



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.

In This Issue

Sabbatical Time

A Note From Your New Congregational Life Consultant

Virtual Opportunities in Youth Ministry

UUA Presidential Candidates Forum at RA 2017

Triennial UU Convocation

UU Class Conversations Workshop

We're starting out the new church year with a deep sense of gratitude. Your regional staff is grateful to have the opportunity to serve our faith by serving you-the people who are part of the almost 200 congregations that make up the MidAmerica Region. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need any resources, consultations, or consulting.

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

(mailto:midamerica@uua.org)



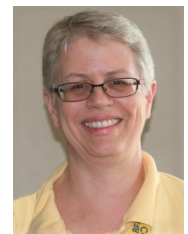
Yours in Faith,
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Congregational Life Consultant

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Sabbatical Time

By Lisa Presley, Congregational Life Consultant

The greatest benefit of working for the MidAmerica Region is the chance to get to know so many wonderful people in all of our congregations, and to be some part of helping those congregations do what you want to do better. This is a job I truly love, and count myself lucky to be working with and for you all.



Yet a close second is the chance, every seven years or so, to be able to take a sabbatical. The UUA provides sabbatical time for every one of its employees, not just the ministers, and so it is with great delight that I will begin my sabbatical on September 1 this year running through January 2, 2017. Sabbatical is a time to step aside from the ordinary rush and bustle of the work of being a Congregational Life Consultant, and be able to think about the work more deeply, and be able to restore and renew oneself from what is sometimes the nonstop onslaught of questions, concerns, and marvelous things our congregations bring to my phone and email.

For me, in addition to the broad thinking about how we are doing our work, there are three other aspects to my sabbatical. The first one is to remember the Sabbath. With the hectic nature of moving from three districts to one region, we were all asked to do more work than we had been doing before as we created the new while still maintaining the old. I am the last of our team to have sabbatical time since we began that process. Remembering the Sabbath will allow me to understand new ways to do the work, and new ways to restore myself while I continue to do that work. The second aspect of my sabbatical is to go more deeply into my learning of Celtic harp. I began playing the harp last fall, and in between the travel trips and the email, there hasn't been as much time as I would've liked to learn more and more about this beautiful instrument. So I will be playing the harp as spiritual discipline, and look forward to welcoming a new harp into my household during this time.

The third aspect of my sabbatical is a bit of research I will be doing. One of the things I've been curious about for a long time has been the impact on grief in a minister's life on the relationship with their congregation and on the tenure of their ministry. For example, I've seen instances of ministries ending soon after a ministerial spouse's death, some well, and some very badly, as well as some ministries that have continued and have been renewed through the ministers coming to grips with the changes in their

lives. I want to learn what I can by interviewing both ministers and lay leaders about how to help hold the minister and the congregation when grief happens in the minister's life. Stay tuned - I will be sharing the results of this work in various ways when I get back.

Most of all, though, I am so deeply appreciative of the UUA and the MidAmerica Region for providing me with this opportunity, and to let me go away so easily. While I am gone, if you have questions that you would ordinarily ask of me, I would direct you to my Congregational Life Consultant colleague Sharon Dittmar. You can reach her by phone at 513-823-3535, or by email at sdittmar@uua.org (<mailto:sdittmar@uua.org>).

Thank you all again.

A Note From Your New Congregational Life Consultant

By Sharon Dittmar, Congregational Life Consultant

Hello! With the intrepid Lisa Presley on sabbatical as of September 1, I will be filling her role this fall as Transitions contact (if you, the minister, are leaving your congregation or considering doing so, or you, the Board, are preparing for the departure of a minister) and as Heartland area contact (if as a minister or Board President in Heartland you have a question for Field Staff or something has gone awry...). I will be shadowing Field Staff colleagues on a variety of tasks, including "Exit Interviews" (for ministers and Boards that are saying good-bye to one another) and Start-Up Workshops (for congregations welcoming a new minister!). I will also be a regular attendee at Regional Board meetings. This November you can expect to see me lead a webinar using the principles of Parker Palmer, and later, an on-line course using Palmer's work. As a double bonus, I will be at Midwest Leadership School during the summer of 2017.



Please be in touch at sdittmar@uua.org (<mailto:sdittmar@uua.org>) or 1-513-823-3535 in order to say hello, ask a question, or give me your view of UUism from where you serve and live.

Virtual Opportunities in Youth Ministry

By Nancy Combs-Morgan - Congregational Life Consultant

I am so pleased to be able to share news on a brand new endeavor in UU youth ministry. Our UUA's Congregational Life Staff [www.uua.org/directory/staff/congregationallife] and Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries [www.uua.org/directory/staff/ministriesfaith/youthministries] are excited to share a new initiative embodying inter-regional and national collaboration.



