

ALL SOULS DECEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER

The Holidays are here! Hanukkah, Bod-hi Day, The Winter Solstice, Saturnalia, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and New Year's.

We can celebrate a miracle of light not running out in wartime (Hanukkah). We can celebrate the Buddha reaching Enlightenment over the Destroyer's temptations. We can celebrate the Earth reaching and passing the darkest day of the year. We can celebrate secular or religious Christmas - with goodwill to all and the celebration of the birth of the one called "The Light of the World".

My family has always celebrated Christmas, albeit mostly secular. We'd grill out hamburgers and brats for Christmas Eve and open a present from a sibling. This time of winter is often a point for reflection for me, starting with the feelings and thoughts of "Peace on Earth and Goodwill to All".

All Souls will continue with our newer tradition of a Progressive Christmas Eve Service and Hymn Sing.

In each of these holidays we can find joy; we can find hope; and we can find love. We often use light as a metaphor for companionship, warmth, and community. In our own tradition of the UU, our symbol of the chalice offers another meaningful view of light.

Martha Kirby Capo, as quoted from the UUA website, says that "For some, the chalice cup is a communion cup, freely offered to all who would the greater Truth. Others see the circle of fellowship in its embracing sides. The sacred hoop of its rim, the ambient energy cradled in its basin, the abiding, grounded strength of its pedestal: may all be lit by the fire of spiritual integrity; so too may we each be bathed in the glow of our shared Truth, multifaceted and radiant."

I pray that this Holiday Season, we all can find ourselves in the goodwill of others. And, that we all can have a miracle of being moved by the sacred, warmed by Love, and set ablaze by passion for life, for our companions, and for our connections to each and all.

Peace, Merry Christmas, and Happy Holidays

Pastor Will

PASTORAL CARE

Please contact our pastor, Will Humphrey, for pastoral care needs.

740-263-1171 or email will.allsouls@gmail.com

"WE TAKE INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY SERIOUSLY"

MESSAGES FROM THE BOARD

...from Glenn Myers, President

IS ALL SOULS REALLY A CHURCH?

I've been trying for over a year to get someone to voice a disagreement with something I write in this column. Maybe this will be the one.

Is it accurate to call All Souls, or for that matter, any UU Congregation, a Church? Well, one has to go to the fifth or sixth dictionary definition of "church" before finding one that is general enough to describe the UU building or congregational body. Most of the other definitions include "Christian" in one way or another. Therefore, most people think of a church as being Christian.

So, could the use of "church" in the names of UU Congregations be understandably misleading? And could this cause some folks outside of the UU memberships to be honestly critical? (One of the remarks we often hear is, "UUs don't believe in anything" -- meaning they don't believe in Christ.)

Now, we know that many UUs do consider themselves to be Christians, and we accept that. But that begs the question; why do other UUs reject Christianity as Atheists or Agnostics? Difficult to explain, huh?

Then we go on to say we UUs do not have a creed, but do believe (affirm and promote) in the Seven Principles. The third dictionary definition of "creed" is "any set of beliefs or principles." What?

We UUs know what we are, even though it can be difficult to explain to outsiders. We UUs have a steadfast respect for each other and for all existence of which we are a part. We know we are all seeking truth and spirituality, and we trust each individual's notion of where he/she is in that quest.

What's in a name? Maybe more than we think. Some UU Congregations avoid using "church" in their names altogether, e.g., "Unitarian Universalist Society of Cleveland". Others use the term, "Association", rather than "Church". Might be something to consider.

If you haven't ripped this page out of the newsletter and destroyed it by now, I would like to say I personally love All Souls by any name. It is my spiritual home, my refuge from fantasy, and my social family.

See you at All Souls UU "Church."

Judy Shaffer has organized a monthly **All-Inclusive Casual Get-Together for All Women** on the third Wednesday of each month. Plan to join Judy for an evening of conversation on Wednesday, December 16 @ 7:00 p.m. Come as you are.

