



# Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

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Decatur, IL 62526  
Phone: (217) 875-5442



One of the "facts of life" about Sunday services at

UUFD has been the break for coffee. Besides the vital benefits of socializing, the process "cleanses the mental palate" before returning to the Sanctuary to explore the service's theme more thoroughly.

Now, this valuable service doesn't happen magically; this year, it's been Kathy Sorensen's task to gently wrangle "volunteers". Besides saluting Kathy, the "keeper of the clipboard", we ask people to take their turn.

## Mailing lists

To receive our current mail list of members and friends of UUFD, email [joyce.throneburg@gmail.com](mailto:joyce.throneburg@gmail.com). Note: use of this list is limited to church business. Corrections to the list are welcome and encouraged.

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General Assembly in a nutshell **Page 6**

*shortest month ... shortest month ... shortest month ... shortest*

## Upcoming Services

at 10:15 a.m.

Religious education for children and child care for babies provided

### **Feb. 1 – "Wholly Holey Holy" with Rev. Elaine Gehrman**

We are complex creatures, full of strengths and sensitivities, gifts and gaffes, anxieties and accomplishments. We will explore how our whole is more than the sum of our parts.

\* \* \*

### **Feb. 8 – "Building a Better Community for All - One Youth At a Time" with Alida Graham**

Tapping into her experience in the Decatur schools and her current work in the Macon County State's Attorney's office, she will discuss the initiatives of the Macon County Juvenile Justice Council.

\* \* \*

### **Feb. 15 – "The Need Never Ends"**

Jerry Pelz, director of the Northeast Community Fund, will describe what has motivated him to serve Decatur's low-income community for 44 years. He also will assess how the need has grown and discuss the causes and responses.

\* \* \*

### **Feb. 22 – "Clue vs. Serial" with Rev. Elaine Gehrman**

We are questioning beings, looking for answers. In the game of life, definitive answers are often hard to come by. We will discuss justice, certainty, ambiguity and true crime.

## A UU hero in "Selma" – and real life

June Allison reminds us that the Rev. James Reeb, a courageous UU, is portrayed in the "Selma" movie, in theaters now and nominated for Academy Awards.

Reeb, a Boston minister, was in Selma in March 1965 and marched with Martin Luther King in the demand for basic rights for African-Americans. During that mission to Selma, he was clubbed by white supremacists after eating at an integrated restaurant and died a few days later, at 38.

The Madison, Wis., congregation is named after Reeb.



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# Calendar of Events

## Sun. Feb. 1 – noon

UUFD Board; see what's cooking

## Wed., Feb. 4 – 7 p.m.

Greater Decatur Humanists,  
UUFD

## Tues., Feb. 10 – 6:30 p.m.

UUA Common Read  
Discussion, UUFD

## Wednesday, Feb. 11 – 6 p.m.

Women's Book Group, Vicky  
Harbeck's home, 2802 Southland  
Drive

## Sun., Feb. 15 – at service

Food donations accepted for  
Northeast Community Fund

## Wed., Feb. 18 – 6:30 p.m.

Decatur Vegetarian Society,  
UUFD

## Thurs., Feb. 19 – noon

Third Thursday Brown Bag,  
UUFD

## Tues., Feb. 24 – 6:30 p.m.

Race discussions, UUFD

## Greater Decatur Humanists

At the January meeting, we examined the hunt for happiness. For our purposes, "happiness" was defined to be the mental, emotional state characterized by positive to pleasurable emotions from contentment to immense joy. How can society measure happiness?

Across cultures, measures include GDP per capita for purchasing power, healthy life expectancy, having someone to count on, perceived freedom to make life choices, freedom from corruption, and generosity.

On Feb. 4, at 7 p.m. at UUFD, the Greater Decatur Humanists will watch the first part of "Torturing Democracy". The film shows reasons and techniques used by the American government in manipulating prisoners. The discussion should be uplifting, despite the grim nature of the movie.

## Decatur Vegetarian Society (DVS)

A potluck dinner is followed each month by a presentation at 8 p.m. Bring a vegetarian or vegan dish with a recipe or donate \$5. Contact Mel Weinstein (mel.weinstein.domehome@gmail.com) for more information.

