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First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor, Michigan

Nurture Your Spirit. Help Heal Our World.

July Newsletter

July 1, 2014 - Vol 10, Issue 7

Worship @ UUAA

Congregational Links

UUAA Links:

[Calendar of Events](#)

[Social Justice at UUAA](#)

[UUAA.org](#)

Other Links:

[MidAmericauua.org](#)

[Standing on the Side of Love](#)

[UUA.org](#)

Join Our Mailing List!

One Worship Service at 10:00am each Sunday through August, 31
with classes for children K-8 followed by Social Hour.

July 6, 2014

"Threshold July 2014: Wrestling the Blessing"

Rev. Gail R. Geisenhainer

June into July is a liminal time for my personal year, for this Congregation, and for Unitarian Universalism. Reflections on wrestling the blessings out of our wilderness seasons and threshold times.

2014 Summer Preacher:

From Rev. Gail: "Please welcome the Reverend Kevin Tarsa to our pulpit. Rev. Kevin will be offering worship for us for three weeks. His bio information is [here](#); his worship information is listed below. **PLEASE read through his blurbs** here, there are opportunities to interact with Kevin's preparation and help to shape the services."

BIO: Rev. Kevin Tarsa has just finished a year as the Interim Minister of Music with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lansing, MI, and in August will begin serving as the Interim (Parish) Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Beaufort, SC. A native of Maple City, MI, a lifelong church musician, a religious naturalist, and a graduate of Meadville Lombard Theological School, Kevin's 26-year vocational path within UUism has been a journey into ever-deeper parish ministry.

July 13, 2014

"The Elements"

Rev. Kevin Tarsa

If you were charged with being Unitarian Universalist, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Sparked by this question and the July 14 anniversary of the mob burning of the church, home and lab of English Unitarian (and discoverer of oxygen as well as inventor of soda water) Joseph Priestly, we'll ask, "What are the essential elements of Unitarian Universalism? What is it, without which, Unitarian Universalism would no longer be

Unitarian Universalism?"

(We encourage you to **please send your own answers** to the "essential elements of UUism" question to kevintarsa@gmail.com by Wednesday, July 9. Kevin will draw upon your replies in the service.)

July 20, 2014

"Storied Lives"

Rev. Kevin Tarsa


The stories we tell about ourselves, our community, and our religious tradition shape our lives and our future in the very telling. What stories do you tell about yourself, about the First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor, and about Unitarian Universalism? What might those stories tell you about you?

(Kevin invites you to write the story of the First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor in a six-word narrative for use in the service. **Please send your six-word stories** to kevintarsa@gmail.com by Wednesday, July 17.

July 27, 2014

"Draw the Circle Wide, Draw it Wider Still"

Rev. Kevin Tarsa

Forty-two hours after he had been declared dead, our Universalist ancestor George de Benneville (1703-1793) awoke in his coffin. He returned to life with a renewed mission: to preach "the universal and everlasting gospel of boundless, universal love for the entire human race." On this day after de Benneville's birthday, let's consider stretching the edges of our own circle of care and concern. 

From Our Staff

Gleanings

Reflections from Rev. Gail R. Geisenhainer, Senior Minister



Dear Ones, All:

As I write this note I am packing bag and briefcase to be off to the General Assembly of our Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations in Providence, Rhode Island.

I have a few denominational responsibilities this year. I am presenting at a conversation for ministerial colleagues about the Lead Mentor training I attended in January. We have been learning to train other clergy in the craft of mentoring clergy new to the ministry. In past years that work has been hit or miss. Some clergy are naturally gifted mentors..., others, not so much! With the goal of strengthening our ministry well into the future, we are applying best practices to the task of mentoring. I truly enjoy the work and am grateful for the opportunity to pay back the UUA and UU Minister's

Association for the training by offering my time at GA.

I will also be part of conversations with the UUA President, Rev. Peter Morales, and the leadership of our Senior Ministers of Large UU Congregations. I expect it takes longer to say all those titles than our meetings will last. Everything is so rushed at GA. Woven throughout all my events and conversations is a recruitment effort to bring the best of Unitarian Universalist preaching to our Ann Arbor pulpit this year and in the years ahead. I will also be recruiting folks to be a part of our 150th year of celebrations.

