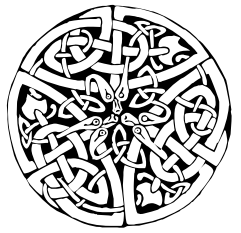




Earth Healer



A Unitarian Universalist Congregation



The Official Newsletter of the friends and members of Gaia Community July 2003

WHY I AM A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

A Personal Perspective—*Barbara Griggs*

I often tell people that I have been a Unitarian Universalist all my life, but that I only found out a few years ago. While it sounds like a joke, this is quite an accurate description of my perception of how I fit into Unitarian Universalism. I doubt there is a UU anywhere who has not at some point struggled to encapsulate the official beliefs of our non-creedal denomination, and it is not uncommon to fall back on the compelling, but somewhat inaccurate, statement, "We can believe whatever we want to believe." Not long ago I heard Reverend Jim Eller of All Souls in Kansas City offer this summary instead: "We believe what we are compelled to believe." This formulation resonates with me. I have many *opinions* about various beliefs, and in forty years of searching for my religious affiliation, I repeatedly noticed that it was not an issue of *not being able to believe* many different articles of faith. Rather, I could not see any good reason to believe one thing over another. It is not that I dismiss the Christian Virgin Birth as impossible or absurd, for example. Anyone who has every seen conjoined infants or a child born with no legs, for example, should not strain at believing such a simple anomaly. It was more that no one adduced any evidence for the phenomenon, and even if they had, why should it be probative of anything, let alone the divinity of one so born? I *could* have believed it—I just never got the point of believing it.



On the other hand, my entire life I periodically stumbled over something I felt *compelled* to believe, some pesky article of faith that I could not seem to do without.

"No One Left Behind"

Reverend Bill Sinkford, currently President of our denomination, succinctly described the Universalist position with this phrase, reverberating with its contrast with the recent, eschatological Christian idea of the Rapture, as expressed in the wildly popular "Left Behind" series of novels. My very earliest religious rebellion, the first thing I found my self *compelled* to believe (at the age of eight), was that *if* salvation existed, it was universal, and that it was not for an elite few. This personal bit of dogma has never released me, and it impeded my ability to commit to any organized faith until I found out that was what the second "U" in UU meant. I am compelled to believe in the First UU Principle: the *inherent* worth and dignity of every person.

"Deeds Not Creeds"

Through thirty years of marriage my husband and I never talked about religion, while I studied theology in books on my long quest and he (as far as I can tell) never looked back after having wandered away from his Episcopalian upbringing, with one exception. Throughout all the inevitable ups and downs of a relationship, both of us worked in social services, volunteered for various causes, and gave in money, goods and time to a wide variety of humanitarian efforts to which we were both committed. Very oc-

continued on page 4

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
SUNDAY SCHEDULE	2
WEAVE AND SPIN BUDGET OUTCOME	3
COMMUNITY CARES	3
COMMUNITY AT-LARGE	4
GAIA AROUND TOWN AND SPECIAL EVENTS	5
EARTH HEALER CONTACTS	6



PAGAN TRADITIONS OF THE WORLD: A JOURNEY OF AUTHENTICITY—KEMETIC PAGANISM

Ritual Chapters to come:

- Sunday, June 29th–Sunday, August 3rd (Lammas)—Egyptian Chapter.
- Sunday, August 10th–Sunday, September 21st (Fall Equinox)—Hellenic Chapter.
- Sunday, September 28th–November 2nd (Samhain)—Druid Chapter
- Sunday, November 9th–December 21st (Winter Solstice)—Gaia Traditional

All Sunday activities take place at Shawnee Mission UU Church; 7725 W. 87th St.; Overland Park, KS (near 87th & Metcalf) and begin at 4 P.M. unless otherwise noted.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

With the new year, we'll be trying something new at Gaia Community—in the weeks leading up to each Sabbat, we'll be examining and learning from different pagan traditions. All of the classes and rituals in the “Chapter” leading up to that Sabbat will relate to that tradition. In this way, we hope to make your ritual experiences more meaningful every week, and especially on the High Holidays.

