

UU Church of Midland

On the Journey with Jennifer

What a transformative summer! The church and playground have a whole new look thanks to the generous offerings of time, treasure, and talent of so many dedicated members and friends. I expect curious people stop by to see what kind of vibrant community can commit to such a significant external change and to discover if there is a place for them. Let us be good hosts to these guests and encourage that exploration with us.

The second great change started in May when the congregation approved the budget that included funds to search for a full-time minister. As of June, I finished my service as your called minister and started my time as your interim minister. Having a transition minister begin from within the congregation is unusual. Best practices show how much a church benefits from an outside perspec-



Reverend Jennifer Innis

tive. Given the current budget limits and trusting that my knowledge of the congregation is an asset, I offer my experience as an interim minister so you can begin with a new minister as soon as next year.

The developmental tasks of a congregation in search for a new minister remain the same no matter who is serving the congregation. The tasks begin with carrying out the normal duties of congregational ministry, including worship and pastoral care. The next five tasks of the congregation include 1. claiming and honoring its past, 2. recognizing its unique identity and its strengths, needs, and challenges,

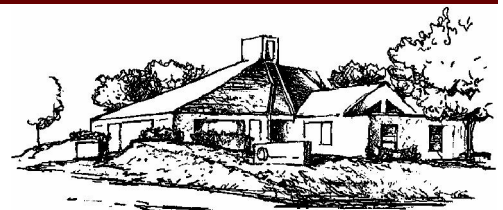
3. understanding the appropriate leadership roles of minister, church staff, and lay leaders and navigating the shifts in leadership that may accompany times of transition, 4. making use of Unitarian Universalist and other resources, 5. renewing its vision, strengthening its stewardship, preparing for new growth and new professional leadership, ready to embrace the future with anticipation and zest.

Over the course of the year, you and I will explore these areas, sometimes together and sometimes separately. The ultimate goal is to prepare the congregation to receive a minister as soon as next August and to begin a new chapter in the life of this beloved community. I look forward to an exciting and enriching year together.

Namaste,
Jennifer

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August 2010 At A Glance

August 15

9:30 a.m. Forum: *The News from Lake Woebegone, or A Report from the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly in Minneapolis* led by the Rev. Jennifer Innis

11 a.m. Worship: *United We Stand, Divided We Fall* led by the Rev. Jennifer Innis

August 22

9:30 a.m. "Homecoming Brunch" with good food brought and shared by all.

11 a.m. Worship: *Ingathering Water Communion* led by the Rev. Jennifer Innis

August 29

9:30 a.m. Forum: Presentation by Judy Craig of the National Alliance of Mental Illness

11 a.m. Worship: *Many Voices, Many Paths* led by the Program Committee

UU Children participate in religious education from 9:30 to 10:30 each Sunday morning.

At 11 a.m., children join the adults for the beginning of each service.

After a children's story, they engage in supervised projects or play through second hour.

Free childcare is available each Sunday.

August Calendar

August 13-22		Jennifer in Midland
August 14	11:30am	RE Meeting at Murray's
	2-4 pm	Quantum Dreamers
August 15		Children and Youth Registration Begins
	12:30pm	Program Committee
August 18	7:30 pm	BYOP/Building Your Own Philosophy
August 21	9am-1pm	Board Retreat
	1-3pm	Board Meeting
August 22	9:30am	Homecoming Brunch
August 28	2-4 pm	Quantum Dreamers

Featured Sunday

The new program year begins on August 22 with the sharing of what feeds us as a community. Bring your favorite foods to nourish both body and soul at the Homecoming Brunch at 9:30am. For worship at 11:00am, we honor our return from summer journeys near and far by bringing a bit of water to mingle with the waters offered by our neighbors and signal the refreshment of this liberal religious community. (Symbolic water will be available as needed. The best gift you can bring is yourself!)

August Mystery Member

A big believer in advocacy and social justice, the August Mystery Member belongs to P.E.O. (Philanthropic Educational Organization), one of the pioneer societies for women founded in 1869 by seven students at Iowa Wesleyan College in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. Today P.E.O. supports women in education through projects providing scholarships, grants, loans and fellowships. Originally a small campus friendship society, P.E.O. has grown to almost a quarter of a million members in chapters across North America.

