



FROM YOUR MINISTER



We have just completed a wonderful November which saw increased attendance at Sunday services, a successful Harvest Potluck pledge drive kickoff, our congregation’s hosting of the Stockton interfaith Thanksgiving, and our annual young adult homecoming ritual.

Sadly, we lost one of our matriarchs in November, the great Dorothy Simmons who had been a member of our church since 1932 passed away on November 21st (see article later in this newsletter). We are holding a funeral luncheon at the church on Tuesday, December 1st and

thank everyone who has volunteered to provide food and help host the event.

We have a very exciting month ahead of us working with the Soul Matters theme of “Expectation” – which we will begin to explore our very first Sunday during our annual Membership Sunday service. I encourage everyone to read the packet excerpt included in this newsletter and continue meeting with your small groups sometime during December.

The highlight of the month will be our annual Candlelight Christmas Eve- one of UU Stockton’s most beautiful rituals- if you haven’t attended in the past, you and your family are very much encouraged to come. It is a magical evening and our historic sanctuary is incredibly beautiful in candlelight.

Many blessings for a wonderful holiday season and hope to see you in church!

- Rev. Erik

<p>Rev. Erik David Carlson</p>
<p>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.</p>

CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE – THURSDAY DEC. 24TH – 5:30PM



All are welcome to attend our annual candlelight Christmas Eve service at 5:30pm on Thursday, December 24th, the 115th celebrated in our sanctuary. Our holiday choir will perform and the theme will be the true message of Christmas.

Tell your friends- this will be a Christmas service everyone can enjoy!

NEWS FROM YOUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

We would like to thank everyone who came to the Harvest Potluck & Pledge Drive Kickoff on November 8th. A presentation developed by Rich Mattas was shown highlighting the accomplishments of the past year. Ted Davenport went over a preliminary budget for 2016 depending on the pledge drive outcome.

Alice Erickson gave an update on the work the transition team has done. Pledge cards were handed out to everyone that was present. If you want to order a poinsettias to decorate the front of the sanctuary this holiday please let Ted Davenport know by December 13th. The price is \$14.00 and needs to be paid in advance with a note of whether it’s in memory of someone.

We will also purchase gifts for a needy family again this year as soon as the Stockton School gives us the list of presents to buy. We wish everyone a Happy Holiday and a wonderful New Year.

<p>2015 Board Roster</p>
<p>Moderators Ted Davenport (2017) Mark Haman (2016)</p>
<p>Secretary Sheila Haman (2017)</p>
<p>Financial Secretary John Fischer (2017)</p>
<p>Treasurer Leslie Hawley (2017)</p>
<p>Stewards Laura Dufford (2018) Bill Schuldt (2016) Joan Rawce Metzger (2017)</p>
<p>Email: board@UUChurchOfStockton.org</p>

HOLIDAY CHOIR REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Our choir will begin rehearsing for the holidays at 9:45am every Sunday through December 20th. All voices are welcome and encouraged to participate, even if you cannot attend every rehearsal. The choir will be performing anthems at several Sunday services as well as our Christmas Eve candlelight service!

Let us join our voices and make something beautiful!



CELEBRATION OF MEMBERSHIP SUNDAY – DECEMBER 6TH



Celebration of Membership is the first Sunday service of December! This is a time when we open up the membership book to any and all who would join us on our spiritual journey, and in our annual tradition honor those with five-year anniversaries of membership.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Stockton, please review the Membership section of the

<http://UUChurchOfStockton.org> website, and speak to Rev. Erik. If you know of a member anniversary you would like recognized, please contact Rev. Erik.

NEWS FROM THE FACC



We attended the November delegate meeting of the Freeport Area Church Cooperative and learned that the political gridlock in Springfield was adversely affecting FAAC's finances. Several grants have not been released by the state; as a result, the part-time staff has been reduced and the permanent staff is sharing overnight shifts at the homeless shelter.

