



The MidAmerica Messenger

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Summer is two-thirds over, and the MidAmerica Region staff is gearing up for the fall! We invite you to participate in the opportunities you can read about below. If you need assistance, don't hesitate to contact us.

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

Compassion for Campers Helps Those Who Are Homeless in Illinois

by Carol Alfus, Board President, Tree of Life Unitarian Universalist Congregation McHenry, Illinois

The Public Action to Deliver Shelter (PADS) program of McHenry County, Illinois provides homeless people with food and shelter in area churches every night from October 1 through April 30. Since 1987, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Woodstock was a PADS site, with many of its members staffing shifts, welcoming and feeding guests, and doing laundry. In 2012, when the church moved to neighboring McHenry, and eventually changed its name to Tree of Life UU Congregation, the PADS site was moved to another church, but many Tree of Life UU's continue to volunteer their time and support.

Lisa Jacobsen, a Tree of Life member and longtime PADS volunteer noticed a need when PADS sites closed in the spring. "You spend seven months of the year building relationships with some of these folks, then there's nothing for them," Jacobsen said, noting that for five months clients must make do by living in their cars or camping in wooded areas around the county. The sudden withdrawal of services troubled Jacobsen. "I don't have a solution for homelessness," she stated, "but I can cook," and in May of 2012, Compassion for Campers was born. Spearheaded by Jacobsen and supported by the Social Justice Committee of Tree of Life and the Woodstock Area Community Ministry (WACM), Compassion for Campers provides a cookout style lunch every Monday at the PADS office just outside of Woodstock. Beyond lunch and fellowship, PADS guests are provided with bottled water, insect repellent, batteries, hygiene products, and other necessities to help them get through the week. All food and supplies are donated and lunch was staffed by Tree of Life or WACM members. "The first year we did fifteen Mondays, last year we did seventeen Mondays, and this year we are able to cover nineteen weeks," Jacobsen reported.

Jacobsen gets the word out about Compassion for Campers through the McHenry County Volunteer website, McHenry County College, and by reaching out to local businesses for donations of food and supplies. In 2013, Compassion for Campers became a community partner of Tree of Life's Second Sunday program, which offers financial support, and last year, she applied for and received a small grant from the Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice. Jacobsen tells of a boy from a local Jewish Congregation who "adopted" Compassion for Campers as a project for his bar mitzvah, and collected two truckloads of food and personal items. The program averages between 25-35 guests each week, but has had as many as 42 people show up. Jacobsen says Compassion for Campers offers PADS clients a chance to have a relaxed meal, check in with volunteers, and get some much-needed supplies. "How can you not do something?" Jacobsen asks.



Every lunch setup includes a tent, serving tables, and a grill to cook hot food. Compassion 4 Campers serves lunch every Monday - no matter what the weather - from May 1st to September 30th

Call for Workshops for Regional Assembly!

Our next Regional Assembly will be held in Naperville, Illinois, the weekend of April 17-19, 2015. It will be a great chance to be together as one region as we explore **The New in a New Era of Unitarian Universalism**.

Part of our exploration will be with workshops-and we want your help.

- What's new in UUism for you?
- What new ideas, concepts, and new ways of doing things have you been using?
- What do you think will help us move into a new understanding?

Start thinking now about what you might want to present.

Workshops will be 75 minutes long. Workshop presenters need to register for the Regional Assembly and pay their own expenses. Applications to present a workshop must be submitted by **October 31**. We will notify you if your workshop has been accepted by late November.

<https://www.uua.org/midamerica/ra/ra-archives/2015>

If you have any questions, or want to recommend a topic that you hope someone else will cover, please be in touch with Lisa Presley, lpresley@uua.org.



Chalice Lighter Grant Application Deadline This Month



The Chalice Lighter program provides grants to congregations for growth related projects. The program is supported by small, periodic contributions from many individual UUs around the Region.

- The next deadline for submitting an application for a Chalice Lighter grant is August 31.

- Sign up to be a contributor.

(<https://www.uua.org/midamerica/giving/chalice-lighters>)

We welcome your questions.

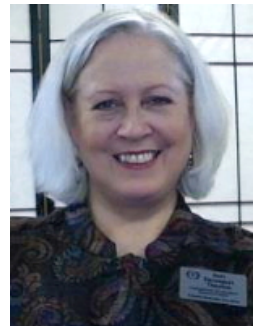
Dori Davenport Thexton and
Rev. Phillip Lund plund@uua.org

Creating a Culture of Generosity

By Dori Davenport Thexton

Generosity can be a form of spiritual practice. It can also be a deeply rewarding experience. Our religious communities are the ideal places to nurture our human desire to make a positive difference and practice generosity. People give to something they believe in, to something that inspires them.

On September 20, at the First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati, I'm looking forward to working with teams from our MidAmerica congregations to explore ways to create and support a culture of generosity.



We'll spend the day delving into your congregational mission and purpose, how to strengthen programs by ensuring that your mission is well integrated, and how all of this can be used to foster relationships and care among your members. Since relationships are at the heart of a culture of generosity, we'll look at how your members can inspire generosity in each other as part of their ongoing spiritual practices.