This mystery member traveled a nine-county area with her own presentation recruiting respite care providers for families of developmentally disabled children. This was part of a federal grant program in Montana. Speaking of children, she considers her greatest achievement the successful raising of two beautiful ones who became loving, productive adults.

Her hobbies are reading, sewing and gardening. She sewed the majority of her school clothes in high school and college. In the past she even sewed suits, shirts, and slacks for her husband. As a Permian Basin Master Gardener, she says, "I am not paid financially for working in my flower gardens, but this time is truly enjoyable,

even spiritual for me." Her back yard garden is primarily flowers, blooming shrubs, and trees that are native or adapted. The plants she chooses are ones that attract hummingbirds and butterflies as well as provide nectar and host food.

Music is a significant part of this UU member's life and she's been involved in music since childhood. She took piano, organ, and flute lessons from grade school through college. She can totally lose herself in music whether singing it or playing it. Musical favorites include the song "If" by David Gates and musicians Yo-yo Ma and Joao Gilberto. Her favorite genres are classical, jazz, and Latin.

This next clue might reveal our Mystery Member. She is an original member of the UUCOM Quantum Dreamers Group, believing that the world beyond the five senses is just as real as that which is seen. She believes that developing an understanding of the intuitive and the spiritual enables wonderful growth. Her interest in dreams came from times when she sought answers to questions and posited them before she went to sleep. She would awaken knowing with great certainty the answer. Following her husband Warren's passing, she remembered many dreams, ones that were helping her work through her loss after his death.

UUCOM Board

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Harry Nutter, President Elect

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Linda McConathy, Membership

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Alice White, Treasurer

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David White, Building & Grounds

Barbara Handley, Religious Ed Rep.

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Scroll (or turn) to the newsletter back page to name our Mystery Member.

The Search Committee Update

The Search Committee continues its efforts to find an outstanding candidate to serve as the next full-time minister of our church. Recently, the search committee met with Dr. Walter Pearson from Austin, UU District Compensation Consultant, who flew in to review and advise the most appropriate financial package that the church might offer to a prospective candidate for the position.

The July 10 session with Dr. Pearson was a lengthy one and covered all aspects of finances related to what the church could reasonably afford while remaining financially healthy and competitive with other churches in the process. The consultant pointed out that many other UU churches nationwide would also be looking for a minister at the same time that we are.

One concern that emerged from committee members was the recent categorizing of our church as a GEO INDEX 2, which places it alongside those in San Antonio, Austin, El Paso and other large cities around the country with considerably higher population centers – most in the millions while Midland numbers around 120,000. Dr. Pearson explained that the listing was not based on the size of the church or city but rather on such aspects as the degree of support from

members, the sustainability of the church over time, and the socioeconomic status of the community. He provided ample spreadsheets and related data to illustrate the process used to establish the listing.

Alice White, a member of the Search Committee and the Church Treasurer, will take the recommendations to the congregation at a special session later this fall so that all members of the church will have the opportunity to hear and discuss recommendations regarding a possible financial package for the future minister.

Our search for a full-time minister is posted on the national UUA list of Opportunities for Ministry, however, formal submissions or applications cannot be received until clearance from our church and a formal announcement with an application packet is available for interested ministers.

Development of that formal vacancy announcement and application packet comprises the next major step for the Search Committee. Plans are currently underway to produce the entire packet in an electronic format, including a downlink from our current home page here in Midland.

Particular components of the packet, designed to attract the

best candidates, include salary package and benefits, and information about the church and details about the quality of life in Midland.

Based on established protocol, the members of the Search Committee will consider all applications, select three finalists, travel to hear each one in a pulpit setting, and recommend one candidate for the entire congregation to hear and make final determination. The congregational vote is expected to be in the late spring of 2011, based on a calendar of recommended procedures from UUA Transitions office.

In the meantime, our current part-time minister, Rev. Jennifer Innis, has agreed to continue serving over the coming year until the new minister is Appointed. Her insight and support will be helpful to the committee as the process continues.

Members of the Search Committee are Barbara Handley, Jane Hellinghausen, Alice White, John Kullman, Cristi Branum, and Tom Parks.

Quantum Dreamers

Quantum Dreamers examines the many levels and possibilities of existence, including understanding our dreams, using our dreams to live a full life, and examining the quantum influences that affect us. Our new book is *Lucid Dreaming: Gateway to the Inner Self* by Robert Waggoner. " Lucid dreaming provides a path to greater creativity, self understanding, and exploration.--- It is a unique psychological tool with which to consciously investigate dreaming and the subconscious." ---From the Acknowledgments and Preface of *Lucid Dream-*

ing: Gateway to the Inner Self by Robert Waggoner.

