



# Unichord

AUGUST 2015



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ELGIN

## Greetings From Your New Minister



Dear Members of UUCE,

I'm writing to you from my nearly-empty apartment in Minnesota as I'm working to finish up my last few obligations here. My belongings are already in my new home on Highland Avenue—still in boxes, furniture still disassembled, but waiting in readiness to become my new home. My heartfelt thanks goes to the team of volunteers from UUCE who came to help carry it all inside; everything was moved in less than an hour, and that included a break for a thunderstorm! I am deeply grateful for the care and thoughtfulness that has been shown to me, and my heart is longing to return to you all.

I will officially become a resident of Elgin on August 12, with my office hours at church starting on the 15th. I am planning to attend worship services so that I can get a feel for our shared community, and so I can have a chance to learn how you usually organize Sunday mornings when I'm not directing things. My first official Sunday preaching will be the weekend after Labor Day (September 13). It will be good to be together again!

Meanwhile, many of you have reached out to "friend" me on Facebook—thank you for welcoming me into your lives and for being curious about mine! I have done my best to accept all friend requests from members of UUCE, so if you would like that kind of connection, please feel welcome to send me a

request.

I have a few rules of thumb that I try to live by on social media. My general policy is that I will not make first contact on Facebook, because I don't want anyone to be put in the uncomfortable position of feeling any pressure to share with me on social media if they don't want to. I will engage with your comments on my own posts, but I generally will not interact with posts from congregants. And once I get my official UUCE email set up, that will be my preferred method of electronic communication (rather than Facebook messages).

That being said, I'm still working on figuring out how my online presence will evolve now that I am your minister—this is a new situation for me. Right now, I only have one Facebook profile, with which I connect to friends, family, congregants, colleagues, and casual acquaintances alike. I use it to post pictures of my life, my personal social and political opinions, and random quotes and comics. I may decide to make some changes depending on what needs come to the surface, but for now, let's see how things unfold.

I am very much looking forward to being part of your lives! I am already grateful that you are part of mine.

In faith, and with much love,  
—Leslie

Leslie Mills  
Minister

# Lifespan Religious Exploration and Education



Unbelievably, most schools will resume classes in just 2–3 weeks. This is one of the more popular times during the year that families explore religious communities, too. Think back to when you first came through the doors at UUCE. What appealed to you? Was it the physical space or someone who made you feel welcomed? I'll bet it was the latter! Those of us who are "experienced" members often forget what it was like those first few Sundays when we crossed the threshold of the unknown.

As we move into the "church year", remember to make honest and meaningful connections with a visitor. Those of us who tend to be more introverted may struggle with this. The thought of initiating a conversation with a stranger can be overwhelming! Here are a few ideas to start such a conversation:

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. (person usually replies with their name) Do you live far from here? (If they have children or teens, address them too in your conversation.)

Would you like to stay for a cup of coffee or a bite to eat?

Would you like a tour of the building?

How did you find out about Unitarian Universalism?

How did you find our congregation?

Are you visiting with other family members?

What are your passions/hobbies?

Where has your spiritual path led you so far?

Once you learn a little bit about the person, you may find that they have something in common with someone else at UUCE. If so, introduce them to each other and chat over a beverage and snack.

The trick is to be attentive, but not too attentive! Give them some space to explore a bit on their own too if they seem hesitant to

talk and share their life story. If you get a sense that they would like to keep conversation to a minimum, try not to take it personally. One suggestion to help may be to point out the information table or the kiosk in Fellowship Hall. This can give visitors a "way out" without feeling awkward. They can peruse the materials at their own pace and leave without feeling pressured.

Here are some links to UU articles on being welcoming:

[How Welcoming Do Your Visitors Think You Are?](#)

[\(Un\)welcoming Churches: How Do Visitors See Us?](#)

[Welcoming Newcomers](#)

You may have heard of radical hospitality, too. Radical, meaning "drastically different from the ordinary practice; outside the normal". It means to welcome others by going the extra mile, offering the utmost of ourselves, our creativity, our abilities, and our energy. Here are some links to articles on radical hospitality:

[Radical Hospitality](#)

[Will They Come Back? Radical Spiritual Hospitality](#)

Our UUA President, Rev. Peter Morales, wrote:

The hunger for true religious community, for connection and commitment, is pervasive in our time. Our future depends on whether we can connect with people at the level of their deepest longings and highest aspirations. We are called to feed the spiritually hungry and to offer a home to the religiously homeless. And in the process, we are enriched in spirit. Someone, a long-lost relative of the human family, is coming into our lives. It happens every single day. At church it happens every single Sunday. May you and I be there, with

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# A Month of Sundays: August

## August 2: This I Believe

Inspired by our Fourth Principle—our free and responsible search for truth and meaning—we will hear from three of our very own members and what answers they've found to life's big questions about Life, the Universe, and Everything. Service led by Stephen Day with guest speakers, Donna Askins, Kathie Wachholder, and Jennifer Day.