## Women's Book Club

The next meeting is Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 6 p.m. in the home of Vicky Harbeck, 2802 Southland Drive, Decatur. The book is "Beautiful Ruins" by Jess Walter. Bring a dish to share for dinner and RSVP to Vicky at 428-4764.

## Meditation exploration

UUFD will host a series of meditation training sessions on three consecutive Wednesdays, starting Feb. 25. The sessions will likely start at 5 p.m. The program will be offered by the Qadriya Sufi Foundation of America, which is a spiritual organization based in Charleston and dedicated to promoting spiritual pluralism and teaching meditation to those seeking inner peace and nearness to the divine presence (however you define it). [Qsfa.org](http://Qsfa.org) is the website.

Terry Ankrom has agreed to help coordinate this activity, and will share more information later.



## Along the lane with Elaine

*"The flowers of late winter and early spring occupy places in our hearts well out of proportion to their size." -- Gertrude S. Wister*

Although winter is far from over, it seems that we do take great comfort and joy in a day of above 40 degrees, or bright morning sunshine despite the cold air. Of course, something inside us seems to leap at glimpses of new green life poking up through the ground. The abundant lush green that we will soon take completely for granted, for now is precious and seems much larger than life. If only we could remember to treasure our gifts as much when they are abundant as when they are scarce.



Last month, I began two new discussion groups, and even if you were not able to attend the initial session, I encourage you to consider joining us this month. The book discussion group on this year's UUA Common Read -- Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square by Paul Razor (Skinner House Books, 2013), will next meet

Tuesday, Feb. 10, at 6:30 p.m. at UUFD. Please let me know if you would like to borrow a copy of the book.

The other discussion group, "Race Conversations", will next meet Tuesday Feb. 24, at 6:30 p.m. Please let me know if you would like to receive the handouts. This group is open to anyone, so if you know someone who has a particular interest in race issues, please invite them to attend. I believe that conversation is crucial to understanding and progress.

I am continuing the Third Thursday brownbags, and invite you to join me on Thursday, Feb. 19, at noon. I will continue to hold my Tuesday afternoon hours (1-3 p.m.) at Starbucks. Please consider stopping by if you're available.

I am excited about this year's Environmental Film Series, organized by the Green Sanctuary group, and I encourage you all to attend, and to spread the word.

Speaking of spreading the word, I imagine there are more people in Decatur and the surrounding area who would appreciate our approach to religion, worship and discussion. Please consider inviting a friend to any/all of our events! See you at the fellowship!

*Elaine*



My general **office hours** are:  
 Tuesday 10 a.m.-noon, and  
 1-3 p.m. (at Starbucks)  
 Wednesday 10 a.m.-noon  
 and 4-6 p.m.  
 Thursday 10 a.m.-noon  
 And other times by appointment

The best ways to reach me  
 are: e-mail,  
[minister@uufd.org](mailto:minister@uufd.org), or by  
 phone: Home 217-344-2335,  
 Cell 217-358-9412, or  
 Church 217-875-5442. Don't  
 hesitate to be in touch!

## In "the Pod"

### RE-sponsible

Our Religious Education kids have a "mission" during part of this month: they're brushing up on their knowledge of the UU Seven Principles in order to present the Children's Focus in the Feb. 8 service! May their understanding of our basic ideals be broadened.

Did we say "responsibility"? The children also will be making valentines for our shut-ins on Feb. 1. BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE. On Feb. 8, there will be a love-ly Valentine's Day party. Then on Feb. 15, RE plans an observance of the Chinese/Tibetan New Year. And, starting Feb. 22, some of the famous Bible stories will be shared.

Ask Lorelei, Jennifer Sekosky or Linda Shroyer how you can help make RE even stronger.



### Bernie's words



We won't quite need signs that say "Under Construction", but some work's going to be done on the Fellowship building and grounds.

Darwin Shroyer is working on a checklist of projects that needs to be done. There is some exterior peeling paint, and the outside lighting is not working. He will follow up with an electrician and will bring a proposal for fixing the lighting to the board. Eric DeVore has handicap parking signs and will have them put up.

