

Our reach should exceed our grasp.

REACH

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northfield
A WELCOMING CONGREGATION

December 2010



Services are held at Fellowship Hall, corner of West 2nd & Linden Streets in Northfield. Babysitting and children's religious education are provided.

Minister

Kristin Maier 651-647-5699
kmaier@q.com

President

Bob Ciernia 663-7876
bobciernia@gmail.com

Vice-President

Pat Tullo 651-258-4735
Tullo@sleepyeyetel.net

Treasurer

Mike Jonas 507-649-0001
michaelcjonas@gmail.com

Secretary

Janet McGrath 645-7660
janetmcgrath@gmail.com

Board Member-At-Large

Mairi Doerr 507-789-6606
dancingwinds@frontiernet.net

Director of Religious Education

Nancy Huppert 507-581-6437
nhuppert@gmail.com

Religious Education

Kristin Lucas 645-9098
welucas4@charter.net

Sunday Services

Suzannah Ciernia 663-7876
syciernia@gmail.com

Membership & Music

Bev Topp 952-469-4859
bevorleetopp@frontiernet.net

Facilities

Lee Topp 952-469-4859
bevorleetopp@frontiernet.net

Social Justice

Mera Colling 645-9174
eimalou@gmail.com
Marilyn Prevost 645-0285
marilyn57@vitalityforlife.com

Stewardship

Greg Marfleet 645-4035
gmarfleet@charter.net

Ministerial Liaison

Lee Topp 952-469-4859
bevorleetopp@frontiernet.net

Reach Editor

Hortense MacLeod 645-4572
turhanz@gmail.com

December Services & Events

Sunday December 5 • 10 a.m. • “All My Relatives” • Rev. Kristin Maier

European culture has traditionally drawn a sharp line between human life and “animal” life. When we reexamine our connection to the other beings in the animal world, what can we learn about what it means to be human? What can we learn about this greater world of which we are a part?

Sunday December 12 • 10 a.m. • “Bless the Animals” • Pat Tullo • Through songs, readings, reflections, photographs, and testimonials from the congregation, we will celebrate our connection to the rest of the animal kingdom and the ways in which animals enrich our lives. (See additional information later in this issue of REACH).

Sunday December 19 • 10 a.m. • “Authentic Joy” • Rev. Kristin Maier

Each Christmas season we are bombarded with the message that if we just by a particular product, then we (or the recipient) will know happiness. What kind of happiness are we being sold? What kind of happiness do we truly seek? How might we really find it?

Friday December 24 • 4 p.m. • Christmas Eve Carols, Cookies and Cider

In the spirit of the season, you are invited to take a break from the hustle and bustle and come in from the cold for some warm Yuletide comfort and joy – singing, stories, and good cheer! Family service will be kid-friendly

Sunday December 26 • 1 p.m. • Yuletide Sleigh Ride and Potluck Snacks

Come out to the Topps' farm to enjoy an old-fashioned horse drawn sleigh ride through snowy woods with hot cider and a potluck of snacks – leftover holiday cookies are great! Sleigh ride will happen weather permitting, so send your best thoughts towards the snow spirits! If you need directions, please call Bev or Lee.

When is a Sunday service a little different?

Every once in a while we have a month with five services. The 5th Service has traditionally been an occasion for a more casual multi-generational service or activity followed by a potluck. This church year we've had one in October and will have three more this church year. Sometimes, as on December 26th, it is extra special; we don't meet until the afternoon.

“What Wonderful Tradition Do You Come From?”

by Kristin Maier

I've heard that the His Holiness the Dalai Lama has the habit of asking new acquaintances, “What wonderful tradition do you come from?” It has always struck me as such an important model for how to approach interfaith dialogue.

It begins with the assumption that whatever tradition a person hails from has intrinsic value, even if or perhaps especially if that tradition is different than one's own.



To adopt such a perspective requires a certain level of confidence in one's own religious tradition. If I know in my heart that my religious tradition is just as legitimate as any other, I am in a better position to acknowledge the worth of another's tradition, even if it is categorically different than my own. I need not be defensive about my own religion or question the integrity of another's religion in order to legitimate my own. I simply know that my religious tradition is “wonderful” and of value regardless of what others might or might not think.

