

UUCRV NEWS

Published by and for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rock Valley
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Visit us at www.uucrv.org



June 2019

Monthly Schedule

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1 – 10:30 *Book Group On Aging*

2 – Reverend Harden “*Where We find Hope*”, We can each enumerate too many worries about our own future, the future of our children, and the future of all human existence in this world -- there is reasonable cause for fear on so many levels. And yet, I feel that we at UUCRV are still mostly an optimistic and positive minded group of people. I am interested in why this is true. I assume that we each harbor images and understandings that bring us a sense of possibility and that sustain feelings of hope in our lives – for ourselves and for coming generations. What in this world gives you a sense of trust? What are your personal wellsprings of hope?

12:00 *Worship Committee Meeting*

9 – *Celebrating Poetry* with Connie Matusiak and others....

12:00 **Board Meeting** (Please note the change in date)



16 – Reverend Allen Harden “*Migration, Internationalism and Citizenship*”

issues posed by persons moving across borders arise around the globe, and are a frequent cause of civil and political disagreement. This highlights implicit conflicts that exist between different value constructs – especially between ideals that privilege the value of a person and those ideals that privilege national sovereignty and citizenship. I will talk about these, and reflect on the current political and humanitarian crisis with immigrants into the United States.

19 – Small Group Discussion using Touchstones topic of *Mystery*. Please let Connie know if you need a copy of the printed materials.

23 – “*Liars and Lying*” Ray Herzer. **Congregational Meeting** will be held afterwards.

30 – Membership Committee to conduct a short outdoor service (weather permitting) with LGBTQ theme. *Potluck* side dishes to accompany grilled hotdogs.

7/7 - Reverend Harden “*What I Learned at General Assembly*”, I will attend the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association in late June. This is the annual national convention of UUs, where we do some business, hold some classes and discussions, and try to figure out who we are and what we care about as a denomination. I will report on some of what I observe and reflect on how it might be meaningful and/or useful to us here at Rock Valley.

Rev’s Reflections



A minister’s job is interesting and multifaceted. By far the most visible thing I do at UUCRV is leading worship twice a month, and presenting messages that might challenge, inform, support, intrigue, stimulate, mystify, or anger you. If I am doing it well, I hope that I touch most of these buttons at one time or another. But even more, I hope that our shared worship experience is a time when each of us feels that we are a part of something good, and that we are continuing to build the religious community where each of us feels stimulated and safe at the same time.

To do this well, we need to remain intentional and careful about how we treat one another, how we hold and share with one another. A bit over a year ago, you met and formed these intentions into an explicit covenant of right relations, and it is always worth remembering why you did this. Being an open and welcoming community is not something we can just decide on, or a quality that we achieve once and automatically retain. Instead, it is a commitment to always keep working, to always keep trying to be fair and open minded and engaged with whoever enters our circle. I think we do this pretty well most of the time. But each of us must be self-aware and vigilant as we engage with others. It is most important that we do our best to see and accept others where they are, for what they are.

It is easier for any of us to be open and warm and giving to others when we are comfortable in our own skins — confident, or at least accepting, of ourselves and our own life situation. Yet this is far easier to say than to do. As most of us are our own greatest critics as well as our own greatest boosters – we may be many things but almost always a mess of contradiction. And this is not pathological – it is what normal is all about.

Which brings me to another thing I do here, which we usually capture under the term of “pastoral care”. A large share of my time as your minister is allocated to some type of pastoral care work. We tend to think of pastoral care more as helping congregants deal with major life

problems, such as illness, loss, or serious misfortune. But while these big issues are important, they are also the times when your whole support system is likely to mobilize to help you out. The UUCRV community is wonderful about caring for one another in times of strain, visiting, comforting, and feeding one another when needed. As your minister, I expect to participate as well, but it is others who often do the important work.

