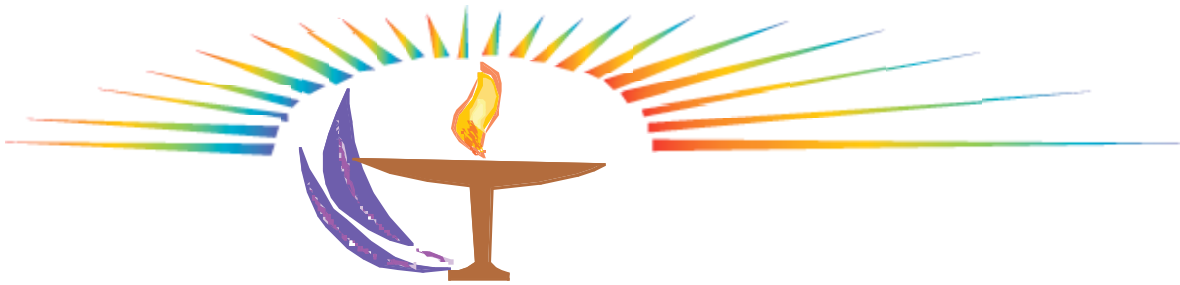


# Huntsville Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship



## September 2008 Newsletter

Services are generally held on the second and fourth Sunday of each month at 10:30 a.m. in the Laura Chapel of Huntsville Memorial Hospital. From 10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m., we gather and have coffee. For more information call (936) 295-3170.

*People say that what we're seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive.*

~ Joseph Campbell



### Sunday, September 28, 2008

Our guest speaker will be Christina Branum-Martin. Her Sermon is entitled "Celebrating the Rituals of Our Every Day Lives". Rituals create meaning & depth in our lives. They address our personal transformations both large and small. Our public rituals formally celebrate life passages of births, weddings and funerals. Often unexplored, our private rituals are grounded in the habits and routines of our every day lives. How is your life's journey enriched by ritual?

Christina Branum-Martin grew up in Houston, Texas as a Unitarian Universalist and is currently a member of the Bay Area Unitarian Universalist Church. She is a 7th generation Unitarian. She lives in Houston with her husband and 8 year-old daughter. As a third year seminary student at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago as a modified residency student, she spends each January in Chicago taking intensive classes in addition to classes in local seminaries in preparation for Unitarian Universalist ministry.



## **Sunday September 14, 2008**

Our guest speaker will be the Reverend Michael Thompson. His Sermon is entitled "What Does This Fellowship Mean to You?" Like a jewel, each congregation is a multifaceted thing, and each person views it from a different angle. Our guest speaker, Rev. Mike Thompson, will offer a composite image of our religious community as a garden, a banquet, a family, a sanctuary, a temple, a tradition and a mission.

Rev. Thompson is a native Texan who grew up in the Piney Woods, and has been a Unitarian Universalist minister for over fifteen years. He first served as a student minister in the Dallas-Fort Worth Area, then as an intern minister in Shreveport, Louisiana. For six years he was a parish minister in Beaumont, Texas. He has also served as a part-time contract minister in Houston and Galveston, and as an interim minister in Canoga Park, California. For the past six years, he has been parish minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Ministry is a second career for Rev. Thompson. He came to this calling after fifteen years as a high school teacher of history, government, economics and debate. He earned his undergraduate degree in political science and public address from Stephen F. Austin State University in 1974, and his divinity degree from Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in 1993.

In 1999 he helped organize the Beaumont Chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). In 2005 he helped organize the Tuscaloosa Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. In 1998 he received the CUUPS Fuller-Thoreau Award "for spirited defense of religious freedom," and in 1999 he received an Anti-Defamation League award "in recognition of outstanding efforts to guard religious liberties for all."

Rev. Thompson and his wife Pamela have been married for 34 years. They are vegetarians who share their home with two feline companions, Swoosie and Xena.



### Charitable Giving

At our September 28th service, we will have a collection for Habitat for Humanity of Walker County. Walker County Habitat for Humanity (WCHFH) is a non-profit Christian organization that helps low-income families own decent, affordable housing. Habitat houses are sold to selected families using a no-interest mortgage loan. The program is made possible by community financial support, donated materials, and volunteer labor, including labor by the selected family.

At our July 27th service, we collected donations for the Friends of the Huntsville Public Library. A total of \$235.00 was collected. We thank our members and friends for their generous contributions.

