

# The Uniter

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign



January 11, 2012

## **Worship Services**

**January 15, 2012**

**9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.**

“Of Race and Rationality”

The Rev. Axel H. Gehrmann

**January 22, 2012**

**9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.**

“And Now for the Good News”

The Rev. Axel H. Gehrmann

**January 29, 2012**

**9:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.**

“Unexpected Connections”

The Rev. Axel H. Gehrmann

Chalice Circle Workshop (see pg. 5)

***Our Mission***  
*Build Community.*  
*Seek Inspiration.*  
*Promote Justice.*  
*Find Peace.*

## **Minister's Message**

**-Rev. Axel H. Gehrmann**

We are approaching that time of year, when a small cadre of church leaders will be reminding us about the financial dimensions of congregational life. Along the way, they will raise questions about how each of us hopes to contribute. These are important questions that touch into bigger issues.

The sentiments of our religious endeavors are lofty, and the spiritual truths we seek may often seem subtle and elusive. So it can sometimes feel jarring to be reminded of the crass material realities of money and budgets, of building upkeep and staff salaries. But there it is.

Our church - our religious home - does not float in the clouds. It stands on solid earth. And thus, it is subject to earthly matters of maintenance and stewardship. This is as it should be. For, truth be told, any religion worth its salt is at its best when its principles are put into practice.

The moral fiber of any faith becomes apparent only as it is put into action. That's how our cherished ideals of compassion and kindness, of justice and generosity, become tangible realities in our lives, and in our world.

This is why our annual Stewardship Drive is such a critical aspect of congregational life. It is an opportunity for us to have honest conversations with about our religious commitments, about how this religious community has touched us, and how we want to shape its future.

Stewardship is about a lot more than money. It is about deepening the connections among us,

(cont.)

strengthening the fabric of our community, and envisioning more powerful ways in which - together - we can serve a greater good.

The religious endeavor offers no guarantees. Even a casual look at events around the world offers ample evidence that religion has the potential to foster kindness as well as cruelty, hate as well as love. I believe firmly that our particular religious approach can help us cast a distinct vision of human wholeness and harmony, which our world desperately needs.

Our Stewardship Committee has scheduled a kick-off event on Saturday evening, February 11th. (Mark your calendar!) It is designed to be a fun social gathering, with a lot of good food and music. In the following week we will have so-called "cottage meetings" in the homes of members and friends, at which each of us is invited to participate, to share our experience of the church, and our hopes for the years ahead. Please keep your eyes upon for upcoming announcements with more specifics.

We are approaching that time of year, when our active involvement in the life of our community is especially encouraged. I hope you join us.

See you in church!

## ***RE Matters***

*-From Religious Education  
Director Amy Schneidhorst*

### **Waiting on the World to Change**

This week, I noticed an on-line discussion amongst Religious Educators about how to teach about disappointment, particularly the disappointment that arises when an anticipated outcome has not occurred, such as a child (or adult) plunging a hand into a box of cereal to find the prize is not as glorious as s/he had imagined. I am writing this on January 5th after a month full of anticipation for what Christmas and the New Year will bring. Its true, the New Year can bring tremendous change, for instance the anticipation of a life shared after a holiday marriage proposal. But it is also often the case that the flipping of a calendar page to January 1 brings pretty much the same life we had on December 31. Not that

you'd ever know it to hear the news: Iowa Caucus attendees hoping the New Year will bring a political administration more in line with voter ideals, our collective holding our breath hoping for a stronger economy, hoping that forces outside ourselves will bring about changes within us. As the John Mayer song says, "Waiting on the World to Change."

. . . Now we see everything that's going wrong  
With the world and those who lead it  
We just feel like we don't have the means  
To rise above and beat it

So we keep waiting

Waiting on the world to change . . .

As the song also implies, it is a lack of self-confidence or uncertainty as to how to apply one's talents that move us to look outside ourselves for a solution to our individual discontent and inertia. The very forces we rely on, for our loved ones to change their behavior; for our government to act in our interests; for the nations to make decisions based on our humanity and fragility, not power; are all things that are largely out of individual control. We are likely to have greater success if we sit with the discontent and consider what we can contribute, in cooperation with others, to bring about the change we so most desire this time of year.

