



The Searchlight

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia, Missouri

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December Worship

Services at 9 and 11 a.m.

(except 10 a.m. only on Dec. 25)

Sunday, Dec. 4
“God Is Not God’s Name”
Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

As we contemplate fluency in the use of metaphor this month, join us in exploring the biggest concept of all, and the many names, symbols, and metaphors we use to speak of great forces and deep mysteries.

Sunday, Dec. 11
“Metaphorically Speaking”

As Unitarian Universalists, we do not have only one shared sacred text, but rather several sources of ongoing wisdom. Join us to hear from several among us about the metaphors and narratives that guide their lives. What sacred stories guide yours?

Sunday, Dec. 18
“Another Redeemer”
Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

A Unitarian Universalist luminary and educator once said, “Each night a child is born is a holy night.” UU churches across the country proclaim their faith when they declare that each child may be another redeemer. Join us for a **child dedication**, a service exploring the miracle of life in the winter holiday stories. If you would like to have your child dedicated on this day, contact Rev. Molly Housh Gordon.

Sunday, Dec. 25 – 10 am. only
“Gather Around”

Join us at **10 a.m.** on Christmas morning for a time of reflection, carols, and merriment. Pajamas are welcome. Hot Chocolate is guaranteed. Children who wish are welcome to bring a favorite new or old toy, book, or other item to share and show their church friends.

Special Holiday Season Services

Holiday Blues Service – 7 p.m. Dec. 18

Christmas Eve – 6 and 8 p.m. Dec. 24

Details on page 3

Spiritual Growth is cultivated by practicing . . .

Fluency in the Use of Metaphor

“The world is not made of atoms. It is made of stories.”
– Muriel Rukeyser

In a time when heightened dynamics of fear and division create real danger and despair in our country, it seems to me the need is urgent for courageous, clear, and deep storytelling... and story-listening.

The world is not made of black and white, good and evil, or other literalisms and dualisms that we appeal to for power over one another. The world is too full for that... it is made of stories – nuanced and personal and paradoxical, and it is in the language of metaphor and story that we reach not just truth, but understanding.

In her TED talk, “The Danger of the Single Story,” novelist Chimamanda Adichie reminds us that the stories we hear and tell and repeat about other people create deep assumptions and biases, for good or for ill. The stories we hear about other people form our behavior toward those “others.” Our metaphors have power – very literally – and so we must be astute and responsible with those that we encounter or create. Our fluency in the use of metaphor helps us avoid the literalisms and dualisms that divide us. Rather, it creates empathy as we explore the many stories and images that make up our world.

Join us this month to hear and tell a variety of stories, and perhaps to deepen our understanding and our capacity for compassion and love.

See you in church!
Molly

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Our Mission and Our Next Challenge

By Jeremy Milarsky, 2016-17 President

If the mission of our community is more than words on a window, every decision we make should be in support of it. “Radical welcome” and “deep connection,” for me, ultimately boil down to a rejection of things that divide us. Our mission is about accepting each other and growing together.

Just like our decisions, our physical space must also be in support of this mission. This is a more complicated question than it may seem, because decisions about the “where” of what we call church last a long time and are felt persistently by community members.

We need your help in finding an answer to this complicated question. I suspect there might not be so much of a “right” answer here as a “right answer for us.”

UUCC has occupied the Shepard Boulevard building for more than 46 years. The community has invested a great deal of time, talent and treasure in its upkeep and development. The current building we occupy is partially an expansion completed about 18 years ago.

It is now in much need of repairs and improvements. More important, perhaps, is the need for an elevator. To say the least, the lack of one in our building does not show radical welcome.

But we (the Board of Trustees) think it would be a mistake to limit that discussion to the question of an elevator alone. A broader discussion may, for example, include careful consideration of environmental sustainability, of adequate space for our programs, and even of the desirability of our location itself.

