

UU Church of Midland

On the Journey with Jennifer

Many thanks to the Board for kicking off the annual Guest At Your Table program with the Stone Soup Lunch and a great worship. Guest At Your Table has been part of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's education and fundraising campaigns for almost 30 years. And each year, we learn about more people we can include as our guests because they are partners with the Service Committee.

For example, young people have recently returned to their villages in northern Uganda after years of brutal war. Opoka Kenneth is one such young man who has returned home from the camp for internally displaced persons he was forced to live in for so long. He now uses oxen teams to plow land for several families. UUSC is also working with Opoka and others to help them



Reverend Jennifer Innis

rebuild their houses, revitalize traditions, and come together as a community to heal.

Then there is Maral, a teacher in Afghanistan. When she participated in the Teacher Training for Human Rights, she learned how to bring human rights into her lessons, focusing especially on the rights of women and girls. Like a growing number of teachers across the country, Maral helps her students better understand their individual human rights. She also trains other teachers to include those rights in their curriculum, further helping girls overcome

challenges to complete their educations.

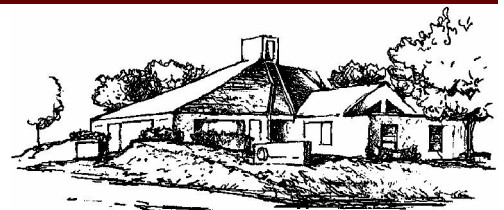
These are just a couple of the countless people working with the Service Committee. Progress on human rights and access to education and natural resources comes from the hard work and deep commitment of all involved. Those partnerships are based on respect as well as compassion, because the Service Committee asks how they may best add to the efforts of the people already there.

The Guest At Your Table Collection will be received on February 20. Make checks to UUSC. Unrestricted gifts of \$100 or more will be matched by the UU Church at Shelter Rock. See www.uusc.org for information. Thank you for bringing a guest to your table.

Namaste, Jennifer

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February 2011 At A Glance

February 6

9:30 a.m. Forum: *God Is Not One: Judaism* led by the Rev. Jennifer Innis

11 a.m. Worship: *The Power of Prayer* led by the Rev. Jennifer Innis

February 13

9:30 a.m. Forum: *God Is Not One: Islam* led by Glen Aaron

11 a.m. Worship: *The Science of Love* led by Emmy Ulmschneider and Friends

February 20

9:30 a.m. Forum: *God Is Not One: Christianity* led by the Rev. Jennifer Innis

11 a.m. Worship: *Who Wants to Be One with Everything?* led by the Rev. Jennifer Innis

February 27

9:30 a.m. Forum: *God Is Not One: Hinduism* led by Niki Widmayer

11 a.m. Worship: *Wide Open Spirits* led by the Rev. Karen Schmeltekopf

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 their second hour.

Free childcare is available each Sunday.

February Calendar

Feb	2	7:30 pm	BYOP/Building Your Own Philosophy
Feb	4-8		Jennifer in Midland
Feb	5	10 am	Program Committee
Feb	5	11:30 am	Religious Ed. Committee at Murray's
Feb	6	12:20 pm	Getting to Know Unitarian Universalism
Feb	7	7 pm	Board Meeting
Feb	12	2-4 pm	Quantum Dreamers
Feb	13		Deadline for March Newsletter
Feb	16	7:30 pm	BYOP/Building Your Own Philosophy
Feb	18-22		Jennifer in Midland
Feb	19	TBA	Circle Supper
Feb	20	12:20 pm	Getting to Know Unitarian Universalism
Feb	26	2-4 pm	Quantum Dreamers

February Highlights

Explore the unique natures of different religions during the forum series based on the book, *God Is Not One*, by Stephen Prothero. Learn more about how another church extends a welcome to people of many faiths and lives from our guest minister, the Rev. Karen Schmeltekopf, on February 27. Newcomers and visitors are invited to remain after worship on February 6 and 20 for an introduction to Unitarian Universalism with the Rev. Jennifer Innis. And mark your calendar for the annual Auction on March 5! Donation forms are available this month.

