

# The Beacon MONTHLY



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Montgomery Newsletter

2810 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery AL 36109-3402

Rev. Lynn Hopkins, Minister

March 2016

## Sunday Service

### **March 6:** Peacewalkers

Karen Hunter Watson and Audri Scott Williams share not only their lives with each other. They also share a vision of peace for all the world, and have been actively pursuing this vision for many years together. For more about them and their work, visit [audriscottwilliams.com](http://audriscottwilliams.com)

### **March 13:** Evolution/Revelation

A religion whose tenets contradict the hard facts of science is, at best, an inspirational fairy tale; too often, it has been the justification for some of history's greater horrors. The wonders of evolution tell us as much or more about the larger truths of religion as any book.

### **March 20:** The Space Between the Stars

Just as the science of biology informs and inspires us about deeper and more mysterious truths, so the revelations of modern physics gives us new and exciting (sometimes bewildering) ways of understanding the world we inhabit, and our place in it.

### **March 27:** Easter: Life and Death, Extinction and Resurrection

Framing the story of Easter (and the even more ancient stories on which it was based) in the context of our scientific understanding of life. The realities of mortality do not detract from the resurrection story. In many ways, they confirm it.

# Church Events

Every Monday: 7PM Course in Miracles	Fri 11 Mar: Minister at Prison
Every Tuesday: 6PM Choir	Sat 12 Mar: 6PM UUFAMDARCSHE
Every Wednesday: 7:15PM Meditation/Discussion group	Sun 13 Mar – Sat 19 Mar: Franklin-Pierce Alternative Spring Break
Every Thursday: 8:45AM Buildings and Grounds Meeting	Mon 14 Mar: 6:30PM COCO Meeting
Every Saturday: 8PM Young People's AA Meeting	Fri 18 Mar: Minister's Day Off
Every Sunday: 7PM Real Connections SA Meeting	Mon 21 Mar: 5PM Living Legacy Tour Visit
	Fri 25 Mar: Minister's Day Off
	Fri 25 Mar: 6PM Publicity Committee

## Speaking of Membership...

At UUFAMDARCSHE, on March 12, four new members joined our ranks by signing the Membership Book. We are growing again, and so are our organizational needs. Later in this edition, you will find Andre's request for support with publicity efforts through social media. This is not the only area that could use some help.

Whether or not you attended the event last Saturday, I hope that you will give some thought to ways in which you would like to see our Fellowship be stronger. Of course, as you consider that, you will find yourself thinking of ways you could or would like to pitch in.

What might enrich your experience, and the experience of those you know? Adult RE / Second Hour topics? Whole-congregation social gatherings, or gatherings of particular cohort groups (retirees, singles, young adults, parents, military, educators...)? Topics for worship or for workshops? Subjects for religious exploration on a Saturday or weekday evening (UU history, comparative religions, Bible study, ...)?

Increased rentals mean increased need for volunteers to monitor the building. This means sitting in the office for a two-hour shift, using computer and internet to your heart's desire, and possibly answering a few questions from the renting party. Could you do that?

Have you considered pitching in to support Sunday morning worship – greeting, coffee hour, sound control, recording, ...)? The worship associate program is currently undergoing a redesign to increase collaboration and consistency; would you like to have some input into the format and content of the worship hour?

## Our Larger Community

### One Place Family Justice Center

The mission of One Place Family Justice Center is to provide a comprehensive service and support center which affords greater safety, access to services, and confidentiality for victims and their families by co-locating services under one roof. The vision is to reduce homicides, increase victim safety, to empower victims, to reduce fear and anxiety for victims and their children, to reduce recantation and minimization, wrap the victim in services and to hold offenders accountable.

### Notable Notes

#### Publicity Initiatives

Meetup.com is a social networking site that helps people with similar interests connect. With the help of a wonderful volunteer that I will not name at this time since I haven't asked permission, we now have a meetup group for the First Wednesday Forums. If you have been attending the forum and would be willing to sign up and join the group I think it would help.

Additionally, I am working on getting some help with Facebook. If you are one of our members who uses Facebook, could you make a point of liking and sharing events you see posted on the Facebook group? The idea is, if a small percentage of all people that make contact with our Fellowship start coming, then it becomes a simple matter of numbers. More people come in contact with us, more people come check out what we are doing.

# Ministerial Musings

By Lynn Hopkins

Between the time I first wrote for this edition and the time it was to be published, there were significant developments in the case of Gregory Dunn. For this reason, I held back with intention of writing a new essay and publishing promptly. Promptly does not describe how I proceeded, and I am sorry for that. The matter weighed so heavily on me that it was extraordinarily difficult for me to write a few simple paragraphs. While monthly newsletters have been delayed many times for a number of different reasons, the Publicity committee had this in my hands in time for publication before the first Sunday; this delay was entirely my doing.

