



OCTOBER 2014

# Unichord



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ELGIN

## Beyond Categorical Thinking

“Will the new minister hear me? Will my concerns and needs be met? Will the minister understand what I’m living with? How will the community respond to our minister?”

In answering these questions, a picture of the “ideal minister” (categorized by age, gender, gender identity, nationality, physical ability, race, and sexual orientation) comes to mind. With this picture in place, it can be easy to unintentionally exclude ministers who fall into certain categories. At times, as we get caught up in comparing candidates to our “picture,” we can even forget what it is we hoped for in a minister.

On the weekend of *October 5*, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin (UUCE) will participate in the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop offered by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) for congregations involved in the search for a new minister. The UUCE Search Committee invites all congregational leaders, members, and friends to participate in this workshop.



The Beyond Categorical Thinking program is designed to promote inclusive thinking and help prevent unfair discrimination in the search process for a new minister. This program includes a Sunday morning service led by a BCT workshop facilitator followed by a three-hour workshop. In the workshop, UUCE members will:

- Consider the hopes, expectations, and concerns they have for a new minister.
- Learn more about the ministerial search process, and
- Explore how thinking categorically about people sometimes interferes with choosing the best candidate.

Come on October 5 at 1 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Elgin to participate in this UUA-sponsored workshop, led by Michael Takada and Dan Hislip. Lunch will be provided between the service and the workshop.

The selection of a minister is important. The Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop is another opportunity for everyone in our congregation to be a part of that process. This experience will provide guidance for the Search Committee in our work. We look forward to seeing you there!

—Settled Minister Search Committee  
[Susan Anderson](#), [Dan Hislip](#), [Valerie Howells](#),  
[Lydia Larrabee](#), [Diana March](#), [Joe Masonick](#),  
and [Doug Pratt](#)

# Lise's Letter



One of the things I love about being in a religious or spiritual community is the paradoxes involved. We all aspire to care for one another and to help make the world a better place, but we also work towards these goals in many different ways. Part of the reason we work towards these ends in a variety of ways is because we have largely or slightly different visions of how this could look. On our way to these visions we express ourselves through our diverse theologies or philosophies; we also use a variety of talents to get us there. Some of us work through the arts (the Aesthetics or Worship Committee, Musicians), some are administrators (the Board, Finance and Endowment Committees, the Executive Team), some like to work with their hands (Building and Grounds), and some are relational (the Care Team, Religious Education and Exploration).

Of course people usually have a mix of attributes, but we don't always recognize their complexity because we're blinded by some of their more dominant habits. This broad diversity can be challenging, but it also enriches us as well, especially when we take the time to talk about and understand our differences. Have you ever worked on a committee or project and found yourself initially knocking heads with someone for whom you later developed a great appreciation and affection? I think we all know this is possible, but it often takes more energy, attention, and courage

than we'd like to devote. But when we take the time to reach those understandings, we often learn the most, not only about the person with whom we're conversing but about ourselves as well. I can speak from experience when I say that sometimes those self-discoveries are not always the most flattering, but when reflected upon they often bring the most profound learnings and opportunity for change.

This month I'm participating in a pulpit exchange with the UU minister from Rockford and I'm planning to do at least one or two other exchanges with other ministers this year. It gives us as ministers a chance to learn how other congregations do things, and the congregations we serve the opportunity to experience different perspectives and styles in the pulpit. UUCE will also have a guest speaker from the UUA this month to help the congregation consider different options for its future settled minister. Just like members of a congregation, no two ministers are alike either and they also have a variety of gifts and strengths that aren't always apparent the first time you meet them. I hope you enjoy this chance to experiment with and reflect on your pulpit preferences and how they can complement the rest of the ministry that happens at UUCE.

Love,  
—Lise

Reverend Lise Adams Sherry  
Interim Minister

## Negotiation Team Named

Per Search Committee procedure, the BoT has appointed a Search Committee member, [Dan Hislip](#), a BoT member, [Tim Davis](#), and a church member at large, [Debbie Caruso](#), to be the Negotiation Team. This trio will develop and present the compensation package to our potential settled minister at the end of the interview period next spring.

# A Month of Sundays: October

## 10/5: Beyond Categorical Thinking

The Beyond Categorical Thinking program is designed to promote inclusive thinking and help prevent unfair discrimination in the search process for a new minister. This program includes a Sunday morning service led by a BCT workshop facilitator followed by a three-hour workshop. Service led by Michael Takada.

