



# The Searchlight

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia, Missouri

2615 Shepard Blvd., Columbia, MO 65201 • 573-442-5764 • [www.uuchurch.net](http://www.uuchurch.net) • Volume 54, Issue 4, December 2014

Worship Services  
December 2014  
*Services begin at 10:30 a.m.*

**Sunday, Dec. 7**

**“Rejoice, Rejoice”**

**Rev. Molly Housh Gordon**

The holiday season invokes a call to merriment and joy, but what does that look like, exactly? What does it truly mean to rejoice?

**Sunday, Dec. 14**

**“Ha Ha Ha”**

**Rev. Molly Housh Gordon & High School Youth Group**

In this Youth Collaborative Service, Rev. Molly and our teens will explore the spiritual value of laughter, hilarity, and perhaps even ridiculousness.

**Sunday, Dec. 21**

**“Joy in the Dark”**

**Rev. Molly Housh Gordon**

Many ancient and contemporary traditions mark this dark time of year by turning toward the light. Can we find a rooted joy that resonates in the dark times?

**Sunday, Dec. 28**

**“At Year’s End”**

**Guest Preacher**

We will gather to mark the end of one year and look ahead to all that the next may hold.

**Christmas Season  
Worship Opportunities  
on Page 2**

## Our December Worship Theme:

# JOY

*When you do things from your soul, you  
feel a river moving in you, a joy.*

– Rumi

If the great religious thinkers of the world are to be believed, joy is as simple as a smile, and as difficult to pin down as the effervescence that bubbles up in a glass of something sparkly.

What is joy, truly? A bubbling up within the soul? A deep and contented peace? A lightness of being? A laugh? Does joy soothe or excite? Do we choose it or does it choose us? Does joy embrace sorrow or refuse its touch? Is joy foolish or wise?

Yes.

This month, let us make way for joy. Let us pause amid the rush to find moments of pure and unadulterated delight. So doing, we may just reach a deeper place in the center of our own souls.

See you in church!

Rev. Molly



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# December Worship Theme: *JOY*

## **Wise Words**

“Joy is not in things; it is in us.”

– Richard Wagner

“Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day.”

– Henri Nouwen

“Peace is joy at rest, and joy is peace on its feet.”

– Anne Lamott

“Every breath we take, every step we make, can be filled with peace, joy and serenity.”

– Thich Nhat Hanh

“I like nonsense, it wakes up the brain cells.

Fantasy is a necessary ingredient in living, it’s a way of looking at life through the wrong end of a telescope. Which is what I do, and it enables you to laugh at life’s realities.”

– Dr. Seuss

## **Want to reflect further?**

### **Check out these resources...**

*Reduced to Joy* by Mark Nepo

*Finding Deep Joy* by Robert Ellwood

*Dancing With Joy: 99 Poems* Edited by Roger Housden



## **Hanging of the Greens!**

Bring an ornament to help us decorate our Christmas tree during the potluck lunch on Dec. 7.

# **Christmas Worship**

## **Advent Vespers**

**Wednesdays, Dec. 3, 10, and 17 – 6 to 7 p.m.**

Join us each Wednesday from now until Christmas for quiet, contemplative services, centered in the themes of Advent. We will gather in the Greeting Area for reflection, prayer, and song. Service from 6 to 6:30 p.m., with a simple soup supper to follow from 6:30 to 7 p.m.

## **Blue Christmas Service**

**Sunday evening, Dec. 14 – 7 p.m.**

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.

## **Hospitality Team Request**

Please bring a plate of cookies, a box of candies, or another treat to share during the Coffee Time on Christmas Eve!



## **Christmas Eve**

**Wednesday, Dec. 24**

**Two Services at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.**

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

**Candlelight Service – 8 p.m.** – Join us for the late service, with the traditional carols and candlelight, and a Christmas homily from Rev. Molly.

# Forum for December 2014

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.

## Dec. 7

Wayne Anderson will introduce us to new language-learning technology.

## Dec. 14

Jimi Cook, the Bill Allen Distinguished Professor in Orthopedic Surgery, will take us on a trip into his second life as a leader in "Be the Change Volunteers" which builds, restores and equips schools worldwide.

## Dec. 21

Forum members not out of town for the holiday are invited to a group discussion about the year past and the year to come in politics, social issues, and matters Unitarian-Universalist.

## Dec. 28

A continuation of the discussion begun on Dec. 21.



## 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.*

## UU Life Writers

The UU Life Writers will meet at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 6 for writing and then lunch out!

The group is finishing up its fall sessions of "Seasons of our Lives – or Seasonings or Seasoned!"

