

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



September, 2018

Monthly Schedule

9/9 - 10:30 - Ingathering – Water Communion Service – Allen Harden & Jerry Paulson.
You are encouraged to bring water from (or representing) place from your travels or a recent place of significance in your life..

12:00 -Worship Committee Meeting

–9/16 – Dr. Betsy Schroeder - Merrill School & Caritas

12:00 – Board Meeting

3:00 – **Jim Scott Concert** - *Gather the Spirit – A Raising of Voices* **Note the new date**

9/19 – 10:00 – Small Group Discussion “Vocation”

9/23 – New Member Recognition Allen Harden

9/30 – UUA General Assembly Report, Christopher D. Sims

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Minister’s Musing

Our lives are forged by the how we react to and manage the contradictory messages and inherent tensions that constantly roil within us. So much is going on around us, how can we choose where to engage our efforts and our feelings. I feel this pressure all the time, as many pieces of my world attract my attention.

Last month, during our service at the Nygren Wetlands, I was able to listen to that part of me that belongs – viscerally and organically -- to our physical world, seeking harmony with environment and nature. I feed on nature, and I love coming to our Stateline area because natural beauty is so accessible here. A few of you may know that I pretend to have a “second office” in town, located at tables under trees on the prairie hilltop in the Jensen forest preserve (off Bluff Road just north of Rockton). This place affords me the chance to sit outdoors, to feel the breeze, listen to birds, and track the changing sky. I sometimes stop in for a few minutes, but often much longer. When seeking exercise, I can walk down to the river, through wooded bottomlands, or across restored prairie fields.

Last week, I spent most of a Saturday at the Rock the Pride Festival in Beloit. This day held many pleasures, some coming from sitting quietly with UUCRV people and having a chance to engage easily and without agenda. But the simple pleasures were wrapped in something larger because we were there in the spirit of service, support, and making clear our offer to be allied with the LGBTQ cause. We had purpose. I observed little in the way of conflict or personal

angst during this day, it was almost all gentle family fun. But we were there, walking our talk, and preparing for such time when a more serious situation asks more of us. I found much in this day that fed me. Maybe the best was the pure joy I perceived from many of the youth we met who were feeling free to explore and play with gender identity and public presentation. On this day, at least, they showed me enthusiasm for life.

During the coming months, we desperately need to engage in the public dialogues and political debates attached to the mid-term elections. These elections are in big part a referendum on how we view the future of our nation and its governance. As a church, we cannot endorse individual candidates directly, but we should feel compelled to address the issues and practices surrounding our governments. And, we should be drawn to activities that make our elections fairer and more representative. Her I need help, because. I am not a local. I ask any of you who have contact with local efforts to increase voter registration and assist voters in getting to the polls to help point me to places here our resources, work and concerns could find leverage. The places we want to engage are those where issues are clear and races are in contention, be they in local or national races, in Illinois or Wisconsin.

We need to care for ourselves, we need to care for our neighbors, we need to care for the bigger world. This is hard work, and confusing work. It is the work of living. May we help one another as we continue to move forward.

Blessed Be. Allen

Committee Information

Worship: The Worship Committee is always looking for people to give the Sunday message and/or participate in our Worship services. Maybe you would like to do one of the readings or maybe lead the singing? *Why not give it a try?!?!?* Contact a Worship Committee member if you are interested in being involved – even just once!

Our September services are in place and we will be working on the October schedule September 9. If you have any speaker suggestions, please contact one of us.

September 9 Water Ceremony and Ingathering Worship Leader, Allen Harden

This week's service marks the symbolic start of our church year. You are invited to bring water from your travels, from places with special meaning to you, or that represents places, events, or persons of special importance in your lives. Water will also be available for those of us who do not bring some to church with us. The service will address coming together as community, new beginnings, and how we might work together to changes ourselves and our world.

September 23 New Member Recognition Worship Leader, Allen Harden

We will hold a ceremony to bring three new persons into membership in our Congregation, and welcome them as they officially join us in mission, in covenant, and in responsibility for our works. The message for the morning will be a reflection on who we are and what we hope to be: both as the UUCRV congregation and the Unitarian Universalist denomination.

GARAGE SALE

Yes, it's garage sale time again, and I've agreed to organize the sale. BUT, I need stuff to sell and help with the sale!

