



MINISTER'S SLANT - ...Marking the time

On the 20th day of this month, our hemisphere will close the door on Winter and move, gratefully, into Spring. The yearly calendar is full of passages like this, some having to do with seasons and agricultural cycles, others that relate to the history of memorable events of a particular group of humans. Thus, our Jewish colleagues celebrate Passover in the Spring (March 30 this year,) and this holiday also marks their passage out of Egypt and, eventually, into "the promised land."

Our lives have their marked days and passages, too -- times when we move, it seems, through a doorway into something new. The major ones are initiations, too: birth, the passage from the watery world to the breathing world; adolescence, the movement from childhood to adulthood; marriage, the commitment to be with and for a beloved; and death, the passage out of the breathing world into blessed memory, or perhaps into something we cannot yet imagine, something like the promised land.

Initiations are usually accompanied by rites and rituals, not so much in western civilization, and not much of late. Malidoma Patrice Some' writes, "Initiation consists of rituals and ordeals that help... people remember their own purpose and have their unique gifts recognized by the community.... Initiation and the suffering that accompanies it end when an individual's experiences are acknowledged by others." Do you remember the very last line in Arthur Miller's play, *The Death of a Salesman*? Willie Loman's wife, Linda, stands at his grave and says, "Attention must be paid." Attention/recognition is a vital component of the initiation process, and the Church has been and may still be one of the best places to mark the important life passages.

There are many occasions that could be celebrated in our families and church community. There are learnings that, once we accomplish them, we earn a new status, a new identity. For instance, once we learn to walk we are "bipeds," and we seldom revert to crawling. Once we learn to read we are "readers," and we cannot not read when we see printed words. The same could be said of riding a bicycle, swimming, and a host of others. For the first part of our lives, we add skills and abilities; then there is a turn--about as we age, and we relinquish those skills.

I remember Eleanor, in my first parish, who came home from a scary drive to her bank and announced to her sister with a sigh of relief, "Well, I don't have to do that anymore!" She sold her car the next week. Her sister, cut from the same cloth, had moved into the retirement home with Eleanor years before she herself would need it, so that Eleanor would not be alone and she herself would be well-situated when the time finally came. Most of us do not greet the diminishment of our abilities with such forethought and joy. Most of us enter those little doorways with trepidation and dread.

Had I it to do over, I would devise a little ritual for Eleanor to turn over her car keys and tell about all the places she had been in that car and others, about her experience on her last day as a driver, and her intention to pass into her new status as a non-driver. And the congregation would acknowledge and respond with words of encouragement and welcome.

Given the opportunity, I would celebrate a lot more rites of passage, and I think I do have that opportunity! I applaud Nancy Schuldt's initiative in starting the last-Sunday birthday parties. Certainly, the achievement of another year is worth noticing. Are there other occasions that should also be noted? Do you know of someone who just learned to walk, read, ride, dance, hit a baseball, cook a meal? Someone who found a job, retired, reconciled with a sibling/neighbor/enemy, began or ended a relationship, sold or bought a house, etc. These are occasions we could celebrate.

April first, April Fool's Day, comes on a Sunday this year. It's also Easter Sunday. This co-incidence has to portend fun and festival! I would like to celebrate some mini-passages on Easter/Fool's Day. So, what are they?

On a larger and more somber note, I sense that our society is what the scholars call "liminal," that is, standing at the doorway of a great passage from one state of being into another. The students of the Parkland, Florida high school who survived the recent massacre have risen up in outrage and righteousness to demand change in our country's gun-regulation laws. In more sane societies, like that of the elephant, the older males would surround the females, and the females would surround the youngsters to keep them safe. With us, it seems to be the opposite, the youngsters are having to be their own shield of protection, their own champions. It's a turn-about that I had not fore-seen, and I feel some apprehension, because those precious children are on the outside of the circle, where we elders should be. But okay, then. We may not yet be as wise as the elephants, but if I cannot circle and shield I have enough sense to follow when wisdom decides to lead. Spring is coming, and a great turning is at hand.

