

SERMON TOPICS:

- January 5—Fire Communion
- January 12—My Quest for Justice
- January 19—Martin Luther King, Jr.
- January 26—TBA

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Sermon Topics	2
Why I Do What I Do, continued	2
Book Club	3
Tales from the Doorway	3-4
Homeopathy Workshop	4
Comic Relief	5
Upcoming Events	5

Why I Do What I Do by James Croft

People often ask me what I do. It's a difficult question to answer: most people look at you funny when you say you're a "Humanist activist". Sometimes I don't even want to begin the discussion, and say something like "I speak on progressive political issues". Sometimes I even feel a little uneasy or embarrassed about how I spend my time. But here I want to say a little about *why* I do it: why I have dedicated so much time and so many tears to a movement as small and, at times, dissatisfying as Humanism freethought.

Because, let's be honest: movement freethought is tiny. *Tiny*. Unitarian Universalists frequently wring their hands that their movement is small and dying, and they are *way bigger* than we are. And our movement is frequently dysfunctional: there is no other word for a movement which gets wracked with bitter debates over things like feminism, and which sometimes seems to relish tearing apart fellow free-thinkers even more than it enjoys casting aspersions on the religious (a trend which, itself, often goes too far). As a movement we have our own little dogmas and blind-spots, and

movement leaders and organizations often act in ways which fail to uphold the high values we claim to espouse. And we far too often seem incapable of getting the most basic things done, so prone are we to magnifying minute differences in opinion to epic proportions.

This can get dispiriting. At the risk of sounding like a self-aggrandizing wazzock, I want to achieve something with my life. I've been extraordinarily privileged to have developed some very valuable skills— a keen mind, an excellent education, a facility with words, the ability to speak in public—which might, if put in the service of a worthwhile social movement, do some good. I'm about to graduate from my doctoral program and I don't want to dedicate the early part of my career to a movement which is going nowhere— and certainly not one which is going in the wrong direction. I do not want to look back ten years from now and feel I have wasted my thirties on freethought, skepticism, and Humanism. There have been times—more frequent recently than ever— when I have considered giving up on Humanism and joining some other social movement—

perhaps even training as a Unitarian Universalist minister (Heresy!).

But, however dispirited and burnt out I sometimes feel, something keeps me coming back to Humanism, and it is simply this: Humanism represents the highest human values in a way unmatched by any other social movement or lifstance. No other movement can claim so proudly that they put the highest human values right at the center of their worldview, unadulterated. In Humanism there is nothing valued above the dignity of persons, the primacy of reason, and the necessity of hope for the future. Humanism represents the single best hope for the future of our species: given the potential threat of climate change it may be that if our species *has* a future at all could be dependent on how Humanistic a world we create.

The promise of Humanism, and of a Humanist movement, is the promise of a cultural movement of people unwilling to let public policy be decided on the basis of prejudice and ignorance. It is the promise of a public dedicated to seeking the good of all, including prisoners and addicts and outcasts. It is



Sermon Topics

January 5—Tom Moor will lead us in our annual new year **Fire Communion**.

January 12—Justin Michael will speak on **My Quest for Justice**. Ed Howard worship leader.

January 19—Bill Gupton returns to preach on **Martin Luther King, Jr.** Potluck following service.

January 26—**To Be Announced**. Potluck following service.

Why I Do What I Do by James Croft, continued

*“Humanism promises nothing less than the transformation of the human condition”
-James Croft*

the promise of financial security and decent healthcare for all people. It is the promise of a compassionate and thoughtful populace unwilling to succumb to prejudice or fear. It is the promise of science and education taking precedence over warfare and business. It is the promise of governments responsive to the will of their people, which respect their fundamental rights. It is the promise of international cooperation over competition, for the betterment of the entire world. Humanism promises nothing less than the transformation of the human condition.

I am reminded of the promise of Humanism when I see campaigns by Humanists in India working to build a more humane society. I am reminded of this promise when I see Humanist organizations like the American Ethical Union recognize those who have taken diffi-

cult stands for love and justice and great risk to their own lives. Most of all, I am reminded of the promise of Humanism every time I meet passionate student leaders like those I met this weekend at the Center for Inquiry’s student leadership in Buffalo, NY—those students re-
-inspire me, reminding me that there is a future to our movement, and that it is getting *brighter*.

