

Allegheny **ADVOCATE**

Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church's Monthly Newsletter

From Reverend Dave's Desk

Last time, I mentioned Christmas Eve at Uncle Gary's pad. Now I know I'm supposed to be spiritual & all, but I gotta tell you about the "stuff": My all-time-best present was a mechanical dog. He barked. He did 360-degree flips. I was thrilled.

Well it wasn't the cuddliest toy ever. All those mechanics and no doubt some rules of aerodynamic made for one industrial-grade puppy. And it didn't come with batteries. So I had to content myself. Watch other people open their stuff. Listen to Grampa's stories. Listen to all my Uncles joking—sometimes the same joke for the hundredth time. Keep from getting grabbed into Gramma's copious lap. Play with my sisters' presents. Eat the cookies my aunts made. Sing carols. Sleep on the ride home. Listen to Dad read "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus . . ."

A few days later, the moment arrived. I sat by myself on the living room floor, put in the new batteries, switched him on, and let him rip: Bark. Bark. Bark. Flip. Bark. Bark. Bark. Flip. It was fun. For the first, maybe, thirty times. Then I looked for other switches to see what else it would do. Nothing. Now please don't tell Uncle Gary, but once it had done it's trick, it got kind of boring. It was kind of heavy and clunky, so not something to carry around. And as I mentioned, not something to snuggle up and take a nap with.

Later that week when I played with it again, it was: Bark. Bark. Bark. Flip. Bark. Bark. Bark. Flip. Bark. Bark. Bark. Flop. Broken already. I suddenly kind of missed Gramma's lap. This holiday season, may you be filled with what matters most.

December 2006

**Message from the
Board President's
Desk**

Well, the first snowflakes have fluttered in the air and the holidays are upon us. Where did the year go? It has been a busy year for us at Allegheny, challenging but very rewarding. The last few weeks in particular seem to have been very full.

There are a couple of changes to your Board of Trustees to inform you all of. First, Chris Stygar has agreed to fill the seat left vacant by the resignation of Cheryl Napsha earlier this year. Maryanne Sonick recently tendered her resignation from the Board and Leo Nagorski has agreed to fill her seat. Also, Maryanne's resignation left the position of Vice-president open, and Kim Winbush has agreed to fill that position. Thanks to Chris, Leo and Kim for agreeing to lend their time and skills to these vital positions.

Diane McMahon is heading up our new Canvass/Stewardship group and doing an excellent job with the assistance of Pete McQuillin, Gloria Skillings and Khrys Mryddin, Allegheny is conducting a late year Stewardship Campaign in place of the normal spring canvass. This process is in place so that we may have the necessary information to construct a more accurate budget for fiscal year 2007. Within the next couple of weeks everyone will be asked to meet with a volunteer visiting steward to renew their commitment to Allegheny. You will also be given a chance to provide feedback on church operations which will help guide the future direction of Allegheny. I ask that all participate fully in this effort, and thanks to those who have stepped forward to devote time to being volunteer stewards.

As many of you are aware, Northside Common Ministries has been struggling to continue operations this year. Allegheny was a founding member of this group and has always been involved in its activities.

As part NCM's survival plans the current debt load needs to be erased. Your Allegheny Board has committed to pledging \$750 towards helping NCM in erasing that debt contingent upon them finding a means to erase the remainder of the debt. This amount is approximately 1% of this year's expected offerings receipts.

Allegheny has also just successfully completed the 100 Bags food drive for the pantry at NCM. Thanks to Gloria Skillings and Willie Dawson for their efforts on this campaign. How impressive it was to see us hauling all those bags out to the van after church on a Sunday! Can we make this an annual effort?

I wanted to recognize one of our youth, Zoe Engberg. Zoe spent her summer as an intern working on Synapse, the news magazine for UU youth. We recently received a copy of the issue she worked on. Please congratulate Zoe on a job well done; it's great to see one of our youth representing Allegheny on the national level. Way to go Zoe!

Well, enough rambling for me; enjoy all the activities this time of year, no matter which holidays you observe but set aside some calm and peaceful time for yourself also.

Ed Kinley

The world premiere performance of the theatrical extravaganza *A North Side Nativity* will take place during our Sunday 19 December Intergenerational Service. Performed brilliantly by the students of our Religious Education Program, *A North Side Nativity* is a searching look at the holiday season. You'll laugh; you'll cry!

