



JANUARY 2015

# Unichord



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ELGIN

## Flock to the Service Auction

Prepare to take flight at the 2015 UUCE Service Auction on Saturday night, February 21. Our theme this year is "Birds of a Feather" and you'll be amazed at just how much fun our birdbrains can have with that. You know what they say about birds of a feather don't you? Yep, just like Unitarian Universalists, they stick together!

Our Service Auction consists of a flock of UUCE feathered friends getting together each year to have fun and it's the largest fundraiser for this church we love so dearly. There is a Silent Auction component that offers opportunities to bid on valuable physical items, and then a live auction that allows for bidding on creative services offered by members of the congregation. Of course in order for there to be items to bid on, there need to be donors to offer them. Could be a game evening, wine tasting in front of the fire place, a group bike ride along your favorite riverside trail, or to a picnic and night of music in the park. The



sky's the limit!

Colorful plumage will abound as the aviary doors will be flying open at 5:30 p.m. for beverages, hors d'oeuvres for pecking, and the Silent Auction. Owl of us will gaggle for dinner at 7:00 p.m. and then head aloft to the Bird Sanctuary for the Live Auction at 8:00 p.m.

Please contact [Mike Moutrie](#) if you would like to join the planning committee and help our event soar!

Submitted by,  
—[Todd Underwood](#)

## A New Year of Stewardship and Commitment

It is January and a time for new beginnings. Our beginnings at your UUCE in 2015 will be phenomenal. We will be inviting a new minister to lead us to new heights of growth, celebration and service to our community and our world. This is what we are all about as Unitarian Universalists. This is what we talk about in our Seven Principles.

It is fine to recite our Seven Principles and get that warm fuzzy feeling that we are on the side of right and justice. It is however our financial support that proves the resolve of our principles and makes our best wishes come to life. It is saying our principles are not empty platitudes, but

*continued on page 7*

# Lise's Letter



Happy New Year! I hope all of you have had a wonderful time with your family and friends over the holidays. And I hope you all have recovered—in whatever way is necessary for you.

The holidays can bring so many expectations, and many of them are met, but sometimes holidays are like a young person's imaginings of their first romantic encounter—we just hold that bar way too high for all our dreams to possibly come true.

If that has been the case for you recently, or at any time, I'd like to simply remind us all that we are Unitarian Universalists. We believe in second chances, and third, and fourth and fifth chances . . . (you get the idea). We believe in redemption, renewal, and the ability to change course when needed. Sometimes we can do this on our own, but more often we need help, which is just one of the reasons we enter into religious community with one another over and over again.

As a person who feels blessed to be in community with you all, I'd like to share this poem. Enjoy!

Love,  
—Lise

Reverend Lise Adams Sherry  
Interim Minister

Morning in a New Land by Mary Oliver  
*In trees still dripping night some nameless birds  
Woke, shook out their arrowy wings, and sang,  
Slowly, like finches sifting through a dream.  
The pink sun fell, like glass, into the fields.  
Two chestnuts, and a dapple gray,  
Their shoulders wet with light, their dark hair  
streaming,  
Climbed the hill. The last mist fell away,  
And under the trees, beyond time's brittle drift,  
I stood like Adam in his lonely garden  
On that first morning, shaken out of sleep,  
Rubbing his eyes, listening, parting the leaves,  
Like tissue on some vast, incredible gift.*



## Cardinal Rules for the Silent Auction



Here's how it works: you bring your donation to church and fill out an information tag, our volunteers research its value, take an appealing photograph, write an inspiring description, assign a value and a minimum bid, enter it into our database, and publish it in the catalog.

We start accepting donations on Sunday, January 4. There are seven Sundays before the Service Auction. We will not include anything in the catalog that comes in after February 15.

Now, about Goodwill:

Items that come in without any information go right in the Goodwill box. If you're donating an item only because you don't want it to end up in the landfill, save us a trip, and give it directly to Goodwill. If it's worth little but is Really Cute, it may go on the Buy It Now

Table. (Less work for us: no catalog entry/no bidding—buyers pay the price and take it away!) Now, stop thinking about how much it's WORTH, and think how much someone is likely to PAY.

If it's truly worthy of competitive bidding—at least \$5 to \$10—we'd love to include it in the Silent Auction!

Hint: if you've seen your item for sale at Target for \$5.00, take it to Goodwill.

