



The Chalice Flame

The Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent

August 2011

Sunday Services

9:30 and 11:15 am

228 Gougler Ave.

Kent, Ohio 44240

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www.kentuu.org

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Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziener
minister-uukent@sbcglobal.net

Minister's office hours:

Tuesday - Friday

By appointment

Congregational

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MaryBeth Hannan

Office hours:

Mon. through Fri. 9 - 1:30

Religious Ed. Director:

Karen Lapidus

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DRE's Office Hours:

Tuesday and/or Wednesday

By appointment

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Deadline:

The 15th each month

What does it mean to be a Unitarian Universalist? That is a question I have been thinking a lot about this summer. At our annual General Assembly in June we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the consolidation of the historic Unitarian and Universalist denominations. There were many wonderful workshops and worship services exploring who we have been, who we are now and who we hope to become. If you are interested, you can check out lots of free content from the General Assembly on line at <http://www.uua.org/ga/2011/index.shtml> I especially recommend the outstanding Sunday morning worship service led by the Revs. Scott Tayler and Kaaren Anderson, senior co-ministers at the First Unitarian Church in Rochester, NY.

What does it mean to be a Unitarian Universalist? I know some of you have been thinking about that question too – not only those who attended General Assembly and the Unitarian Universalist Leadership Team Institute with me, but also many of the 108 people from our congregation who were in attendance at the Ohio Meadville District Summer Institute last week. The moderator of our Board of Trustees, Christopher Gargoline, and I decided to ask the members of the board a related question as a way to center and open our meeting last night. The reflections I heard from them and the comments I have heard from those of you who have had Unitarian Universalist intensive experiences this summer are so rich.

That is why I have decided to dedicate the whole month of August to an exploration of what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist at this moment in time. Over the course of the last three Sundays in the month, we will focus our worship services on topics in Unitarian Universalist history, theology and ethics. My hope is that these services will be engaging and stimulating to people who have already chosen this religious path as well as to those who are interested in learning more about what this religious tradition is all about. If you have been thinking about inviting a friend or family member to church with you, August would be a great time to go ahead and extend that invitation.

In addition to the services, I will be offering an adult religious exploration class beginning in August which will explore a Unitarian Universalist approach to ethics grounded in virtue. The Rev. Dr. Galen Guengerich, Senior Minister of All Souls Unitarian Church in New York City, created the series we will use which is called *The Necessity of Virtue*. "Unitarian Universalists believe in virtue:" he writes, "the personal spiritual discipline of becoming the kind of individuals we ought to become, so that we might live as human beings ought to live. This presentation aims to examine our individual capacity to strive for moral excellence always and everywhere. What is your ethical basis for deciding what to do and how to live?"

This class will run for four consecutive Thursdays from 7 – 9 beginning on Thursday, August 25 and will meet in the (air conditioned) Eldredge Annex. During each class we will view the video for two of the series segments followed by a discussion. Each class

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Upcoming Sermons

31 July

Strands of Earth Spirit From Our Web

Christie Anderson, CLL and Worship Associate Lori McGee

Do you know the difference between Pagans, Wiccans and Druids? We will explore these distinctions as well as the historical and contemporary connections between earth-centered faith traditions and Unitarian Universalism.

7 August

Put Your Troubles on the Bus

Guest Worship Leader Tom Beck and Worship Associate Max Grubb

Our Seven Principles include the phrases "inherent worth and dignity of every person," "compassion in human relations," and "acceptance of one another." These elements of the Seven Principles focus on empathy and compassion but where does one begin in understanding the complexities of human nature in order to extend empathy and compassion to another person? Tom Beck is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Akron and an Administrator and Teacher at The University of Akron. Tom is the dad of three adult married sons and grandfather of two with another one on the way.

14 August

Not By Common Belief, But By Common Promise

Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer and Worship Associate Trish McLoughlin

Unitarian Universalists are not bound together in common belief. We have no dogma, we have no creeds. What we do have is covenant. We are bound by common promise. In this sermon we will explore the history and significance of covenant in our religious tradition.

21 August

You Can't Be a Unitarian Universalist All By Yourself

Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer and Worship Associate Kathy Kerns

To be a Unitarian Universalist is to be united in covenantal community with other people. Our religious tradition is inherently relational; it requires our participation. This morning we will explore the theology of covenant in our religious tradition.

28 August

Striving for Right Relationship

Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer and Worship Associate Eric Van Baars

Unitarian Universalists are people who strive to live ethical lives in alignment with our deepest values. But we don't always get it right. The best we can do is keep striving to live in right relationship. Come reflect on some of the ethical tensions of living in covenantal community.



Banners from UU congregations around the country line up for the parade into the meeting hall at General Assembly in Charlotte last month.

Moderator's Corner

The last few days I have been thinking about a topic for this month's article—with little success, I might add. The distractions of summer and, of life in general, seem to continually pull my attention in different directions. As I sit at my workspace in the dining room I can see the leaves from my ornamental cherry tree and from birches on the ground, brought down by the recent rain. Obviously summer is moving through our lives with a rampaging energy toward the fall. General Assembly has come and gone, and many of you are now enjoying the fellowship of Summer Institute. Others may be away for the summer vacationing or even traveling to distant lands to bring home their long awaited child. The seasons change. The seasons of our lives change, too.

We've just completed our first month as a new Board and I am energized by the prospects of working with these folks, each one bringing a wonderful portfolio of experiences, skills, and ideas to Church governance. The Board sat for its first official meeting in early June, and new members of the Board later attended an orientation meeting. We have good conversations and it is obvious that each person is truly committed to the well-being of the Church. I've started to think about the Board retreat in August and look forward to it with some anticipation. During that meeting, we will identify our personal goals for this Board year and further explore policy-based governance and strategic planning.

A frequent topic that often arises during our meetings is change. In fact, there have been some good reflections about the changes that have occurred over the past few years as we move in alignment with our Mission, Vision, and Covenant. Sometimes our progress toward our goals seems positively glacial, it happens so slowly. But change will come without a doubt, in its time as we work toward it planfully and strategically. "Nothing happens until something moves."

Christopher Gargoline



General Assembly Report

This year our UU denomination celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Unitarian and Universalist faith traditions. Even though our founding religions have been around since the Revolutionary War they were only merged in 1961. There was a lot going on this year and some of us were in the thick of it. Our dear Rev. Melissa served on the Right Relationship Team. Passions can and do run high at General Assembly (GA) and sadly good folks sometimes say the wrong things – coming out as disrespectful and oppressive speech – Melissa's team is there to provide pastoral care and remind our UUs there are UU suitable ways to disagree with each other. Melissa was also elected to serve as President Elect for the UUs for Racial Equity (next year she will be President). Our Susan Goekler was very busy in her new role as Commissioner on the UUA Commission for Social Witness. She helped facilitate the final editing and passage on the Ethical Eating Statement of Conscience – our own Kent Intentional Eating group provided input to this statement. Besides coordinating a workshop as Chair of the UU Peace Ministry Network, my fellow Anti-Death Penalty board members elected me President of UU for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. Also, I resumed my role as the Ohio Meadville District Regional Coordinator for our UU Service Committee.

Much of the GA discussion centered on what a Justice GA will look like. This started last year when our Melissa and others brokered a compromise to have a minimal business/Justice GA in Phoenix next year instead of boycotting Phoenix (due to Arizona's anti-immigrant laws). Much still needs to be done and emotions and passions are still high – just as they were last year when the compromise was agreed to. We will work this out.

Mac Goekler

Annual Program Fund Drive Update

Many thanks goes to those who have pledged to support our Annual Program Fund Membership Drive. As of June 30, 2011 our members pledged a total of \$11,484.00. Your support has permitted us to pay our full fair membership dues to the Ohio Meadville District and approximately 1/2 of our fair share membership dues to the UUA. Your continued generosity is very much appreciated!

Summer Institute Magic

I am a wee bit reluctant to write about my experience at the Ohio Meadville District's annual Summer Institute knowing that not all of us were there. Even though more than 108 members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent were in attendance at Kenyon College during the second week of July, I know that it is difficult for folks to get the time off and/or get the finances together to be gone for a week. But I do think that the perspectives gained by those who attend SI oozes into our community (in a good way!) and affects who we are together for the rest of the year.

