



# UUCRV NEWS

Published by and for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rock Valley  
P.O. Box 256, Rockton, IL, 61072 Phone number: 1-815-624-4094  
Visit us at [www.uucrv.org](http://www.uucrv.org)



## August, 2017

### Monthly Schedule

*Services begin at 10:30 a.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rock Valley, 329 School Street, Rockton, IL 61079. Child care provided. We welcome visitors, and invite you to coffee hour afterwards for snacks and chat.*

**Sunday, August 6** – Speaker: **Connie Matusiak** The August 6th service will honor teachers and learning.

*Please contact Connie Matusiak if there is a teacher who made a difference in your life that you would tell us about that morning in 3-5 minutes.*

**Sunday, August 13** – *Guest Speaker*, **Stanley Campbell**, will speak to us about **"Intolerant Unitarians"**

**Religious Education** - Meeting

**Sunday, August 20** - *Campfire sing along* with **Denny & Wendy** (Weather permitting, this will be held outside. Bring a lawn chair, please.)

**Sunday, August 27** – Speaker: **Lynda Johnson** **"Exploring Our Values"** \*\*\*  
**Board Meeting**

**Sunday, Sept. 3** – **NO CHURCH SERVICE!!!!**

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### **Unitarian Universalists in History – Thomas Jefferson**

Tom Owen-Towle in Growing a Beloved Community says that "In pursuit of the Beloved Community, the past is cherished, the present is celebrated, and the future is charted...Healthy churches dare to look back, cherishing the past... [and] ensure that all become familiar with the...history of Unitarian Universalism..."

Thomas Jefferson was known to worship at Joseph Priestly's Unitarian church in Philadelphia, but did not formally belong to any Unitarian church. He wrote in a letter "The population of my neighborhood is too slender, and is too much divided into other sects to maintain any one preacher well. I must therefore be contented with being a Unitarian by myself." (Source: Was Thomas Jefferson really one of us? [www.uuworld.org/articles/was-thomas-jefferson-really-unitarian](http://www.uuworld.org/articles/was-thomas-jefferson-really-unitarian)) While it is believed that Jefferson held beliefs consistent with Unitarian sympathies, there is controversy about claiming him as a Unitarian due to his role in our racial history as a slaveowner.

On July 16<sup>th</sup>, one of our youth, Grant, provided some information and insights into this historical figure in a service titled "Remembering Some Famous Unitarians and Universalists." Grant showed a Power Point presentation highlighting "The 55 Unitarians and Universalists Honored on United States Postage Stamps."

This was followed by an interview with Thomas Jefferson (portrayed by Brock, Grant's dad). Grant shared interesting information on Jefferson's life and asked him some probing questions as to some of the more controversial issues in his life.

Grant shared this quote by Jefferson: "Say nothing of my religion. It is known to my god and myself alone." – letter to John Adams, 1817



Grant interviewing Thomas Jefferson

*Thanks Grant and Brock for an enlightening and enjoyable service!*

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\*\*\* Please come August 27 – I will not be doing a sermon or a lecture – rather, we will be exploring our "values" in a fun, interactive activity. This is for young people (kids), too! I will be giving all who enter a cutout Iceberg on cardstock. I think everyone knows that an iceberg is a huge mountain of ice, of which only 10% is above the ocean water, and all can see it. The remaining 90% is below water, and no one can see it – which is why the huge Titanic sank, not seeing all that was below the water.

As people, we are somewhat like icebergs, because when anyone see us, or meets us, or even gets to know us as friends – mostly what everyone sees is that 10% above water. To take the analogy further, that-which-people-can't-see is the other 90% - which is where our "values" are! We'll be exploring that part – so bring your ideas.

I began thinking about "values" during the national election. And I've been extremely agitated by other people's "values", thinking, of course, that my "values" were the only ones anyone should have. Admit it, maybe you might have thought the same thing! So I began really thinking about "where did I get my values, and have any changed over the years?"

Gosh, I realized that I didn't like digging deeply into the origin of my "values" – I'd rather watch t.v., or read, or talk to friends, or eat or sleep! "Thinking deeply" is hard! What I discovered is that some values, I got from my parents – and, I'm ashamed to say, some of my other feelings about stuff, which I can't call "values", I also picked up from my parents, as early as I can remember. Lee says, you pick up your fear of snakes long before age 5, like age 1 ½, from a relative. I think we pick up a lot more than that!

I'll give one example of a "value", and where it came from, and how it evolved to the present. On the funny side, I'll give a couple of example of "other stuff" I picked up from my parents, and how I've changed for the better in more recent times. Yes, it is possible to change, even at 75 years.

**YOUR ASSIGNMENT BEFORE AUGUST 27: Think** about your values. Bring those thoughts and your sense of humor on August 27.

Have a good summer!

- Lynda Johnson

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**“Small church is a wonderful and beautiful way of doing church. ... Steve Willis”**

Last fall I took an on-line course through the UU Leadership Institute ([www.uuinstitute.org](http://www.uuinstitute.org)) titled “Revitalizing the Smaller Congregation.” It was taught by Rev. Megan Foley who serves on the UU Central East Region staff. She says that 36% of UU churches are small like ours, under 60 members, and 69% have less than 160 members.