## 10/12: "Renewing our Liberal Faith"

More than a decade after Unitarian Universalists began to speak about a "language of reverence," we continue to evolve our faith, spiritual practices, and self-identity. In our pluralistic and increasingly secular age, how might Unitarian Universalists renew our liberal faith for the coming decade? Service led by Rev. Dr. Matthew Johnson.

The Rev. Dr. Matthew Johnson is the senior minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church, Rockford; he has served that congregation

since 2008. A third-generation UU, he is the parent of two medium-sized children, the co-chair of the UUA's Presidential Search Committee, and the author of "Newborn Bards: A Theology of Preaching for Unitarian Universalists."

10/19: The Inherent Worth and Dignity of All  
Our first principle can often be one of our most challenging values to uphold, in part because it requires that we balance it with the needs of our community as well. We'll explore each of our UU principles this year, beginning with this one. Service led by Reverend Lise Adams Sherry.

## 10/26: Making "Sacred Time"

Join us as we explore the historical, religious, and societal differences between "sacred" and "profane" time and share examples of ways we can create sacred time into the upcoming holiday season. Service led by Steven Day and Susan Anderson.

## Join Circle Supper!

From October through April (November/December counts as one), UUCE members and friends meet once a month in groups of six to eight for an evening of good food and sparkling conversation. This is a wonderful way to socialize with old friends and make new ones!

You are cordially invited to join Circle Supper at any level you feel comfortable. You may sign up as a "host" and have one dinner (or more if you choose) at your house and attend four additional monthly dinners at other church member's houses or in Fellowship Hall. If you're just not up for hosting a dinner party, sign up as an "alternate" and we'll put you on the list of people ready to substitute at a moment's notice. Circle Supper is potluck style with the host providing a main dish and

guests each bringing an appetizer, salad, side dish, or dessert so you don't have to cook the entire meal when you host.

At the Finale Potluck last May, attending members once again chose to have Circle Supper on the second Saturday of the month so members can save that date ahead of time. Of course flexibility is always an option.

We will start our season with the Fall Potluck on Saturday, October 11 at 6:30pm in Fellowship Hall. We will then have group dinners November 8 or December 13, January 10, February 14, March 14, April 11 and the Finale Potluck in May.

*continued on page 6*



# President's Reflections



To say that the past year has been a busy one for the Board would be an understatement and news to no one. And so, as we looked over our coming year at the annual BoT retreat and at a special meeting soon after, we prioritized the work ahead. We hope to address that which is most urgent, without forgetting the other important tasks before us as a Board and as a congregation.

One thing that needs doing periodically is the review of Vision and Mission statements. Connected to this is the review of our Covenant, a statement of how we will relate to and behave with each other. The Board actually did begin this work last spring, determining that it would be best to begin with our Covenant. The reason is, as we have been going through this time of discussion regarding every aspect of our life together, there have been strong differences at times, resulting in some pretty heated encounters with hurt or angry feelings. Of course we know how to behave with each other, respectfully, lovingly, encouragingly. But somehow, in the heat of a moment when we are considering something very important to us, we forget this all too easily, saying and doing things that are harmful and counterproductive.

What Board members learned when we tried to open the conversation about a church-wide review of our covenant was that people did not have the energy or time to take on another discussion, especially in the summer. The Settled Minister Search Committee was just getting started, and their work also requires much active participation by everyone in the congregation. If the Board is to support the SMSC in their work, we need and want to do that, rather than compete for the finite amount

of energy each of us has as a church member or friend.

So the Board determined that the better course is to shelve the Covenant review temporarily. The Task Force in charge of this effort has kept the information we gathered from the meetings that were held, including a children's REE session when the children were given an opportunity to add their thoughts to how we want to behave together.

We will hold this information and wait until we have our settled minister. Then we will take it up again, along with review of our Vision and Mission. In the meantime, we can remember:

1. Speak kindly, respectfully, and carefully with each other, listening at least as much as we talk.
2. When we have differences of opinion or approach, honor the differences, remembering there is more than one "right" (effective) way to do things.
3. Make every attempt to work through disagreements by going directly to the person with whom we disagree, not a third party to complain and gossip.
4. If we are unable to resolve a difference one on one, invite a third person to be present and assist in the conversation, looking for points of agreement and what is right, not who is right.
5. Remember, we are all, in the end, wanting to be the best congregation we can possibly be.