I want to give honor to the MPD Chief and to the Montgomery County DA for taking bold action when they determined that it was appropriate. The arrest of Officer Smith only a few days into the investigation is a highly unusual action, and I am confident that this is a decision that no-one took lightly. It causes me to believe that either the statements of Mr. Smith's colleagues or video from the scene offered compelling evidence of wrongdoing.

I have asked Chief Finley to come speak to us about his initiatives, especially the community policing effort for which he is most well known. I do not yet have an answer, but I am hopeful that we can get him or a representative to speak to us as citizens of Montgomery.

This is the statement that I sent to Mandy for the February 28 service. I think it bears repetition:

Early on Thursday, February 25, Greg Gunn was confronted, pursued and then shot five times by a white MPD officer. He died in front of his mother's house, on the street where he lived most of his life. There had been no citizen complaint, no 911 call. He was 58 years old.

That is about all we know for certain.

When the investigation is done and details published, I wonder whether the explanation will satisfy many people. I wonder whether those who are satisfied with it would be similarly satisfied if I were shot and killed under identical circumstances, in front of my home in Dalraida. Some might regard such a hypothetical question as frivolous or inane. I suggest that it is the only true measure by which we can assess the situation. Not particularly the death of Greg Gunn, but the question of whether and how much black lives matter to us.

Right now, none of that is before us. What is before us is a tragic death, an officer under scrutiny and a police force under fire, and a city seething with rage and suspicion.

For now, we stand in grief for the loss of life taken by violence. We stand in solidarity with the citizens of Montgomery who find themselves fearing assault, rather than protection, from its armed patrolmen. We will patiently but watchfully wait for the SBI investigation.

I will pray for peace. I will pray by listening, as openly as I can. I will pray by conversation, sharing my insights as they come, without claiming superior understanding to anyone else's. I will pray by trusting even those I am inclined to suspect, until I have just cause not to. By meditation and discussion, in silence and in shouts, in confidence and in doubt, I will pray. I hope you join me in this.

## DRE Corner



Last weekend, I attended Chris Crass' anti Racism workshop in Chattanooga along with 8 others from UUFM. It was a wonderful opportunity to gather with UU's from around our region to develop our spiritual leadership in regards to the Black Lives Matter movement. I had been eager to attend since I had heard about the workshop because I have felt that my UU principles and values lead me to be a part of Black Lives Matter movement but I have struggled with my role as a white ally. I knew that a number of my colleagues would be there and we had planned on meeting after the training to discuss how to use what we learned in the workshop and use it in our work as religious educators.

It was a wonderful workshop, filled with conversation and lots of dialogue. We heard stories of what was working for congregations. We practiced responding to push back against the Black Lives Matter movement. It was wonderful to see so many people from UUFM engaged in this work. What I thought was most exciting was seeing the youth from our congregation participating in the conversation with leaders from across the Southern Region. Among the attendees from UUFM were three of our youth, Indee Goheen, James McKenny and Katherine McKenny. I know I have said it before, but it bears repeating, we really do have some amazing youth in our fellowship. I understand I am biased in a lot of ways, but it is exciting to think about what these young people have in store for us. They have strong voices and are ready to use them!

With recent events here in Montgomery, I believe it's time for us to become more actively involved in the Black Lives Matter movement here. There is an opportunity for us to be the allies that we need to be, to be the support that needs to happen. I know our youth see this as important work. It is something they feel strongly about. At General Assembly last summer, it was the youth who brought forth the Action of Immediate Witness in Support of the Black Lives Matter Movement. It was the youth who defended the action during the debate along with their adult supporters. I believe our UUFM youth would have been right there with them pushing for the denominational support of Black Lives Matter.

More UU resources:

<http://callandresponse.blogs.uua.org/search/black+lives+matter>

<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/5-ways-support-black-lives-matter>

<https://www.facebook.com/BlackLivesUU/>

<http://www.standingonthesideoflove.org/the-power-of-the-black-lives-matter-banner/>

<http://www.uua.org/worship/collections/black-lives-matter>

<http://www.uuworld.org/articles/black-lives-matter-pushback>

### **Minister and Staff**

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

### **Committee Chairs**

Religious Education: Christine Freeman  
Finance: Lynn Shaw  
Joan Boltz  
FUUN Team: Terry Woosley  
Building & Grounds: Barbara Witt  
Public Relations: Andre Goheen  
Social Action: Beverly Shaffer

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### **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 25 March, 2016. Submissions can be sent to Andre Goheen at [goheen100@yahoo.com](mailto:goheen100@yahoo.com) and Janice Wood at [jrwood.montgomery@gmail.com](mailto:jrwood.montgomery@gmail.com)