

# The Beacon MONTHLY



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Montgomery Newsletter

2810 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery AL 36109-3402

Rev. Lynn Hopkins, Minister

February 2016

## Sunday Service

### **February 7: God as Creativity**

Theologian Gordon Kaufman suggested that the notion of God as person is obsolete in post-modern reality and, without abandoning Christianity, offered a very different way of imagining “God the Father.”

### **February 14: God as Love**

One of the first definitions of God that ever really made sense to me was, “the power of love in action.” It’s Valentine’s Day, but of course that’s not the kind of love we mean.

### **February 21: God as Music**

A favorite metaphor of mine for describing the vastness, variety and elusiveness of the god-idea was offered by a brilliant Hindu teacher. Of anything in our lived experience, music comes closest as model for God.

### **February 28: God as Divine Feminine with Mandy Goheen**

Wisdom, Sophia and Gaia will take us on a journey of exploring process theology. We will use Carol Christ, Rosemary Radford Ruether, and William Hartshorne as our guides for understanding the role that God’s creative femininity plays in co-creation.

## Wednesday Service

<p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday</b></p> <p>First Wednesday Forum: In humanist tradition, Forum features a presentation from a local speaker on topic of broad community interest.</p>	<p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday</b></p> <p>Quaker Reflection and Sharing: A short reading will be used as the opening for those present to share reflections using the Quaker contemplative method.</p>
<p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday</b></p> <p>Vespers Service: This is a brief service of quiet reflection, prayer and meditation. Afterwards, we join for an informal potluck style supper.</p>	<p><b>4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday</b></p> <p>Metaphysical Teachings: Rev. Maureene Bass shares from her training and studies in metaphysics.</p>

### **UUFAMDARCSHE\***

Saturday, March 12, 2016 -- 6:00-8:00 PM

Featuring a sit-down Italian dinner (Meat/Vegetarian/Gluten Free), BYOB

Suggested donation: \$10.00 per person (no donation requested for children/event volunteers)

Families welcome! Bring cash for raffle and tip jar.

Reservations required; reservation deadline March 6.

Further details to be announced at Sunday service on 2/21.

\*AKA the 2016/2017 Membership Drive

## Church Events

Every Monday:

7PM Course in Miracles

Every Tuesday:

6PM Choir

Every Wednesday:

7:15PM Meditation/Discussion group

Every Saturday:

8PM Young People's AA Meeting

Every Sunday:

9AM Quaker Meeting

7PM Real Connections

5 Feb, Friday: Minister's day off

10 Feb, Wednesday: 7PM Finance Committee

11 Feb, Thursday: 8:45AM Building & Grounds

11 Feb, Thursday: 1PM Social Action Committee

11 Feb, Thursday: 6PM Sisterlight

12 Feb, Friday: Minister's Day Off

12 Feb, Friday: 6PM Darwin Day Celebration

13 Feb, Saturday: 1PM UU and You: Orientation and Conversation

18 Feb, Thursday: 6PM Board of Trustees

19 Feb, Friday: Minister's Day Off

20 Feb, Saturday: 2PM Bond-Hopkins Wedding

20 Feb, Saturday: 6PM Young People's Group Conscience Meeting

25 Feb, Thursday: 7PM Book Club

26 Feb, Friday: 6PM Publicity Committee

27 Feb, Saturday: 9AM RE Teacher Training

29 Feb, Monday: Minister's Day Off

UUFM PHONE: 334-279-9517;

EMAIL: [info@uumontgomery.org](mailto:info@uumontgomery.org);

WEB: [www.uumontgomery.org](http://www.uumontgomery.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/57873577026/>

## Our Larger Community

### Family Sunshine Center

It might be surprising to learn that girls and young women ages 16 to 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence. One in three adolescent girls reports being physically, emotionally, verbally or sexually abused by a dating partner. The Family Sunshine Center has a dating abuse prevention curriculum for adolescents, called "Safe Dates," that is making great strides in prevention. According to the American Journal of Public Health, after four years, students who participated in the program reported 56 percent less dating violence than teens who did not participate.

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. If you or someone you know is in an unhealthy relationship, you can contact the Family Sunshine Center at 800-650-6522, National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline at 866-332-9474 or [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org). FSC also can provide a prevention educator to give a presentation on dating violence or healthy relationships.

### Mental Health America

(from Executive Director Brittany K. Wiggins)

Thank you for your congregation's generous donation of toiletry and hygiene items to Mental Health America in Montgomery. These items are always needed and will be much appreciated by our clients. We still face many challenges as we work together to eliminate the stigma that is associated with mental illness, and we are very grateful for our community's support. It takes all of us to make a difference and your generous contributions will assist us as we move ahead toward the goal. The strength of Mental Health America in Montgomery is directly related to friends like you. Thank you for helping us "bring wellness home."

### National Alliance on Mental Illness (STP November 2015)

(from Mary Jo Logan, President of Board of Directors)

What a heartwarming surprise it was to receive your generous donation to NAMI Montgomery. NAMI Montgomery is an all-volunteer organization that advocates for better mental health services in our local area. Your donation will enable us to financially help some individuals or families who are experiencing negative life situations due to the effects of mental illness on family members. This is such a blessing. I applaud your congregation's "Share the Plate" program. It is a wonderful way to make a difference in the greater community. NAMI Montgomery gives presentations about mental illness and its effects on individuals and on their family. If your congregation would like a presentation, just contact me to arrange a date. Once again, the Board of Directory for NAMI Montgomery wants to thank you for your donation.