### Women's Sharing Circle

On Thursday, September 18th, we will be meeting at 10:30 a.m. at the home of Roberta Krock (3329 Pine Grove Dr.). We ask that anyone who has come up with a design for our new church banner to please bring it. If Anne True can figure out how to change the format, we will also be having a presentation of the first session in the Unitarian-Universalist Global Literacy program. Luncheon will follow.



At this time, six members of our congregation, Joan Stringer, Pam Johnson, Joan Hinds, Anne Sigler, Gail Philips and Anne True, are signed up to attend the International Convocation of Unitarian-Universalist Women which will be from Feb. 26 - March 1, 2009 at the Hilton of the Americas in Houston, Texas.

There is still plenty of time to register for the convocation. The cost is \$350, but discounts are available if you work at the meeting. You can pay by credit card online at <http://www.icuww.com> or with a check to "Southwest UU Women", 3224 Timmons Lane, #165, Houston, TX 77027. Remember to make sure that you have housing for the convocation.

**International  
Convocation  
of U-U Women**

The next Book Club meeting will be held at 2:00pm on Sunday, September 14th, at the home of Anne True (1879 Greenbriar Dr. in the Elkins Lake Subdivision).

Anne True will be leading the discussion about *Jesus For The Non Religious* by John Shelby Spong. In this book Spong's aim is to separate the historical Jesus from the Jesus myth. He challenges much of the traditional views of Jesus from his birth to his miracles and explores the story of Jesus by considering the Jewish Scriptures and the liturgy of the first-century synagogue.

John Shelby Spong was a Episcopalian priest and bishop for forty-five years. He has written over 20 books and is one of the leading spokesman for progressive Christianity.

## Book Club



## Business Meeting

On Sunday, August 10th, a business meeting was held and it was determined that the Huntsville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship would accept the proposal of Mike Watkins for the construction of a water-detention weir on the Fellowship's property with a cap on the construction costs of eight thousand dollars.



The Millbend Coffeehouse is a non-profit live music venue hosted by the Northwoods Unitarian-Universalist Church at their church at 1370 N. Millbend in The Woodlands. Performances are held at 8:00 pm on the 2nd Saturday of every month. Refreshments such as several gourmet flavors of coffee and a variety of scrumptious pastries are available. Recommended Donations are as follows: Adults - \$15.00; Seniors and Differently-Abled - \$12.00; Attended Child - \$2.00.

On September 13th, the artist will be Michael Smith

For more information go to <http://millbend.org/index.htm>

## **New ways to learn at Meadville Lombard, a Unitarian Universalist Seminary**

### **Weekend and Week-long formats allow flexibility for Ministers and Lay Leaders**

Meadville Lombard is now offering courses in formats that make it easier for working religious professionals and lay leaders to broaden or deepen their theological and congregational understanding. These on-campus courses were designed in a format best suited to developing religious leadership skills--a format that is face-to-face and heart-to-heart.

### **Weekend Courses**

#### **Lay Leadership Development with Rev. Brian Covell; October 3-4 and 24-25, and November 14-15, 2008**

Designed to help ministers, lay leaders and post-internship seminarians become acquainted with the paradigms, problem-solving and relational skills necessary for effective lay leadership development. Because of the nature of this course, we offer this incentive for congregational teams: **Pay for two team members from your congregations, and register a third for free.** Audit: \$700.00/Credit: \$1400.00.

#### **Real Peace/Real Security: UU Perspectives on Peace and War with Dr. Sharon Welch; January 17-18, 2009**

In this half-credit course, address the issues posed by the UUA CSAI study/action issue on peacemaking. Examine options for enhancing peace and security in our contemporary world and explore perspectives held by Unitarian Universalists on: strategic peace building, just peace, just war, preventive defense, nonviolence and pacifism. Then discuss the concrete ways in which congregations best foster open dialogue and informed engagement on these crucial issues of peacemaking and conflict transformation at all levels: interpersonal, congregational, national and international. Audit: \$375.00/ Credit: \$750.00.

#### **Problems in Public Ethics with Rev. Dr. William Schulz and Dr. Sharon Welch; January 23-25, 2009**

Learn to clarify the theological and ethical underpinnings of your approaches to public problems; consider five of the most pressing such problems on the national and world stage today: torture, military intervention, abortion, death penalty, and poverty and learn how to articulate your perspective and navigate the complexities of dealing with such issues in an institutional context. Audit: \$750.00/ Credit: \$1500.00.

### **Week-long Courses**

#### **Fling Wide the Doors: Children and Church Growth with Rev. Greg Stewart; January 12-16, 2009**

How well do we welcome children into the church family and what impact does that have on church growth? Audit: \$750.00/ Credit: \$1500.00.

