

# UUCRV NEWS

Published by and for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rock Valley  
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Visit us at [www.uucrv.org](http://www.uucrv.org)



## February 2018

### Monthly Schedule

**2/4** – Allen Harden ***“This atheist learned to pray, and still prays.”*** How do we find and get started with personal religious practice? What does it mean and do for us? I will explore how we might we bring presence into our daily lives, merge reverence with routine, and find ways to build and hold our own sense of connection and grounding. I will use observations I made as a hospital chaplain, and my personal journey of finding a prayer practice through time spent with patients, as one example.

12:00 – Worship Committee Meeting

**2/11** – ***“Lessons from Secret TV Week”*** - Misha Sanders “Family love stories shape us. Sometimes we don't notice how profound a moment was until decades later, after countless retellings. We'll talk about the love stories that connect the generations, and how they can move us to create our own.”

Pussyhat Sunday (information found later in the newsletter)

**2/14** – 10:30 *Compassion Meditation* led by Susan Busker

**2/18** – Allen Harden ***“Exploring the Divine.”*** “We each hold notions of ultimate meaning, of God or *not*-God. Most UUs are seekers, and tend to form personal understandings of the ultimate and how they feel about and experience spirituality.

I will consider how beliefs, understandings of ultimate meaning, and our sense of purpose and interconnection operate in our shared lives, and ways that religious understandings emerge from our shared being.”

UUCRV will also be acknowledging Grant Heckel's accomplishing the requirements for the Boy Scouts of America's "Religion" badge. Grant has also completed the requirements for the UUA's "Religion in Life" program. Join us in celebrating Grant's accomplishment by witnessing the receipt of the UUA Religion in Life pin ceremony.

12:00 – Board Meeting

**2/21** – 10:00 – Small Group Discussion *“Love”*

**2/28** – *“Love”*, Lay led service using *Touchstones*

### ***Minster's Reflections***

A rain-drizzled Monday morning, a bit odd for January, especially in a year that brought the Arctic to us several times already. I sit in my Rockton apartment, watching wetness through the window while I wait for the Internet installer to connect me to the wider world. I need Internet connection to do my work, to get to ideas, to get to news, to get to you.

I have one month with UUCRV behind me, and I contemplate --Where am I with this new position? Where is UUCRV as a congregation? Where are we together in our shared ministry to one another and to the world? I don't really have answers to any of these questions yet, but I do have feelings.

And the feelings are good. I feel real warmth among you -- warmth coming from the kindness and caring in your hearts; warmth emanating from the fires of concern and commitment that burn in your souls. If the aim of most religious teaching is to bring hospitality and compassion into our being, then the congregation of UUCRV is already well along on the road to mastery. And that is how it should be -- the world, in my humble opinion, needs us to be its gurus. We just have to figure out how to let them know this.

My first month mostly involved learning. I am on a mission to devour everything I can about you -- your history, your culture, your tastes and preferences, your aspirations; about the area -- the communities, geography, problems and resources, where I might eat and play. I am gradually meeting and starting to know many of you and learn some of the things you care about and do. I am becoming familiar with how you work to serve one another and sustain your church home. I like what I find here in this wonderful, small, and vibrant church community you created.

I need your help to engage further in the life of UUCRV -- mostly I need help getting to know each of you better. I invite people to talk to me -- about yourselves, your lives, what matters to you. In order to minister to you and with you, I need to know you. And because this is a small congregation, I really do need to know each of you. Please find me -- in the church, during office hours, by appointment, for coffee, over the phone, or by email. I encourage any of the above. If you believe that you should call on a Minister only with a crisis, or that you shouldn't "bother" me, then you and I are not on the same wavelength.

It is still raining, and the Internet installer is still somewhere else. But all will transpire, and grow, and improve over time. I have faith in that.

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office hours on the days before 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays.

Fridays 1:00 pm -- 4:00 pm (this month, Feb 2, 16)

Saturdays 11:00 am -- 1:00 pm (this month, Feb 3, 17) and other times by appointment.

### **Committee & Task Force Information**

**Worship:** Allen Harden (our new ½ time minister) and Misha Sanders will be giving the worship message 3 Sundays month. We will have various lay led services the other Sunday/s.

