



First News

RichmondUU.org Volume XVI Issue 12 November, 2011

REV. JEANNE M. PUPKE
GROWING GREENE

**SUNDAY WORSHIP &
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**
10:00am and 11:30am

It is a very hard struggle. The effort required to make a difference in our Richmond public schools is always significant and, too often, of limited effectiveness. It is a frustrating environment in which to work and to volunteer. There is just no good reason anyone should put up with the aggravation of it all except...the children. The children are always the reason we do what we do.



This congregation's connection to the Greene school, serving some of Richmond's poorest populations, is long. It began with the devotion of one man, Ray Aldrich (now deceased brother of our Betsy Bowers) who rode buses to volunteer at Greene. "Mr. Ray" they called him, and few now remain who remember his commitment to the students. He recruited volunteers from among the church because the needs were so great and the resources so few. Teachers needed help with student learning needs, supplies ran out. Enrichment opportunities were few. Where he saw these needs, he tried to find those who could match themselves to the need and all this out of love for the children.

Our connection to the school has endured change and overcome obstacles in the intervening years. We have joined the Micah mentoring project, tried to partner with other faith communities, and renewed relationships as school leadership changed. With the committed leadership of Joel Blum, members of our church have joined the PTA, promoted innovative programs, rolled with the interruptions and administrative policy changes and tried to understand the on-again, off-again bureaucratic interventions typical of any urban school system trying to make a difference. The

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

November 6, Rev. Makanah Morriss, "Religious Education as Awakening and Blossoming Forth" Our liberal lifespan religious education invites minds, hearts and souls to expand in new ways. How have you been changed by creative UU religious education? What might the future hold for your congregation's ability to transform the world, one mind, heart and soul at a time?

November 13, Rev. Jeanne Pupke, "To Save or to Savor"

November 20, TBA

November 27, "Food. Football. Family" Intern Minister Aija Simpson With Thanksgiving over and the Winter Holidays right around the corner, come take a moment to reflect on our traditions, and what they may reveal about what we have faith in.

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children come, and the children go. Somehow, we stay connected enough to try and make it better for the children.

Recently, our many efforts have been the work of connecting students to growing and preparing healthy food. Member Kate Ruby has dreamed a dream that by developing a program of gardening in which the students grow, prepare and consume their own vegetables, they might learn eco awareness, health, science, community, and above all, their own power as young people. What has been done so far has delighted the children who participated. The work has required perseverance and creativity, but her commitment to see the dream realized endures. She has created a nonprofit "Growing Greene," to keep the dream alive and funded.

On Saturday morning, November 5th, we are all invited to join in a work party to do major improvements by creating raised beds and planting landscape. It is physical work for a brief while that sends a signal to the children that they matter and that their education is important. This is a work party for families, youth and elders alike. There is something you can do, even if it is to write a check. We, as a church, are privileged to have these long connections and the opportunity to make a difference at Greene. So on Nov. 5th, show up for Mr. Ray. Show up to honor Joel's leadership. Show up for Kate's dream. Show up for the children so they can grow green.

VESPERS

Vespers is a shorter, contemplative service held every Wednesday at 5:30pm

November 2 "Last Year's Costume" Aija Simpson

November 9 "Cheer" Aija Simpson

November 16 "Pulling it off the Shelf" Rev. David MacPherson

November 23 "Surrender" Rev. Jeanne Pupke

November 30 "Fast" Aija Simpson

SHARING & CARING: CARE COMMITTEE NEWS

It is always time to reach out and show each other care and is doing well. Ann Taylor is recovering from a stay in the hospital and is now doing well. Sandy Wexler had surgery and could use some good wishes, Deana Holton is having neck issues, we wish her good luck.

Laura Curtis could use some thinking of you cards.

Rolleen Wells could use some offers of rides and outings. Sybil Harp helps her so much but Rolleen might want some extra outings.

Again, to all of you who are still looking for jobs and get discouraged, we are wishing you well and thinking about you.

