

January 2012

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# Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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Rev. Larry Hutchison  
Consulting Minister

3773 N. MacArthur Rd.  
Decatur, IL 62526  
Phone: (217) 875-5442  
www.uufd.org

President:  
Judy Thistlethwaite

Vice President:  
Marge Evans

Treasurer:  
Mark Sorensen

Secretary:  
Mary Lovell

Board Members at  
Large:  
Carolynn Devore  
Mel Weinstein  
Joyce Throneburg

UUFD Trust Board:  
Ken Robertson  
Vern Thistlethwaite  
Dave Snoeyenbos



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## Upcoming Services

All Sunday services begin at 10:15 AM.

We offer religious education for children and child care for babies.

### January 1 - No Service

**January 8 - "You Must Remember Bliss"** Rev. Larry Hutchison  
From Buddha's brain to genetic engineering, the happiness of being us.  
(see my article)

Board Meeting at noon

**January 15 - "I Have a Dream Today"** Rev. Larry Hutchison  
A discussion about everyday civil/human rights today, always everywhere  
here and now. "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Proverbs

Food Bank Sunday

**January 22 - "Beyond Babel – Communicating with Others"**  
Kathy & Mark Sorensen

Starting with the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel, we will examine the  
role of communication in building a better world. Also, closer to home,  
how can UUs create and maintain a common religious community when  
we come from so many different backgrounds and speak so many  
different "spiritual languages"?

Long-time UUFD members, Kathy and Mark Sorensen, will share the tale  
of "The Barking Mouse" and some personal insights based on a recent  
sermon presented by Rev. Thomas Perchlik of the First Unitarian Church of  
Saint Louis.

**January 29 - "Seasons Come Dancing"** Rev. Larry Hutchison  
A service to celebrate the life, thought, song, and poetry of Nobel Prize  
Hindu reformer Rabindranath Tagore. In 1911, Tagore gave his first public  
address in the US in the Unitarian Church, now the site of Channing  
Murray Foundation, Urbana, IL.

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**All activities take place at the Fellowship, unless otherwise noted. Visitors are always welcome!**

**Wednesday, January 4**

7:00 p.m. — Humanist Discussion Group

**Friday, January 6**

1:00 - Men's Luncheon at Tuscany

**Wednesday, January 11**

7:00 p.m. — Spiritual Journey Covenant Group

**Wednesday, January 11**

6:30 p.m. - Women's Book Group

**Thursday, January 12**

7:00 p.m. - CUUPS Group

**Friday, January 13**

1:00 p.m.— Men's Luncheon at Tuscany

**Wednesday, January 18**

6:30 p.m. — Decatur Vegetarian Society

**Friday, January 20**

1:00 p.m. — Men's Luncheon at Tuscany

**Wednesday, January 25**

7:00 p.m. — Spiritual Journey Covenant Group

**Friday, January 27**

1:00 p.m. — Men's Luncheon at Tuscany

## Calendar of Events

**Humanist Group**—Humanist Discussion Group meets 7:00 pm on the first Wednesday of the month. Contact Dave Snoeyenbos at 865-2409.

**CUUPS Group** - Meets the second Thursdays for study of Earth-Centered Spiritualities. For January the topic is part 1 of the adult RE curriculum "A Brief Introduction to UU Paganism" by Joan Van Becelaere.

**Women's Book Group**— Meets in January to discuss the book *The Thirteenth Tale* by Setterfield. Please call Kathy Sorensen to find out where we will meet.

**Spiritual Journey Covenant Group**—The Spiritual Journey Covenant Group meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month at UUFDF from 7:00-8:30. For further information contact Ron Shafer at ron.shafer52@gmail.com or 865-2527.

**Decatur Vegetarian Society (DVS)** --- The DVS group meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm for a vegetarian potluck dinner, followed by a live or video presentation at 8:00 p.m. The meetings are open to the public. If you interested in participating in a potluck, please either (1) bring a vegetarian or vegan dish with a list of ingredients or (2) donate \$5. Also, you should bring your own eating utensils. Contact Mel Weinstein (763-0509) for additional information.

**UUFDF Men's Group**- This group meets every Friday at Tuscany at 1:00 for lunch and conversation.

**January 15 is Food Bank Sunday** - Please bring non-perishable food items for donation to local food banks on the third Sundays of each month.