Praise be and blessings,
Armida

Board Report

The Board welcomed its new members, Martha Wolf and Linda Weeder. Mark Haman was also welcomed to his new position as Steward.

Lots of business was conducted indicating a busy church.

Armida arranged for a subscription to ZOOM, a media program that allows live streaming of our services. Now we need a video camera and someone with audio/visual skills to set it up. We made arrangements for two ways to better advertise our church and its activities. We have a six-month subscription to list our church in the Thursday church listings in the Freeport Journal. We also took advantage of a special offering for four full page ads in the Galena Gazette. We may not use all four ads but we have the option to do so. It is a great opportunity to advertise special things our church does such as our Council Hill Benefit event.

We are proud of Kate Miller and Nancy Schuldt who are on the committee that planned the Broad Ideas events at the Galena Arts Center. (More information in this newsletter.) We encourage you to support their effort. UU Stockton is one of the sponsors.

Randy Downing delivered the personal items to the Freeport Area Church Cooperative. His picture and some narrative appeared in the Freeport Journal. Ted Davenport will deliver our donation of \$300 to the January Service Partner, the SNAP program (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) in Stockton.

As discussed at the Annual Meeting, the Board voted that all cash from the collection plate (rather than half) will go to our service partners.

Michael Staver, Dan and Joan Rawce Metzger presented the board with some ideas for the kitchen renovation. The board voted to allocate \$5,000 for the project. Michael Staver will start things off with the purchase of two new electric stoves.

We are looking forward to our guest speaker and musician, David Stocker on March 4, the Italian Dinner prepared by Chef Michael and our Freeport satellite service at Parkview in May.

Linda Weeder, Co-Moderator

Tables for Sale \$\$

At the annual meeting in January it was discussed to purchase 6 ft. round tables for the Patterson room. Everyone agreed that seating around round tables is more conducive to conversations after Church service and would be ideal for fundraisers. Because of space limitations the Board decided to sell the older rectangular tables. Over the years, members and friends have borrowed the sturdy, (and heavy) tables for garage sales, graduations, and picnics. Now is your chance to own 1 or more. We are offering them to anyone for \$25.00, first come first serve. There are 8, eight foot tables and 2, six foot tables. Contact Ted Davenport (815-238-8781)

Our Kitchen

By the time you read this, the 30-40 year old stoves will have been replaced. The Board approved money to improve and upgrade our kitchen. Coming soon will be another opening out of the kitchen to relieve the bottleneck at the original doorway. Plans also include finding and installing a (used) 3-tub sink. Talk to your favorite Board Member for more details. – Mark Haman

GSA TRAINING RESCHEDULED

The Northwestern Illinois Gender and Sexuality Alliance will host our next Volunteer and Information Session on Sunday, March 4th from 3:00 - 5:30 pm at the CTE Academy in Elizabeth, Illinois. This training will provide information about our organization, basic LGBTQ+ education, as well as ways you can volunteer for our organization if you so choose. The cost of the training is FREE and refreshments will be provided. The only cost we ask of folks is \$10 to cover background checks. Background checks are only performed if folks choose to volunteer directly with our youth. This is an amazing personal and professional development opportunity to learn about the LGBTQ+ community and ways in which youth are being supported in our area. For more information, please see the Facebook link:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1701495426577043/>.

March 4 – Soup Sunday

They say March comes in like a lion. Well here at UU Stockton he comes with a soup bowl and an appetite. We will once again have Soup Sunday following the service. Sign up to bring some soup or bring something to add to the table.

BROAD IDEAS

WE ARE THE ONES WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR

An arts show dedicated to telling women's stories. This 6-week exhibit, will highlight the range of experiences, feelings, and realities of those that identify as female. It's a celebration, an acknowledgment, a community of support and solidarity.

Broad Ideas runs from March 2- April 8, 2018. Please join us!

*All events will offer FREE on-site child care!

