



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur



News and Notes

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

Upcoming services

At **10:15 a.m.**, unless otherwise noted

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

Dec. 6: "The Gifts of Humanism" with Rev. Michelle LaGrave

The history of the humanist movement is strongly tied to Unitarianism. A reflection on the gifts humanism has given to the theological and philosophical diversity of Unitarian Universalism.

Dec. 13: "An All-Too-Human Jesus" with Rev. Michelle LaGrave



Scholars have long debated what can be known about the human Jesus in an attempt to separate the Jesus of history from the myth of the Christ. Come and hear what the children have discovered in their research during the story time and stay for the sermon. To top it all off, homemade challah will be served for coffee hour!

Dec. 20: "Compassionate Decatur – Now More Than Ever" with Teena Zindel-McWilliams

The coordinator of Curriculum and Grants at Richland

Community College and a member of the Compassionate Decatur Steering Committee will present an update on the progress on the Compassionate Decatur movement. She will explain what has happened since her last presentation. Kathy Sorensen is service leader.

6 p.m. Dec. 24: "Unto Us a Child Is Born" with Rev. Michelle LaGrave

A traditional Christmas Eve service of lessons and carols which celebrates the births of all children born into the greater UUFd family this past year.

Dec. 27: Celebrate the holidays with friends and family. No service today.

In Michelle's words

Dear Ones,

As you have been learning, interim ministry is, in some ways, significantly different from any of the forms of ministry UUFd has had in the past. I am impressed by the ways in which so many of you have opened your hearts and minds to the interim experience.

The recent showings of a video about the interim time (post-service and at a Board meeting) resulted in some great discussion and many questions. As a group, I have experienced you as curious and intellectually engaged seekers of knowledge and understanding.

I also want to affirm that this interim time is a time filled with change and change is not always so easy to grapple with emotionally. Emotions can run the gamut from a vague sense of feeling unsettled to fear. And that's all okay.

Whatever it is that you or I or we feel, it's all okay. What matters is how we understand those feelings and what we do with them. My hope is that by the end of the interim time you will have completed something of a congregational soul-searching; you will



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A time to reach out

Again this year, the UUFDF community will be reaching out to make the holiday warmer for a family.

We have selected a family with a mom raising six children on her own. They were homeless for some time, but now have a place to live.



Linda Shroyer will collect lists from the family, and Lorelei Zaker will prepare a "giving tree" and place it somewhere in the foyer. The tree will go up on Dec. 6, and members and friends can adopt one of the children or pick items to purchase.

On Sunday, Dec. 13, gifts, marked with recipients' names, will be dropped off to the RE Pod and be inventoried. We could use your help again if more items need to be purchased. Kathy Sorensen and Judy Thistlethwaite will shop for groceries also.

Then, on Sunday, Dec. 20, the kids and adults will wrap the gifts and ready them for delivery. Linda Shroyer will deliver packages to families.

Anytime from now until then, you may donate cash for the food or gifts to Kathy Sorensen. Thank you sincerely for making this a meaningful outreach activity for our RE kids, the whole Fellowship, and our selected family.

Weather cancellation policy

When a decision to cancel a service is made, an email will be sent by 7:30 a.m. If you don't have email or question whether we plan to have



service, you are always welcome to call one of the board members (names are listed in each newsletter).



Professor Eric Freyfogle drew an attentive audience with his presentation in November about Pope Francis' encyclical on modern life.

Odds and ends

The Fellowship has applied to our UU region for a Chalice Lighters grant. This money would help us upgrade to a more effective web site and improve our outreach. The outreach and marketing, you'll recall, are a fundamental part of our Three-Year Growth initiative. Our chances for the grant have been improved by those of you who have joined the Chalice Lighters program with your donations. Thanks to Marge Evans and everyone else who have been instrumental in the grant process.

We now have a photo permission policy involving our youth. Check into it through Cara, Michelle, Mary Lovell or Joyce Throneburg.