For if our movement often fails to reach and reflect its high values, *at least it is striving to reach higher than most*. While our ruthlessly self-critical nature may make it seem our movement is more fractious than others, it reflects our commitment to continually striving to better ourselves and examine our own assumptions. If we fight about feminism it is because (at least some of us) *care about women*, and are open to difficult questions about how

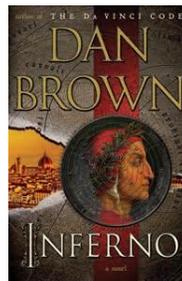
we might change a sexist culture. If we fight about religion it is because *we care about the baleful effect many religions frequently have on people’s lives*, and want to liberate those people. I would rather be part of a movement which tears itself apart over social justice than one which is blind to the demands of social justice entirely—like so many social movements out there.

This is why I do what I do. This is why I think, despite the current weakness and smallness of the current Humanist movement, there is no project more important than its development and empowerment. I look forward to a time when I can say proudly, “I am a Humanist activist”, and everyone will know what I mean. Until that time, I keep fighting. Please keep fighting with me—for the transformation of humankind.

UUCE Book Club

The next meeting is Thursday, January 30 from 11:30am until 1:00pm. Bring your lunch to eat while we discuss this month's book, *Inferno* by Dan Brown. All members and friends are welcome!

List of upcoming books and discussion can be found at uucebookclub.wordpress.com. Contact Tina Sizemore for more info.



Tales from the Doorway by Hardin Rathgeber

As I look out over our congregation I see an aging population with little infusion of young blood. But I believe that we can turn things around. At times we have attracted several young people who have consequently drifted off elsewhere.

We need to improve our treatment of visitors. First we need to accept that we need the young more than they need us. Many of them seem to be members of the LGBT community and thus have very important personal issues to address. They seem to want a place where they feel accepted, welcomed, and provided a safe haven from what I characterize as the "Buckle on the Bible Belt." They are seeking the social support that blacks have long received from their churches.

I have been a greeter for several years and on Sunday, December 15, I met two couples of college students: Justin1/Brittney (definitely a couple) and Justin2/Benn (maybe a couple). During Joys and Sorrows, Justin2 got up and said how dismayed

he was over the lack of acceptance he has received regarding his personal choices—I perceived that as a cry for help. I know we have at least one lesbian couple and one gay couple who attend fairly regularly—four people. I wonder how many of those four sought Justin 2 after service. I think probably none. If I am correct, this was a tremendous wasted opportunity. I spent a lot of time with each couple before the service. Then after the service I deliberately sought out each couple and gave them a low key sales pitch emphasizing the potluck on the next Sunday with the Newcomers' table and the church dinner of Christmas Day. (Usually a free meal and congenial companionship will attract college students).

More thoughts on welcoming:

1. First impressions are always primary in today's world. There may not be a second chance to make a good impression.
2. Reduce the initial empha-

sis on getting visitors to sign up for more information about us and the UUA. The process can be quite lengthy particularly if there are 2 or 3 visitors queued up as I have often observed. Young visitors already have enough information to bring them in the first time. We do not want them to feel like they are standing in line at the old BMV. Our goal should be to get them to want to return, and then we can solicit them to determine their interest in further information. Too many of our visitors are one and done.

3. The first personal contact they have is usually with the front door greeter. That is not enough—we need more sustained contact throughout their entire visit: initially, during service, afterwards at the coffee hour or potluck and before they leave. If you see a visitor, introduce yourself, sit with them during service, and talk to them after service. Mention the

Tales from the Doorway by Hardin Rathgeber, continued

- coffee hour, the next potluck, and any special church dinners. Focus on the social interaction in these events.
- When people start to leave, seek out the visitor and indicate how pleased you were to see them. Make them feel genuinely welcome in our church. Hillside Heights General Baptist Church in Bowling Green, KY has the practice of making visitors feel welcome down to a science. I suggest a couple of our members visit the church for a firsthand look.
 - Treat every visitor as special.
 - Never be condescending to a visitor because of dress,

behavior, etc.

Greeters:

- Be sure to mention open seating, the coffee, and sweets after service, the next potluck with the newcomers' table, and any special social gatherings.
- After service seek them out and express your appreciation of their attendance.

