



APRIL 2014

Unichord



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ELGIN

Big News for Worship

FIRST AND FOREMOST

We're trying something new this summer! There's more UUCE to love because we will have services every Sunday at 9:45 beginning on June 15. The topic schedule is in the works. If you would like to be a speaker, please contact [Reverend Lise](#) or [Tim Closson](#). To volunteer for Religious Exploration and Education, contact [Kathy Underwood](#).

ALSO OF IMPORTANCE

In preparation for calling the settled minister, the Worship Committee is trying new things in the Sunday morning worship service. This is a conscious effort to see which elements of the service are flexible, and which things are sacred and shouldn't be changed. One simple example is the chalice lighting words. Some congregations have different chalice lightings every week.

A more significant aspect of our service, which is rare in the greater UU

community, is Shared Reflection. This ritual must be approached with particular care, because many ministerial candidates won't apply to a church which has Shared Reflection.

WHY IS THAT?

Every minister has their own style of worship and may not want to abandon their style to fit our traditions. And, Shared Reflection can be a very intimidating time for ministers—especially a new minister. They wonder:

- Will someone completely disparage a carefully crafted message?
- Will someone say something that insults or alienates visitors or other members?
- Will someone use Shared Reflection as a time to bring up a personal agenda?
- How many congregants simply don't like this part?

At the conclusion of a worship service, Shared Reflection is the Big Unknown—which is why many ministers no longer include it in their services and why an otherwise perfect applicant may not even apply to be our settled minister.

With these questions in mind, the Worship Committee will be testing a service format this April and May that does not include a general Shared Reflection. Instead, anyone wishing to discuss the service topic is warmly encouraged to meet at the front of the sanctuary immediately after the closing circle. One of the service leaders will be part of the group.

At the end of May, based on feedback and participation, the Worship Committee will determine whether Shared Reflection is an essential part of our service format. Feedback is desired! Please do contact [Reverend Lise](#) or [Tim Closson](#).

Lise's Letter



I don't know if you remember this, but at the beginning of my time with you all, I said on several occasions that this time of interim ministry was going to be hard, and it was going to be

fun. I think we've definitely had some fun together, and more recently I think we've also had some hard times. But that's okay, because transition, experimentation, and change can all be challenging. One of the things that excites me most about these challenging times, however, is the fact that we seem to be working our way through them with mutual respect and love. That's not to say that I haven't been frustrated, because I have, and I know that many of you have been as well. But who hasn't been frustrated at some point in time with someone they care about? It happens tons; we wouldn't be human (as in non-perfect, fallible beings) if we didn't feel exasperated with our loved ones on occasion.

Since we're getting to know each other better, I imagine we all will continue to experience some discomfort from time to time. That is simply part of the definition of an interim ministry as described in the Welcoming Ritual we had on our first Sunday together back in September. Elizabeth Closson, your Board President, read these words to me on your behalf: ". . . we are asking you to companion and challenge us as we look at our past, affirm our strengths, and imagine what our ministry and our congregation could become. In effect, we are . . . asking you to lovingly shine up all the mirrors so we can see ourselves more clearly throughout this transition of spring cleaning. We

know we might not always like what we see reflected back during this process . . . things might be a little rough going from time to time. But we trust in the good intentions of all those who contribute to our congregation. We also believe that your calling as a minister will allow you to guide us with integrity, honesty, humor and love as we affirm and re-imagine our religious community."

I trust in all of your good intentions, too, and hope you will continue to let me know your questions and concerns regarding our process. But I need something more from you; I need you to take ownership for your questions and concerns by attaching your name to them when they are sent my way. I know it can be difficult to talk to someone in person when there are differing opinions, so some of you have sent messages to me anonymously. But it's also difficult to get feedback out of context. If I don't understand a comment, I'd like to be able to go to the source for more information so I can more effectively apply your concerns to our ministry together. Communication within a relationship needs to be able to move both ways, and we are in relationship with one another. We also covenant to promote each other's inherent worth and dignity; as such I think it's vital that we be authentic with one another in kind and compassionate ways. Taking ownership for our words and actions helps us to do that. I will do my utmost to listen and respond with kindness and compassion as well.