The **Humanist Discussion group** will meet on Wednesday, Dec. 2, at 7 p.m. to continue with last month's subject, "Capitalism vs Global Warming". We'll consider whether capitalism will be the ultimate barrier to control global warming.

The **Women's Book Club** will meet on Wednesday, Dec. 9, at 6 p.m. at the home of Vicky Harbeck, 2802 Southland Dr., Decatur.

Instead of discussing a book, this month they will each bring a poem or other reading to share aloud. Also bring a dish to share for a potluck dinner. RSVP to vickyh12@gmail.com.

In Michelle's words

(from Page One)

will understand who you are, know what is most essential to your identity and what is necessary for you to carry forward into the future, and have a solid grasp on who you have been and how that influences who you are now. Exciting stuff and also hard work!

To those ends, I would like to introduce you now to your Transition Team. During an interim ministry, the Committee on Ministry goes on hiatus and is replaced by something called a Transition Team. This team was recently voted in by the Board and consists of Rita Schwake, Vern Thistlewaite and Raphaella Prange.

The tasks of the team include serving as advisor and counselor to the interim minister and helping to plan and facilitate workshops and activities related to this time of transition. Unlike how you may have experienced the Committee on Ministry in the past, the Transition Team does not serve as a place for feedback about the ministries of the

congregation, nor do they serve as mediators of conflict or advocates of the minister.

I know it's a lot to wrap your minds around, and I want to reassure you that I am here if you have any questions.

Speaking of my being here, I want to remind you that I do hold office hours on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons and by appointment. These times are not only for matters of pastoral care and counseling.

I welcome you to drop by and talk about how you are experiencing this time of transition or to share your energy and ideas for what you would like to see happen now and in the future of UUFD.

In faith and love,
Rev. Michelle

Office Hours:

Tuesday: 3-6 p.m.

Wednesday: 2-5 p.m.

Also by appointment

Thursday: Reading and Writing Day - phone calls for urgent matters welcome

Friday: Day Off

Calling all Musicians, Story-Tellers and Candle-Lighters!

You are wanted for Sunday and Christmas Eve services! Whether it's a lay-led program or a minister-led service, your gifts and talent are welcome.

Please contact Rev. Michelle with ideas about what you might like to see happen or, better yet, come to a meeting of the program committee to discuss your thoughts with others. It's Wednesday, Dec. 2, at 11 a.m. Bring a brown bag lunch if you'd like!

Of this – oh, yes – and that

Game Night?

Anyone up for a night of fellowship and fun? Let's gather on the second night of Hanukkah to light candles, play the dreidel game, and join in any other games you'd like! Feel free to bring a favorite game and/or some refreshments, Monday, Dec. 7, at 7 p.m.

Got Questions?

Are you new to UUFD? Have you been a friend for

years but never joined? Or maybe you are a member who hasn't had the chance to learn as much about Unitarian Universalism as you'd like.

Come join Rev. Michelle for an evening of discussion about Unitarian Universalism and membership. Remember: bring your questions! Tuesday, Dec. 15 at 7 p.m.

Holiday Cookies and Candy Wanted! - for refreshments after the Christmas Eve service. Bring a favorite recipe or something you always wanted to try.

Co-presidents report

Warm Wishes for the Holidays

Join us for the Christmas Eve service Dec 24, followed by our traditional cookie-sharing. Bring a plate of holiday goodies to share with all. Remember there is NO service Sunday, Dec. 27. And because we're getting into *that* time of the year, note the service cancellation policy for inclement weather, published elsewhere in this newsletter.

At the November board meeting, we approved Stuart Black as Assistant Treasurer to assist and shadow Mark Sorensen for the balance of this church year. Last month, Mark gave notice to the board that he'll be resigning the position of treasurer at the end of this term after serving in that role for over 15 years.



Big thanks to Mark for all the checks he's written, the statements he has reconciled and the meetings he has attended.

