



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

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www.myspace.com/uufd_il



Minister:

Rev. John Biedler
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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.

October 4—"Growing Our Diversity"— Rev. John Biedler

This is the third annual "Association Sunday" of the Unitarian Universalist Association and this year's theme is **Growing Our Diversity**. How can we as a congregation help Decatur become more welcoming of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity? What can we do in a practical way to help dismantle racism in our community? Today Reverend Biedler will identify ways we as a congregation can build multiracial/multicultural communities of love and justice. It starts by first being willing to listen with an open mind and open heart. Come this Sunday with both.

October 11—"Standing on the Side of Love Part I"—Rev. John Biedler

Every major religion has compassion and love at its center. The Unitarian Universalist Association launched a new public advocacy campaign this past summer, "Standing on the Side of the Love," aimed at helping UU congregations mobilize support in their communities for marginalized groups. Since staying true to our religious values, we may as a religious movement finally have gotten it. Bumper stickers calling us the "Uncommon Denomination" are nice, but for us to turn our main public voice from an attempt to explain who we are to one that focuses on what we do in and for the world is stronger. Today we will find out what it really means to stand on the side of love and compassion.

October 18—"On the Side of Love Part II"— Rev. John Biedler

If you are new to Unitarian Universalism, one of the things you will learn is that we are extremely proud of our history. Our history is full of great things but, truth be told, it also has had its share of shameful moments and embarrassing episodes. Yes, we can trace our history and list the myriad ways that we have stood on the side of love. When today too much of our public discourse is driven not by love, but by fear, particular people are too often deemed less than human. This is a violation of all faiths which are centered in love. This campaign seeks to harness the power of love to stop oppression, exclusion, and violence.

October 25—"Staying Connected as a Couple"—Matt and Marilyn Stevens

Training couples in the skills needed to be more intimately connected to each other, especially after retirement, is what Matt and Marilyn love to do. Matt and Marilyn Stevens just celebrated their 27th wedding anniversary and have two sons age 21 and 24. They completed the international organization PAIRS (Practical Skills for Emotional Literacy) Certification Process in 1999, and have been facilitating workshops since. Marilyn is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Clinical Member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, and Matt works in the Information Technology group at Caterpillar of Decatur. Today they will share some of what they teach to help couples maintain a satisfying and healthy connection. More about their work? <http://www.connectedpairs.com/>

Samhain/Halloween Observance and Party

Samhain/Halloween Observance and Party will be at 7 p.m. on October 31. Ritual, drumming, food, costumes and fun! Everyone welcome. Hosted by UUFD Sacred Pathways CUUPS.

UU Women's Book Group

The UU Women's Book Group will meet at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 14, around the campfire at the rural Argenta home of Nancy Shoop. Please call Nancy, 795-2200, to RSVP. The group will discuss a juvenile fiction work, *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan. Bring a dish for the potluck, but the hot dogs, buns, and condiments, baked beans, and s'mores ingredients are spoken for already.

If you want to carpool to Nancy's, you have two choices of meeting sites:

To park at UUFD, please let Heather Stoa know to expect you. Her phone number is 875-3752.

To park in front of Sally VanNatta's, 2 Lake Grove Road, call Sally at 423-0214.

Looking ahead, the book for November is *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt* by Doris Kearns Goodwin. This is available in paperback and is BIG, so you might want to start early.

In December we plan to discuss *Julie and Julia: 365 Days, 524 Recipes, 1 Tiny Apartment Kitchen* by Julie Powell, and we will each bring a Julia Child dish for the potluck!

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.

Directions? Take Route 51 south toward Assumption. Turn left at the first flashing light as you enter Assumption. Drive approximately 5 miles east, and go straight through a 4-way stop. Drive another mile east to the Mt. Pleasant Church of God on the right, and turn right on their lane that is immediately east of the church. Got a GPS system? Go to 1178 E 2100 North Road, Assumption, IL 62510.



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 4th
 Sunday the 11th
 Sunday the 18th
 Sunday the 25th

October 2009 Calendar of Events

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

Visitors are always welcome!

