



First Unitarian Universalist Church of New Orleans

LE FLAMBEAU

Faith in New Orleans since 1833

2903 Jefferson Ave, NO LA 70115 (504) 866-9010 www.firstuuno.org

December 2008

**"Sunday, December 7, 2008
"What President Obama Needs to Know"
The Rev. Melanie Morel-Ensminger**

Less than a month from Inauguration, Rev. Melanie will presume to offer advice to President-Elect Barack Obama on ways to help unify our divided country -- although from his writings, it may be things he already knows.

Gifts of the Season Holiday Service Series

**Sunday, December 14, 2008, Part 1 of 5:
"Enjoying Holiday Gifts"
The Rev. Melanie Morel-Ensminger**

In a perilous economic time in a city still in disaster-recovery mode, how can we get into the spirit of the holiday season? Rev. Melanie has some suggestions to help make the season bright.

**Sunday, December 21, 2008, Part 2 of 5:
All-Family, All-Holiday Candle Lighting
Service
Mr. Reese Brewer, Director of Religious
Education Ms. Coleen Murphy
plus a cast of young people & special music**

In true UU fashion, we will come together to celebrate Winter, Yule, Hanukkah, and Christmas in poems, stories, and beloved carols, and ending with candle lighting. (As part of our shared ministry, Rev. Melanie will be leading a holiday service for the North Shore congregation.)



**Wednesday, December 24, 2008, Part 3 of 5:
Christmas Eve Candle Light Communion,
Service at 8 p.m.**

**The Rev. Melanie Morel-Ensminger
Holiday Open House Before & After Service**

Join us for this open-table (everyone is welcome) simple communion in the Unitarian Universalist tradition. We will give thanks for the many gifts of our lives, and remember the birth of a great Teacher of humankind. Bring a Christmas goodie to share; there will be hot cider.

**Sunday, December 28, 2008, Part 4 of 5:
Jazz Funeral for the Old Year
The Rev. Melanie Morel-Ensminger
Special Musical Guests: The Red Hot Brass
Band**

We bid 2008 good-bye along with its gifts, treasures, cares, and woes in a traditional New Orleans jazz funeral, complete with brass band and casket. Be ready to secondline around the Sanctuary as we clear the way for the New Year 2009!

**Sunday, January 4, 2009, Part 5 of 5:
"Gifts of the Magi"
The Rev. Melanie Morel-Ensminger**

We end our holiday series with a look at the journey of the Magi and the special gifts they brought to the Child in Bethlehem, and end the service as we should with kingcake!

Sunday Worship

10:30am (unless otherwise noted)
5202 S. Claiborne
(Corner of Jefferson & Claiborne)

**FROM OUR MINISTER:
MELANIE'S MISCELLANY**

"Tis the Season"

"Tis the season to be jolly – Fa la la la la, la la la la"

Have you ever found yourself in the midst of the holiday season thinking you'll scream if you hear one more canned carol, one more insincere "Happy Holidays"? Of course you have, we all have. 'Tis the season as much for frustration as for frivolity.

- ❖ "Tis the season – the season of standing in long lines only to be told that what you were waiting for is now sold out.
- ❖ 'Tis the season – the season of whining from little kids (and sometimes even big kids!), overstimulated by holiday commercials for items you can't afford and that the kids won't want 2 days after Christmas.
- ❖ 'Tis the season – when a family member or co-worker calls you up and tells you they know you won't mind making – for tomorrow! – a double batch of the holiday goodie that this year you had vowed not to make at all.
- ❖ 'Tis the season – when even though you and your partner and family had all promised NOT to make a fuss with extravagant gifts, you find out that somebody is going all out.

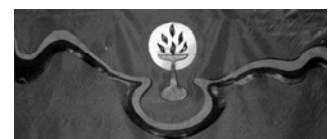
Yes, this month is the season for all of the above and worse, circumstance and situations that make us crazy, drive us nuts, prompt us to want to scream, "I'm canceling Christmas this year!" It doesn't have to be that way – or, at least, that doesn't have to define all of this hectic holiday month. It's true, it's the holidays, and the stores will insist on piping in endless loops of carols, and things will still go wrong, and people close to you will do their best to get on your last nerve. But – you can choose to react differently, to see things or put things into a different perspective.

