



# WOMEN & RELIGION NEWSLETTER

Summer 2007

Barbara Vaughn, Editor

Facilitator's Circle: Nuala Carpenter, Randa Todd, Lois Morrigan, Chris Higgins, Anne Slater, Alix Berenzy, Barbara Vaughn, Kay Woods, Heather Gehron-Rice

**Mission Statement:** Our mission, as women in community, is to explore our authentic selves, and to work to promote gender equity in our lives, our congregations, and in society

## What is a Woman Link?

*A woman link is a conduit for information of particular interest to women, and news of upcoming events between her congregation and the JPD Women and Religion Facilitators' Circle.*

**A woman link receives information from us (the Facilitators' Circle) and from the JPD monthly packet. She transmits information to her congregation via bulletin boards, the church's newsletter, and Sunday morning announcements.**

If your congregation sponsors an event of interest to many women, your *woman link* informs us, and we include the announcement in our newsletter, transmitting it to all JPD congregations.

Being a *woman link* is not onerous. In fact it is a pleasant way for the *woman link* (and event participants) to get to know other women in the District and an easy way to reaffirm bonds between your congregation and the JPD.

Please check out our web site: [www.jpdw.org](http://www.jpdw.org)

If you are interested in being a *woman link*, please call or email:

Randa Todd 717-732-6576

[wrrt1946@yahoo.com](mailto:wrrt1946@yahoo.com) or

Anne Slater 610-896-6468

[Slater.Anne@gmail.com](mailto:Slater.Anne@gmail.com)

## JPD Spring Conference

JPD Spring Conference was a great success, despite the last minute loss of our presenter. The circle pulled together, led by Randa Todd and produced a lively and well accepted workshop on our elder wise women. Our table did well with 8 shirts sold and 15 new people added to our mailing list. There was a lot of interest in "Cakes" coming out and people who are interested in taking the course.

**Facilitator's Circle** meets three times a year to plan events for JPD W&R. Our spring meeting is conducted at Nuala Carpenter's Beach House on the Eastern Shore. We revel in this opportunity to spend time together and brainstorm new ideas and plans. We also take time to relax, to walk and to enjoy this beautiful place.



**Women and Religion  
at General Assembly  
Portland 2007**

The buzz at the UU women and religion annual meeting and at their booth in the exhibit hall was about two exciting events: the one happening right now is the publication of a revised edition of the first 5 sessions of the inspired curriculum 'Cakes for the Queen of Heaven'. A printers proof was available for perusal at the booth. The curriculum which will be available mid August can be purchased on the web site [www.UUWR.org](http://www.UUWR.org). Buy one for the women of your congregation or borrow it from the JPD W&R library.

The other is an International Convocation of UU Women taking place in Houston Texas February 27 to March 2 2009 . Mark your calendars and start saving your pennies so you can attend this once in a lifetime event ,which is being organized jointly by UU W&R and Southwest UU Women. For more information go to [www.icuuw.com](http://www.icuuw.com). The topic for GA this year was 'Choices that Matter' and at the opening ceremony Bill Sinkford , president of the UUA mentioned the Women and Religion resolution, which was passed at GA 30 years ago, and highlighted the changes facilitated by it, including a gender neutral hymnal, and that more than 50% of current UU ministers are women up from a mere 10%. The Worship service 'Revolution by Resolution , Celebrating 30 years of Women and Religion was presented by the UUW&R core group. The service recognized and lauded the changes wrought by the resolution. Copies are available from the JPD W&R lending library so gather some women together and present this service to your congregation. Two more exciting events at GA were the presentations of the Breakthrough Congregations - Davies Memorial UU Church was the one recognized in JPD which was honored for growth in racial diversity. And the other was the emotional debate on Actions of Immediate Witness

during Plenary VII about which women-of-color delegates, including first-time GAer Angel Savoy James, were especially outspoken. One of the AIWs was to ratify CEDAW, the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. You can watch these events on videos available on the web at [www.uua.org/ga](http://www.uua.org/ga) under 2007 Event Coverage.

Nuala Carpenter  
has graduated  
to become  
Facilitators' Circle  
Muse.

Anne Slater:  
new co-  
convenor of  
JPD W&R

Anne grew up  
in Lancaster,  
Pennsylvania,  
the oldest of

five children. In ninth grade, her Sunday School teacher stated categorically that "God speaks to us only through the Bible". Anne knew that was impossible, as she had already found God's bones in fossils on the beach of Lake Michigan, and a divine Life Force in trees growing out of fissures in the boulders in Franconia Notch, New Hampshire.

Anne went to Bryn Mawr College where she majored in anthropology. Half way through college, she married her high school French teacher. Luckily for her, he was a Unitarian. In 1966 Anne and her husband joined the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia. Although no longer married to each other, both are very active in the church. Anne has been Sunday school teacher, flower buyer, chair of ministerial and music search committees, and board president. Currently she sings in the choir and is a member of the Ministry Leadership Team.

Anne retired in 2005 after 31 years running the Circulation Desk of the library at Bryn Mawr College. She is a voracious reader, avid landscaping gardener, cooks wrecklessly, and knits while she watches her favorite movies. She lives in Ardmore, PA.

