



CEDAR LANE NEWS

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
9601 Cedar Lane • Bethesda, Maryland 20814

Volume LIV, No. 14

March 4, 2008

Sunday Services at 9 and 11 a.m.

March 9, 2008—*Singing the Journey* “More Popular than Jesus?”

Roger Fritts

In March 1966, John Lennon proclaimed that the Beatles were “more popular than Jesus.” We will listen to their music and reflect on the human tendency to form “hubs” as described by Albert-Laszlo Barabasi in his book *Linked*. **DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS TODAY: If you forget to change your clock, you will be one hour late for church!**

March 16, 2008

“The Risk of Palm Sunday”

Roger Fritts

Teacher recognition: children attend the first part of the service.

For months Jesus walked the countryside questioning the authority of the Roman occupation and the collaboration of the Jewish leaders. But just before Passover he summoned up the courage to enter Jerusalem. In our own lives when do we take such risks?

March 22, 2008

“The Joy of Easter”

Cedar Lane Ministers

Children five years old and up attend the whole service.

The service will be a mixture of Easter music and hymns interspersed with short child-friendly reflections by our ministers and ministerial students on the joys of spring. Easter is early this year, so please pray that it does not snow!



Cedar Lane's Auction Is This Saturday, March 8!

Advance tickets \$30 (\$35 at the door)

Doors open 6 p.m. for Silent Auction

Buffet reception, music, wine and beer cash bar
"Nifty Thrifty" 6 -7:30 p.m.

Live Auction begins at 8:30 p.m.

Win fabulous getaways ~ incredible dinners ~ event tickets services and gifts galore!

To preview all auction offerings, go to:

<http://www.cedarlane.org/2008catalog.pdf>

Raffle tickets at \$15 each:

Large screen HD TV ~

6 months organic produce ~

CLUUC Buck\$ 50-50 cash pot

DONORS PLEASE NOTE ITEM INTAKE TIMES!

If you have donated a physical item to the auction, or have a little something for Nifty Thrifty to sell (\$25 and under), please bring your item(s) to the Chapel on Friday, March 7 between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m.

If a Friday drop-off is not possible, there will be an intake table at the chapel on Sat., March 8 from 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. only.

All are welcome to join us for **Newcomer Talks** every Sunday after worship services.

Become a member of Cedar Lane UU Church at a **Second Sunday Signing** after services, or by calling Kristin Grassel, Membership Coordinator, at 301-493-8300 ext. 305.

Notes from the Ministers

Roger Fritts

My prayer for opening a Maryland Senate session
February 22:

Thou in whom we live and move and have our being, in
this place we have many feelings:

In this room we have feelings of ambition—the desire in
all of us to be successful, to feel that our parents, our
partner, our children, that God will be proud of us. God
created us as creatures who feel ambition.

In this room we have feelings of temptation—the temptations
of status and power and money. God created us
as creatures who can be tempted.

In this room we have feelings of fear – the fear of losing,
the fear of making a mistake, the fear of what the voters
will think and even fear that God will disapprove. God
created us as creatures who feel fear.

In this room we have feelings of frustration—frustration
because we do not always agree, frustration with the
process of working together, and frustration with God.
God created us as creatures who feel frustration.

In this room we have feelings of excitement—the excitement
that comes from debates and power struggles, from
working with others trying to achieve a greater good, the
greater good that we hope God intended us to achieve.
God created us as creatures who feel excitement.

God created us as ambitious, tempted, fearful, frustrated,
excited creatures. And God also created us as creatures
who can choose love. In this room—at the core of all of
us—is love. When we are at our best, we let go of ambi-
tion and temptation, we let go of fear and frustration, we
move beyond excitement, and we remember God’s rule
of love found in every great religion: do unto others as
we would wish them to do unto us.

I humbly ask God to give all of us the strength and the
wisdom to live today and each day to treat others with
the respect, dignity and love as we wish to be treated.

In the name of all that is holy we pray.

Amen

Leslie Kee, Intern Minister

Some popular UU folklore suggests the question mark is
more symbolic to liberal religion than, for example, a
cross. In my case, I am more comfortable with a ques-
tion mark because one of the most persistent words in
my world is “why?”. As much as I am drawn to asking
questions, I am equally as drawn to formulating answers.
Unfortunately, this whole process is often so complex
that it is tempting to just walk away from the hardest
questions whose answers are even harder to come by.

