



What*s Happening

MAIN LINE UNITARIAN CHURCH

December 2009



“VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL” FOUR CENTURIES OF FAITH: UNITARIANISM, FROM TRANSYLVANIA TO PENNSYLVANIA

REVEREND RÓBERT BÁLINT, 2009-2010 BALÁZS SCHOLAR,
STARR KING SEMINARY,
Fireside Room, Sunday, December 20, 7:00 p.m.

MLUC is delighted to have Reverend Róbert Bálint visit us on December 20 to compare the evolution of liberal religious thinking in the Transylvanian and American UU traditions. He will discuss common values, theological and structural differences, historical context and possibilities for mutual support. There will be a question and answer period following his talk. Child care will be available. Coffee and dessert will be served.

Reverend Bálint is on leave from the ministry of the Mészkö Church in Transylvania. The 2008 Pilgrimage received a warm welcome and tour from Reverend Bálint at this beautiful historic church. He has worked closely with MLUC's Partner Church in nearby Várfalva. As part of his ministry, he has worked with Unitarian youth, plus local social and charity organizations.

Life in Mészkö in the 20's and 30's, including the ministry of Reverend Ferenc Balázs, is described in the book, *The Alabaster Village*, written by his wife, Christine. Reverend Bálint started the Ferenc Balázs Historical Preservation Project to honor his legacy.

Reverend Bálint's wife Réka, daughter Dalma and son, Mátyás, will accompany him during his visit. Please join us for an evening of faith and fellowship on December 20.

WHO WE ARE

Main Line Unitarian Church is a diverse and caring religious community engaged in a liberating ministry of spiritual growth, human compassion, and universal justice.

At our church we:
embrace all people, regardless of age, race, ability, politics, financial situation, or sexual orientation; encourage and nurture every individual in his or her own search for meaning in life; and commit to serve local and world communities in promoting peace, social justice, and responsible stewardship of the earth.



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RUMINATIONS



Rev. Dr. Justin Osterman
Senior Minister

Thanksgiving is behind us and the December holidays are fast approaching. In many ways, this part of the year can feel like a brief season that features “gratitude” and “gift giving” as its opening and closing virtues. I see things differently and believe that it is important for each of us to center ourselves during the season, so that we can live our values years round.

No Christmas reading serves to focus my heart, mind, and spirit for the year ahead like one by the late Rev. Howard Thurman, professor, preacher, and teacher of leaders.

The Work of Christmas

*When the song of angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the brothers,
to make music in the heart.*

May the December holidays be safe and joyous for you and all whom you love. May your spirit be renewed, and may the giving of gifts and thanks be your ethic year round. May your light and love burn bright for all the world to see. And when the season is over, let our work begin.

Yours in faith,
Rev. Justin Osterman

CRAIG'S COLUMN



Rev. Craig C. Roshaven
Associate Minister

I'm looking forward to winter. I remember it being so cold the snow squeaked with every step. I remember seeing the tracks of small animals in the snow.

I'm looking forward to winter because the cold and dark remind me of the promise of warmth and light. When I was ordained to the ministry in 1982, Cris Williamson's song *The Changer and the Changed* was a central part of the service. I chose it because she sings of rainy days, “Sometimes it takes a rainy day, just to let you know that everything's going to be all right.”

My colleague Arvid Straube offered the best definition of spirituality I've ever heard. I'm paraphrasing now... Spirituality is the sense that there are resources available to me beyond my control or understanding upon which I can, nonetheless, reliably depend.

When I learned to float on my back in the water, I learned that it was essential to let go, to stop trying to hold myself up. Only then did I discover the water would support me. The same principle applies to rainy times in my life. I have found if I accept the rain, something will hold me up, something beyond my control or understanding.

I love to sing “In the Bleak Mid-Winter.”

In the bleak midwinter frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter long ago.

But I also love to sing “A Promise through the Ages Rings”

A promise through the ages rings, that always, always,
something sings.

Not just in May, in finch-filled bower, but in December's coldest hour,

A note of hope sustains us all.

