

MARCH 2011

Unichord



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ELGIN

Liberal House on the Prairie

Having survived the February blizzard, we can turn our attention to seasonal transitions, such as baseball players returning to spring training, the tending of gardens, and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin (UUCE) Annual Canvass.

Skilled gardeners can accomplish great things. Our prairie cathedral is appropriately situated on a patch of Illinois prairie, and through the hard work of several members, portions of our property have been restored to its pre-1800 condition (deep rooted native grasses and plants anchored in rich, fertile soil). Other ambitious UUCE members successfully advocate for an earth-connected contribution to local food banks through their on-site community gardening efforts.

Another UUCE rite of spring is our Annual Canvass. Last year we embarked on a

spiritual journey toward becoming more generous people. The canvass provides us with an opportunity to examine our role in realizing the church's mission and vision and is essential to tending our human garden—our church community. Pledging generously provides the fertile foundation for our efforts to foment change and transformation in our world.

So what is a "generous" pledge? At our church, it is defined as 3% of the gross income of the pledging unit before taxes. No committee member will call on you to discuss your pledge; you decide whether you can be a "generous" giver (or possibly work toward that goal in the future). Pledge packets will be distributed on March 6. If you cannot be in church that day, your packet will be mailed to you right away, or you can fill out the form online. Please bring your completed pledge form to the service on March 13, or mail it in the envelope provided.

On March 13, in appreciation for your prompt response, the Canvass Committee will put returned envelopes in a special drawing. Prizes, all donated for the occasion, will include: a beautiful Dotty Carringi art print, gift cards for Starbucks, Applebee's and Panera, home baked treats, Fanny May chocolates, and a \$50 certificate for dinner at Villa Verone in downtown Elgin. Also, those returning their pledge forms on March 13 will receive a free lunch for themselves and their families after the service.

In closing, consider this quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson as we strengthen the roots of our beloved community, "Be an opener of doors for such as come after thee."

—*Tim Davis*

Canvass Chair



From the Minister

Generosity is the habit of giving freely without expecting anything in return.

Most recorded English uses of the word “generous” up to and during the Sixteenth Century reflect an aristocratic sense of being of noble lineage or high birth. To be generous was literally a way of complying to nobility. During the 17th Century, however, the meaning and use of the word began to change. Generosity came increasingly to identify not literal family heritage but a nobility of spirit thought to be associated with high birth—that is, with various admirable qualities that could now vary from person to person, depending not on family history but on whether a person actually possessed the qualities. In this way generosity increasingly came, in the 17th Century, to signify a variety of traits of character and action historically associated (whether accurately or not) with the ideals of actual nobility: gallantry, courage, strength, richness, gentleness, and fairness. Then, during the 18th Century, the meaning of “generosity” continued to evolve in directions denoting the more specific, contemporary meaning of munificence, open-handedness, and liberality in the giving of money and possessions to others.

The special place of the virtue of hospitality/ generosity throughout the Middle East has often been noted. The Arab/Islamic tradition in particular emphasizes that the faithful have a duty to God to show generous hospitality towards the stranger, offering them shelter and the best food and drink available. In the Jewish tradition showing generosity was honoring God. For Christians, to be generous is to be conformed not just to Christ but also to the loving divine Parent. Generosity was also a virtue in the classical pagan context. It is the third of the virtues of character discussed by Aristotle, following on the heels of courage and temperance.

In recent years one of the greatest advancements in the practice of generosity occurred in Unitarian Universalism when the members and friends of the church in Elgin, IL became a congregation of generous people. This milestone was reached when the majority of members pledged 3% or more of their income in support of their religious community. Their example sparked a prairie fire of generosity that swept through the UU faith—a fire that continues to burn brightly.

A Month of Sundays

MARCH

3/6: Kick-Off Sunday

This Sunday marks the beginning of our annual canvass. We celebrate the gift of generosity that transforms lives and creates beloved community. Service led by the Rev. Dan Brosier.

