

UUFT BEACON

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Topeka
4775 SW 2nd Street • Topeka, KS 66604 • 785-272-9233 • www.uuft.org
Proud to be a Welcoming Congregation

February 2012

A Month of Sundays . . .

February 5 – All I See is Part of Me. Imagine sitting in a sunbeam and allowing its heat to seep through your skin and deep down into your bones. This cold time of year humans tend to yearn for the warmth of summer, but still have to deal with the cold and darkness. Yes, darkness is necessary to growth, but wouldn't a sunbeam melt you like warm butter? Fellowship member Amanda Thomas will lead a warm celebration of Imbolc, the holiday that welcomes the ever so slight return of the light into our lives.



The Forum: Sleep, Health Promotion, Immune Function, and the Epidemic of Cancer & Chronic Disorders. Is there anything that can be done to promote better sleep, enhance immune function, and reduce risk factors for cancer and a host of chronic disorders including obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease? What works to help individuals and families improve sleep quality and thereby impact the quality of their lives including improved performance, enhanced flow, reduced fear and anxiety, and promote enhanced self-awareness and authentic happiness? Come join biofeedback therapist, Peter Parks from Synergy Systems Consulting, as he discusses the extensive research into the impact of sleep deprivation on individuals and communities. Program Contact: Bill Lucero.

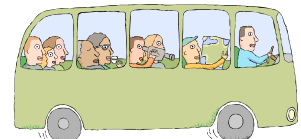


February 12 – Standing on the Side of Love: Valentine's Day, Reimagined. Purveyors of cards and heart-shaped boxes of chocolate send the message that love is about romance and affection. But do justice and equity have a role to play in your love life, too? What does it mean to stand on the side of love? Rev. Lisa Romantum Schwartz will explore the question at this annual observance of Hugs & Quiches. Plan to stay for a tasty lunch, provided by you and others! Contact Jamie Crispin if you're able to help with set up or clean up for the salad and quiche extravaganza. Got a yellow SSL shirt? Wear it today. The Hopscard Brass Quartet will be performing in Scanland Hall between the Forum and Service, from 10:15 to 10:45 a.m., and they will also provide special music during the 11:00 service.



The Forum: Following Passions. Tom Averill, Washburn University Writer-in-residence and Professor of English, will discuss his writings and influences. "My writing has always been literary, with models like William Stafford and Eudora Welty, but my subjects come from my passions in life--food, Kansas history, culture, and landscape/all things Scottish, music and gardens." He will read short excerpts from his works to talk about writing and his inspirations. Program Contact: Bill Lucero.

February 19 – Get on Board. Unitarian Universalism is committed to justice for all people. Next June, thousands of Unitarian Universalists of all ages will gather in Phoenix for General Assembly to bring attention to injustices and human rights abuses faced by those too often deemed "other." As UUs did fifty years ago during the Civil Rights movement, we will join with local communities to witness, serve, worship and work together. Join Rev. Jill Jarvis of the UU Fellowship of Lawrence to remember our history, and prepare to continue the effort to bring justice, equity, and compassion to all.



The Forum: Zen Secrets. The practice of Zen meditation is ancient. Practiced for millennia, it is still an enigma for many. What is Zen? And why would anyone want to bother with it? In this small presentation, Rebecca Otte will introduce you to the basics of Zen meditation - both principle and practice. We'll discuss concepts of emptiness, kong-an practice, and what happens to one's life because of meditation practice. Program Contact: Bill Lucero.

February 26 – Our Solemn Vow. Peace Camp is a program of the Topeka Center for Peace and Justice (TCPJ) that started at UUFT. Last summer at camp participants looked at peace from four perspectives: Peace within, peace with friends and family, world peace, and peace with the environment. With this broad understanding of the call to be “peacemakers” comes recognition that reconciliation ought to be a priority at home, at work or school. Can faith communities speak prophetically and boldly, not just to church people, but like the prophet Malachi, to the leaders of our nation? If we held up peace as a vision, would it fill up the valleys and bring down the mountains? Rev. Jim McCullough, Executive Director of the TCPJ, is our guest speaker.



The Forum: Wisdom from the RiverKeeper. Our Kaw Riverkeeper will be with us to discuss the health of the Kansas River, how we can protect and enjoy this water resource, and share with us the wonder of the river ecosystem. Program contact: Bob McDanel.



All Services Start at 11:00 a.m. The Forums Begin at 9 a.m.

Standing on the Side of Love Bus

Soon you'll be seeing registration forms for a Kansan bus trip to Phoenix for this year's General Assembly. Why would you want to go to this particular General Assembly? You can find out more info about that here: On why to go: <https://sites.google.com/site/ga2012bus/why-go>

And if you have questions about this trip or why we're getting a bus of UU Kansans together, (with people from Lawrence, All Souls, Salina, and Hutchinson interested) check out this link: <https://sites.google.com/site/ga2012bus/faq>

This trip is like cluster - on wheels. You get four days to spend with other Kansan Unitarian Universalists. On the way down, we'll have fun and learn about the issues for what we'll experience in Phoenix. On the way back, you'll get to share your experience with others. This will help us build a solidarity effort in Kansas to have Unitarian Universalists working as a force for good and start making the change we wish to see in the world. We want to arrive by bus because we want to announce our presence in Arizona - We are Unitarian Universalists, and We Stand On The Side Of Love for Immigrant Justice!