In other news, the UUFDB Board is working closely with Rev. Michelle to step back and examine various aspects of our congregational life, from leadership and committee structures to procedures and policies. As Interim Minister, she will be helping us to reimagine who we are, for each other and for our community. We are committed to take advantage of her experience and training as we reflect on our strengths and consider changes that will help us achieve our goal to expand the circle of people UUFDB serves.

There will be opportunities for congregational participation in this journey of reflection, ideas and action. Many of you have attended a few of these sessions already. It is very encouraging to see members and friends take this opportunity seriously. Hang with us ... we believe this work is key to our ability to achieve our goal of growth.

May each of you find and spread a warmth of spirit during this holiday season.

Joyce and Mary

RE: It's all about the kids

The warm fireplace illuminating faces. The snow falling quietly outside. The smell of fir trees and cinnamon fill the air. The taste of peppermint mocha on our lips. Oh, how this time of year can seem so magical!



Whether you are celebrating the Winter Solstice, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or none of the above, this is a time of year to reflect on the past year

and come up with new goals for the new year.

Let's sit back, enjoy the time, enjoy the family, and think happy thoughts.

To highlight our upcoming services:

■ The last weekend in November, we are going to put together our presentations we have been working on. I am SO proud of how hard these kids have worked!

■ On Dec. 6, we are going to be talking about Hanukkah and we will be learning how to play Dreidel!

■ Dec. 13, we are going to be presenting our projects during Children's Focus in the sermon given by Rev. Michelle LaGrave. And Miss Cara will bring some yummy challah!

■ Dec. 20, we will be talking about Christmas and about what we can do to help others in this time.

■ Dec. 27, we do not have worship; ENJOY THE TIME OFF!

Cara

By the way, 4 RE kids collected \$55.35 from members at UUFDB on Sunday, Nov. 8. Thanks to all.

Find us on the Internet

Facebook page: UUFD - Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur, IL

Twitter: UU Decatur

Instagram: uufd_decatur_il

Pinterest: Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

New UUFD Group: Mindfulness & Spirituality

Meditation returns to UUFD in the form of a new group called "Mindfulness & Spirituality." We had our first official meeting on Nov. 19. The group will meet the first and third Thursdays of each month from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Fellowship.

The purpose of the group is to experience the benefits of silent meditation and to participate in programs exploring spiritual growth and meditation insights/teachings.

We welcome newcomers to the group, but advise contacting the facilitator in advance to learn about the meeting guidelines.

We promptly begin silent meditation sessions at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary. The next meeting is Dec. 3. Facilitator: Mel Weinstein

Free Meditation Instruction

The practice of meditation offers many benefits, including reduced stress/anxiety, increase in peace and calmness, improved clarity of mind, spiritual development and numerous health enhancements.

Medical research has confirmed these benefits through brain/body scans and health studies. Free instruction in meditation is available every second Thursday at 6 p.m. at the Fellowship.

This introduction to meditation is based on classes that were offered at the Fellowship and Richland Community College in the past. No reservations or advanced notice is required. Simply show up. Instructor: Mel Weinstein

The birthdays

Judy ThistlethwaiteDec. 4
Dick ZakerDec. 4
Lorelei ZakerDec. 30

Now, send us your birthday, and nobody gets hurt!

newsletter@uufd.org

The deadline

Please have your items in by Dec. 20, either at newsletter@uufd.org or the Newsletter mailbox in the Fellowship office.

The "officials"

Co-Presidents: Joyce Throneburg and Mary Lovell president@uufd.org

Vice President: Dick Zaker

vice_president@uufd.org

Past President: Bernadette Lundeen

Treasurer: Mark Sorensen

treasurer@uufd.org

Secretary: Kathy Kline secretary@uufd.org

Board Members at Large: Eric DeVore, Tatiana Isakovski, Amy Stockwell

The buck stops here

Editor Dick Zaker-UUFDNewsletter@gmail.com

We ARE UUFD

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to get to know these three stalwarts better – and vice versa. Seek them out, and tell them "the Editor" sent you.