OCTOBER TREASURER'S REPORT Average Attendance: 59

	OCTOBER	Y-T-D
INCOME		
Pledges	1,951.00	8,841.00
Offerings	542.00	2,081.00
Maintenance Fund	1,200.00	3,150.00
Kenya Coin Collection	89.47	330.74
Rummage Sale	50.00	1,147.54
Recycle	46.98	46.98
Minister's Discretionary Fund	0.00	0.00
Fundraising Expenses Account	176.80	849.06
Other	<u>181.09</u>	<u>181.65</u>
TOTAL	4,237.34*	16,627.97
EXPENSES	3,988.91**	15,866.79
DIFFERENCE	248.43	761.18

*A monthly income of \$3,645.50 is required in order to meet annual expenses of \$43,746.00

**Expenses Other than "Usual":
Leek Organ Co. - \$360.00

OCTOBER PLEDGE REPORT

Total Units	31
Total Pledges	24

	OCTOBER	Y-T-D
Amount Pledged	2,931.00	10,743.00
Amount Received	<u>1,951.00</u>	<u>9,641.00</u>
VARIANCE	-980.00	-1,102.00

...from Chuck Rhodes, Building & Maintenance Trustee

The church work day was held Saturday, October 10. The previous Friday, Deb Mattix and her husband raked and disposed of all the crabapples at the west end of the yard. A big THANK YOU goes out to Deb and her husband. On Saturday, five volunteers completed the following tasks: scrubbed front steps, washed the outside of all windows, washed restroom walls, washed tables and chairs, vacuumed the pews, checked and cleaned gutters and painted the inside of the new kitchen window. I want to thank Mike Garber, Jay Gilbert, Ann Kilgore and Bruce Kilgore for their hard work.

The mullion has been installed on the front door, which should prevent snow from blowing into the vestibule.

Thanks to Glenn Myers, the planter at the church sign is filled with topsoil and is ready for spring planting.

The shrubs by the old church sign have been removed, along with the annual flowers. If anyone wants the hostas, let me know. That area will be leveled and grass planted.

The remainder of the month will focus on ground maintenance, specifically leaf removal and winterizing the equipment.

...from Mike Garber, Finance Trustee

The Holiday Bazaar was a success. An early estimate is that we cleared \$1,000.

Thank you to all who spent hours working on set-up, cooking, baking, selling and clean-up.
Your donations are appreciated!

Update from Marjorie Smith on the Sun Catchers

There are 21 sun catchers completed and boxed. Another 21 will be completed in early December.

Wow!

Happy Holidays from the Finance Committee

Joanne Gillum, Treasurer
Kristy Mandeville
Chuck Rhodes
Marjorie Smith
Mike Garber

...from Liz Hansen, Religious Education Committee Chair

No Adult RE is on the schedule for the New Year YET. So, if you have anything you'd really like to see us study, please talk with Liz Hansen. Also, if you are interested in facilitating a class, please let me know. I can help find a class you would feel comfortable facilitating. There are endless combinations of topics, formats (book, movie, discussion) and length of classes (anywhere from 2-52 weeks)!

...from Bruce Kilgore, Fellowship Trustee

Laurels of Glory to all who helped with the Holiday Bazaar. We couldn't have done it without you! A BIG thanks to Mike, Kristy, Charity, Ann, Marqua, Morley, Marjorie, Joanne, Melanie, Cheryl, Glenn, Teasha, Eric, Mary Anne, Sandy, L.D., Reed, Joan, Shelley, Chuck, Jacqueline, Jay, Eric, Liz, Analyssa, Corey, Joe, Courtney, Deborah, Hilary and my wife, Cheryl.

Sunday, December 27, will be a brunch. A sign-up sheet will be passed around. The church will provide ham. Please see Ann or Bruce if you would be willing to help with the pot luck set-ups. It would be a good idea for other people to be able to do so in the event of emergency, illness, vacation, etc.

A few spots remain on the sign-up list for December. Please consider filling in those spots. A big hurrah for Chuck for filling in for social room clean-ups.

...from Art O'Leary, Social Action/Social Justice Trustee

We are going to have a two-pronged holiday charity outreach this year. First, a "traditional" food drive to support the Clearfork Food Bank. I'll place a box on the landing by the stairs leading from the back door to the sanctuary and make a delivery about December 20. If you would like to come along, let me know. The more the merrier! Second, a collection for special needs, in cooperation with the Bellville Police Dept., will be the other "prong". We will participate with the Bellville Police holiday project contributing to their "Shop with a Cop". I'll put a container out, and we will have a special offering on Sunday, December 13.

How often are we, as individuals, part of a visually identifiable minority? Myself, not very often. It's uncomfortable - right? Well, when my neighbors invited us to their one-year old's birthday party, I didn't expect for that to happen to me. Oh, I know they are Palestinian, but they don't wear traditional veil, bourkas or tunics - right? WRONG! This was a formal occasion for them, so I should have expected his mother and aunt to be fully covered. But Siddiya, the baby's mother? I'd never seen her covered! And no one was wearing shoes (except me and Lee Ann). There were Hijabs, Al-Amiras, Shaylas, and even a full Burka. Even the men were wearing tunics, Taqiyahs and Kettiyens. What did it all mean? Well, of course, it meant we were in their home, and I realized what a privilege it was to be invited.

