



What*s Happening

July-August 2009

MAIN LINE UNITARIAN CHURCH

Sunday Service at 10 a.m. only through Sept. 6

REV. VIRGINIA SAYS GOODBYE

This is the real good bye. I have been dreading it and spinning toward it for months now. Is it a hurdle or a doorway? Or is it really death itself? For religious people, good-byes are entirely significant. They are they are the first and the last step on the learning curve of life. As your minister, I should be able to model how to do this. I should have it all together, right? I know you are better at this than I am. This congregation has blessed me with an amazing goodbye. Individually and collectively you have loved me up until the very end. My cheeks are rubbed smooth with all of your kisses. My arms are made strong by all of your hugs. My eyes overflow with the sight of each perfect face that has made the pilgrimage to this final passage.

It was a short seven years ago when I arrived and everything felt so awkward as we tried to find a way into this relationship, to create a good hello in this ministry together. Somewhere in there, somewhere in the daily round, we grew together. We grew in respect, in love though challenges and celebrations. We have walked together from tentative beginnings. We have held each other through tough and tender moments. We have heard each other into being. I am deeply grateful for all that we have shared.

Yet this is the real goodbye. I say this because in order for us both to start the next chapter well – to say a really good hello – this must be a real goodbye. I wish you all the best in your next chapter. Know that you are held in love from afar. I know that I leave you in the very best of hands with Rev. Justin and your dedicated staff. It's been a great honor for me to serve this congregation as your Family Minister. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Farewell, my friends. Godspeed and goodbye.

~Rev. Virginia

MICHELLE CREECH SAYS GOODBYE

As I reminisce on my time here at MLUC, I ponder my fortunate beginning. About four years ago, my partner April and I were welcomed by a greeter. I was unaware of the life-changing events that would follow. I was on the path to a new-found faith as a Unitarian Universalist, and to my surprise, a spiritual calling to a new career.

Of the information we gathered that day, one faith statement echoed in my heart and mind: open minds, helping hands, and loving hearts. It was clear this congregation practiced open minds by hiring a newcomer to the faith to lead their youth groups. As time went by, you recognized my zeal for religious education and supported my efforts of becoming a credentialed religious educator. The helping hands of this congregation have made many of my goals for the youth program and membership reality. Of the three aspects of the faith statement, I am most moved by your loving hearts — you embraced me and my family. This church has truly become our home away from home.

Though I will become Director of Religious Education at another UU congregation, I will hold MLUC dear to my heart. Thank you for providing safe passage into this wonderful faith and supporting me through my growth as a religious educator. It has been an honor to work with you and be a part of your community.

With appreciation and love,
Michelle Creech

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

This summer is a time of changes at MLUC: a change to single Sunday service at 10 a.m.; the start of a new fiscal year (the new pledge cycle begins July 1); Rev. Virginia's departure and a new Associate Minister's arrival; a change in staff structure as an Interim Director of Religious Education joins us to oversee our children's religious education program. These last two changes were unforeseen in the fall.

It has been an historic year at MLUC, the 50th anniversary celebration of MLUC's founding with a new senior minister. It has also been an historic year for our nation, with the inauguration of our first president of African descent and an economic downturn of staggering proportions. This latter event was no cause for joy, and had an impact on our plans at MLUC.

Our planned 50th Anniversary Capital Campaign was not pursued and pledging in the annual giving campaign was slower than expected. That said, I am pleased to announce that the total dollars pledged in our annual giving campaign set a new record for MLUC. That is an impressive achievement on your part. Congratulations!

One of the things that impressed me about MLUC when I met the Search Committee that brought me here was the "We Can Do That" attitude that is the ethic of this congregation. After a year as your Senior Minister, I have observed that spirit in action, am deeply impressed, and very proud to be your minister.

It has been a historic, challenging year, with changes we never expected, but it has been a very successful year at MLUC. I want to thank each one of you for the gifts of your time, talent, and treasure that you have poured into MLUC to keep the ministry strong.

Enjoy the summer. It's going to be an exciting fall.