The sale at our church will be inside Saturday, September 22 from 9-3. This is a church fund-raising activity, but also allows customers to meet us.

Please bring your donations to church on Sunday the 9th or 16th or both. If that doesn't work for you, call me (815-624-2283) to set up a convenient time. Also, check with me about clothing before you bring it.

Please check your calendars and save some time for helping. I need help setting up the sale during the week of Sept. 17-21. I also need help staffing the sale on Saturday the 22nd, and a clean-up crew after the sale. (We have church the next day!) Some of you can't do the set-up, but you can be a cashier at the sale or just sit in the sales area to answer questions.

Also check out the sale even if you can't help; I personally have found many things I needed/wanted. The prices are good, and the merchandise is varied.

Closer to the sale, I'll ask you to consider posting the sale to your friends on FaceBook if you you are a FB person.

I'll have a schedule soon with opportunities to help. I'm counting on the good response I usually get — PLEASE!
Nina Herzer, sale organizer



September Birthdays

1 – Tricia Graham
7 – Gloria Shafer

2 – Kara Becker
8 – Linda Brefeld

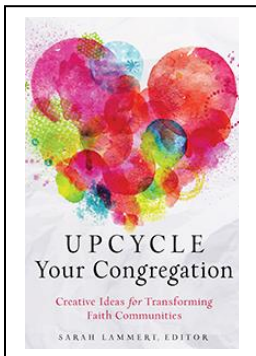
4 – Denny Broderick, Diane Busker
13 – Russ Pickering

Upcycle Your Congregation

The Board is reading this new book from the UUA this year and will be discussing a chapter at each Board meeting.

Upcycle Your Congregation, Creative Ideas for Transforming Faith Communities is a collection of essays by Unitarian Universalist leaders who share creative ways to “upcycle” aspects of a congregation - a process of remaking something better or reusing something for a new purpose. In the introduction, the editor Sarah Lammert, says “This book is not about changing everything in head spinning ways, but being inspired to experiment in the service of vitality. It is about taking the ingredients you have at hand – the buildings, the worship life, the mission, the people, and the programs that make up your religious community – and creating new possibility.”

We discussed the first essay, “The New Revised Standard Version of Our Story” by Vanessa Rush Southern, at our August meeting. The author says that “A healthy congregation has healthy anecdotes – tales of love, courage, and laughter, and of the good, long journeys across the wilderness places.” The opposite of this is the “problem-centered story”, “one that a community (or individual) tells about itself that has a problem or a barrier, seemingly unmovable...The congregation’s job too easily becomes (officially or unofficially) looking for that problem and reconfirming how this barrier is a cross to bear.” What story do you tell about our congregation - one of problems and barriers, or one of love, courage and laughter?



Southern tells the story of a congregation that faced adversity and discovered in this church's accomplishments a theme of risk – "...then the central job of leadership became to hold up stories of risk wherever we found them – both in the congregation's past and in its present life...Simultaneously, we...named victories everywhere we could in our congregation's life..."

What risks has our congregation taken and what victories have we achieved?

- ❖ Over 15 years ago a small group of 5 people first gathered to consider forming a new congregation - 15 years later this congregation is thriving!
- ❖ The decision was made to relocate to the Rockton area – a location was found that would become a long-term home!
- ❖ A goal was set to pay off the mortgage on our building in order to be able to fund a ½ time minister – this year we hired our first half-time minister!

And those are just the big risks – there are many others that we have taken with positive results. The author points out that "what we look for we often find." Can you find other examples of risks this congregation has taken and achieved? Make these the story of our congregation!

- Susan Busker

P.S. We have a couple of extra copies of the book if you are interested in reading along with us – all are welcome to share ideas for upcycling our congregation!

What happens at a Board Retreat?

And what does this have to do with you?

As President I sometimes feel frustrated that I don't have enough time to discuss topics in depth with the other Board members. We are often pressed for time to get through the business of the church leaving little time to do the most important work of the Board, visioning our future.

