



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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Regional Assembly 2017, Social Justice Empowerment Workshops, Self-Care for Leaders webinar -- just some of the helpful information you'll find in this issue. And remember, for news about the wider UU movement, check out the UU World (<http://www.uuworld.org>) and the UU Bulletin (<http://www.uua.org/communications/bulletin>).



As always, if you have any questions or comments about these or any other services we provide to the MidAmerica Region, feel free to contact any of your MidAmerica staff.

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

Yours in Faith,  
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# Regional Assembly 2017

## Finding Our Partners: Faith in Action

In spite of our small numbers in the national religious scene, Unitarian Universalists have been at the forefront of every significant social change in our nation's history. Now, more than ever, we need to work with partners to have an impact in our cities, states, and country.

Join us at the Oak Brook Marriott in Oak Brook, Illinois, on April 28-30, 2017.



Our Keynote Speaker will be Rev. Dr. Lee Barker, President of Meadville-Lombard Theological School! Rev. Dr. Barker's address will be "**To Multi-faith: A Verb.**" According to President Barker, "Unitarian Universalism is perfectly situated to promote constructive multi-faith engagement for increased understanding and enhanced harmony. Success will depend on a new understanding of what it means to 'be engaged.'"

Plan now to join us there (<https://www.uua.org/midamerica/ra>)!

## Social Justice, Empowerment and Lifespan Learning

*By Nancy Combs-Morgan, Congregational Life Consultant*

As an advocate of UU lifespan faith development, I believe that experiencing social justice as part of the heart of congregational life helps create vital lifespan learning. Putting social justice at the heart of congregations is the core premise of the Social Justice Empowerment Workshops, a model created by Susan Leslie, the UUA's Congregational Advocacy and Witness Director, who graciously trained me in this SJE model. In the MidAmerica Region, congregations like the UU Church of Evanston, Illinois, experienced the Social Justice Empowerment Workshop model a few years back, and then went on to do great state advocacy work. More recently, North Shore Unitarian, in Deerfield, Illinois, took part in an SJE workshop that I was thrilled to co-lead with Rev. Scott Aaseng, the new Director of the UU Advocacy Network of Illinois (UUANI).



If your congregation would like to learn more about the Social Justice Empowerment Workshops feel free to contact me: Nancy Combs-Morgan [ncombsmorgan@uua.org](mailto:ncombsmorgan@uua.org). And to find out more about the great work being done by the UU Advocacy Network of Illinois, visit their website at <http://www.uu-advocacy-illinois.org>. You can also DONATE to UUANI.

# Self Care for the Busy Leader Webinar

There's still room for you to participate in Sharon Dittmar's "Self Care for the Busy Leader" webinar, based on the work of writer and educator, Parker Palmer. Sharon will explore the challenge of caring for oneself as a congregational leader, while listening to what Palmer refers to as the most important teacher, your inner voice. This webinar will offer time for readings, story, questions, and even reflection!



It is one session in a six part webinar series Reverend Sharon Dittmar will be offering for congregational leaders in the winter of 2017 entitled "How to Build Your Personal Leadership Toolkit." The webinar will be on **Thursday, November 11**, at 7:45pm Eastern, 6:45pm Central, 5:45pm Mountain. **REGISTER NOW.**

## Online Leadership Course Series from the UU Leadership Institute



Would you like your leaders to work better together?

Would you like to deepen your own Unitarian Universalist faith? Would you like to attract and keep new members?

Would you like to shift your church culture from "fake fights" to transformative ministry?

Deeper than a single webinar or workshop, UU Leadership Institute (<http://www.uuinstitute.org>)

offers multi-session courses with on-demand materials. These materials are for leaders, seekers, new members, church staff and clergy. They are perfect for the congregation who wants to learn together. Topics in the Online Leadership Course Series include Healthy Leadership, Strategic Leadership, Adaptive Leadership, and Faithful Membership.

Courses open on January 20, 2017, and will run through June 30. The cost is only \$30 per course per semester.

"Flipped Classroom" materials are provided for local study groups. For more information, visit UU Institute (<http://www.uuinstitute.org>) or contact [info@uuinstitute.org](mailto:info@uuinstitute.org).

