



The MidAmerica Messenger

Volume 3, Issue 2 | September 2015

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

Introducing Shannon Harper

Webinar: Before Disaster Strikes

Learning Network Covenant Update

Ferguson - One Year Later

Welcoming Covenanting Communities

Save the Date - Regional Assembly 2016

Calendar




As the new church year begins, our staff wish you an excellent year and stand ready to assist you with resources, consultation, and coaching. Contact us if we can be of help.

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





Introducing Shannon Harper

By Shannon Harper, Our Whole Lives [OWL] and Youth Events Coordinator

Greetings, MidAmerica. I'm so excited to introduce myself to you in my new role as Our Whole Lives [OWL] and Youth Events Coordinator for the Region. "What exactly does that mean?" you might ask.



Well, as far as OWL goes, I will be your go-to person for planning your own OWL Facilitator Training. I am your contact to post trainings on our MidAmerica website and calendar and for advertising on social media and the UUA calendar. I am also ready to answer logistical questions, provide Trainer contact info and generally support your endeavor. I'll keep track of what OWL Trainings are happening in MidAmerica and make sure we are spreading them out both geographically and time-wise to ensure we are meeting the needs of churches across the Region and not having too many trainings in one area, close to the same time (resulting in low attendance for all).

So, if you are considering hosting a training anytime in the near or distant future, please contact me first. As for MidAmerica Youth Events, I am here to support our three areas: Prairie Star, Central Midwest, and Heartland, in whatever capacity they are providing area and region wide youth events. Please contact me if you are planning a Youth CON, Training or Retreat. I will make sure your event is posted and advertised. I might even ask if I can come!

In addition to calendaring and advertising events, I will be working with Nancy Combs-Morgan, Congregational Life Consultant, to update our Regional Youth Safety Policy. I would also love to hear what amazing things you are dreaming about with youth events.

For both OWL and youth events you can contact me. I look forward to working with you.

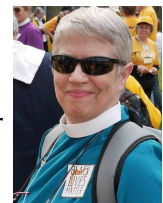
-- Shannon Harper



Webinar: Before Disaster Strikes




Join Rev. Julie Taylor, a member of the UU Trauma Response Ministry, and Lisa Presley, MidAmerica Staff person and responder, as they discuss what a congregation can, and should do, to prepare themselves for disasters, whether natural or human caused.



Offered twice: Thursday, October 15, and Tuesday, October 20

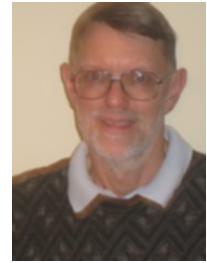
6:45 - 8 pm Central/7:45 - 9 pm Eastern



A Learning Network Covenant Update

By Rev. Bill Sasso, Past President of MidAmerica Region Board

At our MidAmerica Region Annual Business Meeting in April, delegates overwhelmingly endorsed the Learning Network Covenant -- an open and inclusive visioning process intended to help us explore the possibilities that our new region can engage. Here's a quick update to keep you informed about the Learning Network Covenant process.



In May, the MidAmerica Region Board established a task force to design and coordinate this collaborative process. While the task force is still in development, I'm excited to report that these MidAmerica leaders have agreed to serve on the task force:

- Nancy Combs-Morgan (Lexington, Kentucky, MidAmerica Region Staff)
- Rev. Dawn Cooley (Louisville, Kentucky, MidAmerica Region Board)
- David Jackoway (Indianapolis, Indiana)
- Tim Peterson (Fargo-Moorhead, North Dakota)
- Rev. Bill Sasso (Carbondale, Illinois)
- Shannon VanLandingham (Lawrence, Kansas)

We are currently in conversation with two more potential members of the task force, and hope to complete formation of the task force by mid-September at the latest. After we make sure that we have a shared understanding of the covenant concept and the task force's role, we will work to develop a process that invites your active collaboration and input. Please watch for regular announcements describing how you and your congregation can be part of this exciting process!

In the meantime, for more information about the Learning Network Covenant, and about how you and your congregation can engage this topic, please check out the "Revised Learning Network Covenant Package 9/2014" document available online ... or you can contact the task force -- thanks for your support!



Ferguson - One Year Later

By Rev. Dr. Lisa Presley, Congregational Life Consultant

What can one say about Ferguson? Never enough, never enough, for some of us, and while for others, even one mention of the name is too much. There is much that swirls in the air these days about how we, as a country, respond to the continuing existence of racism in our institutions, our hearts, and our minds. It was with this in mind that I went as part of our MidAmerica contingent to the events marking the one year anniversary of the death (murder) of Michael Brown.

Why did I go? Although I was involved as much as someone of my age could be in the Civil Rights

movement of the 1960s, I left the States early in the 1970s for Canada. There the "complexion" of race relations is not the same-it's based on a different history, and racism in Canada comes from similar but different strands.

So when I returned to the States in the 1990s, I was playing catch up on issues around race. I noticed that some things had changed (many for the better), but that the great divide still existed with regard to education, employment, justice, and how people socialize. I wanted to learn more about that, and so I dabbled in the topic for years. Since coming on staff for MidAmerica, the trainings have deepened, and I am pleased to be able to work on intercultural competency issues for our Region...



UUA Board Welcomes Covenanting Communities

By Rev. Phillip Lund, Congregational Life Consultant

Several groups in the MidAmerica Region were recognized at this year's General Assembly in Portland, Oregon, as "Covenanting Communities," a new status offered by the UUA Board of Trustees to acknowledge a group's relationship with the wider UU movement. Up until this year, the only way for a dedicated group of Unitarian Universalists to become an official part of the UUA was through the traditional process of congregational affiliation. This new designation makes room for a variety of communities to be part of our association.



According to Carey McDonald, UUA Director of Outreach, "A covenanting community is NOT a member congregation of the UUA, nor is it an interest or affinity group of UUs who are already members of congregations. Covenanting communities are the primary ways that their members or participants connect to Unitarian Universalism."

Groups interested in the Covenanting Community status had to submit an application that included their community's answers to these questions:

- How do you claim UU identity and principles?
- How do you advance UU values in the world?
- What relationships do you have with other UU congregations, groups, organizations, etc.?
- What are your covenanting practices or documents?

In addition, groups made a financial pledge to the UUA appropriate to their size and means.

Of the 11 communities welcomed by the UUA Board of Trustees in Portland, three are part of the MidAmerica Region:



Save the Date for MidAmerica Regional Assembly 2016

April 29 - May 1, 2016.



We now have confirmed the location for the 2016 MidAmerica Regional Assembly:

InterContinental Crowne Plaza St. Paul Riverfront
11 East Kellogg Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55101

Watch for information about how to apply to offer a workshop at next spring's Regional Assembly. The deadline for applications is October 30, and the application form will be on our web site soon.



Calendar

PLEASE SEE OUR FULL CALENDAR



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