

October 2008



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

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Decatur, IL 62526
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Minister:

Rev. John Biedler
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Office Hours:

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

President:

Julie Pajer

Past President:

Linda Shroyer

President Elect:

Heather Stoa

Vice President:

Tom Meyen

Treasurer:

Mark Sorensen

Secretary:

Mary Lovell

Board Members at Large:

Ron Shafer
Dave Snoeyenbos
Rita Schwake

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.

Sunday, October 5—"Creation" by Rev. John Biedler

Have you ever noticed that scientists are often depicted in Hollywood movies as arrogant and dangerous people with a desire to play God and try to take control of the world. In truth, the scientists I have known are usually rather humble people, at least when it comes to their claims as to know with certainty. Today I'll explore what science says about how this all happened –I mean the Universe. I'll leave to philosophers and theologians the far more challenging and problematic question of "Why did it all happen?" The answers to the how question are fascinating enough.

Sunday, October 19—"Don't Be a Stranger" by Rev. John Biedler

When we say ours is a non-creedal church, we mean there is no doctrinal test for membership. You will find we tolerate proudly a wide range of theological beliefs. We say and we mean in our hearts, "Here let no woman, child or man of goodwill ever be a stranger." As members of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur, we will welcome this day new ones becoming a part of our congregation. Come find out what we are all about – and you might even bring a friend.

Sunday, October 26—"Religious Literacy - What Every American Needs to Know" by Mark Sorensen

Mark Sorensen, Adjunct Professor of History at Millikin University, will discuss Stephen Prothero's latest book, "Religious Literacy" in relationship to what American's have known about their own and other people's religion. By many measures, America is both the most religious country in the world while knowing the least about religion. Should religion be taught in our public schools? Come test your knowledge and join in the discussion.

Sunday, November 2—"Adlai E. Stevenson for President" by Dr. Mark Wyman

Dr. Mark Wyman, retired Professor of History at ISU, will discuss the life and career of Bloomington Unitarian Adlai Stevenson. Only a few days before our latest Presidential election, Prof. Wyman will review a man of peace who was known for wisdom and honesty while still serving a governor of Illinois and presidential candidate in 1952 and 1956. What can we learn about this Unitarian who helped promote the United Nations and worked quietly to keep peace between the U.S. and the Soviet Union? You can brush up on your Stevenson lore at <http://www.adlaitoday.org/>

Next Newsletter deadline: October 15, 2008

Halloween / Samhain Celebration - October 31 - Friday 6:30pm

A Celebration of the Final Harvest and Ancestors Past: Come join us to celebrate the ancient sabbat of Samhain which observes the end of the growing season and the beginning of winter. This was a time for the country folks (pagans) to remember their departed loves ones and make merry with games and good food as the fields become dormant for wintertime. We'll combine history and modern Halloween cultural ways of games and treats to enjoy the evening. Party for all ages! Come in costume; bring snacks to share Questions: June Allison #423-1813 Kathy Kline #428-1807 Cassandra Meyan #935-3191

GLAD to Dance!!!

The Gay and Lesbian Association of Decatur (GLAD) will hold its 15th Annual Dinner Dance – “Coming Out at the Movies” – on Saturday Oct. 11th in the Unity Center for Inspired Living, 317 W. Decatur St.

Please join us for this exciting event. The evening will begin with a catered dinner at 7 p.m. followed by professional DJ spinning tunes of both dance and romance. The night will also feature silent auction items, door prizes and more. In honor of our theme, attendees are encouraged to dress as their favorite star of the silver screen.

Tickets are \$30 per person. The price includes your dinner choice of either roast beef, chicken breast or vegetarian lasagna. Dance-only tickets are \$15 per person.

To purchase tickets please mail a check payable to “GLAD,” P.O. Box 3783, Decatur, IL 62524-3783. Please let us know your meal choice with your ticket order.

If you have any questions please contact us at gladinfo@mchsi.com.

Proceeds raised from the dinner dance will go towards meeting GLAD's annual expenses. The purpose of GLAD, founded in 1993, is to help the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender community come together to support each other, to provide an atmosphere conducive to socialize, to educate the members of GLAD regarding cultural/sexual diversity, and to promote self acceptance.

