



Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign

Uniter

Winter 2018-2019 Issue

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SEEKING INSPIRATION

BUILDING COMMUNITY

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SHARED MINISTRY

COVENANT

ILLINOIS

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RAINBOW

VOLUNTEERS

SERMON



Winter 2018-2019 Issue

Season of Gratitude

Rev. Florence Caplow, Minister

As I write this, it is the night before Thanksgiving. As problematic as Thanksgiving is from what is known about American history, it is still a time each year when my mind and heart turns to gratitude. And I have so much to be grateful for this Thanksgiving.

On November 10th about 300 of us celebrated our shared ministry, in a grand ceremony the likes of which has not taken place here for more than two decades. This ceremony of installation only happens when a new settled minister is called by a congregation, and it is an expression of mutual commitment and covenant between a minister and congregation.

Although the vote by the congregation to call me here was in May of 2017, it is not uncommon to wait a year or more for the ceremony, since there is so much to do in the first year of a new ministry. The ceremony is usually called an "Installation" but since that word brings to mind, at least for me, either new appliances or new software ("Yes, ladies and gentlemen, here is Version 2.0, fresh from the factory"), I told the planning team I preferred "Celebration of Shared Ministry." We compromised by using both names: "Installation and Celebration of Shared Ministry"!

I feel more than gratitude when I think of this celebration: I feel awe. It took so much energy by so many people – so many of *you* – to create the event and to take care of our visiting ministers. It was not only about shared ministry; it was a genuine expression of shared ministry. There were 64 names on the volunteer list in the program (I just counted them), and 12 people on the planning team, and I know there were many other people who contributed who were not named. There were more than 40 people from the congregation with some role in the ceremony: choir members, band members, singers, readers, and those offering words in the sermon. If you had some role or helped in any way, please know that my heart is full of gratitude for you. It truly took a small village – probably 150 people – to celebrate our shared ministry.

I was moved nearly to tears by the ceremony. As each person's words, ages 9



Rev. Florence Caplow
Minister

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Special points of interest:

- Photos from the Celebration of Ministry and Installation of Rev. Caplow!
- Property Updates!

to 90, filled the Sanctuary, it was like a great, swelling symphony, each instrument singing a dream of justice, inclusion, and diversity. For a minister, to know that there is a shared dream with the people of one's congregation is extraordinarily supportive and inspirational. If we truly share that dream, we can move mountains, and we can create a beacon of powerful light in these dark, hard times. I for one am encouraged and buoyed by what I heard that day. I hope you were too, if you were there.

Our member Shamim Nanozi, a refugee from Uganda, put this so well, in her part of the sermon: *My dream for this congregation is to be ministers of pure love by embracing everyone from all walks of life...I want us to be soul touchers and vessels of pure compassion mending the broken hearted and giving them a hope and a reason to live.*

This is a big dream. And I believe we can do it, we can be it. Every time I put on my new stole, created by Heidi Richter and Cathy Cunningham and given by the congregation, images of prairie fire and life-giving water, I will be reminded of your great vision. May that vision become reality in the coming years.

If you would like to watch the installation, you can view it [here](#) (thanks to the efforts of Chris Hannauer and others). The ceremony itself starts about 10 minutes after the beginning of the video. Here are the words of the [Charge to the Congregation](#), spoken by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones.

If you would like to help me put together a book of the installation for our church archives, please let me know.

Again, countless thanks to all.

"At the rood of shared ministry is the belief that all people, not just clergy, are called to share their gifts and service one another in religious community."

(Barbara Child)



Rev. Florence Caplow and Jenny Hunt during the Act of Installation.



Shamim Nanozi sharing her dream for this congregation.



Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones delivering her words of the Charge to the Congregation.



Congregation during the celebration.



Rev. Florence Caplow in her new stole, a gift from the congregation.



UU Band performing "Room at the Table".



The Ministerial Search Committee reciting the Unison Chalice Lighting.



Jenny Hunt with the congregational gift (blue bowl for Water Service) from Rev. Caplow.

Board of Trustees Greetings

Jenny Hunt, Chair of Board of Trustees



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.

Greetings to all from the Board of Trustees. Happy Holidays for whatever traditions you may follow. Beginning on November 1st and lasting through January 15th there are 29 holidays celebrated by 7 of the world's major religions. May whatever you celebrate may this season bring you a sense of peace and renewal.

As you may have seen or felt, our congregation is going through a significant size increase over the last couple of years. In church growth literature, this means we must now begin to think in terms of a cultural shift for our congregation, not just the awareness that we are getting bigger. For many years we found ourselves in what is known as a pastoral size church, with membership up to about 150. We now find ourselves with over 300 members which places us in what is known as a program size church. What does this mean for us here at UUCUC? In the pastoral size church, the minister is the center of almost all activities. Attendees come to the church because of a connection with the minister or the Sunday services. This is still very true with Rev. Florence Caplow becoming formally installed as our settled minister on November 10. There is a vitality to our Sunday morning offerings that continue to draw people to us.

The program size church is identified by the programs. Attendees and ultimately members are drawn to the church because of the program offerings and the focus of the programs that they can identify with. We are also experiencing this with our social justice programs and presence in the community, our Welcoming Congregation status identifying us as a safe and welcoming place for our LGBTQ neighbors, our growing religious education program attracting more young families into our community. People in the community know who we are and know that no matter what is going on, we show up. With the increase in size and demand, it is obvious that Rev. Florence cannot possibly meet all of the demands that folks may be accustomed to in the old pastoral size model. Committees and groups are being called on to take responsibility for more of some of these activities. We have an unbelievable Care Core committee that responds so quickly to the needs within the congregation. We now have a worship associate program that involves more people in the development and participation in services. We have a Repair Core group that is ready and willing to lend a hand to members and friends when called upon for a wide range of repair activities. We are taking care of each other, not just relying on Florence to take care of us.

This also means that the church leadership is looking at new and different structures and ways of organizing our committees to respond effectively to the needs of our congregation, our mission, and our vision. So you will begin to see changes in how property issues are handled. Last year our budget planning group began a new way of looking at our budget, as a mission based budget, in other words putting our money where our words are. This led to substantial increases in allowances for our social justice and racial justice groups. This also led to an increase in our religious education budget following our voices to grow a vibrant religious education program. This mission based budgeting process is being followed again this year. This size shift has also led to many more small group involvement opportunities such as our covenant groups that have been meeting this fall. These small groups allow us to connect with each other in new and different ways to make sure that we are still building together as a community.

So as we move through the holidays and into 2019, please remember that no matter how we grow, we are still a faith community and family. That being said, please consider what opportunities exist here within our beloved community that you could become a part of, what committees match your interests and talents, what groups you could offer your love and support to. Moving into this program size church, we need you. We need your energy and enthusiasm for the issues that you care about so that we can continue to be and even grow more into being the beacon of light in our community that we were charged with in the charge to the congregation in Rev. Florence's installation.

Thank you all for what you bring to our church family, to our beloved community here at UUCUC, with your presence that lifts us up each time we are together. May we move into 2019 with a sense of adventure in being the best that we can possible be.



Our congregation during the Celebration of Ministry and Installation of Rev. Caplow.

Michele Townsend Grove, Interim Director of Religious Education

A Church Fairytale

Once upon a time in a land far, far away lived a church with an upstairs and a downstairs. Every Sunday, the people would come to church and walk through the front door together. Some of the people would go upstairs and some would go downstairs. The people who went upstairs worshipped together in a way that felt comfortable. The people who went downstairs worshipped differently than those who went upstairs but it was in a manner that felt comfortable. Occasionally, the two communities would meet for a special occasion. But rarely did the two communities come together for a long period of time and everyone seemed to be content in their place of worship.

As time went by, more people came to worship at this church. It grew and grew and grew! Soon, the upstairs church was so full that there were not many empty seats left for new people. The upstairs community asked, "what can we do?" Should we split our upstairs worshipping community into two so that there is more room for everyone? It seemed like a workable solution, but it made a lot of people sad because no one wanted to be separated from those in their worshipping community. Many people exclaimed, "We will miss each other if we cannot worship together!"

And yet, only a few people realized that there were already two, separate worshipping communities: one worships upstairs, and one worships downstairs. What does this say about how we value the whole community?

