

Unichord

MARCH 2015



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ELGIN

A Chance to Give Back Through Stewardship and Commitment

I am very excited about what has been going on in your beloved UUCE. I am even more excited about what is looming on the horizon for our church fellowship.

In a state of transition, we have forged ahead with our terrific music, religious education and exploration programs. Volunteerism is alive and well in so many obvious and even more behind the scenes ways. Our giving has been keeping pace with our pledges, even as we reach out to support community benevolent organizations.

A decision will be made very soon about who will be called to serve as minister to our UUCE. The Pulpit Posse has been diligent in their search for just the right person to meet our needs. The excitement has been and is building as that person comes into ever clearer focus.

The most exciting thing by far happens *this* month. March is your opportunity to look inside yourself and determine the level of your giving for the 2015–2016 church year. Will you give the 3% of your gross annual income, as recommended by the Unitarian Universalist Association, identifying yourself as a “generous giver”? Will you take steps in your giving to draw closer to that 3% landmark?

Will you, as so many others, actually vault over the 3% giving mark to new heights of giving and commitment?

March is your opportunity to decide. March 8 is Stewardship Sunday, where we will hand out the pledge materials. Please spend the next week carefully considering your level of giving. March 15 is Commitment Sunday, where you will have the opportunity to actually make your commitment to your church for the 2015–2016 year. We will be celebrating with a drawing for terrific prizes as well as a catered lunch, to thank you for your support.

Your UUCE needs your best, most well considered level of giving this year if we are to continue our fabulous programs and bring our new minister on board to a thriving, growing church.

After all, we are nothing more or less than a congregation of loving, caring folk, like you, who are giving of themselves for the betterment of all. Our time, our talents our treasures speak louder than any words can, to who we are, what we stand for and what we consider is important in our lives.

Submitted by,
– [Tim Closson](#)



Lise's Letter



UUCE has a wonderful spirit of giving and generosity. I felt it the first time I walked through the church doors, saw your welcoming smiles, and broke bread with you all. That community spirit manifests itself in so many ways as you care for one another and our spiritual home throughout the year. I hope we all realize how special this place is and how lucky we are to be a part of it.

As members and friends of UUCE, it is time, once again, to make our yearly pledge to UUCE. It's time to reflect on how much this place, our Prairie Cathedral, and everything that is connected to it means to us, not only in the present, but in the future as well. UUCE has been in existence since 1866 as a voice of liberal religion in the Elgin community. How do you envision it contributing to your life and those in the wider area in the years to come? What kind of resources do you think it will take to fulfill that vision?

I know these are rather big and kind of vague questions, and the Stewardship Committee has been working to educate everyone about what it costs to keep UUCE running and

dreaming for our future. I truly do hope you will take some time to think about what your particular answers to these questions are. I also hope you'll take some time to look at your own financial situation—sit down with your bank statement or checkbook, look at your budget—to see what your bills say you value and to reflect on whether they do, in fact, show what is important to you. When the financial resources we have are in alignment with the things we care about most that is when we feel most effective and fulfilled in our giving.

I want to leave you with these words by Parker Palmer, an educator, community builder and practicing Quaker: "In the human world, abundance does not happen automatically. It is created when we have the sense to choose community, to come together to celebrate and share our common story." UUCE has a pretty great story; may this financial stewardship season continue to strengthen and grow our community and our story.

Love,
—Lise

Reverend Lise Adams Sherry
Interim Minister

Leader Needed for Adopt-A-Highway Litter Cleanups

Interested in continuing the UUCE litter cleanups along the road by the church? Please contact [Joe Masonick](#), who led this effort for years, for more information.



A Month of Sundays: March

3/1: The Secret of High Attainment

In the mid-1940s, Dr. Frank Adams, former pastor of the First Universalist Church of Elgin, delivered a lecture on Ideals that was so well received, the Elgin Courier reprinted it “for the benefit of those unable to attend.” Join us for a condensed version of his message to find if it has withstood the test of time and is still applicable in our lives, 70 years later. Service led by Stephen Day.

