



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur



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Here's what the kids call a shout-out to our minister, the Rev. Elaine. We hope you've noticed how she's jumped in to her work with us. She quickly got to know how we operate and befriended us individually as quickly as possible. We're happy to have her fully formed, thoughtful sermons. Elaine's impressively organized for Board meetings.

The icing on this cake is that she's plugged herself in to an array of activities, both church-related and social justice themed. And even though it's more than a half-hour drive, she attends our services on weeks she's not scheduled to speak.

We all know there's never 100 percent agreement on a minister, but this corner finds no fault with the goodwoman from Urbana.

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Have faith: Spring starts this month!

Upcoming Services

at 10:15 a.m.

March 1 – “Wholly Holey Holy” – Rev. Elaine Gehrmann

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. (This was originally scheduled for Feb. 1, but weather did not cooperate.)



March 8: “The Fading American Dream” with Dave Snoeyenbos

What was “The American Dream,” and what is it now? An engineer, thinker, humanist and birth control activist, Dave brings his broad knowledge and perspectives to the question of what has happened to this treasured ideal that defined previous generations.



March 15: “Are Children's Books Relevant in the Digital Age?” with Katie Gross

Katie, Decatur Public Library children's librarian, will share her passion for the importance of reading to and with children as they develop their moral, ethical and spiritual values. The 7 Principals we share at UUFD connect well with the reasons that Katie continues to be inspired to reach out to children through the language of their books.



March 22 – “Turning the Other Cheek”-- Rev. Elaine Gehrmann

Nonviolent resistance has a long and proud history, but is it really practical in today's world? We will examine.



March 29: “The War on Drugs” with Peter Wenz

Dr. Wenz, emeritus professor of philosophy at the University of Illinois at Springfield and adjunct professor at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, will discuss the past and present realities of our country's use of and campaign against drugs. His remarks will be based on his book “Beyond Red and Blue: How Twelve Political Philosophies Shape American Debates”.



UU 'to do' in March

Sun. March 1 – noon

UUFD Board; it's what's happening with your Fellowship

Wed., March 4 – 7 p.m.

Greater Decatur Humanists, UUFD

Tues., March 10 – 6:30 p.m.

UUA Common Read -- "Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square", UUFD

Wednesday, March 11 – 6 p.m.

Women's Book Group, Heather Stoa's home, 470 Shoreline Drive

Sun., March 15 – 10:15 a.m.

Food collections accepted for Northeast Community Fund

Wed., March 18 – 6:30 p.m.

Decatur Vegetarian Society, UUFD

Thurs., March 19 – noon

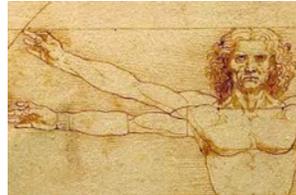
Third Thursday Brown Bag, UUFD

Tues., March 24 – 6:30 p.m.

"Race Conversations" series, UUFD

Greater Decatur Humanists

The U.S. authorized extreme means to extract information from prisoners following the 9/11 attacks. The Greater Decatur Humanists delved into that murky territory in February. The film they viewed, "Torturing Democracy", set the tone for a pointed discussion of



how America could shove the Geneva Conventions aside to get what it wanted.

Participants didn't let the Obama administration off the hook, either. Not only has the Guantanamo Bay facility not been closed, but the sitting president has actively prosecuted whistleblowers.

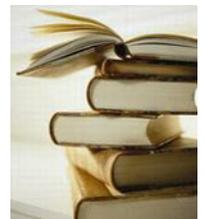
In an attempt to bring the whole group out of despair, charity will be the theme of the next meeting on March 4.

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

"Being a Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End" by Atul Gawande is the book for the March 11 meeting at 6 p.m. in the home of Heather Stoa, 470 Shoreline Drive. Please bring a dish to share for dinner. RSVP to Heather at hhstoa@gmail.com.



Seeing June in March

It's always good to remember our members and friends who aren't out and about, but this is a special invitation to give our June Allison a visit at the Symphony of Decatur facility. Chelso Frescura, her husband, will be away for a few weeks and hopes we will help keep her company. We imagine that sharing even what we think as the mundane in our lives would be refreshing and satisfying for June. She'd do the same for you, you know. The general number at Symphony is 875-0920.