The particular why question that has demanded my
attention these days comes from a convergence of three
different events, all involving children. The first event is
my trip to Legislative Day in Annapolis with a contin-
gent of Cedar Lane High School students. I was honored
to witness the intelligent, heart-felt discourse the young
folks graciously engaged in with various legislative
representatives. I left the event filled with pride and
confidence, knowing that our future is in good hands.

And just when I was feeling so good, I opened up the
newspaper and there they were -- events number two and
three. Number two is the story of Nicholas Browning,
the 15 year old Boy Scout and honor student from
Cockeysville, MD who is accused of shooting his father
and mother and his 14 and 11 year old brothers, and then
spending the rest of that Saturday out with his buddies
having fun. Pretending to find the crime when he re-
turned home, Nicholas called 911 but later confessed to
the quadruple homicide.

And just when I thought I couldn’t feel any worse, there
was more on the tragic story of Banita Jackson who is
charged with murdering her four daughters because she
believed they were possessed by demons. To add to the
horror, the bodies of the children lay in the upstairs of
their home for several months before being discovered.
Now the news reports the two grandmothers and father
of the second child are going to sue the state for negli-
gence.

Why these particular incidents have converged in my
brain is anyone’s question, but why these incidents pe-
riod, is everyone’s question. Why do teenagers feel
compelled to witness for just and fair laws which will
uphold love over hate? Why do teenagers kill the people
who love them most? Why do children bear the brunt

of adult psychosis? To make it even harder, when all is said and done, who or what is to be held accountable?

Are the grandmothers lashing out in their grief, or are they right in blaming the state for the mother's actions? Is it the school or the Boy Scouts who should be blamed for not seeing murder in a young man's heart? And who is to blame for the prejudice and hate that is institutionalized in antiquated and unfair laws?

And hardest of all, why is it human beings still have no good answer to the question, "Where is God in all of this?" Why? Why? Why?

Board Steps

BOARD STEPS: summary of the Feb. 19, 2008 meeting of the Board of Trustees

by Nancy Janssen, chair

(nancyjanssen@peoplepc.com; (301)-588-1488)

A ministerial intern candidate will make an informal visit to Cedar Lane in late February. Discussion continues on possibly changing the newsletter publication schedule and supplementing it with a weekly e-mail, as well as information in the Sunday orders of service. Cedar Lane's May 17th Day of Service & Celebration, precedes the 50th Anniversary Celebration of our building on May 18. CLUUC's first experience as a polling place on February 12 was positive.

The Board accepted and thanked Maury Merkin, chair of the Leadership Development & Nominating Committee for the slate of new members for the FY 2008/2009 Board of Trustees. This will be presented for vote at the April 20 Annual Meeting. **Candidates are: Nancy Derr for Assistant Secretary; Bob Pechacek for Assistant Treasurer; and Val Carter, Mary Karimi, and Jim Laurenson for Members-at-Large.** The Board encourages attendance of congregational members to the JPD Conference, March 28-30, at the Bethesda Doubletree (www.jpduua.org) as well as the General Assembly in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, June 25-29 (www.uua.org).

Please read the full minutes on the bulletin board in the lounge; prior minutes are in the library. Board meetings are open—do come —3rd Tuesdays, 7:30 pm in rooms 1 & 2.

Nominees for Board of Trustees Announced

The Leadership Development and Nominating Committee has nominated the following Cedar Laners to join the Board of Trustees in July. The congregation will vote

for on-coming members of the Board of Trustees at our Annual Congregational Meeting to be held immediately after Sunday morning worship on April 20.

Nancy Derr, Assistant Secretary:

Nancy Derr joined Cedar Lane in 2000. Although originally from Michigan, Nancy came to the Washington, DC, area in 1979, when she joined the Arlington Public School System as a German/English as a second language teacher. In 1992, Nancy joined the federal government and is now employed at the Food and Drug Administration, where she works as a senior policy analyst.

Nancy has served on Cedar Lane's Social Justice Council, and she helped organize the very first Green Sanctuary program at Cedar Lane. For the last two years, she has shared the newsletter editor position with Fred Peters and Robin Larkin. In her spare time, Nancy is also active with Oldies But Goodies (OBG) Cocker Spaniel Rescue, fostering cockers until they can find a forever home. She also volunteers with Pueblo a Pueblo, a U.S. nonprofit organization located in Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala, which supports the local hospitalito as well as the indigenous children in the local school.