Oh, and let's keep having fun times together as well.

Love,
—Lise

Reverend Lise Adams Sherry,
Interim Minister

A Month of Sundays

April

4/6: Does Adversity Make You Stronger?

Rama, one of the more popular Hindu gods, will be celebrating a birthday this month. Known for his courage, compassion and devotion to religion and duty, we'll see what his life experiences might have to offer us today. Service led by Reverend Lise Adams Sherry.

4/13: What About Me?

Reflections on the Prodigal Son from the older brother's perspective. Service led by Bridget Laflin.

4/20: Multigenerational Earth Day Service

Rev. Lise and our Director of REE, Kathy, will lead us in an experiential worship service to celebrate Earth Day.

4/27: Do We Need to Be Carefully Taught?

Oscar Hammerstein is known as one of musical theatre's great luminaries. Besides entertaining us, what else did his art form do for our society? Service led by Reverend Lise Adams Sherry.

Sunday services begin at 10:45

Pagans Celebrate Spring Three Times

On Saturday, April 26, at 4:00, Pagan Unity will host a family-friendly celebration of Beltane. This outdoor ritual will include a Maypole dance and a potluck feast afterwards.

The Wheel of the Year actually contains three celebrations that honor Spring and the growing season for pagans. The beginning of the beginning of Spring, known as Imbolc, is actually in February when the groundhog is checking out his shadow and everyone is dreaming of an early spring.

The second is at the Vernal Equinox when we officially enter the light half of the year and the growing season begins. Snow melts, the labyrinth floods, and grass starts turning green. On March 22, Pagan Unity's Ostara ritual drew 21 people. They did a little traditional Spring cleaning by shaking off and sweeping out the stale, cold, stagnant energy of

Winter with a Witch's Besom (broom). The altar was graced with a beautifully crafted tree decorated with Ostara eggs hanging from its branches. This ritual included blessing and energizing both the physical seeds on the altar and the seeds of each person's aspirations. Everyone got a chance to plant a seed in a peat pot to take home and share their intention for what they wanted to grow with that seed.

The third and final celebration of the Spring season happens in May when leaves have sprouted and flowers have bloomed. The Sun has warmed the Earth and Winter is now a dim memory.

Many cultures around the world celebrate "May Day" with ribbons, balefires* and Maypoles. Spring has come again.



**A balefire is lit outdoors and is often used as a signal fire.*

Lifespan Religious Exploration and Education



We'll begin a new program on April 13 in Adult Spirituality: Examining Whiteness. It may be easy to think that we already know about white supremacy and white privilege, so

I'm challenging us to look at this topic within the framework of Unitarian Universalism. This 8-week program will explore topics on racial identity, development and journey, developing a positive white identity, and the history of white supremacy and power. Andrea Schmidlin and Elizabeth Olson will be

facilitating this program at 9:00 in room 301 through May 18.

The Coming of Age group continues to raise money during the year for a trip to our roots in Boston this summer. They will be hosting another pancake breakfast on April 13. The suggested donation is \$5/person.

Look for more details on the e-list and in the order of service.

They will continue selling candy and apples for \$1 during Fellowship Hour each Sunday too. Stop by for a snack to go!



In Faith,

—Kathy Underwood

Director of Religious Exploration and Education

Pass the Cereal

The All People's Inter-Faith Pantry needs one-pound packages of spaghetti and rice, small cans or jars of spaghetti sauce, cans of soup, peanut butter, and jelly, and of course, cereal.

Try to bring your donations on our Pantry Sunday, April 6, but, as always, your contributions are welcome anytime during the month.

