



*In this issue:*

[President's message](#) 2

[Bi-monthly leadership council forming](#) 2

[Ministry with Children and Youth News](#) 3

[Back \(from a "Forced sabbatical"\)](#) 4

[Service Schedule](#) 4

## Why Perform the Messiah at UUMAN?

*Note: Handel's Messiah will be performed on Dec. 1, at 8pm.*

Artistic endeavor is timeless, ageless, ever inspirational. It transcends the many barriers that have and continue to separate us from each other. Fashions change and generations come and go but great artistic expressions remain to inspire mankind to reach for the highest and best that is within each of us.

Handel's Messiah is one such work of art that has inspired us for more than 250 years. It has certainly withstood the test of time. Put simply, Messiah has become the world's most popular choral work. Certainly the most often performed. Messiah, particularly in Great Britain and America, has become a musical institution. Literally hundreds (maybe even thousands) of choral groups gather annually to present this work as an expression of their love for some of the most sublime music ever written. This masterpiece, more than any other, brings people together.

*(continued on pg 2)*

## Notes from the Interim

Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, President of our Unitarian Universalist Seminary, Starr King School for the Ministry, tells a story about one of her first pastoral visits as a very young Methodist minister. She visited a man on his death bed who asked her to come to speak to him. Fearing that she would be asked to absolve him from some terrible thing he'd done or ask her a question about the afterlife she couldn't answer...she stepped into his bedroom in the small worn trailer where he'd lived for much of his life. As she approached his bed, his eyes lit up. "I'm so glad you're here," he said. "I've got something important to tell you." Anxiously she stepped forward as he reached for her hand. Grasping it he said, "This is something you'll need to know for your ministry." And then with great urgency he said, looking deep into her eyes, "In the end, all there is, is gratitude." This knowledge was the gift he offered her so that she might understand what is important in life, so that she could minister with open eyes.

In this season of Thanksgiving, our focus is on family and food. It isn't always possible to be grateful for family. Many of us have so much unresolved history that stands like, not an elephant, but a mastodon in our midst as we talk politely about how we've been and what our kids or grandkids are up to these days. Sometimes we feel dread during the holidays of going through another family gathering where resentments, old wounds, fears, and unspoken sorrows crowd our subconscious begging for air. In some families all the old wounds are brought out at the holidays and heated arguments are replayed with no resolution. A beautiful feast of food is offered with love and care, and yet often our souls leave empty and unnourished or even wounded. How can we change this for ourselves?

What if this time, just this once, we intentionally decide to create a new experience for ourselves? What if we visualize a new openness in ourselves to our family, even to one member of our family? When we are with them this holiday season, perhaps we can make it our task to find one new thing in each person...something we hadn't seen before, something we never thought to ask about. Bring up a new topic of conversation, something that will bring out a facet of our parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings, that is new for us to talk with them about. What questions could you ask that would deepen the conversation? What admission could you make that would free you from an unnecessary fear and encourage openness in the other? If we step out of the family pattern, everyone has to shift because we all have to play our parts for the old pattern to exist. Take the leap this year.

Gratitude can't always be felt under the burden of secrets, resentments, disappointments and unresolved conflict. Let's not wait until our deathbeds for this all to fall away. Let's start now to open ourselves to what our families do have to offer and what we can bring to them.

Blessings of courage and joy to you this Thanksgiving. I am deeply grateful for all of you.

—Frieda Gillespie  
Interim minister, UUMAN



## Those Who Can

*Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer.* -- Anonymous

At UUMAN, we are fortunate to have a cadre of talented, committed volunteers who keep our community running. From highly visible roles such as chairing the Worship Associates (Thanks Suzanne!) or coordinating the Rummage Sale (Thanks Carolyn!) to the unknown volunteer who swept the leaves off the sidewalk last week (Thank you!), these are the people who are getting the most depth from their UUMAN membership.

That's right – *getting* the most. As with all relationships, getting more and giving more are intertwined. In interpersonal relationships, if someone is willing to get in the boat and row with you (and vice versa), we say the relationship has depth.

You might think that this is going to be an appeal for volunteers. It is, but not simply to give more time and energy where UUMAN needs it. It is an appeal to give time and energy where *you* need it. Giving time and energy to UUMAN benefits the community most, when you are doing something that really floats your boat.

Awhile back, a member of the board resigned from the board. This was someone who found her role to be a drain on her time and energy. It was a burden and it was making her unhappy. Afterward, she began putting *more* time and energy into UUMAN – and getting more satisfaction from it. She found the right role, benefiting both herself and UUMAN, and deepening her relationship with UUMAN.

If you are one of our volunteers, firstly, a big thank you! If what you are doing for UUMAN does not feed you, let's find a role that does. If you are not volunteering, or you are volunteering but feel you could do more, please talk with Frieda, a committee chair, or a member of the board about the kinds of things that feel satisfying to you, and about your interests and talents. We have an abundance of roles to fill, both ongoing and transition-related.