This kind of mindset of assuming the worth of the other's perspective and knowing the worth of one's own has particular relevance to Unitarian Universalists. We understand that any religious movement that involves two or more people is an interfaith endeavor to some degree. After all, even in our relatively small congregation we come from a broad range of theological (or atheological) perspectives. On any given Sunday we have among us Unitarian Universalists who identify as Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, religious Humanist, spiritually Earth-centered, theist, atheist, agnostic, probably everywhere in between and beyond.

If we felt that we needed to convince everyone else to think as we do in order to preserve our own sense

of legitimacy, we would have a highly contentious religious community. Or, no religious community at all. Instead, each week we have the opportunity to be curious about one another, to wonder and to ask, “What wonderful religious perspective are you coming from?”

What we might find in our curiosity is that each perspective brings a richer sense of who we are as a whole religious community. Each perspective also tells us something about the many sources that make up our tradition of Unitarian Universalism. Each perspective, each source can teach us something about how to better love this world and each being we find on it. As Ferenc David, the founder of the Unitarian Church of Transylvania, once said, “We need not think alike, to love alike.”

Unitarian Universalism (UU) draws from many sources:

- 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;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
- Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

To My Old Brown Earth

by Bob Ciernia

The following lyrics are from a song written by Pete Seeger in 1958.

To my old brown earth
And to my old blue sky
I now give these last few molecules of "I."

And you who sing,
And you who stand nearby,
I do charge you not to cry.

Guard well our human chain,
Watch well to keep it strong,
As long as sun will shine.

And this our home,
Keep pure and sweet and green,
For now I'm yours
And you are also mine.



"To My Old Brown Earth" was performed by our choir at the recent memorial service for one of our founding members, Joy Wolf. Suzannah and I were in Massachusetts visiting our sons for Thanksgiving and were unable to attend but everyone I've talked to has said it was a celebration of Joy's life, and some have said they hope it will be replicated after their own passing. I am sorry to have missed it.

Joy had a wonderful ability to interweave threads of the internal dialogue she was having based on the books she was reading, the news of our world, and the people she was talking with... and make connections others might have missed. Engaged and thoughtful, I am sure Joy would have both approved and commented on this song, and the entire service.

Another UU, Peter Seeger, has been commenting on his view of the world and putting those thoughts into music for decades. Born in 1919, Pete Seeger wrote this song when he was 39. Think about that for a moment. This is not the song of a man nearing death, but it is the song of a man wrestling with it and working out how to find peace with it.

Pete is reminding us that the molecules that were Joy are still all around us. And when I think about my own molecules of "I," I know they, too, will eventually be reconstituted into some other "I," ad infinitum.

And, as this is the Christmas season, I will make a leap of which Joy would be proud: the birth so many celebrate at this time of year is noteworthy not so much for the

story of its divinity but for the wonder of its universality. Every birth is a gift, the reconstitution of an "I" that has disintegrated and been reintegrated countless times since the beginning of time.

As you gather to celebrate the various holy days of this holiday season, I hope you will remember that you too are a miracle birth... and that the molecules that of your "I" will remain active until the end of time. At times, this good news will be distressing and at other times this good news may be all you need to know.

It's a wonder-full life, isn't it? Given the choice, this "I" would surely do it again.

Quotes from Pete Seeger:

"I like to say I'm more conservative than Goldwater. He just wanted to turn the clock back to when there was no income tax. I want to turn the clock back to when people lived in small villages and took care of each other."

"I still call myself a communist, because communism is no more what Russia made of it than Christianity is what the churches make of it. But if by some freak of history communism had caught up with this country, I would have been one of the first people thrown in jail."

Addendum:

Fifty-two years ago when Pete Seeger wrote "To My Old Brown Earth," I was 10 and listening to my parents' albums of Mitch Miller. Pete would have been frowned upon in my household – too much of a rabble-rouser – and I doubt I would have listened to him, let alone reflect on the meaning of his song. Now, as an aging Boomer, I find Pete's song (and his entire body of work) inspiring. Even at 91, Pete does not seem old... giving me hope I can be the same.

When you stop to reflect on your childhood, middle age, and old age, you can see they are not disconnected pools of time but parts of a stream that is your life... no matter your age, it is a stream you can look upstream and downstream as you reflect on where you have been and where you are going. Looking back at what I thought of my elders when I was 10 – or 40 – has prompted me to reach out in both directions so as to learn more about what lies ahead and to extend a hand for those coming up.

