



## *The MidAmerica Messenger*

Volume 3, Issue 3 | October 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

Regional Assembly 2016

Michigan UU Congregation Stands for Social  
Justice in the Midst of Adversity

Fall 2015 Chalice Lighter Call

MidAmerica Staffer Featured in Weekly Podcast

Two Weeks in Denmark

A Learning Network Covenant Update

Regional Assembly Workshop Applications Open  
Now!

New Webinar Added for November

Calendar

### Quick Links

More About Us  
(<http://www.midamericauua.net>)

Email the Editor  
(<mailto:midamerica@uua.org>)

Find us on Facebook  
([https://www.facebook.com  
/MidAmericaUUA](https://www.facebook.com/MidAmericaUUA))

Archived Newsletters  
([https://www.midamericauua.net  
/services/newsletters-archived](https://www.midamericauua.net/services/newsletters-archived))

Now that the church year is getting into full swing, please remember that the MidAmerica staff is here to help. So don't hesitate to contact us if you need any resources, consultations, or coaching..

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,  
Phillip Lund  
Congregational Life Consultant  
plund@uua.org (mailto:plund@uua.org)  
612-875-0959

## Regional Assembly 2016

*By Dori Davenport-Thexton, Congregational Life Consultant*



Regional Assembly 2016  
**The WHO in the New Era  
of Unitarian Universalism**  
April 29 - May 1 • St. Paul, MN  
[MidAmericaUUA.org/ra](http://MidAmericaUUA.org/ra)

As you may recall, last spring's Regional Assembly had the theme of "The 'New' in the New Era," building on our MidAmerica tag line of "A New Era in Unitarian Universalism." We heard from Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt and Rev. Marlin Lavanhar. They told stories and discussed the racism we are attempting to dismantle in all aspects of our culture, especially focused on our UU values and the role our congregations can play in this important work.

Feedback from participants told us that a logical next theme for our 2016 Regional Assembly in St. Paul, Minnesota (April 29-May 1) would build on the New Era theme, looking at WHO we want to be as faith communities in the coming years. Who will we Unitarian Universalists need to be, to be relevant? How will we get there? Who will be joining us on this journey?

It is with great excitement that we announce our keynote presenters to help us explore these questions.

- **Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen**, Leadership Development Associate for Youth and Young Adults of Color at the UUA
- **Rev. Jeremy Nickel**, minister of the Mission Peak UU congregation in Fremont, CA
- **Kenny Wiley**, UU World senior editor and Director of Faith Formation at Prairie UU Church in Parker, CO.

They each will present highlights of their own work as they look forward to the future of Unitarian

Universalism. There will be conversations with each other and they will take questions from participants.

And, as always at Regional Assembly, we will have worship services to inspire us and workshops to stimulate our thinking, along with plenty of opportunities to have fun with new and old UU friends.

We are currently soliciting workshop proposals for Regional Assembly. Apply now!

([https://www.midamericauua.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2503:ra-workshop-proposal-2016&catid=89:regional-assembly&Itemid=665](https://www.midamericauua.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2503:ra-workshop-proposal-2016&catid=89:regional-assembly&Itemid=665)) We hope to see you there!



## Michigan UU Congregation Stands for Social Justice in the Midst of Adversity

*By Rev. Jeff Liebmann, Minister, UU Fellowship of Midland (<http://www.uufom.org/>)*

Midland, Michigan is a city of 40,000 residents in the middle of the state's lower "mitten." As the corporate headquarters of Dow and Dow Chemical, Midlanders enjoy an affluent lifestyle not found in the neighboring Tri-Cities of Bay City and Saginaw. Politically conservative and overwhelmingly White, the city is also home to over 100 Christian churches, one small synagogue, an Islamic Center, and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland.

As one might expect in such an environment, the Fellowship has served for decades as a haven for the spiritual but not religious, atheists, agnostics, pagans, and humanists. With growth in recent years, the congregation committed to more active outreach and visibility. Blessed with a prime location at a major intersection, we erected a flag pole and began flying the rainbow flag and an earth flag a few years ago representing our commitment as a Welcoming Congregation and a Green Sanctuary.



