



July—August 2009

An Uncommon Denomination Coming of Age in the Deep South

## Upcoming Services

Service at 11:00, childcare available

July 7, 2009	
Carey Varnado	Religious Freedom and the Roots of Separation of Church and State
July 12, 2009	
Susan Nodurft	Listening to Soul
July 18, 2009	
Carey Varnado	Unitarian Universalist History
July 26, 2009	
Doak Mansfield	Wondering about God
August 2, 2009	
Lilian Hill	Being Liberal in an Illiberal World
August 9, 2009	
Amy Slagle	TBA
August 16, 2009	
Jawad Niazi	A Citizen Immigrant's Point of View on the Old Country
August 23, 2009	
Michael DeArmey	Plato's Symposium: Plato on love, human love and divine love.
August 30, 2009	
Doak Mansfield	TBA

## Message from the Leadership

*Many eyes go through the meadow, but few see the flowers in it.*  
 ~Ralph Waldo Emerson, Unitarian Minister & essayist

This line from one of Emerson's journals caught *my* eye. It seemed an appropriate metaphor in my efforts to educate myself more deeply about this faith we share, and as a metaphor for our small community in these hot summer days when life in the meadow seems dry. Through my UU reading resources, I am discovering lots of *new flowers* of our faith. They are enriching my life, faith and hopefully participation as a member/leader of our fellowship. And, a few months ago our HUUF community felt a discouraging dryness – members of our leadership had been carrying heavy loads for too long and were exhausted – in other words, the flowers were wilting with no new ones in sight! But as Emerson suggests, it took new eyes. We consulted with Eunice and Connie from the Mid-South District Office and at their suggestion and with the consent of the current leadership, the organization of HUUF was restructured (from positions and committee chairs to leadership teams). This has already brought about two positive outcomes: first, those previously 'heavy-load' positions are now being shared, and second, we have been able to renew our focus on the aspect of being community that "feeds us," that is, our Sunday morning worship experience. We are excited about what lies ahead. Today, as we look over our HUUF meadow, we can see new flowers especially those named hope, gratitude and joy.

Blessings,  
 Susan Nodurft, Leadership Team Coordinator

## Rev. Peter Morales Elected as 8th President of Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

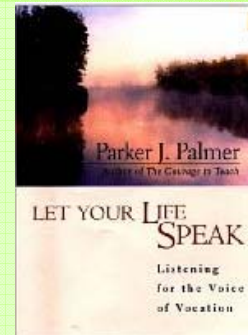
Rev. Peter Morales, senior minister of Jefferson Unitarian Church in Golden, CO, was elected today to be the eighth president of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) at the Association's General Assembly (GA) in Salt Lake City. Speaking of his aspirations for Unitarian Universalism, Rev. Morales said, "I want to grow our faith, to reach all those people who are looking for non-dogmatic, liberal religious community. I look forward to working with partners in many other progressive and justice-seeking religious groups. There are tremendous issues that we'll be facing in the coming years and we're going to need one another." Rev. Morales is the first Latino leader of the UUA and succeeds Rev. William G. Sinkford who has served two four-year terms as President of the UUA. For more information about the voting process and General Assembly, see <http://www.uua.org/news/newssubmissions/144235.shtml>



## Worship News

### *Adult Religious Education*

In June, the adult religious education program held its sixth and final meeting. The classes, begun in the Spring, met from 9:45 to 10:45 in the Garden Center prior to Sunday Worship. Using Parker Palmer's well-known little book on vocation, *Let Your Life Speak*, participants shared their reflections and experiences on attempting to listen to their own "inner voices" in determining choices that led to a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives. A fall program will be announced at a later date.



### *Children's Religious Education*

There will be no Children's RE program during the summer but the program will resume in September.

## *Social Action Committee: HUUF in the Community*

### *Help "Unadoptable" Dogs at Pine Belt Animal Sanctuary*

The Social Action Committee continues to collect dog food and/or cash for the Sanctuary for "unadoptable" dogs located in Lamar county. The next time you go shopping, pick up an extra bag of dog food. Janet or Stacie will take it to the Sanctuary for you.

### *Fair Trade Coffee and Tea available For Sale*

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has partnered with Equal Exchange to buy coffee, tea and chocolate directly from farmers following the standards and principles of fair trade, insuring that low-income farmers earn a fair, living wage. These items may be purchased through HUUF's Social Action Committee on Sundays or by emailing Stacie Chandler at [stacie\\_chandler@comcast.net](mailto:stacie_chandler@comcast.net).

### *Domestic Abuse Family Shelter*

The Social Action Committee continues to collect donations for the Domestic Abuse Family Shelter. If you forgot to bring your items, it's not too late. See Janet for a list of needed items.