Tuesday, October 6th

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

Wednesday, October 7th

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

Thursday, October 8th

- 7:00 p.m. — Buddhist Group

Sunday, October 11th

- 12:00 p.m. — Board meeting

Tuesday, October 13th

- 7:00 p.m. — decREAD Group

Wednesday, October 14th

- 6:00 p.m. — Women's book club
- 7:00 p.m. — The Spiritual Journey Covenant Group

Tuesday, October 20th

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

Wednesday, October 21st

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

Thursday, October 22nd

- 7:00 p.m. — Buddhist Group

Tuesday, October 27th

- 7:00 p.m. — decREAD Group

Wednesday, October 28th

- 7:00 p.m. — The Spiritual Journey Covenant 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, October 13 and October 27 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 October 7nd and 21th, 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 Nancy Shoop at 6:00 for a potluck followed by discussion of The Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan. For more information call Kathy at 330-6614.

Spiritual Journey Covenant Group—The Spiritual Journey Covenant Group meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at UUFD from 7:00-8:30. For further information contact Ron Shafer at ronaldshafer52@yahoo.com or 865-2527.

Letters from John...

This year's Unitarian Universalist General Assembly was held in Salt Lake City at the Salt Palace convention center. The main entrance to the convention center has a tall circular glass tower that is pretty spectacular. Before the assembly began, the UUA had hung an immense yellow banner on the glass tower declaring that Unitarian Universalists "stand on the side of love." During the week of the convention a strong wind came through downtown Salt Lake City, the banner partially detached, and a gust of wind slammed a metal grommet from the banner into the glass tower breaking one of the windows, causing glass to rain down everywhere.

Those who are more rational minded might offer an explanation for this event that combines the power of the forces of nature and a technical criticism of the engineering capabilities of whomever hung the banner. But there are other interpretations one might offer...

In the center of Salt Lake City, did God or the Angel Moroni reach down from the heavens to tear down our banner? Or, perhaps the power of love incarnate had struck, offering evidence that love is a force too powerful to be constrained, or restrained, or limited.

Those who walked out of the building at around the time our banner was intently trying to tear down the convention center window, pane by window pane, were greeted by the presence of something remarkable – a bright, full rainbow in the Utah sky. Considering all of the money the Latter Day Saints had pumped into California to pass Proposition 8, perhaps the inclusive love that is often symbolized by a rainbow was exacting some small measure of revenge. After all, Jewish weddings end with a shattering of a glass. Perhaps this was a sign in favor of religious diversity and equal marriage. And, yes, maybe I'm stretching this symbolism a bit, but I still see this as significant.

Which brings me to what I would like to talk with you about – a new and exciting initiative that has been launched by our association of congregations, the UUA. In doing so, I'm not doing a denominational plug here. Standing on the Side of Love is the name of a brand new public advocacy campaign launched in Salt Lake City. You will remember how June Allison wrote about it in last month's UUFD newsletter.

The campaign is described as confronting the exclusion, oppression, and violence that is based on identity and that seeks to diminish the worth and dignity of other persons. Standing on the Side of Love is a call to pursue social change through advocacy, public witness, and speaking out in solidarity with those whose lives are publicly demeaned.

Two focuses of the campaign, and I understand there will be more, are standing on the side of love for marriage equality and standing on the side of love with immigrant families.

Big blue billboards and bumper stickers calling us the "Uncommon Denomination" are nice. But, I feel this UUA initiative is sign of growth and maturity for us as a movement – to turn our public voice from an attempt to explain who we are to one that focuses on what we do in and for the world. We stand on the side of love!

If you are new to Unitarian Universalism, one of the things you will learn is that we are extremely proud of our history. In truth, our history is full of great things, but it also has its share of shameful moments and embarrassing episodes. However, we can also trace our history and list the myriad ways that we have stood on the side of love. In the 1800s prominent Unitarians in the Northeast were effective at convincing the public of the inhumanity of slavery. In California, Unitarian minister Thomas Starr King was primarily responsible for keeping the Golden State in the Union during the Civil War. In advocacy for abolition, we stood on the side of love.

We were the first denomination to recognize the ordination of a woman. It was in these Unitarian and Universalist congregations, where they recognized the religious leadership of women, that the suffrage movement was born. Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Olympia Brown are our religious forebears, and our congregations played a role as well, opening their doors for the suffragettes to organize and deliver stirring speeches. In standing for equal rights for women, we stood on the side of love.