— Elizabeth Closson  
President,  
UUCE Board of Trustees

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.

# Join Circle Supper!

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We will continue the option of hosting in Fellowship Hall with the possibility of child care there during your dinner.

Sign up on the clipboard in Fellowship Hall or contact me, [Kathie Wachholder](#), at (847) 207-

6473 or by email. Please sign up by September 30 to give me time to complete the schedule before the potluck. Last season's members will receive an e-mail from me in September.

See you around the dinner table!

## Introducing Our New Church Administrator

Our new Church Administrator, Sheena John, is officially at work now. She has had some training help from our previous administrator, Mila Brinker, and also from member Donna Askins, who has been managing our email since Mila left. Sheena's office hours are Monday 10–2, Wednesday 2–6, and Friday 10–2. She will be working from home on Thursday. She will not have office hours on Saturday or Sunday, so if you need to make contact with her in this capacity, it needs to be during the week.

Sheena has actually been part of our congregation for several years. She participates regularly in Adult REE as well as with the Landscape Team and the Buddhist sangha. She is the one who designed our Meditation Garden. You may also see her at worship on

Sundays. Her partner, Claire Dassy, does lovely photography, selling photo note cards and magnets at our spring and fall farmers' market. Sheena also enjoys photography, outdoor recreation, ecology, and Buddhist studies. She and Claire have offered a meal and nature walk as a Service Auction event for several years.

Sheena has been owner of a landscape design business since 1992. She has had other interesting work experience as a volunteer building administrator for a condominium and a liaison with the British Army designing mobile exhibition trailers. Sheena grew up in Britain, moving here as an adult. Watch out for that dry, sly British humor as we welcome Sheena to this new phase of her life.

## All Music, All The Time!

At least for one worship service next month. The first of our two annual Music Sundays will be on November 9. Music Sunday is a joyous celebration of the music of our church. In addition to The Unichords, The Barn Bells, The UUCE Vocal Ensemble, and Villa Street, many church members of all ages get a chance to sing and/or play. If you or your child would like to perform that morning, please contact [Rev. Lise](#). All are welcome!

The November Music Sunday has two offerings. One is the regular offering that we collect every Sunday. The second offering

goes into a special fund to support the music of our church. It has been used to purchase sheet music and arrangements, sound equipment, and even musical instruments (the church's drum kit was partially paid for from this fund) among other things. Your generosity in support of our church's music has always been greatly appreciated! Please keep UUCE music in mind as that day approaches.

Humbly Submitted,  
—Steve Askins  
your Songmeister

# Settled Minister Search Update

Congratulations! You did it! You achieved the 80% target we set for participation in the Settled Minister Congregational Survey. Now, we did extend the deadline but, hey, this is Chicagoland and the Machine knows how to turn out the vote. And the important thing is that you've registered your collective opinions. We are still analyzing what those answers yield, and I'll have to get back to you with that information. At this point, I can only appreciate what you just accomplished.

In the same spirit, I appreciate your participation thus far in the Focus Groups regarding the Settled Minister. However, since another pair of Focus Groups is scheduled for September 21, I cannot be as effusive in my praise for your efforts in this category. I can tell you that we were able to glean some additional and very valuable information from the Board of Trustees and the first two general congregation sessions, which will augment and further clarify the survey results. We hope for more of the same on September 21. We will also consider whether additional Groups might be helpful and advisable. More on that later.

Still you made two major advances in our quest. I'd like to tell you of an opportunity to earn yet a third merit badge for your participation on Sunday, October 5. On that date, we will be hosting a Sunday service as

well as a workshop on "Beyond Categorical Thinking." This program is designed to promote inclusive thinking about whom we will consider as our permanent settled minister and to prevent any unintended discrimination in our process. The age, physical ability, race, gender, or sexual orientation of a minister indicate little about that person's capabilities or leadership style and even less about the fit with our congregation. So, I'd like each and every one of you to come to the Sunday worship service on October 5, which will be led by Michael Takada, followed by a lunch and then a three-hour workshop on this incredibly important subject. Our Church and the Pulpit Posse are both committed to a search free of discrimination, affirming the principles of justice, and celebrating our diversity. In the end, this approach gives us the largest slate of candidates from which to choose. We can collectively examine our fears and prejudices, concerns and objections, whether we've voiced them or thought them or haven't yet even considered them. We all need to be on the same page on this aspect of the search. So please join us in this next step of our adventure. We need you. Child care's on us.

