



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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In this newsletter you'll find: a firsthand account of your MidAmerica board presenting the Resolution of Muslim Solidarity that was passed in April at our Regional Meeting to Detroit area Muslim leaders; information on an online Renaissance Module opportunity for religious educations; thoughts on the importance of our MidAmerica Friends program; and news you can use about this year's General Assembly in Columbus, Ohio.



And remember, your MidAmerica Region field staff is here to serve you! Please feel free to call or email any one of us and let us know how we can help you and your congregation.

We appreciate your comments and suggestions for the newsletter. Send us a message.

Yours in Faith,  
Phillip Lund

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# MidAmerica Board Presents Resolution on Muslim Solidarity to Detroit-Area Leaders

*By Rev. Dawn Skjei Cooley, minister at First Unitarian Church in Louisville and MidAmerica Board Trustee*

Even though we had been urged to step into our discomfort, I still didn't know what to do or say to these Detroit area Muslim leaders. It was so much easier to stand around and talk to people that I already knew! But I could do that any time, so I summoned my courage and conviction and approached a friendly looking man wearing a kufi, standing alone. I put on a big smile and used my favorite Sunday morning technique for initiating conversation with newcomers and long time members alike: "Hello! I am so glad to see you here!" He returned my smile with a large one of his own, and we were off.



Prejudice and violence against Muslims is on the rise. And it is seemingly sanctioned by political candidates and religious leaders who continue to target Muslims with hateful rhetoric. In an effort to stand against hate, the Michigan area UU congregations initiated a **Resolution on Muslim Solidarity** that was passed at the MidAmerica Regional Assembly in April. As a member of the Regional Board, it was an honor to be in Detroit, presenting signed, laminated copies to the area Muslim leaders.

During the course of the evening, I spoke to and heard from many of the Imams. I was reminded of how important it is to have allies -- these men were powerfully moved by the show of support not just from the Michigan Unitarian Universalist congregations, but by the entire MidAmerica Region of the UUA.

After some ritual around the presentation, we sat down together to brainstorm next steps -- ways that Unitarian Universalists might reach out to support Muslims in our communities in and beyond Michigan. I came away inspired to learn more about Islam, and to contact the Muslim leaders in the Louisville, KY community, to build bridges, and to try to live into the Resolution.

The text of the Resolution on Muslim Solidarity that was passed at Regional Assembly can be found online and an article about the meeting between UUs and Muslim leaders in Detroit can be found at <http://www.detroitnews.com/story> (<http://www.detroitnews.com/story>).

# Religious Educators Needed for Field Test

To make professional development for religious educators more accessible, the UUA is creating online versions of existing "in-person" Renaissance modules. The **Administration as Leadership** module will be offered Monday, Aug. 15 through Friday, Aug. 19, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. EST. The **UU Identity** module will be offered Monday, July 25 through Friday, July 29 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. EST. For each module, the UUA seeks eight to ten participants who:

- have not already taken the module
- have access to technology
- are available for all five of the two-hour online sessions

To apply, email Pat Kahn, at [pkahn@uua.org](mailto:pkahn@uua.org) (mailto:pkahn@uua.org) by July 15. Include a brief bio and why you would be an ideal field test participant. Preference will be given to applicants who are geographically isolated and unable to travel to participate in an in-person Renaissance module.

The Administration as Leadership module will be led by MidAmerica's own Tracy Beck and Phillip Lund.

<http://www.uua.org/careers/re/renaissance/module-resources>

## Friends of the MidAmerica Region

*By Dori Davenport-Thexton, Congregational Life Consultant*

Last month, I wrote about the history of our Friends of the Region program. This month, I'd like to let you know about the kinds of things your contributions to our Friends' program make possible. I asked my colleagues on our Field Staff team to share the activities they are able to do with the extra money in our budget from Friends.

**Phil Lund** says that the extra money has allowed him to offer the *Clergy Seminar Series in Congregation-Based Spiritual Direction* to almost 50

MidAmerica clergy persons in five different locations in our region over the past three years. Reports from participants let us know that this work is encouraging them with solid skills to help their congregations grow in spiritual depth.

**Ian Evison** says that the extra money really helps when a congregation is in crisis and a trip to work with them is required. It allows any one of us to respond by saying, "I can be there next week" and we don't have to stop and worry if there is enough money left in the travel budgets to cover our costs.

**Lisa Presley** has loved leading the *InterCultural Competency* workshops around the Region. She says that without the additional funding from Friends to pay for her training and to cover the costs of the leaders' travel and lodging, costs to participants would be much higher.



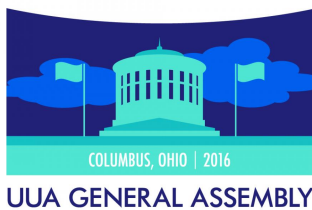
**Nancy Combs-Morgan** has worked tirelessly to support religious educators across our Region. Leading startup workshops and providing continuing support and training for them, and for youth advisors, is a huge part of her work. Having extra money allows her to do this for more of the dedicated leaders who serve our children, youth and young adults.

For my part, the extra money allowed me to attend several different continuing education and training events on *stewardship and generosity*. When I lead workshops for congregational teams, most of my travel costs are covered, which reduces the cost for participants.

Contributions from **Friends of the Region** have also allowed us to be part of the *Midwest Leadership Schools* (<https://www.uua.org/midamerica/ele/mwls-sunsetted>) for both Youth and Adults every summer.

So if your congregation has benefitted from any of the above activities, please consider making a donation to our Friends of MidAmerica program. You can make the check out to MidAmerica Region, with "Friends" in the memo line and send to us at 2355 Fairview Ave. N. #312, Roseville, MN 55113. You can also make a donation online by going to: <https://www.uua.org/midamerica/giving/friends>.

## GA From Home



If you can't make it to General Assembly (GA) in Columbus, Ohio this year, consider registering as an off-site participant (<http://www.uua.org/ga/registration/off-site>).

In addition to watching all the events in the session hall -- like the Ware Lecture, the Service of the Living Tradition, and the banner parade, which are available to the public -- you'll be able to participate in 8 workshops via video and live chat and watch video of an additional 20 workshops.

You can also be an off-site delegate for your congregation. Off-site delegates can watch, speak in, and vote in all business sessions including mini-assemblies.

Don't miss GA just because you can't make it to Columbus! **Register on the UUA website** (<http://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/registrants>), and learn how to show GA video in your congregation!

## MidAmerica Ingathering at GA

If you are going to be in Columbus, Ohio for General Assembly June 22-26, 2016, please join members of your MidAmerica board and staff for the official MidAmerica Ingathering, on Wednesday June 22 from 6:30 pm-7:15 pm Eastern Time in Union Station Ballroom C.

It's a great way to start your GA experience!

