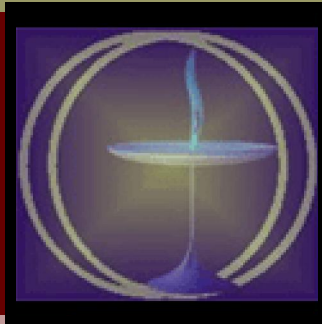


November 2011

www.uumidland.org



AN OASIS OF SPIRITUAL SEEKERS NURTURING OUR PLANET & COMMUNITY

UU Church of Midland

Minister's Musings

"Hospitality is a lively, courageous, and convivial way of living that challenges our compulsion either to turn away or to turn inward and disconnect ourselves from others. It addresses the core loneliness that we avoid with the bustle and haste of our hectic lives."

Father Daniel Homan & Lonnie Collins Pratt

I like to think that a large part of church life is the type of hospitality Homan and Pratt describe above. They call it "Radical Hospitality" in their book of the same name. It is not about "grand gestures, it requires nothing of a person but an open mind and an open heart. Ideally, it is what we strive to do every Sunday and at every church meeting we attend.

"There is a big loneliness at the center of every person. There's a reason for the loneliness. It is meant to lead you somewhere. Even if you are unconscious of it, the big lonely is driving you homeward."

Homan & Pratt



The reason people attend a church or group that speaks to a person's spiritual needs, can generally be traced back to this feeling of loneliness or isolation. The word church as we know it today comes with lots of baggage, personal for many of us, but also with great historical baggage. The original word in the New Testament that was mistranslated to church was "ecclesia," which meant, "the called out." I prefer this to "church" because it bypasses all the baggage and speaks to the heart of what "church" is all about. We are each and all "called out" of our feelings of loneliness and isolation to find that place we can call home.

This church is our spiritual "home." It sustains and supports us just as we sustain and support it. It is the place where we feel safe to build the relationships and do the spiritual work that is necessary to ease the loneliness and isolation.

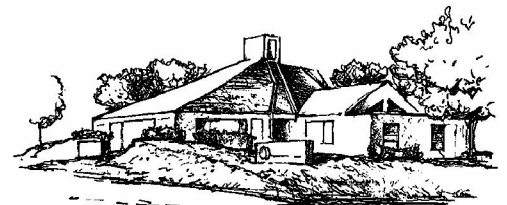
Have no doubt, every guest that walks through our doors is seeking to ease the same feelings that brought us here. What they want to know whether this is their safe place, if this is their home. They want to know if we are as eager to welcome them into our home as they are eager to be welcomed.

"When I let a stranger into my heart, I let a new possibility approach me. When I reach past my own ideas, I begin to stretch myself open to the world, and this opening of my heart could change everything."
Homan & Pratt

In Peace and Love,
Rev. Thomas Schmidt

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November 2011 At A Glance

November 6

9:30 a.m. Forum: Green Sanctuary led by Niki Widmayer

11 a.m. Worship: *It's About Time* led by the Rev. Thomas Schmidt

With the setting of our clocks happening this weekend, it seems like a good time to explore our relationship with time. Our growing reliance on technology keeps us ever more mindful of clocks and time, allowing for greater productivity. What are the long-term effects of an obsession with time?

November 13

10:30 a.m. Forum & Worship: All Church Thanksgiving Dinner and Service

(See sign-up sheets in the foyer to contribute to the menu and help with set-up and clean-up)

November 20

9:30 a.m. Forum: Coffee Hour

11 a.m. Worship: *A Harvest Communion* led by the Rev. Thomas Schmidt

The Interdependent Web of all existence is more than a objective description of the natural world, it is a spiritual reality as well. Let's celebrate our shared community with all that lives and all that makes us whole.

November 27

9:30 a.m. Forum: Hanging of the Greens led by Religious Education

11 a.m. Worship: *Social Justice is not Socialism* led by the Rev. Thomas Schmidt

Social Justice is an integral part of Unitarian Universalism just as it integral to many religions. Social justice has wrongly been associated with Socialism by some in what seems like an attempt to distract and divide the nation. Let us not be distracted and let us join with our fellow religionists on the issues that can unite and strengthen our country and our world.

