



MidAmerica
Region



MidAmerica Messenger

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

In This Issue

Regional Assembly Details

#BLUUWhiteSupremacyTeachIn

Chalice Lighter Spring Call

MidAmerica Adjunct Consultants

Membership

Brilliant Bits

Multiracial Unity Caucus

Calendar (<http://www.midamericauua.net/events>)

Contact Us



Welcome

Ian Evison, MidAmerica Regional Lead

I look forward to seeing you all at our Regional Assembly, April 28-30, in Oak Brook, Illinois. A huge controversy is playing out in our movement, that I am sure points to one of the biggest issues we will be dealing with in the next chapter. The hiring of a white male minister as the staff team lead in the Southern Region has set off self-reflection regarding the ways in which white cultural assumptions pervade our institutions, including our congregational life staff.



This controversy has led to the resignation of our UUA President, Peter Morales.

Each of our three UUA presidential candidates has declared that they want to make dealing with the issues raised by this a top priority. I am sure that this will be central to our discussions at Regional

Assembly. I am painfully conscious of the ways cultural assumptions unfriendly to diversity of participation and leadership are baked into the structures of our institutions, and into how we do things. This needs to be a time of self-reflection and learning for all of us. I look forward to this.

And remember, your MidAmerica regional staff is here for you, so don't hesitate to contact us if you need any resources, consultations, or coaching. Visit <https://midamericauua.net/about-us/contact-us> (<https://midamericauua.net/about-us/contact-us>) for more information.

As always, we appreciate your comments and suggestions for the newsletter.



Regional Assembly - Partnerships, Impact and Transformation

Register Now!

We came up with our theme - *Finding Our Partners: Faith In Action* - for the 2017 Regional Assembly almost a year ago. Before the November election and subsequent events that are taking place across our country. The outcomes of the country's presidential election have mobilized people in way that most of us have not seen for about 50 years.



Unitarian Universalists are not the only people of faith who are marching, demonstrating and contacting their elected officials by the thousands. There are literally millions of people across the United States who are concerned about the rights and freedoms that many have fought for and are sometimes taken for granted.

Our faith, our principles and values, call on us to act in small or large ways when we see these rights and freedoms being destroyed. Many of us have found that partnering with others not only has a greater impact in the public sphere - it can also lead to personal and spiritual growth as we work with people who may have different theologies, perspectives and experiences. When we allow ourselves to be open to listening to others and finding common values around which we can come together, it is no small feat.



Our keynote presenter, Rev. Dr. Lee Barker, will explore his own experiences in this kind of work and action. We truly hope you will join us for Lee's keynote address - he is an inspiring and energetic preacher with an important message for our times

You can also be part of the forum with the three candidates for the UUA president on Friday night; and participate in the lively workshop offerings on Saturday afternoon.

Complete information on Regional Assembly can be found at www.uua.org/midamerica/ra.

Earlybird registration rates are available through April 5th.



#UUWhiteSupremacyTeachIn

Black Lives of UU

#UUWhiteSupremacyTeachIn

SUN APR 30 or SUN MAY 7



Everyone has to start somewhere, and it takes a commitment to disrupt business as usual.

BlackLivesUU.com/uuwhitesupremacyteachin

70 congregations have signed up so far for the UU White Supremacy Teach-in effort! Let's get 150 to sign up!

On Sunday, April 30 or Sunday, May 7, join a large, growing group of Unitarian Universalists who will shift our regularly scheduled Sunday morning worship to participate in a teach-in on racism and white supremacy. On these two Sundays, you and your UU community will be participating with thousands of UUs around the country in this large-scale historic action. This call to action and worship comes from a growing network of UUs -- religious professionals and lay leaders from both within and outside congregations -- led by UUs of color and white UUs working together.

Over the past few weeks, many have been responding to calls by UUs of color to look critically *within* our faith communities -- including hiring practices, power brokers, and cultural habits -- for the ways racism, sexism, and white supremacy live.

Learn more <http://www.blacklivesuu.com/uuwhitesupremacyteachin>



Spring 2017 Chalice Lighter Call

Rev. Phillip Lund, Congregational Life Consultant

The MidAmerica Chalice Lighter Committee is pleased to announce the congregations that will benefit from the current Chalice Lighter call:



The Chequamegon UU Fellowship in Ashland, Wisconsin to increase paid professional staff by hiring its first part-time minister.

The Harbor UU Congregation of Muskegon, Michigan to install a vertical wheelchair lift that will make their 91-year-old, two-story building handicap accessible.





The Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockford, Illinois to hire a 1/4 time consulting minister to strengthen the congregation's social justice work and to develop a model for creating collaborative cluster-based justice ministries.

Congratulations to all three congregations!

