

September 2009



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

3773 N. MacArthur Rd.
Decatur, IL 62526
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www.uufd.org
www.myspace.com/uufd_il



Minister:

Rev. John Biedler
Office: (217) 875-5442
Other: (217) 423-7349
Cell: (217) 972-2184
jsbiedler@aol.com

Office Hours:

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

President:

Heather Stoa

Past President:

Julie Pajer

Vice President:

Tim Rooney

Treasurer:

Mark Sorensen

Secretary:

Mary Lovell

RE Director:

Available

Board Members at Large:

Jeanne Robertson
Rita Schwake
Judy Thistlethwaite

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.

September 6 - No Sunday Service, Labor Day Weekend

September 13 - Water Communion and Foyer Dedication — Rev. John Biedler and the entire Congregation.

In this sermon I will address how water is the sacred birthright of every living creature. Just as life originally emerged from water, so it is that water nourishes all living things. Please bring actual (or symbolic) water with you to this service as we tell of people, places and experiences from our lives. We will have water available in the service should you not bring any. Along with this long-held tradition of Water Communion, we will formally dedicate our new entrance area, recognizing the time, talent and treasure that so many contributed in making our entrance so beautiful and welcoming. It speaks volumes about who we are.

September 20 - "Why Be Happy-Part I" — Rev. John Biedler

There is a doctor who claims to know for a fact what makes us happy and what doesn't...and why it's worth the effort. Meet Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky and her ground-breaking book *The How of Happiness—A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want*. According to her research, happiness is not some magical state of mind that we're born with, blessed with, or lucky enough to stumble upon—but rather a way of being in the world that each of us can attain. In this two-part sermon, I will set the stage for structuring a life that makes you happy. I'll define words, explain concepts and argue why it's worth it. These two sermons will lead up to a series of workshops for members, guests and anyone in our community who would like to know how to actually be happier.

September 27 - "Why Be Happy-Part II" — Rev. John Biedler

No matter what your external circumstances, you can choose to be happy by changing and managing the way you think, act and, very possibly, even the way you feel. What makes *The How of Happiness* unique is not only the depth with which Dr. Lyubomirsky explores the subject, but the rigorous science on which her conclusions are grounded. As I continue to delve into the why and how of happiness, it becomes both challenging and surprising. And if you think that having more money, a bigger house, your dream job, or even the ideal mate will make you happy, think again. Return for the first class on happiness from 2 to 4 o'clock in the UUFd sanctuary.

Next Newsletter deadline: September 15, 2009

Mabon/Autumnal Equinox Ritual

Monday, September 21 at 7 p.m. we'll celebrate the Mabon/Autumnal Equinox Ritual. If you wish, bring drums, rattles, etc. and a snack food to share. All are welcome, hosted by UUFD CUUPS Group.

Books, Bites and Botanicals Coming October 10

It's time to box up good, resellable books for the UUFD Books, Bites, and Botanicals Sale Saturday, October 10. Mark your calendar. Your help will be needed. Tell your relatives, friends and neighbors that if they have books to get rid of, we would love to have them for our fall sale. Plants should be started now so that they will be lush for sale in our botanicals room by October 10. And don't let those zucchini go to waste. They can be made in to moist and tasty breads, cookies and muffins for freezing. By starting early, we'll have many choices for our BBB customers.

A Covenant Group: The Spiritual Journey

Wanted: People who are seeking a spiritual life apart from institutions, dogmas, and conventional thinking to meet together for shared experiences and exploration such as readings, personal experiences, meditation, contemplation, contemplative prayer, sacred music, chanting, etc. Members of all faith communities are welcome, Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, Taoist, Earth Centered, New Age, humanist, or simply agnostic. The purpose of the Group is sharing and exploring spiritual experiences in a safe, accepting, non-judgmental space. The Group is not meant to replace anyone's beliefs but rather to deepen and broaden them. There are no age or affiliation requirements other than a willingness to attend meetings and participate. Group leaders will vary from meeting to meeting and be volunteers from the Group. The Group would meet the first and fourth Wednesdays of each month from 7:00-8:30 PM at UUFD. A small collection will be taken each meeting to defray UUFD building expenses. Meetings will begin in late September or early October, 2009. If you are interested, please call or email Ron Shafer at rnshfr@shelbywb.coop or 217-865-2527. Also, you may simply sign the sheet in the lobby.

