



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur

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www.uufd.org



Future Unitarian Universalists are made, not

born. Well, they are born, but they need nurturing to accept and thrive in our faith path.

That's where our Religious Education people come in. Lorelei Zaker, Linda Shroyer and Jennifer Sekosky have been the core of the program for several years.

They do an outstanding job, particularly because they have to hit a "moving target". That is to say that attendance is unpredictable: There may be six one week, nobody the next. The mix could include preschoolers and middle schoolers.

RE has engaged in many creative projects, including Day of the Dead observances, do-it-yourself mangers and annual UNICEF collections.

Besides the fun, the RE teachers have introduced them to the Seven Principles and Joys and Concerns.

Since our future depends on the youngsters, find out how you can help RE.

Inside: Help our 3-year plan **Page 4**

Upcoming Services

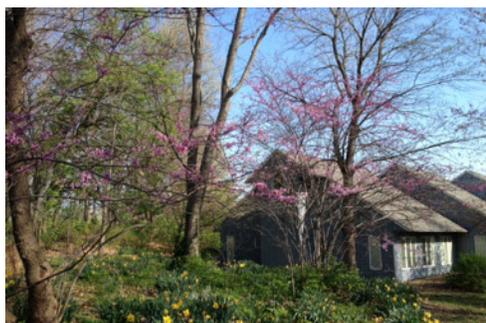
at 10:15 a.m.

May 3 – "Death is Personal: A Hospice Chaplain's Reflections on End of Life" with Vera Duncanson

Vera is the spiritual care central region coordinator for Presence Health in Champaign-Urbana, and she has many years' experience working with individuals and families dealing with end of life issues.
Service leader: Mary Lovell

May 10 – "Mothers All the Way Down" with Rev. Elaine Gehrmann

It's not really "turtles all the way down", but mothers instead. This Mother's Day, we will pay a tribute to our maternal ancestors and explore some of the implications of this lineage.



Kathy Sorensen photo

This tree, donated by Ken Robertson, makes its welcoming spring statement on our grounds.

May 17 – "The McCollum Case, its Origins and Place in History" with Daniel McCollum

Daniel McCollum, former mayor of Champaign, was a student in the Champaign school district and an indirect plaintiff in a famous Supreme Court case involving the separation of church and state.

Mr. McCollum has written a book on the case, which will be available for sale after the service, with proceeds going to UUFD.
Service leader: Jim Palmer

May 24 –Potluck brunch at 10:15

Kick back this Memorial Day Sunday with a healthy serving of community, UUFD style. Board members will provide vegan and traditional breakfast casseroles, as well as beverages, for our brunch. Just bring your smiles, and a simple side dish such as bread or fruits. We invite everyone to participate in a quick clean-up afterward.

May 31 – "Spirit of Life" with Rev. Elaine Gehrmann

"Spirit of Life" is one of our most beloved UU hymns, and it is also a very ancient idea, describing the animating life force in the world. We will examine some ideas about what this "spirit of life" might be and how we experience it.

May matters at UUFD

Sunday, May 3 – noon

UUFD Board; could be interesting

Wednesday, May 6 – 7 p.m.

Greater Decatur Humanists, UUFD

Wednesday, May 13 – 6 p.m.

Women's Book Group, Sally Van Natta's home

Sunday, May 17 – 10:15 a.m.

Bring your food donations for Northeast Community Fund

Wednesday, May 20 – 6:30 p.m.

Decatur Vegetarian Society, UUFD

Thursday, May 21 – noon

Third Thursday Brown Bag, UUFD

Sunday, May 31 – after service

Annual Congregational Meeting. Adoption of budget, election of officers, possibly other important topics.

Women's Book Club

Hey, Anthony Doerr fans: His book, "All the Light You Cannot See", will be discussed at the Women's Book Club at 6 p.m. May 13 in the home of Sally Van Natta. Contact Kathy Sorensen at 620-6850 to RSVP or for more information.



Greater Decatur Humanists

The Greater Decatur Humanists will meet on Wednesday, May 6, from 7 to 9 p.m., with Kathy Sorensen leading a discussion about "Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End" by Atul Gawande. In his best-selling book, Gawande shows how a conversation about mortality can be reasoned and compassionate.

If you'd like to hear some of what Dr. Gawande believes, watch his Oct. 30 interview on "The Daily Show" or "Frontline;" both available on YouTube.

For more on the Humanist group, go to 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) for more information.

Do you write?

Wanted: UU members and friends who would like to share something they have written. We envision a "Voices from Within" service this summer composed of readings created by us. Could be a poem, memoir, short story ... something that could be shared in three to five minutes.

Please email or call Joyce Throneburg joyce.throneburg@gmail.com or 254-3235, or Mary Lovell maryclovell@gmail.com or 428-7703 if you would like to participate.

We suspect there are several people who express themselves in writing from time to time ... and hope to hear from several of you by the end of May.

