



MINISTERIAL CANDIDATE IS REV. ARMIDA ALEXANDER – SERVICE APRIL 24TH

At the service on March 27th, the Transition Team was pleased to announce that we have a ministerial candidate to present to the congregation! She is the Reverend Armida Alexander.

Some of you may be saying that name sure sounds familiar. Rev. Alexander served as an interim minister at our church in 2003-2004, and those of us on the Team who knew her then, are pleased to say she hasn't lost her touch! We are proposing to hire her as a half-time contract minister, with an initial one-year contract beginning this September. We would expect to renew her contract as appropriate on an annual basis with approval of the Board of Trustees.

Armida visited with us over the weekend of March 6th and we all got to know her better. That Sunday, she preached at the neutral pulpit of the Dubuque UU Fellowship and we, along with the Dubuque congregation, were very impressed.

Please join us in welcoming Rev. Alexander on Saturday, April 23rd for a potluck supper and then come to hear her service the following Sunday, April 24th. Immediately following that service, there will be a congregation vote to confirm her as our minister. We are very excited to offer you a candidate of such high quality! Please be sure to join us in welcoming her on Saturday, April 23rd and giving her a positive, affirmative vote after service on April 24th.

Please feel free to contact any one of us if you have any questions or comments and please see the article about Rev. Alexander's education and work history later in this newsletter.

Your Ministerial Transition Team,

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



VOCALITY IN CONCERT AT UU STOCKTON- APRIL 24TH - 2:00PM

On Sunday, April 24th, at 2:00 PM, our church will sponsor the second in the "Coming Home" series of concerts featuring returning Stockton area talents. (The first featured Stockton native Lisa Nadig in a benefit concert for Doctors Without Borders.)



We are especially pleased this year to host the men's champion vocal quartet from Minnesota, *Vocality*, featuring among them Stockton native, Jay Althoff. Jay, along with his parents Carol and Allen Althoff and siblings Jo Ellen, John and Jeff, were deeply involved in music at our church for many years.

There is no charge for admission, but there will be an offering gathered as a benefit for the Freeport Area Church Cooperative and our church.

Tell your friends- it will be a wonderful afternoon!

FROM YOUR MINISTER



What an incredible Spring this is shaping up to be – ripe with change, new beginnings and exciting potential. Your dedicated and talented Transition Team has done the difficult work of preparing the congregation for your next minister, we should all be excited by and appreciative of their work. I am very pleased that you will have an opportunity to meet with Rev.

Alexander this month, and I wish her and you all the best for the events of the weekend of April 23rd – 24th.

As you know, my family and I have also been exploring our options with UU positions around the country, have visited several sites and are now in a “waiting game” to see where our next ministry will be. I appreciate all the thoughts of concern and interest and promise I will let the congregation know my plans as soon as I have them.

Kimberlee, Miles and I are just starting to understand the deep sadness we will feel leaving the myriad of communities which have made us so happy here- the folks at the UU Church of Stockton primary among them, but also those from UU Rockford and the whole of the Galena/Stockton/Freeport/Rockford areas. Please know that we all deal with transition in different ways and this is going to be an emotional time for the Carlson family, even when we don't show it publicly. We love you all so much and one of the reasons I am overjoyed at the success of the Transition Team is that I am happy the congregation will be in such good hands.

Before we leave, however, I am pleased to be able to give back to another great community of our faith, serving (perhaps for the last time) as a youth conference chaplain for our regional Spring Youth Con – *Baecon*, being held the first weekend of April at UU Rockford.

April will continue our march towards a new beginning, and it is only appropriate that *Creation* be our monthly Soul Matters theme. We are very pleased to welcome Chris Aldridge, Rev. Matthew Johnson and Rev. Armida Alexander to our pulpit this month, as well as the award-winning music of Vocality as a special, fundraising concert.

Much gratitude to you all, many blessings for a wonderful April 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 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!

UU FUNDRAISING!



Sunday, April 24th: “Coming Home” concert @ 2 p.m. See details in this newsletter.

