

May 2008



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

3773 N. MacArthur Rd.
Decatur, IL 62526
Phone: (217) 875-5442
www.uufd.org
www.myspace.com/uufd_il



Minister:

Rev. John Biedler
Church Office:
(217) 875-5442
Other Phone:
(217) 423-7349
Cell:
(217) 972-2184
jbiedler@uufd.org

Office Hours:

Tuesday evenings
5 – 7 p.m.
Wednesday & Thursday
mornings
10 a.m. – noon

President:

Linda Shroyer

Past President:

Eric Devore

President Elect:

Julie Pajer

Vice President:

Heather Stoa

Treasurer:

Mark Sorensen

Secretary:

Mary Lovell

Board Members at Large:

Ron Shafer
Dave Snoeyenbos
Denise Renfro

UUFd Trust Board:

Ken Robertson
Vern Thistlethwaite
Dave Snoeyenbos

Upcoming Services

All Sunday services begin at 10:15 AM.

There is religious education for children and child care for babies.

May 4 — “The Truth Within Community” with Rev. John Biedler

Central to our ministry at UUFd is that here we promote a 'free and responsible search for truth and meaning' to all who come through our doors. But what does it mean to be 'free' to search for truth and meaning and yet to be 'responsible' about it? As the hinge that holds our other principles together, it is here that individualism and interdependence meet; it is here that solitude and community are balanced. Herein lies the tension...we are both separate individuals of worth and dignity and yet interdependent in a transcendent reality. The privacy of our own souls found in community with others will each be honored (and challenged) in this sermon.

May 11 — "A Celebration of Mothers." with Kathy Sorensen

A special celebration of our mothers, grandmothers, or those who were like mothers to us. Members and friends of the Fellowship will share their memories and experiences. Special music will be provided.

May 18 — “A Communion of Truth and Flowers” with Rev. John Biedler

What is truth? Is there only “my truth” and “your truth” or is there an overarching truth? We are combining in this service two propositions -- that each of us is like an individual flower in our singularity of beauty, contribution and truth, yet we are an integral part of a bouquet of beauty and truth greater than any one us. We invite you to bring a fresh flower with you this day, adding it to the collective bouquet we will create. After the service you'll be invited to take home a flower, one brought by another. In the sermon I will take on the question of “how do you know if you've found the truth or not?” It seems to be one of the struggles of this human enterprise, and one I've personally struggled with for a long time. You'll hear what I think...but I want to hear what you think in the discussion to follow the sermon.

May 25 - "Compassion and Loving Kindness: A 21st Century, American

Zen Perspective" Ron Shafer. What is "Compassion"? Where does it come from?

How are we to act with our fellow human beings, with all sentient being? Ron will give a view from a 21st Century, American Zen perspective.

The Integration of Science and Religion

In this series of lectures and discussions, Rev. John Biedler will explore the distinctions between science and religion, and the results of the long "philosophical Cold War" that has been going on for centuries. He will review previous intellectual attempts to integrate these two epistemologies, and will demonstrate how science is compatible with those deep features common to all of the world's major wisdom traditions. In pointing the way to a union between truth and meaning, Rev. Biedler's aim is to guide the audience to what he contends is a mutual accord between the spiritual, subjective world of religion and the objective, empirical world of modern science. You are invited to sign up on the form on the foyer table at the Fellowship. Lectures 4 & 5 are on the **Sunday afternoons of May 4th and 18th, from 2 to 4 p.m.** You need not have attended previous sessions to participate.

Next Newsletter deadline: May 15, 2008

Monthly Themes

Each month we explore a new theological theme at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur. The purpose of these themes in sermons, newsletters and the discussions after church services is to inspire us all to live lives of greater meaning, skill and purpose. Each theme plays a part in the development of what we hope will be a well-rounded religious and spiritual life. The church's offerings each month are by no means limited to the themes, since we have guest speakers often. However, these topics provide us with a set of common stories and ideas that become elements of an ongoing community conversation. Our ultimate goal is to contribute to the shaping of our country's culture and future by becoming the change we would like to see in the world. Through the ten themes listed below we will explore the language and knowledge needed to dialogue with people of different perspectives on issues of faith, values, ethics and religion. But be warned: seriously engaging these themes could transform your life!

