

UU Church of Midland

On the Journey with Jennifer

Saying goodbye in ministry always comes faster than I realize and always takes longer than expected. Perhaps it is no surprise that I schedule a lot of my life around Sundays. (Insert joke here about ministers only working one day a week.) In this case, Sundays are becoming a measure of the remainder of my time with you. Depending on the final calendar, you and I have about 6-7 Sundays together before the summer begins and my service with you draws to a close. What has been almost five years is down to a matter of months. And due to the nature of part-time positions in ministry, starting early usually means finishing on time.

The theological theme for March is Letting Go. In that spirit, it is time for you and me to begin to let go of each other. The Board and I are working



Reverend Jennifer Innis

on a way to celebrate the conclusion of my service with you. That date and the nature of the celebration will be determined after the Ministerial Search Committee completes its search for a permanent minister. For now, I hope to find smaller ways to enjoy your company and to thank you for your dedication to the church and support of my ministry in West Texas. If you would like to visit, have coffee, or share a meal and reflect on the time we have known each other, I am open to all invitations.

Part of the letting go is to know when the end is the

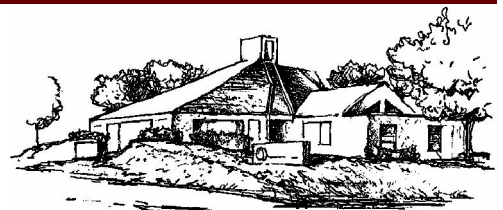
end. Once I conclude my service with you at the end of July, I will not be available for contact. It is essential that you and I mark a clear finish to this ministry so that you may greet the new minister with a fresh heart.

A Note about Nate: My family and I are so grateful for the care shown to my son since I first brought him to Midland a couple of months after he was born in August 2008. (Can you believe it has been that long?) If the schedule goes to plan, I will have Nate with me in Midland for March 4-8 and April 22-26. I may not have him with me in May, and June is to be determined. If you would like to say goodbye to Nate outside of Sunday morning, let me know as soon as possible.

Namaste,
Jennifer

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March 2011 At A Glance

March 6

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

11 a.m. Worship: *Spring Cleaning* led by the Rev. Jennifer Innis

March 13

9:30 a.m. Forum: *Editorials and Coffee Talk* led by the Program Committee

11 a.m. Worship: *God in Disaster* video sermon from the Rev. Christine Robinson
led by Niki Widmayer

March 20

9:30 a.m. Forum: *Categorical Thinking and Beyond* led by the Rev. Jennifer Innis

11 a.m. Worship: *Let Us Live While We Live: The Life of Sarah Ripley* led by the Rev. Jennifer Innis

March 27

9:30 a.m. Forum: Budget Presentation for 2011-2012 led by the Board

11 a.m. Worship: *Women's Strength, Women's Power* led by Kathryn Shelley and Cristi Branum

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.

March Calendar

March 2	7:30 pm	BYOP/Building Your Own Philosophy
March 4-8		Jennifer in Midland
March 5	10 am	Program Committee
March 5	7pm	Gala Auction!!
March 12	11:30 am	Religious Ed. Committee at Murray's
March 13		Deadline for March Newsletter
	2 am	Daylight Savings Time Begins
March 16	7:30 pm	BYOP/Building Your Own Philosophy
March 18-22		Jennifer in Midland
March 21	7 pm	Board Meeting
March 26	2-4 pm	Quantum Dreamers

March Highlights

Worship this month includes two Sundays in honor of Women's History Month. Rev. Jennifer will present the story of Sarah Ripley, a Unitarian of the early 1800's who navigated the confines of society to become an accomplished tutor and an early influence on Ralph Waldo Emerson. Cristi Branum and Kathryn Shelley will present their thoughts on *Women's Strength, Women's Power*.

All are invited to learn about the projected budget for 2011-2012 during the forum on March 27.