Sunday, July 6

The God/dess Auction

Bring your dollars and food for Harvesters. You will vote for your patron with either or both. This ritual is Rated R for adult content. You must be 18yrs. or older to participate. Come meet the God/desses of our city. The Egyptian New Year starts around the first of August with the rise of Sothis, the Dog Star. As faithful citizens in the Old Kingdom, it is our duty to choose who our next patron God/dess for the upcoming year will be. We must bring tributes (yes, I mean bring your money) to the deity we want as next years patron. Each God/dess brings gifts to its most faithful servants (yes, this means that the person who donates the most for each deity gets a gift). The deity that receives the most money, um, I mean tribute will be our dedicated patron for the upcoming year. The auction will benefit Gaia Community.

Sunday, July 13

Feast of Light

“Lamenting the ruined state in which she'd found the Temple of Hathor (Isis) at Cusae, Hatshepsut said, 'The ground had swallowed up its august sanctuary...' To return the city to prosperity, she rebuilt Hathor's temple, overlaid the images of the Goddess with gold, and reestablished the temple services. The offerings she conducted in the temple she called Feast of Light.”—Normandi Ellis, Feasts of Light

Sunday, July 20

Class: “Myths and Symbols of Ancient Egypt”

Stories told and Mysteries Unveiled (the move from Unity to Trinity in Kemetic Theology)

Sunday, July 27

Temple of Thoth

Thoth is the God of language and divine law. He is the ‘wisest of the wise’ among the old Gods. Come to the temple to witness the daily rituals of the priests and Thoth as He divines upon the water the key to surviving the Unleashing of the Eye.

Sunday, August 3

Unleashing of the Eye of Re Festival

(aka Sekhmet's Revenge on the Unfaithful). Sacred theatre, dancing, music, and food (the tradition potluck will be part of the ritual, so bring your food and dishes on in with you. It is recommended that you bring easy finger foods that need little or no prep. like fruits, veggies, nuts, cheese, sandwiches, hummus and pita, you get the idea).

A note about our Egyptian Chapter: This section will have rituals based on reconstructualist ideas from the Old Kingdom and the 18th Dynasty New Kingdom eras. The coordinator is Heather and the secondaries are Nicole, Carey, David, Kimberly, Caroline, and Collene.

**MAY YOU NEVER HUNGER,
MAY YOU NEVER THIRST.**

WEAVE AND SPIN



Splinters from the Board

from Nicole Turner, Secretary

On behalf of the Board, I want to thank everyone who attended the June 7th Ritual for Business, at which we voted in a budget for the 2003/2004 fiscal year that demonstrated how far we've come in the last two years. We've met the Challenge for our new child care provider. . . gotten ourselves out of debt. . . and started aggressively saving for our New Home. Yay.

If you have business items for July's agenda, please get in touch with Collene Newby (it's her turn to facilitate) no later than Thursday, July 10th. Her contact information is below.

Remember, all members and friends are welcome and urged to attend. This is our community's "weaving and spinning." Although only members have a vote, everyone has a voice. See you there!

Saturday, July 12th, 9:30–11:30 A.M.
Shawnee Mission UU Church
Jefferson/Franklin Rooms (downstairs)

Minutes from previous Rituals for Business are available upon request. Contact the Secretary at saffronhare@kc.rr.com or 913-706-9159.

Gaia Community Board Members

President—Barbara Griggs

bpmg@earthlink.net or 816-587-2350

Vice President—Caroline Baughman

carolineo@earthlink.net or 816-729-7112

Treasurer—David Reynolds

naebli@kc.rr.com or 816-361-5383

Secretary—Nicole Turner

saffronhare@kc.rr.com or 913-706-9159

Members at Large

Collene Newby

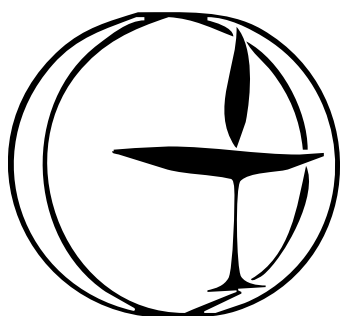
oedipus_the_doomed@yahoo.com or 913-221-3278

Jacki Kelley

opaljax@aol.com or 816-228-0018

Jeff Park

jpark2@kc.rr.com or 816-361-0465



COMMUNITY CARES

Joys and Concerns

Compiled with YOUR input.



Congratulations to . . .

- our resident thespians who did an awesome job in "Agamemnon" Caroline, Andrew, Victor, Mikki and behind the scenes with Kimberly and Matthew.
- Gaia Community for donating over 150 pounds of food and other goods to Harvesters throughout the Polynesian section! Thanks to everyone who brought offerings, we hopefully made a difference in the lives of some families in need.