All-Church Potluck & Weiner Roast at the Throneburgs

Be sure to set aside the evening of Saturday, October 3rd from 4- 8 p.m. for fun time out in Assumption country. Monty and Joyce Throneburg invite everyone to come on down. Wieners, buns, lemonade and so'mores will all be provided by the Throneburgs. Bring your own table service and definitely your lawn chairs. Maps will be on the foyer table at the Fellowship.

Rev. Biedler's Hours

Regular office hours for Rev. Biedler are at the Fellowship every Tuesday and Thursday evening from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. John is available at other times by appointment and certainly welcomes your calls. You may reach him either by calling his cell phone at (217) 972-2184 or by leaving a message at the church office at (217) 875-5442.

Religious Education Classes

Sunday the 13th

Sunday the 20th

Sunday the 27th

September 2009 Calendar of Events

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

Visitors are always welcome!

Tuesday, September 1st

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

Wednesday, September 2nd

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

Tuesday, September 8th

- 7:00 p.m. — decREAD Group

Wednesday, September 9th

- 6:00 p.m. — Women's book club

Thursday, September 10th

- 7:00 p.m. — Buddhist Group

Sunday, September 13th

- 11:30 a.m. — Congregational Meeting
- 12:00 p.m. — Board meeting

Tuesday, September 15th

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

Wednesday, September 16th

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

Tuesday, September 22nd

- 7:00 p.m. — decREAD Group

Thursday, September 24th

- 7:00 p.m. — Buddhist Group

Group discussion topics:

Buddhist Group—The UUFD Buddhist Group will be meeting at Terry Ankrom's house, 2480 West Main Street, Decatur, Illinois, 62522 on the second and fourth Thursday of each month. 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. 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 decREAD Group—The decREAD Group will meet on Tuesdays, September 8 and September 22 at 7:00 p.m. at UUFD. All are welcome. We are reading "The Varieties of Religious Experience" by William James.

The Christian Practices Covenant Group—The Christian Practices Covenant Group will be reading "Jesus for the Non Religious" by Episcopal Bishop John Spong. Contact Joan Brown or Reverend Biedler if interested – guests are always welcome.

The Wednesday Morning Covenant Group—The Wednesday Morning Covenant Group meets the first and third Wednesdays of the month, which will be September 2nd and 16th, from 10 a.m. to noon. Come discover the magic and power of these small gatherings of members and friends of UUFD. This group is reading and discusses the book "Living Buddha, Living Christ" by Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh. You're always welcome.

Humanist Group—The Humanist group meets the first Wednesday of each month. All meetings begin at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur at 7:00 p.m.

Women's Book Club—The Women's Book Club will meet at the home of Kathy Sorensen at 6:00 for a potluck followed by discussion of Firefly Lane by Kristin Hannah. For more information call Kathy at 330-6614.

Letters from John...

Last month I presented to the Board of our congregation a number of ideas I had been considering for adult religious education classes in the fall. The one that received the most interest at the board meeting, was a class on “how to be happy.” Someone commented something like “you don’t hear that topic being taught very often.” Others felt it would not only be unique, but that it’s the kind of subject that not only members would enjoy, but one to which we could invite friends, family members and people new to UUism. It would give them something that could significantly enhance their everyday lives, and something they could use for the rest of their lives.

So that’s what I’m going to do: “The How of Happiness.” You can read more about it in this newsletter. I’ve already ordered a couple dozen of the books in anticipation of a high turnout.

I’m introducing the series with two sermons on what happiness is and why it’s worth pursuing. These sermons will set the stage for the classes. I’m also designing a flyer to give out to other churches and organizations in town, even inviting members of the ecumenical minister’s group I belong to. I will be sending press releases to the media about the classes.

As you can tell, I’m pretty excited about teaching this class. And though I consider myself a pretty happy person, I know already from reading the book by Sonja Lyubomirsky, that I could do a lot more towards being happier...and I don’t mean being slap-happy. I mean living a more satisfying, rich and personally fulfilling life. The research shows that it can be done.

Even Abraham Lincoln is said to have said, “People are just as happy as they make up their minds to be.”

Problem is, people aren’t taught how to make up their minds. Or if they have, they don’t know what activities really produce a happier life? They don’t know the studies that have been done on what really works and what doesn’t? We’re not taught where happiness comes from? Or, how we make it happen for ourselves?

Here are a few ideas for you to think about: According to Lyubomirsky, each person's capacity for happiness can be broken down into three areas. The first fifty percent of this capacity is an intrinsic set point for happiness that is genetically predetermined, similar to intelligence or a propensity for weight gain. Little can be done to alter this set point of happiness.

