

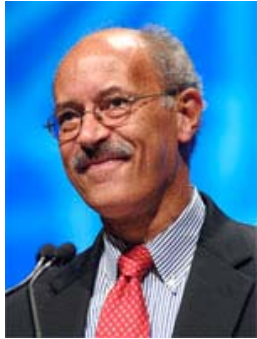
# SCUUP



South Coast Unitarian Universalist Press

November – December 2008

Vol. 18 • Number 3



## Holiday Pastoral Letter

By UUA President Wm. Sinkford

Dear Friends:

This holiday season, when so many of us are praying for peace, my thoughts keep returning to the powerful words of the apostle Paul:

*Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places ... Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.*

(From Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, 6:11-15)

Paul certainly had a way with words, didn't he? I think many of us, regardless of our theological perspectives, can enthusiastically support a "gospel of peace." But, like other Pauline letters, this one could easily be misused. There's something incongruous about a battle metaphor for spreading the good news. We argue against those religious fundamentalists who wield religion as a weapon. But on the other hand, I have "fought" for peace, and I know many of you have as well.

This paradox is understandable. Nothing inspires a fighting spirit like witnessing the true cost of war. When I hear that over 4,500 U.S. troops and as many as a half million Iraqis have been killed for a war that began with a lie, I get angry. I can't believe the number of injured troops coming home, and I can't even fathom the number of injured people trying to make it through another day in Iraq. And when I hear that the money spent on this violence in one month is enough to completely rebuild New Orleans, or that the money spent in one week could provide three meals a day for nearly an entire year for 6 million children—the same number who die each year from malnutrition—I am ready to fight. I can't sit still when I hear these things, and I hope you can't either, because that is a righteous anger.

The challenge to people of faith is to transform anger into action. Rather than simply fight, we've got to follow through with actions committed to end the fighting. Whether or not one believes there can ever be just reasons for war—and opinion is not unanimous within our faith—the proper response toward our troops is one of honor and gratitude for their willingness to serve. No sacrifice they have made is in vain, and we cannot let it become so. But to those who worry that pulling the troops out would render their service meaningless, I say it does not do justice to our nation's sons and daughters for us to stop thinking about whether we are on the right course. "Staying the course" without raising questions does not give meaning to their sacrifice. It is nothing more than a tragic guarantee of further sacrifice. In memory of our fallen soldiers and out of love and respect for the people of Iraq and the troops that remain there, we must act now to end this hopeless war.

We have marched, and signed petitions, and held vigils, and still the war goes on. Our military commanders will most likely tell us the surge was a success, and that we need to give it more time to work. They will ask yet again for our patience, for our complicity in prolonging the bloodshed. And now our

President tells us, despite his national intelligence estimate on Iran, that this other country is also a threat to us. Far more than a surge of troops, we need a surge of truth. It is hard not to despair when our leaders seem bent on war.

For peacemakers, hope is hard to hold onto at times like these. When we begin to lose hope, we need to know that our comrades are holding it for us until we can carry it again ourselves. And sometimes we need to be the one carrying hope for our brothers and sisters. Perhaps we need "armor" from God after all. Not the kind that keeps bullets out, but the kind that strengthens us in the face of fury and despair, the kind that shores us up to find salvation, when so much has already been lost. The belt of truth. The breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet. Paul says, put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.

One shoe does not fit all, as Paul knows, but we'll walk side by side with the shield of faith—the hope we hold for and with each other. This holiday season, let us find in "the armor of God," a shield to protect the spirits of peacemakers. I am praying for the peacemakers, and also I'm praying for the war-makers. My prayer for those with the power to beat swords into plowshares is expressed beautifully by Jill-Beth Sweeney Schultheis in her poem, "Remember Peace":

*We will hold you until you soften.*

*We will love you until you begin to melt.*

*We will sing to you until you remember peace.*

During this holy season, may we all work together to nurture hope and to remember peace.

In faith,  
William G. Sinkford, President

## Cluster Conference Report

*By Barbara Taylor*

The PNWD Southern Oregon Cluster Conference held in Ashland at the Rogue Valley UU Fellowship was attended by about 50 participants from six fellowships. Bob Mahaffy, Barbara Taylor, and Daina Swanson represented SCUUF. Workshops included Worship Development, Membership & Growth, Conflict Resolution, Religious Education, Stewardship, and Leadership Development.

We enjoyed thought-provoking conversations, lively music and song, delicious food, and a memorable Sunday morning service, featuring a sermon by Rev. Carolyn Colbert.

At the end of our time together, we filled out index cards in a rainbow of bright colors, printed with the questions: What does UUism have to offer southern Oregon? If our congregations bloom and thrive what difference will we make?

Here is my response: "UUism offers an antidote to negative, divisive thought and action. When we bloom & thrive we will be leaders in our communities, helping work towards social & environmental justice, while being nourished within our faith community." ☺

## Here to Serve

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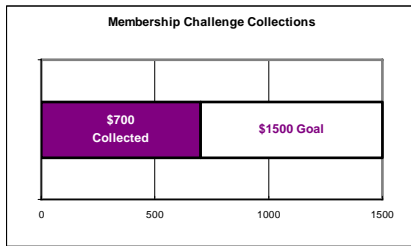
## SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND

Want to know the topic for the next SCUUF program or who to call for information about the book group or the children's program?

