

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



August 2018

Monthly Schedule

8/5 **"What's Love Got to Do With It"**¹

8/10 **Campfire Sing along & S'mores** – 7:00 pm

8/11 **Board Retreat** 9 – 1:00

8/12 **"Moral Obligation to the Natural World"** – Lee Johnson

8/19 ***A Service at Nygren Wetlands***² – Allen Harden

8/24 **Campfire Sing along & S'mores** – 7:00 pm

8/26 **"Bubble Trouble"** – Kara Becker

Minister's Reflections



My closest friends in the world (apart from family) are people I met almost 50 years ago in church youth groups and UU summer camps. Most of my parents' closest friends were also peers from their Unitarian Church experiences before and during WWII. These thoughts crossed my mind during our wonderful 15th anniversary celebration last month. Our efforts to build an intentional liberal religious community really can have a lasting influence, on each of us and on our community.

We (or at least I) usually tend to think of "the church" as an institution, a relatively stable and fixed presence in our lives. And in many ways it is this -- we continue to worship, seek justice, and share lovingly together year after year. But the church is also a living and dynamic entity. Our habits and practices gradually change and adapt. And notably, our membership also changes over time. Always, there are new people visiting and starting to engage, and we are very good at welcoming them. And others move on, some to other parts of the country, some to other personal needs and times in their lives, and some to eternity.

I was surprised to hear many names of people that I don't know who at one time or another were attached to this congregation in its 15 years. And I was thrilled to meet some of the people whose names I have heard, and to discover that they are still

beloved in the community of UUCRV, that they will always remain in our hearts. The beat goes on. I am sad and will miss those leaving us, but I am thrilled and excited about new people and possible returnees.

So, I am reminded that we should experience and enjoy what we have together now. And, because it is guaranteed to change, we should lead the change. We strive to see that UUCRV moves forward, with changes that make us stronger, more vibrant, more useful. This is our task, to energize our shared life, to bring our all-important messages to new people, and to continue to follow our dreams. We are the only ones that can do this, we are the ones that will do this.

I will start tonight, by going to a campfire, making s'mores, and singing songs. What better way is there to be religious?

Committee Information

Worship: The Worship Committee met for a "Retreat" on Saturday, July, 28. This gathering was NOT designed to plan specific services for the 2018 - 19, but to share ideas on how to make our worship services more meaningful. We are going to introduce some changes to our Order of Service among other things. We are excited about these and sincerely hope you will be also!

Also, we would like congregants to actively participate in the services. (IE: do a reading, lead a meditation, present a message, lead the singing.....) If you would like to volunteer, please contact Wendy Edgington (chairperson) or any of the members which are Lee & Lynda Johnson, Jerry Paulson, Kara Becker, Christopher Sims and Denny Broderick.

Worship Services:

- ¹ "I preached about the Hebrew Bible in July with Noah, so let's give the Christians equal time this August with Paul. The Apostle Paul wrote much of the Christian Bible. In one of his more enduring writings, he wrote about love in 1st Corinthians, Chapter 13. You might recognize it in "Love is patient, love is kind..." This poem ends with "...and now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." [*although, if you were raised on the King James Version or the Catholic Bible, the word I call "love" appears as "charity". Translation is always a problem*]. Well, I wondered why Paul would privilege love (or charity) over faith and hope. It sounded so unlike him, and so unlike early Christianity. My search led me to a better understanding of Paul and his times, of the creation of the New Testament, and of the Christian faith. Some of the conclusions I found still have meaning in America today.
- ² "Our July Picnic at the Nygren Wetlands fell victim to local (if not global) warming. I will try again, but with a service instead of a picnic. (although you are welcome to bring a picnic on your own). The service will be themed in nature."

Worship will be held in the tent by the barn. Please use the event entrance (3190 W. Rockton Rd), rather than the entrance by the overlook. Parking is available.

For more detailed information, Google **Carl and Myrna Nygren Wetland Preserve**. It listed on the Natural Land Institute's page.

Hopefully, we can motivate some walks and maybe guided tours after the service to complement our time in worship and keep a wonderful day alive. Please dress in a manner that leaves you free to wander, and remember sunscreen, insect repellent, and if needed, raingear. **Please bring your own chair!**

If the weather is stormy or extremely hot, our backup plan is to meet at UUCRV and hold the service in our sanctuary.

Membership: A new twist to the after service 'treats'. Instead of people sign up EVERY SUNDAY, we are looking for people to sign up ONCE a month. Pick your month & the Sunday you would like to provide goodies. Other Sundays will be covered by Nina Herzer using our 'Pantry' goods.

If you would like to sign up for a specific Sunday, see/call Paulette Lucas.