Consistently being the church that sends the most people to SI (despite not being among the largest churches in the OMD) has been a source of well-deserved pride for us. It means that we enjoy being together. Be it making music, creating art, sharing our special ways of engaging in the Harry Potter stories, learning about how we can be agents of change, playing games or sharing in worship, collectively we cherish our shared experiences and our opportunities to strengthen our relationships.

As always, there were many magical moments. Knowing that I can't name them all, I best not name any, but I encourage those of you who went to **share your SI magic stories** with others who were there and with those who were not there. Sharing the stories of kindnesses offered, friendships deepened, challenges met, tears dried and inspirations stirred is essential for bringing the SI magic back home to our church.

Just after lunch on Friday, we had our church photograph taken as we sat on the steps of the assembly hall. We completely filled each tier of steps and even had to crowd onto the adjacent ledges. As folks were coming up the path from the dining hall to the assembly hall to get into the picture, we were cheering them on, clapping and calling their names! It was so much fun! And, it was magical! At that moment (and even now as I write this), I was filled with joy and amazing gratitude to be a part of this wonderful community of friendly and loving people who truly enjoy and affirm each other.

In faith and with love,

Karen Lapidus, Director of Religious Education

In the Library

Andrew Bores has completed the inventory process for the library collection, so we are again adding titles. In addition Andrew has prepared reports on missing items and on how many and which titles are circulating. The latter can help us decide in what areas to expand the collection. Copies of the up-to-date library catalog are available in the library and will be available on the church website in the near future.

One of the books being added in August is *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life* by Karen Armstrong (New York, Knopf, 2011). One of the most original thinkers on the role of religion in the modern world—author of such acclaimed books as *A History of God*, *Islam*, and *Buddha*—Armstrong now gives us an impassioned and practical book that can help us make the world a more compassionate place.

Karen Armstrong believes that while compassion is intrinsic in all human beings, each of us needs to work diligently to cultivate and expand our capacity for compassion. Here, in this straightforward, thoughtful, and thought-provoking book, she sets out a program that can lead us toward a more compassionate life.

Kaaren Armstrong presented the Ware Lecture at General Assembly 2011. The lecture was titled: "The Challenge of Compassion."

Martha Kluth, Church Library

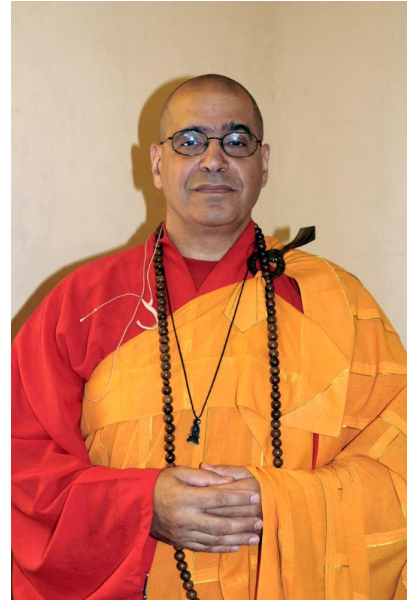


Book Group Meeting

The Book Group will be meeting on Tuesday, August 19 at 6 pm in the home of Annie Brightbill. If you are interested, we will meet at the church at 5 pm so we can car-pool. This month we are reading *State of Wonder* by Ann Patchett. Award-winning "New York Times"-bestselling author Patchett returns with a provocative novel of morality and miracles, science and sacrifice set in the Amazon rainforest - a gripping adventure story and a profound look at the difficult choices we make in the name of discovery and love. In the month of September we will be reading *The Hotel at the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* by Jamie Ford. If you have any questions you may contact Bonnie Harper .

New UU class August 7

Have you been waiting and wanting to learn more about Unitarian Universalism in general and the UU Church of Kent in particular? Our quarterly class for folks new to our church will meet on Sunday, August 7, from 9 to 11 am in the Eldredge Annex, the house next door to the church. If you have any questions, or know that you will be attending, please contact Marion Yeagler.