Meetings will begin again on the first Saturday in February (weather permitting).

## Need a Ride?

Do you need a ride to church on Sunday, or a church function at another time? We are coordinating rides as part of the Caring Ministry. Please call the church office at 442-5764 or contact Marianne Erickson,

Our Presence on the Web  
Go to  
<http://uuchurch.net>  
for complete information  
on church activities  
and our online calendar  
of events.

## YRUU

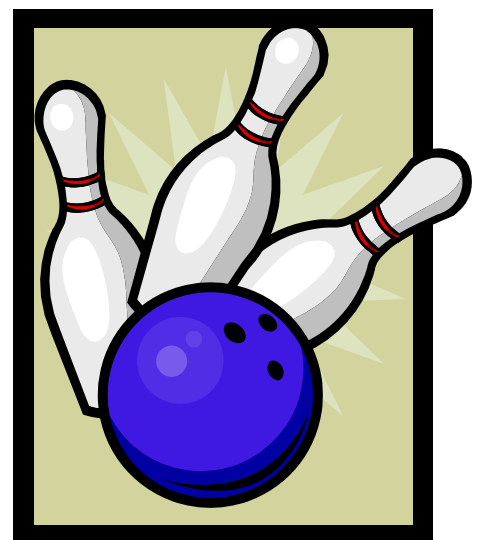
YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) is our ministry program for high school youth. Jamila Batchelder (256-8688) is the adult adviser. Meetings are generally from noon to 2 p.m. Sundays in the lower level.

### December Schedule

Dec. 7 at noon – Discussion on Restorative Justice

Dec. 14 at 10:30 a.m. – YRUU Collaborative Worship Service

Dec. 14 at noon – Bowling



Dec. 20 at 5 p.m. – Lock-In

Dec. 21 – No YRUU meeting

Dec. 28 – No YRUU meeting

## News from the Caring Ministry

Donations of special foods are needed for holiday boxes for UUs who are in long-term facilities, isolated, or home-bound. The following items are requested before the holiday box packing/wrapping event at church from 1 to 4 p.m. Dec. 13:

- Small and large loaves of quick breads or yeast breads
- Holiday cookies and candies
- Navel oranges
- Other holiday goodies you may wish to create

Please contact Marianne Erickson at 268-2666 or [ericksonmc@missouri.edu](mailto:ericksonmc@missouri.edu) if you wish to donate items or assist with the Dec. 13 box packing or Dec. 14 delivery of boxes.

The Caring Ministry maintains a Benevolence Fund for members and friends who experience an urgent financial need that is unaffordable. Examples of such needs are medications, urgent car repair, utility shut-off, plumbing, job interview expense and home repair. Inquiries and assistance are maintained confidentially. Persons in need of assistance should contact Marianne Erickson or Rev. Molly Housh Gordon.

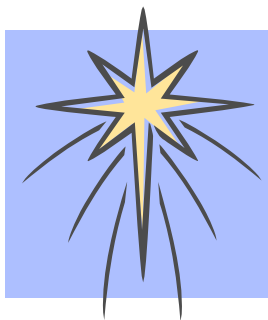
**The offerings at the Christmas Eve services will be dedicated to supporting the Caring Ministry Benevolence Fund and the Minister's Discretionary Fund.**

## Minister's Monthly Challenge

*Rejoice every day this month*

Even if it's tough for you. Especially if it's tough. Look for something to celebrate every single day. Look for the chance to laugh or smile. This is no affront to the difficulties of life; this is what makes survival possible through the darkest of times. This is what makes the human spirit itself a miracle – our capacity to glimpse joy even amidst our struggle. May you have a joyous December.

In faith,  
Rev. Molly



## Church Notes

Meet Emily Woodall! Emily is our new Sunday Morning Assistant. She will be with us on Sundays only, but will be as busy as a bee while she's here! Her job will be to assist in the smooth operation of our Sunday programs. Please take the time to introduce yourself and offer to lend a hand occasionally for Sunday coffee or the monthly potluck!

—  
The volunteers who have worked so hard to tidy up the UUCC library have reported that some books appear to have been checked out for an excessive amount of time. Please check your bookshelves, and if there is a UUCC book there, please return it! Many thanks for your help!

## Dining Group plans Dec. 5 Holiday Party

The UU Dining Group, now more than 39 members strong, is planning a holiday party at church on Friday, Dec. 5 from 4:30 to 7 p.m.

Every couple is asked to bring one of their favorite appetizers to share. A variety of beverages will be provided including coffee.

The party is planned as a way to have a pleasurable time with friends and approach the coming days with mindfulness and optimism.