# JPD WOMEN AND RELIGION FALL RETREAT

October 12 - 14, 2007

## **SAVE THE DATE**

”A Weekend to Change Your Life”

We will take the heritage from the women in our lives, natural or adopted, look at where we are and where we want to go from here. This will be a time apart, with space to ponder, a place to share.

Learn what to let go of and what to cling to. Come plan your next steps at

Saint Raphaela Mary Retreat Center  
in Haverford, PA

Friday evening through Sunday lunch

This is an opportunity ponder, to connect with other women, and to enjoy free time.

Barbara Vaughn is our librarian for the time being. If you know someone who would like to take on this task, please contact her at 301 638-3733 or Anne at 610 896-6468. Our library is contained in a wheeled suitcase. Our librarian finds new purchases library, loans out materials and tracks the loans. **We will buy two copies of the new *Cakes* as soon as it comes out and keep it in our library to loan out.**

*Keep updated at our new website*  
<http://www.uujpdwr.org>

*A special thanks goes to Joyce Dowling the web designer of our new website. Take a look. It really looks nice and will keep you better informed as we work to provide great ideas and opportunities for the women of our region.*

### **Heather's Graduation**

We are proud to applaud the success of Heather Gehron-Rice who graduated from seminary this spring. Barbara, Anne and Randa were her stand-in grandmothers at the worship service and graduation program. Heather stood and gave a letter of appreciation to the women of our Facilitators' Circle for supporting and encouraging her in her work to become a U.U. minister and leader. Her class was proud to provide over \$13,000 as a class gift to teach diversity education at the seminary. The circle presented Heather with a soft-sided leather brief case.

### **Thank-you Women's Links!**

Thanks to our Women's Links, our March 3 Drumming Circle had more than 50 participants, ranging in age from 11 to 70 (reportedly). The word really got out and we were at the limit in no time, even though bad weather kept one person at the airport in Atlanta, and illness kept another one home. You ROCK!

## **A Drumming Circle for Women**

Our drumming circle was a wonderful success **and** we will plan another one for next winter. The next one will be in Harrisburg the first weekend in March.

### **I AM**

I am light and love  
Laughter and celebration  
Connection and sharing.

I am a page turner  
A difference maker  
A synergist.

I am "a sharing one"  
A friend  
A lover.

Barbara Jean Vaughn

## Trusting Our Bodies

Women in childbirth have a variety of experiences. As a “doula” I try to make that transition into motherhood as positive as it can be. The biggest obstacle to having a “good birth” is the mindset we have inherited from not only our families but from society. Mothers are told to expect pain and suffering and to embrace narcotics to avoid the natural sensations of labor and birth, Instead of being taught good coping skills and making labor and birth a team effort. The medical establishment has taken birth as their own away from women, the mothers and the midwives and the montrices, and made it more paternalistic and interventionist and modern.

To think of giving birth as a feminist issue takes some people a little getting used to. Labor and birth are parts of many women's lives but even those who are not mothers can take to heart this issue on other levels. By modernizing or medicalizing a natural event and perverting it does not empower women to make sound choices in their healthcare. It teaches them to be afraid of their bodies and of change and of trusting their internal minds and instincts. Some women have become so frightened of the labor process they are seeking out voluntary cesarean sections, i.e. major abdominal surgery, to forgo trusting their bodies.

With my efforts, and the efforts of many other women in my area, we are trying to bring the focus of labor and birth back to where it began. Making babies is messy. Having babies is messy. Life is messy.

--Jennifer Mossholder

jenn@doulamom.com

[www.doulamom.com](http://www.doulamom.com)

## LOCAL EVENTS OF INTEREST

An exciting project at Restoration in the Mt Airy section of Philadelphia this fall is an offering of "Rise Up and Call Her Name" led by Rev. Kathie Thomas. A retired minister and member of Wilmington Unitarian Society, she has led women's spirituality groups throughout this area. More class details as they are available, however: but we are planning going to offer the first half starting in Oct. meeting weekly for 6 weeks, then the 2nd half of curriculum in the winter.

Another Restoration treasure is Susan Windle, poet and writing circle leader. She leads a weekly writing group that is almost all women but welcomes those interested. Check out her web site at [www.susanwindle.org](http://www.susanwindle.org)

The Davies Memorial Unitarian Universalist Church in Camp Springs plans to openly welcome gays to its membership. The date set is Sept. 22. The church is confident the move will bring in greater diversity, said the Rev. John Crestwell Jr., the church's pastor.

### **The following article appeared on [uuworld.org](http://uuworld.org):**

Thirty years of feminist transformation

The 1977 Women and Religion resolution transformed the Unitarian Universalist Association. By Kimberly French

Please click on the following link or copy and paste it into your web browser:

<http://www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/23905.shtml>

**Would you like to have a JPD W&R retreat in your area?**

We are looking for new sites for our retreats.

If you know of a retreat site in your area  
that might work for one of our retreats, please get the particulars  
and contact a member of the Facilitators' Circle with the information.

Thanks.

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