



The Searchlight

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Columbia, Missouri

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December Worship

9 and 11 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 3

“Showing Up Anyway”

Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

Amid the inevitable struggles of life and relationships, one of the most profound things we do in religious community is explore how to remain faithful – to one another, to our highest values, and to Love. When the going gets tough, it takes spiritual maturity to stay at the table and find our way through.

Sunday, Dec. 10

“The Wildness of the Season”

Rebecca Graves

Join Worship Associate Rebecca Graves to explore the wilderness in the winter holidays. Particularly through the northern European figure of Krampus, we’ll explore what it means to tap into the wild within.

Sunday, Dec. 17

“The Faithfulness of the Light”

Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

As our Jewish members and friends celebrate Hannukah, we turn to the story of a light that burns on faithfully past all expectations. What forces in the world do we trust and rely upon?

Sunday, Dec. 24

10:30 a.m. only

“Christmas Kitsch”

Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

Join us at for one service at 10:30 a.m. on Christmas Eve morning. By this point in the holiday season, adults are often exhausted and children giddy. Let’s take a moment to just *enjoy together!* Join us to lean into the fun and silly side of Christmas, in all its kitschy glory. *Ugly Christmas Sweaters Encouraged!*

Sunday, Dec. 31

“Burning of the Grudges”

Rev. Molly Housh Gordon

Join us this New Year’s Eve morning for a multi-generational service burning away the old year and preparing for the new one! What do you need to let go of in order to begin a new year of learning and loving?

Special Holiday Worship Services

7 p.m. Dec. 17 - Holiday Blues Service

6 and 8 p.m. Dec. 24 - Candlelight Services

Details on page 2

Resilient Community Weaves In . . .

Faithfulness

“True happiness is not attained through self-gratification, but through fidelity to a worthy purpose.” – Helen Keller

The first thing they did was plant trees... our founders – who scrimped and saved and finally in 1965 took a leap of faith to buy the land where our church now stands. When they acquired the land, they didn’t have the money yet to build on it. So they planted trees.

The neighborhood was not yet developed – it really didn’t even exist as a neighborhood. The school wasn’t here, nor most of the houses you now see. The street leading to this plot was narrow gravel road.

There were no utilities out this far yet– no electricity hookups or water pipes. So our founders brought water from home in buckets and gallon jugs to nourish the trees they planted. For five years they raised money from garage sales and their own bank accounts. They drew up plans for the building they dreamed of.

And all the while they hauled out water in buckets and jugs, and cared for the trees that would grow tall and strong around the site of this, our church home. You can see the trees now at either end of our parking lot, gracing our land – pines and cedars mostly, sharing beauty and oxygen and shade from the sun.

I can think of no better testimony to our founders’ faithfulness than to tell you how they carried water and planted trees, before there was anything here. May we be so faithful – to this community and its mission and all it represents.

The work of community is hard and long – relationships are inevitably riddled with conflict and failure as well as sweetness. The work of love and justice, too, is never-ending and full of struggle.

Yet, when we are at our best, we hold faith with that work, with one another, with our dream for the future, and with the values we hold most dear. We stick with it, even when the going gets tough. We find practices of restoration when we hurt or fail one another. And we keep carrying water, day after day, week after week, year after year, so that our children’s children’s children will have shade and sweet air and all the love we can leave them.

In faith,
Rev. Molly

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Forum – December 2017

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. 3: Attorney Helene Tatum will discuss problems of immigration.

Dec. 10: Noppadol Paothong, Department of Conservation photographer, will present on his new book, *Sage Grouse: Icon of the West*. He will have copies of his book available for purchase.

Dec. 17: Wayne Anderson will look into a future when there will be no more gasoline stations.

Dec. 24 and Dec. 31: Programs will be spontaneous discussions among the Forum attendees. Bill Clark will also have a Plan B for both Sundays.

New Year's Day Hike

Jan. 1, 2018

Meet at UUCS at 1:30 p.m.

The annual New Year's Day hike will start at the church at 1:30 p.m. Jan. 1, 2018. Join us for an interesting and energetic walk in the good company of esteemed UUs. It's a chance to get off the couch, take a break from screen addictions, and burn off holiday season calories.

The length and route of the walk will depend on the weather and who joins the group, but the tentative plan is to hike at Three Creeks Conservation Area. Halfway through the hike the group will stop and build a small campfire. Bring nibbles to share.

Peter Holmes is organizing the hike. For more information, email him at pfolmes63@gmail.com.



Special Holiday Worship

Holiday Blues Service

Sunday, Dec. 17 – 7 p.m.

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

Christmas Eve

Sunday, Dec. 24 – Two Services at 6 and 8 p.m.

