

# UU MATTERS



The Mt. Vernon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship  
1600 Isabella, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864 (618) 241-9644  
An Emerging UUA Congregation

December 2008 & January 2009  
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Mt. Vernon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship  
is excited to announce the arrival of its second  
Winterfaith Celebration!



Mt. Vernon UU Fellowship services begin at 10:00 a.m.  
on Sunday mornings. Please join us!

Winterfaith is a two month long interfaith celebration of the many religious and secular holidays that occur during the winter months. The purpose of Winterfaith is to encourage the growth of interfaith activity in the Mt. Vernon area, to celebrate the diversity of religious beliefs found in the community, and to create an atmosphere of collegiality and universality among all people of faith. Join us as we welcome special guest speakers and musicians to our Sunday services.

Free Childcare is provided during all Winterfaith services.

## **Winterfaith Services & Special Events:**

***December 7: Special Guest Dr. Waheed Rana of the Islamic Speakers Bureau of St. Louis*** will speak to us on the meaning of the Hajj, the once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca that Islam requires of all Muslims who can financially and physically make it. Dr. Rana is very involved in interfaith work in St. Louis. His interfaith connections, especially with local rabbis, played a key role in securing greater St. Louis' acceptance of the building of the first mosque in the area. This Sunday falls within the four-day period of the Hajj. In addition to speaking to us about the spiritual importance of the Hajj, Dr. Rana will give a brief presentation on the cultural importance of the Hajj in Muslim lands. This is also the second Sunday of Advent. We will light the first two candles of our Advent Wreath to recognize this day.

***December 14: Special Guests Yo Presley and others from the Shawnee Dharma Group of Carbondale, Illinois.*** Members of this Buddhist meditation group will join us for the second time to recognize the place of Buddhism in Southern Illinois. Holidays recognized at this service will include the third Sunday of Advent, the Mexican Catholic tradition of Posadas Navidenas, and the Buddhist holiday Bodhi Day.

***Special Event: Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.: Drum Circle and Solstice Gathering.*** Join us for an evening of drumming and celebration of the Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year and the longest night. Bring a drum or other instrument to play, or simply come to celebrate with us. Everyone is also welcome to bring a snack or drink to share among others! (NOTICE: Drum Circles are usually held on the first Friday of each month, but will ONLY be held on this date during Winterfaith. First Friday Drum circles will not be held in December and January but will resume on February 6<sup>th</sup>.)

**December 21: "A Rabbi's Christmas Sermon,"** written by Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin of the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation (Reform) in Atlanta, GA, will be read at this service led by MVUUF members. Known informally as "The Temple," this synagogue founded in 1860 is Atlanta's oldest. In addition to its distinguished position in Jewish life in Atlanta, the Temple is the synagogue whose 1958 bombing is depicted in the movie *Driving Miss Daisy*. Rabbi Salkin respectfully looks at the meaning of Christmas for serious Christians while presenting a Jewish counterpoint to the holy day's themes. Holidays recognized at the service will be: the fourth Sunday of Advent, for which we will light the candles of our Advent Wreath; Christmas, in honor of which we will open a Peruvian nativity *retablo*; Chanukah, in anticipation of which we will light the *chanukiah*, or menorah; and the Winter Solstice, perhaps the most ancient of holidays, in recognition of which we will unveil the mistletoe, a plant of this season held sacred throughout ancient Europe.

**December 28: Special Guest Rabbi Randy Fleisher of the Central Reform Congregation in St. Louis** will preach on themes from Chanukah, the last day of which begins at sundown this Sunday. The temple, or synagogue, of Rabbi Fleisher's congregation is directly across the street from the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis, which hosted Central Reform Congregation before the synagogue building was built. Rabbi Fleisher is heavily involved in interfaith and social justice work in the St. Louis area. This Sunday also falls within the seven-day period of Kwanzaa. We will recognize both Kwanzaa and Chanukah with music, lighting the *chanukiah*, and lighting the *kinara*.

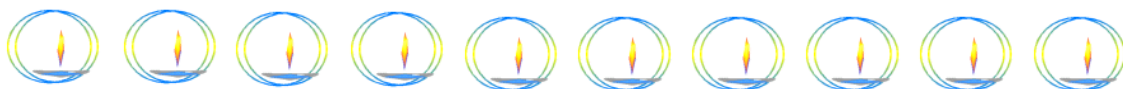
**Special Event: January 1, 12:00 p.m.: 4<sup>th</sup> Annual New Year's Day Potluck.** Please bring a dish to share as we bring in the new year together! Feel free to bring games or activities as well.

**January 4:** *“Get Lost ~ A Sermon for Epiphany”* written by minister Tripp Hudgins of Community Church of Wilmette will be read during this service led by MVUUF members. Community Church is a Baptist congregation and member of the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists. MVUUF will celebrate the Christian holidays of Epiphany, Theophany, and 3 Kings Day, and the secular tradition of New Year’s.