The food pantry has already exceeded last year's activity for the whole year, serving 3,600 clients and exceeding both food and personal items distribution. Director Dean

Wright discussed a plan to improve the nutritional value of the food list and provide health support to the clients.

FAAC will be distributing 133 Christmas baskets to area families. Our role is to provide candy for these baskets. Sunday, December 6, will be your last opportunity to bring individually wrapped candies to church.

Many thanks for all you are doing and have done for the clients at FACC! - Dick and Joan Harmet, delegates.

STOCKTON COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE THANK YOU



Many thanks to all the members of our congregation and the larger Stockton community for coming to the Stockton Ministerial Association interfaith Thanksgiving service, held this year in our sanctuary. We raised over \$200 for the Stockton Food Pantry and enjoyed the participation of three local congregations in leading the ceremony.

Special thanks to Sally Fischer and Mel Heidenreich for providing the music and to Terry Lee for his beautiful Thanksgiving stained-glass altar piece.

What Does It Mean To Be A People of Expectation?



*God give us rain when we expect sun.
Give us music when we expect trouble.
Give us tears when we expect breakfast.
Give us dreams when we expect a storm.
Give us a stray dog when we expect congratulations.
God play with us, turn us sideways and around.*

— Michael Leunig

We all know the common mantra: “You get what you expect.” That has truth. And yet there are also moments when letting the situation take hold of us is good for the soul. Sometimes holding too tightly to our expectations leaves us blind. Sometimes getting what we expect leads to expecting to always get what we want. Sometimes the most important question is not “Are you ready to take control of the reality in front of you?” but instead “Are you willing to let go of expectation and be led by the unknown?”

So, yes, this month, bring on those unruly dogs and unpredictable tears. Make our music wilder than we want and make us eventually want it to be that wild. Play with us indeed. Turn us sideways and around, and lead us expectably on!

- Scott Tayler

EXPERIENCES — CHOOSE AT LEAST ONE

A: “Perhaps Poems” challenge us to turn our deepest assumptions and expectations on their head. Bring your perhaps poem to your group and share the journey of its creation. Here are examples:

<http://www.beyond-the-pale.uk/perhaps.htm>

B: This is the season of ritual -- rituals of preparation and expectation. Recruit your family or circle of friends and engage one of the winter rituals of expectation. You can explore Chanukah, Advent, Solstice, and/or Kwanzaa. Also see UU Family Christmas ritual at <http://tinyurl.com/ob2ld&a>.

SESSION PLAN

Chalice Lighting

Our expectations frame our view of what is to come. Too often that frame is distorted by preoccupations with where we have been, like trying to walk forward while staring back over your shoulder. Instead if we look to the vision of the future we seek, our highest aims, we create expectations that face us fully forward into our lives. Each step going forward toward that vision is also grounded in our present experience and creates a dialogue between what is true in our life and our expectations for what it can be.

— Rev. Dr. Frances Sink

General Check-In

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

“What did you expect to happen today? Has it, will it, or is it unlikely?”

Homework - People share their homework. After sharing, discussion.

1. Conversation - a question that “grabs” you, and answer. After sharing, discussion.
2. What if “it” begins this very month?! What would happen if you knew this month was going to be the start of some yet-to-be discovered new adventure?
3. Are you expecting too much or too little of yourself?
4. Have you been chasing an expectation too long? Is it time to let it go?
5. Are your holiday expectations set too high or too low?
6. Are you really open to “whatever comes?”
7. Has the weight of societal expectations become more than you want to bear alone?
8. Are you sure you shouldn’t wait just a little bit more? Is life asking you to be patient just a little bit longer? Are you sure that expectation of yours isn’t right around the bend?

Check-Out - What’s your take-away from “expectation?” Your gratitude for this time?

Closing Words: by Robert Sardello

Patience is the virtue that shows us that the time of the soul and the time of the spirit are different than everyday time. Patience is required to be in healthy connection with soul and spirit. Patience concerns a particular form or way of waiting; it is one filled with expectation.

