



MidAmerica  
Region



# 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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After you've looked over the latest news from the MidAmerica Region, don't forget to check out what's going on in the wider UU movement.

For the latest announcements and updates from the various staff groups and committees of the UUA, the Church of the Larger Fellowship, and the Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice, there's the UU Bulletin . And for UU news from around the country and beyond, there's the online version of the UU World, our award-winning denominational magazine.



As always, we appreciate your comments and suggestions for the newsletter. Send us a message.

Yours in Faith,  
Phillip Lund

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# Regional Assembly 2016 is almost here!



## Regional Assembly 2016 The **WHO** in the New Era of Unitarian Universalism

April 29 - May 1 • St. Paul, MN  
MidAmericaUUA.org/ra

There's still time to register for this year's MidAmerica Regional Assembly, April 29 through May 1, in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Join our keynote presenters as they help us explore the Who in the New Era of Unitarian Universalism. Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen, Rev. Jeremy Nickel, and Kenny Wiley will present highlights of their own work as they look toward the future of Unitarian Universalism.

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. For more information and to register for Regional Assembly, visit [www.midamericauua.net/ra](http://www.midamericauua.net/ra). We hope to see you there!

*NOTE: The InterContinental Hotel in St. Paul has informed us that they are almost sold out of overnight rooms during our Regional Assembly. If you are unable to book a room there, we are terribly sorry for the inconvenience. According to [www.hotels.com](http://www.hotels.com), there are many other hotels with rooms in all price ranges within a few miles of our hotel.*

**REGISTER NOW**

## Celebrate Nancy Heege's Service to the UUA



We have a unique opportunity to recognize Nancy Heege at the conclusion of her 22 years of exemplary service to the Prairie Star District-UUA and the MidAmerica-UUA! The Nancy Heege Scholarship for Families has been established in her honor at Camp Unistar by district and regional leaders who worked with Nancy. In keeping with Nancy's goals and ideals, it will enable families to attend that might otherwise be denied the Unistar experience. You may easily contribute to the scholarship fund online:

<https://www.givemn.org/project/nancy-heege-family-scholarship-fund56e77dd3c9f68>

You are also invited to a reception in Nancy's honor, prior to the start of our MidAmerica Regional Assembly:

Friday, April 29, from 4:00 to 5:30

InterContinental St Paul Riverfront Hotel

11 East Kellogg Blvd, St Paul MN

We will also accept donations to the scholarship fund at that time, and at the Camp UniStar table in the Exhibit Area. We look forward to your generous participation and to seeing you in St. Paul!

# Friends of the MidAmerica Region

Our Friends of the Region program was a continuation of the former Prairie Star District Friends program, designed to raise money from individuals for the District, and now for the MidAmerica Region. Nancy Heege started this program in Prairie Star many years ago after a number of people who were grateful for the help and support from the District asked her if they could make a donation.



For any of you who are Friends of the Region, we hope you will also join us at the reception for Nancy Heege.

We are in the process of evaluating the Friends of the Region program and looking for new ways to invigorate it. Your ideas are welcome -- please contact Sharon Dittmar, [sdittmar@uua.org](mailto:sdittmar@uua.org) (mailto:sdittmar@uua.org). We will continue to gratefully accept any donations to the Friends of MidAmerica Region. If you are a Friend, please be sure to pick up your ribbon for your nametag at Regional Assembly. If you can't join us at RA, contact us to have a ribbon sent to you -- you can attach it to your nametag at your congregation!

## Deepening Relationships

*By Nancy Combs-Morgan, Congregational Life Consultant*



When I imagine the future of Unitarian Universalism, especially here in MidAmerica Region (MA), I envision significant and lasting relationships -- relationships among our wonderful congregational leaders and with our MidAmerica staff. The deepening of our relationships came up as guiding vision for our MidAmerica Board and staff, as evidenced in the efforts of the Learning Covenant Network task force of the MA Board, on which I serve representing the MA staff. (Hopefully, you will take a moment to read the piece in this newsletter from Rev. Bill Sasso about the work of the LNC).

For my vision of our relational future, I have some specific hopes: that our religious professionals thirst for time together to share new ideas and discoveries about growing our faith; that when our congregational lay leaders are facing challenges, they first think, "I wonder what our sister congregational leaders have discovered about this very same issue," then they reach out and find a way to communicate with those other UU leaders. Woven into all of these, is the hope that our MidAmerica staff team are seen as co-collaborators who are charged to look up and out at the national trends in our Association and throughout other denominations. It is the circling back that counts -- circling back to relationship.

