

UU Church of Midland

Minister's Musings

My first task is to thank everyone who has helped make this transition happen so smoothly. Everyone has been so hospitable and gracious, I wish I could thank everyone by name but I am afraid I might leave someone out. I would like to thank one person in particular though, Michael Wright, who not only was instrumental in helping in find a place to live, but also helping me move several pieces of furniture upstairs into that new apartment.

I know I met many of you during my visit last month, but in the coming weeks and months I hope to get to know everyone better and for you to get to know me better. It is the nature of my position that you will get to know me quite well if you participate in church activities. On the other hand, it is not so easy for me to get to



know everyone in the church. For this reason, I will be developing a short questionnaire that will be sent to everyone. This will help me learn things about you that may not come out in casual conversation on Sunday or during a committee meeting. This will be for my eyes only and all information will remain confidential. You are invited to return the information to me during my office hours or you can make an appointment so we can meet and talk. This is all optional of course, but the more you share the better I can serve you and this congregation.

In the meantime, do not hesitate to call, e-mail or stop by the office and let me know what's on your mind and heart. That is what I am here for, it is what I do. Your concerns, your issues, your ideas serve as the seeds that will grow into sermons, classes and discussion topics. Ralph Waldo Emerson told the Harvard Divinity School graduating class of 1838, "The true preacher can be known by this, that he deals out to the people his life,--life passed through the fire of thought." The more your life intersects with mine, the more of your story I know, the more it will pass through "the fire of my thoughts" and be shared with the whole congregation.
Yours in Peace and Service,
Rev. Thomas Schmidt
432-559-2411
minister@uumidland.org

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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
www.uumidland.org

October 2011 At A Glance

October 2

9:30 a.m. Forum: *Shared Ministry* led by the Rev. Thomas Schmidt
11 a.m. Worship: *Association Sunday* led by Carol Kullman and the Board

October 9

9:30 a.m. Forum: *Butterflies* led by Emmy Ulmschneider
11 a.m. Worship: *The Sympathy of Clocks* led by the Rev. Thomas Schmidt

October 16

9:30 a.m. Forum: *OWL-Our Whole Lives* led by Maureena Benavides
11 a.m. Worship: *Is the Good Life Really Good for Us?* led by the Rev. Thomas Schmidt

October 23

9:30 a.m. Forum: *The General Assembly Experience* led by Barbara Handley
11 a.m. Worship: *What If?* led by the Rev. Thomas Schmidt

October 30

9:30 a.m. Forum: *A Personal Story of Immigration* led by guest speaker
11 a.m. Worship: *Dia de los Muertos* 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.

October Calendar

Oct 2	12:15 pm	Monthly Luncheon
Oct 5	7:30 pm	BYOP/Building Your Own Philosophy
Oct 8	10:00 am	Program Committee
	11:30 am	Religious Education Comm. at Murray's
Oct 19	7:30 pm	BYOP/Building Your Own Philosophy
Oct 17	7pm	Board Meeting
Oct 23		Deadline for October Newsletter



Sunday Highlights

Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a pre-Columbian Aztec ritual that honors loved ones who have died. Unlike the Spanish invaders, who feared death as the end of life, the native Aztecs viewed it as a continuation life. Instead of fearing it, they embraced death because only in death did they awake to life's fullest potential. Help us celebrate Dia de los Muertos by bringing a picture or memento of loved one who has passed away.

Kudos & Applause

Big thanks to **those who brought ingredients, assembled or delivered baskets** filled with lunch in honor of the Station 5 and 8 fire fighters on September 11th. Additional thanks to guest speaker **Lee Wise** and each person who donated to the Midland Professional Firefighter's Benevolence Fund "collection boot." A generous \$321 was raised. Those of us who enjoy a fresh cup of coffee and a building ready to receive us on Sunday mornings have **Barbara Handley** to thank as Hospitality Host the entire month of October. Sunday morning music is so much better with thanks to the beautiful piano accompaniment of **Beverly Wise**. To **Tony Flores** for cleaning out the front flower bed.



