

January 2009



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, Wednesday and
Thursday evenings 4:30 to
6:30 p.m. at the Fellowship

President:

Julie Pajer

Past President:

Linda Shroyer

President Elect:

Heather Stoa

Vice President:

Available

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Cassandra Meyen

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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.

January 4th—"Collaborative Sovereignty" by Dr. Roy Wehrle

Dr. Wehrle has spoken at UUFd a couple times before to great acclaim. We'll start 2009 off by exploring the issues and questions of authority and sovereignty in a world of public goods such as climate, ocean fisheries, and good or bad air. Come ready to hear Dr. Wehrle's recent research and be ready for an interesting and engaging discussion!

January 11th—"What is Evil?" by Rev. John Biedler

Historically, theological conservatives in America have erred on the side of locating evil in individuals. Drinking, dancing, sex, and other individual behaviors were the evils to which the church primarily addressed itself. Conservative churches tended to be less concerned with societal evils -- like racism, sexism, poverty and war. Religious liberals on the other hand, have erred on the side of locating evil mostly in society and thus have often failed to maintain a strong critique of the individual person's potential for evil. This sermon will ask and attempt to answer "what is evil and where does it come from?" A discussion follows the service.

January 18— Guest Minister

From time to time Rev. Biedler invites other UU ministers to visit the Fellowship and speak. Be sure to attend this week and hear one of our denomination's outstanding speakers.

January 25—"Good vs. Evil" by Rev. John Biedler

Evil has become a popular word since September 11th, 2001 as politicians from the President of the United States to Senators have used it to explain current events and people. With the rampant violence in our world today, in the forms of child abuse, genocide, terrorism, rape, war, global pollution and others, any credible theology, philosophy or religion has to deal with the reality of evil. We need to be able to accurately identify evil and effectively resist and respond to it. What say do you have whether good or evil prevails in the world -- any? We will have a discussion following the service.

February 1—"Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin" by Dr. Neil Baird

Dr. Neil Baird is back in the pulpit comparing two of the world's most influential men who both celebrate their 200th birthdays on February 12th. Come hear how two great men were both similar and different. Neil Baird is a former professor of biology at Millikin University and a believer of evolution.

Next Newsletter deadline: January 15, 2009

Dinners for Eight

It's time for another round of Dinners for Eight! This is your opportunity to enjoy a meal with other members of UUFD and get to know them better or renew old acquaintances. This year's date will be Saturday, February 7 with a bad weather date of Feb. 14. There is a sign up sheet in the entry at the Fellowship, or you may call or e-mail Rita Schwake at: 424-2305 or swakrita@aol.com . We hope to have several groups again this year. Please indicate if you would be willing to host a group and what course you would like to bring to share. If you have never participated, you don't know what you are missing!

Old Spectacles Needed

VOSH (Volunteer Optometric Service to Humanity) is an international organization that delivers much needed glasses to improve human eyesight all over the world. Volunteers pay their own way to travel and work. Other sight-related services are provided as needs demand. Suellen Brauer, retired Eisenhower math teacher, volunteers in VOSH missions. She will see that your old spectacles will do much good. Regular spectacles, sunglasses, children's glasses, bifocals, triifocals, reading glasses, old frames are needed. Vern Thistlethwaite, vthistle@comcast.net, will receive your old glasses and pass them on to Suellen. Bring them to the fellowship or call Vern (429-5923) for a pickup.

WomanSpirit 2009 - Weaving Our Sacred Tapestry

Gather at the Universalist Unitarian Church of Peoria, IL (3000 W. Richwoods Blvd.)

February 20-21 (Friday and Saturday) 2009

Our keynote speaker is Shelley Graff, singer, songwriter and educator. www.shelleyg.com

Your are welcomed to build, share and "weave" your Inner Feminine Divine.

Take part in a variety of workshops and gatherings to celebrate both common and individual beliefs and practices. Many vendors and artisans will be there to present their talents. Join us also for community meals to share and enjoy.

