



DECEMBER 2015

# Unichord

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ELGIN



## Beloved Community Conversation

On “First Sundays” each month you are invited to stay after the service for a 30-minute open house conversation in the sanctuary about what’s going on at UUCE. How are we doing at building Beloved Community?

Our minister will be present with other congregational leaders to talk about the exciting things that are going on from month to month—what we’ve been up to, decisions that have been made, and energizing changes that are coming down the line.

It will also be an opportunity for you to ask questions about things you’ve noticed. We

want you to have clarity about why things are happening, and we’re open to hearing your feedback and thoughtful suggestions.

December’s Beloved Community Conversation will focus around **ministry at UUCE**. Join us Sunday, December 6 after the service. This is your chance to hear from our freshly formed Committee on Ministry, chaired by Dan Hislip, with other COM members present for a panel discussion. They are hard at work figuring out how best to evaluate ministry (in all its various forms) at UUCE, and we look forward to seeing you there!

This is the last monthly *Unichord*. The Communications Team has determined that a monthly newsletter is not an efficient way to get current news out to members and visitors. Beginning in January 2016, the *Unichord* will transition to a beautiful weekly format sent straight to your inbox!

## Church Mail Change of Address

We now have a mailbox on site at the church on Highland Avenue. From now on you can send mail to the church at 39W830 Highland Avenue, Elgin, IL 60124. Any mail that has been sent to the old PO Box will still reach us over the next month, but please begin using our on site mail box address next time you send us mail.

Thanks to Joe Masonick for installing the new mailbox.



# Minister's Meditation



## December's "Expectation"

## Theme—

Now that we're in our fourth month of settling in together, it feels very appropriate to be shifting our attention to

December's theme of "Expectation." What expectations do we have of each other?

There has been a lot of good energy as we've moved forward into this church year. As we've deepened our relationships, sometimes we've run into unexpected bumps—or, what I've learned to affectionately dub "fences in the fog." We'll all be going along, thinking we're on the same page (the fog), and then suddenly it becomes apparent that someone (usually me) had expectations that didn't align with everyone else (the fence), and before I know it, I've walked right into it. Thankfully, when this happens, we notice it, name it, have a good laugh, and then talk about how we can realign our two different sets of ideas. I come away from these conversations with a heart full of gratitude for the amount of trust and goodwill that overflows here at UUCE.

So tell me—what are your expectations, and are they aligning with reality? Are you noticing any "fences in the fog" yourself? As we've begun to figure out where our fences are, UUCE has been growing its expectations in a number of ways.

- Our Board of Trustees has dedicated themselves to deep training in our church governance system, with two day-long retreats so far, as well as ongoing guidance and support as they delve into "policy governance" and how that works at UUCE. The ET is about to get the same training.

- Our Committee on Ministry is up and running, with three big tasks on their

plate: to provide feedback to and complete evaluations of the minister; to lay groundwork for developing leadership and supporting emerging and continuing leaders; and to understand and support the organization of the various teams that provide many kinds of ministry to this church.

- Our Membership Team is busy making plans and designing classes for new members, while at the same time holding a vision for what strong, vital membership could mean for current members. In what ways is every member responsible for building this Beloved Community that we all hold so dear?

Our vision for the future of UUCE is vast and exciting, and this year, we're spending most of our time digging deep into our expectations of that future, and then looking at the reality of where we are and what we need to do if we hope to build the future we're dreaming of. Right now, our focus is on making sure our church leaders are rallying around the same set of expectations—so that we can reduce the number of foggy fences we might run into as we make progress.

In the midst of this, I've had to adjust some of my own expectations, too. Just last week, after talking with many church leaders, we have come to realize that my ordination and installation as your minister will need to be held in September, rather than this spring. We decided that we want to do this well, and that means taking our time. If you're wondering what it takes to plan an ordination/installation ceremony, imagine what it takes to plan a wedding—the invitations, the reception, the music, the speakers, the gifts, and (of course) the family politics. We need to assemble a team whose task it is to help me plan this special event, and that's what we're starting to work on right now. It will also need to have funding in next year's budget, which

this year's budget simply didn't have room for.

If you're curious to learn about what's going on behind the scenes here at UUCE, I hope you'll plan to join us after the service on December 6 for our second "Beloved Community Conversation." This month, we'll

be hearing from the Committee on Ministry, with opportunities for you to ask questions and offer feedback.

