



# 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 5, January 2015

Worship Services  
January 2015  
Services begin at 10:30 a.m.

## Our January Worship Theme: **Confession**

**Sunday, Jan. 4**

**“Burning of the Grudges”**

**Rev. Molly Housh Gordon**

Join us for an interactive, intergenerational New Year service, as we burn away the grudges and regrets of the previous year and seek to start the New Year fresh.

**Sunday, Jan. 11**

**“I Confess”**

**Rev. Molly Housh Gordon**

What could be the use of the concept of confession in a Unitarian Universalist context? Is there some spiritual value to naming our mistakes and missteps as individuals? What about admitting our collective role in systems of injustice? Let us struggle with these questions together.

**Sunday, Jan. 18**

**Martin Luther King Jr. Service  
Lay-Led by Social Action Team**

Join us for our annual commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday, with reflections from our Social Action Team on the resonance of Dr. King’s words then and now.

**Sunday, Jan. 25**

**“Where Do We Go From Here?”**

**Rev. Dr. Clanton C.W. Dawson Jr.**

Clanton C.W. Dawson, Jr. is the Pastor, President, and CEO of Dawson Journeys Ministry, a multicultural, multigenerational ministry of hope. He is President of the African American Clergy Coalition of Mid-Missouri and Professor of Philosophy at Columbia College and United Theological Seminary.

*Confession of errors is like a broom which sweeps away the dirt and leaves the surface brighter and clearer. I feel stronger for confession.*

– Mahatma Gandhi

The New Year is often a time for cleaning house and starting fresh. We make resolutions and commitments; we take up healthy new habits. And we seek to make room in our lives for positive new decisions. But making that space often involves sweeping out some of the mistakes and regrets of the previous year.

Catholicism and many strands of Protestantism answer this need for “spiritual house cleaning” with rituals of individual or corporate confession. Some Hindu and Tibetan traditions have similar rituals. The Jewish tradition practices atonement rituals especially during the high holidays in the fall. All of these rituals acknowledge that we make mistakes and that admitting to them is the first step to making amends.

Though our heritage comes out of the Protestant tradition, Unitarian Universalists generally no longer practice rituals around the concept of confession. Perhaps confession reminds us too much of doctrines of original sin that we have rejected in our theological evolution, or perhaps it takes us back to unpleasant pieces of our personal religious histories.

But there is no doubt that UUs, too, make mistakes and mis-steps, that we hurt others and participate in systemic injustices when we would rather not. We are human, after all. So... what do we do with all that baggage? Could some new understanding of confession be a step along the way?

This month, we’ll explore together how we might do some of our own spiritual house-cleaning.

See you in church!

Rev. Molly

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# January Worship Theme: *Confession*

## **Wise Words**

“You can’t legislate into existence an act of forgiveness and a true confession; those are mysteries of the human heart, and they occur between one individual and another individual, not a panel of judges sitting asking questions, trying to test your truth.” – Athol Fugard

“A guilty conscience needs to confess. A work of art is a confession.” – Albert Camus

“It is the confession, not the priest, that gives us absolution” – Oscar Wilde

“If only we could help each other build temples of forgiveness instead of prisons. We can. In our own hearts.” – Jack Kornfield

## **Want to reflect further?**

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

*Confession of Downfalls: The Confession Sutra and Vajrasattva Practice* by Brian Beresford and Arya Nagarjuna

*No Future Without Forgiveness* by Desmond Tutu

*On Apology* by Aaron Lazare

*I Thought It Was Just Me (but it isn't)* by Brené Brown

*When Sorry Isn't Enough* by Gary Chapman and Jennifer Thomas

## President's Letter

Dear UCC Members and Friends,

The board continues to learn how to utilize our new policy governance model that has been put into place in the last three years. We're learning how to be the visionary board that our model enables and charges us to be. I am learning, and I believe all of the members of the board are learning together, how to do this with integrity and clarity in accordance with our mission and with respect to our divisions of authority within the institutional body of the church.

We've added a "Big Question" section to our monthly meeting agenda to allow for us to spend time asking visionary questions of ourselves and thus maintain a visionary presence of mind when reviewing and amending policies. This visionary mindset will aid us as we create a strategic plan that will strengthen and focus the efforts of our ministries.

Our strategic planning cottage meetings have been sparsely attended, but I actually see the lack of attendance as a indication of the satisfaction the congregation has with the great work the ministries and Rev. Molly are presently engaged in. Bravo for that! Thank you to those who did attend – the Strategic Planning Task Force appreciates your perspectives, and I hope you continue the conversations that were started with other members of the congregation in the weeks and months to come.

