



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur



News and Notes

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



Our services

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

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

April 2 - An Evolving Community, Rev. Michelle LaGrave. We are living in times of rapid change. The world around us is changing faster than it ever has before, and the rate of change is only increasing. With the rise of artificial intelligence and other technologies drastically impacting our near future, how do we transform our community to meet the needs of a future we can only barely imagine?

April 9 - Broken Open, Rev. LaGrave. Transformation begins in a state of brokenness. There are times in our lives when our spirits, relationships, or beliefs feel broken, and we may despair. This state of brokenness can better be thought of as a state of broken-openness, a prelude to radical personal and spiritual transformation.

April 16 - Easter, Rev. LaGrave. A special multigenerational holiday service. The children and youth will be assisting with the service.

April 23 - The Science of Climate Change for People Without Ph.Ds, Dr. James Bonacum. Climate change is something that is being discussed every day in the news. Some say that it is a dire threat to human existence. Others say it is a hoax. Many people are unsure of what to believe because they find science to be confusing and difficult. But the basic science of climate change is surprisingly simple. Dr. Bonacum will present the principles of science that explain how the Earth's atmosphere regulates the climate, as well as the evidence that shows why the

Earth's climate is currently changing, and the steps we can take to address the problem.

April 30 - And I Still Rise, Maire Foxx. The presentation will focus on the relevance of Maya Angelou's poem "And Still I Rise" and the message of hope it offers regarding recent social and political events. She will also present the children's focus. Foxx is in a Ph.D program while working full time at the University of Illinois at Springfield. She is working on her Ph.D. in History with an emphasis in Gender Studies, speaking on such topics as Women in America, Women in the World, Diversity and Multiculturalism in the Workplace, the Modern Middle East, and The Gay and Lesbian Experience.



In the near future, UUFD will be joining Soul Matters. Soul Matters Sharing Circle is a group of over 200 UU congregations who follow the same monthly worship themes so we can more easily share small-group material, as well as worship, sermon, music and children's religious education resources. In the month of April, Soul Matters has given us a free month of access to their materials. We will be taking the chance this month to try it out and explore how the Soul Matters RE resources and plans will work for us at UUFD.

The Soul Matters theme for April is Transformation. We will include some Easter and Earth Day lessons related to transformation this month. We will try out some new opening words and a new way

to "Check-in" with everyone that is a little different from the Joys and Concerns we have been doing recently. We will read books related to the theme and try out some of the suggested activities in the Soul Matters resources. For the younger children, we will find out what a "Wonder Box" is that is used in some of the lessons.

The Soul Matters RE lessons include resources for lesson planning for different age groups, PreK- 1st (ages 4-7), 2nd-3rd grade (ages 7-9), and 4th-5th grade (ages 9-11). All of the activity suggestions throughout the age levels are still related to the same theme. This will allow us to have activities ready for whatever



age children arrive on Sunday mornings that are all focused around the same theme.

INTERFAITH POTLUCK

with Baha'i community
 Sunday, April 9, 5 p.m.
 Surprise guests and activities!

To assist people with allergies or other eating restrictions, please bring a small card listing all the ingredients found in your dish.



Humanist Discussion Group, 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 5. Jim Palmer will lead the discussion: "Can democratic governments govern as societies increasingly self-segregate? What will be the impact of increasing self-segregation on society?" Everyone welcome; bring a friend. Wine and snacks.

Mindfulness & Spirituality, 7 p.m. Thursday, April 6 and 20. This UUFD

group meets on the first and third Thursday of each month in the Sanctuary to have a session of silent meditation and to discuss a topic of spirituality related to meditation practices. We start promptly at 7 p.m. with the meditation, so please arrive early and enter the Sanctuary in silence. The group is open to any member or friend of the Fellowship or anyone in the community who is interested. Contact Mel Weinstein for information: mel.weinstein.domehome@gmail.com

Gay and Lesbian Association of Decatur, 6:30 p.m. Saturday, April 8. Please contact one of our co-chairs: Jerry Bowman at bufnjer@live.com or UUFD member Rene Verry.

The Women's Book Club, Wednesday, April 12. Weather permitting, **5:30 p.m. Wildflower hike. Potluck and discussion following.** The group will meet at the rural Mt. Zion home of Marge Evans to discuss *The Nightingale* by Kristen Hannah. Please bring a dish to share, and RSVP to mmedec@aol.com.

Committee on Ministry, 3 p.m. Wednesday, May 3.

Harvard EdX

If you are still interested in the Harvard EdX religious education and discussion, please contact Melissa Haynes Hendrian at mhen913@gmail.com.

The Ghosts in Our Machine April 1



The last film of our Environmental Film Series will begin at 7 p.m. Saturday, April 1.