The Venerable Shih Ying-Fa from the Cloudwater Zendo in Cleveland gave a sermon at our church last month.

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can stand alone so you are welcome to come to any or all of the four sessions, though the first session will include an introduction to the whole series. The schedule for the series is as follows:

August 25 – Virtue as the Key to Happiness (Introduction) and Wisdom
September 1 - Courage and Compassion
September 8 - Justice and Temperance
September 15 – Transcendence and Hope

I hope you are finding what you need this summer and I look forward to seeing you in church.

Peace,

Melissa

P.S. As a reminder, I will be out of town serving on the staff for another Unitarian Universalist Leadership Team Institute from 7/24 through 7/27. From 7/28 through 8/2 I will be on vacation and our Commissioned Lay Leader, Christie Anderson, will be available for urgent concerns. From 8/3 through 8/7 I will have a few more days of study leave. I will be back in the office on a regular schedule beginning 8/9.

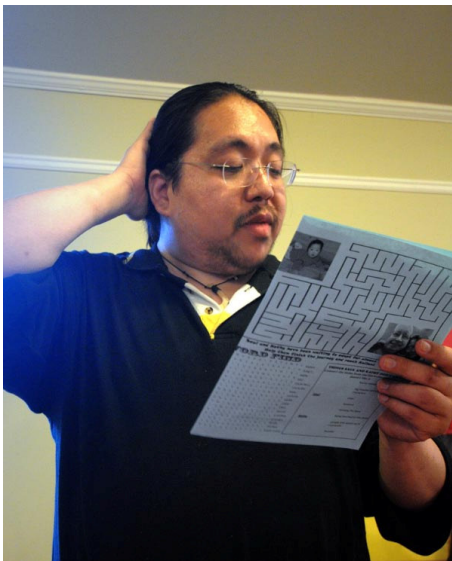


One of many, many pieces of fabric and well wishes that was included in a book.



Gifts galore await the arrival of Kailani.

Saul
and
Kathy's
most
excellent
baby
shower



Kathy and Saul's best friend Kai led the playing of games



Kathy said "And this sign is meant for me!"

August Church Events

31 10:30 Pancakes 12:15 Pancakes #2 7-9 AA FH	1 5:30 Tai chi	2 Thread/Web and eNuus deadline	3	4	5	6
7 9-11a New U class EA p5 12:30-2:30 SJC EA 7-9 AA FH	8 5:30 Tai chi	9 Thread/Web and eNuus deadline 12-1:30 Retirees lunch F	10 7:30 Board mtg. EA	11	12	13 9:30p-12a Worship Ass. EA
14 7-9 AA FH	15 5:30 Tai chi Newsletter deadline	16 Thread/Web and eNuus deadline	17	18	19	20
21 9:30-10:30a chat w/ Moderator 7-9 AA FH	22 5:30 Tai chi	23 Thread/Web and eNuus deadline 6-8:00 RE com. EA	24	25 7-9 Adult RE EA	26 6-8 church reserved 8-10 Backbone concert	27
28 10:30 Pancakes 12:15 Pancakes #2 6:30 Adult choir 7-9 AA FH	29 5:30 Tai chi	30 Thread/Web and eNuus deadline	31	1 7-9 Adult RE EA	2	3

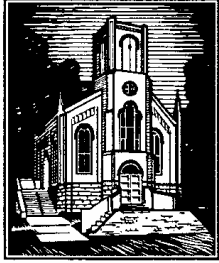
Tai Chi: 7:00 Advanced, 7:30 Intermediate, 8:00 Beginner - Yoga and Tai Chi are held in Fessenden Hall
EA- Eldredge Annex; FH- Fessenden Hall; FL- Founders' Lounge; L- Library; S- Sanctuary; N- Nursery;
Calendar does not reflect changes or additions after July 22

A complete and up-to-date church calendar can be viewed at
<http://www.localendar.com/public/uukent> or through a link on our website at www.uukent.org.



On the way to the great
hall at General
Assembly in Charlotte.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent
228 Gougler Ave.
Kent, OH 44240



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