

**Prairie Unitarian-Universalist Society**

December 12, 2004

Musical Prelude - "O Mary Don't You Weep,"  
Prairie Choir

Welcome - Michael Briggs, President  
Chalice Lighting and Reading from Salman Rushdie  
Silent Meditation

Musical Interlude: "La Peregrinacion," Lee Burkholder, Ruth  
Calden, George Calden, and Doleta Chapru

Joys and Sorrows

Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew, ch. 16 -  
Al Nettleton

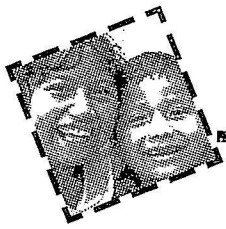
**"What Can We Learn from the Jesus Myth?"**  
presented by Warren Hagstrom

Discussion

Offering  
Introduction of Guests and Visitors  
Prairie Announcements

Spiritual - "Go Tell It on the Mountain,"  
Prairie choir and congregation

Closing words from Walt Whitman - Warren Hagstrom



# Guest at Your Table

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## Guest at Your Table 2004

By placing the Guest at Your Table box where you have your meals, you are inviting to your table someone who needs your support in the struggle for human dignity.

Keep it there for a month or six weeks. Read the Stories of Hope – drawn from the work of UUSC partners – to help you imagine a different guest every week.

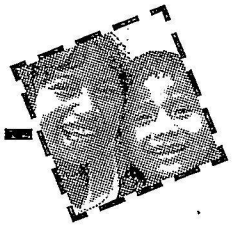
Insert coins or bills, and return the box on the date announced, or write a check to UUSC and bring it to your in-gathering.

Membership in UUSC begins with just \$25 (or \$10 for seniors, students and youth).

Households that contribute \$60 or more have their gifts doubled through a matching grant. That's just \$2 a day or \$10 a week during the Guest at Your Table period.

Currently, only about one UU household out of every ten is a member of UUSC. Let's double that percentage this year. There has never been a more important time for us to raise our voices loudly and together to defend justice and basic human rights. Join us!

# UUSC



Founded in 1939 to rescue victims of Nazi persecution, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is an independent human rights organization whose work is grounded in UU principles and made possible by the activism and generous support of its 25,000 members and supporters.

## Guest at Your Table 2004

UUSC's president, Charlie Clements, is recognized internationally for his courageous and effective work in networking public health and human rights advocates, advocating for access to clean water as a basic human right, initiating the International Campaign against Landmines, and challenging the human impact of U.S. foreign policy.

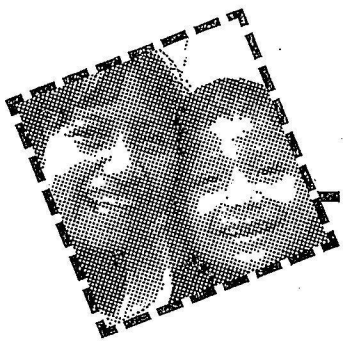
UUSC partner organizations focus on protecting and promoting human rights by using approaches often far more cost-effective in saving human lives than any other. Often it focuses on places where atrocities go unchallenged.

This year's Guest at Your Table program emphasizes the work of UUSC and their partners in Guatemala, Burma and the United States.

It is a fine way to teach children – and yourself – about human needs, human rights and sharing.



Unitarian Universalist Service Committee  
*"The Power of You & You"*



# UUSC in Guatemala

**Guest  
at Your  
Table  
2004**

## Confronting the legacy of civil war in Guatemala

During a devastating 36-year civil war in Guatemala, an estimated 200,000 primarily indigenous people were killed and another 50,000 disappeared. Although the signing of peace accords officially ended that war in 1996, peace has yet to arrive. Political violence, military and paramilitary remobilization, threats against human rights workers, and a fragile justice system unite to provide what Guatemalan human rights leaders have called the biggest challenge to a lasting peace since the war ended.

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has continuously supported the struggle for justice in Guatemala since 1974. Our partners in Guatemala defend basic human rights through focusing on three major issues: citizen participation, women's rights, and the rights of indigenous communities most affected by violence during the civil war.