You can see I really like this song.

December RE

by Nancy Huppert

Sunday, December 5

K-4 Picture Book UU – When the Moon is Full

Teacher: Nancy Huppert

Nursery: Nick Marfleet

Full moons come, full moons go, softening nights with their silver glow. So begins the introductory poem to this lovely book that portrays the twelve full moons of the year and their traditional Native American names. As fall turns to winter, we will celebrate the change of seasons with poetry and song. Our K-4 children will also rehearse the musical story SNOW in preparation for our presentation during the January 23rd service.



Youth Group: The Gospel According to the Simpsons

Sunday, December 12

K-4 : Picture Book UU – Elijah’s Angel: A Story for Hanukkah & Christmas

Teacher: Marcia Jacobs

Assistant: Lois Burnes

Nursery: Ben & Theo Lucas

Elijah’s Angel tells the story of the friendship between a young Jewish boy and an elderly Christian woodcarver and the understanding that is created between them during the holiday season.

Youth Group: The Gospel According to the Simpsons

Sunday, December 19

K-4 : Picture Book UU – The Shortest Day: Celebrating the Winter Solstice

Teacher: Nancy Huppert

Nursery: Olivia & Claire Paulsen

Youth Group: During today’s service our youth will participate in a solstice ritual and then remain upstairs with the adults.



Friday, December 24

Cookies & Carols – NO RE or Nursery Care

Youth and children will remain upstairs.

Sunday, December 26

Sleigh Ride at the Topps 1:00 p.m.

No RE or Nursery

UUFNers with funny hats



November 2010: Feed My Starving Children

Standing on the Side of Love Rainbow Dinner

by Suzannah Ciernia and Hortense MacLeod

The Sunday Service Committee has begun plans for next year's "Rainbow Dinner" to honor and celebrate equal rights for all persons. The event has grown in popularity over the past two years. This led to discussion in the committee about expanding our "reach" by moving to a larger venue and inviting other community partners to participate. We are delighted to announce that after meeting with members of the First United Church of Christ, they have accepted our invitation to join UUFN in sponsoring the 2011 "Rainbow Dinner".

As in the two years past, Luigi Sison will be volunteering his chef expertise. During the last six months, Luigi and Klaus Huehn have been developing exquisite home-made German sausages in the Huehn lab kitchen during. These will be part of the upcoming fare and I (Hortense) can testify to their exquisite deliciousness.

It was proposed to the UCC that this year's Rainbow Dinner's focus be on the issue of immigration. This is another issue the UUA national "Standing on the Side of Love" campaign addresses.

With the larger venue, there will also be many opportunities for volunteering so please contact Hortense Macleod if you would like to help in any way.



UUA "Standing on the Side of Love" General Campaign

from the Standing on the Side of Love Website

- Right now, both love and fear are rising up in our nation. We stand on the side of love. We want to harness love's power to stop oppression, exclusion, and violence.
- Our local and national leaders have a responsibility to unify and advance our communities, not to divide us from our neighbors simply because of who we are.
- We are all created in God's image. People of every faith are called to honor God by honoring all of God's creation. We are called to love our neighbors and welcome the stranger.

GLBT

- We believe that homophobia, not homosexuality, is a sin.
- Love is a gift from God. No loving God would give anyone a gift in order to punish or humiliate them.
- The covenant of marriage is a sacred trust between two individuals. Any couple able to forge that bond deserves the legal benefits of marriage as well as the ability to express that sacred trust freely and equally in our society.

Immigration

- Our immigration system is taking children from their parents and tearing our nation apart. Any system which breaks up families is, itself, broken.
- Hospitality is central to spiritual life. The inhospitality and cruelty shown to immigrants today weakens our nation's soul.
- As people of faith, we are called to stand with the vulnerable and the oppressed. We are called to welcome the stranger.
- As neighbors, we must offer refuge to weary travelers, not declare that there is no room at the inn.

<http://www.standingonthesideoflove.org/>

Wind Turbine to Power Nora Church

November 16, 2010 - By Fritz Busch, Staff Writer

HANSKA - A church east of here was recently learned that thanks to a \$20,000 federal grant, plans for a wind turbine project will come true.

A few years ago, the [Nora Unitarian Universalist Church Social Justice Committee](#) began exploring alternative energy projects to power the church and sell power back to utility firms.

