



ALUUC Focus

Newsletter for the Abraham Lincoln Unitarian Universalist Congregation
www.aluuc.org



March 2009

Worship Services are held Sunday mornings at 10:30am. Religious education and child care are provided for children of all ages. Large Print Bulletins and Hymnals are available upon request.

March 1 ~ “*The Practical Side of Mindfulness and Meditation*”

The Venerable U Vamsarakkhita will speak on some practical applications of Buddhism. He grew up in Vancouver, British Columbia, where he began meditating at age 17. He attended college on a basketball scholarship, and worked as a financial advisor and film actor before becoming a Buddhist monk. He was drawn to the Buddha's doctrine because of its profound practicality in life and as a spiritual path.

March 8 ~ “*My Favorite Superstitions*” by Reverend Martin Woulfe

Of course, reasonable people aren't superstitious, right? And yet, old habits sometimes die hard. Do you carry any good luck charms? Do you dread Friday the thirteenth? In this service, Rev. Woulfe will share a few things that he has believed over the years and talk about the positive and negative roles of superstition in human society. (NOTE: Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour Saturday night!)

March 15 ~ “*Our Ministry to Earth*” by Reverend Jackie Ziegler

We are hearing from scientists that climate change is happening quicker than they had originally predicted. This sermon considers why and how religion must be engaged in addressing this looming crisis. The service will include an uplifting visual and musical experience. Rev. Ziegler currently serves as the Acting Minister for the Unitarian Universalist Church of Stockton, Illinois. She has been a pulpit guest at ALUUC in the past.

March 22 ~ “*Religions in India—Abridged*”

From a prepared hour long talk, Delinda Chapman will share a condensation of the most interesting highlights of her review of the literature on the religions in India. She'll also reflect briefly on the implications of the West's influence on the East and the East's influence on the West.

March 29 ~ “*Justice, Equality and Pledging*”

We often sing that we “believe in justice and compassion, we believe in equity”. What does it mean? In this service Frank Kopecky will examine equality as an element of justice. This Sunday is Justice Sunday as well as the start of our annual pledge drive. The act of pledging money to support of the congregation will be used to illustrate concepts of equal justice.

April 5 ~ “*Anti-intellectualism in our time*”

The recent election included blatantly anti-intellectual candidates and tactics, and yet we elected an out-of-the-closet intellectual as president. What does this tell us about our love/hate relationship with the intellect? Linda Kopecky will draw on historian Richard Hofstadter's classic work and more current commentary to examine the impact of anti-intellectualism on education and political discourse.

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From the Board President...

I read a criticism the other day of President Obama's use of the phrase, "**We are the ones we have been waiting for.**" Apparently the source is a subject of some debate. It was used in a poem by June Jordan, as a book title by Alice Walker, in a song by *Sweet Honey and the Rock*, and it is sometimes attributed to a Hopi Elder.

The origin of this exact phrase is not as important to me as the idea it conveys. Yes, we are overwhelmed by political, economic and moral dilemmas. And yes, we need to remember that no one person, government or prophet can save us. We are the ones who must step up.

Before this recession is over, we will all be asked to step up often—in our homes, workplaces, cities, and here at our beloved meeting house, as well. Whether we labor at fundraising, or cleaning, or volunteering for any number of needed tasks, I hope we will remember to thank each other for supporting this community of free religious thinking. And even when thanks are few and far between, I hope we can all reach inside and congratulate ourselves for doing our part. We are doing important work.

Personally, I am trying to catch myself every time I start to worry about what I've lost, and what I could lose in the future. I reflect on the times that Kent and I have been broken and discouraged, and I realize that we have always found a way to recover. I recount my litany of gratitude for the joys we have experienced. I think about others who are hurting. And in an effort to throw off that helpless and useless feeling, I decide to roll up my sleeves and get back to work.

To everyone who contributes time, talent and treasure to ALUUC, I am so thankful for you. With all of us pitching in, we're going to be just fine!



~ Gwen Childs

From Religious Education...

So March besets us.... and the order of the day is housekeeping! Many people do not realize that what we call Groundhog's Day is really what is left of a pagan holiday called Imbolc. One of the traditional ways to honor the goddess, known by many names in different cultures, was to clean house.

We all know where children are concerned that cleaning is a consistent issue. This is as true at church as it is in our home. One of the things my children look forward to most each week is to grab a mug like the adults and stir up a cup of hot chocolate for themselves. No one watching misses the pride and joy a youngster experiences as they participate in this ritual. The only problem is, no one misses the extra powder on the counter, the array of mugs left in classrooms or sanctuary, or the noise during a service while these activities ensue.

