



FROM YOUR MINISTER



Recent snows aside, we are charging ahead towards Spring here in Northwest Illinois and are grateful for the warmth and opportunities it will provide. In February we were treated to two wonderful, lay-led services, made possible by the efforts of the Worship Team, especially Angel Miller, Aaron Dodson, Mark Haman and Ed Risinger.

Culminating with the showing of part of the 2015 Ware Lecture at UUA General Assembly by Dr. Cornel West, our services in February engaged deep questions of moral and spiritual engagement. To watch the Ware Lecture in its entirety, please visit <http://www.uua.org/multiculturalism/ga/ware-west>.

March is looking to be just as engaging a month as we delve into the Soul Matters theme of "Liberation." We will also reintroduce our UU Stockton Choir and perform our traditional child dedication service on Easter Sunday (see articles later in this newsletter).

In personal news, I have just realized that I have at most 10 more services at the UU Church of Stockton. Though the transition is very exciting and Kimberlee, Miles and I are very much looking forward to new opportunities to serve our faith, we are all struggling with the sadness we feel leaving Stockton. I am very happy that the Transition Team has been so diligent and effective in the search for a new minister, and hope we all have some exciting news to share soon. Please know how much I and my family love and appreciate the folks at Stockton and the wonderful six years we've shared with you all.

Many blessings for a wonderful month ahead 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.

EASTER CHILD DEDICATION SERVICE

The UU Church of Stockton has traditionally welcomed new children into our community with a special child-dedication service on Easter Sunday. In a complete reversal of rituals from other traditions, Unitarian Universalists dedicate the energy of the church and its members to the life of the child, and not the other way around.

If you have a child under the age of three and would like to participate in this most sacred of UU traditions, please speak with Rev. Erik - uureverend@gmail.com prior to Easter.

NEWS FROM THE FACC



Many thanks to everyone who continues to support the Freeport Area Church Cooperative with donations of personal items and toilet paper. Though our donations have been increasingly generous the FACC always runs out of these all-important items quickly as there is great need in our community. Please continue to give generously and know how much our contributions are appreciated!

2016 FUN(D)RAISING OPPORTUNITIES!

The Fundraising Committee met recently. We are pleased to report that 11 people attended and many new ideas were presented! Watch for a list of events in the April newsletter or in emails.

Current quest: a plant sale committee; ANYVOLUNTEERS? - Please contact Nancy Schuldt at 815-281-0034. Thank You!

- Your Fun(d)raising Committee

IN MEMORIAM – LENA KELLEY DURTSCHI

It is with sadness that we recognize the passing of Lena Kelly Durtschi, 98, who along with her husband Bill was an active member of our congregation from 1954 until 1978. Among her numerous accomplishments, during World War II Lena served with a select group of female pilots, Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASPs), the first women in history trained to fly American military aircraft and was later a flight instructor and commercial pilot. You may view Lena's full obituary at www.newcomerfuneralhome.net.

Funeral services will be held on Thursday, March 3, 2016, at 12:30pm, at the Newcomer Funeral Home, 1329 31st. Ave., Monroe, WI. Interment will follow in Greenwood Cemetery, Monroe. A luncheon is scheduled following interment. Visitation will be at the funeral home on Wednesday, March 2, from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Memorials are suggested in Lena's name to the Rockford Rescue Mission, 715 W State St., Rockford, IL 61102. Online condolences may be shared at www.newcomerfuneralhome.net.

UU STOCKTON CHOIR



Our choir will be performing at several spring services including Easter Sunday (March 27th) - all are welcome to join voices with our other talented musicians!

We will be rehearsing every Sunday in March at 9:45pm in the Patterson Room- please join us even if you cannot make all the rehearsals.

FEAST OF HYPATIA OF ALEXANDRIA MARCH 26TH – 6PM



Come celebrate one of the most influential Hellenic women of the West! Hypatia of Alexandria was famous for Her teachings in Platonic philosophy, Greek thought and religion. However, She existed during the time when the emerging Christian religion was doing whatever it could to take over.

In 415 CE, She was attacked by a mob and brutally murdered. The Temple Of The Greek Gods, which recognizes Her as a Greek Heroine, holds this annual feast in Her honor each year in the spring, to honor Her memory, to remember Her priceless wisdom for humanity, and to never forget the dangers of radicalism.

NIGHT OF COMEDY AT UU ROCKFORD – 3/4/16 AT 8PM



On March 4th at 8pm, Chicago's legendary comedy theater comes to The Unitarian Universalist Church, 4848 Turner Street Rockford, IL 61107 with "The Second City: Improv All-Stars," an irresistible hour of improvised comedy. The masters of the form will astound you with their talent, skill and wit - all without the aid of scripts or sets.

Fresh, fast and always spectacularly funny, The Second City is celebrating 55 years of producing cutting-edge satirical revues and has launched the careers of legends like Tina Fey, Stephen Colbert, Steve Carell, Gilda Radner, Bill Murray and more.