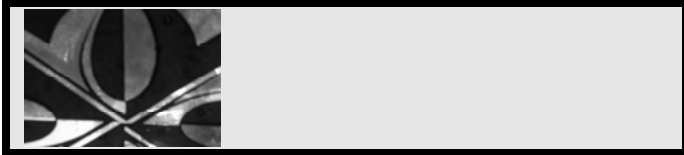
- ❖ 'Tis the season – for beautiful decorations and lovely lights, Don't try to kill yourself decorating your house – unless it's what gives you joy – but do drive or walk around, enjoying what other folks put up.
- ❖ 'Tis the season – for holiday wishes and greetings. Choose to take them all as literal expressions, to view them as the true and real wish of those around you that you have a Happy Holiday, a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah, a Happy New Year. Say with great sincerity, "You too!" and mean it.
- ❖ 'Tis the season – for memories. No matter how many bad holidays we've had in our lives, each of us has warm and happy memories of the good ones. Treasure those, and talk about them with your loved ones. Share the stories.
- ❖ 'Tis the season – for Christmas trees. Sure, selling Christmas trees is the church's biggest and most important fundraiser of the year and we all have to pitch in for it to succeed. But don't forget it's FUN! It's fun to help couples and families and individuals find the perfect tree for their homes. It's fun to hang out with church friends. It's fun to be part of the army of "Santa's helpers" during the holiday season.
- ❖ 'Tis the season – for carols sung with those we love, candlelight services in the church, goodies shared, dressing up a little. We'll have several opportunities for worship that will warm your heart and remind you why there is such a thing as Christmas – come be with your church family and celebrate this time together.

Yes, 'tis the season. And YOU make it what it will be for you. Choose to make it joyful and lovely and full of love and humor, and then that's what the season will be for you and yours.

Warm Yule, Blessed Solstice, Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, Joyful Kwanzaa, and Happy New Year!

Rev. Melanie





Rev. Melanie's Office Hours:

Monday -- her Sabbath away from church duties
 Tuesdays and Wednesdays -- 12 noon to 5 pm
 Thursdays -- 10 am-3pm
 Fridays and Saturdays -- sermon preparation days
 Sundays -- worship and fellowship
 Other times are available by arrangement --
 please call or email.

Special dates in December:

Rev. Melanie's will not be in the office:
 Wednesday, December 24 to Tuesday, January 6.

GenUUine New Orleans Mardi Gras! February 21-25, 2009

First Unitarian Universalist Church of New Orleans
 2903 Jefferson Avenue, New Orleans
Contact us at mardigras@firstuuno.org

Spread the word to your out-of-town friends.

A unique opportunity to experience the greatest free party in the world -- Mardi Gras in New Orleans -- for a reasonable cost with guidance from locals who know the ropes! Visitors may choose activities, and length of stay. Mardi Gras Day is Tuesday, February 24th.

We will be using the Volunteer Center Housing -- (bunks beds upstairs) and also the homes of friends and members willing to share accommodations. Our church members and friends will also be providing transportation, tips and fun.

Contact Ann Maclaine to let her know if you can provide assistance for this important fundraiser.



Poinsettias in Honor and Remembrance

In order to provide holiday decorations and honor and remember those whose lives have had meaning to us and our community, church members and friends may dedicate poinsettias again this year. The cost is \$8 for one, or 3 for \$20. The list of those being honored will appear in the order of service each week, and the donors and/or honorees may take the poinsettias home after the Christmas Eve service.

To reserve your poinsettias, contact Frank or Cathy Harbison, who are coordinating this event. Frank and Cathy will also be taking orders during coffee hour. All proceeds will go to the church operating budget. (Home phone is 822-8499. E-mail fharbis@yahoo.com.)