Last year, after Rev. Jeff testified before the Bay County and the City of Saginaw councils on gay rights regulations, our rainbow flag was stolen. Earlier this year, after an incident at our Planet Fitness involving a transgender person, our second rainbow flag disappeared. We replaced it and added a transgender rights flag.

After the Supreme Court struck down state bans against same-sex marriage, the Fellowship began running a Facebook ad on marriage equality. The ad was enormously successful, attracting several hundred new 'likes,' and notably a number of young adults and African Americans from Bay City and Saginaw. After Rev. Jeff published editorials in the Midland Daily News about Black Lives Matter, we

added a second ad and placed a banner in the front yard supporting the movement.

A few weeks later, all of our flags were stolen and we received a number of angry comments about our stand on the Black Lives Matter movement. In response, we held our next Sunday morning service on the front yard and dedicated new flags and our banner and our commitment to these causes of social justice. This fall, we are engaging in discussions about race and anti-racism using Bill Gardner's curriculum *Examining Whiteness*.

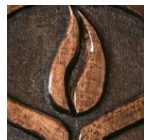
The Facebook ads continue to run. Our 'likes' have risen from 395 in late June to 941 as of today. Our flags and banner still adorn our property and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Whatever comes, we will continue to serve as a beacon to progressive thought and liberal religion in mid-Michigan.



## Fall 2015 Chalice Lighter Call

*By Rev. Phillip Lund, Congregational Life Consultant*

The MidAmerica Chalice Lighter Committee is pleased to announce the three congregations that will benefit from the current Chalice Lighter call:



**Bismarck Mandan Unitarian Universalist Fellowship and Church** in Bismarck ND to take their quarter time clergy person to a half-time position in order to provide more ministerial support and guidance with the goal of developing a thriving congregation. By enabling their minister to participate in more church services, committee meetings and activities, they hope to “Weave a Vibrant Web and a Future of Promise.”

**The Hopedale Unitarian Universalist Church of Oxford OH** to renovate their Religious Education space and create an outdoor environmentally friendly playground. Their goal is to foster new membership and to retain their current families. The congregation has indicated that meeting the needs of the children and families is a priority. They also want to reach out to potential members of the local community through social media.



**White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church in Mahtomedi MN** to help fund their St. Croix Valley Outreach Project, using ACS, an innovative and powerful membership database system which will allow the congregation to connect with 150 member households in new and unique ways and link them to each other, community events and church activities. This is a two year project and progress reports will be shared with MidAmerica so we call can benefit from White Bear's experience.

Congratulations to all three congregations! Chalice Lighter funds can be used to start a new congregation, acquire a meeting space, secure a minister, religious educator, or other professional staff, or provide for an outreach or public relations program. If your congregation is interested in applying for a Chalice Lighter grant, the deadline for the Winter Call is Sunday, November 15, 2015.

To find out more about the Chalice Lighter program, or to donate to the Fall 2015 call, visit

<https://midamericauua.net/programs/chalice-lighters> (<https://midamericauua.net/programs/chalice-lighters>).



## MidAmerica Staffer Featured in Weekly Podcast



Rev. Dr. Lisa Presley, one of our Region's Congregational Life Consultants, has been interviewed for *The UU Perspective*, a weekly podcast on a whole variety of topics.

In this 35-minute program, Lisa discusses Congregational Conflict and how to handle conflict when it arises. You are invited to **listen to this** (<http://www.uuperspective.com/uupp-030-lisa-presley-congregational-conflict-and-resolution>) and to other programs in this series.



## Two Weeks in Denmark

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

In the last two weeks of August I went on a self-constructed two week language immersion experience in Copenhagen. While there I wore a small "Black Lives Matter" button. It led to some fascinating conversations. Huge numbers of people from the Middle East, Syria especially, are pushing their way towards Europe. The Continent finds itself with the biggest wave of displaced people and its biggest humanitarian crisis since World War 2.