The themes for 2007-2008:

September -- Building Community
 October -- Knowing your Calling in Life
 November-- Gratitude's Gifts
 December -- Peace on Earth
 January -- With Grace & Compassion
 February -- Spiritual Practices & Prayer
 March -- Letting Go
 April -- Salvation Re-Defined
May -- Truth , Is it Relative?
 June -- The Power of Transformation

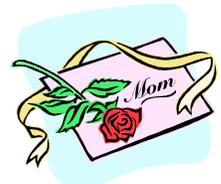
Religious Education Classes

May 4 - Cinco de Mayo- Day celebrating Mexico's struggle for independence - June Allison

May 11 - Mothers' Day- Day to give love and thanks to all mothers - Jennifer Sekosky and Linda Shroyer

May 18 - Humanism - encourages people to work towards the happiness of self and all - Lorelei Zaker

May 25 - Honor your Ancestors Day - Cassandra Meyen



Tips for Living Green...

This month's Living Green tips are given with Water in mind:

- 1) A really easy way to conserve water in the home is to check for any leaky faucets/running toilets and by not letting the water run when you wash the dishes, brush your teeth or shave. The 20,000 gallons of water a year this would save is enough to fill up a swimming pool!
- 2) Consider consuming less meat and dairy, or better still, go Vegan! Did you know that the amount of water that goes into the feeding and care of the average cow is enough to float a destroyer!? To produce only ONE pound of meat takes 2,500 gallons of water--whereas the amount of water needed to grow just one pound of wheat--25 gallons.

***Another reason to go Vegan...did you know that the most common cause of death in the U.S. is Heart Attack? This risk of death by the average meat/dairy eating American man is 50%. But the risk of death by the average American man who consumes a purely vegetable diet is only 4%.

Rev. Biedler's Hours

Office hours for Rev. Biedler in May are each Tuesday evening from 5 – 7 p.m.; Wednesday mornings of May 14 and 28 from 10 a.m. – noon; and each Thursday morning of from 10 a.m. – noon,. You may reach John at the church office by calling (217) 875-5442; or cell phone at (217) 972-2184. Rev. Biedler is also available at other times by appointment.

Glass Recycle

Glass recycle is now available at the Fellowship in a bin just outside the R.E. door. Thanks. We hope this will be helpful to members who do not have curbside pick up.

May 2008 Calendar of Events

All activities take place at the Fellowship, unless otherwise noted.
Visitors are always welcome!

Friday, May 2nd

- 1:00 p.m.—UU Men's Group - Tuscany restaurant

Sunday, May 4th

- Noon — Drumming Circle

Monday, May 5th

- 7:15 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.—Social Action Covenant Group

Tuesday, May 6th

- 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group
- 7:00 p.m. — Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group
- 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.—Christian Practices Covenant Group

Wednesday, May 7th

- 10:00 a.m. to noon—Wednesday Morning Covenant Group

Thursday, May 8th

- 7:00 p.m.—UUFDF Buddhists Group

Friday, May 9th

- 1:00 p.m.—UU Men's Group - Tuscany restaurant

Sunday, May 11th

- Food Pantry Donations Accepted

Tuesday, May 13th

- 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group
- 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. — decREADgrp

Friday, May 16th

- 1:00 p.m.—UU Men's Group - Tuscany restaurant

Monday, May 19th

- 7:15 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.—Social Action Covenant Group

Tuesday, May 20th

- 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group
- 7:00 p.m. — Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group
- 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.—Christian Practices Covenant Group

Wednesday, May 21st

- 10:00 a.m. to noon—Wednesday Morning Covenant Group
- 6:00 p.m.—UUFDF Women's Book Group at Sally Van Natta's home.

Thursday, May 22nd

- 7:00 p.m.—UUFDF Buddhists Group

Friday, May 23rd

- 1:00 p.m.—UU Men's Group - Tuscany restaurant

Tuesday, May 27th

- 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group
- 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. — decREADgrp

Group discussion topics:

Christian Practices Covenant Group—Please join us for discussions on the life and teachings of Jesus and the possibilities of the Christian faith for everyday living. Guests always welcome.

decREADgrp—Spiritual Book Club—the "READ" portion of the title stand for **READING EXPLORATIONS AND DISCUSSION**. Open to the public

Drumming Circle—at Noon after the morning service at UUFDF. If the weather is good we'll again take our drums outside to help energize the Earth for Spring! This is an event for all ages!! Questions: June Allison #423-1813

Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group—The discussion group seeks to explore the teachings and spiritual philosophy of Eckhart Tolle, a contemporary mystic, through discussions, audio-visual presentations, and silent meditations. Presently we are viewing and discussing a spiritual retreat with Eckhart Tolle filmed in Costa Rica a few years ago. This event was attended by Marcelo Lepeley. Open to the public. Contact Mel Weinstein (763-0509) for additional information.

