

July 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:
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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.

July 6 - "A Celebration of Freedom."

Never before in human history had the world seen political documents such as those that established our country. Today, we will celebrate The Declaration of Independence, The Constitution for the United States of America, The Bill of Rights, and Jefferson's famous statement on the separation of church and state. Come and join us to hear the stirring words of those who established this country. A discussion will follow.

July 13--"Our UU Church on the kame--its geological and ownership heritage" with Ken Robertson. Kathy Sorenesen will be service leader.

July 20— "Are We a Welcoming Congregation?" by Rev. John Biedler

The other day I was talking with our new Board President, Julie Pajer, about the changes we are making to the entrance area of the Fellowship. As we talked, it occurred to both of us that these changes are really more about the changes we as a congregation need to make in how people feel when they walk in our door. With a more open area to our building's entrance, we want to match this with a sense of more openness to those guests that grace our entrance each week. We'd like your ideas on how we can be more inviting, more welcoming, more open as a congregation, just as we are making our building more open, more inviting. Have any suggestions?

July 27 — CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

Recent discoveries regarding mistakes that have been made in conviction and sentencing have brought this vital issue to the front of our attention. Sometimes the mistakes have been discovered only after the accused has been killed. Our speaker will be Fred Spannaus, of Spannaus Consulting, and well known locally in social services and social justice causes. He will explain the arguments given for and against capital punishment, tell us what is happening on the national scene, and tell of the origin and work of the local and state advocacy groups regarding capital punishment.

Next Newsletter deadline: July 15, 2008

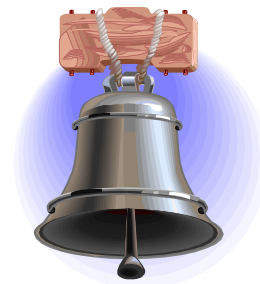
Religious Education Classes

July 6 - U.S. Independence Day- Day to celebrate the right of all peoples to exercise peaceful, democratic self-determination - Lorelei Zaker

July 13 - Secular Humanism Day- Day to celebrate all rational and scientific belief systems - Cassandra Meyen

July 20 - Rocks and their Natural Energy - Annette Meyen

July 27 - Jesus for UU Kids - Jennifer Sekosky and Linda Shroyer



Going Green -- Bring back the butterflies and bees!

Providing a pesticide-free sanctuary for our pollinator pals, such as butterflies and bees, can easily be done. If you haven't already heard, we're in the throes of a major bee-loss epidemic, which is causing beekeepers in North America and Europe much hand-wringing. Because pollinators such as bees, birds, and bats affect 35 percent of the world's crop production, increasing the output of 87 of the leading food crops worldwide, the decline in bee populations could potentially collapse the food chain and spell the beginning of an ecological apocalypse.



Theories abound, naturally—answers, not so many. "We've been pushing them too hard", Dr. Peter Kevan, an associate professor of environmental biology at the University of Guelph in Ontario, told Canada's CBC. "And we're starving them out by feeding them artificial pollen and moving them great distances."



How to help out the bees? --- grow a diverse variety of native flowers they're particularly drawn to, such as wild lilac, goldenrod, and lemon balm. (Gardens with 10 or more species of attractive plants have been found to entice the most bees.) Let's remember our bees and butterflies, because extending a little hometown hospitality could go a long way!

"Be the change you wish to see in the world" ~ Mahatma Gandhi

Rev. Biedler's Hours

Office hours for Rev. Biedler in July and August will be by appointment only as July is Rev. Biedler's month of "Study Leave" and August is his vacation. You may reach John by leaving a message at the church office: (217) 875-5442; or by calling his cell phone at (217) 972-2184.

Earthstock



www.uufd.org

Earthstock T-Shirts

With Earthstock only a few short weeks away, we are taking pre-orders for t-shirts with the Earthstock logo on them (to the left)! The shirts are \$12 each, which includes tax & shipping. If you would like to order an Earthstock T-Shirt, please contact Tammy Bledsaw at 217.855.0736 no later than Friday, July 11th.

July 2008 Calendar of Events

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

Tuesday, July 1st

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

Wednesday, July 2nd

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

Thursday, July 3rd

- 7:00 p.m.—UUFD Buddhists Group

Sunday, July 6th

- Noon — Drumming Circle

Tuesday, July 8th

- 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group
- 5:15 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.—Earthstock planning meeting
- 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. — decREADgrp

Wednesday, July 9th

- 6:00 p.m.—Women's Book Club

Friday, July 11th

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

Saturday, July 12th

- 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.—ARE/Edgar Cayce Study Group

Sunday, July 13th

- Community Food Bank

Tuesday, July 15th

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

Wednesday, July 16th

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

Thursday, July 17th

- 7:00 p.m.—UUFD Buddhists Group

Friday, July 18th

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

Tuesday, July 22nd

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

Friday, July 25th

- 1:00 p.m.—UU Men's Group - Tuscany restaurant
- 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.—Earthstock begins (still preliminary)

Saturday, July 26th

- 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.—EARTHSTOCK
- 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.—ARE/Edgar Cayce Study Group

Tuesday, July 29th

- 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group

Group discussion topics:

ARE/Edgar Cayce Study Group—at Julie Lauer Cook's home

Christian Practices Covenant Group—Please join us for discussions on the life and teachings of Jesus as we read the book by Marcus Borg "The Heart of Christianity." Guests are always welcome.

