



# The Wy'east Beacon

A Welcoming Unitarian Universalist Congregation

*Whoever you are,  
Wherever you come from  
You are welcome here*

[Wy'East' — Ancient name for Mount Hood]

January 2008

## Reveries ♦ ♦ ♦ By Rev. Susan Maginn

As a parent of small children, I am aware that rituals are the connective tissue in our family's daily life, especially around meal times and around bedtimes. We pray together and sing together before eating and sleeping and it is really sweet to see my children begin to anticipate and enjoy these times.

But is there a difference between rituals and repeated behaviors? As a parent I feel like offering predictable patterns in our day is a great gift to small children. There is so much uncertainty in a small person's life and it feels right to do some of the same things each day in hopes of bringing a sense of security to life.

I feel this joy at Wy'east too. It is a delight to have been at Wy'east long enough now that I anticipate the sweet stability created by the weekly and monthly cycles of our life together – the worshipping, the conversations, the meals, the decision making, the chalice lightings. I have so loved these recent months of getting to know the people of this wonderful community.

One of the things that I most love about being a minister is the honor of being present at the turning points of life: at times of birth and death, times of growth and transition, times of illness and recovery. Being present can mean simply being a companion during those times in life that can feel so uncertain. However, sometimes having a companion is not enough. And sometimes the repeated behaviors of our Wy'east life are not enough. Sometimes what we most need is a ritual that is created just for us.

This suggestion may sound downright strange to you since we rarely talk about the importance of ritual in our religious life. When I say ritual I mean a simple ceremony – could be as public or private as needed – which formally acknowledges the present state of one's life and articulates a vision of the future. Could be a special time of prayer before a medical procedure. Could be the blessing of a new house. The possibilities reach as far as our creativity and our heart's yearning.

If you are going through a transition in your life, I hope you will let me know so that I might offer support in a way that is right for you.

*Susan*

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## From the Board

A few weekends ago, my wife  
Laura and I took our daughter

Anna to Girl Fest, a Girl Scout convention at the Expo Center. It was indeed a festive day for girls, with entertainment, activities and educational booths for all ages. Participating in Girl Scouts has been a fun and valuable way for Anna to be in a community of girls, and to spend time with her mom. Our family has found community in other places as well – at Anna’s school, PTA meetings, group hikes, book clubs, volunteering for political and human rights issues we believe in, or even through browsing the Red Sox Web site or other blogs with like-minded companions.

So with all these meaningful possibilities for spending our time, why come to church? Is church different, or is it interchangeable with a Mazamas hike or other such events?

There are different ways to answer this question, but my main point is that church is different because it's a place set apart from the world – giving us the space to truly contemplate the world and our place in it.

I come to church to learn and to grapple with and to meditate upon the stories and ideas of our theological history and future. Why are we here? Why is the universe here? Now that the universe **is** here and we are in it, how are we to live our lives?

Does it matter how we treat one another and our environment? Does it matter if we go about our lives focused only on ourselves and our loved ones, or if our concern encompasses all of creation? Does it matter if we burn up the atmosphere and melt the ice caps, or if we make a commitment to leave behind a more sustainable future? Does it matter? To me, to you, to our ancestors, to God?

I come to church to be inspired to think about such questions, and fortunately, there is laughter and companionship to be had here too.

Karl Arruda  
Board Vice Moderator ♦

## Music Matters



Last month, Rev. Susan Maginn eloquently addressed the historical commitment of this congregation to the young people in our midst.

One way that *you* can support our children and youth is to join the **Intergenerational Choir!** We will be meeting once a month to learn an easy song that we will sing in the service that day. You may also bring an instrument or be a percussionist (shakers, chimes, drums). The idea is to have fun making music in community.

Our first time together will be on **Sunday, January 27 at 4:00 p.m.** in the sanctuary.

