



The Leaf

Mar / Apr 2009

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

Sunday Services 10 AM

Mar. 1: Beth Payne

Mar. 8: Mildred Smith

Mar. 15: Richard Venus

Mar. 22: Derek Parker

Mar 29: Nancy Bowen

**Apr 5: Richard Venus, Union
Service with Eldorado**

Apr 12: Richard Venus

Apr 19: Derek Parker

Apr 26: Richard Venus

Upcoming Events

FISH Offering Sundays
March 1 & April 5

Food and Fellowship
March 1

Lunch at Ft. Black Buffet af-
ter Sunday services! All are
invited.

Board of Directors Meetings
Everyone is welcome!

March 17, 7 PM
April 21, 7 PM

Spring Cleaning
April 4, 9 AM

Union Service with Eldorado
April 5
Pitch-in brunch following ser-
vice

Richard's Reflections

My colleague David Blanchard writes, "I believe, as surely as I believe anything, that in this life, everything is possible. That is not to say that we will have everything we want, or need, or deserve, but that our souls, the most essential and real dimension of our being, are not confined by the restrictions of the past or the limits of the imagined future. Sometimes that means we live, simply, in hope and trust that the time of renewal, of rebirth, is yet to come. But that it will come if we are alive and aware and receptive. We have been created to be free. We have been created to know joy. We have been created to love. We were not made to be exiles."

I have held on to hope during the past years of the Bush presidency, in face of his horrendous leadership and destructive decisions. As I write, we are about to install a new President. On him, much has been laid. With him, I sense a kind of caring and compassion that will guide him, not the greed and drive for power that drove the last eight years of the White House reign. He gives me reason to hold out hope.

Disorder and malfeasance is behind us now. It is time to give birth to the new. Hope lives in our souls, and is present sometimes only in the tiniest of measure, the very still voice within to give us the strength to carry on. We are a tiny congregation, few in number, but we are enough to bring hope where it is least known. We do it with our support for the UU Service Committee, the FISH program, the Harvest Sounds concert, and our upcoming effort to help the Children Without project. That is part of what it means to be a religious community.

A word of thanks to all who gave so generously during our recent Guest at Your Table campaign. Your gifts will be used to advance human rights and social justice in the US and around the world. This program, guided by the UU Service Committee, brings clean water to villages where the people have known water born diseases for years. It brings relief to people whose homes and entire cities have been destroyed by earthquake and flood. It works to provide law, order, and civil liberties to places where the democratic process is in its infancy and struggling to survive. First Universalist Church of New Madison can be justly proud of the measure of giving it offers to assist those in need.

A Tribute to Joe (1921-2009)

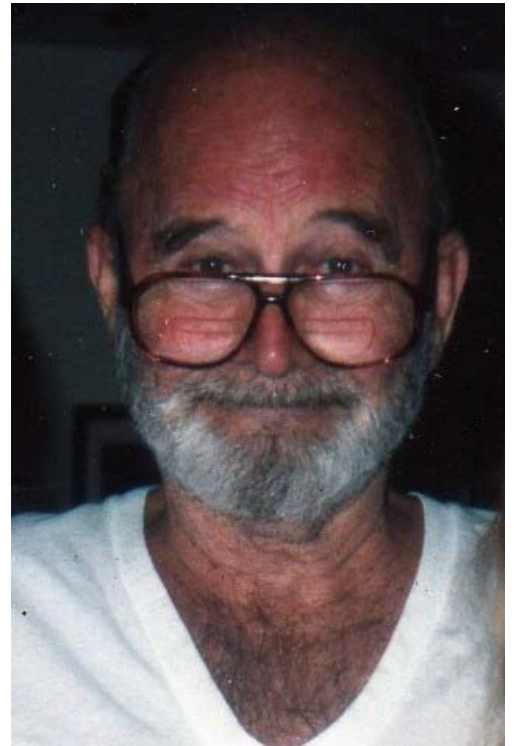
If you spent even a few minutes with Joe Lipps, you couldn't miss the twinkle in his eye. Ask his three daughters (Nanette, Paula, and Linda) about Joe, and the adjectives roll right out: kind, funny, smart, ornery, family man. If you talk to Pat, Joe's wife and life partner of over 60 years, you'll learn of a man with a stubborn streak and a heart of gold, a man who was simply crazy about his family and extended family and who had an extra soft spot for his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Church members love to share remembrances of Joe, and oh, the stories. Joe was at the core of church life for decades and we are all going to miss him.

Born and raised in New Madison, Joe returned to New Madison following World War II. He met Pat at a barn dance and immediately asked her for a date the next night. Pat describes the two of them as being a good match because they were both so stubborn. As she relays this observation, Pat's smile has a twinkle of its own.

It was Pat who first came to church at First Universalist. She would come home and tell Joe about the services and finally he decided to come see for himself what she was talking about. Thus began Joe's long relationship with the First Universalist Church of New Madison. It was a relationship he treasured. Linda says, "The church meant a lot to Dad for a very long time and he loved all the people associated with it. I love the fact that he walked, Paula, Nan and me down the aisle of that church."

Joe didn't just love the church; he worked tirelessly on its behalf. The Reverend Ray Michel was minister, friend, and co-conspirator with Joe. Ray describes that even as church president for many years, Joe "never was embroiled in one serious conflict or confrontation. He handled things diplomatically and congenially. As we grew in numbers and faced many changes, Joe was personally involved in every development and performed wisely." According to Ray, Joe spent hour after hour at the church, actively involved in one situation after another. Many years after his joining the church and becoming so involved, Pat good naturedly said to Ray, "A long time ago I told you I did not think I could ever get my husband to attend the church services. I now need your advice once more. How do I now get him to spend less time on church matters and more time at home?" And yet, ask Pat today what she and Joe enjoyed doing together and she'll pause to think about it, look you in the eye, and then say, "we loved coming to church together."