General Admission Tickets for The Second City are \$50 with cash/check, \$52 online/credit card – 18+ show

For more information, please call The Unitarian Universalist Church (815) 398-6322

<http://uurockford.org/the-second-city-in-rockford-il.html>

Soul Matters March 2016

What Does It Mean To Be A People of Liberation?



“True wisdom comes in understanding that sometimes, you are both the prison and the key.”

— **Johnathan Jena**

Sometimes the key is right in our hand.

Let's be clear: Liberation is about struggling against “others.” There are forces, structures and people that put bars around us. Liberation is indeed about “opposing the powerful,” “dismantling systems,” and “fighting them for freedom.” But sometimes the bars are of our own making. Sometimes the limits and boxes are self-imposed. Sometimes, we are indeed both the prison and the key.

So this month, let's make sure to look in all directions. Let's look honestly and hopefully at the many ways that liberation requires a clear-eyed re-assessment of our choices, not just a battle against those bad guys. All of the great religions agree: We are more powerful than we realize, or want to admit. We can forgive and free ourselves from the cage of resentment. We can let go of jealousy. We can stop playing the self-defeating games of status, money and beauty. We don't have to keep telling ourselves that life is unfair and we've been cheated. We can let that chip fall from our shoulder and freely move on.

Christian author, Israelmore Ayivor, writes, “You have the right to suppress yourself, oppress yourself and depress yourself. You also have the right to impress yourself. And let yourself feel happy too!” There is something perfectly balanced about that quote. It's both critical and kind. Confrontational and inspirational. It honors the fact that there are bars that hem us in, but it also invites us to notice when the key is setting right there in the lock.

May this be the month when we notice and turn that key.

Experiences - choose at least one

A: Mark (and take control of) Your Hours! Liberation is often about simply waking up! Hour by hour, we give up intentionality and let life happen to us. This exercise invites us to liberate ourselves by waking up to what our hours actually look like.

Here's your assignment: Use the alarm clock on your cell phone (or some other device) to set off an hourly alert/chime. Have the alarm/chime go off every hour on the hour for the entire day, from the time you get up to the time you go to bed. Every time the hourly alarm goes off, make a one-word note in a journal or notepad that capture what you are doing in that moment. For instance, one day's worth of entries might look like: worrying, staring, working, working, working, eating, complaining, daydreaming, emailing, working, commuting, cooking, washing, emailing, dog-walking, nodding-off.

Do this at least 2-3 days, either in a row or at different times.

Now here's the catch: Notice the pattern and figure out how you want to change it. Don't over-plan it. Just give your day a little bit more intentionality. Keep your hourly alarm in your head and tell yourself that you want to end the day with a list that you can be proud of. Imagine what kind of list would make you smile, feel in control or feel free. For instance this kind of list: snoozing, jogging, enjoying, planning, working, experimenting, advocating, working, dreaming, laughing, cooking, reading, connecting, talking, loving, breathing. Or this kind of list from a day off of work: sleeping, sleeping, soaking, painting, painting, varnishing, indulging, napping, painting, painting, dining, dancing, dancing, gazing, dreaming. It's all about consciousness. It's all about liberating yourself by simply noticing. It's all about living life rather than letting life live you!

B: In J.R.R. Tolkien's classic, *The Lord of the Rings*, we watch a creature named Gollum give his life and soul over to his "precious." That which empowered him, ended up destroying him. That which was meant to free and protect him, depleted and betrayed him. It's meant to symbolize the destructive lure of addiction and power. It's an extreme example. But this trap is also commonplace. All of us do things that we think will make us feel better but end up making us feel worse. We all have our "precious" that ends up betraying us.

This exercise simply asks you to use this month to work on facing your "precious" and make some small step in letting it go. There are no complicated instructions than this: Liberate yourself from your "precious."

Here is some inspiration and guidance: http://gretchenrubin.com/happiness_project/2015/03/like-gollum-do-you-have-something-precious-that-isnt-good-for-you/

Session plan

Chalice Lighting

If prayer would do it
I'd pray.
If reading esteemed thinkers would do it
I'd be halfway through the Patriarchs.
... If anything other than love could do it
I've done it already
and left the hardest for last.
— Stephen Levine

General Check-In

Question: re-introduce yourself (name, and "who is your best friend?") and then answer: *What's something you wish you could be liberated from?*

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

As always, don't treat these questions like "homework" or a list that needs to be covered in its entirety. Instead, simply pick the one question that "hooks" you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal of these questions is not to help you analyze what liberation means, but to figure out what being a person of liberation means for you today. So, which question is calling to you?