## *A Welcoming Fellowship: The Greeter Team*

HUUF is committed to offering a warm and welcoming fellowship to members and guests. There are two ways that you can be a part of this. You can volunteer to serve on the greeters' team. Contact Bob Buckner at [bbuc15@comcast.net](mailto:bbuc15@comcast.net). Each Sunday HUUF has one designated greeter. This person arrives between 10:30 and 10:40. She or he gives a warm welcome to every person as they arrive in the building. She or he makes sure the greeters' table is ready, watches for newcomers, and goes to them to offer a welcome, and to help them get a name tag. She or he also points out the brochures and other items available to them on the greeters' table.



The second way you can help is very important. Every member of HUFF should participate. Greet everyone you see with a warm welcome. Be friendly. If you do not know a person's name, she or he may be a guest. Ask him his name. Chat with her and determine if she is a first time guest. If so walk him or her to the greeters' table for a name tag. Introduce him or her by name to the other people you encounter. Keep an eye on him or her. Try not to let him or her become isolated. Remember when you were a first time guest, and treat him or her the way you would like to be treated.

### *'State' of HUUF's Fellowship*

On June 28, 2009, Susan Nodurft gave a brief 'state of the fellowship' address. She described the new leadership model, moving from a formal committee and committee chair structure, to a two-team model that focuses on worship and stewardship. She also explained our financial needs for the future. This is the time of year when members make their pledge to support HUUF, both financially and through their volunteer efforts. We have regular members who pledge to support the work of our fellowship and if just a few people more decide to commit and a few more commit to increase their pledges slightly we will be in much better shape. As you consider what you can give, think about the value HUUF serves in your life—a caring community within a group of like-minded people? An opportunity to express your spirituality? Your gifts are essential to HUUF and can be financial and/or a commitment to volunteer service. As a lay-led community, our volunteers are vital to the wellness of our community. Members can expect to receive a pledge letter in the mail along with a stamped self-addressed envelope to return the pledge form. Pledge forms will also be available at the services for any who wish to contribute.

### *Why Theology Matters*

In these days of advanced science and technology, in our mostly secular world, the questions and concerns of theology may seem pointless and even arcane. On Sunday June 7, Rev. Tess Baumberger preached at Unity Church of North Easton, MA about why theology matters through telling the story of a fifth century Irish man most people have never heard of, by the name of Pelagius. Pelagius taught that heaven's gates are open to people of all religions who live good, kind, and upright lives. Universalism – the idea that all people will go to heaven – is one root of Unitarian Universalism, and so we count Pelagius as one of our religious ancestors.

And what of our own internal lives? Given that Pelagius taught that we carry the mark of the Creator – what he called natural grace or natural sanctity — how might our self-esteem be affected? Would we be different if we grew up in a religious world that was Pelagian and we meditated on the goodness of creation? Given that he taught that it was possible for us to live blameless and upright lives because we are made in that image, would more people strive for that sort of perfection? Would we follow his injunction to balance outward acts of goodness with inward spiritual strength? Theology matters because it shapes how we view each other, our selves and our world, whether we know it or not. It is part of our culture and who we are, and if Pelagius had prevailed all those centuries ago, I think we would see things see things differently and it's possible our world would be a better place. *Excerpted from:* <http://www.wickedlocal.com/norton/news/lifestyle/columnists/x862902691/COLUMN-Why-theology-matters>



#### *Lilian Hill weds Alan Williams*

Several HUUF members attended the wedding of Lilian Hill to Alan Williams on June 6, 2009. The bride is a HUUF member who is active on the leadership team. The wedding was held in the Fellowship Hall of Main Street Methodist



Church and the reception was held immediately after. The bride was delighted that her mother, sister, and son could all come from Canada for the wedding, and the groom was pleased that friends and family came from Vicksburg and other places in Mississippi. The couple will live in Lilian's home until they find a new home together.

### *UUA O.W.L. program featured in Oprah magazine*

Pick up the July 2009 issue of Oprah's *O* magazine and you'll find that one of the articles featured on the cover is a great story all about OWL (Our Whole Lives) Sexuality Education for Adults. For those not familiar with it, OWL is a popular comprehensive sexuality-education program that the Unitarian Universalist Association published with the United Church of Christ.



Front

*HUUF T-shirts available for sale*  
Enjoy wearing a HUUF T-shirt. Made of Fair Trade Cotton, they are lovely and soft. HUUF's emblem is included on both back and front, and the background is ivory and the print is green and black. A range of sizes are available and the shirts cost \$15.00.



Back

## *From the Midsouth District:*

### *Greetings from Newly Elected UUA Trustee Nancy Bartlett*

Mid-summer greetings to the Mid-South District! As your new UUA Trustee from the MSD, I am grateful for your confidence and trust in electing me to succeed Lyn Conley in this position. Lyn provided exemplary service to our district and the denomination in her eight years as trustee, not only fulfilling her demanding assignments on the UUA Board, but also attending meetings of the MSD Board and many, many gatherings and events throughout our district. I look forward to similar opportunities as we work together to strengthen our congregations and our connections with each other.

