



# Oaklandon Unitarian Universalist Newsletter

July 2006

*To provide a religious environment for persons seeking spiritual insights free of dogma and creed.*

## Reflections on General Assembly 2006

By Jan and Steve Viehweg

We attended our first General Assembly in St. Louis in June. It was a wonderful experience for our family to affirm our faith while discovering resources and strategies that can help OUUC grow in the coming years. Several observations:

- ✓ Two-thirds of UU churches are considered smaller (fewer than 150 members) – there is definitely a place for liberal religion here on the east side of Indianapolis as McCordsville, Fortville and Greenfield continue to grow.
- ✓ While it is great that we are offering additional activities to attract people into our church (OCT, meditation, book club, Socrates Café, Adult Education), our true source for growth will be our worship services at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays. Jan attended several sessions featuring worship excellence ideas that she will be able to share with the worship committee as we plan for 2006-07.
- ✓ There are research resources available at little or no cost that can assist us with planning. We need to determine what we do well and focus on that first, then add programming as we grow. The shotgun approach will not work for a church our size because we can't convert people to membership if we don't have programming for them.
- ✓ UUA has partnered with a company to provide web templates and hosting capabilities for church websites that will assist us in keeping our site current and easily updated. Many visitors find churches

on the web and we need to be there in an accessible way.

- ✓ Bryce participated in the Youth Caucus at GA and met several neat teens in the process. There were over 300 young people involved and it was good for him to see how other churches welcome his age group to church. Ask him about his new t-shirts and bumper stickers next time you see him.
- ✓ Hearing the poetry of Mary Oliver was a nice treat, too.

There were many great sessions and it was impossible to attend them all. We hope to attend other General Assembly conventions in the future – you should consider going too! In the meantime we look forward to sharing our experiences from GA with you over the coming months.



*Member Gordon Hart gave the third installment of his Energy series at the June 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday service. Everyone at Oaklandon wants to thank Gordon and Marjorie Hart for their years of service to the church, and wish them all the best as they move across country and begin a new life. They will be missed!*

**Minister:**

Rev. Loring Prosser .....271-3361

**Director of Religious Education:**

Sandy Baier .....823-3938

**Organist:**

John Carey.....773-4668

**Board:**

Steve Viehweg, Moderator .....894-8577

Bonnie May, Vice Moderator

David Wing, Treasurer

Paul May, Financial Secretary

Judy Kirkham, Registrar

Tamara Brown, Secretary

Joe Kirkham, Trustee

Jack McMahan, Trustee

Steve Tilden, Trustee

**Newsletter:** Tamara Brown .....577-1286  
(email: tedbrown@60msn.com)

**Church Website:** [www. Oaklandonuu.org](http://www.Oaklandonuu.org)

**From the Minister's Desk**

July 2006

The 2006 Unitarian Universalist General Assembly (more than 4,000 strong) in St. Louis was a powerful and uplifting experience. I attended interesting programs and workshops, voted in plenary sessions, connected with UU's from many parts of the country and world, communicated with ministers during Ministry Days, sang at the Service of the Living Tradition and in the General Assembly Choir, saw Jan and Steve, Bryce and Blair, and tried to use my time efficiently. Some highlights included the Ware Lecture (poet Mary Oliver), a workshop on regional co-operation to grow Unitarian-Universalist congregations, "Small is Beautiful" workshop (700 out of 1000 of our UU congregations are 150 members or less), and David Korten's provocative lecture "The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community."

A concern that many share is that the General Assembly deals with so many social and spiritual issues that it becomes somewhat overwhelming. We would do well as a congregation to concentrate on one or two or three areas and do them well. In fact, this is strongly recommended by the denomination for churches under 50 members (family size churches), even as they work to grow beyond 50 members. Worship, religious education, fellowship, and music are strengths of our church that we intend to be very intentional about maintaining and improving. Also, most churches that devote part of one Sunday a month's collection to a humanitarian or social witness cause found that their overall collection increased. We want to feel we are part of something greater and contribute toward the "Good of the Whole."

