

GOOD NEWS

unitarianuniversalist
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

freely following jesus



"Witnessing the Transforming Power of the Holy Spirit in our Lives"

May/June 2009

Easter/Pentecost/Ordinary Time

www.uuchristian.org

The UUCF at General Assembly 2009 in Salt Lake City *Experiencing Theological Diversity, Depth*

This year at the **Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly in Salt Lake City, June 24-28**, the UUCF is going to have our most extensive presence ever, our largest booth ever, and will be sharing that booth space and joint booth programming with the UU Buddhist Fellowship and UU Mystics in Community. We will be one of the major hubs, located right across from the UUA Bookstore, and thanks to partners with the Massachusetts Bay District, we will be offering a General Assembly program official Communion Service again, with sermon by the Rev. Earl Holt, senior minister of Kings Chapel in Boston. We will also have an important Annual Meeting, catered dinner, and hymn sing program at First Unitarian Church in Salt Lake City.

Come and See.... If you would like to volunteer at the booth or help out at worship or some other way, contact RevRonRobinson@aol.com.

Thursday, June 25 1 to 2:15 pm at Our Expanded Booth:

Christian Voices in UUism:

Based on the book by Skinner House, edited by UUCF President Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, different UU Christians will talk about freely following Jesus as their spiritual path and how Unitarian Universalism has helped.

Friday, June 26 2:45-4 pm at Our Booth:

UU Christian Spiritual Practices:

What spiritual practices and disciplines from our own UU Christian history, and from other Christian traditions, do UUs follow, and how can they grow the soul of all regardless of theological orientation?

Saturday June 27 1-2:15 pm at Our Booth:

Emerging Small Groups The Jesus Way
Planting and nurturing and multiplying small groups of UU Christians and Jesus-followers in your church or, with

other progressive Christians, in your wider area, and how the lessons from the Emergent Church movement can help.

Saturday June 27 3:30 to 4:45 pm at Salt Palace Room 255A

GA Communion Service

With Massachusetts Bay District

Sponsorship:

Rev. Earl Holt, senior minister King's Chapel, Boston

"Something We Do"

Annual GA Communion Service, open to all, non-creedal, in the loving and liberating spirit of Jesus.

Saturday 6-8 pm, at First Unitarian Church, 569 S. 1300 E.

Catered Dinner, Annual Meeting,

Hymn Sing Program Maps and

carpooling signup available at the UUCF booth. Dinner \$25. RSVP to Rev. Ron Robinson, 918-691-3223 or RevRonRobinson@aol.com.

Skip the long Saturday dinner lines; come and celebrate.

Sunday 1 to 2:15 pm at Our Booth:

Dialogue on Theological Diversity

with UU Buddhist Fellowship, UU

Mystics in Community

A panel of representatives from UU Christians, UU Buddhists, and UU Mystics will discuss some of the themes from the 2005 report from the Commission on Appraisal. How are we informed and transformed by our theologies? How do we engage our theological diversity within the UUA? How can our theological interest groups further enrich UU congregational life? Attendees will be welcome to participate in the discussion.

Our booth will also have free books and journals and newsletters and pamphlets, our new webministry, and DVD programs from contemporary progressive Christian biblical scholars and commentators.

Also at our Shared Booth Program Space, come to these other programs as well:

100,000 Vajrasattva Mantras
Thursday June 25 2:45 – 4:00pm

The Rev. Judith Wright will present slides and speak about her 5 month sabbatical journey in Nepal, January-June 2008. She stayed for this entire time in a Tibetan-Buddhist monastery/nunnery (Kopan) doing spiritual practices and teaching the nuns.

UU Mystics Community Gathering ***Thursday June 25 4:30 – 5:30pm***

An informal gathering of members, friends, and all who share an interest in direct experience of transcending mystery and wonder. Our trustees will be on hand to discuss our purpose, objectives, activities, and our contribution to the spiritual life of UU congregations.

Mystical Naturalism Friday June 26 ***1:00 – 2:15pm***

Mystical naturalism means that basic religious truths can be found in nature, through observation and experience, and recognizes that some of that experience is beyond our natural abilities to understand. The universe is unknowable in its entirety and mystical naturalism respects the mystery of the wonder and wisdom that is there for all of us in times of need or out of the blue. Led by the Rev. Susan Manker-Seale.