Look at your neighbors, get to know some more people in your zip code area. Ask them over, have fun. The more we

Interact with people the more connected we can be. Thank you to everyone who so generously shares their time and talents with each Other. Call me (Judith Mills) anytime at 804-358-0222.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

What happened to September?

I know time seems to speed up as we age but this is ridiculous. So many things to deal with this summer, house renovation, family reunion, packing, moving, unpacking, earthquake, hurricane; it was slightly overwhelming. Sometimes it can feel that our obligations and commitments are just too much. Maybe it's time to stop and take a breath. Find the place that helps you to get off the merry go round, however briefly. For me it's the beach. I need to sit on the sand, look at the ocean and feel the wind on my face. The ideal length of time for this is two weeks, one is ok, but if one day is all I can get, I'll take it. Maybe for you it's hiking in the mountains, or kayaking the river, or listening to music in your backyard.



Maybe it's at church at vespers on Wednesday evening, the Sunday morning service, with your small group, or spending a few minutes in the Memorial Garden. Hopefully, something at church feeds your spirit, but what if everything did. Imagine that committee meeting as a spiritual practice, instead of just another item on the "to do" list. Impossible? Maybe, but maybe it is really a matter of perception. Often how we perceive something colors how we feel about it. How would it improve your life if every connection with church fed your spirit?

I've noticed that the people who are the most pessimistic and cynical about life and the future are those who are not involved in trying to make it better. Their spirits are worn down by the day to day difficulties and they aren't part of the effort to change the world. If you think about it you will see that everything we do at church is part of building a better world and that surely will feed your spirit.

Try moving your church commitments from the "obligation" column to the "renews me" column on the list in your head. Because singing renews me, I'm willing to devote every Wednesday evening to Singers practice, and while it is a commitment, it doesn't feel like an obligation. Find something here, a group, a committee, or an event, that can be a spiritual practice for you. The time spent will be well worth it.

In Friendship,

Fricka Raycroft, President

President@richmondUU.org

BOARD NEWS

SHARE THE PLATE - NOVEMBER

On the first Sunday of each month, we pass the offering basket in a ritual we call “Share the Plate.” Through the generosity of our members and friends, we at First UU provide financial assistance to worthy causes in our own back yard or around the globe – charitable operations which are helped by a donation of cash, while we are living our Mission to Care in Support of Community and to Act in the Service of Justice.

In the 2010-2011 church year (actually in just October to June), we collected and dispersed \$16,432 to nine different organizations! That is an average of more than \$1825 per organization. So far this church year (July-October), we have collected and distributed funds to the **Central Virginia Food Bank** (\$2804), the **READ Center** (\$1166), and to the **UUA-Association Sunday Fund** (amount not yet available).

In light of the severe drought and devastating famine in East Africa, on November 6, our designated recipient is the **UU Service Committee Somalia and East Africa Relief Fund** and December 4 will be our traditional collection for the **Minister’s Discretionary Fund**. You may nominate a future recipient – an organization in which you are involved – by filling out the nomination form available on the bulletin board. The committee meets periodically to determine who future recipients will be, while remaining flexible to respond to tragedy or natural disasters that occur, leaving people who need immediate assistance. Your generosity is so very much appreciated. Remember, Share the Plate, every First Sunday at First UU.

The screenshot shows the UU Service Committee website. The header includes the UU Service Committee logo and tagline: "Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Advancing human rights is the work of many joining hands." Below the header is a navigation menu with categories: Who We Are, What We Do, What You Can Do, and Resources. A search bar is located on the right. The main content area features a large image of a tented refugee camp. Below the image is a breadcrumb trail: Home > What We Do > Focus Areas > Rights in Humanitarian Crises > Ongoing. The main heading is "Somalia and East Africa Crisis". Underneath is a "Background" section with text: "On July 20, 2011, the United Nations declared catastrophic famine in two regions of southern Somalia; on August 3, an additional three areas were added. The famine is expected to spread across all of southern Somalia within the coming months. Currently, half of the Somali population — 3.2 million people — need immediate lifesaving assistance. This is the world’s worst food security crisis in the last 20 years." To the right of the text is a map titled "FOOD INSECURITY IN SOMALIA AUGUST 2011" showing various regions of Somalia color-coded by severity. Below the map is a "DONATE" button with the text "SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS". On the right side of the page, there are sections for "Rights in Humanitarian Crises home", "Somalia and East Africa Crisis home", "Resources", "Stories", "Our Partners", and "What You Can Do". A "Related Stories" box lists several articles from August and September 2011.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Thoughts for the Journey—What's Happening in RE? Abundance and Gratitude!