Bob Pechacek, Assistant Treasurer:

Helen and Bob have been members of Cedar Lane for forty years, since 1967. He was chairman of the Board of Social Concerns and of the Building & Grounds Committee a long time ago, when the committees went by those names. Bob taught Sunday school for about four years, was an adviser to YAC, twice chaperoned the youth group trip to Boston, and for several years he participated in the Holiday Craft Day. For the past three years he has been a member of the auction committee. Currently Bob is on the Forum Committee and a member of Rich Clark's audio-visual crew. Helen and Bob have enjoyed a CLUUC dinner discussion group since 1984.

Bob was an experimentalist in the Plasma Physics Division of the Naval Research Laboratory before retiring in 1992. He has been treasurer of the Beltsville Garden Club for 6 years.

Val Carter, At-Large Member:

Val Carter joined Cedar Lane by way of the Wednesday Morning Group.

After attending years of lectures, she decided to come for church services about eight years ago. Her daughter, Chopper, is in the R.E. program and Val works occasionally at the R.E. table. She served as "Let it Shine" auction co-chair in 2007.

Val works under the federal IDEA grant with families whose babies have been identified with developmental delays. She serves the areas of Montgomery County populated by many immigrant and low-income residents.

In her community, Val has led the PTA while simultaneously working part-time and chairing CLUUC's Wednesday Morning Group. Last year she founded a community service event, Community Cupcakes, in honor of her son.

Mary Karimi, At-Large Member:

Mary Karimi and her four children started attending Cedar Lane in 1995. Ana was in the Celebrations class with Ilsa, Pari in DUSO and her twin boys Arman and Kian were not yet enrolled in RE. Alida DeCoster was preaching in a jester's costume and the choir was singing something awesome. Mary felt she had finally found a spiritual home...

Over the last 12 years Mary has attended Cedar Lane on a regular basis, sung in the choir, served six years on the RE Council, two years as co-chair, four years on the Pledge Drive, once as chair, currently teaches 7th grade, has taught 3 year olds, helped with senior seminars, and directed five or more years of Senior High Dessert Theatre and Spring B Players. She is also *We Care* Chair of Neighborhood 5. Ana has moved on to college, but attended the Sr. High ski trip over winter break before heading to Cairo, Egypt for study abroad. Pari will be a graduating senior this year and will participate in the senior service. Arman and Kian are in their critical OWL year in RE. Mary and her family have been growing up just a few blocks down the road from Cedar Lane and very glad that it has been such an important part of their lives.

Jim Laursen, At-Large Member:

Jim Laursen joined Cedar Lane in 1998, along with his wife Judy, after having attended services undercover for about a year. Both children have attended the Cedar Lane religious education classes since the babies class and now are in the Stepping Stone (4th grade) and Growing Up Year (6th grade) classes. Jim has volunteered for many groups and events at the church, including the Environmental Task Force, the Ministerial-Congregational Committee, Religious Education, Holiday Craft Day, and Spring B. Outside of Cedar Lane, Jim is active in the PTA and is a Cub Scout den leader. For work, he is an environmental scientist at ICF International (20+ years).

Jim looks forward to serving on the Board and giving back at least some of what he has received from Cedar

Lane. If chosen to serve, he hopes to give particular attention to the gap -- that delicate time period between when our teens leave religious education and when (and if) they decide to become active adult members of Cedar Lane or UU more broadly. Jim also hopes to focus on membership issues, and in particular, the ways in which Cedar Lane reaches out to the community to actively recruit new members.

We Care

The end of an era: It is with sadness that we announce the death of long-time Cedar Laner **Angie Skinner (N47)**. She died on Feb 18 at age 100 after a long decline. A memorial service will be held on May 10 in the Cedar Lane Chapel, time to be determined.

Congratulations to **Patricia Phillips** and **Michael Thoryn (N15)**, parents of **Claire Phillips-Thoryn**, on Claire's wedding on Feb. 16 in Lincoln, MA. Claire grew up at Cedar Lane and was ordained here in February, 2007. Claire and Ben Feingold Thayer were married at First Parish where Claire serves as Assistant Minister. The couple merged last names - they are now Claire and Ben Feingold Thoryn.

It is with joy that **Jean Schaible (N41)** announces the birth of her new grandchild, Noah Frances, born Feb. 18 in Arlington, VA to Steve Schaible, Kevan Miller and welcomed by older sister Phoebe. Hooray!

