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# NUUSLETTER

NORTHWOODS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

*A Beacon of Light in the Northwoods*

P.O. Box 253, Minocqua, WI 54548 <http://www.newnorth.net/~beckratz/nuuf/>

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## Coming Sundays

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**Sunday**, October 17, 10:30 AM, Philosophy and Religion in the Modern World, Lecture 5: "Plotinus: Neoplatonism and the Ultimate Unity of All."

**Sunday**, October 24, 10 AM, Mary Ann Fields.

**Sunday**, October 31, 10:30 AM, Philosophy and Religion in the Modern World, Lecture 6: "The Jewish Scriptures: Life with the God of Israel."

**Sunday**, November 7, 10 AM, Sister Ann Wittman, Spirituality: a New Buzz Word.

**Sunday**, November 14, 10:30 AM, Philosophy and Religion in the Modern World, Lecture 7: "Platonist Philosophy and Scriptural Religion."

**Sunday**, November 21, 10 AM, Terry Hoyt, UUSC.

**Sunday**, November 28, 10:30 AM, Philosophy and Religion in the Modern World, Lecture 8: "The New Testament: Life of Christ."

**Sunday**, December 5, 10 AM, TBA. **Sunday**, December 12, 10:30 AM, Philosophy and Religion in the Modern World, Lecture 9: "Rabbinic Judaism: Israel and the Torah"

**Sunday**, December 19, 5 PM Pot Luck & Evening Holiday Program, Terry Hoyt.

**Sunday**, December 26, 10:30 AM, Philosophy and Religion in the Modern World, Lecture 10: "Church Fathers: The Logos Made Flesh" •

## Long Range Planning

At the request of our Board of Directors, the Long Range Planning Committee, Tim Kratz, Myrle Wasko, Dick Fields, and Jerry Woolpy are considering the possibility of making a set of specific recommendations for the future of the Fellowship. After a few wide-ranging discussions we have narrowed our focus to three issues that emerge both from our deliberations and the suggestions of others. They are "Do we need to enhance our

facilities to become more child friendly?” “Do we need to hire a minister?” and “Do we have sufficient space to accommodate the needs of our present congregation?”

To obtain a wider discussion of these matters we propose the following agenda: 1– We will circulate summaries of the major points of consideration on each of these questions. These summaries appear below in the NUUSLETTER.

2 – Within a few weeks following the circulation of the summaries and before November 1, we will circulate, collect, and tally a questionnaire to help assess your considered opinions regarding these questions.

3 – Within a month of the circulation of the questionnaire and before December 1, we will distribute the results of the questionnaire and have an all congregation meeting to discuss them, early in December.

4 – Before February 1, we will make recommendations in accordance with the consensus that may emerge from the congregation meeting else we will summarize the points of agreement and disagreement on questions about which there is no consensus. We hope to conclude this process with ample time for Board and committee reviews prior to the making of the budget for next year.

**“Do we need to enhance our facilities to become more child friendly?”** The degree to which our fellowship is "child friendly" has been identified as an important issue by our long-range planning committee. How child friendly are we currently? How important is being child friendly to our fellowship? The committee views child friendliness as more than a strong religious education program, although RE is certainly an important part. It includes having an environment where families with pre-RE aged children feel welcome, and where the children themselves look forward to coming to the fellowship.

We have identified a broad range of issues relating to children. One of the specific questions we are considering is whether we need a "crying room", a place where parents of pre-RE aged children can take their children, hear the service through a speaker system, but not have the children disrupt the service. Would the availability of a crying-room help attract new young families to the fellowship? If so, what are our options for developing a crying-room with our present facility, or do we need some remodeling or expansion?

Another issue is summer, when we currently do not hold RE classes. Would developing an outdoor playground area make our fellowship more welcoming to families with children? If so, what are our options? Should the fellowship provide child-care during the summer? If so, should this be a paid position, or staffed by volunteers?