The Worship Committee is still recruiting ideas/speakers for the remaining church year. (And the upcoming church year!) If you have a speaker or a service you would like to present, see any of the Worship Committee members or Susan Busker. Wendy Edgington

**ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Small Group Discussion:** The February Touchstones Discussion Group meets at the church February 21 at 10:00 a.m. Lynda Johnson will be the discussion leader - please read the Touchstones packet sent to all members. All are invited every to join us. Questions? Call Connie Matusiak, gratefully our leader, who keeps us "on topic" for great discussions. 608-361-9669.

Submitted by Lynda Johnson

### **Green Corner**

Here are some enviro-news tidbits that you may have missed on Fox News:

The largest coal-fired generating plant west of the Mississippi is due to close in 2019.

Scientists in Ireland have learned how to make electricity from tears. (I'm curious as to how they generate enough tears to make this possible).

Fewer people are dying of lightning strikes. That's because fewer people are going outside. Kenyans who produce, sell or use plastic bags face a \$40,000 fine or four years in prison. After Hurricane Maria, some Puerto Ricans are forced to drink water from Superfund hazardous- waste sites.

In the last 40 years, the sperm count and quality in men from North America, Europe and Australia has declined by half.

And finally, we end on a happy note. Oregon joins 20 other states in making it legal to eat roadkill. Ray Herzer

### ***Celebrating the Life and Carrying Out the Work of Martin Luther King, Jr.***

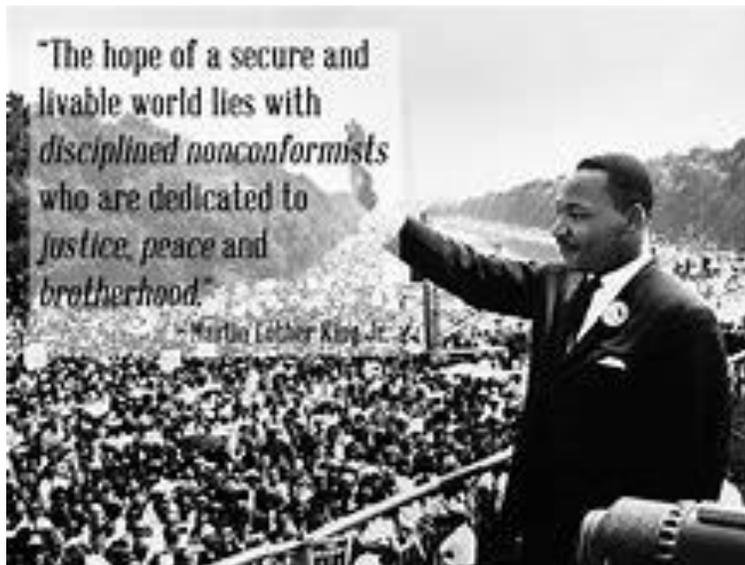
Allen Harden led a group of UUCRV members in a service and discussion on the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr., including his "I Have a Dream" speech delivered during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963. In the speech, King calls for an end to racism and for civil and economic rights. Standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, King talked about the Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves in 1863 and noted that "one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free." Now, over 54 years after King spoke, there is still much to be done to end racism and ensure civil and economic rights for all.



Sixteen UUCRV members attended this event, including some of our youth who were off school due to the holiday. Participants broke into small groups to discuss the following:

- ✦ How was our personal understanding of race formed?
- ✦ What influenced our earliest thoughts about race?
- ✦ What were memorable causes of shift in our attitudes?
- ✦ Where do we see racism around us?
- ✦ Do we feel that responding to racism is possible?

The service included these words from Rev. King: ***"This is where we are. Where do we go from here?"*** Let this be a renewal of ongoing reflection, discussion and action to end racism and ensure civil and economic rights for all. *Where do we go from here?*



Susan Busker

## Birthdays

2 – Mariah Gomez

10 – Grant Heckel

17 – Alicia Jenski

24 – Zoey Kavari-Zimmerman

27 - Dianna Kevari

### **“The single greatest problem with small churches is perception.”**

The Strategically Small Church, Brandon J. O’Brien, p. 36

In his book, *The Strategically Small Church*, Brandon J. O’Brien elaborates on what he means by “strategically small.” Does he mean that churches should have a goal of remaining small? No, he says that “Strategically small does not mean ‘intentionally small’...A strategically small church is one that has become comfortable being small, because it has learned to recognize the unique advantages of its size...A strategically small church realizes it can accomplish things that larger churches cannot. This doesn’t make it better or godlier. But it means it can proceed in ministry not from a sense of its deficiencies, but from confidence in its strengths.” (O’Brien, p. 14) *How do you see us proceeding in our ministry based on our strengths?*