Social Action Covenant Group— meets the first and third Mondays of the month, April 7 and 23, from 7:15 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. at the Fellowship. We lead the congregation in social and political issues important to the citizens of Decatur, the state of Illinois and the nation. Some of the ideas this Covenant Group is working towards are 1.) helping adults improve their reading skills through **Project READ**; 2.) **Share a Magazine Sunday** where we all bring our past magazines to church, place them on long tables to sell for 50 cents each, and support worthy organizations in our community; 3.) **Canned Food Sunday** for organizations such as the N.E. Community Fund, the Good Samaritan Inn, etc. that feed the hungry in our community.

Wednesday Morning Covenant Group— Please join us as we discuss the book *Constructing a Life Philosophy* by David L. Bender. Guests welcome.

Women's Book Group— Sally Van Natta's home at 2 Lake Grove Club Road. Bring a dish to share and consider car-pooling due to limited parking space. The book is *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll.

Letters from John...

Some of the most valuable tools for living available to us are the Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association – if we read them in such a way as to reveal and emphasize the "principle behind the Principles." Notice that in the center of the seven principles is that of a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning."

This not only affirms the search for meaning as central to the human experience, but also declares that the very meaning we search for, the meaning of human existence itself, is to be found in that we are at once separate individuals, each with worth and dignity, and at the same time interdependent parts of an indivisible whole.

Yet a 'free and responsible' search for truth and meaning does not mean a purely individual search, because none of us is a purely individual being. But rather it is inherently something we carry out both in the privacy of our own souls and in community with others. Principle number four focuses itself on that point where individualism and interdependence conjoin.

But perhaps the most important word in this principle is "responsible." Without it, we would be free to believe whatever we want to believe. Instead, we are required to believe what a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning" leads us to believe. This is a much higher standard in my opinion.

As you think about your own lifelong search for truth and meaning, I invite you to contemplate some of the following questions:

- What role have the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes played in your own search for truth and meaning?
- What beliefs from your past have you given up? Were they damaging beliefs, or comforting beliefs? Were they easy to give up or hard to give up? What led you to give up those beliefs?
- Can you name any beliefs you wish you had, but cannot bring yourself to? Why would you like to believe them? What prevents you?
- Are there beliefs that others hold that you would like to embrace? Are there beliefs held by others – especially other Unitarian Universalists – that you think are damaging or foolish? Why? How does this affect you? How can you listen to them speak their truths, and hear what you might learn, if you believe they are damaging or foolish?
- The search for truth and meaning may be carried out in any number of ways, including scientific inquiry, an academic study of the words of prophetic women and men, a study of scriptures, discussion with others, experiences with nature, experiences in worship, meditation or other ways of seeking transcendent experiences. These sources for our inspiration are listed in the Living Tradition part of our Principles and Purposes, Which of these avenues have you included in your own search? Are there avenues for this search that you would like to pursue, but have not? If there are, what is holding you back?
- Having looked at the dynamic tension between individualism and interdependence, have you had any new insights into the role that the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes play in your own life?
- So what would you say *is* the "principle behind the Principles?" Could it be that Unitarian Universalism *is a way of being religious* rather than an embracing of specific religious doctrines?

For me, religion is an ongoing search for meaning, purpose, value, and spiritual depth in our lives. Our UU creed is not doctrinal, but moral: to love your neighbor, work for a better world, and search for truth responsibly, with an open mind. And thus we come together in community to support each other as we explore our own truths.

Thank you for including us on your personal journey. We are honored.

In your service, John

p.s. I'd love to hear your responses to the above questions.

