



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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Welcome!

Ian Evison, Congregational Life Consultant and Regional Lead

Meeting with our congregational leaders this Fall, I feel resolve and uncertainty. We are one year on from the election of Donald Trump. Many of our congregations has experienced a "Trump bump" in membership and attendance. Many are responding to our message that "now more than ever we are needed as moral force and refuge -- or sanctuary." And we are also six months on from a once-in-a-generation upheaval in our UUA over white supremacist presumptions built into our structures.



What we are "against" is very much a part of us -- and impacts profoundly the people of color among us, as well as other marginalized people.

Especially those of us, like me, who are on the up side of the privilege divide, need to combine moral clarity and decisive action with humility and willingness to be self-critical about the impact of our actions no matter how good our intent. Tough, yes. And also immensely energizing and rewarding. We are in a once-in-a-generation time of transformation. I find it an honor to be part of this transformation.

I invite you all to find your places in this also: in your congregation, in your community, in our wider Association, and in the world.

Visit our MidAmerica Region website (https://www.midamericauua.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=featured&Itemid=21) for more information.



Accessibility and Inclusion Certification Received!

Several years ago the UUA created a certification to acknowledge congregations that are working hard to ensure that their buildings and operations are as accessible as possible, so we can be as welcoming as possible. We are thrilled that First Church UU in Rochester, Minnesota (<https://uurochmn.org/>), has completed all the steps and has been awarded certification through the Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry program (<https://www.uua.org/accessibility/aim>). They are the fourth congregation (<https://www.uua.org/accessibility/aim/certified-congregations>) to receive this, and First UU in Ann Arbor Michigan was the first to receive the certification.



ACCESSIBILITY AND
INCLUSION MINISTRY
AIM PROGRAM

Committed to the full inclusion of people with disabilities

We know that this status is not easy to achieve, and what underlies it is a deep commitment by the congregation to making itself as accessible as possible. For too many years, our congregations have struggled without overcoming issues of accessibility -- buildings that did not have ramps or appropriate entrance ways or restrooms, type that

was miniscule and illegible for those with visual concerns, no amplification or hearing loops to help out, structures that supported a lack of neurodiversity, and so on.

This certification means that First Church Rochester has decided to step away from "business as usual" to make it "business wide open." Thank you, First Church, for all you do to make everyone feel welcome in the congregation.



Regional Ministers Receive UUA Grant Awards



Congratulations to Reverend Jennifer Gray and Reverend Alan Taylor for being selected to receive UUA awards in 2017. Reverend Gray (UU Fellowship, DeKalb, IL) was awarded the **Betty and Ray Goodman Ministerial Aid Fund**. This fund was established by Betty and Ray Goodman as a grant to supplement ministers during their first three years of ministry.

Reverend Alan Taylor (Unity Temple, Oak Park, IL) was awarded the **Westwood Ministerial Aid Fund**, a grant established by the Westwood Family to support UU clergy who successfully spread the faith and nurture Unitarian Universalist congregations. Reverend Taylor plans to use the grant to "cover the costs of creating a video series about the values and history of Unitarian Universalism."



Congratulations to Jennifer and Alan!



The Promise and the Practice of Our Faith

Imagine what our faith would look like if we upheld and centered the history, the perspectives, the voices, and the leadership of Black Lives of Unitarian Universalists...



(<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/promise-and-practice>)

The Promise and the Practice of Our Faith Campaign is our opportunity to take the lead as a faith denomination in addressing our history of upholding white supremacy. Together, we can collectively work to dismantle it and amend a long broken promise to the Black Lives within our Association.

Join our Association of Congregations as we do something different in this extraordinary moment to connect our finances with our theological values as we enter a new chapter within our faith.

Congregations are asked to join in the Promise and the Practice of Our Faith by engaging in the following opportunities:

Schedule at least one Sunday on **November 12, 2017** or **February 4, 2018** (or any Sunday that is convenient for your congregation) to engage around the theme **The Promise and the Practice of Our Faith**. Make a financial commitment in our support to BLUU that is transformational and inspirational which helps fulfill our \$1 million match opportunity (double the impact of your contribution by meeting the threshold of \$10 per certified member, or however you count the souls you serve). Make a long-term commitment to dismantling white supremacy, racism and oppression from within our denomination and

beyond, and uplifting the Black Lives, Voices, and Leadership of Unitarian Universalism. This is our time to be **Bold, Radical, and Transformational** as we commit to nurture a radically inclusive, justice centered, multiracial and multigenerational religious faith!

