

Published by and for the Unitarian Universalist Community of Rock Valley
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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

On December 10, UUCRV members participated in person and on-line in an open and honest conversation about the future of our Congregation. Marlene set the tone and laid out guidelines for the discussion, then asked us to reflect on our experiences with attending services and being involved with the church. The answers touched on the opportunities to be together, working with others to create services and educational programs, intellectual stimulation of services and discussions, the sense of community, and the friendliness and care that are part of a small, welcoming congregation. When asked what is the most important lifegiving characteristic of our church, and what is

the single most important value that makes our church unique, some of the responses were: love, acceptance, loyalty, commitment, friendliness and caring for each other.

Then the discussion moved to the question, does our current building meet our needs? A big issue is accessibility to bathrooms, the upper and lower floors, and the sanctuary that limits our use of much of the building. Because of this, space to socialize and allow other groups to use the building is limited. There are numerous other repairs and improvements that are needed, including to our aging heating system. However, the location makes us highly visible to the public and the grounds are beautiful with its old oak trees and native plantings. It's location is central to the members of the congregation, and it is paid for! What we spend on building upkeep and utilities are in-line with other small congregations, but making major repairs will be costly. A lot of sweat equity has been put into the grounds and building, but our older members can no longer help do the work that is needed to maintain the property.

We also discussed our capacity as a congregation to sell, relocate, remodel or rebuild. The Board and the Building and Grounds Committee started the process to identify the repairs and remodeling that are needed to make the building more accessible, safe and usable. This process was put on-hold while we discussed our funding priorities and needs. The task force members will meet during the first week of January to review the pros and cons of staying in our current building or moving to new space, and to create a list of priorities and cost estimates for repairs and remodeling that can be presented to the Congregation for consideration. This process has shown, once again, that we care deeply about each other, and that we are willing to listen to differing ideas and opinions. As we start a new year, I'm excited about the possibilities for our small, but mighty Congregation.

Jerry Paulson

MARLENE'S MINISTERIAL MUSINGS

As we enter a New Year I'm realizing, and feeling, a sense of uncertainty. So much is in flux and changing. So much is concerning and even horrifying. There is the war in Israel/Palestine and conflicts in so many places. There is growing authoritarianism and Fascism not just here in the US but in the wider world. This year brings an incredibly important Presidential election and all the tension, uncertainty, and even fear associated with that. It leaves me asking the question how we will traverse all this uncertainty? And. I have one answer and that is by keeping Love at the center and holding our UU values close and foremost, and by building strong caring communities like we have at here UUCRV. I know that this community will help me get through the uncertainty this New Year brings by always reminding about what really matters.



Blessings.

Rev. Marlene

Jan 10 and 24 @ 10 a.m.
Community Office Hours
Bushel and Peck, Beloit

Jan 17 @ 4 p.m.
Vespers
IN person & hopefully online.

Jan 31 @ 1 p.m.
Common Read Workshop
On line only (I think)

LOOKING FOR GREETERS AND COFFEE HOUR SNACKS

The Membership Committee would like volunteers to greet at Sunday services as well as provide snacks for social time after services. Please consider helping out.

Greeters extend a warm welcome by welcoming people at the front door. The only requirements are your presence, a smile and arriving 15 minutes before the service begins.

UUCRV social time after our services is an opportunity to catch up with each other as well as get acquainted with visitors. Help us make it special by signing up to provide snacks for the social hour. Perhaps you have a special occasion to celebrate or just feel like treating the UUCRV community. Now is the time to save your date by signing up.

Email Carol Klager at: carolklager@gmail.com to save your date to help with either of these activities.



JANUARY WORSHIP SERVICES

JANUARY 7 "THE BURNING BOWL"

REV. DR. MARLENE WALKER

On this first Sunday of a New Year, we will burn what we want to leave behind and welcome our hopes and intentions for the New Year.

JANUARY 14 "REFUSING TO ABANDON"

REV. ALLISON FARNUM

Join Rev. Allison Farnum with the UU Prison Ministry of IL as she invites us to organize ourselves to be a caring presence to those in IL prisons and to remember our power as a humanizing, caring presence. To read Rev.