“In the midst of winter, I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer.” -Albert Camus

Yours in a Shared Faith,
Rev. Craig Roshaven

REFLECTIONS FROM “DR. DRE”



Sandra Greenfield
Interim Director of
Religious Education

Thank you to the CSC and the YAC for organizing the Welcome Potluck on November 8. It was fun to sing, dance, and eat fabulous food. I LOVE my new scarf!

Now after having thanked you for your gracious welcome, I need to speak about my leaving. Questions have come up about the nature of our relationship once your settled DRE is here. As a member of LREDA (Liberal Religious Educators Association), I am bound by a set of ethical codes, similar to the code of conduct by ministers. Here is an excerpt of the guidelines regarding leaving:

“When leaving a position of religious education leadership for any reason, I will refrain from being involved in the process of selecting my successor. Further, I will support my successor by leaving room for her/him to establish her/his own identity and leadership in the congregation and by refraining from accepting positions on policy-making bodies in the congregation . . . for two years after my professional leadership has been concluded in that congregation. For two years, I will . . . encourage members of the congregation to speak to the current religious educator or other appropriate persons for answers to all current religious education issues or concerns.”

My intention is to leave a thoroughly organized, accessible RE program so everyone will be able to keep on with the good work being done now.

In the meantime...I am yours...
In faith,
Sandra

SUNDAY SERVICES

DECEMBER 6: "HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS"

Rev. Dr. Justin Osterman

Music: Men's Choir

December is the season when many of us start planning homecomings: going home to visit distant family or loved ones coming to visit us for the holidays. In the midst of all the coming and going, we'll pause to consider what message the Christmas manger scene might have to offer.

DECEMBER 13: "GOODS AND SERVICES"

Rev. Dr. Justin Osterman

Music: MLUC Choir

Businesses are in high gear for the holiday season, purposefully producing goods and services for the world. This makes me wonder what goods and services religious communities are in the business of producing.

DECEMBER 20: "OPENING OUR TREASURES"

Rev. Dr. Justin Osterman

Music: Intergenerational Choir, Children's Choir

It's the gift giving season. What is your greatest gift and are you sharing it? This is an intergenerational service. (*Christmas Family Service*)

DECEMBER 24: "CHRISTMAS EVE"

Rev. Dr. Justin Osterman and Rev. Craig C. Roshaven

Music: 4:00 p.m.: Betsy's Bells; 6:00 p.m. & 8:00 p.m.: MLUC Choir

These are our annual, intergenerational candle-light Christmas Eve services, featuring music, readings, and a Christmas message.

DECEMBER 27: "BETTER EVERY YEAR"

Rev. Dr. Justin Osterman

Music: Dr. Vincent Craig

The end of the year offers a unique vantage point. We can survey the past and plan for the future, both of which can be a little unsettling. (*One service only at 10:00 a.m.; No RE classes; childcare only*)

MLUC'S ANNUAL FALL RAKING GALA

Don't miss MLUC's annual Fall Raking Gala scheduled for Saturday, December 5 (rain date December 12), from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Bring a rake and a tarp if you have one; reconnect with old friends, meet new friends, and contribute to the flow of UU energy in high gear. We will follow up with a cup of chili, coffee, cider, and cookies in the Fireside Room.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

MAIN LINE UNITARIAN CHURCH

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Submit material to news@mluc.org.

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(Saturday–Tuesday)

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

Gail Burgess, Chair

We had a great turnout for the Welcome Potluck for Sandra, Craig, and Arley. It was fun for kids and grown ups and was a wonderful way to continue strengthening the intergenerational ties in our church.

The children are settling nicely into the new school year, as classes are now in full swing. Teachers please remember to take attendance on a weekly basis. Parents, please take a moment to sign up as a parent helper in your child's class and bring a snack.

On December 20, we will continue our Christmas Pageant tradition with the children being part of the pageant. They will be making new costumes and recycling some old ones during their classroom times on December 13.

Mark your calendars for the exciting new Workshop Rotation coming up during the month of March. This year we will complete our own "trilogy" by focusing on someone who represents the "loving hearts" quality of UUs. Stay tuned...

