

Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign

Uniter

Spring 2019 Issue

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Rev. Florence Caplow
Minister

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Special points of interest:

- Jenny Hunt reflects on her year as BOT Chair
- Michele Grove outlines the importance of identifying our religious education heritage
- Julie Laut provides a summary of Rev. Bill Breeden's workshop

Everything Changes, Everything Flows

Rev. Florence Caplow, Minister

"Everything changes, everything flows." These words (or the Greek equivalents) were written by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, 2,500 years ago. The Buddha taught this too. And yet change is hard for most of us - even for long-time students of Buddhism like me!

When I heard, in February, that our Office Administrator, Rosalyn Maziarka, who had been such a support for me, would be leaving to begin her journey toward becoming an elementary school teacher, I was both happy for her and grieving the change.

This reaction was an opportunity for me to see how challenging change can be, and it reminds me to honor all the changes that you have been through in the years before and since I arrived. It makes me appreciate how gracious you have been in accepting the interim process, accepting me as your minister, accepting other staff transitions, and in embracing our many new members. Thank you.

And I am happy that our search process for a new administrator went so smoothly (thank you, hiring team members!) and we were able to bring on a great new Administrator, Brian Franklin. Although he has only been here a few weeks, he is a joy to work with. Another reminder: change can be hard, but can also bring new possibilities.

On March 10 the Rev. Bill Breeden was a guest speaker and workshop leader here. He is the retired minister of the Bloomington, Indiana UU church, which grew from 250 members to over 500 members while he was one of their ministers. He provided much wisdom and inspiration for us in our own growth and transition. You can read more in Julie Laut's reflection on page 9.

When I was studying for the ministry, one of the things I learned is how close change and grief really are to one another. People sometimes grieve even when wonderful changes are happening - a new baby, a wedding - because with each new identity we have to let go of old ways of knowing ourselves, our old identities. As we continue our journey together, I invite you to be gentle with yourself and others around change here at UUCUC. Being willing to feel a range of feelings is an important part of human life, and church is a good place to practice. Let's practice together.



Jenny Hunt
Board of Trustees Chair
2018-2019

Board of Trustees Greetings

Jenny Hunt, Chair of Board of Trustees

I can't believe that we are winding down to the end of this year's board year on May 5, a transition to a new board and a new board chair. It has been my honor and pleasure to have served as the chair of your board this year. It has been a pretty amazing year with much going on, some very visible, and some behind the scenes laying the groundwork for what is to come.

On the visible side we have seen the beautiful installation of our Rev Florence Caplow. What an awesome and inspiring day that was, with kudos to all the folks that made that happen. We have seen the addition of our Soul Matters groups to build relationships as our congregation grows. After the fall trial run of the first groups, we have another set of groups going on now. I am hearing very positive experiences from folks, so if you haven't been a part of one of these small group ministries, talk to Sherry Bohlen, our membership coordinator, about when you, too, might be able to become involved.



As the church has grown, the board has been busy looking at how to restructure and re-organize how we look at things. It became apparent that certain facets could not be handled totally by our volunteers, it was simply becoming too much, so we began with adding a staff person to oversee day-to-day property issues and a small team that has been looking at how to re-organize teams of volunteers for some of the property tasks. Many thanks to Andy Robinson for working hard to maintain the property activities until it was decided to go in this new direction. Kate has been busy, busy, busy. Thank you Kate for getting the needs inspection done and recommendations for priorities!

We now have an active strategic visioning process looking at who we are as a congregation and where do we go from here. As you have already been exposed to, we have the United Dream Team (UDT) which is made up of the subgroups of Strategic Visioning Team (SVT) and *(continued on page 4)*

**2018-2019
Notable Highlights**

- **Soul Matters**
We have seen the addition of our Soul Matters groups to build relationships as our congregation grows
- **Property Management:**
Staff member added to oversee property management and organization of volunteers to handle property-related tasks.
- **Planning for the Future:**
Strategic planning process outlined, and introduction of the United Dream Team.
- **Social Justice Groups Making Strides:**
Welcoming Congregation for LGBTQ and Racial Justice Project sponsored various workshops.
- **Space Assessment:**
Assessing the size shift from pastoral to program, and the implications on the space in the Sanctuary.

Board of Trustees Greetings, continued

Jenny Hunt, Chair of Board of Trustees

Religious Education- Exploring the Future (REEF). Keep your eyes and ears open for activities, workshops and opportunities to participate in letting these folks know what is important to you. They will find you one way or another.