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.

November Calendar

Nov 2	7:30 pm	BYOP/Building Your Own Philosophy
Nov 5	10:00 am	Program Committee
Nov 9	7:30 pm	Catechism with an Open Mind
Nov 12	11:30 am	Religious Education Comm. at Murray's
Nov 13	10:30 am	Thanksgiving Dinner and Service
Nov 16	7:30 pm	BYOP/Building Your Own Philosophy
Nov 20		Deadline for December Newsletter
Nov 21	7:30 pm	Board Meeting
Nov 30	7:30 pm	Catechism with an Open Mind

Sunday Highlights

On November 13, all are welcome to the **Thanksgiving Dinner and Service**. See the sign up sheets in the foyer for what to bring and how many will attend. Serving is family style, so please bring exactly what is asked for on the menu. See David or Alice White for questions.

Kudos & Applause

"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."

Albert Schweitzer

Special thanks to these people and to everyone who make our church run. Without our volunteers, without you, there is no church. Please submit your thanks and kudos to the office for inclusion in next month's newsletter.

Thanks to the generosity of these members and friends we now have 30 new hymnals: **Larry Haggard, Tom Parks, David & Alice White, Jane Hellinghausen, Barbara Handley, John & Carol Kullman, Nellie Fields** and **Betty Lewis**.

Rev. Schmidt sends his gratitude to **the Kullmans** for hosting the "Welcome to Midland" party and to everyone for the "pounding" you gave him.

The Friday, October 28 Midland Reporter-Telegram article about our church and our new minister is thanks in large part to **Tom Parks** who made the initial contact with the paper and did a lot of the preliminary work.

Our Website has been updated to include information about our new minister with some added features to make it easier for everyone to use. Check it out (www.uumidland.org) and then thank **Kathryn Shelley** for all her hard work to make it happen.

Circle Supper

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 for future events, see Carol Kullman or see the sign-up sheet on the table in the foyer at church. First event is targeted for November.



Koffee Klatch

Guests and long-time members are invited to join Rev. Schmidt every Sunday following the services that he is here. This is your opportunity to ask questions about the morning message, Unitarian Universalism, or anything that might be on your mind. The topic for discussion is determined by those who participate and will likely vary from week to week. This is a great chance to get to know our new minister better and also an opportunity to connect with others in the church at a deeper level. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall 12:15—12:45.

UUCOM Board

Carol Kullman, President
Barbara Handley, President-Elect
Emmy Ulmschneider, Programs
Alice White, Membership
Kathryn Shelley, Secretary
David White, Treasurer
Edith Stanton, Social Outreach
John Kullman, Building & Grounds
Sally Flores, Religious Ed. Rep.

UUCOM Staff

Rev. Thomas Schmidt, Minister
Email: minister@uumidland.org

(432) 694-4308 office

(432) 559-2411 cell

Office Hours: Tues and Thurs 10-3

Wed 5-7

Or anytime by appointment

Lisa Jebson, Religious Ed. Director

Email: ljebson@aol.com

Ginny Lang, Office Assistant
(432) 694-4308

Office hours: Tues and Thurs
9 to 1

Email: office@uumidland.org

News from Religious Education

We have had some really great discussions during our Sunday School sessions – if you haven't been with us – please join us. We're having a lot of fun as well as some great conversations. In addition to this great programming, we have some exciting upcoming events for our youth. Please be sure to mark your calendars!

First of all – thanks to the hard work of Maureena Benevides and Sally Flores our youth (ages 11 and up) will have the opportunity to attend OWL (Our Whole Lives) sex education sessions in Lubbock.

November 18-19

December 2-3

January 6-7

January 20-21

Please contact Maureena if you have any questions.