Heart felt wishes and healing to . . .

- Anyone who may still be grieving or having "old wounds" opened again.
- Carey and David would like good wishes for their house buying adventure (they close in July).

Peace & strength to . . .

- Friends who are rolling with the punches of unemployment and job searches.
- Those struggling with substance abuse and addiction.
- Those in our community experiencing the pain of divorce or separation.

Happy Solar Return to people celebrating their birthday this month:☽

7-3: Jai Roberts

7-5: Linda Boyce

7-10: Jeff Park

7-13: Michael O'Riley

7-23: Collene Newby

7-28: Nola Cavanaugh

Thanks Miki for providing birthdays. If we've missed you, clue us in again! Let Earth Healer know—earthhealer@gaiacommunity.org or 816-361-0465 or just sort of let the people at the greeter's table know.

And a special welcome to the folks who visited us for the first time recently:

Debbie Dozier, Jen Leach, Maya Zahira, Earl Boyce, Matt Griggs and Mark Pauch.

Chalice Lighting—Michael DeVernon Boblett

*We are not alone.
 We are this flame, ancient as the stars, new as the vulnerable spark.
 We are not alone.*

*We are this chalice, rimmed by the spiral dance of searching.
 We are not alone.*

*We are the light soaring, the shadow deepening, the dance between them.
 We are not alone.*

*We are the heirs of the tribes and their fires, the healers and their circles.
 We are not alone.*

*We are here. We are here for ourselves. We are here for each other. And...
 We are not alone.*

Source: 1997 UUMA Worship Materials Collection

COMMUNITY AT LARGE

New Heathenry

Robin and JoLynne Martinez, two Gaia Community members, are helping to form a new heathen kindred in the metro area. They would cordially like to invite anyone interested in learning more about this spiritual path to visit one of the new group's blots or sumbels (ceremonial gatherings). Some of the local kindred are members of a national heathen organization, The Troth. From their literature comes the following description of the religion: "Although there are many variations in beliefs and practices within this faith, and many ways of describing and classifying these differences, we all share a defining personal loyalty to, or 'Troth' with, the gods and goddesses of the Northlands, such as Odin, Thor, Frigga, and many others. We have a deep respect for our Germanic religious, cultural and historical heritage while at the same time welcoming all who hear the call of our gods, whatever their background. Together, we seek to practice the moral principles followed by our noble predecessors, including Courage, Truth, Honor, Loyalty, Discipline, Hospitality, Industriousness, Self-reliance, and Steadfastness." For more information, contact Robin or JoLynne at (816) 453-7122. Information can also be found at the KCAsatruFellowship list serve:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/KCAsatruFellowship/>

READYMADE

Attention all you Craft Circle and Green Sanctuary fans!

A new quarterly magazine's been making the rounds of some Gaia Community members that we think more folks might like to see. It's called "Ready-Made; Instructions for Everyday Life." Sort of like Martha Stewart Living for bohemians. Lots of articles about how to make really cool stuff out of material that would otherwise be trashed or is difficult to recycle. Lamps out of the Styrofoam packing your computer came in, for example. Also, each issue features a "MacGyver" contest in which readers are challenged to come up with the most creative craft project using an item that would otherwise enter the trash stream. Last issue's challenge was what to do with an old phone book? The winning entry was to cut holes in it, fill them with dirt and use it as a planter. (Nicole had suggested mortaring and plastering them with EarthCrete to build a retaining wall out of them.) The current challenge is what to do with blown-up light bulbs? You can obtain a free sample copy by writing to ReadyMade; 2706 Eighth St.; Berkeley, CA 94710. Or go to their web site at www.readymade.com. And yes, the magazine is printed on recycled paper.

HSA EVENT

Spirit Circle which is sponsored by the HSA is held every 3rd Monday of the month at Aquarius in Westport at 7:00 P.M.

For information call Mikki 816-651-8195.



continued from page 1 "Why I am a Unitarian Universalist"

asionally, we would briefly agree that our common religious belief was that rather than attending a church or joining a denomination, or praying for some change in the world, we should *work for* what we thought was right. We have found this same orientation in the UU denomination with its emphasis on social action, and particularly in the many committed people we have met through the church.

