



# 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 55, Issue 1, July 2015

## Worship Services

July 2015

Services begin at 10:30 a.m.

**Sunday, July 5**

**“Books Give You Wings!”**

**Rev. Molly Housh Gordon**

Join us to celebrate books in this fun multi-generational service based on the book and short film *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore*. During the service, individuals of all ages are invited to participate in a book swap – bring a favorite title to pass along for someone else to discover!

**Sunday, July 12**

**“Growing a Soul”**

**Rev. Molly Housh Gordon**

Unitarian Universalist minister and humanist luminary Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons has developed a list of the 12 qualities of spiritual maturity from a humanist perspective. We will explore these qualities and the role of religious communities in helping us to develop them.

**Sunday, July 19**

**“Tension & Release”**

**William Palmer**

Join lay leader Will Palmer in exploring those moments in life that create tension, stress, and even anger – and how/when to release yourself from them.

**Sunday, July 26**

**“The Practice of Being”**

**Caya Tanski French**

Who do you want to be? How are you being present to your life? Join lay leader Caya Tanski French for a service exploring the ontological view of life and the art and practice of being.

We have a new DRE!

Details on page 3

## A Very UU Summer

Can you imagine 4,000 Unitarian Universalists descending upon downtown Columbia, bringing along their reusable water-bottles, insisting upon composting in their meeting venues, and milling about with their Co-Exist slogans and their “Standing on the Side of Love” t-shirts?

That’s what’s just happened in Portland, Ore. June 24-28 marked our annual UUA General Assembly, when members of our congregations from across the country gathered to build community, worship together, learn from one another, and do the business of the association. Four thousand UUs together in one place – the energy for liberal religion was palpable!

But what was most exciting to me is that we bring our values with us wherever we go. Previous hosting venues still offer composting and recycling in their convention centers because we requested it when we visited for General Assembly. Residents of the towns we visit learn about transgender identities when we create All Gender restrooms in our meeting venues. And our actions of social witness in places like Phoenix, Ariz. have had a lasting impact on local justice issues.

Several members of UUCC attended General Assembly this year, and we’ll be sure to report back in and tell you all about it. But, I wonder what would happen if we **each** lived and proclaimed our UU values and identity, wherever we go this summer? Maybe the person on the plane next to you would get inspired by our Seven Principles. Maybe the family next to you at the local pool has been looking for an open-minded place to give their kids a liberal religious education. Maybe someone will catch you in an act of kindness or sustainable living and get inspired in their own life.

Wherever you go, or stay, this summer, I hope you’ll take UUCC with you in spirit.

See you in church!

Rev. Molly

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# Planning for a Second Worship Service

## To UUCM Members/Friends from Rev. Molly:

Church growth experts tell us it's time to add a service when you're averaging 80% of desirable seats full... and we've been averaging more like 100% of desirable seats full on most Sundays. So, we have taken the following steps...

In order to address this wonderful problem of growing attendance, we have decided to add a second Sunday morning service during the program year.

To discuss this with the congregation, we held two open meetings for the whole congregation in April, as well as meetings with the Forum group and the choir. We also sought written feedback on posters in the sanctuary.

At these meetings, in addition to discussing the simple numbers and logistics of the situation, we discussed our mission of radical welcome and deep connection – we know we need to balance both as we seek to include more people in our community. We also discussed our articulated desire to keep making room for those who seek our message.

After hearing from you, we developed a plan.

### Here's the Plan:

1. We will have two Sunday morning services at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. These services will have the same content (same readings, same sermon), but will be slightly different in structure.

The **9 a.m. service** will be interactive, intimate, and family-friendly. We will put the chairs in a circle to enhance the feeling of intimacy. We will share joys and sorrows in a spoken-aloud format and add other interactive elements to the service when possible. We will create an expectation that movement is welcome, and a beautiful visual order of service posted on a board will help youngsters and all of us know what's coming next. Music will vary in style with special performances from musical church volunteers and regular offerings from small vocal ensembles. Childcare will be offered during this service, but there will be no children's R.E. program at 9 a.m. at this time.

The **11 a.m. service** will be inspirational, reverent, and more traditional. Chairs will face forward, and there will be less expectation of interaction. The children will be present for the first 15 minutes including a story for all ages and a clergy-led ritual of joys and sorrows, and they will then exit to their regular reli-

gious education classes. Music will vary in style with special performances from musical church volunteers and regular offerings from the choir. Nursery care and our full R.E. program will be offered during the 11 a.m. hour.

