

March 2009



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

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Office Hours:

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

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Julie Pajer

Past President:

Linda Shroyer

President Elect:

Heather Stoa

Vice President:

Available

Treasurer:

Mark Sorensen

Secretary:

Mary Lovell

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Cassandra Meyen

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.

March 1— “Jesus the Man” by Dr. William Keagle

Bill Keagle is Professor of History at Millikin University and a former Presbyterian Minister. His class about the nature of Jesus is one of the most popular on campus. He believes that when we look back at Jesus, our view of him is distorted by three giant lenses: translations through many languages, trying to understand an ancient culture in modern times and many errors in copying the New Testament.

March 8— “Redemption” by Rev. John Biedler

It’s a difficult concept for me to grasp: redemption. I really hadn’t thought about it for years—not since I left fundamentalism. And then came the movie *The Shawshank Redemption*, based on the book by Stephen King. *Shawshank* was a prison; a man was falsely accused of murder and locked up for 20 years; he finally escaped. But what was the redemption? Drawing from the movie, maybe living a redeeming life is applicable even to us today. Maybe it’s not such an old, useless idea after all... you may be surprised.

March 15— “This I Believe” Mark Sorensen and John Biedler

Mark Sorensen will explore the origins and nature of the “This I Believe” radio broadcasts and present samples of programs from the past 60 years. During the discussion members of the Fellowship will share their personal essays.

March 22— “A Humanist Spirituality?” by Rev. John Biedler

Can you be a humanist and still be spiritual, or are they mutually exclusive? Whether a religious humanist or secular humanist; whether agnostic or atheist, is it possible to pursue a spiritual path...that is, to have what could legitimately be called a spiritual life? Some think not, arguing it’s not honest, that it lacks integrity. But I think you can have both. I’m doing it—and after you listen to what I have to say, you be the judge whether I’m being honest or not. I welcome discussion following the service.

March 29, 2009 “The Gnostic Gospels” Rev. Miley Palmer

Former minister Miley Palmer returns to our pulpit to discuss the Gnostic Gospels, books such as *Mary, Thomas and Judas* that are not found in the New Testament. Where did they come from and what messages do they communicate?

Next Newsletter deadline: March 15, 2009

Enneagram classes coming to UUFD Sunday, March 8th, 1:30 - 3:30 PM, led by Rev. John Biedler

Here is an opportunity for you to get to know yourself better. It also opens up ways to know those around you. You'll find in this series what your major concerns in life really are that you may not be aware of. Some people are driven to do things the right way and want others to do the same. Others find helping others gives them joy in life. For some, wanting to appear capable, successful and accomplished in marriage or career is what drives them forward. Maybe you struggle with feeling good about yourself; or for you, trying to become highly knowledgeable in any given field is of utmost importance. It could be you are constantly perplexed with trying to figure yourself out; or maybe simply having fun is your highest desire in life; or striving to be in control; or wanting to maintain a calm and peaceful inner state is your nature.

All these qualities point to inner drives, inner motivations. Of course there have been various psychological and spiritual systems that have addressed these concerns for human beings. World renowned psychologist Carl Jung proposed four qualities in the human personality – extrovert, introvert, the feeling type and the thinking type. These in fact form the basis of the Myers-Briggs typologies used in the business and academic world.

A lesser known study of the human psyche is the Enneagram (pronounced “ANY-a-gram”). If you haven't googled it, give it a try and you'll find dozens of websites on the subject.

Rev. Biedler has been a student of the Enneagram for over 18 years and is a gifted teacher in helping people understand the choices they are making in their lives and how to make more fulfilling ones. The Enneagram will provide you with insights to help you understand other family members, the people in your congregation, or those you work with, and, most importantly, to know yourself. This series at the UU Fellowship will be open to everyone but you are asked to sign up on the foyer table or call/email John if you would like to attend. The dates of this six-part series are: March 8 and 22; April 5 and 12; May 17 and 31.

UU Fellowship to host Decatur Ecumenical Minister's Group

Rev. Biedler meets monthly with a group of clergy from Decatur and will be hosting the gathering on Tuesday, March 17th, on St. Patrick's Day (go GREEN! –sanctuary, that is) from 11:30 to 1:00 p.m. at the Fellowship. If you would like to meet members of the group and/or help out by preparing some desserts, tea and coffee, please give Rev. Biedler a call at (217) 972-2184.

This I Believe

You can find out more about NPR's “This I Believe” series by visiting: <http://thisibelieve.org/index.php> or pick up a copy on the foyer table.

Rev. Biedler's Hours Religious Education Classes

Office hours for Rev. John Biedler in March are Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. You may reach Rev. Biedler by calling the church office at (217) 875-5442, or his cell phone at (217) 972-2184. John is available at other times by appointment and welcomes your calls.