Many events are happening in Religious Education! This means there are many ways for you to make one of these experiences *your* experience!



The Youth are *not* always in the Lower level, just doing their own thing! Nov. 5-6, they will **journey to Newport News for a Lock-In** with the Tide-water Cluster of congregations. The Lock-In includes group games, worship, discussion groups, and naturally, a lot of fun! Registration forms are available in the classroom and by emailing Rhonda@richmondUU.org. Get in the carpool today!

Rock-N-Wrap is coming in December! Support the Youth NOW!! Nov. 13, The Youth will serve coffee after both services to raise awareness and take pledges for this exciting fund raising event! During Rock-N-Wrap, Youth will raise funds for GA and other youth endeavors, while enjoying an evening of wrapping gifts from the congregation's annual Mitten Tree purchases.

Nov. 12 is FALL FAIR FUUN Night. Make caramel apples, play games, and enjoy a Pot Luck Dinner for all ages! 5:30-7:30. A big note of thanks to the RE Committee for the First UU Fright Night in September! Ghost stories from Anne Chase, Dexter Ramey, and Melody Morton, raised eyebrows on all faces! Students and adults alike were caught up in the spooky after dark treasure hunt! Kudos to Ray McGugan for the best adult costume—Groucho Marley (picture a Bob Marley-Groucho Marx combination here)!

Adult Religious Ed. continues with a new class beginning November 7! Cakes for the Queen of Heaven will explore the divine from a feminine perspective. This class examines how our culture has been influenced by Judeo Christian values. How would your life have been different if, when growing up, the divine had been imaged as female? Contact Rhonda@richmondUU.org, 355-0777 to register.

Students in Grades 1-9 are strongly encouraged to participate in the **Christmas pageant**, to be presented Dec. 11. Practices will be held 12:30-1:15 on Sundays throughout November. Email Dexter Ramey at dmramey@aol.com with questions.

Religious Education opportunities are abundant! Get involved today!

In hope,

Rhonda Wingfield, Acting Director of Religious Education

Rhonda@richmondUU.org

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES COMING SOON!

Plan now to get your new year off to a great start with January classes! Register by emailing Rhonda@richmondUU.org, call 355-0777, or put your registration form in the Registration Box in the middle studio.

YOGA--a class for the beginner to intermediate level. **Tuesdays, Jan. 10-March 16. 7-8:30 pm.** Instructor: Lori Speagle. **Fee: \$40.**

FAITH LIKE A RIVER-THEMES FROM UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST HISTORY. Place yourself in our UU history and consider its legacies. What lessons do the stories of our history teach that can help us live more faithfully in the present and into the future? **Wednesdays, Jan. 11-Feb. 22 (No class Jan. 18). 6:45-8:45.** Instructor: Aija Simpson **Fee \$25**

INTRODUCTION TO LATIN/CLUB DANCING—For those with little or no experience. This class will lift your spirits and get your blood pumping! Singles, couples and same-sex couples welcome. **Thursdays, Jan. 19-Feb. 23. 6:30-8:45.** Instructor: Michael Recant **Fee: \$15. Singles/ \$25 couples.**



CALLING ALL ADULT EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS!

The last day to submit class proposals for the spring session (Feb.-April) is Friday, Nov. 11. Submit your proposal to Rhonda Wingfield at Rhonda@richmondUU.org. All proposals need to reflect a connection to Unitarian Universalist principles and practices and the Adult RE theme of promoting our religious heritage and facilitating growth in mind, body and spirit.