Warmly,  
— [Leslie](#)  
Leslie Mills  
Minister

## A Month of Sundays: December

December 6: Light One Candle: Making Ourselves Ready for the Days to Come  
Service led by Leslie Mills, Minister.

December 13: On the Road to Anywhere but Here: A Story of Hope Where We Least Expect It  
Service led by Misha Sanders, Guest Speaker. Misha Sanders is midway through her Master of Divinity degree program at Meadville-Lombard Theological School, our Unitarian Universalist seminary in Chicago. A charming and comedic public speaker, she resides in Huntley and currently serves Tree of Life UU Congregation as ministerial

intern.

December 20: Song and Story: Cherishing the Holiday Spirit  
Service led by Leslie Mills, Minister.

December 24 (Thursday at 7:00 p.m.): What Child Is This? Exploring the Christian Story from a UU Perspective  
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Service led by Leslie Mills, Minister.

December 27: Setting Your Own Expectations: A Question Box Sermon  
Service led by Leslie Mills, Minister.

### Green Corner

## *Opportunities for Activism* are back at UUCE!

The Green Sanctuary Committee is once again offering letter-writing opportunities to the UUCE community. Personalized letters are considered an effective means of communicating with our legislators in government.

In November, we wrote letters to our members of Congress to urge action on climate change. These letters were timed to coincide with the United Nations Climate Summit in Paris the first week of December. The world is watching this summit and hoping that world leaders forge a strong agreement to address climate change.

In the first two Sundays of the letter writing campaign, forty letters were completed. The Green Sanctuary Committee copied and mailed them in bulk to the district office of the U.S. Representative pertaining to each constituent as well as to both of our U.S. Senators. Thanks to all who wrote a letter about this crucial issue!

After the success of this initial campaign, we will offer additional letter writing events periodically. Watch for announcements about the next *Opportunity for Activism!*

# Lifespan Religious Exploration and Education



As we enter the winter holiday season, we tend to let our to-do lists get longer and feel the pressure of trying to keep up with the expectations of others as well as our selves. How can we manage these stresses

better? There are as many answers to this as there are stresses! One tidbit I've passed on to parents and families over the years is to have a conversation over a shared meal to answer the question, "What is the one thing that makes the holiday special for you?" For young children, it will most likely be "opening presents." For us adults, it's usually "spending time with family."

Once everyone has given thought to their answer and shared it, then have the conversation of how the family can make each person's special thing happen. Note I said "family" —this isn't just for mom or dad to take on! For example, if holiday cookies are important to one person, then the whole family can help make them.

In our lifespan religious education program, we slow down a bit during the winter holidays knowing that time and energy are precious. Our Adult Spirituality programs, Mandalas and Improvisation for the Spirit will end on December 13. We will resume on January 10 with a popular program, Speaking Peace.

For the children and youth, we will be collecting men's warm clothing and travel-sized toiletries for Elgin's homeless. Since the shelter usually houses men, please donate clothing for men only. You can drop off warm coats, gloves, hats, boots, socks to Fellowship Hall in the marked box.

We will end the month with a Chalice Circle, where we will begin our next social action unit on hunger.

In Faith,  
—Kathy

Kathy Underwood  
Director of Religious  
Exploration and Education

	December 6	December 13	December 20	December 27
Preschool	How Many Days 'til Christmas?	How Many Days 'til Christmas?	Winter Multigenerational Service	Chalice Circle
K-2	About the Bible	About the Bible		
3-5	Books of the Bible	Books of the Bible		
6-8	Intro to the Bible	Intro to the Bible		
High School	Planning Session	Planning Session	No Classes	No Classes
Adults	Mandalas & Improvisation for the Spirit	Mandalas & Improvisation for the Spirit		

## Adult Spirituality Team Formed

I'm pleased to announce the formation of the Adult Spirituality Team, whose mission is to "provide vibrant programming for adults that stretches our minds and hearts, and nurtures our spirituality." If you have an idea for us

to consider, please share it with anyone on the team: Elizabeth Closson, Mitch Jacobs, Elizabeth Olson, Andrea Schmidlin, Leslie Yoshitani, and Kathy Underwood.