While respecting our kiddies is a hallmark of our congregation, we also want to teach them the full spectrum of responsibility that goes along with privilege. As in most organizations, there are the few precious souls who are often left holding the symbolic, or in this case literal, dishrag or trashcan or vacuum. We who enjoy seeing our children welcomed into the community do not want to take advantage of this generous spirit. We can show our appreciation for work done in our behalf by insisting our children participate in cleaning up behind themselves and using the kitchen at appropriate times.

As spring approaches, it just seems in our natures to tidy up and ready ourselves for what's to come, shaking off the cobwebs of winter. Let's all consider watching for church workdays and make plans to pitch in when and where we can.



~ Meg Schnake
Coordinator of Religious Education

From the Board Treasurer...

February 20, 2009

Per our financial statements for January 31, 2009:

Operating revenue for January 2009: \$12,501.

Operating expenses for January 2009: \$14,710.

Mortgage liability paid for Jan. 2009: \$ 1,809.

Total outflow: \$16,519.

A copy of the current financial statement is posted on the Board's bulletin board in the hallway.

I had a question this last month about our revenue and expenses. My questioner said "On the income statement, it looks like we have plenty of revenue to cover our expenses. Why are we having a budget crisis?"

There are many things that affect financial statements. One of the big ones in our case is our mortgage payments. When we pay interest on our mortgages, it is part of that expense number above. When we repay the borrowed capital, however, we are reducing a liability. If you know where to look on the balance sheet, you will see our loan balance drop every month. So while this is not an expense, it does cost us money each month. For that reason and because of questions I get, I'm changing the presentation of how I show our expenses each month. Instead of what you formerly saw, you'll see what is presented above. Hopefully, this will give everyone a better idea what our outflow is every month.

If you have any questions about how this or other financial issues, please feel free to ask me. I would be happy to show you the process.

~ Victoria Vincent

Groups & Other Events

Book Discussion Group

The next meeting will be at 7:30pm on Tuesday, March 24th at Barbara Moore's home to discuss "My Mortal Enemy" by Willa Cather. Call Barbara if you have any questions. Future books we will discuss include "The Photographer", by Penelope Lively; "The Member of the Wedding", Carson McCullers; and "An Incomplete Revenge", Jacqueline Winspear. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Dream Group

The next meeting will be at 7:00pm on Monday, March 2nd at the ALUUC. This is a chance to discuss recent dreams in a relaxed and informal setting. If you have any questions, please contact John Glosser.

Flute Circle

This group meets on the second Wednesday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00pm at the ALUUC. Flutes will be made available for others to try. The focus of this circle will be the care and playing of the Native American Style Flute, but other types of flutes are welcome. Any questions can be directed to Mike Haynes at FluteCircle@aluuc.org

Humanist Discussion Group

The next meeting will be at 7:00pm on Monday, March 23rd at the ALUUC. Linda Kopecky will review *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* by Naomi Klein. A brief summary of the book can be found at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/30/books/review/Stiglitz-t.html>

It is not necessary to have read the book to participate fully in the discussion. If you have questions about the Humanist Group, contact Carol Floyd at HumanistGroup@aluuc.org

Labyrinth Walk

The Labyrinth Walk is held from 7:00 to 9:30pm on the third Friday of each month from September to June. All are welcome.

Meditation Groups

The Thursday Evening Meditation meets every Thursday evening from 7:00 to 9:00pm at the ALUUC. The Sangamon Zen Group sits most Saturday mornings at the ALUUC from 9:30 to 11:30am. Please check the website calendar for exact dates.

News Covenant Group

The next meeting will be at 7:30pm on Thursday, March 5th at Heiko & Renata Buchloh's home. Everyone is welcome.

The Occasional Choir

The choir rehearsal is at 9:30am on specified Sundays. Please check the website calendar for exact dates. For more information about the choir, please contact Bonnie Ettinger at music@aluuc.org

Theologies in Dialogue

The newly formed "Theologies in Dialogue" group will meet in the church sanctuary on Monday, March 16, at 7:00pm. In our initial meeting, our Minister Emeritus Berkley Moore will give a presentation entitled "The Philosophical Bases of Eastern and Western Religions." The meeting will close with an optional communion service led by Rev. Moore. "Theologies in Dialogue" is a new creation at ALUUC. It is made up of the former Christian Interest Group and former Build Your Own Theology group. For more information, please contact John Glosser.

