



The Searchlight

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia, Missouri

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Sunday Worship December 2013

Sunday Services at 10:30 a.m.
(Christmas Services on Page 3)

Sunday, Dec. 1

“Darkness/Light”

Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

During this time of long nights and festivals of light, we will explore the balance of darkness and light, with reflections on the symbolic power of both in our poetic and religious traditions.

Sunday, Dec. 8

“How Sweet the Dark”

**Rev. Molly Housh Gordon
and Youth Group**

In this Youth Collaborative Service, Rev. Molly will reflect on the holy potential of darkness – a time of adventure and growth. The sermon emerges from conversations with members of our youth group, who will also take part in the service.

Sunday, Dec. 15

“The Stranger at the Gate”

Lay-Led Service – Barb Carter

Who is the stranger at our gate? Can we, do we, offer our light to all who enter here? Do we accept the light and warmth they offer in return? In many times and in many places, people have told the stories and honored the traditions of welcoming all to the table, of offering a resting place to those who are weary – even when that person is one we have labeled “the enemy.” Who will we invite to our table? What light will they bring to our path?

(Continued on Page 2)

December worship theme:

Darkness & Light

“You can’t have a light without a dark to stick it in.”

– Arlo Guthrie

During this time of year, when darkness begins to descend by late afternoon, the balance between darkness and light feels particularly poignant. Throughout human history, cultures and religions both ancient and modern have marked this turning of the year with contemplative times in the dark and bright festivals of light. These cultures have prized the balance of light and dark.

Darkness can be full of fears, and it can be full of dreams. Light can illuminate, and light can blind. Growth always begins in the dark – of soil or womb – and it always continues in the light – of sun and star.

This month, we will celebrate the beauty of candlelight and the return of the sun, and we will also make some time to sit in the quiet dark. Recognizing the literal and metaphorical need for both light and dark in our lives, we will spend time reflecting upon and welcoming both.

See you in church,
Rev. Molly

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December Worship Theme: *Darkness & Light*

Wise Words

“Every hour of the light and dark is a miracle.”

– Walt Whitman

“Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there, wondering, fearing, doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before.”

– Edgar Allan Poe

“I will love the light for it shows me the way, yet I will endure the darkness because it shows me the stars.”

– Og Mandino

“There are two kinds of light – the glow that illumines, and the glare that obscures.”

– James Thurber

“Darkness deserves gratitude. It is the alleluia point at which we learn to understand that all growth does not take place in sunlight.”

– Joan Chittister

Want to reflect further? Check out these resources...

The Fruitful Darkness: A Journey Through Buddhist Practice and Tribal Wisdom by Joan Halifax

Dark Night of the Soul by Saint John of the Cross

Come Darkness Come Light: Twelve Songs of Christmas by Mary Chapin Carpenter

Come Be My Light by Mother Teresa

Sunday Worship December 2013

(continued from Page 1)

Sunday, Dec. 22

“Festivals of Light”

**Rev. Molly Housh Gordon
and DRE Lisa Fritsche**

Yule, Diwali, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and more! So many traditions celebrate festivals of light at this time of year. In this intergenerational service, we will explore many of them in story and song.

Sunday, December 29

“At Year’s End”

Worship Associates

Join us for a time of reflection and contemplation at the year’s end, as we consider what has been and what may be in the year to come.

Christmas Worship

See Page 3 for information about Advent Vespers, a Blue Christmas Service, and two Christmas Eve services.

YRUU December Schedule

YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) is our ministry program for high-school-aged youths. Jamila Batchelder (256-8688) is the adult advisor.

Noon Sunday, Dec. 1

Activity: Yoga with Karen Dwyer

10:30 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 8

Event: YRUU Collaborative Service (lunch afterward)

Noon Sunday, Dec. 15

Discussion: Watch movie *Super Amigos* and discuss

6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 21

Lock-in: Faith in Action, plus Christmas Cookie Fundraiser

Event: Solstice Celebration

Sunday, Dec. 29

No Meeting Scheduled



Hanging of the Greens!

Bring an ornament to help us decorate our Christmas tree during the potluck lunch on Dec. 1.

Christmas Worship



Advent Vespers – 6-7 p.m. Thursdays, Dec. 5, 12, and 19

Join us each Thursday in December before Christmas for quiet, contemplative services, centered in the themes of Advent. We will gather in the Greeting Area for reflection, prayer, and song.

Blue Christmas Service – 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 15

This celebratory time of year can also be painful for we who suffer grief, loss, family conflict, depression, and more. Join us in the Sanctuary for a service that takes seriously the blues that exist amid the merriment.