# President's Reflections



We are now halfway through the church fiscal year of 2015–2016. It has been a memorable time of celebration and introspection. Celebration, because our new settled minister, Leslie Mills, gave her first sermon on September 6, and thereby started a new spiritual era at UUCE. I dare say most congregants totally embrace and welcome the emphasis on spirituality that Leslie brings. But the first half of the year has also been a period of introspection. Introspection of how UUCE is organized and structured as a church. It isn't that UUCE is disorganized, but the years of transition and uncertainty it brought has affected the way the church functions as a

whole. This introspection will continue in the second half and expand into the congregation as we ask ourselves what kind of church community do we want to be and what must we do to become closer to that community.

This being the last Unichord, I want to extend a heartfelt gratitude to Donna Askins, Taylor Kremer, and all others who have tirelessly worked to put together this monthly publication.

In peace,

—Jun

Jun Yoshitani

President,

UUCE Board of Trustees

## Winter Solstice Ritual and Potluck

Join us on Sunday December 20 at 4:00 p.m. create indoor labyrinths on the floor of the Sanctuary when the weather doesn't allow us to start promptly at 5:00 p.m. We will welcome to be outside. Andrew and have donated four the rebirth of the Light on this the some dozen tea lights to begin filling the "Tea light night. We will bid adieu to the Holly King Tub," which we hope will eventually be filled and welcome the new born Dak Inng. We will with several hundred tea lights. For more celebrate the turning of the Wheel of the Year information and to RSVP: <http://www.meetup.com/Elgin-Earth-Worship/events/226753732/>. donations of LED flameless tea lights for future moonlight walks of the Earth Wisdom Labyrinth. Tea lights will also be handy to

Submitted by,  
—Sandy Russel

## Library Notes

Did you know that the UUCE library has over 60 books related to meditation and prayer? Our collection explores this spiritual practice from diverse traditions including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, and Paganism, as well as material from a secular perspective. Come explore, browse, and borrow at the UUCE library, located on the second floor next to the Sanctuary! Contact [library@uuce.org](mailto:library@uuce.org) for more information.

## Cardboard City a Huge Success!

Our children, youth, and families collected \$616 during the Cardboard City program on homelessness! Add that to the \$328 collected in our Share the Plate offering, which is a grand total of \$944! All of this will be sent to the Elgin Public Action to Deliver Shelter. Plans are underway to take a tour of their facility too, so look for more info soon.

# Communications Team Wants You To Know...

## **Staff Cell Phones Make It Easier To Stay In Touch**

If you would like to reach Leslie Mills our Minister you can call her directly on her church cell phone at 224-276-9755.

Need to be in touch with our DREE? Call Kathy Underwood at 224-276-9274.

Something to discuss with Sheena John for administration? Call 847-888-0668. This is the general contact number for the church.

There's a phone in the Volunteer Office if you need to make a call from the church.

## **Faster Internet For Church Computers:**

We now receive faster internet access. In the future we'll be upgrading some more of the

equipment and networking staff computers. All this will provide a more reliable system for staff use and those connecting with the church.

## **Reminder To Keep Interior Doors Closed In The Winter**

Most of the interior doors need to be kept closed during the winter months.

The Exceptions Are: The only door on the third floor between room 301 (couch room) and the hallway leading to room 302.

When temperatures dip below 0 degrees Fahrenheit we also need to prop the bathroom doors open when not in use so those rooms with running water and outside walls can be heated from the hallways.

## Calendar Highlights

### **Worship Services**

Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

### **Deck-the-Halls Holiday Potluck Party**

December 4, 2015 from 6:30 p.m.–9:00 p.m.

### **Beloved Community Conversation**

December 6 after the service

### **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

December 24, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

### **Afternoon Book Group**

December 28 at 12 p.m.

### **Reinventing Church Leadership Workshop**

January 30, 2016 from 9:00 a.m.–3:15 p.m.

## Paid Childcare Worker Needed



We're still looking for the right person to fill this important job! Please pass this on to others and post on your social media sites. Hours are Sunday mornings from 8:45–12:45. Pay is \$15/hour. Email resume to [dre@uuce.org](mailto:dre@uuce.org).

# Upcoming Events

## Deck-the-Halls Holiday Potluck Party

December 4, 2015 from 6:30 p.m.–9:00 p.m.

It's time to welcome the winter holiday season by decorating our beautiful church! Members and friends of all ages are invited to join us for an evening of friendship and laughter. We'll begin with a potluck dinner—bring your favorite dish to share, and we'll provide the festive atmosphere, holiday music, and good company. Punch and egg nog for everyone! Our very own Steve Askins will be providing music and good cheer to set the tone and get us into the holiday spirit. After dinner, we get to deck the halls! We'll get the building decked out in true evergreen style in no time at all. Plan to join the fun, because you wouldn't want to miss out on this great family event! (Ugly holiday sweaters optional.)

## Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

With Leslie Mills, Minister

December 24, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

All are welcome to attend this special evening service, where we will hear the Christmas stories and sing the songs and reflect on what this season brings. How can this Christian story speak to us as Unitarian Universalists today? This service concludes with singing

Silent Night by candlelight.

## Reinventing Church Leadership Workshop

(Sponsored by the Western Crescent of UU Congregations)

January 30, 2016 from 9:00 a.m.–3:15 p.m.

UUCE is the host site for this daylong workshop, organized by the Western Crescent cluster of UU congregations. Church leaders from all over the area will be attending—Board members, COM members, ministers, and other lay leaders. Get inspired by new ideas from our guest presenters, including keynote speaker Rev. Nancy Bowen and workshop presenters Rev. Sean Dennison, Rev. Dr. Lisa Presley, and Rev. Dr. Matthew Johnson. We will have the opportunity to explore questions around ministry transitions, multi-site congregations, developing lay leadership, and building a solid Committee on Ministry. Cost for participating is \$15/person, with lunch included (salad and vegetarian pizza from Nick's Pizza, with a gluten-free option). Please register by January 25 on the MidAmerica website. More information, including the schedule, can be found on the UUCE church calendar: <http://www.uuce.org/event/reinventing-church-leadership/>.

## Get Into the Spirit of Giving

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, December 6, but your contributions are welcome any time during the month.

## Caring for the Congregation



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.

# UUCE Board of Trustees' Minutes

October 21, 2015

Present: Stephen Day, DJ Jensen, Mary Knapp, Leslie Mills, Sandy James, Steve Stultz, Kevin Webster, and Jun Yoshitani

## I. Opening

- a. Check-in
- b. Discussion by Jun regarding an additional Board meeting in November, on 11/4, to conduct board business, with Lydia Larrabee in attendance to observe and offer feedback to facilitate implementation of the policy governance model.
  - i. A quorum agreed to attend.
- c. Discussion regarding collecting money from AT&T to offset cell tower property taxes.
  - i. Steve will talk with Sheena (as ET Team representative) to assist her with the communication to AT&T.

## II. Reports

- a. Discussion of consent items.
- b. Treasurers report moved to discussion agenda.
- c. No Executive Team Report.
- d. No DRE Report.
- e. No Monitoring Report.
- f. Motion by Jun to approve consent items (Minutes from Board meeting on 9/16/2015) passed.
- g. Discussion of Treasurers Report by Sandy.
  - i. Letter to bank is required, signed by Board President and Minister, to allow additional signers account access.
    - aa. Sandy to write letter for Jun and Leslie to sign.
    - bb. Discussion regarding responsibility to monitor budget variances.
    - cc. Finance Committee will assign someone to follow-up with committees or individuals who incur expenses in excess of their budget.
    - dd. Board will review policies regarding monitoring spending and recommend changes if needed.
      - i. Discussion regarding discrepancies

between numbers from Power Church software and Treasurer's Report.

- aa. Sue (bookkeeper) will assist with issues regarding unclear numbers.
- h. Discussion about timing and content of ET Reports.
  - b. Minutes of ET Meeting will serve as ET Report for future Board meetings.
    - i. Leslie to provide a separate Ministers Report to the Board.
    - ii. Leslie will send both ET minutes and Ministers Report to Board President by the End Of Day of the Friday before the next scheduled Board Meeting.
    - iii. Jun will send single email with all appropriate attachments to Board Members by End Of Day of the Sunday before the next scheduled Board Meeting.

## III. Reflection

- a. Discussion and feedback about recent Board retreat.
- b. Discussion about need for updating Church Mission and Vision statement.
  - i. Stephen to give overview of the needed process at the next Board Meeting.
  - c. Discussion about need for regular monitoring reports of the solar panels per recent SREC contract.
    - i. Executive Team to task to a responsible party. Tom Lesiewicz was suggested as a willing volunteer.
    - d. Discussion about need for more transparency regarding budget preparation.
      - i. Finance Committee to provide timeline of needed tasks.
      - ii. Board to review policies for Finance/Budgeting and suggest improvements if needed.
    - e. Discussion about need for an attendance record.
      - i. Executive Team to provide attendance numbers collected by Sound Person during Sunday Service.
      - f. Discussion about need for follow-up of new members.

i. Kathy Hislip and Lydia Larrabee will be doing this.

g. Discussion about need for joint meeting with Executive Team and Board of Trustees regarding policy governance.

i. Executive Team will meet separately with Lydia regarding policy governance.

ii. Executive Team and Board of Trustees will meet together with UUA Rep at Board Workshop.

h. Discussion about need to review Board member's code of conduct, Board calendar and Board succession.

i. Stephen to provide prioritized matrix of

Board calendar at next meeting.