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

**- Henry David
Thoreau**

I love interim religious education because interim time is a time of reflection. I love to hear the stories people tell about religious education and congregational life. I hear joy and struggle. I hear pride and grief. I hear great stories of the past and I hear dreams of the future. Each story paints a picture of this community. The story of the upstairs church and downstairs church is one of this congregation's many stories. It is not the only story but it one that is deeply ingrained in this congregation's identity.

During this interim time, the congregation can create new ways of being a Unitarian Universalist presence in this community and world. This conversation is only honest if the congregation is also honest about who you are right now. This is a congregation full of generosity, spirit and love! An honest look at our current identity will show goodness and challenge. As you own the whole story, who do you want to be in the future and how is everyone included in this vision?

I look forward to walking with you as you discern your vision of the future! I am confident that this congregation will continue to do great things and overcome all the obstacles.



Michele Townsend Grove
Interim Director of
Religious Education

Uncorking Scents

Wendy Graves, Accessibility Task Force

**“Take a walk in
the pines. Stop
and smell the
flowers.”**

The sensory systems of some of us are akin to the proverbial canary in the coal mine. The artificial scents in our household cleaning and personal hygiene products can have devastating effect on many of us – causing itchy eyes, rashes, asthma, headaches and more. And, while some of us “canaries” respond more directly, these artificial scents aren’t good for any of us.

Since beginning our conversation and investigation regarding artificial scents, we have received resounding applause of approval from the community of people who are affected. And, while some others are a bit put-off by our “scent free” project, we hope that everyone will consider that our newly awakened perspective helps to create a healthier environment for us all. A close examination of artificial scents reveals a troubling “soup” of chemicals which most of us would not knowingly apply to our bodies on a daily basis.

But what’s the alternative since delightful scents elicit sensations of comfort, joy and attraction? Perhaps we could simply return to the natural source of the scents we hold dear.

Take a walk in the pines. Stop and smell the flowers. Bake with vanillas, cinnamon and mints. Add rosemary, lavender, and sage to your favorite dishes. Learn to enjoy these natural scents subtly and reflectively.

Let us leave all those hidden, potentially harmful chemicals in their beakers -- just for the health of it!

With a toast to the good sense of natural scents....Happy Holidays and onward to 2019.



Property News

By Jenny Hunt, Chair of Board of Trustees

As we grow as a congregation, we are changing the structure of committees and organizational structure. At the November business meeting of the board it was voted to disband the property committee as it has stood for many years. It has become apparent that the physical needs of our church now demand more than a committee of volunteers can handle. There is a significant time commitment now and the need for time flexibility to meet with contractors for bids on different needs. A Property Advisory Group has been established, much like our Interim Religious Education Advisory Group, to envision what structure and organization will serve us best as we move forward. We are delighted to announce that we are in the process of expanding Kate Barton's position of Events Coordinator into Events and Facilities Coordinator. Kate has a background in property management, so this allows her to utilize the full range of her skills for the betterment of our church. One of the things that this will make so much easier is having someone on staff who is available to meet with contractors to get bids and arrange for larger maintenance type needs. The Advisory Group will continue to look at property policy changes and organizational structure over the coming several months. Our many thanks go out to Andy Robinson for picking up the ball following Jerry Carden's long tenure as property chair. We hope that this additional time may allow Andy to help us in the areas of energy efficiency and 'Green' issues, which we know are really his areas of passion. Stay tuned for new developments in the coming months as we continue to grow and expand.

Hospitality Happenings

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.

Chime Reminder on Sunday Mornings

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





Seven Principles. Color me.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana-Champaign

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



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.

Our Staff

Rev. Florence Caplow

Minister

minister@uucuc.org

Michele Townsend Grove

Interim Director of Religious Education

re-director@uucuc.org

Matt Sheppard

Music Director

music-director@uucuc.org

Rosalyn Maziarka

Office Administrator

admin@uucuc.org

Sherry Bohlen

Membership Coordinator

membershipcoordinator@uucuc.org

Kate Barton

Events Coordinator

events@uucuc.org

Emily McKown

Youth Coordinator

youthcoordinator@uucuc.org

Shornor Vineyard

Custodian

buildingcare@uucuc.org

Matthew Gladden

Accompanist

accompanist@uucuc.org

Stephanie Cobb

Sunday Kitchen Helper

Kelsey Libert

Childcare Coordinator

childcare@uucuc.org