This is our group's most important fundraiser. Please help us out by joining us for a fun-filled evening of good food, good friends, good conversation, and good times.

Rev. Biedler's Hours

Office hours for Rev. Biedler in October are Tuesday evenings from 5 – 7 p.m.; Wednesdays Oct. 22nd and 29th from 10 a.m. – noon; and every Thursday morning from 10 a.m. – noon except Oct. 9th. You may reach John at the church office by calling (217) 875-5442; or by calling his cell phone at (217) 972-2184. He is available at other times by appointment.

Religious Education Classes

October 05 - UU Principle #2 - Cassandra Meyan

October 12 - Columbus Day - Liz Richards

October 19 - Makahki/Hawaiian New Year - Chelso Frescura

October 26 - Halloween Party - Trick or Treat for UNICEF

CROP Walk at Fairview

Join us for the annual Hunger CROP Walk at Fairview Park's pavilion #2 on Sunday, Oct. 5th -- 2 p.m. registration and 2:30 walk. CROP stands for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty. All were on a mission of fellowship to help raise funds to end hunger in the United States and around the world. Call Rev. Biedler at 972-2184 if you would like to be in the walk or make a donation. Thanks!

October 2008 Calendar of Events

All activities take place at the Fellowship, unless otherwise noted.

Visitors are always welcome!

Wednesday, October 1st

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

Sunday, October 5th

- Drumming Circle

Tuesday, October 7th

- 7:00 p.m. — Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group
- 7:00 p.m. —Christian Practices Covenant Group

Wednesday, October 8th

- 6:00 p.m.—Women's Book Group

Thursday, October 9th

- 7:00 p.m.—UUFd Buddhist Group at Ankrom's house

Tuesday, October 14th

- 7:00 p.m.—decREADgrp

Wednesday, October 15th

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

Tuesday, October 21st

- 7:00 p.m. — Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group
- 7:00 p.m. —Christian Practices Covenant Group

Thursday, October 23rd

- 7:00 p.m.—UUFd Buddhist Group at Ankrom's house

Tuesday, October 28rd

- 7:00 p.m.—decREADgrp

Group discussion topics:

Buddhist Group—The UUFd Buddhist Group will be meeting at Terry Ankrom's house, 2480 West Main Street, Decatur, Illinois, 62522. Further information? Call 217-428-1807 E-mail terryankrom@gmail.com.

Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group— The Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7 pm in the Fellowship sanctuary. This month we will meet October 7th and 21st. 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 Copenhagen, Denmark in 2004 and entitled "The Art of Presence." All are welcome and no prior knowledge of Tolle's teachings is required. Contact Mel Weinstein (763-0509) for additional information.

The Social Action Covenant Group—The Social Action Covenant Group—invites you to join them in a walk to end hunger at Fairview Park's pavilion #2 on Sunday, Oct. 5th—2 p.m. registration and 2:30 walk. In the coming year we will be serving meals at the Good Samaritan Inn and making other community contributions. Join us and help make a decided difference in our community and world. Please see Rev. Biedler if you would like to participate.

The Christian Practices Covenant Group—meets the Oct. 21st from 7:00 and to 8:30 p.m. at the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to join for discussions on the life and teachings of Jesus as the group reads "The Heart of Christianity" by Rev. Marcus Borg.

The Wednesday Morning Covenant Group—meets the first and third Wednesdays of the month, Oct. 1st and 15th, from 10 a.m. to 12. Please join us as we discuss the book by Eckhart Tolle "A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose" by Eckhart Tolle. Guests welcome—we always leave an empty chair in our circle.

Letters from John...

As I delve into the theme "Creation" this month, I realize there are those who believe in a time when serpents literally talked and who also believe just as literally that women were created from a man's rib. Not only do they believe it, but they want it taught in public schools alongside evolution and other scientific theories. I suppose if the people we trusted the most as children (parents, grandparents, teachers, clergy) had all told you and me that these stories were factually true, and that all other stories of creation were false, then you or I might be inclined to believe them as well. How appreciative I am that I was not raised with such a limited worldview, even though I went to an Episcopal church every Sunday as I grew up. My father, a professor of education at Kent State University in Ohio, continually challenged me with other perspectives, other answers.