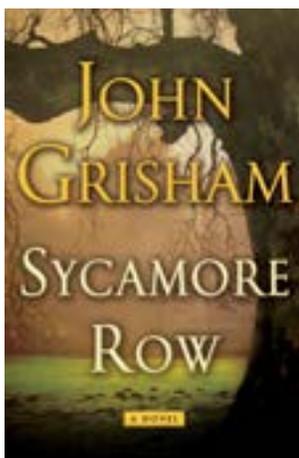
i. Discussion regarding Board Succession deferred to next Board meeting.

j. Discussion about need for improved communication and transparency to congregation regarding Board activities.

i. Kevin to send summarized Board meeting notes, more general than minutes, to the Board for review and approval with the intention to send to UUs email list within one week following monthly Board meetings.

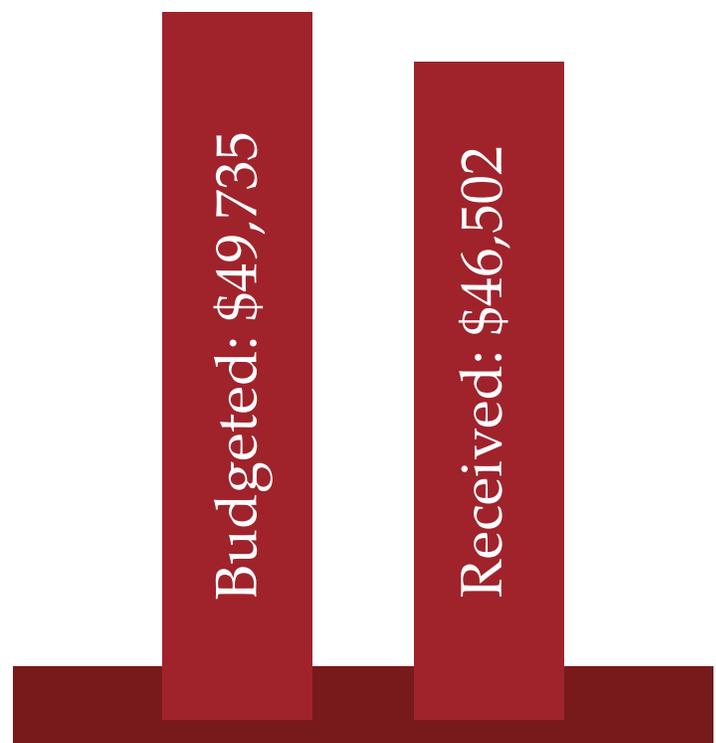
Submitted by,  
—Kevin Webster

## Afternoon Book Group



The Afternoon Book Group will meet at 12:00 p.m. on Monday, December 28, at the home of Jane Kimball to discuss "[Sycamore Row](#)" by John Grisham. For further information contact [Alice Macy](#).

## Pledge Incomes



## 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)

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

### PHONE

847-888-0668

### POSTAL MAIL

39W830 Highland Avenue  
Elgin, IL 60124

### PHYSICAL LOCATION

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

## Happy Birthday!

3	Bob Sandidge	14	Jennifer Day
4	Tim King	15	Kassia Lesiewicz
6	Rusty Winchel	19	Ethan Fincher
7	Linda Porter	20	Barbara Sugden
7	Mike Moutrie	23	Leslie Yoshitani
8	Ryan Flanagan	23	Hannah Day
8	Jun Yoshitani	24	Teresa Stultz
9	Barbara Iverson	24	David Nunes (Caruso)
10	Kole Talaga	27	Marilyn Hendry
11	Paul Hanifl	28	Benjamin Sharani
11	Jim Bottino	(Swain)	
12	Kurt Wachholder	30	Doug Pratt

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



The Unitarian Universalist

Church of Elgin

39W830 Highland Avenue • Elgin, IL 60121