"After studying solar, wind and geo thermal projects, we found wind is the best choice," said committee member Darrell Hinsman of New Ulm.

"People in the congregation said we should look at it. Our beliefs and values are about producing carbon-free energy," Hinsman added.

He is president of Prairie Beacon, Inc., an investor group that got the \$20,000 USDA grant.

The church is the only shareholder in Prairie Beacon. It can take advantage of a 30 percent federal renewable energy tax credit.

Hinsman said the site on a hill is an excellent wind power site with an 11-year project payback, according to a study done by Energy Concepts of Hudson, Wis.

The \$94,000 project includes a Jacobs 20kw wind turbine with 31-foot diameter fiberglass blades on a 120-foot tower similar to windmill towers found on many nearby farms.

The turbine is advertised as being able to generate power with 6 mph wind, has a 20,000 watt rated capacity at 27 mph and monthly output of 480 kw/month at 12 mph.

It will be located about 400 feet from the church, where a gravel road is located, on the south edge of Mount Pisquah Cemetery.

Hinsman said that because the project is less than 40kw, a wind monitor study was not needed.

A county permit has been acquired.

"We used wind maps and learned we have an excellent wind (power) site. The land around where the tower will be built slopes up from the south. Wind accelerates as it goes uphill," Hinsman added.

He said the wind turbine, which was built in Prior Lake, has a mechanical inverter.

According to state law, surplus power will be bought back by Alliant Energy.

"We're excited about it," Hinsman said.

Without a grant, the project would have been much more difficult, he said.

The study concluded that heating and cooling loads draw the most electricity.

It suggested replacing outdated appliances with Energy Star-rated models and keeping lights and computers off when not in use.

The church [held] a ground-breaking event Sunday, Nov. 21 following the 10:30 a.m. service.

Cement turbine tower footings will be poured later this month.

[The church may be the first in Minnesota with a wind turbine project.](#)

(Fritz Busch can be e-mailed at fbusch@nujournal.com).



Participation in the “Bless the Animals” Service

by Pat Tullo

Come join us on Sunday, December 12, at 10:00 a.m. The service will include a photographic slideshow of animals, rather than the presence of live animals. We



invite you to email me pictures of the animal companions in your family—past or present— or pictures of other animals that you wish to include in the blessing ceremony. If the pictures also show human members of your family, so much the better. Send as many pictures as you like; I will include them all. If you do not have pictures in digital form, or a scanner to convert them, you can

mail prints to me or bring them to the Fellowship on December 5. I will scan and return your prints to you.

WELCOMING CONGREGATION COMMITTEE

Becoming a Welcoming Congregation

by Pat Tullo

In the October issue of REACH, Bob Cernia gave an overview of the UUA's Welcoming Congregation program and where our Fellowship currently stands with respect to being designated a Welcoming Congregation. Since then, we have formed a committee consisting of Mairi Doerr, Naomi Estes-Tullo, Burt Fleming, Janet McGrath, and Pat Tullo. We are planning to distribute a simple survey that we invite everyone to complete so we might have a better understanding of the thoughts and beliefs of the Fellowship. The survey will help us plan our activities, some of which we will integrate into Sunday services. Our hope is to be ready to apply for UUA certification at the end of the 2010-2011 year.



We would love to hear from anyone who would like to work with the committee to further our goal of becoming a Welcoming Congregation. Please contact any committee member. This is an opportunity for us all to learn and grow together and strengthen our understanding of each other as a community.

COFFEE HOUR

Below is the list of those who have volunteered to set up, bring treats, and clean up for Social Hour. Thank you all! We are trying to simplify for the hosts this year so are asking that you provide just one sweet and one savory treat.

Feel free to exchange with someone else if another date works better for you and please let Bev Topp know about the changes at bevorleetopp@frontiernet.net or 612-702-6127 Thanks to everyone!

SUNDAY SOCIAL HOUR HOST



Dec 5 - Bob & Suzannah C Ciernia

Dec 12 - Lois Burnes & E Emma Onawa

Dec 19 - Marilyn Prevost & Nan Just

Dec 26 - All

GREETER LIST

December - Carol Marshall & Bobbi Baker

Greeters are asked to serve for a month of Sundays. In the event there is a Sunday in your month that doesn't work, please just contact Bill McGrath at billmcgrath52@gmail.com (or 645-7660) and we will find a fill-in for you.