Along the lane with Elaine

I attended a four-day UU Ministers' Institute in California last month, and enjoyed great workshops, stimulating discussions with colleagues, and catching up with old friends. There were over 440 UU ministers in attendance. The workshop track I was in focused on preaching and worship, and was led by Rev. Michael Piazza, a dynamic UCC minister who has a great track record for growing congregations. He emphasized the importance of ministering not only to those who are already sitting in our pews, but directing our efforts outward, to serve the needs of those who have not yet found the benefits of our liberal religious community.



He asked us to think about two questions — “What business are we in?” and “Who are our customers?” I found him very convincing in his position that liberal religion is exactly what the world needs right now, only most people don't even know we exist. He said that people are crying in the desert, and we have the oasis, only we're hidden behind a sand dune, so people keep passing us by. Good food for thought, and I welcome your reflections.

We will have our last session discussing this year's UUA Common Read – “Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square” by Paul Razor Books, 2013 – on Tuesday March 10, at 6:30 p.m. at UUFD. Please consider joining us.

I will be out of town March 12 to 14, attending the White Privilege Conference in Louisville, Ky. You can find out more about this event online at whiteprivilegeconference.com.

The discussion group, “Race Conversations” will next meet Tuesday March 24, at 6:30 p.m. Please let me know if you would like to be added to the email list for this group.

I am continuing the Third Thursday brownbags, and invite you to join me on Thursday March 19 at 12 noon. I continue to hold my Tuesday afternoon hours (1-3 p.m.) at Starbucks. Please consider stopping by if you're available.

The Environmental Film Series has begun, and I encourage you all to attend and to spread the word about these great events.

And finally, mark your calendars, the UU Midwest Regional Assembly is coming up in Naperville, IL, April 17 to 19. The theme is “The ‘New’ in the New Era of Unitarian Universalism” and the keynote speakers are Rev. Marlin Lavanhar and Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt. More information can be found online at midamericauua.org.

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, or by phone: Home 217-344-2335, Cell 217-358-9412, or Church 217-875-5442. Don't hesitate to be in touch!

A UU summer camp

If you're still looking for a summer trip destination, how about the Missouri Ozarks? The Midwest Unitarian Universalist Summer Assembly will be held July 5-11 in the forests and rolling hills of the Ozarks. About 400 UUs are expected for a combination of workshops and recreation. This year's theme is “Can We Talk?” For more information, to go muusa.org.

RE life: In "the Pod"

This month's classes

RE will come in like a lion in March! How about "A Quick History of 'God': Polytheism to Monotheism on the first. Lesson will include Judaism and Christianity. Then "Creation Stories" will be covered the next week. March 15 will have information about the Old Testament, particularly Moses. The 22nd will focus on the Ten Commandments, exploring such topics as "What is sin?", the "Seven Deadly Sins", and "What are heaven and hell?" from a UU point of view. On Palm Sunday, there will be an introduction to the New Testament, with a discussion of the life of Jesus, his birth and death.



If you've ever even thought about helping guide the next generation of UUs and UUFD members, this would be the month to jump in.

Grace on the stage

Our own Grace Raleigh will perform in the Decatur Park District's "Fiddler on the Roof", March 13 and 14. Her cast will be on stage 7 p.m. Friday and 2 p.m. Saturday with the Decatur Symphony Orchestra in the Decatur Civic Center Theater.

Tickets are \$7 for reserved seating, through the Decatur Park District by calling 422-5911, at the park district's administrative office, 620 E. Riverside Ave., or one hour before the show at the door.

There's some "Starr" power coming to the Mid America Regional Assembly in April in Chicago suburban Naperville. The Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt and the Rev. Marlin Lavanhar are featured

speakers. Rev. McNatt is the new president of the Starr-King School for the Ministry in California that trains many of our UU ministers. Rev. Lavanhar is senior minister of All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Okla. With 1,800 adult members, it is the largest UU congregation in America. He's got to be doing something right!

Going regional

The theme for the April 17-19 event is "The New in the New Era of Unitarian Universalism". That will be developed in many

workshops on topics such as social action and environmentalism. There also will be a banner parade and worship opportunities.

Decatur is near the middle of the MidAmerica UU region, which covers 13 states. The adult registration for the regional assembly is \$175, which includes four meals. For more information, go to MidAmericaUUA.org/RA.

New Inclement Weather Cancellation Notice Procedure

When a service is canceled due to the threat of inclement weather, an email will be sent to those who receive the weekly eBlasts by 7:30 a.m. that day.