HAVE YOU BORROWED BOOKS?

There are several books missing from the Religious Education Library. If you have borrowed a book, please return it as soon as possible, preferably by Sept. 11. You can recognize an RE book by a small white label on the cover with the name of the church and an RE accession number on it. Return it to the front desk.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

FOOD JUSTICE

First UU is doing its part to help eradicate hunger in Richmond. We collected and sent nearly \$3000.00 this summer through Share the Plate. In August we sent just over 800# of food "Saving Kids from Sauerkraut" and nearly 400# in October responding to the food bank's need for soup. We set up a table each week in the lobby, collecting and delivering nonperishables to FeedMore and have a food drive whenever we are aware of an immediate need. We can be proud to have nearly a dozen committed volunteers who each month spend time at Central Virginia Food Bank sorting through and distributing the collected food. Increasingly, families are depending on food banks to feed themselves. All of our efforts to help will continue as First UU steps up to address the issue of hunger in our community.

The beauty of the food bank is its immediacy. No soup...bring soup; need peanut butter...give peanut butter. It's limitation however is the dependency that can grow by those using it to meet their need for food. As a short term solution to hunger, the food bank is critical, but First UU has joined with other urbanites to address hunger with an eye on the long term. It is a much slower, less immediate process, but critical if hunger (childhood obesity, diabetes, etc) is to be eradicated.

Growing Greene, the gardening program at Greene Elementary School addresses with the children of Greene how to grow food, how to prepare food and which foods give the body the best opportunity to grow up healthy and strong. The program involves a growing number of families of Greene, as well as teachers and administrators. The first Saturday of each month **Growing Greene** has activities planned involving planting, building, harvesting, and celebrating gardening and food. Growing food takes more time, planning and work than collecting and opening a can from the food bank. However, harvesting your very own radish, watching berries appear on the blueberry plant you planted last year, or the first apples appear on the tree you planted while in kindergarten, gives a child a completely different perspective on food. Already they are asking when the strawberries (we planted last year) will be ready! Please consider dropping in to help on Saturday, November 5th 9-noon. Bring your children, your parents, a trowel, those bulbs you just divided, or just yourself, and be with the children and families of Greene as they grow food, beautify their school, and plan and work for a strong and healthy future.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

My Little Corner of the World

Happy Fall!

Sometimes we fall into thinking that we can't do anything to help!
Well....NOT TRUE!

I'd like to highlight several ways in which you can help our UU community – volunteer opportunities that can fit into your schedule and are some essential ways in which we welcome visitors and take care of members.



First, **the Care Committee** would love to hear from you if you're interested in helping members and friends who need an extra hand. The Care Committee truly puts into action the "CARE" part of our mission statement – We Care in Support of Community. There are many ways to help – card writing, meal delivery, rides to appointments, a friendly ear. Essential work!! Please contact Judith Mills @ 804-405-4502 if you're interested in helping!

Second, **the Visitor's table** would love more volunteers from which to pool resources! Once upon a time, many moons ago when you first visited, you may have been greeted by these fine folks! The skills needed for this job are pretty simple – a smile, a handshake, offering a visitor packet. Phew! First and second service slots are available! If you're interested in first service, please contact Eldonna Reynolds @ eldonna.h.r@gmail.com for second service, please contact Laura May @ lmay45@comcast.net

Third, let's not forget that **coffee** reigns supreme for many UUs, and we could use some folks to offer a smile to those getting a cup of java on Sunday mornings. We could have an empty table, but we can do a lot better in the hospitality department than a deserted coffee table! If you ENJOY coffee on Sunday mornings then perhaps being the smiling VOLUNTEER behind the table is your way to contribute. Please contact Iolet @ roseiolet@comcast.net

Happy Thanksgiving! I'm thankful for those of you who volunteer and help make things happen! And I'm thankful for those who are going to respond to this request!

Peace, y'all...