2. Occasionally, both services will occur in the more lively multi-generational style we have developed.

3. We will form a Fellowship Team to ensure that we are creating regular opportunities for deep connection and fun together outside of worship. We will charge this team with creating appealing multi-generational activities to build community and help us feel that we are all still a part of one congregation. Let me know if you're interested in serving on this team! As part of our work on fellowship, we will survey the congregation regarding monthly potlucks to find a time when many of us can gather for fellowship and food without drawing people away from one of our two services.

We know that this decision is an emotional one, as well as logistical, and that change brings both excitement and fear.

### Our Hopes and Fears

Your Worship Team took all of the feedback we received from our meetings as data, and we developed the above plan particularly to build upon our hopes and opportunities while also addressing some fears and challenges posed by our growth.

Here's what you told us:

#### Hopes

- Chance to add new/old, interactive elements to new service.
- Chance to appeal to different learning styles and a more diverse array of people.
- An additional chance to spread our wonderful message.
- Chance for people to teach Sunday School and attend a worship service.

#### Fears

- Would we become more age segregated?
- Would we lose a sense of being one community?
- Would we have the energy and volunteer capacity to sustain both?
- What if we can't fill up two different services and one feels empty?
- Will we lose our occasional intergenerational worship?

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# Meet our new DRE – Shanon Dickerson

Our DRE search team is very excited to introduce to you our new hire for Director of Religious Education, Shanon Dickerson.

Shanon comes to us from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal, where she is a member. Shanon is an experienced educator with nearly a decade of experience teaching Spanish to all ages and Sociology, International Studies and Women's Studies at the college level.

In her current position, in addition to teaching, Shanon runs the program of International Studies and led cultural trips abroad for students, faculty, and administration.

Our search team was particularly impressed with Shanon's combination of creativity, compassion, and administrative skills, as well as her commitment to Unitarian Universalism. We are excited about her unique collection of gifts – she has what it will take to run a growing program with vision, excellence, and care.

Shanon and her husband Tim know and love Columbia from years visiting family in the area, and they are excited to move to our town. Shanon will join us in person starting Aug. 1, but will soon be getting started with the work remotely as she and Tim prepare for their move.

I know you will join me in showing Shanon a warm UUCC welcome!  
– Rev. Molly



Shanon Dickerson

## Forum for July 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.*

### July 5

Allen Hjelmfelt will present his annual July 4<sup>th</sup> program.

### July 12

Cathy Richards, Boone County Public Administrator, will tell of her role helping those unable to help themselves on an inadequate budget.

### July 19

Panel Discussion: "Who Will Be Elected President in 2016?" Panel to be named later.

### July 26

Mel West will present a subject that just might change five minutes before the starting time!

## Marriage Equality Reception July 11

To celebrate that marriage equality is now the law of the land, we will be holding a Marriage Equality Reception and Dance at church from 7 to 9 p.m. Saturday, July 11 – with cake, punch, and dancing. Same sex couples will be invited to cut the cake and participate in a "first dance." The event will be family-friendly, free, and open to the public.

Additionally, Rev. Molly is offering her services as legal marriage officiant to same-sex couples free of charge for the remainder of the summer, starting July 5 and subject to availability.

## Planning Second Worship Service

Continued from page 2

We think our plan helps address many of these opportunities and challenges, and we will stay accountable to these hopes and fears as we continue making adjustments and making our two services both as good as they can be.

### Follow-Up

We will proceed as planned starting in September, and we will refine as needed to work out the inevitable kinks. We will survey the congregation in January to discern how we can improve the experience that is emerging. And, of course, your feedback is always welcome. You can email me at [minister@uuchurch.net](mailto:minister@uuchurch.net) or the Worship Associates at [worship@uuchurch.net](mailto:worship@uuchurch.net).

We look forward to expanding the Sunday services of this warm and wonderful community and making our community available to all who seek it!

– In Faith, Rev. Molly

## Programs and Events

### First Sunday Potluck – July 5

On the first Sunday of each month 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!

### 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.

### Meditation in Nature – Postponed until September *Come into the peace of wild things...*

There will be no Meditation in Nature in July or August, but it will resume in September.

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

### UU Book Discussion Group – July 10

The UU Book Discussion Group will meet at 5 p.m. July 10 at ABC Chinese Cuisine. Bring a book you have read to discuss briefly.

Call Pam at 573-445-0642 if you have questions.

### Conversations, Etc. – July 8

Conversations, Etc. UUCS women’s group will meet at noon July 8 at the church. Bring a brown bag lunch and a snack to share if you wish. Call Melinda at 573-445-6325 if you have questions.