"Even to Question. . . is an Answer"

I am one of those people who never quite got over that irritating phase every three-year-old goes through-you know-the one where there is no end to "why?" There's no stopping me with a flat, "God said so," or "Thus it is written." As an adult, I can restrain my tendency if necessary in public, and helpfully have gotten a lot of the basic "whys" settled as I have grown, but I always seem to find more questions to ask. The Fourth Principle affirms and promotes "A free and responsible search for truth and meaning," which conveys to me that this is the church where you do not have to think you-or someone else-has all the answers in order to belong. I knew I was in the right place when I first heard "Hymn #354" in *Singing the Living Tradition*, "We Laugh, We Cry," which ends with the words, "In our search for peace, maybe we'll finally see: even to question, truly is an answer."

"One River, Many Wells"

This title of a book by Matthew Fox, founder of Creation Spirituality, expresses the idea that wisdom is like a vast, deep, subterranean river that can be tapped into from the surface in many places and many ways. While I have encountered only a tiny fraction of the still-existing written religious thought available, I have read some compellingly wise, persuasive ideas from a wide variety of different traditions. It is impossible for me to believe that one source or another contains *all* the truth there is. I find scripture in unlikely places, including poetry, fiction, and even graphic novels and popular songs. The UUA says, "The living tradition we share draws from many sources. . . [including] words and deeds of prophetic men and women. . . and. . . wisdom from the world's religions which inspire us."

"Religious Pluralism"

The Unitarian Universalist tradition is enriched by our own histories and beliefs; it is not necessary to struggle against our uniqueness. New in this tradition, yet another harbinger that here, indeed, was home, was the inclusion in the hymnal not only of Lao-Tsu, Thich Nhat Hanh, Black Elk, and Margaret Mead, but also of Starhawk. Here we find welcome for all the shadings and nuances of our various pagan traditions, in contrast to other denominations where the very words "pagan" or "heathen" cause people to blanch. I see this pluralism at work within our own community as we learn about various traditions, each of us able to keep to his or her own true path, but sharing with respect, interest and understanding. In light of the havoc created throughout human history in the name of religion, in my moments of hope, I can see that if within our faith we can learn to coexist-in close harmony and cooperation-not merely with tolerance but with acceptance. . . we might someday model a different way to relate to each other in the larger world.

GAIA AROUND TOWN—EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Family Support Night

Wednesday, July 2nd, 6:30 P.M.—9:00 P.M.

A Safe Space: Friends Family Support Group is for anyone who is experiencing conflict within or because of their past or present family situation, or just to enjoy the company and friendship. Dinner is generally provided by the person(s) doing the hosting, and donations to defray meal costs are welcome but not required. Contact Jacki or Greta for more information about the July FSG gathering. Contact Jacki at opaljax@aol.com or Greta at (816)822-2070 for more information about this month's (or any month's) gathering.

Voices of Gaia

(on hiatus for July)

Voices of Gaia is Gaia Community's choral group. Male and female voices are welcome and encouraged to join us in exploring vocal harmony, rounds, chants and pagan songs. Our vision is to evolve into a (primarily) pagan chorus that would perform publicly. Voices of Gaia is currently on hiatus and will return after the summer. Contact Kitty Degler at (913)469-8779 or songbird@kc.rr.com for more information.

KidSpace Committee Meeting

Friday, July 11th, 7:00 P.M.

The KidSpace Committee Meeting is a place for all parents, kids at heart, and KidSpace volunteers to come together and discuss the future of our children. Plans for future activities, volunteer opportunities, dinner, and the direction of the future of KidSpace could all be on the agenda.

Come to the meeting or contact Andrew Turner, our Director of KidSpace Programming, for more information at agrmn@kc.rr.com or (913) 706-9167.

Games Night/Sacred Dance

Friday, July 18th, 7:00–10:00 P.M. at SMUUCH Loose Park

Sacred Dance Group (picnic in Loose Park) Sacred Dancing Group Sacred Dance is a way to explore rhythms and dance melodies you may not be familiar with, get in touch with the divine through ecstatic dance, or just quiet the 'monkey mind' through quiet, focused movement. Bring your favorite dance to share, bring a snack or drink to share, bring a friend along, or just bring yourself and a willingness to learn.

For July, we will be enjoying the warm weather and holding a potluck picnic, drumming session, and dance party in Loose Park, in southern KCMO. Loose Park is located at approximately 55th St. and Wornall Rd.; contact JoLynne at (816) 453-7122 for more information. Games Night now alternates with Sacred Dance on the 3rd Friday of every month. Games Night will return in August!

