

# The Community Spirit

Newsletter of the Northwest Community Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston

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Services are held each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.  
at 5920 Highway 6 North  
just south of West Little York, behind the Casa Ole  
in Houston, Texas.  
For further information call 281-550-8884  
or check our web site at  
[www.nwcuuc.org](http://www.nwcuuc.org)

## Upcoming Services



November 2

### "Human Development and Spirituality"

by Dr. Dov Liberman

Dr. Liberman will address the issue of spirituality as separate from emotion and cognition and discuss how a person's concepts of God and spirituality develop as one goes through the cycle of life.

November 9

### "The Bible for Skeptics, Seekers, and Religious Liberals"

by Dr. Barbara Coeyman

I have intentionally borrowed part of the title of this sermon from the title of a new book on 'Understanding the Bible' by Rev. John Buehrens, past president of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Buehrens encourages us to read the Bible, and to read it with liberal eyes, so as to not give it and its power over to conservative

interpretations. What role if any does the Bible play in your own search for truth and meaning? Can you consider new methods of reading and interpreting this most read of books? This sermon theme complements several adult education events being planned for this church year.

November 16

### "Life Journey"

by Lucia Bertler

Lucia will speak about her own life journey. She will reflect on both earth-based spirituality and western religion. More later.

November 23

### "Guest at Your Table Service"

Guest at Your Table is a opportunity to participate in the works of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. The UUSC works with grassroots groups around the world to protect and promote human rights and social justice.

November 30

### "Gratitude Service"

This is Thanksgiving weekend. Please come prepared to light a candle and share something you are grateful for.

## President's Letter



### Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Purses

The great Ralph Waldo Emerson once said that, "Money is hardly spoken of in parlors without an apology." True, isn't it? I'm happy to get in long discussions about politics, religion, sex ... but bring up money, and I grow quiet. Nice girls just don't talk about such things, you see.

But it's that time again when we do need to talk about our stewardship of our church. To be a successful church and take the steps forward necessary to reach our vision, we need to be the church not only of the open hearts and open minds ... but also the open purses.

Rev. Carl Scovel, former minister of King's Chapel in Boston, has written that "If someone in the next century wanted to know who we were, she could read our letters, diaries, obits, or our report cards. . . . But if she wanted to know what we valued, I think she'd have to find our checkbooks."

On one of the online Unitarian Universalist lists, the subject of "Generosity as a Spiritual Practice" came up recently. It was pointed out that in practically all religions, there is some variation on the theme that "Blessed are those who give without expectation of reward, for they have already received their reward." I thought this was interesting, that giving is not just seen as a something necessary to pay the bills, but can also be seen as part of one's spirituality, like meditation or prayer.

If you need one other reason to "dig deep," here's one last quote, this from Dr. Karl Menninger (a noted American psychiatrist who died in 1990): "Money giving is a symptom of a person's mental health. Generous people are seldom mentally ill."

Here's to spiritual growth and mental health!

Joanna Crawford

## Ministerial Musings



The other day in the hospital where I serve as one of the chaplains - the only UU chaplain, by the way - one of the nurses noticed the flaming chalice I usually wear around my neck when I'm on duty. She was attracted to its contours and realized it was not a cross. She wanted to know more about it,

and while we talked, two others nurses joined in our conversation.

Well, I of course did not turn down the opportunity to talk about the chalice: how it is probably the most common symbol of Unitarian Universalism, how it evolved in the aftermath of World War II, and how its flame embodies the Spirit of Life of free religion. And then of course I had to explain free religion: that UUs do have religious beliefs, but that there are no 'musts' that one must adhere to in that belief. Free religion is grounded in freedom to choose one's individual path in search for truth and meaning and to respect everyone else's path. I also mentioned that UU theology is based on the inherent goodness of each human being, and that respect for the interconnected web of all life is paramount. I also explained that, yes, we do have worship services, many of which resemble the format of liberal Protestant services, and also, that, yes, UUs do have ministers.

Almost simultaneously, my audience of three reacted with stories about how they wished they'd known about UU-ism when their kids were growing up, or how they had to take their children out of religious education classes that taught human sin and depravity and punishment.

How many other people out there would be delighted to hear about free religion? How many others out there are ready for this conversation? Let us be ready to tell them, to explain clearly and distinctly our symbols and our faith. Let us be ready to tell the world what we're about. The world certainly seems ready, perhaps even overdue, for the Good News of free religion. Let's be ready to talk about a religion that matters to us.

See you in church!

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Minister  
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## Dining For Dollars

Our Canvass dinner will be held Saturday evening, November 15. Stay tuned for more details!

