

# Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Rock Tavern

Rock Tavern, New York ([www.uucrt.org](http://www.uucrt.org))

*Fall 2008 Chalice Lighters Called Congregation, UU District of Metro NY*

## **RISING FROM THE ASHES: INTO THE FUTURE!**

Your Chalice Lighter donations will help us realize our vision for the future!



## OUR STORY

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Rock Tavern can trace its history back to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We began in Fishkill, NY, on the 2000 acre estate of John Peter De Windt and his wife Caroline Amelia De Windt, nee Smith, granddaughter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. President John Adams. Later, the congregation moved across the Hudson River to Newburgh, NY, where it remained for over a century. In the late 1960's, a decision was made to sell the building and relocate to Rock Tavern. The "meetinghouse on the hill", as it was known, was dedicated in 1970.

Then, on September 12, 2006, our meetinghouse was destroyed by fire. Most of the historical records, artwork displayed in the sanctuary, countless photographs, an antique baptismal font, and a century old Steinway piano were lost in the fire. The building structure was reduced to ashes.

Congregants were devastated. And yet, in spite of this tragedy, people continued to gather and remain hopeful. Neighborhood churches opened their doors, including St. Anne's Episcopal in Washingtonville, where the UUCRT has continued to meet each Sunday as a temporary home. Support and caring from UU congregations flowed in from throughout the Metro NY District and beyond.

While the building may have been destroyed, the spirit of the congregants has remained strong. In 2007, the children of our congregation wrote a song, entitled *Rebirth*, and had a CD professionally produced that expresses their hope for the future in the midst of loss. Remarkably, membership has increased by over 20% since the fire. Renewed energy is visible in all areas of congregational life including worship, religious education, small group ministry, and social action.



## PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Following the fire, several meetings were held to determine the future of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Rock Tavern. After sharing their visions for the future, the congregation unanimously decided to rebuild on the Vance Lane Property, which is located in Orange County, the fastest growing county in the State. Through discussions and questionnaires, two priorities became clear: We must allow for continued growth, and particularly for an expanding Religious education program. And we must build in a way that respects the Earth, while providing space for spiritual renewal, liberal ideas, social activism, and the arts.

With the help of an architect who shares our environmental commitment, a building plan was developed that provides for a much larger sanctuary with seating for 175 people, as well as a fellowship hall, office suite, and expanded religious education space. In addition, our design includes highly energy efficient building envelope, sustainable siding and interior materials, and roof design to accommodate future solar panels.



**COST AND FUNDING:** The estimated cost of our new building is about \$1,226,000.00. Approximately \$800,000 is currently available from insurance, savings, donations and fundraising efforts. A Capital Campaign has raised an additional \$150,000 to date. The remaining amount that we are seeking to raise is estimated at \$275,000. We have applied for grants and NYSERDA reimbursements, and are also exploring mortgage options to obtain this amount. We are hopeful that Chalice Lighters might provide as much as \$50,000 that would partially offset the mortgage we may need to take out.

**SCHEDULE:** Assuming the financing has been completed, we hope to break ground in late Fall 2008, with occupancy in our new home in 2009.

**We thank you wholeheartedly for your continued support through this Chalice Lighter Call, as we rise from the ashes and move into the future!**