GOING DEEPER:

Download the complete December Soul Matters packet at

<http://UUChurchOfStockton.org/expectation.pdf>

WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION – DECEMBER 26TH - 6PM



Please join us in a special interfaith Winter Solstice worship and feast with our own Temple of the Greek Gods group, honoring Apollo and the many manifestations of the sun.

The worship will include dinner and is open to the whole community- donations on behalf of the church and the Temple of the Greek Gods group will be gratefully accepted.

IN MEMORIAM – DOROTHY SIMMONS – 1916 - 2015



Dorothy Dale Reed Simmons, age 99, of Stockton, IL, died Saturday, November 21, 2015, at Lena Living Center, Lena, IL. Dorothy was born in to William and Sylvia Stephens Reed in Warren on January 23rd, 1916. She graduated from Warren High School and married Donald Rich Simmons on Halloween of 1932. Donald and Dorothy lived in Stockton together for more than 70 years. Dorothy would become a fixture of the Stockton scene from working over 30 of those years at Haffele's and later Woods

Pharmacy- always friendly, always helpful- and always quite visible to local children from behind the candy counter!

She taught our Sunday school classes and was the congregation's treasurer and held many other leadership positions over the years. As part of the Universalist Sewers (US) women's group, she delighted in sharing her gifts of quilting, needlework and knitting. Later, she would help coordinate the recording of Sunday church services and deliver cassettes to those who were no longer able to attend.

Dorothy enjoyed gardening and cooking, especially dishes like rhubarb crisp, and her famous butterscotch cookies, the recipe for which we were fortunate enough to republish in the UU Stockton 115th anniversary book last year.

From the generations of kids who grew up with her behind the candy counter / to the generations of Universalists who were blessed with her quilts, pies and kind presence / to the generations of her own family, Dorothy touched many lives with her own.

May her light and her love carry on in our hearts as long as we shall live.

NEW CHILD CARE PROVIDER HIRED



We are very pleased to introduce the newest member of our UU Stockton team, child care professional Paige Grube.

Our former child-care provider Debby Lyons will still fill-in on occasion.

We are very glad to have found someone as enthusiastic and aligned with UU values as Paige is. Please make her feel welcome!

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

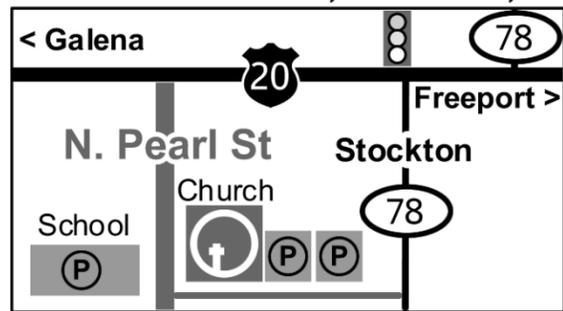
Rev. Erik at 815.947.3812 or uureverend@gmail.com.

CALENDAR – DECEMBER 2015

Sunday, December 6th 9:45am Choir rehearsal
Sunday, December 6th 10:30am Service: Membership Sunday
Sunday, December 13th 9:45am Choir rehearsal
Sunday, December 13th 10:30am Service: Times of Transition
Religious Education: Expectation
Monday, December 14th 6:00pm UU Stockton Board Meeting
Sunday, December 20th 9:45am Choir rehearsal
Sunday, December 20th 10:30am Service: 'Tis the Season
Thursday, December 24th 5:30pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
Saturday, December 26th 6:00pm Winter Solstice Celebration
Sunday, December 27th 10:30am Service: New Year's Resolutions
December 30th – January 5th Rev. Erik out of town

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

UUCHURCHOFSOCKTON.ORG

FACEBOOK.COM/UUCHURCHOFSOCKTON

UUREVEREND@GMAIL.COM



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
219 N PEARL ST, STOCKTON, IL 61085