



Common Ground

Social Justice Newsletter UU Church Bloomington In

Simple Gifts

A Concert for Hard Times

A Benefit for **Hoosier Hills Food Bank**

Janice Bagwell, Soprano
John Clodfelter, Piano
Sally Todd, Piano

Saturday, January 10, 2009-7:30pm
Unitarian Universalist Church

Music of America through the centuries

Including: Native American Chants, Shaker

Hymns, Stephen Foster, MacDowell, Ives, Hoagy

Carmichael, Cage, Copland, Bernstein and others

Donations of food or money for the
Hoosier Hills Good Bank are suggested

small decisions on their own. Also, jobs are hard to come by if you have a record, and yet these individuals are almost always required to pay for probation and other programs when they are released. You can help. **Shalom Center provides job training**, job finding, socialization skills, etc. Contact Norman Horrar to offer assistance: 876-3383, nhorror@area10agency.org.

—**Game Night or Movie Night** will provide alternatives to the “same old, same old” for those who have been incarcerated. These folks need to find new ways to relate with one another and the community.

You may want to join us! volunteernewleaf@aol.com

—**New Leaf/New Life** has permission to use the atrium of the building next door to the Justice Building to start a Sunday afternoon gathering place for families who are waiting—sometimes for hours—to visit their loved ones in jail. We plan to provide crafts, story time, and games for the children.

—**New Jail—To Be or Not to Be—That Is the Question!** DMC (Decarcerate in Monroe County) wants to provide an educational, interactive forum on the feasibility and advisability of building a new jail and/or youth facility in Monroe County. If we put our money into rehab instead of brick and mortar, will we even need a larger facility?—perhaps we could rehab the need right out of existence!

—*Glenda Breeden, Friends of Prisoners Task Force*

Help in New Orleans March 14-20th Volunteers Needed

We seek volunteers and contributions for another trip during spring break, March 14-20, 2009. Please contact David Parkhurst at 333-2945, or by e-mail, nola.dfp@comcast.net.

Friends of Prisoners Task Force News

—Our UU Choir and IU’s African American Choral Ensemble will be travelling to the Putnamville and Wabash Valley Correctional Facilities on January 17th to present our annual MLK Day concert. We are grateful to the City’s Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Celebration Commission for awarding us a \$250 grant to help fund the trip. You can help with this effort on **January 11th—buy a seat on the bus** to secure this musical “day on—not a day off” tradition.

—One of the main reasons that recidivism is so high is that jails/prisons teach helplessness and hopelessness. People who are incarcerated are not free to make even

Green Sanctuary Task Force: Caring for our Earth



The Green Sanctuary Task Force (GSTF) would like to thank those who support our activities through the purchase of coffee, teas, chocolate and compact fluorescent light bulbs. Most of the products at our stand are purchased through the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) Coffee Project which purchases in bulk for over 500 congregations, allowing us to buy fair trade products at competitive prices, passing on the savings to you, and fundraising in the process.

These funds are spent on projects and activities that increase sustainability and addresses climate change. In 2008:

- We participated in and donated \$250 toward a Martin Luther King Day light bulb exchange, providing CFL’s to low-income individuals in our community.
- We funded scholarships for the Earth Celebrational, All Congrega-

tional, Intergenerational UU Retreat.

- In July we paid Sherlock Homes \$600 to do an in depth energy audit of the church. Through this audit we have developed a list of projects that will improve the energy efficiency of the church, a number of which are small and can be accomplished with volunteer help and a little bit of money. The audit will also help inform decisions as the Green Spaces Initiative develops plans for the courtyard and entryway.

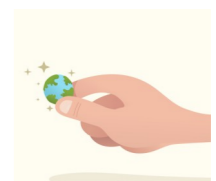


We have a new low flush toilet!

- In September the GSTF and the Building Committee purchased and installed a dual flush toilet in the accessible bathroom. In November we supported the Simply Healthy Fair that took place at the church.

- With your help through purchases at the Coffee Table, the GSTF was

The next Social Justice Coordination Circle meeting is Feb. 1st, 7pm in the library



able to provide over \$1,500 in support for projects in the church and our community that further the mission of the GSTF. The benefits of these investments go far beyond Bloomington, helping to provide a fair wage and healthy work conditions to farm workers in developing countries who produce the beans and cocoa and to the UUSC and their work to help people in need around the world. –Marcia Veldman

Habitat For Humanity Task Force continues to work on builds.