March Mystery Member

At eleven a.m. and four p.m., you are most likely to find our March Mystery Member drinking tea. She is not British, yet she's lived in Britain, Bermuda, the Bahamas and New Zealand. While living at the Bermuda Biostation, she cooked for the crew

"I started going to the UU Church as I wanted our girls to have a defense against dogma."

and scientists there in addition to illustrating and photographing a field guide to the flora and fauna of Bermuda. She has worked as a geologist, illustrator, teacher, biologist and lots of odd things.

Currently, you might find this Mystery Member at the City of Midland Aquatics gym or swimming laps or at the Saturday farmer's markets collecting her favorite food - vegetables. No wonder her favorite song is "Homegrown Tomatoes" by Guy Clark.

"I feel very strongly about the interconnectedness of life," she says when asked about her spiritual leaning. As a UU, she most enjoys the diversity of opinions found at the UUCOM where she has been involved since 1990. Raised a Methodist, she started going to Quaker Meetings when she lived in California. "What I loved about Quaker meetings besides the eclectic and engaged group of people was the importance of consensus and the simplicity. I went off and on to meetings in FL, OK, MA, and finally here. When the meeting disbanded in the early 90s, I started going to the UU Church as I wanted our girls to have a defense against dogma."

She has lots of hobbies including weaving, gardening, cycling and occasionally drawing. If you stop by her home, you're likely to find her immersed in the back yard collecting the plumpest blackberries in town. Turn (or scroll) to the back page to learn our March Mystery Member.

UUCOM Board

Carol Kullman, President

Open, President Elect

Emmy Ulmschneider, Programs

Nancy McGlasson/Barbara Handley,

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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Categorical Thinking and Beyond on March 20

The forum on March 20 will be an opportunity to follow up on the conversation about race, sexual orientation, gender, and other identities explored during the Beyond Categorical Thinking (BCT) workshop on January 22. After this program, the Board and I realized how little this congregation has

discussed identities such as transgender, or differences in class and ethnicity and how that might affect the church's relationship with a new minister.

If you attended the workshop, come help deepen the conversation. If you could not

attend BCT in January, here is a chance to be part of the discussion.

This forum is offered in support of the growth of this church. All voices and questions are welcome for what can be sensitive topics. See Rev. Jennifer with questions and comments.

Ministerial Search Committee Update: Nearing Completion!

Members of the Search Committee report that the year-long process of finding a new full-time minister is nearing a successful end. Following a lengthy checklist of steps laid out by the Transitions office of the Unitarian Universalist Association, members of the committee began their work in March of last year and are hoping to reach a conclusion within a few weeks.

During that process, they have continued to work with various UU leaders at both the regional and national levels and have brought in consultants on such aspects as ministerial agreements on salary and benefits as well as a workshop on "Beyond Categorical Thinking." They also coordinated

efforts with our current part-time minister, Rev. Jennifer Innis, as the process continued, and provided routine updates and reports to the congregation. Now members feel that it has been worth the effort, particularly if their work results in finding the best candidate to serve and lead our church.

"Although we haven't reached the final goal line, at least we can see it in the distance," commented Tom Parks, committee chairman. "We still have some major steps to undertake before we can report to the congregation, but all of us are feeling good about the prospects at this point."

Next steps include choosing one minister to present to the

congregation as the candidate. Once the candidate minister and the search committee complete a letter of agreement, the name of the minister can be announced. In May, the congregation and the candidate will have a chance to get to know one another, and the minister will lead services for two Sundays in a row. After the second service, the congregation will meet to decide whether to call that minister for the full-time position set to begin on August 1.

Members of the committee are Cristi Branum, Alice White, Jane Hellinghausen, John Kullman, Barbara Handley, and Tom Parks, chairman. They are glad to respond to questions from the congregation about the search.

Children and Youth Religious Education

We are having a lot of fun with "Windows & Mirrors" this semester. The wonderful thing about this set of lessons is that we will have something to display at the very end. The kids work on their "panes" during each session as part of an ongoing project.

And for those of you who missed out – we are continuing our annual tradition of Valentines for Safe Place. The youth made Valentines which were handed out on February 13. If you would like to make a contribution but you didn't get a valentine, please email me at

LJebsen@aol.com. We will be collecting the items through the end of the month.

See you soon!

