



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.

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Coffee Hour Conversations

Lisa Presley, Congregational Life Consultant

One of the things that we hear from congregations is how they want to meet and learn from each other.

Once a month, Lisa Presley will host a 'Coffee Hour Conversation' where you are invited to drop by (virtually, of course), and chat with her and others. What are you doing really well in your congregations? What are some things you're struggling with? How can we do this thing called "church" better? We will share and learn from and with each other. Stop by at the beginning, drop by in the middle, stay until the end, or whatever works. The sessions will run from 5:45 pm Mountain, 6:45 pm Central, and 7:45 pm Eastern time to 7:00 pm Mountain, 8:00 pm Central, and 9:00 pm Eastern. Dates are below.



No need to preregister, just join us at: <https://zoom.us/j/2485145458> (<https://zoom.us/j/2485145458>)

Or on phone only at 1 646 558 8656,
meeting room number 248 514 5458.

Wednesday October 11

Tuesday November 14

Monday December 11

Thursday January 18

Monday February 19

Wednesday March 14

Tuesday April 10

Thursday May 10



Welcome and Support for New Directors of Religious Education

Nancy Combs-Morgan, Congregational Life Consultant

If you are new in your position as a Director of Religious Education, or, perhaps you have been serving for a while, we'd like you to know that our MidAmerica Region wants to provide support with continuing education and collegial opportunities.



Hope you take a moment and register for the 2 part "New DRE" webinars on Tuesday, September 12 from 7-8:30 p.m. Eastern time, and the second part on Wednesday, September 20 from 12-1:30 p.m. Eastern. There is no charge, so REGISTER NOW!



For continuing education, we are in the planning stage for an online Administration Renaissance Module,

to start this October, and there will be a face to face Worship Renaissance Module at North Shore

United Church, in Buffalo, NY, on Thursday November 16 (starting with dinner) and concluding on

Saturday, November 18 in the afternoon. Registration for both of these modules will be up on our

website very soon.

One of the things that we hear from congregations is how they want to meet and learn from each other. In addition, keep in mind that many of our religious educators gather together for engaging cluster

meetings. Please contact me so that we can connect and get you plugged into one of these cluster opportunities.

Also, if you have youth ministry in your portfolio don't miss the once in a lifetime opportunity of taking part in a youth ministry revival, CommUUnity@Heart! (See next article.)

In addition, due to requests from our MidAmerica religious educators, we will be offering a one day Basic Youth Advisor Training, at Miami Valley UU Fellowship, in Dayton, OH on Saturday, November 11 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. (this is also available as a virtual training). The cost will be \$20. per participant.

Please feel free to contact me, I would love to connect personally and share more!



CommUUnity@Heart: Youth Ministry Revival 2

Here is the Corona...don't miss this once in a 100 year opportunity....



Did you wait until the last minute to prepare for viewing the solar eclipse? Perhaps you were scrambling to find some viewing glasses, well, don't be in that same mode when it comes to preparing

for a once in a lifetime experience, CommUUnity@Heart: Youth Ministry Revival 2. On **Sept. 29-Oct. 1, at Countryside Church UU in Palatine, IL**, we will be carrying forward the important conversations around race and social justice with new models of multigenerational group spiritual direction and contemporary worship.

This is a unique opportunity for teams of youth, youth advisors, DRE's, ministers, and social justice leaders to take part in an experience which will deepen faith, nourish spirit, and lift hearts so that beloved community will be experienced in our congregations, with our interfaith partners, and in the greater world! Even if you are a new religious professional in the Region and can't come with a team, you are more than welcome to take part!

CommUUnity@Heart will provide nurture through music, movement and message for youth and adults to become "mystical warriors" focused on beloved community building. Mystical in that each participant will find ways to go deeper into their own resolve to nurture the spirit within themselves, and their communities, to help create a world where all are treated fairly. There will also be separate group spiritual direction sessions for cohorts of UU religious professionals, co-led by Rev. Phil Lund and Rev. Sharon Dittmar, and separate sessions for multigenerational leaders, with talented youth and young adult leaders.

The MidAmerica Region is sponsoring CommUUnity@Heart as a shared national UU Youth Ministry Roundtable initiative, with talented leaders from the UUA's Youth and YA Office; Congregational Life, and

the UU College of Social Justice. We thrilled to have Matt Meyer from the Lucy Stone Cooperative and Boston Sanctuaries movement to help us go deeper in our spirit with music and message, and we have invited leaders from the InterFaith Youth Corps, to bring their unique vision on building communities of partnership and pluralism.

CommUUnity@Heart is Sept. 29-Oct. 1 at Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist, in Palatine, IL.

REGISTER NOW (https://www.midamericauua.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2702&Itemid=2947)

We invite youth and at least one of the adults from their team to stay on site, and we have a block of rooms at a reduced rate at a local hotel.

The fee for participants is \$60. Per youth and adult, and for teams of 4, the rate is \$200. We're hoping to see you there!