Please check the Church School Calendar on the MLUC website regularly as scheduling changes will be updated there.

YOUTH ADULT COMMITTEE

Liza Jane Bernard, Co-Chair

Gil Stevens, Co-Chair

Youth and advisors have been having a very active fall. Launching the year with an incredibly rewarding retreat at Camp Dark Waters, both age groups jumped right into engaging and fun activities. YRUU/YUUM youth did the AIDS Walk raising approximately \$2,000. JYGers (and advisors and parents) created an amazing Haunted House enjoyed by all who dared to traverse the spooky tunnels. Thanks JYG for your help at the CSC and YAC Welcome Potluck for Craig, Sandra, and Arley. More than 70 people shared the evening together.

"Popcorn theology" is engaging YUUM in discussing some interesting films. Films planned include *The Matrix*, Pink Floyd's *The Wall* and *Interview with a Vampire*. JYG is planning a sleepover and grounds clean up on December 4 and 5. They are also getting ready to make and sell snacks at the Holiday Workshop. This is their only major fundraiser to support some fun outings, so bring your appetites to Holiday Workshop. YRUU/YUUM youth will be distributing UUSC Guest at the Table boxes on November 22. Please share the good will of this holiday season with others less fortunate. YRUU and YUUM youth are also planning to be on board to assist at booths for the Holiday Workshop.

Thanks to advisors and parents who are contributing to these events. Best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season from the YAC crew!

ARTIST OF THE MONTH: MARGO ALLMAN

Visual Arts Committee

Barbara Bugliani, Co-Chair

Mary Kane, Chair, Artist of the Month

Margo Allman, a prominent abstract artist from West Grove, will show her paintings and a sampling of her sculpture through January 3 in the Fireside Room.

Allman's "ovoidal" compositions suggest the impact of the computer and other cultural changes including fertility engineering and our shift into an information age. Her use of translucent paint and her perfectionist handling of the surface are exceptional. You are invited to a wine and cheese reception and slide/talk by Allman describing her artistic journey on Saturday, December 5, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Bring your friends.

Annual Members Art Show and Gala

The annual art show by members of the congregation has been moved to May 2010. Moving it to May will give everyone a chance to produce something wonderful in any medium for this always thrilling event. Surprise us in the spring with your entry of painting, sculpture, pottery, found object art, fabric design...collage...flowers...Stay tuned!

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF SERVICE. VOLUNTEERS: SAVE THE DATE!

The Unitarian Society of Germantown (USG) will once again host the Martin Luther King Day of Service on the holiday, Monday, January 18, 2010, at their church at 6511 Lincoln Drive, Philadelphia.

A variety of service projects are planned: some take place at the church and others in the larger community. We'll gather for coffee and bagels at 8:30 a.m. while you sign up for the project of your choice. Then, at 9:30, it's off to work we go until we return to the church for a free lunch and wrap up at 12:30 p.m.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dave VanOcker, President Diane Kyker, Vice-President

MLUC lives its values by striving to make a better world for those outside its walls.

We have such a rich tradition of Social Action programs at MLUC. At a recent Social Action programming retreat, members filled a wall by listing many of the tremendous outreach programs that have marked our 50+ year history of helping to change the lives of people in need:

A Better Chance—for inner city youth living and attending high schools locally	Interfaith Hospitality for homeless families (in partnership with St. David's)	Providing sanctuary for Central American refugees (in partnership with Central Baptist)
Escorting patients at Planned Parenthood clinics	Meals and fundraising walks for those with AIDS	Teaching literacy and English as a second language

The list is far too long to include here, but suffice to say that it is inspiring!

As we look forward to the beginning of a new chapter in our giving, let us remember how our individual and collective efforts make a difference for those less fortunate than us. We can all be a part of that difference that MLUC wants to make for others! There are exciting opportunities ahead for family and intergenerational involvement, enabling everyone to say "thanks" for the gifts we have received. Remember, generosity is one of our core values!

CHOIR SCHEDULES

Dr. Vincent Craig, MLUC Music Director
610-688-8332 x. 22; vincent@mluc.org

Men's Choir will sing during the Sunday, December 6 worship services.