The Ghosts in Our Machine follows the photojournalist and animal rights activist Jo-Anne McArthur as she photographs animals on fur farms and at Farm Sanctuary, among other places, and seeks to publish her work. This multi-award winning documentary gently removes our blinders by illuminating the lives of indi-

vidual animals living within and rescued from the machine of our modern world. Through the heart and photographic lens of Jo-Anne McArthur, we become intimately familiar with a cast of non-human animals. McArthur tries to shed light on a topic that most people strive hard to avoid. Are non-human animals property to be owned and used, or are they sentient beings deserving of rights?

Admission: Free! Donations Accepted. Concessions: Fresh, theater-style popcorn and healthy drinks available at low prices. Discussion follows the movie.

Three-Year Plan Gets a New Look!

With the realization that our Fellowship's growth plan will realistically take more like 4 to 5 years to implement, we are now calling it the Sustainable Growth Plan (SGP) as the overarching idea for this plan is to create a sustainable future for UUFD. For the immediate future, this means two things: 1) we need a more fully developed plan that includes goals, strategies and timelines and 2) we need a better way of organizing ourselves to meet our goals and create the best future UUFD we can.

Over the remainder of this fiscal year, we will be meeting in large groups to discuss each area of the plan. These areas are:

community action, community building, lifetime religious education, Sunday services, and buildings and grounds. Each working group will propose strategic goals for its own area. These proposals will then be combined into a cohesive plan and reviewed by the Board for final approval and implementation in the new fiscal year. Dates and times for each working group will be spread out over the next 3 months. Watch the weekly eBlasts and newsletters for information about dates. We encourage all of our members and friends to participate in at least one working group. Your say is important, and we need to hear from you!



Upcoming Pledge Activities

4 p.m. Saturday, May 6

Supper, fellowship, and budget discussion/planning session

Sunday, May 14

Board Meeting including review of budget for presentation to congregation

Sunday, May 21

Congregational meeting

Learn the Hymns - Every Sunday at 10

Ever wished you were more familiar with the hymns chosen for the service? Or maybe you just love to sing? Join us at 10 a.m. each Sunday for hymn practice. We'll practice the same hymns that were chosen for that Sunday's service, so you'll always be ready to sing!



Join a local CSA!

CSA stands for community supported agriculture. CSAs operate by selling shares ahead of the growing season, which then enables the farmers to make necessary purchases at the start of the season. UUFD, through its partnership with **Faith in Place**, will serve as a drop-off point for Jubilee Farms this summer.

Each share costs \$300, or a half share costs \$150. Jubilee Farms grows its food organically and is located in nearby

Clinton. They donate a seventh of all they produce. You can make the good they are doing go even further by choosing to donate a share or half share to Good Samaritan Inn.

Visit www.jubileefarmsclinton.com and let us know if you sign up. There are pledge sheets in the foyer of the fellowship, or you can let Rev. Michelle know you are participating. Hurry though, because sign-ups close soon!

Advocacy Day at the State Capitol

UUFD has chosen to partner with Faith in Place, a multi-faith program that empowers people of all faiths to be leaders in caring for the Earth, and providing resources to educate, connect, and advocate for healthier communities. By choosing to partner with Faith in Place, we are able to focus our local community action efforts to one broad theme. As Faith in Place is well-established, this also means we can join a movement for environmental justice without being the primary organizing leaders, an ideal set-up for a small fellowship such as ours.



An important event coming up is the annual Advocacy Day at the Capitol in Springfield on Thursday, April 6.

As the result of the rallies the past two years, the Future Energy Jobs Law was passed. This landmark law creates significant investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and opportunities for all in the green economy. The newly-created Solar for All program will provide

job training initiatives to make available 2,000 clean energy jobs for persons with records and alumni of the foster care system.

In spite of this good news, your voice is still critically needed. We must hold our legislators accountable to implementing this law and properly funding programs, such as the Solar for All program. We need to keep building momentum for environmental justice in our state.

On April 6, you will have the opportunity to meet with your state legislators in the morning when you arrive. Then we will gather at 1 p.m. for a rally of inspiring speakers and interfaith prayer for environmental justice.

Please be sure to bring a reusable water bottle and lunch, and wear comfortable shoes for walking around the Capitol building.

Please contact Rev. Michelle if you are interested in attending as we will be carpooling – and remember to wear your UUFD T-shirt!

Dearest Ones,

Have you ever been transformed? Not changed or grown, but transformed? Can you recall a time when you re-made yourself into something new?



Change and growth is necessary to all of us; we have all changed and grown over time. But transformation is something deeper; it requires a re-making or a re-birth. A caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly. De-segregation transformed our society. The death of a loved one can transform a family.

Transformation requires adjusting to radical new ways. The caterpillar no longer crawls on the ground, but flies. De-segregation significantly increased justice in the world. A family no longer takes life for granted, but lives with deep intentionality.

Transformation was a regular occurrence in seminary. We served as

In Michelle's words

the subjects of transformation, the witnesses to the transformation of others, sometimes even the catalyst for each other's transformation.