	Preschool	K-2	3-5	6-8	High School
Apr. 6	My World Has Light	Maria's Comet	Daniel Chester French	Editing "Thinking of Death"	You and Me
	Family Movie at 12:30				
Apr. 13	My World Has Trees	Henry Climbs a Mountain	Try Something New!	Stuff Happens	Transformation
	Coming of Age from 12:30-1:30				
Apr. 20	Intergenerational Service - no classes				
Apr. 27	My World Has Flowers	From Lava to Life	Treasure Maps	Stuff Happens Part 2	Transformation Part 2
	Coming of Age from 12:30-1:30				

President's Reflections

TO GROW OR NOT TO GROW?

Recently someone expressed to me the wish that information from the Board of Trustees (BoT) appearing in the *Unichord* was less of a dry, two-month-old set of minutes and more of a fleshed out commentary on the Board's activities. I agree. In this column I have often focused more on theory than specifics, especially with regards to Board activities and conversations. Compounded by the fact that minutes aren't published until they are approved, which does make them two months old, this doesn't really convey the nitty gritty of daily BoT life.

Therefore, I'm resolving to take a different tack. If this is helpful, let me know. If I don't hear from anyone, I will know the rumor is true: no one really reads the *Unichord*. :>)

UUCE has been doing things the same way for a very long time. This means that there are revisions, reviews and updates to be considered almost everywhere. The transition is a Pandora's Box: everything we touch evolves into not one, but several projects. So, in addition to regular business, here is what the Board has been doing:

- Overseeing changing the church's record-keeping from QuickBooks to PowerChurch, in conjunction with Finance Committee, Treasurer, and Acting Bookkeeper
- Working closely with the Transition Team to address the aspects of moving toward finding a new Settled Minister.
- Redesigning the job descriptions of the paid staff
- Working with the Minister and Worship Committee as changes are tried on Sunday mornings
- Working with the Leadership Team as they assemble the slate of nominations for offices and committee chairs for the Annual Meeting in May

Also, the Board recently formed the Mission and Vision Task Force. Fondly called the Mizion Task Force, it consists of two BoT members, two Transition Team members, plus the minister, to focus specifically on the church's mission, vision and covenant. The Mizion Task Force, and the entire Board, will assemble on April 2 to concentrate on a discussion of our covenant with each other as we look to the coming years. The conversation will soon expand to include the entire congregation.

While overwhelming at times, all of these activities are both exciting and necessary. Things are never static, so why would we NOT review and change with the times and circumstances? This is indeed a GROWTH conversation. We may or may not be talking about numbers of people. But we are definitely talking about the amazing and wonderful opportunities and tasks we have laid before us. And we will ALL be talking TOGETHER about how we want to grow (which means CHANGE) as a group in light of the circumstances presented to us. If we are honest with ourselves, we will acknowledge that there is no way things stay the same, even if they appear so. Indeed, one cannot step in the same river twice. UUCE is not the same church it was yesterday or will be tomorrow. We are growing, whether we want to or not. We are growing different (and that is not a grammatical error); that is to say, we are growing into a different entity. The question is HOW? Together, you and the Board are determining the answers.