Hurricane Harvey Relief

The UUA now has a fund set up for Hurricane Harvey Relief:

<https://giving.uua.org/harvey-floods>

We'll have more communications about this going forward, as additional support capacity develops and we learn more about what's needed on the ground. But for the time being, please share this widely with your networks.



Networking for Presidents of Large Congregations

Gail Sphar, Healthy Congregation Consultant



A cluster of top board officers of large congregations (500+ members) has been meeting monthly since 2014 to share ideas, issues, success stories and cautionary tales. Topics the group has wrestled with include stewardship, measurement of progress towards ends, transition issues, safe congregations, and social justice initiatives, to name just a few. Sometimes we've invited guest "experts" to talk with us about particular subjects. Among them have been UUA Moderator Jim Key, Rev. Dr. Susan Ritchie, and First UU San Diego stewardship staff.

Presidents, vice presidents and presidents-elect are welcome to participate, and from time to time other key lay leaders join the conversations. The meeting is by teleconference, through Free Conference Call.

The agenda is set by the participants and their interests. The conversation is facilitated by Gail Sphar, Healthy Congregation Consultant.

The cluster meets the second Tuesday of every month from 7:30 - 9 p.m. eastern. If you're interested in joining the cluster, or would like more information, please contact Gail at gsphar@uua.org (<mailto:gsphar@uua.org>). If you're interested but can't meet at that time, let Gail know and we may create a second cluster.



MidAmerica Chalice Lighter Grant Helps Give Mesabi UU Congregation a Lift



Five years ago, the board and members of Mesabi UU began discussions and planning to make our church handicap-accessible. We, like many congregations, had aging members who couldn't navigate our steps, and community members who couldn't come to our services and events. We began with the renovation of our basement bathroom three years ago, then proceeded with demolition of our former parsonage two years later and, on July 17, 2016, at a



special congregational meeting, voted 22-0 to proceed with a lift to complete the access. Construction began on the southeast corner of our 105-year-old building in late in the fall of 2016.

The lift itself matches our original architect's plan, but we added two accessible parking spaces on the south side of our building in order to address some of the concerns about folks with disabilities having to park on the street and navigate the width of the building to access the lift. We had some major challenges with the building permit process and then our contractor had emergency cancer surgeries which significantly delayed the project, but the lift is now complete and our contractor is well again. We held a ribbon-cutting at our annual meeting on May 7, 2017 (photo below). The lift was made possible, in part, by a Chalice Lighter grant.



Fall Webinars

Phil Lund, Congregational Life Consultant

The Fall lineup of Webinars has begun!

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Phil Lund, Congregational Life Consultant

The Fall lineup of Webinars has begun!

All times are Eastern.

New DRE - Part I with Nancy Combs-Morgan

Tuesday, September 12, 7:00pm - 8:30 PM

Gift Acceptance Policy - by Stewardship for Us

Tuesday, September 12, 7:30pm - 9:00 PM

How to Be a Great Congregational President

with Ian Evison

Tuesday, September 12, 7:45 - 9:00 PM

Gift Acceptance Policy - by Stewardship for Us

Wednesday, September 13, 3:00pm - 4:30 PM

New DRE - Part II with Nancy Combs-Morgan

Wednesday, September 20, 12:00pm - 1:30 PM

Spiritual Companionship for Progressive Congregations with Phil Lund

Tuesday, September 19, 7:45pm - 9:00 PM

White Supremacy Teach-In with Sharon Dittmar

Tuesday, October 10, 7:45pm - 9:00 PM

Coffee Hour Conversations with Lisa Presley

Wednesday, October 11, 7:45pm - 9:00 PM

Stewardship for Us topic to be announced

Monday, October 16 10:00 - 11:30 PM

Stewardship for Us topic to be announced

Tuesday, October 24 7:00 - 9:30 PM

Coffee Hour Conversations with Lisa Presley

Wednesday, November 14, 7:45 - 9:00 PM

Reimagining Religious Community with Phil Lund

Thursday, November 16, 7:45 - 9:00 PM



Go to www.midamericauua.net/events/webinar for more information and to register. There is no charge to attend. You can also watch Past Webinars on our website.



WEBINAR: Gift Acceptance Policy

Mark Ewert, Stewardship for Us Consultant

What kinds of gifts does your congregation want? What kinds of gifts is your congregation not prepared to accept? These two questions are pivotal to asking for and receiving financial gifts that will stabilize the congregation's finances, fuel your mission, and prepare for the future. They also make a difference to people who want to give you financial gifts, so they know their gifts are needed, appreciated, and used well - oh and don't create a bunch of conflict among the congregants.



The key to answering these two questions and communicating to your potential donors about them is a Gift Acceptance Policy. This webinar will cover the elements of a good policy, its purposes and uses, and informing your congregation about it. Whether you are planning an Annual Pledge Drive, a Capital Campaign, or are planning to participate in the Wake Now Our Vision (<http://wakenowourvision.org/>) Legacy Challenge program, you will need an up-to-date Gift Acceptance Policy. That is why this webinar is for board members, ministers, finance teams, and endowment committees from all congregations - regardless of your size or governance program.