Yours in faith,
Rev. Justin Osterman

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

David VanOcker, President

It took an extra month, but you did it. YOU stepped up and enabled us to fund a budget for fiscal year 09/10 that, while remaining austere, will assure a healthy continuum by funding a new Associate Minister and Director of Religious Education. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to thank YOU for recommitting to keep MLUC moving forward through another transitional period!

I want to extend a special thanks to co-Chairs Bruce Barton and Kathleen Leone, and the members of the Annual Giving Campaign Committee — Ursula Siebeneich, Barbara Welsh, Dana Wiley, Bridget Wiedeman, Krynn Lukacs and Laura House-Kelly — for their diligent efforts in these unprecedented financial times, assuring a successful campaign.

Summer is here. This one finds us embracing another significant transition – the departure of Rev. Virginia Jarocha-Ernst, our Family Minister for seven years. Virginia's leaving brings the sorrow of parting company with a family member, a leader who has taught us so much and helped to bring us through some major transitions. At the same time, it brings tremendous joy and excitement for the opportunities ahead for her. We wish her well in her new challenges as Senior Minister at Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Monmouth County.

Speaking of transitions, what you're hearing is a tremendous sigh of relief and relaxation of our out-going and immediate past president Bob Batt. It's been four and a half years of stellar leadership and inspiration under his guidance. A collective thank you! And we can't forget to thank Jim Armour, Pam Fried, and Michele Angello for their service as they depart the Board, and to warmly welcome newcomers Dana Wiley, Laura House-Kelly, and Jamie Wheeler. The Board has gotten off to a strong start at the beginning of summer, a timely transition that will enable our new team to move right into critical business and to be at full stride by the time we gather again after Labor Day.

I hope the summer brings you all the much needed time off, vacation, rest and relaxation — whatever it is that rejuvenates you most. Be assured, we'll get in our much-needed summer rest as well – you can be certain that I will.

Regards,
Dave VanOcker

***The next newsletter will be published in September.
The deadline for submissions is August 10 at noon.
Submit items to tara@mluc.org.***

SUNDAY SERVICES

Through September 6, there will be one Sunday service at 10 a.m. only. We'll continue our tradition of offering a series of inspirational and thought-provoking services throughout the summer. We have scheduled an exciting mix of lay leaders and guest ministers.

~Terry Dixon, Chair, Worship Committee

July 5: **Revenge, Reconciliation, Freedom: Untying Our Self-Made Nooses**

Malika Aanaïs Lévy

Music: Red Beans and Rice

Many people read the psalms in the Old Testament for comfort and supplication. Yet many avoid the more violence-laden psalms that call for extreme acts of vengeance. Is there something we miss by skipping over these texts and their unsettling imagery? Malika Aanaïs Lévy, a sponsored ministerial candidate from First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia, will consider whether these psalms contain hard-yet-liberating truths that can teach us something about ourselves as individuals and our nation and might lead us from revenge to reconciliation and freedom.

July 12: **The Unitarian Universalist Evangelist — A Contradiction in Terms?**

John F. Smith, III

Music: Pat Jordan, soprano; Laurie Rogers, piano

An increasing number of UUs believe that our liberal religious faith should not be content simply to wait for others to find it. What are the implications of seeing growth as an imperative? Should we be ringing doorbells and handing out tracts? Are better marketing and a welcoming attitude the answer? Or do the answers lie deeper?

July 19: **Even Atheists Need Rituals**

Richard Grzywinski

Music: Sonya Ovrutsky, piano

As UUs, we thrive on the use of reason in our "free and responsible search for truth and meaning." We characterize ourselves as free-thinkers, unconstrained by absolutism or dogma. Yet in our Sunday services, we incorporate stylized customs, symbols, and repetitive acts reminiscent of traditional faiths. Are these elements important to our "faith," or are they mere artifacts of our Judeo-Christian origins? How and why do they affect us so deeply? Richard Grzywinski, a lay leader at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore, explores these questions.