Register online! www.regonline.com/640335

Questions, contact the Registrar at wws@womenandreligion.org

Come weave your spiritual tapestry with connectedness, safety, and joy.

Sponsored by the WWS2009 Committee at UUC Peoria and Women & Religion Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association's Central Midwest District www.womenandreligion.org

Rev. Biedler's Hours Religious Education Classes

Office hours for Rev. Biedler in January are Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. You may reach Rev. Biedler by calling (217) 972-2184 and he is available at other times by appointment. He welcomes your calls.

Sunday 4th: New Hope for the New Year - Cassandra and Thomas Meyen

Sunday 11th: What is a UU Kid? - Cassandra and Thomas Meyen

Sunday 18th: MLK Day - Liz and Derek Richards

Sunday 25th: No RE, Child Care only

January 2009 Calendar of Events

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

Visitors are always welcome!

Sunday, January 4th

- 12:00 p.m. — Rhythmic Earth Drum Circle

Tuesday, January 6th

- 5:00 p.m. — Youth Science Group
- 7:00 p.m. — Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group
- 7:00 p.m. — Christian Practices Covenant Group

Wednesday, January 7th

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

Friday, January 9th

- 6:00 p.m.—Rhythmic Earth Drum Circle

Tuesday, January 13th

- 5:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group
- 7:00 p.m.—decREADgrp

Wednesday, January 14th

- 6:00 p.m.—Women's Book Group

Friday, January 16th

- 6:00 p.m.—Rhythmic Earth Drum Circle

Tuesday, January 20th

- 5:00 p.m. — Youth Science Group
- 7:00 p.m. — Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group
- 7:00 p.m. — Christian Practices Covenant Group

Wednesday, January 21st

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

Friday, January 23rd

- 6:00 p.m.—Rhythmic Earth Drum Circle

Tuesday, January 27th

- 5:00 p.m. — Youth Community Group
- 7:00 p.m.—decREADgrp

Friday, January 30th

- 6:00 p.m.—Rhythmic Earth Drum Circle

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.

Youth Group—Youth Group meetings are every Tuesday from 5-6 pm at the UUFd. The 1st and 3rd Tuesdays are Science Group, and the 2nd and 4th are Community Group. All ages are welcome. For more information email Cassandra at meyen@peoplepc.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 January 6th and 20th. 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 Christian Practices Covenant Group—The Christian Practices Covenant Group meets the first and third Tuesdays of the month. Jan. 6th and 20th 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—The Wednesday Morning Covenant Group meets the first and third Wednesdays of the month, January 7th and 21st, 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." Guests are welcome—we always leave an empty chair in our circle just for you.

Women's Book Group—We will meet Wednesday January 14 at 6 p.m. at Kathy Kline's home 2480 W. Main St. for potluck and discussion of Run by Anne Patchett. Please RSVP at 428-1807 or kkline923@aol.com

Letters from John...

Here it is 2009 and it's amazing to me that it has been over eight years now that I have been serving as your minister. It is even more amazing how fast these eight years have gone by. It must be that I've been having you-know-what (it is said you have) whenever "time flies." But it's been much more than fun for me over these past 8 years, though I can say it has been fun as well. In the years I've been here some of the most significant events of my life have occurred, along side some of the most significant events in your lives.

I've blessed many of your children and grand children, have officiated at your weddings and those of your children, performed memorial services for your mothers and fathers and grandparents, for sisters and brothers, for your friends and loved ones, and even on occasion most difficultly for your children.

I've had to say a final goodbye to some who have passed away, and goodbye to some who have simply had to move away. I've welcomed new members into our Fellowship, seen some ask to be removed from membership, had guests come and seen members fade away. I've conducted over 190 Sunday Worship Services over these eight years, and many dozens of adult religious exploration classes.

