



MidAmerica  
Region



# The MidAmerica Messenger

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***MidAmerica Region is where UUs visibly live our faith, create connections, grow our membership, and welcome all persons who share our UU values.***

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Welcome to 2017!

To make this newsletter a more useful resource this year, we're adding a new feature: Brilliant Bits from Boston. Each month we'll be highlighting one or two resources from the UUA headquarters in Boston. Of course there are plenty of other great things happening at 24 Farnsworth Street, and we encourage you to check them out in the monthly UU Bulletin. On the Regional level, make sure to visit our Facebook page to keep up to date with what's happening in MidAmerica.



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

Yours in Faith,  
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# Chalice Lighters Winter Call

The members of the MidAmerica Regional Chalice Lighter Committee are pleased to announce that the application from the Michael Servetus Unitarian Society in Fridley, Minnesota has been approved for our Winter 2017 Chalice Lighter Call.



The congregation has asked for funding to add summer ministry by hiring a minister for the summer to provide and oversee worship services, offer adult education and offer pastoral care. It is a congregation that has undertaken very intentional and careful planning leading up to this point, understanding that summer is a time when many families are "shopping" for a religious community. Since they are located in an area with many young families, they feel that adding a summer minister along with programming for all ages on Sunday mornings will support their growth efforts. (<http://www.msuu.org/>)



**Michael Servetus  
Unitarian Society**

Since there was only one application this round, any additional funds raised over the amount needed for the Michael Servetus grant will be put into our "New and Emerging Congregation" Chalice Lighter fund.

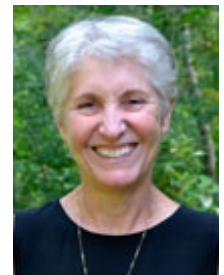
We will be contacting the ten congregations that formally affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association within the past 10 years to invite them to apply for these funds for a project. We will keep you posted on any grants issued to these new congregations!

**You can donate** to the Winter 2017 Chalice Lighter call by going to the Chalice Lighter webpage and clicking on the Donate option of your choice.

## A Ministry Rooted in Place: the St. Croix Valley Outreach Project at White Bear UU Church

*By Victoria Safford, Senior Minister, White Bear UU Church, Mahtomedi, Minnesota*

When White Bear UU Church (<http://whitebearunitarian.org/>) purchased a new data base system in 2014, we knew it could do more than simply organize the contact information of our members and friends: with sufficient user-support, the new system could help us develop strong programs to connect our people more deeply to one another, to meaningful projects, and to their UU faith. Here's how:



A devoted member had wondered for some time how to deepen his sense of belonging to this congregation which had grown from a small fellowship when he and his wife first joined in the 1960s to a large church with over 700 members. Their own lives had seen many changes as well over the years, including a move from their longtime home into a retirement community in a new town. Although they still came most Sundays, they were feeling disconnected from the life of the church. He knew other UU members probably lived nearby. Using a regional map, pushpins and a paper directory, he quickly saw that over 100 member households were clustered in his new community and in adjacent towns, all up and down the beautiful St. Croix River Valley.



White Bear Unitarian  
Universalist Church

A generous Chalice Lighter grant allowed us to develop a part-time, stipended internship to help transfer the "pushpin research" into an easily accessible digital directory. A retired IT professor from a local college, familiar with our new data system and devoted to community service,

found two technology interns eager to work on our project. They coached our staff and lay leaders as the St. Croix Valley Neighbors came into focus, inviting those 100 families to gather close to home for dinners, picnics, and community outreach projects. Some gatherings have been held in a local Episcopal church (closer to their homes than our own building); some have been held in regional parks; some in their homes. These events have allowed these UU neighbors to know each other more easily and deeply than they might at our own large congregation; they all still attend regularly and actively participate there, but their UU identity is deepened now through local roots and neighborhood ties. Older members, like the one who made the first map, are befriending young families who live just a few miles away; pastoral care and some social justice projects are organized within this geographic community on its own.

The Chalice Lighter grant from MidAmerica made possible the critical support we needed to bring the vision and yearning of a longtime member into reality, deploying a powerful new tool for the age-old ministry of belonging, community, and service.

If you're interested in finding out more about how White Bear UU Church used their database to connect people more deeply with one another, contact Anna Gehres at [agehres@wbuuc.org](mailto:agehres@wbuuc.org).