The second ten percent is circumstantial. Many assume that a better job, a nicer car or a new wardrobe will make them happy, but that is simply not true. People adapt very easily to new circumstances, so while a sudden change can sway one's happiness for a time, eventually he or she will go back to their set point.

The third area of happiness is the focus of the workshop series: that forty percent of a person's potential for happiness that is determined by his or her own behavior. Lyubomirsky finds this large percentage an encouraging number for those plagued by unhappiness. "This is terrific news. It means that all of us could be a great deal happier if we scrutinized very carefully what precise behaviors and thoughts very happy people naturally and habitually engage in," she wrote. She does warn that like anything else worth pursuing, happiness requires hard work. However, scientific evidence indicates that it will be worth it, as happy people reap physical benefits, such as better health and longer lives.

Well, enroll in my class I say...I think you’ll be happy you did! And invite someone you care about to do the same – and that too will make you happier. Try it and see.

Faithfully yours,

John

Memories of Our Week at General Assembly

By June Allison

UUFD members June Allison and Chelso Frescura attended the 48th Annual General Assembly (GA) in Salt Lake City, UT, June 24-28, 2009 and represented our Fellowship as voting delegates.

Our annual UUA General Assembly was as wonderful as usual. I volunteered again at the accessibility table to assist with usage of electric scooters, hearing and visual devices, answer questions, etc. The coordinator for this committee is very qualified and has been in the position for five years now. She reported all committee heads receiving double the amount of volunteer applications this year to sort through. There were almost 3,400 attendees this year at GA.

GA introduced a new public advocacy campaign called "Standing on the Side of Love." This campaign, open to secular allies and those in other religions, is all about standing in solidarity with oppressed peoples. Its goal is to promote respect for the inherent worth and dignity of every person by training individuals to speak and act quickly in response to current issues, legislation, and hate crimes. A public witness rally was held in the city plaza to draw attention to the injustices immigrant families suffer.

At a local Himalayan restaurant, I was asked about my pin reading "Standing on the Side of Love UUA". The gentleman said he'd seen many people in his establishment wearing this pin. I explained our support of immigrants and he quickly understood.

Chelso again was in the GA Choir which practiced every day. This year they sang three times at GA instead of only at the closing ceremony program.

After attending the candidates' forum, we chose to vote for Peter Morales as president of the UUA. Either UU candidate would be great in the office, but Morales impressed us slightly more with how he answered questions and presented himself. For me, the most spiritual event at GA was the installation of president Peter Morales at the closing ceremony! It brought tears to my eyes, and I'm sure when I saw Peter's face tighten at one point, he too was fighting back tears. I can only describe it as a beautiful spiritual ceremony centered around everyone laying on hands to our new president. Between readings for Morales, the GA Choir would harmonize the line, "We pray..."

We only had time to attend plenary twice during the week. Moderator Gini Courter said she intended to address governance this coming year throughout the UUA. She will be visiting churches and fellowships across the country to address this issue. Courter also indicated there will be some changes in how General Assembly is organized and held. General Assembly will be held next year from June 23-27, 2010 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

"The How of Happiness" Workshop with Rev. John Biedler

"The How of Happiness" Workshop with Rev. John Biedler, begins September 27th and extends through the end of November. It is based on the book by the same title written by research psychologist and professor at the University of California, Sonja Lyubomirsky. This series of activity-based and practical ideas begins with simply asking: what is happiness and how is it measured? Also, why are some people happier than others? Participants in my series will complete scales that measure their levels of well-being -- namely, happiness, life satisfaction, mood, self-esteem, and depression. They will track their positive and negative moods through each day over the course of six days. Participants will graph their results and write a response about the patterns they observed and their experience doing the exercise. This will truly be an activity-based class with the purpose of living a satisfying and happier life. Enrollment sheets are on the foyer table in the Fellowship, or send an email to jsbiedler@aol.com. The cost is just \$20/ which will include the book and all handouts. The dates are: Sept. 27, Oct. 4, 18, Nov. 1, 15 and 22.



From the President...

Greetings,

Over the years our family has regularly attended church. However, when our children were small, there was no Sunday School in the summer, and because of that, we did not attend services in June, July or August. One September Sunday as we prepared to return to church, our then five year old son asked if it was "church season" again.

After a busy summer of traveling, painting the house and gardening, it is indeed church season again!

As a teacher, my life always followed the school calendar. September was a time to make plans, begin new classes, renew friendships and focus on the upcoming school year. It is not much different in the life of a church. After a summer full of activities, September is a time for members and friends to meet together again at the Fellowship. We will hold our annual water communion on September 13th and dedicate the newly remodeled foyer. Reverend Biedler is introducing a new class on happiness at the end of the month, and we are preparing for our October 10th Books, Bites & Botanicals fundraiser. Covenant groups and interest groups meet throughout the month to provide members and friends with opportunities for fellowship and discussion.