Social Justice News

Help fight hunger in Topeka!!

UUFT is participating in Thirty Days of Love promoted by StandingontheSideofLove.org.

Our focus is Hunger in Topeka. For the thirty days between Martin Luther King's Birthday and



Valentine's Day we are ramping up our Food Drive for the Center for Empowerment & Safety at the YWCA. UUFT is a donor throughout the year to this pantry but NOW is the time to FILL the grocery cart!!! in the gathering area.

With Board approval the SJC donated \$5000 from the SJC endowment to Harvesters to underwrite their SnackPak program. Our donation will supply 25 children with a weekend backpack of food for a full year. Contact Jamie Crispin at jamielcrispin@gmail.com if you would like to help prepare the snackpaks Feb.11, 9 a.m. to noon.

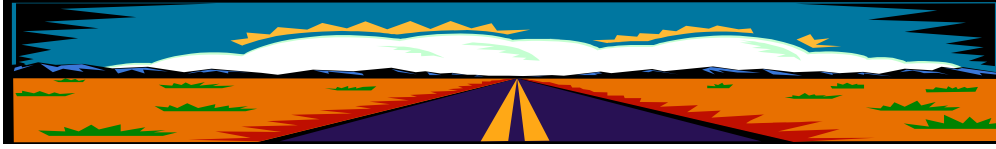
The SJC is always looking for more people and good ideas. Our next meeting is Feb 6 at 7p.m.

Program Committee Meeting Tues. Feb. 21, 6:30 p.m.

Do you have ideas about Sunday services, and interest in helping the service be interesting, challenging, and occasionally even transformative? Come to the Sunday Program Committee meeting on Tuesday Feb. 21, 6:30 p.m. in the Emerson Room.

Membership Class Sat. March 24, 9-1

Have you been thinking about your life's journey, and wondering if you'll find spiritual companions at the UU Fellowship of Topeka? You're invited to attend Pathways to Meaningful Membership, a class about the UUFT community and how you might become a part of it, on Saturday, March 24 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.



By Rev. Lisa Romantum Schwartz

Communion

An Episcopal priest of my acquaintance was once asked the question, “Why isn’t everyone, even non-Christian visitors to our church, invited forward to receive the bread and wine at communion?” He answered, “Because then it wouldn’t be a sacrament, it would be a picnic.”

I’ve pondered that perplexing idea for a few years now. I acknowledge that it makes some sense in a Christian tradition like the Episcopal Church, but to me it begs the question: Why can’t a picnic be a sacrament? When people share food with each other, especially with no conditions or obligations, it seems like a holy act to me.

The Christian church’s scriptural referent for Holy Communion is the story of the last supper, in which Jesus is made to say words about the symbolic character of bread and wine when taken in religious community. A better story for Unitarian Universalist communion is the Feeding of the Multitudes. The tale of Jesus taking a small amount of food and sharing it among thousands is present in all four gospels, which gives it a ring of authenticity. It was at least a common tale of Jesus’ living, loving ministry to real and hungry human beings.

As a devotee of our humanistic faith, I don’t buy the supernatural explanation of Jesus’ miraculous feeding. In fact, if the story comes down to a “shazam” moment in which a substance is magically created out of nothing, the story loses relevance.

If, on the other hand, there was something in that moment that compelled people to share, even out of their meager means and their fear that there might not be enough to go around, THAT’S a miracle I can sink my teeth into. And that they became a community in the act of sharing food, THAT’S a holy sacrament. And it makes the first communion more of a potluck than a solemn gathering of a select few.

This month the UUFT will observe one of our holiest rites: Hugs and Quiches, a potluck tradition started over two decades ago to re-affirm the Fellowship community after the loss of two members who moved away, and one member who died (Toby Scanland, the man after whom our Fellowship hall was named). And this year Hugs and Quiches Sunday (Feb. 12th) will also mark the close of 30 Days of Love, during which Fellowship members and friends will share nonperishable food to re-stock the pantry at the Center for Safety and Empowerment (the local women’s shelter).

May we celebrate the sacrament of communion together: a holy feast made real through our sharing, love embodied in community.

Lisa

Hopscard Brass Performance

Sunday, February 12th the Hopscard Brass Quartet will provide a brass performance in Scanland Hall 10:15 to 10:45 a.m. They will also provide special music during the 11 a.m. service. The Quartet group are music students at

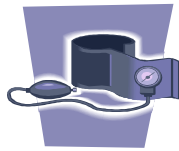
Washburn University. Their performance was acquired by members at a Washburn Band Fundraiser for Joplin High School Music department. Come and enjoy the fellowship of fine music on this special Sunday.

