



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

CHURCH OF STOCKTON, IL

FROM YOUR MINISTER

Dear Friends,

When I was called to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Stockton in May of 2010, I committed to the Search Committee and the Board that I would stay at least five years and no longer than eight. I made the commitment of five years because I felt strongly that the congregation needed a consistent ministerial presence for the period of healing and growth we were entering at the beginning of this decade. I limited the time of my service to eight years because I believe that no ministry can be successful if one person, however dedicated, leads in one community for too long. I have been open and upfront about this commitment from the beginning of my time here and have done my best to prepare the congregation for its future beyond my ministry.



This September marks the beginning of my sixth year as your minister, making me the third longest-serving minister in the church's 115 year history. Sadly, this will also be my last year as minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Stockton: I will be entering search for a new position and will be ending my service here next June. My last service will appropriately be Fathers' Day, Sunday, June 19th, 2016.

I want everyone to know that I do not make this decision lightly, nor do I lament my decision to stay this long. It is also with great ambivalence and grief that I and my family will move on from this community; all of you who have been part of this church the last five years have been an incredible blessing to us and our lives.

Because of this transition, everyone who is invested in this church and its future will need to be especially engaged in our work together: participating in congregational meetings and self-reflection activities, volunteering for our religious education program and special services. I am especially glad that the Board has decided to pursue the *Soul Matters* program for this year, as the small-group discussions will ultimately support and inform our work going forward.

I will be working with volunteers to transition some of the administrative functions I've been performing, such as website and Facebook administration, newsletter construction and production, and membership processes. If you are interested and able to help out in any of these areas, please contact me as soon as possible.

We will also be re-envisioning our Care Team and the way members may take on some of the ever-important work of connecting with those in our community who need physical and emotional support.

Please understand how much I love this congregation and all the wonderful folks who make it up. Some of the interactions I've had with you have been painful, but the vast majority have been glorious and provided a deepening for my own belief in the power of our shared, saving faith. I consider myself incredibly blessed to have been called to walk with this congregation and its members, helping consecrate weddings, dedicate children in our faith (including my own), and mourning while celebrating lives which have passed.

Finally, please 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.

NEWS FROM YOUR BOARD

Before the August Board meeting, Rev. Erik Carlson informed the board that he would be entering search for a new congregation. Erik has been a steady and valuable minister to our congregation for the past five years and will have completed six years next summer.

We appreciate that Erik told us in advance about his decision, which gives us time to form a committee to lead the congregation in the process of searching for a new minister. At the August board meeting, the board discussed potential church members to lead the congregation in this transition. The tentative committee to be voted on and approved at the September Board meeting is Randy Downing, Alice Ericksen, Mark Haman, Rich Mattas, and Nancy Schuldt.

The co-moderators and Alice Ericksen met with Rev. Dr. Matthew Johnson, the senior minister of the UU Church in Rockford to determine the best course of action to take going forward. The landscape has changed dramatically since Rev.

Erik was called in 2010. There are many congregations searching and too few ministers to fill the vacancies. The chance of getting a settled, full-time minister is slim given our small congregation and limited financial package.

We could be looking at a part-time minister or shared ministry with another congregation. Ultimately, it's up to the congregation to determine the direction we should take to keep the pulpit filled and continue pastoral care.

One of the first duties the Transition Team will complete is to develop a Congregational survey that will give the team direction. All members and friends of the UU Church of Stockton will receive a survey and we cannot emphasize enough the importance of filling it out and returning it. In the 116 years that we have existed here in Northwest Illinois, we have overcome many obstacles. The dedication and commitment of our members and friends has sustained this congregation in the past and will continue to long into the future.

Rev. Erik has helped us transition to the 21st century with new technology that will help immensely in attracting a new minister and providing meaningful services. If you have questions feel free to call Mark or Ted and please fill out and return the survey after you receive it in September.