But despite my disbelief in literalism, you might enjoy as I have in actually reading the book of Genesis in the Bible. I believe you will find it rich with metaphors and useful images for life when you read them as such.

The book of Genesis as an explanation for how life on earth came to be is no different in substance from the thousands of other creation myths of tribal peoples throughout history. These myths tell of humanity's attempts to understand where we came from and what we are on this earth possibly to accomplish.

Each of these mythologies is a true testament to humanity's incredible creative abilities. There are as many colorful tales of how the universe was created and life on earth began as there are cultures to create such tales. These stories do more than try to explain existence, they also attempt to give it meaning. When we teach our children that only one of these stories is true and all others are false we give them a distorted view of humanity, history, mythology, anthropology and of the world and their place in it.

At UUFD we may teach our children the stories from Genesis and the Bible with the hope that they might appreciate all the exquisite language and poetry and images they contain. These are cultural reference points that are essential to a well rounded understanding of Western culture, literature, poetry and art. They also contain powerful lessons in memorable packages that will last a lifetime.

By presenting these stories with openness, along side other creation myths, we offer our children depth and wisdom. When we share the stories with a respect for, rather than a discounting of, scientific explanations of the universe, we add to rather than limit our children's perspectives. If we are successful, our children learn that they are part of an incredible world and that they too are creative beings and illustrious meaning makers.

It is a shame more people don't know that a religion like ours exists. May we cherish what we have, and may we all do what we can to ensure that this expansive religious perspective we have takes its rightful place in a world that so badly needs it. We hope you will join us.

In Faith,

Rev. John

Harmful Items In Your House... How to reduce your daily exposure to Toxins

Pesticides

Problem Product (PP): Supposedly only affecting pests, toxic sprays can easily find its way into the mouths of children and pets, posing serious health risks. Pesticide dust can remain indoors for an entire year after spraying.

Safe Substitute (SS): Non-chemical products, including repellants like this [Ultrasonic Pest Repellent](#)

Carpet Cleaner Fluid

PP: It may make your floors look good, but a chemical in most of them called perchloroethylene can cause horrific side effects and even death. "Perc" has caused cancer in lab animals.

SS: Steam cleaning your carpets and rugs can provide the same effect as synthetic carpet cleaners without the chemicals. You can buy/rent this [Rug Doctor Plus Steam Cleaner](#) and use with [Earth Friendly All Natural Carpet Shampoo](#).

Cat Litter

PP: Truckloads of cat litter are dumped into landfills each year. Dust from cat litter can get into animal and human lungs; other ingredients like sodium bentonite, if ingested, can expand and kill your pet or your child.

SS: Some kitty litter, like [World's Best Cat Litter](#), is made of natural substances like wheat, decomposes, and poses no toxic threats. To help with odors, use [Mrs. Meyer's Pet Litter Freshener](#).

Plastic Baby Bottles

PP: Some have been shown to leech bisphenol A, a toxin that can hinder development and cause hormonal problems. While most of the ones for sale now are safe, recalls are constantly being announced.

SS: Glass bottles used to be dangerous but now choices like this [BornFree Glass Bottle](#) are especially safe. If you can't see yourself giving up plastic, look for BPA Free ones like this [Philips Avent 4-ounce bottle](#).

Antibacterial Soap

PP: Not only are you not really staying healthier, you're also contributing to the increase of resistant germs.

SS: Regular soap is the best bet, but if you're desperate for some extra protection, alcohol-based wipes like these [EO All Natural Sanitizing Hand Wipes](#) are safer for the environment and for your immune system.

Fabric Softener Sheets

PP: They might keep clothes from clinging but the chemical fragrances in many of the brands can seriously irritate lungs and skin. Some of the ingredients might cause cancer, nervous system disorders, and other health concerns.

SS: Consider alternatives like [Nellie's Dryerballs](#) and this liquid that is made from natural ingredients, [Seventh Generation Natural Fabric Softener](#).

Thermometers & Thermostats

PP: Mercury is a potent toxin found in older thermometers and thermostats. If leaked, it can seriously affect health.