In keeping with this desire to continue strategic planning discussions throughout the congregation, the board and the Strategic Planning Task Force would appreciate hearing more from you. Please feel free to email me at [maryc.denson@gmail.com](mailto:maryc.denson@gmail.com) with your thoughts, and if you would like to have a phone conversation, my number is in the directory. Creating the most actionable and compelling strategic plan is a community effort.

Yours in Faith and Service,  
Mary Denson, President

## Minister's Monthly Challenge

*What burdens are you carrying?*

Are you carrying the burden of an apology unspoken, a regret unfulfilled, or a wrong un-righted?

I invite you to spend some time this month thinking about how you can lighten your load.

- To whom do you need to apologize, in order to be in right relationship?
  - What do you need to do in order to move forward from mistakes that haunt you?
  - What can you do today to let go of lingering regret?
- This month, take the first step.

In faith,  
Rev. Molly

## YRUU Plans Conference in February

The members of YRUU, our high school youth group, are very excited to be embarking on our most ambitious project yet, and **we need your help!**

We are organizing and hosting a conference from Feb. 27 to March 1 for regional UU teens on the theme of "boundaries and consent." Our goal is to increase understanding of this important topic and empower teens to become activists in creating a culture that respects consent.

This is a subject our group is very passionate about, and it will be an exciting opportunity for our teens to develop their leadership skills as they take the lead in organizing this event. However, they still need plenty of adult support to make this a success. We know this is a subject many of you are very passionate about as well, and we invite you to get involved as a volunteer in our conference.

There are many ways you can help:

- Help with set up
- Help prepare meals
- Help with meal cleanup
- Donate food
- Chaperone (particularly at night)

To volunteer, please email Katie Ensign-Bedford at [ensigns@missouri.edu](mailto:ensigns@missouri.edu) or Jamila Batchelder at [jamilabatchelder@yahoo.com](mailto:jamilabatchelder@yahoo.com).

Thank you for your support of YRUU and this exciting project!

## Forum for January 2015

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.*

### Jan. 4

Joann Vest will continue her history of art.

### Jan. 11

Greg Mermelstein, a public defender, will update us on the status of the death penalty in both Missouri and the United States.

### Jan. 18

Dr. Paul Tatum, University of Missouri Medical Center and Hospitals, will discuss "The Art of Dying in Modern America."

### Jan. 25

Sam Otten will offer insight into Common Core from the view of a University of Missouri mathematics teacher.

## 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, Team Leader.

## **Stewardship: Transforming vision to action**

As we approach our annual pledge drive in February and March to fund our 2015-16 budget, the Stewardship Team asks UUCC members and friends to reflect on the meaning of stewardship.

To paraphrase the motto of the UUA Congregational Stewardship Network: We partner with friends and members to help UUCC transform its unique vision into bold action.

Every member and friend of UUCC is both a customer and an owner – and a steward.

We are customers because we receive services, such as worship, religious education, and the newsletter.

We are owners because we make decisions about

the future of the church at congregational meetings and as lay leaders.

When we talk about stewardship, we are not talking to members in their role as customers. We are not asking if Sunday worship was a good value this month or whether we “exceeded expectations” with our hospitality. Instead, we are talking to members as owners. We are asking how to best to achieve our mission, and how each of us can contribute.

In short, the ministry of stewardship does not present stewardship as “payment for services”; rather, stewardship is our commitment to build and sustain a healthy religious community. We are first and foremost stewards of what has been entrusted to us.

### **New Adult Religious Education Program**

## **The Brown Bag Reading Group: Emerson as Spiritual Guide**

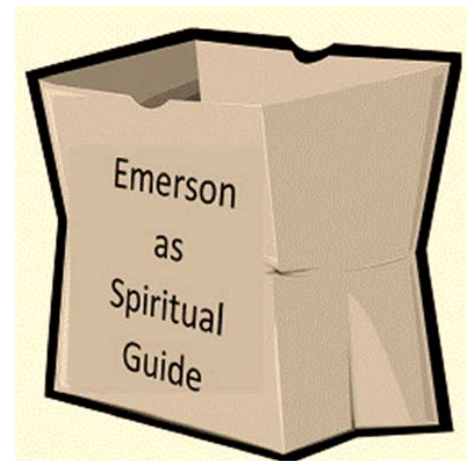
The Adult Religious Education Team announces a new opportunity to deepen your faith and develop your understanding of Unitarian Universalism.