Saturday night, May 14th: Men’s Italian Dinner.

Saturday, June 11th: Garage Sale at Linda & Doug Weeder’s garage; part of the Galena Territory Garage Sale - Details later; please save your “good stuff” for this sale!

Saturday, September 17th: Service Partner Concert @ Council Hill

All profits are designated to go to Service Partners.

Saturday, October 22nd: Great Beginnings & Chocolate Finales tentative date.

Silent Auction items will be needed for the Service Partner Concert and Great Beginnings and Chocolate Finales; F.Y.I. if you are willing to donate!

We will not have a plant sale this year; maybe next year. Book, art and music sale will be held in 2017.

Thank you! The Fundraising Committee

What Does It Mean To Be A People of Creation?



Creativity is simply our ability to dream things up and make them happen. — Peggy Taylor

Creativity is about dreaming and imagination. It is about being able to envision what others haven't. To be a people of creation is indeed to dream the "not yet."

But what about "...and make them happen." There's something in there that sometimes gets short shrift. Yes, creation requires the ability to imagine the "not yet," but it also requires the courage to live into it.

Which means that this month is not just about imagination, artistry and self-expression, but also about bravery. It takes courage to offer a unique expression. It takes courage to try new things and fail. Creativity asks us to leave the familiar, to break with the pack, to risk being singled out.

And so maybe that's why we also better talk about "co-creation" this month. Something as daring as creativity is dangerous if we try to do it alone. Indeed, where did we get that silly idea that artists and inventors are isolated, independent geniuses?! There is no such thing as a "person of creation"; only "people of creation"! Simply put, there are no creators without companions. - Scott Taylor

EXPERIENCES - CHOOSE AT LEAST ONE

A: Capture Creation: Ramp up your appreciation and refine your attention by taking a picture of one "act of creation" each day. You decide what counts as "an act of creation." Many of us have a cell phone to make it easier on us, but if you don't have, carry a camera. Do this daily for at least a week. At the end of your week or two, line all the photos up and figure out what lesson they want to offer. Where are unexpected patterns? What did you not notice when you first took the picture?

B: Create Something Together: Find a partner and create something together. Grab your kid and build a model car or a tree house! Plop a puzzle on a card table in your living room and have the whole family piece it together over a week's time. Convince your artist or writer friends to do a joint project. Invite your neighbor over to help plant and share a garden. Join the creative justice makers in your neighborhood as they try to build a better and more beautiful world. Come to your group and share what new lesson you learned about why we need each other.

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/

SOUL MATTERS DISCUSSION GROUP - SESSION PLAN

CHALICE LIGHTING

Creation is an act we are all participating in — moment by moment, breath by breath, dream by dream. We are constantly evolving from one thing to the next, reinventing our outward selves as our inner spirit grows and emerges in new ways. Our thoughts, our words, our actions — these create reality, not only for ourselves as individuals, but they shape the world for all beings. Our intentions pull the future into place; our linked hopes hold the power to shape the world -that-will-be. We are all co-creators of the universe. — Leslie Mills, Soul Matters minister

GENERAL CHECK-IN

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

What's something you have co-created in the last few weeks?

HOMEWORK

People share their homework. After sharing, discussion.

CONVERSATION

A question that “grabs” you, and answer. After sharing, discussion.

1. What are you building, painting, composing or planting with your life? (“All the arts we practice are apprenticeship. The big art is our life.” -M.C. Richards)
2. Are you ready to re-create yourself? Is it time to start with a blank canvass? To start writing a new story?
3. When was the last time you “failed beautifully”? Is fear of failure preventing your life from becoming art?
4. What if you started every day with “In the beginning...”?
5. Pablo Picasso believed “every act of creation begins with an act of destruction.” What needs to be deconstructed, wiped away or tilled over in your life in order for a new creation to take root?
6. What forms of art, creativity, and beauty most connect with you? Why do you think that is?

SECOND CONVERSATION

As time allows.