Christmas Tree Volunteers Needed, until the lot is empty!

The Christmas Tree Team still needs volunteers to help sale the trees Saturdays and Sundays, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. This is our biggest fundraiser and very important to this year's budget. Please come and help. There is a perfect job for everyone willing to assist.

For more information contact Victoria Sumrall via the church office.

November Special Collection

Jefferson Presbyterian Church - \$612

Fire destroyed sanctuary where we worshiped after Katrina.



<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08273.htm>



FROM THE PRESIDENT FROM WHERE I STAND

Thank you to those of you who remained for the Sunday, November 23 Congregational Meeting. Thank you for your insight, comments and understanding as we voted on a budget for 2009.

Our wonderful volunteers on our Finance Team set about creating a 2008 budget with a lot of unknowns hanging over their heads. For the past two years, because of Katrina, the UUA Katrina Fund had been paying our staff salaries, but that was ending, and we knew that the coming year would be a challenge. As we had been receiving generous donations from our partner churches we budgeted for income from them. We were also sure that we would be receiving rental income for our building.

Well as it has played out this year, we have not solicited money from our partner churches because it was decided that they would be asked to contribute to the GNOUU Capital Campaign Fund. Our building rentals were delayed, and did not get started until late in the year. These factors have greatly reduced our income for 2008. Add to this the fact that there are a number of unpaid pledges, and it accounts for the large budget deficit we are running.

Last year, we ended the year with \$80,000 +/- in the bank. We have been drawing on that money for this entire year to cover our shortfall. The hope is to not end 2008 with our bank account in the red. To this end we have asked all teams to spend only what is absolutely necessary until the end of the year. If you look at spending for the year, you will see that our shortfalls are not because of overspending in the budgeted categories. Our church is very frugal in its spending habits.

Our Finance Team has come up with a budget for next year. It is a very lean budget which is what we need. It calls for the elimination of the Office

Administrator position and diligent work on fundraising activities. The position of Director of Religious Education will remain the same. The source of the salary will change with only a portion of the salary coming from the operating budget, and the greater share being drawn from the Flowers Fund. This budget will need the support of all of us to run our church office and to create and bring to fruition the fundraising activities.

These are temporary measures. Our continued work on the church building will enable us to bring in more rental income, our membership is increasing which means we can expect more pledges, and our commitment to find fundraising activities which bring in monies from outside the congregation will also help. Together we can put ourselves back on a more comfortable financial path.

Your continued support is needed.

Stumbling Along With Love,
Cherie LeBlanc,
President, Board of Trustees

Membership Needs You!!!!

Dear Fellow Members and Friends of First Church ...

I am officially resigning as Chair of the Membership Team. I have served on this team for over 5 years and it is time for new blood and enthusiasm. I personally consider this as the most important Team of the church, because without growth, we will not be able to do all that we need to do in this world. We need to spread the word of liberal faith.

So please, someone, step up to the plate and take on leadership for this vital committee. I will be glad to acquaint you with the current set up and help get things started.

The membership team meets at 5:30 on the third Wednesdays.

With love, Mary Jo Day

A Major Upcoming Event!

The D'Orlando Lecture on Social Justice

Saturday, March 28th at 5:00pm

Kim Gandy, President of NOW

"Hope and Change: What the Next Four Years Holds for Women's Rights"

"The Eleventh D'Orlando on Social Justice will be given by Kim Gandy (president of the National Organization of Women) on Saturday, March 28th at 5:00pm in the sanctuary of our church.

Two months into the Obama-Biden administration, hear the inside Washington perspective of the president of the nation's largest women's rights organization. With economic troubles, an expensive bailout, and a war in the Middle East, is there anything left to restore the safety net and increase equality and opportunity? Are women's reproductive rights still at risk?

Please plan to bring a friend. A reception in the fellowship hall will follow.

This lecture is free and open to the public.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR

DIVA CHEF -

Please help with this NEW ongoing fundraising strategy!

