



Holiday Tradition at Westside – Tamales!

It's that time of year again - time for our traditional tamales and tortilla soup feast. This year, we will observe this tradition during potluck on Sunday, December 20th. If spicy isn't your cup of tea, there will be plenty of other dishes to enjoy during this festive occasion.

This event takes a bit of planning, and everyone's invited to help. There are sign-up sheets posted at church for those willing to bring or sponsor a specific item (tamales, tortilla soup, taco salad, kid-friendly items, desserts) and even a category where those who are undecided can opt to "surprise us" with their own Mexican specialty and/or non-Mexican food. If you would like to take a break from cooking or shopping, we need sponsors for tamales to be purchased from Hot Damn Tamales!

Hot Damn Tamales!, a local business, combines traditional techniques with fresh, new ingredients to give their tamales a flavor and texture you never knew tamales could have. They use 100% vegetable shortening instead of lard to make a masa that is lighter and

moister than most. And because they offer meatless selections, vegans and vegetarians can enjoy authentic tamales!

If you can help by sponsoring tamales, please sign up and give your money (a dozen tamales range in price from \$12 to \$24) to Paul McClellan by December 13. You can usually find Paul near the kitchen before and after church. If you have suggestions or questions about the event, please contact Brenda Baldwin (brendabrew@hotmail.com or 817-988-9441).

Thanksgiving Baskets

Again, Westsiders have been instrumental in providing much needed help to the needy in our own neighborhood. We filled forty-two Thanksgiving baskets this year, compared with thirty last year. We "packaged" our food in reusable green Westside UU bags, donated by Cindy Fountain.

The Westside Story

December 2009

Monthly Newsletter of Westside
Unitarian Universalist Church

901 Page Avenue Fort Worth, TX
11:00 AM • www.WestsideUU.org

Our Mission Statement

Westside Unitarian Universalist Church makes a positive difference in the lives of our members, our families, and the world at large through supportive relationships, religious exploration, and social action.

Our Vision Statement

Westside Unitarian Universalist Church will grow and become a more influential liberal religious presence through active service to our community and the world at large.

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Many people helped to make this a success – especially all of you who provided the food to fill the baskets. Special thanks go to Beverly Archibald, Brenda Baldwin, Jeff Bullock, John Dickinson, TJ Jennings and especially Jay and Suzie Lotven, who helped at all stages of the process, and took the food to SCAC on November 23rd for distribution.

We were asked to include a Thanksgiving prayer (see below) which was printed on cards in both English and Spanish by Jeff Bullock.

*For this food, let us be thankful.
For those who made this food possible, let us be thankful.
For those who share this food with us, let us be thankful.*

*Por esta comida, demos las gracias.
Para los que hicieron posible esta comida, demos las gracias.
A los que comparten esta comida con nosotros, demos las gracias.*

Helping sign up people to receive Thanksgiving turkeys were Beverly Archibald, Reed Bilz, Cindy Fountain, and Jay and Suzie (Jay came four Tuesdays and Suzie three). All of us found it an enriching experience (and those who speak Spanish were doubly rewarded).

This was an excellent group effort of which we can all be proud. What better way to add to our celebration of Thanksgiving.

Of course you will insist on modesty in the children, and respect to their teachers, but if the boy stops you in your speech, cries out that you are wrong and sets you right, hug him!

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Humans think they are smarter than dolphins because we build cars and buildings and start wars etc., and all that dolphins do is swim in the water, eat fish and play around. Dolphins believe that they are smarter for exactly the same reasons.

-Douglas Adams

December 13th - “Finding the Beauty in Religion” with Dr. Russell Elleven. There are many authors today who concentrate on the actions of religion that have been atrocious. And the horrible deeds and activities on behalf of religion are certainly easy to find. This Sunday, however, Russell will try to find and focus on the beauty that one might behold in the religious realm.

December 20th - “My Own Personal Jesus” with Dr. Russell Elleven. Many Unitarian Universalists wrestle and struggle with the man from Nazareth. On this Sunday before Christmas, Russell will reflect on Jesus and, perhaps, many things about the man even we cantankerous UUs can appreciate.