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

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

Strategic Priorities for UUCC – 2017

by Todd Iveson, 2017-18 President

The UUCC Board of Trustees has established three primary strategic priorities for the church to focus on during the next three to five years. While these goals may be revisited and revised as the needs of the church change, they provide a framework for the focus of our efforts in the foreseeable future. These priorities are in line with the mission and the vision of our church:

- 1. Encourage deep connection; clarify a path to service, responsibility, and leadership; facilitate spiritual growth through membership, small group development and adult religious education opportunities.**
- 2. Address future building plans and staffing needs to better enable our mission of radical welcome, deep connection, and helping to heal the world.**
- 3. Reach outward to Columbia and our Missouri community in a way that enacts our Unitarian Universalist values. Partner with groups outside our church to increase our members' commitment and active participation in efforts of providing sanctuary, and promoting social action, multi-culturalism, anti-racism, inclusion, and environmental awareness.**

In its meeting on Nov. 16, the board adopted the strategic priorities above as part of our continuous process of strategic planning. These priorities flow from the previous work of the congregation on our mission and vision statements and provide a more specific focus for the energies of our ministry over the next several years.

The words of these priorities were carefully crafted after much discussion and speak for themselves. But I want to share some thoughts these goals inspire in me about how we can give substance to the ideals we have expressed through our mission and vision.

The first priority calls on our commitment to radical welcome and spiritual growth. It challenges us to create a path not only to membership for all who share our principles, but also a way to fully integrate each member in service to the church and its mission. To truly create radical welcome, we must make it possi-

ble for each member and friend to find a fulfilling way to bring their gifts, to let their lights shine. At the same time, we must provide all of us with new ways to grow spiritually through interaction with other points of view and exposure to unfamiliar concepts.

The second priority echoes the words of our mission statement and makes us focus on the practical steps we must take to bring those ideals to life. We cannot be radically welcoming unless our building and programs are fully accessible to all; we know we have much work to do to achieve that. We also must realize that we cannot fully realize our ambitious goal of helping to heal our world without sufficient staff to support our dedicated volunteers. While our reach must always exceed our grasp, if we reach too far without the necessary support, we will fall.

The third priority renews our commitment to social action and specifically calls on us to engage more fully with the community outside our church. It recognizes that we are powerful in the collective energy we as a congregation can bring to these issues, but that we are always more powerful when working in community with others. Working with others also allows the wider community to hear our message of courageous love and radical welcome.

I am sure the words of these strategic priorities will inspire different thoughts in many of you. I look forward to having those discussions and to moving forward to achieve these goals.

On a practical note regarding the second priority, I am excited to tell you that I recently met with the now fully constituted Building Needs Task Force. This is a committed group with the complementary skills needed to help us bring clarity to our path forward on this important issue. The task force has agreed to engage in a meaningful process to seek input from the congregation and, based on that input, bring at least three options for future building plans to the congregation by Sept. 30, 2018.

The task force members are Matthew Bossaller, Kevin Fritsche, Larry Lile, Gretchen Maune, and Connie Ordway. Please let them know your vision for the future of our church home.



Green Sanctuary Team News

Green Sanctuary accreditation application has been submitted

What is this, and what does it mean? The Green Sanctuary program is a nationally recognized path for congregational study, reflection and action in UU congregations in response to environmental challenges (see below). Currently, about 25% of UU congregations have achieved GS accreditation, and now we are on our way. It has been a long, challenging process, putting the application and work plan together. Many thanks to Lisa Guillory and Jan Weaver for all their work making this happen!

What does this mean? We have completed a congregational self-assessment and put together several projects across four focus areas: Environmental Justice, Worship and Celebration, Religious Education, and Sustainable Living. Over the next two to three years, you will see many opportunities to get involved.

In December, for example, we will be kicking off our series of family-friendly “Got Skills Workshops,” to be held on the second Saturday of February, April, June, August, October and December. The first is coming up on Dec. 9, when we will be making t-shirt bags (with a craft for little hands as well) that can be used for bringing your own dishes to potlucks, among other uses. No sewing skills needed! That’s the basic skill we will be highlighting. We are focusing this month on how we consume energy and materials. We all share the burden of the waste from their use. By taking a step away from consumption, you are taking a step toward justice and towards love and compassion for others, both human and wild.

December will also see the kickoff of the New Year-to-Valentine’s Day “Green Hearts” challenge, an opportunity to join other UUs as you choose a new personal environmental practice as an act of spiritual devotion to justice and love.

There will be many opportunities to get involved with this process. You can join us at our Green Sanctuary Team meetings to help with planning; you can be involved in organizing individual projects of interest to you; or you can simply participate in the activities that appeal to you. Our next meeting, and all are welcome, is at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 12 at the home of Ellen Thomas (ellenthomascomo@gmail.com).

