

The Beacon MONTHLY



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Montgomery Newsletter

2810 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery AL 36109-3402

Rev. Lynn Hopkins, Minister

August 2016

Sundays in August

August Theme: *3rd Principle of UU: "Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations."*

Aug. 7: Acceptance of one another – People of faith tolerate others, but can they accept?

Aug. 14: Encouragement – More than accept, helping fellow travelers be more fully themselves.

Aug. 21: Spiritual Growth – Considering the priorities of lifespan religious education.

Aug. 28: Growth – Spiritual, personal, relational and congregational aspects of growth.

Second Hour programs:

Aug. 7: a. Harvest the Power: Lay Leadership series

b. Friends and Family Chapel

Aug. 14: Growing UU Strong from the Inside with the Membership Committee

Aug. 21: a. Our Whole Lives (OWL) overview and information

b. Emerson & the Idea of America

Aug. 28: a. Harvest the Power series

b. TED Talk – video and discussion

Church Events

Aug. 2: 4 p.m. Lee-Oaks Night Out

Aug. 3: 6 p.m. First Wednesday Forum

Aug. 6: 10:35 a.m. Philosophy Group

Aug. 9: 7 p.m. Social Action Committee

Aug. 10: 7 p.m. Finance Committee

Aug. 11: 6:30 p.m. Board of Trustees

Aug. 13: 1:00 p.m. UU & You

Aug. 20: 2 p.m. Bacons' Vow Renewal

Aug. 27: 10 a.m. Teacher Training

Aug. 30: 6 p.m. Hate Crimes Vigil

Planning Meeting

UUFM phone: 334-279-9517

Email: info@uumontgomery.org

Web: www.uumontgomery.org

Weekly Meetings

Every Sunday:

10 a.m. Worship Service
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 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 a.m. Building & Grounds
Committee

Every Saturday:

8 p.m. Young People's AA

August Share the Plate: Minister's Discretionary Fund

People often turn to "the church" for help, and many are surprised to find out that a minister in the UU tradition has no control over or access to a congregation's financial resources. After all, expenditures are governed by a budget, approved by the membership and overseen by the Board of Trustees.

So the need arose for the Minister's Discretionary Fund, set up as a separate account solely to provide assistance in emergency situations, as determined by the ministers. Since emergencies keep happening, the fund needs to be replenished often, which makes it a worthy recipient for this month's "Share the Plate" collections.

In recent months, the Minister's Discretionary Fund has helped in times like these:

- * Restoring water to a home where there had been none for three months.
- * Offsetting a portion of an overdue electric bill to prevent service from being cut off in a home with several young children.
- * Made it possible for a friend of the fellowship to bring food to a gathering after a relative's funeral.
- * Put a few gallons of gas in a neighbor's car to get the driver to a job interview.
- * Contributed toward an auto repair bill to get a UUFM member back on the road. See Rev. Lynn for more information.

First Wednesday Forum: Vernā Myers

This month, a late cancellation requires us to depart from our usual practice of hosting a speaker from the local community for the Forum. Instead, we will be hearing from a distant speaker – a TED Talk presenter named Vernā Myers. The title is, *How to overcome our biases? Walk boldly toward them.* Her first lesson is, "Stop trying to be good people. We need real people." We'll start at 6:00pm on 8/3 (First Wednesday). Bring a snack to share if you can; if not, come anyway.

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Ministerial Musings: In My Mind's Eye

By the Rev. Lynn Hopkins

I hope you are enjoying your summer. It's awfully hot outside, but in my office at home, it's already fall. **In my quiet space, in my imagination:**

- We've started celebrating the **50th anniversary** of the congregation, with arts, social events and fanfare.
- We've begun gathering in **small groups**, going deeper on topics that matter to us but that we can't really discuss with coworkers or family friends.
- We're **welcoming and connecting** with visitors and seekers from places and lives we don't know and making space for them to find their own way here.
- We have **more than enough** greeters, coffee servers, dishwashers, rental event hosts, chair arrangers, membership canvassers, choir singers, and leaders of every other type.
- We're hosting eight sessions of **Our Whole Lives** sexuality education for 4th, 5th and 6th grade students.
- We're enjoying the fruits of **improved web and social media presence** and more clear and consistent communication across multiple channels.
- We better understand, and are responding to, the **financial needs** of our ambitious but underfunded congregational life.
- We have volunteers in the **children's classrooms**, dedicated to the spiritual health and growth of our kids.
- We have fully scheduled **adult Second Hour programs**, with volunteers eager to explore and share their insights in single-session and series discussions.
- We're working with **local community, religious and political leaders** to open up conversations about race, violence, poverty, education, privilege and possibility in Montgomery's past and future.