Community Food Bank—Please bring a donation of nonperishable food items to be taken to our local food banks on this Sunday

decREADgrp—Our readings and discussions are centered around religion, science, and philosophy. Information sheets are available on the literature table at the Fellowship. Open to the public.

Drumming Circle—at Noon after the morning service at UUFD. 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

EARTHSTOCK—SEE PAGE 5 FOR DETAILS

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— will not be meeting during the summer months and will start up again in the Fall.

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

Women's Book Group— Karen Olsen-Murley's rural Cerro Gordo home. The book is *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Please bring a dish to share and RSVP to kom@njoy.com or 763-6455. If you want to carpool to Karen's, please meet at 5:30 p.m. at Sally VanNatta's, 2 Lake Grove Club Road, or at Tina King's, 3476 N. Water St.

Letters from John...

For the past two years I've focused on themes as the subject of my Sunday morning sermons. Drawing from theological authors, from poets, philosophers, various people's life stories and my own experiences, I've talked about ideas significant to all of us. Some of those have been: what is faith, how do we forgive, what is hope, justice, racism, love, transformation, transcendence, death, community, having a calling in life, gratitude, peace, grace, prayer, the art of letting go, of salvation and even that elusive thing called "truth"...yes, these all have been addressed over the past few years from the pulpit. I've also written about them in the newsletters and in handouts on Sunday mornings. If you've missed any of them, you will find recordings of many of these sermons available through Bill Harbeck, chair of the Pulpit Committee, where he keeps a library of them on the foyer table.

My hope is that you've enjoyed hearing what I've had to say. Through these themes I've tried to explore the language and knowledge needed to dialogue with people of different perspectives on issues of faith, values, ethics and religion. I've offered "spiritual practices" for some of these themes for those who have wanted more.

The purpose of this "theme-based ministry" is to encourage in all of us a full and well-rounded spiritual life. Preparing and giving these sermons over these many months have, I hope, helped to inspire us to live lives of greater meaning, purpose and service. But my question is, have they? Have these sermons had any impact? It's hard for me to know if they've been useful to anyone. It may even be difficult for those of you who heard them to know if they made any difference.

One thing for certain is that since I'm the one who has had to prepare them, and of course I've had to listen to every one of them, they have been a real boon to me. The subjects have been very real to me. They have demanded my full engagement. And as you know, if you've ever had to be a speaker on a particular topic, you probably learn far more than anyone listening ever does.

But I'm still left wondering if they did anybody else any lasting good...I guess I will only know if you tell me and of course by observing the lives I see all of you living. A short comment in the way of feedback would be most appreciated if any of you would care to do so.

Now, beginning this September, I would like to propose the last of the 3-year series I spoke about when I began two years ago. Here are the topics I'd like to address in the coming year, from September through May: ***Vision, Creation, Democracy, God, Authority, Evil, Redemption, Freedom and Mercy.***

How do these sound to you? Do you have other themes you would like to suggest?

I look forward to hearing from you.

In Faith,

John

Items Wanted for Earthstock

Please bring your unwanted plastic bags and worn out t-shirts to the UUFDF for use at Earthstock. A crochet class will be held at the event that will teach people how to crochet their plastic bags and t-shirts into reusable bags and rugs!

For more information, please contact Jo Caulkins at jccaulkins@aol.com

Thank you!



Earthstock



July 25th, 2008 – 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM – *still pending*

July 26th, 2008 – 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur
3773 N. MacArthur Rd
Decatur, IL**

This event is being hosted to raise awareness of living Green, as well as to promote the benefits of a vegetarian/vegan lifestyle

The following will be available at the event:

Recycling drop-off

Web of Life Game

Repurposing booth – how to use objects for other than the intended purpose

Drumming Circle

Children's activities:

Garbage Grunge

Touch the Rainforest

Food and drink vendors

Information booths for the following:

Living Green

Books, Bites & Botanicals

Vegetarian/Vegan lifestyle

Deonne Orvis Farm

Oasis Day Center

Green Sanctuary/Co-Op

Illinois Environmental Council

Special Invited Guests:

Al Gore

The Climate Project Group

**50% of the proceeds will
benefit The Oasis Day Center**



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July 2008 Issue

“Promoting freedom, reason,
And tolerance in religion”

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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.



July Birthdays

Linda Shroyer July 6th
John Hays July 21st
Jo Caulkins July 25th
Ron Shafer July 25th



Joys & Concerns

The Oasis Day Center and the homeless
Barbara Avni's family



For

Contact

At:

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Address Changes

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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