We will be meeting on our regular schedule in August and September, the 2nd and 4th Saturday from 2-4 p.m. Contact Alicia Gardner if you have any questions at 570-0703.

Come to Choir

The choir is up and singing. If you would like participate, contact Beverly Wise at 686-2791 for more information.

Program Committee

Ever wonder how all those great services and forums mysteriously appear every Sunday? Find out more on August 15 at 12:30 am.

Building Your Own Philosophy

The Building Your Own Philosophy book group (BYOP) is reading *Great Conversations 1*, an anthology from the Great Books Foundation. Through discussions, participants examine beliefs in the light of a rich, thought-provoking text.

BYOP meets 7:30 - 9:00 pm on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays. Currently the group is meeting in the McConathy's home.

In August, the group will discuss:

- *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death* by Sigmund Freud

- *The Secret Sharer* by Joseph Conrad

The group is open to all. Contact Linda McConathy at 687-5221 for information and directions.

Revival 2010

Rediscovering Jesus and Communities of Hope is the theme of the annual revival retreat hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship (UUCF). This retreat will run Thursday, October 14 - Sunday, October 17, 2010 at Horizon Unitarian Universalist Church Carrollton, TX in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metropolitan Area.

Come be a part of our spiritually uplifting, community forming, personally deepening, Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship Revival Retreat. Revival transforms our lives and our movement. This will be our ninth such gathering since the first in New Orleans in 1999. Keynote lectures will be presented by Dr. Bernard Brandon Scott of the Jesus Seminar and the Rev. John Buehrens, former president of the Unitarian Universalist Association. All are welcome. For more information, see www.uuchristian.org/revival.

Kudos and Thanks

To Harry Nutter and Michael Wright for leading another great year of the Arts and Film Festival, especially during the construction.

Joys & Sorrows

If you or someone you know in the church could use a friendly call or a visit, please contact Rev. Jennifer.

Summer “Read to Feed” Underway

HELLO to all the girls and boys in the church who are enjoying their summer and participating in a social outreach project at the same time! Thanks go to all the sponsors who have made pledges based on the number of books read by the child or a set amount. All monies raised will go to Heifer International www.heifer.org It's not too late to become a sponsor – if you have not been approached, you can always offer! When regular services resume, you will have August 15th and 22nd to visit with the children and sign up.

The Read To Feed project ends on August 22nd as the school year begins on Monday the 23rd.

Sponsors will receive a list of the books read by each child they made a pledge to, and the child will notify you of the total amount due.

All checks are to be made out to Heifer International and turned in with the church offering, mailed to the church, or given to Linda McConathy or Lisa Jebson, the DRE. The deadline for checks to be received is Sunday, September 12, and they will be mailed together directly to Heifer International.

September 19th, after the monies are totaled, the children will decide how they wish it to be used by Heifer International. Perhaps there will be money for a heifer or goat for

milk or a sheep for wool, bees for honey, chickens for eggs and manure for vegetable gardens or trees to protect the soil. It will be an exciting choice to make. As said previously, not only will a family's life be lifted by the gift they receive, our children will have experienced being an agent for change while enriching their own lives through reading. In late September or early October, the boys and girls will present their choice to the congregation during a service.

In the meantime, we wish the kids “happy reading” as they enter the homestretch of this summer project!

Greetings from the New Director of Religious Education

In 2009, I made a list of goals to achieve for the year and at the very top of the list was to visit the UUCOM to see if it would be a good fit for our family. We had visited a few summers before to do a presentation as part of the Summer Arts and Film Festival and although it took entirely too long, I was very glad that we made the move in 2009 to get involved with this community. One of the primary reasons we came here was our son, Zach. We wanted a place for him to explore world religions in an environment that would set the

stage for him to decide what he believes. Needless to say, the UU is the perfect place for that.

As the new Director of Religious Education, I look forward to working with the committee and other volunteers to continue to make that exploration possible. I would like to thank the church for giving me the chance to be a part of this important part of the UUCOM. This is a big responsibility and one that I take very seriously. Thank you for the

opportunity to work with the youth of this church!