WorshipWeb materials are available online. (<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/promise-and-practice>)

For more information about the Promise and the Practice of Our Faith Campaign for BLUU, please contact bluu-campaign@uua.org (<mailto:bluu-campaign@uua.org>).



Chalice Lighters Grant Application Deadline

Just a reminder: Applications for the Winter 2018 Chalice Lighter Call are due by midnight on **November 15**. Chalice Lighter grants are funded by small donations from individuals like you -- donations that are pooled together to help congregations from across our large MidAmerica Region of the UUA with specific growth projects.



Visit www.midamericauua.net/chalichelights (<http://www.midamericauua.net/chalichelights>) for details about what you'll need to complete an application



Worship Renaissance Module in Deerfield IL

Thursday - Saturday, November 16-18



Presenters:

Nancy Combs-Morgan, CRE-ML & Rev. Rudra Vilius Dundzila, Ph.D. & D.Min.

Understanding worship, its place in congregational life, its craft, is essential. This module, geared for

religious educators and lay worship associates, will explore worship formation; review the range of worship experiences; highlight resources and skills for the craft of worship; impact understanding and practice the power of stories in worship, and equip for evaluating the aspects and impact of a worship service.

Fee is \$200 per person.

Final Registration Deadline: November 9, 2017 **REGISTER NOW** (<https://www.midamericauua.net/events/calendar2/eventdetail/748/-/worship-renaissance-module-in-deerfield-il>)



Holly Near at Unitarian Church of Evanston

WOMANSPiRiT 2018

"I AM WILLING" with Holly Near

Unitarian Church of Evanston

February 2-3, 2018



If you are struggling listening to the nightly news... Come hear Holly Near!

Holly began her career of artistic activism singing protest songs about the Vietnam War - and she has been singing ever since. About ... the disappeared in Central America; single mothers; peace and justice; and, women-identified women. Holly Near gives voice to the dream of a world of equality and wholeness.

Join us in creating an intentional women's community where we will listen to Holly Near, to each other and to ourselves.

Register at www.womenandreligion.org (<http://www.womenandreligion.org>)



UUA Commission on Institutional Change



The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Commission on Institutional Change is charged with long-term cultural and institutional change that redeems the essential promise and ideals of Unitarian Universalism. Appointed by the UUA Board of Trustees in 2017 for a period of two years, the Commission will analyze structural racism and white supremacy within the UUA.

Read the complete summary (https://www.uuworld.org/sites/live-new.uuworld.org/files/proposal_to_appoint_a_commission_on_institutional_change_v3.pdf) of the Commission, including the full charge and member bios. To contact the Commission, email **commission@uaa.org** (**<mailto:commission@uaa.org>**).

Keep up-to-date on the Commission's activity with **The Institutional Change Blog** (<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/commission-institutional-change/blog>).



Brilliant Bits from Boston

UU Health Insurance Plan for Congregational Employees!



The UUA Office of Church Staff Finance reminds us that there is a UU Health Plan (<https://www.uua.org/finance/compensation/health>)! As Church Staff Finance Director Richard Nugent explains:

Our plan is 'oUUr.' We are self-insured, so it's our plan designed with UU values, and managed by UUists. While the premium for national staff is a blended one (everyone pays the same in each category), premiums are based on age and zip code at the congregational level. We offer 4 great plans, including one Medicare Supplement, and extraordinary customer service. Providers are on the Blue Cross network throughout the US. Open

enrollment begins in November 1! Now would be a great time for congregations to review whether they should join the 300+ congregations in our plan. We've announced our 2018 premium increase is Zero. In this era of double digit increases, you can't beat that AND our plan is faith-based (ours). Congregations will soon receive open enrollment materials.

Questions? Contact UUA Health Plan Director Jim Sargent at (617) 948-6405 or jsargent@uua.org (<mailto:jsargent@uua.org>).



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.