WELCOME
New Members

Lori Leytem ~ 8 Feb 2009
Linda Quigley ~ 8 Feb 2009

From the Nominating Committee...

It is the duty of the Nominating Committee to present a slate of candidates for ALUUC officers, Board members and Nominating Committee members at the annual meeting of the Congregation in June. At that time the Nominating Committee will also announce appointments to the Committee on Ministry. The Nominating Committee will be meeting from time to time over the next few weeks to choose candidates. The Nominating Committee members are Buffy Lael, Dianne Roberts-Hill, Debby Hagan and Roger Powers. Please be receptive to a request to serve.

Reminder...

The new black stack chairs are developing stress fractures in the molded poly shell. Please do not lean back on them—especially on two legs. Thanks.

For Everyone's Safety...

Please do not park on the driveway in front of the building. This is a fire lane and *must* be kept clear. Thank you.

Green Tips from the Green Sanctuary Committee

Heating Your Home: Paying Less While Wasting Less Energy

Most of the energy used to heat our homes comes from burning non-renewable fossil fuels. There are many things we can do at no cost to cut back the amount of energy we use to heat our homes. Here are some to consider:

1. Set the thermostat at a lower temperature. Data from Ameren suggests that for each degree lower, you can save up to 3 percent on heating costs. Begin by reducing the temperature just one degree at a time to find out how low you can go and still be comfortable. Just layer your clothing.
2. Save more if you have a programmable thermostat, by setting it to a still lower temperature when everyone is sleeping or out of the house.
3. Draw window shades or drapes at night to reduce heat loss by radiation. Keep shades up on sunny winter days to benefit from the sun's heat.
4. Close the fireplace damper to prevent heat loss up the chimney when the fireplace is not being used.
5. Close the door to the least-used rooms and cap heat outlets and air returns if the home has hot air heating. Turn off radiators in those rooms served by hot water heat.
6. Clean or replace furnace filters on a regular schedule. Dirty filters reduce the heat output that goes to warm the house.
7. Reduce the water heater temperature. Ameren claims that customers who heat by natural gas can cut their energy costs by 3-5% by setting the water temperature at 120 degrees. This is still sufficient for hot water washes and showers.

From the Fellowship Committee...

Mystery Dinners ~ "Wall Street Scandal" - how appropriate for our times!! So much fun, it's almost criminal. Join Robert Ubylynd, Wirth Les Bonds and Stockard Ann Bonds and the other dinner guests and suspects at ALUUC at 6:30pm on Saturday, March 28. Times are tough so this will be a potluck and, of course, bring your own beverage. Sign-up today. The Mystery Dinner guest list is on the clipboard in the hallway above the water fountain, or contact Diana DeWeese at fellowship@aluuc.org

Do you Fondue! Join us on Saturday, March 7 at 6:30pm at the ALUUC Sign up to enjoy a delicious meal of various fondues! - cheese, meat, veggies, and dessert fondues - will be on the menu. If you have a fondue pot, please bring it. Sign-up today. The signup sheet is on the clipboard in the hallway above the water fountain, or contact Diana DeWeese at fellowship@aluuc.org

Adult Religious Education Class Toastmasters Speechcraft or Public Speaking 101 Program

Speechcraft is a short, 4-session, seminar-style program designed by Toastmasters International (T.I.) to teach public speaking and leadership skills. During the program, participants have the opportunity to present three speeches, introduce other speakers and serve as evaluators. They also participate in impromptu speaking exercises. Two members of the ALUUC who are veteran Toastmasters members with the assistance of several other presenters who have been trained by Toastmasters International, will advise and evaluate participants and provide instruction in speech preparation and effective speaking techniques. This could also be referred to as a Public Speaking & Leadership 101 course. By the end of the course, all participants will be much more competent and confident at: prepared speaking to small or large groups, impromptu speaking, speech evaluating, job interviews, leading a business meeting and performing other leadership roles.

The classes are from 6:00 to 8:00pm on March 10, March 24, April 14, and April 28. We have openings for 10 people in the program. The course is being offered free as an ALUUC Adult RE offering, although when put on by Toastmaster clubs outside of our congregation usually costs between \$25 to \$35 per person. Restrictions: Participants must be at least 18 years of age. If there are any 11 to 17 year olds who may be interested in acquiring these skills, another Toastmasters program designed specifically for that age group called a 'Youth Leadership Program' could also be offered in the future.