—**Elizabeth Closson**
President,
UUCE Board of Trustees

Greet, Eat, Keep Things Neat

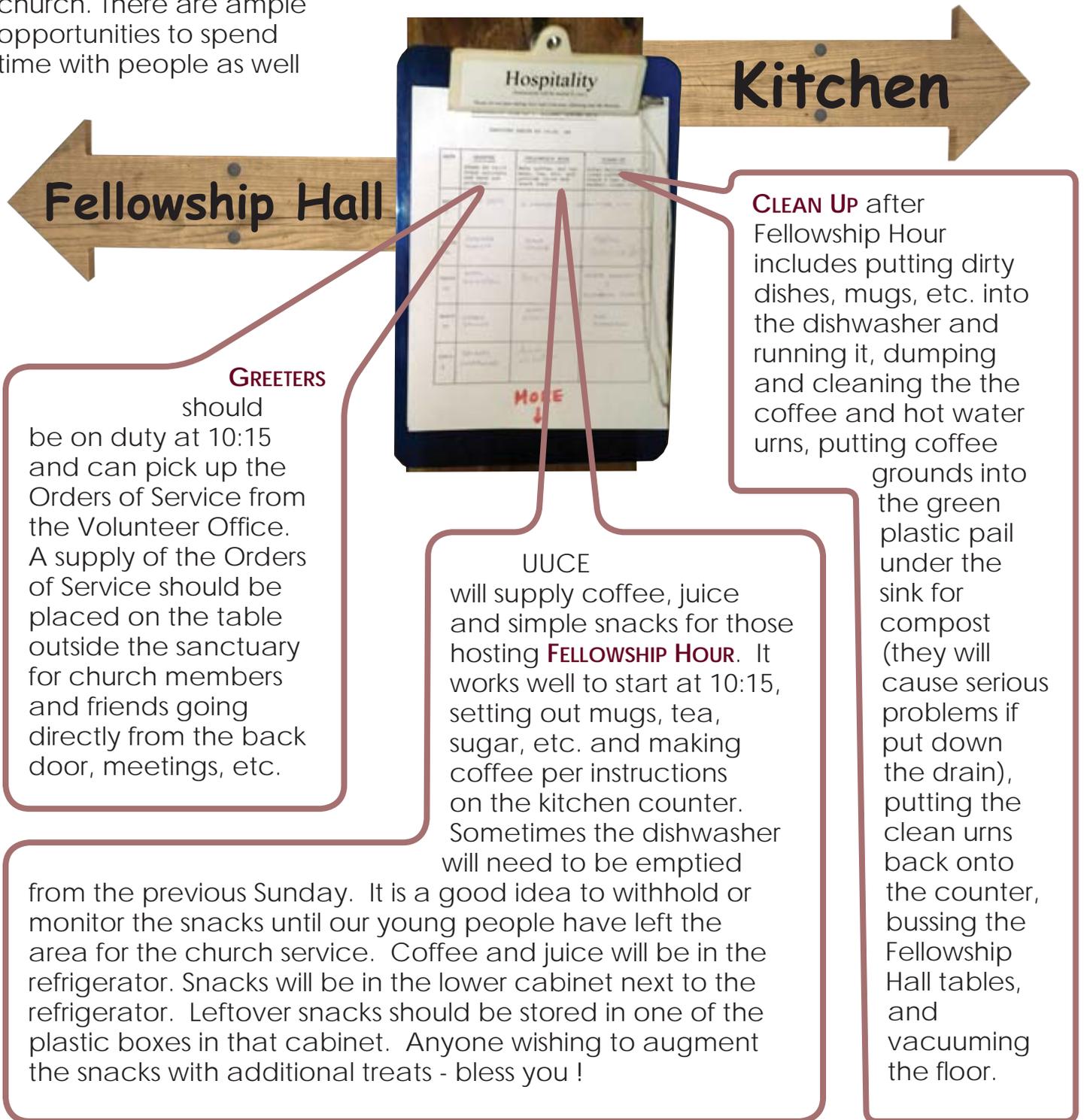
The church needs volunteers every Sunday! Greeters, Fellowship Hour hosts, and Cleaner Uppers are all in demand. This is a great way to get involved in the life of the church. There are ample opportunities to spend time with people as well

as do a little something for which the congregation will be truly grateful.

The Hospitality Sign Up Clipboard lives above the counter which divides the

kitchen from Fellowship Hall — please see the illustration below.

If you have questions, or find a bag of kazooos under the sink, contact [Norm Wilkinson](#).



It's Time to Review the Mission and Vision

This month, the Transition Team will begin to tackle the next major step: reviewing UUCE's Mission and Vision.

are expected to behave in groups."