Finally, over the long-term how can we continue to improve and sustain our children's RE program? Should we consider having a paid children's RE director (and/or a paid youth director)? Can we continue to rely on volunteers from our fellowship to run our RE program? Should we? If we choose to hire an RE director, should it be from someone from

within the fellowship or from outside? If within, what happens if the person isn't doing a good job? If outside, how do we find someone with whom we are comfortable?

Clearly, the committee has raised some important and complex questions. We have not yet developed recommendations. We welcome your thoughtful perspectives and advice. [See also LRP Report on consultation with Dori Davenport, UUA District Children's RE Director, which follows this article.]

### **“Do we need to hire a minister?”**

Here are three alternatives we have considered:

1. Student or Practicum Minister- We could obtain by contacting the District Office. Cost is \$150.00 per visit plus travel. The District Office will subsidize travel up to \$650.00/year. The \$150.00 covers giving a Sunday service only. Meeting with the board is an additional \$50.00, meeting with committees, \$30.00. Pastoral counseling would cost an estimated \$40.00/hr. Number of Sunday services is up to the congregation. The fellowships at Marquette and Houghton both have a student minister and use their services 9-10 times a year.

2. Extension Minister- This requires a three year commitment in which the UUA/District subsidizes the minister. The minister is assigned so there is no choice in who it is. The subsidy is 60% of the minister's cost the first year, 40 % the second year, and 20% the third year. To obtain an extension minister we would have to be committed to growth and expected to have a need for a full-time minister at the end of the three year period. The beginning cost for a minister for salary, housing, travel, etc is \$48,000.

3. Share a minister with another congregation- We would have the choice of selecting our own minister. UU minister contracts call for being on duty 10 months/year and during that 10 months they present services 3 out of 4 Sundays. Sharing a half time minister would cost approximately \$24,000/year and the minister would be presenting 15 times over 10 months. (When considering these alternatives please bear in mind that our entire 2000 budget is approximately \$22,000. We welcome any feedback you may have regarding this issue.)

**“Do we have sufficient space to accommodate the needs of our present congregation?”** There have been concerns expressed over limitations placed on our Fellowship due to lack of space or proper use of existing space. Our sanctuary is 27 ft. by 29 ft. (783 square feet) and includes a piano, pulpit, bell and chalice stand, serving tables, coat rack, visitors table and hymnal cart. Chairs occupy the rest of the space. We have room for approximately 70 chairs in the sanctuary. Most Sundays we have sufficient space for members and visitors, but on occasion we are very crowded. To have repeat visitors and

attract new members, the UUA recommends that the sanctuary should not reach beyond 80% capacity (in our present sanctuary that is 56 persons). Beyond 80% of the chairs being occupied, the UUA concludes that visitors feel they are not needed and feel uncomfortable being crowded with people they do not know. We may have reached our maximum growth due to the size of our sanctuary.

Regarding the sanctuary, is 70 persons enough to adequately accommodate wedding, funerals or a memorial service?

One major shortcoming we have is the lack of a crying room/nursery and playroom. We may need these facilities to attract and keep families with small children. Crying rooms generally have a sound system to hear the service, play equipment and comfortable chairs. Can we possibly solve these space problems without expanding the present facilities? •

## **Consultation on Child-Friendliness**

On Sunday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, Dori Davenport, District UUA Children's RE Director, met at the Fellowship with Myrle Wasko and Jerry Woolpy to make suggestions on how we could make our present facilities more child friendly.

With respect to a crying room, Dori said that the kitchen was not adequate because it was not sufficiently separated from the sanctuary and did not have a comfortable chair. Nor did she see any place upstairs or downstairs that would be adequate. She did suggest the possibility of adding a room outside of the present building on the north side, at the west end with windows into the sanctuary. It could be a sort of extension of the entryway.