Contact: Todd Austin
E-mail: todd@aluuc.org

ALUUC Bylaws Review

The Board of Directors has established a *Ad Hoc* Bylaws Committee to review the current ALUUC Bylaws. Rob Ewart has graciously volunteered to chair the committee. This committee had its first meeting on 22 February 2009. Future notices via email or newsletters will supply more information to include requested feedback.

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) Update

UUSC advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies

A Celebration of Another Successful Guest at Your Table program!

Congratulations! This year, ALUUC raised \$351.20 through our Guest at Your Table program. Thanks so much for everyone that contributed!!!

Become a UUSC Member

You can become a member of UUSC by making a membership gift. Your contribution will support UUSC's work to advance human rights and promote social justice in the United States and around the world. As a member, you will also join a community of more than 47,000 UUSC supporters who share your ideals. You will also stay up-to-date on human rights issues through regular mailings, action alerts, and a subscription to our newsletter, Rights Now. UUSC believes in *acting locally and supporting globally*. UUSC can increase the power of UU social justice by allowing all congregations and individuals to join together as one voice for human rights. UUSC is not a replacement for local social action but a powerful extension of it. You can join online, https://secure2.convio.net/uusc/site/Donation2?df_id=1220&1220.donation=form1 Membership is \$40.00 (General), \$75.00 (General, dual), \$10.00 (Student/Youth), \$20.00 (Student/Youth, dual), \$20.00 (Senior) and \$40.00 Senior (dual).

Justice Sunday 2009

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights ... Celebrating 60 Years of Justice

On March 29, Justice Sunday, ALUUC will stand up with UU congregations nationwide to put our principles into practice. Justice Sunday 2009 celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). http://www.uusc.org/universal_declaration_of_human_rights_preamble Sixty years ago, on December 10, 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. This unprecedented document attests to the rights and worth of all people, identifying that these truths are the "foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." While we have made significant advances since the UDHR was proclaimed, there is still much to do. On Justice Sunday you will also have an opportunity to learn more about the activities of the ALUUC Social Action Committee.

Weaving a Web of Protection for Women and Girls in Darfur

The genocidal war in Sudan's Darfur region has raged for over five years. More than 300,000 people have been killed, and more than 2.5 million people are living in camps, displaced from their homes by violence and insecurity. UUSC's Rights in Humanitarian Crises Program helps to weave a web of protection for displaced women and girls, who are at particular risk of violence each time they leave their camps to collect firewood and food. Many have been attacked and raped by armed bands. With your support, UUSC is helping to establish women's centers in camps, where women can access training on human rights and advocacy and resources to start small-business projects. UUSC also helps to train male camp leaders about the particular dangers that women face in their daily lives and how best to work with them to improve protection measures. This multifaceted approach addresses women's immediate safety issues, while rebuilding respect for women, which was an integral part of Darfurian culture before the conflict. You can help to weave a web of protection for women and girls in Darfur. Learn more about UUSC's Drumbeat for Darfur campaign <http://www.uusc.org/drumbeatfordarfur>. And give to the campaign today <http://www.uusc.org/drumbeatfordarfur>.

For more information about the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee <http://www.uusc.org> or contact: Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant, Local Rep at UUSC@aluuc.org

The Pattern of Pledging

The annual pledge drive will begin at the end of this month. We are in the process of recruiting canvassers who would be willing to meet with approximately five other church members and take their pledges. Please consider volunteering.

The pledge drive is the congregation's primary source of funding. The UUA recommends that about 90% of the church's operating budget should come from pledges. Last year we raised \$146,400 which is only about 80% of the budget. As a result, we are required to engage in several fund raising efforts to balance our budget, and we had to cut out janitorial services. We will have to increase the fund raising goal this year.

In addition to not raising enough money through the pledge drive, the distribution of the pledges is problematic. Currently there are 182 members in our church. Last year there were 120 pledge units. A pledge unit is basically a family. Not all members pledge, and there are some pledges from persons who are not members. The amount pledged ranged from several thousand dollars to fifty dollars. The mean average pledge was \$1220 and the median pledge (half gave more and half less) was \$600. A more detailed contribution break down is as follows:

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Highest 20% of units | -----\$89,400 | (each 20% is 24 pledge units) |
| Next 20% | -----\$31,100 | |
| Middle 20% | -----\$15,000 | |
| Next 20% | -----\$ 7,800 | |
| Lowest 20% | -----\$ 3,100 | |
| Total | -----\$146,400 | |

We are grateful for all contributions regardless of the amount, and we are particularly grateful for the strong and loyal support shown by our core group of donors who have provided the base for the church's finances for years. A pattern of giving similar to the one found in our church is not unusual, It is to be expected that members with a long term commitment to the church and who have more disposable income will provide a high percentage of the church's income. What is problematic with this pattern is the degree to which the funding is concentrated from the larger donors. If one or more of these families were unable or stopped giving there would be a major budgetary shortfall.

