



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.

Sept. 6: No Service

Reflect on the status of the
American Worker in your own
way.

Sept. 13: "Drinking Freely" with Rev. Michelle LaGrave

A water communion. Please
bring along water that
represents a gift received over
the course of the summer.

Sept 20: "Scovill Zoo – Beyond Entertainment" with Ken Frye

Our local zoo director will
touch on the history of Scovill
as well as the role zoos play in
aiding the survival of animals in
the wild as well as endangered
species. Ken will bring a couple
of animal friends to assist. Our
RE youth and leaders will be
service leader.

Sept. 27: "Hello!" with Rev. Michelle LaGrave

A joyous welcoming in of a
new church year and a new
ministry. Invite relatives,
friends and people with whom
you'd like to be friends!



Greetings from our new minister

I am excited to finally be here
in Decatur and begin our minist-
try together on Sept. 1.

My spouse, Micah, and I have
been busy settling into our new
home and getting to know our
new community. I am eager to
meet each and every one of you
and will begin to do so with our
first worship service together on
Sept. 13.

As an interim
minister, our
relationships with
each other will
grow, change and
deepen with time,
but we will begin
with the most
important task of
all – getting to
know each other.

My hope is for our beginning
to be filled with listening and
sharing. I look forward to a time
filled with the sharing of stories
and of histories as well as care
and compassion.

I welcome your creativity and
collaboration in all aspects of

community life, including
minister-led Sunday services.
So please, if there is something
you love to do – whether it is
ringing chimes, singing a song,
or telling a story – I would love
to hear about it.

Speaking of which, I'll share
below my tentative schedule,
which I will refine once I get to
know the schedule of Fellowship
and community meetings.

Sundays – leading worship
services and attending meetings
as scheduled

**Mondays, Tuesdays, and
Wednesdays** – in the office,
visiting and attending meetings

Thursdays – writing and
reading day at home (please
call only with emergencies)

Fridays – day off

I want you to know that I DO
want to hear from you, no
matter the day or time, if you
are facing some kind of urgent
health or family crisis and would
welcome immediate support
from your minister. When the
matter is non-emergent, I
remain available to provide
support in the ups and downs of
life, whether the issue is big or
small, seemingly spiritual or
not. At those times, phone calls
and texts are most welcome
between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m., as
is email at any time. Most of
all, remember I will only know
of an issue IF you tell me! And
I DO want you to tell me ... but
hoping I will hear through the



(please follow us on to Page 2)

grapevine or happen upon your Facebook post too often results in missed opportunities.

Speaking of opportunities... our first service together will include a water communion celebration. I invite you to

bring water you have collected from some special source, whether from travel to faraway lands or from your kitchen tap, which symbolically represents a gift you received this summer which you would like to share with

your community. If you forget, no worries, we'll have some extra water on hand. With hope and love,

Rev. Michelle
860-539-3248
michellelagrave@gmail.com

It's deja vu, all over again



Once again, on Aug. 23, the Rev. Larry Hutchison held sway in our pulpit, exhorting us to believe that 'love should be the spirit of

this Fellowship'. The outpouring of enthusiasm for Larry and his wife, Nancy, was palpable. They live in Adrian, Mich.

One guy, giving thanks

You may not have attended the service on Aug. 16, presented by my wife and myself (shame on you!) What occurred there was more important than what didn't.

The program was about the UUA General Assembly in Portland, Ore. In attempting to give a better feel for the wide scope of what went on, Lorelei endeavored to compile a succession of video clips. Commandeered into the process was our techno-son, Evan,

coincidentally a Portlander (Portlandite or Portlandian).

Well, on that day, Bad Technology won out over Good, but John Wylder, Mel Weinstein and Terry Ankrom worked like crazy to get one computer to talk to another. In between drops of sweat, we simulated a service. We will not forget their generosity.

Those three gents helped remind us of the strength we collectively have as a Fellowship.

From the Co-Presidents

We start with our BIG news, that our interim minister, Michelle LaGrave, has arrived and is getting settled, with spouse, Micah, and her service dog, Bella, in their Baker Woods townhouse on the east side of Decatur.

Rev. LaGrave will be in our the pulpit for the first time on Sept. 13, so mark your calendars and bring your friends to show her a warm and enthusiastic welcome!

ONGOING UPDATES:

■ Thanks to our Building and Grounds Committee, you will notice some changes outside the building, as we have been pruning, trimming, repairing, and will soon be painting the exterior of our building. (We were sad to say farewell to two trees that were no longer healthy.) Our wayside pulpit sign has been repaired, with improved lighting. Please extend special thanks to Vern Thistlethwaite, Darwin and Linda Shroyer, and Eric DeVore for their continued hard work in this area!

■ Our piano improvement should be complete by Sept. 1!

■ Judy Thistlethwaite



coordinated with our representative from Millikin toward making the Aug. 22 Work Day project rewarding for the students, as well as for UUFD.

On Aug 9, your UUFD board voted to use \$300 (from the \$500 in our Community Action budget) for annual membership with Illinois Peoples Action. IPA's Don Carlson spoke at UUFD in August, and many of our members are actively involved with IPA, a strong force toward positive actions on environmental and social justice issues.

■ Finally, as promised, we are using the Newsletter to share progress with the goals we developed as a result of our March brainstorming session attended by 26 lively and thoughtful members. Here is a brief summary of our progress and status:

- Use funds from our Trust as start-up funds for targeted goals toward growth.