It will also be a good time for potential new members of the Dining Group to come and get acquainted with the group's program of monthly gatherings of eight in members' homes.

If you would like to attend but have not yet joined the Dining Group, call Linda Lou Brown at 447-3939.



# Social Action News

## ***You Are Invited to the Second Annual Trivia Night to Benefit Honduras 6:30 p.m. Jan. 24, 2015 at UCC***

Mark your calendars for the 2015 trivia night to benefit Honduras. A silent auction, chili dinner and desserts, cash prizes and 50-50 raffles will be part of the fun. Child care will be provided. Tickets are \$20 per person, \$12 for students and people with low income, or \$100 for a table of six.

Our Honduras group has connected with a microloan organization based in La Ceiba called Adelante. Adelante is active further up in the Cangrejal River Valley, and they are currently looking into the feasibility of and general interest in starting women's circles for the purposes of microloans and economic education in the three Cangrejal River Valley communities in which our Honduras groups have worked.

As the next UCC Honduras service trip is not planned until 2016 or 2017, our group would like to support Adelante in its work in the interim. Funds raised at trivia night will go toward Adelante's work, as well as toward restocking the health clinic in El Pital, materials for the latrines that will be built during the next UCC Honduras trip and scholarships for the next trip.

– Allie Gassmann  
Social Action Team

## **Creating Shelter with Room at the Inn**

We were so moved by our experience hosting a cold-weather shelter last year that your Social Action Team has decided to participate in shelter efforts again this year. We are working with the Room at the Inn organization, which has advanced the shelter's beginning date to Dec. 11, and the shelter will operate through mid-March.

Room at the Inn prefers to host its shelter at locations with large capacities. They are asking smaller congregations like ours to staff the shelters with volunteers a week at a time.

We have volunteered to staff the shelter at Broadway Christian Church from **Dec. 21 at 5:30 p.m. to Dec. 27 at 7:30 a.m., including all day on Christmas Day.**

We will be hosting a training for potential volunteers **from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Dec. 6.** All volunteers must be trained.

Although the shelter will not be at our church, we hope to see the same enthusiasm from our community that we experienced last year – showing up to create an atmosphere of warmth and love during this cold, dark time of year.

Please join us at our Dec. 6 training, and be on the lookout for signup information in church and by email starting in December.



## **CROP Hunger Walk Update**

This year's interfaith Columbia CROP (Communities Responding to Overcome Hunger) Run and Walk on Sept. 20 and 21 raised almost \$14,000 to help alleviate hunger here in Columbia, across the country and around the world. Thanks to all UCC members and friends who walked, raised funds and donated! In addition, UCC was an official sponsor of the event again this year.

– Allie Gassmann, Social Action Team

## Programs and Events

### First Sunday Potluck – Dec. 7

On the first Sunday of each month from September through June, we gather for our “First Sunday Potluck” immediately following the worship service. Please bring a dish to share so we’ll have enough for our guests!

### Fair Trade Sale – Dec. 7 and 14

Fair trade coffee, tea and chocolate is available for purchase in the Greeting Area before and after worship every second Sunday from September through May, but the items will also be sold on the first Sunday in December so you can stock up for the holidays and buy gifts.

### UUCS Men’s Group

The UUCS 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 Wiley Miller.

### Meditation in Nature – Dec. 21

#### *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 who love nature.

For more information contact Peter Holmes at 573-239-7789 or [naturemeditation@yahoo.com](mailto:naturemeditation@yahoo.com).

### UU Book Discussion Group – Dec. 12

The UU Book Discussion Group will meet at 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 12 at ABC Chinese Cuisine. Bring a book you have read to discuss briefly.

Call Pam at 445-0642 if you have questions.

### Conversations, Etc. – Dec. 10

Conversations, Etc. will meet Wed, Dec 10 at the church. Soup will be provided. Bring a salad or dessert to share. Call Melinda at 445-6325 if you have questions.

## Green Sanctuary Team



You are invited!

Make reusable shopping bags  
(No special skills required)

Meet new friends  
Enjoy snacks

Wednesday, Dec. 10  
7 p.m.

Janice Smith’s house  
704 Gunnison Court  
Columbia 65203

314-602-3414

### New Year’s Day Hike

Come join us for an interesting and energetic walk in the good company of esteemed UU members.

Our traditional New Year’s Day Hike is a chance to get off the couch, take a break from screen addictions, and burn off Christmas calories.

Meet at the church at 1:30 p.m. Jan. 1. The length and route of the walk will depend on the weather and who joins us.

If you have any questions, contact Peter Holmes.