Something I related to in the first module was when Dr. Foley talked about how small churches often feel that they are not enough and that the UUA may have played a role in perpetuating this feeling. She offered **release** for small congregations from the idea that there is one right way to do church and from the aspiration of doing it all. Rev. Foley says that small churches don’t need to be miniature versions of larger churches and that until a congregation reaches 125 members the full-size church model doesn’t work. In fact, Rev. Foley says that small congregations have unique strengths including being able to be flexible and responsive, and offering strong interpersonal connections. I think this is true of our small congregation.

There was a short reading connected to this module from the book Imagining the Small Church: Celebrating a Simpler Path by Steve Willis. The author says that “...every twenty or thirty years the small church is rediscovered. Of course, it never went away. The small church simply continues to love the people and places where it resides...” I thought that was an apt description of our congregation – we love the people with whom we live out our mission to “create community, celebrate worship, seek justice and truth and live guided by love” and the place where we do this sacred work.

Rev. Foley encourages small congregations to consider the following questions:

- What is our congregation good at doing?
- What do we enjoy the most?
- Aside from worship, what is it that we *must* do?

I know I have answers to these questions and would like to hear your answers as well. Maybe we can have a group discussion around these questions.

I encourage you to check out the UU Leadership Institute courses – they are reasonably priced at \$30 and offer access to a variety of knowledgeable leaders in a convenient format. **Susan Busker** - UUCRV President

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## Green Corner **Ray Herzer**

**Plastic.** We can’t live with it and we can’t live without it. Since the early 50’s, humans have produced 18.2 trillion tons of plastic. Can I put that in more easily understood terms? Yes - it’s a lot! And it is expected to double in the next 30 years. (That’s a lot times two).



Where does this plastic wind up when we are through with it? Mostly in landfills or the environment, including the ocean. Nine percent is recycled and 12 percent is incinerated.

Exacerbating the problem is that many plastic items are single use or of very limited use before they are discarded. Think of all the single or limited use plastics we use every day (baggies, food wrap, dental picks, packaging, fast food and drink containers, etc).

Which brings me to a partial (if teeny-weeny) solution to a problem at our church. You may notice a step-on trash container labelled "For Recyclable Drink Containers" in the hallway. Remember these rules for plastic containers:

No caps or lids

Must have neck and shoulders (the drink container, not you).

Must be labelled a 1 or a 2

Now, I encourage all of you to get your own reusable drink container (I highly recommend **Contigo** for hot or cold drinks. Check with me or Nina to see such a drink container. They are available at *Shopko, TrueValue, Walmart* and other fine stores.

The leading countries for recycling are China and the countries of Europe. Let's take that title for ourselves. As President Trump says, "Let's make America great again!".

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**UUCRV Care and Concern** – The purpose of Care and Concern is to assist UUCRV in the ministry to one another. Care and Concern is part of the Membership Committee. A care request needs to be something that is possible for UUCRV members to do—like providing food, rides to medical appointments, running errands, visiting members who are house bound, in the hospital or rehab, etc.

If you or another UUCRV member needs help from UUCRV Care and Concern, please contact Wendy Edgington (815-865-5364) or Dianna Kevari (608-365-2343). Please contact them if you know one of our members is ill, has lost a loved one, or is experiencing a difficult time. They would rather hear the news twice than not at all. Remember that Wendy and Dianna are assisting our church in its ministry to one another.

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## **"What's a UUCRV?"**

We are looking for more ways to get our name and information about who we are out into the community. One of the first steps we have taken is to wear buttons with our message "Standing on the Side of Love" that also include our name and website.

For a long time, we have had the wallet cards from the UUA, including "What Do UUs Believe" and "Principles and Purposes", that we could carry and share with people who ask about our faith. But these did not have information specific to our church so we have now created a wallet card with our location, contact information and our mission. Pick up a couple of these cards from the Visitor Table to share when you are talking with someone interested in learning more about who we are.

A third idea is to have a table prominently displayed at all of our events that are open to the public, including our Book Sale, Fair Trade Sale and Garage Sale, with informational brochures that also have a sticker with our contact information so that people can find out more about both Unitarian Universalism and our church.

In addition, we are looking for ways to have articles in our local newspapers about our activities and events. *Ray Herzer*, our resident reporter, recently had an article published in the Beloit paper about our garden that supplies fresh produce to CARITAS Food Pantry. The article includes a nice photo of some of our members – check it out on the bulletin board.