Joys and Concerns

As in our Sunday services, we are now offering a "Joys and Concerns" section in our newsletter. If you know someone that is having a joy or concern, and would like to notice them in the newsletter, simply send an email to Tammy Bledsaw at t.bledsaw@hotmail.com with "Joys and Concerns" in the subject line, with the person's name in the body of the email. Other information will not be published due to the privacy laws.

Thank you.



From the President...

It is once again time for the annual meeting and the changing of the guard. May 4, 2008, I will be convening the annual meeting of the congregation for the purpose of electing new officers, approving a budget for the coming fiscal year and hearing a report about the status of the trust from one of the trustees. This is one of the best opportunities to actively take part in the governance of the Fellowship and I hope you will do so.

The Secretary will read the minutes from the last meeting seeking approval or amendment by the congregation. The Nominating Committee will present a slate of candidates who have agreed to accept the positions, if elected, of Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Board Member at Large for the congregation's consideration. Members will vote to elect individuals to serve for the next year.

Effective committee chairs and committee members are the backbone of getting work done on behalf of the Fellowship. It cannot be done without them. They will be appointed by the incoming President, Julie Pajer, to begin serving at the same time as the new officers. I hope you all considered completing the time and talent section of the pledge form before you submitted it and if not, perhaps you could consider it now. It is never too late to get involved. One of the best ways to feel more kinship with other fellowship supporters is to be on a committee. An organization with only one ¾ staff person whose time is filled with ministerial work can only function if someone replaces burned out bulbs, takes out the trash, updates the guest book, replaces the wicks for the pulpit, orders the coffee, plans the dinners, teaches R.E. for a Sunday and on and on.

I want to thank the members of the Board, John and the Committee Chairs and Committee Members for making my term of office so rewarding and productive. These people work very hard on your behalf.

When I was asked about the possibility of being Vice President and entering into the four year succession of offices, I thought there surely was someone more capable than I who should be asked but what overrode that emotion was the thought that I could be of service to the Fellowship. This is where I belong and I want it to continue for my daughter and grandchildren and everyone else who is seeking a liberal religious experience. In closing, I want to say I appreciate even more now what so many people do to keep this ship afloat and steering in a positive direction. You cannot imagine how much I've learned. I hope you will share your wisdom and support with Julie as you have with me.

Respectfully,
Linda Shroyer

Annual Rummage Sale

May 18- Rummage sale committee meeting, 12:10 in the board room , or any available space. All are invited .

As many of you know the rummage sale is a major money-maker for the Fellowship and I am looking forward to another record-breaking sale ,none of which is possible without your generous support and donations . A wonderful way to declutter your home and garage and recycle or repurpose those items you no longer use.

Please make sure the donated items are clean, free of stains, tears and are wearable.

Small appliances should be clean and be in good working order.

We cannot accept the following items:

Computer monitors

Computers

Personal items such as cosmetics

June 22- Sale set-up-Your assistance is need to put up chairs

Put items not for sale away

Put up tables

Get items down from the attic

June 28 -This years annual rummage sale 8am-2pm

June 29-No service ,instead we will clean-up sale items, clean the Fellowship and replace chairs etc.

In mid May there will be a sign up sheet in the foyer for helping set-up the week of the sale and working the day of the sale.

In addition to your wonderful donations we need storage space to house some items until the slae .If you can assist in the matter please let Vern or I know.

As always either give Vern Thistlewaite 429-5923 or myself (Denise) a call at 794-2300 for any items you need picked up.

Thank you



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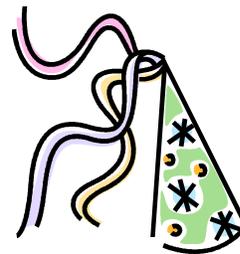
Fellowship mission statement:

In a nurturing environment of openness, mutual respect, and friendship, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur is a welcoming, diverse congregation. We share values and seek to celebrate life and support one another in our inward and outward searches for spiritual meaning, provide a liberal religious presence, and strive for compassion and justice in our community and our world.



May Birthdays

Julie Pajer—May 19th
Terry Hogg—May 28th



For

Contact

At:

Name Tags

Kathy Kline

(217) 875-5442

Address Changes

Carolynn DeVore

ebdevore@insightbb.com

Newsletter submissions

Tammy Bledsaw

t.bledsaw@hotmail.com or (217) 855-0736

Website suggestions

June Allison

JuneChelso@springnet1.com or (217) 423-1813

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