



FROM YOUR MINISTER



The season is ripe with transitions, both globally and within our congregation. Less than a month from my announcement that I will be entering search for a new ministerial position for fall 2016, your congregational leadership has already begun work on the next phase of the life of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Stockton. The Board selected and approved a Transition Team to help lead the effort, which consists of Alice Ericksen (Chair), Randy Downing, Mark Haman, Rich Mattas and Laura Dufford. This dedicated team has already begun meeting regularly and are in contact with the relevant UUA and MidAmerica Region staff.

Part of the process for finding a church’s next professional minister involves completing a “congregational record” which accurately reflects the state of the congregation’s finances, membership and ministerial needs. I encourage everyone to help by participating wholeheartedly in the forthcoming surveys, conversations and workshops that the Transition Team will be offering over the next several months.

During September, we officially joined the *Soul Matters* family of congregations which focus worship and small-group ministries on monthly themes. During September, we explored the theme of “Invitation” – struggling with how we are a “welcoming” community but might work to become more actively “inviting” of all those who might benefit from our saving message of Love.

In addition to our two Sunday services dedicated to “Invitation,” the highlight of the month for me was leading our first Thursday evening Family Service, complete with a pizza dinner, worship, conversation and crafts. Twelve people representing seven different families attended and dedicated hand-prints to the spirit of invitation. Be sure to look for our hand-print art installation at church during the month of October!

Our October theme of “Letting Go” is particularly apt this time of year, and we will celebrate the season with a series of services dedicated to those things we hold most dear, and letting go of everything else. We will welcome back the talented Margie Lyons to lead the October 11th service and I am also excited to be emceeding the performance section of the Great Beginnings & Chocolate Finales fundraiser, this coming Saturday, October 3rd at 6:30pm. We will have a host of talented performers to help entertain the crowd during the feast!

Thank you to everyone who expressed concern or sadness at my announcement last month, but be assured that this is both the right course of action for the UU Church of Stockton and for me and my family. And please always remember that ministers come and go, but it is you the members who make the congregation. Though I have been incredibly fortunate to serve here, it has never been my church. It has always been and continues to be yours. I look forward to our final year together and offer you many blessings for the time ahead.

In Faith and Gratitude,
Rev. Erik

Rev. Erik David Carlson
Rev. Carlson is available for pastoral services. If you or someone you know is in need, please contact Rev. Carlson at uureverend@gmail.com or by leaving a message at the church: 815.947.3812. All requests for pastoral care will be kept confidential. Please write Rev. Erik to receive electronic newsletters.

HIGHWAY CLEAN-UP – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

It's time once again to do the Roadside clean-up on our stretch of adopted highway. Our church has been picking up litter along Rt. 78 south of Stockton for many years. Here's another opportunity for you to help out! We need to do the clean-up one more time before the snow flies. We are planning to do this sometime in October and are looking at doing it either late afternoon on a weekday or a Sunday after the service. If you would like to help out with this, please contact Laura Dufford (815-947-2720) or lauradufford@gmail.com. We'll pick a time that works best for folks that want to help. This project usually takes 60-90 minutes and involves some walking. Our stretch goes for one mile, but you are welcome to walk as much or little as you wish. We hope to hear from you!

NEWS FROM YOUR TRANSITION TEAM

Every ministerial transition is both daunting in the change it requires and also exciting in the way it allows a congregation to examine deeply its mission and identity going forward. As we prepare for our church's future, we find that conditions have changed dramatically since Rev. Erik first came here in September of 2010. What was a "buyer's market" then has switched and now there are many UU churches vying for a small number of ministers. Even interim ministers are at a premium.

2015-16 Transition Team

Alice Ericksen, Chair
Randy Downing
Rich Mattas
Mark Haman
Nancy Schuldt

We must realize that as a small congregation, we may have difficulty bidding successfully for a full-time minister. Of course, we would prefer finding an interim minister followed by a full-time, settled minister, but will need to be adaptable and explore a creative (and potentially part-time) solution in the near-term. If, indeed, we move to a part-time professional ministry, we all will need to step up and do more to keep our church active and healthy.

Please feel free to speak with your transition team and get involved!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – SUNDAYS OCTOBER 11TH & 25TH FAMILY SERVICE THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15TH AT 5:30PM



A special thanks to our religious education teachers Lee Anderson and Sheila Haman, and thanks to everyone who participated in our September RE and Family Service night! We are excited for our next month's activities!

Based on our Soul Matters theme of "Letting Go," our Sunday morning lessons will focus on the things that we really value in our lives.

Be sure to fill out registration forms for all youth participating in our program, and don't miss our upcoming Family Service on Thursday, October 15th, starting with dinner at 5:30pm! The evening will include a worship time and crafts activity and a time for families to get to know one another better. All are welcome!