February Mystery Member

You might say that February's Mystery Member has a big heart for UU music. She says, "I love our UU hymnal so much I had Beverly play and record 40 hymns so I can listen to them whenever I want." She's been an active member of the UUCOM

"Unitarian Universalism allows every human being to be who they are, but also asks each person to be responsible for who they are."

since 1989 where she says she most enjoys the fellowship with other liberal religious folks.

A few of her favorites include the book, *Wherever You Go, There You Are* by Jon Kabat-Zinn; favorite food, artichoke and favorite movie, *Avatar*. Professionally, you are likely to see this member's handiwork at Belle Ball, the symphony, on band and cheerleading teens all over town and of course a few UUs at church. As a professional dressmaker for over 30 years, her name was among the first this writer learned of as a newcomer to town seeking a wonderful seamstress. She is a busy woman who is also a Certified Paralegal for

the last ten years and a yoga instructor for five years. This woman has given her time to many volunteer and civic needs in our community. The most recent includes serving as a member of Midland's Vision 2020 Sustainability Committee where she enjoyed working with other residents of our community to create environmentally sustainable goals for Midland over the next decade. If you attend any of the farmer's markets, you will inevitably see this mystery member selecting her veggies for the week.

When asked about her specific spiritual leanings, she lives her life based on the principles of the yogic lifestyle, which are very compatible with UU principles. Growing up a Unitarian, she married the first time in Fountain Street Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, her second time to a fellow UU member in Midland. She considers her greatest achievement raising two children to productive adulthood. The most difficult thing she has had to learn is how to let her kids grow up on their own; helping them only when they ask.

Turn (or scroll) to the back page to learn our November Mystery Member.

Guest Minister: The Rev. Karen Schmeltekopf

Please welcome our guest minister for February 27, the Rev. Karen Schmeltekopf. Karen is a Native West Texan who is glad to live in her sacred geography. She is the pastor of The Gathering United Church of Christ in San Angelo and a bereavement counselor and

chaplain with Hospice of San Angelo. The Gathering welcomes and celebrates people of all racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, and faith perspectives. For more information on their ministries, check out: www.thegatheringsanangelo.org.

UUCOM Board

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Open, President Elect

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Linda McConathy, Membership

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Open, Social Outreach

David White, Building & Grounds

Barbara Handley, Religious Ed Rep.

Lisa Jebson, Religious Ed Dir.

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Benefit Lunch Thanks

Thank you to everyone who contributed to and enjoyed the Stone Soup on January 16. Your generous contributions came to \$231.25 for the Midland Soup Kitchen Ministries.

Ministerial Search Committee Update: Interviews and Beyond!

The process continues for the six members of the Search Committee as they undertake the remaining crucial steps in fulfilling their mission to identify and recommend a candidate for our church's full-time minister to begin this fall 2011. Part of that search was a very successful workshop for this church on January 22 called "Beyond Categorical Thinking," featuring the Rev. Keith Kron, director of the Transitions Office at Unitarian Universalist Association in Boston. With over one-third of the congregation attending, feedback was uniformly positive about the workshop, with members pointing out the many new insights and perspectives they gained from their participation. In case you missed the program, we discussed how

the church might respond if the next minister was white, black or Latino, a different sexual orientation, older or younger, and/or had emotional challenges such as depression or had physical challenges. Many of us agreed that the church had not had this conversation before that workshop and that more discussion could be useful. Look for possible follow-up programs in the months to come. Contact the Search Committee if you have specific questions about the results of the workshop.

The Search Committee is just beginning the crucial part of the year-long search process of identifying potential pre-candidates scheduling conference phone interviews, checking references, and making decisions on possible visits as guest ministers. In this part

of the process, confidentiality is very important as ministers and search committees gather and weigh a great deal of information about each other. The Search Committee will not be able to say with whom they are talking until they are able to present one candidate to the congregation later in the spring. Please know that the process is on schedule and in good order. Members expect that they will be able to fulfill their mission successfully. Members of the committee are Cristi Branum, Alice White, Jane Hellinghausen, John Kullman, Barbara Handley, and Tom Parks, chairman. They will be glad to respond to questions from the congregation about the search.