Inquisitive Cuisine
EAT, CHAT, LEAVE SMART

Sunday, October 2nd
12 o'clock Noon

Members, Visitors & Friends
Get the latest UU news.
We'll welcome Rev. Schmidt.
It's easy. It's free.
You'll leave full and smart.

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



Everything is perfect, and needs a lot of work

By James Ishmael Ford

The world is perfect as it is. That's the insight of the spiritual eye. Everything just as it is, is. No judgment, no second thought. Just this. And, and, and, at the very same time, it needs work. Lord, it needs work. That's the other eye. Starving children, oppressions and exploitations of every sort, greed, hatred, and endless certainties all leading to small and great hurts, the suffering world crying out for justice, for mercy, for some action.

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) 559-2411

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

A New Roadmap for Our Church

People don't join churches to serve on committees. We honor that people need to simply enjoy the refreshment of our progressive religion and we are glad to serve you. However, if you are at the next step of seeking a deeper way to establish friendships while contributing to the dreams and goals of our church; peruse the variety of volunteer opportunities listed here. There are short-term needs, small needs and longer commitments – each one vital to the Church's effectiveness. Each endeavor has a contact name and number to explore the specifics further. Thanks in advance for considering what role would match your own interests or skills.

BUILDING & GROUNDS. He's a good, kind man who could use a few willing window washers, landscape trimmer-uppers, and handy-men/women so he's not lonely. *Join Tony, David, Tom Parks and Richard for this as-needed group. Contact John Kullman, 528-7101.*

CARE. If you are naturally caring and service-oriented, this is the group for you. You'll help respond to the member and friend needs. If you have any one of the following skills, you are PERFECT: make a meal, deliver a meal, send a card or pay a visit to someone. *Join Barbara, Marion and Victoria as an unlimited number of people are*

welcome. Contact Barbara Handley, 978-5977.

FUNDRAISING/EVENTS. Co-chairs Carol and Barbara would like some fresh idea people to jazz up current ideas or help invent something new. They already have a new handbook of ideas. They serve wine (or martinis). *Contact Carol Kullman, 682-4942 or Barbara.*

HOSPITALITY. If "Just tell me what to do and I'll get 'er done!" describes you, here's the perfect "occasional" job. You will open/close the building, make coffee and tidy up the kitchen after service. This is a great way to volunteer in a small way that makes a BIG difference. *Join Heather, Lisa, Daniel and Victoria. Would like two more. Contact Kathryn Shelley, 352-5728.*

NEWSLETTER MYSTERY MEMBER WRITER. ALREADY FILLED.

PR & MARKETING TASKFORCE. If you have a passion for joining the effort to let this region know about UUCOM and its mission, join in. We need only one more person with social media skills. We will meet monthly (except Dec) for 6-8 months. Expect popcorn and mixed drinks. *Kathryn Shelley, 352-5728.*

PROGRAM. Join the group that delivers! You'll have an opportunity to plan Forums plus one Lay-Led Service per month. If you are a networker, researcher or detail person and you like the satisfaction of quality programs, join this vibrant group. Join Rev. Schmidt, Emmy, Niki, Michael, Harry, Jane and Victoria. The more the merrier. *Contact Niki Widmayer at 697-5292.*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. UU youth are curious and excited by adults who lead them through a special project or simply join them in the free time of second hour. If you have one hour to share on a Sunday, this is for you. Additionally, teachers are needed to help with an already-designed curriculum. *Contact RE Director Lisa Jebson at 694-6395.*

SOCIAL OUTREACH. ALREADY FILLED.



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.

10/ 5, Luigi Pirandello: Six Characters in Search of an Author

10/19, Stephen Crane: The Open Boat

11/2, Sherwood Anderson: Death in the Woods

11/16, Jorge Luis Borges: The Garden of Forking Paths

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, 10 am October 8th at the Church.