December 27th - “Going Back to the Beginning” with Dr. Russell Elleven. The end of the year is coming. We will start anew at the beginning of another. What will you do differently in 2010? Russell will offer his thoughts this Sunday.

Adult Forum

Current events discussion group continues each Sunday at 9:45 a.m. in the eastern-most classroom off the foyer. These weekly discussions are vital and enthusiastic. All are welcome.

sunday services

December 6 - “Hanging of the Greens” with Myron Ice. With the holidays come many traditions – including those at Westside UU! We hope you will join us for our second annual “Hanging of the Greens” service where lights, love and logic are celebrated through story and special music.

How Your Church Family Works

The book discussion group will be meeting on Sunday the 27th at 9:45 a.m. Those participating should read the third and fourth chapters prior to the meeting. The ideas expressed in this book and our discussion of them could play a very large role in the

health of Westside as we go into our future together.

Choir again!

“Come Sing a Song...” with Cathy McConnell and the rest of the Westside choir. We rehearse and sing in the worship service every other week. Email Cathy at clmcc7@yahoo.com for information.

RE News

Don't miss Julie Tribble's RE News. You'll learn what RE has in mind for the holidays and what important RE events are ahead, so check it out!. It's the last two pages of this document (after the page with attendance).

in & around westside

Green Sanctuary Committee

Linda Hanratty, chair

The Green Sanctuary Committee was very busy this month. Hoyt West performed an energy audit, the findings of which were presented to the church board at their November meeting. The committee, with input from other members of the congregation, compiled a history of environmental activities that the church has already undertaken. Amanda Pryor and Roxanne Jones drafted a congregational survey and a youth survey to determine the congrega-

tion's and its children's interests in, and knowledge of, the environment. Amanda and Roxanne plan to get input from the Religious Education Committee and present the surveys at the Green Sanctuary Committee's next meeting on December 10, 2009. The goal is to present the survey to the church board for their approval in December. Upcoming activities will include: (a) preparation of profiles of Green Sanctuary Committee members, (b) an overall profile of the congregation, and (c) an action plan for the UUA Green Sanctuary application. The committee plans to complete the application in the first quarter of 2010.

Where's Russell in December?

Russell will be in the house every Sunday in December! He will be offering reflections on the last three Sundays. He will facilitate Joys and Concerns on each Sunday of the month. December Office hours will look like this:

Tuesday, December 1st, 9am – 1pm
Thursday, December 3rd, 9am – 1pm
Tuesday, December 8th, 9am – 1pm
Thursday, December 10th, 9am – 1pm
Tuesday, December 15th, 9am – 1pm
Thursday, December 17th, 9am – 1pm
Tuesday, December 22nd, 9am – 1pm
Thursday, December 24th, Unavailable
Tuesday, December 29th, 9am – 1pm
Thursday, December 31st, Unavailable

Please remember to call him at home (817-370-2171) first. If no answer, leave a message, and then try the church office (817-924-6988). If you do not receive an immediate response, it means Russell is with another church member at that time.

He will return your call as quickly as possible (if you've left a message). Mondays are Russell's days off and

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Just think of the tragedy of teaching children not to doubt.

-Clarence Darrow

The actions of men are the best interpreters of their thoughts.

-John Locke

Some humans would do anything to see if it was possible to do it. If you put a large switch in some cave somewhere, with a sign on it saying 'End-of-the-World Switch. PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH', the paint wouldn't even have time to dry.

-Terry Pratchett

he tries to stay away from the computer and telephone on those days. He will always respond to emergencies unless out of town.

Refreshments and entertainment will be the order of the evening. Details will follow and any questions may be addressed to Reed Bilz or Dick Trice. Plan to come for a jolly good time!

Are you a new member?

In order to keep the pictorial directory fairly current, we schedule picture appointments on an on-going basis. Pictures for the directory are taken by Mary Cretsinger, a professional photographer and one of Westside's members, at no charge to you. For more information and to set a time for your photo contact Mary at 817-292-7766, or marycret@yahoo.com, or www.marycret.com

"Did God have a mother?" Children, when told that God made the heavens and the earth, innocently ask whether God had a mother. This deceptively simple question has stumped the elders of the church and embarrassed the finest theologians, precipitating some of the thorniest theological debates over the centuries. All the great religions have elaborate mythologies surrounding the divine act of Creation, but none of them adequately confronts the logical paradoxes inherent in the question that even children ask.