Sharing Mystical Experience Saturday ***June 27 2:45 – 4:00pm***

Many of us have had them, but not as many have found a place to share our mystical experiences with others of open mind and heart. These experiences can take on the shape of our religious backgrounds, but the commonalities are deep and connect us to one another. Led by the Rev. Susan Manker-Seale.

Fostering a UU Mindfulness Practice ***Group Sat June 27 4:30 – 5:30pm***

This workshop will help you foster your own lay-led, peer-led, UU Mindfulness Practice Group. The MPG model emphasizes practice and does not require teachers or adherence to any particular approach to Buddhism. Led by Robert Ertman.

Don't miss this exciting Unitarian Universalist adventure.

Lent and Easter

PRESIDENT REV. KATHLEEN C. ROLENZ

Good News

**"Witnessing to the Transforming
Power of the Holy Spirit in our
Lives"**

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UUCF members also receive the
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Now that we've been cut loose from the mother ship, what do we do? Who are we if we're not part of Unitarian Universalism? These and many other questions continue to swirl around the UUCF since the UUA Board of Trustees decided to eliminate almost all independent affiliates. It remains to be seen as to whether or not the UUA Board of Trustees will decide to start with a clean slate and abolish all Independent affiliates, or if some will continue to remain. Regardless of the process with the UUA, I feel compelled to offer my perspective on this on-going conversation.

First, I believe that it's important to maintain our identity with Unitarian Universalism and with the local congregation. We are the Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship, not simply the Christian Fellowship. While there are some individuals who are not connected to Unitarian Universalism, most of us are, or have been, connected to a Unitarian Universalist church, congregation, fellowship or Society. Unitarian Universalist Christianity has a unique identity that I believe should be preserved. There are thousands of "brands" of Christianity these days, and I cannot imagine creating yet a new "brand" of liberal Christianity that is devoid of the rich tradition which we inherited.

Furthermore, I think Unitarian Universalism needs us—whether some individuals would recognize that need or not. We are one of the few theological identity groups who have a historical connection to Unitarian Universalism and I am proud of our continued presence in both the UUA and in the local congregations.

At the same time our "roots hold us close," we have also been "set free". The crisis of losing our independent affiliate status has also created opportunities for the UUCF Board and Executive Director to think outside the box—to imagine being a kind of "Church of the Larger Christian Fellowship" a church that exists both in small gatherings all over the country and the world, on-line and through web interaction, and in our gatherings of Revival and at General Assembly. This vision is still in the making, and we would welcome your thoughts and input on this and any other aspects of the future of the Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship.

While at Revival last month, I realized how deeply I love this faith and our Christian witness and presence. I thank God for all of you and am blessed by your ongoing support of our deep heritage.

Love and Blessings,

Kathleen

Revival 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015

Revival 2009 in Tulsa was full of worship and the gospel of inclusion. You can read more about it in the Revival Section of www.uuchristian.org, and we are including parts of the prayer and healing service and the communion service, in this issue of the Good News. More will come in future issues. But we are pleased to announce upcoming revivals in these locations and dates:

Horizon UU Church, Carrollton, TX in the Dallas area, Oct. 14-17, 2010

Universalist National Memorial Church, Washington, D.C., March 22-25, 2012

First UU Church of San Diego, CA, Oct. 10-13, 2013

First UU Church of New Orleans, LA in March, 2015



From the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has had several goals this year which are nearing completion, and we wanted you, members of the UUCF to know about what's been happening. The first shift was to move the board meetings to monthly instead of every other month. Then, small teams and working groups have been reporting to the Board each month on progress of goals. Below is a list and brief description of some of the projects that the Board, in conjunction with various teams and with the Executive Director, has accomplished:

- **On-line membership survey** has been created by the Membership Team and will be posted on-line by the time you receive this good news. We encourage everyone to take the survey as a means of supplying the Board with information about our membership.
- **Relationship with the UUA.** Kay Montgomery has been in conversation with me about the role & status of theological identity groups. The Board of Trustees has delegated the decisions about groups formerly known as Independent Affiliates to the UUA staff.
- **General Assembly planning.** This year we have purchased a larger than usual both space at General Assembly and will be sharing that space with the UU Buddhists and UU Mystics. We will be working on a schedule of

programs that will be offered at the booth. This is partially in response to the fact that many of us were removed from independent affiliate status and therefore were not given access to workshop slots. We aren't sure how it will all work out, but were' excited about partnering and sharing time and space with other theological identity groups.