Pat

Director of Membership

powen@richmondUU.org

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MITTEN TREE RETURNS

Just about the time that we finish off our Thanksgiving leftovers, the Mitten Tree will appear in the church lobby. The Mitten Tree is our annual project aimed at providing Christmas gifts to the residents of The Parkwood; an assisted living facility for adults with chronic mental illness. Each mitten that decorates the tree has the name of a Parkwood resident and their Christmas wishes. Stop by the tree on November 27 for more information. This really going to make you feel good!



“LETTING GO OF GOD” SCREENING

Tuesday, November 8th, the Humanist group will meet at 7 p.m. We will be showing the second half of the movie "Letting Go of God", a very funny monologue by Julia Sweeney. She relates how she slowly explored many forms of spirituality through out her life and came up with an interesting conclusion. "Believers of all stripes and intensities, as well as non-believers who may scoff a little too faciley, will be challenged an disarmed with stick-in-your throat laughter by Sweeney's utterly uncynical, blisteringly honest testimony"--Rob Kendt, Lost Angeles Times.

VISITING THE AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND

On October 10th several of our UU folks joined with others to participate in a celebration of the Reclamation of the Richmond African Burial Ground.

To fill you in: For over a hundred years a plot of land on lower Broad Street was used to inter the bodies of African and African American slaves. It was also the site of the town Gallows Post where Gabriel, leader of a slave revolt in 1800 was hanged. Eventually the plot was covered with asphalt and used as a parking lot.

For the past decade there has been a drive to get those cars off the burial ground and properly restore the Burial Ground. This past spring the land was stripped of the parking lot and sod placed down. In June memorial plaques were installed. Now the next drive will be to get archeological work so that the land can become a cemetery once more.

Periodically, after church I go down to the site to walk and meditate. It helps me gear up for the next stage of the struggle. I am encouraged to place flowers by the plaques. So I invite you to join me in visiting the burial ground, with your friends and family on some Sundays. If you'd like to do that, please give me a call: 798-7661. If necessary leave me a message on my answering machine and I'll tell you the next date I'll be making a visit. But you don't have to wait for that. A map of the location you'll find on a wall in the middle studio. And sign up to join the struggle!

Rev. Dave

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LEADING THE MISSION SESSION

Please join the First UU Board for our Fall "Leading the Mission" session on November 5 from 9-11am at First UU. Coffee and snacks will be provided.

Denise Rimes from the Committee on Mission will lead a discussion on the First UU CHALICE covenant that was adopted at the last Annual Meeting of the congregation.

Bring your questions and learn more:

- How was the covenant developed?
- How does having a covenant help us in our mission to Grow, Care, and Act?
- What does it mean to be "in covenant"?

Share your own experiences with others

- Developing and making use of a covenant within your committee or small group
- Finding ways to "return to covenant" when needed

There will also be time to get to know each other better, and to share activities and opportunities within our church and across the District. We hope you'll join us!

HUMANIST GROUP PRESENTATION: MODERN RELIGIOUS TRENDS

The Humanist Group has arranged a presentation and discussion for Sunday, November 13th at 1 p.m. Dr. Mark Wood, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at VCU, will give a talk on The Spirituality and Ethics of Occupation.

The Occupation movement has gone global in just a matter of weeks. This talk will explore the social, spiritual, and ethical meaning of Occupation.

SHADY GROVE COFFEEHOUSE

The Shady Grove Coffeehouse continues its eleventh season on Saturday, November 5, with a concert by high-energy string band Tricky Britches. The short version:

Who: Tricky Britches

What: Concert at Shady Grove Coffeehouse

Where: The Unitarian Universalist Community Church, 11105 Cauthorne Road, Glen Allen, VA 23059

When: Saturday, November 5, 8:00 PM; doors open at 7:30 PM

Admission: \$10 advance; \$12 door; children 12 and under admitted free of charge; teens 13-18 admitted at half price

Information: (804) 323-4288, www.shadygrovecoffeehouse.com, or info@shadygrovecoffeehouse.com

The details are as follows:

On Saturday, November 5, the Shady Grove Coffeehouse continues its eleventh season with a concert by Tricky Britches, young, high-energy, up-and-coming string band that hails from Portland, Maine. From their roots of playing heel-stomping old-time fiddle tunes they have progressed into a fusion of classic bluegrass, country, and folk rock. As the Portland *Phoenix* has said "In an age of auto-tune and manufactured music, Tricky Britches isn't just a throwback – they're a look forward."