Robin Scheu said this of Boards: "Often boards are unclear what their role is. Their role is to articulate the vision, getting input from lots of sources, and saying what results or outcomes they want to have." (From Board Orientation: A Drive Time Essay

www.uua.org/leadership/skills/management/102118.shtml)

To allow more time for this visioning work, a Board Retreat was held on August 11th from 9:00 am-1:00 pm. After reflecting on current and possible future practices in support of the Mission and the Pillars of Beloved Community, the Board chose the following goals for the 2018-2019 church year:

- 1) Hire a ½ time minister for the 2019-2020 church year.**
- 2) Continue to work on policies to guide the governance of the congregation.**
- 3) Keep a balance of Justice and Joy activities.**
- 4) Provide an Entry Point activity monthly to connect with community members**
- 5) Continue to form relationships with the greater UU Community.**
- 6) Support and facilitate work on the Pillars of Beloved Community (Fredric Muir):**
 - Multiculturalism
 - Environmental Justice
 - Sexuality & Family Values
 - Right Relations
- 7) Ask Committees to review and revise Committee Charters; adopt revised Charters.**
- 8) Use UUA website template and update information on website**
- 9) Support Minister in identifying and carrying out goals for the year.**

While some of these goals will be the sole responsibility of the Board, most of them will require input and support from all of our members in order to achieve them:

- What Justice activities are important to you? How can you support these activities?
- What Joy activities might you help plan and carry out to be enjoyed by the congregation?
- What ideas for Entry Points do you have that would encourage people from the community to visit us and have a chance to get to know about Unitarian Universalism?
- How might you support building relationships with the greater UU Community, e.g. attending an event sponsored by another UU congregation?
- Which of the Pillars of Beloved Community interest you and what might you contribute?

The Board will be looking for input regarding the work toward these goals. You can always attend a Board meeting to share your ideas or tell a Board member who can bring it to the group's attention. Your Committee will also be asked to support work toward these goals so talk to the other members about what your group can contribute. Your ideas are needed!

- Susan Busker

The Joy of Visiting With Other Small UU congregations

I had the privilege of visiting with a couple of other small congregations in the last month, and as always, I feel that I gain so much from these connections. On August 12th I provided the message for the service at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Stockton, IL. It, too, is a small congregation, with 40+ members. The message I delivered is one you have heard before, "Small Church is a Wonderful and Beautiful Way of Doing Church." I Believe the message was well received as there was applause when I finished speaking and one member dropped a stone for Joy in the water at their time of Joys and Concerns saying, "These are just the words we needed to hear!"

How many other small UU churches out there need to hear that they are "wonderful" and "beautiful" just the way they are and that the aspiration of "bigger is better" doesn't need to be one that we claim? It reminds me of one of my favorite hymns: "How could anyone ever tell you you were anything less than beautiful? How could anyone ever tell you you were less than whole?" (words by Libby Roderick; #1053). I believe that small congregations are already beautiful and whole.



Members at the Stockton church expressed their concern about having mostly older members and losing them over time. One fellow expressed surprise that of our most recent new and soon-to-be new members, half were under retirement age. Since this seemed so unusual to him, I decided I needed to ask our younger members why they are choosing our congregation. One responded "What attracted me to UUCRV is the size of the congregation and the warmth of its members...You can really get to know people in smaller congregations." Another one said "For me it has a lot to do with what we talked about at the UU meeting a few weeks ago when it was pointed out that this congregation has a "sweetness" to it. The more I attend and the more people I talk to I find that to be true...I stayed...because of the immediate acceptance that I felt within the members." It seems the small-sized congregation appeals to people across the generations.

My second recent experience with another small UU congregation was when I attended a picnic in Janesville hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Rock County. The food was delicious and the setting so beautiful, but the main draw was the fellowship we shared – it is always a joy to share time together.



One of the Board’s new goals for the 2018-2019 church year is to “Continue to form relationships with the greater UU Community.” This supports our **Covenant of Right Relations** which includes the right relations of **Members to the Wider UU Community** in which we agreed to:

- Support and encourage engagement with other local UU congregations
- Attend and participate in UUA activities as able
- Support becoming a Fair Share Congregation

- Susan Busker

UUCRV Rocked at “Rock the Pride” Pride Fest!



It was great fun connecting with lots of new people at the “Rock the Pride” Pride Fest in Beloit on August 25th! Thanks to the UUCRV members and youth who welcomed visitors to our booth and let them know about our special church home!

Congratulations, Grant!



Congratulations to Grant on achieving the highest rank in Boy Scouting, that of Eagle Scout! Many UUCRV members attended the National Court of Honor for Grant on August 26th. We are proud of you and happy to celebrate your accomplishment with you!