Starting Jan. 25, 2015, join us every second and fourth Sunday from 12:30 to 2 p.m. for lunch and lively discussion of UU heavyweight Ralph Waldo Emerson. Along with Emerson’s own writings, the group will use Barry M. Andrews’ *Emerson as Spiritual Guide: A Companion to Emerson’s Essays for Personal*

### *Reflection and Group Discussion.*

If, like Emerson, you consider reading, conversation, and contemplation as important spiritual practices, this group is for you! Bring your own brown bag lunch.

Please register by sending an email with the subject “Brown Bag” to [adultRE@uuchurch.net](mailto:adultRE@uuchurch.net). Books will be available for pre-order or through the Book Table. Childcare can be provided if requested in advance of the meetings. Registration ends Jan. 14.



## **‘Committee and Team Fair’ at Potluck on Feb. 1**

Are you curious or confused about the many committees at church? Interested in participating more in church life but not sure where you might best fit? Don’t miss the “Committee and Team Fair Potluck”!

During potluck on Sunday, Feb. 1, the Committee on Ministry (COM) will host a church “Committee and Team Fair.” Each table will have representatives from a given church team/committee available to provide information about the work its group does within the church and community. Choose a table and get to know that team/committee, or just the people interested in that group, and

if you want, move to another table to learn more about another team.

Just in case you’re wondering about the Committee on Ministry:

Our primary purpose is to promote the spiritual health and well-being of UUCC. In that role the committee is working to develop leadership, build commitment to shared ministry, and help our congregation work fulfill our mission.

Our committee members are Scott Denson, Jeremy Duke, Amy Ewing, Qhyrrae Michaelieu, and Steve Zweig.

## Programs and Events

### First Sunday Potluck – Jan. 4

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 – Jan. 11

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.

### UUCU Men’s Group

The UUCU 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 – Jan. 18

#### *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 – Jan. 9

The UU Book Discussion Group will meet at 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 9 at ABC Chinese Cuisine. Bring a book you have read to discuss briefly.

Call Pam at 445-0642 if you have questions.

### Conversations, Etc. – Jan. 14

Conversations, Etc. UUCU women’s group will meet at noon Wednesday, Jan. 14 at the church. Bring a brown bag lunch and a snack to share if you wish. For information call Melinda at 445-6325.

## Green Sanctuary Team



### Notes

- The Green Sanctuary Team, in the spirit of being sustainable, would like everyone to consider bringing his/her own plates and silverware to the next potluck.
- In November our solar panel array produced 164 kWh, or enough to brew 1,093 pots of coffee. Since installation, the array has produced 845 kWh and has offset 1,301 pounds of carbon.
- Next meeting 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27 at the home of Lisa Guillory.

### 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.

**More Green Sanctuary news on pages 6 and 9**

# News and Reports

## **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 micro-loan 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

## NEW THIS YEAR:

### INSTANT 'GUEST AT YOUR TABLE' *For the UU Service Committee at January Potluck*

We're going to do the "Guest at Your Table" fundraiser for the UU Service Committee differently this year. Instead of spanning several months, the collection will be taken at the Jan. 4 potluck. One day!

Please consider the good UUSC does – here and worldwide – in our name, and bring a check, *made out to UUSC*, with "Guest at Your Table" on the memo line, to the potluck. Or turn it in at the worship service or Forum on Jan. 4 if you cannot attend the potluck. Thank you.

## **Green Sanctuary Team News**

Notice the nice cedar-plank structure on the west side of the property? It's ready for your plastics! The GS Team is collecting two types of plastic not currently taken by the city – # 4 & 5 plastic. You may put # 1 & 2 in with the #4 & 5's, but the required ratio is that no more than 30% of the bag should be #1 & 2.

Please put your plastics in the blue bags that you usually use for City of Columbia pickup, and place them as flat as possible in the collection bin. Volunteers from the GS Team will transport the bags of plastic to Millersburg to be made into plastic lumber. We will be placing a permanent sign on the enclosure signifying our commitment to reducing the environmental impact of plastic.

Janice Smith hosted an "upcycling" project night last month. Many reusable cloth shopping bags were made from old T-shirts donated by UCC church members and friends. Wiley Miller, Mary Lehman, and Corinne Mann used their fabric cutting know-how. Thanks to those who loaned us sew-

ing machines: Vic Myers, Corinne Mann, Kyna Byerly, and Lisa Guillery. GS Team is planning a free cloth bag give-away very soon, teaming it with another upcoming project. Stay tuned.

GS is researching environmental effects of washing plates vs. paper plates vs. "bring your own/take them home" for potluck Sundays. There are pros and cons to each choice, and many thanks to Jan Weaver for helping us investigate. Your comments are welcome as we go through the process of collecting information and discussion. Send email comments to Ellen Thomas at [ellen.thomas@centurytel.net](mailto:ellen.thomas@centurytel.net).