When you've been in the hospital, I've visited you. When there was an illness or a death in the family, I've made myself available to you and to those you love and care about. When you've struggled with a personal issue or a loss in your life, I've sat and listened, hoping I could be of some comfort, or that my presence might be of some consolation. If I had a suggestion, you've listened and carefully considered what I had to say.

When you've wanted to plan a child dedication or a rite of passage for your son or daughter, when you were planning a wedding or union ceremony, or memorial service or a blessing ceremony for a beloved animal that was alive or had passed away, you've called upon me to officiate. Some have even planned their own Memorial Service with me, which I keep in a safe place for that unforeseen but ever so inescapable day. Some have entrusted their last will and testament with me, which I also keep secure and confidential.

When you have felt depressed or troubled and uncertain by events in your life, I've tried to be there for you, to connect with you in some way, to let you know I'm here, that I care, and that life does get confusing and painful at times. When you have had an important decision or choice to make in your life, you have called upon me to help sort it out, gain some clarity or direction. When you've struggled with something on your spiritual journey through life, you've asked for feedback or some suggestions.

You've listened to my sermons on different themes, you've read my columns in the Newsletters, considered some of the Spiritual Homework ideas I've placed before you, sang in the choir, filled in at the piano when urgently needed on a Sunday. You've been Service Leaders for guest speakers, you've hosted Dinners For Eight in your homes, gone to lunch with one another, made hundreds of phone calls checking up on one another. You've cried together, laughed together, kidded each other, gotten upset with one another, disagreed, argued, come to consensus, and put aside your differences together.

You've made financial pledges to the Fellowship, contributed your time, your energy, your talent, love, care and generosity in hundreds of ways over these and many other eight year periods in the life of this Fellowship. Some have even contributed to the not-often-talked-about Ministerial Discretionary Fund which has allowed me to help members of the congregation during tough financial times or when special needs arose in their lives.

When some of you have had concerns about an aspect of the congregation's life, or had suggestions for how services might better be conducted, or had questions regarding something I've said in a sermon, class or Covenant Group, you have taken the time to say something to me, to write an email or fill in the comment section in one of the surveys I've conducted over the years.

All of this is what makes this Fellowship what it is – your care, your showing up on Sundays, your calls to one another, your warm greetings when people walk in our doors, your teaching of Sunday school classes, or at the Youth Group activities, or participating in drumming sessions, or committee meetings, or board meetings, or changing out light bulbs, or hosting coffee and refreshments after services, or helping us to Think Green in our lives, or bring your books and rummage to our annual sales. All of this has been going on over the years I've been here and it has been my profound privilege to be a part of it with you.

By now you must be thinking this is my last farewell letter but it's nothing of the kind. I have no set plans to go anywhere. Gwen and I really do enjoy living here and I thoroughly enjoy being your minister.

Rather, this is just a time of looking back at the best eight years of my life – and I owe it to all of you and to my dear wonderful wife Gwen!

Thank you. In your service, John

On More Than Just Paper



We may be living in a digital age, but still, we Americans are putting it all on paper. Despite the many advances in computer technology that were supposed to lead us to go paperless, we continue to go through large amounts of paper every year. According to the World Resources Institute, each person in the U.S. consumes about 675 pounds of this pulpy stuff annually. Add it all together and you get a figure of roughly 99 million yearly tons of paper being used for everything from newspapers and magazines to printer paper and junk mail each and every year! That's pretty outrageous, isn't it?!

What about the environmental price tag? Basically, a single ton of paper requires the sacrifice of anywhere from eight to 24 trees, depending on the type of paper made.

Did you know that it takes an average of 16 trees to produce a ton of paper? The bad news is that it takes about 1.5 billion trees that are carried off to pulp & paper mills each and every year! However, the good news is that according to the Paper Industry Association Council, we've been recycling more of this precious resource. In 2007, paper and paperboard recovery set a new record of 54.3 million tons or to break this down for you, about 360 lbs. per person. This is saving more than forests because every ton of paper we recycle conserves about 3.3 cubic yards of space in our landfills.