## Minister's Message

Rev. Hutchison's Office Hours

Monday day off

Tuesday 10 - 12

Wednesday 10 - 12 & 6 - 8

Thursday 10 - 12

Friday study at home

E-mail lghutch@comcast.net

Phone 352-949-1601 anytime Church phone 875-5442

## You, Me, & Happy New Year!!

At the end of the year, I like to think of the good times I've had, the happy moments and give thanks for these happy memories. Being here in Decatur with you these few months has given us much joy. Nancy and I wish to say thank you as we wish you all a hearty happy New Year.

...the pursuit of happiness, it's sacredness is in our blood and even the Dalai Lama wrote; "I believe that the very purpose of our life is to seek happiness...I think the very motion of life is happiness."

Yet, for most of us, the road to happiness is rocky - several speed bumps along the way and an occasional good sized obstacle. But what if this bumpy path to joy and happiness could be smoothed? What if genetic engineering was capable of kindness and bliss? What about a happiness pill? Yes, I know serotonin was a bust, but that is only a temporary setback. Could happiness be chemical, and if so what will be the loss and cost of its commodification?

It gives us pause to ponder; what is happiness? Is it an emotion, a feeling, or a state of mind? Is it a human right? Are we shaped to think the things we want will make us happy? Really, can the search for the "happiness gene" actually find happiness?

Genetic engineering, for all the moral qualms that arise from it, (I have many) gives us a chance to rewrite, edit, to choose our own New Years resolutions. There is no choice like chance. This seems to be where history has dropped us down.

We here at UFD have a way of saying what it means to be alive. Even though statistics declare us ridiculous. Thermodynamics prohibits us. Life, by any reasonable measure, is impossible, in my life - this, here, now - infinitely more so. Our religion has a way of saying in the face of impossibility, just how worth celebrating it is to be saying anything at all. So let us celebrate the new year together.

Happy New Year,

Larry

## President's Message

Greetings to Members and Friends,

Happy New Year to everyone.

I consider our adoption of a needy family a great success. Thank you all for the food and money donations. Kathy Sorensen worked hard calling the family, getting the information, organizing the foods, buying what was needed, and delivering the goodies. The R.E. did a great job buying for the 3 year old. They knew just what he would like. Thanks again to everyone. Hope we made their holidays a little brighter.

We can still use more people to serve on the Membership/Outreach committee. Please contact Rita if you can help in this area.

We have been having many visitors. We welcome them to come back to other interesting services. Please help the greeters each Sunday, welcome our visitors.

With an extra day this year, we should be able to get more done in 2012.

Thanks for all you do.

Judy Thistlethwaite

## News from Religious Education

Jan. 8 - Begin Bible unit. Introduce the Bible. Lesson on Creation/Adam and Eve. - Lorelei Zaker

Jan. 15 - Noah's Ark - Jennifer Sekosky / Linda Shroyer

Jan. 22 - Moses being found in the bulrushes. - Lorelei Zaker

Jan. 29 - The Ten Commandments being given to Moses - Jennifer Sekosky / Linda Shroyer

## Meet Jonathan

Jonathan Cruz is a junior Commercial Music major at Millikin University. He started playing piano at the young age of five, and has studied music and piano performance ever since. He has performed in many different venues and events, including the Waukegan Beauty Pageant and receptions for the former mayor of Chicago, Richard Daley. He participated in many organizations during high school, and received twelve first division and two second division rates at the IHSA Solo and Ensemble Competition. He has given private piano lessons for four years to locals in his home town of Waukegan, IL. He has done a total of 34 recitals and has another fast approaching in February of 2012.

## UUFDF Website

In November, the UUFDF website (<http://www.uufd.org/>) got a major update. "Impossible!! That can't be! Nothing has changed!" Sure, that might be what you exclaim. After all, it looks almost identical to the previous setup. What's changed? How is anything different?

The UUFDF website had an "Extreme Makeover" on the inside. With the former setup, changes were not easy to make. Things were so difficult and had such potential to disable the website that we couldn't really make any serious changes to the website. To orchestrate any updates or upgrades, it would require more time for the contractor and additional cost for the UUFDF. Since the previous setup seemed to work well enough, why change that? Especially if it would cost us more cash!

