

Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry

November 2010

Dear Ones,

It is an exciting time at UU Animal Ministry. We have had a productive and lively year with lots of great energy for our work and many fine accomplishments. We are moving into the future with vision and hope.

As you know, we changed our name from UFETA to UU Animal Ministry to better reflect the nature of our work as ministry. This simple gesture locates our passion for animal rights, advocacy, and compassion in the context of our Unitarian Universalist values and articulates our commitment of care to include humans *and* other than human animals – all beings, no exceptions. We recognize that those who work on behalf of animals are often in need of ministry to fuel our hope. Our justice work on behalf of animals has been more widely and graciously received as we have intentionally named that our ministry and compassion extend to all beings – no exceptions.

Last year we had a very successful General Assembly presence. People were attracted to our wonderful booth where we had many, many meaningful conversations with folks who previously had not approached us.

Howard Lyman, author of *The Mad Cowboy*, presented at well-attended session at GA. We sponsored this workshop in collaboration with the Ethical Eating Task Force, reinforcing our message to a wider audience and situating our work in the larger context of UU social witness.

We also launched our UU Animal Ministry Newsletter. I hope that you are receiving it, reading it, and sharing it with others. The newsletter is a way for us to stay connected, informed and inspired. We have continued running ads in the UU World, and look forward to the next ad, which will include some of the new information about membership that I'll be sharing with you here.

The board is very excited about development of the Reverence for Life Program. A dedicated Task Force created a program for congregations to use to bring about awareness and compassionate actions on behalf of animals, which can result in congregations developing a Congregational Reverence for Life Covenant or, further, Congregational Reverence for Life Certification.

You can see that the past year has been rich. We expect the coming year will bring us many other opportunities to share our ministry within our faith communities. And next year is a very important year – this year marks UFETA/UUAM's 25th anniversary! I want this year to be an ongoing celebration and extension of the good work begun by our founders.

Here are some of the things that we're working on:

We will be compiling the history of UFETA/UUAM to celebrate our anniversary.

We will once again have a booth at General Assembly and have submitted a proposal renowned to bring animal rights philosopher, Tom Regan, to our General Assembly.

We are revamping our website and will have that up soon.

We will continue to run ads in the UU World.

I'm thrilled to report that former UUAM President, the Rev. Dr. LoraKim Joyner, is now engaged in full-time multispecies ministry. This is an important step in our organization's evolution.

I know that many of you are also doing amazing work in your congregations and I look forward to hearing about how you are living your faith and love.

As president, one of my goals is to continue the direction toward further organizational maturity. I believe the time is right for UU Animal Ministry to lead our denomination toward greater consciousness of animal issues and the compassionate living out the prophetic possibilities of our faith.

And you know we need the financial support of our members to accomplish the transformation of Unitarian Universalism into a faith tradition that truly embodies compassion and justice for all beings – no exceptions.

The board made the decision to raise membership fees for the first time in 25 years. General membership has increased from \$20.00 to \$30.00. We have also provided greater opportunities to support UUAM by designating various contribution levels.

Here are the new categories:

\$30 Member

Please consider membership at a higher level.

\$75 – Clara Barton – Humanitarian

\$200 – Charles Darwin- Visionary

\$500 – Rachel Carson – Earth Guardian

\$1000- Albert Schweitzer – Reverence for Lifetime Membership

So, friends, I'm asking for your generous regular support of UUAM. Please give at the highest level that you are able.

As the holidays approach, I also encourage you to give an extra donation, and remember that you can give UUAM memberships to family and friends, as well as in honor or memory of an animal that has given shape to your life and love.

Let's take our organization to the next level of maturity and influence – now is the time, and we are the ones.

I wish you many blessings at this holiday time and into the new year.

All love, all peace to all of you and all beings.

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Rev. Dr. Beth Johnson

President, Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry