

The Beacon MONTHLY



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Montgomery Newsletter

2810 Atlanta Highway, Montgomery AL 36109-3402

Rev. Lynn Hopkins, Minister

October 2016

Sundays in October

October Theme: 5th Principle of UU: “The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process in our congregations and in society.”

Oct. 9: May the Force Be with You. Presenter: the Rev. Maureene Bass

Second Hour:

- Continuing Conversation: with Maureene Bass.
- Share the Plate: Family Sunshine Center (unconfirmed) or
Defying the Nazis: The Sharps’ War, with the Social Action Committee

Oct. 16: Talk is Cheap; Free Speech Isn’t. Presenter: Janice Wood

Second Hour:

- Harvest the Power: Concluding Session IV of the UU lay leadership program.
- Poetry discussion: Charles Suhor leads an exploration of “The Mind of Absolute Trust” by Seng-Ts’an.
- Black Lives Matter: The Social Action Committee hosts a discussion of the movement.

Oct. 23: Children of Promise - Closing Opportunity Gaps

This is our congregation’s third annual recognition of the International Children’s Sabbath.

Second Hour:

- TED Talk: Video and discussion led by Roger Burdette.
- Prayer in Public: Sharon Sexton will lead a discussion on this complex topic.
- Friends and Family Chapel: An intergenerational, kid-friendly, less formal UU worship

UUUFM phone: 334-279-9517

Email: info@uumontgomery.org

Web: www.uumontgomery.org

Oct. 30: The Democratic Process

What does democracy have to do with liberal religion?

Second Hour:

- Fifth Sunday Potluck: Bring something to share if you can. Everyone is welcome.

Church Events

Oct. 5: 6 p.m. First Wednesday Forum

Oct. 8: 7:50 a.m. Kayak trip on Coosa River

Oct. 10: 6:30 p.m. Council of Committees

Oct. 11: 7 p.m. Social Action Committee

Oct. 12: 6 p.m. Harvest the Power

Oct. 13: 6 p.m. Sisterlight

Oct. 16: 2 p.m. OWL Class

Oct. 17: 7 p.m. Citizens Climate Lobby

Southern Energy Freedom Tour

Oct. 20: 6:30 p.m. Board of Trustees

Oct. 23: 2 p.m. OWL Class

Oct. 26: 6 p.m. Harvest the Power

Weekly Meetings

Every Sunday:

10 a.m. Worship Service

11:20 a.m. Second Hour/Lifespan

Religious Education

7 p.m. Real Connections

Every Tuesday:

6 p.m. Choir Practice

7 p.m. Refuge Recovery

8 p.m. Young People's AA

Every Wednesday:

7:15 p.m. Meditation/Discussion group

Every Thursday:

8 a.m. Building and Grounds

Committee meets

Every Saturday:

8 p.m. Young People's AA

First Wednesday Forum: Death Penalty in Alabama

Sara Romano, LGSW, and John Palombi, J.D., will talk Oct. 5 about issues with capital punishment in Alabama. Both work with the Federal Defender's Office and are active with the Alabama Post-Conviction Relief Project. The program will start at 6 p.m.

October Share the Plate: Family Sunshine Center

The Family Sunshine Center works in seven Central Alabama counties. Its mission is:

- to end family violence and sexual assault, to foster hope and healing,
- to offer immediate response and a safe haven in crisis, to provide advocacy, counseling and support for family violence and sexual assault victims,
- to empower them to lead safe, violence-free lives, and
- to promote community awareness through education and training.

Black Lives Matter Here

There is a great deal of rumor and misinformation about what “Black Lives Matter” represents. This is complicated by the fact that several related organizations exist (notably [Movement for Black Lives](#) and [Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism](#)), doing much of the same work with much of the same language. Furthermore, the slogan itself is sometimes adopted or co-opted by groups who may have different principles and practices from the official body. This is the statement of principles from the BLM organization <http://blacklivesmatter.com>

Diversity: We are committed to acknowledging, respecting and celebrating difference(s) and commonalities.

Restorative Justice: We are committed to collectively, lovingly and courageously working vigorously for freedom and justice for Black people and, by extension all people. As we forge our path, we intentionally build and nurture a beloved community that is bonded together through a beautiful struggle that is restorative, not depleting.

Unapologetically Black: We are unapologetically Black in our positioning. In affirming that Black Lives Matter, we need not qualify our position. To love and desire freedom and justice for ourselves is a necessary prerequisite for wanting the same for others.