3/8: The Generosity Path

This is the beginning of UUCE’s Stewardship Campaign. How will our giving empower our future? Service led by Rev. Lise Adams Sherry.

3/15: Commitment Sunday

The culmination of the UUCE 2015 Stewardship Campaign will take place during Sunday’s service. All members and friends are encouraged to submit their pledge on Sunday. Pledge forms can be submitted to any Stewardship Committee member or [online](#). If your pledge sheet is submitted by this date, you

will be eligible for the Fabulous Prize Drawing. Following the service, all members and friends are invited to attend the Stewardship Luncheon, which is our way of thanking you for generously supporting the financial needs of our beloved church community. Thank you for generously Funding Our Future! Service led by the UUCE 2015 Stewardship Committee: Tim Closson, Tim Davis, Elizabeth King, Rev. Lise Adams Sherry, Kathie Wachholder and Beth Cooper-Zobott.

3/22: Sufism

Sufism, as studied in the West, uses a variety of meditative forms to open the heart and to bring joy to its practitioners, along with the realization of the unity of all religions. Service led by Leslie Yoshitani.

3/29: Music Sunday

It’s time once again to showcase our UUCE musical talent. If you’d like to participate, please let Rev. Lise know as soon as possible and definitely by March 22.

AND THEN THERE WERE TWO!

No, this is not an Agatha Christie novel but I do promise to be short this month. Of course, that’s a promise I can keep every month (because I am short, you see). But also, this month, it is especially true because time is short in the Search process and because the list is short—much shorter than last month’s 12. We have narrowed the selection down to two candidates. The Posse thoughtfully considered all the applications and carefully reduced the alternatives to two candidates whom we would feel good recommending for your approval and whom we each individually would be extremely comfortable having minister to us. We are presently checking the references they presented. Of course, we still

have the opportunity to host each candidate for a weekend and hear them preach in a neutral pulpit. After that, on the first Thursday in April, we can extend an offer to one of them for a candidating week later in April or early May where you will have the chance to meet the candidate and to hear sermons on consecutive weekends before you make your own decision about filling our pulpit. So, yes, the time is short and the list is short, but no one in the Posse is short on enthusiasm. I’m hoping at this point you’re starting to catch some of that yourselves.

Until next month,
—Dan Hislip,
Pulpit Posse

Lifespan Religious Exploration and Education



The new adult spirituality program, *Writing as a Spiritual Practice*, continues this month. The program uses some content to motivate and inspire participants in their writing, and explores some aspects of writing that one may not usually associate with the practice. Elizabeth Closson facilitates the class, which will meet in Room 301 on Sunday mornings at 9 a.m., so feel free to try it out.

Last month, we had a Chinese New Year potluck after the service. For those who braved the cold temperatures, there were egg rolls and spring rolls, tangerines and apples for luck and fortune, and a trivia game. This tied in with our world religions theme of the year, and with the classes where the young people learned about Confucianism and the New Year.

This month will be a fairly quiet one, with the energy going to the annual canvass. The young people had a Chalice Circle, where we talked about stewardship and the ways they can contribute to the church. Feel free to talk with your children, youth, and/or grandchildren about the ways you, as an adult, contribute to the congregation. This can be explaining where you put your time and talents as well as your financial resources. The saying, “actions speak louder than words” fits into this conversation nicely. Older children and youth may wish to have a say in how they and/or the family contributes as well. These conversations often result in some pretty interesting and sometimes humorous observations!