Christmas Eve – Tuesday, Dec. 24 – two services at 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Family Service at 6:30 p.m. – Join us for the traditional carols and candlelight, and a family-friendly pageant with an accessible message of hope.

Candlelight Service at 9 p.m. – Join us for the late service, with the traditional carols and candlelight, and a Christmas homily from Rev. Molly.

Forum Schedule

9 a.m. Sundays

The UU Forum, an adult discussion group open to the public, meets on Sundays from 9 to 10 a.m. Conversation and light refreshments are offered along with the discussion. Childcare is offered at no charge in our nursery. If you have ideas for a program or would like to make a presentation at Forum, contact the coordinator, Bill Clark, at 573-474-4510.

Sunday, Dec. 1

Jim Carrel – “Awe in Nature.” Reflections of a field biologist who is also a UUC member.

Sunday, Dec. 8

Alan Arnold, UUC member and popular musician, will entertain us and talk about the saxophone and other instruments.

Sunday, Dec. 15

Robin Remington, UUC member, will discuss the pros and cons of the Nobel Prize for Peace going to the European Union.

Sunday, Dec. 22 and 29

Bill Clark, long-time coordinator of the Forum, will lead a discussion on a subject to be announced.

Exploring Spirituality

9 a.m. Sundays

The Exploring Spirituality group, which meets in the lower level from 9 to 10 a.m. every Sunday, is now using the following format:

- On the last Sunday of each month, the group will conduct a “Socrates Circle,” putting into practice Socrates’ claim that the most worthwhile and meaningful life is the examined one. On these Sundays, the group will engage in philosophical dialogue on a selected question – e.g., *What is enough? What does it mean to be mature? Is anger ever a virtue? What is sanity? etc.*
- On other Sundays, the group will have a predetermined topic and be led by a presenter who will introduce the topic and facilitate discussion.

For more information contact Qhyrrae Michaelieu.

Dec. 1

Bill McMillan will present on “Reincarnation.”

Dec. 8

Brian Bowles will present on “Paradox and Spirituality.”

Later December programs to be announced.

Growth, Part 2: Becoming a 'Program' Church

By Steve Scott, 2013-14 President

Last month I wrote about some of the more tangible manifestations of our current growth spurt, including issues related to our facilities and staff.

Growth also has profound implications for church culture – old ways of organizing and doing things need to be changed to foster growth. This kind of change can be unsettling, but the discomfort must be faced if we want to continue to grow in order to advance our mission and spread our healing message.

Scholars who study church size note distinctive organizational characteristics related to the number of adults and children who attend Sunday worship and classes. These scholars define four size groupings:

- * **Family church** – Sunday attendance of up to 50.
- * **Pastoral church** – Sunday attendance of 50 to 150.
- * **Program church** – Sunday attendance of 150 to 350.
- * **Corporate church** – Sunday attendance of more than 350.

For many years UUCC had been a pastoral-size church, and our organizational characteristics pretty well matched what the scholars predict. Some of these characteristics include strong lay involvement and leadership; expectations that the minister will relate to everybody, attend many activities, personally provide pastoral care for all members in need, and provide guidance to the leadership; and the functioning of the board as a committee arranging much of the day-to-day operations of the church.

Now, however, we have average worship attendance of more than 100, and average Sunday School attendance of more than 50, so we are clearly moving into the program-size church range. The demands of growth lead to changed characteristics in a program-size church – many of which have already taken place or are in the works at UUCC.

One major change is that our Board of Trustees no longer arranges much of the day-to-day life of

the church, but delegates operations to the minister and focuses on big-picture issues – such as dealing with growth! Staff members and volunteers no longer report to the board, but rather to the minister. These are aspects of our on-going move to “policy governance,” a topic I wrote about in September.

Another characteristic of program-size churches is that they provide entry points for new members through a variety of groups within the church rather than expecting newcomers to relate to the membership as a whole. We have been making progress on this front as well – our new Chalice Circles are a prime example.

While program-size churches still look to the minister for leadership and guidance, we need to understand that the opportunities for each member to interact directly with the minister may be somewhat diminished because of the increased demands on the minister. The minister now supervises the staff and volunteers in our numerous ministry activities and, as a result, has somewhat less time to spend with members and newcomers. Delegation by the minister becomes essential to prevent burn-out.

A good example of delegation by the minister is increasing reliance on our excellent, long-standing Caring Ministry Coordinating Team to help meet the pastoral care needs of our growing congregation.