And as hard as it is to believe, the holidays are upon us – so please plan to be a part of our upcoming

"Hanging of the Greens" event of November 27 as well as the Christmas pageant in December. We will have more details on the latter in the next newsletter.

In the meanwhile, we hope to see you in the RE Wing next Sunday!

What is RE?

Unitarian Universalist religious education (RE) is grounded in nurturing our children and adults. We give them the building blocks with which to form their own beliefs rather than indoctrinating them into a system of thought. As Unitarian minister William Ellery Channing said in the early eighteenth hundreds, "The great end of religious instruction is not to stamp our minds irresistibly upon the young but to stir up their own [minds]."

Dwight Brown Leadership Experience

Dwight Brown Leadership Experience (DBLE) is a challenging and exciting leadership experience that will enrich not only the life of the participant but also the sponsoring Unitarian Universalist congregation. It is designed to teach and reinforce skills and abilities for leaders and potential leaders in UU congregations. DBLE is scheduled for the week of August 5-10, 2012. Funds are available to send two participants. If you are interested in participating, please contact Barbara Handley or any member of the Board of Directors.

Program Committee

Check out the energetic group who are working diligently to ensure your Sunday worship and forum experiences are top notch. They need your assistance. Saturday, November 5th, 10 a.m. at the Church.

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.

Building Your Own Philosophy (BYOP)

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 Walt McConathy at 432-687-5221.

11/2, Sherwood Anderson:
Death in the Woods (11 pages)
Jorge Luis Borges: The Garden of Forking Paths (9 pages)

11/16, Simone de Beauvoir:
Introduction to The Second Sex

12/7, Grace Paley: An Interest in Life

12/21, NO MEETING DUE TO HOLIDAYS



In Times of Need

One of the reasons we are here is to care for each other in our search for truth and meaning. If you or another member or friend are aware of an update or need, please contact the church office or Rev. Schmidt at 432-559-2411 or Minister@uumidland.org

UUCOM Granted Green Sanctuary

Congratulations are in order! After five long years and much hard work, UUCOM has been granted Green Sanctuary status. The letter is posted in the fellowship hall. Please join Niki Widmayer at our November 6 Forum to review all that we have achieved and decide where to go from here!



Sharing the Plate

As a part of our stewardship and social outreach plans, we will begin Sharing the Plate in November. Each month a nonprofit will be designated. One-half of all monetary contributions to the offering plus designated contributions will be donated to that nonprofit. The Permian Basin Food Bank will be our first recipient. In conjunction with our Thanksgiving Service we will also sponsor a canned food drive to benefit the food bank.

Catechism with an Open Mind

A traditional catechism involves a series of questions and answers which is used to teach participants the foundation of their religious beliefs. In a Catechism with an Open Mind, participants are asked questions for which they provide their own answers. A traditional catechism is often required for membership. A Catechism with an Open Mind is not a requirement for anything. This program is designed for those people who want to grow in self-awareness and faith. For more information about the class, please contact Rev. Schmidt. The classes will be on Wednesdays that do not compete with BYOP or holidays, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. See below for dates and topics.

Date/Topic

November 9, 2011
What is Religion?

November 30, 2011
The God Question

December 14, 2011
What Does it Mean to be Human?

January 11, 2012
The Meaning of Community

January 25, 2012
What is Unitarian Universalism?

Membership Matters

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 Alice White, Membership Chair, a Board member or the Rev. Thomas Schmidt.



Our Mission and Covenant

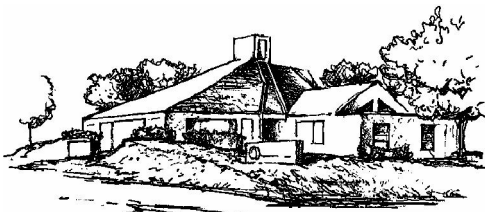
The Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland is an oasis of liberal religion empowering people to pursue spiritual growth and work toward a just, equitable, sustainable society. As a congregation, we covenant together before the wonder and mystery of life to provide a welcoming, safe, and tolerant religious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