In the areas of social justice: we have an ongoing revitalization of Welcoming Congregation for LGBTQ with workshops occurring to educate us all on the changing landscape of this in today's world; we hung the Black Lives Matter banner, and the Racial Justice Project (RJP) has sponsored a number of workshops and trainings to help us, as a congregation, move to another level of this work. We are seeing a revitalizing of our work in the area of immigration with a new group having been formed. If interested in this contact Pam Richart. There are many more things going on in social justice, and I can't imagine an area that you might be interested in that someone in the congregation is not involved in. Reach out and follow your passions to find the areas to become involved with.



Behind the scenes, the board has been looking closely at the size shift from pastoral size to program size and what this means already and what it might mean for us in the future. We are all aware of the number of people in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings. This is exciting that more people are finding a home here with us, but also challenges our space. So the board has been looking at what kinds of possibilities the congregation may have to consider. We have been studying the Operations Manual and by-laws to see where changes need to be made to coincide with shifts and changes within the church. As for by-laws, rest assured that any recommended changes will be brought to you, the congregation, for consideration and the final decision.

It has been a pleasure to work with this group of leaders this year. There is so much wisdom and experience in this group that we have been able to sort through complex issues together as a team. I am grateful to have been part of it.

So as we move closer and closer to the end of this year, let's begin to move our focus out ahead of us. As Reverend Bill Breeden said in his time with us on March 10, let's not be afraid to let those around us know who we are. I am proud of being a UU and what we stand for, and I hope all of you are too.



Thank you for allowing me to serve this community in this way this year. May you continue to find here the spiritual and relational sustenance to guide you on your individual journeys.

Claiming Our Religious Heritage

Michele Townsend Grove, Interim Director of Religious Education

David Setran, associate professor of Christian formation and ministry at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, once wrote:

In a practice-oriented discipline like Christian education, the study of history can appear a bit distant from our central concerns. Fueled by a progress paradigm, the past is viewed as a repository of those things we have 'moved beyond' in order to cultivate best practices in the current era. Our orientation, we reason, is toward the present and future, planning for current ministry programs and dreaming of future possibilities. Many, therefore, see the study of history as something relevant only for obscurantists who specialize in arcane knowledge and trivial minutia. In fact, it is tempting to view history not as something to learn from but as something to transcend.¹



Michele Townsend Grove
Interim Director of Religious Education

Setran’s words also apply to Unitarian Universalist religious education. During the interim religious education period, it is healthy for a congregation to spend time reflecting on its religious education past. And yet, there is often an anxious energy which whispers, “Come on, get on with it....What we really want to talk about is the future!”

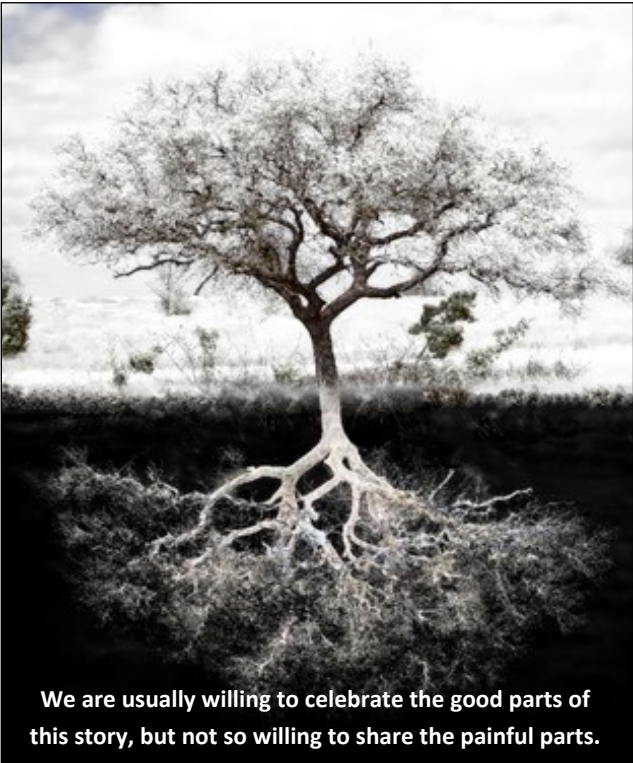
There is no need to worry. This congregation will spend ample time discerning your religious education future. My hope is that you also spend time reflecting on your past. Our religious education heritage provides a solid foundation for who we are and who we will be. It is important for us to name the story and understand it as a community.

There are two types of religious education story to explore.

This congregation’s religious education heritage. It is important to identify the key players and important religious education stories of this congregations long and rich history. How is religious education woven into the church’s history and who were the main characters in the stories? Also, it is fun to find the unnamed folk who did so much and are left unnoticed.