GREAT BEGINNINGS & CHOCOLATE FINALES – OCT. 3RD – 6:30PM – 8:30PM



Church members are encouraged to sell four tickets to your friends and family. Our goal is to sell 100 tickets this year; we really want to have a big crowd. We have many excellent items in the silent auction, but of course the highlight of the event is the dessert buffet full of wonderful chocolate! Thank you for your support of this "last fundraiser of the year."

Contact Nancy Schuldt if you have a silent auction donation; could use more! 815-281-0034

Contact Leslie Hawley if you have questions about bringing an appetizer or dessert. 815-541-9824

**Tickets \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids 6-11
5 & under FREE**

**Buffet filled with scrumptious APPETIZERS
Additional buffet offering desserts; many
CHOCOLATE!**

**Silent Auction ~ Musical Entertainment
Fun for all ages!**

SOUL MATTERS OCTOBER – “LETTING GO”

What Does It Mean To Be A People of Letting Go?



When cast into the depths, to survive, we must first let go of things that will not save us. Then we must reach out for the things that can. — Rev. Forrest Church

All [of us] must leave room for the acts of the spirit. — Ursula LeGuin

We cling. You name it, we've wrapped our grasping fingers and anxious hearts around it: success, safety, society's standards of beauty, desires to be accepted, perfectionism, duty, fear, grudges, hurts, hopes, stuff, shame and privilege. Whether the object of our grasping is good or bad is not, as we learn, truly the issue. It's the grasping itself. That's the real problem. Holding on too long and too tightly is never good for the soul. So our faith pleads with us, "Let it go!"

But here's the twist: Our faith follows that up quickly with "Let it in!" This spiritual dance takes a two-step. Letting go must be followed up by reaching out. Or maybe it's better to say opening up. Indeed, the tragedy of grasping so tightly is not simply that we anchor ourselves to that which burdens us, but that we end up shutting out that which is trying to save and feed us. Letting go is ultimately about letting in. It's really about making room. — Scott Tayler

EXPERIENCES — CHOOSE AT LEAST ONE

A: Is life calling you to let go and leap into something entirely new? Watch this:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWvV5N4hOGc>. Watch it three days in a row or multiple times over two weeks.

Ask: What new trapeze bar has your name on it? What is your next new story? What is the new aliveness coming to get you? Are you ready to jump? Are you ready to honor and savor the transition zone? Come to your group ready to describe the bar that has your name on it.

B: Let Go of the Privilege of White Privilege. Even the act of raising awareness of white privilege can unintentionally marginalize the perspectives and experience of people of color. Activist Austin Channing helps us understand this in her insightful article, "White Privilege Weariness." In it, she asks, "How often have you been [in an awareness raising workshop] where the feelings of white people take priority? Do they feel guilt or shame? Rather than judging the success of my training on whether or not white people walked away understanding privilege, could I define success based on the emotional energy of people of color after the training is done?" Read Channing's article and discuss it with friends and fellow parishioners: <http://austinchanning.com/blog/2014/3/weariness>.

SESSION PLAN

Chalice Lighting

“Instructions”

Give up the world; give up self;
finally, give up God.
Find god in rhododendrons and rocks,
passers-by, your cat.
Pare your beliefs, your absolutes,
Make it simple; make it clean.
No carry-on luggage allowed.
Examine all you have
with a loving and critical eye, then
throw away some more.

Repeat. Repeat.
Keep this and only this:
what your heart beats loudly for
what feels heavy and full in your gut.
There will only be one or two
things you will keep,
and they will fit lightly
in your pocket.

- Sheri Hostetler

General Check-In

Question: re-introduce yourself (name, place of birth, hobby) and then answer:

“What’s one thing you would keep, fitting lightly in your pocket?”

Homework - Each person share their homework. After sharing, discussion.

Conversation - a question that “grabs” you, and answer. After sharing, discussion.

1. Are you living in (and holding on to) a story about yourself that isn’t letting you grow?
2. Are you looking at (and holding on to) a story about others that isn’t letting them grow? That is putting them in a box that they don’t deserve?
3. Are you allowing yourself to be dragged? One of our Soul Matters participants writes, “It took me 10 years of repression and 2 years of rumination before I forgave my ex-husband as a gift to myself for my birthday this year, and when I did, I realized how much lighter I felt. ... I’m now exercising my “forgiveness muscle” ... because letting go feels so much better than being dragged.” How does your forgiveness muscle need a bit more exercising?
4. What religious ideas have you let go of? Are you happy with that choice, or do you want some of them back?
5. Is staying in control controlling you? Is it time to let go of always being in charge?
6. Are you ready to forgive yourself? Sometimes the kind of mercy most needed is mercy for oneself. Is it time to let go of being so hard on yourself?

Check-Out - What’s your take-away about “letting go”? Your gratitude for this time?