The goal of this year's pledge drive will be not only to raise more money, but to increase the number of families who give and to begin the process of changing the pattern of giving. A significant financial contribution consistent with the ability to pay is one of the responsibilities of church membership. If we have a successful pledge drive, we will increase the ability of the church to expand its programs and advance its mission.

Frank Kopecky & Kent Childs.
Pledge Drive Co-Chairs

CONTACT INFORMATION

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| CLERY: | | | |
| Minister Minister Emeritus | Rev Martin Woulfe Rev Berkley Moore | | minister@aluuc.org Minister-emeritus@aluuc.org |
| STAFF: | | | |
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| BOARD OF DIRECTORS: | | | |
| President Vice President Treasurer Secretary | Gwen Childs Delinda Chapman Victoria Vincent Carol Floyd | | president@aluuc.org vicepresident@aluuc.org treasurer@aluuc.org secretary@aluuc.org |
| Board Members | Ceceilia Haasis Beverly Holmes Mark Hanson Phillip Anderson Kitty Wrigley Bill McCall | | ceceilia_haasis@yahoo.com baholmes98@warpmet.net mark_al_hanson@hotmail.com phillip74@aol.com kittywrigley@gmail.com bill.mccall@lcc.edu |
| COMMITTEES OF THE CONGREGATION: | | | |
| Committee on Ministry Nominating Committee Endowment Trust | Rebecca Anderson Roger Powers Frank Kopecky | | CoM@aluuc.org nominating@aluuc.org endowment@aluuc.org |
| COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD: | | | |
| Electronics & Communications Facilities - Aesthetics - Flower Fellowship Finance Green Sanctuary Membership & Publicity Pastoral Care Program Religious Education (RE) Social Action | Scott Wade & Jerry Zarley Kurt DeWeese Debby Hagan Vi Lanum Diana DeWeese Barbara Moore Meg Evans & Stu Jacobson Jodi Perko Michael Plog Craig Bailey Penny Wollan-Kriel Brenda Wade Tom & Rachel Zehr | | ECC@aluuc.org facilities@aluuc.org aesthetics@aluuc.org flower@aluuc.org fellowship@aluuc.org finance@aluuc.org greensanctuary@aluuc.org MPC@aluuc.org pastoralcare@aluuc.org program@aluuc.org RE@aluuc.org SAC@aluuc.org |

FYI...

Change of Address or Email: Changes can be submitted by email to Updates@aluuc.org or by completing the ALUUC Membership Update Form found in the office.

Newsletter Option: To stop receiving this newsletter by mail or to change to receive it by email, please email your request to Scott Wade at webmaster@aluuc.org

Nametags: If you need a replacement nametag, please email your request to our Office Manager, Cheryl Wycoff, at office@aluuc.org or print your name on a piece of paper and place it in the nametag slot found on the nametag rack.

March 2009

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | | | | | | |
| 1 Worship Service, 10:30am | 2 Dream Group, 7:00pm | 3 Board Meeting, 7:00pm | 4 | 5 * News Group, 7:30pm Meditation, 7:00pm | 6 | 7 Zen Meditation, 9:30am |
| 8 Worship Service, 10:30am (Daylight Saving Time) | 9 | 10 | 11 Flute Circle, 7:00pm | 12 Meditation, 7:00pm | 13 Bridge Group, 7:00pm | 14 Zen Meditation, 9:30am |
| 15 Worship Service, 10:30am Committee Meetings, 12:15pm | 16 Theologies in Dialogue Group, 7:00pm | 17 Adult RE: Music & Spirituality, 6:00pm | 18 | 19 Meditation, 7:00pm | 20 Labyrinth Walk, 7:00pm Newsletter Deadline | 21 Zen Meditation, 9:30am |
| 22 Worship Service, 10:30am | 23 Humanist Group, 7:00pm | 24 * Book Group, 7:30pm | 25 | 26 Meditation, 7:00pm | 27 | 28 Zen Meditation, 9:30am |
| 29 Worship Service, 10:30am | 30 | 31 | | | | |

* Event not held at the ALUUC

Dates & Times are subject to change. Please check the website calendar any changes.