

**THE MEMPHIS
UNITARIAN**

**THE
CHURCH
OF THE
RIVER**

Burton D. Carley, Minister

Home—759-1848 Church—526-8631

Fax—526-8632

e-mail—UURiver@aol.com



www.churchoftheriver.org



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EDITOR: MARGARET PARK - Home: 763-0206, e-mail—uuriver@aol.com

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DIRECTOR: Cindy Sakaan— Home: 725-7758 e-mail—DRECSakaan@aol.co

May 24, 2010

Administrative Assistant: Margaret Park

SERMON: “Why Memorial Day Matters”

In the responsive reading we use each year for Memorial Day the poet Archibald MacLeish reminds us that the death of soldiers belong to the living and that the living must decide what they died for. On Memorial Day we remember the sacrifice of those young dead soldiers and take up the poet’s charge to find the meaning in their sacrifices.

The Rev. Burton Carley will deliver the sermon at the eleven o'clock service

Church of the River Calendar Quotation of the Week

“Thus we bind ourselves to walk together in the paths of love to grow our souls and stand against everything that would diminish the human spirit.”

From COR Chalice Lighting Unison Reading by bc

Wednesday, May 26

7:30 p.m. Choir Practice in the Sanctuary.

Thursday, May 27

6:30 p.m. Soup for the Soul will meet at Laretha Randolph’s, 258 W Cherry Cl. Please contact Laretha at 682-4559 for directions or consultation on what to bring for the pot luck.

7:00 p.m. River Readers will meet at the home of Tuck Dickerson, 461 N Mendenhall. We will be discussing Year of Wonders by Geraldine Brooks

Sunday, May 30

9:30 a.m. The Quest Group will meet in the Beacon Room to consider “The Bible—Down & Dirty”

10:00 a.m. Questions of Faith will be discussing UU Elevator Speeches.” How do we best respond to inquiries about our stand on abortion, death, welfare, justice, immigration, prayer, guns? Please come and add your expertise.

Religious Education for High School students
Childcare for infants and preschoolers.

11:00 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary

Religious Education for kindergarten—Grade 8

noon Coffee Hour in the Mississippi River Room.

12:30 p.m. The Lunch Bunch will meet at the Macaroni Grill, located at 6705 Poplar Ave.

Monday, May 31—OFFICE CLOSED FOR HOLIDAY

Christian Brothers University and our resident art teacher, Katie Jones, earned a Bachelor’s Degree from the Memphis College of Art and was accepted into the Master’s of Teaching program.

A special note of thanks to the Children’s Ministry Team for a lovely brunch on Sunday celebrating our volunteers and to the congregation for their gracious gifts of affirmation and love, openly expressed, to a certain fiery, red headed DRE. You and your children continue to bless me. Thank you.

Announcements from the Children’s Ministry

On Sunday, May 30, childcare will be available beginning at 10 o’clock in the nursery and pre-school with Caron Lumsden and Mary Park.

The kindergarten will meet with Brenda Lanier in their classroom at 11:00.

River Explorers, grades 1-5, will begin at 11:00 in the Chalice Room for worship, co-operative games, and ice-cream sundaes.

The Middle School and High School are invited to attend the morning worship service in the sanctuary and join the younger children for ice cream sundaes afterwards.

Looking ahead to summer, nursery, preschool, and kindergarten continue with classes through June. June 6, is the annual choir music festival for all ages. Our June Service Project for grades 1-12 begins June 13.

Childcare for nursery and pre-school and Summer of Faith programming for children in grades K-5 will be offered beginning July 11.

Look for details in next week’s newsletter.

This May marks the graduation of several of our members. Congratulations to the following members of The Church of the River “family” earning degrees this year:

Mary Conaway from St. Mary’s Episcopal School for Girls, Cameron Hastings from White Station High School, Erin Crenshaw from the University of Washington, Becca Foehring from Furman, Suzannah Herbert from New York University, Will Landers fro Beacon College, and Meredith Strong from Hendrix College. Liz Conway earned a Master’s Degree from

REFLECTIONS FROM THE RIVER



Stephen Hawking is both inspiring and disconcerting. He is inspiring as a brilliant theoretical physicist whose work has explored the mysteries of the universe and its origin. That wonderful mind, however, is housed in a body possessing an incurable muscular disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or ALS. He is confined to a wheelchair and must use a computer-generated voice synthesizer to communicate. Despite the inability to control his muscles, professor Hawking continues to teach, write and lecture. Truly he is inspirational.

The disconcerting part came to me when in a recent television program regarding the possibility of sentient life on other planets, Hawking suggested that we might be a little more cautious about inviting an alien race to visit us since the history on our planet of technologically advanced civilizations coming in contact with less technologically advanced civilizations has not turned out so well for the second party. When the camera for dramatic effect zooms in on the eyes of Hawking, their expression leaves the lingering impression that he knows something terrible that we are not prepared for. Of course, that is only a subjective response on my part.

More disconcerting are the ways he enumerates all the other possible causes for the demise of humanity on our planet. They range from drifting continents colliding, or a burst of gamma rays from the sun to a half mile wide meteor hitting earth. And even if we escape these threats there is always our sun spending its fuel or the eventual collision of the Milky Way with another galaxy. The ironic good news is that we have many more opportunities for us to destroy our environment or each other before any of these occur in the distant future.

In a way science reminds us that we were not meant to survive forever as a species. This can be disconcerting but also instructive about the miracle of our existing in the first place and in the midst of such natural beauty. Aware of our mortality not only as individuals but as a species, we could be inspired to stop arguing and killing each other over particular faiths religious or secular, and lift up faith itself as the human capacity to have reverence for the wonder and majesty of being alive to know and to love at all. As Einstein said the miracle is that the universe is intelligible at all, and the second marvel is that we can apprehend something of its nature. My own prayer is for a human future when we can mature past fighting about our differences to celebrating the glory that we are and our capacity to bear witness for such a brief time in the infinity of the universe to the mystery in which we live and move and have our being. Then the need for Memorial Day will no longer exist in the rituals of humankind.

bc

OUTREACH NEWS

Our 2010 spring outreach project in partnership with Friends for Our Riverfront has been cancelled due to high water along the Mississippi River. We will put our efforts into a fall riverfront cleanup.

Sue Strong

IRONWEED

There is a shade of purple in
this flower near summer's end that makes
you proud to be alive in such
a world, and thrilled to know the gift
of sight. It seems a color sent
from memory or dream. In fields,
along old trails, at pasture edge,
the ironweed bares its vivid tint,
profoundest violet, a note
from farthest star and deepest time,
The glow of sacred royalty
and timbre of eternity
right here beside a dried-up stream.

— Robert Morgan



Laretha Randolph will be the Care Coordinator in May. You can reach Laretha at 682-4559.

Among Our Members

A warm welcome to our newest member, Barbara Small who signed the membership book on Sunday, May 23, 2010. Barbara is a project manager. She enjoys salsa dancing, travel, home improvement and arts & entertainment.



As we travel this spring and summer, please remember to save hotel toiletries for the Manna House guests. Also needed are jeans and pants, t-shirts, tennis shoes, tube socks, towels and blankets. Manna House serves both men and women. Thank you so much for your continued support.
Nancy Walton