Globalism: We see ourselves as part of the global Black family and we are aware of the different ways we are impacted or privileged as Black folk who exist in different parts of the world.

Collective Value: We are guided by the fact all Black lives, regardless of actual or perceived sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, economic status, ability, disability, religious beliefs or disbeliefs, immigration status or location

Transgender Affirming: We are committed to embracing and making space for trans brothers and sisters to participate and lead. We are committed to being self-reflexive and doing the work required to dismantle cis-gender privilege and uplift Black trans folk, especially Black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-antagonistic violence.

Black Women: We are committed to building a Black women affirming space free from sexism, misogyny, and male-centeredness.

Black Villages: We are committed to disrupting the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, and especially “our” children to the degree that mothers, parents and children are comfortable.

Empathy: We are committed to practicing empathy; we engage comrades with the intent to learn about and connect with their contexts.

Black Families: We are committed to making our spaces family-friendly and enable parents to fully participate with their children. We are committed to dismantling the patriarchal practice that requires mothers to work “double shifts” that require them to mother in private even as they participate in justice work.

Queer Affirming: We are committed to fostering a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking or, rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual unless s/he or they disclose otherwise.

Loving Engagement: We are committed to embodying and practicing justice, liberation, and peace in our engagements with one another.

Intergenerational: We are committed to fostering an intergenerational and communal network free from ageism. We believe that all people, regardless of age, shows up with capacity to lead and learn.

The Black Lives Matter – Unitarian Universalist Connection

The following was ratified at the 2015 UUA 2015 Action of Immediate Witness

WHEREAS, Unitarian Universalists strive for justice, equity and compassion in human relations; WHEREAS, Unitarian Universalists have a goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

WHEREAS, allowing injustice to go unchallenged violates our principles;

WHEREAS, the Black Lives Matter movement has gained powerful traction in conjunction with recent tragic events involving, in particular, police brutality and institutionalized racism that target the black community;

WHEREAS, Tanisha Anderson, Rekia Boyd, Michael Brown, Miriam Carey, Michelle Cusseaux, Shelly Frey, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Trayvon Martin, Kayla Moore, Tamir Rice, and Tony Robinson are just a few names of people who were recently killed by the racism that exists in the United States today;

WHEREAS, people of all ages and races are killed by law enforcement, yet black people ages 20-24 are seven times more likely to be killed by law enforcement;

WHEREAS, mass incarceration fueled by for-profit prisons and racially biased police practices drive the disproportionate imprisonment of black and brown Americans;

WHEREAS, the school-to-prison pipeline is an urgent concern because 40% of students expelled from U.S. public schools are black and one out of three black men is incarcerated during his lifetime; and

WHEREAS, we must continue to support the Black Lives Matter movement and Black-led racial justice organizations;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the 2015 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association calls member congregations to action, to become closer to a just world community, and to prevent future incidents of this nature;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2015 General Assembly urges member congregations to engage in intentional learning spaces to organize for racial justice with recognition of the interconnected nature of racism coupled with systems of oppression that impact people based on class, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability and language;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2015 General Assembly encourages member congregations and all Unitarian Universalists to work toward police reform and prison abolition (which seeks to replace the current prison system with a system that is more just and equitable); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2015 General Assembly recognizes that the fight for civil rights and equality is as real today as it was decades ago and urges member congregations to take initiative in collaboration with local and national organizations fighting for racial justice against the harsh racist practices to which many black people are exposed.

There's a New Word Going Around: CORE

By the Rev. Lynn Hopkins

CORE ... you may have heard about it already. Maybe you've already gotten an email or a phone call. Many of you attended a Second Hour discussion last month, but many more of you missed it.

What am I talking about?

We're launching a small group program this fall. All members and friends are encouraged to participate to the degree that your life and energy will permit. This program offers an opportunity to:

- get better acquainted with your neighbors,
- spend relaxed time with fellow UUs,
- affirm commonalities and celebrate differences,
- build and strengthen the connections that make fellowship possible,
- consider and discuss topics of religious/spiritual significance,
- involve everyone in the same conversation without getting everyone together.

What does 'CORE' mean?