3/13: UU History: The Fight for Harvard

For many years in the 1800s, Harvard Seminary was considered a Unitarian school. What happened at Harvard reflected the revolution taking place in the New England Congregational churches. Service led by the Rev. Dan Brosier.

3/20: Music Sunday

Twice a year we devote a service to celebrating the music of this church. As usual we have a full line-up of members willing to share their musical gifts with us. Service led by the Rev. Dan Brosier.

3/27: Readers' Theatre

The UUCE Readers' Theatre Troupe returns from their world tour to perform one of their favorite pieces in what will prove to be a memorable service. Service led by Paul Anderson.

March Calendar

Worship Services

Sunday mornings at 10:45



Annual Canvass Kickoff

March 6

Board Meeting

March 16 at 7:00 in the Fellowship Hall

Book Group—Afternoon

March 28 at 12:30

(offsite)

Book Group—Evening

March 18 at 7:00

(offsite)

Buddhists

Thursdays at 7:00 in rooms 301 and 302



Canvass Luncheon

March 13 at 12:30

Choir Practice

Thursdays at 7:30 in the Sanctuary

⇨ CHURCH RENTAL ⇩

March 21 and 28 at 5:30 in the Fellowship Hall and classrooms

Committee on the Ministry

March 2 at 7:00

Dan Zahn Birthday Bash and Folk Concert

March 26 at 6:00 in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall

Evening Covenant Group

March 8 and 22 at 7:00

(offsite)

Executive Team Meeting

March 1 and 15 at 1:30



Farmers' Market

March 20 at noon

Finance Committee

March 9 at 7:00

Landscape & Grounds

Work Party

March 13 at 12:30

Pagan Unity Book Club

March 8 at 7:00 in the Fellowship Hall

Pantry Sunday

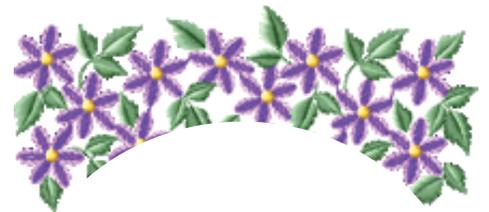
February 6 in the Fellowship Hall

qUilters

March 5 from 9 - noon in room 302

Social Justice Council

March 23 at 7:00 in the Fellowship Hall



Spring Equinox Potluck and Ritual

March 20 at 4:00 in the Fellowship Hall



UNICHORD DEADLINE
March 20

Western Crescent Ministers Meeting

March 16 at 11:00 in room 301



From the Director of Religious Exploration and Education

The beginning of March starts our last trimester for Adult Spirituality. Kathy Hislip will be facilitating "Building Your Own Theology, Part 2" at 9am in room 301. This program,

which is a continuation of part 1, continues the process of theological meaning-making by examining truth and authority, the holy, good and evil, justice and the beloved community, suffering, death, immortality, and a doctrine of the liberal church. As of this writing, I am hoping to have another program to offer at the same time for those who did not participate in part 1. Watch for emails and announcements in the order of service. And if there's a topic you would like to have considered for future adult spirituality programming, please let me know!

There is a unique opportunity coming up in our district April 15-16 to be trained to facilitate the Our Whole Lives (aka OWL) sexuality curriculum for middle and high school youth. The OWL program helps youth make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior, and covers topics and skills that both parents and youth want to have available, but schools are less likely to cover. If you would like to apply for this volunteer opportunity, email me at dre@uuce.org.

Here's what is happening for the young people this month:

March 6 Preschool: My World Has Birds

K-2: Animal Homes

3-5: Medicine – Learn First Aid

6-8: Chalice in a Bag

High School: Speaking Faith

March 13 Preschool: My World Has Water

K-2: Hearth and Home

3-5: Food –Stone Soup

6-8: Spirit of Life

High School: Wholeness

March 20 Music Sunday – no classes

March 27 Preschool: My World Has Air

K-2: Book of Ruth

3-5: Fannie Farmer

6-8: James Reeb

High School: The youth will choose their topics for the rest of the year.

