



FROM YOUR MINISTER



The coming of the New Year is always a time of reflection and transition. I am happy to say that we finished 2015 off well with a wonderful Christmas Eve service featuring beautiful music from our talented musicians and holiday choir, with many family and friends in attendance. We all hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season wherever you were this past month.

As 2016 begins, so also begins an exciting time for both me personally and for the congregation. The ministerial search process starts in earnest on January 2nd, and both I and the congregation will be exchanging “packets” with interested parties. I thank everyone who has expressed concern about where my family and I will be next; all I can say right now is that we don’t know but appreciate the support and are confident that we will be fine wherever our next call takes us. We are just starting to realize how difficult it will be to leave this wonderful church community and how much we will miss all of you, but still believe this is the right time.

I am also excited about the possibilities that will soon be open to the congregation and am very grateful for the Transition Team’s work to prepare all the materials necessary for search- they have been busy! (See update below).

January promises to be a wonderful month of programming, including an exploration of the many different solstice traditions on January 3rd, a tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr. on January 24th and our annual Congregational Meeting on January 17th. Please do try and make it to service that morning which will feature a message from my father, Dr. David M. Carlson, as well as to the meeting where we will be approving the 2016 budget, discussing bylaw changes and electing new trustees to our Board in addition to hearing reports on the work of 2015.

January’s theme is “Resistance” and we will be holding our monthly Family Service on Thursday, January 28th at 5:30pm- pizza dinner and snacks included with a family worship and activity afterwards. Tell your friends- all are welcome and it is a wonderful time.

Many blessings for a glorious New Year and hope to see you in church! - 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.

NEWS FROM YOUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Make sure you are able to attend our annual Congregational Meeting on January 17th after service- we will be hearing reports from our staff and committees, approving our 2016 budget, voting on changes to our bylaws and electing our leadership for the future.

We also want to say thank you to outgoing Board members Joan Rawce Metzger and Bill Schuldt for their hard work and dedication on behalf of the church.

Your UU Board of Trustees

NEWS FROM YOUR MINISTERIAL TRANSITION TEAM

Thanks to all who participated in the congregational discussion on December 13. Your strong support was greatly appreciated. The discussion gave us a clearer picture of your hopes and expectations for our next minister.

As we move forward in the process, our website for prospective candidates will go up in a couple of days. We will keep you posted.

Your Ministerial Transition Team,

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

Spirit Journey January 2016

What Does It Mean To Be A People of Resistance?



...it starts when you care to act,
it starts when you do it again
after they said no,
it starts when you say We
and know who you mean, and each
day you mean one more.

--Marge Piercy, *from The Low Road*

Sometimes being a people of resistance involves struggle and requires us to disobey; other times it asks us to just be ourselves and not hide who we really are. Sometimes it involves defeating the enemy; other times it is a matter of noticing that treating them as the enemy defeats us all.

Sometimes being a person of resistance is about fighting all the way to the top; other times it's about picking yourself up off the floor and taking one tiny step. Sometimes it depends on the will to never let them win; other times it hinges on the wisdom to follow the path of least resistance.

It certainly takes the form of speaking our truth. But more often than not, it's about the harder task of speaking the truth in love. We all know being a people of resistance involves refusing to comply and demanding change, which requires great courage. But sometimes the most courageous thing is to stop resisting and accepting that things just aren't going to work out the way we hoped.

The blessing, of course, is that we don't have to hold on alone. It is one thing to be told, "Resist!" It is quite another to be told, "Resist together!" But often what we need most is simply to be reminded that we don't have to resist alone. Let's help each other remember to start by saying 'we!' It may be as simple as that. - Scott Taylor

Experiences — choose at least one

A: Who made resistance possible for you? Who stood beside you as you stood against the status quo? Who helped remind you that the arc really can be bent? Who invited you into a vision of an entirely new day? Who made you feel like a one of a kind rather than a misfit? Who helped you resist the pressures to follow the herd?