OPENING NIGHT! MARCH 2 FROM 5-7PM

Join us in celebrating the artists and artwork that makeup Broad Ideas. Party with live music. Enjoy food and beverage while networking with community supporters.
at Galena Center for the Arts, 219 Summit Street, Galena, Illinois

POET LAUREATE MARCH 11 AT 2PM

A day of poetry with a Kim Blaeser, Poet Laureate of Wisconsin 2015-2016.
at Galena Center for the Arts, 219 Summit Street, Galena, Illinois

SONGWRITERS SHOWCASE MARCH 15 FROM 6-9PM

Enjoy songs from numerous female performers during this night of music.
at Galena Center for the Arts, 219 Summit Street, Galena, Illinois

WOMEN'S HERSTORY NIGHT! MARCH 18 FROM 6-8PM

**Including stories from local nursing home residents!*

An evening of learning and empowerment, with a performance from Galena's Women of Courage & Commitment and The League of Women Voters.
at Galena Center for the Arts, 219 Summit Street, Galena, Illinois

YOGA NIDRA PRACTICE - MARCH 22 FROM 7-8:30PM

Gentle mindful movement & essential oils.
at Galena Center for the Arts, 219 Summit Street, Galena, Illinois

SPOKEN WORD CLOSING EVENT APRIL 8 AT 6PM

Celebrating the duration of this show and it's future possibilities.
at Galena Center for the Arts, 219 Summit Street, Galena, Illinois

Check out Broadideas.org for more information.



LEAD SPONSOR

PROUD SPONSORS:



Judy Wehrle, Carol & John Borowski, Laurie Wurster, Carole Sullivan & Ian Lavack, Nancy & Bill Schmidt, Irene & Keith Thraen-Borowski, Eric Hanson, & Ellen Ryan, Judy Cuplin, Jenny Stoddard, Pat Lietzen Eye, Caprina Abt, Jen & Jay Notrott and dozens of other individuals that support women.

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 that 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. Linda Weeder (815-777-0875) Ted Davenport (815-238-8781)

Food and Culture Class

On March 11th, our own renowned Chef Michael Staver will give us a glimpse of the class 'Food and Culture' he taught while teaching at UIC. 'Food and Culture' covers the history of humans through food. Michael would like this to be a discussion driven 'course' and promises there will be NO tests!! If there is enough interest, he will continue the classes in upcoming weeks. We will meet after coffee hour, around 12:30 and should be done around 1:15. If you are interested in joining us, let Laura Dufford know 815-947-2720 or lauradufford@gmail.com. Perhaps we can plan for lunch arrangements.

UU Italian Dinner - Mark your calendars!!

Saturday, April 21 will be a night of great food and music at our church. Chef Michael Staver, with help from kitchen elves, will serve a delightful Italian dinner. We're trying something different this year by having two seatings: 5:00 and 7:00. Galena musician Jim Mantey will entertain us in the sanctuary between the two dinner seatings. Tickets will be sold in advance and will be available later in March. Mark the date - more info will be coming soon.

Touchstones theme for March - Humility

Please join us on Sunday, March 11 for the Touchstones Adult Discussion Group. We'll meet at 9:15 in the RE area. This group is open to anyone interested in some stimulating, thought provoking conversations. No need to sign-up, just show-up! The material that will be discussed can be found on line at <http://www.uuchurchofstockton.org/touchstones.html>. If you have a chance, please look over the discussion material. We are pretty loose, so we'll be happy to have your thoughts whether you've read the material or not. Please consider joining us! Extra hard copies of the Touchstones Journal are available in the Patterson Room for anyone who is interested. - *Laura Dufford*

A reminder to the Galena/West end group - next meeting is Monday, March 12 at 11:30 at E-Town.