# Hybrid Adult Faith Development Renaissance Module

By *Nancy Combs-Morgan, Congregational Life Consultant*

Yes, this sounds like a new plant, but in reality, we will be offering an adaptive model of the Adult Faith Development Renaissance Module. Rev. Phil Lund and I will be co-facilitating this virtual and face-to-face learning opportunity for religious educators, ministers, seminarians, and leaders who are active in providing adult religious education. We are offering this module because vibrant, growing congregations acknowledge that spiritual journeys last a lifetime, so they offer intentional, structured opportunities for adults of all ages and in all life stages to grow in faith.



This module explores faith development and programming for adult Unitarian Universalists. Participants will have ample opportunity to engage with theoretical information, to learn practice skills, and to explore issues, questions, and models for developing and managing programs in UU congregations and groups. There will also be a chance to consider the changing cultural context, including non-traditional delivery formats, and to learn how to best use Tapestry of Faith and other adult programs.

The virtual sessions will be on these Thursday afternoons: March 2, March 16, March 30, and April 13. Our last session will be face to face on Thursday, April 27 at the DuPage UU Church in Naperville, Illinois, right before our MidAmerica Regional Assembly.

The cost will be \$200. Registration available on the MidAmerica website.

If you have any questions, please contact: Nancy Combs-Morgan, [ncombsmorgan@uua.org](mailto:ncombsmorgan@uua.org).

## Watch This Space for Regional Assembly News

Next month's newsletter will have complete information about the 2017 MidAmerica Regional Assembly on April 28-30, 2017, including information on how to register.

We're looking forward to a fantastic three days at the Oak Brook Marriott in Oak Brook, Illinois. In addition to our Keynote Speaker the Rev. Dr. Lee Barker, President of Meadville Lombard Theological School, there will be a forum with all three UUA presidential candidates. And of course, a full slate of exciting workshops.



# Reaching Beyond RE Social Justice Workshops

*By Matthew Johnson, Senior Minister, UU Church, Rockford, Illinois*

Years ago, as the ministers of the Western Crescent Clergy Cluster in Illinois sat talking about what was happening in our congregations, we hungered for our lay leaders to learn together about the best and newest ideas in Unitarian Universalism. We thought, why not? When the holidays are over, and we're ready to be inspired, let's get someone to come be with us. So we held our first annual workshop day on the topic of worship. It was fabulous! Last year, our second annual day was on leadership-and leaders were encouraged and educated.



When we talked about what we wanted to learn this year, we wanted to talk about how to do ministry in this world where we need to connect with each other beyond what we do Sunday -- to enrich our families, children, and work for justice. We decided to have a chance for folks to learn about innovative ways to do religious education and social justice, and then bring the conversation together. We secured some great speakers -- so if you come, you'll learn a lot. But you'll also get to connect with your own congregational team and with other UU leaders-and that is just as important.

It's 10 am to 3:30 pm on Saturday, January 28th, at Countryside UU Church (<http://ccuu.org/>) in Palatine, Illinois. You can register on the MidAmerica website.

## Call for Nominations

The Nominating Committee for the Mid-America Region of the UUA is charged with identifying potential candidates and presenting nominations for consideration at the Annual Business Meeting of the Region for the positions of

- Regional Board of Trustees
- Regional Nominating Committee
- Midwest UU Conference (MUUC)

Potential vacancies on the MidAmerica Board this year include the positions of Secretary, Treasurer, and Member-At-Large. The nominating committee seeks to identify the most diverse pool of candidates possible, with a particular emphasis at this time on expanding our diversity in the areas of race, gender, sexual orientation and age.

The committee needs to receive inquiries and/or recommendations no later than January 25, 2017 to allow for appropriate follow-up and completion of the slate.

Please feel free to contact the members of the committee via e-mail at [nomcom@midamericauua.net](mailto:nomcom@midamericauua.net). Thank you for your participation and support for leadership development across the Region.

# Brilliant Bits From Boston

(Your *Need to Know* UUA Update)

By Sharon Dittmar, Congregational Life Consultant

Hello folks! We are debuting a new item in the newsletter -- brief highlights of UUA activities that are of interest to folks in our MidAmerica Region! First up is "Show the Love" resources with tips for greeters, de-escalation techniques, map of local actions, and information on how you can publicize, connect with and be inspired by UUs providing sanctuary and engaging in resistance. [uua.org/actions/show-the-love/resources](http://uua.org/actions/show-the-love/resources)

**Feeling alone?  
Scared?  
Hopeless?**

Find a Unitarian Universalist congregation near you at [UUA.ORG](http://UUA.ORG) and join us this Sunday. That'll address the first thing, and together, we'll figure out solutions for the other two.

**You are not alone.**

## Calendar

PLEASE SEE OUR FULL CALENDAR



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