Hint: if the latest version of your item is selling at Best Buy for less than you paid for yours NEW eight years ago, take it to Goodwill. If in doubt, take it to Goodwill.

See you in Bird Land!!

# A Month of Sundays: January

1/4: Fallen Heroes

We all need people in our lives who can inspire and lead us, but what happens when those same people disappoint us in some way. What then? This is a question raised by our high school youth and will be the second topic in our Youth Pew Sermon Series. Service led by Reverend Lise Adams Sherry.

1/11: Alfred Adler, "the Crucial Cs", and Our Church Community

Adler's Individual Psychology and Unitarian Universalism could be soulmates. We'll explore how the "Crucial Cs" (connect, capable, count and courage) work in our church community. This service is a product of the Service

Auction. Service led by Kay Kummerow and Reverend Lise Adams Sherry.

1/18: Exploring our Second Principle

In honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. we'll explore our second principle of "Justice, Equity, and Compassion in Human Relations" by learning about some freedom fighters you may not have heard of before.

11/25: One More Step: Walking the Talk

Three members of our community tell stories of ways in which they are active in social justice. Service led by Steve Askins and the Worship Committee.

## UUCE ComUUnity Garden: An Opportunity to Give

Do you enjoy homegrown tomatoes, cucumbers, squash and potatoes? So do people who need the food offered by the local food pantries.

"It's wonderful to be able to offer our agencies the chance to pick fresh produce," says Sarah Slavenas, a spokeswoman for the Northern Illinois Food Bank. "They're always grateful. It can be difficult for families to afford fresh produce, and this gives them a way to introduce new fruits and vegetables that they might not otherwise try."

Lisa Ayala of the Salvation Army in Elgin echoes those same sentiments. Her food pantry site drew consistent donations of tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, and peppers, including bell peppers and jalapeño peppers. "It's such a needy time, with people trying to make ends meet, and not having enough money for



food," Mead says. "As soon as the vegetables come in, they're gone."

You can help make fresh produce available to those in need in our local community by participating in UUCE's CommUUnity Garden. Started by Donna Askins in 2006, our garden has produced hundreds of pounds of fresh produce for our larger community over the years.

Look for more information in the coming weeks and get ready to get your hands dirty!

# Lifespan Religious Exploration and Education



A new year is beginning, and it promises to be an exciting one with the search for a new settled minister. Despite all of the excitement, things will continue as normal for the most part.

A new adult spirituality program begins January 4—titled *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. This program will explore the issues raised in this book by Michelle Alexander. Books are available at the UUA bookstore or on Amazon for those who wish to read it, but reading it is not required. Rev. Lise will facilitate the class, which will meet in Room 301 on Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. during the month of January.

Also on January 4, there will be a family event after the service. My hope is that there will be enough snow for some good old-fashioned fun! If not, we will show a movie at the church. Look for more details via the e-list and announcements.

You may be curious about why the high school youth are occasionally staying for the whole

worship service. They are participating in the Youth Pew program. In this program, the youth meet with Rev. Lise to share topics of interest that they would like to hear her speak on. From this list, Rev. Lise narrows down the choices and then gets busy writing a sermon. The youth then help plan some of the other aspects of the worship service, such as music and readings. On the day of the service, the youth remain in the sanctuary to hear the words of wisdom and participate in it.

On January 19 (Martin Luther King Day), middle and high school youth are invited to a Youth Leadership Conference at The Centre in Elgin. There will be a service fair and workshops on topics such as restorative justice, self-determination, and handling stress. Lunch and a free t-shirt are included, at no cost to participants. After the workshops, all youth can stay until 5 p.m. to play basketball or swim. Let me know by January 4 if your youth is interested.

In Faith,  
 —Kathy Underwood  
 Director of Religious  
 Exploration and Education

	Preschool	K-2	3-5	6-8	High School
January 4	We Can Be Angry	Taoism: Tai Chi	The Ramayana	Intro to Judaism	Youth Pew Sunday
Family Event: Sledding or a Movie					
January 11	Good Wishes Come True	Hopi: Storytelling and Dance	Lights For Gita	Judaism and UUism	Brunch at a local restaurant
January 18	All Kinds of Families	Sikhism: Divali	Intro to Islam	Visiting a Synagogue	Beloved Community
January 25	We Need Our Families	Judaism: Passover	Muhammad	Brunch at a local restaurant	Beloved Community Part 2
Children's Chapel—Preschool through 8th grades at 10:30 a.m.					