If you know of someone in need of care, a visit, a phone call, good thoughts or a prayer, please notify Heather Janules, Assistant Minister, at ext. 204 or hjanules@cedarlane.org.

Child Dedications on Easter Sunday

In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, we welcome and celebrate the arrival of children into the world through a Ceremony of Dedication. This ceremony is a time for parents and loved ones to publicly declare their love and care for the child and for the congregation to affirm their participation in the child's growth into its unique personality. As we affirm that all are born without sin, this ceremony is not a baptism but more a recognition of the sacred potential in all people and the responsibility of all to nurture the youngest in our community with the best we have to give.

As part of a celebration of new life, there will be a time to dedicate our community's children in our Easter service (March 23) If there is a little one in your family that has yet to be recognized and welcomed in this way and if you would like to have your child dedicated on Easter

Sunday, please contact Assistant Minister Heather Janules at hjanules@cedarlane.org or at x204.

Religious Education

Religious Education Notes

Susan Archer is on sabbatical until August 1: Glenis and Gale are in the R.E. office Monday through Friday; R.E. Council co-chairs, Judy Laurenson and Mary Farrar, and our ministers are here to help.

Spring “B” is coming on April 20: The brochure will be mailed in the middle of March; register for classes at the church on Sundays, March 30 and April 6. Join us for an intergenerational program of classes and seminars planned for multiple ages. This is an opportunity for parents and children and grandparents to learn something new together and have fun.

Easter Sunday is March 23: There will be an intergenerational service at 9 and 11 a.m. Easter Sunday for children will include an egg hunt and refreshments after the service in Room 1-2. We ask that all families joining in the egg hunt bring rolls, muffins, bread, or fruit to share to Room 1-2, before the service.

Our “You and UU” ninth graders are busy:

Our 9th Graders Leave for Boston on March 28-30 to Learn about their UU Heritage. To help finance the trip they are selling fair trade coffee and chocolate at the Bagel and Donut table on Sunday mornings. Come, buy and help to improve the economy for small-scale farmers in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the U.S. while helping our kids raise money to get to Boston. Their departure date of March 28 is drawing closer! So stop by the bagel and donut table and help both causes! A real win-win!

We celebrate and recognize our 9th graders at their Coming of Age Services and Potluck Dinners. Because we have many 9th graders this year, there will be two services/dinners this year.

- Session II Class: Friday, April 11 at 6 p.m.
- Session I Class: Saturday, April 12, 5 p.m.

Please come and celebrate with our young people at either or both services and stay to enjoy one another and shared food. Bring something to share for 8-12 people according to your last name: A-M brings a main dish; N-Z brings salad or a side dish. Beverages and dessert

provided. YOU NEED to RESERVE at 301-493-8300 so we will know how many attendees to plan for. Leave your name and the number in your party.

Calendar:

- March 8: Cedar Lane Auction; free child care available; pre-registration is required.
- March 16: Teacher Recognition
- March 23: Easter Sunday; intergenerational service; egg hunt for children; bring breads, muffins or fruit.
- March 28-30: 9th Grade Boston Trip

Youth Notes

JUNIOR HIGH NOTES

This group is open to youth in grades 7 and 8. John Daniel and Megan Renner are the advisors.

Junior High Schedule is Coming Together: Within a few days, the 2008 schedule for the Junior High Group should become final and will be shared with all. Events that are almost certain to make the schedule include a sleep-over with the sharks at the National Aquarium in Baltimore; a hike on Old Rag Mountain, our annual NY City sight-seeing trip; Manna Food Packing; and a movie night at the church. If you have questions about the group, call John Daniel (301-946-5509) or Megan Renner (301-807-4963).

SENIOR HIGH NOTES

Senior High Youth Group activities are open to young people in grades 9-12; the group meets during the second session R.E. time in the Chalice House on the second Sunday of the month. Special Senior High Youth Group activities happen at non-Sunday morning times. Watch for information by email and snail mail. If youth are not receiving email notification and would like to, please send addresses to Archene Turner at 301-493-8300 x 205 or aturner@cedarlane.org.

On other Sundays, second session 11th -12th grade youth continue senior high “Our Whole Lives;” 10th graders with “Change the World” and 9th graders with “Coming of-Age.”

Up-Coming Events Include:

March 9: Allison Fisher of Greater Washington Interfaith Power and Light (www.gwipl.org) will visit us at 11 a.m. to chat about lots of things green and what youth in our area are doing about it.