- **Website.** We expect to add a live version of a UUCF group in Bible study and discussion, and are looking at ways to make the website more interactive. We have been inspired by the way that the Church of the Larger Fellowship use their website and are looking at similar ideas.

- **Publications: Good News & UU Christian Journal.** We switched from six issues mailed out to every home to four issues mailed and two available on-line. Tom Wintle, long-time editor of the UU Christian Journal, is planning to retire from that editorship by 2010. We are preparing for this transition by devoting the last issue to him, celebrating his ministry and work on the Journal at General Assembly 2010, and considering a different format for our two publications—perhaps more along the lines of a magazine or e-zine style good news combined with journal quality articles. This is still in process.

- **By-laws.** The UUCF By-laws had not been reviewed or changed since

1996. A small ad-hoc committee of the Board decided to re-write the by-laws and have been submitting them to the Board for feedback and editing suggestions since January 2009. The by-laws are available online at http://www.uuchristian.org/M_ByLaws.html. If you have specific suggestions and/or comments, please send them to Dean Drake deanadrake@hotmail.com and me. Please sign your name and approximately the year you joined the UUCF. Comments from non-members and unsigned letters/emails cannot be considered.

- **Executive Director Update. Final Fellowship:** Congratulations to Reverend Ron Robinson for being received into Final Fellowship. Evaluations for Executive Director Reverend Ron Robinson will be undertaken by the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees this spring. The Board will solicit input from various groups with whom Ron has worked; primarily the website, membership, revival and general assembly planning teams, as well as members of the Board of Trustees. Board President Kathleen Rolenz will be in charge of the process. The Board will also be reviewing and re-drafting a new Letter of Agreement for Reverend Ron Robinson this Spring as part of our Administrative overhaul.

Be A Revolutionary With Jesus Rev. Ron Robinson, Executive Director

I want to complement President Kathleen Rolenz's column in this issue of the Good News by writing about the "big picture" that informs the changes and actions and ideas and plans of the UUCF mentioned by her. This is a good issue to do this because it is our "General Assembly and Pentecost" issue when we do our outreach in the UU sphere, connecting ourselves to both our UU churches and the Church Universal in the spirit of the birth of the church celebrated during Pentecost. The big picture affects us all, whether we are Jesus followers or not.

George Barna is head of a religious research group that continually looks at the canvass of the American religious landscape and publishes findings and analysis. His understanding of Christianity and of "biblical principles" differ vastly from mine, but his views on changes in culture and church resonate deeply with my own and I find them informative for the future of our particular manifestation of Church through the UUCF.

In his book "Revolution," Barna says that in the year 2000 people in the

U.S. primarily experienced their faith and found spiritual expression through these means: 70 percent in local church, 5 percent in alternative faith-based communities, five percent in families, and 20 percent via media, arts, culture. But the forces that have been underway for a few generations are picking up speed in a revolutionary, not evolutionary, way and he forecast that by the year 2025 these percentages would be: 30-35 percent local church; 30-35 percent alternative faith-based communities,

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Revival 2009 Prayer and Healing Service

Do You Want To Be Healed?

Rev. Jonalu Johnstone, First Unitarian Church, Oklahoma City

Invocation

Great God, Healer and Comforter of all,

Come into our midst and let us feel and know your spirit and love.

Be with each of us, offering what we need from you, whether our needs are great, or small, or even unknown to us at all.

Let us be filled with thankfulness for your presence and power. May we come to you with humility, integrity, and full of love, just as Jesus came to us.

AMEN

Scripture II Kings 5:1-14 (NRSV); Mark 5:25-34 (NRSV)

Prayer

Gracious God,

There is a balm in Gilead. We know that, we know that whenever we wish, we can invite your spirit and feel its power. So often, we hesitate, though. Let that not be true for us tonight.

Some of us come with hearts that are burdened, others with bodies that are broken or worn. Some have spirits that need uplift.

Grant each of us what we need, whether we have identified it or not. Help us to know your power.

All of us are grateful for the gifts you bring, for the spirit of love with which we are surrounded and the company which lifts our hearts and helps us to know you better.

In the name of all the children whom you love,

AMEN

Sermon

Do you wish to be healed? Do you really wish to be healed?