# President's Reflection



First, I want to thank Elizabeth Closson, Lise Adams Sherry and other members of Board of Trustees (BoT) for helping me to transition into this new role as president of UUCE's BoT. As most of you

know, my election was the result of a series of inexplicable events. Be that as it may, I pledge to you my very best effort to lead the BoT and to help make UUCE a welcoming community of all faiths and beliefs. In comparison to some congregants who have been a part of UUCE for decades, I feel like a newcomer. One sure sign of this is that I still don't know many of you. I'd like to change that with your help. So, as Joan Rivers used to say, "Can we talk?"

To start the dialog—I lived in Japan until I was ten years old. The family relocated to Los Angeles where I attended secondary schools and one year of high school. My father, who worked for Mobil Oil, got transferred to the New York office and we made the momentous

move from surfer town to Norwalk, Connecticut. Talk about culture shock (one good thing happened though, I met Leslie at Norwalk High School). I went to Tufts University and now have six grandchildren, four in Wilmette, and two in Oakland, California. There's a lot of missing information, but it's intended to be a conversation starter. Now it's your turn.

Getting to know each other binds the community and makes the church a safe place. But we also need to get to know each other because that is the only way UUCE can be relevant to you. In the recent BoT meeting, it was said that the mood of the congregation seemed to be upbeat compared to a year earlier. No doubt, we have gone through a lot in this transition, but I'm confident that the light at the end of the tunnel we're seeing is a new exciting vista for UUCE and not an on-coming train.

—Jun Yoshitani  
President,  
UUCE Board of Trustees

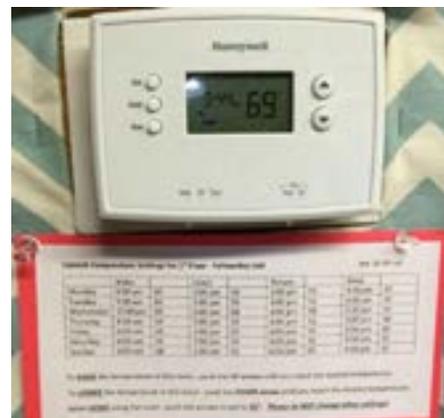
## Adult Spirituality

We are taking a short break over the winter holidays, but will gather again on January 4. For the month of January, the adult spirituality class will read and discuss the book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of*

*Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander. Books are available at the [UUA bookstore](#) or on [Amazon](#). Reading the book will add to the discussion, but is not required. Rev. Lise will facilitate the class, which happens Sunday mornings at 9 a.m.

## Ready for Winter!

Three new 7-day programmable thermostats were recently installed in the church by Joe Masonick. Now, all five building thermostats are set for maximum energy efficiency. Instructions are posted by each thermostat in case someone needs to temporarily adjust the room temperature.



# Farewell Pagan Unity

The result of our recent Year End Meeting was clear. The Covenant Group formed in 2007 is now formally dissolved. Originally, Pagan Unity was formed to oversee pagan activities at UUCE by several members and friends of the church. Prior to that, my husband Andrew Russel and I began scheduling Solstice and Equinox celebrations here in 2005. During our first 2–3 years at UUCE, a community of people was drawn together by our rituals, so we were moved to create a formal covenant group to share the responsibilities of planning and presenting these Wheel of the Year celebrations. Participating in earth-centered worship rituals is in accordance with our seventh principal of respect for the interdependent web of nature of which we are all a part. Andrew and I became members of CUUPS; the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans that is a part of the UUA and even looked into forming a CUUPS Chapter a few years ago.

As a UU for almost two decades now, I can say from experience that covenants always need periodic reviewing and re-evaluation. I must admit that Andrew and I have probably put off this process a lot longer than we should have, because who wants to face questions like is the covenant succeeding or failing? This covenant has come to an end, primarily because you need at least three people to form one. Two people do not a covenant make. However, if there weren't a need in the community for earth worship celebrations, we'd be alone in the Fellowship Hall every eight weeks and we're not. We've successfully and consistently had many meaningful Earth Worship services that give people an experience of the sacred in community with others who view our World and all its elements, environments, and creatures as sacred. That kind of experience draws many people to our church location for the very first time.

