



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!

Nancy Combs-Morgan, Faith Development Director/Congregational Life Consultant

Holiday Greetings and welcome to our December newsletter. Winter is a purposeful season in our congregations, focused on celebrations -- community celebrations encompassing many different holiday traditions. The best in our pluralism is experienced during this season, from heartfelt Winter Solstice celebrations to moving Christmas Eve services. For religious professionals and lay leaders alike, the season brings a flurry of activity. When I look at many of our MidAmerica congregational newsletters I am moved to see how many of you take part in community building service projects, from delivering holiday packages to local homeless shelters to singing carols at Senior Centers. Thankfully, we embody in those moments our shared intent for deeper connections with our larger community. Our UU congregations, in my estimation, are best when we exemplify humane and loving community.



My holiday wish for each of you is a moment of peace: a peace reflected in joyous music, hands held in worship, laughter in the fellowship hall, and multigenerational moments of great tenderness.

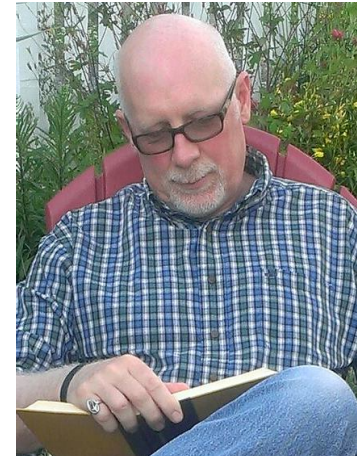


Supporting One Another in the Work of Our Faith

Eric Huffer, MidAmerica Region Board President

Every year in the fall, the members of our MidAmerica Region Board of Trustees make phone calls to leaders of some of our congregations to check in and gather feedback. We have conversations about how they are doing, what seems to be working well, and where they might be experiencing struggles. We check to see how and if they feel connected to the Region and UUA, and which, if any, of the resources and programming made available by the region and UUA have proven useful to them or their congregation.

Our hope is that these calls will help the region and UUA create better connections with our congregations, and find ways we can better serve them. Each year, in November, the MidAmerica Region board and the congregational life staff team meet and review the notes from the calls, and look for general themes that appear across the conversations. We try to identify successes and opportunities for improvement, as well as areas of need.



This year, the tone of the calls felt a little different. We kept hearing how stressed and tired both congregations and leaders are feeling. They spoke of having to respond to so many different social justice issues over the last year, and the need to provide sanctuary and ministry to their members as they too struggle with the many demands on those seeking justice in our world.

There is no denying that these are trying times, and the demands on our time and resources are many as we work toward bringing forth the beloved community. Many congregations feel isolated, and may even withdraw into themselves to focus on taking care of their members. I want to take this opportunity to raise up that these are the times that make being part of an "association of congregations" so important. We have covenanted to join together in body and spirit in the work of our faith. We know we are not alone, and that knowledge gives us strength, resolve, and creativity.

I am asking you to live into that knowledge, both in the work that you do, and the resources you share, as we go forward in community.



Salary Recommendations Now Posted

Jan Gartner, UUA Compensation and Staffing Practices Manager

The UUA Office of Church Staff Finances team has now posted Salary Recommendations (<https://www.uua.org/finance/compensation/program/salary-recommendations>) and related resources for the 2018-2019 year. Please note:

- New for 2018-2019, the Geo Index Listing (https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/geo_index_listing_18-19.pdf) features a designation for areas with an especially high cost of living relative to cost of wages. (The Geo Index itself is based on cost of wages.) You may recall that 2017-2018 was a "catch-up year" (http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/salary_memo_for_17-18_-_112216_as_posted.pdf), in which we held all recommendations steady to allow for thoughtful congregational review and adjustment of salaries with respect to our guidelines. Thus, the 4% increase in salaries for all positions in 2018-2019 reflects changes in wages over a 2-year period.
- The Guide to Salary Recommendations (https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/guide_to_salary_recommendations.pdf) has been updated to provide a deeper understanding of our recommendations and how to use them in your context for new and continuing staff.
- Look for our Compensation Worksheet (https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/compensation_worksheet.xlsx), modified for greater flexibility, which helps congregational leaders

ensure that they are properly budgeting for benefits.

About congregations in search: We are aware that congregations in search have been using 2017-2018 numbers to complete their materials. It's okay for them to use these for now -- and to say they are meeting our compensation guidelines based on this year's figures. However, as winter turns to spring and they are dealing with actual religious professionals, everyone will be looking at 2018-2019 numbers and they should be prepared to negotiate based on those.

This is the earliest we've ever posted the following program year's salary charts, but I know it's still on the late side for those in ministerial search. Timing is an issue every year. Will try to give a better heads-up in the future. (Still riding that learning curve.) Questions? The Compensation Consultants (<https://www.uua.org/finance/compensation/program/consultants>) and I (JGartner@uua.org (<mailto:JGartner@uua.org>)) are here to help!

Coming Soon: Social Justice Webinars

MidAmerica UUA is partnering with the Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA (<http://www.muusja.org/>)) to present a series of six social justice webinars beginning January 9, 2018. There will be one webinar on the second Tuesday of each month between January and June. MUUSJA's Executive Director Rev. Ashley Horan and Statewide Organizer Pastor Danny Givens will host. There will also be webinars next year on covenant, building safety, dealing with disruptive behavior, congregational discernment, accessibility, and endowments. Watch for further details in next month's MidAmerica Messenger or visit <https://midamericauua.net/events/webinars> (<https://midamericauua.net/events/webinars>).



Brilliant Bits from Boston

Follow the UUA President on Social Media!

Want to stay connected with UUA President Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray on social media?

Follow her Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/revsusanfrederickgray/>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/sfrederickgray>) account (@sfrederickgray) for updates and conversations on Unitarian Universalism and the work of the UUA! Want more ways to connect and stay informed? Follow the UUA on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/TheUUA/>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/UUA>) (@UUA) as well.



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.