#### **Afro-Americans and the Universalists, Unitarians, and Unitarian Universalists with Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed; January 26-30, 2009**

Become familiar with both the Afro-American experience within the liberal religious community and the community's attitudes toward Afro-Americans. Who were these Afro-American women and men and when and how did they become part of this religious movement? What were the attitudes they met among Anglo-Americans and what was the institutional response to them? One objective of the course is for students to create a historical record of their home congregation with regard to race. Audit: \$750.00/ Credit: \$1500.00.

Visit our website for a full listing and course syllabi and to register online. Please note that the tuition does not include lodging, and registrants will need to apply for Student at Large status (\$45.00) and pay a registration fee of \$50.00. Contact Erika Chavez, Director of Admissions, at 773.256.3000 x 250 for more information.

**Meadville Lombard Theological School:** Changing Lives to Change the World  
[www.meadville.edu](http://www.meadville.edu)



## Recommended Books by Ann Staples



### *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know - and Doesn't* by Stephen Prothers

I found the text interesting as he tells us what our current situation is, why we need to be religiously literate, what we knew in the past and how and why we have become religiously illiterate and what to do about it. He clearly states his goal on page 15 "My goal is to help citizens participate fully in social, political and economic life in a nation and a world in which religion counts." The author has a serious, but at times, humorous style. I particularly found both the history of religion, and the reasons for knowing about contemporary religions very interesting. A religious test is included in the book and I did O.K. on the parts referring to the Bible, but not on the parts referring to other religions. Do see how you do.

### *Three Billion New Capitalists: The Great Shift of Wealth and Power to the East* by Clyde Prestowitz

This book, which can be ordered through interlibrary loan, has a copyright date of 2005. The author has some very interesting things to say about U.S. philosophy and management and other global management styles. It is very enlightening to reflect on when the book was written and it's foresight into the current energy situation. On page 259 the author states "using the latest technologies, we could double oil efficiency again with an investment of only \$12 per barrel of oil that now costs \$35 per barrel and may well cost \$80 or more by 2025." He goes on in page 262-263 to state that "Finally, the United States should not try to maintain a hegemonic military position from a relatively declining position of economic power."

### *Escape From the Deep: The Epic Story of a Legendary Submarine and Her Courageous Crew* by Alex Kershaw - book on CD.

This is a story of the WWII deadliest submarine, the U.S.S. Tang, her exploits, her demise and of the few of the crew that survived. The stay of the crew in a Japanese prisoner of war camp and a synopsis of the remainder of their lives is also part of the story. I wished for a minor detail: how the Tang got its name as I find it an odd name, especially during WWII.

*Ghosts Among Us: Uncovering the Truth About the Other Side* by James Van Praagh  
Van Praagh is a New York Times best-selling author of 2 books and the co-creator and co-executive producer of the *Ghost Whisperer* TV series. He gives helpful thoughts on living life and on energy - both positive and negative types of energy. On page 75 of the book he states that "Positive thoughts help to counterbalance negative energy. Our positive thoughts and prayers are vital to our physical and psychic well-being." One chapter of this book is titled "Everything is Energy. The book jacket sums it up with the statement that "With incredible true ghost stories and surprising details about how ghosts actively participate in our lives, Van Praagh challenges us to question our perceptions and shows us how we can live more fully through understanding the world of spirits."

*The Eye of Jade* by Diane Wei Liang

This mystery novel, which features a female detective, is set in modern China. This enjoyable read is rich in information about modern China. To me, most of her expressions, phrasing and descriptions, etc. had an oriental flavor which made the book fresh. Occasionally there would be some "western phrase and/or odd word that to me seemed jarringly out of place. An example of this was the use of "Sure Thing" as a reply; though perhaps here it was meant as a popular use of western slang. Other examples are "this one was a drag," "...quiet at siesta time." and "...in the fridge..." This book is not at Huntsville Public Library and must be ordered through interlibrary loan.

*The Day of the Barbarians: The Battle that Led to the Fall of the Roman Empire* by Alessandro Barbero

This book is an excellent discussion on a period in Roman history when Rome was dealing with barbarians wanting to come into the empire and mishandle the situation. The day in the title refers to the battle of Adrianople, on Aug. 9 AD 378, when the Goths defeated the Roman army. I wanted to read it because of the parallels between their immigration issues and the U.S.'s current ones. Ancient Roman issues included techniques of accommodating Rome's need for labor, especially mercenaries, by bringing in barbarians from other countries. The book follows first the satisfaction and then the dissatisfaction of having so many foreigners in charge of the protection of the empire. This book is not at Huntsville Public Library and must be ordered through interlibrary loan.

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