Also, an important group is up and running again. The Committee on Ministry is a kind of "two-way street", giving the minister a way to communicate about certain situations and for the congregation to convey thoughts about the minister. Vern Thistlethwaite is chairing the committee, whose members are Kathy Vaught, Kathy Sorensen, Raphaella Prange, Barbara Hannon and Tim Rooney.

## Is it more jokes you wanted?

**Q: How many Unitarians does it take to change a light bulb?**

A: We choose not to make a statement either in favor of or against the need for a light bulb. However, if in your own journey, you have found that light bulbs work for you, that is wonderful. You are invited

to write a poem or compose a modern dance about your personal relationship with your light bulb. Present it next month at our annual Light Bulb Sunday Service, in which we will explore a number of light bulb traditions, including incandescent, fluorescent,

3-way, long-life, and tinted, all of which are equally valid paths to luminescence.

**Q: Why can't UUs sing very well in choirs?**

A: Because they're always reading ahead to see if they agree with the next verse.

**It's almost here again!** Now in its eighth year, the Green Sanctuary Committee, in conjunction with the Decatur Audubon Society and the Community Environmental Council, is sponsoring an environmental and nature film series at the Fellowship starting in late February and continuing through early April.

The purpose of the film series is (1) to bring awareness to environmental issues and (2) serve as a community outreach project for the Fellowship. All the films are free and are shown on a movie screen with stereo sound.

Donations are accepted at these events, and the purchase of

concessions (organic popcorn made with unrefined oil using a theater-style popcorn maker), along with healthier drinks, will help support the Fellowship in this endeavor. Note that the films have likely **not** been shown in a theater setting in Decatur or on local television.

Please support your Green Sanctuary Committee in these outreach events: Six helpers each night are needed to greet and sell concession tickets; to make and sell popcorn and drinks; and to arrange and rearrange chairs, leaving the sanctuary ready for Sunday. Please sign up on the help sheet in the foyer.

# Best films on Earth

## 2015 ENVIRONMENTAL FILM SERIES

8th season of contemporary environmental documentaries - featuring some of the best flicks for thinking, discussing, dreaming & imagining! A discussion follows each film.

Held at: **Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Of Decatur** (3773 N. MacArthur Road, Decatur, IL)

Time: Each screening will begin at **7:00 PM**. Limited seating available.

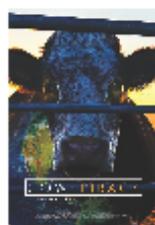
Free admission, donations accepted. Fresh theatre-style popcorn and healthy drinks available for purchase.



### FEB 28<sup>TH</sup>: HOW I BECAME AN ELEPHANT (2012, 82 MIN.)

Follow a wide-eyed, fourteen year-old girl from suburban California on her quest to save the world's largest land mammal; a quest that takes her halfway across the globe and face to face with the gentle giants she aims to save.

This elephant documentary, with its exotic and sometimes disturbing imagery, is inspiring folks around the globe.



### MAR 14<sup>TH</sup>: COWSPIRACY (2014, 85 MIN.)

A groundbreaking feature-length environmental documentary tailing intrepid filmmaker Kip Andersen as he uncovers the most destructive industry facing the planet today – and investigates why the world's leading environmental organizations are too afraid to talk about it. Well researched, illustrated, and entertaining.



### MAR 28<sup>TH</sup>: GMO OMG (2013, 90 MIN.)

Director and concerned father Jeremy Seifert is in search of answers. How do GMOs affect our children, the health of our planet, and our freedom of choice? And perhaps the ultimate question, which Seifert tests himself: is it even possible to reject the food system currently in

place, or have we lost something we can't gain back? These and other questions take Seifert on a journey from his family's table to Haiti, Paris, Norway, and the lobby of biotech giant Monsanto.



### APR 11<sup>TH</sup>: HEART OF SKY, HEART OF EARTH (2013, 98 MIN.)

Accompany six young Maya in Guatemala and Chiapas through their daily and ceremonial life. They put forth a wholly indigenous Mayan perspective in their own words, without narration. Their cosmology, in which all life is sacred and interconnected, presents a deeply compelling alternative to the prevailing worldview. As giant corporations go to the ends of the earth to extract all resources, these Maya reveal their determination to resist the destruction of their culture and environment.



# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The ANNUAL MEETING of the  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

Portland  
Oregon

JUNE 24-28, 2015



This year's theme is "Building a New Way".

In soliciting program providers, G.A. is asking such questions as: How are you working to imagine and tell a new story for your faith community, one that responds to the needs of time? How are you reaching out beyond your immediate Unitarian Universalist community to share the liberal religious values that transform lives?

Over five days, thousands of UUs will explore this theme in the beautiful environs of the City of Roses.

Dr. Cornel West, who has written 13 books and takes

his liberal passion to the streets of Ferguson, Mo., and other crossroads of justice denied, will deliver the major address, the Ware Lecture.

Attendees may equally well take home their highlights from sessions on a variety of topics or just interactions with fellow UUs. You may delight in the effervescence of the youth – and their vividly colored hair!

The Opening Ceremony is a wonder to behold, with a parade of banners from UU congregations from all over.

The Service of the Living Tradition spotlights ministers, ones just "coming into

Fellowship" and those retiring or who have died.

Plus, there are evening social activities and a chance to craft the next social justice stance taken by the UU Association.

Oh, and did we say Portland is just plain gorgeous! And if that were't enough, it's a relatively short trip to Seattle. The Zaker family is planning on attending, and others from UUFD may be, as well.

"Reasonably priced" flights can be found out to that area, depending on how soon you make arrangements.

Find more information at <http://www.uua.org/ga/>

## Prom dreams

Do you have prom dresses, show choir, bridesmaid dresses, shoes or accessories that you can donate for young women who otherwise could not afford them? You can drop them off in the UUFD office by Feb. 15, or take them to the Eisenhower High School main office any weekday between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The Eisenhower High School Cinderella Project is open to any area high school student, not just Eisenhower students. They have one "shopping day", when the young women pick out their dresses, then they are professionally dry cleaned, and the girls pick them up before their prom.

Eisenhower staff members and other volunteers act as personal shoppers to help the girls with their selections. After their prom, they are free to donate them back or keep them. It's a great event that benefits a lot of area students. Talk to Elaine for more information.



Look at it this way: We had this page last month, we might as well have it again.

### The "officials"

- President: Bernadette Lundeen  
[president@uufd.org](mailto:president@uufd.org)
- Co-Vice Presidents: Joyce Throneburg and Mary Lovell  
[vice\\_president@uufd.org](mailto:vice_president@uufd.org)
- Past President: Rita Schwake
- Treasurer: Mark Sorensen  
[treasurer@uufd.org](mailto:treasurer@uufd.org)
- Secretary: Kathy Kline  
[secretary@uufd.org](mailto:secretary@uufd.org)
- Board Members at Large: Eric DeVore, Tatiana Isakovski, Dick Zaker
- UUFd Trust Board: Ken Robertson, Dave Snoeyenbos, Vern Thistlethwaite

### The birthdays

- Athena Pajer ..... Feb. 5
- Nancy Hutchison ..... Feb.24

**HOLD BACK NO LONGER!**  
*Send e-mail with your natal day to*  
[newsletter@uufd.org](mailto:newsletter@uufd.org)

### The deadline

Please have your items in by Feb. 20, either at [newsletter@uufd.org](mailto:newsletter@uufd.org) or the Newsletter mailbox in the Fellowship office

### UU Principles

**Note: read and commit to memory: You will be tested!**

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

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### Helping incarcerated women

Stacey Carter, the librarian at the Women's Correctional Center, is looking for donations of books. Specifically they could use nonfiction, careers, recovery from addiction, surviving abuse, self-help books, workbooks, religious/spiritual books, classic literature, mysteries, true crime, but no romance!



Ms. Carter says that the inmates love to read, and because they have no Internet access, all they have to read is what's in the prison library. She is planning to lead some book discussion groups, and so multiple copies of books are also very helpful!

If you have any books to donate, please drop them off in the UUFd office, or contact Elaine, and she can arrange to pick them up.

Books (other than classics) should be less than 10 years old; paperback and hardback are both acceptable.

And thanks so much!