I find Unitarian Universalists can be skeptical about healing, just as skeptical as they can be about, well, everything. Of course, most mainline Western Christians have their questions about healing. While embracing the stories of Jesus, many don't really believe in healing miracles in this day and age, except in the most vague or abstract sense. In a recent

Christian Century article about Uganda, writer Jason Byasse describes meeting Father Gabriel, an African Catholic charismatic healer. These are his words:

"So how did you come to have the gift of healing?" I asked the white cassocked priest, whom I'd just seen dancing "Well, I was dead for seven hours," he said. How does a skeptical Westerner respond to that? ["Perilous Presence," Christian Century, Feb. 10, 2009, p. 14]

In other places, in other times, where people haven't relied so fully on the scientific method as we tend to, healing has had a different, and perhaps, deeper meaning. What remains the same across time and place is that we base our beliefs and expectations in a limited set of knowledge of how the world works.

We usually think of healing as a medical issue. It's not. It's a spiritual issue.

A colleague of mine, Russ Savage – some of you know him -- told how watching a surgery had changed his view of healing. He realized that the surgery was a violent violation of the body, and the healing was not healing from the original problem, as he had always imagined it, but was actually healing from the surgery. Healing was the adjustment of the body to a new way of being, a new interrelationship of the organs and blood vessels and nerves and everything. Surgery was not healing; the recovery was what was healing.

Do you wish to be healed? Do you really wish to be healed?

I ministered to a woman who had pancreatic cancer, a cancer with among the worst survival rates. She put everything to bear on this disease. She did visualizations, listened to healing tapes, refused to be around people who were negative about her prognosis, and of course, followed doctors' recommendations. Her cancer disappeared, for some years. When it

returned, she confessed to me that she had no more energy for the fight. The extra years had allowed her to accomplish what she wished to in her life. There would be no more battle. And the disease took her in a short time. Yet, what had she managed to heal of her life? A great deal, I think.

Do you wish to be healed? Do you really wish to be healed?

The two Biblical stories I shared depict two sufferers with differing attitudes about their own healing. Naaman wants to be healed – enough to travel to a foreign land, seeking out a prophet he knows little about. He wants to be healed enough that he brings with him silver, gold, garments and a letter of introduction from his own ruler.

But, he nearly leaves in a rage without receiving his healing because his own expectations and ego get in his way. Does he want to be healed? The king doesn't know what to do for him. The prophet refuses to come out and deal with him personally. Naaman is an important man; this prophet has the gall to send a messenger. Naaman expects an exotic cure – a foreign prophet, if not an actual king, who touches him with healing power, who at least deals with him personally. Isn't he worth that? What's more, this so-called prophet Elisha asks him to bathe in the crummy waters of the Jordan. What good could come of that? Wouldn't a respectable Syrian river do? Naaman is outraged enough to leave without a cure. He nearly lets ego prevent his restoration.

Until his humble servants reframe the situation for him. "Wouldn't you have done something difficult if that's what the prophet had asked? He's asked for something easy. Why not try it? Go and bathe." The simple logic of the servants' confrontation jolts Naaman into compliance. And he is healed.

How typical is the patient like

(Continued on page 5)

Naaman. We all know someone who refuses – or is unable -- to follow doctor's orders. The asthmatic who won't quit smoking; the diabetic who loves sweets. My uncle said, after his heart attack and surgery that if he had to quit eating red meat, life wasn't worth living.

If we require healing, we have some disease – dis-ease; lack of comfort. Disease, or dis-ease, is a sign that something is out of whack in our lives, out of balance, out of harmony. Healing is a restoration of balance or harmony. Healing requires change.

What we often want is for everything in our lives to remain the same except the disease, that single element of our lives. What we forget is that we are organic creatures. Everything in our bodies, minds, spirits, relationships and environment is interrelated.

My massage therapist recently told me that she has learned that a lot of neck problems can be alleviated by working on the lower back. That sounds counterintuitive, but the spine is built on that base in the lower back. If it's out of kilter, the neck may be too. For that matter, my neck pain may be related to me holding stress about a relationship. My allergies may be triggered more when I haven't had enough sleep. More than once, I've had physical complaints disappear when I've quit a stressful job.

Healing may require willingness to give up what I cannot imagine letting go – my ego, my expectations, my dreams. How does my disease hook into my life? What might healing require of me? Do I really want to be healed?