We are therefore planning to have a congregation-wide meeting **after the 11 a.m. worship service on Jan. 15, 2017**. Please mark your calendars and plan to join this important conversation. To start the discussion, we plan to consider the following questions:

- 1. What does our current physical space say about us as a community?*
- 2. Our mission statement articulates our commitment to radical welcome, deep connection, and helping to heal our world. What would we need to change about our physical space to help us better achieve that mission?*

This topic is too important to consider without ample input from you, the members of our church community. Please consider participating. If you're unable to attend the meeting, you can discuss this question with a board member or Rev. Molly.



Hanging of the Greens *Sunday, Dec. 4* **10 a.m. between worship services**

Bring your favorite holiday treat to share (finger foods only, please!) and join us for a time of hot chocolate, decorating, and merriment between our 9 and 11 a.m. worship services.

Forum for December 2016

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. Forum coordinator: Bill Clark, 573-474-4510.

Dec. 4

Verna Laboy, winner of the first-ever Liz Schmidt Community of Service Award, will speak. Laboy devotes her life to making a positive impact on her community. She works with a committee to create healthy neighborhoods and is a minister at her church, Urban Empowerment. She is active with the Youth Empowerment Zone and Living Large, a program that provides various classes and Bible studies to the community.

Dec. 11

Vanessa Brown Haywood, a representative of the Board of Directors of Columbia African-American Association, will speak about the history and contributions of the CAAA. The organization is committed to the development of America's youth, specifically targeting African American students living in the Columbia area.

Dec. 18

George Frissell will return to help us celebrate the birthdays of Jesus, Buddha and other religious teachers. A UUCM member, George was the recipient of a Columbia Values Diversity Award in 2004. For more than 30 years he taught English, social studies and world religions at Hickman High School, and for more than a quarter-century he was the director of the student-oriented "Speak Your Mind" forum at Hickman.

Dec. 25

To be announced. Your presence – but not your presents – will be appreciated.

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 573-442-5764 or contact Meredith Donaldson or Win Scott, Team Leaders.

Special Holiday Season Worship Services

Holiday Blues Service 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 18

This celebratory time of year can 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 Saturday, Dec. 24 Two Services at 6 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 later service, with the traditional carols and candlelight and a Christmas homily from Rev. Molly.

Forum Message: Race Relations Videos

In November the UU Forum group was privileged to learn about the work of the MU Faculty Council Committee on Race Relations from journalism professor and committee chair Berkley Hudson.

The 12-member committee of faculty, staff and students produced five enlightening three-minute videos that acknowledge and address long-standing problems of race relations at MU.

The UU Forum group encourages everyone to view these videos at <https://vimeopro.com/mizzouvideo/racerelations/video/143048171>.

Also see the Race Relations Committee Progress Report at facultycouncil.missouri.edu.

New Year's Day Hike

Jan. 1, 2017

Meet at 1:30 p.m. at the church

Come join us for an interesting and energetic walk in the good company of esteemed UUs. This is a chance to get off the couch, take a break from screen addictions, and burn off Christmas calories.

The length and route of the walk will depend on the weather and who comes, but the tentative plan is to hike at Three Creeks Conservation Area.

Halfway through the walk we will stop and build a small campfire.

Email Peter Holmes at pfholmes63@gmail.com if you have questions.

Green Sanctuary



GS Team Report

The knife skills class originally scheduled in December has been postponed (date to be announced).

Green Sanctuary will sponsor a green/earth-themed workshop on the second or third Sunday each month, with the goal of 10-11 workshops per year. Possibilities are re-purposing old clothing or fabrics and making easy DIY products for cleaning, bike maintenance, vegetarian cooking, etc. More details will be in the January *Searchlight*.

The Missouri Rural Crisis Center is looking for people to attend Lobby Days in Jefferson City to support legislation that maintains local control for rural farmers. Local control, for example, allows communities to pass health ordinances that help keep CAFO's (Confined/Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) out of areas that suffer pollution from these corporate farms. There are many forces at work that are harming small rural farmers. MRCC needs your voices. Several GS Team members will go to Lobby Days in the coming legislative session. Stay tuned for announcements for carpooling to these events.

GS Team wants to thank our congregation for its generous support during the November Faith to Action Collections for Columbia Center of Urban Agriculture.