## ***From the Board Chair***

*-Bill Childers*

Where does the church get the money to keep the doors open and provide services to the congregation? Most of the church's funds obviously come from the congregation. As we all know every year we hold a stewardship campaign. This year is like any other year and you will be hearing about pledging soon. One of the other main fundraising opportunities for the Church is the annual service auction. Every year our church holds an auction of goods and services that are donated by members and friends of the church. Last year we were able to raise over \$22,000. Last year my family donated three parties that were held at our place in the country. We really enjoyed it and had a great time getting to know more people in the congregation. We also purchased several items including a wine

tasting trip to southern Michigan that was probably the most fun weekend we had all fall. Good auction items are the key to a great fundraiser. Please be thinking of something you would like to donate. A theme party or short trip is a great way to raise money for the church and get to know more people at the same time. I guarantee you will have a great time.

The Auction Committee is forming now. We have a good group of people that are willing to help but still need more people to make this year's auction as successful as last years. Please contact me at [wchilder@comcast.net](mailto:wchilder@comcast.net) if you are able to help.

## Our Church Family

### Joys and Concerns

This information is not available online.

### January Birthdays to Celebrate

Fabio Greene	Liam Thomas
Jerry Hunt	Barbara Poss
Dave Sharpe	Nancy Dietrich
David Love	Emma Herzog
John Klein	Amy Kummerow
Sam Beshers	Veronica Mierek
Steve Troyer	Beth Cobb
Mariah Laugesen	Andy Robinson
Grace Adelston	Chris Hannauer
Phillip Duling	Lin Foote
Anya Troyer	Colleen Fitzgerald
Carole Wilson	Finn Kerins
Sophia Gehrmann	Julian Hartman
Miranda Burgos	Noah Gehrmann
Karla Peterson	Chet Strohecker
Marty Williams	

### Our Condolences

Long-time church member Nancy Heins passed away unexpectedly on December 29th. A small graveside service was held at Mt. Hope Cemetery on January 4th. A memorial service at the church is being planned for a later date. We extend our condolences to Nancy's husband, Jim, and the entire Heins family.

## Food for Thought

*-News from the Hunger Initiative Coordinating Team*

### Backpacks Filled

THANK YOU to everyone who donated backpacks and supplies for the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen's Backpack Project. The response was overwhelming--UU's donated 27 filled backpacks, plus several bags of supplies to be put into backpacks! The soup kitchen gave away over 750 filled backpacks plus additional supplies to their guests this year. This is a very important project, as for many of Daily Bread's guests, this backpack was their only gift this Christmas season. So again, thank you for your generosity!



### More from the Hunger Initiative

Hunger Initiative work is ongoing thanks to the help of many. The Daily Bread backpack giveaway was a great success, I hope all saw the News Gazette article on how many were given out over the holidays, it's available from this online link:

<http://www.news-gazette.com/blogs/there-yet/2012-01/they-celebrate-charity-lieu-more-stuff.html>. Nancy Dietrich did a beautiful job organizing this so that we had plenty to provide with both filled packs and lots of great winter clothing and toiletries in addition. We heard and loved the stories told of children helping to shop to fill a pack back and how carefully they chose items to help make someone's holiday that much brighter. We also had a great food drive with about 30 boxes of groceries delivered to the Eastern Illinois Food Bank in one month thanks to all of you. Many also gave

money directly to the Food Bank to help restock the shelves. We will get a full report from EIFB soon but you all made this work. A special thank you to the YRUU who arranged for a festive neighborhood evening of door to door caroling combined with a request for canned goods. Over 30 of our Church friends joined us to sing carols and share in the joy of the holiday season, what a great turnout! Several sturdy wagons were filled with food that evening and we all enjoyed singing our selves hoarse...hmmm seems like maybe an event to be repeated next year!

We have been so busy these past few months with repacks at EIFB, apple picking, service planning and more to come soon. There is still room for a few more for the January 19<sup>th</sup> training to volunteer at the Wesley Food Pantry on campus. This is a great opportunity to join your friends to learn more about this once a month volunteer opportunity. See the Volunteer Spot link to sign up.