July 26: **GA 2009: Who are We? Where are We Going?** **Mary Stromquist and other GA Delegates**

Our delegates returning from the Unitarian Universalist Assoc. General Assembly in Salt Lake City share their experiences and key insights from this year's annual meeting.

Visit www.mluc.org and click on calendar under Members/Friends or Visitors. Also check out the Upcoming Events link on the MLUC Home Page. (Click the Upcoming Events header).

August 2: **The Waves that Bring Us Back To Shore**

Dara Kaufman-LeDonne

Music: Wolfgang Jaeger, piano

A wave brings a long-time friend of MLUC back home! Dara Kaufman-LeDonne grew up attending MLUC and is now preparing to become a UU minister. She'll explore what keeps the tides of Unitarian Universalism moving in exciting new directions. Given the changing tides of life's many transitions, how do we navigate the waters of change? And which are the waves that bring us back to familiar shores?

August 9: **Reality Isn't What It Used to Be**

Rev. Dr. Om Prakash John Gilmore

We are going through a great paradigm shift all over the world. This is reflected in the struggles between many of the fundamentalists from all faiths, philosophies, and belief systems as they struggle to hold onto old ideas as new ones are forcing their way into reality. Rev. Dr. Om Prakash John Gilmore, the Director of Social and Racial Justice for the Joseph Priestley District, will discuss this paradigm shift and the joy of being alive at a time when we can experience the next leap in human consciousness.

August 16: **Orthodox Heretics**

Rev. Dr. Justin Osterman

Music: Carolyn Brown, flute

The word "heretic," to choose, is often worn as a badge of honor by religious liberals. In contrast, the word "orthodox" is scorned. We'll discuss "heresy" and "orthodoxy," and the possibility of being an "orthodox heretic."

August 23

Rev. Paula Maiorano

To be announced.

August 30: **The Mind on Fire**

Rev. Dr. Justin Osterman

Music: Candice Craig, soprano

Rev. Osterman can argue persuasively that the most influential figure in 19th Century Unitarian history was Ralph Waldo Emerson. He'll get a strong response from some quarters. But he'll make his case, using Robert Richardson's biography of Emerson, The Mind on Fire.

September 6: **Listening Carefully and Hearing Deeply**

Rev. Susan E. Vollmer

Music: The Gingles Duo

In this time of economic hardship, it is so easy to navel gaze, to see the impact upon ourselves and to spend our time tightening our belts and worrying. But can we hear outside of our own head and heart, beyond our front door? Rev. Susan Vollmer will challenge us to consider what our UU principles call us to do.

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 816 S. VALLEY FORGE ROAD, DEVON, PA 19333
 PHONE 610-688-8332, FAX 610-964-1195
 DEVONU@MLUC.ORG
 WWW.MLUC.ORG

Rev. Dr. Justin Osterman
 Senior Minister
 x12; justin@mluc.org

Rev. Virginia Jarocha-Ernst
 Family Minister (through Aug. 1)
 x13; virginia@mluc.org

David Arnold
 Director of Administration
 x15; david@mluc.org
 (Monday–Friday)

Doreen Jackson
 Administrative Assistant
 x10; doreen@mluc.org
 (9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Mon.-Fri.)

Michelle Creech
 Youth Program Director and
 Inreach Coordinator (through July 30)
 x23; michelle@mluc.org
 (Sunday–Thursday)

Dr. Vincent Craig
 Music Director
 x22; vincent@mluc.org
 (Thursday, Friday & Sunday)

Marybeth McMurray
 Parish Nurse
 x16; marybeth@mluc.org
 (Wednesday & Thursday)

Carol Beaton
 Accountant
 x17; carol@mluc.org
 (Tuesday)

Tara Lynn Johnson
 Communications Coordinator
 x14; tara@mluc.org
 (Wednesday & Thursday)

Eileen Andrews
 Church School Support
 eileen@mluc.org
 (Tue., Thurs. & Fri.)