Jyaphia will be preparing a light lunch to serve after the service on Sundays. A vegetarian option will always be available. She welcomes collaborators. If you are willing to help cook, set up, serve or clean up or even have menu suggestions (want an old favorite for Sunday lunch?) - Please email jyaphia@aol.com or call 610-DIVA (3482).

Greetings from GNOUU

We have received some nice donations from several churches recently--

Rev. Marti Keller, UU Congregation of Atlanta,
Rev. Anthony Johnson, First Unitarian Society of Plainfield, NJ,
Rev. Marta Valentin, First Church Unitarian, Littleton, MA (remember her??),
Rev. Don Southworth, Eno River UU in Durham, NC,
Rev. Craig Roshaven, 1st Jefferson Church UU, Fort Worth, TX,
The First Church in Barre, Vermont,
Community Unitarian Church, White Plains, NY,
Rev. Peter Morales, Jefferson Unitarian Church, Golden, CO.

All together these donations totaled to nearly \$8,000. Anyone who'd like to send these generous congregations a thank you note may contact me for their address.

Thus far, our total pledges and donations are at \$788,000.

As the end of the year approaches, we invite you to pay as much on your pledge as you can so as to maximize your income tax deductions :) :). You can put your payments in the GNOUU mailbox outside the church office, hand them to me, or mail them to GNOUU, 316-38th Street, NOLA 70124. Please don't put them in the offering basket on Sundays. We need to keep our funds separate from our church's funds.

Thank you all for your continued support and good wishes.

Alice Abel Kemp, GNOUU Administrator -- note new email: aliceakemp@gmail.com



**Gillespie Breakfast, 9:30am-12noon --
2nd Saturday of EACH MONTH**

The Gillespie Memorial Community Breakfast is usually held on the second Saturday of each month, 9:30am to 12:00pm, at the First Unitarian Universalist Church, South Claiborne Avenue and Jefferson Avenue in New Orleans. It has been a project of the First Unitarian Universalist Church Social Justice Committee since 1983.

Thank you for your continuing support. For more information contact Kit Senter at (504) 866-8257 or kitsenter@yahoo.com

Jazzercise Discount for First Church Members!

A variety of Jazzercise classes are held at First Church on week day mornings. They offer a 10% discount to church members. So, if you are interested in this activity, call 1-800-FIT-IS-IT to learn more, and mention you are a church member to get your discount.



Spinning the Web

COMING SOON -- The new church website thanks to GNOUU funding and the generous time offered by our own resident web developer, Geoffrey !

If you are interested in being a part of this exciting new development email the Communications Team at firstuuno@gmail.com

-“Let your light shine!”

Wear your name tags and help us be welcoming and do so in a way that is true to our UU values.

Dances of Universal Peace - in the

Courtyard or Chapel, 7:45pm (approx. 2 hours)

Wednesday Evenings:

- December 3rd
- December 17th

Contact: Amina Rae Horton - 866-1114

raeannhorton@yahoo.com

The Dances of Universal Peace are part of the timeless tradition of Sacred Dance.

No musical or dance experience required, but comfortable, loose-fitting clothing is suggested.

Special NOTE: Invite your friends for this special service: Annual Jazz Funeral for the Old Year

Sunday, December 28, 2008 - 10:30 am at First Unitarian Universalist Church of New Orleans -- 5212 S. Claiborne Ave. (corner Jefferson Ave.)

service led by the Rev. Melanie Morel-Ensminger

The greater New Orleans community is warmly invited to join the First Church congregation for this moving ritual to end the end the year. The Red Hot Brass Band will furnish the trad jazz accompaniment, and Majestic Mortuary has loaned a real casket in which participants can all "bury" the griefs and concerns and pains and losses of the year 2008. In true New Orleans style, we will then "cut the body loose" to face the New Year with hope and joy, second lining to "The Saints." Coffee and refreshments will be served after this special intergenerational service that honors the culture of the Crescent City.