Mark your calendars for upcoming gatherings:  
February 24  
March 30  
April 27  
May 11  
June 15

Join in whenever you can, and be ready to have fun, whatever your age!

Yours in harmony,

Linda Jo Reinhard  
Music Director ♦

# LRE

## Lifespan Religious Education



Once again, as you read this article, I'll be in Chicago, walking to seminary classes in my warmest coat, reconnecting with friends and colleagues, and studying Spiritual Practices, Ethics and the Cultural Context of Ministry. (I'm studying to be a UU minister through a modified residency program at Meadville Lombard in Chicago. This program requires me to be on campus in Chicago for the month of January.)

Like last year, I'll brag a bit about the wonderful congregation I get to serve, how children and youth are included in the worshipping life of the congregation, how we gather for potlucks and soup suppers every month, and how at least two four year olds have told me I'm their Favorite Teacher Ever! I'll tell them about our very cool youth group, where small numbers have no effect on the enthusiasm of the participants and my privilege to explore and learn alongside them.

I am so pleased that people have stepped up to teach the youngest class while I'm gone. Elizabeth S and Sharron H will be the lead teachers, while Sonrisa S A, Amy E, Linda R and Gina O will assist. A big thank you to all of these congregants who are about to experience the pleasure of working with our kids each week.

And once again, I'd like to invite you all to think about our RE program. Where are you called to serve at Wy'east? It may be in other places, certainly, but I'm not sure there is a job in the congregation where you get as much back as you do from working in RE.

Morgan S, who is a busy high school student, is teaching biblical stories to our elementary kids every other week. Now, as she put it, no one can accuse her of having extra time she needs to fill. Also, growing up Unitarian Universalist, Morgan felt like she was missing some of the knowledge that her peers have about the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. If the best way to learn something is to teach it, then Morgan's about to become an expert! Katy M is sharing stories from other faith traditions with our elementary class, and Anders L's group is studying world religions. All of the teachers are enjoying the relationships we're building with the next generation of Unitarian Universalists.

For those of you who don't feel called to teach, we're still looking for an RE committee. This committee will be run more like a task force, not meeting every month, but perhaps quarterly. Charged with helping with the administration of the RE program, this group will also help provide the institutional memory for RE at Wy'east. They will be involved with decisions about what kind of program we wish for our kids. How can we use our teachers most effectively? What do we want our children to learn in kindergarten? In elementary school? In middle school?

We will have a meeting when I return in February, to discuss the future of RE at Wy'east. The meeting will take place after the service on February 10<sup>th</sup>. Wy'east's RE program has so many positives: high attendance, energetic teachers, a culture of involving kids in the worship service. Let's see how we can continue to build on the wonderful program we have here.

Faithfully Submitted,

Marcia Stanard  
Director of Religious Education ♦

## Reflections from the Five Questions Class

This fall, a group of Wy'east members and friends took part in a 6-week course looking at, yes, the meaning of life! It was a challenging but rewarding time of discovery for all, as we worked through our understanding of the nature of the universe and our presence here. Participants wanted to share some thoughts that came to us during or as a result of the experience:

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“From our reflections, exercises and discussions, a major benefit I got from the 5 Questions class was a more positive view of myself. Though my intellect, limited as it is, isn't yet reconciled to any theological claims about the Ultimate Reality, my intuition and imagination suggest an energy or intelligence that generates, sustains, demolishes, rebuilds and binds all that is, in an amazingly orderly pattern. I think it is nurturing to one's inner growth to reflect and inquire about life's meaning, as the class so well guided us to do, if only to awaken wonder and a sense of mystery about our existence and the cosmos.”

\*

”I think a lot. I think when I think my thoughts matter and I think when I don't think they do. So, I have consciously decided to believe my thoughts have an impact on the world.

How I treat my thought at this moment will make a difference in the way somebody else experiences the same thought tomorrow, or in a few thousand years in the future. I believe in this connection.”