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

SWUUC Annual Fall Leadership Training

The Annual Fall Leadership Training aspires to strengthen and extend Unitarian Universalism in the Southwestern Unitarian Universalist Conference (SWUUC) by developing congregational leaders, providing the resources needed to carry out congregational missions effectively, and encouraging and establishing/strengthening lateral relationships among member congregations.

This year we are offering six different tracks to choose from at the Fall Leadership Training. The six tracks at the Fall Leadership Training will meet separately but will gather as a community for worship and for meals. Worship this year will be led by regional staff and the participants of the Worship track. High school youth are welcome and encouraged to attend any of the 6 tracks and we hope to see youth in each. New this year, we will offer an Evolution Camp for elementary and jr. high kids. Unfortunately we are still not able to offer child care at this time. We hope to do that in years to come and welcome your input and ideas on whether that would be helpful to you and your family.

Glen Rose Retreat Center offers a variety of housing options for SWUUC Fall Training attendees. Families bringing their kids for the Evolution Camp may want to stay

SWUUC Annual Fall Leadership Training continued

at the La Quinta in town. Glen Rose, Texas also has other options available and is located approximately 40 miles southwest of Fort Worth. This year we have the pleasure of having Julie Hazzard performing on Saturday night. For more information about fees, workshops and housing, visit <http://www.swuuc.org/> There are scholarships available to attend the SWUUC Fall Conference. Please visit www.swuuc.org/pages/resources/forms.php to download the scholarship form. These forms must be received by October 10, 2010.

Tracks and Presenters

The Future of Unitarian Universalism: A Conversation for Religious Professionals 40 and under

Examining Your Mission Field
Leader: Rev. Susan Smith and Rev. Ron Robinson

Worship: From Theory to Practice
Leaders: Rev. Kenn Hurto, Rev. Barbara Jarrell

Beyond Fundraising
Leader: Kay Crider

UU Identity
Leader: Thomas Pistole, Terry Ward

Building Multicultural Coalitions
Leader: Carrie Stewart

Change a Life, Empower Women: Fair Trade Sale @ UUCOM

Purchase a gift that gives back by purchasing fair trade hand woven textiles, shawls, purses and clothing as well as artisan crafts from around the world and even chocolate, cocoa and coffee. Beautifully unique, specially selected items from India, Turkey, Greece, and South and Central

America will be for sale at the UU Church of Midland, Friday and Saturday, October 28-29 from 9 am to 6 pm. New designs and arrivals from Guatemala! Invite your friends, family and co-workers and expand your world as you see educational videos depicting the labor-intensive artistry of back-strap loom weaving.

Learn first-hand about the dying cultural tradition that your purchase supports when you buy Fair Trade products from women's cooperatives in Guatemala.



News from Religious Education

Our new school year is off to a great start with great programming for our youth. Barbara, Maureena and Victoria are leading all of the sessions this semester for our youngest. Bring your little ones to learn more about stories from the Bible in our "Timeless Themes" series. We have two offerings for the older youth... "Sacred Threads" - a great study of eastern religions as well as "The Gospel According to the Simpsons."

The most pressing need we have this semester is for volunteers to help instruct those sessions. If you can help please email or call me.

Lisa Jebsen
Director of Religious Education
email - LJebsen@aol.com cell - 528.5359

Association Sunday 2011: Celebrating Excellence in Ministries

In our semi-centennial anniversary year, we will join together again to celebrate the bonds that connect us through a special service and collection on October 2, 2011.

We know that excellence in ministries is the cornerstone of successful congregations and a vibrant, growing Unitarian Universalism. This year, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has partnered with the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA), the Unitarian Universalist Musicians Network, the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA), and other professional organizations to celebrate Association Sunday and

to raise funds for the future of our ministries.