“...Thanks to all those who attended Grant's Eagle Court of Honor this last Sunday. The day was not too windy, but it was frightfully hot and humid and yet we counted 14 UU's that attended the ceremony. Given the weather, I wasn't too sure how many would come. Grant says that he is grateful that so many came. So, thank you for the support, and especially given the conditions, that was above and beyond the call of duty.

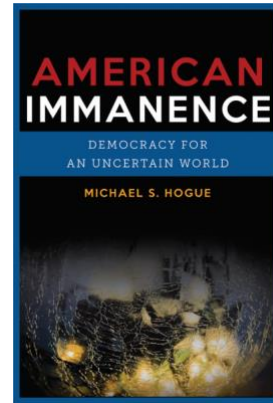
Brock, Melonie and Grant

How Can We Save Our Democracy? Get some inspiration at this event!

On October 6th, Meadville Lombard and the Unitarian Church of Evanston are cosponsoring an event titled “How Can We Save Our Democracy? Religion and Politics in an Uncertain World.” The description of this event says:

Increase of xenophobia and racism, threats to freedom of the press, anti-climate change policies—it is clear that we are living in a radically uncertain world. How can we save our democracy in times like these? Meadville Lombard's core faculty will share concepts and practical skills to build resilient democracy and stronger community.

Dr. Mike Hogue, Professor of Theology, Ethics, and Philosophy of Religion, is the keynote speaker. He will speak from his new book, *American Immanence: Democracy for an Uncertain World* (read Dr. Hogue's introduction), which calls for building democratic communities of responsibility, resistance, and resilience. His book will be available for purchase at the event.



Lunch is included. Please indicate any special dietary needs at checkout.

Suggested ticket price is \$30 per person to help defray the expenses of this event. But in the spirit of building a strong, resilient community, we ask you to set your own ticket price: if you can give more to help those who cannot at this time, we encourage you to do so. Minimum is \$1 to register.

Registration closes on Friday, September 28, 2018.

Go to the Meadville Lombard website <http://www.meadville.edu/ml-commons/details/how-can-we-save-our-democracy-a-day-of-learning-in-evanston-il/> to register.

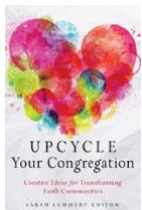
You can see a brief video 5 min. of Dr. Hogue talking about his book at <http://www.meadville.edu/ml-commons/details/american-immanence-democracy-for-an-uncertain-world/>. What might your role be in a “resilient democracy?”

Here is a great opportunity to support our Board goal to “Continue to form relationships with the greater UU Community” and support our **Covenant of Right Relations** which includes the right relations of **Members to Wider UU Community** in which we agreed to affirm and promote:

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- Attend and participate in UUA activities as able

- Susan Busker

Religious Education for Children and Youth 2018-2019



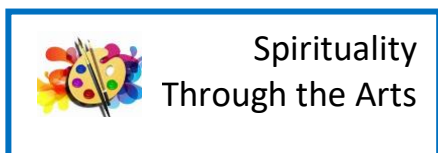
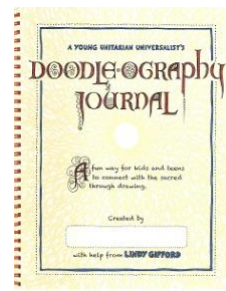
The Board is reading a new book from the UUA called Upcycle Your Congregation (edited by Sarah Lammert, Boston, MA: Skinner House Books, 2018) – upcycling involves transforming “the main ingredients of our congregation into something relevant, innovative, and new.” This is what we are working on for this coming year with our Religious Education Program for our children and youth.

Many churches report a lack of children, and volunteer burnout as the reasons their religious education programs have diminished or even disappeared. I have always been proud of how our congregation has valued our children and youth, but I am afraid we are facing

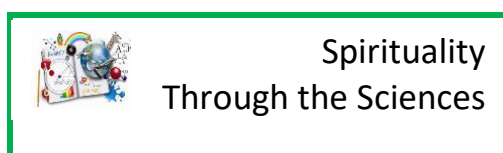
a similar situation at UUCRV. There are currently 4 children and youth in our congregation, and no volunteers on the Religious Education Committee.

