

April 2015



# Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur



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[www.uufd.org](http://www.uufd.org)



You look at your News-  
letter for the  
topic for next

Sunday's service and you decide whether you'll attend. How do the "non-Elaine" services come about?

Only through the consistent work of the Program Committee. The in-joke of the group is that it's the "Program Non-Committee" to frame the work as more of a joy than a concern.

Mary Lovell and Joyce Throneburg set the tone with a conscientious work ethic. Also, they celebrate ideas coming from any and all who attend "non-meetings". They have included Lynne and Rex Crow, Tatiana Isakovski, Dave Snoeyenbos and other important people.

"Filling the Sundays" is just the first step, though. Joyce and Mary have created and adhered to a theme of having speakers share what their passion is for the given subject. If that wasn't enough, they have produced a guide for service leaders who volunteer from the congregation. Fine job!

## *Re-awaken your UU energy*

### Upcoming Services

at 10:15 a.m.

#### **April 5 – "Coming Back to Life" with Rev. Elaine Gehrmann**

This Easter Sunday, we will explore the various ways that we can re-awaken and revive the dormant aspects of our lives.

#### **April 12 – "Urban Gardening and Food Security" with Olivia Heisner**



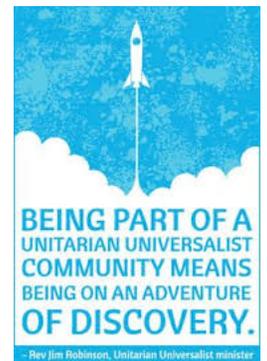
Olivia, the executive director of Decatur is Growing Gardeners, will share DIGG's vision for solving food and nutrient insecurity, creating jobs, changing lives and beautifying Decatur.

#### **April 19 – "Using Land Wisely to End Poverty" with Kathleen Robbins**

Every ecology and culture contains the means to improve their conditions. Kathleen co-founded Jatropha Projenou in 2007 to help Haiti's rural communities find and use those means. This group provides training and resources to give legs to Haitian aspirations and hard work.

#### **April 26 – "Our Saving Faith" with Rev. Elaine Gehrmann**

This Stewardship Sunday, we will examine the hopeful and affirming message of Unitarian Universalism and how UUFD can share this transformative faith with others.



## **Shroyer Power!**

Darwin and Linda Shroyer's  
50th Anniversary Party  
Saturday, May 2  
2 p.m.  
UUFD  
Everyone is invited!

## April 'flowers' at UUFD

**Wednesday, April 1 – 7**

**p.m.**

Greater Decatur Humanists,  
UUFD

**Sunday, April 5 – noon**

UUFD Board; no admission  
charge

**Wednesday, April 8 – 6**

**p.m.**

Women's Book Group, Marge  
Evans' home, 5584 Traugher  
Road

**Wednesday, April 15 – 6:30**

**p.m.**

Decatur Vegetarian Society,  
UUFD

**Sunday, April 19 – 10:15**

**a.m.**

Food collections cheerfully  
accepted for Northeast  
Community Fund

**Thursday, April 23 – noon**

Third Thursday Brown Bag,  
(it's 4th Thursday, this time)  
UUFD



### Greater Decatur Humanists

The group will have a TED topic for its April meeting, watching a video first, then probing it in discussion. TED, by the way, stands for Technology, Entertainment and Design. It is thought-provoking series of conferences that began in 1984 and are held in many sites around the world.

In March, "charity" was the topic. Our local humanists explored it from the philosophical, biological, practical and economical aspects.

For more on the group, go to [www.gdhumanists.org](http://www.gdhumanists.org)

### 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](mailto:mel.weinstein.domehome@gmail.com)) for more information.

### Women's Book Club

The Women's Book Club will meet at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, April 8, at the home of Marge Evans. The book is "Brown Girl Dreaming" by Jacqueline Woodson. Weather permitting, Marge will guide us on a wildflower walk on her property.

Please contact Marge at [mmedec@aol.com](mailto:mmedec@aol.com) to RSVP and/or for directions. Please bring a dish to share for dinner.

**Come,  
shake  
your rake**

Did you notice the snowdrops in bloom? The daffodils are up and soon the garden will come to life again!

Let's start the month with a "spiff up" day. Bring your rake and join the party on Saturday, April 4, at 9 a.m. If you would prefer to bring some refreshments instead of your rake, that is fine, too.

Some plants are ordered to make the garden east of the walk complement those on the west and should be arriving the second week in April. Whether your thumb is green or not, everyone is welcome to come back to help plant – or supervise from the bench.