The problems often cited by others (and maybe by ourselves) regarding small churches aren’t necessarily problems. Small churches likely need to take different actions from those taken by larger churches, but different isn’t better or worse, just different. O’Brien says that “Low attendance, small budgets, and limited staff are not, in and of themselves, problematic. What is problematic are the insecurities and defensiveness that result when we fail to live up to expectations of success established by a handful of churches. As a dear friend and mentor of mine likes to say, you can do two things about expectations. You can meet them, or you can change them. I say we change them.” (O’Brien, p. 36) *What expectations might we need to change, expectations others have expressed for us or expectations we have set for ourselves?*

In many of the readings I have done on small congregations, it is mentioned that large churches have come to understand some of the benefits of small congregations. O’Brien says “It’s ironic if you think about it. Larger churches are spending their considerable financial and personnel resources to re-create the small-church experience. Meanwhile, smaller churches are expending extraordinary

energy and resources, burning through clergy and volunteers alike, in an effort to get big...Instead of trying to imitate large-church ministry, small churches would do well to recognize and capitalize on their own inherent and strategic strengths." (O'Brien, p. 35) *What of our strengths as a small church do we recognize and capitalize on?*

I embrace the concept of evangelism regarding Unitarian Universalism, that is spreading the "good news" of our faith, and hope that our congregation might be of support to other small congregations so they might continue to thrive. And, who knows, maybe one day we might be of support to an even newer congregation just starting up. "The church is meant to grow...This doesn't mean that every local church should keep getting bigger and bigger'...evangelism doesn't lead to bigger churches. It leads to more churches." (Neil Cole in The Strategically Small Church by Brandon J. O'Brien , p. 48). *What would this country be like if there were a Unitarian Universalist congregation in every*

*community, accessible to everyone?*      *Susan Busker*      UUCRV President

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!!**

Would all women and men, girls and boys, who believe in equality for the sexes, please wear a pink/red pussyhat to church on Feb, 11, the closest Sunday to Valentine's Day - *if you wish*.

If you do not have such a hat and would like one, Gloria Shaffer, a member of the congregation, has volunteered to knit one for everyone who wants one. So far five of us have received one and three more are on order. Gloria works full time and does not promise them all by Feb. 11, but she will continue to knit until your orders to her are complete. This is her contribution to the church.

Please let me know if you wish such a hat and I will pass the orders to her. You will have one ready for the next march you attend whether in Washington, Chicago, Beloit or Rockford! Or just for church on **February 11, 2018!!!!!!** Jan Henningsen (Editor's note: For more information on The Pussyhat Project™ go to <https://www.pussyhatproject.com/> )

### ***UU Women on the Move***

There is a long list of Unitarian and/or Universalist women who have taken action throughout our history to make a difference in our world. Just a few of the names you may (or may not) know include:

- ‡ Abigail Adams (1744-1818) – women's rights advocate and First Lady of the United States
- ‡ Sara Josephine Baker (1873-1945) – physician and public health worker
- ‡ Olympia Brown (1835-1926) – suffragist and Universalist minister
- ‡ Margaret Fuller (1810-1850) – journalist
- ‡ Judith Sargent Murray (1751-1820) – advocate for women's rights and letter writer
- ‡ Mary White Ovington – (1865-1951) – cofounder of the NAACP
- ‡ Malvina Reynolds (1900-1978) – singer, songwriter and activist
- ‡ Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) – suffragist, abolitionist and leader in women's rights
- ‡ Lucy Stone (1818-1893) – orator, abolitionist and suffragist

The need to stand up for women's rights, and human rights of all kinds, continues today and it is vital that we carry on this work. UUCRV members, both men and women, have participated in the Women's Marches of 2017 and 2018. Thank you to all who have marched for all of us!



Dianna Kevari, Linda Brefeld and Milli Fler marched in the 2018 Women's March in Rockford!

- Susan Busker



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**2017-18 Officers**

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