Children and Youth Religious Education

First things first – this is a big thank you to everyone who filled our Mitten Tree this past holiday season. Just before the mid-January cold snap, I delivered 6 pairs of socks, 6 hats, 3 scarf/hat/gloves sets and about 20 pairs of gloves and mittens to Safe Place. Secondly, I wanted to remind you that we have just begun our second semester session entitled "Windows and Mirrors." This program encourages our youth to get in touch with their own experiences and backgrounds while understanding, exploring and respecting the perspectives of

others. Our volunteers work very hard to prepare these important lessons, so we hope to have plenty of youth on hand during the 9:30AM forum time.

And finally, a quick reminder that we still have many Sundays available for Second Hour volunteers to spend time with the children after they leave the worship. Please let me know if you can help.

See you soon!
Lisa Jebson
Director of Religious Education

Come to Choir

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

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

Building Your Own Philosophy

The BYOP book discussion group meets at the church on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays each month from 7:30 – 9:00 pm. All are invited to participate. For more information, contact Linda McConathy at 432-687-5221.

Upcoming readings:

February 2 — *The Fall of the House of Usher* by Edgar Allan Poe

February 16 — *Bartleby the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street* by Herman Melville

March 2 — *Goblin Market* by Christina Rossetti

March 16 — *Physics and World Philosophy* by Max Planck

Getting to Know You and Unitarian Universalism

Visitors and friends of the church are invited to join Rev. Jennifer for a short introduction to Unitarian Universalism on February 6 and 20. We will meet after the service in the fellowship hall for a light lunch, a brief presentation, and discussion. The sessions will begin around 12:20 pm and run no later than 2 pm. Childcare will be available. See Rev. Jennifer or Linda McConathy for questions. New members in need of a refresher or who want to be part of the conversation are also welcome. Please join us!

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 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.

Contact Alicia Gardner for meeting times and any questions at 570-0703.

Program Committee

Our forums and lay led worship services make UUCOM the UUnique place it is. Come help us shape the spiritual and intellectual path of the congregation. The next meeting is at 10 a.m. on February 5. Also, Michael Wright is beginning to take suggestions for the Summer Arts and Film Festival in June, July, and August. Thought-provoking movies, guest speakers, or other ideas are welcome. If you are interested in making a difference to our church, contact Emmy Ulmschneider or a member of the program committee.

Auction on March 5!

Come to the Auction Fundraiser on Saturday, March 5, at 7:00 pm. This annual event has become one of the best parties at the church. Admission is \$5 per person. Bring friends and family, too. The more, the merrier!

The key for a successful auction is a large attendance and lots of auction items. Keep in mind that this is not a garage sale (Church Garage Sale is the first Saturday of May) and all donated items should be in mint condition. Suggestions for items include: jewelry, books, picture frames, "green" items, pet supplies, or art. Possible service donations include: home-made food, dinners, parties, window cleaning, car wash, or alterations.

Donation Forms will be available at the church and a .pdf of the form will be emailed soon.

Help with setting up the auction is always appreciated as well as help after the auction. If you have any questions regarding the Auction, please call Barbara Handley at 520-3978 or Carol Kullman at 682-4942.

Circle Supper

A Circle Supper is a gathering of about 8-10 people at someone's home or at a restaurant. These dinners are a great way to get to know people and share good food. If you would like to be a host or be added to the list future events, see Carol Kullman.

Mystery Member Revealed



Niki Widmayer, another one of the fascinating members of the UU Church of Midland. She was a self-described “incredibly shy

wall flower until I joined this church and took up the challenge of writing and delivering my own sermons.” Lucky for us she has stayed hooked as a Unitarian. She says, “Unitarian Universalism allows every human being to be who they are, but also asks each person to be responsible for who they are.”

When she and her husband Ernie retire to Ecuador, she hopes to hone her sustainability skills on their own property, in their own dome home.

Our Mission and Covenant

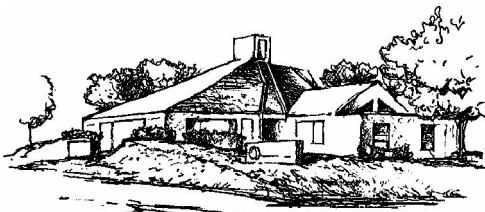
The Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland is an oasis of liberal religion empowering people to pursue spiritual growth and work toward a just, equitable, sustainable society. As a congregation, we covenant together before the wonder and mystery of life to provide a welcoming, safe, and tolerant religious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