Thanks from your Green Sanctuary and Building and Grounds committees.

## Along the lane with Elaine

From this year's UUA Common Read, "Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square", by Paul Razor, 2013, p. 51-52:



*At a minimum, religious liberals need to be clearer and more intentional about the religious dimensions of our convictions. We can look at our complex tangle of motivations and try to discern how our religious commitments fit. We can say to ourselves, "Yes, my commitment to social justice is based at least partly on my religious convictions," and then try to express them in ways that address specific situations. ...When we speak publicly, we can be intentional about saying that there are religious reasons, and that*

*they matter.*

Our three-session discussion of the above book ended on a discussion of ways we might think about framing our social justice convictions in more explicitly religious language. An example that several of us had in common was responding to friends who mention that they are going to get something at Hobby Lobby, and each of us were quite clear to our friends that we no longer shop at Hobby Lobby. We no longer shop at that store because they sued to be excluded from the Affordable Care Act mandate that employee health insurance plans cover emergency contraceptives.

But perhaps we no longer shop at Hobby Lobby because our religion affirms the principles of individual freedom and the right of conscience, and because we respect individuals' rights to make their own choices about matters that concern them. Or maybe we could just say that Hobby Lobby's position is against my religion! How might you frame your positions on social justice issues that you care about in more religious language?

The UU Midwest Regional Assembly is coming up in Naperville, Ill., April 17 to 19. The theme is "The 'New' in the New Era of Unitarian Universalism", and the keynote speakers are the Rev. Marlin Lavanhar and the Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt. More information can be found online at [midamericauua.org](http://midamericauua.org). I encourage you to consider attending: It will be an informative and inspiring weekend!



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!

The Committee on Ministry encourages you to participate in the evaluation of Rev. Elaine Gehrman's ministry with UUFD. Please take a couple of minutes and complete the evaluation form at this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/UUFDMinistry> The results will be sent to the committee on Ministry and then discussed with Elaine.

Elaine and the Committee on Ministry



## RE life: In "the Pod"

### This month's classes

Once again this year, Eastertime is a big deal in RE Land. Your gifts of canned goods will enable the "Easter Can Hunt" on April 5. The next week, they will learn about "The Miracles of Jesus." The focus shifts to Earth Day on April 19 and on to "Prayer and the Lord's Prayer" on April 26. Let your curiosity get the best of you and wander back to the Pod and find out what's happening.



*When you see the 200 UUFD daffodils this month, thank the RE kids for helping plant 40 new bulbs last October.*

By Nancy Heege,  
Congregational  
Life Consultant

**Note: "Who We Are" is a monthly series of articles introducing who we are as the MidAmerica Region of the UUA.**

One great way of learning more about Who We Are as the MidAmerica Region is looking into some interesting history.

For instance, who knew that Sinclair Lewis, the author of "Elmer Gantry", became good friends with a Kansas City Unitarian minister when Lewis was doing research for

his book, which featured a dynamic, but flawed tent preacher?

And who knew that one of our Wisconsin congregations was founded by

German-speaking immigrant free-thinkers in 1852?

And that another of our congregations is housed in a castle-like, stone building overlooking the Mississippi River in Alton?

To read these intriguing stories, visit the History and Heritage page on our web site:

<https://www.midamericauua.org/about-us/history-and-heritage>

## Going regional

### Taking environmental action

The UUANI (Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois) invites you to participate in its Clean Jobs Campaign to combat climate change.

In response to the UUA's Commit2 Respond initiative, UUANI is supporting strong implementation of the EPA's Clean Power Plan in Illinois. This is the most significant environmental policy since the Clean Air Act of 1970.

UUANI, along with every major environmental organization in Illinois, is part of a coalition that has introduced the Illinois Clean Jobs bill (HB2607/SB1485). This bill would ramp up renewable energy and energy efficiency, creating tens of thousands of clean energy jobs; establish the first-ever carbon pricing market in Illinois and target resources towards low-income communities and communities with power plants.

We invite you to join this effort by:

- Gathering petitions to Gov. Rauner and your state legislators.
- Meeting with your state legislators in-district or at the Earth Day of Action for Climate Justice in Springfield on Wednesday, April 22

You also are invited to attend their events at Regional Assembly on Friday, April 17: "Building Power and Putting It Into Action," and "UUANI: Empowering UU Action for a Better World".