Sunday the 1st
 Sunday the 8th
 Sunday the 15th
 Sunday the 22nd

March 2009 Calendar of Events

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

Visitors are always welcome!

Tuesday, March 3rd

- 5:00 p.m. — Youth Science Group: Life Science
- 7:00 p.m. — Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group
- 4:30 p.m. —Christian Practices Covenant Group

Wednesday, March 4th

- 10:00 a.m.—Wednesday Morn Covenant Group
- 7:00 p.m.—Humanism

Friday, March 6th

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

Tuesday, March 10th

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

Wednesday, March 11th

- 6:00 p.m.—Women's Book Group

Friday, March 13th

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

Sunday, March 15th

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

Tuesday, March 17th

- 5:00 p.m. — Youth Science Group: CHERT
- 7:00 p.m. — Eckhart Tolle Discussion Group
- 4:30 p.m. —Christian Practices Covenant Group

Wednesday, March 18th

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

Friday, March 20th

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

Tuesday, March 24th

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

Friday, March 27th

- 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 March 3rd and 17th. 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 March 3rd and 17th from 4:30 to 7 p.m. at the Fellowship. All are welcome to join for discussions on the life and teachings of Jesus as the group reads writing by UU Christians.

The Wednesday Morning Covenant Group—The Wednesday Morning Covenant Group meets the first and third Wednesdays of the month, March 4th and 18th, from 10 a.m. to noon. Having finished Eckhart Tolle's book, the group will be exploring new ideas and books for our group to discuss. Visitors are certainly warmly welcomed -- we always leave an empty chair, symbolizing our welcoming new comers.

Women's Book Group—The Women's Book Club will meet on Wednesday, March 11 at 6 pm at Eileen Ruski's home at 2431 W. Forest Ave. Please RSVP to tilopa1@comcast.net. The book is Loving Frank by Horan.

Letters from John...

Do you find reading or talking about what others believe about our human origins, about God, love, death, science, religion, etc. to be fascinating? For all of my adult life I have had a keen interest in knowing why people believe and do what they do. We all know that people for the most part are fascinated with themselves, but it seems equally true we're also very intrigued with what other persons believe and think.

I've observed that both times I've offered the adult religious exploration series "Building Your Own Theology" at the Fellowship that they were some of our most highly attended workshops. What's interesting is that in these workshops participants spend most of their time listening and comparing themselves to what others in the group think and believe. It always draws large numbers.

On March 8th I'm beginning another series entitled "The Enneagram—a Guide to Gnosis". It too asks participants to listen to others and to reflect on what people say are their core realities and beliefs. My point is that people really do like to know what you think, feel and believe about the big questions in life (such as those mentioned in the first sentence).

A few months ago I shared with the Fellowship's board that I'm beginning to interview people in the congregation on what they believe, and how they came to those beliefs. In part this is a way for me to better get to know everyone, but I have to confess I also have an eye on compiling a kind of "congregational journal" from these interviews. This journal would contain people's statements— their "credos" as they're called in the BYOT program mentioned earlier—for others to read (with each person's consent, of course).

At that board meeting our treasurer Mark Sorensen pointed me towards National Public Radio's nationally syndicated program "This I Believe." I'd heard about it but now see hadn't paid enough attention. Today's NPR program is based on a 1950's series hosted then by radio announcer Edward R. Murrow, to which an estimated 39 million listeners tuned in.

Today we not only have radio, we have the power of the internet. Whether you listen to NPR on radio or via the internet, you will encounter Americans—well known and unknown—reading five-minute essays about their personal philosophies of life, from Albert Einstein to Geoffrey Canada and so many others. They share insights about individual values that shape their daily actions. The first volume of This I Believe essays, published in 1952, sold 300,000 copies—more than any other book in the U. S. during that year except for the Bible.

Why so popular? I think it's because people are so fascinating, that people intrigue people. We simply want to know what makes others say and do what they do.

That said, here's what I propose – that we all take time to better get to know one another, not only within the congregation but elsewhere also. And to do that, I encourage following the guidelines NPR has established for writing an essay on your beliefs. You'll find them at <http://thisibelieve.org/index.php>. If you don't have access to the internet, I will have copies available on the foyer table at the Fellowship throughout March.

In the Sunday service on March 15th, Mark Sorensen will be giving a short history of the 1950's series and will read some of the actual stories that have been published. After the service, we will gather back in the sanctuary to hear some of the stories of those I've invited to share. I'm sure you'll find them fascinating. We will also discuss ideas on how to write a statement of I beliefs. I'm hoping you will find all of this not only interesting, but very useful in your own growth and deepening sense of connection with others.

I look forward not only to sharing with you my own process in writing down what I believe, but hearing your life experiences that have led you to believe what you do.