Co-Moderators, Mark Haman (815-777-0493) and Ted Davenport (815-238-8781)

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

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – SUNDAYS SEPTEMBER 13TH & 27TH

FAMILY WORSHIP SEPTEMBER 24TH AT 5:30PM

We are starting a new year and new format for our Religious Education program! We will be meeting on the second and fourth Sundays in September and will begin our Thursday evening family services once a month with our Soul Matters September theme of *Invitation*.

We will also be introducing our monthly family worship service on Thursday, September 24th at 5:30pm. The evening will feature an interactive, all-ages worship and activities and a meal. Tell your friends- all are welcome!

UU MEN'S GOLF OUTING – SEPT. 4TH

We had so much fun last year that we like to do it again. We have set the date as Saturday, September 4th at the Blackhawk Run Golf Course in Stockton. The plan is to play nine holes (it's easier for us old guys), followed by drinks and dinner. To help in planning this event, please let me know that you plan to attend. Thank you and see you on the course! - Dick Harmet - joandick@jcwifi.com



TEMPLE OF THE GREEK GODS: ATHENA RITE AND STUDY NIGHT – SEPT. 26TH

The Temple of the Greek Gods, co-led by UU Stockton members Anastasia and Chris Aldridge, will be holding their monthly study group in the Patterson Room on Saturday, September 26th from 7pm until 9pm. The session will focus on Hellenic education and include a philosophy discussion and Athena ritual. Light refreshments will be served at this free event- donations to the church will be accepted.

Tell your friends, all are welcome!

SOUL MATTERS – SEPTEMBER 2015 - INVITATION

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PEOPLE OF INVITATION?



Do not try to save the whole world or do anything grandiose. Instead, create a clearing in the dense forest of your life and wait there patiently, until the song that is your life falls into your own cupped hands and you recognize and greet it. Only then will you know how to give yourself to this world so worthy of rescue.

- "Clearing" by Martha Postlewaite

Create a clearing, listen for your song and let it teach you how to give yourself to this world. There is no better description of the religious life than this! And notice that it all begins with invitation, with the deep humility and knowledge that while the song is deeply ours, it also comes from something or somewhere beyond ourselves. It takes time, but eventually we each come to realize that --to be whole and to find home-- a space must be made, a clearing must be created, and otherness must be invited in.

- Scott Tayler

EXPERIENCE THE THEME THIS MONTH — CHOOSE ONE OR MORE:

A: Read "The Invitation" by Oriah Mountain Dreamer at www.oriahmountaindreamer.com. Read it once a day for one week. Choose the line that speaks to you and to which you can aspire. Come prepared to discuss.

B. Invite a friend to church. Be thoughtful about who, how, and why you invite them. Be ready to share what it was like not only to have that friend with you, but to invite the person in the first place.

SESSION PLAN

CHALICE LIGHTING

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness, some
momentary awareness comes
As an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all! Even if they're a
crowd of sorrows, who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture, still treat each guest honorably.

He may be clearing you out for some new
delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet
them at the door laughing, and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes, because each
has been sent as a guide from beyond.

- From *The Guest House* by Rumi

GENERAL CHECK-IN

Question: Introduce yourself (name, work, family) and then answer:

What new things have entered your life, invited or not, over this summer?

BEING A GROUP

Discuss and reach agreement about time and place, expectations of attendance (including letting the facilitator know if you can't come), confidentiality (what is said here stays here, encouragement to reach minister if needed), and general group dynamics ("step up/step back", respect for diversity/each person, active listening). Ask "what do you need to feel safe in this group?"

EXPERIENCE

Share your experience ("Invitation" poem and/or inviting someone to church). What did you discover? After sharing, discussion.

CONVERSATION

Identify a question that “grabs” you and provide a short answer. After sharing, discussion.