One final thank you to the RE Committee: long before I applied for the DRE position, they put together a great curriculum for the 2010 school year. We're excited to get started! See you at registration on August 15!

-Lisa Jebson
Director of Religious Education
UUCOM

Standing on the Side of Love campaign celebrates first year

The Unitarian Universalist Association's Standing on the Side of Love campaign (SSL) is celebrating its first anniversary. Launched in June 2009 at General Assembly in Salt Lake City, the campaign's mission is to harness the power of love to stop oppression, exclusion, and violence based on people's identity. Organizers have created banners, signs, and other resources that allow congregations to use the SSL message to address issues in their own communities.

"It's been a huge success," said Adam Gerhardstein, SSL campaign manager until this past June when Dan Furmansky, the former director of Equality Maryland, became manager. Gerhardstein noted that SSL has been part of more than 200 events across the country organized on behalf of marriage equality, GLBT rights, and immigrant justice. The campaign has generated more than 130 news

stories, has 26,000 people on its email list, and 17,000 followers on Facebook.

When hundreds of UUs went to Arizona at the end of May to stand against anti-immigrant measure SB 1070, they became known as "the love people," he said, because they could be easily seen in their bright yellow Standing on the Side of Love T-shirts.

The campaign also provides multiple ways for congregations to engage with it, Gerhardstein said. "Whether they want to sign petitions, invite the city council to a forum, or just hold a committee meeting, we have the resources to make each of those things happen.

"The message "Standing on the Side of Love" first emerged as a rallying point for people of faith in Massachusetts during their efforts to promote marriage equality

around 2004. It was used again in 2008 during the fight against California's Proposition 8, a law revoking marriage equality in California.

After the deadly shootings at the Unitarian Universalist church in Knoxville, media consultant Helio Fred Garcia was commissioned to write a concept paper for the campaign. The movement already had an anthem. The Rev. Jason Shelton, minister of music at the First Unitarian Universalist Church in Nashville, had written "Standing on the Side of Love" in 2004 for the successful marriage campaign in Massachusetts.

For the full article, see www.uuworld.org. For more on the Standing on the Side of Love campaign, see www.standingonthesideoflove.org.

Wanted: Second Hour Volunteers!

Second Hour is what we call the time of activities for the children after they leave worship and return to the religious education rooms until the end of service. Second hour volunteers do **not** have to be parents of the children in our religious education program. Second hour provides an

opportunity for members of our congregation to get to know our children. This can be done supervising them at play or sharing a planned activity. If you have a hobby or interest that you would like to share with our youth, second hour is the perfect time! Holidays

make great opportunities to organize a craft, i.e., pumpkin decorating, gift making, etc. Please sign up often! For more information, please contact our DRE, Lisa Jebesen, or Barbara Handley.

Mystery Member Revealed

Alicia Gardner, just one of the fascinating people you'll find at the UU Church of Midland. As a Unitarian for seven years, it is these particular UU principles that keep her coming back: affirming the worth and dignity of every



person, the search for truth and meaning available to everyone, and the interconnected web of which we all are a part. She states, ***"I believe that a positive, loving attitude affects me as well as those I encounter each day. Our emotional, mental, and spiritual energy impacts our lives more than most of us realize."***

Our Mission and Covenant

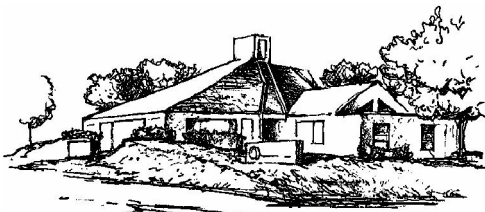
The Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland is an oasis of liberal religion empowering people to pursue spiritual growth and work toward a just, equitable, sustainable society. As a congregation, we covenant together before the wonder and mystery of life to provide a welcoming, safe, and tolerant religious community that both nurtures and challenges us in our diverse and yet shared journeys. Striving together in the spirit of love, we will listen and respond to the ethical and spiritual concerns of one another, seeking to foster a deeper sense of fellowship that strengthens us each in service to life.

- adopted 2003

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- o the inherent worth and dignity of every person
- o justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
- o acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
- o a free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- o the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
- o the goal of world community with peace liberty, justice for all
- o respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Membership in our church is open to all who wish to covenant in the free, responsible search for truth and meaning. Contact the church office for more information.



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