During the 1980s, we led delegations to Central America which allowed dozens of members of the U.S. Congress to meet with government, military, religious, opposition, peasant and union leaders. Delegation participants then often played leading roles in Congress in working toward U.S. policies supportive of human rights in Guatemala and other Central American countries.

Today, we have continued this tradition by leading a delegation in November 2003 to monitor the hotly contested presidential election. Another delegation in May 2004 witnessed our partners' efforts to bring to justice those who have perpetrated abuses against the country's indigenous population.

Military officers responsible for egregious human rights violations and war crimes continue to possess enormous power in Guatemala. During the November 2003 presidential elections, the candidacy of former military dictator Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt only served to worsen the unrest felt throughout the country. Gen. Ríos Montt, who is accused of genocide by courageous human rights defenders, was defeated at the polls. This defeat is an important step forward for peace and human rights in Guatemala but much remains to be done.

## Defending human rights

Together, we can defend human rights in Guatemala by:

- Getting involved in advocacy efforts by joining UUSC's Guatemala Human Rights Defenders by contacting [hndefenders@uusc.org](mailto:hndefenders@uusc.org).
- Buying fair trade coffee through the UUSC Coffee Project. This project helps UUSC support a women's leadership training program of a Guatemalan coffee cooperative.

In the United States, we work with our members and supporters to raise awareness about the situation in Guatemala and to pressure the U.S. government to take effective action to combat human rights abuses and impunity for human rights violators.



Unitarian Universalist  
Service Committee

*"The Power of You & You"*



## Guest at Your Table 2004

### Participation by women and indigenous people

Our program partners are at the forefront of the movement to ensure that the rights of women and indigenous groups are properly represented in Guatemala by encouraging their active political participation.

The **Civic Political Forum for Mayan Unity and Fraternity (EPUM)** works with indigenous rights organizations to increase political participation. Given the high stakes of the presidential elections in 2003, EPUM focused its efforts on a campaign for a conscientious vote with 13 municipalities. In 2004, UUSC supports EPUM's workshops to empower indigenous women with the self-esteem, leadership skills and political knowledge they need to be successful at the community level.

### Seeking justice in Guatemala

UUSC supports the work of our partner, ADIVIMA, to bring Col. Jose Antonio Solares Gonzalez to justice for his role in the deaths of thousands of indigenous people during the 1980s. A photo of Col. Solares is now being circulated in Guatemala, and a \$5000 reward is being offered for his capture and successful completion of his trial.

### Pursuing justice for survivors of the massacres

UUSC program partners are leaders in seeking justice for the survivors of brutal massacres of indigenous people carried out under the military high commands of Gens. Ríos Montt and Romeo Lucas García. Members of the **Association for Justice and Reconciliation (AJR)** are survivors of the 1981 and 1982 massacres from 22 different indigenous communities. Together, they are prosecuting the generals for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. UUSC provides financial and technical support to AJR for human rights education and the legal struggle to end impunity for genocide. AJR holds community commemorations of the massacres and other means of preserving the memory of victims of the violence, including a nationwide quilt project.

The **Maya Achi Association for the Integral Development of Victims of Violence (ADIVIMA)** is an organization made up primarily of those left widowed or orphaned after the massacres in the Rabinal region during the civil war. ADIVIMA conducts exhumations of

massacre sites, reburials for the victims, construction of monuments in their memory and provides legal support for victims. UUSC supports these survivors in the long process of bringing to justice ex-paramilitary and military perpetrators of the massacres of more than 70 women and 107 children in Rio Negro, Rabinal, and Baja Verapaz in 1982.

### Supporting the rights of women

Local indigenous women's organizations can play a key role in supporting the rights of marginalized women in Guatemala. UUSC program partner, **Promotion for Women's Rights (PRODEM)**, identifies local indigenous women's organizations (often organized around revolving credit or income generating projects) in the indigenous Mayan Mam and Kiche communities in the Quetzaltenango area highlands and then provides women's rights and leadership training to the leaders of those women's organizations. The women leaders then return to their respective organizations to train the other women in what they have learned. In 2004, PRODEM began to form a youth network in the communities where the organizations are located.