Denmark has a new right wing coalition government. And there, as here, politicians on the right compete with each other over how far they are willing to go in getting tough on immigrants. The new immigration minister, Inger Støjberg, has a special gift from dramatic anti-immigrant gestures which make great hooks for news stories. One of her moves was try to remove the special permission to immigrate that the former left wing government had given to 2,500. Another was to put an ad in a Lebanese newspaper telling people that Denmark was a bad place to come to (and calculating the cost of this advertisement as equal to the cost of supporting one immigrant for one year) -- or sending more police to the border.

There are honest questions in Denmark as there are in the US, about how many immigrants to accept and how generous to be to them. But the thing that was troubling to many Danes I met ,was how it seemed to be an easy game for their politicians to compete with each other regarding how tough they were willing to be on outsiders. And this is what incited the conversations about my "Black Lives Matter" pin. One man observed to me: "Every society has those who it is easiest to dismiss or disvalue. For you in America it is young black men. For us in Denmark it is Muslims."

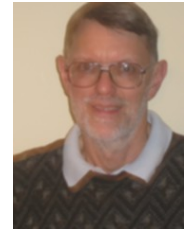
Read more... ([https://www.midamericauua.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&](https://www.midamericauua.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&)



## A Learning Network Covenant Update

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

Last April, MidAmerica Region delegates 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.



First, we're pleased to announce that the MidAmerica Region Board has appointed Rev. Lisa Friedman (St. Paul, Minnesota) as a task force member, joining:

- 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)

Second, the task force met (via web conference) for the first time on Monday evening, September 22. We have already begun to identify a set of processes that will encourage different forms of active collaboration and exploration of MidAmerica's exciting possibilities. Watch this space for more information soon!!

Third, in the meantime, we'd love to hear how you -- as an individual, in a group, or as a congregation or other UU organization -- have addressed questions like "What can the MidAmerica Region become?" and "How can we fulfill the promise of a New Era in Unitarian Universalism?" or other topics that relate to the Learning Network Covenant. Please contact the task force at [bsasso@juno.com](mailto:bsasso@juno.com) (<mailto:bsasso@juno.com>) to let us know about your engagement with these topics, and how we can support you in this process of discovery and experimentation! Thanks!

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 at <https://www.midamericauua.net/governance>. (<https://www.midamericauua.net/governance>)



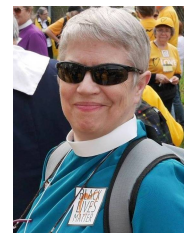
## Regional Assembly Workshop Applications Open Now!

*By Rev. Dr. Lisa Presley, Congregational Life Consultant*

Our next Regional Assembly will be held in St Paul, Minnesota, on the weekend of April 29 through May 1, 2016. This year we will be exploring **the "Who" in the New Era of UUism**, with keynoters Rev.



Elizabeth Nguyen, Rev. Jeremy Nickel, and Kenny Wiley.



In addition to the keynoters, workshops are a major draw to Regional Assembly. We'd like to invite you to share your knowledge, skills and experience with other UUs in the Region. We're looking for people who can help articulate the "Who" in the New Era of UUism, but also congregations that have found great ways to "do church." What are you doing particularly well that you think others would benefit from hearing about? How can you help others reach out beyond the way they are to discover a new way of being? What can you offer, and what can you bring, to help us continue our engagement with the New Era of UUism? Start thinking now about what you might want to present.

Workshops are 75 minutes long, and there will be two workshop slots (so if you have a more in-depth workshop you want to do, you can apply for it to be a 2-session one!). Applications must be submitted by no later than October 31st. All workshop participants will need to register for the Regional Assembly. We will notify you if your workshop has been accepted by late November. Apply now!  
([https://www.midamericauua.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2503:ra-workshop-proposal-2016&catid=89:regional-assembly&Itemid=665](https://www.midamericauua.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2503:ra-workshop-proposal-2016&catid=89:regional-assembly&Itemid=665))

If you have any questions, or want to recommend a topic that you hope someone else will cover, please be in touch with Lisa Presley, [lpresley@uua.org](mailto:lpresley@uua.org) (<mailto:lpresley@uua.org>).



