



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.

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"From the harvest of the soil we are given occasion to garner a harvest of the heart and mind: A harvest of resolve to be careful stewards of all life's gifts and opportunities." (Percival Chubb, #656 in Singing the Living Tradition)

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.




Correction: The article on the One on One organizing workshop in last month's newsletter was written by Bill Rau of the UU Church of Bloomington Normal, in Bloomington, Illinois, and not by Rev. Scott Aaseng.

Our apologies for this error.

Sincerely,

Nancy Heege, Congregational Life Consultant



Join Us in April!

Join us April 17 - 19 for the **MidAmerica Regional Assembly** in Naperville, Illinois (a suburb of Chicago). It will be a great chance to be together as one region as we explore "The New in a New Era of Unitarian Universalism." And we're very excited about the two major speakers who will be with us: the Reverend Rosemary Bray McNatt and the Reverend Dr. Marlin Lavanhar.



The Reverend Rosemary Bray McNatt is the new president at Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California. She is a UU World contributing editor and until June 2014, was senior minister of the Fourth Universalist Society in New York City. A skilled writer and editor, she's a former editor for the *New York Times Book Review*, and the author of three books, including a memoir, *Unafraid of the Dark* (Turtleback, 1999). Read some of her essays (<http://www.uuworld.org/about/authors/rosemarybraymcnatt.shtml>).



The Reverend Dr. Marlin Lavanhar is Senior Minister at All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. A lifelong UU, he began his religious life at the North Shore Unitarian Church in Deerfield, Illinois. In 2008, All Souls became the largest UU congregation in the United States, with over 1800 adult members. All Souls offers three worship services on Sunday mornings - a humanist service, a traditional service, and a contemporary service - plus services on some Friday evenings. Read about them (<http://www.allsoulschurch.org/worship>). Read one of Marlin's essays (<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rev-marlin-lavanhar>).

And More

Besides our theme speakers, we'll have workshops, the Regional Business Meeting, music and celebration, good food, and time for meeting new friends and old from congregations across our great Region. We hope to see YOU there!

Information about Regional Assembly 2015 (<https://www.uua.org/midamerica/ra/ra-archives/2015>)



IUUWAN (Iowa UU Witness/Advocacy Network) is Launched!

By Terry Lee Lowman, President, IUUWAN Board of Directors

There is another State Advocacy Network in the MidAmerica Region, and it was launched with a full day of celebration and learning at First Unitarian Church of Des Moines, Iowa, in October.

IUUWAN (pronounced "Iowan") got its start several months ago with a cooperative effort by representatives from several UU congregations in Iowa. We formed a board, incorporated as a nonprofit, and have received our 501(c)3 status from the Internal Revenue Service.



Launch Day

The Launch day was paid for by generous donations of Iowans and a matching grant from Standing on the Side of Love through the UU Funding Program. The day began with welcomes by Des Moines Senior Minister Rev. Mark Stringer and UUA President Rev. Peter Morales via video. Presenters discussed topics such as Iowa's bullying law, driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants, the Bakken oil pipeline and restorative justice. There were theatrical readings for racial justice, and music, and Rev. Erin Gingrich, Associate Minister of Social Justice at First Unitarian Church of Des Moines, closed the event with a beautiful metaphor explaining that as water will break down rocks, our efforts will break down injustice. MidAmerica Region Board Member David Martin from Iowa City was present. **Current Issues** Issues currently being worked on by the Iowa group include: the Affordable Care Act; anti-bullying reform; the Bakken Pipeline; driving permits for undocumented immigrants; and Death with Dignity.

Learn More

To learn more, visit our website, www.iuuwan.com or "like" us on Facebook at facebook.com/IUUWAN



Congregation in Ministerial Transition?

If your congregation is in the midst of a ministerial transition, there are some excellent resources for you on our MidAmerica web site. Lisa Presley and others created more than thirty 3-to-5-minute videos on many topics related to transitions in ministry. Sharing this resource with your congregation members is a great way for them to have their questions answered. [no longer available]



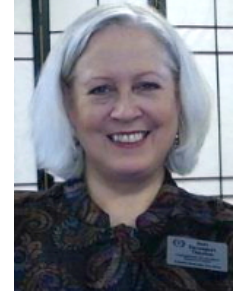


Generosity as a Spiritual Practice

By Dori Davenport Thexton, Congregational Life Consultant

The in-person workshops and webinars on generosity and stewardship that I've led this fall have been wonderfully rewarding, and it's always a joy to engage UU leaders who care deeply about our faith and congregations. In the workshops, there are three things that I emphasize. One is framing generosity as a spiritual practice; the second is the importance of relationship; the third is Mission and Vision.

For the most part, we all want to be generous people. Every time there is a crisis or disaster, we hear countless stories of people offering to help. Intentionally thinking about the ways we are and can be generous in all aspects of our lives can be a spiritual practice. By definition, a spiritual practice is something that stretches us and helps us grow. Cultivating this practice, especially within our faith communities, can be gratifying and satisfying.



Professional fundraisers will tell you that relationship is a primary foundation of their work. Every book written on the subject includes numerous stories of how a strong relationship has been the root of every generous gift they've solicited or received. To know and be known is a fundamental theological idea - so how can our congregations foster and strengthen meaningful relationships among their members? Even during these difficult economic times, many congregations have had successful pledge drives and/or capital campaigns. The one thing they all have in common is that their donors are funding a mission and vision for the future. There is a strong sense of purpose and making a difference within these religious communities. Mission and vision are articulated often, through many channels, by both professional and lay leaders.

If you would like to host a "Creating a Culture of Generosity" workshop, call or email - we'd love to hear from you! We'll be happy to work with you on organizing the event and inviting other congregational leaders. It is most successful when teams of 4-6 participants from at least five congregations commit to being there. Contact Sharon Dittmar, sdittmar@uua.org (mailto:sdittmar@uua.org).



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