

UU Church of Midland

From Our Fearless Leaders

Did you know that August is one of the most popular times for "church shopping"? People are catching up on summer lists of "I meant to do x,y,z." For some, they try a new church. A visitor's first impression happens within seconds of entering the building. How we greet those who come in the door is one of the most important expressions of our values and beliefs. The Rev. Peter Morales, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, writes about hospitality in his pamphlet, *Religious Hospitality: A Spiritual Practice for Congregations*. He notes:

Hospitality, true hospitality, is emotionally powerful. It touches something very deep in us—our profound human longing to feel accepted, to belong, to be loved, to

feel safe, to be valued and respected.

Hospitality is not something to be proclaimed; it must be lived. Hospitality is both a spiritual discipline and an expression of spiritual health. If I feel angry, hurt, unloved, or alienated I cannot offer a warm welcome. Conversely, if I am at peace, filled with joy at being alive, aware of those around me with compassion in my heart, then hospitality flows naturally and inevitably from the depths of my being.

What is true of an individual is also true of a community. A congregation in which people do not genuinely love each other is not likely to exude warmth. A congregation that is self-absorbed and

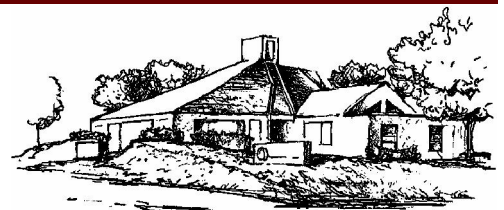
disconnected from its community cannot offer religious hospitality. Hospitality is love in action.

Rev. Morales goes on to point out that there are a thousand ways to practice hospitality, beginning with those we already know. Homecoming Sunday and the first service by the Rev. Thomas Schmidt is on August 21. What if in addition to the food we will share, we take a fresh look to old friends as well as a warm welcome to new guests? The practice of a fresh look could assist all of us in the search for a new minister and in being a place where people feel connected.

Sincerely,
The Board

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**3301 Neely at Midkiff
Midland, Texas 79707-5808
Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 9-1
Phone: (432) 694-4308
Web: www.uumidland.org
E-mail: office@uumidland.org**

August 2011 At A Glance

August 7

9:30 a.m. Arts & Film Festival: *Billy Elliott* This gritty and inspirational film is a coming of age tale about the young son of a poor English coal miner who dreams of being a ballet dancer.

August 14

9:30 a.m. Arts & Film Festival: *Writing for You and Me* led by the Tom Parks. Tom will publish the 4th annual anthology of creative writings from UUCOM members and friends.

August 21

9:30 a.m. "Homecoming Brunch" with good food brought and shared by all.
11 a.m. Worship: *Home Again for the First Time* led by the Rev. Thomas Schmidt

August 28

9:30 a.m. Forum: *Why I Live in Midland* led by Emmy Ulmschneider
11 a.m. Worship: *Unitarian Universalism in a Nutshell* led by the Rev. Thomas Schmidt

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 the second hour.
Free childcare is available each Sunday.

August Calendar

August 3	7:30 pm	BYOP/Building Your Own Philosophy
August 6	8 am	Work Party
August 13	11:30 am	Religious Education Com. at Murray's
August 15	7 pm	Board Meeting
August 17	7:30pm	BYOP/Building Your Own Philosophy
August 20	10 am	Program Committee
August 21		First Sermon from the Rev. Schmidt
August 21		Deadline for September Newsletter
August 28		Second Sermon from the Rev. Schmidt
August 28	12:30 pm	Congregational Lunch and Vote on New Minister

August Highlights

Mark your calendar for the three very important events. The annual anthology presentation is on August 14. Be part of worship led by the new candidate minister, the Rev. Thomas Schmidt on August 21 and August 28. Stay after the worship on the 28th for the congregational meeting to vote on the new minister.

In case you are wondering, water communion is rescheduled for September 4. Be sure to bring the water that represents your travels, however far from or close to home. Look for details in September.