So what did we do? Watched football! No, I mean the NFL. Switching channels to keep track of their fantasy teams. The women sat in the kitchen talking (and translating) about the baby and her cousins. The kids were all out in the blow-up bounce toy castle. Was it Aladdin's? I didn't ask. When it was time to eat, we were invited to eat - self-serve in the kitchen - several ethnic treats (I don't know their names) and pizza. Morad explained to his family that it wasn't halal, and some of them avoided it.

All in all, very different; and yet, very much the same as any other family event. Even when we feel out of place, each of our seven principles speaks eloquently, if we are listening.

**Peace,
Art**



**“Tibetan Singing Bowls with Paul Stranahan”
Paul will perform at the Sunday Service on December 6.**

...from Brian Moore, Pulpit & Worship Trustee

Greetings from the Pulpit Chair

Wow, here it is December! Last month of the year. That didn't take long. December, the month in the middle of the holiday season. The last month before the weather really gets nasty, and the month I find myself praying! “Please God get me through.”

Christmas. I must confess I'm a total Scrooge when it comes to Christmas. But let me tell you how I really feel. Christmas Sucks. It's not exciting as an adult, it's expensive, it's tiring, lame gifts, it makes you fat, the decorations are tacky, and it's wasteful. Do I really have to hear those stupid songs again? I hate shopping, Christmas decorations out before Halloween, because it's all about marketing, commercialism, and convincing us to buy, buy, buy!!! OK, maybe I'm being a little facetious, because we all know Christmas is not about that. Christmas is about Jesus' Birthday right? Because Jesus (if he actually lived) however, was born sometime in June, probably the 16th, according to most scholars, but is celebrated on December 25th because some early church leaders wanted to seize the enthusiasm from crowds already gathering on a day holy to many people. Oh, OK. Well...all right Happy Birthday Jesus anyway. But to be fair, maybe we should also wish a happy birthday to a few other gods that were actually born on December 25th as well. Are we ready? Here we go!!! Happy Birthday to you!!! Happy Birthday dear Horus (3000 BCE), Osiris (3000 BCE), Attis of Phrygia (1400 BCE), Krishna (1400 BCE), Zoroaster (1000 BCE), Mithra of Persia (600 BCE), Heracles (800 BCE), Dionysus (186 BCE), Tammuz (400 BCE), Adonis (200 BCE), Hermes (400's BCE), and Prometheus (born at the beginning of mankind). Happy Birthday to all of you. Happy Birthday to you! And let us all celebrate the victory of Sol Invitus and have a great Saturnalia winter festival, an occasion of wild revelry.

But, I sincerely wish everyone a joyous holiday season, and I hope you can celebrate it in any manner that brings peace and happiness to your heart.

...Pulpit & Worship cont.

December Schedule

December 6

Speaker: Paul Stranahan

Title: "Tibetan Singing Bowls" with Paul Stranahan

Topic: Percussionist Paul Stranahan uses ancient instruments, gongs and Tibetan singing bowls, to make music that is completely modern and original. He creates sounds and moods that can range from soothing and meditative to chaotic and downright apocalyptic. Each performance is improvised and, thus, each show is totally unique. By using various sticks and mallets, including a special striker to gently rub the rim of the bowls, Paul fills the room with sound and vibrations that can only be described as "other worldly".

Leader: Joan Richmond

Music: Trio Alla Breve

December 13

Speaker: Dr. Walter Kania

Title: "A Metaphysical Christmas"

Topic: In order to celebrate Christmas properly we need to understand the meaning behind all of the symbols that we find in the Christmas Story. To literalize and make historical a baby Jesus in a manger who is the only Son of God born of a virgin woman misses the whole point of the story. The Christmas Story is a beautiful story, but it still is a story. But what does it mean? Walk into a marvelous experience of light, love, and joy!

Leader: Teasha Sargent

Music: Ayesha Fry, Organist

December 20

Speaker: William Humphrey & Bruce Kilgore

Title and Topic: "Holiday Readings"

Leader: Eric Sargent

Music: Trio Alla Breve

All Souls Winter Recycling Collection Day

December 21 - Winter Begins

December 24 – Christmas Eve Service with Pastor William Humphrey

December 25 – Christmas Day

December 27

Speaker: Marisa Hills

Title: "Being Good for Goodness Sake: Atheism, Humanism, and Community Volunteerism"

Topic: My message will touch on my personal journey as an Atheist and Humanist and how both have driven me to build a positive community for secular individuals and believers alike, through rational discussion, volunteerism, and community events.

