For the wrapping paper, try stamping or stenciling plain brown paper. Stamps and stencils and different colors of ink are readily available at any craft store. (While you are there, pick up a glue gun so you will be ready for the trimmings below).

You can also make homemade stencils from any firm fruit such as apples or pears. Cut the fruit in half, dip in paint or ink, and voila!

One suggestion with stamping and stenciling: you may want to decorate after wrapping in order to choose the exact placement of the stamps on the package.

Homemade bows are relatively easy to make and many websites offer step-by-step instructions on how to tie a variety of bows. Wired ribbon holds its shape better than flat ribbon, but either will work. Wider ribbon also tends to look better than more slender ribbon.

Now is the time for that glue gun. Finish off your packages with natural trims such as pine needles, twigs, winterberry berries, or holly leaves and/or berries.

Wrapping a gift in white butcher paper and a white bow with one of these natural trims makes an elegant gift. For a gift with an old yule flair, use fruits or nuts as a natural trim. For items you do not wish to glue, use floral wire. Happy Holidays!

Susan Stafford

Circle of Concern

Emerson Chapel will be supporting the Circle of Concern food pantry as an ongoing project this church year. We will be collecting food items on a continuing basis, concentrating on a particular type of food each week. The suggested item will be announced in the weekly email of what's happening at Emerson this week, and in the announcements in the Order of Service. Let's get together to make this happen; get your children involved, and on occasion, some of us (including youth) can go to the Circle to help bag items for the needy families.

To get started, the first item to bring on Dec 7 is usually first on the menu—soup. Stay tuned for the next week's item!

Kudos also go to:

- ★Janie & Walt Fowler and Denise & Patrick Livingston for hosting our first Circle Suppers.
- ★Members of the Emerson Singers for their dedication in preparing music for the Bread Service
- ★Newsletter Editor, Tom Kibby, Webmistress, Barb Brown, & TWAE Editor Camille Herman for keeping us informed
- ★Marcy Saphian for her glorious Art Show
- ★The Grocery Certificate Committee
- ★Carol Jose, Dorothy Newell & Jo Myers for coffee, greeters & flowers on Sunday morning.
- ★Jo Myers, Marcy Saphian and Carol Jose for preparing a wonderful Legacy Luncheon
- ★The Finance Committee for its diligence and hard work. The way is not clear but a path is clearing!

DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1 7P* Womyn's Web	2	3	4 7P Spiritual Journey CG	5 Hanging of the Greens 6:30-9 PM	6
7 Service 10AM Intergenerational Holiday Program	8 7P* M&Ms CG	9 1:30-3:30P* Wise Women 6:30P Living the Journey-Emerson	10	11	12 MADRIGAL DINNER	13 MADRIGAL DINNER
14 Service 10AM Rev. Taves "The Things We Want To Do Right" 12:30 Board Meets	15	16	17 7P Finance Cmte	18	19	20
21 Service 10AM Rev. Taves "A Time of Waiting"	22	23	24 Service 4:30PM Rev. Taves "Finding Nazareth"	25	26	27
28 10 AM Pancake Breakfast	29	30	31			

All events occur at Emerson unless noted with an *
Child care may be provided to any Emerson Sponsored event, please call the Chapel office.
Confirm with Covenant Group (CG) leader for meeting location and time.

Upcoming events:

- Feb. 8: Beacon of Hope Evening
- April 17-19 Youth Con, Eliot Chapel

EMERSON EMISSARY

Congregation established 1994

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