Farnum's story go to: <https://www.meadville.edu/ml-commons/details/alum-story-rev-allison-farnum-mdiv-08/>



JANUARY 21 "CAPACITY: HOW WE FEED THE CAT" REV. DR. MARLENE WALKER

If Curiosity is not what killed the Cat then Capacity is what keeps it fed. We will explore how we determine what our capacity is, both personally, and as a congregation, and also how we can both accept the capacity we have and build capacity when we need it.



JANUARY 28 "SEEDS FOR THE NEW YEAR" REV. DR. SOPHIA BETANCOURT

What seeds are you planting for the new year?

How are you weaving your magic into your relationships with others?

How can we center beauty and goodness and love in all that's ahead?

These questions are at the heart of the homily, story, and other worship materials being offered by Worship Web and Rev. Dr. Sofía Betancourt, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

UUCRV ACTIVITIES

THE TOUCHSTONES JOURNAL JANUARY TOPIC IS JUSTICE

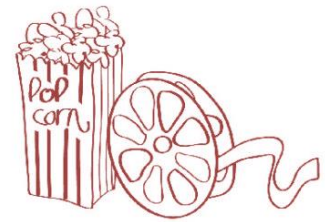
The Touchstones Discussion Group has reached maximum capacity & isn't accepting new participant. The journal is still available to all members for individual reading and reflection.

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgzGwJSGtPjxmrvjtHkNdjxbfFsfl?projector=1&messagePartId=0.7>

If you would like to be on a waiting list for the Touchstones discussion group, contact Connie Matusiak @ 608-361-9669. The group meets in person on the third Wednesday of the month.

MEANINGFUL MOVIES AT UUCRV

The Membership Committee extends an invitation to all members and friends to join us for an all-new monthly event...Meaningful Movies. On the second Tuesday (1:30 p.m.) and Saturday (6:30 p.m.) of each month from January through June. So, mark your calendars and enjoy movies that look at social justice or spiritual issues that are of interest to UUs.



January 9 and 13 are the movie dates for showing **1946: The Mistranslation That Shifted Culture**. It chronicles the discovery of never-before-seen archives at Yale University which unveil astonishing new revelations, and casts significant doubt on any biblical basis for LGBTQIA+ prejudice. Featuring commentary from prominent scholars as well as opposing pastors, including the personal stories of the film's creators, 1946 is at once challenging, enlightening, and inspiring.

Here is the trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00QOkOE49qM>

Watch for the complete schedule through June later this month.

WHY UU PRISON MINISTRY OF ILLINOIS EXISTS

The United States is a prison nation. The United States has 5% of the world's population and 25% of its prisoners. It is even worse for women: the U.S. holds nearly 33% of all women incarcerated worldwide. Radical disparity is a major factor: black people are 10.1 times more likely to be sent to prison for drug offenses than white people, although whites use and sell more drugs than blacks do. Bryan Stevenson, author of Just Mercies, urges us to get in proximity to injustices we want to change. The UU Prison Ministry of Illinois will do exactly that.

Our Mission: UUPMI will equip UU's in IL to transform institutions and support people harmed by the prison industrial complex.

Our Unitarian Universalist principles call us to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to engage in a free and responsible search for truth and meaning. We want to engage those most in need of affirmation – the people locked up, often for very minor offenses, in Illinois prisons, who look to worship services for badly needed peace and solace. The UU Church of the Larger Fellowship serves 700 people in prison who deeply value our shared faith, and 260 people in Illinois prisons have pen pals through the GLBTQ group Black and Pink. The need is clear. Our UU presence and support in prisons can save sanity, spirit, and even lives.

The Chicago UU Prison Ministry of Illinois will foster connections between UU congregations and Illinois prisoners.

1. Offering liberal religious ministry inside prisons.
2. Advocating for policy changes related to prisons.
3. Teaching radical hospitality to congregations welcoming formerly incarcerated people.

For more information visit: <http://www.uupmi.org/>

Donations can be made at: <http://www.uupmi.org/donate.html>

If donating by check please send checks made out to UUPMI

Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of IL

280 Exmoor Ave., Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

UU Prison Ministry of Illinois is a 501(c)3 organization, so your contributions are tax-deductible.

