



# Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur



## *News and Notes*

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



March 2017

## Our services

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

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

**March 5 – Homeless in America: How Did This Happen? Fred Spannaus**  
Fred will discuss how homelessness emerged, how it was once virtually eliminated, and why our public policy choices matter. He will illustrate how federal approaches to homelessness have evolved over the past nine decades. Kathy Sorensen is the service leader.

**March 12 – Who'll Save Us Now? Rev. Michelle LaGrave.** On this festive feast day of Purim, it is fitting we talk about salvation. Purim is a Jewish holiday that commemorates the story told in the book of Esther; a story about salvation in this world, not the hereafter; a story in which God is not named even once. As

contemporary UUs, what does salvation mean for us? Is salvation even a relevant concept? These and other musings will be examined through an anti-racist, anti-oppression (ARAO) lens.

**March 19 – Trouble on the Frontier, Rev. Michelle LaGrave.** The scandalous story of Unitarian missionary, the Rev. Ephraim Nute, and his church's effort to save "Bleeding Kansas" from slavery. Abolition, the Underground Railroad, prison, a near-lynching, and the foundation of their church turned into a fort – this story has it all! What can we learn from our forebearers about our work for today?

**March 26 – Raising Medical Marijuana in**

**Shelby County, Tom Colclasure, executive director of Shelby County Community Services.** Colclasure discusses the mission and challenges faced by SCCS as they became licensed and started growing medical marijuana in a facility north of Shelbyville. Joyce Throneburg will be service leader.





## REal Cool Sunday School

Rev. Michelle will be teaching RE on **March 5**. She has been spending her time in RE the last few months with the children, teaching spiritual practices. Please



Suzanne Prange's tool is a paint brush.

encourage the children in your family to come join her for this week's lesson to see what fun plans she has ready for them!

On **March 12**, we will be doing the Toolbox of Faith session 9 talking about the Spirit of

Life and water. This was rescheduled from Feb. 26 in place of a more environmental-based lesson that week to coincide with the speaker in the adult service. The plans for March 12 will include some fun with water play and our very own water communion with the children.

On **March 19**, Mary Lovell will be teaching RE and will have some wonderfully fun activities ready for the children!

Then on **March 26**, we will get back to our Toolbox plans with session 10, talking about courage and convictions with saddlebags or a rucksack as the "tool" of the week! I think I'm going to be using a picture of the tool that week unless one of you has one for us to use as an example!!?



RE students, including Mario Richard, have fun working with real tools.

*Time again to start thinking about our annual budget process and our commitments to each other.*



**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**



**Humanist Discussion Group, 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 1.**

"The Danger of a Single Story" will be the topic. Our lives, our cultures are composed of many overlapping stories. Novelist Chimamanda Adichie warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding. We'll listen to a portion of an 18-minute TED Talk the author delivered, then discuss. For more information, call Joyce Throneburg, 254-3235.

**Mindfulness & Spirituality, 7 p.m. Thursday, March 2 and 16.**

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 in these topics. Contact Mel Weinstein for information: [mel.weinstein.domehome@gmail.com](mailto:mel.weinstein.domehome@gmail.com)

**Through March 2, "I Am Not Your Negro", The Art Theater, 126 W. Church St., Champaign.** This film about civil rights is nominated for an Academy Award in the documentary category. It is narrated by Samuel L. Jackson. There may be some time for discussion following the showing. Times are listed on the theater's website.

**Tour of Greater Decatur Islamic Center, 10 a.m. Saturday, March 4.**

Organized by Lady of Lourdes. Information about the open house at the center is on Page 4.

**Women's Book Group, 5 p.m., Wednesday, March 8,**

at the home of Heather Stoa. The book is "Hillbilly Elegy" by J.D. Vance. Bring a dish to share for dinner. For more information or to RSVP, please contact Kathy Sorensen at [kathysorensen1@comcast.net](mailto:kathysorensen1@comcast.net).

**Board Retreat, 1 - 5 Saturday, March 11, at the home of Mary Lovell.**

**Gay and Lesbian Association of Decatur, 6:30 p.m. Saturday,**

**March 11.** This group meets the second Saturday of month for a potluck dinner and program. We are a welcoming group, open to adults who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, queer identity, and straight. If you have any questions, please contact one of our co-chairs: Jerry Bowman at [bufnjer@live.com](mailto:bufnjer@live.com) or UUFD member Rene Verry at [river1815@att.net](mailto:river1815@att.net).