-Michio Kaku

opportunities to learn & serve

Ethical Eating Group

The Ethical Eating group meets on the third Thursday of each month. For the month of December that means the 17th at 7:00 p.m. at the church. Last month we watched a video on longevity. This month we will be viewing a video called *A Delicate Balance*. Come be with a variety of people who have very different ideas of what it means to eat ethically. Be informed and inform others.

Humanists of Fort Worth

HOFW will meet jointly with the Fort Worth chapter of ACLU December 9th to celebrate the season at the Botanic Garden Arboretum at 7 p.m.

Self Management and Recovery Training (SMART)

These confidential meetings are held each week at Westside on Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. for those who want or need to discuss strategies for confronting addictive behaviors. The group is sponsored by the Humanists of Fort Worth as an alternative to traditional 12-step meetings requiring belief in a higher power. For more information contact Russell at relleven@gmail.com or go to www.rke.cc.

Contemporary Books

This group meets at 12:30 at church Sunday December 27, to discuss *These is My Words* by Nancy E. Turner, a woman's diary of life in the Arizona Territory. There is also a sequel called *Sarah's Quilt*.

Westside Cookbooks for Christmas

Westside cookbooks are on sale for \$20 or 5 for \$18 each. They would make wonderful gifts for Christmas, birthdays, bridal showers and weddings. Cookbooks will be on display at the entrance of church and in fellowship every Sunday.

Potluck Reminder!!!

Please remember to put a little extra in your dish so we can truly welcome everyone to our church for food and fellowship on potluck Sunday, third Sunday of every month.

our wider community

NTAUUS Service Awards Announced

NTAUUS is formally announcing the creation of its first annual NTAUUS recognition awards. The awards are to be given to individuals in recognition of their contributions to the Unitarian Universalist religion and congregations in north Texas.

There are three awards, named after individuals who have made extraordinary contributions.

Robert Raible Award: Leadership (Minister)

Ruth Clark Award: Support (Staff Person)

Marty Robinson Award: Volunteerism

The awards will be given to recognize outstanding service in the designated category that has benefited the member's own congregation or other NTAUUS congregations, NTAUUS itself, or the cause of Unitarian Universalism in North Texas.

Nominating criteria and procedures are located on line at ntauus.org/awards.shtml. Nominations must be submitted to Pat Davidson, by February 1, 2010.

Pat Davidson
Phone: (214-361-5638)
E-mail: patandmarty@mail.com

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What is freedom of expression? Without the freedom to offend, it ceases to exist.

-Salman Rushdie

Only the educated are free.

-Epictetus

Do not fear to be eccentric in opinion, for every opinion now accepted was once eccentric.

-Bertrand Russell

If a book be false in its facts, disprove them; if false in its reasoning, refute it. But for God's sake, let us freely hear both sides if we choose.

-Thomas Jefferson

The deadline for next month's newsletter is always the 15th of the month. Please submit items for next month's newsletter to janice_williams@charter.net.

Westside Unitarian Universalist Church

Our Board

President: Sandy Olah

Vice President: Gwen Gipson

Secretary: Bob Vann

Treasurer: Bob Rake

Directors, two- year terms: Reed Bilz, Michael Muñoz, and James Finn

Director, one-year interim term: Nancy Van Boskirk

Directors, continuing: Brenda McKeon and Ann Sutherland

By The Numbers

Date	Adults	Children	Total
October 4	89	25	114
October 11	92	28	120
October 18	112	31	143
October 25	98	24	122
Average	97.75	27	124.75



This congregation has taken part in the UUA Welcoming Congregation Program to become more inclusive towards bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender people.

The 7 UU Principles

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience & the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Westside Unitarian Universalist Church
901 Page Avenue, Fort Worth, TX 76110

How are we doing?

Do you feel that our church is doing something right? Should we be doing more or less of something? Should we be doing something different? If so, let the Committee on Ministry (COM) know. The committee also wants to know if you have a criticism, concern, or question. Look for us after the service, call us, or email us at COM@westsideuu.org.