Come July I will be back here in the church office working with the many groups preparing our year-long celebrations of the 150th Anniversary of the founding of our Congregation.

I hope to see you all on Sundays as we share in the services offered by our Summer Preachers.

Peace be with you all in the warm days ahead,

My Love to Each,
Rev. Gail

REMINDERS:

Water Communion is September 7, 2014. Bring a wee bit of water to add to the common bowl.

Water Communion + Ingathering Sunday is where we each add a wee bit of water to the common bowl as a ritual act of regathering the community to enter into the program year. Bring a bit from places you travel in the summer. Bring a bit from your kitchen tap. All are invited to bring a bit of water as we restart two services and our full fall programming.

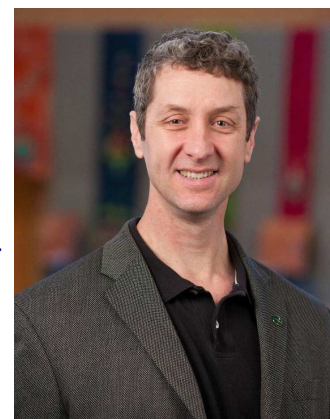


Musings

Rev. Mark Evens, Associate Minister

Providence Amid the Sun and Buzzing

To paraphrase hymn number 66, here, with the summer sun shining and the insects happily buzzing among the flowers, my heart is open and full. I connect with beauty within and without. I write from the city of Providence, Rhode Island, named for the experience of goodness and security coming from larger outside sources. I write from the beginning edge of our annual meetings of our Unitarian Universalist ministers and congregational delegates where we will renew and refine our commitment to this work we do together of building meaningful lives and aligning our lives and our common efforts with the building of a richer, more just, more peaceful tomorrow. We have accomplished much in the year gone past and will accomplish much more in the year ahead.



In the middle of July I will be on vacation for three weeks so that I can return to our shared projects with renewed energy and vision, renewed too by my time here this week in Providence. I wish you each times of renewal and rest this summer as well.

In faith,
Mark



The Business of the Church
Thom Bales, Executive Director

While summer brings dormancy to many Congregational ministries and programs, and provides a certain level of quiet in the building, the work in the Church Office nevertheless remains fairly busy, as we catch up on some outstanding tasks and prepare for the new program year.



Here are a few things to note, as well as ways you can help us during this time -

1. Receipts on annual pledges made by members and friends takes a considerable dip during the summer months. Yet, our expenses remain fairly constant. Do your best to keep up with your pledge payments. If you're planning to be away during the summer, go ahead and mail us a check, so we can maintain steady cash flow.
2. In accordance with UUAA's Building & Grounds Policies, our operating hours for scheduled activities remain the same during the summer. *We do not keep the building open when there are no scheduled activities.* Now thru August would not be a time to "show up" expecting the building to be open. However, you can continue to schedule activities and event by using the online room request form: <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e73s4ql7hdkfd2jw/a01nrhwhza6ge/greeting>.
3. Venus Gregory, our Building Attendant, has been adding 2014-2015 events to the UUAA calendar for the past few weeks and has been in touch with most recognized groups about their upcoming plans. If you are a Congregational leader and haven't been contacted by Venus, feel free to reach out to her in the very near future (venus@uuaa.org).
4. Lastly, our Butterfly Garden, Inner Sanctuary Garden, Memorial Garden, and Parking Lot Islands recently received a refresh of mulch and weeding. I hope you enjoy the photos of the Memorial Garden below!

Here's also to hoping you have a great summer.

My door is open to you.





Spiritual Growth and Development (SGD) News

Growing Together

Debra Golden, Spiritual Growth and Development Program Assistant

Our 2014 summer program **Super Plays** got off to a lively start on Sunday, June 15. We welcomed Suzanne Davidson and Robbi Duda to our teaching team, and they joined us in group introductions with the Echo game. Returning teachers included Lisa Kohn and Jamie Todd. I think they all had as much fun participating in the staged reading of "Tomorrow is Sunday" as our youth did. Yes, some grownups did play the kids' parts and vice-versa. The story centered on the hope and anxiety of going to a "new" place (UU). I am delighted with how welcoming our group is to those who are "new"...be they children or caregivers. This is especially wonderful as we have more visitors in the summer months. Sunday, June 22 teachers with Suzanne include Kate Wells, David Tumbarello, and Terry Madden.