**Religious Education, 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 22.** If you are interested in RE in any way, please join us!

**Engage With Decatur**

What's next for Decatur? What's heard? Join us and attend Decatur City Council meetings to learn about community concerns, plans, and share your ideas with City Council. City Council meetings are scheduled at 5:30 p.m. on the first, third, and sometimes fifth Monday at in the City Council Chambers on the third floor of the Civic Center. March meetings are March 6 and 20. You can also get more information and agendas at <http://www.decatuirl.gov/mayor-and-council/council-meetings/> Plan to meet outside Council chambers at 5:15 p.m. so we can find seats together. Contact Rene Verry at [river1815@att.net](mailto:river1815@att.net) with questions.

## Environmental Film Series begins March 4

The Environmental Film Series is celebrating its 10th anniversary! The first film will be Emptying the Skies at 7 p.m. Saturday, March 4.



The environmental and nature film series is sponsored by the Green Sanctuary Committee, along with the Decatur Audubon Society and the Community Environmental Council. The showings will be Saturday evenings March 4, 18, 25 and April 1.

The purposes of the film series are (1) to bring awareness to environmental issues

and (2) to serve as a community outreach project for the Fellowship. All films are free and are shown on a movie screen with stereo sound.

Donations are accepted at these events, and the purchase of concessions (organic popcorn and unrefined oil made in a theater-style popcorn maker), along with healthier drinks, help support the Fellowship in this endeavor.

Please support your Green Sanctuary Committee in these outreach events: Six helpers each night are needed to greet and sell concession tickets; to make and sell popcorn and drinks; and to arrange and rearrange chairs, leaving the sanctuary ready for Sunday. Please sign up on the help sheet in the foyer.

## Community involvement workshop in Champaign-Urbana March 7

Cindy Shepherd, who has spoken to our congregation about her organization, Faith in Place, has invited us to attend the Faithful Citizen Workshop at 5 p.m. Tuesday, March 7. The Champaign/Urbana location will be posted online.

In this two-hour workshop, discover how ideas become legislation and legislation becomes law in the State of Illinois. Learn the when, where and how of making a difference in this process. Faith in Place will give you the resources you need!

Through interactive exercises and presentations, you will learn ways people of faith can engage in the advocacy process.

Policy Director the Rev. Booker Vance and Central Illinois Outreach Director the Rev. Cindy Shepherd will prepare you for citizen advocacy and invite you to join them April 6 as citizen lobbyists converge on the

Statehouse for Environmental Lobby Day.

To register: [www.faithinplace.org/events/ci-faithful-citizen-workshop](http://www.faithinplace.org/events/ci-faithful-citizen-workshop) or on Facebook Event "CI/ Faithful Citizen Workshop"

*International Women's Day*

**HIDDEN FIGURES: WOMEN  
IN ISLAM**

*Open House*

4 -7 p.m., Wednesday, March 8

**GREATER DECATUR ISLAMIC CENTER**  
1635 Huston Drive, Decatur

Tour the Islamic Center, browse cultural displays of fashion and art, question and answer booths. Refreshments will be served

## In Michelle's words

### *Dearest Ones,*

I am a member of a Decatur clergy group that meets monthly at various churches around town. Recently, the nature of our meetings changed.



We began sharing our stories with each other. Connections have grown and deepened, and I believe, they will make a difference in our work together.

Last month, we talked about our calls to ministry. Among clergy, this usually means a call from God to ministry. But there are other ways of thinking about it, too, especially within our faith tradition of Unitarian Universalism. One might feel called by Love or called to Serve or called to live into one's highest ideals.

And calls are not exclusive to clergy. Any one of us can be called in any number of ways. I like to think of a call as something like a search for fulfillment or a discernment process of discovering one's purpose in life.

Notably, these calls can change at different stages of our lives. Often, this happens with the transition from working life to retirement. It also happens when children leave home for college or to live on their own or when young adults complete a degree and begin working full-time. What we find fulfilling can change multiple times over the course of our lives.