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

	Preschool	K-2	3-5	6-8	High School
March 1	We Begin Life	The 100th Name	Social Action Day	Greek vs. Egyptian Mythology	Interfaith Community Building
March 8	Bodies Are Different	Islam: Sitti's Secrets	Jesus the Carpenter's Son	Buddhism and Zen	Brunch at a Local Restaurant
March 15	We Need Rain	Islam: Fasting and Dates	The Teachings of Jesus	Social Action Day	Planning of Interfaith Con
March 22	Spring Brings Color	Islam: Ahmed's Secret	The End of Jesus' Life	Russia and Her Religions	Interfaith Community Building
	Children's Chapel—Preschool through fifth grade at 10:30 a.m. in Room 302				
March 29	Music Sunday: No Classes—Preschool through High School				

Come to Adult Spirituality Every Sunday in
 March at 9 a.m. in Room 301!

President's Reflection



At the meeting on January 21, the BoT and several invited guests brainstormed about growth of UUCE. Nothing revolutionary came out of the discussion, but it was obvious that many practices intended to enhance growth were known, and in fact, had been a regular part of the service. Like a sports team that loses when members don't execute, I think we need to get back to basics. The first thing we can do is to increase the chance that guests will return after their initial visit. The following was posted by Renee Zemelis Ruchotzke, Regional Leadership Development Consultant at Unitarian Universalist Association. According to follow-up polling of first time guests, the top ten reasons, listed in order of frequency, why the guests chose not to return to a particular church were as follows:

Having a stand up and greet one another time in the worship service. This response was my greatest surprise for two reasons. First, I was surprised how much guests are really uncomfortable during this time. Second, I was really surprised that it was the most frequent response.

Unfriendly church members. This response was anticipated. But the surprise was the number of respondents who included disingenuous friendliness in their answers. In other words, the guests perceived some of the church members with faking it.

Unsafe and unclean children's areas. This response generated the greatest emotional reactions. If your church does not give a high priority to children, don't expect young families to attend.

No place to get information. If your church

does not have a clear and obvious place to get information, you probably have lowered the chance of a return visit by half. There should be someone to greet and assist guests at that information center as well.

Bad church website. Most of the church guests went to the church website before they attended a worship service. Even if they attended the service after visiting a bad website, they attended with a prejudicial perspective. The two indispensable items guests want on a website are address and times of service. It's just that basic.

Poor signage. If you have been attending a church for a few weeks, you forget all about the signage. You don't need it any more. But guests do. And they are frustrated when it's not there.

Inside church language. Most of the respondents were not referring to theological language as much as language that only the members know. My favorite example was: "The WMU will meet in the CLC in the room where GAs usually meet."

Boring or bad service. My surprise was not the presence of this item. The surprise was that it was not ranked higher.

Members telling guests that they were in their seat. Yes, this obviously still takes place in some churches.

Dirty facilities. Some of the comments: "Didn't look like it had been cleaned in a week." "No trash cans anywhere." "Restrooms were worse than a bad truck stop." "Pews had more stains than a Tide commercial."

—Jun Yoshitani,
President,
UUCE Board of Trustees





Come Out to the Farmers and Artisans Market!

Come one, come all! UUCE is hosting another Farmers & Artisans Market on Sunday, March 29, from 11:45 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Calendar Highlights

Worship Services

Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

Adult Spirituality

Every Sunday in March at 9 a.m. in Room 301

Stewardship Sunday

March 8

Comittment Sunday

March 15

Farmers & Artisans Market

March 29 from 11:45 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Fellowship Hall

Music Sunday

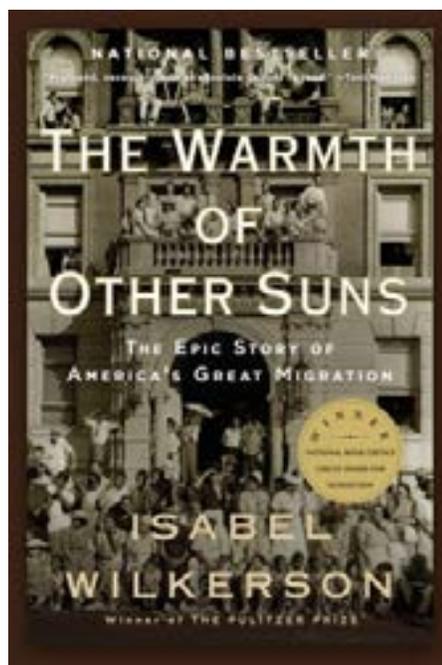
March 29

Afternoon Book Group

March 30 at 12:30 p.m. — offsite

[Check the church's online calendar for the most current information.](#)

