

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lawrence
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
December 2016

Mark Your Calendars!
Upcoming Events and Important Dates Ahead

Saturday, December 3	9:30 a.m. Men's Group Meets at UUCL
Saturday, December 10	Women's Group (see article last page)
Monday, December 12	Meeting of the Executive Board
Sunday, December 11	SAJT meeting (12:15 pm)
Sunday, December 18	Bring gifts for Mitten Tree and return UUSC Guest-at-your-Table boxes (see 9:30 Program info)
Saturday, December 24	Christmas Eve Celebration (7:00 pm)
Sunday, January 1	Champagne Breakfast 9:30-11:00
Sunday, January 8	Hospitali-TEA after the service for lunch*
Sunday, January 21	Soulful Suppers
Sunday, January 29	Connections Fair *

*(See Membership article for detail)

UPCOMING 9:30 SUNDAY TRADITIONAL PROGRAMS

December 4	Jill Jarvis, Rebecca Gant, Shannon VanLandingham, Bonnie Blosser <i>"Where are we going and how do we get there?"</i>
December 11	Gayle Sigurdson, <i>"Recreation Opportunities in Lawrence."</i> (UUCL could form a special group.)
December 18	<i>Our traditional Mitten Tree.</i> Join us and our children in decorating our Christmas tree with mittens/gloves, hats, scarves, socks, underwear for children in our community.**
December 25	Merry Christmas! No program scheduled.
January 1	Join us at the annual <i>Champagne Breakfast</i> sponsored by the Program Team. Come enjoy at 9:30—11:00.
January 8	Denise Stahl, quilter extraordinaire.

** If you have not yet taken a **UUSC (Unitarian Universalist Service Committee) Guest-at-your-Table box or envelope** home yet, please do so, place some cash in it to feed your unseen "guest" each time you have a meal, and return it, with the requested information completed, on Dec. 18 so that it can be placed under the Mitten Tree along with your donations of warm clothing. Also, please take one of the UUSC Stories of Hope booklets home to read at your leisure and share with your family. Boxes, envelopes and booklets are in a basket on the table at the rear of the sanctuary or on a table in the lobby.



THEME FOR DECEMBER

What Does It Mean To Be A Community of Presence?



Spiritually, presence can mean two radically different things. On the one hand, contemplatives talk of “being present.” Presence from this perspective is all about awareness and remembering to “live in the moment.” On the other hand, theologians tend to come at presence from the perspective of “otherness.” Their concern is not just that we pay attention to the present moment, but that we notice a transcendent Presence that is woven through all moments.

This month, we refuse to take sides. Attentiveness or otherness? Who says we have to choose? Isn't it true that, more often than not, they dance together more than they compete? Isn't it true that when we are most present, a powerful presence emerges? Pay attention to your child and slowly a confidence and unique self unfolds. Pay attention to the flow of your breathing or the flow of the ocean and something bigger than yourself enters the scene. Look for a long time at a singular tree and eventually it presents itself to you as a world in and unto itself.

The underlying message here is that the world is full of unnoticed gifts and grace. It's a message perfectly fit for this month that so often celebrates presents over presence. In the face of commercials and billboards that tell us our lives will finally be complete if we stuff them with a few more shiny objects or plastic gadgets, our spiritual traditions come along and remind us that our lives are already complete. Their message: The greatest gift of the holidays is noticing the many gifts that have been sitting there all along.

So how will you engage this dance? What powerful and meaningful presence is waiting for you to be present to it? What gift is waiting and wanting to emerge? What will your awareness bring into being this month?

Here are our December worship services presenting the theme of “Presence”, which will be further explored in Spirit Play, the Program, and Sharing Circles during the month.

December 4*In the Presence of Absence*

The messages of the holiday season -- a longing for peace and joy, anticipation of cherished family traditions, the comfort of being with loved ones -- accentuate the messiness and complexity of our lives. Regret, loneliness, and sorrow often assert their presence most acutely as we're being asked to bring our full selves to the festivities. In a season of such busyness, we remind ourselves to be present not only to others who need us, but also to our own mix of emotions, memories, and expectations.

December 11*Being Present*

In the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, so much competes for our attention. How can we make space to show up for what really matters?