Students entered as their usual selves; though feeling a call to something deeper. Their ideas about God, the Bible, their world, the ministry, their faith – all were completely broken down and then re-made into something new. The process of transformation looked different for each one of us; but we all were re-made, re-born into something new. We emerged as clergy – ministers, pastors, rabbis.

Doctors go through a similar process, as do many others. Whether the process is seminary or a medical residency or war or service in the Peace Corps; it is more than learning, more than an education. *Transformation requires adjusting to radical new ways.*

For the month of April, we will be trialing a thematic UU program called Soul Matters. Transformation is the theme for April and it will run through Sunday services, religious

education, social media and community gatherings. I invite you to enter into this month with intentionality and practices of deep reflection *and* to share your experiences with others. In what way or ways have you been transformed? Or hope to be transformed? Or ... is a new transformation waiting for you just around the corner?

With faith and love,
Rev. Michelle

**Rev. Michelle LaGrave
Minister
Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Decatur, IL**

**michellelagrave@gmail.com
or minister@uufd.org**

860-539-3248 (cell)

Office hours:

Tuesday: 3-5 p.m.

Wednesday: 1-5 p.m.

Thursday: 1-5 p.m.

Also by appointment

Mondays: Day Off

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

**April 18, 19, 20 – no office
hours for the minister**

Thoughts from the Prez

I'm going to give you an example of the kind of energy I'm seeking for our Fellowship. On March 26, I walked into the Sanctuary to find Pat Rossiter introducing a hymn to those in attendance.

Pat explained the sequence of the verses and how we singers were to wait until the correct time to start the song. Michelle Downs accompanied during the lesson.

This experience was important because we have a fine resource in the "teal hymnal" that we haven't much used. It also was significant because it showed a follow-through to something we'd talked over quite a bit during the year. It started to get a big item off the "to-do list" to make our services more fulfilling. Making the services more fulfilling strengthens us as a Fellow

ship and makes us more attractive to visitors. That plants the seeds for the Sustainable Growth on which we've set our sights for two years. Bravo, I say to Pat and Michelle (although more precisely, it would be "brava").



The UUFD to-do list still has plenty of items, some of which will spill over into the next church year. So I have a charge to you, which comes in two parts: a) if you have an activity or other improvement you'd like to see UUFD make, let me know, and b) tell me how you can use YOUR energy to make more good things happen for the Fellowship.

Getting on Board

March's board activity was a retreat, rather than the standard meeting. This concept is nontraditional for us, but standard practice in many UUFD churches in America.

Rev. Michelle, who organized the retreat, featured ways to build a good working relationship among church leaders. One subject area was counteracting anxiety among officers and matching a church's declared goals against how it budgets.

For instance, anxiety can be produced when a congregation sets out to grow. This process produces changes in the ways some things are done, which makes people uneasy. Our church leaders need to acknowledge this and be ready to take "leaps of faith" and accept some amount of change.

Also on this point, church leaders need to avoid "triangulation". That is, when some-

one feels another leader is making a wrong decision or not following through on a task, he or she must avoid merely complaining to another Fellowship member. The message likely won't be delivered to the person causing the "problem", or if it is, the person passing it on may not convey it accurately. The healthier alternative is to go directly to the person with whom you have the problem – but remember to approach him or her with a constructive attitude.

Also, it was agreed there should be better orientation for new Board members and committees. The President and Past President may be best to handle this.

Next board meeting – Noon, Sunday, April 23.

Joan Brown Moves

Joan Brown has moved to Tulsa to be close to John and Gwen Biedler. Contact her at 4731 S. Hudson Place, Tulsa, OK 74135-6923.

Regional Assembly April 28 to 30

This year's Regional Assembly will be happening in our neck of the woods, the Chicago Oak Brook Marriott. The **Rev. Dr. Lee Barker**, President and Professor of Ministry at Meadville-Lombard Theological School, will deliver the keynote express "To Multi-faith: A Verb." If you are interested in attending or serving as a delegate from UUFD, please contact Rev. Michelle. Early bird registration (and a discount!) is open until April 5. For more information, click here:

<https://www.midamericauua.org/events/regional-assembly>



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

"Resist and Rejoice" is the theme of this year's international gathering, June 21-25 in New Orleans.

Delegates will be electing the first female UUA president, as all three candidates are women. It also will be the first time delegates will cast their votes electronically.

The GA theme is dedicated to awakening and deepening UUs' commitment to working in solidarity with people on the margins. A public witness event will explore the concept of sanctuary to support immigrants.

The opportunities to watch events from your computer at at <http://www.uua.org/ga/off-site>.

W-e-l-l d-o-n-e, Ada

Ada Elder placed second in the recent Senior Spelling Bee and qualifies for the next level of competition.



Ken Robertson
Kathy Sorensen

April 6
April 21

If YOU want to get some recognition, email newsletter@uufd.org

Lorelei Zaker is the editor of this Newsletter.
The deadline for the May edition is April 20.
Newsletter@uufd.org

Find us on the Internet

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

Thank you for helping us raise awareness of UUFD via social media.