Candidating Week August 21-28

Members of the Search Committee are happy to share the exciting news that the church's homecoming on August 21 will feature a sermon by a candidate for our full-time minister, the Rev. Thomas Schmidt. The event is the culmination of a continuing schedule of hard work by the committee during the summer. Members of the Ministerial Search Committee are pleased to offer such a special opportunity just in time for homecoming.

Reverend Schmidt has been full-time minister at the UU Church of the Lowcountry in South Carolina for the past five years, where he lives with his wife and eleven-year old son. He holds a master's degree from Claremont School of Theology in California. He visited Midland and our church as a pre-candidate during the weekend of July 15-17 and accompanied the Search Committee to Lubbock, where he delivered a sermon at the Unitarian Universalist Church there. Members then returned to Midland, where they discussed the candidacy of Reverend Schmidt, resulting in an invitation to return and deliver the first two sermons of

the coming year, including a focus on the topic of "Homecoming" for the August 21 session.

Members were impressed with the candidate's depth and breadth of UU theology and history and his dedication to its abiding principles. In his message to the congregation in Lubbock, he centered on the topic of evolution and both its understandings and misunderstandings by the general public, then brought that new perspective to a renewed look at Unitarian Universalist theology on a universal scale along with its status now and in the future.

All members of our church are urged to attend both sessions to hear Reverend Schmidt's sermons and to participate in a vote shortly following the session on August 28 to decide whether to call him as our new full-time settled minister.

Members of the committee are available to answer questions about the new candidate and welcome your inquiries. They include Alice White, Cristi Branum, John Kullman, Jane Hellinghausen, Barbara Handley, and Tom Parks, chairman.

New Hymnal Fundraiser—Singing the Journey

After hearing about Jane Hellinghausen and Barbara Handley's great time singing at the UUA General Assembly in June, the Board decided that to have a dedicated fundraiser to purchase at least 30 of the new hymnal supplement, *Singing the Journey*.

The total amount that we need to raise is \$500. We already have pledges of close to \$150!! If you would like to make a contribution, please contact David White (our new treasurer) or Barbara Handley. Maybe we will have the new books by August 21!

UUCOM Board

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UUCOM Staff

Lisa Jebesen, Religious Ed. Director

ljebesen@aol.com

Ginny Lang, Office Assistant
(432) 694-4308

Office hours: Tues and Thurs
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Email: office@uumidland.org

Work Day, August 20

Come clean up the church and show a great pride of place to our candidate minister! John Kullman invites one and all to give the church a spray and a polish and get us off to a great start for the year. The work day begins at 8 am on Saturday, August 6.

Special Annual Anthology Presentation on August 14

With 23 local and regional authors featured in this summer's annual anthology published on behalf of the UU Church of Midland, plans are well underway for the August 14 session when writers read from their works and respond to questions from the audience. Now in its fourth year, the public readings by authors has become one of the most widely-attended events in the annual Summer Arts and Film Festival sponsored by the church.

Entitled *Legacy: An Anthology of Timeless West Texas Writings*, the paperback book features over 40 entries submitted by authors, including poetry, short stories, essays, excerpts from novels, investigative articles, personal commentary, and memory pieces. In his prefatory introduction, editor Tom Parks centers on the meaning of legacy and how it affects the flow of humankind and its meaning from one generation to another.

"The best legacy that one generation can leave to another is an open door," he writes, and refers the

reader to the photo on the front cover, which depicts an open door that opens to another that opens to another in an endless series of open doors. "There have been times in history when it seems every door was flung open, and we tend to refer to such times as The Golden Age," he states. "Other times, when practically every door was locked and only a self-selected few held keys, we refer to as The Dark Ages."

The cover photo was taken by photographer Cristi Branum and was used as the basis for the cover design by artist Kathryn Shelley, both members of our church. It was made at Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon in New Mexico.

"When an individual or a people are born into a world with every door closed to them, either by a political realm, a failed economy, a military dictatorship, or religious dogma, the idea that keeping things exactly as they are forever, with all doors closed, ultimately results in tragedy and failure," he writes.

This year's edition is dedicated to longtime UU members of our church, John and Carol Kullman, who will be presented the first copy of the book in a special acknowledgement at the beginning of the session.

