

February 2013

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF OWENSBORO

Claud Porter
Legal Counsel

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Minister



Everyone is here at the Full Moon Festival.
Friend, what are you waiting for?
The bright moon shines above us.
There are no clouds tonight.
Why bother to ask about lamps and fire?
Why talk about cooking dinner?
Who is searching and who is finding?
Let us just enjoy the moon, all night.
Thich Nhat Hanh

AD HOC PROGRESS REPORT

MISSION STATEMENT WORK

The Ad Hoc Committee has been working in the Dream Phase of Appreciative Inquiry. This has included reviewing the themes surfaced in last summer's interviews, fun brainstorming activities, thoughtful projections, guided meditation, and group conversations.

Sunday, 20 January, the Committee enacted two skits portraying visions of UUCO in 25 years. Highlights included: Andy--just returned from touring monasteries in Tibet and working with the Dalai Lama--now working on a book and television series on the importance of spirituality in healthy longevity... DuWayne driving the church bus to GA--being held in Owensboro on the riverfront... Eleanor leading a retreat group through our wooded and energy neutral campus right here in the heart of Owensboro... And the youth group doing an online fundraiser bidding for ownership of Tom Hicks' classic '84 Monte Carlo!

Dreaming in big, bold, and occasionally wild ways also yielded some very serious thinking. On Wednesday, 23 January, the Committee finalized the Mission Statement describing our relationship to the larger community. It reads as follows:

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF OWENSBORO IS A VISIONARY CHURCH THAT BUILDS HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND ADVOCATES A JUST SOCIETY THROUGH SPIRITUAL GROWTH, ETHICAL ACTION, AND COMMUNITY SERVICE.

ONTO THE NEXT PHASE

This week, 30 January, the Committee will move into the Design Phase. In this phase, collected data, dream elements, and sub-committee conversations will be used to suggest bylaw revisions and additions, policy amendments or additions, outline programming and sketch a five-year plan.

The three sub-committees have already worked on preparing reviews of the current bylaws and policies from three perspectives:

- Governance
- Theology
- Safe Congregation Principles

Other resources will also be used in the next three months:

- UUA materials on writing bylaws and policies
- Alban Institute articles
- Commission of the Appraisal documents

Stay tuned for updates!

Habitat Can Collection Resumes This Month

Did you know? Habitat for Humanity recycles enough cans to pay for the maintenance and use of their truck! Please deposit your clean aluminum empties in plastic bags under the ramp by 9 am on the first Saturday (2/2) and we will help Habitat keep running.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

3 FEB: V-DAY- ONE BILLION RISING
Marilyn Duncan

17 FEB: STANDING ON THE SIDE OF LOVE
Charlot Martin



15th Anniversary Year: The Vagina Monologues

Owensboro Production
To Benefit OASIS
& New Beginnings

Thu, 21 Feb/ Fri, 22 Feb/ Sat, 23 Feb
8 pm Curtain@ UUCO

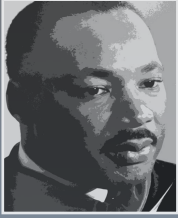
\$10 Admission

CAREGIVER'S LUNCH

Tue, 5 FEB @ 12 Noon
@ Chalice Center

RSVP by Noon on Mon, 4 Feb

THANK YOU!



**Thank You Charlot Martin
for 10 years of
the MLK COFFEEHOUSE
Thank You UUCO for a wonderful
evening of fun and thoughtfulness!
Raised: \$85 for UUCO
\$51 for HL Neblett Center**



**Thank You Revs. Craig & Gray-Coe
For cleansing the sanctuary with
Sage and Blessings
after the break-in.**

interfaith Moment: Shinto

Setsubun is celebrated yearly on Feb. 3 as part of the Spring Festival. In its association with the Lunar New Year, it is sort of New Year's Eve, and so was accompanied by a special ritual to cleanse away all the evil of the former year and drive away disease-bringing evil spirits for the year to come. This special ritual is called (literally) "bean throwing".

Excerpted From BBC Religions @ www.bbc.co.uk
The essence of Shinto is the Japanese devotion to invisible spiritual beings and powers called kami, to shrines, and to various rituals.

Shinto is not a way of explaining the world. What matters are rituals that enable human beings to communicate with kami.

Kami are not God or gods. They are spirits that are concerned with human beings - they appreciate our interest in them and want us to be happy - and if they are treated properly they will intervene in our lives to bring benefits like health, business success, and good exam results.

Shinto is a very local religion, in which devotees are likely to be concerned with their local shrine rather than the religion as a whole. Many Japanese will have a tiny shrine-altar in their homes.

However, it is also an unofficial national religion with shrines that draw visitors from across the country. Because ritual rather than belief is at the heart of Shinto, Japanese people don't usually think of Shinto specifically as a religion - it's simply an aspect of Japanese life. This has enabled Shinto to coexist happily with Buddhism for centuries.

The name Shinto comes from Chinese characters for Shen ('divine being'), and Tao ('way') and means 'Way of the Spirits'.

Shrine visiting and taking part in festivals play a great part in binding local communities together. Shrine visiting at New Year is the most popular shared national event in Japan.

- Shinto sees human beings as basically good. It teaches important ethical principles but has no commandments.
- Shinto has no canonical scriptures, no founder, no God.
- Shinto does not require adherents to follow it as their only religion.

Shinto does not split the universe into a natural physical world and a supernatural transcendent world. It regards everything as part of a single unified creation. Nor does it make the Western division between body and spirit - even spirit beings exist in the same world as human beings.

Shinto does distinguish between the visible world and the invisible world, but the invisible world is regarded as in some way an extension of the everyday world not as a separate realm.

Kami provide a mechanism through which the Japanese regard the whole natural world as being both sacred and material. Kami include gods and spirit beings, but also include many other things that are revered for the powers that they possess. Oceans and mountains are kami, so are storms and earthquakes.

The overall aims of Shinto ethics are to promote harmony and purity in all spheres of life. Purity is not just spiritual purity but moral purity: having a pure and sincere heart.

Shinto has no moral absolutes and assesses the good or bad of an action or thought in the context in which it occurs: circumstances, intention, purpose, time, location, are all relevant in assessing whether an action is bad.

Shinto ethics start from the basic idea that human beings are good, and that the world is good. Evil enters the world from outside, brought by evil spirits. These affect us in a similar way to disease, and reduce our ability to resist temptation. When human beings act wrongly, they bring pollution and sin upon themselves, which obstructs the flow of life and blessing from the kami.

**The UUA has the full draft text
of its latest Statement of Conscience,
"Immigration as a Moral Issue,"
posted on its website.**

**The document will be debated and voted on
at General Assembly in Louisville this June.**

Take a look:

<https://www.uua.org/immigration/re/moral/152647.shtml>

Dwell on the
beauty of life.
Watch the stars,
and see yourself
running with them.
Marcus Aurelius

DO YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY SURVIVAL KIT?

**FEMA recommends these supplies
for a Basic Kit:**

- ☉ Water, one gallon per person per day, for drinking and sanitation (at least 3 days)
- ☉ Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food--avoid high-salt foods, include high-liquid and whole grain products
- ☉ Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- ☉ Battery-powered radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert, and extra batteries for both
- ☉ Flashlight and extra batteries
- ☉ First Aid kit & your medications
- ☉ Whistle and flare to signal for help
- ☉ Formula and diapers, if you have an infant
- ☉ Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- ☉ Dust mask or cotton t-shirt, to help filter the air
- ☉ Plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- ☉ Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- ☉ Maps, phone book, notebook, pen & pencil
- ☉ Empty coffee can with tealight candles and matches