Be sure to check out the Green Sanctuary Team bulletin board on the right just as you enter the Greeting Area. Look for information regarding environmental justice, upcoming projects, and celebrations and photos of completed projects, etc. If you would like to post something on the GS bulletin board, contact Peter Holmes.

*(Continued on Page 9)*

# Reflections

## BINGO!!!

January's *3rd Sunday Lunch* will feature some rousing games of BINGO! Join your church friends after the service on Jan. 18 for a light lunch and the chance to win some fun prizes.



January, 2015  
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

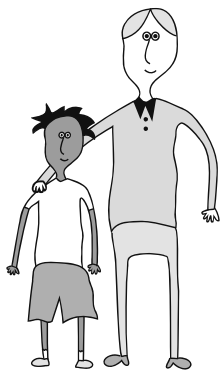
## Important Dates:

Jan. 9 - Jr. Youth CHOPPED Night

Jan. 11 - Mystery Friends begins

Jan. 18 - BINGO at 3rd Sunday Lunch

## Something to Think About in January

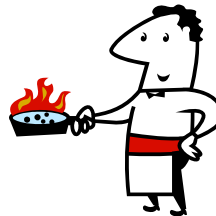


Reverend Molly's theme for January is CONFESSION.

Sometimes it's hard to say we're sorry when we've done something wrong. But sometimes saying we're sorry is just what makes us feel better. Is there a time when you said you were sorry and then you felt better? Is there a time when it was hard for you to say you were sorry?

## Jr. Youth Getting CHOPPED!

Watch your mailbox for your invitation, and more information about our January meeting! We've moved it to Jan. 9, and it will be a chance to show off your cooking skills.



## Simple & Complicated Gifts a BIG SUCCESS!

Attendees at these workshops went home with many gifts to give to their friends and families. Older kids created coasters, altered books, bracelets, frames, cookies and magnets, while younger kids crafted picture frames, bath salts, flower pens, cookie mix, stained glass and sugar cookies.



## Mystery Friends Begins!



Every Sunday morning you will see the Mystery Friends bulletin board filling with mail! Participants can drop off and pick up notes to each other. Be sure to check every Sunday! Have fun getting to know your Mystery Friend!

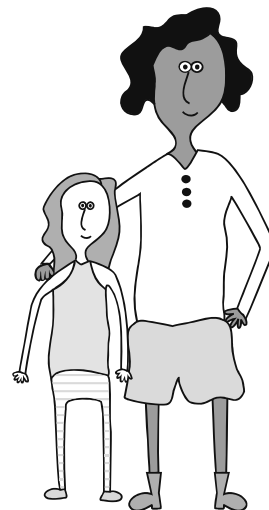


## Many Thanks!

Thanks to Karen Dwyer for the book *Me and Dog*.

## Classroom Aides Still Needed!

As the second semester begins, we have a renewed need for helpers in our Sunday School classrooms. This is a great opportunity to get to know the fantastic, interesting kids of our church family. Please go to SignUp Genius and choose a class and date that will work for you!



### Hang on to Those Broken Small Appliances!

Our 3rd 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!)



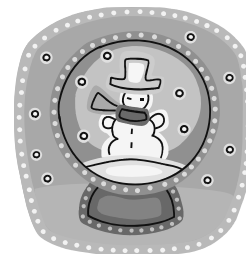
<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0e44afa72ea02-help1>



More than \$211 has been collected so far at Centering for the Michelle Sullivan Scholarship... \$197 more to go to reach our goal. Please be generous! We need to send 34 Senegalese girls to school for a whole year!

### 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 (<http://uuchurch.net>), our Facebook page, or turn on KFRU (AM1400) 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!





## From the Strategic Planning Task Force

# 'What's Good about That?'

Many of you who attended the strategic planning cottage meetings will recognize the title question as the one your facilitator used to spur deeper thinking about what is going well at UUCC. Thanks to the participants, we walked away from this process with a deeper appreciation of what *is* going well at UUCC and the deep thoughts and concerns we all seem to have about our future.

For those who couldn't attend a cottage meeting, allow us to briefly describe what went on. As people reviewed our current Mission Statement, they were asked to consider "what's going well at UUCC?" within the context of congregational life, social and economic justice, sustainability, and physical presence. Discussion topics ranged from our minister, our worship, our religious education program, our building, our varied social action activities, and our Green Sanctuary certification, among other things. We then delved deeper with the oft-repeated question, "What's good about that?"