December 18*A Gift of Peace and Joy: Sounds of the Season*

We wait for light and hope to return to a darkened world. As the holiday season goes into high gear, what better gift can we give ourselves than to pause for a moment of stillness, beauty...and a little fun as well! Come experience the mystery, joy, and laughter of the holiday season, as the UFL choir offers its traditional holiday concert.

December 25*Sharing our Christmas Presence*

We'll share a relaxed time with food, music, stories, and companionship.

**A CHRISTMAS EVE CELEBRATION**

Saturday, December 24



“There’s a beautiful old legend that the Christmas Spirit seeks to enter humans hearts on Christmas Eve. And it’s a candle in the window that invites it across the threshold”

Join us for a peaceful and hope-filled Christmas Eve service, with traditional carols, hauntingly beautiful music, and a special Christmas story relevant to our troubled world.

As is our tradition, the celebration will end with the singing of “Silent Night” by candlelight in the still darkness.

6:15 Doors will open as we gather for refreshments and caroling around the piano in Founders Hall

7:00 Candlelight Service

Children are welcome to attend all or part of the service.
Child care for infants and toddlers is also available



MINISTER'S MUSINGS

Has the moment arrived for Unitarian Universalist congregations to re-envision our role as communities of faith? In the Sundays since the election, UU churches across the country have experienced increased worship attendance, in many cases dramatically so. Waves of first-time visitors are arriving at our doors, seeking a community that will provide not only a sanctuary for comfort and hope, but also a place that inspires and enables a culture of resistance.

In the words of the Rev. Peter Morales, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, "The election is finally over. Most of us are shocked, even horrified, by the results. We live in a nation whose deep divisions have been exposed. The wounds of this election will not heal soon. Many of us are emotionally exhausted and deeply offended by what we have experienced....Fear, anger, racism, and xenophobia have created fertile ground for demagogues. Our voice is going to matter in the coming years."

Not every UU, and not every UUCL member and friend, is in the same place post-election. We're needing a variety of responses from our UU communities. Some of us are ready to move forward to a positive place of resistance, and need direction and support. Others are still experiencing deep grief, fear, anger, and disillusionment, and need both affirmation and a way to re-discover hope. Maybe most importantly, we all need one another as never before.

We're in very new territory as UU congregations, in understanding how to meet the needs of our own people, as well as of newcomers looking for inspiration and action for justice. The time is right for a new stage in our development and growth. At UUCL, we'll soon begin to see the results of creative initiatives and improved leadership structures that have been in the works for months. These will make UUCL more intentionally accessible and welcoming as we live into our mission: *To love inclusively, nurture spiritual growth and connection, freely explore life's big questions, and act for justice.* As we prepare ourselves to offer a powerful and faithful response to the needs of our community and world in these challenging times, UUCL can be a visible leader in resistance and solidarity.

Rev. Jill Jarvis

BOARD MEETING DATES

The next Board meeting will be on Dec. 12, at 7:00 p.m. as usual, and likely to be held in the sanctuary. All are welcome to attend.

Martha and Bob Burbank, Co-

chairs

SOCIAL ACTION/SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION FOR DECEMBER:

"Headquarters, Inc. is the suicide prevention leader in Kansas, providing counseling, education, and resources for all to improve public health."

Headquarters Counseling Center is a National Suicide Prevention Lifeline crisis center that serves people from all over the state of Kansas. Our programs are operated by volunteer counselors, who are trained and supervised by our Director of Counseling, Kristin Vernon LMSW.

We've been credentialed by the American Association of Suicidology, the leading professional organization for suicide prevention since 2001. We were honored in 2013 with the AAS Crisis Center Excellence Award. In 2015, we became accredited by ContactUSA for Online Emotional Support for our crisis chat program. We were also awarded the Student Union Activities Community Support Award in 2015 for our work with Kansas University students.



SAJT OCTOBER-NOVEMBER REPORT

A Multigenerational program to involve parents, grandparents, children and youth has been implemented: the program is about *engaging kids in social justice activities*, noting 3 ways of contributing—

- 1) Warm bodies, meaning donating gently used coats and outerwear to Penn House and Willow Domestic Violence Center
- 2) Brainfood, donating used or new books to United Way, for distribution in backpacks to students in need
- 3) Lunch box, making lunch at UUCL for some hungry kids, a Harvester program

Donation boxes for the Warm bodies and Brainfood will be in the hallway of the RE wing, and the Lunch box program will be organized after Christmas.