Some of us get a lot out of being sick. Our dysfunctions twirl together with our identities like a vine curling

around a branch. Who would she be if she were rid of her eating disorder, or codependence, or depression? How would we arrange our lives without those disorders, those dis-eases that motivate our decisions in so many conscious and unconscious ways? Do we really want to be free? Do you really want to be healed? Or, like Naaman, would you rather hold onto your identity, your ego, your status, whatever it is that must be released to free you?

Remember Father Gabriel, that dancing charismatic healing priest who had died and received the gift of healing? Despite the writer's skepticism, he offered one quote from the priest that may be valuable in our consideration: "It can't be hard work. If you have to strain it's your work, not God's." [p. 34] It's a strain to give up the identity, the ego, the status. It's a strain, unless we let go and turn to God for healing. Because I can't change the way I want to change without help from some source outside myself. Because, along with Paul, I do what I would not do and do not do what I would do.

The hemorrhaging woman wished to be healed. She had been to doctors for years and never found a cure. She knew, though, that she wanted to find healing and she knew where she could find it. She knew she needed the power Jesus possessed.

Yet, like Father Gabriel, Jesus did not strain to heal. He felt the power of it, but he knew that power came from outside himself, just as it comes from outside of us. It flowed through him.

In contrasting Naaman and the hemorrhaging woman, I'm not saying that attitude, trust, or faith means everything. I have New Age friends who are convinced we create our own

reality and that if we can visualize what we want to bring into our lives, we can make it appear.

That's magical thinking, not turning it over to God. What we have to do to truly be healed is to let God have the sickness, the disease, the discomfort, the trial. We have to open ourselves to what God invites us to do – bathe in the Jordan, ask for forgiveness, reconcile with our family – or leave them alone completely. Only then will we find the healing we desire. And, as in Naaman's case, it might not look like what you expect.

Do you wish to be healed? If so, I invite you now to come to one of the designated ministers for a time of individual prayer.

Individual Healing Prayers

*Jesus... Best Friend
May your soul give life to me,
May your flesh be food for me,
May you warm my hardened heart.*

*Jesus... Best Friend
May your tears now wash me clean,
May your passion keep me strong,
May you listen to my plea.*

*Jesus... Best Friend
May your wounds take in my hurts,
May your gaze be fixed on me,
May I not betray your love.*

*Jesus... Best Friend
May you call me at death's door,
May you hold me close to you,
May you place me with God's saints,
May I ever sing your praise.*

AMEN

*"Jesus, Best Friend," inspired by the Prayer "Soul of Christ" from David Fleming's Draw Me into your Friendship: The Spiritual Exercises A Literal Translation and A Contemporary Reading

The full text can be found by going to the www.uuchristian.org site Revival section]

Good News Publication July/August 2009 Online, E-Mail, and Print by Request

As we did with the January/February 2009 issue of the Good News, the next issue, July/August 2009 will be sent to members via e-mail (to sign up for email contact Editor Erika at erikanollwebb@gmail.com), and will also be posted online in the Good News section, and by request we can mail you a print version as we do the other four issues. If you prefer a print copy, please call Rev. Ron Robinson at 918-794-4637 or write to UUCF PO Box 6702 Turley OK 74156. Thank you for helping us save money for our ministries, save the environment, and get the Good News to you as quickly as possible.

“The Beginning and the End”

Rev. Lillie Mae Henley, Universalist National Memorial Church, Washington, D.C

Reading I Matthew 26:17-19,
Reading II Matthew 26:20-30, and
Prayer For A New Mother by Dorothy
Parker

I said, “Yes.” I said, “Yes!” all those years ago, when the dream became real and Gabriel said to me I was to be the mother of the son of God. Little did I know then, what joy there would be in the knowing of Yeshua. Little did I know then, what pain there would be in the knowing of it all.

There will be many stories of him after we are all gone. I do not know what they will say, all I can tell you now, is my story and of the love he brought into our lives—of the change he brought into our lives.

He was my first, a miracle to me. It was a miracle that we both did not die; the conditions were horrible, and if it wasn't for Joseph's determination to see us live through it all, I think we would have died. He made sure there was boiling water and swaddling and a midwife from a cousin's family.