We are usually willing to celebrate the good parts of this story, but not so willing to share the painful parts. This reluctance is born out of the fact that we do not always like to relive the difficult parts of the story. It is also born out of the fact that we do not want to speak ill of the those who led the congregation during more challenging times. The fact that we do not want to speak ill of folk is a good thing! But still, difficult historical stories be named.

The key to telling difficult stories is to frame the stories in the larger picture with reflection to the community’s core values within the context of the story. *(continued on page 6)*



We are usually willing to celebrate the good parts of this story, but not so willing to share the painful parts.

Claiming Our Religious Heritage, continued

Michele Townsend Grove, Interim Director of Religious Education



Sometimes, these stories are challenges because the community's core values were absent. Sometimes, there was broken trust. We wish that things were different so that we were better able to live out our Unitarian Universalist values. When we tell these stories, it is important to move past people and their mistakes and move quickly into naming the absent core values. Then we can easily ask, "Do we wish these values were present today? Are these still values, or have we moved to others?" Every story has a bias and that

bias informs us of our past and current values. That is the focus!

The stories you bring when you enter this community. Your stories of learning become a part of this community's story every time we gather. It does not matter if you have been a part of the community for one day or one hundred years – your story is here. We hope that you will share your stories and help identify the rich threads of learning and memory that are present. What stories of learning transformed you and your values? How do you live them out? What do you look for in community to support your continued love of learning?

On Sunday, February 24, 2019 each person in worship had the opportunity to tell a story of learning that transformed the way they see and act in the world. These transformative learning stories are valuable because they are a part of the story of this community. Your stories become a part of the **US** known as Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign.

Please share one of your stories of transformative learning. The more we know about these stories, the better we may understand the present and future value of learning for UUCUC. Your stories help us understand who we are as learning people. One on the United Dream Team bulletin board (located outside the religious education office), there is a basket of fish cut outs and markers. Please take a few moments and tell us about something you learned in your lifetime that completely transformed the way you see and act in the world. Then pin it to the bulletin board with the other fish. This is learning that goes beyond the knowledge we store in our heads. It is learning that we carry in our hearts and the deepest core of who we are. These stories will guide us in our journey to understand our current religious education identity and vision for the future!

It is a pleasure to walk with this community during this time of reflection and discernment. Thank you for being a part of the journey and thank you for inviting me to join you.

1. David Setran, "History Matters: Reflections on Studying the History of Christian Education." *Christian Education Journal* 11, no 2: 294-299. Accessed September 14, 2018.

From de-CHURCHED to re-CHURCHED

Sherry Bohlen, Membership Coordinator



Sherry Bohlen
Membership Coordina-

Do you ever notice that occasionally someone who was attending Sunday Services or was involved in church activities and events suddenly isn't around anymore? Do you ever wonder why or what it would take to get them to come back?

Studies have shown that there are three primary reasons that people give for stopping their attendance and involvement with their church community. These include change in life situation, disenchantment with the direction the church is taking, and an unloving environment.

While we can't do much about someone's changing life situation and we'll never be able to conform to every person's individual philosophy, we can definitely address the issue of an "unloving environment".

And since statistics tell us that over 40% of the de-churched say they would return to their local church if a friend or acquaintance invited them, we definitely have something to work with.



In a truly welcoming church, it's the job of each of us to reach out to those we haven't seen at church for a while and simply say... We're missing you! That simple act could go a long way to demonstrate a caring church community.

Many de-churched people report that they feel a void in their lives when they stop attending church. They also report that a primary reason that they would consider returning to their church community is to fill an emotional and spiritual gap and to be in community with those who share similar values. With this in mind, be ready to include in any outreach effort relevant updates on what's currently going on at the church. Be as specific as you can. If you know that the person you've reached out to has particular interest in immigration and refugee issues for example,

share with them the latest work going on in that area. If you know that the person has attended meditation classes in the past, tell them about any upcoming retreats or contemplative opportunities. If they have young people in their families, focus on events and classes aimed at our youth.

Don't wait for a staff member or an elder in the church to be the one to reach out to those you recognize as no longer attending or participating in our services or activities. Others might not be aware. Become a hero of the de-churched. Have the courage to pick up the phone and make a call. (Hint.... Check church directory for contact details.)

Never minimize the power of your personal invitation. A simple sincere invitation to return is all it may take to prompt a homecoming. YOU could be the reason that someone who was de-CHURCHED becomes re-CHURCHED!



Wake Now Our Vision Update!

Mona Shannon

Thank you for helping our church qualify for \$32,500 in matching funds and for inspiring well over \$325,000 in planned future gifts for our congregation. What? You don't know what I am talking about. You weren't part of this team effort? But, you were! Here is how it happened.