November 26, SAJT meeting. Only 3 members showed up, so that there was not a quorum; therefore only a discussion of items on the agenda. Another meeting will be scheduled, tentatively on **Sunday, Dec. 11 at 12:15pm**. E-mail invitation was sent to members regarding this tentative date.

Preparing for January Rally in Topeka

A group of folks from around the state have met and begun organizing for a large scale [rally in the capital in January](#) to send a clear message to leaders about which issues need to be on the agenda this year to bring change to Kansas and a better life for all Kansans. [December 10 is the date for the planning team](#) for the *Kansas Peoples Agenda*, to arrange for the rally at the Statehouse in Topeka in January, which will include the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber of Moral Mondays in North Carolina. The meeting will be in Salina and Rev. Sarah, UU minister in Topeka, has sent e-mails out regarding this.

December 19 at 6:30pm will be the next meeting of the Citizens Advisory Board for Fair and Impartial Policing, at City Hall. UUCL congregation is encouraged to attend, as the public is invited and can comment at the meeting.

SEND DONATIONS TO STANDING ROCK WITH GRAHAM KREICKER!

Graham will deliver our donations to the Lakota Sioux and their allies on Christmas Eve, then attend UU services in Bismark on Christmas morning before returning to the encampment.

If the Corps of Engineers follows through with their threat to close the camp, Graham will take our donations to the occupation refugees at their new encampment or to the Lakota Sioux reservation for them to distribute. Winter is here and the need is great, no matter how the tense situation is resolved. These items are most needed:

- Medical Supplies: hydrogen peroxide, bandages, aspirin, etc.
- Medicinal Herbs: echinacea, elderberry, rose hips, valerian root, lemon grass, cinnamon, blue and black cohosh, vitamin c, sage
- WINTER/ 4 Season Tents and extra stakes
- Thermal Sleeping bags
- Gas Masks (N95- covers nose and mouth), goggles, eye protection
- Pepper Spray Relief (antacid, milk of magnesia)
- Ear plugs 30-33 Decibels
- Fire extinguishers
- Flashlight and AA batteries
- Disposable chemical hand warmers from ACE or farm supply stores
- Heavy Duty Long Johns

No clothing is needed at this time.

Cash and checks are also welcome. Make checks out to UUCL and write DAPL on the memo line. We will acknowledge checks. Questions? Call Graham at 842-2332.

LIFELONG LEARNING



Imagine -- A Natural Playground at UUCL!

Sadly, the large elm tree beside the RE wing succumbed to Dutch elm disease this summer. The tree crew left us a large pile of cut limbs and trunk. This former tree will now live on through a new purpose. Plans are underway for using many of these pieces in a natural playground! There are many great ideas on the following link

https://www.google.com/search?q=natural+playgrounds&biw=1171&bih=555&tbm=isch&imgil=CXMWosJLH9LDSM%253A%253BfLmf0_Tk1hrAIM%253Bhttp%25253A%25252F%25252Fw%25252F%25252F&source=iu&pf=m&fir=CXMWosJLH9LDSM%253A%252CfLmf0_Tk1hrAIM%252C%252C&usg=__KalwjUAVVGvq0ArLRuARAScUTck%3D&dpr=1.1&ved=0ahUKEwi67pHGmctQAhVLQyYKHZ07CWQYjclQQ&ei=o1U4WPqQOMuGmQGd96SgBg#imgrc=FEH8BF4fFgShXM%3A

BUT the best ideas are going to be the ones that we actually complete! It will be important to have a variety of play areas – climbing, building, sitting, moving or sorting pieces and for all ages.

This project is something that can evolve and be added to in the years to come. We will start by creating a base area with mulch (the elm also produced another large pile of mulch). Many of the logs we use should be stripped of bark (to reduce insects) and the treated with a natural preservative to for longevity and safety. I am gathering and organizing offers to help: our youth group, a scout troop and a few members of our congregation have already talked with me. I will be posting a list of ways to help out on the bulletin board near the restrooms, so please check this to see if you have a matching skill or interest! *Families could take on individual pieces to complete together either here at UUCL or at home.* Having a natural playground at UUCL will be a creative, fun and visible way to live our 7th Unitarian Universalist principle – being good environmental stewards.