According to the Green Sanctuary website, the process of certification:

- Calls us to simply to do our part through small steps carried out consistently, with faith in our power to make a difference. Religious leaders from most of the world’s faith traditions claim that our environmental crises may be the greatest moral challenge facing humankind in the 21st century.
- Considers the long-term impact of our individual and communal practices and behavior. Green Sanctuary congregations learn how their choices can damage or enhance our environment, weaving related moral, emotional and spiritual issues into worship. This creates space to care for and help one another in challenging times.
- Identifies us as a faith community with a historic and deep commitment to justice that respects the interdependent web of all existence. We understand that caring for the Earth and all of its inhabitants is a critical ingredient in building true justice.

See more Green Sanctuary news on page 5

Welcoming Team Announces:

For Our Newcomers: 'Getting to Know UU'

(for all those who want to know more about us)

On the first Sunday of each month in Rev. Molly's office after the second worship service for about 30 minutes. Child care provided.

Ready to Join?

If you are considering membership in UUCC, we urge you to attend these classes:

Sunday, Jan. 14 – 12:30-2:30 p.m. – Centering Room: Membership 101 will cover UU history and the history of this church.

Sunday, Jan. 28 – 12:30-2:30 p.m. – Centering Room: Membership 102 will cover how to get more involved in the life of the church.

For both classes, lunch will be provided, and child care will be available with one week's notice. Make your reservation by email to uuchurch@uuchurch.net, or call 573-442-5764.

New Member Ingathering

At the 11 a.m. worship service on Feb. 11, there will be a new member ingathering for those who have taken the membership classes or spoken with Rev. Molly and feel ready to join.

Grieving Circle

If you or someone you know would like to meet in a facilitated grieving circle, or you wish to be in a place where you can freely and safely express your grief, please contact Rev Molly, Maria Oropallo, Barbara Carter or Greg Bergman. All of our contact information is in the church directory on our website. Or you can send us an email at grievingcircle@uuchurch.net.

Grieving a loss is personal and can sometimes be overwhelming. With deep connection, love, and patience, we hold your grief in our gentle embrace.

Mindfulness Meditation

Join us for Mindfulness Meditation at 10:05 a.m. in the Centering Room or around the Fire Circle.

Meditators of all levels of experience are welcome. This is mainly silent meditation with some instruction, if needed, and with brief selected readings from eminent teachers.

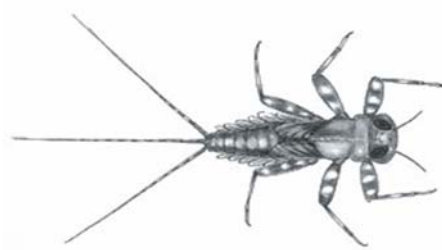
For more information contact Peter Holmes.

GST 'Stream Team' to monitor Hinkson Creek section

The Green Sanctuary Team would like to announce that UUCC now has its very own Stream Team that has committed to monitoring the health of a section of the Hinkson Creek near Capen Park.

This involves making a trip to the Hinkson about four times a year and measuring the health of the stream by catching and counting macro-invertebrates (like the mayfly above) that live in the stream. We will also be measuring stream flow, water temperature, dissolved oxygen, nitrate content, pH level, conductivity and turbidity.

The Hinkson Creek is the biggest stream flowing through Columbia,



and it is not in the best of health. It is on the list of impaired waterways compiled as part of the federal Clean Water Act. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the Missouri Department of Conservation are charged with keeping an eye on the health of our waterways but they do not have the resources or personnel to do much regular monitoring. They

rely on volunteer stream teams to do the monitoring and to feed them information. So we are joining with hundreds of volunteers in the Missouri Stream Team Program that are working to keep our waters clean and healthy.

We have done our first monitoring expedition with the Green Sanctuary Team, and it was great fun. We have chosen a beautiful section of the Hinkson where we can hang out, have a picnic, bring families, and really get to form a "deep connection" with the creek and the creatures that live there. Look for an invitation in the spring to come and join us on our next monitoring trip.

– Suzanne Griffin and Peter Holmes

Kaleidoscope pagan gathering – Dec. 23

For the December gathering at 6 p.m. Dec. 23, Kaleidoscope will be featuring a Yule Feast with an assortment of seasonal foods, beverages and entertainments. This will be a potluck event and will be held in the Greeting Area as usual.

If you have an interest in attending, please email Alan Arnold at alan.d.arnold@gmail.com or Barbara Carter at barbaracarter@centurylink.net.

Because this is a potluck affair and because we are trying to keep to a particular style of food for this event, we'd like to recommend some specific dishes to our participants so we can have a good and consistent variety of seasonal fare. When you email Barbara or Alan, they can assist you in selecting a suitable recipe.

As part of the festivities, please be encouraged to put on whatever period costume suits an ancient celebration and join us for a Yule revel in the spirit of our ancestors.

If you don't have time to cook but wish to join us, let us know and join us anyway!

