



# The Leaf

July / Aug 2009

The Newsletter of the First Universalist Church  
of New Madison, Ohio, a Unitarian Universalist Congregation

## Sunday Services 10 AM

**July 5: Richard Venus**

**July 12: Nancy Bowen**

**July 19: Richard Venus**

**July 26: Chris Benek**

**August 9: Derek Parker**

**August 16: Chuck Thomas**

**August 23: Nancy Bowen**

**August 30: Richard Venus**

## Upcoming Events

### **FISH Offering Sundays**

July 5 & August 9

### **Food and Fellowship**

July 5 & August 9

Lunch at Ft. Black Buffet after Sunday services! All are invited.

### **Annual Congregational Meeting**

Everyone is welcome!  
July 19, after the service

### **Board of Directors Meetings**

Everyone is welcome!  
August 18, 7 PM

## Richard's Reflections

### Finding Peace

Some believe we must struggle for peace. In February 1997, six men and women walked into the shipyard at Bath, Maine took hammers to a navy destroyer's control panel and poured their blood on it. Philip Barrigan was one of those, known as the Plowshares Six. He and his five friends were sentenced from six to 27 months in jail for this act of civil disobedience. Fr. Barrigan, who died of cancer in 2002, spent about 10 years all toll in prison for his peace activities. He knew many considered him part of the theater of the absurd and few followed him. Its true the world is more armed now than before he and his friends began, and they certainly did not stop us from killing each other in war. These few souls, however, helped us focus our hearts and minds on the realities behind what they have done, which we might otherwise have ignored.

Theirs is a way of peacemaking on behalf of all of us.

I am reminded of another way, in words from Lao-Tse: peace begins within. Finding peace is not a project of self-improvement nor is it a way to be released from the troubles and pains of life. Peace comes by giving it time to be discovered and nurtured and by living in a way that fosters it, living a life of integrity and love and quietude.

Peace is an act of the heart. It is that sense of finding love tugging at us to open our selves—if only a little--to another living being, or toward an entire community or nation: It is the experience of finding ourselves acting in another person's interest. Sometimes the act comes first, and then a particle of love will follow.

It seems that many of us are searching for a kind of serenity that will blanket the warring, confusion, suffering that seems to be in abundance in our lives and in the communities near and far.

Perhaps that is what needs be central in the gathering of folks in our sanctuary on Sunday mornings—a sense of peace that does not ignore the pain the world knows, but guides our living in the midst of the too abundant strife.

## Celebrating 150 Years

At one time there were Universalist Churches in Greenville, Palestine, New Paris, Eldorado, and New Madison. Of these, only the Eldorado and New Madison Churches are active today.

The Universalist Church began in 1857 when The Rev. Henry Gifford was asked to come to New Madison to serve this religious fellowship. His work was great and he organized a Church in 1859 with 34 charter members. The First Universalist Church in New Madison, Ohio held its first organizational meeting May 8, 1859, electing three trustees and one Clerk to serve as officers of the Association.

June 9, 1859 the trustees of The First Universalist Church purchased 75/100 acre of land from John B. and Malinda Shriver for the sum of \$75.00. On this land, the first Church building, a 40' by 60' frame structure was constructed and dedicated in January 1860.

At a business meeting held March 10, 1900, the question whether the Church should be repaired or a new one built was first discussed, but nothing definite was done. At a meeting held March 11, 1900, a committee of four members was appointed to solicit funds for building a new Church. The Church had 82 members at this time and a total of 181 current and/or former members signed pledge statements to provide financing for the new Church.

The cost of the new Church was \$6,846.47, of which the Ladies Aid Society contributed \$1,400.00. However, during the dedication ceremony December 29, 1901, a financial report was given indicating \$1,735.40 was still needed to cover the total cost. The Rev. Dr. J. S. Cantrell, the speaker for the ceremony, went to the task of soliciting funds and after the dinner hour a total of \$1750.40 had been raised, meaning the Church was dedicated free of debt, much to the relief of all concerned.

In November 1938, the Church was forced to close its doors as a result of the depression and the general movement of people away from the farms and villages to the larger cities, yet, the Church School continued to meet for several years. During this time the Church Board continued to meet and the Ladies' Social Union served the community for twelve more years.

Early in the 1950's The American Legion attempted to purchase the Church Building. This caused the remaining Universalist members to again revive themselves, and Mary Goodyear was appointed Chairman of a Committee to solicit pledges to reopen the Church. An Appeal Letter, dated December 18, 1952 was sent by Mary Goodyear. This appeal worked and on January 1953 the Church was reopened.

A Centennial celebration was held in 1959 while Reverend Wells E. Behee was our minister. The program for the celebration was written by Mrs. Elsie Newhall, mother of Mary Behee. Mrs. Newhall wrote the original script for a play describing the history of the Church. Members of the congregation enacted the play. The Church was filled with old-time members, friends, and visitors from several states.

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We held our 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration November 12, 1989 while Reverend Raymond Michel was our minister. As late as a couple weeks prior to the celebration our research for historical information had revealed very little. At that time, Herb Ketring mentioned checking the lock box at the bank. Upon checking the lock box a large amount of hand written documents were found, too much to process for the celebration. Kenneth Baker took the material, transcribed the hand written documents, and in 1994 printed a "History of the New Madison Unitarian-Universalist Church." A lot of the preceding information was gathered from these documents.

The quilt that is now on display in the Church is an item we knew little about. It had been in the possession of Olive (Banfill) Wright for many years. Upon her death, her daughter called Reverend Michel and asked what to do with the Quilt? Until then no one knew anything about the quilt. The inscription on the quilt reads "Presented to Rev. Lotta D. Crosley, Apr. 14, 1887, by the Ladies of New Madison."

Plans are underway for our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration December 13, 2009. Our Heartland District Executive, Lisa Presley, has agreed to be our keynote speaker. Keep in touch for further announcements while our celebration agenda is finalized.

#### **JULY BIRTHDAYS:**

2 Pat Lipps  
2 Barbara Hamelberg  
9 Leo Williams  
13 Chris Price  
17 Roberta Feltman  
20 Janet Cassity  
22 Nanette Fritsche  
29 Emerson Behee  
31 Dick Brooks

#### **JULY ANNIVERSARIES:**

3 Wayne & Mary Evelyn  
Geeting

#### **AUGUST BIRTHDAYS:**

1 Dave Feltman  
7 Wyatt Ketring  
10 Jeanette Burns  
15 Rachel Buccicone  
23 Byron Rutan  
26 Jan Price  
27 Richard Venus  
29 Vicki McMahon

#### **AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES:**

5 John & Sue Searls  
19 Wells & Mary Behee  
25 Fred & Margaret Meyer  
30 Mike & Margaret Buccicone