Rehearsals:
Thursday, November 19, 7:00 to 7:40 p.m.
Thursday, December 3, 6:30 to 7:40 p.m.
Saturday, December 5, 11:00 to 12:30 p.m.
Sunday, December 6, 8:00 to 8:30 a.m.

Come sing in the Intergenerational Choir! All ages are welcome; rehearsals are on Sunday mornings. Great opportunity for young families and adults who are church school teachers, or any first timers to MLUC's music program.

Rehearsals:
Sunday, December 6, 10:15 to 10:45 a.m.
Sunday, December 13, 10:15 to 10:45 a.m.
Sunday December 20, 8:15 a.m.

Betsy's Bells

Rehearsals:
Saturday, December 5, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
Saturday, December 12, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
Saturday, December 19, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
Thursday, December 24, 3:00 p.m. (Worship at 4:00 p.m.)

Children's Choir

Rehearsals:
Thursday, December 10 & 17, 6:30 p.m., McGinness Room
Sunday, December 20, 8:00 a.m., Main Meeting Room.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

A warm welcome to our new members:

Valerie and John Maxwell, Phillip Exline, Dianne Kearney and Brian Castellento, Peggy and Frank Arico, Shirley Steele, Eric and Judy Elinow, Fred Davis, Alyssa and Michael Metz-Topodos, Chris Smith, Kevin Thomas.

Valerie and John Maxwell of Downingtown have been coming regularly to MLUC for about a year. Originally from Pittsburgh with Presbyterian and Catholic backgrounds, they find that MLUC provides a community where they can meet others with similar experiences. In June, they look forward to their daughter Kelsey being married at MLUC by the Rev. Roshaven. Son Colin, a senior at Penn State, will have a chance to get acquainted. Both Maxwells are professionals in the health care industry, Valerie as a recruiter for a kidney dialysis company and John a consultant for AECS, a health care consulting firm. At MLUC, they are interested in joining Small Group Ministry and helping with the auction.

Shirley Steele knew Rich Fritszon when they worked in the same group at Unisys. Imagine her surprise finding that Peggy and Frank Arico from the same group were becoming new members, too. Shirley first joined the Unitarian Church when a student in Dallas in 1982 and sang in the choir. With a Ph.D. and post-doc work in Linguistics, she did research in computer speech for Texas Instruments and for Bell Labs where she attended the Summit, N.J. UU Church and joined the choir. After moving to Philadelphia, she attended the First Unitarian Church where she met her husband, Robert Rescorla, a professor at Penn. They now live in Wallingford. Shirley thoroughly enjoys the MLUC choir and Vincent Craig's leadership. She is a runner and hiker and recently has been experimenting with computer fine art.

Profiles to be continued

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SERVICE COMMITTEE

Priscilla Osgood, Liaison



Is a Guest at Your Table box now sitting on your dining table? If not, please contact Priscilla Osgood. This is Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's major effort to translate support from donors into tangible projects to advance human rights. A gift of:

\$40 buys materials for a woman in Northern Uganda to make her own groundnut shelter to return to after 20 years of war.

\$66 pays for door-to-door campaigning in Soweto, South Africa, to educate people about their human right to water and helps to carry out inspections by residents of municipal water services.

\$170 purchases a month's supply of testing kits for members of indigenous communities in Guatemala for water-quality monitoring of rivers downstream from the GOLDCORP mine.

\$600 repairs a home in Gaza, under a home repair program run by youth groups.

\$750 allows the Northwest Arkansas Worker's Justice Center to provide a "Know Your Rights" training workshop for 25 immigrant women who work in poultry-processing plants.

Visit www.uusc.org for more information. Gifts are tax deductible and may qualify for a matching giving program through your employer.

2010 MLUC Ski/ SNOWBOARD SPREE

Attention all MLUC winter sports enthusiasts! The 2010 MLUC Ski/ Snowboard Spree will run from Friday, February 20 through Sunday, February 22.