In Faith,
Kathy

Wheel of Life

Frieda and Brett Anderson are proud first time grandparents to Micah Gillette Anderson, born on February 4, 2011, at 7:59 a.m. to Lars and Megan Gillette Anderson. He weighed 8lbs 13oz. Lars and Megan live in Wilkes-Barre PA.

Debbie Schmidt, known to most of us as "Miss Debbie," is also now a grandmother! Her son Andy and his wife Debbie are joyful parents of Molly Rue Fisher Link, who was born on February 8 in their home.

Welcome, newest UUs!

Fuzzy Aspirations & Hard Realities

On Friday night, April 29th, UUs from across our District will gather at the Chateau Hotel and Conference Center in Bloomington, Illinois for a District Assembly keyed by the Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed. With "The Perversity of Diversity" as this year's theme, attendees will have the opportunity to focus on the challenges and obstacles we UUs face as we strive to become a more diverse and inclusive faith.

According to the Rev. Morrison-Reed, "Why has becoming more culturally and racially diverse been such a challenge for UUism? Why, when our intentions are so good, is it still a struggle? There is a surprising, and painful, truth behind Unitarian Universalist efforts to become more racially and culturally diverse. This truth must begin with taking an honest look at who we are and why we are who we are, and it ends in a conundrum but not without hope. If UUs really want to change, accepting the truth is the only place to start. Torn between our reality and our aspirations, what are we to do?"

In the end we will not only consider why achieving diversity is challenging, but also talk about which congregations have become successfully diverse and how.

Join Mark Morrison-Reed for an inspirational exploration of these issues, combined with worship, music and fun! Saturday will consist of two sessions with our keynote presenter, including some small group breakouts. An extended lunch hour will offer two one-hour informal sessions for affinity groups, workshop-type presentations, resource sharing, or browsing the UUA bookstore and district vendors.

For more information or to register, go to www.cmwd-uua.org.



What is a Covenant Group?

Have you ever wondered what a Covenant Group is, and what goes on at a Covenant Group meeting? Now you can find answers to those questions at a newly created web page:

www.uuce.org/covenant-groups.html

Members of the Tuesday Night Covenant Group present this information as a guide for others who may want to start their own Covenant Group, or who are looking for topics to discuss. Thanks to Carl Deitrick for spearheading the project and preparing the material, and to Todd Underwood for setting up the page.

A Covenant Group consists of six to twelve people who covenant together to meet regularly to create and sustain a community with deeper connections than can be found in casual conversation. The Tuesday Night Covenant Group, which has been meeting every other week since 2002, and consists of both men and women ranging in age from 40s to 70s, was formed to discuss questions of general interest. Other Covenant Groups might have a particular focus, such as the environment, spirituality, paganism, Buddhism, etc. If you are interested in being part of a Covenant Group, contact Groups Coordinator Alice Macy at amacy@highlands.com.



Green Corner

Thirteen Things You Can Do To Support a Sustainable Food System

by Lena Rotenberg

Ethical eating was the focus of a recent Sunday morning discussion course at UUCE. The following list is from the course book, "Menu For The Future", by the [Northwest Earth Institute](#).

1. Eat foods grown and processed locally. Consider growing, processing, and preserving some foods yourself.
2. Give preference to foods that were grown organically.
3. Become part of your foodshed's community. Buy food through farmers' markets, food co-ops or community supported agriculture programs (CSAs).
4. When you buy from chain supermarkets, ask where the vegetables, meats and fish came from. Encourage the store managers to carry local, organic, sustainably harvested and fairly traded products.
5. If eating commercial foods, eat foods that have been processed as little as possible (they are likely to be fresher, more local to you, and healthier for you).
6. Buy food in bulk, or with the least packaging. Bring your own reusable or recyclable packaging to the store.