On a different note, I have been asked to serve on the Board of Hoosiers Concerned About Gun Violence. This is a common sense non-profit organization which works toward encouraging hand-gun trigger locks, no sales of guns to people under 21, limiting the number of guns you can buy in a month, etc. In the culture we live in, this kind of organization has a very important, even though limited, part to play. Some of you remember Prof. David Mason who spoke very rationally and eloquently on this ethical subject in our church last March.

In the summer we look forward to a change of pace or a change to vigorous outdoor activity. This is also known as "soul work." We each have a soul that is unfolding in its own time. "Go forth, under the open sky, and listen to Nature's teachings while from all around Earth and her waters, and the depths of air comes a still, small divine voice."

See you in church. *Loring*

**Crafts Anyone?**

*Anyone interested in helping to organize a fall craft fair, contact Bonnie May at 826-7530.*

**Oaklandon Calendar**  
(Sunday service at 10:30 am)

**Board Meeting:** Sunday, August 6, at 5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall.

**Upcoming Sermon Topics:**

**July 16**—Jack McMahan "Expanded Faith for a New Age"

**July 23**—Jack McMahan "Rethinking the Controversies"

**July 30**—Loring Prosser "Poetry of Mary Oliver"

**August 6**—Loring Prosser "A Challenge of Our Church"

**August 13**—Jack McMahan "What Life After Death?"

**August 20**—Jack McMahan "We Miss You, Mark Twain"

**August 27**—Loring Prosser "The Recovery of Simplicity"

**Meditation Group:** Continuing meditation classes meet on Tuesday nights from 7-8:30 pm. For more information, call Mary Horne-Porter at (317) 831-7470, or 679-6620.

**Piano/Organ/Keyboard Lessons:** John Carey is offering classes at the church. If you are interested in lessons contact him at 773-4668.



**July/August Birthdays**

Greg Porter.....July 6  
Gary Brown.....July 14  
Liza Cohen.....July 20  
Janna Shisler.....August 8  
Dan Castillo.....August 10  
Claire Castillo.....August 11

The OUUC Book Club's August selection is ***The Kite Runner*** by Khaled Hosseini. Keep reading and stay tuned for the next meeting's date and time.

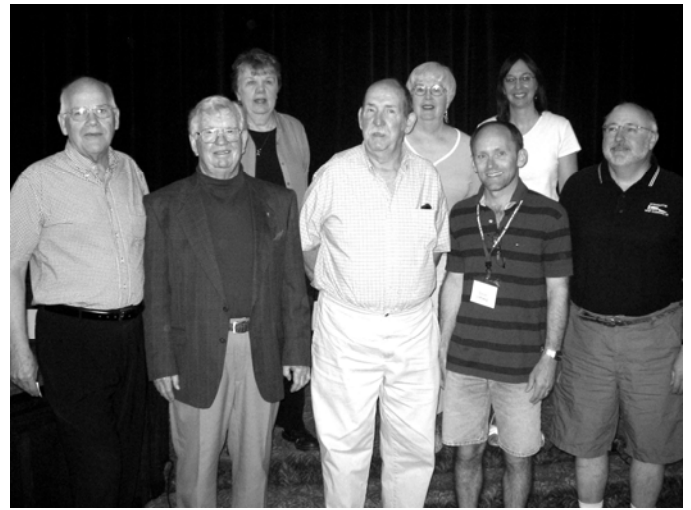
**Rummage Sale Mania!**

Oaklandon's 2006 Community Rummage Sale was a great success, raising nearly \$1200! Many thanks to organizers Judy Kirkham and Bonnie May, and to all the members, friends and families who helped make it possible.





*New members Mary Gourley and Jeff Erlich were honored during the service on June 4.*



*The installation of OUUC officers at the June 4 service included (front l-r) Paul May, Jack McMahan, Joe Kirkham, Steve Viehweg, Steve Tilden (back l-r) Judy Kirkham, Bonnie May and Tamara Brown.*

### **Upcoming Events:**

***August 6—Adult Education Class with Jack McMahan meets at 9:30 am in the Fellowship Hall.***

***September—A Fall Planning Meeting is in the works for a Friday evening and Saturday morning early this month. More information about this all-church event to come.***

Postage

Oaklandon Unitarian Universalist Church  
6450 Oaklandon Road  
P.O. Box 36095  
Indianapolis, IN 46236