<http://www.volunteerspot.com/login/entry/282345632100520068>

Coming up will be more information about working at soup kitchens or helping members of our local community apply for food stamps and work across the community on addressing hunger. Do you have an idea or hope on how to address hunger needs? We meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday at the Church at 7pm in the YRUU classroom. Join us! OR email us at [hunger-team@uucuc.org](mailto:hunger-team@uucuc.org).

## **Church Announcements**

**January Shared Offering: Salt and Light**  
Our Shared Offering for January is Salt & Light Ministry. Salt & Light serves residents of Champaign County who are at or below the poverty level. Its Food Pantry provides almost 400 families each week with perishable and non-perishable food bought from the Eastern Illinois Food Bank. It has a Clothing Closet that provides furniture and clothing to those in need. And Salt & Light has a Financial Literacy Education program that provides individual and group financial counseling through a thirteen-week course.

Salt& Light is supported by our donations of money, food, clothing and furniture. You may have contributed to Salt & Light's "Can-less Food Drive" last summer. Over 260 businesses in Champaign County displayed large tin cans with a red and white label like an oversized Campbell Soup can. Salt & Light asked, "What in the WORLD is a food drive without cans???" Every dollar donated buys \$10 worth of food from the Eastern Illinois Food Bank. So, instead of collecting cans of corn and beans, we need your financial support."

January is our opportunity to provide hundreds of dollars in food through our donations. Learn more about our January recipient at [saltandlightministry.org](http://saltandlightministry.org).

### **Thank you from the Sharpes**

Members and Friends of the UUCUC: Thank you for honoring us on our 50th anniversary by contributing to the Arbor Day Foundation to have a tree planted in a national forest.

Such contributions can make a difference in the future of our forests. You should be pleased to have a part in this effort, which is coordinated by the Membership Committee, chaired by Gail Schiesser.

Gratefully, Anne and David Sharp

### **Good Stewards**

Safety and security. It's not something we think about often, particularly in church. But it is important to take a few moments once in a while and review the good practices we should apply toward caring for our buildings, assets, and most important, people.

For example, everyone who uses the building should take a moment to look around when they are leaving to see the condition they are leaving it in. Check doors to ensure they are firmly closed, both interior (fire doors) and exits.

Look for areas that need to be straightened or tidied up before you go. Did you bring a jacket, a mug, or a book into a room with you? Check lost and found if you think you left something in the building. Toss out trash and papers that you won't use again. Wipe up spills and leave a note for staff if you find a safety concern. If something is broken or missing, let us know.

Finally, shut off lights before you walk out.

Being careful stewards of our building and grounds makes the building safer and more pleasant for everyone. Take a minute to look around you, and appreciate the beauty of the place you share with so many others.

### **Chalice Circle Leader Training -- An Invitation to Join the Fun**

As Unitarian-Universalists we affirm and promote "a free and responsible search for truth and meaning." There is nothing in the Seven Principles, though, that suggests that we have to conduct that search alone. I suspect that the fact that we have organized ourselves into this church community suggests that many of us would, in fact, prefer to conduct our search in the company of others. Many of the people who have become active participants in the life of our church over the past year have expressed an interest in making connections and developing relationships with others who share their values and interests. One of the ways that we, as UUs create those connections and relationships is in Chalice Circles.

Dr. M'ellen Kennedy, who led a worship service here in October, 2010, describes chalice circles as "a voluntary gathering of people who come together for a common purpose. What unites the members is a desire for connection with others and a deeper spiritual connection in their lives." Rev. Bill Breeden, co-minister of the UU Church of Bloomington, Indiana, suggests that chalice circles "exponentially increase the ability to touch those persons in our congregation seeking community and meaningful relationships in their lives."

Our church community presently has two on-going Chalice Circles. In response to a request for more chalice circles and training for potential chalice circle facilitators, the membership committee will be offering a Chalice Circle Leaders' Training on Sunday, January 29, 2012, after the second service.

Those who attend this training will learn some methods of sharing leadership, sharing time, and facilitating chalice circles. You'll also leave with plenty of materials, ideas, and support for developing and facilitating a chalice circle that

meets your needs and the needs of others within our church community.