Until next month,  
— Dan Hislip,  
Sheriff, Pulpit Posse

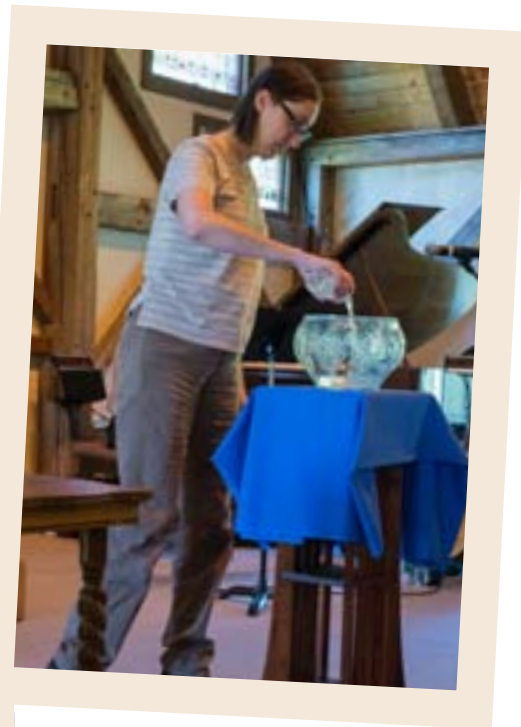
## The qUilters Raffle Quilt

The qUilters, after two years of hard work, have finished the raffle quilt. We are hoping that everyone will help us sell tickets. We will have packets of tickets and a picture of the quilt to assist with sales. You can pick up the packets at church after the service starting October 5. The proceeds from the raffle will be donated to the church.



# Water Communion Photo Album

Click below to see photos of the Water Communion and Annual Ingathering!



## Fair Trade Coffee

UUCE has been selling Fair Trade coffees for over ten years. UUs are linked with small farmers around the world through fair trade, thanks to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's Coffee Project. The UUSC works with Equal Exchange, which supplies fair trade products to numerous faith groups.

The coffees we order are not only fairly traded and organic, they are shade-grown as well, preserving the forests that so many species, ours included, depend upon for existence. The various teas and chocolates we have for sale are also fairly traded and organic.

We carry a just a small sampling of Equal Exchange products. If you would like to order something else from their product catalog, contact [Mary Alice Masonick](#).

For the first time in over seven years, we are increasing the selling price of our coffees. All proceeds benefit the UUCE Social Justice Fund. Thank you for supporting fair trade and sustainable agriculture!

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

## NUMBERS CONTINUE TO GO UP!

Your August donations to the All People's Inter-Faith Pantry helped to feed 2,670 people. The numbers receiving food from the Pantry continue to go up.

The Pantry needs pork and beans, boxed dinners with meat and vegetables,

boxes of mashed potatoes, toilet paper, bar soap, and of course, peanut butter, jelly, and cereal.

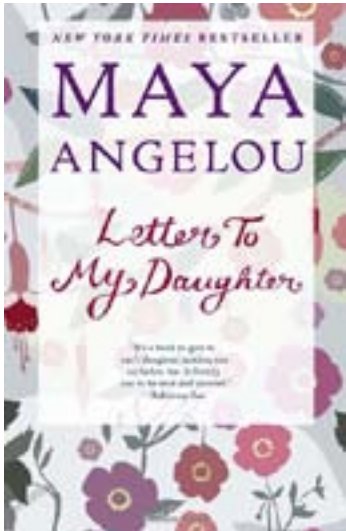
Try to bring your donations on our Pantry Sunday, October 5, but your contributions are welcome any time during the month.



# Social Action Opportunity

The Religious Exploration & Education Team is looking for UUCE volunteers to pack food at the Northern Illinois Food Bank in Geneva on Tuesday, October 21 from 6–8:30 p.m.

This opportunity is best for adults and older children/youth, given the length of the shift on a school night. Contact Vickie at [vlkilgore@gmail.com](mailto:vlkilgore@gmail.com) for more info and to sign up.



## Letter to My Daughter

The Afternoon Book Group will meet at 12:30 on Monday, October 27, to discuss “Letter to My Daughter” by Maya Angelou. Place TBD. Contact Alice Macy.