With the deepening of relationships in mind, here are some amazing opportunities to exchange ideas:

- Our MidAmerica **Regional Assembly** (RA), which in actuality is your opportunity to meet and be inspired by with other UU leaders.
- I am heartened to hear from folks that youth are thirsting for opportunities at the RA to connect with one another, and with that request in mind we are adding to the RA schedule a **Youth Orientation** session on Friday evening, right after the opening ceremony.
- There will also be a **Youth RA Debrief session** on Saturday evening after the dinner and entertainment. I look forward to taking part in both of those sessions (the location and specific time will be posted in the RA schedule).
- For MA leaders of all ages fired up about social change, I am thrilled to be working with the Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance, in offering an add-on "**Prophetic Partners**" training for youth and adults, taking part at Unity Unitarian in St. Paul on Friday, April 29, in the afternoon. I will be leading a track for religious educators as part of the Prophetic Partners workshop.
- For **religious educators** who want to deepen their relationships, the cluster of Minneapolis/St. Paul religious educators have extended a gracious invite to take part in a **pre-RA dinner** on Friday evening (for more information contact Amy Peterson Derrick, wbuucre@gmail.com (mailto:wbuucre@gmail.com)).

Let's weave a fabric of relationship which will enhance our capacity to grow, not just for growth's sake, but to help grow a consciousness of humane care throughout our region.


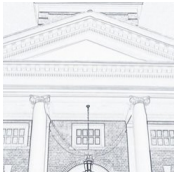
Looking forward to seeing you at the RA!

## Spring Chalice Lighters Call



*By Dori Davenport-Thexton, Congregational Life Consultant*

Our spring Chalice Lighter call will be sent out the first week of April. We're pleased to announce that the committee selected two applications for funding:

-  The **UU Church of Greater Lansing, Michigan** is moving to a new building this spring and they have some work to do to make their meeting spaces fully accessible. The congregation is committed to not only ramps and wheelchair access but also to full audio accessibility in their main meeting rooms. They asked for Chalice Lighter funds to install a hearing-loop system, so your donations will help to fund this project.
-  The **First Unitarian Church of Omaha, Nebraska** is interested in starting a diverse new UU presence in the city, in collaboration with Second Unitarian in Omaha. The Chalice Lighter committee decided to give \$1,000 to fund demographic studies and exploratory meetings with local UUs and other organizers about how and where to start this new group.  
Any funds received in excess of the amounts for these two congregations will be put in the **New/Emerging Congregation reserve fund** for use in the future.

We'd also like to remind you that each of our Chalice Lighter Calls (Fall, Winter, Spring) has an end date published in the letter and on the website. Occasionally, donations are received more than 10 days after the call has ended. Those funds then go into the New/Emerging Congregation fund.

We do have money available for small grants to any affiliated congregation that is less than 10 years old, or to an emerging congregation working towards affiliation with the UUA. So, if you are part of or know of such a new group, contact us to learn more about applying for those funds: Dori Davenport Thexton or Phil Lund at plund@uua.org.

# Learning Network Covenant Update

By Bill Sasso, Learning Network Covenant Task Force



The Learning Network Covenant Task Force invites you to join us at Regional Assembly to engage questions like these:

- What types of learning partnerships would your congregation seek with your sister congregations?
- How might learning partnerships strengthen stewardship, worship, social justice, leadership development, or faith development?
- What resources does your congregation need to deepen lateral relationships with other congregations?
- What types of learning partnerships can best serve our congregations?
- Would your congregation benefit from being in a network of congregations who intentionally seek to deepen their learning partnerships?
- How would a covenantal understanding with other congregations deepen the connection to the greater learning and connection?
- What three words describe what you hope to see in the future for the New Era in Unitarian Universalism?

In addition to active exploration of questions like these, we look forward to learning from you and sharing our sense of the importance and the possibility that the Learning Network Covenant embodies! Our workshop, "Walking Together into MidAmerica's New Era of Unitarian Universalism," will take place from 1:30 to 2:45 pm on Saturday. We hope to see you there!

## Calendar

PLEASE SEE OUR FULL CALENDAR

