



The MidAmerica Messenger

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I hope many of you will consider attending the Regional Assembly (<https://www.uua.org/midamerica/ra/ra-archives/2014>) [in four locations] in April. Our staff and MidAmerica Region Board members will be welcoming you there. Early registration ends soon.

We always appreciate your comments and suggestions for the newsletter. Click on the "email the editor" link to send us a message.

Sincerely,
Nancy Heege, Congregational Life Consultant

Moral March

About 1,500 Unitarian Universalists marched with thousands of others in Raleigh, North Carolina, in the "Moral March" on February 8, 2014. Called to North Carolina by the NAACP to protest against a new law that suppresses voter rights, many people responded. To read more about the March, and UUs' participation in it, go to:<http://www.uuworld.org/news/articles/293312.shtml>

The following is a first-person account of the Moral March, written by Rev. Amy DeBeck, Minister at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Elkhart, Indiana.

Forward Together, Not One Step Back!

I put in my January Ministerial Report to the Board that I would go to Raleigh, and attached the link to the Bill Moyers piece about it. Within days, 3 of the board members and a 4th (to fill up their Prius) had decided to go. Friday night at the UU Fellowship of Raleigh we were treated to congregational-made chili dinner and a worship service. Speakers explained that Dr. Barber is the unequivocal leader of this Moral Movement, and that his language the next day would be Christian AND inclusive. Anti-rain prayers had also been petitioned!

Saturday morning dawned cold and clear-the rain held off. The hotel we stayed at had gotten filled overnight by 2 busloads of Unitarian Universalists from All Souls DC, and the excitement in the breakfast area was palpable. My little group headed to the meet-up place with more UUs, unions, people from Planned Parenthood in bright pink, and of course the ubiquitous Standing on the Side of Love people. UUA President Rev. Peter Morales spoke to us, then organizers taught us some call and response chants like, "Forward Together, Not One Step Back!" and sang songs like "There'll be Freedom in That Land." And soon we were moving to the start of the route.

All along the way we chanted and sang and occasionally stood aside to take pictures and see which groups had come. Many conversations and new friendships started. It definitely became clear that for Moral Mondays to come to Indiana we will need to keep having conversations and forging new friendships.

At the end of the March we all listened to Rev. Dr. Barber and took it all in. We had gathered not because we are the same political party or religion or race, but because we all want a better nation. "We are the people and we will be heard" - Barber's words. At the end of his speech the sun came out as we linked arms and sang "We Shall Overcome." Barber said, "We are black, white, Latino, Native American. We are Democrat, Republican, independent. We are people of all faiths, and people not of faith but who believe in a moral universe. We are natives and immigrants, business leaders and workers and unemployed, doctors and the uninsured, gay and straight, students and parents and retirees. We stand here--a quilt of many colors, faiths, and creeds."

Indeed.

People from all over MidAmerica Region went to Raleigh to march. This group is from at least three Minnesota congregations. (Credit: Unity Church-Unitarian, Saint Paul MN)



Marriage Equality--Wisconsin Update



Retired UU Minister Virginia Wolf and her wife Carol Schumacher are the lead plaintiffs in an ACLU lawsuit against the State of Wisconsin, arguing that the state's constitutional ban on same sex marriage is a violation of their civil rights.

There's a law on the books in Wisconsin that says that people married legally in another state but whose marriages wouldn't be recognized in Wisconsin can be fined up to \$10,000 and sent to jail for up to nine months. The old Marriage Evasion statute, which was originally designed to prevent close relations from marrying one another in another state and then returning to Wisconsin to live, was not specifically meant to pertain to GLBT couples, but the ACLU asserts that the state courts could choose to interpret the law in that way.

Wolf and Schumacher were married by a Minnesota judge when same sex marriage became legal in Minnesota in 2013. They've been working on this issue for a long time, saying, "We've been inching toward marriage for 38 years!" Virginia is Minister Emerita at Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Regional Assembly: One Event in Four Locations



Workshops are all on Saturday April 12, 2014

Discounted early bird registration ends March 15. When we've done evaluations of previous District Assemblies, "workshops!" are always ranked as one of the most appreciated events on the schedule. Here are some of the intriguing possibilities at this year's Regional Assembly in Four Locations.

Workshop Sampler



In Ann Arbor: Gun Violence Prevention and UU

presented by Linda Brundage

There will be an overview of gun violence, review of previous positions of the UUA re gun violence, and how congregations can get involved, participate in Gun Violence Prevention Coalitions, and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.



In Bloomington (Indiana): Transforming the World through Congregation-Based Spiritual Direction

presented by Rev. Phil Lund, MidAmerica Congregational Life Consultant, and Rev. Sue Sinnamon

One of the greatest challenges facing progressive congregations in the 21st century is learning to serve the growing number of people who identify as spiritual but not religious. This workshop will explore how congregation-based spiritual direction can do just that by transforming individuals, their communities, and the world.



In Topeka: Harry Potter Justice Camp

presented by Rev. Judith Cady, Kansas City, Missouri

Create your own justice-making camp for the children/youth of your congregation and the wider community. With robes, wands, Quidditch and more, you will learn to explore your own themes of social and environmental justice in an exciting and fun camp.



In Wausau: Goodbye, Columbus: Reconsidering the Conquest of Turtle Island

presented by Rev. Armida Alexander, minister, and Susan Randall, president, both of All Souls Church UU in Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Come learn about resources to educate your congregation on the UUA's repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery--including children's curriculum, worship materials, and public education possibilities. Regional Assembly workshops list (<https://www.uua.org/midamerica/ra/ra-archives/2014>)

UU Summer Camps

MUUSA

Consider joining fellow UUs this summer in the Missouri Ozarks at the annual Midwest Unitarian Universalist Summer Assembly (MUUSA). The week-long camp offers many workshops and activities for families, couples and singles of all ages. This year Reverend Amy Shaw will lead the daily Morning Celebration service on this year's theme: "Sailing Strange Shores: The Wisdom of the Weird." Come gather in the beautiful forests and rolling hills of the Missouri Ozarks at YMCA Trout Lodge, where you can connect with old friends, make new ones, and participate in a wide variety of activities. Get all the details at <http://www.muusa.org> (<http://www.muusa.org>)



(<http://www.chalicesparx.org>)

Other UU Camps

There are a number of UU camps located in MidAmerica Region. Some are for particular audiences; some for all ages. Get a head start on summer by looking at the possibilities for yourself or your family.



New Welcoming Congregation

Our congratulations to the UU Fellowship of Elkhart (<http://uufe.org/>), Indiana which has been recognized by the UUA as a Welcoming Congregation. The More information about the program is at Welcoming Congregation Program (<http://www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/program/>) is a volunteer program for Unitarian Universalist congregations that want to take intentional steps to become more welcoming and inclusive of people with marginalized sexual orientations and gender identities.

Central Midwest, Heartland, and Prairie Star Districts of the Unitarian Universalist Association joining together to create a new era in Unitarian Universalism as MidAmerica Region.

How to Reach Us

<https://www.uua.org/midamerica/contact-us>

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