

Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign

Uniter

Fall 2018 Issue

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Fall 2018 Issue

The Meaning of Sabbath

Rev. Florence Caplow, Minister

“There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence to which the idealist most easily succumbs: activism and overwork. The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, of its innate violence. To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to violence. The frenzy of our activism neutralizes our work for peace. It destroys our own inner capacity for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of our own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful.” (Thomas Merton, 1966)

When I was a kid in the 1970s, I heard lots of talk about how the world seemed to be speeding up. Now I hear less about it, but I wonder if this is because we have now reached terminal velocity. It has become a given that we are all in a constant state of rushing around, the new normal. Even retired people are busy. How often do you hear, from a retired person, “I’m busier now than when I was working”? Just surviving financially occupies more and more time for many. Children are highly scheduled and organized. An astonishingly large percentage of American families don’t even sit down for dinner together any more.

In contrast, in the small village on the Washington coast where I spend part of each summer, I have watched kids grow up in the “old” way. My neighbor’s children, members of the Shoalwater Tribe, came home from school, played with their pets, played music, played on the beach, and – gasp! – read books. Their mother is a sea glass jeweler who works at home, choosing simplicity over fame or fortune, (although her jewelry has turned up on a few Los Angeles models!).

Those children are now in high school and college. The older one earned an Associates degree from the local community college while still in high school, and she will finish college at 20. But they are still unhurried and at ease. Time moves in a different way there, on that edge of the continent, far from cities and highways.

My own father wrote some twenty books while teaching at major universities.



Rev. Florence Caplow

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Special points of interest:

- Rev. Florence Installation is November 10th!
- RJI has a new name, read more on page 8-9.

But he never, ever seemed busy or harried. In fact, his life was full of play, enjoyment, talk and laughter. Frankly, I don't know how he did it, and now that he's gone, I can't ask him.

I cringe when I hear people describe me as "the busy minister", even when it is accurate. When I was considering training for the ministry, this is what worried me the most. Every minister I knew seemed to work all the time, with little time for the spiritual renewal which seems, to me, to be the wellspring and requirement of ministry.



My Zen teacher once told me, "The greatest gift you can give another person is the quality of your heart and mind." But what kind of quality of heart and mind do we express when we are at terminal velocity? What kind of world do we create when we are too busy to make food, so we buy take-out; when we are too busy to walk, so we drive?

This is where church comes in. "Sabbath" come from the Hebrew word, "to rest." I want Sundays to be a day of renewal, rest, and sustenance for those who come through our doors. I want our Sanctuary to really be a sanctuary: a place of rest, quiet, awe, tears or laughter, encouragement, love.

And I am committed to a life of sabbath myself, so that I can meet you from a place of depth and calm. I hope that I can find sabbath – even a moment of listening to birdsong – every day, and commit to longer times of sabbath and retreat as part of my year with you. That is my own exploration and journey in ministry.

Sometimes, as Unitarian Universalists, with our strong callings to serve and engage in the world, we can lose sight of this side of what we need. It is as if we think we can live by only breathing out –giving and serving, and we forget that we also need to breath in—stop and rest. The breath needs to include both breathing in and breathing out. Especially if our lives involve helping others, or righting wrongs, we must have ways of resting and renewing ourselves for the long journey.

How is this for you? Do you have places of rest and renewal in your life?

**Mark Your Calendars: Installation/Celebration of Shared Ministry with Rev. Caplow!
Saturday, November 10, 2018 11:00 am**

It is traditional to have an "Installation" of a called minister to a UU church. The last Installation here was for the Gehrmanns, more than 20 years ago. This celebration and affirmation of ministry together is a grand event, with many visiting ministers, dignitaries, great music, and a reception afterward. The Gerhmanns will be visiting and speaking as part of the event, along with other UU ministers from around the country. We hope that all members and friends of the church can attend.

Mark your calendars, and watch for an electronic invitation from "Evite" in the next week or so. It will be important to RSVP so we have an accurate count for the ceremony and the reception. If you would like to volunteer to help with planning, or on the day of the event, please contact

Kelly Halcom at kellyhalcom@comcast.net.

Words from Your Board Chair

Jenny Hunt



Jenny Hunt
Board of Trustees
Chair 2018-2019

2018-2019

Congregation Goals

- **Congregational Goal #1:** Become a more compassionate, inclusive, diverse and justice oriented congregation.
- **Congregational Goal #2:** Support and grow a vibrant Religious Education Program for children and adults.
- **Congregational Goal #3:** Create a congregational culture that fosters involvement, participation, and leadership. These goals will guide the development of the board goals, Florence's ministerial goals, and staff goals.

Here we are at the beginning of another church year. Welcome back from your travels and summer activities. The board has been busy behind the scenes all summer to prepare for a very exciting and full year ahead. Since we have so many new members and friends, let me make you aware (or remind you if you are a long-term member) that your board of trustees meets twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month at 7:00 in Classroom 1 downstairs. The 2nd Tuesday is the business meeting where we take action on necessary items. This is the only meeting where votes can be taken on any items you bring before the board. The 4th Tuesday is our study session where discussions take place that require more in depth conversations. All of our meetings are open meetings, meaning that anyone is welcome to attend, observe and ask questions.

In June we held our annual board retreat. We spent a very full day planning for the coming year, trying to prioritize items, setting congregational goals, discussing what we wanted Florence's focus points to be for the year, and strategic visioning on moving forward. The congregational goals for the year built off of last year's goals.

- **Congregational Goal #1:** Become a more compassionate, inclusive, diverse and justice oriented congregation.
- **Congregational Goal #2:** Support and grow a vibrant Religious Education Program for children and adults.
- **Congregational Goal #3:** Create a congregational culture that fosters involvement, participation, and leadership. These goals will guide the development of the board goals, Florence's ministerial goals, and staff goals.

In association with the two year Religious Education revisioning process that Michele Grove own send will be guiding us through, the board is initiating a strategic visioning process that will eventually guide us in the subsequent 3-5 year period. At this time we are suspecting that this process will last somewhere between 12 and 24 months. The previous strategic plan ended in May 2018. Due to the ministerial interim period a strategic plan group was not formed until we had a new settled minister. As a congregation we accomplished much of what was on the previous plan. The new group will determine whether any of the unfinished pieces still apply to where we find ourselves now. As we move forward, the congregation will be fully involved in the process through a variety of different activities to determine who we are, what do we want to do moving forward, and how do we want to be in our congregational community and our community at large. Stay tuned.

So, we move into year two of our time with Florence. If the first year was any

indication, we are in for a continued treat as she guides us individual and collectively. She has a variety of Sunday services awaiting us, along with new adult Religious Education offerings. She has worked with Sherry Bohlen, our Membership Coordinator, to create and kick off our new covenant groups that you have already heard about. She has returned from her summer vacation and study leave re-freshed, renewed, and re-energized to offer us, as she puts it “my best self”. I am grateful for all that Florence does to support our staff, our church leadership, and of course our entire congregation. That is a big job, and she accomplishes it well and with grace. I am so looking forward to all that I believe we can accomplish together.

I am so honored to be the chair of your Board of Trustees. Onward.

The Congregation is the Curriculum

Michele Townsend Grove, Interim Director of Religious Education

Thank you, Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign (UUCUC) for a warm welcome. Since I began as the interim director of religious education, I have talked with amazing staff, members and friends in this congregation and have heard many great stories. I look forward to our time together.

August and September are always a bit chaotic as we start the religious education Sunday morning program. This is particularly true when your religious educator is new to the congregation. Balancing the development and coordination work of religious education with learning about the congregation is a daunting task. And to make matters more complex, I am an INTERIM religious educator. This means that I will be with this congregation for two years working with everyone in the congregation to understand the congregation’s current religious education identity and dream of a vital religious education future.

I am a firm believer that religious education is not a program sequestered to the basement of the church. Religious education is enmeshed in every gathering of the UUCUC community. A visitor will find religious education in a class. They will also find it in worship, in a committee meeting, at choir practice, and while talking to others during Sunday fellowship hour. In this, religious education is a tool and a core value of our community. This means that each of us comes to this community as a learner and teacher. During the next two years, I hope you will join us as we tell stories about this congregation’s religious education journey. I also hope you will join us to create a religious education future that matches the core values of this congregation. An exciting and effective vision will take many hands to create. It is my hope that you will be apart. I look forward to working with you.



Michele Townsend Grove
Interim Director of
Religious Education

**“One is wise to
cultivate the tree
that bears fruit in
our soul.**

**- Henry David
Thoreau**

Welcoming Congregation Renewal



“The first issue that struck us was that many people don’t know what being a “Welcoming Congregation” means.



It has been just under 20 years since our church completed the process to become a “Welcoming Congregation.” What does that mean?

It means we went through an intentional period of education, self-examination, and effort to make our church accepting and supporting of LGBTQ people and their families. The process resulted in a resolution passed by our church in our annual meeting in May, 1999. The Unitarian Universalist Association awarded us the “Welcoming Congregation” designation.

