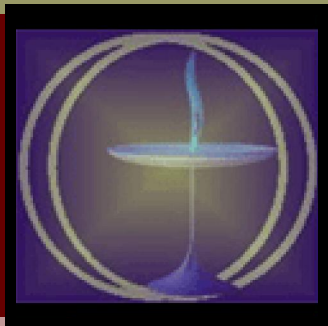


December 2010

www.uumidland.org



AN OASIS OF SPIRITUAL SEEKERS NURTURING OUR PLANET & COMMUNITY

# UU Church of Midland

## On the Journey with Jennifer

The Spirit of the Season inspires me to share one of the best parts of my service with you. You may not know that after most special collections taken at this congregation, I include a note from the church along with the check. I have the wonderful privilege of telling the group that is to receive the donation of when and how the congregation made the collection and the spirit of hope in which it offered. Since January, the list of groups receiving these funds includes Guest at Your Table for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, Keep Midland Beautiful, Sibley Nature Center, Permian Basin Food Bank, Safe Place of the Permian Basin, the Association Sunday collection for the Unitarian Universalist Association, and most recently, a contribution to the capital



*Reverend Jennifer Innis*

campaign of our sister congregations of the Greater New Orleans Unitarian Universalists as they continue to recover from Hurricane Katrina. I am happy to report that this church is sending a total of \$420 for the GNOUU campaign.

As Mark Morrison-Reed reminds us, the central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is a connectedness, a relationship discovered amid the particulars of our own lives and the lives of others. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice...Together, our vision widens and our

strength is renewed.

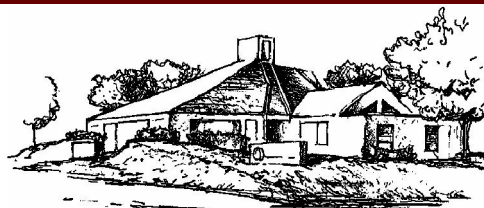
The Board and I determine the need for special collections and then share these opportunities with the rest of the congregation. (If you have ideas for future donations, please let us know.) Our hope is not only to become better known in Midland and in the Unitarian Universalist Association. The larger hope is that we find that connection, feel that inspiration, and discover the strength that comes when we work together for a cause that is larger than any one of us can see alone. Thank you for your generous gifts of money and vision. May we continue such a good spirit as we enter 2011.

Lastly, the staff and I wish you a happy and safe holiday season.

Namaste,  
Jennifer

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# December 2010 At A Glance

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## December 5

9:30 a.m. Forum: *Hanging of the Greens* led by Children and Youth Religious Education  
11 a.m. Worship: *Civility* led by the Rev. Jennifer Innis

## December 12

9:30 a.m. Forum: *Sustainable Farming and Community Supported Agriculture* with Stephen Porter  
11 a.m. Worship: *The Instant Christmas Pageant* led by Lisa Jebesen and Friends

## December 19

9:30 a.m. Forum: *Ministry in the Borderlands* led by the Rev. Jennifer Innis  
11 a.m. Worship: *If There Is To Be Peace* led by the Rev. Jennifer Innis

## December 24

5:30 pm *Lessons and Carols for Christmas Eve* led by the Program Committee and Friends

## December 26

9:30 a.m. Forum: *Boxing Day: The Ministry of De-Hanging the Greens* led by the Program Committee  
11 a.m. Worship: Quaker-Style Worship led by the Program Committee

Please help us keep our new carpet looking great by enjoying food and drinks outside the sanctuary.

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 the children leave the service, they engage in supervised projects or play through second hour.

Free childcare is available each Sunday.

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## December Calendar

Dec	1	7:30 pm	BYOP/Building Your Own Philosophy
Dec	3-7		Jennifer in Midland
Dec	4	10 am	Program Committee
Dec	6	7 pm	Board Meeting
Dec	11	11:30 am	Religious Education Com. at Murray's
		2-4 pm	Quantum Dreamers
Dec	12		Deadline for January 2011 Newsletter
Dec	15	7:30 pm	BYOP/Building Your Own Philosophy
Dec	17-21		Jennifer in Midland
Dec	18	6:30 pm	Christmas Party at the Kimberly's
Dec	24	5:30 pm	Christmas Eve Service
Dec	25		Christmas Day
Dec	23 - Jan 3		Office Closed for Winter Holidays

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## December Highlights

There is something for everyone this month. Enjoy holiday crafts for all ages at the Hanging of the Greens forum on December 5. Special guest Stephen Porter talks about sustainable farming in the forum on December 12. Explore the places where two identities meet with the forum on Ministry in the Borderlands with Rev. Jennifer. Share carols and candles on Christmas eve. Or for a post-Christmas change of pace, spend quiet time together during the Quaker-style service on December 26.