But there are many subtler issues in our lives where we just need an ear, a sounding board, an objective other to share in our thinking and our feelings. I want you to understand that I assume this activity is a part of my job, and that I am always available to you on request. I can't claim professional level skills – so if you need to engage in psychotherapy you should find a real therapist, and if you need marriage counseling you should probably see a marriage counselor. I am not these things, but I am also not a bad place to start, as someone to hear your issues and help you decide how to approach things. I am here to serve you and your emotional and spiritual needs, however I can. I will try to be open and non-judgmental, but I might push and probe a bit to try to give you some feedback as well. It is important for you to know that I am bound to professional confidentiality, and will maintain privacies unless there is a serious danger or threat of harm involved. No problem is “too small” if it feels like a barrier to your own sense of well-being. Additionally, I think it is important that I get to know as many of you as well as possible. One of the benefits of a smaller congregation is that I can attend to congregants as individuals, and I believe that I should do just that. So, if you have an inkling that you might want to engage with me on some issue, just give me a call, and we can find a time to meet in person, or to have a serious conversation by phone. I encourage any of you to do so.

Happy
Birthday

19 – Susan Busker

LAUGHTER YOGA SCHEDULE



In order to have a consistent schedule for Laughter Yoga, Marty and Jodell have suggested once per month sessions. We would meet on the second Saturday of each

month at 11 am.

Each session is independent of any earlier session, so you can come whenever it works for you.

Avail yourself of this opportunity - you will feel better for it. I guarantee it. Ray Herzer



Are you ready to vote on The 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism?

We will be voting at our Annual Meeting on June 23rd regarding adoption of The 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism. ***Are you ready to cast your vote?***

The purpose of having congregations vote on this Principle is to provide feedback to the Unitarian Universalist Association from their member congregations before a vote is taken at General Assembly.

I personally questioned the need for a new Principle at first – didn't we already have this idea covered in our other Principles? However, with further study and reflection I have become convinced that this is a necessary step in addressing racism and other oppressions in our faith and in our society. Based on our history in Unitarian Universalism and in our country, I believe we need to have a very deliberate and specific focus in order to make changes that are very clearly needed to work toward Beloved Community.

As I said in the last newsletter, our vote on this Principle is just the beginning. I was heartened to see that a number of you responded positively on your Talents, Interests and Time Survey that you would "Participate in activities to eliminate racism" – thank you for your willingness to be part of this challenging work. I am looking forward to learning what guidance the UUA will be providing congregations with regard to the 8th Principle.

Please read the proposed 8th Principle once more to inform your decision:

The Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) Organizing Collective encourages all Unitarian Universalists to advocate for the formal adoption of an 8th 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."

Additional information can be found at www.8thprinciple.org. Please talk to Allen or a Board member if you still have questions.

* This supports our goal to "Support and facilitate work on the Pillars of Beloved Community" which includes Multiculturalism.

- Susan Busker

Committees

Worship: Being a Worship Associate on a Sunday, is a 'no brainer'. The Worship Committee needs new voices and faces – some fresh blood! For more information contact Wendy Edgington, 815-865-5364 or sing2all@live.com.

Though UUCRV is a small congregation, our members and guests have many diverse interests that the congregation would like to hear about. Please consider presenting a 20 minute presentation on a Sunday that Reverend Harden will not be in Rockton. A Worship Committee member will put together all the other elements of the Service. Again, talk to Wendy Edgington if you are considering presenting.

Annual Meeting on June 23rd



Our Annual Meeting is scheduled for **June 23rd immediately following the service.** We hope all members will be able to attend as a number of important votes will be taken.

As a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association “We covenant to affirm and promote the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.” But as an independent Unitarian Universalist Congregation, we are self-governing, choosing our own leadership and handling our own finances. Our Bylaws require congregational voting on a number of things, including leadership and finances.

