

# 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)



**February 2019**

## Monthly Schedule

3 – Black Pioneers in a White Denomination - Allen Harden

12:00 Worship Team Meeting

10 – Things that are not in THE Bible: Gnostic texts, Apocrypha, etc. - Allen Harden

17 – TBD

12:00 – Board Meeting

20 – 10:30 Small Group Discussion *Surrender/Letting Go*

24 – *Guest Speaker, **Mark Maxted***, Chaplain for Beloit Hospital, will give the message this morning

## **Minister's Musings**



I am not in Illinois this week, so I'm not sharing the Arctic Vortex that is bringing absurd cold to you. For this, I apologize. I trust each of you has found a way to nestle in and avoid the madness going on out-of-doors. We can always rely on the natural world to humble us by bringing reminders that we are not in charge.

I am in Maryland on family business as my Mother transitions from an independent apartment to a long-term care setting nearby. Mom is healthy, well, and as cantankerous as ever; but at age 96 she finally lost the ability to move around safely without assistance. So, as we did over a decade ago when she left our old family home, we are downsizing her life and simplifying affairs.

My main task is emptying her apartment -- deciding what we keep, give away, recycle, or trash. Because neither I nor my siblings still live in the area, most items bigger than a photograph go to local social service agencies. While the process of separating from objects that hold so much memory is difficult, it feels so right to pass them into new settings where they can provide comfort and support to new sets of lives and hopes.

Most of you have done this kind of thing and dealt with many versions of the markers and transitions that punctuate our journey across the life course. Life events can be poignant, evoke emotions we may not have expected, and be worthy of thought and reflection. As I handle my Mom's things, and as I interact with her while she engages her changed status, I am discovering and rediscovering webs of feelings and connections that bring surprises to me. Most are warm, positive, and good. The experience overall feels necessary, appropriate, and natural.

We are always at an age where our life experience is likely approaching completion, and where we [are] facing transition and changes in how we go about living, and expecting, and hoping. I believe that most aspects of aging can be far more graceful and natural if we remain open and present to the truth, and accepting of the natural progress of our bodies and minds.

I expect to spend a fair amount of my church energy during the next couple of months thinking and talking about aging. I will address some topics from the pulpit, others through discussion groups, and try to learn if we have some specific or shared needs we can face together. We have identified two books that seem to have good potential for organizing our thinking. One is *In Later Years: Finding Meaning and Spirit in Aging* by UU Minister and Chaplain Bruce T. Marshall; the other is *Winter's Graces: The Surprising Gifts of Later Life* by psychologist Susan Avery Stewart. I hope to start some reading/discussion groups using these and maybe other materials in the near future. I will keep you posted, and I will continue to accept suggestions of how we might share together in this area.

Let us age together, well, and with joy!

Allen

### Committee Information

*Worship: Upcoming Service*

“February 3: Black Pioneers in a White Denomination – Allen Harden

Drawn from Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed’s book of the same name, a discussion of the history of early attempts by African Americans to engage in the Unitarian ministry.

February 10: Things that are not in THE Bible: Gnostic texts, Apocrypha, etc. – Allen Harden

The books of the Christian Bible (New Testament) became the “word of God” through politics and votes – they were deemed “in” and a number of other texts deemed “out” and thereby heretical. Most were systematically destroyed. But fairly recent archaeological finds have filled in some of the blanks we have always known were there. I will focus on the “Gospel of Thomas” and mention some of the others, both historically and guessing at why they were seen as threats during formation of the Catholic Church.”

February 17: TBD

February 21: *Guest Speaker Mark Maxsted*, Chaplain for Beloit Hospital, will be giving the message.

### REVISITING: Make Room for All: Accessibility and Inclusion Issues in Congregational Life



Last September, Wendy arranged for members to view a webinar from the MidAmerica Region of the UUA titled “Make Room for All: Accessibility and Inclusion Issues in Congregational Life.” Pete, Paulette and Susan joined her in viewing the webinar and began a discussion on this important topic. In the October newsletter we shared progress we had already made in making our church more assessible along with simple new ideas that we could immediately incorporate.

With the awareness that some of members have challenges with mobility, the Board decided at the January meeting to relocate our fellowship space to the RE rooms across the hall from the Sanctuary so that everyone can participate.