Message from the Board President

continued

World Premiere at Allegheny!



Will the North Side Homeless Be Doubly Homeless?

The North Side Common Ministries (“NCM”) needs help. It’s entirely possible that the shelter and food pantry and long-term housing program that Allegheny has supported over the past couple dozen years may soon be homeless itself. No, not homeless; dead.

For the past several years, the county, city, and federal grants and the financial support of the about 30 member congregations has not been enough to fund these programs. The Board of NCM has been trying to figure out how to keep these unsustainable programs going and has reached out to a larger non-profit social service agency to partner with. The merger is supported by the local foundation community to the tune of about \$750,000.00. Their challenge to us:

Raise the almost \$150,000.00 debt accrued over the years. Then, and only then, we’ll fund the merger.

Not a bad deal, really. We come up with money we’d have to come up with eventually anyway, and they give four-and-a-half times that amount to keep the programs viable.

The Board, with the sanction of the 30 or so other member churches, is going ahead with the plan. That leaves us with trying to come up with \$150,000.00 by the end of February 2007. Of course Allegheny’s Board has agreed to help, and many at the pre-Thanksgiving Sunday helped out on the special collection for NCM, too. But for the rest of this amount, we need to think big. If you know of any resources for grants or any “deep pockets” who care about the North Side, care about hunger and homelessness, care about multi-congregational social justice efforts, or all of the above, please contact Rev. Dave or Executive Director Michael Glass at North Side Common Ministries to discuss the possibilities.

And spread the word! You are only six degrees of separation from exactly the right person who will make it happen. Or maybe it's you!

Black Heritage Celebration

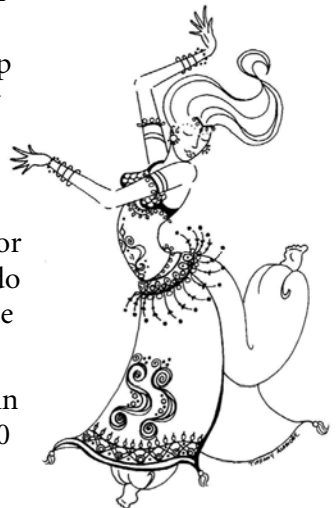
AUUC's Racial Justice ministry will be sponsoring our first Black Heritage Celebration. Mark your calendars now for the weekend of February 2nd. The Friday evening and Saturday daytime activities will be held at the neighborhoods newest coffee shop located at the corners of James and Foreland (*visit them often between now and February to thank them for sharing their space and enjoy a delicious cup of coffee*) and the Sunday morning service will be held at AUUC. Our task now is to find performers; workshop leaders or artisans who may wish to participate in the event- are you one? Or do you know someone? – Please let us know as soon as possible.

Belly Dancers needed!

Well, actually that was just to get your attention - we need any talented or semi talented person who is willing to share their gifts with a group of kids in the neighborhood. The AUUC Racial Justice Ministry is working with the folks at the Jefferson Recreation Center to hopefully provide some workshops and activities for the kids. Small group activities are ideal and the best times are Tuesday or Thursday between 5 and 8 pm or possibly a Saturday field trip in the early afternoon. Share your skills or learn along with the kids how to cook, dance, sing, play an instrument, do a craft or tell them about your job - anything is possible - do you have an idea?- you can bet there is a kid at the center who would love to learn more about it!

Let us know and we'll get you connected. And join us for our Thursday 21 December meeting at 6:30 pm.

Social Justice News



Finance Update

Here are the highlights for the month of October:

- Offerings for the month were \$5,482, and year to date \$25,617 (including \$5,750 of amounts prepaid in last fiscal year toward pledges for this fiscal year.) This compares with budgeted amounts of \$5,813 and \$29,000, respectively.
- We received reimbursement from the City of Pittsburgh of \$2,420 to offset part of the cost of the sidewalk repair, which was done in the spring of 2006. Total cost was \$11,165.
- One member of the congregation requested and signed up for electronic giving, joining the pilot program that the Finance Committee members have participated in for a few months. Information about enrollment will be made available soon to the general congregation and friends.
- I attended an Ohio-Meadville District UU conference at West Shore UU Church in Cleveland with Diane McMahon and Gloria Skillings. Wayne Clark, the UUA Director of Congregational Fundraising Services, discussed stewardship, and we had the opportunity to learn from and share with other district financial members.