Board Bits

by Janet McGrath

The UUFN Policy Board held its monthly meeting on November 2nd. These are some of the topics discussed.

- A Committee on Ministry has been formed as part of Kristin Maier's final fellowship process for UUA. Serving on the committee are Carol Marshall, Greg Marfleet and Lee Topp. They will be liaisons for the congregation to the minister and vice versa, and will complete a ministerial evaluation at the end of the year to be submitted to the UUA.
- Another new active group is the Welcoming Congregation Committee whose members are Pat and Naomi Tullo, Mairi Doerr, Burt Fleming and Janet McGrath. Their responsibility is to structure a process for renewing UUFN's commitment as a welcoming congregation for gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans-gender people. The goal is to be officially listed as a welcoming congregation with the UUA.
- Revival of the UUFN library cart is in the works. Watch for further news.
- The board was made aware of ongoing problems with the sound system used for Sunday services. The Sunday Services committee will monitor its status, evaluate problems and look into repairing or replacing the system.

If you have questions about UUFN, please contact one of the Policy Board members: Bob Ciernia, Pat Tullo, Mike Jonas, Mairi Doerr or Janet McGrath.

Prairie Star District Annual Conference 2011

from Prairie Star District Newsletter

First Unitarian Church of Des Moines is proud to host the PSD Conference in 2011, and congregants look forward to showing off Iowa's capital city. Des Moines is home to over half a million people in the metro area and boasts a growing economy, a revitalized downtown, ample cultural opportunities,

interesting architecture, and the motto, "Do More in Des Moines."

The Conference will be held at the Airport Holiday Inn. Only a mile to the north is Gray's Lake, home to several unique species of birds and waterfowl, and hub of the central Iowa trail system. The surrounding two-mile paved walk affords the perfect opportunity for people- or bird-watching.

Arrive a little early for the weekend and inspire your inner artist at the marvelous Pappajohn Sculpture Park, shop the trendy boutiques and bistros of the East Village, or exercise on the miles of beautiful recreational trails. Seek out dinner before the conference kicks off—there are several unique and fabulous restaurants to be found on Fleur Drive near the hotel.

On Saturday, conference programming will take children to the nationally renowned Science Center of Iowa, which promises live programs and interactive activities to engage young minds.

Find out why Forbes Magazine ranked Des Moines the #1 Place to Raise a Family (2010)! For more information, please visit the Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau website,

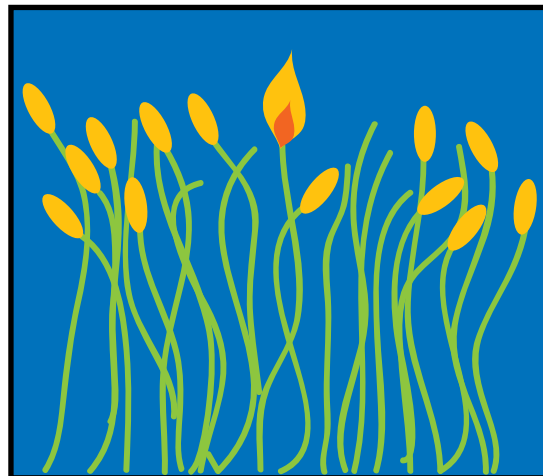
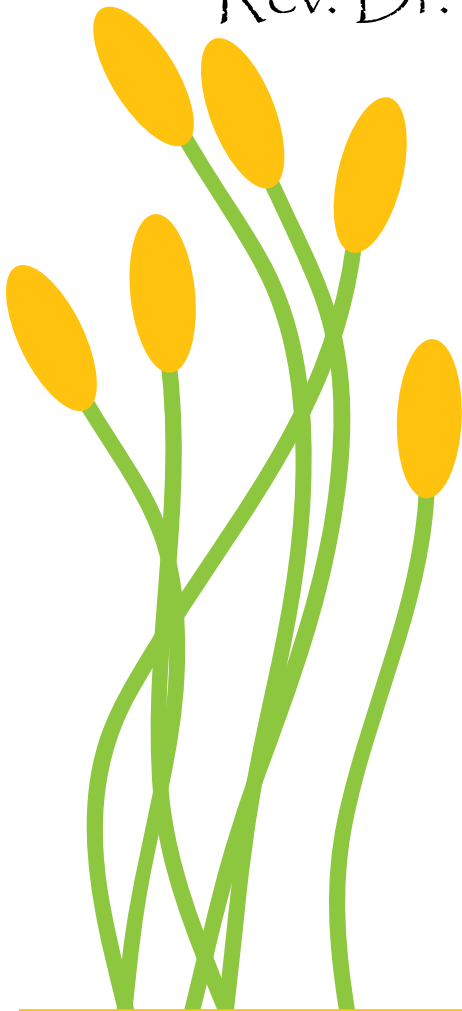
<http://www.seedesmoines.com/>