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2022-2023 OFFICERS

President	Jerry Paulson	815-222-4414
Vice-President	Cher Zimmerman	608-365-2343
Secretary	Jodell Gabriel	815-742-0704
Treasurer	Paulette Lucas	815-601-3225
At Large	Carol Klager	815-298-0477

Members are welcome at all UUCRV committee meetings.

Check the calendar in this newsletter for meeting times.

If you have questions or comments to share, contact board members or the appropriate committee chair.

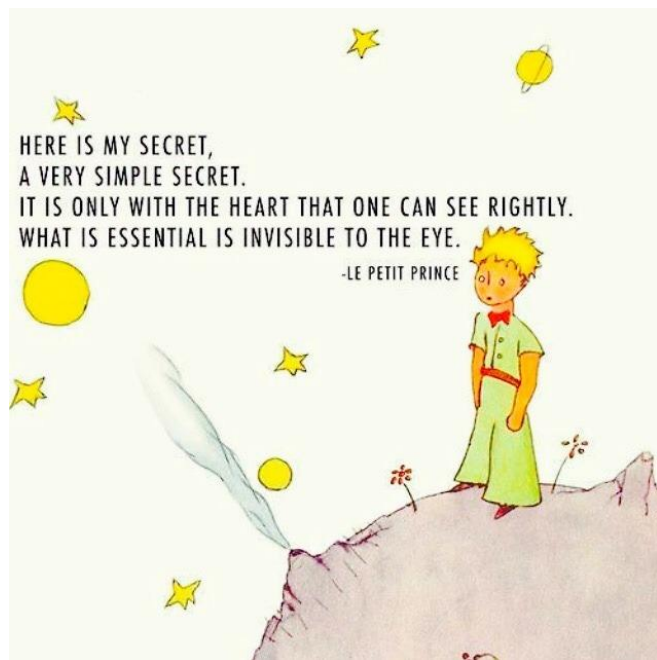
Rev. Dr. Marlene Walker

Email: revmwalker@mac.com

Phone: 970-640-5444



READ MORE ABOUT IT IN THE NEWSLETTER.



COMMITTEES & CHAIRS (OR CO-CHAIRS)

Finance: Cher Zimmerman

Faith Formations: Collaborative

Membership: Diana Kevari

Building & Grounds: Denny Broderick & Brock Heckel

Technology Advancements: Denny Broderick

Music: Wendy Edgington, Denny Broderick & Amy Phelps

TASK GROUPS

Building Task Force: Cher Zimmerman

Spruce up: Paulette Lucas

Newsletter: Editor Jodell Gabriel; Calendar Susan Busker

January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's Day	2	3 2-3:30 pm Building Task Force meeting	4	5	6
7 *** 10:30 am Worship: The Burning Bowl Rev. Dr. Marlene Walker	8	9 1-3pm Faith Formation Committee Zoom Meeting 1:30 P.M. Meaningful Movie Day details in newsletter	10 10-11 am Community Office Hours Rev. Walker Bushel & Peck	11 1-2 pm Finance Committee Zoom meeting	12 2-4 pm Board Zoom Meeting	13 6:30 P.M. Meaningful Movie night details in newsletter
14 *** 10:30 am Worship: Refusing to Abandon Guest Minister: Rev. Allison Farnum Worship Associate: Wendy Edgington	15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	16	17 10:30 am Touchstones Small Group Discussion 4 p.m. Vespers	18	19	20 <i>Please send in dates and articles for the February Newsletter!</i>
21 *** 10:30 am Worship: Capacity: How We Feed the Cat Rev. Dr. Marlene Walker	22	23	24 10-11 am Community Office Hours Rev. Walker Bushel & Peck	25	26	27 Brock Heckel's birthday
28 *** 10:30 am Worship: Seeds for the New Year Worship Associate: Donna Beaumont	29	30	31			

*****WORSHIP SERVICES ARE MULTIPLATFORM INCLUDING ON ZOOM**

(THE ZOOM LINK IS IN THE "SERVICE INFORMATION" EMAIL SENT TO MEMBERS & FRIENDS PRIOR TO THE SERVICE. REQUEST SERVICE INFORMATION BY EMAILING: UUCROCKVALLEY@GMAIL.COM)