March 15: Road Trip to Annapolis to cheer on some of our youth competing in a regional robotics competition (<http://www.usfirst.org/community/frc>)

March 15-18: Participants of the 11th-12th grade OWL are encouraged to be involved in this year's Sexuality Education Advocacy Training (SEAT) where youth, young adults and adults from all over the country come to town to advocate for comprehensive sexuality education in our public schools. For more information see: <http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/issues/comprehensivesexuality/27418.shtml>

Opportunities for Youth in the Wider World:

April 3-5: New York City: See the UU-UN Office and notice elsewhere in this newsletter or at www.uu.uno.org.

June 26-July 13: El Salvador: For ages 16 (by June 1) and older with International Partners. Cedar Laner Emma Vawter vouches for this as a wonderful opportunity to join other youth to help others in El Salvador. The deadline has passed but there are still some openings. For more information about this and later trips, go to www.InternationalPartners.org. Check it out; a life changing adventure.

Young Adults (Ages 18-35)

The UU Young Adults of Maryland (UUYAM) group plans activities for local UU Young Adults. Visit <http://uuyam.uuyan.org> to join the UUYAM email list and view schedule of upcoming events, or call Megan Renner with questions at 301-807-4963. For resources and information on Joseph Priestly District (JPD), Young Adult events, visit the JPD Young Adult Network at www.jpd-uuyan.org.

Join other Young Adults for brunch on the second Sunday of each month. Meet in the vestibule at the back of the sanctuary 15 minutes after the end of the 11 a.m. service. We will car pool to a local restaurant for lunch or brunch and fellowship.

Adult Programs Notes

The Sunday Morning Forum meets from 10:10 to 10:55 a.m. in Chalice House.

March 9: Partnering for Human Rights: A UUHIP Journey to India. For 24 years, the Unitarian Universalist Holdeen India Program has supported a group of the most marginalized and oppressed people in India in their

struggles for economic and social justice and human rights. Last summer Cedar Lane members, Barbara and Steve Wilson, spent five weeks in India visiting programs and partners to learn about their organization and activities. At this forum, they will describe their journey.

March 16: With God as My Running Mate: The Role of Religion in the 2008 Presidential Election with Maureen Fiedler, host of Interfaith Voices (WAMU 88.5 Sundays at 3 p.m.), a public radio program that explores religions and spirituality as they touch our politics and culture. As a Catholic sister of Loretto, Fiedler has worked in interfaith peace and justice activism for over 30 years. She holds a Ph.D. in government from Georgetown University
March 23: Easter Sunday: No Forum

March 30. *An Optimistic Psychiatrist Looks at End of Life Decisions.* Dr. James Lieberman, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at George Washington University School of Medicine, examines decisions accompanying end of life situations and the need to protect freedom of decision-making in such situations. He is a member of the national capital area chapter of Compassion and Choices.

Dinner Discussion Groups

Many groups have been meeting together for years. We are always ready to begin new groups as there are enough people wanting to come together.

A number of Cedar Laners are interested in beginning a new "boomers" group for those born between 1946 and 1965; Marlene Berg is coordinating. For more information about the group be in touch with Marlene at 301-279-6790 or nikkimargot@verizon.net. To register for this group please call Glenis Bellais in the R.E. office at 301-493-8300, x207.

Covenant Groups meet regularly to share experiences, reflect upon them, and support one another in developing meaningful lives.

"I listened to you, and found my own voice."

- Hillary Clinton?

Or you - in a covenant group?

...What's Going On Here? What Calls You to Action? with Kathleen Reedy meets on alternate Wednesdays 7:30 to 9 p.m.

Connections with Nancy Janssen meets on the first and third Sundays at 12:15 to 2 p.m.

Attitudes Towards Living with John Gubbings and Pat Karlsen meets on the second and fourth Sundays, 8:30 to 10 a.m.

Journeywomen with Barbara Gressman meets on the first and third Sundays at 10:45 a.m.

Crones with Coralie Adler meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Living By Heart I with Perry Seiffert meets on the first and third Saturdays, 8 to 10 a.m.

Living By Heart II with Frances Dearman and Ellie Goodwin meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays, 7 to 9 p.m.

Living By Heart III with Bob Harrison meets on the second and fourth Saturdays, 8 to 10 a.m.

The Sharing Group with Len Adler meets monthly on the third Mondays, 7:15 to 9 p.m.