My term as trustee began at General Assembly in Salt Lake City, but the UUA Board warmly embraced me with assignments and conference calls almost immediately following my election in early May! Of particular interest to you is my assignment to the Linkage and Accountability Working Group, which is exploring and implementing ways the UUA Board can listen. Really listen. And really listen really well. We need to know our congregations and understand your visions for yourselves and our Association. We need to know what works well for you and where you struggle. So I need to know you and I need to listen to you. Let us all look for opportunities to make that happen.

### *How Religion is Shaping Our Civic and Political Lives*

This book, being written by Robert Putnam and David Campbell, both experts on American civic life, will highlight the fact that religious Americans are more socially and civically engaged. Irrespective of the content of the faith, being part of a community is the central facet of how religion affects our lives. In a presentation outlining the research undergirding the book, the authors made the point that the politicization by the religious right has had a negative effect. In fact it has prevented dialogue and alienated people. Many young people, in particular, have concluded that if this is religion, it's not for them. "In the diverse, fluid market of American religion there may be a demand . . . For grace, hope and reconciliation—for a message of compassion and healing that appeals to people of every political background" (Michael Gerson, Washington Post, May 8, 2009). Based on this article in the Washington Post, our own Tommie Hildman concluded that Unitarian Universalists may fit this need and that we need to be more public about who we are and what our principles are. Particularly, we need to reach out to the young and let them know that we are an open community. HUUF is a welcoming community that responsibly searches for truth and meaning and respects the inherent worth and dignity of each person.



### *Loaning 'Library' at HUUF*

These titles are available at HUUF for borrowing. Political books donated by Tommie Hildman.

- All the King's Men by Robert Penn Warren. A novel set in the 1930s, it traces the rise and fall of a fictionalized version of Huey P. Long of Louisiana.
- The Last Hurrah by Edwin O'Connor. A fascinating account of big city bosses and machine politics.
- Advise and Consent by Allen Drury. Described as a political masterpiece of power struggles and government influence, Advise and Consent won the Pulitzer Prize.
- Anything for a Vote. True tales of political hijinks in an effort to win the race.
- Secrets of US Presidents. Little-known facts of each president. A fun read.
- State of Denial by Bob Woodward. An expose' of George Bush's tactics written by the newspaper reporter of Watergate fame.
- World's Religions
- Fundamentalism and Society
- Fundamentalism and the State
- Fundamentalism Observed
- The Protestant Reformation
- Mahatma Gandhi - Peace
- Magazines: *Science News, Science and Spirituality, National Geographic, & UU World*

## The Back Page Book Review: This is Water

Anyone looking for some summer reading to help pass the slow, broiling hot (and now parching dry) months might consider something a little different this year; a collegiate commencement address. After you've finished your groan, consider that some speakers have used this important event to say something meaningful and challenging, rather than the bland speech-in-a-can that we've all had to suffer through. I'm certain that after reading David Foster Wallace's "This Is Water," you will feel deeply impacted and introspective. It may even change the way you live your life.

David Foster Wallace is a widely acclaimed author of essays, short stories and novels, one of which earned him a spot on Time Magazine's list of All-Time 100 Greatest Novels. In 2005 he gave a public talk on his views on life, during a commencement address given at Kenyon College. Widely available online, the speech is now available in book form.

As UU's, you may have contemplated the way many Americans travel through their comfortable, prosperous adult lives so unconsciously. We go to work, buy some stuff, chase social status, entertain ourselves, and then do it all over again. For many this becomes a mind-numbing routine that can affect an entire society. How do we get ourselves out of the foreground of our thoughts and examine what our brief life really has to offer?

The speech showcases Wallace's electric intellect as well as his grace in attention to others. He teaches us not only how to think, but what to think about. After his recent death, the speech took on new meaning and was reprinted in *The Wall Street Journal* and the *London Times*, commented on endlessly in blogs, and emailed from friend to friend. The book format of "This Is Water" is worth the modest price as compared to the free internet version, as each page of the book contains one sentence. This medium helps to slow the reader down and absorb each thought before continuing, a tactic that can help the multi-tasking, a.d.d.-afflicted American to reflect on its important message. It also makes for a perfect gift, and not just for the new graduate but for anyone interested in probing the challenges of daily living and seeking renewal.

**This Is Water** Some  
Thoughts, Delivered on a Significant  
Occasion, about Living a Compassionate  
Life **David Foster Wallace**



—Chris Werle

### HUUF Leadership

- Consists of a Worship Team and Stewardship Team, both led by Susan Nodurft
- Contact Lilian Hill regarding the Newsletter at [lilian.hill@usm.edu](mailto:lilian.hill@usm.edu)

### HUUF Mission

HUUF is a welcoming community that responsibly searches for truth and meaning and respects the inherent worth and dignity of each person. We welcome diversity of age, sexual orientation, race, gender identity, abilities and theology.

## Hattiesburg Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

*A member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association*

***A safe, welcoming atmosphere for spiritual exploration.***

Services are held each Sunday at 11:00 am in the Hattiesburg Area Garden Center located at 209 N. Hutchinson Avenue, just south of Hattiesburg High School.

[www.huuf.us](http://www.huuf.us)