It's important that we do everything we personally can to use less and cut our so-called "paper footprint." Here's the guide put out by Seventh Generation to help us make that difference in this new year of 2009 - "on more than just paper:"

- Think before you print! Save as many of your documents as you can on your computer, including emails and household records. Only print those documents you absolutely must have on paper.
- Print only the pages that contain information you need. Use your printer's preview or menu sections to select "current page only" and other economy settings.
- Before you print, condense your text so you use as few pages as possible.
- Find and use your software's print formatting tools to squeeze two pages onto one. Many programs will allow you to fit two pages on a single side of an 8 ½ x 11 sheet turned on its side. (This is typically called landscape mode)
- Be sure to use both sides of the sheets you print.
- Reuse sheets that are mis-printed, or cut them into scrap.
- From magazines and newspapers to your bank and cable provider, ask the companies you do business with whether they use recycled paper. If they're not, keep the pressure on!
- Use your local library wherever possible. It's a great money- and tree-saving resource for books, magazines, newspapers, and other printed materials.
- Check our tips for taking control of your junk mail (<http://www.seventhgeneration.com/learn/lists/take-control-your-junk-mail>) and clear your mailbox of paper-wasting clutter.
- Make sure any paper you buy has a high amount of post-consumer content. Recycled paper saves trees and supports recycling efforts.

Themes for the Coming Calendar Year

During the church year (September-June), Rev. Biedler fashions his sermons around ten theological themes. Each theme plays a part in what he feels will contribute to a well-grounded religious and spiritual life. The themes provide an axis around which elements of church life gain more meaning and depth. They provide us with a set of common stories and ideas that become elements of an ongoing community conversation. Rev. Biedler supports each theme with a newsletter article, suggested readings and at-home spiritual practices. Because we also have guest speakers each month, you will find these are not the only topics covered in any given month. Each Sunday you are invited to a discussion after the service centered on that day's topic. Please join us on this journey of discovery...Themes for 2008-2009:

September -- Vision

February -- Authority

October -- Creation

March -- Redemption

November-- Democracy

April -- Freedom

December -- God

May -- Mercy

January -- Evil

June -- Transformation

Enneagram workshop series coming in 2009, led by Rev. John Biedler

In a sermon entitled "What About God?" Rev. Biedler asked "consider what core value is at the center of your life? What ultimate concern, what central truth might you view as the hub from which all the elements of your life" radiate?" Historically many psychological and spiritual systems have attempted to address these deep qualities, systems such as Carl Jung's psychological types (extrovert and introvert orientations, or intuition, feeling, and thinking functions), or the four classic temperaments (phlegmatic, choleric, melancholic, and sanguine) and numerous others.

The Enneagram Personality typologies that Rev. Biedler will be discussing give dramatic insights into the core concerns which we as human beings approach life, whatever our ethnicity, religious beliefs, cultural background or education might be. The Enneagram is yet another way to help you understand yourself and the world around you, to see how you express yourself and defend your choices, even down to the career and partner you have chosen. It will help you understand those in your family, others in your church and people in general. This series will be held at the Fellowship and will be open to the public as they get underway in the month of March.

UUFD Humanist Group

Organizational Meeting

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

7:00 P. M.

UUFD 3773 N. Macarthur Rd

*Do you consider yourself a
Humanist, or would you like to
learn more about Humanism?*

Join us to organize a new group!

Interested, but can't make it then? Call

John Biedler 972-2184 or

David Snoeyenbos 865-3104



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January 2009 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.



January Birthdays



Denise Lohrenz-Renfro	January-06
Laura Vaught	January-06
Mark Sorensen	January-20
Caius Pajer	January-21
Hadrian Pajer	January-21
Amy Stockwell	January-22

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