– Lisa Guillory

Green tip of the month

Rethink those dryer sheets. Did you know that most dryer sheets are not biodegradable and contain harmful substances and artificial fragrances that worsen airway problems such as asthma, allergies and other airway diseases? Have you tried wool dryer balls? They are about the size of tennis balls, last about a year, and require no harmful sprays, softeners, or additives. You just toss two or three of them into the dryer with your clothes, and they soften and separate the clothes to prevent clinging, with no harmful chemicals. You can find dryer balls easily with an internet search.

Bergfried campout was awesome outdoor fun!

Whether you were a kid or an adult, the first annual UU campout was awesome outdoor fun! During the day, we explored nearby trails, played catch in the meadow (as well as some rousing card games) and talked with our fellow UUsers. Some of us even learned how to split wood! The kids swung on tire swings, had water balloon fights and played ball in the meadow.

In the evening, we hiked to the bluffs over the Gasconade River to watch the sunset, cooked our dinner over the fire, sang songs around the campfire and made s'mores while the kids told us ghost stories. Later that night, many of us celebrated our connection to nature by dancing in a pagan ceremony under the beautiful full moon!

The next morning, we sang and held our Sunday service in the meadow, surrounded by trees in autumn foliage. The campout was the perfect way to have fun, connect with the UU community, and be inspired by nature.

– Peter Holmes

Great progress with honeysuckle eradication

Last year and at the beginning of this year, we had begun to lose hope that we could win the battle to manage the invasive shrub honeysuckle in the UU woods. There was so much of it, and it seemed we would never find the energy needed to make decent inroads. But we have been greatly encouraged by the progress made this fall.

We have cleared most of the woodlands, leaving a smallish patch to the west that we should be able to tackle next spring. Then we will easily be able to manage its re-growth just as we manage mice in the church building and aphids on the ficus trees.

Thanks so much for everybody who helped in this work that is moving us towards a vision of creating a beautiful and soulful woodland garden that will be an inspiration to everybody who visits it.



Meetings at 12:30 p.m. on First Sundays – Forum Room

Social Action Team Chair: Janice Smith
Education Coordinator: Michela Skelton Birk
Communications Coordinator: Jackie Marcink
Finance Coordinator: Amie Burling
Anti-Racism and Justice: Wiley Miller
Economic Justice: Diane Suhler
LBGTQ Justice: Tessa Summers

Honduras News
Holiday Fundraiser
on Dec. 11

The Honduras team is planning its next fundraiser on Dec. 11 between worship services and after the 11 a.m. service. We will be selling cards made by Honduras team members, items from the sewing cooperative in El Pital Honduras where UUCC members will go to work in June, and some baked goods.

Thanks to all who purchased crepes at our Oct. 23 fundraiser. We raised \$800 – thank you so much for your generosity!

The proceeds from the sales will go towards latrine building materials and to support the health clinic in El Pital.

And mark your calendars for the fourth annual Founders Day Trivia Night at 5:30 p.m. Jan. 28, 2017 to benefit our Honduras work.

– Allie Gassmann

Creating Shelter with Room at the Inn

Have you signed up yet to help with Room at the Inn? We are hosting this potentially life-saving sheltering effort during the cold days from Dec. 4 through 18, and we need all of us working together to pull it off!

We need volunteers for every shift, and each one is fun and rewarding in its own right – from setting up with other volunteers, to hosting the early night time shift visiting with guests, to the quiet time of the overnight shift, to the early morning wake-up and nourishment of serving breakfast. Each is a meaningful opportunity to serve and connect. As always, we particularly need overnight volunteers, if such timing can fit in your life one or more nights during our time hosting.

Please sign up to volunteer today: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0c49afaa29abf94-room4>.

We can also use help with laundry and other donations. In-kind donations most appreciated are Walmart gift cards, warm gloves and socks, travel size toiletry items, non-perishable snack foods, breakfast foods, sandwich bags, hand warmers, and other items listed here: <http://www.roomattheinncomo.org/get-involved.html>.