The annual Mitten Tree program is December 18th – There will be no regular children and youth RE classes!

All children and youth will participate in our annual Mitten Tree Program at 9:30. Families are encouraged to bring for donation new warm hats, scarves, mittens/gloves and socks to adorn the tree in our sanctuary. All items are donated to a local organization for distribution to those in need of extra warmth this winter.

Adult Faith Formation at UUCL

As a beloved Unitarian Universalist learning community of faith we are not just all learners but we are also all teachers. We take this journey of faith formation together by using our greatest asset – ourselves. Our new UU Parenting Circles are a wonderful example of shared learning and faith in action. After the shocking election last month, it is clear we have much work to do...and we will do this together.

In January, look for a new UUA Tapestry of Faith course offering: *Faith Like a River*.

Faith Like a River explores the dynamic course of Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist (UU) history—the people, ideas, and movements that have shaped our faith heritage. It invites participants to place themselves into our history and consider its legacies. What lessons do the stories of our history teach that can help us live more faithfully in the present? What lessons do they offer to be lived into the future?

MEMBERSHIP STRATEGY GROUP NEW INITIATIVES

We are preparing to roll out a few new initiatives in January. These will help us connect with each other and with newcomers, and meet our congregational goals for this year.

Coming in January are Soulful Suppers, Hospitality Teams, and the Connections Fair. You can read more about Soulful Suppers in a separate article and sign up online.

Since we are ALL responsible for making UUCL a welcoming place, each member, friend, and newcomer will be invited to serve on a Hospitality Team this year. The teams will work together to greet, usher, make coffee, and provide snacks on Sunday mornings. There will be 8 teams, so each will only be “on duty” once every two months. There are opportunities for all ages and abilities in this important work. Please join us for a “Hospitali-TEA” on Sunday, January 8 after the service for lunch and to find out how this exciting new program will transform how we practice radical hospitality in our congregation.

On January 29 we will have a “Connections Fair.” This idea came about through feedback from some recent newcomers who didn’t know where to start, whom to contact, or what opportunities for service or connection are available at UUCL. Some longtime members have wondered the same thing, since things change a little every year. So come one, come all to see how you can serve the congregation and the world, how you can get more connected with your spirituality and with other UUs, or feed your passion for justice. You just might meet someone new, learn something, or deepen your connections.

Shannon VanLandingham, Connections Coordinator uucconnections@gmail.com

SOULFUL SUPPERS COMING IN JANUARY!

Please join us for a new way to connect with others in our congregation. Soulful Suppers are potluck dinners held in people's homes or at UUCL. Some of the dinners will be adults-only and others will be kid-friendly (kid-friendly dinners may start earlier). On that evening, you will have an opportunity to discuss your response to the theme of the month (January's theme is Prophecy- Charting our Course), followed by free-flowing conversation, laughs, and getting to know one another better.

The first Soulful Supper will be on January 21st. Please sign up using the following link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeu7j468ZxMjpm1vDzNFAXbxEmxX8DX1qZ0g8d7MwKmiccdw/viewform>

Questions? Contact Shannon VanLandingham at shannyvan@gmail.com or Rebecca Gant at rkgant@hotmail.com.

FOUNDERS AWARD TO GRAHAM KREICKER



On Sunday, 30 October, the UU Congregation of Fort Wayne (IN) honored Graham Kreicker for his leadership and service to the congregation from 1971 to the present. Rev. Misty Dawn Shelly read the citation and presented the plaque to Graham.



MUSIC NOTES

What a wonderful month of music we have planned for you! It is truly going to be excellent and quite varied!

The first Sunday of December, **December 4**, will feature one of our wonderful vocal soloists with piano and tenor saxophone performing "Blue Christmas".

December 11 will be a wonderful jazzy presentation of "Do You Hear What I Hear"! It will feature two debut UUCL performances: the vocal soloist and the percussionist! Other

instruments involved will be piano, tenor saxophone and clarinet. Additionally, the piece has been arranged by two of our talented UUCL musicians!

On December 18, the UUCL choir and friends will present our annual Sounds of the Season gift to our congregation (and frankly, to ourselves as well, as we really love to do it!). There will be 5 seasonal pieces that will range from classic Christmas carols to more modern selections to a bit of humor! Please join us for the joy of it!