### **Note: Lost and Found**

A number of items have been inadvertently left behind at the church in the past several months. Please check for your lost item in the lost and found box under the coat racks or hanging on the coat racks in the Greeting Area of the church.

Items not retrieved by their owners will be donated to charity by July 15. If you have any questions, contact the church administrator.

## 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.*

### **Meatless Monday Potlucks every third Monday**

Our next Meatless Monday UU Potluck will be held at **6 p.m. July 20** in the church Greeting Area.

**Who?** Everyone is welcome! There will not be childcare, but children are welcome to join us for the meal!

**How?** Bring a **meatless dish** to share (bring plenty!), bring your recipe for the recipe exchange, and your own plates and flatware so we can minimize clean up!

This program is sponsored by the **UU Green Sanctuary Team** in order to promote intentional, mindful eating! Contact Kathie Bergman at 449-3264 if you have questions.

### Grieving Circle –

**1:30 p.m. July 8 • 7 p.m. July 23**

This group will be open on a drop-in basis, so that anyone may come or not as they feel moved. There will be a chalice lighting and a reading to provide some structure, but main purpose for the group is to be present together and accompany each other through the winding path of grief.

### Lunch with TED – noon July 16

Join us over your lunch hour the third Thursday of each month during the summer to watch a TED talk together and discuss. Bring your own bag lunch. This is a drop-in offering open to all.

### Brown Bag Reading Group – ‘The Good Life’

The Adult Religious Education summer discussion series focuses on the topic “The Good Life.”

Join us in the Centering Room from 12:15 to 2 p.m. on July 12 and 26 for lunch and lively discussion. Find the readings on the Adult R.E. page on our website. Drop-ins are encouraged!

# *Green Sanctuary Team investigates summer activities*

The transportation group of Green Sanctuary Team continues to encourage congregants and friends to ride bikes or carpool to church activities when possible. For assistance on routes and carpooling, contact Ellen Thomas.

In the spirit of non-harm to the environment, GS Team is encouraging the church to purchase environmentally friendly products. As older products run out, the church administrator will be replacing them with products that do less harm to the environment, especially water. Look for new dishwasher detergents, dish soap, toilet paper, paper towels, cleansers, etc.

GS Team is considering a summer camping or canoeing trip. These plans are very preliminary, and Peter Holmes is investigating possibilities. If you have some ideas, please contact Peter and share them.

The June vegetarian potluck for Meatless

Mondays was a big success. The next potluck is at 7 p.m. July 20. All are welcome. Please bring a vegetarian dish to share and your own table service (so clean up will be minimal). Lisa Guillory will post the recipes used each month. Please send the typed recipe or the link to the site of the recipe to Lisa by email to [lisa.a.guillory@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.a.guillory@gmail.com). Everyone is encouraged to read the Ethical Eating Guidelines on the UUA website – it's an easy-to-download PDF. We will be discussing many of these issues and look toward lively discussion and sharing of new knowledge about how our food choices affect the world.

The Harvest Supper is set for Saturday, Oct. 17. Chelsea Otten will chair the event, and either Jan Swaney or Lisa Guillory will co-chair. They need a committee! Please contact Chelsea or Lisa if you want to participate in this super fun event. It is very rewarding to volunteer for this event!

## **UUCG Grounds Team Combines Work and Fun**

The UUCG Grounds Team is having a busy summer. We're excited about the progress that we've made on some important projects, thanks in large part to the help and support of the congregation.

Our workday June 6 was very successful – and a lot of fun! With the help of many team members and Chalice Circle volunteers, we replanted the entire parking lot island bed with native plants – butterfly weed, purple coneflower, little bluestem, and calamint. These drought-resistant perennials should thrive in their new home!

We're sending a big "thank you!" to all those hard-working volunteers, and to Joann Vest, who donated a native witch hazel shrub for our native plant project. We are also very grateful to have received \$1,000 from the church's recent garage sale proceeds. This money will go a long way toward the conversion of our planted beds to native plants.

If you want to enjoy the fresh air while helping the Grounds Team, join Patty Daus and other volunteers every Friday morning starting at 8:30. We will be removing invasive Japanese honeysuckle

from our woods and do some weeding and watering as needed. If you want to help with honeysuckle removal but aren't available Friday mornings, contact Carol Arnold to work with her other times at 474-1787 or by email to [carol.reinert.arnold@gmail.com](mailto:carol.reinert.arnold@gmail.com).

Watch this space for more updates on Grounds Team projects that will enhance our church's outdoor space while supporting our UU Principles.

– Jeanne Murphy, Team Member  
– Peter Holmes, Team Leader

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