The concert starts at 8:00 PM; doors open at 7:30 PM. Tickets are \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door. Children 12 and under are admitted free of charge; teens 13-18 are admitted at half price. Net proceeds benefit UUC. For advance tickets, or more information, call (804) 323-4288, visit the Shady Grove web site at www.shadygrovecoffeehouse.com, or send e-mail to info@shadygrovecoffeehouse.com.

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SOUND BOOTH VOLUNTEERS

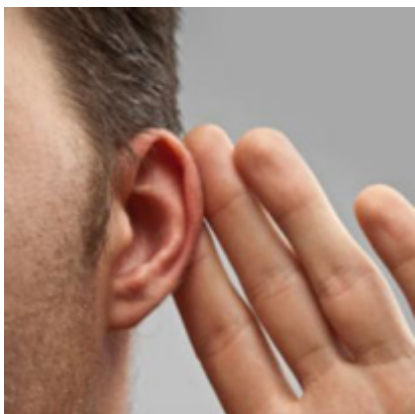
You've heard it before—we really need a few volunteers to run the sound booth during the Sunday morning worship services. But that's pretty vague—you want to know what you'd be getting yourself into, right? So here goes:

- o Come early, turn sound system on, set up mics, adjust sound levels for speakers and musicians. Ready at 9:30
- o Record the service
- o Put equipment away after second service
- o Power off equipment and finalize recordings

You'll receive training for all this and have checklists to follow to guide you along the way. It's easiest to do both services, but two people can share the duties on a Sunday (during the summer, there will be one service at 10:00am). Many hands make light work, so the more volunteers... you get the idea.

This is one of those “behind the scenes” jobs that is absolutely essential so folks in the congregation can hear and for us to minister to those who can't regularly attend. Pay is typical for a job of this nature—our endless gratitude and knowing that what you do matters. Now just let us know when you can start! Any staff will get your info to me, or contact me directly at dwdropin@aol.com or call the church (355-0777) with your contact info and I'll be in touch. And thanks!

Diane Woodruff, Music Director



Cabaret Info!

CABARET****CABARET****CABARET

Come One Come All. If you didn't perform last year but wished you had, then mark your calendars for the CABARET 2012 information meeting, after the 2nd service November 13 at 12:45 (bring your lunch). We will be outlining the show and finding out who wants to do what. We need singers, dancers, musicians, & tech folks, if you are interested we will find you a spot. We had a blast last year so come have fun with us. If you are interested but just can't make the meeting please contact Jana Frances-Fischer jfranfis@aol.com or Fricka Raycroft fricka_r@yahoo.com

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

WINTER CLOTHING FOR THE GREENE SCHOOL

The weather is cooling which is our signal for collecting winter clothing for "unwinterized" children at Greene School. This year we are hoping to get not only coats, but hats, gloves, scarves and boots for children from ages five through ten - twelve. Some of the older students could use larger sizes, but primarily sizes 5 - 12 for both boys and girls would be appropriate.

The clothing will be available at the PTA meetings and the next one is Tuesday, Nov. 15. There is a large box in the coat closet at church on the right near the back. It is labeled Coats for Greene School, and any winter item can be placed in the box. (It would be helpful to place boots under other garments.)

If you feel inclined to make a donation, it would be great to do so before the weather gets colder and know that your generosity is helping to keep youngsters warm and well as we head into winter. If you are passing along garments from your own children, grandchildren or neighbor's children, please examine the garment and empty any pockets and wash the garment/s if needed.

The level of appreciation for donations from the last two years has been great and we hope to continue the giving program that warms our hearts as well as young bodies!