Creation stories are not meant to be literal events. We call them ‘myths’ to help us see that they are real and true at a level deeper than facts. Creation stories serve to define who we are as people by showing us where we have come from and what was important as we began. A creation story is the cornerstone of meaning. Stories of creation tell us not only about beginnings but also right now. Creation is not something that happened once at the beginning of everything. Creation is always happening. — Douglas Taylor, Soul Matters Minister

Question: What creation stories matter to you? Is the “great story” (big bang, evolution, etc.) inspiring to you? Or do you need something more?

CHECK-OUT

What's your take-away about “creation”? Your gratitude for this time?

CLOSING WORDS:

All children are artists. The problem is how to remain an artist once one grows up.

— Pablo Picasso

REV. ARMIDA ALEXANDER EDUCATION AND WORK HISTORY

We are excited to introduce Rev. Alexander to the congregation the weekend of April 23rd- 24th (please see article on the first page of this newsletter). She comes to us with an extensive work history, including serving our Stockton congregation in 2003-04. Rev. Alexander is originally from Rockford, received her BS from Rockford College before receiving a masters degree from the University of Chicago and her Master of Divinity degree from Meadville Lombard Theological School.



The following is a list of her ministry positions starting with her ordination:

- 1981-1987 Minister, Boise UU Fellowship, Boise, ID
- 1987-1988 Minister, First Universalist Church, Minneapolis, MN
- 1993-1993 Interim Minister, United UU Congregation, Waukesha, WI
- 1993-1995 Interim Minister, UU Church of Saint Petersburg, FL
- 1995-1998 Minister, Rogue Valley UU Fellowship, Ashland, OR
- 2002-2003 Membership/Growth Chair, The UU Church, Rockford, IL
- 2003-2004 Interim Minister, UU Church of Stockton, IL
- 2005-2006 Interim Minister, Unitarian Fellowship of Peterborough, ON - Canada
- 2009-2010 Consulting Minister, UU Church of the Lakes, Elkhorn, WI
- 2010-2014 Minister, All Souls Church UU, Sioux Falls, SD

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.

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



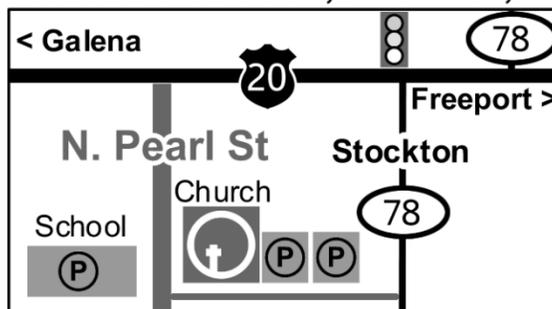
There are currently several members and friends of the church in need of rides to church and during the week (to doctors' appointments, run errands, etc.). If you might be available to help provide a ride for someone in need, or if you could use a ride to church yourself, please contact Rev. Erik at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

CALENDAR – APRIL 2016

April 1st – 3rd – Rev. Erik at regional Spring Youth Con, UU Rockford
Sunday, April 3rd 10:30am – Service: “Creation” - Chris Aldridge
Sunday, April 10th 10:30am – Service: “Creation” - Rev. Erik
Monday, April 11th 6:00pm – UU Stockton Board Meeting
Sunday, April 17th 10:30am – Service: “Creation”
– Rev. Dr. Matthew Johnson, UU Rockford
Saturday, April 23rd 5:30pm – Potluck dinner with ministerial candidate
Rev. Armida Alexander
Sunday, April 24th 10:30am – Service with ministerial candidate
– ALL MEMBERS WHO ARE ABLE ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND
Sunday, April 24th 12:00pm – Congregational meeting & vote on candidate
– ALL MEMBERS WHO ARE ABLE ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND
Sunday, April 24th 2:00pm – “Coming Home” concert featuring *Vocality*
Tuesday, April 26th 5:00pm – May 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

UUCHURCHOFSOCKTON.ORG

FACEBOOK.COM/UUCHURCHOFSOCKTON

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UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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