December marks the end of the first half of the fiscal year. If you have any questions about the status of your pledge payments to date, you can contact Kenney (Kathleen Kenney). If you make a cash contribution in the weekly collection, place it in an envelope (blank envelopes are available in the Emerson room), with your name on it, so it can be properly credited toward your pledge.

Kathy Graham, Treasurer



Thanks to all those who helped make this year's food drive for Northside Common Ministries a success!

100 Bags Food Drive



Images courtesy of Greg Blackman

The DownUnder Coffeehouse



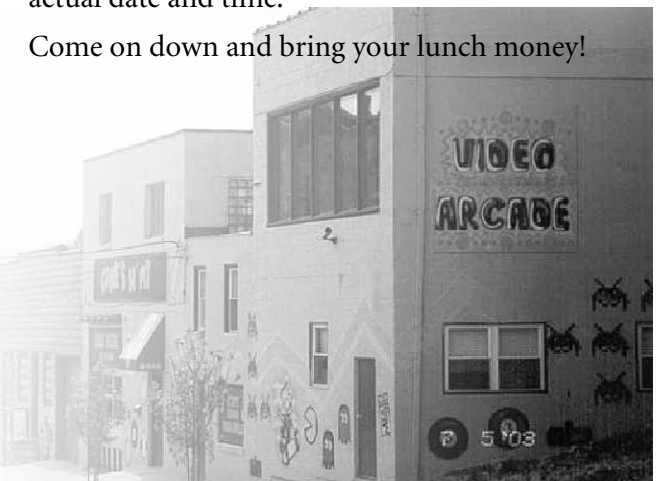
The DownUnder Coffeehouse will host Riveting Rosies. An evening of musical collaboration featuring Pittsburgh women singer-songwriters: Heather Kropf, Patti Spinner, Stacy Mates, Eve Goodman, Janet Ingram and Sue Gartland.

The DownUnder Coffeehouse is open the third Saturday each month in Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church, 416 West North Ave, North Side. Desserts and coffee will be available. Call 412-322-4261 or see www.alleghenyuu.org for more details.

Staying Young

Adult-hood getting you down? Want to escape back to your carefree days of wasting time and quarters in the mall arcade trying to get a bodacious high score or power up? Then join like minded UU adults for a night of fun, friends and mindless alien eradication at Games N' At - Pittsburgh's largest video arcade. 5000 square feet of fun are yours to enjoy along with food, drinks and, yes!, prize tickets. Games N' At is located on the Southside at 2010 Josephine Street. See www.gamesnat.com for more info. Check the upcoming January issue of the advocate for the actual date and time.

Come on down and bring your lunch money!



AUUC December Events

Saturday 2nd

- 11:00 am Peace Vigil in front of church
- 6:00 - 8:30 pm Pledge Kick-off Dinner - Founders Hall!

Sunday 3 December:

- 9:00 am Choir Practice
- 10:30 am Sunday Service
- **Speaker:** Rev. David McFarland
Sewing Threads into the Quilt of Life
On this commemoration of the twenty-fifth World AIDS Day, Rev. Dave will reflect on the AIDS Quilt as a metaphor for life, for healing, and for the blessed community. Pieces of the NAMES Project's AIDS Quilt will be at the church. Check future newsletters for more details on public viewing of the Quilt.
- **Greeters:** Lisa Carvajal & Chris Stygar
- **Refreshments:** Jeanne Zang & Friend
- 12:00 pm Membership Committee Meeting in the U house

Tuesday 5th

- 12:00 pm Oakland Lunch Bunch

Wednesday 6th

- 7:00 pm AUUC Core Team Meeting - Founders Hall

Thursday 7th

- 8:00 PM Tai Chi Class

Saturday 9th

- 11:00 am Peace Vigil in front of church

Sunday 10 December:

- 9:00 am Choir Practice
- 10:30 am Sunday Service
- **Speaker:** Nancy Fitzgerald
"Alignment with Our Values": It's your money or your life especially at the holidays; we'll consider how to change our thinking so it's more in tune with our values.



AUUC December Events

- Greeters: Pete McQuillin & Friend
- Refreshments: Anne Thompson & Friend
- Pick up Giant Eagle certificates

Tuesday 12th

- 7:00 pm Join us for caroling, bringing songs of joy and peace to the Mexican War Streets. Meet at 7 at the U House, where cocoa and treats will be served after caroling. Feel free to bring instruments (i.e. flutes, triangles, recorders) that could accompany the carolers.