I hope you will come to hear the two sermons in October that I promise will inspire and uplift you to do the same, for you to find a way to take such a stand for love. Please join us.

In Faithful Service, John

Books  **Bites**  **Botanicals** 

BOOKS, BITES & BOTANICALS will be our major annual fundraiser on Saturday, Oct 10 from 8 A.M. until 3 P.M. Workers are needed for preparations, working the sale and for cleanup. You can still volunteer to help. Call Judy Thistlethwaite, 429-5923, jthistle@comcast.net to help out. Eric Devore is in charge of the books sale. Rita Schwake will oversee the food items. Marge Evans will mother the plant sale. Mark these dates.

1. Sorting/setup party (wine & cheese) at the fellowship on Sunday Oct. 4, 6 P.M. Bring your donated books to the fellowship by that time.
2. Homemade food items (pies, cakes, muffins, breads, bars, cookies etc.) should be brought to the fellowship on Friday Morning, Oct 9 between 9 A.M. and 11:30 A.M.
3. Plants should be brought to the fellowship between 9 A.M. and 11 A.M. on Friday, Oct. 9. The plant sale room will be set up on that day.

Call Vern Thistlethwaite, 429-5923, vthistle@comcast.net if you need items picked up.

What are Those Humanists Doing? Why? Aha!! Good Idea!!

The philosophy of Humanism constitutes a profound and passionate affirmation of the joys and beauties, the braveries and idealisms, of existence upon this earth. It heartily welcomes all life-enhancing and healthy pleasures, from the vigorous enjoyments of youth to the contemplative delights of mellowed age, from the simple gratifications of food and drink, sunshine and sports, to the more complex appreciations of art and literature, friendship and social communion. —Corliss Lamont

How does all this happen? What can you do to help spread this joyful and beautiful perspective? Join the Humanist Group on Wednesday, October 7th to find out! And if this isn't enough, there will be wine and treats to help us enjoy the evening!

“The How of Happiness” Workshop with Rev. John Biedler

“The How of Happiness” Workshop series with Rev. John Biedler, began September 27th but extends through Oct. 4, 18, Nov. 1, 15 and 22. If you miss a session, each is a stand-alone workshop covering three of the twelve suggested ideas from the book by research psychologist Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky. This series of activity-based and practical ideas begins with simply asking: how do you define happiness and can it be measured? Also, why are some people happier than others? Participants in this series will complete scales that reflect their levels of well-being -- namely, happiness, life satisfaction, mood, self-esteem, and depression. One of the activities will be to track positive and negative moods through the course of six days. You will graph your results and write (to yourself) a response to the patterns observed and the experience of this exercise. This will be an activity-based class with the purpose of living a satisfying and happier life. Enrollment sheets are on the foyer credenza in the Fellowship, or send an email to jsbiedler@aol.com. The cost is just \$20 which will include the book and all handouts. Get the word out, invite lots of people you know.



From the President...

Greetings,

Through the generosity of one of our members, UUFD has purchased a year of Church on Loan through the UUA's Church of the Larger Fellowship. All of us – members and friends – have access to the Church on Line Web site where many worship and religious education materials are available electronically. To access Church on Loan, follow these instructions:

go to <http://www.clfuu.org>
click on For Small Congregations
click again on Church on Loan
one last click on Online Resources: Login
the user id is: churchonline (notice that this is “line” not “loan”)
the password is: resources

Our membership provides us with a wealth of resources including:

- Sundays Online – easy-to-use complete worship services
- Music – information on the UU hymnal, links to other music resources, and mp3 files of songs
- CLF Library – books, video tapes, audio tapes, CD's, and “Month of Sundays” collections of worship materials that may be ordered and used for six weeks. (If you would like to check out specific materials, please let me know, and I will place the order for you.)
- Religious Education Curriculum –
 1. uu&me!, a magazine for kids 6-12 about what really matters
 2. Between Sundays, a Web site designed to help parents and other adults answer religious questions raised by children and youth.
 3. New Connections, a source for information, ideas, and inspiration for adults doing religious education with children and youth.
 4. RE Express, tools to create a complete RE program for a small group

As a small congregational with many needs, this program has multiple resources for us, but they are only useful if we take advantage of them. Browse the site. My curiosity has been piqued by what I have seen, and I hope yours is, too.