My call to ministry came over a decade ago. I was sitting at my dining room table reading an article about the nature of inspiration. The author stated that when Gandhi was asked whether he had a mission or a motto in life, he replied, "My life is my message." At that point, I had an epiphany. I realized that I wanted my life to be my message and that if I were to live my message, I had to become a minister.

Initially, this came as a shock to me, and I resisted. I knew I had received a call, but I did not want to answer it. I eventually understood that becoming a minister made a lot of sense with who I was and who I wanted to become.

I later felt my call affirmed when I read that William Ellery Channing once said, "May your life preach more loudly than your lips." That quote comes from an ordination sermon Channing gave when he first laid out the tenets of Unitarianism.

I'd like to leave you with some questions: What is your call? Has your call changed over time? And . . . how can you live into your call as a part of the UUFD community?

With faith and in 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**

# Thoughts from the Prez

Late February’s warmth beckons us out of hibernation. March could be waiting with a sucker punch of a blizzard, but we know that nothing can stop spring now. And we have the impetus now to take advantage



of way to fortify the Fellowship. A la David Letterman, here is a Top Ten of ways you can make a difference:

**Number ten:** get up to date on your pledge

**Number nine:** Resolve to attend two to three services

each month

**Number eight:** spend a Sunday helping out in Religious Education

**Number seven:** tell Judy Thistlethwaite you’ll make coffee on a Sunday

**Number six:** offer to host a Dinner for Eight

**Number five:** be a Sunday greeter

**Number four:** attend and help at the Environmental Film Series

**Number three:** support a political group, write a letter, march (it’s March, after all) or otherwise promote a cause

**Number two:** contact a UUFD member you haven’t seen in a while, especially if they’re not mobile

And the **Number one** way you can make a difference: promise yourself you’ll get know someone from UUFD on a deeper, more meaningful level.

Shoot for 10 out of 10, but if you only hit five, we’ll all be better off! And, thanks.

# Getting ‘on Board’

UUFD Board members now will be guided by a covenant they finalized at their February meeting. This agreement, common among boards, committees and congregations across the country, creates a framework for working with one another. One section reads: “...we will respect each other’s time by being on time, being prepared and participating fully. We will fulfill the responsibilities we have accepted”.

This covenant reinforces our commitment to each other – and to all of you of the Fellowship – that we will work diligently toward progress. Rev. Michelle intends to encourage covenants among UUFD committees and the church membership at large.

Board members also started focusing on the budget process for the fiscal year that

begins July 1. At 4 p.m. May 6 , we invite you to our “Preview Party”, where you can learn about the financial plan we propose for the next 12 months. Remember, we’ll be moving into Year 3 of our 3-Year Plan, which we now think of as our Sustained Growth Plan. We’ll be handing out Pledge materials at that party. On May 21, after the church service, we will hold our Congregational Meeting. The budget again will be summarized and questions still may be asked at that point, before we put it up for adoption. An update on the state of the UUFD Trust will be given, and new officers will be put up for election. We’d really like all members to attend that day.

Also at the Board meeting, Rev. Michelle described features of our UUFD.org website. The site is something to be proud of, and we urge you to visit regularly.



Lorelei Zaker, Amy Stockwell, and Marge Evans were among several UUFD people who welcomed Joan Brown to her new home in the Primrose Retirement Community. Give Joan a call or stop by to visit. After Joan fully recovers from her surgery, she expects to move out to Tulsa, OK, with John and Gwen Beidler, who have already settled there.



The Religious Education students decorated for our well-attended Valentine's Potluck.

## Reaching out

President Dick Zaker: [president@uufd.org](mailto:president@uufd.org)

Vice President Rene Verry:  
[vicepresident@uufd.org](mailto:vicepresident@uufd.org)

Treasurer Mark Sorensen: [treasurer@uufd.org](mailto:treasurer@uufd.org)

Secretary Melissa Hendrian:  
[secretary@uufd.org](mailto:secretary@uufd.org)



Larry Hutchison	March 3
Mel Weinstein	March 7
Darwin Shroyer	March 15
Sue Weinstein	March 18
Evan Zaker	March 19
Mary Lovell	March 21

Lorelei Zaker is the editor of this Newsletter. The deadline for the April edition is March 23.  
[Newsletter@uufd.org](mailto: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.



**UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
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