Thursday 14th

- 7:00 - 8:30 pm PIIN Board Meeting - Bidwell Presbyterian
- 7:30 PM RE Committee Meeting in the U House
- 8:00 pm Tai Chi Class

Friday 15th - *Hanukah Begins* Newsletter Deadline

Saturday 16th

- 11:00 am Peace Vigil in front of church
- 7:30 pm DownUnder Coffeehouse presents:
Riveting Rosies

Sunday 17 December:

- 9:00 am Choir Practice
- 9:30 am Communion Service
- 10:30 am Sunday Service
- **Speaker:** Rev. David McFarland
Celebrate the Light, Be the Light!
At our annual celebration of the Holidays of Light, we'll explore what it means to bring light to the darkness. This inter-generational celebration is always full of love and life. We hope to see you there!
- **Greeters:** Lynn Glorieux & Friend
- **Refreshments:** Betty Schwarz & Jill Brethauer



Thursday 21st

- 8:00 pm Tai Chi Class
- 9:00 pm Shelter Meal

Saturday 23rd

- 11:00 am Peace Vigil in front of church

Sunday 24 December:

- 9:00 am Choir Practice
- 9:30 am - Sand Mandala Meditation, Linda Deafenbaugh
Let go of the stresses of the season in this circle of creation, healing and meditation
- 10:30 am Sunday Service

– **Speaker:** Linda Deafenbaugh

Winter Solstice and the Call to the Hero's Journey

Pulling inspiration from her journey to Peru, Linda will lead us in a celebration of the inner stirrings of the earth and in a ritual to begin a year-long spiritual quest for all who answer the call.

- **Greeters:** Jane Dirks & Friend
- **Refreshments:** Jane Dirks & Kathy Kozachenko

Monday 25th - Christmas Day

Saturday 30th

- 11:00 am Peace Vigil in front of church

Sunday 31 December:

- 9:00 am Choir Practice
- 10:30 am Sunday Service

– **Speaker:** TBA

TBA

- **Greeters:** Andy Schwarz & Friend
- **Refreshments:** Barry Tepperman & Friend

Monday 1st - New Years Day

AUUC December Events



AUUC January Events

Tuesday 2nd

- 12:00 pm Oakland Lunch Bunch

Wednesday 3rd

- 7:00 pm AUUC Core Team Meeting - Founders Hall

Thursday 4th

- 8:00 pm Tai Chi Class

Saturday 5th

- 11:00 am Peace Vigil in front of church

Sunday 7 January:

- 9:00 am Choir Practice
- 10:30 am Sunday Service
- **Speaker:** TBA
- **Greeters:** *This could be you! See Andrew Schwarz or Chris Stygar to volunteer.*
- **Refreshments:** Pat Downey & Friend
- Pick up Giant Eagle certificates

Thursday 11th

- 7:00 pm PIIN Board Meeting - Bidwell Presbyterian
- 7:30 PM RE Committee Meeting in the U House
- 8:00 pm Tai Chi Class

Saturday 13th

- 11:00 am Peace Vigil in front of church



Note: In order to provide a more stable and reliable schedule, the Advocate prints only six weeks of upcoming events.

2007 Annual Stewardship Drive

AUUC is celebrating a special moment in our socially active history as we commemorate 100 years of impact in Pittsburgh this year.

At this centennial marker, it is the dreams of our AUUC ancestors that are first and foremost in our hearts and minds as we begin to examine our important stewardship role, which heralds our induction into a new century of social activism.

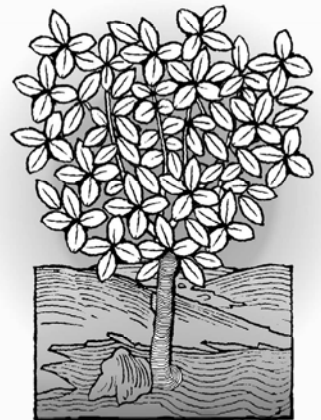
In the next few weeks, AUUC will launch a three-week-pledge-drive that will begin on December 2 and conclude on December 17, 2006. During this time, a visiting steward will personally meet with every member and pledging friend of our community to talk about their dreams and visions for the coming year and century.

When you are visited, we ask that you please consider giving your most generous pledge so we can continue to build upon our social action dreams, visions and plans for ensuring a just and loving community and world.