Should the Mission and Vision statements be fully completed prior to

This process covers new territory, for both leadership and the congregation, that we are striving to navigate with courage and thoughtfulness. Although this will mean our plans require additional reviews and revision from time to time, we are confident this mindful and intentional approach will bring us the positive results we all seek.

		some services based on history Workshops	
Mar	Focus groups' feedback informs plan for Interim Ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mission & Vision review guides UUCE future & search for Settled Minister (SM) Congregation provides input to BoT & T-Team via activities such as meetings and focus groups 	
Apr	Interim Minister Task Force (IMTF) formed		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IMTF interviews candidates 		

To get this activity moving forward, the Board of Trustees (BoT) created a Mission and Vision Task Force comprised of Board members Steven Day and Elizabeth Closson, members of the Transition Team, and Reverend Lise.

This group, dubbed the Mizion Task Force, has met twice and, on March 19, delivered its first status report to the BoT. Highlights of the discussion prompted by the report are:

Work on a Covenant should be included in this activity. As stated in the UUA's Vision, Mission, and Covenant: Creating a Future Together, "Covenants describe the way people interact with one another. They incorporate the values, prized beliefs, and behaviors that are held dear, and they set out an image of how individuals

conducting the ministerial search? The key question is, "Might an incoming minister be excited to add her own voice to this process? Will having a new, fully defined M&V limit the number and quality of candidates we will attract?"

To resolve these questions quickly so the process can move forward, the BoT plans to hold a special meeting in early April. In the meantime, preparations for work on our covenant will begin.

All are encouraged to attend the Transition Talk Time session to be held after the service on April 6. We will meet in the sanctuary from 12:15 to 2:00. Feel free to bring a snack or bag lunch. We look forward to seeing you all there, and hearing your thoughts, concerns, and ideas.

In faith,
The Transition Team

Need a Hand?



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

Lights for the Lavs



The Green Sanctuary Team has been looking at steps we might take to further our energy efficiency, and in general reduce our footprint on the world. One area where energy and money are being wasted is the first floor restrooms. The lighting in these spaces is far more than necessary.

Jun Yoshitani and DJ Jensen have been reviewing the lavatory lighting with an eye toward reducing our energy costs in this highly visible target space. What is currently in place is a four tube fluorescent fixture **plus** an eight-bulb fixture over the sinks. The reduction of total illumination together with more efficient lamps would do us a good service.

A simple fix for the fluorescent fixture is to remove two of the tubes, which would still provide plenty of light. This part is easy.

The filament bulb fixture over the basins now contains eight incandescent bulbs at 40 watts each. That totals 320 watts of power consumption over the

basins. It is time to move from filament to compact fluorescent (CFL) or light emitting diodes (LED).

While these choices still exist today, the long term trend is to move to LEDs. We believe that LEDs are the best choice for our church. The higher initial cost is justified by the lower energy consumption. LEDs often have a life of 20,000 hours; LED bulbs in the restrooms could last 48 years. Incandescent bulbs burn out much more quickly and have to

be replaced frequently, adding to their cost. When cost is analyzed thus, there is no comparison between incandescent and LED bulbs. In addition, federal regulations now in place will **require** lower power use bulbs in future.

We do recognize that aesthetics will be an issue here and hope to involve the appropriate committee as our deliberations go forward.

—Your Green Sanctuary Team

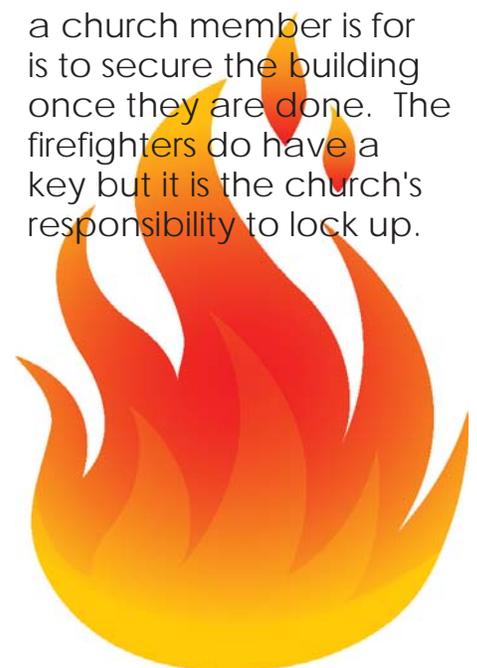
Kudos

Again this month, the church has many people to thank for giving of themselves to do what needs to be done.