Living Alone, Living with Loss with Catharine Kaufman, Maury Merkin and Heather Janules meets on the first and third Sundays, 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

The Adult Programs Committee is Looking for New Members. Come and share your life experience, avocations, and interests with this dynamic group of Cedar Laners. The committee meets once a month to share ideas and camaraderie. If you are interested in joining the Adult Programs Committee, contact Julie Offner at 301-562-8281 or jjoffner@comcast.net.

Adult Programs Registration: Additional copies of the adult programs brochure are available on the church literature table and in the R.E. office. You may also access the brochure from the web site. Register for classes in the R. E. office by mail or in person. Questions? Call Glenis Bellais at 301-493-8300 x207..

Classes Beginning in March:

Wednesday, March 5

The Inviting Church with Roger Fritts and Kristin Grassel meets for seven Wednesdays, 7 to 9 p.m. Using an Alban Institute curriculum, the group examines all aspects of Cedar Lane life and history. Using this knowledge and understanding, the group considers the future shape and purpose of Cedar lane while ensuring our legacy of freedom and justice remains strong into the future.

Thursday March 6

Organizing for Social Justice with Alissa Glassman meets 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Learn what makes effective political advocacy and build your leadership development skills.

FEE: Pledgers \$5; non-pledgers \$10

Alexander Technique with Antoinette Kranenburg meets for six Thursdays, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Learn how to prevent tension patterns in your body, become more comfortable and flexible, and to move, sit, reach, dance

and walk with ease. The class includes one private lesson by appointment

FEE: Pledgers \$75; non-pledgers \$85.

Wednesday, March 12

Non Native Invasive Plants with Lynette Scaffidi meets from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Learn what you can do to help manage invasive plants in your neighborhood and parklands.

FEE: Pledgers \$5; non-pledgers \$10

Saturday, March 29

Dinner Discussion Express is a one-time event with a commitment of only one night. Meet in a private home for a potluck dinner, fellowship and lively conversation; your host will contact you with details. The topic is: UUs are often “agents of change” in society. If you were a benevolent dictator of a country, what one change would you make? Your answer can range from silly to serious.

Register for all the above classes, dinner discussion groups and covenant groups with Glenis Bellais in the R.E. Office at 301-493-8300 x207 or gbellais@cedarlane.org

Social Justice Council

Global Task Force

Alternative Giving Program

The Global Task Force of the Social Justice Council wishes to thank Cedar Lane members and friends who contributed a total of \$6058.50 during the holiday season to the projects included in our 2007-2008 Alternative Giving Program. The breakdown by project is posted on the bulletin board near the lounge.

The opportunity to contribute to these projects, as a way of honoring family and friends by reaching out to a world in need, will continue throughout the world. Births, birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, memorials, and other celebrated events are appropriate times to consider an alternative gift. For more information, contact Annette Scarpitta at annettedcedarlane@spamex.com.

Freedom Riders, 2008: To Annapolis by Bus for Civil Marriage *by Brian and Dian Belanger*

On February 12, the coldest day this winter, we joined more than 550 shivering but determined champions of social justice in Annapolis to rally and lobby in support of the pending Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Pro-

tection Act and other legislation to prevent discrimination based on gender identity. We're glad we did!

Our organizers, led by Social Justice Council co-chair Mike Benefiel, provided a chartered bus—filled to capacity with Cedar Laners of all ages and other good folks from the UU Church of Rockville. We shared generously offered nourishment and camaraderie born of common purpose.

Inspired by a rousing rally near the capitol, we broke up into smaller groups according to legislative district to lobby our respective state senators and three delegates. In our district, #19, three of the four are co-sponsors of the main bill, so in those visits we offered thanks and received the same. The opposition is vocal; chances for success seem slim this year, though some sort of civilunion compromise might possibly pass, one Assembly friend confided.

One of our delegates seemed rather squishy (oily?), but we, as straight (let's just say square) old marrieds, assured him that we see no harm whatsoever to our 45-year union in allowing same-sex couples the rights and benefits we take for granted. Love and commitment are good; society should encourage these. We were gifted with so much appreciation from those with a more personal stake in the outcome that we forgot all about our cold fingers.

Remembering our passion for the civil rights struggle a generation ago, but feeling then too young, too poor, too occupied with school and work, too distant from the primary scenes, and, yes, too scared to participate directly, we are grateful to be counted in this historic civil rights march of today.

Welcome aboard. Next time let's fill two buses!