\*

”I was raised in a theistic religion, and over the years my understanding of God had evolved to the point that I was wondering if I still believed in a Divine Presence, or if I was becoming more of an Agnostic or Humanist. I avoided the homework one especially busy week, when we were asked to think about beliefs around God or the order of the Universe. I realize now that I did not want to look at those questions because the

issue was confusing to me and a bit disturbing; I hadn't merely run out of time or energy that week to prepare for class. My advice: when you find yourself avoiding a particular question or issue, take note. Give yourself some time and space. Then dive in. In those shadows is where you'll find the most meaning.

Through more thought and our group discussions, I realized that I am still deeply spiritual; that part of me is not gone. I also realized that I experience God, as a Divine Presence that lives within each of us and permeates the Universe. I tap into that sacred energy in many ways, mostly through creativity, through Nature, and through connecting with others. This experience, whether you call it "flow," transcendence, or God, happens to us all. It doesn't matter what we believe about its source; we can all embrace the mystery of the extraordinary...”

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“The session that got to me was What Does My Death Mean? It brought me into the presence of this life of mine occurring in a totally small opening in the long arc of the universe. My life has an end for sure. Whatever meaning it has I'm responsible for. Now. Every moment. Gulp. A group member noticed that I had this very concerned look on my face at the end of class, and said so caringly. I said something, but thought, no kidding about the concern. When it hits you hard like that, there's no getting away from it. I now have an 8th personal principle: my death gives meaning to my life. And, don't blow it, kid.” ♦

## It's not Too Late to Join a Chalice Circle

Chalice circles are small groups of Wy'east members and friends who get together to have conversations about the things that matter most to us – similar to the Five Questions class described above, but for a longer period of time. It's a great way to get to know people, to explore your beliefs, and to learn about Unitarian

Universalism. Groups tend to meet once a month and are open to all.

The following small group ministries are currently active at Wy'east:

\* **Men's Support Group**, led by Mikio O, meeting on Wednesday evenings at Mikio's house, next scheduled for January 2<sup>nd</sup> from 7:15-9:15 p.m.

\* **Knitters/Crafters' Chalice Circle**, led by Debra T and at her house on Saturday afternoons from 1-3 p.m., next meeting on January 5<sup>th</sup>.

\* **Parents' Chalice Circle**, led by Laura R, meeting at Waverly on Saturday mornings from 10-noon, next on January 12<sup>th</sup>. Childcare is generally available at the church during the meeting.

\* **Young Adults' Chalice Circle**, led by Elizabeth S, meeting on Saturdays from 2-4 p.m., next on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

If none of these groups seem like a good fit for you, how about forming another? Talk to Rev. Susan Maginn if you'd like to do that. She can help you get started. Susan's contact information is: (503) 867-7310. ♦

## Minister's Study Leave

During the beginning of January you might notice that I am away. I'll be taking two weeks of study leave. Study leave is a time when a minister prepares for the worship services in the coming months. During study leave, the minister completely steps away from the congregation - no phone contact, no email. The board will be able to reach me in case of an emergency.

For my study leave, I'll be going to rural Missouri, to stay at an old friend's lakeside cabin. There I will have days in silence and solitude. I plan to have uninterrupted hours of reading and writing, along with hours of sitting and walking meditation. And, most of all, I plan to return to

Wy'east renewed and excited to share with you the fruits of my time away!

Rev. Susan Maginn ♦

## UU Adventures in Eating



Join us for our First Sunday Supper on January 6th after the service. Please bring a potluck dish to share. January 13th is Second Sunday Soup. Bring a vegetable to church and drop it off in the basket by the entrance. Mark A and Gina O will use it to make a tasty vegetarian soup for all to enjoy after church. Bread, salad, appetizers, etc. are always welcome too. On January 20th after the service and social hour, we'll head out for a Restaurant Adventure, location to be announced. If you'd like to take part, please tell Tode O that day. He'll get a count and call ahead so our table will be ready. ♦

## Brother, Can You Spare a Computer?

Did you get a new computer for Christmas? Does your old computer need a new home? Wy'east could use a couple of not-too-old (Windows ME or later) computers to replace our quite old office computer. A new monitor or printer would be nice too. Contact any member of the board if you have a computer you could donate. And you'll get a tax deduction, too. Thanks.