🕯️ For the hard labor help with the Stewardship Luncheon: Chris Davis, Joe Masonick, Rev. Lise, Sue Hedke, and Liz, Tim and Mitch King.

🔥 For all who volunteered to be on call in the event of a fire at the church: Andrea & Greg Schmidlin, Christina & Jeremy Fixemer, Debbie Caruso & Mike Bergdahl, Susan & Paul Anderson, Susan (Suz) Stillinger, and Norm Wilkinson & Diana March.

NOTE! These brave souls will not need to don turncoats and wrangle firehoses. The firefighters will come no matter what. What a church member is for is to secure the building once they are done. The firefighters do have a key but it is the church's responsibility to lock up.



Library Features New Books

Thanks to library super-helpers Elizabeth Olson and Lydia Larrabee, two physical inventories have been accomplished since January 2013. The first reconciled the books actually present in the library and those listed in the computer. The second tallied all books borrowed from 2007, the earliest records, to 2014. Circulation was strong in 2007-2008, then slumped until recently when it began to climb again.

Overall numbers show that less than 10% of books have ever been borrowed. Since I'd never entered the library until I was invited to be its librarian, I can hardly fault anyone for ignoring this quiet little treasure trove of good reading. Our newest enticement to

change that situation is to highlight current donations on a "New Acquisitions" shelf directly under the window.

Here are just a few:

"Wisdomkeepers" by Steve Wall & Harvey Arden takes one on an extraordinary journey into the lives, minds, and natural-world philosophy of Native American spiritual Elders through words and photos. This book is beautifully presented in large format.

"The Political Mind: Why You Can't Understand 21st-Century American Politics With an 18th-Century Brain" by cognitive scientist George Lakoff demonstrates that the political divide in our country reflects a deeper divide in how Americans understand the world.

Based on how our brains work, the result is two competing modes of thought when it comes to governing our country.

"Myth: A Biography of Belief" by David Leeming invites us into classic religious texts and debates about science and modernism. In a world increasingly dependent on scientific and technical information, Leeming shows that myths and factual knowledge do not negate, but complement each other.

More good reads will be showcased in May, but you needn't wait until then. Visit the library, read, and enjoy.

—**Diana March**
UUCE Librarian

Book Group Has a Sweet Tooth



The Afternoon Book Group will meet at 12:30 on Monday, April 28, at the home of Jane Kimball to discuss **"Sweet Tooth"** by Ian McEwan.

The May meeting will be held on June 2 at the home of Andrea Budasi to discuss **"Gone Girl"** by Gillian Flynn.

For more information, contact **Alice Macy**.

April Calendar

Worship Services

Sundays at 10:45

Adult Spirituality

Sundays at 9:00
in rooms 301 and 302

Barn Bells

Sundays at 9:45
in the Bell Room

Board of Trustees Meeting

April 16 at 7:00

Buddhist Meditation

Thursdays at 7:00—offsite

Afternoon Book Group

April 28 at 12:30—offsite

Coalition for Elgin Religious Liberals (CERL)

April 8 at 11:45
in Fellowship Hall

Crescent Circle Ministers' Meeting

April 16 at 11:00
in room 301

CHURCH RENTAL

Memorial Service
April 5 at 11:00
in the Sanctuary

Coming of Age

April 13 and 27
in room 301
from 12:30—1:30

Executive Team

April 9 and 23 at 11:00

Finance Committee

April 9 at 7:00

Green Sanctuary Meeting

April 20 at 12:15
in room 301

Improv Group

Sundays at 6:30
in Fellowship Hall

Pagan Unity— Beltane Ritual and Potluck

April 23 at 4:00
in Fellowship Hall

Transition Talk Time

April 6 at 12:15
in the Sanctuary

Unichords Rehearsal

Sundays at 12:30
in the Bell Room

Vocal Ensemble Practice

Thursdays at 7:30
in the Sanctuary

qUilters

DATE CHANGE! This month, qUilters are meeting on the *second* Saturday: April 12, 9:00 - 12:00 in room 302. As you were.