Yeshua was strong, but he cried a lot the first months of his life. Because I am the youngest sister, my sisters, already mothers, told me to be patient. Just as I was losing hope he would ever quit crying, he grew into walking, and began to laugh a lot. He laughed at the older children's antics and he laughed at all the new babies crawling and crying around our families' homes.

Yeshua was fascinated by the scripture and was happy when he grew old enough to go with his cousins to the rabbi's bayit for study. I taught him the prophets. I especially loved their message of warning, their message of hope, and their message of relationship with Yahweh. Yeshua listened more intently than most of the other boys. He was eager to go with our families to Jerusalem to the Temple for Passover. He often begged to go with his father or his uncles when they went to Jerusalem to perform their duties as one of the priests who accepted offerings, but of course he could not go.

Anytime someone came to our small

Nazareth from Sepphoris, he listened intently to the stories they brought. When the merchants told stories of faraway places, Yeshua had a faraway look in his eyes. He was fascinated by the Roman soldiers who rode through Nazareth ever so often, and would not stop asking questions about them. It did not take him long to associate the soldiers with the stories he learned from the great prophets in our scrolls. At an early age, he knew the soldiers meant domination and oppression. Yet, he, among all the children seemed to believe most in the promises he found in Isaiah's words. ... do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you... [Isaiah 41:10a Today's New International Version]

It was, I believe, because Yahweh was more real to him than any of us. We were who we were, because Yahweh called us as a people to be His people. We were bound together, all of us, and Yahweh was part of our family. Yeshua had more faith in our faith than the rest of us. I am not saying that because he was my son; I say that because it was true.

I think about the early years through the lens of what happened to him. Beside the man who gave his life for what he believed, I see the infant, my baby Yeshua crying, then laughing. I see the young man he became. He had more compassion than his siblings and his cousins. If the old people needed a visit, he would go. If the disturbed wandered through, he would approach them and soothe their troubled minds. If they were playing in the fields and someone was hurt, it was always Yeshua who brought them in. If there was a group of traveling lepers on the edges of Nazareth, and Yeshua saw them, he would run to all my sisters' houses and beg for food for them and put it in their path. If someone had an illness, it was Yeshua who led the prayers.

Then, one day, he said he had more to learn than he could learn in Nazareth. He gathered up his

carpenter's tools and only a cloak and left. I now know that he traveled to those faraway places that the traveling merchants talked about. He was gone for many years, but he came home ever so often, and when he did, he talked about us loving each other as much as we loved God. This is heresy; but we did not say anything to him, we were so happy he was home.

When he came home the last time from his travels, he said he did not want to be a carpenter any more. He wanted to share his stories. To do anything in Nazareth, or anywhere really, one needed a patron. This was not something that Yeshua wanted to do. He said that this was part of the problem with our people. They were too entrenched in the system of the Roman Empire and there were other ways to live.

Yeshua told me Yahweh was calling him to share a new way of being with our people. I know the anguish he went through as only a mother could know. Before he went to see his cousin John in the wilderness, he told me goodbye. His first act of public ministry was the baptism. I heard about the dove descending. That is when I knew. I knew what Gabriel told me was true. A messiah would be my child.

And then he went into the wilderness. Just as we send the unblemished sheep into the desert alone, so too, Yeshua went alone. I can only imagine. Others tell the story of his temptations—if they are true, then I also know what sustained him then and throughout his “ministry of stories.” It was the words of Isaiah, the word I taught him.

*10 So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your
God.*

*I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my
righteous right hand.*

After his miracle at the wedding, we all knew, that is all of his family knew. It was then, one by one, his brothers left to follow him. And others, too, men and women, we heard, so his

sisters said we should all be there, and after awhile we were. Once, for our safety, he had to deny we were his family, that was all right, we were more afraid for him than we were for ourselves.

You can imagine how difficult it was to live those two—no three years—in the desert, traveling from village to village. We thought everything would be all right, once Yeshua decided to go to Jerusalem. It was a triumphant entry, I must say. Not one of us had ever been happier for Yeshua.

If we had only gone to Jerusalem at any other time, things might have been different. It was Passover, and thousands of our people were there, many who had not even heard of Yeshua's message or ministry. And the soldiers, of course, they were always there at festivals.

Yeshua acted and sounded strange at the Passover meal. He washed the feet

of his followers, and said, "... as I have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you." [John Chapter 13]

Yeshua always reminded us that we were all the same and Yahweh was as real as our love for each other.