## Children and Youth Religious Education

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Now that the holiday season is upon us (which is pretty hard to believe!) the RE Committee has some fun events planned.

The first is our annual "Hanging of the Greens" party on December 5 at 9:30 am during Forum. Please join us for this multigenerational time of fellowship where we will have crafts for all ages as well as the official launch of another UUCOM holiday tradition: the mitten tree. If you would like to bring a snack to share, feel free!

Our second special event will be during worship at 11 am on

December 12. We have all seen Christmas pageants (many of us have even been in one) but we bet you haven't seen one like this! We hope to see everyone there - it promises to be a lot of fun!

I'd like to close this RE update with a special thanks to my husband, Tim who spent a few hours this month working on a "honey-do list" around UUCOM, helping to put the some final post-renovation touches on the RE wing. Thanks again, honey!

Lisa Jebson  
Religious Education Director

## UUCOM Board

Carol Kullman, President  
Harry Nutter, President Elect  
Emmy Ulmschneider, Programs  
Linda McConathy, Membership  
Kathryn Shelley, Secretary  
Alice White, Treasurer  
Open, Social Outreach  
David White, Building & Grounds  
Barbara Handley, Religious Ed Rep.  
Lisa Jebson, Religious Ed Dir.

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Email: office@uumidland.org

## Theme-Based Ministry

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For the past few years, Rev. Jennifer has used a schedule of theological themes as a way to cover a wide range of spiritual and moral topics. For December, the theological theme of vocation will be covered on December 19. The schedule of themes is adapted from those used by All Souls' Unitarian Church in Tulsa, OK and from Westshore Unitarian Universalist Church in Cleveland, OH. For more information on the theological themes, go to [www.themebasedministry.org](http://www.themebasedministry.org) or ask Rev. Jennifer.

Worship Themes for 2010-2011:

August - Unity  
September - Vocation and Calling  
October - Reason  
November - Gratitude  
December - Peace  
January - Grace  
Feb. - Prayer & Spiritual Practice  
March - Letting Go  
April - Salvation  
May - Truth

## Exploring Diversity

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Join Rev. Jennifer for a video and discussion on how we address bias, persecution, and finding a shared future across vast differences using the program, *Ministry in the Borderlands*. This forum is the first of an occasional series offered over the course of the winter and spring.

# December Mystery Member

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## **Are YOU the Mystery Member?**

Each month, a Mystery Member is featured in this section of our newsletter. The UUCOM is full of people with immensely varied backgrounds and talent. One such person is long-time Program Committee chair, Jane Hellinghausen. Jane will be stepping down this month. Who is the Mystery Member that will facilitate this dynamic and crucial volunteer position next? Read a recent exchange with Jane and consider if that Mystery Member might be you.

## ***Tell us why you first became involved in the Program Committee?***

The program committee fit my skills and interests. I am organized and enjoy bringing diverse topics to our church. The program committee is a specific volunteer role in which one sees tangible results.

## ***How long have you served as chair or co-chair? What have you gained from serving in this role?***

I've served since 1991 - off and on (don't worry, the next person doesn't have to sign up for years!). I've gained the pleasure of getting to know

committee members well; becoming more familiar with UU issues, topics, positions on issues; getting to know community resources; and working directly with our various ministers.

## ***What are the responsibilities of the committee?***

Currently, the committee plans four Sunday forums and two lay led services per month, with a three-month break during the Summer Film Series. Reverend Jennifer has been a terrific support for us leading both forum and service on her Sundays in town. When a full-time minister is called, most likely the Program Committee will plan nine months of one lay-led service and typically four forums per month. There are a few forums/services like Thanksgiving, presentation of the yearly budget, etc. that are predetermined for the year.

## ***Where does the content come from?***

We value the UU tradition of being an open pulpit. However, committee members do not have to conduct services or forums (unless they choose to occasionally). Instead, the committee draws from our very own UUCOM talent, community speakers, service materials found on the Internet and elsewhere, traveling ministers, plus available UU video programs from other congregations. Again, our own members possess a wealth of resources.

## ***What are the responsibilities of the program chair?***

The committee meets monthly to plan,

organize, and coordinate lay-led services and forums. The chairperson must commit to **(or delegate)** responsibilities for Sunday mornings. It is the chairperson's responsibility to ensure that speakers are confirmed and the Order of Service is given to our church administrator so she can duplicate and have it out for Sunday morning.