A FUUNO cookbook, as a church fundraising project, is in the works. Volunteers for this project are needed. Contact Maggie MacKay via the church office.



FUUNO Leaders and Contacts

Staff

Minister: Rev. Melanie Morel-Ensminger
 Director of Religious Education (until 12/31/08):
 Coleen Murphy
 Music Director: Betsy McGovern
 Accompanist: Jane Jensen
 Sexton: Chris Brown
 Bookkeeper: Allison Young

Board of Trustees:

Cherie LeBlanc, President (term ends 2009)
 Kathy Hubbell, Secretary (term ends 2009)
 Kelsey Atherton (term ends 2010)
 Jeanne Barnard (term ends 2010)
 Reese Brewer (term ends 2009)
 Mary Holt (term ends 2010)
 Yvelyne McCarthy (term ends 2010)
 Ex Officio – Ann Maclaine, Past President; Veronica
 Young, Treasurer (term ends 2010) ; Rev. Melanie

Teams & Leaders/Contacts:

Building & Grounds – Mary Jo Day
Building Usage – Ann Maclaine
Caring – Rev. Melanie
Choir – Betsy McGovern
Church Ministries – Kathleen North, Chris Reine,
 Germain McCarthy, Jane Mauldin, Marcie Brennan
Communications – Mary Holt, Geoffrey Hennie,
 Cherie LeBlanc (Board liaison)
 Fellowship – **OPEN**
Finance – Veronica Young, Treasurer; Michael
 Tucker, Assistant Treasurer; Wayne Moore, Max
 Oeschger
 Fundraising – Alice Abel Kemp, Yvelyne McCarthy,
 Angie Palazzolo, Ann Maclaine
Canvass – Jeanne Barnard, Victoria Sumrall, Ann
 Maclaine
Christmas Tree Sales – Victoria Sumrall, Marco
 Rosamano, Linda & Chris Reine
 Membership – **OPEN**
Personnel – Kathy Hubbell (Board liaison), Cathy
 Cohen, Max Oeschger, Heidi Bayer-Tompkins, Rev.
 Melanie

Religious Education – Linda Rosamano, Emmeline
 LeMieux, Kathleen North, Camille Tucker (youth
 rep),
Youth Group – Emily Danielson, Steven Williams

Social Justice – Robert Sullivan, coordinator
Anti-Racism – Esther Scott, lead facilitator
Welcoming Congregation – Marcie Brennan,
 lead facilitator
Peace Alliance – Robert Sullivan, FUUNO
 liaison
Gillespie Community Breakfast – Kit Senter,
 Brad Ott, co-organizers
Worship – Rev. Melanie, Alice Abel Kemp, Betsy
 McGovern, Reese Brewer, Cherie LeBlanc (Board
 liaison)

Affiliated Organizations

- **Center for Ethical Living & Social Justice
 Renewal (CELSJR)** – Jyaphia Christos-
 Rodgers, Laura Manning, Rev. Melanie
 Morel-Ensminger
- **New Orleans Rebirth Volunteer Center** –
 Quo Vadis Breaux, Director; Kathy Hubbell,
 FUUNO Board Liaison
- **GNOUU reps** – Jyaphia Christos-Rodgers,
 Claudia Barker, Rev. Melanie, Alice Abel
 Kemp (paid staff)
- **Dharma Study and Meditation Group** –
 Eve Taylor (on hiatus).

Regular board meetings are set for the second
 Friday of every month from 6-8 pm, in the church
 unless otherwise announced.

The church operating budget is based upon the
 pledges made by members and friends. Please
 make sure you pledge payment is up-to-date.
 Payments may be sent directly to the church
 office.

<http://firstuuno.org>

Please check the online church calendar and blog.

A community bulletin board and conversation
 space is also available:

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

Missed a Sunday sermon?

<http://revmelanie.blogspot.com/>



First Unitarian Universalist Church of New Orleans

2903 Jefferson Ave. New Orleans, LA 70115

<http://firstuuno.org>