Afternoon Book Group



The Afternoon Book Group will meet at 12:30 p.m. on Monday, March 30, at the home of Sandy Webster to discuss "[The Warmth of Other Suns](#)" by Isabel Wilkerson. Contact [Alice Macy](#).

Service Auction Soars



On Saturday, February 21, a large flock of fun loving and hardworking UUCE-ers flew into formation and experienced the 2015 auction, "Birds of a Feather". It was enormous fun, and highly profitable for our church. Although the final numbers are not all in, our initial estimate of the net proceeds is approaching \$18,000! This is quite an accomplishment for a congregation of our size and we should all be proud of that achievement.

A more detailed acknowledgement of all who

contributed will be appearing in your inbox shortly, but for now, on behalf of the UUCE Auction Team, I want to thank everyone who volunteered, donated and attended the gala event. Your hard work, generosity, patience and wonderful creativity made my role as general manager so easy and rewarding. And the best thing of all is that the pelican's share of these proceeds comes from community-building events where we can get to know each other in a different setting, laugh together and even learn new things.

The preliminary date for next year's auction is Saturday, February 20. So pencil it on your calendars. You don't want to fly past the next one!

With gratitude,
—Mike Moutrie,
Auction Chair

What the Pantry Needs



The All People's Inter-Faith Pantry staff indicated that they could use donations of canned fruit, boxes of spaghetti, spaghetti sauce, pork and beans, and cans of soup since they are running low on these items. Contributions of the old standbys of cereal, jelly, and peanut butter are always welcome.

Try to bring your contributions on our Pantry Sunday, March 1, but, as always, your donations are welcome any time during the month.

UUCE Board of Trustees' Minutes

December 17, 2014

Members attending: Dan Kalkbrenner, Rev. Lise Adams Sherry, Jun Yoshitani, Elizabeth Closson, Steve Stultz, David Yaeger, Mary Knapp, Stephen Day and Tim Davis

Others attending: Shari Smagatz

I. OPENING

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

II. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 12 and 19 2014 MINUTES

- a. Minutes approved.

III. BOOK DISCUSSION—Chapter 4

- a. “Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times”

IV. REPORTS

- a. Financial Report/Earmarked Funds Report
 - i. Presented by Shari Smagatz in Jamie’s absence. The pension expense of \$1,173.31 should be \$940.45.

- ii. Shari suggests using the EnergyStar website to calculate money saved by using our solar panels.

- b. Minister’s Report and Q & A

- i. Cell Tower ownership in question. We thought AT&T owned it outright. ET would like BoT to look into this. We should not be getting tax bills. AT&T is stating that we have a lease agreement. Steve Stultz is going to look into this for the BoT.

- ii. Tim suggests that our important documents should be secured electronically.

- iii. UUCE has a safe deposit box for storing important documents. Currently Chris Davis has a key for the box, and BoT is suggesting that the church administrator also have a key.

- iv. Need to identify people to work on this. Elizabeth will talk to Mike Moutrie and Jim Howells. The BoT secretary would be involved with this.

- c. Executive Team Report—need review of

Section 4

- d. Transition Team Report

- i. Meeting on Thursday, December 18.

- e. Personnel Team Report

- i. Job description for Bookkeeper is complete. Joe and Lise are screening applicants. Carl’s last day is January 31, 2015. Hope to have someone hired before this so Carl can help her or him acclimate.

- ii. Personnel Handbook is almost complete.