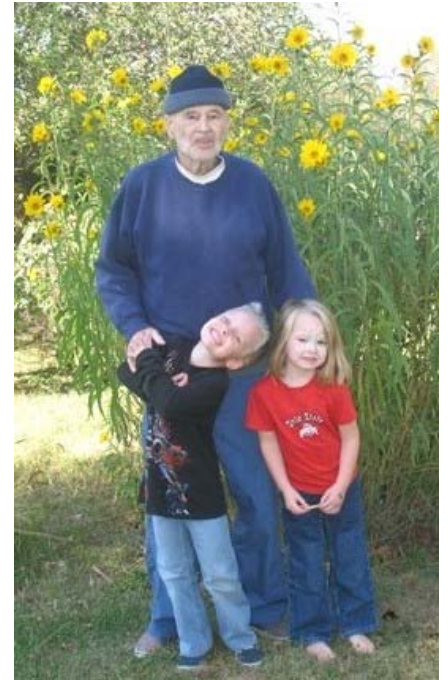
While Joe may have been a small-town boy, he had an expansive view of the world and the people in it. Joe *believed* in the dignity and worth of every person and he practiced that belief in his everyday life. Paula describes her dad as kind-hearted, "even to a total stranger and it was a plus if the stranger looked homeless." From this, Joe's daughters learned not to judge a book by its cover. Nanette adds that her dad taught them all so much just by example. He also knew how to be a great friend. She learned that "you do not need an overabundance of friends, just a few good ones." Memories of times spent with the Ketrings and the Michels feature prominently in family stories along with memories of vacations and fishing (and ending up in the lake) and laughter. He didn't think summer was officially over until he cajoled some/all of the family out into the yard for a picture in front of the yellow-flowering bush.



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For those of us at First Universalist, our lives have been enriched by Joe Lipps. In his later years, Joe no longer climbed up on the church roof for repairs and he allowed his son-in-law Charles to take over stewardship of our fine old church building, but Joe's attentions to the church never flagged. He asked insightful questions in congregations meetings. He made newcomers feel welcome. He added "spark" to whatever he did. Thanks, Joe. You may have left this life, but you haven't left our hearts.



Music Lovers, Take Note

Treat yourself: good music and a good price...free. Our very own Margaret Schryver plays flute/piccolo in each concert listed except the Ruckman piano duo. If you've gone to any of the previous concerts, you know that Margaret's recommendations always feature fine musicianship.

Sunday March 8, 2 pm
Sinclair Wind Symphony, Sinclair Youth Wind Ensemble
Blair Hall Theater, Building 2, Sinclair Campus, downtown Dayton

Saturday March 14, 8 pm
Ruckman Piano Duo (Robert & Tiraja Ruckman)
Blair Hall Theater, Building 2, Sinclair Campus, downtown Dayton

Sunday March 15, 1:30 pm
Zeta Chi Flute Choir
Dayton Art Institute Renaissance Auditorium

Monday March 16, 7:30 pm
Sinclair Concert Band
Blair Hall Theater, Building 2, Sinclair Campus, downtown Dayton

Sunday April 26, 2 pm
Sinclair Wind Symphony, Sinclair Concert Band, Sinclair Youth Wind Ensemble, featuring guest composer/conductor Brant Karrick
Blair Hall Theater, Building 2, Sinclair Campus, downtown Dayton

Wednesday April 29, 7:30 pm
Sinclair Wind Symphony
Miamisburg, church to be announced

UUSC Honors First Universalist

New Madison First Universalist church raised \$635.00 for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) during last fall's Guest at Your Table campaign. As a result, the UUSC presented a "Creating Justice Banner 2008" certificate to the congregation, "in honor of exceptionally generous congregational support for the UUSC's human rights and social justice work." Congregation members are proud to support the work of the UUSC in the United States and around the world.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS:

- 1 Mary Behee
- 1 Dede Wissman
- 5 Bea Lawrence
- 6 Kenny Baker
- 16 Marion Moeckel
- 18 Miranda Hamelberg
- 29 Matt Searls
- 31 Deetra Huntington

MAR ANNIVERSARIES:

- 7 Doyle & Jeannette Burns
- 20 Joe & Pat Lipps
- 22 Richard & Nanette Fritsche
- 26 Jeff & Karyl Parks

APRIL BIRTHDAYS:

- 1 Shea Huntington
- 5 Mike Buccicone
- 10 Rich Fritsche
- 17 Jon Ketring
- 22 Gretchen Price
- 28 Mary Evelyn Geeting

Give a Book; Build a Library

Please look around your bookshelves for books that you might be able donate to SafeHaven of Darke County. SafeHaven's mission is to provide educational, social, and vocational service opportunities to any adult in need of mental health support. In keeping with their mission, SafeHaven is creating a library and welcomes donations of books suitable for their members. Bring a book (or books) to church on **Sunday, March 8th**, when our guest speaker is Mildred Smith of Safe Haven. If you can't be in church that Sunday, bring books any time over the next few weeks and we'll be sure to pass them along. Our library contributions will continue the church's relationship with SafeHaven, which was the beneficiary of the latest Harvest Sounds concert in November, 2008.



Thanks, Lori

Lori Shows has just wrapped up her 6-month special assignment as Religious Education Director. With her daughter Hannah's help, Lori put together an innovative and enjoyable children's RE program. Thanks, Lori. We'll do our best to keep the program going.

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Read The Leaf online
www.uuchurchnm.org