Overall, the challenge faced by a program-size church in its transition from a pastoral-size church is to develop policies and organizational structures that allow the church to fulfill its mission and vision while maintaining some sense of organic cohesion in the congregation as a whole.

At 241 members, we are already larger than about 80% of all Unitarian Universalist congregations. Perhaps someday we'll need to deal with the challenges of becoming a corporate-size church, but that's a long way off. In the meantime, the board and minister welcome your creative suggestions for dealing with our transition to a program-size church.

Programs and Events

UUCM Men's Group

The UUCM Men's Group meets on the second, fourth, and fifth Saturdays of each month at 8 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Executive Center. The group is open to all men. There are no fees and no reservations are necessary. The agenda is an open discussion of whatever is on the minds of those in attendance – and breakfast! For more information contact Mehdi Farhangi at 445-6325.

Conversations, Etc.

Conversations, Etc. will meet at noon at the church on Wednesday, Dec 11. Bring salad, appetizer, bread or cookies. Soup is provided. Contact Melinda Farhangi at 445-6325 if you have questions.

UU Book Discussion Group

The UU Book Discussion Group will meet at Upper Crust, 3107 Green Meadows Way, at 5:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 13. Bring a book you have read to discuss briefly. Call Pam Springsteel at 445-0642 if you have questions.

UU Book Table

The Book Table is usually open the second, third and fourth Sundays before and after worship. Newcomers might want to check out the many books on Unitarian Universalism. Parents might want to note the many books on effective parenting and on being a UU Parent. There are books by our own authors, plus books on theology, meditation, current events and just living.

UU Life Writers – Fall 2013 theme is 'Home!'

Our December theme is "Home for the Holidays." All are welcome at 10:30 a.m. on the first and third Saturdays of most months in the Centering Room – however, in December the group will meet only on Dec. 7. For further information, contact Fran Reynolds at 443-4336 or freynolds@centurytel.net.

Our Presence on the Web

Go to

<http://uuchurch.net>

for complete information on church activities and our online calendar of events.

Meditation in Nature – Dec. 15

Come into the peace of wild things...

Meditation in Nature takes place at Gans Creek Wildlife Area every third Sunday from 9 to 10 a.m. Its purpose is to build a connection between spiritual practice and environmental consciousness, and it is open to all people who love nature. For more information, contact Peter Holmes at 239-7789 or naturemeditation@yahoo.com.

Fair Trade Sales

Sales of fair trade coffee, tea and chocolate are sponsored by the Green Sanctuary group every first Sunday from September through June – however, **there will be two sales in December on Dec. 1 and 15**. The sales are conducted in the Greeting Area before and after worship. Purchases support coffee time after worship and help fund programs for our youth.

Anyone interested in working at the fair trade sale table should contact Ellen Thomas at 999-4615 or ellen.thomas@centurytel.net.

First Sunday potluck – Dec. 1

On the first Sunday of each month from September through June, we gather for our "First Sunday Potluck" immediately following the worship service. We invite all guests to join us, whether or not they have brought food. Everyone pitches in, making light work of set-up, serving and clean-up. We ask those attending to bring a main dish or side dish sufficient to serve six-eight people so we will have plenty of food.

Bring an ornament from home to decorate the tree during the potluck!

In addition to your potluck item, please remember to bring non-perishable food items for the food barrel upstairs near the coat rack. When the barrel is full, the food is taken to the Central Pantry, which serves Columbia and Boone County.



Additional News

How to use hearing aids with the UUCC assistive listening system

Most contemporary digital hearing aids have an automatic T-coil. It is a magnetic induction coil that is activated automatically when one places a telephone up to the ear.

However, the T-coil is not automatically activated by assistive listening systems such as the “loop system” now installed in our sanctuary, and your hearing aid must be programmed to detect it.

Ask your audiologist to program your hearing aid with a “T-Coil + MIC” program. You must tell the audiologist that you need the program for a *loop system* at your church. The audiologist will understand what you need and will program your hearing aid accordingly.

Most hearing aids have a small button the wearer can push. After your hearing aid is properly programmed, the button will change the hearing aid program from your regular program to the “T-Coil + MIC” program.

After your hearing aid is properly programmed and you switch to the “T-Coil + MIC” program, you will hear the voices of Rev. Molly and others using the sanctuary microphones through your hearing aid in a much clearer way. At the same time, the microphone in your hearing aid will still pick up the voices of people near you and other sounds.

If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Guilory at lisaudio@yahoo.com.

Honduras Service Trip Updates

The tamales lunch after the service on Nov. 17 raised over \$600 – thanks to all of you who donated so generously and helped out in various ways!