Friday Night Supper Club

Friday, July 25th, 7:00 P.M.

Join your fellow Gaians for food, friendship, and frivolity. Kick back and stuff yourself silly! July's Friday Night Supper Club will be announced through Sunday Announcements and on the egroups list. For more information contact Jeff Park at jpark2@kc.rr.com or 816-361-0465.

Tuesday Night Adult Education

Now on Tuesdays 7–8:30 P.M. at SMUUCH

We've got new Adult Education classes every Tuesday, starting in July 2003! Every week will alternate between a class and a trance. Each Tuesday night offering will have a small fee for attendees: \$3 for Members and \$5 for non-members. Also, childcare will be provided at \$3/child for the duration of the session, but you will have to notify Caroline or Kimberly beforehand so that someone is available.

If you find yourself unable to contribute towards the cost of a given session, get in touch with either Caroline or Kimberly to see if you can make other arrangements. No one will be turned away based on a lack of funds.

MOON

7/1 Waxing Moon Class

Maiden Archetype, Huntress, Beginnings

7/8 Mother Moon Trance

Drawing Down the Moon (B.Y.O.A., or Bring Your Own Archetype)

7/15 Waning Moon Class

Crone Archetype, Banishing/Reducing, Wisdom of Ages

7/22 Dark Mother Trance

The Moon's Lament

FIRE

7/29 Lughnassadh Class

Harvest, Tension between Order and Chaos, Tribe and the Wilds

8/5 Listening to the Flame Trance

Finding Your Oracle

8/12 Fire From the Gods Class

Trickster Steals Fire

8/19 Fire in the Heart Trance

Revisioning the Sacred Heart

WISDOM

8/26 Odin on the Tree Class

Runes, including the Elder Futhark

9/2 Finding the Runes Trance

The Writing on the Wall

9/9 Thoth Class

The Magic of Writing and Symbols

9/16 Freya Trance

Setting in Stone

THE BLADE

9/23 Mabon Class

9/30 Descent of Innana Trance

10/7 Piercing the Veil Class

10/14 Path of the Mist Trance

10/21 Samhain Class

WATER

10/28 Into the Depths Trance

11/4 Dwellers of the Deep Class

11/11 Sea Priestess; Stella Maris Trance

11/18 Isis; the Night Temple Class

WILL

11/25 Kindling the Vision Trance

12/2 The Smith and the Warrior Class

12/9 Forging the Will Trance

12/16 Yule Class

12/23 Attaining the Crown Trance

EARTH

12/30 Sacred Sovereign; Queen Madb Class

Contact Earth Healer

Send letters, articles, poetry or prose, borrowed wisdom, comments and suggestions to: earthhealer@gaiacommunity.org or by phone (number inside) no later than the 15th of each month.

Save the Snails

Please tell us if you are receiving duplicate copies of *Earth Healer*, if we're getting your name/address wrong or if you prefer to receive the newsletter by email. Let us hear from you before the August *Earth Healer*.

July 2003 Calendar—details inside!

- Tuesday, July 1st** 7:00–8:30 P.M.
Waxing Moon Class
- Wednesday, July 2nd** 6:30–9:00 P.M.
Family Support Group
- Sunday, July 6th** 4:00–5:30 P.M.
Ritual—The God & Goddess Auction!
- Tuesday July 8th** 7:00–8:30 P.M.
Mother Moon Trance
- Friday, July 11th** 7:00 P.M.
Kidspage Committee Meeting
- Saturday, July 12th** 9:30–11:30 A.M.
Ritual for Business Business
- Sunday, July 13th** 4:00–5:30 P.M.
Ritual—The Feast of Lights
- Tuesday July 15th** 7:00–8:30 P.M.
Waning Moon Class
- Friday, July 18th** 7:00–10:00 P.M.
Sacred Dance Group
- Sunday, July 20th** 4:00–5:30 P.M.
Class—Myths & Symbols of Ancient Egypt
- Tuesday July 22th** 7:00–8:30 P.M.
Dark Mother Trance
- Friday, July 25th** 7:00 P.M.
Friday Night Supper Club
- Sunday, July 27th** 4:00–5:30 P.M.
Ritual—Temple of Thoth
- Tuesday July 29th** 7:00–8:30 P.M.
Lughnassadh Class



Gaia Community
P.O. Box 45307
Kansas City, MO 64171-8303

Address Correction Requested