With respect to a playroom and playground, she thought we ought to set aside some space downstairs and purchase a select set of toddler toys that could be put away when they were not being used. She added that we could use a sandbox and jungle gym outside and more low furniture inside.

With respect to space for our youth (adolescents), she thought we ought to construct a close-off-able room with two glass doors in the north west corner of the lower level with comfortable chairs and a table where teens could go and be away from adults.

With respect to the children's RE space on the lower level, she thought it ought to have a vinyl floor with brightly colored rugs, a sink and counter in the main room with cabinets above and below. And that we ought to have rolling storage cabinets fitted with transparent plastic storage boxes, two step stools in the bathroom, and lower blackboards.

Observing that our flyer says very little about children, Dori said that in recent years in order to compete for parents with children many churches have made substantial accommodations for young people and that some churches in vacation areas generate 80% of their revenue from visitors with children. She thought we might consider hiring a part time RE-Youth Director that would run the RE program and run programs for our youth.

This might cost \$5000-\$10,000 a year. •

## Welcome New Members

Barbara Beutler, Laszlo Balogh, and Charles & Janice Reed have signed “the book” and so have become members of the Fellowship. And, Susan Knight and Tom Frost and family are back from Washington DC! Welcome! We now have 54 members.

Others who want to join may phone Patty Buehler (356-6276) or Paul Braunstein (356 2428) or speak to them at the Fellowship. •

## NUUs Travel

### **Joan Hauer, Travel Editor**

**Dan Rondello-A trip to paradise:** I spent a week at Paradise Lakes, in Land O’Lakes, Florida. Land O’Lakes is North of Tampa. I took a plane from Rhinelander to Detroit, and another plane from Detroit to Tampa. I then took a limousine from the Tampa Airport to Paradise Lakes, which is about a 15 minute drive from the airport.

That was the first time that I had ever ridden in a limousine. It was nice. A really big car, with a TV, and a stereo, and ice and wine glasses.

Paradise Lakes is a clothing-optional resort. They offer many amenities. They have several swimming pools and hot tubs, lounge chairs to sunbathe on, a sauna, outdoor showers, Tennis Courts, Sand Volleyball, Water Volleyball, Shuffle Board, Horse Shoes, Miniature Golf, Canoes, a White Sand Beach, a Night Club, an Outdoor Bar, a Restaurant, a Salon, a Spa, a Gift Shop, and a Boutique. You never run out of things to do in Paradise. I even found a secluded spot to meditate.

People from all over the world come here. On the weekend there was close to 2000 people near the main pool area. Paradise Lakes gets more annual visitors than any other clothing-optional resort in the United States. Most of the people there were very friendly.

The weather was in the 90’s most of the time. We did get a little bit of rain, which temporarily turned the hot tubs into cool tubs.

I made many friends, one of which I will be corresponding with.

There is a lot of natural beauty at Paradise. Lots of Palm trees, which bare tiny little berries that are inedible. There are also lots of beautiful red hibiscus flowers. I also saw a few tiny bright yellow butterflies and lots of tiny little chameleons crawling around.

Then there is the M&M incident: The cleaning people leave notes to the visitors asking them if there's anything that they can do to make their trip more pleasant. As a joke, I wrote that I wanted them to get me a big bag of M&M's and separate them according to color, (e.g. all the greens in one cup, all the yellow in one cup, etc.). Well, on the last day of the trip, they took the tip money that I gave them and bought me a big bag of M&M's and gave me back the change. •

## Children's RE News

**Dawn Holt**

**Wausau Trip:** On Sunday, October 3, five of our middle youth and three adults attended the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Wausau as part of the Neighboring Faiths curriculum. They enjoyed a tour of the historical building and a service conducted by Glenda Walker. After the service, Cora Holt, Mineta Kobling, Amy Kratz, Claire Polfus, Zane Sullivan, Dawn Holt and Toni Polfus joined members from the Wausau community for Crop Walk 1999. This walk is an interfaith event sponsored by Church World Service. The money raised helps decrease world hunger locally and globally, helps communities work together for others and supports long-term grass roots development. Our group walked the full 10K, raising almost \$600. Thanks to all of you who contributed to our walkers.