Holly Corbett, Micah volunteer



coat

BOOK GROUP

The Alcott Book Group will meet on Sundays at 4:30 pm at the Positive Vibe Cafe, 2825 Hathaway Road, Richmond, VA 23225-1725 (804-560-9622) , just north of Forest Hill and south of the River.

The group is enjoying its new members and invites others to join.

Nov. 20 Black Like Me, by John Griffin (race relations/early Civil Rights movement/non-fiction, classic work) and **Night Train**, by Clyde Edgerton (race relations/early Civil Rights movement/new fiction)

Both of the above books are small and quick reads, which is why we are combining them for one discussion.

Dec. 18 Lotus Eaters, by Tatjana Soli

DAYTIMERS (ALL WELCOME!)

The November meeting of the Daytimers will occur at 11am on Wednesday, November 9 in the Douglesdale Studio of First Church. Our intern Aija Simpson will talk about "My Path to Service." A potluck will follow the talk. Bring some food to share with fellow members. If you are unable to bring food you may leave a small donation to cover expenses.

Quilters Raffle

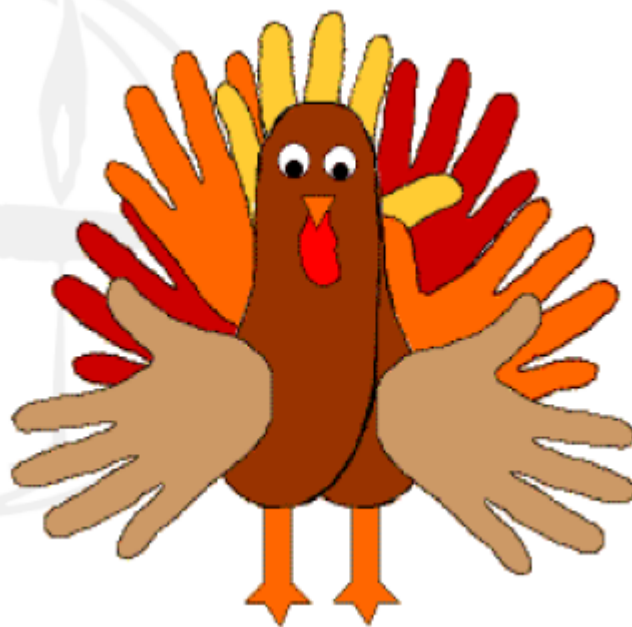
Beginning September 4, a beautiful, intricate, king/queen-sized quilt will grace the lobby of First UU—the QUilters' raffle quilt!

Tickets will be on sale in the lobby and from any members of the QUilters—look for a quilt block on the name tag. Tickets are \$2 each or three for \$5.

Proceeds will be donated to the church. Drawing will be December 4. You need not be present to win, but you can't win without a ticket! Stop by the table and give yourself a chance to own a wonderful quilt.

THANKSGIVING POTLUCK

The Sunday before Thanksgiving is traditionally Thanksgiving at our First UU Church. It's a feast you don't want to miss. A spread that is laid out from one end of the church to the other. This year we celebrate again on Sunday - Nov. 20. Turkeys and drinks will be provided; you bring a dish. Sign ups begin on Nov. 6. Cost is \$7 per family or \$5 per individual. Volunteers for this event are always needed. Please call the church if you would like to help with this fun event! Please bring family and friends!!!



NEW BABY CONGRATS!

Member Sarah Pike and her husband, Ronnie DiSanto welcomed baby Vincent Joseph DiSanto - born Monday, October 24th @ 3:44AM. He is 6 pounds 10 ounces and 19 1/2 inches long. Mama, Daddy and Baby Vincent are all doing well!!! Welcome and congratulations!!!

The First UU Book Store is located in the Middle Studio and continues to provide our readers with many choices. Join 1st UU members and friends for coffee and conversation after each service then, browse through the variety of items displayed for sale, on the “Book Nook” tables or check out a book from the “Lending Library.” Plan ahead for RE Classes, for special titles and copies of sermons you would like to hear again or share with someone.