As we go through our 2-year transition to a new settled minister, new positions will come open and old roles will change. Take advantage of the opportunity to find a niche that fills *your* needs and a need at UUMAN!

—Kevin Kleinfelter

### Bi-Monthly Leadership Circle Forms

To increase communication among leadership and to support and develop current and new leadership, the Committee on Ministry is sponsoring a bi-monthly Leadership Circle. This is also intended to give Frieda an opportunity to address and interact with leadership on a regular basis.

The first Leadership Circle is Sunday November 11<sup>th</sup>, from 12:20-2pm. Lunch will be served after Service with donations requested to cover the cost.

Formal and informal leaders are invited to attend as well as those interested in, or curious about, leadership. Forthcoming meetings Leadership Circle will take place on the second Sunday of the month (when Frieda will be here), the odd months (Jan, March, May, July, Sept, Nov) after Service.

Please sign up on Fellowship Hall poster so we know how much lunch we will need to provide.

Any questions, contact: Dave Hudson, Janet Lacey, Bob Mihalik or Frieda.

### The Messiah? At UUMAN? *(cont. from page 1)*

People normally divided by religion, politics, nationality, and social status seem to put aside their differences in order to share in the majesty of this great work. For generations, countless lives have been lifted and inspired, if even for just a few precious hours, by the soaring melodies and powerful text of this masterpiece. Written in just 23 days between August 22<sup>nd</sup> and September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1741, Messiah is the 11<sup>th</sup> of Handel's 23 oratorios. The text was selected and arranged from the Bible by Charles Jennens. It was first performed in Dublin Ireland on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1742 to an enthusiastic overflow audience at Neal's new Music Hall on Fishamble Street. This performance was given as a benefit for three local charities and was considered one of the greatest artistic triumphs of Handel's life. In England, however, it took almost eight years for Messiah to be generally accepted as a great work of art. Handel was primarily an opera composer who intended his oratorios to be more theatrical than concert or religiously oriented. In fact, the English clergy were initially aghast "at the sacrilege of converting the life and passion of Christ into a theatrical entertainment." Still, from 1750 until his death in 1759, Handel gave annual performances of Messiah for the benefit of England's Foundling Hospital.

Our UUMAN performance of Messiah is in keeping with the long tradition of presenting this work as an expression of respect for, and love of, great artistic endeavor. By inviting the community to join in this performance as either performers or audience, we are rising above any differences that separate us from our neighbors and joining voices and spirits as we once again experience the transformative power of great music. Messiah stands as a monument to our human quest for truth and beauty. Through performance, this great work needs us to bring it to life. Through experiencing this performance, we need Messiah to bring transcendent beauty to our lives.

—Randy Wilbur



## Ministry with Children & Youth

### *A note from our Interim RE Coordinator...*

As I near the end of my tenure as Interim RE Coordinator, I would like to share with you some of the conflicting emotions I am feeling. The first is relief. The MCY is one of the largest programs of UUMAN, and it takes a lot of coordination and many volunteers to make it work. With only 15 hours a week to work with the program (and 18-month-old Joel home with me all day), I had to plan, prioritize, and pray for the best. Sometimes I worried that I had not relieved the MCY Council members (volunteers, naturally) of enough work in a given week. Other times I worried about the length of time it would take to find a childcare worker to replace Jainee in the preschool room—and the cost of hiring temporary childcare workers to fill the position. Obviously, there is a lot that goes on in ensuring that the MCY runs smoothly, and knowing the “buck stopped” with me caused me to worry about the program as a parent worries about a child (well, almost—I don’t think anything quite compares to the potential I have to worry about my children).

I also feel sadness. Doing this work gave me the opportunity to work very intensely with several of our wonderful people at UUMAN. I have enough going on at UUMAN (Choir and Membership Committee to name two) and at home that I know I can’t remain on the MCY Council. So, I will have to say goodbye to the Council at the end of the month. I will, indeed, miss working so intensely with the MCY program.

Next, I feel gratitude. Sharing important work often engenders intimacy, and this was certainly true of my experience working the various MCY volunteers. I’ve gotten to know several people involved in the MCY a lot better in a short amount of time. I have made some of my closest friends at UUMAN by serving with them on committees, so I am grateful for having had the unexpected opportunity to deepen my connections with the members of the MCY Council and with other MCY volunteers.

Finally, I feel the joy of having truly experienced what it means to be part of a *beloved community*. As I assumed accountability for the functioning of the MCY during Toniann’s absence, I was struck by the number of people who approached me to thank me for stepping up to do the work, to offer support (knowing that I have two young children), or simply to wish me well in my new position. I also heard things that people had said about me to others—and they were good things! (Isn’t it so often the case that we only hear the not-so-nice things people say about us?) At the risk of sounding trite, I must tell you that I have felt enveloped by all that is good at UUMAN. And that made all the difference.