7. Compost food scraps and waste. Reuse or recycle whatever packaging you can (Be creative!).

8. Eat lower on the food chain.

9. If you're buying imports, give preference to products that are fairly traded to guarantee farmers and food industry workers a living wage.

10. Cook at home as much as possible. When you eat out, try to patronize restaurants that follow the directives above.

11. Understand that by paying a little bit more for sustainable foods, you're supporting practices that reduce negative environmental and social impacts.

12. Teach your family, friends, and community about how their food choices impact the environment, their health, and society. Contact government officials to encourage their support of a sustainable food system.

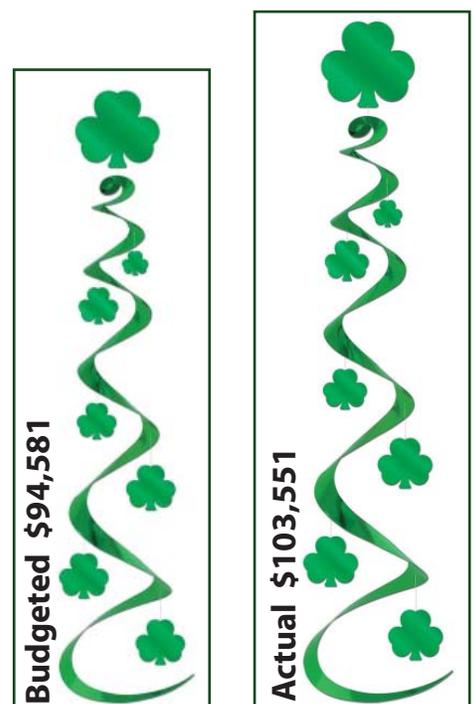
13. Most importantly, give yourself credit for trying to do your best. Take pride in the fact that you're making every decision count, as best you can.

—The Green Sanctuary Committee

March 2011



Pledge Income through January 31



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

19 January, 2011

Attending: Jennifer Day, Kevin Sweeney, Dave Clough, Betsy Thrasher, Dan Brosier, Andrea Schmidlin, Steve Stultz, Shari Smagatz

I. Reports:

a. **Budget Report** – approved, noting that Shari will be looking into the calculations for the last line.

b. **Earmarked Funds Report, Executive Team Report, Monitoring Reports (Governance Policies, Section III), Endowment Committee**