15th Anniversary Celebration

On July 21st, 40 members, friends, and guests helped us celebrate our 15th anniversary of being accepted as a member congregation in the Unitarian Universalist Association. Jan Henningsen gave a very informative talk about the history of UUCRV and Marla Wallace summarized our most current work from the last year – both highlighted the many people and activities that have contributed to the congregation we are today. Susan Busker shared some thoughts about the future of growing in this Beloved Community. Some members gave testimonials about why they choose to be connected with *this* congregation. Allen Harden closed the celebration with some final words about UUCRV and we all joined hands in singing the traditional song this congregation has sung at the end of each service for 15 years, "From you I receive, to you I give, together we share, and from this we live". A wonderful luncheon followed with good food and great conversation.



*Thanks to all who helped plan and carry out this celebration,
and to everyone who joined us! - Susan Busker*

Birthdays

11 – Melinda Stogsdill 13 – Susan Erbe 14 - Connie Matusiak
19 – Cher Zimmerman 30 – Jan Henningsen & Milli Fleer
9/1 – Tricia Graham

The Future of This Small Congregation

At our Anniversary Celebration I shared some thoughts about the future of this small congregation. By now you likely know of my belief in the value of small congregations and my unshakable optimism about their futures.

In preparing for my talk I read an essay from Turning Point, Essays on a New Unitarian Universalism (UUA: Skinner House, 2016) written by Fredric Muir. In his essay, Rev. Muir describes what he sees as a “trinity of errors” in our faith. The first is individualism – instead of valuing and celebrating individuals we have evolved into a people demanding of individual rights. The second error is exceptionalism – tending to think ourselves as exceptional, maybe better than others. The third in the “trinity of errors” is anti-authoritarianism – possibly resulting in our distancing ourselves from the larger UUA. I could see validity in his assessment, and think of examples of all of these errors in our own congregation.

Muir says “Individualism will not serve the greater good...Little to nothing about the ideology and theology of individualism encourages people to work and live together, to create and support institutions that serve the aspirations and beloved principles.” Muir reminds us that as a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association we have agreed to a covenant: “As free congregations we do promise to one another our mutual trust and support.” Yes, we are “free congregations”, but without the “mutual trust and support” from and to our larger faith organization I fear that our work and our impact is more limited.

We have just recently adopted our Covenant of Right Relations in this congregation. Writing and now following this covenant will not be easy – it will involve hard work. Muir shares that it has been suggested that we might consider beginning our Principles not with “the inherent worth and dignity of every person”, but rather with “respect for the interdependent web.” He says “I suspect that this change would go over well, because people know that living as a community in covenant is too hard...individualism comes so easily...Articulating and living our Principles as a commitment to covenant, creating and sustaining a community by ‘promising to one another our mutual trust and support’ takes extra effort.” Are we willing to make that extra effort?

Muir continues, “The Unitarian Universalist story for the twenty-first century begins not only with our historical commitment to social justice outreach but also with congregational justice inreach; it begins with the congregation you attend....isn’t it

hypocritical and incongruent for us to commit...to shaping the world with a vision of the Beloved Community, yet be unable or unwilling to do the same when it comes to this congregations we serve?”

My dream for the future of this congregation is that we continue to grow in that concept of Beloved Community. Can we model in our congregation the Beloved Community by being just that, a Beloved Community, and then share that with the larger world? Muir said” Don’t you see that your congregation is the Beloved Community?”

May the future of this congregation be blessed! - Susan Busker

General Assembly 2018 Recap

It was an energetic time for Unitarian Universalists who participated in General Assembly 2018 in downtown Kansas City, MO June 20th thru the 24th. It was also a time of change and challenges as we embarked on another nationwide and international gathering of our Association.

Our president Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray introduced a new structure that will help the Unitarian Universalist Association dive deep into our work and increase the efforts our social justice work. From what I gathered, this new structure will empower us even more and help sustain a healthy, fruitful resources we’ll need to continue doing the work we need to do. She introduced new staff members Taquiena Boston, Paula Cole Jones, and Carrey McDonald. They are all people of color who have served and will serve our Association even better in the roles they play. Taquiena Boston is the former director of our office in Washington, DC. Paula Cole Jones is co-creator of the 8th Principle project that encourages intentional mentioning of anti-racism in our Seven Principles.

“All Are Called” was the theme of this year’s General Assembly. That particular theme could be felt throughout GA. It also encouraged reflection about why the numbers were low this year. Only 2800 Unitarian Universalists showed up for this year’s gathering. Usually, there is between 3500 and 4000 thousand of us that showed up in Kansas City. Some said it was because the travel warning for Black people driving through the state of Missouri issued by the NAACP and the ACLU is one reason, others say it is because we are working on ending White supremacy in our faith movement that has stopped some White Unitarian Universalists from participating in this much needed work. I hope our Unitarian Universalist staff, including volunteers who serve on the General Assembly Planning Committee will address these reasons and reflect about what this all means for our faith.