If you lose track of this newsletter, you can find information in Saturday religious page in *The World*, at our fellowship web site [www.scuuf.pnwd.uua.org](http://www.scuuf.pnwd.uua.org), or dial our message machine at 266-SEEK (266-7335) for a recorded message updated weekly. ☺



## Membership Challenge



We are nearly half way to matching our membership challenge grant. As of this printing, we have collected \$700 of the \$1500 challenge.

As reported last issue, a SCUUF member has challenged the fellowship to raise money for growing our fellowship. If so, the first \$1500 will be matched.

Funds are to be used for membership development. The board has decided to use the money for:

- ▶ 2 large banners, SCUUF and UU Principles
- ▶ promotional flyers
- ▶ new member packets

For more on the challenge grant or suggestions for membership growth, contact any board member. ☺

## Fellowship Sundays Getting More Musical

Nancy Humphreys, who has been playing the piano and organ for churches since she was 12 years old, has offered to grace our programs with her musical talents. Starting in December, we hope to have Nancy play for us when her schedule allows her to attend SCUUF programs. ☺

## Among UUs

Dennis Phillips reports that a state parks official informed him that the shipwreck at the Southwest corner of the SCUUF Coast Mile (#128) is probably a mine sweeper built in Coos Bay during WW II and wrecked in the 50's. It had a wooden hull with sheet metal interior. It was purposely burned soon after the wreck. We are still searching for a name.

☺ ☺

Will Fowler, son of Barb Taylor, was awarded with the Vigil Honor in the Order of the Arrow. It is the highest honor given to members. The Order of the Arrow is Boy Scouting's National Honor Society. Will served recently as Wacoma Hanas Chapter Chief in the Order of the Arrow.

☺ ☺

Daina Swanson & Barbara Taylor stayed with Mitzi Loftus in Ashland during the Southern Oregon Cluster Conference in October. Mitzi and her late husband, Don Loftus, were instrumental in helping found SCUUF. Mitzi is now an active member of the Rogue Valley UU Fellowship, which hosted the first annual gathering of congregations and fellowships in our region.

☺ ☺

Dick Root is settled into his new home in Portland and he really enjoys having practically everything he needs within walking distance. Dick says the longest drive he takes is 15 minutes, quite a contrast from the distance he had to travel into town from his Myrtle Point ranch.

☺ ☺

In September, Nancy Humphreys and Carl Siminow embarked on an 11 day trip to Alaska. They took a paddlewheel river cruise in Anchorage, a bus to Denali National Park, an Inland Rail journey from Denali to Whittier, and a cruise ship voyage to Skakway, Juneau, and Ketchikan, ending up in British Columbia for a flight home. In November, Carl & Nancy will visit friends and family in Reno, Sacramento, and Eureka for a week.

☺ ☺

The Gay Straight Alliance at Southwestern continues to meet. For information, contact [gsasocc@yahoo.com](mailto:gsasocc@yahoo.com)

☺ ☺

Jim Sherman reports "on Tuesday, Oct. 21, I travelled to Hawaii (the big island) to spend eight days with my son Duane and his wife Belinda (Billie). They live on the south end of the island in an area called *Ocean View*.

"I first saw their home last year while Duane was still working in Jamaica. During the two years he was in Jamaica I spent a total of thirty days with him--an interesting and valuable experience that I will always cherish.

"I've been invited to live with them in their tropical Hawaiian home, and I am strongly tempted. We'll see!" ☺





**South Coast  
Unitarian Universalist  
Fellowship**

PO Box 595  
North Bend OR 97459-0048

**November – December 2008**

**Visit SCUUF online at <http://scuuf.pnwd.uua.org>**

## **South Coast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Nov – Dec 2008 Calendar**

Unless otherwise noted, programs are from 3:00 to 4:30 pm  
at North Bend United Methodist Church, 2289 Meade Street.

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**Children's Religious Education every Sunday at 3:00**

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- Nov 2     **Animal • Vegetable • Miracle**  
Based on a book by Barbara Kingsolver documenting a year  
of feeding one's family locally & sustainably. Explore the  
connection between food, fuel, & fitness (people & planet).
- Nov 9     **The Age of Reason**  
Being an investigation of "True and Fabulous Theology."  
Based on the book by Tom Paine.
- Nov 16    **Awakening To Your Life's Purpose– part II**  
Based on *A New Earth* by Eckhart Tolle.
- Nov 23    **Thanksgiving Potluck**  
Bring your own pilgrim and fixins to 97356 Hwy 241 (Coos  
River Road) at noon. Carpool from Bunker Hill School at  
11:30am.
- Nov 30    **Hike our Coast Watch Mile**  
Meet for carpooling at North Bend Library parking lot at 11.  
Bring/wear suitable gear for BEACH FRONT weather, plus  
beverage and snacks for a seaside lunch. 888-8234 for more.
- Dec 7     **Hereditary Curses: from sources Mythological,  
Historical and Biblical**
- Dec 14    **Symbiosis in Corals**
- Dec 21    **Winter Solstice Celebration**  
Bring something seasonal to share: a poem, a thought, a  
picture of a blossom. Drums and drumming if we are  
moved to do so. At the Kiosk at Sunset Bay at 1 pm.
- Dec 28    **Community: Sharing our Thoughts and Feelings.**

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*Board Meeting on Nov 11 • 7:00 pm • Call for location: 267-7193  
Program Planners on Nov 13 and Dec 18 • 4:00 pm • Java Jones • 888-8234*

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