Bryon Hargrove
 Facility Coordinator
 x20; bryon@mluc.org
 (Wednesday–Sunday)

Will Quay
 Assistant Custodian

JOYS AND SORROWS

MLUC celebrates with:

- ◆ Jansen Wendell and Elisa Lang, honoring his father Doug's 87th birthday
 - ◆ Kay Wilbur, who turned 100 in June
 - ◆ Edward Vincent, who became a U.S. citizen
- ◆ Jean Hawkins, who is happy for the marriage of her son, Kyle Hawkins to Ana-Paula Fernandes

MLUC keeps Ellen Youngdahl's mother, Barbara Campbell, who died, in its thoughts and prayers.

If you have a Joy or Sorrow, record them in the book on the pulpit. In the fall, the ministers will mention your celebration or concern during the prayer in each service.

Please be sure to mark where noted on the form if your Joy or Sorrow may be included in publications such as *What's Happening* and *Notes of the Week*.

There's also an online Joys and Sorrows form at mluc.org. Click on Sunday Services under the "Members/Friends" header and look for the Joys and Sorrows link on the lefthand side.

RE FUN IN THE SUMMER!

Summer Religious Education for Kindergarten through 5th grade continues at 10 a.m. each Sunday through August 30 in the McGinness Room. MLUC graduates Sarah Guyer and Conor Murphy will lead the program on "We Believe: Living Our UU Principles." Childcare for younger children will continue every Sunday.

SUMMER MEDITATION PROGRAMS AT MLUC

To register and for more information, visit www.ClearLightMeditation.org.

Learn to Meditate: Discover the Peace Within

A three-hour workshop for beginners, Saturday, June 27 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Cost: \$45.

Mindfulness Meditation on the Body for Peace, Healing, and Heightened Awareness

Six Tuesday evenings, July 14 through August 18, from 7 to 9 each night. This class is for those new to meditation to develop their skills. Cost: \$75 if registered by July 8; \$90 thereafter and at the door.

Meditations of the Heart

Meditation practices to awaken greater love, kindness, and compassion. Six Thursday evenings, July 16 through August 20, from 7 to 9 each night. This is a Level One class for those with a regular meditation practice. Cost: \$75 if registered by July 8; \$90 thereafter and at the door.

All classes digitally recorded for your convenience.

~Nancy and Scott McBride

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MLUC Musicians: We Want You

A record of people who've participated in church through music during the past 50 years is being created. Anyone who has participated — as a solo, or in groups, church services, children's worship, youth services, coffee houses, concerts, musicales — will be included. Please send your name, a rough idea of your participation dates, and short description of how you participated, to Marjorie Gingles.



2008-2009 PLEDGE REMINDER

Our fiscal year ended June 30. Please make every effort to honor your 2008-2009 pledge to MLUC. In these challenging financial times, when we need our community of faith more than ever, MLUC needs our strong support as well. Thank you in advance for your continuing support of our congregation.

For a convenient way to make donations, we encourage you to visit www.mluc.org and click on "MLUC's Annual Fund." There, you'll find a simple process for initiating an automatic series of regular contributions or for making special one-time donations. You can also print out a detailed confirmation form for your records. Making regular contributions online eliminates the need to write out checks or prepare envelopes. For the church, online giving produces a more consistent level of donations throughout the year.

LIBRARY NEWS

Time to turn in any books borrowed from the MLUC libraries! Did you know that we have 2 libraries at MLUC? Both contain a wide range of informative materials related to UU themes, from UU history and world religions to social justice, life and identity issues, and spiritual practice. The Greeley Library on the first floor is the library dedicated for adults while the Wonder Room on the second floor contains books and materials for children, parents, and teachers.

This summer we hope to organize and inventory both libraries with a view to updating these libraries in the fall. But we need your help! Please return any items borrowed from either library as soon as possible so that we might begin our exciting summer library project. Thanks for your support!

~Kathleen Pollack

BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

"Chris" Christensen, Chair

Things are getting interesting in the Building "Plus" Committee meetings. We are hearing and learning from people coming at us from new directions.

Nancy Cleveland spent time with us to discuss sustainability at MLUC. The objective: the reduction in energy consumption, employment of environmentally friendly cleaners, reduction in disposable goods, and creation of a worker- and consumer-friendly environment here.

