



# 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)



May 2017

## Our services

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

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

**May 7 - Alexander Hamilton: From Immigrant to American Icon, Amber Lusvardi, Millikin University.** More than 200 years



after his death, a somewhat forgotten Founding Father makes a resurgence in the American imagination, thanks to a hit

Broadway musical bearing his name. How does the life of a man who lived in the Revolutionary era connect with Americans today?

Lusvardi is the university's specialist on American Politics. She also coordinates the university's Gender Studies minor. Lusvardi is completing her Ph.D. in Political Science from Purdue University, West Lafayette, Ind.

**May 14 - Searching for Asherah, Rev. Michelle LaGrave.** Asherah, also known as "God's Wife" or the "Queen of Heaven", was a Hebrew goddess. What happened to her? Why have most of us never heard her name? With the advent of monotheism, worship of the goddess suffered. Join us as we explore the hidden story of the divine feminine.

**May 21- "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying-up", Pat Rossiter. Rev. Michelle, service leader.** Pat will discuss this best-selling guide to decluttering your home from Japanese cleaning consultant Marie Kondo.

**May 28 - No service.** Commemorate the holiday with loved ones.

### Help Forge The Future

Time flies! It's that time again to get together and discuss what we want for the coming year. Your Finance Committee is again planning a time for us all to be

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### Upcoming Pledge Activities

4:30 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

11:45 a.m. Sunday, May 21  
Annual Congregational Meeting  
All members needed for voting on budget and election of officers!



On the first Sunday this month, May 7, Rev. Michelle will be teaching the children about another spiritual practice.

The second Sunday, May 14, will be Mother's Day, and mother/daughter team Linda Shroyer and Jennifer Sekosky will be teaching RE and doing a fun Mother's Day activity with the children.

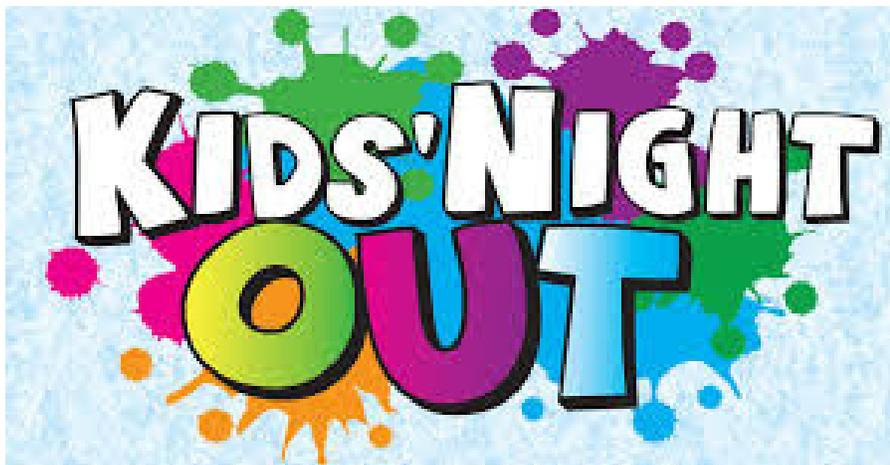
The third Sunday, May 21, Emily Richard will be back in RE and we will be getting back to the Toolbox of Faith curriculum to do session 10 on Courage and Conviction.

Last month in RE, we set up an RE Attendance Chart poster! The names of all the regularly attending children are listed on the chart, and we can add more for visitors, friends, and first-time guests! Each week, the children will place a small sticker on the chart to help us keep track of who comes to RE each week. See how many stickers you can get!

Easter Sunday was an intergenerational service with the children staying in the Sanctuary and helping with several different jobs. Some of the jobs available for Youth Sundays are lighting the chalice, lighting candles for Joys and Concerns, greeters, passing the offering basket, doing a reading, or helping with the snack during the break. The next Youth Sunday will be on June 11 for the Flower Communion. Please plan to join us and help with one or more of those jobs!



Emily Richard  
RE Leader



**5 to 9 p.m. Saturday, May 20**

Decorate a T-shirt! Games!

Movie! Food! Fun!



**Humanist Discussion Group, 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 3.** Dave Snoeyenbos will present on "Poverty in Decatur" using recent data. Snacks are served. Newcomers are always welcome. Please come and join the discussion!

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

**Mindfulness & Spirituality, 7 p.m. Thursday, May 4 and 18.** 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

**The Women's Book Club, 5 p.m. Wednesday, May 10,** at the home of Karen Clarkson. The book is *Dreamland: The True Story of America's Opiate Epidemic* by Sam Quinones. Bring a dish to share for dinner. Contact Kathy Sorensen ([kathysorensen1@comcast.net](mailto:kathysorensen1@comcast.net)) to RSVP and for directions to Karen's home in Cerro Gordo.