Always Intrigued, John

Top Ten Ways to Save Money Every Month

By Gwen Biedler

In these tough economic times, saving money can mean the difference between being able to drive your car and putting food on the table for a lot of people. Fortunately there are several things the average person can do to cut their monthly expenses without drastically reducing their current standard of living. Saving money every month may require you to painfully re-think your priorities - and to change some long-standing habits.

1. First, find out where your money is going. Take a small notebook with you and write down every purchase you make for at least a week. Then break down the purchases into groups, such as fast food and snack foods, gasoline, groceries, rent /mortgage, insurance etc. Then add up everything you have spent in each category and project each category's spending into a full month. Start by cutting down on some wasteful discretionary spending. Even saving an average of \$25 a week translates to a \$100 savings each and every month!
2. Cut back on your TV viewing. Do you really need the cable package you currently have? Why not consider getting a more economical package?
3. Do you really need a standard telephone? Most of us grew up with one and we still feel the need to keep a "home phone." But if you have a cell phone, do you really need the extra monthly expense of a "house phone"?
4. Use energy wisely. Energy costs have skyrocketed. Turning off lights every time you leave a room; only doing full loads of laundry in warm water with a cool rinse and full loads of dishes will save you money!
5. Only drive when it is absolutely necessary. Try to get as many things done in one area as possible and combine as many trips as possible. Using public transportation and carpooling to work not only saves you on gasoline, it can also save you on car insurance as well. So, tell your insurance agent if you carpool.
6. Can you refinance your home? Interest rates are dropping once again and money for refinancing is available despite all of the headlines about mortgage problems. If current interest rates are at least half a point lower than your current mortgage rate and you plan to live in your home for at least another couple of years, refinancing to a lower monthly mortgage payment can save you hundreds of dollars a month in some cases.
7. Pay off high interest credit cards. Paying just a few dollars a month over the minimum payment on your high interest credit cards can make a huge difference in how quickly you can pay off your cards, saving a ton of money in interest and ultimately eliminating a monthly expense entirely. Cutting up your credit cards is a sure way to end financial problems down the line.
8. Review all of your insurance policies. Sit down with your insurance agent and go over each and every insurance policy you have, from auto to health to home to life insurance. Most policies that you have had for a while are ripe for review. Between the two of you are bound to find ways to save money while maintaining the coverage that you genuinely need.
9. Make meal plans. One of the problems with the food budget is that often there is little or no advance planning. Make actual meal plans on paper and plan to have leftovers more often. This will save you from making unnecessary and expensive extra trips to the grocery store.
10. Cut down on shopping trips. If you are used to going to the mall once a week or twice a month find something else to do at least half of the time. Each time you go to the mall, even if it's just to "look around" or to "get out of the house," is an invitation to spend money. If you really need something, consider visiting your local Thrift or Resale Shop for it, instead. This keeps our money in the good ole USA!

As times and our pocketbooks change, so must our habits if we are going to learn to save money every month. This will require us to painfully re-think our priorities and to change some long-standing habits if we are going to learn to save money every month.

Themes for the Coming Calendar Year

During the church year (September-June), Rev. Biedler fashions many of his sermons around special theme, as listed below. This provides a set of common stories and ideas for an ongoing community conversation among members and friends of the Fellowship. Rev. Biedler often supports these themes with newsletter articles, suggested reading and ideas for individual spiritual practices. Because we also have guest speakers each month, you will find there are many different 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. For 2008-2009:

September -- Vision	February -- Authority
October -- Creation	March -- Redemption
November -- Democracy	April -- Freedom
December -- God	May -- Mercy
January -- Evil	June -- Transformation

Bowl For Kids' Sake

Bowl For Kids' Sake is Big Brothers Big Sisters' BIGGEST fundraiser, raising nearly \$200,000 for the children in Central Illinois. The money raised supports our mentoring programs and current matches and helps recruit, screen, train and support new matches. As a bowler, you are helping us raise much needed funds to keep providing positive, adult mentors to children in need of a positive adult influence. To say thank you for your efforts and support, we provide you with free bowling, free food, entertainment and prizes. Bowl For Kids' Sake is a huge party for all our bowlers!

This event is a fun way for the whole community to show support for children who need a little extra time and attention.

Be A Team Captain

The Team Captain's role is to recruit 4-5 additional bowlers for their team and inform them that this is a fundraiser to help raise money for Big Brothers Big Sisters. The team captain is responsible for sending in the team roster with the names of all the bowlers and the date and time to bowl, as well as encourage everyone on the team to raise the minimum \$100 per person.

Important Steps

Team Captains : Call your local office to request a packet. Packets can either be delivered out to the captain or picked up at the office, AND call the office to reserve the date and time that you want to bowl.

For more information, visit our website at bbbs.kintera.org/2007!

Your participation means a great deal to both the staff and the children that we serve. The money raised this year will support local volunteer recruitment efforts, the screening of adult volunteers who work with children, and will provide professional staff to monitor mentors and children working together. Through Bowl For Kids' Sake, BBBS is able to serve additional children and give them a chance at a better future.