Thank you for the opportunity to be in that office for hours at a time this month, to join you on Sundays and spend the rest of the week reading, studying, asking, exploring, planning, scheming, wondering, and renewing.

I especially thank **Barbara Witt, Bill Weaver, Lynette Morse, Felicia Wilburn, Tom Huber, Joan Boltz and Liz Campbell** for moving ahead in continuing to do the hardest work of the congregation – the volunteer leadership that makes everything else possible. I hope everyone noticed, but they do it so well and so gracefully that it is easy to think that things just happen. These folks did not take a break for the summer or hold off to see how things will shape up in September.

I'll be back in circulation by the time you get this. I'll be working closely with these and many other volunteers and with our underappreciated part-time staff, to move toward the things that exist now only in mental image and sketchy outlines. To realize even a fraction of those dreams, we'll need investment of time, energy, and money far beyond what we have seen so far.

I'm giving it all my effort. Those I named above are already extending themselves beyond what we can reasonably expect from volunteers. A handful of others have stepped up in various capacities, and you will know their names better in the coming months. But a dozen or two dozen can't do it alone.

We need the owners to step in. **We need you.** No one can do everything, and there are many things that many people cannot do. But everyone can do something.

What do you dream for UUFM? What matters most to you? What would you make happen, if you had the help you needed to pull it off? If you kept reading this piece down to the last paragraph, I know that you care. I'm willing to bet you have ideas. Maybe they're very different from mine. That's not just OK; it's a good thing. Let's make it happen, together.

Hope to see you on Sunday, if not before!

10 Years of RE Know-How

By Courtney McKenny, Director of Religious Education

It's hard for me to believe that I am beginning my **tenth year** as a religious educator. When the director of religious education position opened here at UUFM, it seemed like an interesting opportunity.

I had grown up in a small UU church in southwestern Missouri much like UUFM. I had had so many wonderful experiences in the RE programs while growing up, I had enjoyed being a part of the church community. With two children of my own, and a third that arrived a year later, I thought the position would be a wonderful opportunity to provide a similar experience and community for the children of UUFM. I was hired and looked forward to the new adventure.

More than One Right Way

For a while, I stumbled around trying to figure out what exactly my role was. The minister I was working with was fairly new to ministry, and there had not been a settled DRE in a few years. So we both worked to figure out what UUFM wanted and needed as far as Religious Education was concerned. I quickly discovered there's not just one right way to "do" religious education.

Thanks to the generosity of my colleagues and the Liberal Religious Educators Association, I discovered many exciting opportunities to create a path for religious exploration and to begin a journey with our children and youth in becoming lifelong UUs. I got involved in district level committee work, which connected me to the larger UU community. I became more involved in my regional LREDA chapter. These were wonderful ways for me to grow as an educator and to move through my life as a UU.

Living and Learning

As I've done this work, I've learned that the method is the message. How we, as a congregation, decide to do things reflects our beliefs and values. With this in mind, the congregation is our curriculum when it comes to Religious Education. Everything we do when we're together in community is a learning experience. How we are with each other is an opportunity for us to learn and to share our UU principles. Our public face teaches others about Unitarian Universalism. Religious education happens all the time for all ages.

Through all of the changes, my work has continued to feed me spiritually. I love walking beside folks as they explore what Unitarian Universalism means to them. What started out as an adventure has become my passion and is still an adventure every week. I love my work. I love being a part of this amazing faith. It's a privilege.

Minister and Staff

Minister: Rev. Lynn Hopkins
Director of Religious Education: Courtney McKenny
Office & Bookkeeping Assistant: Steve Pearson

Committee Chairs

Music Director: Lynette Morse
Religious Education: Christine Freeman
Membership: Liz Campbell
Finance: (TBA)
Building & Grounds: Bill Weaver
Public Relations: (TBA)
Social Action: Beverly Shaffer

Board of Trustees

President: Barbara Witt
Vice President: Sandy Loveday
Secretary: Janice Wood
Treasurer: Felicia Wilburn
Members at Large: Susan Enzweiler
Jimmie Ilachild
Pat Thomason

Newsletter submission

Submissions for the September newsletter should be submitted no later than August 23. Submissions can be sent to Janice Wood at jrwood.montgomery@gmail.com.