## Happy Birthday!

- 1 Richard (D.J.) Jensen
- 3 Nikolas Spayne
- 6 David Zobott
- 8 Charlie Schmidlin
- 12 Laurie Kieseewetter
- 16 Chris Davis
- 17 Shirley Wolin
- 18 Jason Engel
- 18 Amy Schmidlin
- 19 Betsy Thrasher
- 20 Anne Clough

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

## Green Corner

## UUCE on Tour!

On Saturday, October 4, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. UUCE is proud to be a stop on the Illinois Solar Tour. We will welcome visitors wishing to learn about the installation of photovoltaic panels on our church roof. One of our high school youth, Helen King, lead a summer internship program for a group of students from U-46 Science, Engineering and Technology Academy at Bartlett High School to participate in the mission of the Illinois Solar Energy Association: to educate and advocate for solar, wind, and other forms of renewable energy. Jun Yoshitani has created a PowerPoint presentation for visitors on the tour. Learn more at [http://www.illinoissolartour.org/The\\_Tour.php](http://www.illinoissolartour.org/The_Tour.php).

## November Indoor Farmers' Market



Mark your calendars! UUCE will host an Indoor Farmers' Market Sunday, November 9 from 12:00 p.m.–3:00p.m. You won't want to miss it!



# UUCE Board of Trustees Minutes

August 20, 2014

Members present: Elizabeth Closson, Tim Davis, Stephen Day, Jason Engel, Jun Yoshitani, Jamie Yucuis.

Others attending: Rev. Lise Adams Sherry.

## I. OPENING

- a. Centering
- b. Approval of Agenda
  - i. Approved by consensus.
- c. One Minute Check ins

## II. APPROVAL OF JULY 2014 MINUTES

- a. Minutes approved.

## III. REPORTS

- a. Financial/Earmarked Funds Report
  - i. Jamie looking at dues payments to UUA and Mid-America Region.
  - ii. Approved by consensus.
- b. Minister's Report and Q & A
  - i. Need a working definition of what "Chief of Staff" means.
  - ii. It's time to do another interim ministry review for the UUA.
  - iii. Office Administrator tasks are being handled by volunteers in the interim.
  - iv. Will be scheduling a 2104–2105 planning meeting for church business to include touching base on the five goals outlines by the Interim Minister Search Committee. Stephen will help secure a date for this meeting.
- c. Executive Team Report
  - i. No report.
- d. Transition Team Report—no meeting/ no report
- e. Personnel Task Force Report—Lise
  - i. Four candidates for Office Administrator position. Interviews are underway.
- f. Policy Governance Task Force Report—

includes review of revisions

- i. During the next two weeks, BoT members will review PG document. Stephen will send out instructions on how to do this using Google Docs.

- g. Stewardship Report—status of second pledge effort

- i. Campaign has concluded. Tim and Tim will provide final information at the September meeting.

- h. SMSC Report

- i. Elizabeth and Dan Hislip are meeting on the Wednesday before every BoT meeting monthly.

- ii. Working on Congregational Record and Information packet. Launching a survey on August 24.

- iii. SMSC would like to meet with BoT

## IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Review of Policy Governance (from retreat agenda)—Tim Davis

- i. See reports.

- b. Appointment of Small Groups Coordinator—(who's responsible for this?)

- i. Need to determine who would recruit to fill this position.

- ii. Need to add a fifth person, at-large, to the Executive Team.

- c. Conflict Resolution Update—still needed

## V. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Approval of appointment of Steve Stultz as Trustee

- i. Motion made by Stephen Day to appoint Steve Stultz as Trustee at Large. Seconded by Jun Yoshitani. Motion passed.

- b. Name Members of Negotiating Team to assist SMSC (see Transitions Handbook)

- i. Need three people for the Negotiating Team. One BoT member, one SMSC member

and one at-large person from the congregation.

ii. Motion made by Jason Engel to appoint Dan Hislip (SMSC) and Tim Davis (BoT) to the SM Negotiating Team. The at-large position to be determined. Seconded by Stephen Day. Motion passed.

c. Adoption of a process for recording BoT decisions made electronically

i. E-BoT Voting

aa. Tim will write a rough draft for this procedure. The rationale for this option is to have the ability to take a special vote in-between BoT meetings. Adapt Robert’s Rules

for this purpose. Secretary would act as moderator for the vote.

d. Appoint BoT Notebook Updaters

i. Stephen and Jason will perform an autopsy on the old BoT notebooks to begin the process.