## Fair Trade Coffee, Tea and Chocolate for Sale – Dec. 7 & 14

# 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. 7!

**December 2014**  
**Lisa Fritsche**  
**Director of Religious Education**  
[dre@uuchurch.net](mailto:dre@uuchurch.net)  
573-442-5764

**Office Hours:**  
Sunday 8 a.m. to noon  
and by appointment

## **Important Dates:**

Dec. 5 - Jr. Youth Group/Lego Movie

Dec. 7 - Used Toy Clinic Service Sunday, last day to turn in VAC gifts, last day to sign up for Simple & Complicated Gifts workshop

Dec. 12 - Complicated Gifts workshop

Dec. 13 - Simple Gifts workshop, sign up for Mystery Friends

Dec. 14 - 3rd Sunday Sing-a-Long

Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve services

### **3rd Sunday Lunch... Christmas Sing-a-Long in the Centering Room**

Please join us as we share a simple lunch in the Thoreau classroom, and then flex our vocal chords in the Centering Room. We will try out the church's Christmas songbooks and nibble on some cookies. The gathering will run from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 14.



## **Making Gifts, Both Simple and Complicated**

On the morning of Dec. 13 from 9 to 10:30 a.m., there will be many little elves in our church. At "Simple Gifts," kids 5th grade and younger will have the opportunity to create holiday gifts for those they love. Look for registration sheets on the table downstairs in the RE hall. Sample gifts are on display. (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. 12. (Sign up in the RE 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. 15.

**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. 15.

Mystery Friends will run for six weeks, from Jan. 11 through Feb. 15. Please contact Michelle Kelly ([camk16@mchsi.com](mailto:camk16@mchsi.com)) if you would like to join the fun! **Sign up sheets will be available starting Dec. 14 in the RE Hall.**

## Jr. Youth Group



Moon gazing, s'more making, truth detecting, pumpkin exploding, pizza eating, sardine hunting ... this is just a short list of this fall's Jr. Youth Group activities. Want to know

more? Take a look at the bulletin board in the RE hall!

## Two Services on Christmas Eve



We hope you will come to the early service, geared toward families, at 6 p.m., featuring carols, candlelight and a play. The 8 p.m. service will include the carols and candles, along with a Christmas homily.

## December Service Sunday Used Toy Clinic

Start cleaning out those toy boxes and shelves! On Dec. 7 we will be cleaning and repairing gently-used toys and books at our Service Sunday. After scrubbing, taping, gluing and sorting, they will be donated to Goodwill, to have a second life. Be sure to bring your donations to church by Dec. 7!



## 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 the ice. The plow has not visited your street. What to do? Check the church's website ([www.uuchurch.net](http://www.uuchurch.net)), or turn on a local radio station to hear if we have cancelled. If we have not, should you try to 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 JOY! Here are some questions for you to talk about with your family this month....

- What brings the most joy into your life?
- When you are really happy, how can you spread your joyful mood to others?
- Does sharing your joy make you even happier than you were before?



# Winter Solstice Celebration

7 p.m. Saturday, the 20th day of December, at the Church

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,  
and libations and foods to share around the bonfire.

Questions: Contact Jeff Ordway

## Junior High 'Our Whole Lives' Class begins in January 2015

Our Whole Lives (OWL) Sexuality Education for Grades 7-9 will be taught January through March of 2015 on Sunday evenings.

Parents, educators and religious communities all face the challenge of creating environments that support and nurture sexual health. Young people need sexuality education programs that model and teach caring, compassion, respect and justice. The OWL program is comprehensive and progressive. In an inclusive and developmentally appropriate manner, it addresses sensitive topics with the values of self-worth, sexual health, responsibility and justice and inclusivity.

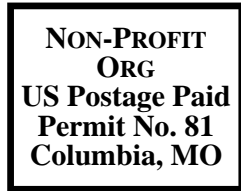
The OWL curriculum was co-written by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ. Our teaching team continually updates the curriculum with current research and topics relevant to our youth.

Class size is limited to 20 students. First priority for enrollment is given to children of members and friends of the UU Church of Columbia.

For more information and to sign up, please contact Rosie Anderson-Harper at [anderharp@yahoo.com](mailto:anderharp@yahoo.com) or Jeremy Duke at [jeremyduke@hotmail.com](mailto:jeremyduke@hotmail.com)

# ***THE SEARCHLIGHT***

The Newsletter of:  
Unitarian Universalist Church  
2615 Shepard Blvd.  
Columbia, MO 65201-6132



**Return Service Requested**

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Email to [uuchurch@uuchurch.net](mailto:uuchurch@uuchurch.net),  
or mail to Church Administrator.

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