For more information: <http://uu-advocacy-illinois.org>

## Dinners for 8 Return!

On Saturday, April 25, we hope you will sign up to attend and/or host a small group of UUs for dinner. These dinners have been popular in the past as it is such a fun way to get to know a few UUs in a casual, small group setting over a good meal.



Each attendee will be asked to provide part of the meal and the host/hostess will provide the place for 6 to 8 diners. There is a sign up sheet in the UU foyer ... or contact Kathy Sorensen at 330-6614 or

[kathysorensen1@comcast.net](mailto:kathysorensen1@comcast.net).

### The larger UU community

The UUA is excited to announce the new design of [UUA.org](http://UUA.org). The fresh look and feel will help to better communicate who we are, what we do and why it matters.

With almost 1 million new visitors to UUA.org each year, it truly is the front door to our faith movement. This launch is only the beginning! We will continue to make improvements to the site: working to make it faster, cleaner and easier. For any questions or suggestions, email us at [outreach@uua.org](mailto:outreach@uua.org).

### Newspapers needed

Michelle Downs is working with DIGG (Decatur is Growing Gardeners) this summer and is in need of newspapers for weed control. DIGG would appreciate any donations. Just bring them



to the services, and she'll pick them up. Thank you.

## Web take 2

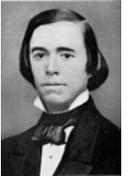
Please consider helping out Marge Evans with the Web of Life at Rock Springs' Festival of Spring.

Children learning about animals, UUFD getting a little exposure: What could be wrong with that? The event is April 25. Find the sign-up sheet in the Fellowship foyer or contact Marge at [mmedec@aol.com](mailto:mmedec@aol.com)

### Why is our Starr King seminary Starr King?

Thomas Starr King was a Unitarian minister/orator and a key supporter of the Union during the Civil War. He helped keep California as a Union state and argued against a growing movement to split the Golden State in two.

He also was a founder of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, a forerunner to the Red Cross.



King described the difference between Universalists and Unitarians as follows: Universalists believe that God is too good to damn men; Unitarians believe that man is too good to be damned.

It is for him that the UU seminary in California is named. His contribution to history once was honored with a statue in the U.S. Capitol.

In 2006, however, the California Legislature approved a resolution to replace King's statue with one of Ronald Reagan, amply honored by an airport. The resolution was authored by Republican State Senator Dennis Hollingsworth, who offered, "To be honest with you, I wasn't sure who Thomas Starr King was, and I think there's probably a lot of Californians like me."

The immortal Hollingsworth went on to observe that King was not a native of the state, though neither was Reagan (nor was Junipero Serra, the other statue representing California in the Statuary Hall).

There has to be a last page; there just *has* to be.

## 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

Ken Robertson	April 6
Kathy Sorensen	April 26

***NOT BORN IN APRIL BUT YET BORN?***  
*E-mail birthday to [newsletter@uufd.org](mailto:newsletter@uufd.org)*

## Film series carries on

“Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth” screens at 7 p.m. On Saturday, April 11, at the Fellowship. The film introduces six young Mayas in Guatemala and Chiapas, Mexico, and shows how they consider life sacred and interconnected. They demonstrate their determination to resist the destruction of their culture and environment. This is the final film of the series, so if you’ve meant to get to one, this one is it.

## The deadline

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

## MidWest Leadership School

UU adults and youth will be gathering in Beloit, Wis. , the week of July 12-18 for an intensive program in leadership and group dynamics. The goals are to develop the congregational leaders of tomorrow and deepen Unitarian Universalist identity.

For more information, go to [www.mwls.org](http://www.mwls.org)

## Missional Church

The Red Pill Brethren are Unitarian Universalists who each have had a pivotal, “red pill” moment when they had to choose between continuing to see church as the rest of society sees it, or see it as the mission-centered force it can be.

They chose the red pill and the task of envisioning the church as something that is sent out to serve the world, being missionaries in what often feels like a foreign culture.

Their tumblr blog is at <http://redpillbrethren.tumblr.com>

## Want a laugh?

During religious education, the teacher asks a little girl, “Can you tell us what happened on Easter Sunday?” The little girl answers confidently, “Jesus rolled back the stone, walked outside and saw his shadow, so we have six more weeks of winter.”

\* \* \*

Henry Thoreau was questioned about his beliefs during the last hours of his life. A concerned neighbor at his bedside asked, “Have you made peace with your maker?” Thoreau replied, “I never quarreled with my maker.”

## The buck stops here

Editor Dick Zaker– [UUFdNewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:UUFdNewsletter@gmail.com)