Adjournment at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
—Tim Davis,  
Secretary

## October Calendar

### Worship Services

Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

### UUCE on the Illinois Solar Tour

October 4 from 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

### Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop

October 5 service at 10:30 a.m. and workshop at 1 p.m.

### Adult REE

October 12–November 16 from 9:00 a.m.–10:30 a.m.

### The Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting

October 19 at 12 p.m. — third floor room (TBD)

### Volunteer for Northern Illinois Food Bank

October 21 from 6–8:30 p.m. — offsite

### Afternoon Book Group

October 27 at 12:30 p.m. — offsite

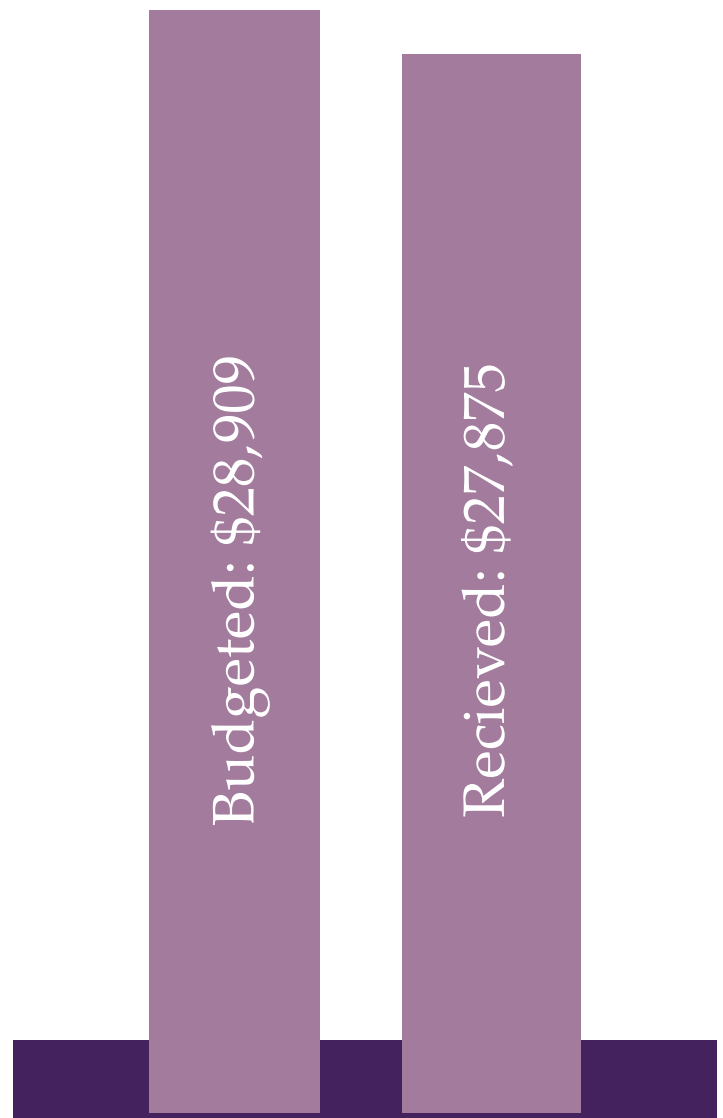
### Indoor Farmers’ Market

November 9 from 12 p.m.–3 p.m.

### Music Sunday Service

November 9 at 10:30 a.m.

## Pledge Income



Ways to Get in Touch

WEBSITE

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

E-MAIL

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three miles west of  
Randall Rd.

# UU Women's Connection Fall Retreat

The theme for our Fall Retreat is *Women as Voices of Wisdom and Compassion* October 10–12 at DeKoven Center in Racine, WI. Join us as we and Joyce Higginbotham, our featured keynote speaker, celebrate ourselves as women, and the unique voice we bring to the expression of wisdom and compassion. How do we grow our wisdom to the greatest depth and our compassion to its greatest span? What does it mean to us to be wise women? Compassionate women?

How do we express it in this complex world? Together we will explore a progression of worldviews, try on their perspectives of moral span and compassion, and discuss their impact on ourselves and the groups with which we interact.

To register for the Fall Retreat visit [www.uuwomensconnection.org](http://www.uuwomensconnection.org)

–Diana DeWeese,  
UU Women's Connection  
Chair



The Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Elgin

P. O. Box 1032 • Elgin, IL 60121