Leader: Brian Moore

Music: Ayesha Fry, Organist

**Kenya Coin Collection & Potluck
Peace, Love and Namaste to All Souls!**

Living Lotus Zen Sangha December Schedule

Monday, December 7: 6:30pm - 8:30pm at All Souls

Special Rohatsu "Bodhi Day" Silent Sitting

To commemorate the traditional Buddhist holiday of the Buddha's enlightenment (Celebrated December 8), we will have a special traditional holiday celebration of an extended silent sitting. There will be no service or dharma talk, but silent alternating sitting and walking for the entire length of the time.

The church is opened at 6:00 p.m. Please enter from the side door. We sit upstairs. Loaner meditation cushions (Zafus & Zabutons) are available as well as pews for those who prefer/need to sit in a chair.

SPECIAL ROHATSU SCHEDULE

6:30pm-6:50pm - Zazen (sitting meditation)

6:50pm-7:00pm - Kinhin (walking meditation)

7:00pm-7:20pm - Zazen

7:20pm-7:30pm - Kinhin

7:30pm-7:50pm - Zazen

7:50pm-8:00pm - Kinhin

8:00pm-8:30pm - Zazen

Brief Beginner's guide to Zazen & Kinhin: <http://global.sotozen-net.or.jp/eng/practice/zazen/howto/index.html>



**Monday, December 14: 6:30pm - 8:00pm
at Relax, It's Just Coffee, 105 N. Main St., Mansfield, OH**

Book Study Discussion: "The Gateless Barrier" by Robert Aitken "Case #6 - The World Honored One Twirls a Flower"

Sangha members and friends are invited for coffee and informal discussion over a case in this Zen book.

NEED NOT HAVE ATTENDED PREVIOUS SESSIONS to jump in!

Suggested Selections to Have Read before Discussion "Case #6-The World Honored One Twirls a Flower"

"Once, in ancient times, when the World-Honored One was at Mount Grdbrakuta, s/he twirled a flower before her assembled disciples. All were silent. Only Mahakasyapa broke into a smile. The World-Honored One said, "I have the eye treasury of right Dharma, the subtle mind of nirvana, the true form of no-form, and the flawless gate of the teaching. It is not established upon words and phrases. It is special transmission outside tradition. I now entrust this to Mahakasyapa."

Bring your thoughts, notes, insights and confusions and a friend!

Visit our webpage at <http://www.livinglotus.org>

Visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Living-Lotus-Zen-Sangha-221565108160/?fref=ts>

**In Gassho,
Jacqueline Moore**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Alex Brown – December 1

Cynthia Phipps – December 9

Cheryl Church – December 15

Art O’Leary – December 17

Mel Wagner - December 17

Cicely Bartsch – December 25

Sandy Macpherson – December 28

Krista Gerhart – December 31

.....clip and save.....

JUST SO YOU KNOW

SPEAKERS FOR DECEMBER

December 6: Paul Stranahan

December 13: Dr. Walter Kania

December 20: William Humphrey & Bruce Kilgore

December 27: Marisa Hills

DECEMBER EVENTS

Adult RE: “Humanism and Then Some” – Sunday, December 6 @ 9:00 am

Special Rohatsu “Bodhi Day” Silent Sitting – Monday, December 7 @ 6:30 pm at All Souls

Pagan and Earth Based Spirituality Group– Wednesday, December 9 @ 7:00 pm

Adult RE: “Humanism and Then Some” – Sunday, December 13 @ 9:00 am

Bellville “Shop with a Cop” Holiday Project Collection – Sunday, December 13

Buddhist Book Discussion “The Gateless Barrier” - Monday, December 14 @ 6:30 pm at Relax, It’s Just Coffee

All-Inclusive Casual Get-Together for All Women – Wednesday, December 16 @ 7:00 pm

Winter Recycling Collection Day – Sunday, December 20

Board Meeting - Sunday, December 20 @ 9:00 am

Questions for Your Answers Discussion & Breakfast - Wednesday, Dec. 23 @ 10:00 am at Bob Evans-Hanley Rd.

Progressive Christmas Eve Service – Thursday, December 24 @ 7:00 pm

MERRY CHRISTMAS! – Friday, December 25

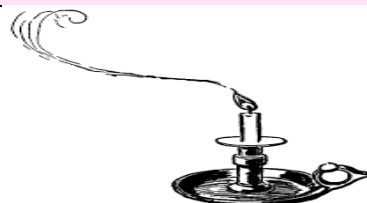
Pot Luck & Kenya Coin Collection: Sunday, December 27

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.....*And to all a good night*