Chalice Lighter funds can be used to start a new congregation, acquire a meeting space, secure a minister, religious educator, or other professional staff, or provide for an outreach or public relations program. If your congregation is interested in applying for a Chalice Lighter grant, the deadline for the Fall Call is Tuesday, August 15, 2017. To find out more about the Chalice Lighter program, or to donate to the Spring 2017 call, visit <https://www.uua.org/midamerica/giving/chalice-lighters>.



MidAmerica Adjunct Consultants

MidAmerica Region Staff

You may be aware that we have a group of talented adjunct consultants who work with our Region's congregations facilitating board retreats, Mission/Vision/Planning and a wide variety of other kinds of activities when the leadership desires specific help within their congregation around particular needs. Last year, two of our adjunct consultants, Steven Mennerick of Eliot Chapel in St. Louis and Thom Thomas from the Geneva, IL congregation, worked together to help one Illinois congregation bring its mission and planning process to life. Here is a report from Steven Mennerick.

Along with Thom Thomas, it was my privilege to work over the past year with the **Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Congregation** (ALUUC) in Springfield, IL on a strategic planning initiative to help guide the congregation's priorities over the next 3-5 years.

With our support, the congregation employed an Appreciative Inquiry approach. The goal of such approach is to amplify the best of past achievements in stretching for future goals. Carefully posed questions help to define the scope of the planning process. These questions are put to the congregation in various group settings to discover themes and values that have animated the life of the congregation. The congregation dreams about what the organization would look like if these themes were implemented in new ways in a congregation of the future. The dreaming is distilled into a few provocative 'stretch goals,' or strategic visions. Finally, several concrete steps are identified that will move the congregation toward those visions. The process encourages a grateful posture and aligns with our UU principle of democratic governance; the congregation has a large role at pivotal points in the planning process. Finally, Appreciative Inquiry represents a systematic method to move from high-level ideas about mission and values to concrete actions.

Carol Kneeder and Deborah Hagan co-chaired a vibrant and inclusive process at ALUUC over the course of 18 months. Their effort also included extensive documentation of the process, so that their own future congregations (and others) can benefit from their experience. I hope you will take a look at their achievement: <http://www.aluuc.org/long-range-planning>



For more information on our Adjunct Consultant program, visit our website.

Nancy Combs-Morgan will be taking over coordination of this program in May.

Membership Directors and Volunteers Unite!

Sharon Dittmar, Congregational Life Consultant

In 2011 the **Unitarian Universalist Association of Membership Professionals** (UUAMP) was formed to "develop and support the ministry of membership through professional development and collaboration." As their website says "Membership is open to ALL who are passionate about the UU Faith (that means those who are paid and unpaid)" www.uuamp.org.



The UUAMP has quickly grown in the past six years thanks to some excellent leadership from committed membership professionals in the MidAmerica Region. Corie Jason from UU Church of Greater Lansing (MI) serves as President, Marie Luna from Fox Valley UU Fellowship (WI) serves as Vice President, and until just recently, Tina Lewis, from Unity Temple UU Congregation, Oak Park (IL), served as the Treasurer. Under their leadership the UUAMP has grown to include mentoring for new membership professionals, conferences and workshops, as well as a NEW UUAMP Certification Program (<http://www.uuamp.org/continuing-education-offerings/uuamp-certification-program>) with coursework on best practices, UU history and identity, community development, boundaries as well as other areas such as pastoral care and social media.

For anyone doing membership ministry in our congregations, I suggest you join for collegiality and professional development. As a double bonus you will get to spend time with wonderful people.

On March 14-15 I attended (and presented) at the UUAMP Professional Days Conference at First Unitarian Society in Milwaukee, WI. There were some excellent workshops, and lots of sharing and learning. If you work in membership in your congregation, or know someone else who does, please let them know about UUAMP.



Brilliant Bits from Boston: Compensation and Staffing News

Sharon Dittmar, Congregational Life Consultant

Are you interested in receiving regular updates with tips and resources on compensation, staffing, and personnel matters? Sign up for Compensation and Staffing News, a new monthly publication from the Office of Church Staff Finances. Developed with supervisors and human resources teams in mind, topics may also be of interest to administrators, finance committees, and others who assist with employment matters. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/compnewssignup>

And for more information on what's happening at the UUA, check out the latest issue of the UU Bulletin at <http://www.uua.org/communications/bulletin>.



UU Multiracial Unity Action Caucus Conference

The UU Multiracial Unity Action Caucus will be holding a pre-RA conference on the struggle against neo-racism on Friday, April 28, 2017, for 9:30 am to 4 pm at the Drake Hotel Oak Brook, Illinois. The conference will be in the Nagel Ball Room, also known as Room 123, on the lower level of the hotel. Conference organizers are asking for a \$20 contribution to help us defray rental space cost. To keep costs down they are not ordering food or drink from the hotel, but participants may bring their own. Please let them know in advance if you need shuttle service. For more information, contact.



We are seeking to covenant with each other to find new ways of partnering and standing together on the side of love for the flourishing of our world, our communities, our congregations and our members.