This program, like those of recent years, lends itself to those who attend when they can. Each Sunday we will feature a different script with related theatre games and exercise as well as a discussion about the meaning of the story. We combined grades K-8 in the Fahs Chapel for the opening session and will do this when we have small groups, so there are enough readers and participants for the games. The older youth are able to help the youngest with reading lines. Those who would rather watch provide a most useful audience and have a chance to help with cues, props, and other 'backstage' needs. In all of this, they are making connections with each other, the story, and how the message relates to us as UUs. I'm posting a calendar with featured skits, so you can see what "shows" are coming up.

Wishing you a sUUPER summer,
Debra Golden



News From the Harper Room

Julie Dybdhal, Lead YRUU Advisor

The end of the school year is always hectic and this year has been no exception. YRUU has been very busy this June. Here's some of what has been happening:



- We honored eight graduating seniors in a Sunday Worship Service.
- On Saturday and Sunday, June 14-15, we had our Bridging-In-and-Out Gnomapalooza, in which we ceremonially welcomed 14 incoming Coming of Age graduates (Bridging-In) and honored five graduates (Bridging-Out) who have been consistently active in YRUU. Approximately 30 youth attended this overnight event, which began with a hilarious scavenger hunt downtown in teams of five and ended Sunday morning with bagels and clean-up. We'll miss our graduating seniors and wish them the very best, and we have a great group of rising sophomores joining the group!
- We are very busy preparing for our service trip to Appalachia from July 20-27. Twenty-five youth and 10 adult chaperones will be in rural Kentucky renovating trailer homes. We're preparing for the trip by learning about Appalachia and the culture of its people, as well as practicing some of our hammering skills.
- On four Sundays over the summer, we will be experimenting with a YRUU chalice circle led by Ginny Preuss and others.

Questions? Contact Julie Dybdahl at Julie@uuaa.org.



Childcare Happenings

Erin Dixon, Lead Teacher, Pre-School Classroom

Childcare provider positions are available.

Hi, I'm Erin Dixon. I have been the lead teacher for the pre-school classroom since 2008. Many of our youngest Congregants know me as "Miss Erin."

I also co-coordinate the Child Care Providers Program along with Maria Thomas, programs coordinator. When the words, "Child care is available" is seen on a flyer or in a notice, that's the Child Care Program in action.

I am now recruiting individuals to hire for Child Care Provider positions. This is a part-part time position offering anywhere from one to six hours per month. Providers will always work on site here at UUAU.



My ideal candidate is at least 14 years old and possesses a genuine love for and interest in children. Applicants will undergo a background check and will always be paired with another care provider at least 18 years of age. Training is provided, including Infant/Child CPR and first aid.

If you, like me, love seeing children's enthusiasm for life and wonder at the world and enjoy being with them during their "aha" moments of learning and growth, then consider joining as a part-time child care provider. Contact me at erin@uuaa.org.



Activities and Events

Senior Dinner * Wednesday, July 2

All seniors are invited to dinner at the Gourmet Garden on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:00pm to enjoy a good meal and good conversation. Questions? Contact Marie Duke at 734-769-0467 or at omaduke7@gmail.com.



Our Land for Worship (OLFW) * Sunday, July 13

OLFW presents the film *A Will for the Woods* to be shown at the UUAU on Sunday, July 13 at 11:30am.

What if our last act could be a gift to the planet? This film captures the genesis of a revolutionary social and environmental movement to draw the viewer into a life-affirming and immersive portrait of people embracing their connection to timeless natural cycles through the act of choosing a green burial.

The film follows musician, folk dancer, and psychiatrist Clark Wang as he prepares for his own green burial, determined that his final resting place will benefit the earth. Clark, a spirited and charismatic advocate, sets out to save a tract of forest with the help of green burial pioneers and the compassionate owner of a local cemetery. Questions? Contact Mona Walz at mlwalz@sbcglobal.net.