If you have ever --

- . thought about joining a chalice circle or leading a chalice circle;

- . wished that someone else would start a chalice circle that you could join;

- . wondered if there would be a support system if you were to start a chalice circle;

or, if you have never thought about joining or starting a chalice circle before, but find the idea interesting, then please join Virginia Brubaker and Gail Schiesser after the second service on Sunday, January 29, 2012, for this three hour training. There's no obligation for you to start, facilitate, or even join a chalice circle. Come and kick the tires. If the idea is sufficiently intriguing, we'll talk about how to proceed.

Please let us know if you're planning to attend. We want to make sure that we have enough handouts copied, coffee brewed, and lunch made. [gschiesser@nlpchicago.com](mailto:gschiesser@nlpchicago.com); [brubaker@nlpchicago.com](mailto:brubaker@nlpchicago.com).

### **A Round of Applause, Please . . . .**

The membership committee (and ping pong fans everywhere) sends up a ringing round of applause for Ryan Thomas. In addition to all he does as leader of the youth choir, web-and-general-tech-guy par excellence, Ryan has provided a new ping pong table for use by church members and friends. Recognizing that the folks in YRUU will probably make the most use of our newest amenity, the table is located on the lower level (do churches have a Lido Deck?). Just listen for the sound of ping pong balls being smacked -- you'll find it.

Thanks for increasing the fun quotient, Ryan!  
<[http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/par\\_excellence#French](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/par_excellence#French)>



**Thanks  
Ryan!**

## **AUCTION AUCTION AUCTION**

We have a date for the next Auction: Saturday March 31<sup>st</sup> just in time to usher in April fool's Day. We are still finalizing the name but things like Fool's Gold and A Fool and their money are soon parted are resonating! Hold that date NOW and Come join in the laughs and jokes that night as we auction off all kinds of things to raise money to help support our Church. Right now we need HELP. We have a very small crew organizing this event right now and need more helping hands for a wide variety of planning and setup tasks from food/drink to entertainment to ticket selling. We especially need help to organize the list of actual auction items, a job that Emily Sanders has graciously done for many years and as you all know she is recovering from major surgery. Can you help by stepping in to offer a hand? Please let Barb Childers ([bchilder@illinois.edu](mailto:bchilder@illinois.edu)), Dave Barr ([dbarr@barrrealestate.com](mailto:dbarr@barrrealestate.com)), or Lynn Wiley ([lnwiley@illinois.edu](mailto:lnwiley@illinois.edu)) know. Thanks all! We have outdone ourselves every year at our Auction and this year promises to be another great one if you can help!

## **UU Gastronomical Society**

Friday, January 20, 2012, 6:30 pm  
Celebrate Chinese New Year (The Year of the Dragon!). Bring a dish from home or a take-out from your favorite Chinese restaurant! Join us at the home of Barbara and Terry England, 2015 Silver Court East, Urbana 344-3438 RSVP: [englandba@comcast.net](mailto:englandba@comcast.net)

## **Sunday Crew Needs You!**

Volunteer for time-limited tasks, meet others at church, and provide a valuable service on Sunday mornings. How? Sign up for Sunday Crew—announcing, welcoming, ushering, providing decorations and hospitality at the worship services on Sunday morning. The tasks are easy to do. You can volunteer once a month or once a season. Send Peggy Patten your email address so she can notify you about upcoming Sunday Crew vacancies: [m-patten@sbcglobal.net](mailto:m-patten@sbcglobal.net). You can also sign up for Sunday Crew on our Church's Web site at: <http://uucuc.org/sunday-crew>. Thanks for helping out!

## **Communications Survey coming soon!**

Look for an opportunity to provide input and feedback to the Communications Task Force to help improve the overall communications within the church community. The Task Force is comprised of Ryan Thomas, Bill Childers, Warren Osbourne, Dianna Black, Janis Hooper, and Elaine Gehrman. We are putting together a brief electronic survey which we hope will capture some thoughts and suggestions for improving the flow of communications around the church. When the results are tallied, we will provide feedback to the Board of Trustees and make recommendations for improvements. If you are interested in learning more, please contact the office administrator, Janis Hooper, at [admin@uucuc.org](mailto:admin@uucuc.org) or 384-8862.