The webinar will be presented twice:

Tues Sep 12 at 7:30 pm Eastern

Wed Sep 13 at 3:00 pm Eastern

Sign up now!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/needed-by-every-congregation-gift-acceptance-policy-tickets-36762974045>

Note: **Registration is handled by Stewardship for Us**, so please contact mewert@stewardshipforus.com (<mailto:mewert@stewardshipforus.com>) with any questions. There is a small fee charged for this webinar.

Mark Ewert is a stewardship consultant with the Stewardship For Us team. Mark works with congregations on their Long Term Stewardship programs.



General Assembly Traveling Chalice



At GA2012, Sculptor Mordecai Roth lights the GA Chalice he made

Each year prior to General Assembly, the Traveling Chalice hits the road as an ambassador and clarion call for congregations to spread the word about GA. Since the MidAmerica Region is large and we have limited resources for shipping the chalice, which weighs in at 60 pounds in its case, we welcome congregations to consider transporting the chalice to neighboring congregations.

The wide distribution of the chalice, with the help of the MidAmerica Region newsletter and sign up, will expand awareness of General Assembly in Kansas City in 2018. Each host church will also receive background information and a complete service, with readings and musical suggestions. The chalice will be available from October until the end of May to visit the Region. Please complete the on-line request information and whether you would be willing to share the chalice with a neighboring congregation.

As the Local Area Coordinator for GA 2018, I thank you for your willingness to host the Traveling Chalice and make use of the supporting materials to amplify the call to GA in Kansas City, Missouri from June 20 -24th, 2018.

Gaby Kusko, gaby.kcga@gmail.com (mailto:gaby.kcga@gmail.com)



DRUMM National Gathering in New Jersey

On the Brink: Reclaiming Our Past for a Better Future

REGISTER NOW!

DRUUMM GATHERING

OCTOBER 20-22



LANOKA HARBOR, NJ

UU OF COLOR EVENT

Join DRUUMM members for a weekend of reunions, recommitments, and reimaginings! Although this gathering is on the East Coast, it's open to all people of color in the Unitarian Universalist faith.

October 20-22, 2017

Murray Grove Retreat and Renewal Center, 431 US Highway 9, Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08374

Contact Ronnie Boyd at outreach@druumm.org (mailto:outreach@druumm.org)

<http://druumm.onefireplace.org/Annual-Gathering-2017>



UU Women's Connection Expands into Michigan

UU Women's Connection Council



Following a successful pilot event at Ronora Lodge in Watervliet, Michigan, the UU Women's Connection has announced its schedule for 2017-2018 includes THREE retreats:

October 14-15, 2017 FALL RETREAT at DeKoven Center, Racine, WI
featuring keynote speaker Shelley Graff

JUNE 1-3, 2018 SPRING RETREAT at Pilgrim Park, Princeton IL

AUGUST 10-12, 2018 SUMMER RETREAT at Ronora Lodge, Watervliet MI

<http://www.uuwomensconnection.org>



New Ministries: Correction

Lisa Presley, Congregational Life Consultant

After we published our list of new ministries, we learned some new things. Key among what we learned



was that Colleen Vahey is a ¾ time contract minister at Third Unitarian, in Chicago, not full-time called. She continues on the staff at Unity Temple in Oak Park as their part-time Faith In Action Coordinator.

It was also pointed out that we don't celebrate new ministries for community ministers. If you are an ordained minister in fellowship with the UUA, and have recently begun a new ministry, let me know and we can celebrate that as well. We don't have access to that information unless you tell us, so make sure to email me about that!

Lisa Presley, lpresley@uua.org

Brilliant Bits from Boston

Sharon Dittmar, Congregational Life Consultant

Mosaic Maker Conference in San Diego, CA October 27-29, 2017: Leading Vital Multicultural Congregations

Mosaic Makers is a dynamic gathering and learning community for teams from congregations deeply engaged in the work of building intentional multicultural community. We gather together in spiritual community for two and a half days of workshop, experiential learning, and community building around the theme of strengthening the fabric of Unitarian Universalist multicultural ministries. We're inviting everyone who wishes to embrace this avenue for disrupting, and eventually dismantling, white supremacy in our culture and in our denomination.



Speakers include UUA President, Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray, Dr. Takiyah Nur Amin (Black Lives of UU (BLUU)), Chris Crass (activist, educator), Dr. Mark Hicks (Meadville Lombard Theological School), Rev. Mitra Rahnama, and Rev. Dr. Susan Moore. Conference attendees will have an opportunity to tour the US/Mexico border with First UU Church of San Diego partner groups, visit the South Bay Campus, celebrate a culturally authentic Día de Muertos, and more. Optional Professional Day for UU religious professionals, Monday, October 30.

Register on the UUA website (<http://www.uua.org/justice/blog/mosaic-makers-national-conference-2017-registration-open-now>)

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.