



## *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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I hope to see many of you at the Regional Assembly in April. Our keynote presenters will be excellent; see more about their topic in the article below.

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





## Some Basic Advice on Triangulation

*By Rev. Ian Evison, Congregational Life Consultant and Lead*

*Staff for MidAmerica Region, with the assistance of Kenn Hurto, Congregational Life Consultant and Lead Staff for the UUA Southern Region*



In the 1950s the family therapist Murray Bowen introduced many ideas about systems. The concept of triangulation is one of the most applicable to congregational leadership. It is, in brief, when John is frustrated with or concerned about Mary, John looks to Jane to deal with this. In organizations that have had unhealthy experiences of conflict or where indirect expression of conflict is culturally normative (the Midwest!), triangulation can become deeply problematic.

If you find yourself in the middle of someone else's squabble, you are being triangulated. If you find someone else wants you to take responsibility for their communication, you are being triangulated. Those who most habitually take the role of the responsible ones -- and this is most of our congregational leaders -- are most susceptible to being triangulated. From a systemic point of view, triangulation is a means of reducing anxiety. The more anxious a system, the greater the tendency to triangulation. Those who are most anxious will have the greatest tendency to triangulate. ...



## Don't Miss Our First-Ever Regional Assembly in One Location!



Religious life in our country is undergoing significant change. Unitarian Universalism, with our heritage of working for justice, is also changing - especially as we observe and engage in the movements for racial equity currently sweeping our country. This is a liminal moment for us as a religious people - we have an opportunity to shape our future right now if we are willing to support and join those on the front lines; if we are open to the changes that will follow. The foundations for our "New Era" are being laid as you read this.; With the well-publicized trends of "spiritual but not religious" and the different needs of younger generations in their embrace of faith and spirituality, how can we make our congregations ready to welcome, embrace and engage all who seek us out? What do we need to pay attention to, to prepare for it? Our keynote presenters will tell their stories and share their experiences in ministry, ministerial formation, and congregational life as they explore possibilities for the future.

Join us at Regional Assembly to hear Reverend Rosemary Bray McNatt, the new president at Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, California, and Reverend Dr. Marlin Lavanhar, Senior Minister at All

Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. April 17 - 19, 2015 in Naperville, Illinois. It's a weekend full of lectures, workshops, and worship. Child care offered. Limited partial scholarships available. Early registration at discounted rates ends March 16. <https://www.uua.org/midamerica/ra/ra-archives/2015>



## First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee Works For Justice

By publicly hanging a **#Black Lives Matter** banner on their historic church, the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee is affirming the importance of this movement



to inspire systemic change. Interim Senior Minister Elaine Peresluha and Associate Minister Dena McPhetres are adding their voices to the outrage in their blog posts about the Black Lives Matter movement. And they are engaging the members of the First Unitarian Church in conversation, as well. The Rev. Peresluha states, "Why must we join the conversation, as a church with a majority white membership? Because a dominant white culture holds the power to define reality, the engagement and support of white Americans is essential to change the current reality. This nation--and Milwaukee in particular as a place suffering so greatly from social inequality and injustices--needs strong intercultural alliances engaging in social action, challenging the system to transform. Bringing different voices together to inspire change requires honesty, vulnerability, and the commitment to keep showing up in order to build true community." To read more, see the full blog posts at: [www.uumilwaukee-events.org/category/social-justice/black-lives-matter/](http://www.uumilwaukee-events.org/category/social-justice/black-lives-matter/)



## 150th Anniversary in Ann Arbor



First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor, Michigan is celebrating their 150th Anniversary with a whole year of activities, story-telling, music, looking back and into the future. The theme they've chosen is "150 years of Reason & Compassion in Action (<http://www.uuaa.org/150>)."

Here are just a few highlights: At least once each month, the Sunday service features some aspect of their history, their work for justice, their theme. See the list of events (PDF). (<http://uuaa.org/images/documents/About/Anniversary150/Media/150thCelebrationPosterJUAA.pdf>)

Different voices from the congregation are presenting "Mini-Histories" during the services. A Mini-History (<http://uuaa.org/index.php/about-us/birthday150/minihistories>) is a glimpse into one piece of our congregation's history, maybe the history of an activity group or a congregational action or maybe just a description of what it was like back in the day.

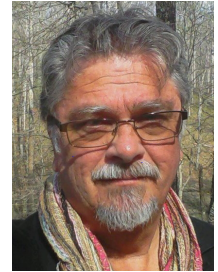
Here's a way to capture current members' stories, which will be interesting to members 150 years from

now. From their web site: "The UAAA History Detectives have a Story Catcher project in progress. If you have a special memory of an event, know an interesting piece of church history, or want to shout out about what UAAA means to you, you can sign up in the social hall to be interviewed and tell an oral story OR you can submit a one page typed story to storycatchers@uuaa.org. "Congratulations, First UU! This is a celebration that will be remembered!



## Doug Cauble Appointed as Region Vice-President

Doug Cauble has been appointed to serve as MidAmerica Region Vice-President, filling the vacancy created when Charlotte Preston resigned due to health concerns. Doug, a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Indiana, joined the Board last July as a Trustee, and is familiar with the issues currently facing MidAmerica. The MidAmerica Region Board of Trustees voted on this appointment on February 10th in accordance with Article V, Section 5 (Board of Trustees: Vacancies) of the MidAmerica Region Bylaws. Doug's appointment is in effect through the April 18th Annual Business Meeting, when the position will be filled by election for the remainder of the term. Please join the MidAmerica Staff and Board in thanking Doug for his willingness to step forward and take on this new responsibility!



## Position Opening for MidAmerica Region Staff

With the retirement of our full time Administrator Sarah Greene, we'll have an opening in that position. Our full time Administrator is responsible for communications, event registrations, logistics for meetings, and assists with financial matters. The Administrator works on a team with other administrative staff, under the supervision of one of our program staff. Ability to work in a technological and online environment, ability to handle multiple deadlines, manage projects, and work with numbers is essential. The job description will be posted on our web site by March 15. Applications will be taken through April 15, and interviews will happen during April and May. The position begins June 1, with a month for training and overlap before Sarah's retirement becomes effective on June 30. We are a great place to work and we value diversity. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer.



## Calendar

### March

6 - Youth CON - Kalamazoo, MI

27 - InterCultural Competency Workshop -Bloomington, IN

### April

10-12 - Active Hope Workshop - Milwaukee, WI

15-17 - MidAmerica Ministers Meeting - Naperville, IL

17 - Congregational Administrators Meeting - Naperville, IL

17 - UU Advocacy Network Illinois Gathering -  
Naperville, IL

17-19 - Regional Assembly - Naperville, IL

### May

1-3 - Youth CON - Naperville, IL

12 and 21 - WEBINAR - How to Be a Great  
Congregational President

MAIN CALENDAR