And, of course, there is **Christmas Eve**. We are always so fortunate to have such talented UUCL musicians volunteer to share their gifts to help make it a very special evening. We will have traditional music and carols as well as some numbers that may be a bit more unfamiliar to you.

A generous gift from an anonymous donor has enabled the UUCL music department to purchase a djembe, an African drum. That same gift will allow us to hold a Drumming Workshop, led by Dylan Bassett, African drumming instructor at KU and in private lessons, to be held at UUCL at a date to be determined in February! All are welcome and sign-up information will be made available. If you have your own drum, bring it; if not, Dylan will be bringing as many djembes as we need so we'll have enough for everyone interested.

Music Want Ad! Do you play a stringed instrument (violin, viola, cello, bass, guitar)? Please contact --

~Susan Harper, Music Director, sbharper@sbcglobal.net 785-830-8487.

ART EXHIBITION IN FOUNDERS HALL

Work by photographer Tony Peterson will be up through December 25. Check out works on canvas and backlit photos in windows.

"Peterson uses his camera as a tool to capture the often seen subtle or raw beauty found in the world around him. He's particularly drawn to the interaction of light, pattern, color, and texture, and his work doesn't fit neatly into any particular category or style." (Lawrence Artwalk 2016)

CLUTTER IS ACCUMULATING IN OUR BUILDING.

The foyer looks cluttered and uninviting!

Please claim your possessions and take them home, e.g.,

LINK dishes

a THANKSGIVING ARRANGEMENT left on the counter—and--

umbrellas tote bags jackets personal files books

Our Housekeeping Team will need to remove unclaimed items to keep our building looking neat.

If you cannot find something you may have lost, contact Mary Beth Musick at cartermusick@yahoo.com

ECM FALL 2016 COMMUNITY FORUM SPEAKER SERIES

University Community Forum is sponsored by Ecumenical Campus Ministries. This program is

held each Wednesday during the Spring and Fall semesters at the Ecumenical Campus Ministries (ECM). All presentations are free and open to the University and Lawrence communities.

Every presentation begins at 12:00 noon and usually includes a brief question and answer period before concluding at 1:00 p.m. We also serve an optional light lunch at 11:30 am for \$6.50 (\$3.50 for students). Free parking is available in the ECM parking lot for attendees.

2016 Schedule remaining

December 7- University-Community Forum Planning Meeting

UUCL WOMEN'S GROUP

The UUCL Women's Group will meet on the second Saturday, **Dec. 10 from 2-4PM** with Janney Burgess in the parlor of the Dogwood Assisted Living Unit of Brandon Woods, 4721 Bob Billings Parkway. All are welcome, especially the newer and younger among us. Please come prepared for a relaxed afternoon of casual conversation and getting to know each other better. You may bring something to share if you wish, but mostly just bring yourselves. Contact Lynne Bodle, 843-8263 or mlbodle2@gmail.com, for more information or for a ride.

To contact the NewsTeam, please email uflcommunications@gmail.com

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lawrence
A Welcoming Congregation
1263 N. 1100 Rd.
Lawrence, KS 66047
785-842-3999**

Helping Hands Team

uflhelpinghands@gmail.com

or call UFL office, 842-3339

This team provides short-term practical assistance, e.g., meals, respite, rides.

Transportation Line

785-842-7529 (to UFL events or medical appointments)

Pastoral Care Associates: Rev. Jill Jarvis at 816-853-6530 jjarvis1@kc.rr.com or

Valerie Roper at 785-979-8339, or vgracev@sunflower.com

This team provides confidential listening for those experiencing bereavement, illness, unemployment, life transitions, aging, loneliness, etc.

Minister Office Hours

Rev. Jill Jarvis' hours tend to be variable. It is best to contact her for an appointment 816/853-6530 or <mailto:jjarvis1@kc.rr.com>

Director of Lifelong Learning

Bonnie Blosser works at her UFL office and from home

Sunday through Wednesday Contact her at ufl.dll@gmail.com or call 785-318-6030 for an appointment.

Administrative Office Hours:

Monday 12:30-5:00 pm Tuesday 8:00-12:00 noon Wednesday Closed Thursday 8:00-12:00 noon Friday 12:30-5:00 pm *Please be sure to call first, 785-842-3339, if coming out during the week as doors are often locked.*