



# The MidAmerica Messenger

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We hope to see many of you at General Assembly in Providence in June. On Wednesday, June 25, several MidAmerica Board and staff members will be available at the Regional Meet and Greet in the Exhibit Hall from 4 - 6 p.m. Look for our table!

We always appreciate your comments and suggestions for the newsletter. Feel free to send us a message (<mailto:midamerica@uua.org>)!

Sincerely,

Nancy Heege, Congregational Life Consultant

# Congregation Based Spiritual Direction



*By Rev. Phillip Lund, Congregational Life Consultant*

Registration is now open for the 2014-15 sessions of the Clergy Seminar Series in Congregation-Based Spiritual Direction, MidAmerica UUA's ground-breaking professional development opportunity. It is designed especially for:

\* ordained clergy \* ministerial interns \* theological students

The goal of the training is to start with the skills clergy already possess through their experience and training (such as Clinical Pastoral Education and pastoral counseling courses), and increase their competence as spiritual directors in three specific areas:

- brief spiritual direction
- group spiritual direction
- supervision -- of peers and of lay leaders of spiritual direction groups.

While designed with the parish in mind, this training would be equally useful in any number of other ministry settings, such as chaplaincy and counseling.

This year we'll be offering the seminar series in two locations:

- **Saint Paul, Minnesota** on October 27-29, 2014, January 26-28, 2015, and May 18-20, 2015; and
- **Bloomington, Indiana** on October 20-22, 2014, February 2-4, 2015, May 4-6, 2015.

**LOCATIONS:**

- Saint Paul sessions at Unity Church-Unitarian
- Bloomington sessions will be held at First United Church

**TIMES:**

From 1 pm on Mondays through 4:30 on Wednesdays.

**TUITION:**

- Full tuition \$975
- Early bird rate \$650 through June 30, 2014
- Ministerial students, interns, and retired ministers \$475.00 for a limited time only



The seminars will be led by the **Rev. Phillip Lund**, Congregational Life Consultant in the MidAmerica Region, and the **Rev. Sue Sinnamon**, former Program Consultant in the Southern Region. Sue has a graduate certificate in Spiritual Direction from the RUAH School at Richmond Hill, and Phil has recently completed certification in Interspiritual Counseling at One Spirit Learning Alliance in New York.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at [plund@uaa.org](mailto:plund@uaa.org) or call me at 612-875-0959.

Mark your calendar now!

# MidAmerica Regional Assembly

April 17-19, 2015

An entire weekend full of events for everyone.

**IN ONE LOCATION:** Naperville, Illinois, just outside of Chicago.



**Theme:** "The 'New' in the New Era of Unitarian Universalism."

We'll bring in two outstanding **keynote speakers**, **workshops** to address every aspect of congregational life, and outstanding **worship and music** led by professionals from across the Region.

We hope you will plan now to join us at the Marriott Hotel in Naperville, along with 500 UUs from all over the Midwest.

## Nurturing and Shepherding

*by Nancy Combs-Morgan, Congregational Life Consultant*

These two verbs capture a view into the goals that I am working on with our MidAmerica staff group. We just concluded a spring staff retreat, where we all reviewed our shared goals and our individual goals. This is how we understand ourselves as a staff team. Our goals do not exist by themselves, but must be reflected in our team goals. I realized that many of my goals included these two verbs...for example, I seek to nurture and shepherd youth and young adult ministry structures and programming that serve the health and vibrancy of youth and young adult ministry experiences in our congregations and region.



We do this in many ways - witness the emergence of tremendous online and face-to-face trainings for our congregational leaders. Sound dry as toast? Not really, for here is a great example.

My teammate, Rev. Lisa Presley, attended a ministers' retreat where **Linette Lowe**, the talented Director of Religious Education [DRE] at **First Unitarian Church of Louisville, Kentucky**, engaged the ministers in a topic that is near and dear to her heart: "Creative Inclusion: Living into our Radical Welcome." Lisa then suggested to me that Linette's work would make a great webinar for leaders. After hearing from Linette why this model of "creative inclusion" resonates so resoundingly in her work as a DRE, I could hear that she had too much to offer for a 75 minute webinar. So, before offering two webinars on "Creative Inclusion" in November, we have scheduled a face-to-face workshop at First Unitarian Church of Louisville, Kentucky, on Saturday, September 13, from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Registration will be on our MA website in the near future and the cost will be \$40.

Step up and help me in the goal to nurture this important work by taking part in these programs. The

workshop and webinars are for ministers, professional religious educators, youth coordinators/advisors, religious education teachers, membership directors, and anyone who seeks to be truly welcoming in your congregation!