Our **agenda** will include:

- Presentation of Annual Meeting Agenda
- Minutes from June 24, 2018 Annual Meeting
- Committee Annual Reports
- Voting on the 2019-2020 Board of Trustees nominations as presented by the current Nominating Committee
- Voting on the 2019-2020 Nominating Committee nominations as presented by the current Nominating Committee
- Voting on the Budget for 2019-2020 as presented by the Treasurer
- Voting on adoption of the proposed 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism.

We hope you will participate in our democratic process!

- Susan Busker

Can you help with our furnace repair???

As you are probably aware, we had to cancel our church service on April 27th due to a problem with the furnace. Turns out it was a BIG problem (involving circulation pumps, bearing assemblies, burner controls and rewiring). The total cost for repairs was \$4,438.95.

While the budget does provide for a Contingency Fund for just such emergency expenditures, this fund was dramatically reduced last year due to the cost of new roofing. As a result, we don't have enough money to cover this current expense. We would have to use all of the Contingency Fund money and then borrow from the Minister's Payroll Account (with the goal to pay it back somehow). At our May Board meeting it was decided to make a special appeal to our congregation to help cover the cost of the furnace bill and not leave our Contingency Fund with \$0 for future emergencies.

Special envelopes will be provided on the table at the entrance to the Sanctuary for your use if you are able to give something extra to help with this special expense. Every dollar counts so please give what you can – thank you in advance for your generosity!

- Susan Busker



Not a good look for our sanctuary next winter

HAPPY FATHERS DAY!

Help save the Monarch Butterflies!

At the May 11th Beloit Farmer's Market, UUCRV set up a booth with the purpose of sharing our 7th Unitarian Universalist Principle: *Respect for the web of all existence of which we are a part*. Our specific focus was on helping support the monarch butterflies which face endangered status due to loss of habitat and use of pesticides. We gave away around 90 free packets of Common Milkweed seed, one of the primary plants used by the Monarch for laying their eggs and feeding their caterpillars. (Milkweed is the only plant used by the Monarch, though there are other varieties of milkweed.)



Information was shared on creating a Butterfly garden that would also support many different pollinators. We had brochures from other area organizations that contribute to this work, including the Natural Land Institute, Nature at the Confluence, and the Welty Center. Connie Matusiak also shared information with visitors to our booth on the native plant sale provided by the Rock County Conservationists to help people get started with their gardens.

In addition, there were activities and materials for children: books and coloring pages teaching about the Monarch butterfly and its life cycle, origami butterflies for them to fold, bookmarks with information about Monarchs.

The purpose of participating in these types of community events is two-fold:

- We have an opportunity to inform people about the values of Unitarian Universalism. People at the events often find that we have shared values, and we had good discussions with visitors to our booth about the impact human activities have had on our pollinators and how vital those pollinators are to our ecosystem and food supply.
- People have an opportunity to learn about UUCRV and to meet some of our members in person. Providing “Entry Points” such as these can help others who are seeking a faith such as ours to make a first connection. The Sunday after we were at the Farmers’ Market, we had a visitor to our service who had talked with us there.

If you would like to join in this effort, there are additional packets of Common Milkweed seeds and growing instructions on the table in the entryway – please help yourself!

- Susan Busker

Thanks to Connie for signing us up and to all the members who helped – you are appreciated!



It Has Been An Honor

My term as President of UUCRV is coming to a close at the end of June. It has been my honor to have served this congregation for the last two years as your President and for the two years before that as Vice-President. I appreciate the trust you placed in me by electing me to those positions.

Before I began serving as President, my father, Past-President Pete Busker, told me that I would learn a lot from this experience and, as is common, he was right. I learned that service provides a profound opportunity to help make a difference, and that it also provides challenges as we learn to stay in covenant with each other to do the important work of this congregation.

Every President who has served this congregation has shared their many and varied gifts to help this congregation thrive for the last 16 years. Our membership has remained steady throughout that period, which given the losses most major religions are experiencing is actually quite an accomplishment. The UUA recently reported on membership across the faith and, they too, found the number of Unitarian Universalists overall to remain steady. The growth they did see was mostly found in small congregations.

