

Unitarian Universalism in New Orleans Spring 2006

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We are still here. We share worship at a Presbyterian Church at 2:30 on Sunday afternoons. Each Sunday, the church sanctuary is full with both congregations present. We have put signs on the shells of our respective church buildings and ads in the local paper and on the local public radio station to let New Orleanians know where they can find us for worship. Newcomers are welcomed each Sunday and encouraged to let us know who they are. Their contact information is shared with both churches through the highly efficient means of a shared office administrator.

Our ministers are amazing. For each minister, this is their first congregation and each minister lost their home in the post-Katrina flood. Each minister has returned to New Orleans and is a strong supporter and leader of our congregations. The minister from each congregation participates in the Sunday services, rotating speaking duties.

The future is uncertain for our congregations as we contemplate moving forward. First Church is striving to recreate a church in the building on Jefferson and Claiborne. Flood remediation, accessibility, and money for the rebuild top the list of challenges we face. Community Church has not fully decided what to do yet. There is talk of going back to the Lakeview area to build anew or, in the immediate future, to join with First Church in their church building. Decisions regarding continuing to have worship service together (once the First Church building is available) or as separate congregations still have to be made.

The strength of each congregation is their desire to be a congregation, to be together as a faith community. For the far-flung evacuees, the internet was a source of comfort and strength as we found out about the members of each congregation. Even in diaspora, we were still a part of our churches. Upon returning, those who could took those who could not into their homes, offering shelter and a chance to come home. Our strength lies in our commitment to each other and our faith.

We are Unitarian Universalists of New Orleans and we are committed to our home. Even in ruins, our city is a place like no other. We thank each and every one of our partner churches from around the country for your love and support and to all the others who have contributed to our recovery efforts. As we continue to struggle along our journey to rebirth, we ask that you continue your ministry of presence. Come be a part of our story.

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