SS: Digital thermometers like this [Timex Healthcare Bendable Thermometer](#) and thermostats that don't use mercury like this [Honeywell Programmable Thermostat](#) are great because they are easy to read and not toxic.

Bleach

PP: Bleach can be extremely dangerous and fatal if used improperly. If splashed in the eye it can blind, and if consumed it can kill. Bleach is a cleaning product of yesteryear and should be chucked for more modern, safer options.

SS: There are tons of non-chlorine based cleaning solutions that can disinfect without the chemicals, like [Seventh Generation Natural Shower Cleaner](#), a hydrogen-peroxide based cleaner.

Cosmetics

PP: Many nail polishes contain chemicals that cause cancer, like formaldehyde. Also, toxic carcinogens can be found in eye drops, hair dye, mascara, hair spray, and more.

SS: Check the ingredients on the bottle to make sure that there's nothing in there that's toxic and look for cosmetics that are touting their clean ingredient list, like [Ecco Bella Black Mascara](#).

Bleached Paper Products

PP: White coffee filters, printer paper, toilet paper, and more might be visually appealing, but studies have shown that the chlorine-dependent bleaching process actually increases the risk of birth defects, diabetes, and cancer.

SS: Look for unbleached items, like these [If You Care Unbleached Coffee Filters](#). If you've got to have that gleaming hue, look for products that are chlorine free, like this [Xerox Chlorine Free Laser Paper](#).

Themes for the Coming Calendar Year

During the church year from September through June, Rev. Biedler will speak on each of the specific themes listed below. Each theme is supported by a newsletter article, suggested readings and at-home spiritual practices. After his talks, we hope you will stay for a discussion centered on the sermon's theme. It is our hope that these topics will inspire us to continue to live lives of purpose, worth and dignity, as we shape our community's culture. With these ten themes we will explore the language and knowledge needed to dialogue with people of varying perspectives on issues of faith, values, ethics and religion. Please join us in the journey.

September -- Vision

February -- Evil

October -- Creation

March -- Redemption

November-- Democracy

April -- Freedom

December -- God

May -- Mercy

January -- Authority

June -- Transformation

WINE AND CHEESE PARTY

WINE AND CHEESE PARTY, 6 P.M. Sunday Evening, October 19. Enjoy the book sorting get-together with wine, cheese, softdrinks and other goodies compliments of the Thistlethwaites.

BOOKS, BITES, BOTANICALS SALE

Saturday, Oct 25 beginning at 8 A.M. This annual UUFd event has grown into a large community service and fund raising event. We offer low-cost and very nice houseplants, holiday treats and books for sale. Please sign up at the fellowship to work two or three hours during the sale to greet and assist. Help is also needed for the cleanup at 3 P.M in preparation for Sunday activities. Ask your friends, relatives and neighbors who are clearing out books to donate them to UUFd. Books may be brought to the fellowship on or before Oct 19. Everyone baking some goodies for the "Bites" portion of the sale, we needed more brownies last year and about any other yummy treats you can think of!! Call Vern Thistlethwaite, 429-5923, vthistle@comcast.net if a pickup is needed.

Further Reading on the Theme of Creation

The Everything Seed, A Story of Beginnings by Carole Martignacco

This is a wonderful children's story about the very first seed that unfolded to become everything in the universe.

The Universe Story by Brian Swimme & Thomas Berry

It "...unites science and the humanities in a dramatic exploration of the unfolding of the universe, humanity's evolving place in the cosmos, and the boundless possibilities for our future."

The Artist's Way, A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity by Julia Cameron

Held by many to be the seminal book on the subject of creativity. An international bestseller, millions of readers have found it to be an invaluable guide to living (a creative life).



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October 2008 Issue

-Promoting freedom, reason,

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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.



October Birthdays

Chelso Frescura	October 16	
Marge Evans	October 28	

Thanks to member/friends who turned in minister evaluation comments to the Committee on Ministry. Together we work to build a fellowship that serves both UUFD and the Decatur area community.

For	Contact	At:
Name Tags	Kathy Kline	(217) 875-5442
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Newsletter submissions	Tim Rooney	timothysrooney@hotmail.com
Website suggestions	June Allison	JuneChelso@springnet1.com or (217) 423-1813