P.S. Refer to bill numbers SB290 and HB351 when you write your Maryland legislators about civil marriage as a civil right.

Kakenya Is Coming! Kakenya Is Coming!

Don't forget to join us on March 9 at 3 p.m. at the Challice House for a reception in honor of Kakenya Ntaiya, from Kenya's Maasai tribe. The award-winning BBC documentary, "Kakenya: Against the Odds," will be shown, followed by a discussion. Kakenya fought tribal tradition and convinced elders of her community to stop her arranged marriage and allow her to be the first female from her village to receive a U.S. college education. She is now fulfilling her dream of building a girls' school in her home village, which will allow other girls to attain the self-empowerment Kakenya finally realized. For details and to RSVP, please contact Annette Scarpitta (annettedarlane@spamex.com).

Action at Scotland Community Center

Action in Montgomery (AIM) of which Cedar Lane is a founding member, held an Action on February 25 attended by almost 100 people, who filled to overflowing the small space of the Scotland Community Center. The purpose was to energize AIM members and the Scotland community to lobby the County Council to increase the miniscule sum in the County Executive's Capital Improvement Budget for 2009-2010. County Executive Leggett and members of the County Council have twice publicly committed to fund renovations and improvements to four community centers—Scotland, Good Hope, Ross Boddy (in Sandy Spring), and PlumGar. Only PlumGar received a substantial sum in the budget.

The focus of the Action was on Councilmember Roger Berliner (D-1) who represents Scotland. In answer to questions asked by two young women who live in Scotland and are seniors at Churchill High School, Berliner committed to being a strong advocate for increased funding for the three centers in the Council committee that makes recommendations on that section of the budget (Planning, Housing, and Economic Development). He also announced that securing five favorable votes for increased funding from Councilmembers was a priority for him. Besides Berliner, Councilmembers Elrich, Leventhal, and Ervine favor increasing the funding. Councilmembers Trachtenberg, Andrews, Knapp, and Floreen have made no commitment about the money in the CIP, although Nancy Floreen has mentioned where some additional funds might be found.

As part of the program, the audience divided into three groups to tour the community center and report to the entire group what they saw. Each group reported seeing space that was too small for its assigned activity: a tutoring center with no space for children to do homework, a weight room with equipment that would not work in the allotted space, and a half-court basketball court that would not enable athletes to have the practice required to participate in tournaments on a full court.

AIM plans a larger Action of 1000 participants on April 2 at University of Maryland at Shady Grove where AIM leaders will ask Councilmembers and the County Executive where they stand on increasing funding for the three centers.

Save the date; you'll want to be there!

For more information, visit the SJC in the Lounge ("The Lounge Lizards") or CLUUC's Web site or call Helen Strang (301-530-6449) or Michael Benefiel (301-929-5252).

Environmental Task Force

On February 18, Environmental Task Force representatives, led by Charlotte Brewer, attended a lobbying day in Annapolis organized by the Maryland League of Conservation Voters to encourage our legislators to back five bills crucial to our state's battle against the effects of Global Warming.

- The Global Warming Solutions Act (309/HB 712) sets a framework for change:
 - MD would need to reduce its [greenhouse gas] emissions by 25 percent below 2006 levels by 2020 and a full 90 percent below by 2050.
 - The bill creates timelines for state agencies to design cost-effective programs to meet the emission limits.
 - A Cap-and-Trade system is created to encourage companies to continue to search for the cheapest ways to comply with the limits.
- The Critical Area Act (SB 844/HB 1253) would protect the natural buffers that absorb polluted runoff before it reaches the tidal portions of Maryland's rivers, streams, and Coastal and Chesapeake bays.
- The emPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act (SB205/HB374) would codify Governor O'Malley's plan to reduce statewide per-capita electricity consumption and peak demand by 15% by 2015.
- The Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SB 268/HB 368) would give the Maryland Energy Administration the resources to offer energy efficiency services to underserved markets that the utility companies won't address.
- Finally the Chesapeake Bay 2010 Trust Fund (SB 213/HB 369) and the Nonpoint Source Fund outline a framework for allocating the Chesapeake Bay 2010 Trust Fund annually based on cost-effective nutrient reductions.

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The Rev. Heather Janules *Assistant Minister*

The Rev. Leslie Westbrook *Community Minister in Pastoral Counseling*

The Rev. Kenneth Torquil MacLean *Minister Emeritus*

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