Committee on Ministry

Dick Trice, Chair

Mary Cretsinger

Kay Kubala

Lin Wells

Tom Woods

When you have finished reading your Westside Story, share it with a potential UU.

RE News

December 2009

RE Committee

Co-chairs - Mary Noer & Susan Farris

DRE - Julie Tribble

Committee Members -

Trisha Bowes	Sandy Olah
Brenda McKeon	Sara Munoz
Jessica Zinn	Andrea Petty
Bettina Pfeiffenberger	

Holiday Decorations

The Sanctuary will be decorated for the holiday season on December 6th. We will be set up in the Fellowship Hall to make ornaments for the tree after RE. Each class will have ornaments to make that are specific to their class, so we will know which ornaments belong to which classes' students.

Teacher Appreciation Dinner

January 16th is the annual NATUURES Teacher Appreciation Dinner at First Dallas Unitarian Church. This year our feature speaker is Rev. Meg Barnhouse, a great storyteller and singer, with a personality as big as the south! This evening includes a great happy hour in Raible Chapel, wonderful dinner and marvelous entertainment! Free childcare is provided. It may be the event of the season!

Mission Statement: Our RE Program provides a safe environment that supports development of an open mind, helping hands and a loving heart in our children and youth.

Mid-year Teacher Conference

It is time to pick out our curriculum for next year! Let's meet on January 23 from 9am - 2pm for some fun and learning. We will have a continental breakfast and also provide lunch. Come and get your batteries recharged for the rest of the RE school year. The theme for next year's curriculum is UU Identity.

DRE Start Up

In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, a start-up is done with a new Director of Religious Education within the first year or two of their tenure. This helps the RE program work on what is important to them and where the responsibilities lie. Karen Lewis, the DRE of First Dallas and a trained facilitator for the Southwest district will be coming to facilitate the meeting on January 30. It will be an all day (9am - 5pm) meeting and anyone that is interested is invited to come to this start-up. Lunch will be provided, as will daycare.

I thought you might enjoy some good church bloopers: " This evening at 7p.m. There will be a hymn sing in the park across from the church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin."

"Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help."

What's up in your World Curriculum?

In order to keep parents up to date on what is being covered in the Religious Education classes at Westside, we are now putting a synopsis of our next month's curriculum in the newsletter.

Clara Barton (3-6 yr olds)

This month the Clara Barton class will explore some of the December holidays, such as Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, and Christmas, through stories, activities and crafts.

Susan B. Anthony (7-9 yr olds)

The winter season is upon us and we have some great things planned in the Susan B. Anthony class. On December 6th, our class takes a look at St. Lucia's Day, a popular Swedish holiday that honors the "Queen of Light". We celebrate the Jewish "Festival of Lights", Hanukkah on December 13. Then on December 20th, we will learn about Los Posados, the Mexican story of the nativity. Our last lesson of year will be centered on Kwanzaa, the week-long African-American holiday honoring African history and ancestors.

Whitney Young (10-13 yr olds)

This coming month, we will be studying some of the adventures of our people, while we ask ourselves, "How can I live my life in a way worthwhile?"

December 6: Sophia Fahs; "The Story Collector" : In this class we want to

learn why this was important for Sophia, and how it relates to us?

December 13: Beatrix Potter, "The Girl Who Used Her Imagination"; What do you do when you are bored? What did Beatrix do? Was it helpful?

December 20: Arthur Lismer, "The Boy With the Restless Pencil"; What do we know about Arthur and his pencil? Did he draw beautiful and fun things?

December 27: Vilhjalmur Stefansson, "The Man Who Loved the Arctic" ; It takes courage and perseverance to live in the Arctic. How long would it take you to build an igloo? Do you think Vilhjalmur was brave?

Ralph Waldo Emerson (Youth)

In December, we will wrap up our study of the "Big 3" world religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Then we will spend a session doing a brief overview of some of the more eclectic Christian practices from snake handlers to speaking in tongues. On December 27th, we'll wrap up the year with Paul Zinn's Christmas Special...should be interesting.

I will begin introducing one of the RE teachers in this section next month. I'm hoping that you will get to know who teaches our children and be as impressed by them as I am!