Lisa Jebsen
Director of Religious Education

Kudos and Thanks

Many thanks to Sam Vanlandingham for putting the library books in good order.

Thank you to all the volunteers who are helping with hosting the guest ministers in January and February.

Program Committee

The next Program Committee meeting is at 10 a.m. on March 5. If you are interested in making a difference to our church, contact Emmy Ulmschneider or a member of the program committee.

Have We Got a Job for You!

Join our merry band of volunteers who rotate the behind-the-scenes tasks each Sunday. On your chosen date, you'll arrive early enough to turn on the lights, make the coffee, and set out the cups. After service, you'll put it all away, take out the trash (or ask a strong helper to do it) and lock up. There is an easy checklist and you will be thanked! See Kathryn Shelley at 352-5728.

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 Michael Wright at 432-425-5279.

Remaining readings in our current book *Great Conversations 2*:

March 2 — *Goblin Market* by Christina Rossetti

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

April 6 — *The Playboy of the Western World* by John M. Synge

April 20 — *Planning and Democracy* (from *The Road to Serfdom*) by Friedrich Hayek

May 4 — *Distributive Justice* (from *Collected Papers*) by John Rawls

May 18 — *Guests of the Nation* by Frank O'Connor

June 1 — *Which New Era Would That Be?* by Nadine Gordimer

June 15 — *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* by Raymond Carver

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.

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.

We will be meeting in March on Saturday, March 26, from 2-4pm.

Contact Alicia Gardner for any questions at 570-0703.

West Texas UU's Unite on April 9

No congregation is an island—come find out why at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Lubbock on Saturday, April 9. Join Rev. Jennifer, Rev. Susan Smith and Jennifer Nichols of the Southwest UU Conference along with members and friends from Amarillo, Midland, Lubbock and other cities to explore ways to develop leaders in the churches and reach out to the larger communities. There will be plenty of time for trading stories and strategies with fellow volunteers. See Rev. Jennifer for information.

The Auction is Now!

The Auction is finally here! Come to the Auction on Saturday, March 5, at 7:00 pm. Don't miss one of the best parties at the church and a source for unique gifts for friends and family. Admission is \$5 per person. Neighbors, co-workers, and friends are welcome, too. The more, the merrier!

A successful auction needs a lot of auction items as well as strong attendance. 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, "green" items, pet supplies, or art. Possible service donations include: dinners, parties, window cleaning, car wash, or alterations.

Donation forms are available at the church and a .pdf of the form is available with this newsletter and on the website.

Helpers to set up and clean up the auction are always needed and welcome. For any questions, please call Barbara Handley at 520-3978 or Carol Kullman at 682-4942.

Joys & Sorrows

Marion and John Kimberly are celebrating the wedding of their daughter, Karen on March 19. Karen and her brothers grew up in this church. She and her fiancé, Peter met on eHarmony. This wedding is especially meaningful because Karen lost her first fiancé to cancer 11 years ago.

Mystery Member Revealed

Many people have discovered a love of nature through our Mystery



Member, Emmy Ulmschneider. She has been long involved with Junior Master Gardeners, the Permian Basin Master Gardeners and recently she chaired the Midland

Visions 2020 Sustainability committee.

She is a Llano Estacado Master Naturalist currently serving on the COM landscape revision committee and the UUCOM board of directors.

Emmy teaches fourth graders at Carver Center. Her greatest achievement? "My two grown girls are the heart of my life. I am so proud of them and treasure the time I spend with them."

Our Mission and Covenant

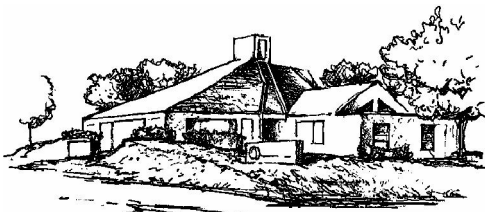
The Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland is an oasis of liberal religion empowering people to pursue spiritual growth and work toward a just, equitable, sustainable society. As a congregation, we covenant together before the wonder and mystery of life to provide a welcoming, safe, and tolerant religious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