**January 11:** *Special Guest Swami Chetanananda from The Vedanta Society of St. Louis, Missouri.* The swami will join us for Winterfaith again this year to speak about Vedanta, a religion based on the ancient Hindu texts, the Vedas (~4,000 B.C.). Vedanta recognizes that there is no single, right way to approach divinity, and that our true nature as humans is a manifestation of the Infinite Divine Reality or Godhead. The Hindu holiday Makar Sankranti will be recognized at this service.

**January 18, 2009:** *Special Guests Roger Lutley and others of a Baha’i Group from Edwardsville, Illinois will speak to us for World Religion Day.* World Religion Day was created by National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha’i in 1950 as an attempt to address the need for religious unity in the United States. The Baha’i believe that all of humanity is one family, and they will celebrate this holiday with our fellowship, leading a service that will include music, readings, and prayers from the Baha’i faith.

**January 25:** *Special Guest Concert Pianist Zola Van will perform for our final Winterfaith service.* Our Winterfaith faith season will end with a Celebration of the Arts. This year we commemorate the birth of author Virginia Woolf with selected readings from her works. Regional musician Zola Van will perform songs from her recordings including *Carol, Piano Bouquet, River to River Trail, and Paint the Forest Winter.* She may also surprise us with some works that have yet to be recorded!



## Other Upcoming Events:

All listed events are held at the fellowship building and are open to the public unless otherwise stated. Please email [information@mtvernonuuf.org](mailto:information@mtvernonuuf.org) for information about any service or event.

**December 3<sup>rd</sup> & January 6<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 p.m.: *Board of Trustees Meeting.*** Board of Trustees members: Nina Peacock: Cochair; Luke Crawford: Cochair; Glenda Eubanks: Cochair; Adam Stone: Secretary. The treasury position remains open. The Board meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30. Open to anyone interested in fellowship business.

**December 5<sup>th</sup> & January 2<sup>nd</sup>: Drum Circle will NOT meet on these days.** Our fellowship will not be hosting its regular monthly drum circles during Winterfaith, but will instead host a **special drum circle and Solstice gathering on December 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.** Bring a drum or other instrument to play, or simply come to celebrate with us. Everyone is also welcome to bring a snack or drink to share among others! As always, you can also bring a friend along!

**December 10<sup>th</sup> & January 14<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30 p.m.: *Welcoming Congregation Workshop.*** The Taskforce for LGBT Concerns will host Welcoming Congregation Workshops on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday evening of each month. These workshops are a cooperative effort by the members of the congregation to make our fellowship better at welcoming all members of the community to our fellowship, specifically those people who are also sexual minorities. *Even if you haven't been to a workshop before, or don't plan on attending every month, please make an effort to attend at least one or two of the upcoming workshops.*

**December 17<sup>th</sup> & January 21<sup>st</sup> @ 6:30 p.m. *Open Minds Discussion Group.*** Open Minds meets on the third Wednesday of each month to discuss a variety of topics. Everyone is welcome. Contact Vito Mastrangelo for more information about this discussion group and topics.

### **Other MVUUF Matters:**

**Are you considering MVUUF membership?** Please ask a Board of Trustees member for a prospective member folder.

**Treasury Matters:** Financial contributions may be made in the offering basket located on the round table at the back of our sanctuary. If you would like to mail contributions instead of putting them in the offering basket, you may mail them to: MVUUF, 1600 Isabella, Mt. Vernon, IL, 62864. Please make checks payable to MVUUF. If you would like your offering to be used for a specific purpose, please clearly mark that purpose on the memo line on your check or on the envelope in which you place your offering.

**Library Matters:** The MVUUF Library catalogue is now available online. The catalog can be accessed at [www.librarything.com/catalog/MVUUF](http://www.librarything.com/catalog/MVUUF)

**UU Matters Newsletter Submissions:** *If you have news or notices that you would like placed in upcoming editions of UU Matters, please send them to [information@mtvernonuuf.org](mailto:information@mtvernonuuf.org) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month, for inclusion in the next month's newsletter.*

**Fellowship Contact Information:** If you are looking for more information about the Mt. Vernon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship or would like to be added to our mailing list, you can do so in the following ways:

1. By Mail: The Mt. Vernon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship 1600 Isabella  
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864
2. By Phone: (618) 241-9644. Please leave a voice mail message.
3. By visiting our website:  
[www.mtvernonuuf.org](http://www.mtvernonuuf.org)
4. By emailing our fellowship:  
[information@mtvernonuuf.org](mailto:information@mtvernonuuf.org)

MVUUF Board of Trustees members can also be reached using the fellowship voice mail or email.

*Thank you for celebrating  
Winterfaith with us!*