**Halloween Party:** On October 31, a party is planned for our Fellowship youth 7:00-9:00 PM at the church. There will be food, music and games. If desired, each child may bring one friend not associated with the Fellowship. Dress for outdoor games, bring a flashlight, music if desired and a snack (chips or pizza, etc.). Required for admission is a costume of some sort (maybe as simple as dyed hair or face paint—be creative). Come have fun at a fall multi-age get-together!

**R.E. Volunteers Needed:** There is a need for volunteers to teach our young class of children (grades K-5). The curriculum is easy to follow and requires minimal preparation time. Please contact Andrea Billings if interested: 358-2712. •

### **Announcements:**

There will be a finance committee meeting after service on Sunday, Oct.24th. Dick Fields

Members and friends of the NUUF list of addresses and phone numbers will be distributed at services, October 24.

UU Women's Fall Retreat at Lake Geneva, Nov. 5-7, 1999, Sonia Choquette will be the keynote speaker. Prepare to live intuitively and creatively in the FEMillennium with life-

enhancing, inspiring workshops lead by experienced leaders. For more info, contact Emily Meter (847) 948-7147.

Women, Wisdom and Wellness...Making Connections Sponsored by the Women and Religion Committee of the Central Midwest District of the UUA. Jan 28-30 in Milwaukee at the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee. Margot Adler is the keynote speaker. Contact Diane Reupert for brochure. 282-5400. •

## Lakeland Ministers Meet at Our Fellowship

On September 14, a dozen local pastors, ministers, lay people and priests met for their monthly meeting. The guest speaker was John Blake, administrator for the Wisconsin Memorial Society, who discussed low cost cremation and burial services. In the absence of the UU representative to the Ministers Association, Don Barnes, Paul Braunstein hosted the meeting. Visitors commented on the beautiful wooded setting of the Fellowship hall. •

## NUU Views

**Question:** Rejecting the classical version of hell as God's punishment of fire and brimstone, Pope John Paul II says "More than a physical place, hell is the state of those who freely and definitively separate themselves from God, the source of all life and joy." In other words, individuals and not God, consign themselves to hell by rejecting goodness. Meanwhile, evangelicals like Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky, say, "Evidently, hell is a punishment imposed by God, and the dire warnings in Scripture to respond to Christ in faith – while there is time – make sense only if hell is a very real place of very real torment." Is there a place for "hell" in UU theology?

**Answer** from Terry Hoyt: Being raised in the Universalist Church of Joliet there was certainly a place for "hell" in our theology. "Hell" was the jumping off place to get away from traditional Christianity. Universalists believed (and most who believe still believe) in UNIVERSAL SALVATION. No one was going to "hell". The only place for "hell" in UU theology nowadays seems to be in understanding and discussing the "hell" of other religions.

The "threat of hell" to me has always been as a tool for tyrants to impose their notions of necessary behavior modification. Pope John Paul II seems to be softening in his old age while the evangelicals are unleashing the hounds to get the wanderers back on "the" chosen path.

While Universalists thought through the teachings of Jesus Christ it seemed ridiculous to think that Jesus would go around confining anyone to an "afterlife" of terror or torment.

The God of Love was not a God of fire and brimstone.

**Editor's rejoinder:** Yes, but isn't there still a hell for those UUs and others who separate themselves from life and joy by rejecting goodness and for those who would create a hell for others whom they presume to judge?

*In this column, NUUs are invited to answer questions of a religious and spiritual nature. If you are willing to share your opinion on these kinds of questions please let the editor know. •*

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has."* Margaret Mead

Next NUUSLETTER Deadline, Sunday, November 21, 1999.





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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