## August 9: Sufism

We'll be exploring Sufism, a joyful, heart-centered meditative practice that promotes the unity of all religions and harmony among all. Service led by Leslie Yoshitani.

## August 16: Thoughts on Living a Grace

## Filled Life

What does the word grace mean in various religious and spiritual traditions? How might we incorporate this concept in our daily practices? Service led by Elizabeth Closson, Worship Assistant Susan Anderson. Music with Mike Moutrie.

## August 23: Community

We will be exploring what it means to be in a community. Service led by Valerie Howells.

## August 30: Readers Theater

Using material adapted from Garrison Keillor's *The Keillor Reader*. Observations on the whys and wherefores of life. Service led by Elizabeth Closson and Company.

## Green Corner

# Pope Francis on Climate Justice

Pope Francis has released his much-anticipated [encyclical](#) calling for action to address climate change. Titled "Laudato Si" (Praised Be), the encyclical speaks about the need to care for God's creation and to protect the most vulnerable from the ravages of global warming. Below are excerpts from [the papal letter](#).

"Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades.

"It is urgent to develop policy so that in the coming years, we drastically reduce carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gas emissions, by, for example, replacing fossil fuels and developing renewable energy sources.

"Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth

and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations...Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who follow us.

"Although the post-industrial period may well be remembered as one of the most irresponsible in history, nonetheless there is reason to hope that humanity at the dawn of the twenty-first century will be remembered for having generously shouldered its grave responsibilities. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start."

Let us join together in hope and take action on climate change!

Submitted by,  
—[Mary Alice Masonick](#)

# President's Reflections



Thanks to organizers Valerie Howells and Susan Anderson, about fifteen members of UUCE participated in the annual Fourth of July parade held in Elgin. The participants ranged from Duncan Yucuis and Caitlin Flanagan at the younger end and Norm Wilkinson and I at the older end. Many of us wore a white or yellow tee shirt with a colorful image of UUCE's stained glass window chalice in the front and our website and a message "We Are a Welcoming Congregation and A Green Sanctuary" on the back. This was the first year that UUCE participated. The parade seemed to be well attended. It occurred to us all that with a little planning and creativity, we could draw positive attention to UUCE. So next year, we should aim for thirty UUCE members parading and having some fun along the route.

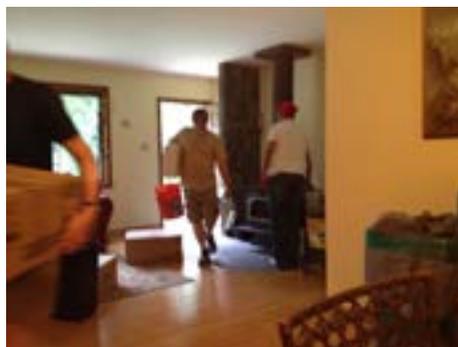
On a hot humid day in July, members of UUCE met at Leslie's place to help her unload her furniture and "stuff" from the PODS into her new home. Members providing brawn included Moter Deng, Mitch Jacobs, Ed Wall, Rick Yucuis, Susan Anderson, and Joe Masonick. Leslie supervised and I provided all important moral support. Donna Askins dropped off lemonade for the crew via Steve Askins. Maybe it's just me, but somehow the act of moving Leslie's belongings into her house signified for me that she really is our new minister.

Soon it will be September, and UUCE will begin a new chapter with Leslie Mills. Until then, have a safe and relaxing summer.

—Jun Yoshitani  
President,  
UUCE Board of Trustees



UUCE marches in Fourth of July parade.



Helping Leslie move into her new home.

# Earth Wisdom Labyrinth Programming

This year the condition of the labyrinth has been very much improved with regular weed treatments and the addition of stone seating in the center. I'm happy to report that usage has increased. We've attempted to have some 8:30 a.m. labyrinth walks on Sunday mornings before the Worship Service, when rain and flooding haven't interfered, which will continue.

guests drummed and danced as our ancestors have before us under the moonlight.



On August 1, our next Full Moon Labyrinth Walk and Drum Circle is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. This is also the weekend of the World of Faeries Festival in South Elgin at Vasa Park, which I highly recommend. The first weekend in August is also the Celtic Festival of the First Harvest known as Lughnasadh or Lammass. So, we'll begin our evening with a First Harvest Potluck. The Labyrinth Walk will include an Earth Worship ritual to be hosted by our guests from Earth Traditions; Angie Buchanan and Drake Spaeth who will lead us in an offering to the Harvest King and to the Fey continuing the Faerie theme. As the Full Moon rises there will be dancing and drumming around the bonfire. Bring your drums and rhythm instruments, lawn chairs and bug spray, and a dish to pass for the potluck. Contact is Sandy Russel or Louette Rogers.