In September, we are introducing a new Religious Education curriculum through the UUA's Church on Loan program. Children and adults will be able to visit REsources for Living Web page, a column inviting kids (and grown-ups) to reflect on matters from how to celebrate holidays to what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist; and the KidTalk Web page, a monthly information and activities page on spiritual practices and social justice projects. We are always in need of caring adults willing to lead religious education classes for our children. If you are available to devote a Sunday morning or two to teach our little ones, please contact me at 875-3752.

To learn more about the activities available at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur, visit our Web site at www.uufd.org and check out the calendar of events. September is a great time to return to UUFD. Invite a friend to join you as we explore and experience our religious and spiritual journeys together.

In Service,

Heather Stoa

Sunday, September 13th 11:30 Congregational Meeting

A brief Congregational Meeting will take place following the service for the purpose of nominating a Ministerial Search Committee. The Board will be recommending members to serve on the committee and nominations may be made from the floor.

We are fortunate that Reverend Biedler has given us a year's notice of his retirement. This allows the Ministerial Search Committee time to put together a profile of the Fellowship, advertise with the UUA, evaluate resumes, arrange phone interviews, set up neutral pulpits for Sunday services, bring one or more candidates and their families to Decatur, recommend a minister and provide support for the minister after he or she arrives. To learn more about the search process, please go to: <http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/transitions/index.shtml>.

If you are willing to serve on the Ministerial Search Committee, please contact Heather Stoa at 875-3752. Your time and efforts are needed and appreciated as we call a new minister to lead UUFD.

Conserving Water is Easier Than You Think

Submitted by the UUFd Green Sanctuary Committee

When it comes to our shrinking water resources, there is a lot we must do in order to preserve our water supply. Water is something we simply cannot do without—our very lives depend on it! Due to the combination of climate change and increasing global population, as many as six billion of us could face serious water shortages by 2050 unless we take this dilemma seriously. Amazingly, the Worldwatch Institute shows us that conservation of our water can make a larger impact on the climate crisis than using less energy in our businesses and homes. So, here are some easy ways to do that.

- Check your faucets to make sure they have aerators installed. They mix air into tap water, reducing the volume of water used. They can easily be found at any hardware store.
- If you can buy a water-saving toilet, do so. If not, just put a brick into the tank of your toilet to displace some of the water there. Old toilets waste up to 14,000 gal. a year.
- Taking baths use more water than taking showers. Limit the showers to less than five minutes each. Install low-flow shower heads for further savings.
- Be aware when you brush your teeth or shave that you don't need to run your faucet.
- Fill your dishwashers before running them. If your washer is fairly new, you don't even need to waste any water rinsing your dishes first. Simply scrape them off.
- Instead of using your sink's garbage disposal which needs a lot of water to work, why not start composting? You'll save on water, electricity and your garden will love it!
- Keeping drinking water in your refrigerator will save you from having to run the tap 'til the water gets cold. And for hot water, why not consider installing an instant hot water tap on your kitchen sink?
- When laundry day arrives, fill your machine and use the shortest wash cycle, using cold water. Encourage your family to use their bath towels for several days before tossing them into the hamper. If it is within your budget, consider buying an energy-efficient front-loading washing machine.
- If you cut your grass high, you will keep the soil moist and promote deeper root systems that need less watering. If you then aerate your lawn, with at least six-inch intervals, when it rains, the water will not run off so quickly, but soak in much faster.
- If you have lawns, then water them in the early mornings before the heat of the day causes wasteful evaporation. Check that the sprinkler targets only lawn, not concrete or stone.
- Use buckets or barrels to collect gutter water that comes from the gutters for garden and houseplant waterings.
- Planting indigenous plants that don't need a lot of water and adding mulch will help soils retain their much needed moisture and it will reduce the need for frequent waterings.
- Repair leaky faucets and running toilets. Repairing just one dripping faucet could save you as much as 2,700 gallons per year! Amazing! Also check for hidden leaks by doing this: take a reading of your water meter. Don't use the water for a few hours, then check it again. If it's higher, you'd best find the leak.

Check out the website for more information:

<http://www.seventhgeneration.com/learn/news/pour-water-conservation>



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September 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.



September Birthdays

Kathy Kline

September 23



For

Contact

At:

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Kathy Kline

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SEPTEMBER 2009 ISSUE