

**Church of the Larger Fellowship  
Report to the Board of Directors  
Lorraine Dennis, Executive Director  
March 2009**

I won't report to you on the staff and what they are doing except to say that they are all wonderful in several different ways and are all working harder than ever to make the CLF the warm, welcoming church home that it is. You will enjoy reading the individual reports from staff members themselves. I've asked them to give you a window into their work here and help you understand what happens in the office while you all are back home.

This report will be about the several ways in which the CLF provides services to underserved populations in the movement. We do things here that no one else does for Unitarian Universalists, both individuals and congregations. I'll be specific about some of these.

**Prison Ministry**

We talk about the Prison Ministry often, but the work that Patty does deserves lots of attention. With about 400 incarcerated members, the Prison Ministry is as large as a mid-sized congregation. These prisoners have a lot in common and many are new to Unitarian Universalism, but they all bring their stories to the table and Patty has developed a loving, supportive relationship with them all. The Letter Writing Ministry is very successful with nearly 150 matches currently. The Correspondence Courses that Patty (with some help from former intern, Dan Kane) offers provide spiritual and theological grounding for these seekers. Spend a few moments reading the GA book that contains letters written to GA attendees by our prisoner members. You will be inspired, I guarantee. [www.clfuu.org/prisonministry](http://www.clfuu.org/prisonministry)

**UUs in the Military**

This is a new program, just started this year, and it is one very close to my heart. I have thought about what it must be like to be a UU in the military since a dear friend joined the Army Reserve and spent 13 months in Iraq a few years ago. I have also lurked on the CLF's UUMIL email list for several years. Their conversations can be fascinating and difficult. We actually published a few excerpts from the list in Quest a while back.

Now, the brand-new website is public at [www.clfuu.org/military](http://www.clfuu.org/military). With the help of the UU military chaplains and chaplain candidates, and especially David Pyle, Meadville Seminarian and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in the Army Reserve, there are many opportunities for online community, learning, reflection and connection. We hope to welcome more and more people as we advertise the site. Don Skinner recently interviewed me and David Pyle. He will write a story on the military ministry for UU World.

**The Church of the Younger Fellowship (CYF)**

Young adults are the future of the movement. The work that our young adult leaders are doing is important for them and for Unitarian Universalism. Right now, the Church of the Younger Fellowship (CYF) is the only young adult programming online available to all between the ages of 18-35. We

support the good work they do, help them manage their program, and provide a home for their program. [www.uucyf.org](http://www.uucyf.org)

## **Worship Resources**

We have a library of complete worship services called *Sundays Online* <http://clfuu.net/myos/resources.php> that is constantly being expanded. *Sundays Online* is part of a website for our small groups that provides access to these services and to other worship resources like music, podcasts, and the CLF library. The *Church on Loan* program has grown by 50% in the last few of years, with about 50 of the movement's smallest congregations in the program. We would love to invite more international small groups to join us (presently, we have 2) by building a library of non-US centric materials and by staying in collaboration with Eric Cherry, of the UUA International Office. We are also talking with Erik Wikstrom, UUA staff, about collaborating with the UUA's Worship Web.

The *Make Your Own Sunday* website is a database of more than 1,000 worship service components created from our *Sundays Online* services and from the *Quest* archives. By using the various search criteria available, one can find opening words, closing words, meditations, sermons, children's stories, and readings based on theme, an author, a season, a theological source and other criteria. This database could really enhance the UUA's *Worship Web* resource, if we can solve some technical and financial questions in the coming weeks. We will certainly make this new resource available to our small groups soon. <http://clfuu.net/myos/resources.php>.

## **Religious Education Resources**

The CLF has been providing RE resources for our isolated families and small groups for a long time. We have a huge Religious Education website with many materials available for the taking. We now offer an emailed, completely new (written each month by Lynn Ungar) online curriculum called *CLiF Notes* as part of the *RE Express Plus* package. For \$129 per year, a religious educator can subscribe to *RE Express Plus* and provide lesson plans, with all the components available on the web. We have recently marketed the program to DREs at mid-size and larger churches for use during the summer, on low-attendance Sundays, during a sabbatical, and as fill-in lessons for absent teachers. The *RE Index*, also a part of *RE Express Plus*, provides a sortable database of all the online RE materials on the website. The Index can sort by age group, theme, source, author, and title. CLF members and Church on Loan groups can receive this resource for free. [www.clfuu.org/re/express.html](http://www.clfuu.org/re/express.html)

## **Online Adult Ed**

The CLF offers online 4-8 week courses in Unitarian Universalist History and Identity, Theology and Faith Development, Spiritual Practice, and Ethical and Social Justice. These courses, taught by knowledgeable instructors, cost \$40 each and are available to all. A few examples of recent courses: *Ancient Roots: The Feminine Face of Western Religion Pt. 2* ( the first part was offered in fall 2008), taught by the Rev. Liz Lerner, *The Soul of Nature: A Journey into the Poetry of Mary Oliver*, , *Transforming Whiteness* (5/4/09-6/5/09), taught by Bill Gardiner and Melissa Carvill-Zieme from Allies for Racial Equity (ARE), *Religion and Ecology: A Shared Fate, A Shared Task* taught by Peg Schaefer, UU and Assistant Professor, Dept. of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, ,and *Humanism Today: Issues and Origins* (5-4-09 to 6-5-09). These and other courses offer students opportunities to broaden their knowledge and deepen their spiritual lives. Also available at the

Online Learning Center are two self-guided classes: New UU class and A Chosen Faith, based on John Buehrens' book. These classes are self-guided with support from Lynn Ungar. [www.clfuu.org/learn](http://www.clfuu.org/learn)

I could go on and on, but you get the picture. Often, programs we design for CLF members and their unique way of doing church, become resources for individuals, congregations, and the movement. We start our work on the first part of our Mission statement and end up fulfilling the second part. It is good and important work for the staff, and for all of you, I hope.

### **Mission Statement**

The CLF's mission is to provide a ministry to isolated religious liberals, and to offer a spiritual home within the Unitarian Universalist movement.

The Church of the Larger Fellowship promotes the understanding and growth of Unitarian Universalism and institutes programs to that end