In June, the labyrinth was visited by approximately 40 students from the Tri-balance Yoga Center in Schaumburg who spent three hours respectfully experiencing our sacred space on a sunny Saturday afternoon. Then on July 2, we had our first labyrinth programming event; a Full Moon Labyrinth Walk and Drumming Circle which had an attendance of over 50 non-members. The drummers began a meditative beat as the sun was setting. The labyrinth was decorated with LED tea lights and people spent an hour walking as the light disappeared and the full moon rose overhead. After the drummers took a break, a fire pit bonfire was ignited and our

Submitted by,  
—Sandy Russel

## Happy Birthday!

- 4 Shari Smagatz
- 7 Hannah Stultz
- 8 Molly Talaga
- 9 Alice Macy
- 14 Vickie Kilgore
- 15 Juliana Sharani (Swain)
- 19 Steve Askins
- 21 Day Waterman
- 22 Sandy Russel

- 23 Jamie Yucuis
- 24 Annika Spayne
- 25 Kathy Underwood
- 31 Jason Burger

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

# UUCE Board of Trustees' Minutes

June 17, 2015

## I. Welcoming of new BoT members

## II. Opening

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

## III. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes

- a. May 13, 2015—Minutes were approved with no discussion
- b. May 31, 2015 Annual Meeting Minutes—to be approved during 2016 Annual Meeting

## IV. Reports

a. Finance Report—the budgeted amount for minister's salary (as approved at the Annual Meeting) will not fully cover our expenses due to a) moving expenses were inadvertently left out of the anticipated expenses and b) there is a slight overlap between when Rev. Lise is on payroll and Leslie's tenure begins. Earmarks were discussed at the Finance Committee meeting and requests made to some of the earmark "managers" to either use the money or transfer to the general fund. These will continue to be discussed by the Finance Committee. During the BOT meeting, we also discussed the idea of "borrowing from the earmarks" as brought up at the Annual Meeting. Earmarks are considered a budgetary liability on the balance sheet, so as long as the bottom line (Checking less liabilities less earmarks) doesn't go below zero, we have not "borrowed" from any earmarks.

- b. Minister's Report and Q&A
  - i. Discussed the final Interim Ministry Review (needs to be done) and areas for Rev. Lise to focus on before departure.

ii. Rev. Lise requests that the BOT address confidentiality requirements for personnel (both past and present)

- iii. Request to mention the "How Things Get Done" binder in the Order of Services
- c. Executive Team Report—no discussion
- d. DRE's Report—no discussion

## V. Unfinished Business

a. Continuation of putting church documents on-line—we need a roadmap to make sure all branches (ET, BOT) have the same documents and timely updates. Lise and Stephen will meet in July to discuss.

- b. Social Media policies—tabled until later
- c. Recognition of Transition Team and Search Committee—Jun will include in President's Reflection announcement at church as soon as possible
- d. Resurrection of Conflict Management Team—tabled until next meeting

## VI. New Business

- a. Updating website—How to Get Things Done should be online
- b. Check Signers—Beginning July 1, 2015 Elizabeth Closson will be removed as a check signer and Sandy James and Elizabeth Olsen will be added as new check signers.

## VII. Farewell to BoT Members

## VIII. Farewell to Lise

**XI. Final Interim Minister Review**—needs to be done by July 31

**X. Motion:** When BOT members terms are up, they are to be removed from BOT Google Group effective midnight, July 1. Motion passed.

Submitted by,  
—Stephen Day

New Board of  
Trustees Member

Kevin Webster was nominated and approved by the Board of Trustees at the July 15, 2015 Board Meeting to serve the remaining term left vacant by Tim Davis. Kevin will also be the Secretary. The Board members welcome Kevin and look forward to working with him.

# Lifespan Religious Exploration and Education Continued

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anticipation in our hearts, warm smiles on our faces, our eyes ready to truly meet the eyes of another, and our arms extended, saying, "Welcome, welcome."

Here is what is happening this month:

August 2—Lava Lamps

August 9—Stop Motion Animation

August 16—Outdoor Fun

August 23—Letterboxing

August 30—Sundae Sunday

In Faith,

—[Kathy Underwood](#)

Director of Religious  
Exploration and Education

## Cereal, Cereal, Cereal

Yes, it's back to cereal, cereal, cereal again. The All People's Inter-Faith Pantry really needs donations of cereal this month along with boxes of Kraft Dinner, canned fruit, toilet paper, face soap, and, of course, peanut butter and jelly.

Try to bring your donations on our Pantry Sunday, August 2, but, as always, your donations are welcome any time during the month.



## Calendar Highlights

### [Worship Services](#)

Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

### [Labyrinth Walks](#)

Sundays at 8:30 a.m.

### [Full Moon Labyrinth Walk and Drum Circle](#)

August 1 from 7:30–10 p.m.

### [Afternoon Book Group](#)

August 24—offsite

## Need Some Help?



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](#) with such concerns.

## 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.*



## Brilliant Book Group

The Afternoon Book Group will meet on August 24 at the home of Jane Kimball to discuss "[Brilliance](#)" by Marcus Sakey.



The Unitarian Universalist

Church of Elgin

P. O. Box 1032 • Elgin, IL 60121