For the last 5–6 years, I've also advertised and

run a Meetup.com group that is named Pagan Unity Elgin, which has over 190 members!! The Meetup has pictures, comments, and discussions that document the Pagan Unity community that has been drawn to UUCE and its beautiful natural landscaping, remote location, and Earth Wisdom Labyrinth. I put a lot of work into creating the Meetup pages with photos, etc., but I believe it's time to let not only the covenant group named Pagan Unity dissolve, but to let the Meetup named Pagan Unity also dissolve. By the time you read this, I will have closed down all the Meetups I was running.

The word "pagan" is an umbrella term that covers an infinite variety of religious practices just as there are many different Christian denominations. I must admit to myself and to everyone else that Pagan Unity really hasn't existed as a "covenant" group for at least the last 3–4 years. But, change is a good thing, because change is the only constant. Nothing stays the same. Since Andrew and I are organizing and leading the rituals by ourselves, what brand of paganism do we prefer to practice? We practice Wicca.

I am delighted to share that our Yule ritual was a wonderful success, if you define success by attendance. We had a turnout of 45 people to celebrate the Winter Solstice with us. We had a very lively ritual and a bounteous feast afterwards. And, even though almost half had never been to a public ritual before, folks were open, respectful, and very generous with helping to set up and clean up. Farewell to the old Covenant Group that no longer exists and welcome to the next generation of earth-centered worship at UUCE. May it continue to be successful at drawing new people to our church, young families and singles looking for community.

Submitted by,  
—[Sandy Russel](#)

# Interviews on Horizon for Pulpit Posse

Happy holidays! However you choose to celebrate this season, I wish you a healthy and joyous time for you and your families. In that spirit, I can report on behalf of the Pulpit Posse that all's quiet with us. We have sent the Congregational Record and Letter of Call into the UUA website which triggers the official commencement of our search. Of course, that was just the culmination of a lot of effort on our (and your) part to get prepared for that filing. (No, we never let you forget it. Sorry.) This month, we have also prepared the Church Packet, which is a compilation of information about the church and the community, which we stand ready to furnish to interested applicants for the position.

Interested ministers are looking over our church during this month of December and, according to the UUA, they generally indicate their interest at the end of the month. At any rate, we will be furnished with the applications

of all interested ministers on January 2. At that point, we will evaluate the packets and choose the 3 or 4 pre-candidates whom we would like to audition for the minister position. We will be doing telephone interviews and reference checking throughout January. Then we will invite the ministers we think fill the bill for our church to meet them in person and to witness them give a sermon at a neutral site. This is the secret part of the process which I wrote about earlier.

So, our new year is going to be exciting and momentous . . . and busy. But that's January. For this month, relax and enjoy the festivities. In a sense, I offer you (and the Posse), for this month, the gift of peace. We're going to use ours very enthusiastically. I hope you will too.

Until the next installment,  
—Dan Hislip  
Chairman, Pulpit Posse

## A New Year of Stewardship and Commitment

*continued from page 1*

a real guiding force in our lives. It is quite literally putting our money where our mouth is.

Every year about this time your Stewardship Committee helps you do just that. Starting this month you will be hearing from us on a regular basis. We will make sure we all understand the need, the gaps needing to be filled and the ways we can all come together to satisfy those needs.

Look for us in the Unichord, the weekly Order

of Service, Sunday morning gatherings and anywhere else we can capture your attention. Our campaign will continue through February and right up to Stewardship Sunday on March 1 and Commitment Sunday on March 8.

Between now and then we are asking that you take a serious look at your level of Stewardship. Are you doing all that you can? Are there ways that you can creatively lend your inspiration, muscle and resources to the strength and effectiveness of your church?



## Kudos!

• Thanks to Elizabeth Olson and Jane Kimball for organizing the giving tree this year.

• Thank you to the Aesthetics Team and all their helpers who decorated the church for the winter festivities this year.

• Thank you to Kathy Underwood and the REET (Religious Exploration and Education Team) for making latkes and cleaning up after our December 14 potluck.

• A big thank you to everyone who helped decorate the church for the holiday season this afternoon after church.

• Thanks to Lise Adams Sherry, Sue Bohne, Tim Davis, Tamra Gentry, Mitch Jacobs, Joe Masonick, Mary Alice Masonick, Nelson Sherry, Dale Steichen, Susan Swing,

Dave Yaeger, and Jun Yoshitani for helping with the prescribed prairie burn on December 4.