# Ministerial Musings

By Lynn Hopkins

One of the prerogatives of professional ministry is that you can talk about God without embarrassment. You can wonder aloud, express opinions, make claims, and read or write about God for hours on end, day after day. I realize that this is not something that appeals to everyone, but for me, it was a big plus.

Considering this, and considering that "GOD" is the worship theme for February, I found two major areas of thought kept arising for me as I planned the upcoming services. First, I thought about how loosely I use the word sometimes. When I say, "God willing," I really mean, "if all goes well;" there is no willingness or godness involved. It is just an idiom.

When I say, "Thanks be to God," there is something a little more behind that. I do not mean to thank a particular entity, but I am publishing my gratitude outward. The point is that I am glad for something that is not my own accomplishment. "God" is a stand-in for all that is beyond my control, and it gives me a sense of both celebration and connection. It is in that sense that I receive others saying "God bless you." They are wishing me good things; it doesn't matter whether we agree about the source of good things. The blessing is contained in the warm wish, the generous sentiment that they offer.

If someone were to examine my sermons, we might find that there is great inconsistency, and perhaps even contradiction, in my use of the word "god/God." That presents no problem for me, since there is enormous inconsistency and even contradiction within the canon of Christian scripture with regard to who and what God is.

Only a few of you have talked with me about what, if anything, the word means for you. If you ever feel like it, I hope you will. I positively love such discussions; even when they are difficult, they always generate growth for me. I consider it a great gift when people are willing to open up about this thing that we are trained to keep so private.

The other thing that arose for me again and again is, what is it that you wish you could talk about, without feeling self-conscious or embarrassed. Religious ideas have always captured my imagination, but I wonder whether other people have topics that they wish we could be more candid and open. If you could rewrite the social mores, what would you want freedom to talk about, as freely as we discuss the weather or sports scores? Maybe there is something that you feel like you should understand, but don't understand. Maybe it is something you understand better than everyone around you, but you don't have permission to clue them in. Perhaps you would like to have an opinion or viewpoint on something, but never had the opportunity to talk it out with anyone. Sex? Relationships? Politics? Money? Science? Philosophy? Architecture? Anything. If you could bring up a topic and discuss it freely without any fear for what others might think, what would it be? I'm dying to hear!

## DRE Corner

Our Whole Lives is a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education curriculum for use in both secular settings and faith communities. Our Whole Lives helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. With a holistic approach, Our Whole Lives provides accurate, developmentally appropriate information about a range of topics, including relationships, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual health, and cultural influences on sexuality.

In mid-January, we hosted a regional training for Our Whole Lives, sometimes referred to as OWL. Fourteen participants spent Friday evening, all day Saturday and most of Sunday training to facilitate Our Whole Lives to elementary-aged students. I am thrilled that UUFM now has a wonderful team of facilitators: Xandi Andersen, Loretta Bacon, Roger Burdette, Nick Morgan-Moore and Rhonda Thomason volunteered their time and energy to this amazing program. We are looking forward to offering the first of our OWL programs this spring.

The OWL program has six age groups, kindergarten through first grade, fourth through sixth grade, seventh through ninth, tenth through twelfth, young adult, and adult. This enables the material to be presented in an age-appropriate way. Our team is trained at both the kindergarten through first grade level and the fourth through sixth grade level. Later this year, we hope to host another training for facilitators of the other levels here at UUFM. I would like to have teams of facilitators in all the levels.

Offering the OWL curriculum here at UUFM is a wonderful way for us to reach out into our community. We will have an opportunity to offer a resource to families that is not available at this time in our area. Considering that Montgomery has the highest rates of sexually transmitted diseases in the nation, we need more resources of information like OWL. If you have any questions about the Our Whole Lives program, please do not hesitate to ask. I am excited to start this program here at UUFM and hope you are as well.

## Share the Plate

### February 2016: Alabama Conference of NAACP

The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination. The vision of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to ensure a society in which all individuals have equal rights and there is no racial hatred or racial discrimination.

## Minister and Staff

Minister: Rev. Lynn Hopkins  
RE Director: Courtney McKenny  
Office & Bookkeeping assistant:  
Steve Pearson  
Music Director: Melissa Galanopoulos

## Board of Trustees

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FUUN Team: Terry Woosley  
Building & Grounds: Barbara Witt  
Public Relations: Andre Goheen  
Social Action: Beverly Shaffer  
Bonnie Lynn Mitchell-Green  
Development: VACANT

## Newsletter submission

Have an announcement for the Congregation?

Interested in sharing an opinion?

The Publicity Committee's Newsletter team is always accepting your work. Submissions for the March newsletter must be submitted no later than 26 February, 2016. Submissions can be sent to Andre Goheen at [goheen100@yahoo.com](mailto:goheen100@yahoo.com) and Janice Wood at [irwood.montgomery@gmail.com](mailto:irwood.montgomery@gmail.com)