- f. Policy Governance Task Force Report

- i. N/A

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Minister as Chief of Staff—continued discussion

- i. N/A

- b. Assign a second safe deposit key person

- ii. UUCE Church Administrator

- c. Stewardship Planning

- i. Tim and Lise provided an update. Campaign timeline established and well underway.

- d. December Calendar Items

- i. Working on REEDirector’s job description.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Cell tower questions

- i. See Minister’s Report.

- b. Passing of the Gavel

- i. Elizabeth gave Jun the president’s key with a purple ribbon. Elizabeth will be on the BoT through the end of the church year.

- c. What’s on your mind for the BoT to be sure to accomplish in the next six months?

- i. Jun shares that the growth of our congregation in size requires a group effort.

1. Randall and Highland signage?

2. Need a new chair for the Welcoming and Membership Team.

3. What components and strategies can be used to work with and attract new members?

4. Setting aside one hour at the January BoT meeting on the topic of growth.

- a. People to invite to help with brainstorming and planning

- i. Kathy Wachholder

- ii. Kathy Hislip
- iii. Jen Day
- iv. Andrea Budasi

d. Motion made to extend the meeting until 9:10 by Mary Knapp and seconded by Stephen Day. Motion passed.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

- a. Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

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

MidAmerica Regional Assembly

It's time to register for the MidAmerica Regional Assembly, a weekend long gathering of UUs held April 17–19 in Naperville. You'll hear from great speakers, participate in thought-provoking workshops, and meet and mingle with UUs from all over the Region.

Go to www.midamericauua.org/RA to see all the exciting events and register. Youth are welcome. Childcare is offered. Limited partial scholarships are available. Hotel rooms are available at a group rate, too! Deadline to register at the early bird discount is March 15.

Green Corner

Please Buy Equal Exchange Coffee!



We've sold 190 of the 250 pounds of coffee we pledged to sell by May 31 for the [Red Cherry Challenge](#), providing critical support to farmers in Central America as they confront the challenge of climate change in sustainable, innovative ways. Together

with Equal Exchange, we support economic justice and can help farmers grow bountiful red coffee cherries for generations to come. All of our Equal Exchange purchases also benefit the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

Need a Hand?



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

Happy Birthday!



- 5 Trisha Dean
- 6 Sharon Fincher
- 7 Sandy Webster
- 8 Robin Peterson
- 8 Amy Hill
- 9 Olivia Grace Hussein
- 10 Mila Brinker
- 15 Joe Cusimano
- 16 Pat Pecho
- 19 Carol Ovelmen
- 21 Sherman Ovelmen

- 22 Carey Schug
- 23 Jim Howells
- 24 Diana March
- 28 Cassandra Howells
- 30 Suzanne Hanifl
- 30 Dan Kalkbrenner
- 31 Olivia Abdur-Raffia

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

Wheel of Life



Past member Jackie Van De Warker passed away in Michigan on January 5, 2015. She died surrounded by her family after surviving several serious falls.

Many of you knew Jackie not only as a friend, but from her time at UUCE as a volunteer secretary, and later as the librarian. She and her husband moved to Michigan to be with Jackie's sister a few years ago. Jackie and her kindness are living on in many ways at UUCE.

If you'd like to be in touch with Jackie's sister, both [Alice Macy](#) and [Lise](#) have her address. A private service was held in Michigan by her family. Alice Macy can provide you with any further information.

Pledge Incomes Up

Recieved: \$107,099

Budgeted: \$99,847

Ways to Get in Touch

WEBSITE

www.uuce.org

E-MAIL

minister@uuce.org

administrator@uuce.org

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.



- Thanks to Thomas Lesiewicz for volunteering to take all the used batteries collected at church for safe disposal.

- To Andrea Schmidlin for winning the Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament.

Kudos!

- To Sharon Fincher for repeating as champion in the Sharks and Hustlers Pool Tournament.

- Thanks to everyone who worked so hard to put together a fabulous and fun service auction.



The Unitarian Universalist

Church of Elgin

P. O. Box 1032 • Elgin, IL 60121

