



MidAmerica  
Region



# The MidAmerica Messenger

Volume 4, Issue 5 | December 2016

*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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*Wishing You a Very Happy Holiday Season*



*From the Staff of the MidAmerica Region*

# UUA Board Supports Black Lives of UU: So Can You!



## BLACK LIVES of UU

In October the UUA Board of Trustees committed \$5.3 million to **Black Lives of UU**, which works to provide support, information & resources for Black Unitarian Universalists. "This commitment is just one step in a long journey towards fulfilling promises made to Black Unitarian Universalists in the 1960s," the board posted on its Facebook page. You can read more about this historic decision here: <http://www.uuworld.org/articles/board-commits-5-million-bluu>.

We here in the MidAmerica Region have our own opportunity to support the Black Lives of UU organizing collective by giving generously to the Chalice Lighter Fall Call. Funds raised during the call will be used:

- to help congregations cover the cost for Black UUs who wish to attend upcoming Unitarian Universalist gatherings in the coming year,
- to help MidAmerica congregations create and display their own Black Lives Matter banners, or replace banners that have been vandalized, and
- to respond to BLUU's call of action encouraging UU congregations to open their doors and make meeting and healing space available to Black organizers during times of crisis.

You can find out more about the Black Lives of UU organizing collective at <http://www.blacklivesuu.com>. And you can join the UUA Board of Trustees in supporting Black Unitarian Universalists by donating to MidAmerica Chalice Lighters Fall Call by Saturday, **December 31, 2016**.

# MidAmerica LREDA Learning Collaborative

*By Nancy Combs-Morgan, Congregational Life Consultant*



When I began my journey as a Unitarian Universalist religious educator twenty years ago, I was blessed to be a part of a community of religious educators in my area. This network of LREDA (Liberal Religious Educators Association) colleagues provided me with opportunities for fellowship and continuing education. Now that I serve the Region, my greatest hope for any religious educator is that they will have the same level of nurturing. With that goal in mind, there is now a new model of connecting: the MidAmerica LREDA Learning Collaborative!

The genesis for the collaborative came from conversations with talented LREDA leaders in the region, including Jules Jaramillo, the Director of Lifespan Learning at the Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist in Palatine, IL, who took part in a "RE: Let's Talk" session that I offered a few months back. Those "RE: Let's Talk" sessions have been happening for the past year with the gifted support of Michelle Richards, our MA Region's LREDA Good Officer. The centering question that has emerged from all of these conversations has been "How do we serve those religious educators who are new to this wonderful calling, and how can we all connect and learn in meaningful ways?"

In my regional portfolio, I reach out to new religious educators and their congregations to be of support. I have grieved for those religious educators who are in an area which is not served by an active LREDA chapter/cluster. Not letting the obstacle of geography impede our shared opportunity to grow in our vocation, we have decided to explore what it would mean to be a MidAmerica LREDA Learning Collaborative (MLLC).

This new initiative allows for those of us participating to truly shape the experience. So far, the goals for the MLLC are to have monthly virtual check-ins; at least 2-3 face-to-face opportunities for the year, and, most importantly, to explore new models of practice which will enhance our potential to heighten Unitarian Universalist faith development in our congregations.

We hope to hear from regional religious educators, including ministers with religious education in your portfolio, who seek to be a part of this learning collaborative. Take part in our next virtual meeting, Wednesday, December 14, 2016 at 1pm Eastern/12pm Central/11am Mountain. Connect using Zoom online meeting.

For this December meeting of the MLLC, we will be talking about upcoming face-to-face opportunities, such as the Central Midwest LREDA Winter Symposium, Feb 10-12 in Dubuque, IA and April 27-28, prior to our MidAmerica Regional Assembly, in Oak Brook, IL. At one of these face-to-face experiences, we will be bringing a new "Community of Practice" model of growing deeper and spiritually-grounding connections with one another. Also, we continue to plan on offering the Adult Faith Development Renaissance Module this Spring. Please let me know if you are interested in any of these opportunities. You can reach me via email at [ncombsmorgan@uua.org](mailto:ncombsmorgan@uua.org).

# Adaptive Leadership Toolkit Online Course

*By Sharon Dittmar, Congregational Life Consultant*

This winter I will be offering a six-session course entitled "How to Build your Adaptive Leadership Toolkit." Based on the work of writer and educator Parker Palmer, (<http://www.couragerenewal.org/parker/>) we will use principles from the Circle of Trust Touchstones to explore leadership skills. Rather than offering answers to technical questions (How do I lead a meeting?), this webinar series will enable participants to work on their own leadership voice and develop skills in a supportive environment.