Many authors whose works were published in the anthology will read and be available for discussion on the 14th. We will begin at the church at 9:30 am sharp to give the authors a chance to share their work. All church members and their friends are urged to attend the session. A complimentary copy of the book will be distributed to all who attend. Additional copies will be available for \$10, payable to UUCOM. Come early for coffee and refreshments.

The event is the concluding entry in the church's annual Arts and Film Festival held each summer, established some eight years ago by members Michael Wright and Harry Nutter and coordinated this year by Emmy Ulmschneider and Michael Wright.

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 Director of Religious Education, Lisa Jebesen, or Sally Flores.

Children and Youth Religious Education

In her report from Norway, Lisa Jebson, Director of Religious Education, offers this teaser for the upcoming fall programs:

“The Simpsons are coming!
The Simpsons are coming!”

Stay tuned for more details about a great new program year for our children and youth.

Arts and Film Kudos and Thanks

To Michael Wright and the rest of the Program Committee for leading another great year of the Arts and Film Festival.

To Tom Parks for putting together yet another great anthology of local authors and to Cristi Branum and Kathryn Shelley for creating a beautiful cover.

To Emmy Ulmschneider for all her work in leading the Program Committee since January and for leading and coordinating additional programs during the summer.

To everyone who led a program, brought snacks, made coffee, and/or listened attentively to the presentations during the Arts and Films series. Your interest and participation make it possible for us to bring special guests and inspire us to choose provocative films for the enrichment of all.

Quantum Dreamers

Quantum Dreamers will be taking a sabbatical until further notice.

Contact Gerriana Koeniger for any questions at 563-2721.

Cluster Gathering in Lubbock

Save the date of September 17! UU's from all over West Texas will gather again at the First UU Church of Lubbock for a day of education and working together. Themes include stewardship, water conservation, and sharing OWL sex education programs. See Carol Kullman or Barbara Handley.

Let Your Voices Sing!

All voices are invited to join the choir and add your joyful sound to the music we share. Most rehearsals are right after Sunday worship. If you would like to participate, contact Beverly Wise at 686-2791 for more information.

Program Committee

The Program Committee schedules the Sunday worship and forum. The next meeting is at 10 am on August 20. Contact Emmy Ulmschneider with any questions.

Building Your Own Philosophy

BYOP, the Building Your Own Philosophy book group, has selected Great Conversations 3 for its next title. The cost is \$24.95 plus \$2.00 shipping and handling for a total of \$26.95.

BYOP is open to all in our church and the community. It meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays from 7:30 - 9:00 pm in the fellowship hall of the church.

Below is a sampling of the upcoming readings. Contact Walter McConathy at 432-687-5221 for information.

Aug 3 Percy Bysshe Shelley: A Defence of Poetry
(spellings from book used)

Aug 17 Honore de Balzac: The Unknown Masterpiece

Sep 7 Leo Tolstoy: Second Epilogue to War and Peace

Sep 21 Rudyard Kipling: The Man Who Would Be King

Oct 5 Luigi Pirandello: Six Characters in Search of an Author

Oct 19 Stephen Crane: The Open Boat



A Final Note from Rev. Jennifer

As I finish editing this newsletter and complete my final tasks with this congregation, let me offer my best hopes for your next ministries.

And I would like to share some personal news. Patrick and I are expecting our second baby in January. Let me say again how much we appreciated the warm welcome we received from this church when we had Nate three years ago. Your kindness inspires me look forward to sharing our expanding family with other churches in the future.

Bowing to the Light Within,
Jennifer

Our Mission and Covenant

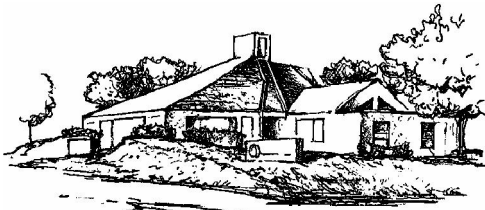
The Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland is an oasis of liberal religion empowering people to pursue spiritual growth and work toward a just, equitable, sustainable society. As a congregation, we covenant together before the wonder and mystery of life to provide a welcoming, safe, and tolerant religious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



3301 Neely at Midkiff
Midland, Texas 79707-5808