In Service,

Heather Stoa

Welcome!!!

The members and friends of UUFD are pleased to welcome new members Glen Minks, an RCC student, and David and Patty Boomer. The Boomers come to us from the Wicca religion. They live in Decatur with son, Corey Crowe, a soon to be teenager!

We also celebrate the births of two new babies. Liz and Derek Richards and big brother Shea welcomed Ashton Emerson on August 17th and Rebecca Butler welcomed Violet Paige on September 11th. We wish these families many years of joy.

Chlorine is a Very Toxic Substance!

Submitted by the UUFd Green Sanctuary Committee

Many grow up with the belief that chlorine should be used to whiten and brighten our clothes, keep us safe from germs/bacteria in our homes and water. But, are we really safe using it? Over 30 years of research have shown, however, that the long term, residual effects from the use of chlorine is a significant health risk to all who come in contact with it.

Chlorine has been documented to aggravate asthma; chlorine consumption doubles the risk of bladder and rectal cancers; chlorine is linked to congenital cardiac anomalies, birth defects, reproductive disorders, and immune system breakdown; chlorine is associated with skin conditions such as psoriasis, acne, and eczema.

Experts have argued the dangers of chlorine saying that it dissipates over time. While it may be true in highly controlled lab situations, it's not true in the real world because when it is used in water treatment, it's found to accumulate in our waterways--our water is treated chemically many miles away and yet the chlorine remains when it comes into our homes! Then, when the chlorine mixes with the organic substances, dangerous cancer causing organochlorines, called THMs (trihalomethanes), are formed. These are then inhaled from the vapors in the shower, absorbed through the skin as well as ingested in the water we drink. Even using bleached coffee filters, toilet paper and paper towels increases the levels in our systems. Just in North America alone, 100 million tons of organochlorides are pumped into our waterways each year! In laboratory studies THM's are known to damage the thyroid gland, cause cancerous tumors, and affect the nervous system, liver and kidneys, and cause reproductive disorders. According to the U.S. Council of Environmental Quality, "Cancer risk among people using chlorinated water is 93% higher than among those whose water does not contain chlorine."

Surprisingly, the most harmful exposure to chlorine comes from skin absorption and inhaling steam while showering because our pores are opened allowing for faster absorption of toxic chemicals. So, we may be absorbing up to 50 times more chemicals in the shower, since chemicals are more concentrated in warm vapors. The chlorine gas then goes directly into the blood stream and the vapors strongly irritate the lungs. Many scientists feel that the increased exposure by inhalation is strongly linked to the 300% increase in Asthma in the last 10 years.

Many common household items, such as coffee filters, paper towels, bathroom tissue, diapers, feminine hygiene products, paper milk cartons, and other paper containers have all been bleached with chlorine increase your cancer risk. Cancer causing chemicals can be absorbed through the skin as they are used, and can leach into food products from bleached paper containers. So, look for products labeled PCF, or processed chlorine free, or TCF, totally chlorine free.

Many people who read about the dangers of chlorine for the first time are shocked that this toxic substance is flowing right into their homes! It won't be easy to remove this toxin from every aspect of our lives, but let's do the best we can:

- Look for the PCF and TCF designation on paper products that you buy.
- Put chlorine filters onto each of your faucets and shower heads.
- Don't drink chlorinated tap water. Drink purified water, and don't drink sugar and chemical filled soft drinks. They are more damaging than you can imagine. They leach nutrients from the body, and they contain phosphates and fluoride that saturates the thyroid. And artificially sweetened drinks contain excitotoxins, which is yet another other shocking health hazard! They are worse in liquid form, so avoid using artificial sweeteners at all. Splenda, the supposedly "great new sugar substitute" is a chlorinated sucrose derivative and is known to damage the thymus gland.
- Limit your exposure to chlorinated swimming pools (this is especially important for kids.)
- Switch to natural, bleach free cleaning supplies.

So, the bottom line is this: Try to remove Chlorine and other toxins whenever possible, eat healthy, and make sure you're taking products that help to flush toxins out of your body. Let's live life on the defensive when it comes to dealing with the chemicals in our environment.



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

October 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.



October Birthdays

Chelso Frescura October 16

Marge Evans October 28



For

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