1. Is there enough silence, stillness and space in your life to hear “the invitation”?
2. Are you open to the invitation of the divine?
3. In her song, “May I Suggest,” Susan Werner sings, “May I suggest this is the best part of your life...” What if that were true for you? What would it mean for you to accept the invitation that right now is the best and most blessed time of your life?
4. How are you handling Life’s invitation to live gracefully and even gratefully with uncertainty and change?
5. When were you “the stranger” and someone invited you in? More importantly, how are you re-paying that gift in your present day living and loving?
6. What are you doing with the invitation to love yourself?

CHECK-OUT

What’s your take-away about “invitation?” Your gratitude for this time?

CLOSING WORDS

“Invitation” by Shel Silverstein
*If you are a dreamer, come in.
If you are a dreamer, a wisher, a liar,
A hope-er, a pray-er, a magic bean buyer.
If you’re a pretender, come sit by my fire,
For we have some flax golden tales to spin.
Come in! Come in!*

GOING DEEPER

The complete September *Soul Matters* packet is available on our website:

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

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. Tickets will be available by September 6th.

Mel Heidenreich is the ticket sales contact person.

The sign up to volunteer, contribute food and or donate to the silent auction starts Sunday, August 30th; please see Leslie Hawley.

Thank you for your support of this “last fundraiser of the year.”
Let’s make it fun and profitable!

**Tickets \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids 6-11
& under FREE**
Buffet filled with scrumptious APPETIZERS
**Additional buffet offering desserts; many
CHOCOLATE!**
Silent Auction ~ Musical Entertainment
Fun for all ages!

SOCK DRIVE FOR ROCKFORD HOMELESS – SEPTEMBER 6TH

We will be collecting new and “gently-used” socks to donate to the Rockford homeless shelter system on September 6th. Please bring matched pairs as you’re able (no holes, please).

PARTNER FUNDRAISING CONCERT – SEPT. 12TH – COUNCIL HILL STATION

The Wundo Band



Saturday, September 12, 2015

2-5 p.m.

~Music in the Barn

~Silent Auction

~Food & Beverage available

~Family Friendly

**Raising funds & awareness for the social needs of our communities
(\$5 suggested donation)**

Check us out on Facebook: Unitarian Universalist Church of Stockton, The Wundo Band, Council Hill Station

Sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Stockton

We are holding our second annual concert for our UU Stockton partners on September 12th at Council Hill Station, 6521 N Hill Rd, Scales Mound, Illinois 61075. Featuring the music of the Wundo Band, the suggested \$5 donation and silent auction proceeds will all go to support our 12 UU Stockton monthly partners. Tell your friends, all are welcome!

SUMMER PICNIC THANK YOU!



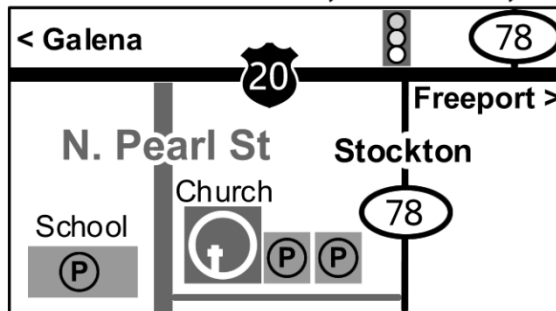
Many thanks to the Carlson family for hosting and to everyone who attended and brought such delicious food!

CALENDAR – SEPTEMBER 2015

Sunday, September 6th 10:30am Service: Labor Day
Saturday, September 12th 3:00pm Partnership Concert, Council Hill Station,
Scales Mound, IL
Sunday, September 13th 10:30am Service: Invitation
Religious Education: Invitation
Monday, September 14th 6:00pm UU Stockton Board Meeting
Sunday, September 20th 10:30am Service: Equinox
Religious Education: Invitation
Thursday, September 24th 5:30pm Family Worship Service: Invitation
Saturday, September 26th 7:00pm Temple of the Greek Gods Study Group
Sunday, September 27th 10:30am Service: Invitation

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

UUCHURCHOFFSTOCKTON.ORG

FACEBOOK.COM/UUCHURCHOFFSTOCKTON

UUREVEREND@GMAIL.COM



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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