Someone stood beside you. Someone picked you up for the protests. Someone taught the class that opened your eyes. Someone wrote the poem that inspired you. Someone's sacrifice moved your heart. Someone's courage rubbed off on you. Someone told you that you were precious. Someone made you feel like you aren't in the fight alone. Thank them! That's it. Your assignment: Find a way to thank them and tell them how they made your resistance possible. Let them know what a gift it was.

B: In his book *Sabbath as Resistance: Saying No to the Culture of Now*, Walter Brueggemann invites us to resist our culture of busyness and anxiety. To him, striving is one of our greatest spiritual diseases. Resisting it needs to become one of everyone's core spiritual practices. Here are his Sabbath "instructions":

- You do not have to do more
- You do not have to sell more.
- You do not have to control more.
- You do not have to know more.
- You do not have to be younger or more beautiful.

Pick one of these as your challenge or guide. Make it your mantra for the month. Find as many ways as you can to honor its goal of giving you rest and release. Report to your group what this counter-cultural act of resistance was like for you.

Session Plan

Chalice Lighting

The moment we begin to fear the opinions of others and hesitate to tell the truth that is in us, and from motives of policy are silent when we should speak, the divine floods of light and life no longer flow into our souls.

- Elizabeth Cady Stanton

General Check-In

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

What force in your life do you wish you could resist more?

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

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

1. What would happen if you saw praise, joy or the creation of beauty as your primary form of resistance? What if the world needs your praise as much as your picket signs? What if it needs the creation of beauty as much as the elimination of injustice?
2. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." How is life asking you to end your silence?
3. The psychiatrist Carl Jung wrote, "What you resist, persists." So, is it possible that your resistance is the source of the struggle you are in? Would the fight end if you stopped fighting? Would the wall fall down if you stopped pushing on it?
4. If you were put on trial for being countercultural, would you be convicted?
5. Is it possible that your refusal to give up and give in may be a way of avoiding the pain?
6. Are your efforts to save the world leaving room to savor it?
7. What would happen if you saw your justice work not as saving the world or bending the arc of the universe towards justice, but simply as "being a pest"?

Check-Out - What's your take-away about "resistance"? Your gratitude for this time?

Closing Words: Resistance is thought transformed into feeling. Change the thought that creates the resistance, and there is no more resistance. — **Robert Conklin**

GOING DEEPER:

Download the complete January packet at <http://UUChurchOfStockton.org/resistance.pdf>

DELIVERY OF FACC CHRISTMAS BASKET CANDY



Parry Stevens delivered our congregation's donation of three large bags of candy to the Freeport Area Church Cooperative Christmas baskets. The candy was included in 133 baskets delivered over the holidays to community families in need.

Many thanks to Parry (pictured left with Dean Wright, FACC Executive Director) for making the delivery and to everyone who donated!

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 – JANUARY 2016

December 30th – January 6th – Rev. Erik out of town

Friday, January 1st – Happy 2016!

Sunday, January 3rd 10:30am – Service: “The Sun’s Return”

Sunday, January 10th 10:30am – Service: “Resistance”

Religious Education

Monday, January 11th 6:00pm – UU Stockton Board Meeting

Sunday, January 17th 10:30am – Service with Dr. David M. Carlson

Sunday, January 17th 12:30pm – Annual Congregational Meeting

Thursday, January 21st – 12:30pm – Worship Team Meeting, Elizabeth, IL

Sunday, January 24th 10:30am – Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr.

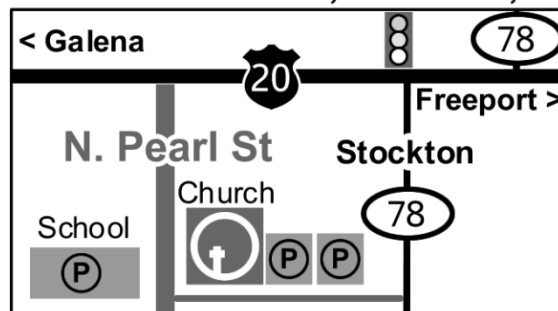
Religious Education

Thursday, January 28th 5:30pm – Family Service Night & Dinner: Resistance

Sunday, January 31st, 10:30am – Service: “Resistance”

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

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