In the years since we passed that resolution, we have been involved in many activities to honor this commitment: supporting marriage equality legislation, marching in community events to support LGBTQ issues, holding workshops on pronoun use and gender identity, visibly displaying rainbow flags, creating gender neutral bathrooms, and offering church services on LGBTQ themes, to name a few. Our ministers have celebrated same sex marriages and honored same sex families.

We concluded that our long history of support had become somewhat haphazard and started a formal review of our church last winter to document what had been done and what we think should be done to renew and strengthen our Welcoming Congregation designation.

The first issue that struck us was that many people don’t know what being a “Welcoming Congregation” means. While we call our church radically inclusive, the term “Welcoming Congregation” is more specific to our invitation to LGBTQ individuals. We hope to make this designation easier to remember through several actions in the e-Uniter and Sunday Orders of Service.

We are proposing some educational events (on trans issues and non-binary gender identity) and Sunday service topics on these issues. We also plan to strengthen our ties to community groups such as the UP Center, the University of Illinois LGBT Resource Center, and Parkland PRIDE.

We are organizing a Welcoming Congregation steering committee affiliated with the Social Action Committee that will more regularly promote LGBTQ issues in our church and make sure we live up to the Welcoming Congregation designation we have worked so hard to earn. Would you like to join our group? Whether you identify as LGBTQ or straight, your participation is welcome. Contact Jim Hannum (jwhannum@gmail.com), Jerry Carden (jcarden@illinois.edu), or Renée Trilling (renee.trilling@gmail.com) for more information.

A Message from Care Core. Many of us have been impacted, one way or another, by suicide. Every day approximately 123 people die by suicide in the U.S., and for every completed suicide, there are 25 attempts (afsp.org). Suicide, the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S., remains a taboo topic in our culture, carrying a stigma that often silences us, keeping us from sharing our stories.

This September, Care Core would like to share resources that present current research on the risk factors for suicide, review treatment recommendations, and share stories of support and hope for those affected by suicide. If you have any questions about the resources listed below, please contact Marilyn Ryan at marilyn.ryan@email.com.

Caring Congregation

At UUCUC, we strive to be a Caring Congregation by supporting each other and celebrating life's ups and downs together. When you join UUCUC you are added to the "Caring Congregation" list serve and will receive monthly emails alerting you to needs in our congregation (e.g. rides to medical appointments, meals for a family with a new baby, a visit to a member in a nursing home, assistance with a memorial reception).

Through these emails you'll learn of members celebrating anniversaries, the birth of a child, the loss of a loved one, and other significant milestones that merit expressions of celebration or support. "Care Core" is the coordinating committee that manages the "Caring Congregation" google group and works closely with the Reverend Florence Caplow to identify needs in the congregation. We on the Care Core Committee encourage all attending UUCUC to let us know when you are needing support or are celebrating a major life event. When appropriate we will let the Caring Congregation know specific ways they can assist you and your family through a difficult time.

When should you call Care Core? When there are joys, concerns and other life issues to share, when dealing with health issues, when a professional referral is needed. Ways you can help us be a Caring Congregation: email, send a card or call a friend or new member, introduce yourself to a new person at Fellowship Hour, bring a meal to folks who are dealing with challenging life issues, bring flowers, provide a ride to church or a medical appointment, offer child care or yard work, visit someone who is homebound or in a nursing home. The possibilities are endless. If you are not a member but would like to be part of this important aspect of congregation life, please email: cindyloui83@gmail.com.

Information and Resources

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: afsp.org

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: suicidepreventionlifeline.org

NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness: nami.org

An Opportunity to Get Involved

Join the "Out of the Darkness" Community Walk on Saturday, September 22 at Crystal Lake Park. More info is available at www.afsp.org/ChampaignUrbana.

Support for Those Who Have Lost a Loved One to Suicide

(commonly referred to as "survivors of suicide")

Attend the "International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day" Program on Saturday, November 17, 2018, at Parkland College. More information is available at afsp.org.

Attend the monthly support group for survivors of suicide loss. For more info, contact Erin Brodbeck, LCSW, at (217) 442-5203.

Crisis Hotlines

If you or someone you know is currently in an emergency, call 911 immediately.

If you are in crisis or are experiencing difficult or suicidal thoughts, call the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or the local crisis hotline in Champaign-Urbana at (217) 359-4141.

**“Be the
CHANGE you
wish to see in
THE WORLD”
-Mahatma
Gandhi**

Two Year Initiative Inspires Transformation of Social Action Committee

The first step in the Church’s two-year initiative to create a culture of community engagement is focused on the Social Action committee itself. The goal is to transform the committee into an engine for community engagement. Our vision is that the Social Action Committee amplifies the reach of all church members and allies to allow them to organize actions in support of causes they feel passionate about. It starts when you bring your idea for an event, action, or gathering to the *Pitch It* portion of our monthly meeting. You will have two exciting minutes to share your enthusiasm for this project and find other members of the congregation, allies and community who want to join you in organizing the event.