Nov. 19 was World Toilet Day – and with good reason. Did you know that no invention has saved more lives than the toilet and that diarrhea kills more children than malaria, AIDS, and measles combined? For this reason, our latrine-building projects in Honduras are vital.

Our goal is to raise at least \$3,000 so that we can build 10 latrines, bring and donate Kindergarten and other supplies plus high quality tools, and pay our foreman. Any additional money we raise will go toward the lodging of the group during the work days and toward scholarships.

Planning for the trip, scheduled June 12-19, 2014, is well under way. Be watching for card sales and other fundraisers in the weeks and months to come.

Our next meeting is at 3 p.m. Dec. 14 at the church. If you are thinking about coming along on the trip, this will be the last planning meeting before a non-refundable deposit is due on Jan. 10 for trip participants.

For more information, contact Allie Gassmann of the Social Action Committee at 447-3629 or alliegassmann@socket.net.



Food Pantry Collection

When you come to a potluck, remember to feed our food barrel...

In October and November two barrels of non-perishable food items – more than 200 pounds – have been taken to the Central Pantry.

A big thank you to all who contributed!

The need for food continues. Please, everyone, consider feeding our food barrels to help our community members. Many of our neighbors need help – times are still tough for them. Thanks.

Need a Ride?

Do you need a ride to church on Sunday, or a church function at another time? The Caring Ministry may be able to help. Please call the church office at 442-5764.

Reflections

Bring in Your VAC Family Gifts NOW!

If you signed up to bring gifts to the VAC family the church is sponsoring at the holidays this year, be sure to bring them to church by Dec. 1!



Third Sunday Lunch...Sing-a-Long in the Sanctuary



Please join us as we share a simple lunch in the Thoreau classroom, and then flex our vocal chords in the sanctuary. We will try out the church's new Christmas songbooks. The gathering will run from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 15. Please let Lisa F. know if you'll be there. We don't want to run out of food!

Making Gifts, Simple and Complicated

On the morning of Dec. 14, from 9 to 10:30, there will be many little elves in our church. At "Simple Gifts," kids in 5th grade and younger will have the opportunity to create holiday gifts for those they love. Sign-up begins on Nov. 24. Look for registration sheets on the table downstairs in the R.E. hall. Sample gifts will be displayed. (Preschoolers will have to bring a parent/assistant along with them to the workshop.)

Too old for "Simple Gifts"? Come try your hand at "Complicated Gifts"! Sixth-12th graders are invited to come to church for pizza and crafts from 6 to 9 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 6. Sign-up begins on Nov. 24, when project pictures will be set up on the table in the R.E. hall. Come join church friends, and make some fun holiday gifts for those you love!

Also....if older kids still want to attend "Simple Gifts," they can help at the craft stations.

You must register in advance!

Share Your Stories as 'MYSTERY FRIENDS' Returns



This popular intergenerational program is making a repeat performance! Sunday school kids will be matched up with adults from our church. The adults will send a letter or card each week to the child, and the kids will answer. As we all know, building connections within our community keeps it strong, and adds to our happiness. Here's what you have to do to get involved...

KIDS....You need to be in 8th grade or younger, and PROMISE to answer the letters written to you by your Mystery Friend. (You will leave letters at church, since you won't know where to mail them!) You will also need to be at church for the Big Revealing on Sunday, Feb. 9.

ADULTS....You need to PROMISE to mysteriously contact your young friend at least once each week for the duration of the program. You must also keep your identity secret, and plan to be at church for the Big Revealing on Sunday, Feb. 9.

Mystery Friends will run for five weeks, from Jan. 5 through Feb. 9. Please contact Lisa Fritsche (dre@uuchurch.net) if you would like to join the fun!

Sign up sheets will be available on December 15 in the RE Hall.



December 2013

**Lisa Fritsche,
Director of Religious Education**

dre@uuchurch.net

573-442-5764

Office Hours:

Wed. 9-3 and Sun. 8-12

Important Dates:

Dec. 1 - Project Linus Service
Sunday, last day to turn in VAC gifts, last day to sign up for Complicated Gifts workshop

Dec. 6 - Jr. Youth Group/
Complicated Gifts workshop

Dec. 8 - Last day to sign up for
Simple Gifts workshops

Dec. 14 - Simple Gifts workshop

Dec. 15 - 3rd Sunday sing-a-long;
sign-up starts for "Mystery
Friends"

Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve service

Mary? Joseph? Shepherds?...



...angels, and wise men? If you will be here for our early Christmas Eve candlelight service and would like a role in our play, contact Lisa F. (Adult help is needed as well.) This year's production will be a bit more elaborate than in year's past.