The volunteer stewards that will be visiting with you, have selflessly offered their own personal time to ensure the life and vitality of our beloved church community. We ask that you please take this opportunity to share and reflect on why you have joined our community, while focusing on what deeply interests you and what keeps you involved with the socially active goals of our community.

Our pledge drive will be launched at a Stewardship Dinner that all members of our community will be invited to attend on Saturday 2 December 2006 at 6:00 pm in Founders Hall at AUUC.

In the mean time, we would like to hear your own dreams and visions for a new century of social activism at AUUC. Please contact the Stewardship Committee at auucpledge-at-yahoo.com.



Your Spiritual Journey – A Call to the Hero-Path

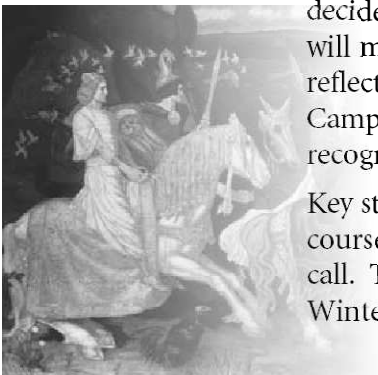
Joseph Campbell helps us to understand the stages and components of the process of journeying. He calls it the hero's journey, the path that is followed by those who are seeking, the path that is followed consistently by those immortalized in folktales and stories the world round. This ageless, cross-cultural wisdom guides all seekers who are embarking on life's journeys.

How often have you read in our order of service, *As Unitarian Universalists, we covenant to affirm and promote ... Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations; and a free and responsible search for truth and meaning?* How often have you made resolutions to work on your personal spiritual journey, but found it rough to keep going consistently on your hero-path?

Now there is a new opportunity coming and it's especially designed for each of you who want to work on your spiritual journey. Drawn from the *direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.*

For the next year, in harmony with the earth-based cycle, all who wish to answer the call to work on their spiritually journey will be able to have the support of others journeyers in the church. The band of heroes will each individually decide on the specifics of their personal path, but will meet monthly to discuss their journey and reflect upon a part of the journeying process that Campbell has identified be it battling the beasts or recognizing guides and guardian spirits.

Key stages of the journey will be ritualized over the course of the year. The first stage is answering the call. This will be ritualized on 24 December at the Winter Solstice Service.

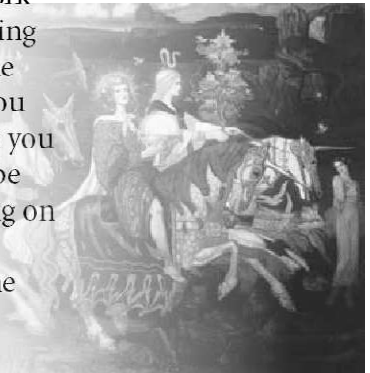


The second stage of the journey, preparing for the journey, will be ritualized on December 31 in the New Year's Service in the morning. The seventh stage of the journey, passing through the gates, will be ritualized in the Summer Solstice Service in June. And the twelfth stage in the journey, returning home, will be ritualized in the fall. As the year progresses, heroes will become involved in helping to design the rituals so these events have the most meaning for their journey.

Your Spiritual Journey – A Call to the Hero-Path *continued*

Here is the call. Answer it if you feel this call is speaking to you....if you are searching for truth and meaning....if you are in need of some encouragement to spiritual growth. *Are you willing to commit to actively engaging on your spiritual journey for the next year?* You decide the specifics, but here are some suggestions to get you thinking about the path. Are there a few books you have wanted to read? Have you wanted to develop the self discipline to do daily meditation? Thought about setting up a worship area in your home? Is there a volunteer effort you have considered starting? Are there places you have wanted to make pilgrimages to?

Think about the call this month and come to the Solstice Service and New Year's Service to help us ritualize these two stages of the journey for all those who answer the call. If you are not one ready to answer the call this year, make sure to attend the rituals to perform the important work of encouraging others. For all who are answering the call, but who will be out of town over the holidays, talk to Rev Dave about doing what you need to do for stages one and two. Then mark your calendar for the first meeting of the heroes to be part of the third stage, departing and separating on January 28 at noon. Check online soon at www.alleghenyuu.org for an overview of the hero's-path.