Bridge * Sunday, July 13

The UU bridge group will play bridge this summer on Sundays July 13 and August 10, beginning at 12:30pm in the Emerson Room. Folks may gather in the Wright Room prior to the game to eat their lunch if they wish. We are intermediate to advanced players and welcome new people to our group. If you would like further information, you may contact Karen Bourdon at kbourdon1@sbcglobal.net.



Announcements and Notices

150th Anniversary Celebration

Terry Madden and Sandy Simon, Co-Chairs



At the June 1 Congregational meeting, Sandy Simon and Terry Madden presented an update on the status of the 150th Anniversary celebration to be held from the Kickoff celebration on September 29 to the Gala Celebration on May 17, 2015. Those who were not able to attend the Congregational meeting can get an update by going to uuaa.org/150.

At the meeting Sandy said, "We stand on the shoulders of all of those people who have signed our historic membership book, a long stream of reasonable and compassionate activists who influenced who and where we are today....

...our main goal for the 150th Anniversary celebration is to encourage every person of every age in the Congregation to join in making make this anniversary year *special*. We hope each of you individually and in groups you belong to will find your own ways to make this year fun, engaging, and deeply meaningful as we all take time to appreciate 150 years of Reason and Compassion in Action."

To volunteer to help with projects, contact Sandy Simon or Terry Madden directly or go to birthday150@uuaa.org.



2015 Annual Budget Campaign

Jim Lee, Chair

An essential element of Unitarian Universalist principles includes leading a generous life such as respecting the inherent worth and dignity of *every* person, and practicing justice, equity and compassion in our human relations. Being generous with our time, talent and treasure is another way that we fulfill our mutual commitment to both UUAA and our greater world.

The planning and giving of your time and treasure can be a joyous practice throughout the year. I ask that you consider a commitment this coming fall for the 2015 Annual Budget Campaign (ABC) of at least a "Fair Share Commitment" as presented below.

Our goal for 2015 is 100% participation in the ABC, and 75% or more people self-recognized as having made at least a fair share commitment. This level of generosity ensures a bright and thriving future for UUAA. In the fall, you will hear from our Trustees, staff, and me regarding some specifics about how your generosity will enhance UUAA's programs and benefit our community.

Please consider committing a generous, fair share of your income to our UUAA mission.

Annual Income	Suggested Fair Share of Income	Annual Commitment
\$10,000	1%	\$100
\$25,000	2%	\$500
\$50,000	3%	\$1,500
\$75,000	4%	\$3,000
\$100,000	5% or more	\$5,000 or more
\$150,000	5% or more	\$7,500 or more
\$200,000	5% or more	\$10,000 or more

Direct comments and questions to annualcampaign@uuaa.org.

Yours in Community,
Jim Lee



Accessibility Team

The Accessibility Team is celebrating it's first anniversary. We want to thank many individuals: Rev. Gail and Rev. Mark for their strong support; the UUAA Board of Trustees; Executive Director Thom Bales for initiating accessibility-related changes; John Erdevig and his team for considering accessible signage on our land; Meredith Ley and the Pastoral Care Education Team for co-sponsoring a panel session and inclusive workshops in the future; Hannah Hotchkiss for incorporating disability issues in training/educational materials; Sandy Garges and her team for addressing (in)visible disability in the SGD curriculum. Your, and many others, "buying into" this Disability/Ability Action Program has been and continues to be a key to success.

Questions or suggestions? Contact Els Nieuwenhuijsen at elsni@comcast.net or Priscilla Spencer at paspencer44@yahoo.com.



Mindful Eating Coalition (MEC)



Produce sharing is coming soon. Gardeners and fresh veggie lovers take note: Beginning Sunday, July 13, and continuing every Sunday throughout the growing season, the MEC table will have

fresh produce donated by our gardeners to be shared with any and all. There will be no charge but donations are welcome and will be used to support the UUSC Haitian Gardens project. Information about this project will be available at the MEC and Social Justice Council tables during Social Hour or follow the link to the UUSC web site: http://actnow.uusc.org/site/PageNavigator/100_Congregations_100_Gardens.html

Gardeners are welcome to bring surplus veggies, herbs, and fruits and leave them at the MEC table. If something new or unusual is introduced, supplying labels and directions for use are helpful.