Last year, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) completed a wildly successful legacy challenge called, Wake Now My Vision. This campaign generated over \$92 million in new gift intentions. A legacy gift is a gift that is received after a person's death, for example through a beneficiary designation or a will. In order to inspire new UU legacy gift commitments, gifts were matched by 10% (up to \$10,000 per donor). We qualified for \$32,500 in matching funds. We expect to receive an initial payment this fall. Thank you to all the donors, named and anonymous, who helped us qualify for this match!

All of that is wonderful, but why did I say that you were part of this success? You inspired the donors! You are this church. Each time you worship, sing, bake, teach, serve, and lead, you add to the community that we call "church". When I think about my life and what I want to leave behind, I realize how much I love this church. You are family. Equally important, I have faith that the next generation will lead the way, standing on our shoulders, just as we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. If you want to know more about planned giving, please contact me at mona4shannon@gmail.com. For more info about this campaign see: <https://stewardshipforus.com/legacy-challenge-report/>



Winter 2018-2019 Highlights!



February 2019

In February, our 4th and 5th grade Religious Education class ran a fundraiser which raised \$2,700 for the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, one of the historical Black churches of Champaign-Urbana, destroyed by fire on Martin Luther King Day.

December 2018

Rev. Florence joined other clergy from around the country and from many different faiths on the San Diego/Tijuana border on International Human Rights Day.

Growing Into Greatness

Julie Laut on behalf of the Committee on Shared Ministry

“The spiritual growth far outweighs the growing pains.” – The Rev. Bill Breeden

On Sunday, March 10, over 60 members of the UUCUC community gathered together for a post-church service workshop led by the Rev. Bill Breeden, Minister Emeritus, UU Church of Bloomington, Indiana. The service (Spiritual Gains and Growing Pains: The Path to Greatness) and workshop (Growing into Greatness: Insights from a Successful Journey) were coordinated by the members of the Committee on Shared Ministry to help foster conversation about our growing membership.

Workshop attendees first viewed a power point created by Board of Trustees member Brian McDermott, which documents membership growth and Sunday morning attendance patterns at UUCUC over the last several years. Our membership remained steady at around 250 for many years, but as of March 2019, we have over 300 members and anticipate continued growth in the coming years. This rate of growth is exciting and has resulted in an invigorated church community and expanding budget, but it is not without growing pains. On most Sundays during the regular church year, our sanctuary is at or above 80% capacity, which is the threshold at which newcomers will begin to feel there is no space left for them. In addition, Fellowship Hall is increasingly crowded and noisy after church, a situation that may feel less welcoming to all. Brian emphasized the need for continued conversation about our growth so that we may prepare adequately for the future.

The Rev. Breeden guided the remainder of the workshop, drawing on his experience as co-minister of the UU Church of Bloomington, which more than doubled in size to over 500 members during his tenure. He began by sharing an acronym he suggested we all keep in mind in this time of transition: **DATE**. It is crucial that the leadership of UUCUC practice **Deep Listening** in order to ensure all are heard in this time of rapid growth and change. He also encourages everyone to **Assume Goodwill** in our meetings and actions in order to maintain positive relations. It is also crucial that we **Trust** one another and our leadership. And finally, he emphasized that continued growth and vibrancy can only be maintained if we **Empower People** to take action.

Rev. Breeden then turned to answering questions from attendees and shared a number of (*continued on page 10*)



**Growing into Greatness:
Insights From A Successful Journey**

“Continued growth and vibrancy can only be maintained if we Empower People to take action....”

Growing Into Greatness, continued

Julie Laut on behalf of the Committee on Shared Ministry

invaluable insights. Here are just a few of the gems from our time together:

- We must take risks to support future growth. We cannot depend on a certain outcome, we just have to act on our dreams and move through it.
- We should go through a process of appreciative inquiry, asking what we love about our church that we would not want to lose and then use that information to guide our decisions.
- To be truly welcoming, we must be open to all who come to us.
- To make governance more spiritually rewarding, we need to build in fun to each of our meetings and be sure to “be people with one another, not just do business with one another.”
- Social justice action is a key to growth – increasing work out in the community will translate into new faces joining UUCUC.

We are so thankful to Rev. Breeden and his Glenda for joining us to share their wisdom, experience, and enthusiasm. If you missed the March 10 service, look for the recording on the UUCUC website once it is posted to hear Rev. Breeden’s sermon. All members of the UUCUC community are encouraged to reach out to members of the Committee on Shared Ministry, the Board of Trustees, and the United Dream Team to share your ideas as we move with excitement and joy into a future of renewed vibrancy and growth.

