



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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At this time of year, many congregations' leadership is in transition. To those of you who have finished your terms as offices or Board members or committee chairs - thank you for your commitment to the well-being of your congregation. And to those who are just beginning - I hope your time will be fulfilling and energizing for you as you work toward your congregation's mission and vision.

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





UU Church Partnering in a Dialogue on Race

On April 9, members of Abraham Lincoln UU Congregation in Springfield, Illinois, marched through the streets of Springfield with members of Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, ringing bells as they walked, "to remember the unfulfilled promises that date back to the end of the [Civil] war, promises that were thwarted during Reconstruction and still remain unfulfilled - a full one hundred and fifty years later." * April 9, 2015, was the 150th anniversary of the meeting to set the terms of surrender of Robert E. Lee's army in Virginia.

The march was an outgrowth of a dialogue on race developed over the past year between the two congregations. The relationship stemmed from concerns that segregation was still an issue in Springfield, according to a public radio program which aired on May 4. Rev. Martin Woulfe, minister at the UU congregation, which is mostly white, partnered with Reverend Silas Johnson of Calvary, a black church, to begin the dialogue.

Find out more about the WBUR radio program here:

<http://hereandnow.wbur.org/2015/05/04/springfield-race-riot-lincoln>

*Source of quotation and to read more about the march: <http://www.aluuc.org/let-freedom-ring-march>



General Assembly: Late Breaking News!


Last month, we told you about some of the things happening at General Assembly, the UUA's Annual Meeting that will be held in Portland, Oregon, from June 24th-28th. We told you about the Regional Ingathering (ribbons for everyone!), the Ware Lecture with Cornel West, and the workshop that Lisa Presley will be co-leading.



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

And now, we've learned that MA staff member Nancy Combs-Morgan will also be part of a workshop! Nancy, along with Mark Bernstein and Suzanne Fast, will be presenting "A New Way to Radical Inclusivity." This workshop will talk about how your congregation can become fully accessible, not only in your physical space and worship services, but also how to broaden the accessibility of your faith formation program. You can attend this workshop on Thursday morning.

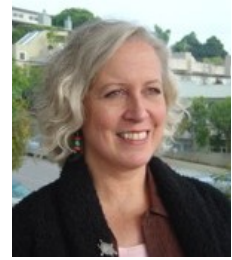
Don't forget-the major events, and all the plenary sessions, will be live streamed: check back at www.uua.org/ga in mid-June to find out the details about live streaming.



Generosity and Gratitude

by Dori Davenport Thexton, Congregational Life Consultant

As the end of the church year and fiscal year are in sight, planning is well underway for next year here in the region. Fall workshops are being planned; many are gearing up for General Assembly in Portland, Oregon at the end of June and most of us are looking forward to a slightly slower pace over the summer.




We on the staff of the MidAmerica Region want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all of the congregations that contributed funds to both the UUA's Annual Program Fund as well as to our region. While we in our region are working with the national UUA staff towards a coordinated system so that congregations will get one pledge request and one statement for both sets of contributions, it seems a good time to lift up that the region and the national offices work together very closely across all aspects of serving Unitarian Universalism.

The Boston-based UUA staff could not do the outstanding work they do without the support of closer-to-home regional staff, nor could we on the regional staff serve congregations well without all that is done by headquarters staff on broad or large-scale issues and needs. During the past few years especially, all of us have been working together in a more intentional and coordinated way which has been very beneficial. We hope that you are feeling supported and served!

We are deeply grateful to all who are Fair Share contributors and hope that those that aren't can consider a 10% or greater increase over what was given last year. We are also grateful for whatever your congregation is able to give to both MidAmerica and the UUA. Pledge statements are being sent out to all of our 182 congregations, asking for a pledge for the 2015-2016 year. It truly helps us to plan more effectively and serve you better if we have an idea of how much your congregation is able to give.

We hope you can respond generously to our pledge request. We would love to support your congregation in becoming more generous, so please call or email me if you'd like to talk about generosity and stewardship.



Welcome, Nancy Harden!