The Youth Ministry Training webinar series is geared towards persons of all skills and abilities regarding ministry to and with youth, including ministers, religious professionals, and lay leaders. Primary materials draw from the Competencies for Ministry To/With Youth, as well as professional expertise, including

DRE's and ministers, across our UUA. Topics for upcoming webinars include:

- Intro to Competencies for Ministry To/With Youth
- Healthy Adult Relationships
- Safety in Youth Ministry
- Pastoral Care to/with Youth
- Inclusive Youth Ministry in a Diverse World
- Inclusive Group Dynamics
- Communication and Social Media
- Youth Inclusive Multigenerational Congregations
- Models of Youth Ministry
- Self-development and Presence
- Working as a Team

Look for more information on the UUA.org website: www.uua.org/re/youth/advisors/webinars
(<http://www.uua.org/re/youth/advisors/webinars>).

UUA Presidential Candidates Forum at Regional Assembly 2017



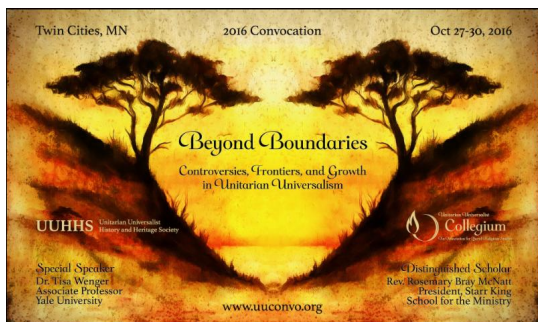
We are pleased to confirm that the 2017 MidAmerica Regional Assembly (https://www.midamericauua.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=89&Itemid=665) will take place April 28-30, 2017 at Oak Brook Marriott in Oak Brook, Illinois.

This year we will be exploring **Finding Our Partners (in Interfaith Work)**, and while we can't announce our keynote speaker yet, there will be a UUA Presidential Candidates forum, featuring The Rev. Alison Miller, the Rev. Jeanne Pupke and the Rev. Susan Fredrick-Gray.

To apply to offer a workshop at next spring's Regional Assembly visit our website.

The deadline for applications is October 31.

Triennial UU Convocation in Bloomington MN



Beyond Boundaries: Controversies, Frontiers, and Growth in Unitarian Universalism is the theme of the Triennial Convocation held jointly by the UU History and Heritage Society and UU Collegium.

The Convocation will take place October 27-30, 2016 at the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport Hilton in Bloomington, Minnesota. Midwestern Unitarianism and Universalism, both past and

present, will be a principal focus. The meeting will offer a stellar lineup of principal speakers plus scholarly papers, dramatic presentations, and music, all in the service of better understanding and advancing liberal religion.

For further information, please see www.uuconvo.org (<http://www.uuconvo.org>) or contact Victor Urbanowicz, Local Arrangements Chair at 612-220-5204.

UU Class Conversations Workshop in Rochester, MN



The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Rochester, MN, will be hosting a UU Class Conversations (<http://www.uuclassconversations.org>) Workshop on Saturday, October 1, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



The UU Class Conversations Workshop seeks to create opportunities where people are able to openly and honestly share experiences with class and about classism. To begin to undo the damage caused by classism, it is useful for everyone to examine our own feelings about money, education, privilege, power, relationships, culture, and ethnicity.

The workshop is open to everyone, members and friends of the church, as well as other UU churches or fellowships. Free childcare will be available and lunch will be provided.

For more information or to register, visit <http://uurochmn.org/class-conversations> (<http://uurochmn.org/class-conversations/>).

Calendar

PLEASE SEE OUR FULL CALENDAR

Newsletter Archive

2017

[December 2017 \(/home/newsletters/1-december-2017\)](/home/newsletters/1-december-2017)

[November 2017 \(/home/newsletters/2-november-2017\)](/home/newsletters/2-november-2017)

[October 2017 \(/home/newsletters/3-october-2017\)](/home/newsletters/3-october-2017)

[September 2017 \(/home/newsletters/4-september-2017\)](/home/newsletters/4-september-2017)

[August 2017 \(/home/newsletters/5-august-2017\)](/home/newsletters/5-august-2017)

[June 2017 \(/home/newsletters/6-june-2017\)](/home/newsletters/6-june-2017)

[May 2017 \(/home/newsletters/7-may-2017\)](/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 \(/home/newsletters/32-february-2015\)](#)
2014
[January 2015 \(/home/newsletters/33-january-2015\)](#)
[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 \(/home/newsletters/44-october-2013\)](/home/newsletters/44-october-2013)

[September 2013 \(/home/newsletters/45-september-2013\)](/home/newsletters/45-september-2013)