

The Beacon MONTHLY



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Montgomery Newsletter

2810 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery AL 36109-3402

Rev. Lynn Hopkins, Minister

June 2016

Sundays in June

June Theme: First Principle of UU: *"the inherent worth and dignity of every person."*

Service Topic:

June 5: Inherent

June 12: Worth

June 19: Dignity

June 26: Music Sunday, with a celebration of Melissa Galanopoulos's contributions as we say "farewell."

Second Hour programs:

June 5: Montgomery Pride United

June 12: Congregational Meeting

June 19: a. Gender, with Rev. Lynn, *or*
b. Emerson, Thoreau and Transcendentalism (video/discussion)

June 26: LGBTQ Pride Festival

Introducing ... the Candidates for Board Positions

Members of the fellowship will vote on the following candidates for the 2016-2017 Board of Trustees at the Congregational Meeting on Sunday, June 12.

- President: Barbara Witt
- Vice President: Sandy Loveday
- Secretary: Janice Wood
- Member at Large: Pat Thomason

Share the Plate for June:

This local group is a collective of individuals, businesses and organizations that affirm and support full equality for the LGBTQ community.

Montgomery Pride United

Montgomery Pride will sponsor special events June 25-26, including a free lunch at The Sanctuary, 432 S. Goldthwaite St. and a one-mile walk to the Capitol Sunday, with rally on Capitol steps.

Church Events

June 8 (Wed): 7 p.m. Finance Committee

June 11: 1 p.m. You and UU (orientation and conversation)

June 14: 7 p.m. Social Action Committee

June 18 (Sat): 8 a.m. Work Day/Fellowship Hall

June 12 (Sun): 11:30 a.m. Congregational Meeting

June 25 (Sat): 9 a.m. Rental: Helping Shepherds fundraiser (Founders Room)

June 25 (Sat): 5 p.m. Rental party (Fellowship Hall)

Weekly Meetings

Every Sunday:

10 a.m. Worship Service

11:15 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 Tuesday:

8 p.m. Young People's AA

Every Wednesday:

9 a.m. CFQ "Moving Meditation"

7:15 p.m. Meditation/Discussion group

Every Thursday:

8:45 a.m. Buildings & Grounds

Committee

Every Saturday:

8 p.m. Young People's AA

Black Belt Citizens group needs more support

Members of UUFM can continue to support the Black Belt Citizens Fighting for Health and Justice, our April "Share the Plate" partner, by attending a pair of public meetings on Friday, June 17.

Anyone who attends a meeting of the Alabama Environmental Management Commission needs to arrive by 9:30 a.m., although it officially starts at 10 a.m. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management then will meet at 11 a.m.

Both meetings will be held at the ADEM Montgomery office at 1400 Coliseum Blvd.

At the AEMC meeting, commissioners will examine the issues of environmental justice of concern to the Uniontown citizens who believe they are suffering from environmental racism and unjust amounts of pollution.

The Alabama Environmental Management Commission is a governor-appointed commission that acts as a governing body for ADEM.

Newsletter submission

Submissions for the May newsletter should be submitted no later than May 22.

Submissions can be sent to Andre Goheen at goheen100@yahoo.com and Janice Wood at jrwood.montgomery@gmail.com.

Ministerial Musings: The Principles

By the Rev. Lynn Hopkins

Beginning this month, I'll spend one month on each of the seven principles of the UUA. As I've begun laying out these sermons, I realized that one important piece was omitted. I didn't dedicate a month of the schedule for the preamble. It seems simple enough: "We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote" – but the brevity is misleading. This sentence fragment contains deep meaning about our beliefs about truth, our beliefs about the nature of a religious body ('church'), and about how we believe our religious body should be structured.

We – This truth did not come from on high. It was inspired by and derived from many sources, but ultimately it is ours. *All* of ours, not dictated or interpreted by popes or bishops or priests.

the member congregations – The UUA is made up of congregations; it is not an association of individuals. Individuals may disagree on one or more of these and be members in good standing. It is the entire congregation, an entity in its own right, that has joined in this particular covenant.

of the Unitarian Universalist Association – This is a voluntary association. In some contexts, the association may be regarded as "the larger church," but it's not a church in the conventional sense. It's an association for mutual support and edification, formed by congregations. It's not *in charge* of the congregations or of their activities. The congregations, in fact, are in charge of it.

covenant – we (the congregations) have agreed to walk together in these things. We haven't subjugated ourselves to any authority, or recognized any particular text as divine or authoritative. We agreed, as equals. We ask others to hold us accountable, and pledge to hold them accountable, to our covenant. Agree or disagree, we walk together as partners and companions in this spiritual journey.

to affirm – Here is the trickiest part of all, what is implied but not explicit in these words. This covenant doesn't say that we believe these things. It says we affirm them. This suggests that we have found these truths to be self-evident. (Sound familiar?) We don't explain them or defend them. We agree to affirm them, as though their truth is axiomatic.

and promote – It is more than a bold religious claim of truth. Of course, "promote" here is not referring to promotional materials or self-promotion. It means, literally, to move forward. This is a covenant to act on this claim. We, the congregations, pledge ourselves both to speak this truth – to *affirm* – **and** to actively move it forward – to *promote*.

This isn't what we are required to do. It isn't what we do to gain salvation, to escape hell, to reach nirvana, to attain spiritual status or achievement of any kind. It's our covenant, what we decided to do together, because ... why?

You tell me. I'd like to know why you do it.

What's Happening ...

with the children and youth?

By Courtney McKenny, Director of Religious Education

We've wrapped up our year in religious education for children and youth, and it has been an exciting one with lots of new adventures and wonderful conversations.

Our youngest UUs have spent the year learning from the *World of Wonder* curriculum (<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder>) from the UUA's Tapestry of Faith program. They've spent their year working with Christine Freeman, Steffany Moyer and Jade Moore exploring our seventh principle. They've spent time outside looking closely at nature. They've played many games, made plenty of crafts and even gotten their hands a little dirty making worm habitats. There have been stories that examine the connections between the children in our classrooms and to nature. All totaled, it was a year of adventure and discovery.

Our upper elementary class has jumped into the world of Harry Potter with the social-action-based curriculum *Harry and UU*, which will continue to explore the UU Principles and social action another year. This group has worked with Weston Flippo, Andre Goheen and Courtney McKenny to battle social problems such as illiteracy and hunger. They had a successful book drive that donated the books they collected to the Friends of the Montgomery Library. This helped to fund new books for the library and provided low-cost books to the public. They also had a food drive with the proceeds going to the Montgomery Area Food Bank. This group has made wands, imagined dragons, learned spells and made potions.

It has been a great year for our youth as well. Amy Campbell, Weston Flippo, Andre Goheen and Rev. Lynn have enjoyed fantastic discussions with the youth. They used *The Twilight Zone*-based curriculum *The Fifth Dimension*. Rod Serling, the creator of *The Twilight Zone*, was a Unitarian. Many of the science fiction / fantasy stories dealt with controversial social issues. The youth watched episodes and examined the deeper issues being discussed.

We expect much more fun and learning in our next year. Please consider taking part in our wonderful children and youth experience at UUFM.

Minister and Staff

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

Board of Trustees

Acting President: Mandy Goheen
Secretary: Ron Belcher
Treasurer: Felicia Wilburn
Members at Large: Georgia Banks-Martin
Jimmie Ilachild
Susan Enzweiler

Committee Chairs

Religious Education: Christine Freeman
Membership: Liz Campbell
Finance: Joan Boltz, Lynn Shaw
Building & Grounds: Barbara Witt
Public Relations: Andre Goheen
Social Action: Beverly Shaffer