Read to a Child Once a Week

Share the joy of reading with a child through EVERYBODY WINS! a core program of Beginning with Books Center for Early Literacy. This weekday lunchtime literacy program matches elementary school students one-to-one with an adult to spend time talking and enjoying storybooks. Sessions take place at Martin Luther King Jr. Accelerated Learning Academy once a week during the child's lunchtime, either 11:00-11:45 am or 11:55-12:40 pm. Free parking is available.

EVERYBODY WINS! Volunteers promote reading for pleasure and provide the positive support that helps children know that they can be successful readers. For more information, please contact Cindy Goodman-Leib at <ew@mybwb.org> or 412-951-2795.

Welcoming the New Year

Looking for an alternative to the usual frenetic New Year's Eve festivities? Why not join us at Allegheny's annual Open House and Meditation Service! This traditional event has been a favorite for those who prefer a more personal and reflective New Year's Eve.

Join us from 8:00 until 11:00 for conversation, readings, food, drink and possibly song. Stay for the whole time, or just stop by. The Meditation Service begins at 11:00 and offers a reflective pause on the cusp of the New Year. The countdown and first toast follow at midnight on the church steps.

Please consider celebrating with us. Bring a food item, beverage and your favorite poem or song.

See you there.



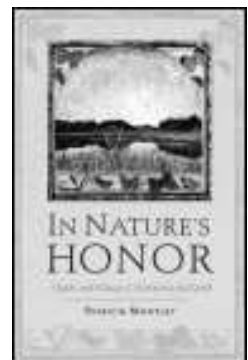
On Solstice Eve, value the dark. On this longest night of the year, before the light overcomes the dark, sit in the dark (alone or with others) and think about the importance of darkness. Bless mushrooms that grow in the dark and honeysuckle that sends its luscious scents into the night. Be grateful for the darkness that soothes us to sleep, the darkness that animals require for hibernation. Give thanks for sheltering dark places: the rich earth where seeds germinate, the caves that harbored our ancient ancestors (and where some of our sun gods were born), the cellars that keep us safe from tornadoes, the wombs that provide our first nourishment. Acknowledge the darkness of suffering, which can deepen our appreciation of life and strengthen our connection to one another.

Value the dark
Meditation for the longest night.
by Patricia Montley



Artfully and thoroughly explores the eight solar holidays that mark the turning of the Wheel of the Year. Each chapter begins with a history of the holiday--the ways in which it has been celebrated from ancient to modern times, its relationship to other religious and secular celebrations and its cultural and mythological foundations. Includes seasonal activities for individuals, families and small-group worship. Plus formal celebrations for church communities and classrooms, complete with songs, dramatic enactments, litanies of seasonal blessings and suggestions for ceremonial food. A published playwright and an award-winning theater teacher and director, Montley is co-chair of the Worship Committee at First Unitarian in Baltimore, MD. (Skinner House) 2005. 400 pp.

In Nature's Honor
Myths and Rituals
Celebrating the Earth
Patricia Montley



Above items courtesy of www.uuworld.org

Interfaith Calendar

December 2006

3,10,17, 24 • Advent - Sundays of... - Christian

6 • St. Nicholas Day - Christian

8 • Bodhi Day (Rohatsu) - Buddhism

Immaculate Conception of Mary - Catholic Christian

12 • Feast Day - Our Lady of Guadalupe - Catholic Christian

16-23 • Hanukkah * - Jewish

16-25 • Posadas Navidenas - Hispanic Christian

21 • Yule - Christian

St. Thomas Day - Christian

22 • Yule* - Wicca/Neo Pagan northern hemisphere**

Litha* - Wicca Neo-Pagan southern hemisphere**

24 • Christmas Eve - Christian

25 • Christmas* - Christian

Feast of the Nativity** - Orthodox Christian

26 • Zarathosht Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathushtra) Zoroastrian

St Stephen's Day - Christian

28 • Holy Innocents - Christian

29 • Hajj begins* - Islam

30 • Waqf al Arafa (Hajj Day) - Islam

31 • Watch Night - Christian

Feast of the Holy Family - Catholic Christian

Eid al Adha*/** - Islam

*Holy days usually begin at sundown the day before this date.

** Regional customs or moon sightings may cause a variation of this date.

CAPITALIZED bold titles are primary holy days of a tradition.

www.interfaithcalendar.org



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Allegheny UU Web Site

www.alleghenyuu.org

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



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WE ARE A SPIRITUALLY DIVERSE, ACTIVIST CONGREGATION