In his book, *Growing a Beloved Community*, Tom Owen-Towle quotes Sue Turner as saying "Just do it! Start talking every day to someone about something that happens in your church. By doing it, you'll get better at it. The Unitarian Universalist community will be enriched and made stronger by your being a witness for our faith." Towle says "It is crucial that liberal religionists dare to become low-key evangelists [to converse, not to convert]...Evangel literally means "good news"...The world hankers for our life affirming vision, rather than one beset with fear or judgment." The UUA says that the ways most people find out about churches is through websites and word-of-mouth – so let's get our website address out there more and talk more about our church! **Susan Busker**



## August Birthdays

3 – Saoirse Burke

11 – Cassi Paslick & Melinda Stogsdill

13 – Susan Erbe

14 – Connie Matusiak

19 – Cher Zimmerman & Erin Fisher

28 – Graham Ingle

30 – Milli Fleer



## Religious Education

The preparatory gathering of the Religious Education Team will be the 2nd Sunday of August. We will outline our plans for the coming teaching sessions of Fall.

Those who will teach lessons can pick their own Sunday and select from the stories we have that build upon our 7 UU Principles which we worked on last year. This year is reinforcement of those past lessons.

Paulette is not a member of the Committee, but will teach some lessons. She mistakenly listed her name under committee. Anyone is welcome to sign on to the RE Committee. It is not too late. Many members have shared that they will help us out this year and we are counting on you. After our first meeting on August 13, noon, Judy Petree will be in touch with you.

This year we will have a couple of service projects to decide upon with the kids help.

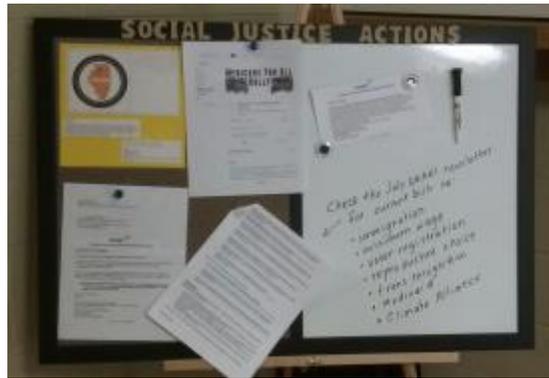
To quote a passage from our UUCRV Religious Education materials "Our religious education program is designed by our teachers to fit the needs and abilities of our Children. It emphasizes the values inherent in the seven guiding UU Principles. Additionally, we...explore world religions to find common truths, learn about and celebrate national holidays and religious holidays of many faiths. Always, lessons will emphasize moral values as a guide to living."  
Judy Petree

### **Balancing Justice and Joy – Taking Action for Social Justice and Sharing Joy**

One of the most powerful social justice actions we can take is to contact our government officials with our ideas and concerns. An advocacy expert once said that for every phone call or postcard an official receives, that contact is multiplied by ten. So that means that if one person expresses a concern, it is assumed that 10 people care about that issue. If 100 people contact the official, that counts as 1,000 contacts. Legislators care about what their constituents think (or at least should) since they work for us. The same advocacy expert said "We hired them and we can fire them."

It is often confusing, especially in these times, as to what concerns need to be raised with our government officials. One resource available to Illinois residents is the Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois (UUANI). Check out their website at [www.uu-advocacy-illinois.org](http://www.uu-advocacy-illinois.org) or their Facebook page for regular updates about current legislation focused on "social change for justice, beloved community, and a healthy planet."

To support our members in this work, we have created a Social Justice Actions board located in the lobby. Susan Erbe has agreed to keep this board current with actions we can take, including an "Action of the Week" as suggested by UUANI.



We will be talking more about actions we can take in our community to support local needs. As Tom Owen-Towle says in his book Growing a Beloved Community, "Healthy congregations will use their finite resources to focus upon those problems in their own backyard...A congregation's social outreach also needs to be aware of growing more committed to breadth than depth [too many ideas – too little time to each one – means little results]...And remember, social justice outreach can't be sustained without oodles of humor and incessant merrymaking."

We are conscious of balancing justice and joy in our congregation. This is not a new idea. Owen-Towle shares that "Theodore Parker, one of our premier workhorses for justice, who harbored fugitive slaves in his home, noted with alarm the glaring absence of any exuberance among his mid-nineteenth-century Unitarian colleagues: Most powerfully preaching to the conscience and the will, the cry was ever 'duty, duty! work, work!' They failed to address with equal power the spirit, and did not also shout 'joy, joy! delight, delight!'."

***Please share with the Board any ideas you may have for balancing justice and joy!***

- Susan Busker -

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## Fall Retreat for UU Women

**October 13-15 at DeKoven Center in Racine, Wisconsin**

**Be prepared to chant and be enchanted with special guest Kellianna!**



Kellianna is an American pagan singer and songwriter internationally renowned for her powerful performance of song and chant inspired by myth, magic, sacred places, and ancient times. With guitar and vocals, she brings to life the stories and sagas of the Gods and Goddesses. With primal frame drumming and soaring vocal chants, she honors the Earth and the Ancestors.

Since 2003, she has performed her music in 10 countries on 3 continents, with regular visits to Canada, the United Kingdom, Western Europe, and Australia.

More information about the retreat may be found at <http://www.uuwomensconnection.org> .

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## **Officers for 2017 - 18**

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