I'm calling them CORE (Communities of Ongoing Religious Exploration) groups. The acronym works for me, but feel free to modify it; if you would rather it be Cadres Of Rational Eccentricity, or Centering-Opening-Relating-Experiencing ... such a wondrous variety of possibilities! I will call them CORE, because the word itself connotes the purpose of this program. Healthy, growing congregations have a core of deep and authentic connection among people.

What are these groups?

The structure, at least initially, is based on neighborhood groupings. This offers the best chance of diversity in age, family status, belief system and life experience. Most groups will have about 10 members. Adjustments will be necessary in the early stages, because we don't yet know how many people will be interested and available to participate. I would ask that each person who's willing to participate will make a real effort to make a home in their neighborhood group. There may be circumstances that make a local group unworkable for some people. We will arrange for group reassignment when it is necessary but as a last resort.

Who is charge?

Liz Campbell has identified individuals in each neighborhood to act as coordinators. Liz and I will offer training and support to these courageous volunteers, so that no one is left out there alone. They will contact their group members, to arrange a time and place of gathering. The program is under the umbrella of the Membership Committee, with advice and guidance from the minister.

What happens?

My suggestion is that groups gather in someone's home, with an understanding that the resident of that home isn't responsible for "hosting" activities such as providing refreshments. I'm recommending a session of about 90 minutes, once a month. More often may be better, but we'll start slowly. Each month, I'll publish materials that include suggested readings and discussion questions based on the topic of the month. It will be entirely up to each group whether or not to use these materials as written, with modification, or not at all. These will be available in print form at the office and electronic form for download.

What now?

For now, please bear with us as we get all the pieces lined up. As you might imagine, it's challenging to create a system that incorporates all members (many of whom don't attend regularly), invites friends (many of whom don't have contact information on file with the office), is structured enough to be dependable, and yet flexible enough to be effective. This work began in earnest at the start of September and is nearly complete. Watch for updates!

Election Issues for Next-Generation Voters

By Courtney McKenny, Director of Religious Education

As Election Day draws closer, we'll be spending time with UU's 5th Principle: "the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large." For our children in youth in R.E., it's worded as: "We believe that all persons should have a vote about the things that concern them."

Considering the magnitude of the decisions being made, there are many reasons to vote about the things that concern all of us.

Adults have been participating in conversations about the election, but how do we talk to children and youth about the same topic? We're aware how influential parents' and adults' opinions can be for the children and youth in their lives. How can we help encourage children to examine these issues deeper without imparting our opinions in the process?

Depending their age, children may have seen some of the news coverage or have had conversations with their peers about the candidates. Having conversations with open-ended questions is a great way to engage everyone. Ask your child what they know about the presidential election. Ask what they have heard. Ask them what they think.

It's a great time to talk about how the democratic process works and how it is an important part of our UU history and faith. When we look at how democracy and faith are connected, 19th century Unitarian minister Theodore Parker said, "Democracy means not 'I am as good as you are,' but 'You are as good as I am.'" We, as UU's, value each person as well as his or her part in the democratic process.

Here are some resources about the election and talk about it with children:

- <http://www.uuworld.org/articles/we-can-still-be-good-neighbors>
- <http://election.scholastic.com>
- <http://www.timeforkids.com/minisite/election-2016>
- <http://www.pbs.org/parents/special/election/article-theraceison.html>

UUFM Income & Expenses for the Month of August 2016

Income

Pledges received	\$18,015*
Regular donations not pledged	155
Sunday collection	950
Fundraising (includes auction)	1,072
Building rentals	985
Total income	\$21,177

Expenses: Staff

Wages	5,678
Benefits	1,871
Taxes	104
Staff subtotal	\$7,653

Expenses: Operations

Mortgage & Insurance	1,176
Utilities	1,097
Building & Grounds	2,600
Kitchen & Office Expenses	225
Operations subtotal	\$5,098

Expenses: Mission

Religious Education	
Committee Expenses	6
Share the Plate	649
Mission subtotal	\$655

Total expenses \$13,406

NET INCOME OR (LOSS) \$7,771

* Some pledges were paid in one lump sum for the whole year.

Minister and Staff

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

Committee Chairs

Building & Grounds:	Bill Weaver
Finance:	Rhonda Thomason
Membership:	Liz Campbell
Public Relations:	Nick Morgan-Moore
Religious Education:	Christine Freeman
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 November newsletter should be submitted no later than Oct. 23. Submissions can be sent to Janice Wood at jrwood.montgomery@gmail.com