Committee on Shared Ministry: Laura Robinson, Amy Hassinger, Walt McMahon, Kathleen Robbins, Steve Herzog, Julie Laut, and Rev. Florence Caplow (ex officio).



Hospitality Happenings:

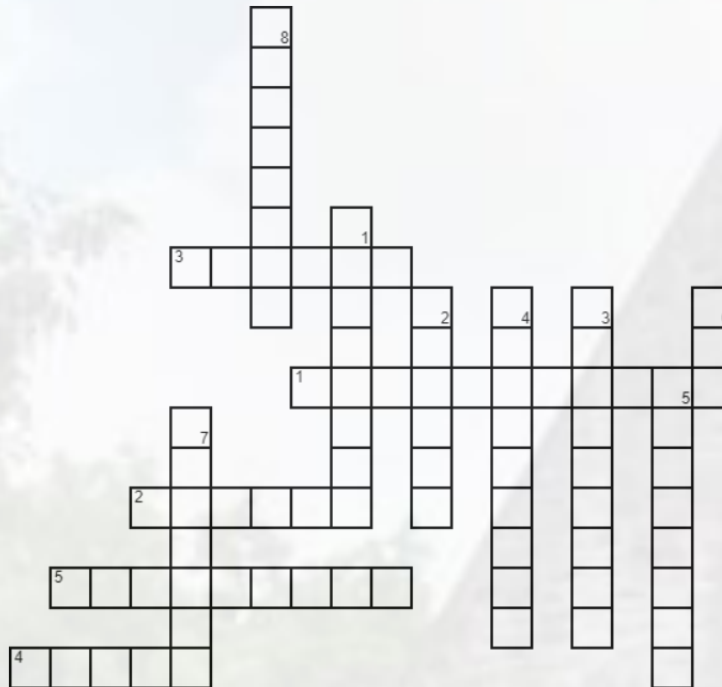
Many Hands Make Light Work When It Comes To Our Kitchen Linens

Peggy Patten

Looking for a small, occasional job to help the Church that you can do at home?

Our kitchen linens need washing every week or so (depending on how busy our kitchen is). Anyone is invited to take home dirty linens in the kitchen linen hamper. Use one of the canvas bags behind the hamper to transport the linens. Return clean linens to the linen drawers in the kitchen. Thanks in advance for helping to keep our kitchen working for all.

Questions? Please reach out to Peggy Patten at mspeggypatten@gmail.com



Across

1. Each Sunday the _____ Team is in charge of announcing, welcoming, ushering, and providing decorations and **snacks**.
2. The _____ Justice Project will lead the UUCUC congregation in reflecting critically on the procedures, documents, and practices within our congregation that might deter people of color from becoming more fully a part of our community.
3. The first day of spring is called the _____ equinox.
4. UUCUC offers Our _____ Lives (OWL) as part of its Religious Education programming. OWL is a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education curricula for use in both secular settings and faith communities.
5. The title of the 2019 Service Auction was "Across the _____"

Down

1. Its earliest narcissi appear in early spring, especially small cultivars like Tete-a-Tete.
2. The last name of our Minister at UUCUC.
3. We are a _____ Congregation at UUCUC since 1999, which means we have worked and are working to make our church home open and supportive for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer people.
4. Form of insect that includes the Monarch and Painted Lady.
5. Our religious education programs include the _____ of Faith curricula developed specifically for the Unitarian Universalist congregations.
6. What month does the UUCUC Annual Meeting take place in?
7. _____ Circles are small groups that meet regularly at UUCUC for discussion, personal sharing, and service to the church or community.
8. Matt _____ is our current Music Director at UUCUC.

Answers— Across 1. Hospitality 2. Racial 3. Vernal 4. Whole 5. UUniverse Down 1. Daffodil 2. Caplow 3. Welcoming 4. Butterfly 5. Tapestry 6. May 7. Chalice 8. Sheppard

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A “Welcoming Congregation” for the
LGBTQIA+ Community



Visit Us on the web:

uucuc.org

The Mission of UUCUC

Build Community.

Seek Inspiration.

Promote Justice.

Fine Peace.

**We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association,
covenant to affirm and promote:**

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Our Worship

During the church year, we meet to worship at 10:15 am. Religious education classes for children and youth, as well as childcare for infants and toddlers, are available during this service. In June, July, and August, we gather together to worship on Sunday mornings in Fellowship Hall. Childcare and one multi-graded elementary class are available in the summer. Summer services are lay-led, and we also have intergenerational services at holidays and other times during the year.

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