



The MidAmerica Messenger

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MidAmerica Region is building a new era in Unitarian Universalism, where UUs visibly live our faith, create connections, grow our membership, and welcome all persons who share our UU values.

In This Issue

One-on-Ones as an Effective Organizing Tool

Sharing Historical UU Treasures

Lest We Forget...

In Memoriam

The Military Ministry Toolkit

Memo to Ministers



Thanks to each of you for the work your congregation is doing to be an advocate for justice, a place of peace, and a beacon of hope for those in your community.

We always appreciate your comments and suggestions for the newsletter.

Click on the "email the editor" link in the menu on the left to send us a message.

Sincerely,

Nancy Heege, Congregational Life Consultant





One-on-Ones as an Effective Organizing Tool

By Rev. Scott Aaseng,

Minister at Quincy Unitarian Church, Quincy, Illinois



Can you imagine actualizing our UU beliefs on social justice more effectively? The UU Advocacy Network of Illinois (UUANI - pronounced "UU And I") provided training on how to do just that in August, for members of eleven UU congregations (Bloomington, Chicago Second, Deerfield, Evanston, Hinsdale, Mt. Vernon, Naperville, Palatine, Peoria, Quincy, and Urbana). The trainer was Ryan Walker of Community Renewal Society (CRS (<http://www.communityrenewalsociety.org/>)), an alliance of over 60 churches that was started by the United Church of Christ 132 years ago. Such collaborative alliances are an important part of actualizing UU beliefs on social justice. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1421369798079834/>)

Ryan covered four topics: charity & justice, power, relationships, and team building.

Ryan said experience shows us that neither a "Lone Ranger Activist" nor a committed and effective social justice team of 8-10 people can achieve in the realm of social justice what traditional approaches can accomplish when seeking volunteers for a soup kitchen or monies for a designated charity. A new approach is needed, and what Ryan recommended was to build people power by creating mutual and sustaining relationships through "one-on-ones." A one-on-one has an initiator arranging a 30 to 45 minute meeting with another congregant to "discover shared interests, values, faith, and passion," to learn through shared stories the big things that have shaped another's life, and to seek answers to two fundamental questions: who am I, and what things will move me to action?

Building teams through one-on-ones allows congregations to mobilize large numbers of people on short notice when timely action on a social justice issue becomes desirable or necessary. Unity Temple of Oak Park, Illinois, is a great example. After much work with one-on-ones, Unity Temple has created networks that can turn out 100 people to an event calling for social justice advocacy. Through the slow building of values-driven networks, a social justice action team, once susceptible to burnout, can call on occasional but re-energizing help from an action alert network. And, with the steady extension of one-on-ones, right across all of the pews, Social Justice Committees can call to action a growing number of congregants who, thus far in their lives, have been passive spectators in the social justice arena.



If you'd like to know more about this method of organizing, or if you are interested in working with other UU congregations in your state to do advocacy work, contact Rev. Scott Aaseng.

List of State Advocacy Networks

(<https://www.uua.org/midamerica/resources/social-justice>)

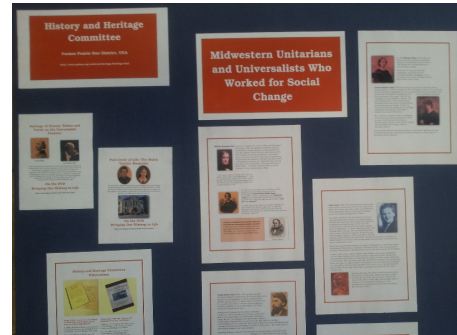
More about UUANI (<http://uu-advocacy-illinois.org/>)



Discovering, Savoring, and Sharing Historical UU Treasures

On November 6, the History and Heritage Committee from the former Prairie Star District will collaborate with Nancy Heege from MidAmerica for a webinar on the pleasures and benefits of doing UU history.

The webinar will begin with the question, "Why do UU history?" It will offer strategies for doing historical work in your home congregations and for connecting your local history to regional and national UU history. The webinar will offer examples of how to communicate your historical information, and how to collaborate with others who engage in UU historical initiatives.



Please join us and/or pass this information along to others in your congregation who are interested in UU history. The webinar will begin at 7:45 p.m. Eastern/6:45 Central.



Lest We Forget...

By Nancy Combs-Morgan, Congregational Life Consultant

It has been over a month since the horrors of Ferguson, Missouri, and I continue to think about ways we can reach out to young people. I was heartened to hear from MidAmerica Directors of Religious Education, who are doing their best to be responsive in youth groups and RE classes in their congregations.