## New Webinar Added for November



We've added a new webinar to the calendar for Tuesday, November 17, 2015: Welcoming the Stranger with Lori Emison Clair. Now more than ever it's important to be truly welcoming to the strangers who come through our congregation's doors. This webinar will present one example of a successful visitor welcoming process in a UU congregation.

Lori Emison Clair worked at First Unitarian Church in Des Moines from 2004 to 2015, first as Membership Coordinator, then as Director of Congregational Life. During that time First Unitarian's membership grew from 240 to 539. Lori also helped form the Unitarian Universalist Association of Membership Professional (UUAMP), serving that organization in several capacities. She currently is working as a consultant with congregations throughout the UUA.

The webinar begins at 7:45 pm Eastern/6:45 pm Central and lasts an hour and fifteen minutes.

For more information, check out the MidAmerica webinar page at <https://midamericauua.net/events/webinars> (<https://midamericauua.net/events/webinars>).



## Calendar

PLEASE SEE OUR FULL CALENDAR



**MidAmerica Region of the  
Unitarian Universalist Association**

2355 Fairview Ave. #312  
Roseville, MN 55113

**Web:** <http://midamericauua.net>  
(<http://midamericauua.net>)

**Phone:** 312-636-9724 **Email:**  
[midamerica@uua.org](mailto:midamerica@uua.org)  
(<mailto:midamerica@uua.org>)

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



## Newsletter Archive

2017

December 2017 (</home/newsletters/1-december-2017>)

November 2017 (</home/newsletters/2-november-2017>)

October 2017 (</home/newsletters/3-october-2017>)

September 2017 (</home/newsletters/4-september-2017>)

August 2017 (</home/newsletters/5-august-2017>)

June 2017 (</home/newsletters/6-june-2017>)

May 2017 (</home/newsletters/7-may-2017>)

April 2017 (</home/newsletters/8-april-2017>)

March 2017 (</home/newsletters/10-march-2017>)

February 2017 (</home/newsletters/9-february-2017>)

January 2017 (</home/newsletters/11-january-2017>)

2016

December 2016 (</home/newsletters/12-december-2016>)

November 2016 (</home/newsletters/13-november-2016>)

October 2016 (</home/newsletters/14-october-2016>)

September 2016 (</home/newsletters/15-september-2016>)

August 2016 (</home/newsletters/16-august-2016>)

June 2016 (</home/newsletters/17-june-2016>)

May 2016 (</home/newsletters/18-may-2016>)



April 2016 (/home/newsletters/19-april-2016)  
March 2016 (/home/newsletters/20-march-2016)  
February 2016 (/home/newsletters/21-february-2016)  
January 2016 (/home/newsletters/22-january-2016)  
2015  
December 2015 (/home/newsletters/23-december-2015)  
November 2015 (/home/newsletters/24-november-2015)  
October 2015 (/home/newsletters/25-october-2015)  
September 2015 (/home/newsletters/26-september-2015)  
August 2015 (/home/newsletters/27-august-2015)  
June 2015 (/home/newsletters/28-june-2015)  
May 2015 (/home/newsletters/29-may-2015)  
April 2015 (/home/newsletters/30-april-2015)  
March 2015 (/home/newsletters/31-march-2015)  
February 2015 (/home/newsletters/32-february-2015)  
January 2015 (/home/newsletters/33-january-2015)  
2014  
November 2014 (/home/newsletters/34-november-2014)  
October 2014 (/home/newsletters/35-october-2014)  
September 2014 (/home/newsletters/36-september-2014)  
August 2014 (/home/newsletters/37-august-2014)  
June 2014 (/home/newsletters/38-june-2014)  
May 2014 (/home/newsletters/39-may-2014)  
April 2014 (/home/newsletters/40-april-2014)  
March 2014 (/home/newsletters/41-march-2014)  
February 2014 (/home/newsletters/42-february-2014)  
2013  
November 2013 (/home/newsletters/43-november-2013)  
October 2013 (/home/newsletters/44-october-2013)  
September 2013 (/home/newsletters/45-september-2013)