Donations to Association Sunday 2011 will support scholarships, continuing education, and a comprehensive assessment of our ministries and their needs for the future. Grants from Association Sunday 2011 funds will help religious professionals get ongoing training to support thriving congregations.

We thank the UUMA, UUMN, and LREDA for their support of Association Sunday. Members of their executive committees and boards have generously pooled personal contributions to make a

combined lead gift of \$10,000. The UUMA, UUMN, and LREDA have also sent a joint letter to their members in support of Association Sunday 2011. This historic partnership reminds us that "we are better together"!

We will celebrate Association Sunday and take a special collection during the worship on October 2. We will also explore the meaning of ministry in a Unitarian Universalist setting during the forum that day as well. See Rev. Thomas Schmidt for more information.

The Soul Only Avails: Teaching as a Spiritual Act

Dr. Barry Andrews, MRE
Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of Shelter Rock, Manhasset, Long
Island, New York

I would like to share a few thoughts with you about teaching—and I mean especially religious education—as a spiritual practice. In my twenty years as a religious educator I have recruited hundreds of church schoolteachers. I am deeply grateful to them for volunteering. The lives of our children and youth have been tremendously enriched by the contribution of these men and women. The fact is, the congregations I have served simply couldn't have had a religious education program without them. Some of those who volunteered were teachers in the public schools, but the overwhelming majority were not. I would say that about ninety percent of them had no previous experience as teachers. Most were simply well-intentioned parents who had relatively little experience

working with children in groups. I don't mean for a moment to suggest that any of these people were lesser Sunday school teachers for not having a background in education. Far from it. Nor do I wish to slight professional teachers who love children and teaching so much that they are willing to give an extra day of the week to R.E.

But I do mean to say that what is important in religious education is not how much you know about children, teaching or even Unitarian Universalism, but how much you are willing to give of yourself, of your soul. Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, "In dealing with my child, my Latin and Greek, my accomplishments and my money stead me nothing; but as much soul as I have avails." I would say that this is true of religious education as well. We do try to equip Sunday school teachers with the basics with training and advice about teaching, curriculum, and the

Unitarian Universalist philosophy of religious education. We try to pair new teachers with more experienced ones. We encourage teachers to attend workshops and classes. But there is only so much we can do with the time we have. The fact of the matter is that the best education our volunteers can receive about managing a classroom or what it means to be a practicing Unitarian Universalist is through the experience of teaching itself. I would be the last to suggest that knowledge doesn't count; but it is not the most important asset in religious education. The essential qualities of a good church schoolteacher are a love of children, a sense of wonder about life, empathy and the ability to listen, and a willingness more to share who you are than what you know. Above all, teachers are mentors and companions of the children as they undertake their religious journeys in life.
(continued @ <http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/teachers/framing/15417.shtml>)

Wanted: Second Hour Volunteers!

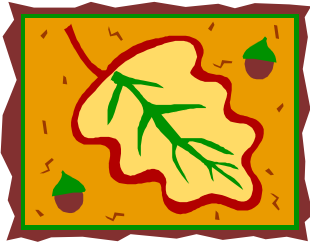
Second Hour is what we call the time of activities for the children after they leave worship and return to the religious education rooms until the end of service. Second hour volunteers do **not** have to be parents of the children in our religious education program. Second hour provides an

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! Holiday

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.

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

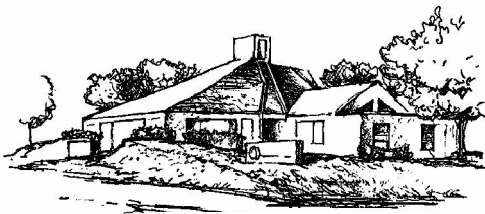
The Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland is an oasis of liberal religion empowering people to pursue spiritual growth and work toward a just, equitable, sustainable society. As a congregation, we covenant together before the wonder and mystery of life to provide a welcoming, safe, and tolerant religious 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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Midland, Texas 79707-5808