



Community Minister's Report – Reverend Lynda Smith

This is my second year of community ministry. I am affiliated with Northwest UU Church Southfield and First UU Church Detroit. Both congregations endorse my community work as valid UU ministry. My ministry this year is multifaceted. First, I am serving as a chaplain with the Wisdom Institute's *In Our Own Backyard (IOOB)*, a program for unemployed/underemployed people in Detroit. Gwen Winston, former co-chair of the Michigan UU Social Justice Network, guides this program. It is community based and has three training tracks—arts, media and green living. The goals are to provide employable skills and promote civic engagement in neighborhood development.

I am developing a Street Ministry with a co-leader Jean Murphy, a doctoral student at the Ecumenical Theological Seminary. In October, we did a 4-day retreat on the streets of Detroit with a Buddhist teacher from the Zen Peacemaker Society of New York City. Thirteen people participated. In May (1st-4th), Jean and I co-led our second long street retreat in Detroit with 6 participants. Also, I did a walk with the Homeless Action Network of Detroit in November that First UU co-sponsored for \$250. In January and February, a church group served a meal at the NSO 24 hour Walk-In Shelter. The food was purchased with funds collected at the Christmas Eve Service.

Next, I am giving moral support and a helping hand to three formerly homeless individuals who are now living in transitional housing. Two recently graduated from Cass Community Social Services Food Preparation Program. One participates in IOOB; one works at Burger King, one volunteers at All Saint's Soup Kitchen.

I am an ordained Buddhist Teacher with Still Point Zen Buddhist Temple of Detroit. I conduct their 5:00 pm Sunday Meditation Service every third week. This includes doing a Dharma talk (UU's would call this a homily—a 10-15 minute talk). I also developed and co-led a workshop last fall with another Temple member on non-violent communication, *"Being Peace in Times of War"*.

This year, I have conducted two **weddings** (one UU and one Buddhist) and have 2 more scheduled. I've given 4 sermons and 2 homilies at First Church, 4 sermons and 1 homily at Northwest Church, and 1 sermon at Grosse Pointe Church. While Rev. Kimi Riegel is on sabbatical from January-May, 2008, I am meeting with Northwest's **Caregiver's Support Group** weekly, attend **staff meetings** with their DRE and office administrator, and do some **pastoral care and counseling**.

I attend meetings of **HAND** (Homeless Action Network of Detroit). I'm on the Board of **Doorway to Recovery**, a transitional housing program. I participate in **MOSES** (Metropolitan Organizing Strategy



Enabling Strength). First UU is a member of MOSES and I participate with our joint core team/social justice team. I attend the **Interfaith Scholar's Colloquy at Marygrove College** and delivered a paper there titled "Women and Buddhism". Finally, I am on the **Poverty Taskforce of the Michigan UU Social Justice Network**. I am finding all this ministry challenging and satisfying!

My gratitude and appreciation for First UU's supportive role.