—Fondly, Elizabeth Rohan

### MCY CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

#### NOVEMBER 2007

Nov 9-11 – MSD YAC ‘CONcert’

Nov 16-18 – Jr Youth Mountain Con

Nov 18 – Thanksgiving IGS

Nov 18 – MCY Council Meeting  
(12-2pm) DH

Nov 25 – RE Winter ‘Intersession’ begins

Nov 30-Dec 2 – Sr Youth Mountain Con



Let’s go to the mountain!

*UUMAN Youth can register NOW for this year’s Fall CON’s at*

#### The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center in Highlands, NC.

*Please return your complete registration packet & fee to Toniann by the date below;*

**November 16-18<sup>th</sup>** – Jr Youth Con  
(registration deadline Wed. 10/31/07)

**Nov 30<sup>th</sup> – Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>** – Sr Youth Con  
(registration deadline Sun. 11/11/07)



Adult volunteers to participate in UUMAN’s

**HOLIDAY PAGEANT**

*Randy Blasch & Merri Beth Stephens, coordinators*

### CONTACT TONIANN

Office Hours: **Wed. 11.30a-3.30p, Fri. 10-2pm, Sun. 9.30a-2.30p**

Office Telephone: **(770) 992-3949**

Email: **dtzjread@comcast.net**

### Mid South District YAC

## Concert

November 9-11  
(Birmingham, AL)

**A music themed CON for Sr Youth grades 9-12!**

*See Toniann for details & registration*



**UUMANTIMES** is the monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Metro Atlanta North Congregation.

We're online!

at:

[www.uuman.org](http://www.uuman.org)



UUMAN  
11420 Crabapple Road  
Roswell, GA 30075

Get up-to-date information!  
Sign up now and  
join UUMAN  
@ [www.uuman.org](http://www.uuman.org).

### 21st Century Humanism

Our regular December meeting will be held Sunday, December 2, 11:45am – 1pm, in the Sanctuary. Everyone is invited.

### Holiday Craft Fair

Northwest UU Congregation will be having a Holiday Craft Fair on Sunday, December 2, at 11:30 a.m. (after their service). Northwest UUC is northwest of Atlanta, in Sandy Springs, near Interstate 285. For more info, visit: [www.nwuuc.org](http://www.nwuuc.org)

## UUMAN TIMES

**Editor:** Dirk Bender

**Contributors:** Kevin Klienfelter, Randy Wilbur, Toniann Read, Elizabeth Rohan and others

**Submissions:** We welcome all types of newsletter submissions.

Please send us your articles, editorials, & announcements, to [newsletter@uuman.org](mailto:newsletter@uuman.org)

## November Service Schedule

Nov. 4—*Eternal Life*

Human beings long for life after death, for eternal life. How do we face a life of loss and eventual death? We will lift up the names of those precious to us that have died this year while we toll the bell. If you wish to have a loved ones name read in the service, please send it to Kelsey Bogue, our Worship Associate: [kbogue412@aol.com](mailto:kbogue412@aol.com)

Nov 11—*Why Worship?*

What is the meaning of worship? What are we doing here on Sunday together, especially since we don't all see the concept of God in the same way?

Nov 18<sup>th</sup>—*I Give Thanks*

A celebration of thanksgiving, meaningful for all ages. This will be a participatory worship service, come and share what sustains you, what you are most grateful for in your life.

## Our MCY Director Returns!

*“The long & winding road, that leads to your door...”*

17 years ago I came to America seeking a new life and a new home. My journey to becoming a permanent resident has definitely been long & winding! So often in life, the most banal (*in this case bureaucratic*) exercises offer us the deepest lessons. There have been many moments on this journey when I have wondered why it was taking *my* application so long...is it worth it? Wouldn't I rather be at “home” anyway? How was I ever going to feel a sense of belonging, permanency and legitimacy with these overwhelming forces working against me? These questions have reached further & deeper than I had ever imagined. As the obvious (*external*) immigration issue nears its resolution I found myself on a “forced” sabbatical that was ultimately a surprising gift. As the USCIS has been processing our final application, I have had the time & space to do some processing of my own. An “Employment Authorization Card” (EAC) is a privilege that comes with an awesome responsibility...for the first time in 17 years I really have a choice! I know, I always had a choice, but this was the shift it took for me.

I have re-discovered a lot about what is precious to me in these past few weeks. My family, my integrity & YOU! I choose my family every night that I make it home by bedtime, I choose my integrity every time I STOP to check in deeply with myself & I choose YOU every morning that I wake up knowing that I want to be with you and that we will make a difference together today.

I have made a covenant with myself to do whatever it takes to protect my commitment to all of these & never one at the expense of another. These are the choices that I am making & that I am responsible for. It is a balancing act that I am learning. I am going to need you to “spot” me when I wobble (& *I will wobble!*). I may not stay at work past bedtime & I may not hurry when you wish I would, but I will show up to serve with you in the best way that I know how...

I am so proud to be back at UUMAN. To partner with you in work that promotes justice & feeds my soul is a gift that I am thankful for every day. Although I am still not (*yet*) a “permanent resident”, I no longer need a green card to know that I have a place here & that the choices I make are mine alone.

—One Love, Toniann

