

Unitattler

A Newsletter for Families
West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church

September 2008

Volume 5 Issue 1



During October, I encourage you to look for opportunities for Making Room conversations every Sunday after church, (childcare provided) and on two Tuesday nights, October 7 and October 20. There will also be several announced times that will be hosted outside the church in members' homes. I look forward to the great possibilities for creative solutions in these discussions and urge you to attend one of the gatherings.

Kathy Strawser

Director of Lifespan Faith Development

Making Room

At our church's June annual meeting, the Board of Trustees announced plans to host a congregational conversation this year about West Shore's options for making room for new members who we expect and will invite into our church community over the next several years. We all know it is better to practice advance planning, rather than reactive planning, which is too late.

The religious education program and its children and youth are at the fore of this discussion regarding use of church space and our desire to make room for more. This year, our combined third and fourth grade numbers are large enough to dictate that we split the class into two groups to ensure the kind of child/teacher ratio we believe is best. Our fifth/sixth grade World Religions class and our seventh/eighth grade Coming of Age class are so large that we will assign them Rooms D + E, and the Chapel, respectively, both spaces normally used to house mainly adult classes and meetings. This morning, I checked the sign-up sheet for new families requesting church school registration materials---ten new families, which will add up to twenty new children and youth to our roster. While I certainly agree these are great problems to have, they do require thoughtful solutions!

How can we make real our church's mission to welcome more people and continue to offer a strong RE program that maintains a relatively low student-teacher ratio? What options do we have? What input can the members of our congregation who do not have Sunday School-age children offer to address West Shore's desire to grow within our current space?

Chalice Lighters: Calling All 3rd and 4th Graders

Chalice Lighters provides an opportunity for young people in our congregation to become familiar with the key ritual and seven principles of our unique religious tradition. They will learn to take an active role in the worship service by lighting the chalice at our Sunday morning services. Throughout the preparation process, family participation is built in to encourage an intergenerational exploration of religious identity enhancing the experience for young people.

Junior Choir Invitation

Junior Choir will start at 9:30, Sunday, September 14, in the Chapel. Come to sing, come to make friends, come to celebrate with doughnut holes and juice! The group makes its church year debut in the sanctuary on Sunday, September 28. Children and youth, Grades 1 - 8, are most welcome!



Parents of 2nd Graders: *Spirit Play* Comes to West Shore

Spirit Play, a UU curriculum and teaching model based on the Montessori model will be offered to second graders this fall in our Sunday School program. The curriculum is story-based and teaches UU values, history and timeless stories. Each lesson includes a coming together time, story, wondering questions, work time, feast and goodbye time. Every lesson is taught with manipulatives and every work time includes a good array of choices for each child.

The two most important keys are the environment and the teacher. The teacher is the link between the children and the materials, but remains secondary to the children themselves, and creates an atmosphere of peace and comfort in the classroom. This class offers children a chance to slow down enough to learn how to be still, and how to listen to their inner lives.

Kathy Strawser and **Chris Porochonski** are trained *Spirit Play* instructors. Chris will be the class's main storyteller and **Edyta Dudzik** will initially function as the class's aide. We look forward to the community that will evolve in this class and the influence it may have on the structure of future Sunday School classes.

West Shore's All-Church Fire Drill - Sunday, October 5

Last fall, our first ever all-church fire drill proved we could quickly and calmly exit the church in under three minutes. To ensure that speed and manner, the ministers and staff have agreed to an annual fire drill. We will use the same procedure as last year to empty the building at 11:30. The religious education volunteers, ushers, staff and ministers have all received recent training for the procedure, and we will apply what we learned from last year's drill to ensure the safest exit for all. Please remember that all children and youth will exit with their church school teachers and will be waiting for parents to pick them up behind the church after the drill.

For me, this fire drill is just another important aspect of being proactive about safety. I welcome

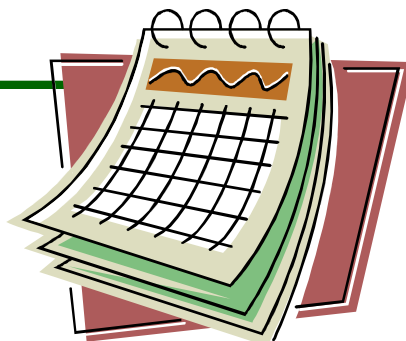
your concerns and suggestions to ensure the success of this important safety measure for our church community, and I encourage your understanding and full participation in the drill.



Four Shillings Short: September 21 7:00-9:30 p.m. Celtic, Folk & World Music for The Entire Family!

West Shore welcomes Four Shillings Short to Uncle Waldo's Coffee House for an evening of music that's perfect for all ages. This husband and wife duo play ancient and modern instruments, combining traditional and contemporary tunes. *Rock'N'Reel* magazine calls Aodh Og O Tumama and Christy Martin performers of "alternative neo-Celtic folk of the first order." Check them out at www.fourshillingshort.com.

Tickets for Adults are \$10.00. At the request of the performers, children under 18 will be FREE. Tickets are available at the church or will-call by phone 440-333-2255.



September Calendar for RE Families

Sunday, September 14

9:30 Junior Choir Rehearsal
10:30 Teacher Dedication (Sanctuary)
First Sunday School: Registration forms due

Sunday, September 21

9:30 Junior Choir Rehearsal
10:30 Sunday School
7:00 Four Shillings Short: Celtic, Folk and World Music

Sunday, September 28

9:30 Junior Choir Rehearsal
10:30 Sunday School
(start in the Sanctuary to hear Junior Choir)

- Sunday School time is 10:30-11:45, unless announced otherwise
- Snacks or donations for snacks from RE families are always appreciated!

Staff contacts for events/opportunities in *Unitattler*

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