Thanks in advance for your important feedback!

## ***Towards a Deeper Understanding...***

A chalice circle is a group of members and friends of the church who meet regularly to explore meaningful topics together. Chalice Circles allow and encourage personal and spiritual growth through exploration of life's fundamental questions.

**Caregiver's Chalice Circle** -third Monday of the month, 7:00 p.m. Contact Karen Retzer (352-9482)

**Reflective Writing Chalice Circle**-third Thursday of the month, 7:00 p.m. Contact Pat Nolan (384-7477, [pnolan96@aol.com](mailto:pnolan96@aol.com))

## **Ongoing Book Discussion Group**

Rev. Gehrman is leading a ten-session discussion on the book "God Is Not One" by Stephen Prothero. The group meets every first and third Thursday at 7:00 pm, and the next session is Thursday, January 19th. Please contact Axel ([minister@uucuc.org](mailto:minister@uucuc.org)) with questions or childcare needs.

## Questions and Answers on Unitarian Universalism

On **Sunday February 5** after both worship services, there will be a brief orientation to Unitarian Universalism and this church in the minister's office. The sessions are informal and designed to answer your questions, whatever they may be. Everyone is welcome, whether you are new to the church or have been attending for awhile.

## How to Reach Us

**Office Hours** - M-F 9:30 - 1:30

**Telephone** - (217) 384-8862

**Mail** - 309 W. Green St., Urbana,  
IL 61801-3221

**E-Mail** - [admin@uucuc.org](mailto:admin@uucuc.org)

**Web** - [uucuc.org](http://uucuc.org)



## Publications & Deadlines

### Subscribe to our weekly E-News.

This publication, "The Uniter" comes out every two weeks, and provides advanced notice of events and broader-spectrum of information. The E-News comes out every Friday, and provides last-minute updates, new information, and reminders of events that are taking place in the coming week. If you are not already signed up for the E-News, please send your name, phone number, and email address to [admin@uucuc.org](mailto:admin@uucuc.org). To make announcements in the E-News, please send your submission to [admin@uucuc.org](mailto:admin@uucuc.org) no later than noon on Thursdays.

**The Uniter** is published every two weeks from September through May and every three weeks during the holiday season and summer months. Please submit announcements by e-mail to [admin@uucuc.org](mailto:admin@uucuc.org). Please note due to the Christmas break, the next submission deadline is Noon, Thursday, January 19, 2012.

## Contacts

### Staff

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Peri Ceperley, Care Core: [gethelp@uucuc.org](mailto:gethelp@uucuc.org)

For questions about pledge payments or Trust Fund donations, please contact Financial Secretary, Amy Robison, at [amy.robison@comcast.net](mailto:amy.robison@comcast.net)

## Calendar

### Thursday, January 12

7:00 p.m. Hunger Initiative Project Coordinators,  
Library

### Friday, January 13

9:00 a.m. Playgroup, Nursery

### Sunday, January 15

9:30 a.m. Worship Service, Sanctuary

11:15 a.m. Worship Service, Sanctuary

### Monday, January 16

7:00 p.m. Caregiver's Chalice Circle, Library

### Tuesday, January 17

10:00 a.m. Care Core, Library

7:00 p.m. Feminist Book Group, Library

### Wednesday, January 18

6:00 p.m. RE Committee, Library

7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

### Thursday, January 19

7:00 p.m. Reflective Writing Chalice Circle, Library

7:00 p.m. Book Discussion Group, Children's  
Chapel

### Friday, January 20

9:00 a.m. Playgroup, Nursery

### Saturday, January 21

8:00 a.m. Strategic Planning Workshop,  
Fellowship Hall

### Sunday, January 22

9:30 a.m. Worship Service, Sanctuary

11:15 a.m. Worship Service, Sanctuary

### Monday, January 23

1:00 p.m. Bridge Group, Children's Chapel

### Tuesday, January 24

7:00 p.m. Board of Trustees, Library

### Wednesday, January 25

7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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