A new edition of 1ST UU's “WRITER'S GROUP FOLIO” for \$5.00

**“STANDING OF THE SIDE OF LOVE” and
“eracism” T-Shirts \$16.00**

KROGER CARDS ARE AVAILABLE FOR \$25.00

CD COPIES OF SERVICES MAY BE ORDERED FOR \$2.00

Gift Certificates, of various denominations, are available at the Book Nook that may be redeemed for merchandise.

At anytime during the month, you may donate your unwanted books for all ages and suitable for resale at the Book Nook. They should be in good condition with appropriate subject material: books that entertain and inform us, that inspire us and that increase our conscious awareness for the world we share. The profits generated from the monthly Recycled Book Sale will go toward the purchase of new titles for the Book Nook.

-- THANK YOU FOR SHARING

DIDJA KNOW?

"THE SPY IN OUR MIDST"

In January 1861, Rev. Alden Bosserman arrived to serve as minister for the First Independent Christian Church of Richmond. He went about the business of the church and his conduct attracted no particular public notice or comment during the remainder of the winter. Spring found the city on the verge of secession and was described as being in a "state of violent agitation." Local newspaper articles reveal that on April 12, 1861 the Virginia State Convention was opened and led in prayer by Rev. Bosserman. On April 17th, after 54 days of deliberation, an ordinance was passed (85 to 55) "*to repeal the ratification of the Constitution of the United States of American by the State of Virginia and to resume all the rights and powers granted under the said Constitution.*"

Virginia joined with the newly formed Confederacy in defense of the state's right, to continue the practice of slavery, supporting their southern culture. In Richmond, singular victories were designated by proclamation of the Provisional Government as days of fasting and prayer services in the city's churches. In *Ashes of Glory*, Ernest B. Furgurson said: "*Elizabeth Van Lew wrote that these official fast days, when markets and stores were closed, were more scrupulously observed than the Sabbath, because they were considered test days of (Confederate) loyalty.*"

Rev. Bosserman's reaction to the proclamations produced no change in the content of his sermons and on the day specified to celebrate the victory at Manassas, he refused to open his church's doors. Preaching to a steadily decreasing congregation, he allegedly had prayed that "*this unholy rebellion be crushed out.*" On two occasions, Rev. Bosserman and B. W. Wardwell had been observed taking notes of the proceedings at a Planters Meeting held at the African Church. Bosserman was also known to have had an association with Richmond businessman and reputed union sympathizer, Franklin Stearns.

It appears that Rev. Bosserman had failed the Confederacy's loyalty test and was being watched.

It was a dangerous time to be speaking out against slavery or expressing pro-unionist opinions. Spy fever escalated in the midst of sweeping roundups of seditious suspects. On March 06, 1862, an article appeared in the *Richmond Examiner* describing the "arrest of Alleged Union Men (Alden Bosserman, Franklin Stearns, Burnham Wardwell, Charles Palmer and John M. Botts) for supposed Union proclivities." They were confined in McDaniel's private jail, a building formerly known as the Old Lumpkin's Slave Jail, now being used for the temporary confinement of political prisoners.

An excerpt from an old letter to a Mr. Gohdes from James H. Easton, 205 Poe St. (10/08/1938):

"I was seven years old in 1860. Bosserman was minister when war was started. Everyone was warned not to say anything derogatory to the South and secession. Bosserman was Northern and spoke his mind to freely and was arrested and sent North through the lines by flag of truce. No regular services thereafter".

There was an extensive Union Underground operating out of Richmond to move Union soldiers across the Mason Dixon Line back into the North and the evidence reveals that Stearns, Wardwell and Palmer were among the pro-unionists cooperating with Elizabeth Van Lew's spy ring. Rev. Bosserman's name does not appear on any of the lists so I can only implicate him through association with those that were. The fact that he was arrested and imprisoned in their company leads me to reason that the Provisional Government could show cause for a charge of treason.

It is my personal opinion there is enough circumstantial evidence for me to believe that our minister, Rev. Alden Bosserman, was "the spy among us."

Pat Vaughn:Nov, 2011

References:

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Article:"Virginia State Convention: Fiftieth Day"

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