News and Notes

CHURCH NOTECARDS AVAILABLE! Stay in touch with your friends and family with our church notecards. These blank cards feature a beautiful watercolor painting of the church by J. Eric Anderson on the front. They are available for purchase in the Patterson Room - 6 cards for \$5.00. - Sheila Haman

Touchstones Theme: Humility

To have humility is to experience reality, not in relation to ourselves, but in its sacred independence. It is to see, judge, and act from the point of rest in ourselves. Then, how much disappears, and all that remains falls into place. In the point of rest at the center of our being, we encounter a world where all things are at rest in the same way. Then a tree becomes a mystery, a cloud a revelation, each man [or woman] a cosmos of whose riches we can only catch glimpses.

Dag Hammarskjöld



One recipe for a humble pie captures the complexity of humility itself. It calls for 2 cans Understanding, 2 cups Love, 2 cups Compassion, 3 cups Humility, 1 cup Forgiveness, 1/2 cup Peace, 1/2 cup Acceptance, 1/4 cup Success, 1/4 cup Failure, 2 tbsp Temptation, 1 tsp Remorse, 1 tsp Guilt, and 1 part Humor; freshly sliced as a garnish. These ingredients suggest that the purpose of eating humble pie is not to punish, but to restore right relationship; not to chastise, but to challenge; not to criticize, but to care.

adapted from Valerie Sagheddu

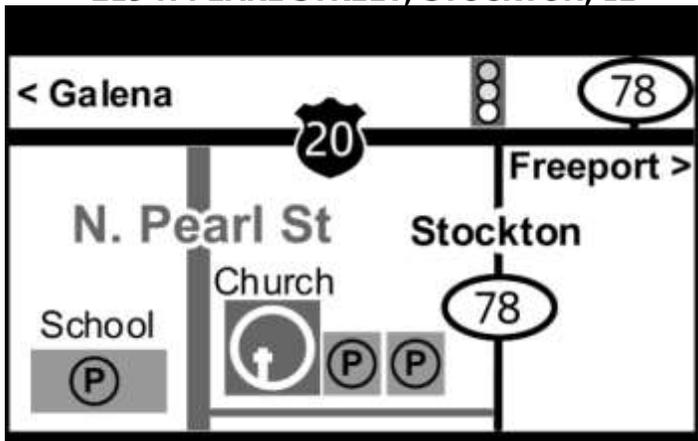
Please join us in exploring the theme of Humility

Services Offer Great Reasons to Come to Church This Month

Along with the wonderful services from our Rev. Armida on March 11 and 25 and a lay-led service on March 18, the Worship committee is bringing you something special on March 4. Please be sure to join us to hear David Stocker's presentation entitled, *On the Brink: Cheerful Resistance and Human Creativity at the Dawn of the Sixth Great Extinction* -- his thoughts, his music and friends. Be sure to stick around for Soup Sunday and a music session after the service.

David is a Masters graduate of the Yale University School of Drama. As actor and singer, David has performed throughout the U.S. and abroad. As a songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, David's talents have delighted thousands of school-age children and adults through his arts residencies in instrument-making, his concerts, and his storytelling/ musical performances. Be sure to bring the children!

See you in church for another month of meaningful spiritual growth.

CALENDAR- March 2018	CHURCH INFORMATION
<p>Sunday, March 4 10:30 a.m. <i>On the Brink: Cheerful Resistance and Human Creativity at the Dawn of the Sixth Great Extinction</i> with guest speaker and musician, David Stocker</p> <p>Sunday, March 11, 10:30 a.m. Rev. Armida – <i>Telling Time, finding time, wasting time; all about TIME.</i> Before the service: 9:15 a.m. Touchstones! Everyone welcome</p> <p>Monday, March 12 at 11:30 Touchstones Galena/West end group – next meeting at E-Town</p> <p>Sunday, March 18, 10:30 a.m.</p> <p>Sunday, March 25, 10:30 a.m. Rev. Armida. <i>Throw Rugs and Magic Carpets.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">219 N PEARL STREET, STOCKTON, IL</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Wheel chair parking and elevator access is available from the rear parking lot. Sunday Services at 10:30 AM Rev. Armida Alexander UUChurchOfStockton.org Facebook.com/UUChurchOfStockton uustockton@gmail.com</p>