# Third International Women's Convocation

*By Kathy Burek, International Women's Convocation Board Member and former MidAmerica Trustee*

The Third International Women's Convocation will bring together Unitarian and Universalist women from around the world to connect, share, celebrate, and empower in the beautiful, inspirational setting of Asilomar, "a refuge by the sea." The Convocation is being held February 16-19, 2017 at Asilomar Conference Center, Monterey Peninsula, California.



The Convocation theme is Weaving a Global Partnership: Forging a Just Future Together. This Convocation is a rare opportunity for MidAmerica women and transgender leaders to network with UU women and transgender persons from around the world. The connections you make at this Convocation will help strengthen your personal connection to the wider UU movement, and bring a perspective to your congregation's programming. I had the privilege of serving as staff for the First International Women's Convocation in 2009, and found it to be a life-changing experience. The Convocation will focus on issues of concern to women and transgender persons. Participants will focus on one of several tracks: leadership development, education, health and reproductive justice, preventing violence, or economic empowerment. Priorities and action steps in each of these areas will be set using a community capacity building process. This process can also be used within congregations, and in working with congregational community partners.

Our keynote speaker will be Rev. Dr. Rosemary Bray McNatt, President of Starr King School for the Ministry. Other keynote speakers include Dr. Cecilia Conrad of the MacArthur Foundation, UU minister and Soto Zen priest Rev. Florence Caplow, Bolivian human rights activist Olga Flores, Philippine women's rights activist Cecilia Hoffmann, and Gizella Nagy, who created a Leadership School for Transylvanian Unitarian women. We are also pleased that all three candidates for UUA President will attend.

Registration is \$350. Bring one or more friends from your church and you qualify for a group discount of \$50 off each. An additional \$50 discount is available for UU ministers. Young adults aged 18-40 can register at a special all-inclusive package rate. If you are interested in offering a workshop, please fill out our workshop request form online. For more information, and to register, go to <https://www.intlwomensconvo.org>

I strongly encourage MidAmerica women and transgender persons to take advantage of this unique opportunity. Please email me at [kpburek@comcast.net](mailto:kpburek@comcast.net) if you would like more information.

*\*\* Note: I'm so looking forward to this conference. Ever since I attended the Parliament of World Religions in Salt Lake City in October, 2015, my interest in multi-faith partnerships has been strong. Any women from the MidAmerica Region who are attending, please let me know and we can plan something together when we are there! -- Dori Davenport Thexton*

# Standing Rock Resistance

The MidAmerica Region of the UUA is receiving donations to support small travel stipends for those able and willing to travel to North Dakota in solidarity with the Standing Rock resistance. **DONATE NOW.**

The Bismarck-Mandan UU Fellowship and Church is supporting the protesters of the Dakota Access Pipeline that is proposed to go under the Missouri River just a

few miles away from Standing Rock Nation. If you've been following the news on the Dakota Access Pipeline, you are aware of The Sacred Stone Camp near Standing Rock. A group of citizens led by Native Americans is protesting the Dakota Access oil pipeline, which is routed to cross the Missouri River just north of Standing Rock Reservation. All pipelines eventually leak as they age and thus will contaminate the water of the Missouri River.

Hundreds of people are coming from all over the country to express their concerns with the pipeline. This pipeline was originally proposed to cross the Missouri River a few miles north of Bismarck, North Dakota but was nixed because of possible water contamination. Please see this article (first paragraphs) from the Bismarck Tribune newspaper ([http://bismarcktribune.com/news/state-and-regional/pipeline-route-plan-first-called-for-crossing-north-of-bismarck/article\\_64d053e4-8a1a-5198-a1dd-498d386c933c.html](http://bismarcktribune.com/news/state-and-regional/pipeline-route-plan-first-called-for-crossing-north-of-bismarck/article_64d053e4-8a1a-5198-a1dd-498d386c933c.html)).

Our Bismarck-Mandan UU Church is a drop-off site for donations for the Sacred Stone Camp to support concerned citizens on site; a list of needed supplies can be found at [www.sacredstonecamp.org](http://www.sacredstonecamp.org).