*Here is Linette Lowe's description for this work:*

### **Creative Inclusion: Living into our Radical Welcome**



Most of our congregations do a reasonable job of being accessible to those with physical disabilities: we have accessible entrances, restrooms, classrooms and sanctuaries. Those with mobility issues, restricted vision, and hearing loss are accommodated so that they can fully participate in the lives of our congregations. But what about those who are neurodiverse? Are those with autism spectrum disorders, dyslexia, ADHD, Tourette Syndrome, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, developmental speech disorders, Parkinson's disease, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and others welcomed as well? What can we do to help our congregations become informed about and more comfortable with neurodiversity so that we can more fully live into our philosophy of radical welcome? What will this mean for how we "do" church? Join Linette Lowe, DRE at First Unitarian Church of Louisville, in an exploration of this issue. Linette's interest in the topic is informed by her Ph.D. work in Philosophy of Education and M.A. work in Special Education, her experiences living with a neurodiverse son and spouse, the work of Sally Patton for the UUA, and the needs of her congregation and the congregations of her DRE colleagues.

## The Story of Our Congregations and Anti-Racism, Anti- Oppression, MultiCultural Awareness

*by Charlotte Preston, MidAmerica Board Vice President*



Many MidAmerica congregations are engaged in the spiritual practice of openness. In some congregations, reading and reflection, conversations, and risking facing one's internal and suppressed prejudices is the focus. In other congregations, finding and creating meaningful collaborations regarding social justice work around hunger, housing, immigration, civil rights is taking place. Some congregations are engaging with and sharing facilities with faith community groups in need of meeting space. The April MidAmerica newsletter detailed the current story at White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church. We'd like to tell yours.

The MidAmerica Board has covenanted with each other as a group to be intentional in developing a personal and a board-deepening practice regarding Anti-racism, Anti-oppression, and Multicultural Awareness [ARAOMC]. At our April 2014 board gathering, our Saturday morning worship was a meditation in which we spoke aloud a date from history, the name of the European-descended US President on that date, and the Native American word or phrase and its meaning for each of the 13 states represented in our MidAmerica Region. To make the meditation a full body experience, we started on the

East wall and, in historical order, stepped to a representational space for the state in which each participant lives or studied or likes to travel. We watched as our movements represented the Westward Expansion of Europeans on this land mass and felt with a deep physicality how that Westward movement by Europeans overwhelmed the land and native peoples.

We consider a focus on anti-racism, anti-oppression and multiculturalism a foundation to our governance work in the MidAmerica Region. And we know the deep and daily work in the MidAmerica Region is taking place in congregations, and beyond, where UUs engage each other, friends, and individual people and groups.

What's going on in your congregation? Send us a heads-up and we will pursue having an interested congregation's story written. It will be reviewed by an appropriate spokesperson for the congregation prior to distribution. If you would like to nominate your congregation for an ARAOMC story, please send an email to [midamerica@uua.org](mailto:midamerica@uua.org) (mailto:midamerica@uua.org).

## Is Your Congregation Facing a Ministerial Transition?

Are you wondering what the next steps are, or what interim ministry is about, or what the search process is like? Then check out these transitions videos.

We have a collection of 30 some videos, each lasting 2-5 minutes, covering some of the most frequently-asked questions about ministerial transition. Whether you are a leader, member, or minister, you'll find these helpful to explain what's going on, and as part of your decision making process. These videos were made collaboratively with the Unitarian Universalist Association's Transitions Office, and the Central East and Southern Regional Groups.



## Meet Your MidAmerica Region Fair Compensation Team

What is "Fair Compensation?" It's one way we live our Unitarian Universalist values within our own congregations by treating our employees as valued members of our communities. Fair compensation is essential to the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel. This is true for any company, corporation, or agency. It is especially true for religious organizations with strong social justice commitments.

The Fair Compensation Consultants are available to help you reach the goal of achieving fair compensation for ministers and all other religious professionals and staff. We can provide guidance to Congregational leadership on such issues as understanding the components of Fair Compensation, accessing and understanding information about them on the UUA website, answering questions on unique pay and personnel issues, and developing plans to achieve your goals.

Your Compensation Consultants are:

- Cheri Cody: South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Western Missouri, Iowa
  - Charlotte Cowtan: North Dakota, Minnesota
  - Ellen Germann-Melosh: Specialist, Small Congregations
  - Jane Gross: Kentucky, Ohio
  - Art Hillman: Michigan, Indiana
  - Douglas Kaufman-Dickson: Illinois, Wisconsin, Eastern Missouri
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*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.*

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