Duties include:

- Coordinate all aspects of bringing an outside speaker to fill the pulpit.
- Prepare the Social Hall for the Forum every Sunday morning, including equipment, hosting, and coffee.
- Regularly evaluate quality of programs.
- Coordinate publicizing programs.

Emmy Ulmschneider is the program board representative attending the board meetings. Her job is to report and convey any program needs. The new chair can continue in the tradition of the current and past committees or bring ideas for "structural" change.

## ***Who will continue on the committee?***

Reverend Jennifer, Emmy Ulmschneider and Niki Widmayer currently provide much support. Each has agreed to continue on this committee. Forums and services are already planned through March by this great group.

(Continued next page)

# Workshop for Congregation on “Beyond Categorical Thinking”

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What does your ideal candidate for our new full-time church minister look like? Now consider that question in terms of age, gender, race, nationality, physical ability, marital status, and sexual orientation. Does the picture change for you? The answer may give you an idea of how different our various images of “the ideal minister” can be as we continue in the search process for our new minister.

And that situation is addressed specifically in a special workshop for the congregation entitled “Beyond Categorical Thinking”

scheduled at the church from **9:00 am -12:00 pm** by Keith Kron of the Unitarian Universalist Association on Saturday morning, **January 22**. It will be an important session for everyone in the church, and you are urged to mark your calendar and plan to attend.

The workshop is designed to promote inclusive thinking and help prevent unfair discrimination in the search process for a new minister. Those attending will:

- consider the hopes, expectations and concerns they have for a new minister
- learn more about the ministerial search process

- explore how thinking categorically about people sometimes interferes with choosing the best candidate

Members of the Search Committee feel that this workshop is another opportunity for everyone in the congregation to be a part of the search process for a new minister. All are encouraged to attend. Committee members include Jane Hellinghausen, John Kullman, Cristi Branum, Barbara Handley, Alice White, and Tom Parks, who will be happy to answer any questions about the workshop.

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## Mystery Member (cont.)

### ***I might be that Mystery Member, what should I do?***

If you'd like to explore more, come to the next program committee meeting on Saturday, December 4 at 10 a.m. or contact Jane at JHellinghausen@odessa.edu; or 689-4471 evening; 335-6555 day.

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## Bring a Friend to Program Committee

Come have coffee at 10 am on December 4 and find out more about the many people who put together the great worship and forums we share on Sunday mornings. The committee meets each month. Our forums and lay led worship services make UUCOM the UUnique place it is. See Jane Hellinghausen, Emmy Ulmschneider or Rev. Jennifer Innis for information.

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## Setting Our Name in Stone!

Help us be a permanent presence at the new Wagner-Noel Performing Arts Center. The Wagner-Noel Center will be a landmark for the arts and culture in the Permian Basin. This church can show our ongoing support of the arts by adding our name to this new venue. We already have \$1,125 in contributions for the pavers campaign. We could reach \$2500! The church name will be larger on the paver with this level of giving. For more information, see the campaign site: <http://www.wagnernoel.com/pavers.php>. Give your checks to Alice White by December 12.

*We look forward to the time when the power to love will replace the love of power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace.*

*- William Ellery Channing*

## BYOP

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The Building Your Own Philosophy (BYOP) book discussion group meets at the church on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays each month from 7:30 – 9:00 pm. All are invited to participate.

Upcoming readings are listed below. On November 17, the group began discussion of selections in the next book titled Great Conversations 2 which can be ordered from The Great Books Foundation. <http://store.greatbooks.org/> The complete table of contents for this book is listed in the October newsletter on the church website [www.uumidland.org](http://www.uumidland.org).

Upcoming schedule:

December 1 Selected Poems by John Donne

December 15 Meditations 1 and 2 by Rene Descartes

January 5 The Nose by Nikolai Gogol

January 19 The Grand Inquisitor by

## Christmas Party

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Mark your calendar for Dec. 18, 6:30pm for the Annual All Church Christmas Party at home of Marion and John Kimberly. See your directory or contact the office for their address. The food theme is Italian. Sign up sheets available on the table in the foyer.

## Quantum Dreamers

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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 current 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 Dreaming: Gateway to the Inner Self by Robert Waggoner.

We will be meeting only on the 2nd Saturday from 2-4 p.m. in December because of the holiday. Contact Alicia Gardner if you have any questions at 570-0703.