• Thanks to all the marvelous volunteers who signed up Sunday to make coffee or to clean up after Fellowship Hour! Thanks to you there is no more wondering if there will be coffee or a cleanup crew.

• Thank you to Norm Wilkinson for volunteering to fold and assemble the Order of Service every week.

• Thank you to Joe Masonick for keeping us all warmer with his work on the thermostats.

• Thank you to everyone who contributed to the multigenerational service and latke potluck.

## We Need Your Red Scarves!



Please start making red scarves now for Feb. 14! Rev. Lise is participating in planning for

Elgin's 2015 [One Billion Rising: The Long Red Line](#) event to be held at Gail Borden Library February 14, 2-4 p.m. This event is to provide education and support to change the culture of violence against women. Participants are encouraged to bring red scarves as a symbol of solidarity and encouragement to break the silence (unmuffling our voices) around this important issue. Please talk with [Rev. Lise](#) if you have more questions.

## Pantry Donations Needed

In the last six months, the number of people being served by the All People's Inter-Faith Pantry has sky rocketed. Therefore, the Pantry needs your donations of canned meats, Kraft Dinner, cans of Chef Boyardee pastas, one pound bags of pinto beans, one pound

packages of rice, and, of course, cereal, jelly and peanut butter.

Try to bring your contributions for the Pantry on our Pantry Sunday, January 4, but they are welcome anytime during the month.

# Prescribed Prarie Burn

Click the pictures to see photos of the prescribed prarie burn. The team cut buckthorn and other invasive plants, squirted (safe) herbicides, and hauled away brush from the prarie after burning.

Team leaders and volunteers helped to preserve the natural beauty, health, and diversity of our church property.



## Green Corner

# Red Cherry Challenge

Our Congregation has taken the [Red Cherry Challenge](#)! We have pledged to sell 250 pounds of coffee by May 31.

Ten cents for every pound purchased will go to the Red Cherry Fund, which provides critical support to farmers as they confront the challenges of climate change in sustainable, innovative ways. Their harvests are shrinking, and their livelihoods are at risk. Together, we can help farmers grow bountiful red coffee cherries for generations to come. Choosing Fair Trade coffee supports a more just, democratic and healthy system of farming and trade. Thanks!



# UUCE Board of Trustees' Minutes

November 19, 2014

Members present: Jun Yoshitani, Elizabeth Closson, Dan Kalkbrenner, Rev. Lise Adams Sherry, Tim Davis, Jamie Yucuis

## I. OPENING

- a. Centering
- b. Approval of Agenda
- c. One-minute check-ins

## II. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 2014 MINUTES

## III. BOOK DISCUSSION— “CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ANXIOUS TIMES”—CHAPTER THREE

## IV. REPORTS

- a. Financial report/Earmarked funds report
  - i. Presented by Jamie
- b. Minister’s report
  - i. Need to determine who will have the second key to the UUCE safe deposit box.
  - c. Executive Team report
    - i. Seeking resolution of tax bill for the cell tower land, which is paid by AT&T. Need to determine if we sold the land or leased it.
    - ii. Christmas Eve donations will again be used for the Minister’s Discretionary Fund. This is past practice. Lise will write about this in her monthly *Unichord* article.
  - d. Transition Team report
    - i. Next meeting in December
  - e. Personnel Task Force report
    - i. Discussed the draft of comp time for non-exempt employees for the personnel manual. To be reviewed for December’s meeting.
    - ii. Bookkeepers Job Description. Motion made by Jun Yoshitani and seconded by Dan Kalkbrenner to approve the Bookkeepers Job Description. Motion passed. Lise and Jamie will coordinate posting the position.
    - f. Policy Governance Task Force report
      - i. Motion made by Jamie Yucuis to approve

the final draft of the Policy Governance document. Seconded by Jun Yoshitani. Motion passed.

- g. Stewardship planning report
  - i. Committee has met and is planning to meet early in December. Work and planning is underway.

h. DRE report

- i. Reviewed.