Closing Words: from *Gestalt at Sixty* by May Sarton

I am not ready to die,
But I am learning to trust death
As I have trusted life.
I am moving
Toward a new freedom
Born of detachment,
And a sweeter grace—
Learning to let go.

GOING DEEPER:

Download the complete October Soul Matters packet at <http://UUChurchOfStockton.org/lettinggo.pdf>

DAY OF THE DEAD CELEBRATION – OCTOBER 31ST 8PM-11PM



On October 31st, from 8-11pm, there will be a special Day of the Dead celebration held in the sanctuary of the church by Chris and Anastasia, sponsored by Temple Of The Greek Gods. The name of the event is Journey of the Soul. This is a celebration of our blessed ancestors, passed loved ones, Heroes, and Gods of the Beyond.

Join us for a ritual, divination, and a potluck dinner honoring our ancestors and beloved dead. Please bring a dish to pass that is either a recipe of a deceased loved one, or reminds you of them.

We will all gather down in the Patterson Rom after the event to eat in honor of the deceased and discuss our dishes and the people who inspired us to bring them. The event is free, but donations are welcome.

Suggested donation \$5 to be split between the UU Church and the Temple of the Greek Gods.

PARTNERSHIP CONCERT



Many thanks to those of you who attended the Council Hill Concert Fundraiser for our Service Partners last month.

A special thank you to the volunteers as well as those who generously donated items for the Silent Auction; we really appreciate your support.

Our Service Partners will be receiving checks from us soon; at least \$100 each. Attendance was down from last year, but the weather, entertainment, setting and overall energy of the day was very positive.

Thank you!

The Service Partner Fundraising Committee

NEWS FROM THE FACC



We attended the September meeting of the Freeport Area Church Cooperative and were once again impressed with the work of this organization. The Homeless Shelter opened on September 1, earlier than usual due to the expressed needs of homeless individuals. In July, HUD gave approval to expand this program for the chronically homeless and disabled by three units, for a total of eight units. Hero House, six units housing homeless veterans, is currently working with the Veterans Administration to fill two vacancies. And FACC continues to provide transitional housing for mothers and children.

The Food Pantry has served 3,115 people and distributed \$132,491 in food and personal items through August. Supplies are running low and FACC will be making a push for more soon. The *Grow Freeport* garden program has given much produce to the Food Pantry and garden plots will be expanded next year.

FACC is one of several agencies working with the city of Freeport in a Blight Reduction Program, funded by a \$500,000 grant for the Illinois Housing Development Authority. The grant will pay for the purchase, demolition and “greening” of vacant and abandoned properties in the FACC neighborhood.

Joan has once again volunteered Stockton UU to provide candy for Christmas baskets for needy families. Stay tuned.

- Dick and Joan Harmet, delegates.

MEMBERS IN NEED OF RIDES AND CARPOOLS



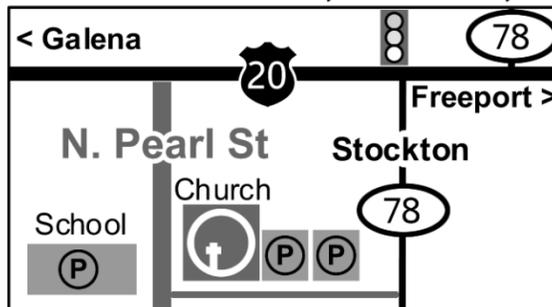
There are currently several members and friends of the church in need of rides to church and during the week (to doctors' appointments, run errands, etc.). If you might be available to help provide a ride for someone in need, or if you could use a ride to church yourself, please contact Rev. Erik at 815.947.3812 or uureverend@gmail.com.

CALENDAR – OCT 2015

Saturday, October 3rd 6:30pm Great Beginnings Chocolate Finales
Sunday, October 4th 10:30am Service: Letting Go
Tuesday, October 6th 1:00pm Stockton Ministerial Association meeting
October 9th – 12th Rev. Erik out of town
Sunday, October 11th 10:30am Service: Waiting for Michael Jackson
Religious Education: Letting Go
Thursday, October 15th 5:30pm Family Service & Dinner: Letting Go
Sunday, October 18th 10:30am Service: Letting Go
Monday, October 19th 6:00pm UU Stockton Board Meeting
Sunday, October 25th 10:30am Service: Current State of Affairs
Religious Education: Letting Go
Saturday, October 31st 8:00pm Day of the Dead Celebration
Sunday, November 1st 10:30am Service: All-Ages Halloween

CHURCH INFORMATION

219 N Pearl Street, Stockton, IL



Wheel chair parking and elevator access is available from the rear parking lot.

SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30 AM

CHILD CARE EVERY SUNDAY AT 10:30 AM

REV. ERIK DAVID CARLSON, MINISTER

OFFICE HOURS: 11AM – 3PM MON, WED, FRI 815.947.3812

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