

The Beacon MONTHLY



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Montgomery Newsletter

2810 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery AL 36109-3402

Rev. Lynn Hopkins, Minister

April 2016

Sunday Services

APRIL Theme: Humans/Humanity

April 17: As the Spirit Moves

Yes, it does that. It's doing it right now.

April 24: Earth Day

Speaker: Mandy Goheen. The religious implications of environment. The environmental implications of our religious principles.

MAY Theme: Change/Transformation

May 1: Connect

May 8: Grow

May 15: Serve

Church Events

April 12: 7 p.m. Social Action
Committeemeeting

April 13: 7 p.m. Finance Committee
meeting

April 14: 6 p.m. Sisterlight meeting

April 18: 6:30 p.m. Committee on
Committees meeting

April 21: 6 p.m. Board of Trustees
meeting

April 22: 6 p.m. Publicity Committee
Meeting

April 24: 9 a.m. Family Promise
volunteer training

More Church Events

Every Sunday:

10 a.m. Worship
11:20 a.m. Second Hour/Lifespan
Religious Education
6 p.m. Real Connections

Every Monday:

7 p.m. Course in Miracles

Every Tuesday:

6 p.m. Choir practice
7 p.m. Refuge Recovery

Every Wednesday:

9 a.m. CFQ "Moving Meditation"
7:15 p.m. Meditation/Discussion group

Every Thursday:

8:45 a.m. Buildings & Grounds
Committee meeting

Every Saturday:

8 p.m. Young People's meeting,
Alcoholics Anonymous

Notable Announcements

Refuge Recovery

This group offers a Buddhist-oriented path to recovery from addictions. In this approach to recovery, "Everyone has the power and potential to free themselves from suffering," by applying the power of the Buddha's teachings. For more information, contact Michael Whitten at (334) 309-6873, michawhit@gmail.com, or Katrina Miller at (334) 300-0688, millkat@outlook.com.

Share the Plate/April: Black Belt Citizens Fighting for Health and Justice

This group is a non-profit grassroots volunteer community service organization located in Uniontown, Perry County, Alabama. It pursues remedies to the threats posed by the nearby mega-landfill and the city's overburdened wastewater treatment system. The group has benefitted from a mentor/program coordinator from the Alabama Rivers Alliance and from a goal-setting workshop provided by the National Rivers Network. In its short existence, it has gained visibility and achieved recognition by participating in state and regional environmental conferences and being an advocate for the rights of citizens. For more information, see its website at <http://blackbeltcitizens.wix.com>.

Newsletter submission

Submissions for the May newsletter should be submitted no later than April 24. Submissions can be sent to Andre Goheen at goheen100@yahoo.com and Janice Wood at jrwood.montgomery@gmail.com

Ministerial Musings

By the Rev. Lynn Hopkins

Why do you go to church?

UU's don't **have to** go to church because God or the Bible says so. We are here because we want to be. Everything here happens because members make it happen.

Every year, we ask you to make a financial pledge. It is how we maintain ourselves and do what we do. Everyone participates voluntarily, as they find it in their hearts and in their budgets. Then, **you decide** what to do with that money, and **you do it**. But this is not just about money.

We also ask that you give of your time and talent. Many people volunteer significant portions of their time to sing in choir, serve on the board, organize a pot-luck, or assist in worship. Why?

Maybe because the congregation needs you? We need greeters and coffee servers, people to count offering and to lead religious education classes. A lot of stuff happens quietly, during the week, thanks to volunteers. There is plenty of work around here.

That's a reason, but not a sufficient one. If we doing a job because there are jobs to do, it seems we are serving an institution, rather than ourselves. Somebody **has to**, so **I should**.

Maybe you volunteer because you get so much out of the fellowship. You know, you really ought to give back to this community, at least to the extent that you get something out of it.

Again, a reason but not one that could sustain us. When we give for what we get, we are simply **paying for a product**. Consumer religion is tempting, and it's all around us, but it can't feed us.

Why do I do church? To grow, connect and to serve. But this isn't about me.

If we see our mission as creating opportunities to grow and to serve, pledge and service become spiritual practice. Our donations of money, time and energy are not simply gifts sent off to a charity. They are ways to **actively participate** in the life of something larger than any one of us.

So, here's an invitation: If you've not yet joined and have been thinking about it, take the plunge. If you're a member but standing on the side, come find your passion, what makes you come alive.

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If you have served long, in many roles, committees and pot-lucks, **thank you**. New leaders need your wisdom and guidance; come mentor new volunteers and enjoy what you have made.

If you are now taking on volunteer jobs and service roles, stepping up and wading in, you are the heartbeat of this sacred body. Even as you learn and become expert, remember to look around. How can you inspire new life, and lead others into leadership?

One more question: In your wildest imagination, what would be the best ever reason to come? What did you hope for, long for, dream of when you first connected here?

Let's make it so, together.

Based on a sermon by the Rev. Douglas Taylor, UU minister, Binghamton, New York

Celebrating Earth Day

By Courtney McKenny, Director of Religious Education

Earth Day is April 22. It is a celebration that resonates with our seventh UU Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Earth Day is a wonderful time to recognize that we are stewards of the earth and of its future. The whole family can celebrate Earth Day together.

The Unitarian Universalist Association provides resources you can use to inspire and nurture children, youth and adults on their journey into nature and its wonders and the stewardship needed from us. For example:

- *UU World* magazine's Fall, 2012 Family pages ("All God's Critters ... Even the Bat") offer entry points into meaningful connections with wildlife and natural habitats; the Summer, 2010 Family pages highlight musician Pete Seeger's caretaking of the Hudson River with his *Clearwater* sloop.
- From the UUA Bookstore: *Earth Day: An Alphabet Book*, a poem of gratitude that celebrates life on earth; *Earth Bound* draws from Earth-based spirituality and all of nature—the animal and plant kingdoms, the senses and capacities of the human body, the accomplishments of extraordinary men and women and humanity's poetry and prose.
- Tapestry of Faith curricula from the UUA are rich with opportunities to make every day Earth Day. Search "environment," "nature," and "outdoors" in the Tapestry of Faith database to locate ecology-focused activities and readings.

What can we do as a community of faith to celebrate our interdependent web all year round? How can we best live by our seventh principle? What are your ideas?

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