UUCC Mission Statement

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



In November,
\$944.70
was collected for
Faith-to-Action
recipient
Columbia Center for
Urban Agriculture

UUCC provides Loaves and Fishes meal on 3rd Sundays

UUCC provides the evening meal at Loaves and Fishes on the third Sunday each month.

Please sign up on the church website to prepare food for this meal and/or to help set up, serve, and clean up.

Serving meals at Loaves and Fishes is a project of our Social Action Team.

If you have questions, email Diane Suhler at drsuhler@ccis.edu.

Men's Group – Dec. 10, 24, and 31

The UUCC 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.

Administrator's Note

We owe much gratitude to many volunteers in our community but particular thanks now goes to **Kevin Fritsche, Matt Bossaller, Marcus Jimerson and Rob Bartel** for their work to maintain the tiled flooring all around the church! Doesn't it look great!!

Unitarian Universalist Church of



Columbia, Missouri

Grieving Circle

Grieving Circle meets at church every month on the second Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. and on the fourth Thursday at 7 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Come, share, listen.

Find more information at <https://uuchurch.net/grieving-circle/>.

Hook & Needle Group

Take a break and join our church's Hook & Needle Group. Yarn, patterns and tutoring are available. The group meets at the church on Tuesdays at 2 p.m.

For more information, call Marian Hjelmfelt at 573-449-5118.

Kaleidoscope Pagan group

Help Us Call Back the Sun!

Kaleidoscope invites everyone to join us for the church's annual Solstice/Yule celebration at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 17.

We will meet at the Ordways' home (address is in the UUCC website directory) for the festivities. Please bring either snacks or drinks and a camp chair if you would like to sit comfortably.

Also, dress warmly as we will be outside the entire time (although bathrooms will be available).

Reel UUs – Third Week

The Reel UUs Film Group gathers during the third full week each month to view a film and hold a discussion immediately following.

The date, time, film and location are announced each month by email, Facebook and website.

Email Janice Smith at janepicturean@gmail.com if you want more information.

Meditation as an Act of Love

More than anything else, I have come to see meditation as an act of love, an inward gesture of benevolence and kindness toward ourselves and towards others, a gesture of the heart that recognizes perfection even in our obvious imperfection, with all shortcomings, our wounds, our attachments, our vexations, and our persistent habits of unawareness. It is a very brave gesture to take one's seat for a time and drop in on the present moment without adornment.

– Jon Kabat-Zinn

Join us for Mindfulness Meditation every Sunday at 10.05 a.m. in the Centering Room or around the Fire Circle.

UU Book Discussion Group – Dec.9

The UU Book Discussion will meet at 5 p.m. Dec. 9 at ABC Chinese Cuisine, 3510 I-70 Dr. S.E.

Bring a book you have read to discuss briefly.

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



Conversations, Etc. – Dec. 14

Conversations, Etc. will meet at noon Wednesday, Dec. 14 at the church. Soup will be provided for this Christmas gathering. Please bring a salad or dessert. Call Melinda Farhangi at 445-6325 if you have questions.

REflections



Dear Families and UUCC Community,

It is such an honor to begin my work as Director of Religious Education at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia. This position combines two of my great passions in life – education and my love of religion, spirituality, and most particularly Unitarian Universalism. It is all the more meaningful that I will be serving a community to which I already feel such deep connection and love.

I cannot express how excited I am to work with the young people of our church. From the very beginning of my time attending UUCC, I have been so impressed and appreciative of our young UUs. I can still remember my first time meeting our high school youth group, a few weeks after joining UUCC. I came home and gushed to my spouse about the amazing teens I had met, unlike any teens I had ever known – so insightful, compassionate, courageous, and so comfortable being authentically themselves. Now in my twelfth year working with the children and the teens of our church, I have had this reaction again and again. As I have worked with them over the years, it has been so meaningful supporting them as they made their way on their journey of developing into their best and truest selves. Whenever I need my faith in the world restored, I look at these incredible children and teens and absolutely believe that we can build a better world. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to devote my professional life to supporting them in their spiritual growth. I am particularly committed to making sure we meet the individual spiritual and educational needs of all of our children, in all their diversity of backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles.