*To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children...to leave the world a better place...to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded.*

*- Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## Sustainable Forum

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Mark your calendars for an exciting forum. Our December 12 forum will feature Stephen Porter. Stephen has been sustainably farming in Midland County since 2006. Many of you know him through Porter's Family Farm Market and the Porter Family Farm CSA. Bring your questions and comments, as he talks about his farming experience.

## Come to Choir

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The choir is up and singing. Most rehearsals are right after Sunday worship. If you would like to participate, contact Beverly Wise at 686-2791 for more information.

## Joys & Sorrows

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

## Circle Supper

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A Circle Supper is a gathering of about 8-10 people at someone's home or for a Dutch treat at a restaurant. These dinners are a great way to meet people at the church for conversation and to enjoy good cooking. If you would like to be a host or be added to the list future events, see Carol Kullman.

## Creating a Cozy Mitten Tree

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Need a new pair of gloves, a scarf, or mittens? So do women and children who are facing the holidays with the added stress of domestic or family violence. A new warm hat can help a child or woman served by Safe Place have one less thing to worry about. The Mitten Tree goes up during the Hanging of the Greens. Consider adding a little color and warmth to the tree this month. Mittens, hats, gloves, and earmuffs for children, teens, and women are all welcome. Donations will go to Safe Place after the service on December 26.

## Auction Ahead! Auction Ahead!

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Tis the season...to be planning your donations for UUCOM's annual auction! Perhaps you might receive a gift that is just not "you". No problem! Re-gift it at the auction. Traveling this holiday season? Be on the look out for that little something that will make a great donation to the auction. The auction will be held on Saturday, March 5 so mark your calendars and invite some friends to join in the fun!

## Membership Matters to All of Us

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Have you been getting to know the church and Unitarian Universalism? Do you feel that this congregation might be a spiritual home? Are you considering a deeper commitment to the church? Membership comes with great gifts and opportunities, as well as responsibilities to the community, such as voting in the upcoming congregational meeting. If you are considering membership, see Linda McConathy, Membership Chair, a Board member, or the Rev. Jennifer Innis.

## UU Service Committee Announces New President: Rev. Bill Schulz

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The board of trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee announced on October 29 that internationally recognized human-rights activist and leader Rev. Dr. William F. Schulz has been named the new UUSC president and chief executive officer.

UUSC Board Chair Rev. John Gibbons said the board voted unanimously to appoint Schulz as the next president, following a lengthy and exhaustive search that considered many highly qualified candidates from across the country.

"Bill's record of accomplishment in human rights is extraordinary," said Gibbons. "He is a scholar of

human rights and a passionate advocate. He is also a human being willing to jeopardize his own safety. Bill is the epitome of a Unitarian Universalist who knows that faith commitments are demonstrated foremost by actions and not merely by intentions. He is a spiritual leader who leads by example."

An ordained Unitarian Universalist minister, Schulz served as president of the Unitarian Universalist Association from 1985 to 1993. He also served for six years as a member of the UUSC Board of Trustees, including three years as board chair, and for 12 years as executive director of Amnesty International USA, until the spring of 2006. He is a widely

sought public speaker and has appeared frequently on radio and television news and analysis shows. He is the author of several books, including *In Our Own Best Interest: How Defending Human Rights Benefits Us All* and *Tainted Legacy: 9/11 and the Ruin of Human Rights*.

The *New York Review of Books* said in June 2002, "William Schulz has done more than anyone in the American human rights movement to make human rights issues known in the United States."

For more about the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, go to: [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org).

## Books! Books! Books!

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One of our new traditions at UUCOM is to collect donations for books for children. We are collecting contributions on Sunday, November 21 through Sunday, December 12. If you make out a check, please write BOOKS in the memo line. Last year was our best year ever! Let's see if we can top it! See Barbara Handley for more information.



## Our Mission and Covenant

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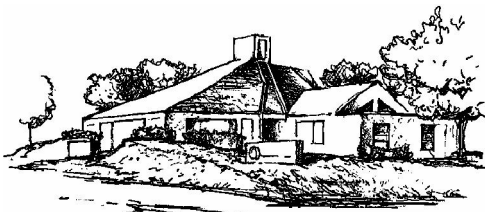
The Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland is an oasis of liberal religion empowering people to pursue spiritual growth and work toward a just, equitable, sustainable society. As a congregation, we covenant together before the wonder and mystery of life to provide a welcoming, safe, and tolerant religious 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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