To move your project forward, the Social Action Committee offers a veritable Smörgåsbord of tools and processes to make your event run smoothly and successfully. Some of the tools we are working on:

- Curated mailing lists to help you get attendance for your event
- Funding from the Social Action Committee budget
- Volunteers to post flyers around town
- Getting your event on the church calendar and e-news
- Selling tickets
- Hospitality and childcare for the day of your event

You bring the idea and the passion, and we provide the tools. We won’t let you fail! Would you like to take part in an event or an action, but don’t know which one to support? Come to a *Pitch It* session and see if you can find another member of the church who is launching an event that lights your passion.

Want to lend a hand with the two-year initiative and help foster a culture of community engagement in the church? We need assistance in developing and staffing these processes. We will help you find something that fits into your schedule and puts your unique skills to work.

Greetings from the Racial Justice Project! (Formerly, the Racial Justice Initiative)



In May 2016, the congregation chose the Racial Justice Initiative (RJI) as its two-year initiative. Over the past two years, RJI has hosted film screenings, workshops, educational trainings, and church services. Our congregation's focus on educating ourselves about racial issues and the need to combat white supremacy in our society led to the vote this May to hang the Black Lives Matter banner outside church.

Now, the decision has been made to extend our congregation's racial jus-

tice work by forming a permanent working committee. Thus, RJI is now the Racial Justice Project (RJP)! We are excited to continue our educational and advocacy work:

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- RJP will continue to provide workshops, movie screenings, and other educational opportunities to our church members and friends from the community. In partnership with Interim Director of Religious Education, Michele Grove, we have begun to consider how these activities can be reframed as part of our congregation's religious education. We also hope to provide programming for children and families, in addition to adult education.
- RJP will strive to form more and deeper connections with other organizations in Champaign County who are working on behalf of racial justice in our community.
- Through participation in community events, RJP has begun to increase UUCUC's visibility around issues of race and racial justice.
- RJP will continue to partner with Reverend Florence on church services that explore race and racial justice.
- RJP will lead the congregation in reflecting critically on the procedures, documents, and practices within our congregation that might deter people of color from becoming more fully a part of our community.

The members of the RJP committee look forward to helping the congregation maintain racial justice education and advocacy as a sustained, central part of our church. The RJP committee meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month from 6:30–8 pm, and new members with interest in racial justice work are always welcome. If you have questions or suggestions for RJP, please contact the committee co-chairs: Deanna Hence (deahence@gmail.com) and Karla Peterson (karla.peterson129@gmail.com).

Membership Matters: Coming to Terms with the “G” Word

Sherry Bohlen, Membership Coordinator

Yes, our church community is **G**rowing. People outside our church are looking at the values, principles and commitment to action of Unitarian Universalism and are sensing that what we have to offer is meaningful in their personal lives and speaks to their passion to create a world that reflects the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism.

But **G**rowth within our church community can inspire great excitement from some while it evokes fear from others. The excitement stems from opportunities offered by new people, fresh ideas and renewed energy. The fear comes from concern that we won't be able to assimilate, integrate and get to know so many new people and that we'll lose our sense of community.

The “new people, fresh ideas and renewed energy” speak for themselves. My hope is that any fear may be addressed by the sense of intimacy, connection and community being developed by Small Group Ministry such as the Soul Matters Covenant Groups that will begin meetings in our church community in mid-September. (Sixty-eight members and friends have signed up for the Fall sessions of our newly formed Covenant Groups. If you missed the Fall sign-up, watch for the next opportunity which will be after the first of the year.)



Sherry Bohlen
Membership
Coordinator

It's a given that our church community is not interested in **G**rowth simply for the sake of **G**rowth, but I hope that we're all interested in addressing the social isolation and rootlessness that is characteristic of modern life, in ministering to the hurts and the hopes of those in our community, in radically defining our community beyond our membership borders, seeking to bring other people who need our support into the life of our church community and into our personal lives, and nurturing deepening relationships between members as we share our lives and our faith together. (Adapted from the words and vision of Glenn A Turner -- Meadville Lombard)

As we do the work to fulfill this mission, others will experience our values, principles and commitment to action. They will recognize the value of the work and will want to join us. And we will naturally **G**row.

May we come to terms with "**G**rowth", release all fear and celebrate the intimacy, connection and community created by our Small Group Ministry. We're UU's. We can do this!