Barbara Smith-Thomas  
Board Moderator ♦

## Help Wanted in the Office

We're still looking for a volunteer to staff the Wy'east office a couple of hours a week. It's an easy job, but very important for the smooth functioning of our congregation, not to mention being available for newcomers wishing to contact Wy'east. In the meantime, if you have questions or church business, please talk to any board member (Barbara Smith-Thomas, Karl Arruda, Joanne Foulkrod, Mark Alter and Jill DeRosa) You may also call Rev. Susan Maginn: (503) 867-7310. ♦

### Newsletter News

Submissions for the February newsletter are due by 7 p.m. on Wednesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>. (We're back to our usual schedule of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month.)

Please send articles, meeting/event dates, poetry, book recommendations ...—let's get creative!

— Laura Raymond & Abbie Weisenbloom

## Denominational Doings

### Pacific Northwest District Annual Meeting

Leap over the holidays and start planning to attend the February 29 (Leap Day!) - March 2, 2008 Annual General Meeting for the Pacific Northwest District of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The meeting will be held in Tacoma, WA, at the newly renovated Hotel Murano (formerly the Sheraton). Check with Wy'east Board Moderator Barbara Smith-Thomas ([smiththomas@att.net](mailto:smiththomas@att.net)) about registration materials. When you register, consider signing up to give two hours or a bit longer to help other UUs find their way and enjoy their stay. Tasks include:

registration, assisting with workshops, helping in the bookstore and with other scheduled activities. Those willing to work at least 6 hours will receive a \$69 rebate off the \$185 registration fee. Please let Mary Watson ([mwatson@harbornet.com](mailto:mwatson@harbornet.com)) or Joan Benderson ([joan.benderson@nventure.com](mailto:joan.benderson@nventure.com)) know as soon as you have made your plans. ♦

### A Historical Month for Religious Tolerance

January is an important month in Unitarian history, because Francis David (or in Hungarian, Dávid Ferenc) preached his first Unitarian sermon in the main church in Kolozsvár on January 20th, 1566. His sermon convinced many people of the need for a religion which looked at the Bible logically, and which regarded Jesus as important, but not as God. The king of Transylvania (John Sigismund) was very impressed with David and asked him to become an advisor. Because there was so much fighting about religion in his country, King Sigismund decided to hold a great debate, encouraging Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists and Unitarians to argue publicly about which version of religion was right. It would, the king felt, be much better to have people stand up and tell the reasons why they believed as they did, rather than fighting, and treating others in a prejudiced way, or even killing them because of their religious differences. So two years later, also in January, they held the big debate. Francis David won, giving the most compelling arguments for the Unitarian point of view. The king, however, did not declare that everyone had to become Unitarians. Instead, he embraced the ideas of Unitarianism, and said that people were entitled to their own religious beliefs, and that no one was entitled to hurt another person or treat them badly because they practiced a different version of religion. So, in the month of January, more than 400 years ago, the first ever law of religious tolerance was born.

*(Excerpted from Church of the Larger Fellowship's KidTalk publication, January 2007) ♦*

# A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

## January 6      **THERE IS NOTHING MORE PERMANENT THAN CHANGE**

You can't hear the same sermon twice: Wy'east member, Anders Liljeholm, will talk about all sorts of changes in our lives, and how community can help us deal with them.

**Choir Rehearsal:** 4:00 p.m.

**Service:** 5:00 p.m.

**Religious Education** (Pre-K): Children attend the beginning of the service, then go downstairs for class. Nursery care is also available for infants and toddlers.