Report – approved by consensus

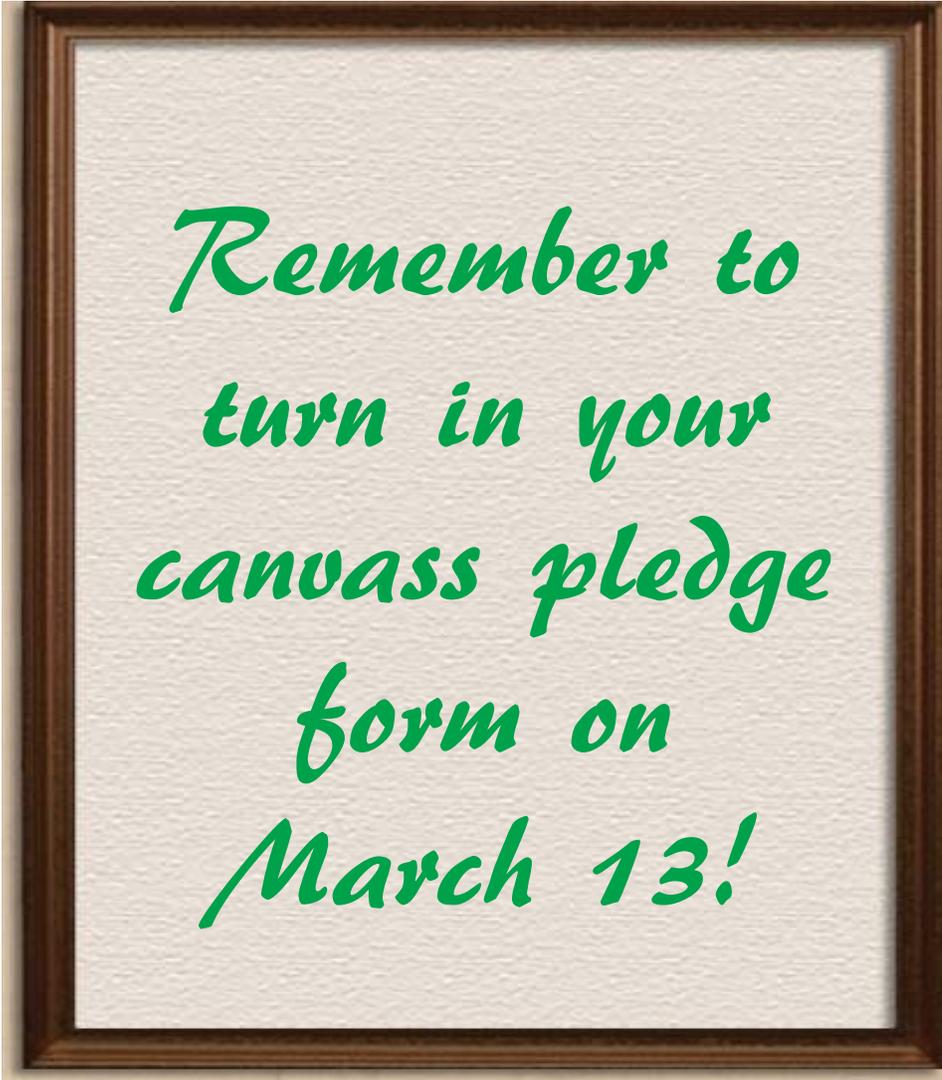
II. Unfinished Business

a. **Staff Compensation Task Force Report** – recommendation is to bring staff compensation for Administrator and Director of Religious Education into parity. Kevin to revise report to reflect this recommendation.

Cell Tower Tax Payments (2008 & 2009) – Dan has been in communication with appropriate parties to resolve the issue.

Happy Birthday!

- 3 Jackie Van De Warker
- 3 Ethan Engel
- 5 Trisha Dean
- 6 Sharon Fincher
- 7 Sandy Webster
- 8 Robin Peterson
- 8 Amy Hill
- 9 Derek Bedard
- 9 Olivia Grace Hussein
- 10 Mila Brinker
- 11 Melanie Davis
- 13 Sara Haase
- 15 Joe Cusimano
- 16 Pat Pecho
- 19 Carol Ovelmen
- 19 Christina Conway
- 21 Sherman Ovelmen
- 22 Carey Schug
- 23 Bruce Kiesewetter
- 23 Jim Howells
- 24 Diana March
- 27 Jamie Kiesewetter
- 28 Cassandra Howells
- 30 Suzanne Hanifl
- 30 Dan Kalkbrenner
- 31 Olivia Abdur-Raffia
- 31 Sarah Seiberlich



*Remember to
turn in your
canvass pledge
form on
March 13!*

UUCE Readers

Afternoon Book Group will meet at 12:30 on Monday, March 28, at the home of Diana March to discuss "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" by Rebecca Skloot.

Ways to Get in Touch

WEBSITE

www.uuce.org

E-MAIL

minister@uuce.org

administrator@uuce.org

newsletter@uuce.org

PHONE

847-888-0668

PHYSICAL LOCATION

39W830 Highland Avenue
three miles west of Randall Rd.

POSTAL MAIL

P. O. Box 1032

Elgin, IL 60121

Our Closing Circle

attr. to Louis Bourgeois, pub. 1551

Let peace en - cir - cle all the world; Let all on earth walk hand in hand.

A liv - ing bond of fel - low - ship; A voice of love in ev - ery land.



The Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin

P. O. Box 1032 • Elgin, IL 60121