1. The sculptor Michelangelo was once asked how it was that he could create such beautiful works. "It's very simple," he answered. "When I look at a block of marble, I see the sculpture inside it. All I have to do is remove what doesn't belong." What can you remove that doesn't belong in yourself? What might be liberated by removing what doesn't belong? What beauty is waiting for you to give it a bit more room?
2. Have you let yourself become imprisoned by the fear of missing out? By the imaginings of what might have been or what others have?
3. Do you need to liberate yourself from the ordinary? ("When things are taking their ordinary course, it is hard to remember what matters." -Marilynne Robinson)
4. Have you been helping people but ignoring the call for liberation? ("If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." - Lila Watson)
5. How is your balance between spiritual/personal liberation and social/political liberation? Are they feeding each other or fighting? Or just not talking?
6. Is the thing you do to feel better actually making you feel worse? Has what you turn to for liberation become a bit of a trap?
7. Is it time to forgive (and free) yourself?
8. Are you ready to take off the mask? Do you even notice that it is on?
9. Are you looking for liberation and freedom in far-away places and possibly not noticing it is waiting for you right back at home? Or right there where you are standing now?
10. Is kindness waiting for you to pick it up and liberate someone? Maybe even yourself?
11. What's your question? Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what the theme is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it.

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

Closing Words:

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. — Henry David Thoreau

SOUL MATTERS TESTIMONIAL – GALENA GROUP

The Galena Soul Matters Group has met five times since September. It is comprised of the Hamans, Harmets, Weeders, Alice Ericksen, and Kande Haertel. We've met for breakfast at Stella's and Otto's Place, lunch at E-Town, and had a soup supper at Weeder's.

We've had thoughtful discussions on the monthly topics and gotten to know each other better. It has been an enriching (and filling) experience.

- Mark Haman

UUs LIKE CSA's

Decode that headline and it means that our church community members appreciate and look for fresh and local produce. CSA means Community Supported Agriculture – a system whereby farms grow and sell fresh and local produce for its members. Put it all together for a win-win situation in the growing season. And this is organic too!

You buy a membership for a prescribed amount of vegetables delivered to a site near you from June through November. (Shorter seasons are available as well.) The local farm gets its money upfront to cover their costs in the spring – seed and all that goes with farming for you.

Two Onion Farm in Belmont, WI delivers to Galena and other WI sites. Find out how it works and buy a membership by checking the web site: www.twoonionfarm.com. Wishful Acres Farm is between Freeport and Lena. More information and membership signup at: www.wishfulacresfarm.com.

CHURCH CANCELLATION PROTOCOL

Church services and other Church related events have to be canceled from time to time because of weather emergencies or other unforeseen situations. It's the Co-Moderators responsibility to call off any Church function where we can't have a scheduled service of any type.

For future reference, the following procedure will be in place and these television stations will be contacted:

From the Quad Cities 8-WQAD 6-KWQC 4-WHBF. From Rockford 23-WIFR 17-WTVO 13-WREX.

We will also will send out an e-mail for the people on the announcement list. The safety of our members and friends is paramount so use good judgment when the roads become unsafe for travel.

Feel free to contact the Co-Moderators also with advice or questions.

Mark Haman (815.777.0493) Ted Davenport (815.238.8781).

CALLING ALL UU STOCKTON WOMEN!



How about a women's retreat in May? Think about a relaxing, fun Friday evening through Saturday afternoon time away from the hectic life. Let me know of your interest.

If enough women are interested we will form a planning committee. - Linda Weeder, dlweeder@gmail.com

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 – MARCH 2016

Thursday, March 3rd 12:30pm – Lena Kelly Durtschi memorial - Newcomer Funeral Home, 1329 31st. Ave., Monroe, WI.

Thursday, March 3rd 12:30pm – Worship Team meeting – E-Town Coffee, Elizabeth, IL

Friday, March 4th 8:00pm – Second City Comedy All-Stars – UU Rockford 4848 Turner St, Rockford, IL

Sunday, March 6th 9:45am – UU Stockton Choir rehearsal

Sunday, March 6th 10:30am – Service: “Liberation”

Sunday, March 13th 9:45am – UU Stockton Choir rehearsal

Sunday, March 13th 10:30am – Service: “Liberation” with Rev. Dr. Matthew Johnson, UU Rockford

Monday, March 14th 6:00pm – UU Stockton Board Meeting

Sunday, March 20th 9:45am – UU Stockton Choir rehearsal

Sunday, March 20th 10:30am – Service: “Liberation” with Misha Lentz, UU Seminarian

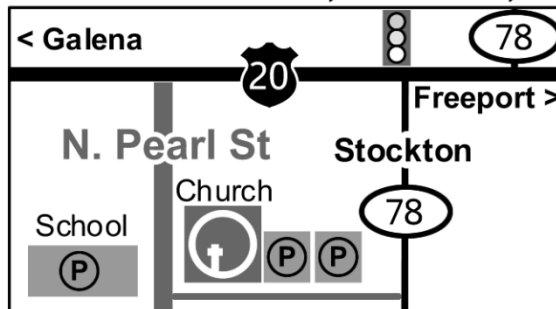
Sunday, March 27th 9:45am – UU Stockton Choir rehearsal

Sunday, March 27th 10:30am – Easter Sunday & Child Dedication

Monday, March 28th 5:00pm – April newsletter deadline

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

UUCHURCHOFFSTOCKTON.ORG

FACEBOOK.COM/UUCHURCHOFFSTOCKTON

UUREVEREND@GMAIL.COM



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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