Moweaqua Coal Mine disaster of Christmas Eve in 1932

Sunday, March 22, 2009 - At 2pm at the Decatur Public Library, historian Mark Sorensen will give a presentation about the Moweaqua Coal Mine disaster that claimed the lives of 54 miners on Christmas Eve in 1932. Why did this tragedy happen and how did it affect this town just south of Decatur? For information about the town and mine, see <http://www.miningmoreinmoweaqua.com>

Second Annual Environmental Film Series

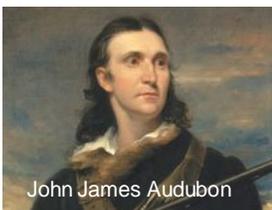
The UUFD Green Sanctuary Committee, in conjunction with the Audubon Society of Decatur, is sponsoring an environmental and nature film series at the Fellowship starting in mid-March and ending in early May. The purpose of the film series is to (1) bring awareness to environmental issues, (2) bring attention to the upcoming Earth Day Celebration (April 22, 2009), (3) to generate interest in the special program scheduled for the weekend of May 2nd, when we welcome the national speaker Dr. Michael Greger to Decatur, and (4) as a fundraiser for the Green Sanctuary Committee. All the films are free (what a deal!). The schedule for the film series is provided below with detailed descriptions of the first two showings. Donations are accepted and the purchase of concessions (popcorn made with unrefined oil using a theater-style popcorn maker), along with healthier drinks, will help support the work of the Green Sanctuary Committee.

Please mark your calendars for the dates below. I'm sure that you'll enjoy these documentaries, all of which have not been shown in a theatre setting in Decatur. For those interested, we will also have a short discussion session after each showing.

Date	Day	Time	Films	Length
March 14	Saturday	7:00 pm	(1) John James Audubon: Drawn from Nature	54 minutes
April 4	Saturday	7:00 pm	Everything's Cool	89 minutes
April 18	Saturday	7:00 pm	(1) Wolves in Paradise (2) Affluenza	57 minutes 56 minutes
May 2	Saturday	7:30 pm	King Corn	90 minutes

SATURDAY, MARCH 14 @ 7 PM --- DOUBLE FEATURE

John James Audubon: Drawn from Nature



This is a 2007 film about the life of John James Audubon. He saw more of the North American continent than virtually anyone of his time, and came to stand for America - the America of wilderness and wild things. Audubon was a self-taught artist and a self-made man whose life was rife with action and contradiction. He played the debonair European when he visited the American frontier, and then the wild woodsman in the drawing rooms of Europe. "Visually stunning and totally engrossing...The program easily moves between realistic dramatizations, scenic outdoor footage, pans of bird prints, and interviews with authors, artists, and museum curators, who offer intriguing insight into the man who 'was a drama waiting to happen.'" (Booklist, Editors' Choice)

Second Annual Environmental Film Series

The Return of the Cuyahoga



This 2008 documentary tells the story of the death and rebirth of one of America's most emblematic rivers. For centuries, the Cuyahoga River has been on the frontier. When the United States was a new nation, the river literally marked the western frontier. But "civilization" came to the river; by 1870 the river was on the industrial frontier. On the river's banks sprouted a multitude of factories, a booming display of what was called progress. The river, as it flowed through Cleveland, became a foul-smelling channel of sludge, with an oily surface that ignited with such regularity that river fires were treated as commonplace events by the local press. But then, in 1969, the river burned again, just as a third kind of frontier swept across the nation: an environmental frontier. And the Cuyahoga River became a landmark on this frontier too -- a poster child for those trying to undo the destruction wrought by progress in America.

SATURDAY, APRIL 4 @ 7 PM

Everything's Cool



This 2007 documentary examines the media strategies, on both sides, that have resulted in the US government's failure to take decisive action on global warming. The film is a "toxic comedy" about the most dangerous chasm ever to emerge between scientific understanding and political action - Global Warming. The good news: America finally gets global warming; the chasm is closing and the debate is over. The bad news: the United States, the country that will determine the fate of the globe, must transform its fossil fuel based economy fast, (like in a minute). While the industry funded naysayers sing what just might be their swan song of scientific doubt and deception, a group of self-appointed global warming messengers are on a life or death quest to find the iconic image, proper language, and points of leverage that will help the public go from understanding the urgency of the problem to creating the political will necessary to push for a new energy economy. Hold on -- this is bigger than changing your light bulbs.



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March 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.



March Birthdays

Mel Weinstein	March-07
Jeanne Robertson	March-11
Darwin Shroyer	March-15
Sue Weinstein	March-18
Evan Zaker	March-19
David Kent Coy	March-20
Mary Lovell	March-21



For

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MARCH 2009 ISSUE