Questions? Contact Merrill Crockett at crockettmerrill@aol.com.



UUSC Coffee Project



When Church member Nikki Cusick buys her 2 lb. bag of Fair Trade Organic French Roast at Social Hour, she is adding funds to the Church and to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) Small Farmer Fund. Plus, she says it is the best coffee she has ever tasted.

With her purchase, Nikki is also connecting with coffee farmers like Pedro Perez Lopez, a member of CIRSA Co-op, Chiapas, Mexico, who says "Consumers and farmers must continue to walk together in this cooperative effort for the good of all."

UUSC collaborates with Equal Exchange to work closely with small farm cooperatives around the world in Fair Trade practices, environmental sustainability, and advancing human rights. Come and visit in the Social Hall on Sundays to see the variety of Fair Trade organic coffee, tea, cocoa products, nuts, extra virgin olive oil, and more. It's called "A Taste of Justice".



Scrip Thank UU's

"Thank you" to all of the regular Scrip users who purchase Scrip both online and at the Scrip table on Sundays during Social Hour. These efforts have already accounted for nearly \$5,250 worth of income for the Congregation in 2014.



Don't forget to take Scrip on vacation - for transportation, hotels, restaurants, car rentals, groceries, and gasoline. Just be sure to plan ahead. If it's a "staycation", use scrip for home improvement, garden supplies, or a night at the movies, as well as groceries and gasoline. Questions? Contact Carloyn Barber at 734-665-0884 or cmbponyclub@sbcglobal.net.



Partner Church

Phyllis Valentine, co-chair



We're back from the pilgrimage to our Partner Church in Transylvania!

The six of us (Nancy and Steve Schewe, Jan Bower, Cathy and Mike Muha, and I) spent a wonderful 10 days learning about our Unitarian heritage, seeing the sights, enjoying great food, and, most of all, basking in the warm welcome of our hosts in Kézdivásárhely and Szentivanlaborfalva. Starting in

Budapest, we celebrated Pentecost and Unitarian communion at 1st Unitarian. Moving on by train to Kolozsvár, Romania, we met up with our former partner church minister, Rev. Maria Pap and her daughter, Abigel, as well as Rev. Robbie Balint, our tour guide from the 2008 trip. We enjoyed a visit to the Unitarian Church archives, where archivist Rev. Lahel Molnar Bodrogi, showed us many documents, including some signed by Francis David.

On our way to an evening in Székelyderzs, we stopped in Torda to see the site of the declaration of religious tolerance, and in Marosvásárhely to see the 1920's Unitarian Church and the Teleki Library, founded in 1802, and the first public library in the Kingdom of Hungary. The Church of Székelyderzs provided a typical peasant meal in the bastion wall. And yes, we did stop at Dracula's hometown, Segesvár, and escaped unharmed.

Our Partner Church minister, Rev. Istvan Buzogany-Csoma, his wife Csilla, and his church boards orchestrated an incredible welcome for us. We stayed with families in Kezdi and enjoyed outings, visits to artisan bread makers and bone carvers in the



The group, our hosts, Kezdi Board members, and Istvan and his family.

village, wonderful meals and conversations, and a very moving church service in the village that included the men's and women's ecumenical choirs. Istvan and Csilla's two young daughters provided their own special welcome.

We have much to share about this trip, from history to partnership, so look for articles in the Newsletter from the travelers about different aspects. We will be sharing more photos also. Stop us to ask about any aspect that interests you. We had a wonderful time!



Trail Signs Upgrade

As a contribution to the 150th Anniversary, the Men's Council is sponsoring a project to upgrade trail signs on the "Back-40". Dates for the project are one-half day on Saturdays August 2 and 9. To sign up to help out or for more information, contact Tom Longworth at tenniscarol@comcast.net or 734-434-4609.



Snowbirds Chalice Pilot

Beginning in the fall of 2014, a pilot program for a shorter term Chalice Circle will start in early September and conclude in December 2014. This represents an effort to make the Chalice Circle experience available to Congregation members and friends who leave Michigan for much of the winter. If this sounds appealing, contact Margaret Pekarek at mdawsonpekarek@gmail.com.