Some space will still be allocated for use by children and youth, but the larger space will allow for gathering for fellowship following the service. There are up with an additional table in the room for youth. We the coffee makers, microwave and supplies upstairs, and adding a small refrigerator (Does anyone have one they donate?).

Look for this sign to welcome you to our Fellowship



six tables set have moved will soon be could

Room:

***We look forward to being able to welcome everyone  
fellowship following our service!***

***to a time of***

Please share with the Board any response you have to this change as well as any suggestions for improvement.

- Susan Busker

## Birthdays

**2 – Mariah Gomez    10 – Grant Heckel    14 – Christopher D. Sims    18 –  
Erin Scott    24 – Zoey Kevari-Zimmerman    27 – Dianna Kevari**



## **FURTHER EXPLORATION: The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle of Unitarian Universalism**

**Each month we will continue to explore the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Principle of Unitarian Universalism and provide an opportunity to revisit the wording of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle and learn some additional information behind this proposed addition.**

The Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) Organizing Collective encourages all Unitarian Universalists to advocate for the formal adoption of an 8<sup>th</sup> principle, articulating a commitment for the dismantling of white supremacy, within the stated principles of our faith:

*“We the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”*

- *Our existing 7 principles imply this 8<sup>th</sup> principle, but do not explicitly hold us accountable for addressing these oppressions directly, especially at the systemic level.*
- *UUism has great potential for building diverse multicultural Beloved Community as envisioned by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (not just European/Americans and African/Americans, but including Native Americans, Latinx people, and other cultural groups) globally and could experience tremendous diversification, vitality, and thriving if it works to embody this vision, but it won't happen without conscious awareness and effort on our part.*

## **The Ordination of Allen**

I hope to become the “real deal”, a Unitarian Minister carrying the honorary of Reverend – which is one piece of what happens with ordination. This was my plan and your expectation when I was hired to serve as Minister of UUCRV.

In our tradition, as one element of our congregational polity, a Minister can only be ordained by a local congregation. That is because UUs consider membership to be the ultimate ecclesiastical authority – there are no Bishops, no Presbytery, or no similar “others” in charge. The UUA is just an “association” of UU congregations.

I am starting a plan to become ordained under the joint authority of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rock Valley and by the First Unitarian Society of Chicago. At First Chicago, and act of

ordination requires a congregational vote, and that is scheduled for late February. UUCRV has no prescription of the procedure, so it becomes a Board responsibility. I expect you Board to vote to ordain me at their February meeting. If you object, you should start lobbying them soon.

The ceremony, a Service of Ordination, will be held on April 7, 3:00 p.m., at First Unitarian in Chicago. Rev. Dr. Lee Barker, the current President of Meadville Lombard Theological School, has agreed to offer the sermon. All UUCRV members and friends are invited (and will receive invitations), and I am scheming to arrange transportation to make attendance easier. An ordination starts with a special service and ceremony, and is always followed by food and fun.

I am excited about taking this next step in my journey to ministry, and hope that many of you can join me for the service and celebration. *Allen Harden*

## • UUANI Northern Cluster Gathering

- **What?** This is an event for the DeKalb, Elgin, Rock Valley, Rockford, Stockton and Tree of Life congregations to gather to build relationships among our congregations, to share about justice work we are doing, and to explore areas for potential collaboration.
- **When?** Saturday, **February 9<sup>th</sup>**, 8:45 am – 12 noon (with lunch follow)
- **Where?** The Unitarian Universalist Church, 4848 Turner St., Rockford, IL
- **How?** You do need to register in advance so the organizers can plan for lunch (\$5 suggested donation):  
[http://salsa4.salsalsbs.com/o/51510/c/321/p/salsa/event/common/pubic/?event\\_KEY=11272](http://salsa4.salsalsbs.com/o/51510/c/321/p/salsa/event/common/pubic/?event_KEY=11272)
- Wendy and I will be going and would welcome others to join us. We can carpool from the church if you are coming from the Rockton area. Let me know if you plan to attend!
- *Dismantling racism, white supremacy, and other oppressions requires work at the personal and institutional levels.*



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Consider your answers to the following questions:

- What personal work might you do to dismantle racism, white supremacy and other oppressions?
- What work might our church need to do at the institutional level?
- How might we work on addressing oppression at the systemic level?

Additional information can be found at [www.8thprinciple.org](http://www.8thprinciple.org)



## 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](mailto:uucrockvalley@gmail.com)

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