We will board the bus in the MLUC parking lot by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, travel about 6 ½ hours (weather permitting) and arrive at the cozy Mountaineer Inn in Mount Snow, Vermont. There will be sandwiches, cheese, desserts, wine, beer, and soft drinks on board. We get two delicious country breakfasts, one gourmet dinner and a wine and cheese party. Discount lift tickets and ski lessons are available for downhill skiers/ snowboarders. Mount Snow's MOOVER bus takes skiers and snowshoers to the cross country areas. Or you could take the MOOVER to Wilmington, a nearby classic Vermont town. After skiing or boarding, you can enjoy the swimming pool, game tables or a sing-along beside the large upstairs fireplace. On the way home we will have sandwiches and beverages. We will return around 10:00 p.m. to MLUC.

Please contact Neil Chippendale or Jon Bass for information. We will also have a table in the Atrium on December 6 after Sunday Service.

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE/ RETIRED MEN'S GROUP ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

The Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, December 9, at 11:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room.

The super chef team of Russ and Joan Gaul will prepare their signature walnut chicken entree for lunch. Russ will bring in some of his special white wine and a surprise red wine for our pre-dinner enjoyment. As we did last year, there will be no charge for this event but seating is limited, so register early.

Men should register by contacting Herb Seifert. Women should register by contacting Mary Ann Callahan. **Please indicate whether you are registering for one or two people.**

Deadline for signing up is 8:00 a.m. on Monday, December 7. Don't miss this holiday event!

SEEKING SOLACE AT SOLSTICE?

The Winter Solstice is a time to pause- a moment to reflect on the turning of the season and celebrate the reemergence of light into our world. On Sunday, December 20, at 2:00 p.m., the ad hoc Labyrinth Exploration Group will visit St. Thomas' Church, Whitmarsh to walk their new outdoor labyrinth.

Please join us to celebrate the rebirth of the Sun, practice walking meditation, or simply enjoy a moment of tranquility and fellowship during the hurly burly of the holiday season. All ages are welcome! Warm apple cider and other refreshments will be served. If you are interested in coming, please email Terry Dixon.



SOUL SISTERS

Come join the Soul Sisters on Sunday, December 6, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. (please note the change of date from the second Sunday) for a festive evening of singing, sewing and snacking. Help create a quilt which will symbolize our spiritual journey together as soul sisters.

Bring your own medium and design to embellish a 5 x 5 quilt square. We will have materials and ideas available if you consider yourself artistically challenged. Please bring a snack to share. Child care will be provided if you notify Doreen Jackson (610-688-8332 ext. 10; doreen@mluc.org) one week in advance.

FIGHT POVERTY! (DO TAXES)

America's largest anti-poverty program is the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a refund back to the working poor, those least able to afford Uncle Sam's tab. In Philadelphia, an estimated 39,000 eligible households do not file EITC claims, leaving more than \$66 million **unclaimed**. For many people, the only way to claim EITC is to pay \$200 or more to have their taxes prepared. But they lose much of the refund to pay preparation fees and then, if they get a loan based on their anticipated refund, pay exorbitant interest rates.

Enter *Campaign for Working Families (CWF)*. CWF volunteers prepare taxes for FREE. Refunds are credited within days to a free debit card. Low income taxpayers get their full refunds- as much as \$5,657 per year, depending on family size and income- instead of a fraction of that amount.

If you would like to join in America's anti-poverty campaign, do taxes! Visit www.phillyfreetaxes.org or call 215-851-1759 to sign up to volunteer with the CWF! All training provided. MLUC members David and Casey Aspin and Mike Woolley are CWF volunteers and would be happy to discuss their experiences.

It would be great if we could form an MLUC Free Tax Team! If you're interested, please e-mail Rev. Roshaven (craig@mluc.org) so that we can know who's on the team.

THE AUCTION IS ALMOST HERE!

Saturday, January 16, 2010, is the big day! Mark your calendars and save the date! The auction committee is busy making plans for a successful auction and we're counting on you to help make it a success.

Here's how you can help:

Volunteer: Volunteering for the auction is more fun than just about anything! There are lots of different ways to help and many levels of involvement.

Donate: Think about that vacation home, that unique talent of yours, or your gregarious spirit just itching to host a meal for your MLUC pals.