I hope that one of my main accomplishments as President has been to share with you my sincere belief in the value of small congregations. As I had learned in an online course I took from the UU Leadership Institute titled “Revitalizing the Smaller Congregation” with the Rev. Megan Foley, 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.

While I may not have accomplished everything I would have liked in my two years as President, I am proud of the work this congregation has done:

- ✦ Hiring our first ½ time minister, and renewing his contract for an additional year, providing stable leadership
- ✦ Engaging the congregation in writing a covenant to guide right relations
- ✦ Forming relationships with other UUs through the Small Congregations Alliance (including the Janesville fellowship and the Elkhorn church), working with the MidAmerica Region UUA to bring a workshop to our group, learning from and supporting UUANI (Unitarian Universalist Action Network of Illinois) in social justice work, and providing speakers to other area UU churches including Janesville and Stockton
- ✦ Holding our first Peace and Justice rally on our grounds
- ✦ Becoming recognized as a Welcoming Congregation by the UUA
- ✦ Providing Entry Points to help others in our community learn about Unitarian Universalism and UUCRV, including concerts that were open to the public, booths at the first PrideFest in Beloit and at the Farmer's Market, Fair Trade sales open to the community, and church services at Highview in the Woodlands Assisted Living Facility.
- ✦ Choosing a focus for the coming year for our social justice work to address our climate crisis with environmental actions.
- ✦ Learning about the proposed 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism and participating in the Practice and the Promise to raise funds for Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism
- ✦ Planning a balance of Justice and Joy activities help us find the support from each other in order to do the work that our world needs.

While I need to take a break from leadership, I, of course, plan to continue my work on behalf of this congregation. I especially want to continue to provide “Entry Points” so more members of our community can learn about this congregation and our UU values, to continue to work on environmental justice issues, and to continue to reach out to other UUs in our area – we are stronger together!

I am so grateful to have found this congregation and appreciate the support you have provided to me, the Board, the other members, our Minister, and our community partners. I am excited to see what gifts the new President and Board will share with this Beloved Community!

- Susan Busker



How will you be involved in UUCRV in the coming year?

How will you take care of your church?

You should have received a copy of the Interests, Talents and Time Survey in the envelope with your pledge card on May 5th. The purpose of this survey was to identify interests our members and friends have to be sure there are opportunities for you to pursue those interests. It was also to learn about your talents so that we might find ways for you to share your gifts with our congregation. And it was to develop awareness of the time you might be able to give. None of your answers obligate you to anything. Rather this is an attempt to improve engagement of our members and friends in ways that they have chosen.

Unfortunately, we have only had 15 surveys returned so far – we would gladly still collect them when completed! We are currently collating information from the surveys so we can begin planning for programming, committees and social justice work for the coming church year.

I shared an article on Facebook a few weeks back titled “Your Church Doesn’t Need Volunteers” in which the author, Erin Wathen, says “You cannot volunteer at your own church, in the same way you cannot babysit your own kid. Because the church belongs to you in the same way your family does. It’s your own place, your own people. So of course, you help take care of it...We don’t just belong to the church – it belongs to us.”

I thought about this a lot and realized that I do believe the church belongs to me, so of course I take care of it, as do many other members. When you serve in a position of leadership you become acutely aware of just how much work goes into making a church function – to keep the physical facility clean and running, to provide meaningful worship and music every week, to care for the lawn and gardens, to track and maintain a balanced budget, to provide programming for small group ministries, to plan and participate in social justice activities, to supply refreshments and plan social events – it can be exhausting just to think of it. But, fortunately, this work can be shared. In fact, it must be shared. Do you believe the church belongs to you? How do you want to take care of it?

If you haven’t completed the survey, please consider taking a moment to do so. If you have misplaced yours, please ask for another copy or print out the one attached to this newsletter. We want to get to know you better and how you might want to be involved in your church.