**Gay and Lesbian Association of Decatur, 6:30 p.m. Saturday, May 13.** Please contact one of the co-chairs: Jerry Bowman at [bufnjer@live.com](mailto:bufnjer@live.com) or UUFD member Rene Verry.

**Spiritual Art Play, 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 16.** Play with art as a form of spiritual self-expression. The goal is not to make crafts or works of art, but to explore ourselves more deeply, to express our values and ideas, to make beauty present in the world. All forms of media are welcome: paint, colored pencils, ink, collage, clay, paper cutting, journaling, writing, book making, weaving, knitting, etc. Bring something you are already working on or start something new.

### Sunday Services Meeting

**Tuesday, 5:30 p.m. May 9**

Would you like to have input on various aspects of both lay and professionally led services at UUFD? Join this work group for an hour to discuss upcoming worship services. We'd like your input!

## ***In Michelle's words***

### *Dearest Ones,*

I open with what some might consider to be a bold statement: The gift of the spirit resides in all of us. Yes, all of us. Whether we consider ourselves to be humanist, atheist, panentheist, agnostic, theist or maybe a little bit of all of the above. Depending on the day, we all have spirit. We breathe in (inspire). We sing (spirituals). We experience creativity (inspiration). We cheer (spirit). We are influenced by leaders of great moral courage (inspired). Definitions of spirituality or what it means to be spiritual abound. But regardless of the specific definition any one person brings to the word, or whether one considers its source to be from within or without the self, spirituality is a broad and universal concept that



encompasses a search for meaning in life.

This month I am introducing a new program called Spiritual Art Play. This program is open to all, regardless of theological or philosophical orientation. The format is that of an open studio. You can bring projects you are already working on or explore the materials made available for the evening. Its purpose is to get in touch with the inner self; to explore, discover, and create new meaning(s) in life. There is much to the life we humans experience on a subconscious level. Art, in all of its forms, can bring those experiences forward to the realm of the conscious, leading to new insights and paths to personal growth. Though many of us may explore our creativity alone and at home, I hope you will consider joining us for an evening of exploration within community. Even if you do not consider yourself an artist or haven't

picked up a crayon since elementary school or believe that art is not your thing, this is for you. I hope you will join us.

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**

### **More on Michelle –**

*No office hours on May 23-25 and May 30- June 1. The Rev. Martin Woulfe and Paula Brayden will be covering any emergency pastoral care needs from May 22 to June 5.*

*On May 20, Rev. Michelle will be giving the Invocation for the Armed Forces and First Responders Parade and Ceremony.*

## Thoughts from the PreZ

I just occurred to me that this is the final time I will fill this space as President. I'll save my thank-yous for the Congregational



Meeting (right after the service on May 21), but I want you to know that EVERYTHING that was accomplished in this past year was by you.

Now, Thursday, April 6, was a significant day for six of us, and for the Fellowship as a whole. Joyce Throneburg graciously drove us to the State Capitol for a day of lobbying on behalf of the Illinois Environmental Council. The activity was organized by Faith in Place, a coalition of faith-based groups with an interest in protecting our environment.

Kathy Kline, Terry Ankrom, Marge Evans, Rev. Michelle, Joyce and I piled into a van for our "mission". On the way, we gave relatively new Illinoisan Michelle a short course on governments in the state, particularly on the township level.

Our sextet was equipped with fact sheets on the issues the Environmental Council had prioritized. Chief among them was preserving \$200 million for a program that would install clean energy sources and create jobs for people trying to make their way after serving jail time and for young people who had come out of the foster care setting.

Once inside the marvelously marbled and brassed State Capitol, we struggled to get our bearings. What was the south side? The west? We stuck together as a group, although some of us had different state senators and representatives. "WHERE is

Sen. Manar's office?" was a running joke throughout the day.

Maneuvering between the clusters of well-tailored professionals and lines of youthful tourists in the lobbies was an ideal opportunity for people watching. But, after all, we were lobbyists now, and we had a job to do. Well, we never actually crossed paths with a state official: They were booked up with hearings or committee meetings. Apparently, we missed an opportunity with State Rep. Sue Scherer by just minutes. Our group did, however, drop off letters and made some of our points with various assistants of the legislators.

In the afternoon, we joined with more than 100 others in the shadow of a Lincoln statue to cheer on officials who have supported our issues and grassroots organizers from around the state.