And then the last thing he did at supper, before he went off to Gethsemane to pray was lift up the bread. He blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to all of us, and said, "Take, eat, this is my body."

And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

We did not know this would be our last supper together. We did not know what was to come. We did know

Yeshua taught us a way to live that would forever change us.

The world will always challenge us when we try to live as Yahweh would have us live. My son knew that. I see the infant in the man who died for what he believed. Whatever will come of his story and the memory others have of him is up to Yahweh.

I said, "Yes." I said, "Yes!" all those years ago, when the dream became real and Gabriel said to me I was to be the mother of the son of God. Little did I know then, what joy there would be in the knowing of Yeshua. Little did I know then, what pain there would be in the knowing of it all.

Amen and Blessed Be

[Editor's Note: This is an excerpt of the sermon. For the full sermon, with readings, go to www.uuchristian.org and go to the Revival section]

(Continued from page 3)

five percent families, and 30-35 percent media, arts, culture. Some of the fastest growing forms of church now are found in houses, in cyberspace, and in independent worship events.

The UUCF is committed to helping local churches help their people go deeper into the Spirit, and we will do more if we intentionally form a Church Ministry Team dedicated to this, and it is why Revivals are held in local churches, and many of our small groups are part of church small group ministries. At our recent Revival in Tulsa, our panel dedicated to discussing the new movements within churches and the new kinds of churches was a way to serve the mission of our churches. But, in addition to this, as one of those alternative faith-based communities, the changing one-size-doesn't-fit-all culture is ripe for the UUCF to become a deeper wellspring of faith for UUs, and others, who are looking for both "something more" and "something else."

Barna uses the term Revolutionaries

for all those who, through a local church and/or not, are committing themselves to making their faith expression the primary expression of their life, instead of seeing it as an add-on to their life. He says they have seven spiritual passions, and the thriving groups will be those who can connect with those seven passions: 1. intimate worship, but not necessarily in an organized worship service, and daily; 2. faith-based conversations, sharing our experience of Jesus in low-key high-impact encounters, embracing these instead of running from them; 3. intentional spiritual growth, learning more and finding purpose as a way to connect with God; 4. servanthood, putting acts of mission and helping others first; 5. investing resources of talent, time, treasure in a way that reflects faith values and builds community and relationships; 6. spiritual friendships, for walking together in life with encouragement and accountability; and 7. family faith, which stresses the home as the model for connecting with God.

Some of the questions we will be asking, which will be guiding our UUCF through these changing times, are in what ways do we and can we align ourselves with those seven passions through the work of our websites, our small groups, our Revivals national and regional, our General Assembly gatherings, our publication resources, our curriculums, our relationships with other groups and churches, and our own presence as a means for people to invest their money, talents, time, hopes, and passions for God and the world.

Barna says that the Revolution is about recognizing that we are not called to "go" to church, but are called to "be" the church (as defined by another revolutionary, Shane Claiborne, as a people of God making Jesus visible in the world). May you this summer be in prayer and service and conversation about how you can "be" the "church" that is the UUCF, how you relate with these seven spiritual passions, and how you can join with us in the continuing revolution that Jesus started.

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Become a Member Today Become a Member Today

Are You Already a Member of the UUCF? Great! Now is the time to renew your membership. Each and every year, the leadership team of the UUCF reviews the membership rolls and hopes that you will decide that the UUCF is important enough in your life to renew your membership. **Are you not yet a member? Join today!**

Why is it important to sustain the UUCF through your membership? The UUCF is a self-supporting and self-sustaining institution. The first and most important reason to stay connected to the UUCF is because we represent a liberal religious Christian presence in the Unitarian Universalist Association. We believe that Unitarian Universalism is broadened and deepened by our active presence and our faithful witness. We represent one of the few organizations in the UUA that can claim an authentic theological position, and the only one that can claim a historical tradition that dates back to the beginning of our movement. We bring to one another spiritual support, meaningful worship, intellectual engagement, and serve as a powerful witness for liberal Christianity within our tradition as Unitarian Universalists.

With the removal of affiliate status in the UUA, our expenses will be higher and our ability to have a presence at General Assembly, more expensive. We need your support. Please make a monthly pledge to the UUCF today.—*Rev. Kathleen Rolenz, President*

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