We need to make a change. The changes the Board agreed to at their August meeting include:

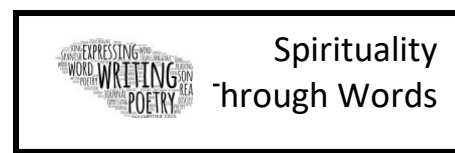
- ✦ Children and youth will remain in the Sanctuary for the service. We will continue to investigate ways to include them more actively in the service, such as having them light the chalice or provide a reading. All children and youth will be offered a copy of a Doodle-ography Journal (UUA, 2018) to use during the service. It contains words and images to connect children and youth with their Unitarian Universalist heritage as well as wisdom from other religions and the earth. Doodling is an effective aid in helping with focus – research shows that people who doodle while listening retain up to 29% more information than those who do not. (There is also a doodling book for adults available from the UUA bookstore!) When finished, they will have a personal visual record of their journey and a memento of their faith community to keep.
- ✦ Activities will be provided in the Fellowship Room in the basement following the service. Some activities will be led by adult members. Other times children and youth might choose from a variety of activities organized on shelves. The themes for the shelves are:



Spirituality
Through the Arts



Spirituality
Through the Sciences



Spirituality
through Words

We will be asking members to consider sharing a talent or interest with the children and youth. For example, Kara Becker has agreed to teach them our hymn “Spirit of Life” using American Sign Language, and Pete Busker has agreed to help them build a telegraph key and learn Morse code. Could you lead an art activity, provide a nature or science experience, teach a meditation practice, guide a lesson in writing poetry, help them learn a new song? Be creative – I know everyone has something to offer our children and youth. We will have a calendar on the bulletin board in the basement to keep track of what is planned.

There are many other ideas that have been offered, mostly by the parents, children and youth themselves, that are also under active consideration. We still need to identify who will be responsible for each of these ideas and to identify the specifics of how each will be implemented, but some of the ideas include:

- Youth participating in a Common Read of a book and discussing it with others with facilitation by an adult
- A monthly donation project led by the children and youth
- A “Question for All Ages” created by the children and youth and presented in the service for all to consider
- Interviews of members with introductions made to the congregation by the children and youth

- Special service projects involving the children, youth and adults

We have a very creative and engaged congregation – let the Board know of any feedback or ideas you may have to support this effort! Susan Busker

JIM SCOTT

Composer, Guitarist, Singer

**Sunday
September 15
3 PM**



**Songfest
Concert and
New Album
Preview**

Songs for Earth, Peace (and Fun)
UU Congregation of Rock Valley
329 School St. Rockton IL
Suggested donation \$10 to \$20 sliding scale
UUCRV.org

*Jim brings a warmth and authenticity that turns any size audience into an intimate gathering.
With lyrical melodies, well-crafted words and humorous surprises, he invites us all to get involved in the issues he raises.
Honed through his years with the Paul Winter Consort and world travels as a soloist, Jim's guitar mastery, enchanting manner moved folk legend Pete Seeger to call him "Some kind of magician."*

**VIEW AND DISCUSS:
"THE SULTAN AND THE SAINT"
TUESDAY, SEPT. 18 4:30 P.M.**
SSM ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL 3400 E RACINE ST.
LILAC, ORCHID AND VIOLET ROOMS

**FOURTH WARD
PEACE WALK
WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 19 5 P.M.**
FOURTH WARD PARK 410 RACINE ST.

**PEACE MEDITATION
AND TREE PLANTING
FRIDAY, SEPT. 21 12 P.M.**
ROTARY BOTANICAL GARDENS
1455 PALMER DR.

**PEACE HIKE
LED BY THE ROCK TRAIL COALITION
FRIDAY, SEPT. 21 5 P.M.**
PEACE PARK 2801 ROCKPORT ROAD

**INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF PEACE
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2-4 P.M.**
Hedberg Public Library 316 S. Main St.

Celebrate the 37th anniversary with speakers, activities and local informational booths.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:
Diversity Action Team of Rock County • Rock Valley Fellowship of Reconciliation • Rock Trail Coalition
SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital • Rotary Botanical Gardens • Hedberg Public Library

HedbergPublicLibrary.org



2018-19 Officers

President	Susan Busker	815-624-2833
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Treasurer	Nina Herzer	815-624-2283



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