APPROVED AND IN PROCESS.

- Hire full-time minister to help achieve our goals. FULL-TIME INTERIM MINISTER HIRED.

- Hire Religious Education Lead teacher. JOB DESCRIPTION IS READY TO POST ON A VARIETY OF MEDIA.

- Increase our visibility and outreach through a comprehensive marketing effort. COMMITTEE HAS BEEN FORMED, PRELIMINARY WORK HAS STARTED. CHALICE LIGHTERS GRANT TO BE SOUGHT FOR PARTIAL FUNDING.

We thank each of you for your participation and support, and look forward to the upcoming months with a sense of hope and excitement.

We encourage all of our members and friends to get involved in an area of UUFD work that appeals to you: All of our work groups are fun and welcoming. Come grow with us, in spirit and community!



So here they are, the Millikin University students who gave of their Community Service to make our building and grounds neater and sparklier. Eighteen students and 10 UUs pitched in to get the job done.

We turn busy in September

The Women's Book Club will meet Wednesday, Sept. 9, at 6 p.m. at the home of Karen Clarkson in Cerro Gordo. The book is "My Notorious Life" by Kate Manning. Bring a dish to share for dinner.

Please contact Karen at olsenmurley@gmail.com to RSVP and/or to get directions. Carpooling will be available by contacting Kathy Sorensen at 620-6850.

* * *

The new book group called SCAT (for Science, Consciousness, and Technology) got off to a good start in July with about seven members joining. We have an extensive and growing list of books to read on the subjects of science, technology and consciousness.

Meetings are held on the second and fourth Wednesdays at 7 p.m. at the Fellowship (Sept. 9 and 23).

We are currently reading and discussing a very interesting book on humans called "Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind."

We will start a new book at the Sept. 9 meeting. If you would like to join us, please contact Mel Weinstein at mel.weinstein.domehome@gmail.com to get on the e-mail list. This group is also open to non-UUFD folks.

* * *

The First Wednesday Discussion Group (Formerly Humanist Discussion Group)

invites everyone to attend their discussions, which range over any issues that affect the human condition.

On Wednesday, Sept. 2, at 7 p.m., David Snoeyenbos will lead a discussion on "How much Technology is Good for Us", which will include a brief historical perspective: "Is Technology an addiction? a distraction? The mainspring of our economy?"

* * *

The Friends of the Library Largest Book Sale of the Year will be held Sunday, Sept. 6, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and again Labor Day Monday, Sept. 7, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

People who are "Friends of the Library" members may come in at 9 a.m. and have first choice at the thousands of books offered on almost any topic imaginable.

Tables will be set up in the Civic Center lobby so that people can become a Friend. People donate fine books all year. They are sorted by category and stored for this super big sale. Thousands of fine and many uncommon books at extremely low prices are offered.

* * *

Decatur UUs have established a lending shelf of books on the counter in the foyer.

Look them over. Take one that appeals to you. Return that book or one you think another person would enjoy.

New California home



No, you HAVEN'T seen Kim Hanneken and her winsome daughter, Josie, lately. They have transplanted in Ukiah, Calif., where Kim will doctor in a rural health clinic. Josie has just started in a private school, Instilling Goodness, Developing Virtue, K-12, on the grounds of a Buddhist monastery. Their address is: 500 Vichy Hills Dr., Ukiah CA 95482.

RE life: In 'the Pod'

Our Religious Education is poised to make a great leap forward. They are looking to hire a lead teacher/curriculum coordinator. This is a crucial facet of our Three-Year Plan of strengthening the Fellowship.

Meanwhile, Lorelei Zaker, Jennifer Sekosky and Linda Shroyer will help our RE kids lead the Sept. 20 service, with our visit from Scovill Zoo Director Ken Frye and some of the zoo's "stars".

You ARE still reading, you dog!

Shedding light on Chalice Lighters program

Have you heard about the Chalice Lighter Program? Fellowships such as ours have received thousands of dollars to enable them to take a big step forward. Like funds to increase professional staffing or establish outreach and public relations programs or expand meeting space or in support of new or emerging congregations. Does this sound like something we might strive for?

How does UUA manage to offer this kind of help? By the

unique idea of the Chalice Lighter Program. "Chalice Lighters" across the U.S. support it by pledging as little as \$10 three times a year. (Of course, they can pledge more).

The selection committee looks favorably on congregations that show project sustainability through the percentage of Chalice Lighters participating. Should you already be a Chalice Lighter, or intend to do so, would you please respond to

mmedec@aol.com? A committee has been formed to work up an application and assess how many from UFFD are Chalice Lighters. We don't need the amount; just need to count noses.

The committee plans to meet again Sept. 27 at noon after seeking guidance from our new minister. Come join the meeting: Your input is what makes UUFD strong! The next call for applications is Nov. 15.

The birthdays

Deonne Orvis
Kathy Kline

Sept. 13
Sept. 23

If you have a September birthday and you aren't Kathy or Deonne, there's not too much we can do for you this year, but notify us about your date, and we'll pass it along to the next Newsletter editor. newsletter@uufd.org

The deadline

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

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 and justice in our community and our world

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

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

The buck stops here

Editor Dick Zaker- UUFDNewsletter@gmail.com

Part of our pride

UUFD is a Green Sanctuary and a Welcoming Congregation and now a contributing member of Illinois People's Action – standing for our values!