Thankfully our website contact helped demonstrate why this upgrade would save us time and money. With the new format, any modifications and changes could be done at the UUFDF. There would be no need to hire an outside contractor. Even better, our already paid website hosting fee could be transferred to this new system. We wouldn't lose any money we'd already paid to host the website.

This wasn't the end of our good fortune, though! To ensure anyone could modify the website, we also got a document that details how to make common updates and modifications to the website. I have that document, and I can share that with anyone interested in the inner workings of the website. Furthermore, I would encourage anyone interested in working on the UUFDF website to contact me at the UUFDF on Sunday in the coming weeks. With one individual already showing interest, I'd hope we could get another couple to volunteer. With those interested, we could spend some time with the new software and demonstrate the new features available to us with the upgraded website setup.

I hope everyone has some time to checkout the website and feel free to pass along ideas or suggestions. We want this website to showcase all that the UUFDF has to offer, and your interests and thoughts are encouraged!

Tim Rooney

# Humanist Group

Happy Holidays from the Humanists at the UUFD! To celebrate the holiday season, the Humanism group at the UUFD seems to have created a tradition. Last year, our group "took a break" from the usual discussion and presentation to share a favorite holiday poem or story. This year we did the same thing, and it was another resounding success.

Before delving into the poetry and tales told at the meeting, be aware that we Humanists can't just take the poems or stories at face value. Of course we had to discuss, detail, and digest all the implications that the literature could suggest. Just as we did last year, much conversation was had about the stories and poems featured at our gathering.

How did we begin the evening? With our local famous poet, of course! Ken Robertson, an active and enthusiastic member of the UUFD, had several poems to share. Who was the author of all those poems? Ken was, of course! But these weren't just poems he'd penned in his spare time and created on cocktail napkins. These were published poems! In a college publication, Ken has several samples of his work. It was wonderful to hear Ken read his own work. Beautiful and heartfelt, for certain!

When Ken finished his first reading, other members and guests were eager to share some discovered and poetic verses. David Snoyenbos began his pithy quotes with a question. "How many of you know what an aphorism is?" We had to admit that we'd heard the word, but none of us had looked up the definition. David proceeded to give us a dictionary definition--a terse formulation of a truth or sentiment, according to Merriam-Webster website. Once we had that understanding, David delivered some thought-provoking gems.

Next, Kathy Sorensen read some passages from *Good Without God* to us. These certainly provided an enlightened and reassuring message. How enlightened? It was significant and relevant enough that we considered that as a topic for future meetings.

Wrapping things up was Rita Schwake and the poem *Thanotopsis* by William Cullen Bryant. Several people at the meeting perked up with this announcement. "We read that in high school!" And "Sure, I know that poem." Rita read the entire poem, and what a treat that was! This triggered great discussion and some eye-opening remarks.

Overall it was a merry and thought-provoking evening. What's more, there were plenty of refreshments! In keeping with the tradition that went along with the start of the group, we had snacks and wine to share. Those delicious treats ensure a pleasant evening, regardless of the topic discussed or detailed.

Thinking of that topic, we also decided on our January 04, 2012 meeting topic. Really? It's a 2012 date! Yikes! Soon enough it will be here, but we hope you can join us at the UUFD on January 04, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. to discuss the book *Good Without God*. See you there!

# Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

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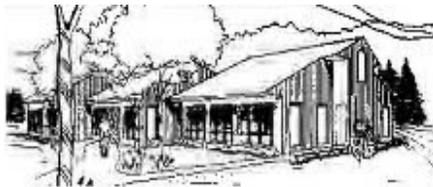
## Fellowship Mission

**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	Jan. 6
Mark Sorensen	Jan. 20
Caius Pajer	Jan. 21
Hadrian Pajer	Jan. 21
Amy Stockwell	Jan. 22

*Want to see your name on the birthday list?  
Send e-mail to [newsletter@uufd.org](mailto:newsletter@uufd.org)*



**minister@uufd.org (Rev. Larry Hutchison)**  
**president@uufd.org (Judy Thistlethwaite)**  
**vicepresident@uufd.org (Marge Evans)**  
**treasurer@uufd.org (Mark Sorensen)**  
**secretary@uufd.org (Mary C Lovell)**  
**programs@uufd.org (Mark Sorensen)**  
**newsletter@uufd.org (Kathy Kline and Terry Ankrom)**