Attend: This is the most fun of all! Plan a night out, invite your friends, and attend the auction on January 16. You don't want to miss out on this fantastic evening of fun and fellowship!

Contact Laura House-Kelly (laura@mluc.org) and let her know how you'll be participating this year.

COMMITTEE FOR FUN

As a congregation we work hard: teaching Sunday School, holding committee meetings, and doing social action tasks. Let's have more fun and more fellowship. Beginning in January, we will be scheduling fun events. On the agenda is bowling at Devon Lanes and a play reading session at MLUC. Ideas and/or comments, contact Sally Fritzon.



2009 MLUC HOLIDAY WORKSHOP



Have yourself a merry Holiday Workshop,
Let your heart be light,
Your homemade crafts will be out of sight!

Have yourself a merry Holiday Workshop,
Make a gingerbread house today,
Find a perfect gift and your shopping troubles will be miles away!

Make some Bourbon Balls as in olden days,
Happy golden days of yore.
Faithful crafters who are hungry
gather to the Fireside Room once more!

Through the day we'll craft, eat, and shop together,
As the fates allow.
Hang the shining star of time spent together
upon the highest bough,
And have yourself a merry Holiday Workshop now!



**Sunday, December 13
2:00 to 5:00 p.m.**

*Join MLUC families and friends of all ages
for a day of fun, creativity, and fellowship!*

For more information or to volunteer, contact Stephanie Vincent.

INTRO TO SMALL GROUP MINISTRY IN JANUARY

In our society of frequent relocations and diminished family support, people come to MLUC to find friends and community. They come for a sense of intimacy and a place to belong. Small Group Ministry offers a safe place to wrestle with life's ultimate questions through deep listening and personal sharing. It invites you into more constant and reverent relationships and has the capacity to profoundly transform and strengthen your life.

Find out more about Small Group Ministry starting in January. Introductory sessions will be offered over the course of several weeks to let individuals discover how these groups can enrich our lives and the MLUC community. Sign-up sheets will be available after the services during the first two Sundays in January. Contact Ingrid Deckman for information.

SORROWS

Marilyn Furfari mourns the death of her brother, Jim White, who passed on November 4.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS

Parish Nurse Marybeth McMurray will check your blood pressure after services on Sunday, December 6.

MLUC'S ANNUAL FALL RAKING GALA

Saturday, December 5, 9:00 a.m. (See page 3).

SOUL SISTERS

Sunday, December 6, 7:00 p.m. (See page 6).

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE/ RETIRED MEN'S GROUP ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Wednesday, December 9, 11:30 a.m. (See page 6).

MLUC'S ANNUAL HOLIDAY WORKSHOP

Sunday, December 13, 2:00 p.m. (See page 7).

REVEREND RÓBERT BÁLINT

Sunday, December 20, 7:00 p.m. (See page 1).

MLUC AUCTION

Saturday, January 16, 2010

2010 MLUC SKI/ SNOWBOARD SPREE

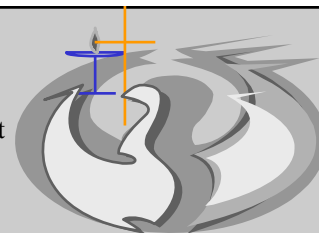
Friday, February 20 through Sunday, February 22. (See page 6).

ON THE WEB

The complete MLUC calendar of events is online at www.mluc.org. Members can simply click to request a room for their meeting or event. While you're there, you can listen to past sermons and learn more about MLUC.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA 2010

Phoenix 2010 presents Dr. Arthur L. Caplan, Director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania, on Sunday, February 21, 2010, at 3:00 p.m. in the St. David's Episcopal Church. Save the date to hear Dr. Caplan discuss the ethical issues involved in providing health care and to join in a stimulating debate.



Consider: Is it ethical to deny health care to the elderly on the grounds that they are too old to be worth the cost? Is it ethical to deny health insurance coverage because of a pre-existing condition? Is it ethical to deny health care to undocumented immigrants?

This annual lecture series is sponsored jointly by St. David's and MLUC.



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