But it is not the young people alone that make me excited about this position. There are so many people at UUCC who help support the development of our children. It has been inspiring to witness the dedication and hard work of parents, RE teachers, the RE team, and our past DREs who have loved and nurtured these young people – instilling in them a strong sense of their own inherent worth and dignity and of the worth and dignity of others, avoiding teaching easy answers in favor of difficult questions and complicated truths, being role models of activism and service. Let's just say that I have done a lot of gushing over the years! I am thrilled to get to devote my energy full time to a community and a program that I value so much, for myself and my children, and of which I am so proud to be a part.

If you are interested in learning more about how I approach this position, I encourage you to read my entire philosophy of religious education posted on our website, but I want to share one piece here. When people ask me what Unitarian Universalism is all about, I say that it is a covenantal, as opposed to a creedal, religion. By that I mean we put at the center of our faith not dogma, but the development of relationships of compassion and care, relationships with ourselves, with each other, with the broader community outside our church walls, and with the earth itself. This component of covenantal relationship building, of learning to care in a deep and sacred way for ourselves, each other, and the world is at the heart of what I believe our religious education program is about. I look forward to continuing to build these relationships with all of you. My greatest strengths and passions throughout my career have been in dialogue, collaboration, and problem solving. I am eager to begin talking together, dreaming together, and overcoming challenges together. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your DRE.

Jamila Batchelder

Director of Religious Education

dre@uuchurch.net

573-442-5764

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10 a.m. to noon and by appointment

Sincerely,
Jamila Batchelder
Director of Religious Education, UUCC

Reflections...continued

Upcoming Events

December is a busy month with lots of fun events for people of all ages!

R.E. Family Potluck – 6-8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 3

Everyone involved in our R.E. Program is invited to a potluck dinner, to share a time of fellowship, and also to share our vision of where we are heading in our R.E. Program. I would love to hear more about what all of you are passionate about and what ideas you have for R.E. as I begin planning and prioritizing for the future.



Thank You!

Thank you to all the volunteers who kept our RE programming running smoothly in our period of transition! Particular thanks to our transition team members:

- Melissa McConnell
- Melissa Collins
- Jeff Ordway
- Corinne Mann

Hanging of the Greens – 10-11 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 4 (between worship services)

Help us decorate our sanctuary for the holidays! Bring finger foods to share as we mark the beginning of the holiday season together.

Complicated Gifts Workshop – 6:30-8:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 9

Jr. Youth and YRUU are invited to create some Complicated Gifts on the evening of Friday, Dec. 9, from 6:30 until 8:30 in the lower level of the church. Pizza will be served as we craft book safes, coasters, newspaper poetry, among other things. Be sure to let Lisa Fritsche know if you'll be there, as we want to have plenty for you to do, and to eat! (Extra adult help would be appreciated as well!) RSVP to lisa.fritsche@gmail.com.



Simple Gifts Workshop – 12:30-2:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 11

Create simple holiday gifts with your children. We will have several easy craft projects set up (geared to kids ages 4 to 10) for kids that they can use for holiday gifts. A bagel lunch will be provided.

Christmas Eve Service – 6-7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 24

Join us on Christmas Eve for our family-friendly early service.



Christmas Day Service – 10-11 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 25

Christmas Day falls on a Sunday this year, so if you want to come visit with your church family on that day, please join us for a relaxed time of fellowship, pastry eating, song singing, and a sharing of our stories of Christmases past. Everyone is encouraged to come in their pajamas, and children are welcome to bring a favorite present to show to their friends.

Junior High 'Our Whole Lives' Class Begins in January 2017

Our Whole Lives (OWL) Sexuality Education for Grades 7-9 will be taught January through April of 2017 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 or Jeremy Duke at jeremyduke@hotmail.com.

OWL Curriculum details can be viewed on the UUA website at <http://www.uua.org/re/owl>.

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Unitarian Universalist Church of



Columbia, Missouri

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