We'll have brief practices after church on Dec. 15 and 22.

Two Services on Christmas Eve



We hope you will come to the early service at 6:30 p.m. It will feature carols, candlelight and our Christmas pageant.

Hang on to Those Broken Small Appliances!

Our Third Sunday Lunch in February will involve exploring small appliances. We will take them apart and peek at what's inside. So, if you have a radio that won't receive a signal, a curling iron that no



longer heats up, or a fan that won't spin, bring them to church where they will be deconstructed by curious kids! (Any curious adults are encouraged to come as well!)

Service Sunday – Project Linus

At the Dec. 1 Service Sunday we will be creating beautiful blankets for hospitalized children through "Project Linus." It's been said that this is the Service Sunday project most beloved by the kids of the church.



Everyone from Kindergarten through middle school will be helping, which is lucky, as there is much to do!

Be sure to come to church on Dec. 1!

Sunday Snow Day?



It's Sunday morning and you wake up to snow falling and wind blowing. The tree in your front yard is bowed under the weight of

snow and ice. The plow has not yet visited your street. What should you do?

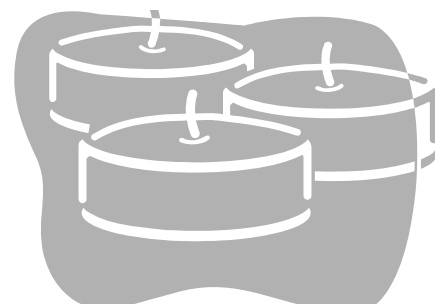
Check the church's website (www.uuchurch.net), our Facebook page, or turn on KFRU (AM 1400) to hear if we have cancelled.

If we have not, should you try and fight your way to church? Please use your own judgment. We don't want ANYONE to put themselves or their children in danger just so they can get to church!

Something to Think About in December

Rev. Molly's theme for the month of December is Light and Darkness. Here are some questions for you to talk about with your family this month....

- Do you prefer to sit and think in the light or in darkness?
- What is the perfect combination of darkness and light to have in a day?
- What are things that can make your mood light, or dark?



Expanding Heart, Mind and Soul



Next Pie-Day in January

There will be no Friday Pie-Day in December because of the holidays.

But do join us on Jan. 24 and the fourth Friday of following months for pie, good conversation, and a program focusing on the month's worship theme.

New Year's Day Hike

Come join us for our traditional New Year's Day Hike. It promises to be an interesting and energetic walk in the good company of fellow UCC members.

Plan on meeting at the church at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2014. We will be walking in Three Creeks Conservation Area. The length and route of the walk will depend on the weather and who joins us.

This is a great chance to get off the couch, take a break from screen addictions, and burn off holiday season calories.

If you have questions or want more information, contact Peter Holmes at 239-7789 or pfolmes63@gmail.com.

Our Mission

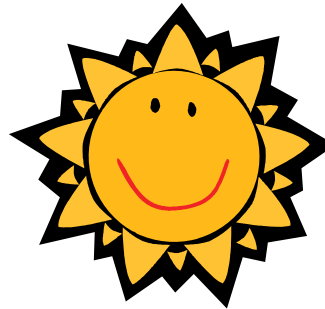
*In the spirit of courageous love,
we forge a community of radical
welcome and deep connection
that moves us together to heal
the world.*

Winter Solstice Celebration 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 21, at UCC

Mummers play, fancy dress, face painting, animal spirits, flaming torches, fire breathing, bonfire, dancing, drumming, singing, and midwinter madness.

With any luck, if we produce enough energy and enthusiasm, we'll have a special appearance of...

The Sun



**This is a kid and family friendly event.
Wear warm and weird clothes.**

Also bring:

**High energy, foolery, drums, noise-makers, flashlights,
libations, and finger foods to share around the bonfire.**

Questions? Contact Peter Holmes

New to Unitarian Universalism?

Two opportunities to get to know us better are coming up.

On Dec. 8 (and the second Sunday of each month), the Membership Team will offer "Discover UU." This is a short (20-30 minute) session after church to answer questions you might have. Whether you are new to Unitarian-Universalism, or coming from another UU church and wanting find where you fit here, we welcome you.

If you're thinking you might be ready to join but still have some questions, come to the Membership Team's "Membership 101" class from noon to 2 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 15, which will provide more in-depth information. Lunch and child care are provided, so we do request an RSVP to Barbara Carter at 696-1784 or oakshaven@socket.net.

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Email to uuchurch@uuchurch.net,
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The deadline for submissions is noon on the third Monday of each month for the following edition.