Along the lane with Elaine

My partner Axel and I have just celebrated 25 years of marital bliss (mostly). So I have been reflecting on long-term relationships and what sustains them. I think that these reflections apply not only to one-on-one primary, personal relationships, but also to relationships with close friends and with others in communal organizations, like churches and fellowships.



So what do I think I have learned?

Look up from the newspaper (or computer screen or smartphone or TV).

Relationships take attention and care. If you take either your partner or your friend or your fellowship for granted, the quality of the relationship will suffer, and eventually they may look elsewhere for attention.

It's on me to bring life and excitement.

Relationships may wax and wane, but it is upon each of us to keep them alive and vital. We may go through periods of closeness and distance, but we have an important role to play in how genuine and rewarding they are — our active participation is crucial to the relationship's success.

Appreciate the ways we are both alike and different.

Recognizing and respecting differences while treasuring commonalities is key — some of what makes our relationships most interesting and exciting are exploring our different perspectives and yet remembering that we are more alike than different helps with some of the bumpier stretches.

Always, always, always be kind and understanding.

Humans are sensitive creatures, and we need to be treated with kindness and love. We also need to practice the fine art of forgiveness, recognizing that at times we all fail to live up to our highest ideals, and we need to forgive others as we ourselves also want to be forgiven.

Hang in there; it's worth it.

Quality relationships are hard work, but it is some of the most rewarding work around — the benefits are love and compassion, shared dreams and working together to accomplish a larger vision than would ever be possible on our own.

What is the state of your relationship with this Fellowship? What might you do to strengthen it? What could the Fellowship do to help deepen your connection to it, and to each other? At this time of year, when you are considering your annual pledge, and goals for the year ahead, think also about new ways that you would like to be more fully involved in the life of the Fellowship and ways that the Fellowship could support you better. Together, let us dream, and work to build the world we dream of living in.

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!

RE life: In 'the Pod'

This month's classes

On May 3, the kids will make Mother's Day gifts. The next Sunday will be dedicated to appreciating Moms. Seven days later, we'll have an End of Year Bash. On May 24, we begin our Summer Season, headed by Lorelei and Jasmyn Zaker. We also welcome Stavia Stone-Wylder, a college student who will be taking care of the younger children and helping with summer classes.



What a wall o' cans you donated. Elaine sneakily hid them around the Fellowship Building, and our youngsters clambered in search of them.

News from your UUFD Board of Directors

Our Vision/Brainstorming gathering on March 25 was an experiment designed to give a large group of our members equal voices in planning our future together.

We hoped for 10 to 12 people, and were delighted to have 24 members with great ideas and enthusiasm.

Elaine graciously compiled the list of ideas and their respective "votes" which was emailed to our members.

Huge thanks to all those who attended, and to those who shared ideas through email before and after the meeting!

Our first experiment in group brainstorming included our current members. Now that we have tried a process that

seemed to work, we plan to include our UUFD friends in our future brainstorming efforts. We have much to learn from all who are part of our extended UUFD family.

Using the information from our March 25 gathering, we will develop a three-year planning document that will be reviewed at each Board meeting. It is important that we maintain momentum and focus. We will periodically provide brief summaries of our progress and activities, usually in the newsletter.

The strengths of UUFD as a Fellowship and as an organization are many. We have a very committed and hard-working minister who

brings a wealth of experience to help us move forward with YOUR visions for the next three years. We have a wonderful building in a highly visible location, beautiful grounds, and thriving relationships with local groups and organizations. And, we have each of you, as individuals and as members of our unique and important community of thinkers, dreamers, and compassionate souls.

So, as our Board works to bring some of these goals to reality, you will likely be invited to help in some way. Please keep the enthusiasm alive and help us in any way you can. It is an exciting time and together we can build a robust, inclusive, and visible UUFD community.



This tree, reportedly cherry, was planted by Deonne Orvis

Congratulations: You've reached the last page! Here's a cookie.

Growth in the UU movement

Yes, new UU churches are being created: Open Door UU Fellowship in Owensboro, Ky., and Saint Croix Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Saint Croix Falls, Wis., now are affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association.

The birthdays

Julie Pajer Shields	May 19
Terry Hogg	May 28

*You May want to get on this list
E-mail birthday to newsletter@uufd.org*

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

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

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.

The deadline

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

NOTE The next issue will be a combined June-July affair, so plan your news items accordingly.

The principles

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.

Want a laugh?

This is said to be a real story that happened in a Sunday school. The kindergarten class was discussing "prayer", and the children seemed aware that the way you end a prayer was with "amen."

"Does anyone know what 'amen' means", the teacher asked. There was a long silence. Then one little boy piped up, with appropriate, computer-age gestures, and said, "Well, I think it means, like, "send".

The buck stops here

Editor Dick Zaker- UUFDFNewsletter@gmail.com