If we can face this violent racial intolerance and injustice with a sense of renewal and deeper commitment to justice, then we can help lead our children and youth to a better tomorrow. To help with that process I reached out to our gifted UUA national Faith Development leaders, Pat Kahn and Jessica York, who graciously sent a host of great teaching resources. As I went through them, I was especially moved by the "Teaching for Change" website that is devoted to building social justice starting in the classroom: www.teachingforchange.org

Also, UU minister Rev. Tom Schade wrote a very moving piece, "Ferguson: Stepping Back to See the New Situation," on his UU blog site, "The Lively Tradition," www.tomschade.com

From The Atlantic: How to teach kids about what's happening in Ferguson (<http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/08/how-to-teach-kids-about-whats-happening-in-ferguson/379049/>)

From CNN: Talking to kids about race and class

(<http://www.cnn.com/2014/08/22/living/talking-to-kids-race-class-parents/index.html>)

From Teaching Tolerance: Students are watching Ferguson

(<http://www.tolerance.org/blog/students-are-watching-ferguson>)

From University of Missouri at St. Louis: On responding to children after Ferguson unrest

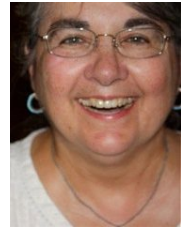
(<http://blogs.umsl.edu/news/2014/08/24/casgsl-ferguson/>)



In Memoriam

the Reverend Georgette Irene Wonders [1952 - 2014]

Rev. Wonders was ordained to the Unitarian Universalist ministry on October 13, 2002, by the Bradford Community Church Unitarian Universalist, of Kenosha, Wisconsin. She was called to the Bradford Community Church Unitarian Universalist in August, 2002, and served there until her death. Georgette joined the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association in 2002, and served as Good Officer for the Central Midwest Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association from 2005 to 2014. She served as a member of the Kenosha County Clergy Association, and as co-president of Congregations United to Serve Humanity (CUSH) from 2005 to 2007.



She is survived by wife, Hope Engeseth; son, Andrew Wonders; parents, Sam and Joyce Wonders; sisters, Heather Keefer, Autumn (Simon Szeghy) Wonders and Naomi (Randy Groskinsky) Wonders; and other extended family.

<http://www.uuma.org/blogpost/569858/186823/In-Memory-of---Georgette-I-Wonders-1952-2014>

the Reverend William L. Holden [1931 - 2014]

Rev. Holden served as youth minister to the Stoneham Unitarian Church, of Stoneham, Massachusetts, from 1959 to 1961; and Minister of Education to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Medford, Massachusetts from 1962 to 1964. His later work was in corrections. His extensive volunteer ministry included service as a volunteer hospital chaplain to Hennepin County Medical Center of Minneapolis, Minnesota; volunteer police chaplain to the St. Paul, Minnesota, Police Department; member of the Minnesota State Children's Mental Health Advisory Committee; guest preacher and consultant to countless Unitarian Universalist congregations; and co-founding of the Victim's Intervention Project, a program out of the St. Paul Police Department that supports the families of homicide victims. He was ordained by the UU Church of Minnetonka, Minnesota in 1980.



William is survived by his wife, Sondra Smalley; children, William Lynn (Karin Lauria), Barbara Lynn, Michele Wallace (Doug Root), Sarah Merwin (Kedrik), and Doug Smalley (Sara); and extended family.

<http://www.uuma.org/blogpost/569858/196076/In-Memory-of---William-L-Holden-1931-2014>



ANNOUNCING The Military Ministry Toolkit

Is your congregation considering outreach to active duty military personnel, veterans and their families? Do you want to make a safe, welcoming space in your community for sharing members' stories of involvement in war or military life?



Read more... (<http://blogs.uuworld.org/ga/2014/06/28/military-chaplain-offers-tools-for-uu-ruck-sack/>)

The UUA Faith Development Office now offers the Military Ministry Toolkit for Congregations online at no charge to congregations. The toolkit provides six one-hour workshops for adults in Unitarian Universalist faith communities that seek to become more intentionally open and inviting to military service people, veterans, and their families.

Included is a 23-minute video, *Embracing the Unitarian Universalist behind the Uniform*, which can help begin a conversation in your congregation about why and how to explore military ministry. Schedule an event to watch and discuss the video in order to inspire support for deepening and strengthening this aspect of the congregation's ministry. Learn more... (<http://www.uua.org/re/adults/militaryministry/index.shtml>)

Photo: The Rev. Rebekah Ann Montgomery, a U.S. Army Reserve chaplain, preached the sermon at the 2014 UUA Service of the Living Tradition. (© Nancy Pierce/UUA)



Memo to Ministers:

There's still room for a few more participants in our Clergy Seminar Series in Congregation-Based Spiritual Direction. Join colleagues from throughout the MidAmerica Region and around the country for a learning experience that is bound to transform your ministry.



Sessions will be held in Bloomington, Indiana; Saint Paul, Minnesota; and Lawrence, Kansas. Special rates for UU clergy (active and retired), ministerial students, and interns still apply.



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*Central Midwest, Heartland, and Prairie
Star Districts of the Unitarian Universalist
Association joined together as
MidAmerica Region
in July 2013.*