Wheel of Life

Both Cheryl Janu and Lydia Larrabee lost their mothers in early March.

Cheryl Janu's mom, Jean Hunter, had been fighting pancreatic cancer for two years and had reached the hospice stage of her illness. Cheryl felt fortunate that she, her brother, and her dad were all able to spend the last two weeks of Jean's life with her; Cheryl felt it was a good ending. Jean died on March 2 and Cheryl asks that you all send healing thoughts towards her family.



Lydia's mom fell and hit her head in her back yard. On March 9, she died as a result of her injuries. Lydia told me that her mom was 96 and lived a good full life; she was heartened to know that her mom's death was not a lingering one.

I know that Cheryl, Lydia and their families will feel your love and support during this difficult time. Thank you all for being part of this wonderful community.

Love,
Reverend Lise

UUCE Board of Trustees Minutes

January 15, 2014

Members present: Bridget Laflin, David Yaeger, Debbie Caruso, Elizabeth Closson, Krista Flanagan, Mary Knapp, Tim Davis

Others attending: Lise Adams Sherry (minister)

I. OPENING

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

II. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2013 MINUTES

III. REPORTS

- a. Financial Report/
Earmarked Funds Report
 - a. Line 6501 is the licensing fee for Power Church
 - b. Transition Team earmark is actual dollars. This will be adjusted for the next budget year.
- b. Minister's Report plus Q and A
 - a. Lise performed a marriage ceremony on Monday, December 23.
 - b. Daily Herald will be talking to Lise about the new Marriage Equality law.
- c. Executive Team Report
 - a. Update on status of check signers
 - b. Elizabeth will contact Alice and Shari to move the process which was defined in October BoT minutes
 - c. Status of Childcare workers will be transitioned

from contract workers to employees in 2014

- d. Transition Team Report
 - a. Conversation about T-Team work
 - i. Non-anxious presence
 - b. BoT is looking for a report
 - e. Personnel Task Force Report
 - a. Cheren has completed working on the job descriptions. She has sent an Excel file to Elizabeth
 - f. Policy Governance Task Force Report
 - a. Update provided by Debbie, Lise and Tim
 - b. Need feedback from BoT in February
- IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 - a. Stewardship Planning
 - a. Tim provided an update
 - b. Safety Issues (may be part of ET Report)
 - a. ET provided with an update by Mike Moutrie and Rusty Winchel regarding the installation of digital security cameras
 - b. Krista provided an update on the type of sign needed to prohibit concealed carry. Krista is going to write a draft wording for the sign. David is looking into custom signage.
 - c. Appointment of Small Groups Coordinator – Elizabeth

- a. Tabled until February
- d. Transition/Exit interview with Dori Thexton, Sat. 1-18-14, 9:30-11 AM

V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Appointment of 1-2 people to fire alarm call list
 - a. Currently only Joe is on the list.
 - b. Debbie is willing to be on the list.
 - c. Will put a call out for a third person. (Elizabeth)
 - b. Conflict policy Resolution Review
 - a. Bridget is going to read the policy and share information with the BoT.
 - c. Who We Are Readers Calendar – Stephen
 - a. Reviewed
 - d. Who will do the Interim Minister review?
 - a. Due electronically on February 15.
 - b. Elizabeth and Tim will gather information for the review
- UPCOMING DATES:
- 1-18-14 BoT ministerial exit interview with Dori Thexton
- 1-19-14 Transition Covenant Groups begin (6 wk duration)

Faithfully submitted,
—**Tim Davis**, Secretary

Ways to Get in Touch

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PHYSICAL LOCATION

39W830 Highland Avenue

*three miles west of
Randall Rd.*

Pledge Income

Budgeted YTD: \$110,621

Actual Received YTD: \$110,071



**The Unitarian Universalist
Church of Elgin**

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