Grounds Team reports honeysuckle success

The Grounds Team is very happy to report that we now have the shrub honeysuckle in our church grounds under some reasonable control.

Shrub honeysuckle is a very aggressive, invasive plant that completely dominates the understory layer in woodlands if it is allowed free rein. It was taking over our woodlands, but over the past few years, with the help of many volunteers, we have pushed it back and have arrived at a reasonable agreement with the spirit of the honeysuckle whereby everybody's needs are given some attention. We will never get rid of the honeysuckle but it is now manageable if we weed it out regularly.

Now we can see through our woods and will be able to enjoy some of the less assertive flowers and understory plants. Please take an opportunity to walk the path through the woods and check it out.

'The Work That Reconnects'

Join us for twice-monthly group work at UUCC at 7 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays in "The Work That Reconnects," a program developed by Buddhist scholar, author and teacher Joanna Macy and facilitated by Caya Tanski-French.

The central purpose of "The Work That Reconnects" is to deepen our relationship with each other and with the self-healing powers in the web of life, taking us from despair and helping to motivate and empower us to reclaim our lives, our communities, and our planet.

For more information, contact Caya by email at cayasadhana@yahoo.com.

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 573-449-5118.

UUCC provides Loaves and Fishes meal on 3rd Sundays

UUCC provides the evening meal at Loaves and Fishes on the third Sunday each month – Dec. 17 this 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.

Conversations, Etc. – Dec. 13

Conversations, Etc. will meet at noon Wednesday, Dec. 13 at the church. Bring soup, salad or dessert. Let Melinda know what you are bringing (573-445-6325).

If you have questions, call Pam Springsteel at 573-445-0642.

UU Book Discussion – Dec. 8

The UU Book Discussion group will meet at 5 p.m. Dec. 8 at ABC Chinese Cuisine. Bring a book you have read to discuss briefly.

If you have questions, call Pam Springsteel at 573-445-0642.

Men's Group

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.

Reflections

Jamila Batchelder
Director of Religious Education
dre@uuchurch.net
573-442-5764
Office Hours: Wed. 10 a.m.-noon
and by appointment

This month we will be examining how communities are strengthened through faithfulness. When we started thinking about this topic of building resilient communities, this is what I first thought of, particularly the Litany of Atonement by Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs, the popular responsive reading in UU services, with the repeated phrase “Forgiving others and ourselves, we begin again in love.” It is the single idea I have brought most often into my UU parenting, that whatever struggles we go through, we can always come back, again and again, to a place of love and begin again together. It is a beautiful message as we head into the holiday season – that it is an opportunity to regroup ourselves in our love for our family and community and the world, and begin again as we prepare to head into the new year. Happy Holidays, UUCC Families! I look forward to sharing this season with all of you.

Simple Gifts Workshop Sunday, Dec. 10, 12-2 p.m.

Join us for a workshop making simple crafts that can be given as holiday gifts. Lunch will be provided, and there will be crafts suitable for kids ages 4-9. Please RSVP if you plan to attend.



Junior Youth Night Complicated Gifts Friday, Dec. 8, 6:30-8 p.m.

Junior Youth (6th-8th grade) will meet for their annual Complicated Gifts Workshop (high schoolers welcome to attend). They will make crafts to give as gifts. And, as always, eat pizza! Please RSVP if you plan to attend.



Big News in OWL!

One of our programs we are most proud of at UUCC is Our Whole Lives (OWL), our comprehensive sexuality education class that we offer in alternate years for junior high and high school teens. But it has been a dream of mine to expand the program to include classes for Kindergarten and Elementary age kids. To do that, we would need teachers trained for those curricula, and we also need new teachers trained to continue our existing programs.

So...we have decided to host an OWL facilitator training Jan. 13-15 not only to get our congregation's teachers trained, but also to support congregations throughout the Midwest in training teachers for their program. This is a big undertaking, and we would love any volunteers who are interested in helping, either in logistical support during the conference, or in providing home-stay accommodations for participants coming from out of town. Please contact me at dre@uuchurch.net.

The other OWL news is that we are going to take one year off from our regular junior high/high school OWL schedule (so that the next High School OWL will be offered in 2019, and our next Junior High OWL will be offered in 2020). We are doing this in part to give us the opportunity to get revamp our program and get new teachers trained, and also because the particular age distribution of teens in our church fits best with this schedule.

December R.E. Schedule

- **Dec. 3:** Service Sunday - Making stockings for the Caring Team to give to church members.
- **Dec. 10:** Regular R.E. classes
- **Dec. 17:** Regular R.E. classes
- **Dec. 24:** Intergenerational Service
- **Dec. 31:** Intergenerational Service

THE SEARCHLIGHT

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

Return Service Requested

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Email: music@uuchurch.net

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Unitarian Universalist Church of



Columbia, Missouri

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