We will study our own attitudes toward money and how these attitudes shape our sense of stewardship.

Using resources from a Lilly Foundation program on religious fundraising, this workshop broaden your understanding of stewardship and generosity. It will help lay the foundation for successful pledge drives.

In addition to this workshop in Cincinnati, I'm also interested in working with congregational leaders in other parts of the MidAmerica Region and create a group of consultants who can work with individual congregations to improve their fundraising programs.

Upcoming Webinars and Workshops

From webinars on faith formation and stewardship to workshops on Intercultural Competency and Creative Inclusion to the Clergy Seminar Series in Congregation-Based Spiritual Direction, there are plenty of learning opportunities for lay leaders and religious professionals in the MidAmerica Region beginning in late summer and continuing into the fall.

WEBINARS

- **New DRE:** Tuesday, August 19 & Thursday, August 28
- **New Ideas for Small Congregation Websites:** Thursday, August 21 & Tuesday, August 26
- **New Youth Advisors:** Tuesday, September 9 & Thursday, September 18
- **Nurturing Generosity in Your Congregation:** Thursday, October 16 & Tuesday, October 21
- **Creative Inclusion: Living Into Our Radical Welcome:** Thursday, November 13 & Thursday, November 20

IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS

- **Creative Inclusion: Living into our Radical Welcome**
Saturday, September 13, 2014, Louisville, Kentucky (Register by August 9.)
- **Building a Culture of Generosity**
Saturday, September 20, 2014, Cincinnati, Ohio (Register by September 15.)
- **Intercultural Competency: Who Are Our Neighbors?**
Friday, October 24 & Saturday, October 25, 2014, Louisville, Kentucky (Register by October 17.)

CLERGY SEMINAR SERIES

- Monday, October 20 through Wednesday, October 22, 2014, Bloomington, Indiana
- Monday, October 27 through Wednesday, October 29, 2014, Saint Paul, Minnesota
- Monday, November 10 through Wednesday, November 12, 2014, Lawrence, Kansas

You can view the archived webinars (<https://www.uua.org/offices/organizations/midamerica-region-uua>) anytime that's convenient for you. The topics are wide-ranging and designed to be of help to congregational leaders in a variety of roles.

From Starting to Parting

By Nancy Combs-Morgan

Mindful that many of our MidAmerica congregations experience transitions with their religious education and music professionals over the summer, I want to let you know about a new resource from our national office. Our MidAmerica team works closely with the national staff at the Unitarian Universalist Association, helping to develop resources that can assist congregations as they navigate these transitions. Jan Gartner, the UUA's Professional Development Associate for Religious Education and Music Leaders (jgartner@uua.org), has worked tirelessly to update the resources.



Jan writes....

" From Starting to Parting: Supporting Religious Education and Music Staff in Unitarian Universalist Congregations is an update, synthesis, and expansion of our previous information, The Search for Religious Education Leadership and Music In Our Congregations.

Among the features of From Starting To Parting:

- Unified guidance for transitions of religious education and music staff - also relevant to other staff positions
- Links to additional UUA web pages and other resources
- Assumption of healthy, collaborative staff teams and strong ministerial involvement in staff search/support (noting that this may be aspirational or not universally applicable)
- Sections on staff teams/supervision and departures
- Attention to special situations: interim and "acting" titles, inside candidates, members as staff

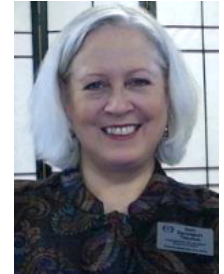
Underlying philosophy: the nature of congregational life is in flux, with implications for staff. Revelation is continuous. www.uua.org/documents/recc/starting_to_parting.pdf

We, in MidAmerica Region, very much want to know when you have changes with your religious professionals, so do let us know and we will seek to be of direct support.

MidAmerica Adjunct Consultants

by Dori Davenport Thexton

We are blessed in our region by having an outstanding group of folks who help us support our congregations by facilitating retreats, meetings, and planning sessions for individual congregations. They are our Adjunct Consultants, and many of them are professional facilitators in their careers. These consultants work for us at greatly reduced fees because they love Unitarian Universalism and want to help our congregations be vibrant, strong and healthy.



We work closely with our consultants, sharing the latest resources and models for leading groups in all aspects of congregational life.

If your congregation needs someone to assist a committee or the board with planning, vision/mission work, conflict engagement or organizational development, we will be happy to provide the services of one of our consultants.

The coordinator of our Adjunct Consultants will work with your congregation to select the best one for your particular needs. Please email some background and information on what you're seeking, and we'll coordinate the arrangements with our administrative staff.

More information and fees can be found on our website (<https://www.uua.org/midamerica/resources/consultants>).

Camp Piomingo Middle School Retreat

A fun and engaging UU Middle School retreat, for fellowship and bonding of youth groups at the beginning of the program year will take place near Brandenburg, Kentucky, September 27 to 28, 2014. Register by August 31.

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.