**First Sunday Supper:** Bring a potluck dish to share following the service.

## January 13    **RELIGIOUS LIBERALS AND RACIAL JUSTICE**

What is our theological response to oppression and in particular racism as Unitarian Universalists? A religious response is not something we do with just our heads; we must also use our hearts, hands and feet. Join Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons, a multiracial Asian/White lifelong UU, in his reflection on his personal journey towards wholeness, and the questions and ideas that he has discovered. Rev. Santos-Lyons' interests center on the intersection of liberal religion and people of color communities, with a focus on multiracial families, anti-racist identity development, youth, young adults, and spiritual growth.

**Choir Rehearsal:** 4:00 p.m.

**Service:** 5:00 p.m.

**Religious Education** (Pre-K-8<sup>th</sup> Grade): Children attend the beginning of the service, then go downstairs for class. Nursery care is also available for infants and toddlers.

**Second Sunday Soup:** Bring a vegetable to church for the soup. Bread or salads are welcome too.

## January 20    **THE ACCEPTANCE THAT IS UNACCEPTABLE**

Unitarian Universalists covenant to affirm the "inherent worth and dignity of every person." How do we respond when we see a person act in ways that are truly unacceptable or even, dare I say, evil? Today we'll reflect upon Naomi Wolf's latest book, The End of America, and consider how her work can give all of us the gift of renewed clarity about the world. Rev. Susan Maginn leads this service.

**Choir Rehearsal:** 4:00 p.m.

**Service:** 5:00 p.m.

**Religious Education:** (Pre-K-8<sup>th</sup> Grade): Children attend the beginning of the service, then go downstairs for class. Nursery care is also available for infants and toddlers.

**Social Hour:** Join us for refreshments after the service.

**Restaurant Adventure:** 7:00 p.m. Location to be announced during social hour.

## January 27    **THIS I BELIEVE**

Unitarian Universalists hold a wide range of beliefs and we enjoy learning from each other's experience. Join Wy'east member Katy Michel today as she shares her personal theology, as part of our congregation's "This I Believe" sermon series.

**Service:** 5:00 p.m.

**Religious Education** (Pre-K): Children attend the beginning of the service, then go downstairs for class. Nursery care is also available for infants and toddlers.

**Social Hour:** Join us for refreshments after the service.

OofS=order of service

## January 2008 — Calendar of Events

\* Unless noted by an asterisk, all events are at the church.

Sunday	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
		1	2 10am OofS Deadline 7:15-9:15pm Men's Chalice Circle at Mikio Ohgushi's house *	3	4	5 1-3pm Knitters and Crafters Chalice Circle at Debra Tomsen's house *
6 4pm Choir Rehearsal 5pm Service & K-4 <sup>th</sup> Gr. RE 5pm 5-8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Relig. Ed. 6pm Potluck / Youth Group	7	8	9 10am OofS Deadline	10	11	12 10am-Noon Parents' Chalice Circle
13 4pm Choir Rehearsal 5pm Service & K-4 <sup>th</sup> Gr. RE 5pm 5 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Relig. Ed. 6pm Soup Supper	14	15	16 10am OofS Deadline 7pm Newsletter Deadline 7:15 pm Board Meeting	17	18	19 2-4pm Young Adults Chalice Circle at Elizabeth Suh's *
20 4pm Choir Rehearsal 5pm Service & K-4 <sup>th</sup> Gr. RE 6pm Social Hr / Youth Grp. 7pm Restaurant Adventure	21	22 7:15-9pm Worship Committee	23 10am OofS Deadline 7-9pm Membership Committee	24	25 7-9pm Committee on Ministry	26
27 5pm Service & K-4 <sup>th</sup> Gr. RE 5pm 5 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Relig. Ed. 6pm Social Hour	28	29	30 10am OofS Deadline 7:15 pm Board Meeting	31		

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