We will learn how to ask "open and honest questions" and how to turn to "wonder." We will explore the power and pain of communities, and honestly share the rewards, burdens, and "shadow side" of leadership. Sessions will offer time for reflection, journaling, and group questions. Participants will have some pre-work prior to sessions (watching a 7 minute video, for example). By the end of the course participants will have tools to assist in unexpected and challenging situations that require leaders to have clarity of voice, discernment, and the ability to hold space for different perspectives.

Due to the intimate nature of the course, class size is limited to 12 participants who must be willing to commit to 5 out of 6 sessions. Sessions will be held Thursdays at 7:45-9PM EST (6:45-8 PM CST). The cost is \$75.00.

## **Course sessions are:**

January 19, Session 1 - Our Community Work

January 26, Session 2 - Self Care and Honoring your Inner Voice

February 2, Session 3 - Turn to Wonder

February 9, Session 4 - Learn from Silence and Listening

February 16, Session 5 - Leadership as Suffering and Shadow

March 2, Session 6 - Open and Honest Questions

Note there is no class on Thursday, February 23.

I hope you will join me in building an adaptive leadership toolkit! Sign up on our website.

# Love Reaches Out in MidAmerica

*By Phillip Lund, Congregational Life Consultant*

Now more than ever we need each and every congregation in the MidAmerica Region reaching out into their local communities to bring about more love, justice and peace into the world. But sometimes it can be difficult to find a cause an entire congregation can get behind. Fortunately, there's a fantastic resource from the UUA that helps congregations do just that.



Love Reaches Out is a three workshop study guide that helps us

- understand how the American religious landscape is changing and how UU congregations can respond to that reality,
- examine who we are as Unitarian Universalists, both in our congregations and as a faith movement, and whether we are effectively communicating this to the wider world, and
- develop a plan for getting started with your congregation or group reaching out into the community while staying grounded in your core identity or mission.

I've had the privilege of leading these workshops as one-day events in congregations in Dubuque, Iowa and River Falls, Wisconsin -- and the response has been overwhelmingly positive! Plans are underway to lead another "Love Reaches Out" workshop this February in La Crosse, Wisconsin and I'd love to see it offered in more places around the Region. So if you're interested in finding the "Sweet Spot" between your congregation's passion and the needs of your wider community, let me know and we'll see about setting up a "Love Reaches Out" event in your area. Just contact me at [plund@uua.org](mailto:plund@uua.org).

## January Webinar: Stewardship for Beginners

**Wednesday, January 25, 2017**

7:45 PM Eastern Time/6:45 PM Central Time/5:45 PM Mountain Time

*Dori Thexton, Presenter*

Are you involved in your congregation's annual budget drive for the first time? Join Dori Thexton to learn about the basics of coordinating a stewardship campaign. Find out how to recruit and train the canvassers, how to involve professional and lay leaders, and learn about resources to support your efforts. Register on our website.



# FLSA Changes Will Not Take Effect on December 1

*By Sharon Dittmar, Congregational Life Consultant*

On November 22, 2016, a judge issued a nationwide temporary injunction on the **FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act)** changes that were to take place on December 1. Many of our congregations have been preparing for this for over a year. As of now the current rules will remain in place. Stay tuned to learn if the injunction becomes permanent. The UUA recommends congregations remain prepared for the injunction to be lifted (though this is not certain). As Jan Gartner from the UUA Office of Church Staff Finance said to me, "The way I figure it, a lot of the work I did (and congregations did!) is like cleaning your house and then your company cancels. Reviewing job descriptions, record-keeping, and pay practices -- probably way overdue for most folks!"

If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to Jan Gartner, UUA Compensation and Staffing Practices Manager at [JGartner@uua.org](mailto:JGartner@uua.org) or the Rev. Richard Nugent, Director, Church Staff Finances at [RNugent@uua.org](mailto:RNugent@uua.org).

## Camp UniStar is Hiring for Summer 2017



Spend the summer working where natural beauty is rich, life is simple, and community is cherished. Nestled in the Chippewa National Forest on Star Island, near Bemidji, Minnesota, Camp UniStar is a uniquely Unitarian Universalist family camp for UUs and like-minded individuals. Work with children, youth, and families at this rustic camp with extensive waterfront activities and a variety of weekly programs. Openings for experienced and apprentice staff of all ages.

Positions include: Camp Director, Food Service Director, Waterfront Director, Assistant Director, Children's Program Director, Youth Program Director, and Program Area Staff.