If you don't receive the weekly emails and the weather is bad, call the president or program chairs, Joyce Throneburg, 226-3235, and Mary Lovell, 428-7703, anytime after 7:30 to inquire.



Your 2015 Environmental Film Series

The meaningful movies continue, with "Cowspiracy" showing on March 14, and "GMO OMG" on March 28.

The first film asks the question: Is the cattle industry the most destructive on Earth? The one later in the month wonders how GMOs will affect our children, our planet and our freedom of choice.

The purpose of the film series is (1) to bring awareness to environmental issues and (2) as a community outreach project for the Fellowship.

Showtime is 7 p.m.; admission is free, although donations are accepted. Concessions (organic popcorn made with unrefined oil using a theater-style popcorn maker), along with healthier drinks will be available for a nominal price.

Feel free to stay after each screening for a short discussion led by a guest speaker.

Please come out to support your Green Sanctuary Committee in these outreach events. Co-sponsors include the Decatur Audubon Society and Community Environmental Council.

Web of Life

Volunteers are most welcome to make the Web of Life game available to area kids at the Festival of Spring.

Rock Springs hosts the nature-based gathering each year, and this year's will be held April 25.

UUFD has spearheaded the Web of Life game for years, in which children learn about animals in a gentle, enjoyable atmosphere.

We need two helpers there for each shift: 10-12; 12-2; 2-4. Sign up in the Fellowship foyer or contact Marge at mmedec@aol.com if you would like to help.

Did we mention it was June 24 to 28 in Portland, Ore.? Well, if you didn't read the report in February's Newsletter, that can't be helped.

At any rate, the Ware Lecture is a major feature of the gathering of UUs from around the world. This year's speaker will be Dr. Cornel West, a foremost civil rights advocate. West will join a list that includes: Jane Addams, Linus Pauling, Jesse Jackson, Kurt Vonnegut, Jesse Jackson, Shirley Chisholm, Norman Lear, Julian Bond, oh, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

General Assembly

Want a laugh?

A traveler couldn't find the local Unitarian Universalist church. After looking in the center of town, in the suburbs, and out in the surrounding countryside, the traveler asked a farmer, "Am I too far out for the UU church?" The farmer's reply: "Nobody is too far out for that church."

Child Dedication: In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, we hold Child Dedication Ceremonies to affirm our support of children (and their parents) in our congregation. These ceremonies are usually held as part of a worship service, and parents are involved in the particular words used in the ceremony. If you have a child that you would like to be part of an upcoming Child Dedication Ceremony (perhaps May 3?), please speak with Elaine.

BTW (By the way, as the cool kids say...)

The Committee on Ministry will be requesting your feedback on Elaine's ministry with us. Please keep an eye out for an email soon.

This page appears, courtesy of dumb habit.

The “officials”

President: Bernadette Lundeen
(president@uufd.org)

Co-Vice Presidents: Joyce Throneburg
and Mary Lovell
(vice_president@uufd.org)

Past President: Rita Schwake

Treasurer: Mark Sorensen
(treasurer@uufd.org)

Secretary: Kathy Kline
(secretary@uufd.org)

Board Members at Large: Eric DeVore,
Tatiana Isakovski, Dick Zaker

UUFD Trust Board: Ken Robertson,
Dave Snoeyenbos, Vern Thistlethwaite

The birthdays

Larry Hutchinson	March 3
Mel Weinstein	March 7
Darwin Shroyer	March 15
Sue Weinstein	March 18
Mary Lovell	March 21

THIS COULD TOTALLY BE YOU!
Send e-mail with birthday facts to
newsletter@uufd.org

New UUA.org site

Our national organization has revamped its website, which is worth a look. There is a world outside Mound and MacArthur!

As they say, UUA.org is the front door to our faith movement.

A touch of trivia

1. Our building faces:
a) east b) west c) north d) forward
2. How many UUFD ministers can you name?
3. How many years have we been in our present home?
4. Where does our pulpit come from?
5. To whom is the seat in the front yard dedicated?

ANSWERS: 1. a) 2. Mary Moore, Linda Belez, John Biedler, Larry Hutchinson and Elaine Gehrmann 3. 32; since 1983. 4. The Rev. Jasper Douthit's church in Shelbyville, a site which now rests under Lake Shelbyville 5. Rosemary Idleman

The deadline

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

Remind us to tell you about Thomas Starr King in next month's Newsletter.

The buck stops here

Editor Dick Zaker– UUFDNewsletter@gmail.com

The 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.