Worship Committee and Summer Services

Sam Beshers, Worship Committee Chair

This year, for the first time, the Worship Committee has taken on the responsibility for summer services, those from the last week in June until the last week in August when we begin again with the water and stone ingathering service. We thank Beth Cobb, who has now stepped down to be a private citizen, for her skillful and thoughtful work on summer services over many years.

Why is there a Worship Committee anyway? Because the minister can't do it all. The minister can prepare and lead an excellent worship service, but not every week, or she will get burned out. We ask a lot of our ministers and other worship leaders: services that explore, inform, challenge and inspire. Those services don't grow on trees and they don't come from Amazon - they take time and thought and preparation. The current standard for UU ministers is approximately thirty sermons per year, leaving about one service a month during the regular year and nine or ten services during the summer. The Worship Committee either creates services or finds (begs, cajoles, flatters) others to lead them. We at UUCUC are fortunate to have a dedicated and creative committee, a large and growing list of Worship Associates who lead some or all of the service elements, and a large and growing group of people who are willing to write or share their parts in a sermon or reflection. This summer's services have featured over fifteen lay persons giving sermons or reflections, several of them for the first time.

We actually had a surplus of ideas, leaving some to be developed during the

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coming year, or even the following year. This is a wonderful thing, because we probably won't be scrambling in the depths of February. More importantly, this allows us to think bigger and to be a little more ambitious.

What goes into a service? There are the standard elements: hymns, offertory, Joys and Sorrows etc. There are usually some readings and some original writings, whether a full length sermon or a shorter piece. There is music. There could be poetry, acting, video and we can have guest speakers.

Do you have an idea, or a skill, or a part you would like to play? If so, we would love to hear from you. We are particularly interested in more involvement from new members, older members, children and youth, teachers, scientists, artists, business people, activists, lawyers, witches, computer jocks, real jocks, single moms, double moms, parents, grandparents, and people born in months ending in "ember" or "uary".

Hospitality Happenings

Retiring, Continuing, and New Hospitality Team Leaders

Thanks to the following Hospitality Team Leaders who have stepped down from two years of service: Jennifer Greene, Libby Tyler, Cindy Ingold, Sandy Hannum, Karen Folk and Jenny Hunt. Thanks to the following Team Leaders who are continuing in their roles: Jenna Zeidler, AJ Herzog, Anne Sharpe, Katie Madigan, Tamara Ducey and Trisha Locke. Thanks to the following new Team Leaders this year: Pam Richart, Jennifer Livingston, Wendy Graves, Marcy Joncich, Priscilla Kron and Kathy Robinson.

Be the Face of Sunday Morning: Join a Hospitality Team

Hospitality Teams are in charge of Sunday morning hospitality (e.g. bell ringing, welcoming, ushering, providing decorations and refreshments) for two months during the year. Hospitality Teams are a great way to meet people and serve our congregation in a fun and important way. All members and friends are encouraged to join a Hospitality Team. Each Team has 30-40 members so you do not need to help on every Sunday assigned to your Team. Stop by the Hub table on Sunday mornings to sign up for a Hospitality Team (or to find out if you are already assigned to a Team). Questions? Contact Peggy Patten, mspeggypatten@gmail.com

Book and Magazine Exchanges Returns

The Book and Magazine Exchanges return on September 16 and will take place on the third Sunday of most months throughout the church year. On Book and Magazine Exchange Sundays you are invited to bring in a *small amount of books and/or magazines to exchange in Fellowship Hall after Sunday services. Books and magazines should be in good condition and can be for adults or children. Remaining magazines will be recycled. Remaining books will be donated to UC Books to Prisoners or the Urbana Library. Questions? Talk to Kristi Mercer.*

Chime Reminder on Sunday Mornings

A chime will sound at 10:10 in Fellowship Hall and the foyer on Sunday mornings to let you know the worship service is about to begin.

Unitarian Universalist Church
of Urbana-Champaign

309 West Green Street
Urbana, Illinois 61801
Phone: (217) 384-8862
Questions: info@uucuc.org

Church Office Hours: 9:00 am - 2:00 pm



A “Welcoming Congregation” for the
LGBTQIA+ Community

Visit Us on the web:

uucuc.org

The Mission of UUCUC

Build Community.

Seek Inspiration.

Promote Justice.

Fine Peace.

**We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association,
covenant to affirm and promote:**

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Our Worship

During the church year, we meet to worship at 10:15 am. Religious education classes for children and youth, as well as childcare for infants and toddlers, are available during this service. In June, July, and August, we gather together to worship on Sunday mornings in Fellowship Hall. Childcare and one multi-graded elementary class are available in the summer. Summer services are lay-led, and we also have intergenerational services at holidays and other times during the year.

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