Carolyn Ballinger shared some of her ideas and hopes of ways we might be able to generate increased and reliant rental income. She is looking for historical information in former policies and supporting data, so if you have anything to help her in her task, please contact her.

Please feel free to drop in at our meetings in the Wonder Room (201), which take place at 7:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday each month.

LABOR DAY RETREAT AT TOCKWOGH

Join many of your friends and make new ones when MLUC takes over the Delaware YMCA facility in Worton, Maryland. A holiday tradition for decades, MLUC friends and members, as well as other UU congregations in the area, gather for sun, fun, and relaxation. This year, most schools will have begun the academic year the week before Labor Day, so there will be no conflicts with school starting the day after the holiday.

Enjoy sailing, swimming, archery, biking, basking in the sun, climbing the rock wall or just relaxing with a good book. Regain a piece of the Summer vacation!



Find out more and register at www.oldmacd.org/Tockwogh/. Mark Sept. 5-7 on your calendar now and reserve your place on the beach. Questions? Contact Kevin Black or Ed MacDonald.

PUBLICATION DEADLINES

Notes of the Week and *E-Notes* submissions (100 words or less) are due by **9 a.m. Wednesdays**.

Submissions of 225 words or less for *What's Happening* are due by **noon on the 10th of each month**.

Items received after deadlines may not be published.

When submitting an item, especially for the newsletter, please include the committee or task force chair name and contact information. Also include the name of the author for shorter news items.

E-mail items to Communications Coordinator Tara Lynn Johnson (tara@mluc.org).

Thank you for your cooperation in creating MLUC's publications, serving our members, keeping our community in touch.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

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Visit ClearLightMeditation.org. **Learn to Meditate: Discover the Peace Within:** A three-hour workshop for beginners, Saturday, June 27 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Cost: \$45. **Mindfulness Meditation on the Body for Peace, Healing, and Heightened Awareness:** Six Tuesday evenings, July 14 through August 18, from 7 to 9 each night. This class is for those new to meditation to develop their skills. Cost: \$75 if registered by July 8; \$90 thereafter and at the door. **Meditations of the Heart:** Meditation practices to awaken greater love, kindness, and compassion. Six Thursday evenings, July 16 through August 20, from 7 to 9 each night. This is a Level One class for those with a regular meditation practice. Cost: \$75 if registered by July 8; \$90 thereafter and at the door. All classes digitally recorded for your convenience. ~**Nancy and Scott McBride.**

DRUM/DANCE RETREAT

The second annual Murray Grove Drum and Dance Retreat will be held August 14-16. Express yourself creatively and spiritually! Workshops on Afro-Brazilian, Latin and West African Drumming and African Dance will explore ancient practices with roots in ritual, religion, and celebration. The cost for the weekend is \$250 per person, double occupancy, including meals (\$225 if registration is received before July 1). Sign up just for the Saturday afternoon and evening session for \$75. Space is limited. For more information and registration, contact the Murray Grove Retreat/Conference Center (609-693-5558; murraygrove@murraygrove.org). ~**Nuala Denham**

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HOMECOMING SUNDAY

Join us for Homecoming Sunday, September 13, to kick off the 2009-2010 church year. Two services will be held, one at 9 a.m. and one at 11 a.m.

CAREGIVERS NEEDED

MLUC has an ongoing need for mature individuals (age 21 or older) interested in providing childcare during Sunday services and other church activities. Those interested should have had experience with children, as well as able to provide rigorous references and pass state clearances. In addition, they should have taken (or be willing to take at MLUC expense) the YMCA course on childcare first aid. Hourly rates range from \$9 to \$13, depending on qualifications; individuals need not be church members. Anyone interested should contact Eileen Andrews (610-688-8332, x11; eileen@mluc.org) in the church Religious Education office.



MAIN LINE
UNITARIAN CHURCH

816 SOUTH VALLEY FORGE RD · DEVON PA 19333

PHONE 610-688-8332

FAX 610-964-1195

WWW.MLUC.ORG

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