Our Ware Lecture, the special lecture given at General Assembly by notable figures and leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Bryan Stevenson and poet Mary Oliver was delivered by a young Black activist this year. Her name is Brittney Packnett. She delivered a very humbling and thought-provoking lecture about White supremacy filled with storytelling, honesty, and an awareness you would not expect from a 33 year old. She’s beyond her years and is providing the nation what we need to hear as people of

faith, organizers, and activists fighting the good fight. You can watch her full lecture here: <https://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/2018/ware>.

I went on what is called the Segregation Tour the last day I was in Kansas City. A small team of local Unitarian Universalists put together this tour for us to learn more about the extreme segregation in Kansas City, MO and Kansas City, Kansas. One of the first intentional segregated communities in the United States was developed in Kansas City. It was a huge lesson we learned as we traveled on a bus through neighborhoods that were 93% White. Even in 2018 if a person of color, especially a Black person drove through those neighborhoods, the police would be called. Tax dollars from the city citizens pay for the upkeep of the amazing amount of privilege and affluence in that area. There is still a lot of work to do in this country!

Overall, Kansas City, MO was a delightful place to have our General Assembly. The food was great, downtown Kansas City was lively, and the people were nice. It is a great location if you're a foodie and enjoy live entertainment. The food options were suitable for any palate. Although the oppression is there, it is two cities that is working on making a difference and changing what is going on there. We should look forward to returning to Kansas City, MO and I hope more Unitarian Universalists from the Midwest, and other places, will consider doing so!

It'll be even closer for us in northern Illinois in the summer of 2021. General Assembly will be held in downtown Milwaukee, WI. You have a few years to plan for it! 😊 To learn more, visit <http://www.uua.org/ga>.

Humbly submitted, Christopher D. Sims July 7, 2018

Social Justice Library

At our July meeting, the UUCRV Board decided to establish a Social Justice Library as part of our work to address social justice issues including racism, climate justice and immigration as well as an ongoing focus on the LGBTQ community. The shelf near the entry to the Sanctuary will be dedicated to this library, making it easy for members to look at and check out books.

In a new book from the UUA, Upcycle Your Congregation, Creative Ideas for Transforming Faith Communities, Julica Hermann de la Fuente in her essay titled *Beloved Community** describes three levels of social justice work: **“First is individual work that we all need to do to understand our own social location and the impact of our social identities.”**

The idea with the Social Justice Library is to provide a creative way to help transform our congregation with regard to understanding social justice issues and consider actions we might take. You may borrow books from this Social Justice Library in order to support your individual work. **Please sign out books on the clipboard including your name and the date you borrowed the book.** When you return the book simply add the date you returned the book and cross off your name.

From the Board's budget, a small number of books were purchased to get this library started, but we need the support of members to help grow the choice of books. **If you would like to support the growth of this library, choose one of the titles listed on the envelopes and place the money needed to purchase that book in the envelope.** This can be placed in the offering plate or given to the Treasurer. Or you can purchase the book yourself and donate it to the library.

Current titles in the library include:



Talk with other members about a title that you found impactful in your individual work. Let the Board know if you find a book that you think would make a good Book Study title or let the Worship Committee know if you would like to share what you learned from your experience in a service. Together we can live out our Principles to affirm and promote:

- ✦ *The inherent worth and dignity of every person*
- ✦ *Justice, equity and compassion in human relations*
- ✦ *The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large*
- ✦ *The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all*
- ✦ *Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*

* Julica Hermann de la Fuente in *Beloved Community* from Upcycle Your Congregation, Creative Ideas for Transforming Faith Communities, Ed. By Sarah Lammert, Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2018

- Susan Busker



**Rock the
PRIDE**

Rock County PrideFest 2018

August 25th

10:00 am – 10:00 pm

Telfer Park, 2101 Cranston Road, Beloit, WI

As you know, UUCRV was officially approved as a Welcoming Congregation by the UUA in June. Much work went into this accomplishment, but this work is not over. As a congregation we must continue our work to support the LGBTQ community.

In this effort, the Board voted to be actively involved in the Rock the Pride event being organized by Yellow Brick Road at Telfer Park in Beloit. We will have a booth with information about our church as well as supply volunteers for the event.

Dianna Kevari attended an organizational meeting for volunteers and has information about working at the event along with the Volunteer Application.

We will **need to have members also volunteer at our booth** to talk with participants about our congregation. Please let Susan Busker know if you are able to help with this.

Set-up begins at 8:30 am with the grounds opening at 10:00 am. The booths will close at 6:00 pm.

This is a great “Entry Point” activity – an opportunity for the LGBTQ community to learn about Unitarian Universalism and about the potential of UUCRV as their spiritual home.

- Susan Busker



2018-19 Officers

President	Susan Busker	815-624-2833
Vice-President	Wendy Edgington	815-865-5364
Secretary	Ray Herzer	815-624-2283
Treasurer	Nina Herzer	815-624-2283



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rock Valley
329 School Street
Rockton, IL 61072

815-624-4094
uucrockvalley@gmail.com