Did we make a difference? It's hard to say, but I know I will await the fate of bills such as the Clean Jobs Act with enhanced interest. Also, we may have set in motion a drive to act communally on our beliefs. If you have been waiting to see some social justice activities, perhaps you will be inspired by this and the Decatur City Council meeting attendance by Rene Verry and others.



# Getting on Board

Much of our April 23 meeting was devoted to a review of the coming year's budget. I know – UGH. Look at it this way, though: If you don't prioritize what you're going to do and then figure out how to pay for it, you're going to have some nasty surprises ahead of you.

So, we listened to Amy Stockwell's status report on the progress of our intrepid Finance Committee's current budget version. I'd like to make a plug right here for you to consider upping your Pledge, if only by a little. No one wants to take more from our Trust Fund than needs to be, so whether we can progress as much with the third year of our Sustainable Growth Plan largely is up to how well you and I can provide the



Amy Stockwell  
Finance Chair

(The future, continued from page 1)

together and discuss our budget: what is important to us, what is possible, the challenges and opportunities we face. On Saturday, May 6, at 4:30 p.m. please join us for an informal work session. Thanks to our hardworking hospitality committee, we'll have heavy appetizers/light supper, as well as plenty of food for thought! We'll be done in time for you to make any other Saturday night plans you might have.

This will be a time to get your questions answered, make suggestions and help us prepare for the congregational meeting May 21. Fellowship, food, fun, and finance — such a deal! Hope to see you all there, as we are all in this together!

Funding.

VP Rene Verry filled us in on her success in securing nominations for all church offices for the coming year. Members will get their vote at the May 21 Congregational Meeting.

President Dick Zaker reported that he and Rev. Michelle have signed her contract for 2017-18. An agreement also is in the works for our Religious Education leader, Emily Richard.

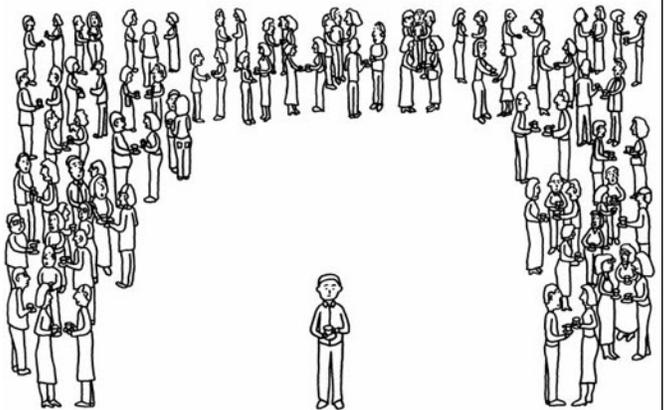
Finally, there was a quick overview of the Working Groups organizational structure Rev. Michelle has suggested to guide our Growth Plan forward.

**Next board meeting** – Noon, Sunday, May 14. The budget will be reviewed and readied for presentation on May 21.

**Something to Think About . . .**  
**Coffee Time: When newcomers get to know the congregation!**

**AFTER-SERVICE COFFEE**

THIS IS THE TIME WHEN NEWCOMERS CAN GET TO KNOW THE CONGREGATION



## Cover girl Marge

Don't know if we can label Marge Evans a supermodel just yet, but she's certainly showing up in print regularly. She, UUFD



member John Regan and friend of the Fellowship John Hays were among the "go-getting role models" featured in the April-May edition of Decatur magazine. Then, in late March, Marge was found smiling on the front

page of the Herald & Review, helping explain the onslaught of the honeysuckle in parks and conservation areas. Well done, Marge!

## UUA News

The Rev. Peter Morales announced his resignation from the presidency of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Morales stepped down in the midst of an escalating controversy over racial aspects of the UUA's hiring practices and the statements he made concerning them.

Morales' tenure as president was to end with the election of a new UUA president at the General Assembly in New Orleans, but instead he left his position April 1.



**UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

## Hear ye, hear ye

Leading a Sunday service soon? Please submit the description and a photo of your speaker. Have a big development in your life, such as an honor or a grandchild excelling in some activity? Treat this Newsletter as your personal announcement page. And please aim to meet the deadlines – it makes life SO much easier on the Newsletter editor. Thanks.



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Julie Shields

May 19

*If YOU want to get some recognition, email*  
[newsletter@uufd.org](mailto:newsletter@uufd.org)

Lorelei Zaker is the editor of this Newsletter.

The deadline for the June/July edition is May 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.