Memoir Group

My mother, aunt and uncle were actively involved with memoir writing groups in their respective UU congregations. They found the small group writing and reading experiences to be among the most enjoyable and rewarding activities in which they participated. In both UU churches, the memoir groups have been active for over a dozen years and usually involve about ten to twelve individuals. I am interested in seeing if there is a core group at UUFT who would like to participate in a memoir writing endeavor. You do not need an advanced degree in English, journalism or creative writing — all who want to document and share their life stories in an informal setting are welcome. I envision the group meeting once or twice a month and the day/time of the sessions would be negotiated by those involved. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Phil Roudebush at 478-9019 or philroudebush@gmail.com.

Blood Pressure Check

I would happily check anyone's BP at any time at UUFT. The cuff and stethoscope are handy, it only takes a minute, and I like to help folks monitor their health. Linda Lucero



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Topeka Board Meeting December 21, 2011

Present: David Schaeffer, Shannon Roy, Sylvia Tuchscherer, Phil Roudebush, Rob Koch, Linda Williams, Jean Ryan, Lisa Schwartz, Shawna Foster, Dara Montclare

Meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm by David Schaeffer. Shannon Roy was appointed as process observer. The Chalice was lit with a reading from Lisa Schwartz about the shortest day of the year.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved as distributed.

Consent Agenda: Attendance, utility, minister and DLRE reports were distributed prior to the meeting. Addendum to minister's report – Lisa will be absent from the pulpit on 05 February and 18 March 2012 as part of our support of another UU congregation with a minister on sabbatical leave.

Old Business

Approval of Minutes - November regular Board meeting minutes, November special Board

meeting minutes and December Annual Meeting minutes were submitted in written form. **Decision: Minutes of all three meetings were approved.**

Sunday Closing Status – New building closing schedule for Board members and the closing check-list were published.

Prairie Star District (PSD) Dues – In regard to PSD dues, \$4232 has been paid in PSD fiscal year 2010-2011 and \$918 in PSD fiscal year 2011-2012. In regard to UUA dues, a total of \$2755 has been paid this year split between two fiscal years. Only token amounts were budgeted for PSD and UUA dues in 2012. **Decision: Because of concerns about shortfalls in 2011 revenue, further PSD and UUA dues will not be paid in 2011. This overturns the original PSD dues decision from the September Board meeting.**

Minister's Report – Lisa shared thoughts on where we are as an organization — somewhere between a pastoral-sized and program-sized congregation — and the inherent tensions it produces. Discussion ensued. **Action item: Encourage the committee chairs to meet under the guidance of the President-Elect to discuss these issues. Action item: Discuss the Sunday Forum program at the January Board meeting.**

New Business

Regional Governance – Phil Roudebush provided information about the proposal to move toward regional governance, which would impact the Prairie Star District and Fellowship. Next steps for UUFT would include: Board will monitor the PSD website and newsletter for additional information on regional governance; begin identifying members to attend the annual PSD business meetings in April 2012 and April 2013; determine how to best communicate these changes to the congregation; and communicate to interested parties the potential impact of regional governance on Camp Unistar.

Archive Policy – Phil Roudebush discussed a draft of an Archive Policy. **Action item: Board members were asked to provide feedback to Phil about changes to the draft policy. Further discussion on the policy will occur at the January Board meeting.**

Treasurer's Report - Sylvia Tuchscherer submitted a treasurer's report in written format and discussed two items from the Endowment Committee that needed Board approval. **Decision: Approved the Endowment**

Committee recommendation that \$17,971.22 be transferred from the Social Justice Committee money market fund to the Social Justice Endowment Fund. **Decision:** Approved the Endowment Committee recommendation that \$10,000 of Social Justice Endowment funds be used for a \$5,000 donation to Harvesters and \$5,000 for scholarships to the 2012 Justice General Assembly. Sylvia also discussed concerns about funding of the general account because of possible shortfalls in 2011 pledges. **Action item:** Ask the Finance Committee to develop clear policies for use of excess funds or addressing income shortfalls at the end of the fiscal year. **Action item:** At the January Board meeting, the Treasurer will provide a 2011 budget summary with the intent of making appropriate adjustments to the general operating account.

Process Check: Shannon provided feedback to the Board on meeting process issues.

Executive Committee – **Decision:** Agreed to begin an executive session of the Executive Committee to discuss a personnel issue.

Adjournment: Meeting of the Board adjourned at 8:12pm.

Next Regular Board Meeting – January 18th, 6:30pm

Respectfully submitted,
Phil Roudebush, Secretary

FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 5** FAIR TRADE COFFEE, TEA, AND CHOCOLATE SALES, 10 A.M. – 12:30 P.M., GATHERING SPACE
 - 11** STUFF SNACKPAKS, 9 – NOON, HARVESTERS
 - 21** PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING, 6:30 P.M., EMERSON ROOM
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Send articles for the UUFT Beacon to newsletter@uuft.org . Deadline is the 20th of each month.

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