## V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. CAUUC—Jun

i. BoT recommends to focus on developing local social activism and working within the UU Midwest District Western Crescent Group.

b. One Billion Rising—The Long Red Line

i. Motion to donate \$250.00 of our Outreach Fund to support this Elgin Group. Seconded by Jun Yoshitani. The donation would allow UUCE to appear as a sponsor on a billboard. Motion passed.

c. Minister as Chief of Staff report—Elizabeth

i. Elizabeth shared an analysis of the research she has done to date on this topic. We will pick up this topic again in December. Lise suggests looking at feedback from the congregational survey to make sure BoT is in sync with membership.

d. Bookkeeper job description—Jamie

e. 2015 Flower Communion

i. Celebrate Hanifl’s, twenty years at this site

f. Motion made to extend the meeting to 9:10 by Jun Yoshitani and seconded by Jamie Yucuis. Motion passed.

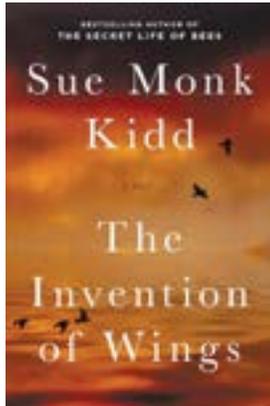
## VI. ADJOURNMENT

a. Meeting adjourned at 9:10

Respectfully submitted by,  
—[Tim Davis](#),  
Secretary

The Care Team coordinates the church's efforts in caring for members and friends at significant and/or vulnerable times in their lives. Contact [Leslie Yoshitani](#) or [Rev. Lise Adams Sherry](#) with such concerns.

## Book Group Gets Wings



The Afternoon Book Group will meet at 12:30 p.m. on Monday, January 26, at the home of Bonnie Schwank to discuss “[The Invention of Wings](#)” by Sue Monk Kidd. Place TBD. Contact [Alice Macy](#).

## Pledge Incomes Up



## January Calendar

### Worship Services

Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

### Adult Spirituality

January 4–25 at 9 a.m. in Room 301

### Family Event: Sledding or a Movie

January 4 after service

### Youth Leadership Conference

January 19—offsite

### Afternoon Book Group

January 26 at 12:30 p.m.—offsite

### One Billion Rising: The Long Red Line Event

February 14 from 2–4 p.m.—offsite

### Service Auction

February 21 at 5:30 p.m.

### Stewardship Sunday

March 1

### Commitment Sunday

March 8

## Happy Birthday!

- 5 Jan Underwood
- 5 Andrea Budasi
- 7 Louette Rogers
- 11 April Swain
- 12 Dave Segel
- 13 Chris Leyba
- 14 David Yaeger
- 16 Heike Spayne
- 16 Diana Heiser
- 17 Olivia Leyba
- 25 Jeremy Clough
- 26 Elise Wall
- 29 Paul Anderson
- 29 Koby Lesiewicz

• If we missed your birthday this month, we apologize. *Please let us know* and we will add it to the list.

## Ways to Get in Touch

### WEBSITE

[www.uuce.org](http://www.uuce.org)

### E-MAIL

[minister@uuce.org](mailto:minister@uuce.org)

[administrator@uuce.org](mailto:administrator@uuce.org)

[newsletter@uuce.org](mailto:newsletter@uuce.org)

### PHONE

847-888-0668

### POSTAL MAIL

P. O. Box 1032

Elgin, IL 60121

### PHYSICAL LOCATION

39W830 Highland Avenue  
*three miles west of  
Randall Rd.*

# Nourish Your WomanSpirit

As women we are often too busy caring for others.

Join a group of spiritually connected women and care for yourself by attending this year's Women & Religion WomanSpirit conference on February 6–8 at the Lake Country UU Church in Hartland, Wisconsin.

Refresh, recover, and renew by being with like-minded women and celebrating our womanselves.

Choose from eleven different workshops ranging from ZenTangle to Goddess work, writing to facilitated breathwork.

Vendors include massage therapists, hand-crafted scarves and fiber art, jewelry designers, tarot, and Chinese brush painting.

Start your weekend retreat with the Friday evening Soup Supper hosted by the LCUUC Church and join us Saturday night for a concert by Armonia.

The conference, all workshops, and all meals will be held in one building. Both the hotels have pools and whirlpools.

For more information and to register, go to:

[www.womenandreligion.org](http://www.womenandreligion.org)



The Unitarian Universalist

Church of Elgin

P. O. Box 1032 • Elgin, IL 60121