We welcome Nancy Harden to our MidAmerica Region staff as the new full time Regional Administrator.



She started June 1 and will spend some time this month training with Sarah Greene before Sarah's retirement.

Nancy is new to the UU staff, but brings with her many years of administrative experience. She has worked for United Airlines and the American Academy of Pediatrics in the past and brings an array of knowledge with her.

Nancy lives in the Chicago area with her twin pre-schoolers and her dogs. She is a member of a UU congregation in the northwest suburbs of Chicago and likes to spend any free time she gets reading, listening to music, being out in the backyard and working on her college degree.



Nancy Heege to Retire December 31

By Nancy Heege, Congregational Life Consultant

I've made it official! I have let our MidAmerica Board and Staff, and our UUA staff, know that I'll be retiring from my position as Congregational Life Consultant for the MidAmerica Region as of December 31, 2015. By then, I'll have worked for Prairie Star District, and more recently for MidAmerica Region, for twenty-one years. What a joy it's been to have served our congregations over those years! I've met so many great people and have gotten to know and work with so many of our congregations.



When the delegates at our three District meetings several years ago made the decision to form the MidAmerica Region, I made a commitment to myself to stay in my position until we had worked through the process and I felt that congregations were being well-served by the Region. We are now at that point. When Sarah Greene announced that she would be retiring as of June 30, I knew I'd stay on through the transition to a new Administrator. By the end of December, our new Administrator should be fully integrated into our staff team. Working with our team of Congregational Life Consultants and the administrative staff has been a special joy over the last few years! They are smart and wise and experienced and a real asset to our region. I will miss working with them.

I look forward to seeing many of you between now and the end of December, to express my appreciation for your trust in me and for the work we've done together. What an extraordinary privilege it's been!



Learning Network Covenant Process Begins!

By Bill Sasso, Board President, MidAmerica Region UUA

Please note: If you are not familiar with the Learning Network Covenant proposal, you can find it and explanatory materials on the MidAmerica website governance page...



At our MidAmerica Annual Business Meeting at Regional Assembly, our delegates voted overwhelmingly to endorse the Learning Network Covenant (LNC) proposal! The LNC is an open and inclusive Regional visioning process that MidAmerica will undertake over the next two years. The MidAmerica Board hopes that you and your congregation -- or other UU organization -- will join us in this process!

To plan and coordinate the LNC process, the MidAmerica Board has begun to form a Learning Network Covenant Task Force. At its meeting on May 16th, the Board approved a charge for the task force. The Board is currently confirming the task force membership, which will include UUs reflecting the range and depth of UU experience, insight, and relationships present across MidAmerica.

Please watch for more information about the membership of the task force and the LNC development process in the next (August) issue of this newsletter!



Your Participation is Invited

From voting rights to mass imprisonment to police brutality and Black Lives Matter protests, racial justice issues in the United States have a new sense of urgency. This urgency is bringing communities together across boundaries of race, faith, and geography in solidarity with movements as diverse as immigration, economic inequality, LGBTQ equity, and climate justice.

Our UUA is inviting UUs of all ages and backgrounds to share their hopes and dreams for the role that Unitarian Universalists can play in the coming years in advancing racial justice in the United States. Responses are anonymous. They will be reporting back what they hear from the survey later this summer. The responses will help frame a shared vision for what Unitarian Universalists can do to advance racial justice, and for what the UUA can do to support that vision.

www.surveymonkey.com/s/uuaracialjustice

The survey will remain open through June 15, 2015.



Calendar

June

5-7 - UU Women's Connection Spring Women's Retreat - Princeton, IL

24-28 - UUA General Assembly - Portland, OR

July

5-11 - MidWest UU Summer Assembly - Potosi, MO

12-18 - MidWest Leadership School for Adults and for Youth, Beloit, WI

14-19 - Chalice Sparx Camp - Sturgis, MI

August

7-9 - Advisor CON - Indianapolis, IN

15 - Chalice Lighter Grant Applications due

21-22 - OWL Training All Levels - Elkhart, IN



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