Registration for the pilot Chalice Circle will begin in July and will be separate from the larger Chalice Circle program.



Sharing the Collection



The first Sunday Service collection of every month is donated to a non-profit community service organization in Washtenaw County that serves disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, such as low income families and individuals, people who have been targets of discrimination or disabled or abused populations. Community support is depended upon for funding and volunteers.

The July collection will go to Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County (CSSW)-Senior Services. Older adults face many challenges. From illness and caregiving to needing basic household repairs or tax assistance, CSSW has designated community-based programs to help support adults who are age 55 and older. Through volunteers, staff, and collaborations with community partners, CSSW is able to facilitate services including: resource advocacy, tax assistance, caregiver respite, volunteer opportunities, Medicare and Medicaid assistance, help for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren, medical transportation (limited), chore, home safety, adult day, elder and substance abuse screening, and various community presentations. Check out csswashtenaw.org

Questions? Contact chair Terry Madden at terence.madden@gmail.com.



Social Justice Council

Join members of the Social Justice Council at hear the four Ann Arbor mayoral candidates: Sabra Briere, Stephen Kunselman, Sally Hart Petersen, and Christopher Taylor address issues of affordable housing and homelessness at a public forum hosted by St. Clare Episcopal Church and Temple Beth Emeth on Tuesday, July 15 at 7:00pm at 2309 Packard Road.

Sponsored by over 30 local congregations and organizations that serve people experiencing homelessness, the forum will provide an opportunity to learn about each candidate's approach to reducing homelessness in the community. Candidates will give brief presentations then address audience questions. The evening promises to be a great way for citizens to learn how the next mayor will approach these pressing issues. A reception will follow.

Questions? Contact Kate Warner at kpwarner@umich.edu or 734-662-1820.



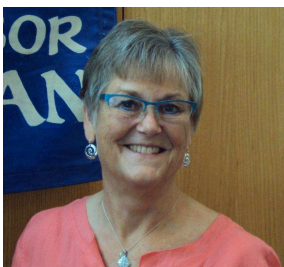
Road Construction

The road work on Ann Arbor-Saline Road between Eisenhower and Oak Valley Drive is scheduled to last through August affecting many routes to Sunday Service. Here are links with detour maps from the [Washtenaw County Road Commission](#), on [construction phases](#), and more [detour details](#).



New Members

Lexie Bopp



"I discovered the UUA Church through a friend at the University of Michigan. I was looking for a church that was welcoming, open, and active in social justice action. This Church certainly fit all of those categories and much more. I lost my partner one year ago and have struggled to gain footing again and discover what my life will look like without her in it. The members of the Church have been friendly and supportive as I walk this new path. I look forward to becoming an active and giving member of this community."



Church Office News

Building Hours:

Sundays, 8:00am-9:00pm
Mondays-Thursdays, 9:00am-9:00pm
Fridays, CLOSED
Saturdays, 9:00am-5:00pm

The Church Office is open Mondays-Thursdays from 9:00am-5:00pm

Telephone: 734-665-6158
Fax: 734-665-7895
General Email: office@uuaa.org

Communicating at UUAU:

The deadline for submitting UUAU event, news, and program notices for inclusion in UUAU's Weekly Bulletin is 5:00pm each Wednesday. Send submissions to bulletin@uuaa.org.

The deadline for submitting UUAU event, news, and program notices for inclusion in UUAU's August Newsletter is 9:00am on Monday, July 21. Send your submissions to newsletter@uuaa.org.

Lay and staff program leaders may submit changes, additions, or updates for the website (www.uuaa.org) to webtech@uuaa.org.

For more information about how to get things done at UUAU, refer to the Lay Leader Administrative Guide. ([click here](#)).

Building & Office Team:

Thom Bales, Executive Director, thom@uuaa.org
Debby Casamatta, Office Administrator, deborah@uuaa.org
Venus Gregory, Weekend Building Attendant, venus@uuaa.org
Arthur Whigham, Weekend Custodian, arthur@uuaa.org
Dewon Lewis, Weeknight Custodian, dewon@uuaa.org.



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