The UU Habitat Task Force is organizing a group of 18 to work on Saturday, Jan. 24, installing siding, dry-wall and building the porch of a Habitat house at 3801 Valmore Ave., off of IN-45 (Second Street). This will be a great chance for a group of UUs to do a community project together, so please sign up to volunteer as soon as possible. The work will be from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., with lunch,

Simple ways to help Habitat

- Search the Internet through www.goodsearch.com. Every time you search through Good Search rather than Google or other search engines, the group of your choice receives 3 cents for each search. Find the local affiliate, listed as Habitat for Humanity-Monroe County IN.
- take your aluminum cans to J.B. Salvage or Bloomington Metal and Iron and ask them to put the money made from recycling them in the Habitat account.

snacks and drinks provided. You do not have to contribute financially to participate in this build. Please respond to Barb Berggoetz. Also there are other Saturdays in January and February that are open for volunteers.



Come hungry and Help Habitat! **Breakfast**
1/25 10:15-11:15am

Our task force is stepping up, raising funds to contribute to this build to help Habitat for Humanity. We have raised money so far by parking cars at IU football games and selling ornaments and magnets at the church bazaar. We are now planning to offer the congregation a delicious fundraising breakfast on Sunday, Jan. 25 from 10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. Our goal is to contribute at least \$3,000. So, please eat breakfast at church that day. We will be providing items, including scrambled eggs, sausage, potatoes, fruit salad, juice and breakfast baked goods. An RE class and a Chalice Circle are going to help make and/or serve the breakfast. PLEASE come hungry to church that day!

Another upcoming project is a donation day to Habitat's ReStore, a local shop that sells donated building supplies, household appliances, lighting and other items for the home to the public. So, if you have some items in your garage, basement or home that you aren't using and are suitable for selling, please hang onto them for awhile to donate them to the Re-Store. Thanks!

–Barb Berggoetz; barbberg@bluemarble.net
(812)876-6659

The Most Important Gift

The sign-up sheet for MCUM Holiday Food Baskets read at the top, “This may be the most important gift you give all year.” Here is one of many reasons why. .

HELP FEED



A story from Monroe County United Ministries:

One of our Holiday Food Baskets went to a family of five: Mom, Dad, two teenagers and a newborn baby. Mom is on maternity leave because the baby is just several weeks old and Dad lost his job about the same time the baby was born. They applied for food stamps when Dad lost his job but because the new privatized benefits system moves so slowly, they had not yet received them. The family had little food and practically no baby supplies. When the MCUM caseworker provided them with their basket, Mom expressed amazement at the amount of food in the bags. Luckily, we also had some diapers, bottles and other baby basics to provide them as well. Although they received their “holiday basket” well before Christmas, the volume of food in those baskets will last the family some time, probably until their food stamps come through or Dad finds a new job. And they were definitely uplifted by the generosity of that basket’s donor. We all know hope is a valuable commodity that can make a huge difference in people’s lives and we know that that family had more hope when they left than when they arrived.

This year our congregation was blessed with the opportunity to repeat this and other stories like it many, many times (78). Thank you from Monroe County United Ministries and thank you from the Help Feed Our Hungry Neighbors Task Force. Never have so many baskets been donated. May this story wrap you in the warm spirit of giving throughout the season.



–Mary Blizzard, Help Feed Our Hungry Neighbors Task Force

Words from the Belly of the Beast

Phillip Stroud is a man I correspond with and visit at Wabash Valley Correctional Facility. He’s a member of the Quilt Project to which many of you have so generously contributed fabric and dollars. He’s also a new member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Larger Fellowship. Phillip turns 30 next week. I want to celebrate his birthday by sharing with you an excerpt from a letter he wrote me last week. He’s one fine human being!

“If it is possible for someone to be both terrified and fearless, that’s what I am. Most days I’m convinced that I am perfectly well but on others I feel decidedly strange. Luckily, my well days outnumber those on which I feel frightened and floating... Sometimes I feel detached from the world, detached from myself. I used to stand in front of the mirror for hours staring at my face making certain I’m still here, in a nightmare... I see, know and feel everything coming together for me...I can’t wait until I’m able to spend the holidays with my family and friends again...We gotta stay humble, keep working hard, keep doing right by everybody, network, stay dedicated, and focus on the peoples’ needs. Take care. J Peace and Love, Phillip”

—Glenda Breeden, Friends of Prisoners Task Force