Other Congregation Members:

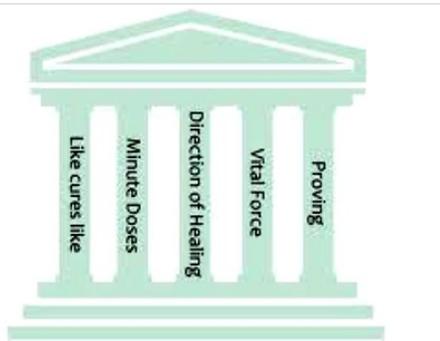
- If you see a member talking to a newcomer do not interrupt unless the church is on fire! Any conversation you wish to have with the member can wait until they finish talking to the visitor.
- After that conversation is complete, introduce your-

self to the visitor and engage in conversation with them wherever it may go.

Welcoming Table Additions:

- Provide each visitor with a wallet size fanfold with out seven principles.
- Provide each visitor with a detailed list including dates and times of all church activities: these lists need to be updated every month.
- Provide name tags (have at least 3 markers at the table in case we have several new people come in at once.)

We want to entice the visitor to come back so we need to reinforce our welcoming attitude.



Homeopathy: Immune Support for Today's Hectic Pace

With

Kay Hummel HHP, AADP, CR

Series Workshop dates: Thursday, Jan. 23rd and Thursday, Feb. 13th from 6 to 8:30 pm

@

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Evansville, 2910 E. Morgan Avenue

Homeopathy is my first love in the field of the Healing Arts and what is termed as "Energy Medicine". I use regularly for my own health and balance. I'm excited to share my experience and insights to promote personal health and wellbeing by utilizing Homeopathic Remedies. It is not a diet or nutrition program, it is a form of medicine to support healing processes as well as provided daily support for health and wellness. Safe for all ages, regulated by the FDA and utilized around the world. What's in store for you...?

- The history and schools of thought which led to the development*
- Understanding how it complements the innate healing wisdom of the body*
- The different "types" of prescriptions and how the body utilizes them*
- The home medicine cabinet & how to work with Self-help when you feel a "bug" coming*
- The Bach Flower Essences for emotional support made simple*

Pre-registration via PayPal or personal check* \$75 includes materials/\$80 at the door

*Just call: [812-483-7195](tel:812-483-7195) or e-mail: n2wellness@live.com : SUBJECT LINE: Homeopathy for Health

Board of Directors:

President	Ed Howard
President Elect	Bev Tonso
Secretary	David Fentress
Secretary Elect	Tina Sizemore
Treasurer	Chris Norrington
Treasurer Elect	Mollie Pharo
Director	Suzanne Perrey
Director	Jasmine Sturgill
RE Director	Ashley Perkins

Other Volunteers:

Youth Leader	Mary Helen Weldy
Building and Grounds	John Schaeffer
Stewardship	John Schaeffer
Communications	Chris Norrington
Social Justice	Pam Thoren
Congregational Life	Bev Tonso
Worship Associates	Tom Moor
Newsletter Editor	Ed Howard
	uceeditor@hotmail.com
Webmaster	Ashley Perkins
Website	www.uuevansville.org



**Unitarian Universalist
Church of Evansville**

2910 East Morgan Avenue
Evansville, IN 47711
812-474-1704

**Service on Sundays at 10:00 AM
Youth RE on Sundays at 10:30 AM**



Comic Relief:
December 22nd service?

Upcoming Events & Activities

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| Friday, January 3: 7pm Drum Circle | Monday, January 13: 6pm Down to Earth meeting | Wednesday, January 22: 6:30pm Congregational Life Committee meeting |
| Sunday, January 5: 10am Fire Communion | Tuesday, January 14: 7pm Pagan Study Group | Thursday, January 23: 6pm Homeopathy Workshop with Kay Hummel; registration required |
| 5pm Freedom Indiana phone bank | Friday, January 17: 3:30pm United Caring Shelter Spaghetti Dinner | Sunday, January 26: 10am Service. Potluck following service |
| Monday, January 6: 6pm Down to Earth meeting | 7pm Drum Circle | 3pm Dances of Universal Peace |
| 7pm Board meeting | Sunday, January 19: 10am Martin Luther King, Jr. Potluck following service | Monday, January 27: 6pm Down to Earth meeting |
| Tuesday, January 7: 7pm Pagan Study Group | Monday, January 20: 6pm Down to Earth meeting | Tuesday, January 28: 7pm Pagan Study Group |
| Sunday, January 12: 10am My Quest for Justice | Tuesday, January 21: 7pm Pagan Study Group | Thursday, January 30: 11:30am Brown Bag Book Club |
| 11:30am Religious Exploration Committee meeting | | |