Our conference theme comes from a favorite reading in our hymnal, "It Matters What We Believe" (#657) by a beloved UU religious educator, Sophia Lyon Fahs. It begins, "Some beliefs are like walled gardens. They encourage exclusiveness and the feeling of being especially privileged. Other beliefs are expansive and lead the way into wider and deeper sympathies." What kind of believers are we? We are our best selves when we achieve understanding and empathy. We are at our worst when we can only proclaim what we are against. How do we challenge ourselves to be our best, while avoiding the trap of being exclusive ourselves? Come and explore this theme with us. How do we articulate our individual beliefs? How do we help our children form their own moral compass? And how do we, as a church, take a public stand on ethical issues?

Prairie Star District Conference

April 8-10 2011

Rev. Dr. Brian Eslinger, Keynote Speaker
&
Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons, Judy Lecturer



It matters what we
BELIEVE



Airport Holiday Inn
Des Moines, IA

For more information visit:

<http://www.psduua.org/drupal/events/AnnualConference2011>

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Numbers that Count

Number of farmers markets in the United States in 1994: 1,755

Number of farmers markets in the United States in 2010: 5,274

Total jobs worldwide in the renewable energy sector in 2008: 2.3 million

Total number of Wal-Mart employees worldwide in the same year: 2.1 million

Total loss in U.S. stock value between July 2008 and March 2009: \$7.4 trillion

Percentage of stocks held by the wealthiest 10 percent of Americans: 90.4

Percentage of stocks held by other 90 percent of Americans: 9.6

Percentage of consumers who say the recession has improved their spending habits: 78

Gallons of gasoline saved by recycling 1 ton of mixed paper: 185

Gallons of gasoline saved by recycling 1 ton of aluminum cans: 1,665

Percentage of aluminum cans recycled in 2000: 54.6

Percentage of aluminum cans recycled in 2008: 48.2

Number of U.S. citizens in prison: 2.3 million

Number of Canadian citizens in prison: 39,132

Percentage of Americans who report a positive reaction to the word "socialism": 29

Percentage of 18- to 29-year-olds who report this reaction: 43

Percentage of those over 65 who report this reaction: 14

Yes! Magazine, Fall 2010
www.yesmagazine.org

Percentage change in the U.S. unemployment rate since June 2009, when the recession officially ended: +1

Estimated percentage change since 2000 in the number of management positions in U.S. companies held by women: 0

Percentage change in reading scores for public-school fourth graders since No Child Left Behind became law: +1

Number of delayed-notice search warrants granted by federal judges last year under the Patriot Act: 1,150

Number that were related to drug offenses and terrorism, respectively: 844, 6

Value of economic-recovery bonds the State of Louisiana has sold since Hurricane Katrina: \$5,900,000,000

Percentage of the revenue that has been spent on projects in New Orleans: 1

Percentage spent on the Lower Ninth Ward: 0

On the state's oil industry: 29

Percentage of all pencils, pens, and crayons sold last year that were manufactured in China: 1/3

Percentage of all food consumed in Cuba that is imported: 80

Chance that an Indian child younger than five is chronically malnourished: 1 in 2

Rank of carbonated beverages among the best-selling grocery items in the United States this year: 1

Rank of baked desserts, pizza, and soda as sources of calories for American children, respectively: 1, 2, 3

Chances that an American believes that Jesus Christ will return to earth by 2050: 2 in 5

Percentage change since 2008 in the number of Jewish Americans who identify themselves as Republican: +77

Chance that an American believes Ramadan is the Jewish day of atonement: 1 in 10

Chance that a U.S. Protestant knows who Martin Luther is: 1 in 2

Harper's Magazine, December 2010
www.harpers.org

The Wayside Pulpit

True enlightenment is nothing but the nature of one's own self being fully realized.

His Holiness the Dali Lama