- Susan Busker

Talents, Interests and Time Survey

Name: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Please share with us some information regarding your time, talents and interests so that we might help you get connected in a way that fulfills you and supports the congregation!

My Talents (circle all that apply and add others we didn't think of!):

-  GARDENING
-  CARPENTRY
- HOSPITALITY
-  ACCOUNTING
- TEACHING
- POLITICAL ADVOCACY
-  MUSIC
- WORKING WITH YOUTH
-  LEGAL KNOWLEDGE
- HISTORY
- COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS
-  LANDSCAPING
- LEADERSHIP
-  BAKING/COOKING
- MARKETING
-  MINOR REPAIRS
- LAY-LED SERVICES
-  FUNDRAISING
-  PAINTING
- CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES
- SPORTS
- SINGING
- CLERICAL WORK
- PUBLIC SPEAKING
- EVENT COORDINATING
-  WRITING
- MEDITATION/MINDFULNESS
- WRITING GRANTS
-  EARTH-BASED SERVICES
-  SEWING/CRAFTS
- HOSTING SMALL GROUP DINNERS
-  HEALTH CARE
-  TAG SALE ORGANIZING SALES
-  HOLIDAY DECORATING
-  COMPUTER SKILLS
-  PHOTOGRAPHY
- FLOWER ARRANGING
- OTHER: _____

My Interests:

- Participating in Small Group Ministry** (e.g. book study, discussion group, Touchstones theme group, other: _____)
- Participating in social events** (e.g. potluck dinners, sing-alongs, game night, comedy night, other: _____)
- Helping with the Food Pantry Garden**
- Organizing donation drives for area organizations**
- Helping with Flower Gardens**
- Sharing a worship service on the topic of _____**
- Providing treats for Coffee Hour after church**
- Meditation and Mindfulness activities**
- Help with Fair Trade Sales**
- Work on Book Sales**
- Organize and sell at "Garage" Sales**
- Spending time in nature**
- Help with recycling in the building**
- Other: _____**

Serving on a Committee:

- Membership** – *welcoming visitors and planning coffee hour and other events for members*

- Care and Concern** – reaching out to members in need
- Worship** – helping plan and lead worship services and/or music
- Finance** – overseeing the budget and financial health of the congregation
- Religious Education - Children and Youth** – planning and carrying out educational opportunities for children and youth
- Religious Education – Adults** – planning and carrying out educational opportunities for adults
- Building and Grounds** – helping with upkeep of the building inside and out, and maintain the grounds
- Fundraising** – helping with various fundraising sales and events
- Technology Advancements** – supporting social media and the church website
- Spruce-Up**

Social Justice:

- Participate in local social justice actions** (e.g. rallies and marches, educational events, letter writing)
- Reading about social justice needs and discuss with others**
- Participate in events to support the LGBTQ community**
- Participate in activities to eliminate racism**
- Participate in events to address environmental issues**

What time do you have available to share?

Times to best reach you (check all that apply):

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
morning							
afternoon							
evening							

Times you might be available to participate (check all that apply):

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
morning							
afternoon							
evening							

What is the amount of time you might be able to give to this congregation?

_____ hour(s) weekly _____ hour(s) monthly _____ hour(s) on a Sunday after church

In Serving With Grace, Lay Leadership as a Spiritual Practice, Rev. Erik Wikstrom asks “Will you take advantage of the opportunity to use your service in the church to deepen your spiritual life and further your spiritual journey? The monasteries and intentional spiritual communities of all religious traditions understand that each and every moment of each and every day provides opportunities to learn, deepen and grow. Whether sitting in meditation and prayer in your room or chopping carrots and washing dishes in the kitchen – anything can be used as a tool for deepening our connection with life. The quiet of the prayer bench and the bustle of the business office are not seen as two distinct things – they are two aspects of the same process. The busy work of the monastery provides as much of a pathway as prayer. And when the work is seen that way, that’s just what it does.” (pp. xi-xii)

2018-19 Officers

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