As we review our notes, we see that some groups came up with actual goals to be considered for our long-term strategic plan. In other groups, members developed a better understanding about why things are the way they are and questioned whether those things should continue or not. Interesting stuff!

Included on pages 10 and 11 in this newsletter is the worksheet used at cottage meetings that allowed people to add thoughts and ideas after the sessions ended. If you would like to add your comments, please complete the worksheet and leave it in President and Strategic Planning Chair Mary Denson's mailbox, in the hallway across from the minister's office.



## 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.*

## Green Sanctuary News

(Continued from Page 6)

The GST transportation subcommittee is working on an overarching theme which will include the concepts of movement and journey. We strive to reduce vehicle use to church functions and investigating alternatives. At present, fact-finding includes counting how many cars are used on Sundays and making maps for carpooling. This project is in development, and suggestions are welcome. Contact Ellen Thomas or Allie Gassmann.

A presentation by the Missouri Rural Crisis Center is being planned for February. GST is exploring ways to partner with MRCC, and invites everyone to look at the new MRCC website and support them as they work to better the lives of rural farmers ([www.morural.org](http://www.morural.org)). GST anticipates that the primary environmental project for GS Accreditation requirements will be in partnership with MRCC and/or the Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture.

GST is sponsoring a vegetarian cooking class on Friday, Jan. 9 from 4 to approximately 6 p.m. The class will focus on cooking for consistent participation in "Meatless Mondays." The class is limited to 8 people. You must reserve your place by Sunday, Jan. 4, the Sunday before the class, by sending an email to Lisa Guillory at [lisa.a.guillory@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.a.guillory@gmail.com).

Our January meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27 at 300 S. Glenwood Ave. (Lisa Guillory's home). If you have an interest in all things "green," please join us.

# UCC STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHEET

Strategic planning is an organization's process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy.

By undertaking this strategic planning process at UCC, we are attempting to understand how our congregation sees the future of our church. Where are their interests and energy?

We intend to meet with as many of the members of the church as we can in small cottage meetings and encourage them to share their vision of our future. When these meetings are completed a detailed strategic plan will be compiled setting priorities for the next 5, 10 and 20 years.

Our starting point is our mission and vision statements that we have recently compiled:

## *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.*

## *Vision*

*The Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia:*

*Transforms lives by calling us to deeper connection, service, and spiritual exploration within an uplifting community of diverse beliefs.*

*Lights a moral beacon for Columbia and Missouri by creating intentional welcome, relational solidarity, and compassionate action in response to injustices.*

*Grows in environmental consciousness and advocates for the health of the earth and all living things.*

*Engages our intergenerational community in faith development and lifelong learning with a spirit of curiosity and openness.*

and with these in mind we are going to ask the following questions:

1. What do you think is going well at UCC? What is good about that? How can we deepen and expand these activities/interests?
2. What would UCC look like and feel like to you in five years if we are living fully into our mission and vision? What would make you feel good about the church? I want to belong to a church that...

*(Strategic Planning Worksheet continues on Page 11)*

# UCC STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHEET

*(Continued from Page 10)*

The cottage meetings are designed to encourage church members to share their ideas for the future of the church in four main areas: Congregational Life, Social and Economic Justice, Sustainability, and Physical Presence

We are aware that these meetings will not capture all the important ideas and some of you will want to go away and think about things further. We encourage you to take notes during the meeting and to send any other ideas to [stratplan@uuchurch.net](mailto:stratplan@uuchurch.net). Completed worksheets may be placed in President and Strategic Planning Chair Mary Denson's mailbox in the hallway across from the minister's office. It may help your thinking process to consider each issue using the SWOT method (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). (Please put your name on your submissions so that we can get back to you.)

**You may submit your ideas on this worksheet or in any other form.**

**Congregational Life**

**Social and Economic Justice**

**Sustainability**

**Physical Presence**

## ***THE SEARCHLIGHT***

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### **Our Staff**

**Rev. Molly Housh Gordon, Minister**

Office Hours: Mondays-Wednesdays 1-4 p.m.

Email: [minister@uuchurch.net](mailto:minister@uuchurch.net)

**Lisa Fritsche, Director of Youth Religious Education**

Email: [DRE@uuchurch.net](mailto:DRE@uuchurch.net)

**Desiree Long, Music Director**

Email: [music@uuchurch.net](mailto:music@uuchurch.net)

**Kathie Bergman, Administrator**

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Telephone: 573-442-5764

Email: [uuchurch@uuchurch.net](mailto:uuchurch@uuchurch.net)

Visit our Website: <http://uuchurch.net>



### **2014-2015 Board of Trustees**

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

The deadline for submissions is noon on the third Monday of each month for the following edition.