



# Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur



*December 2020 News*

3773 N. MacArthur Rd. Decatur, IL 62526 Phone: (217) 875-5442 [www.uufd.org](http://www.uufd.org)

## Our virtual services: 10:15 a.m. Sundays, *live on Zoom* – [www.uufd.org](http://www.uufd.org)

**Dec. 6: "A Tale for Tough Times"** with Rev. Miley Palmer

In the strangest year any of us have experienced, holidays seem especially constricted and twisted beyond recognition. Miley will take a beloved part of the Christmas story and interpret it in a way to address our new circumstances. Mark Sorensen is service leader.



**Dec. 13: "Homeless Persons' Memorial Day"** with Ashley Velez



Ms. Velez is executive director of Humility Homes & Services Inc. in Davenport, Iowa. Her organization offers housing opportunities and supportive services in the Quad Cities area. They believe homelessness is a systematic social injustice – a reversible circumstance – and not a personal characteristic. She earned her bachelor's and master's

degrees from Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. Sarah Schrishuhn is service leader.

**Dec. 20: "Finding the Light" with RE families**

RE kids help lift up the light of this special time of year

### Notes on services

The Zoom room usually is open at 10 a.m., before the 10:15 service. In addition, there ordinarily is a discussion of each program, after a five-minute break.

## Holiday Special Events

- \* Dec. 13: **"Winter Solstice"** – come to the Fellowship parking lot from 2 to 3 to help create natural bird feeders
- \* Dec. 17: **"Holiday Blues Service"** – Some people feel sad during this time; let's explore, at 6:30 p.m. Zoom-868 026 1933
- \* Dec. 24: **"Lift Your Voices"** – Gathering at Fairview Park at 3 p.m. to sing Christmas carols and share best wishes
- \* Dec. 27: **"Holiday Fun Night"** – Bedazzle us with your bizarre yuletide attire and enjoy a plethora of games at 6:30 p.m. Click <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8680261933>
- \* Dec. 31: **"Out with the Old"** – Lorelei and Dick Zaker are eager to shake the dust off this year, but need your help. Go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8680261933> from 8-9 p.m.

# We're keeping up with keeping close

Dear Fellowship Community,

At the time of writing this column, we are about to have Thanksgiving during a pandemic, and we are less than a month away from Christmas during a pandemic, holidays none of us ever imagined.

People are having to make hard decisions about how they are celebrating their cherished family traditions. In addition, the board will be making a difficult decision in December about how long to continue keeping the meeting house closed for services and meetings. None of these conversations are easy but I know for sure the decisions are made from a place of love and caring for the larger community.

I am thrilled at how the Fellowship has continued to find ways to support one another, despite being in lockdown. In other parts of this newsletter, you will find three opportunities for gathering, one in person in the Fellowship parking lot and two on Zoom. I encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities.



*Rev.  
Karen  
Madrone*

Many of you have said to me and others that even though we are physically distancing, through the services, discussions and other events, members and friends are getting to know each other on a deeper level. I find that really encouraging, both for the present and for the future of the Fellowship.

This month, I will be leading three worship services. On Thursday, Dec. 17 at 6:30 p.m., I will lead a "Holiday Blues" service that acknowledges the sadness that people sometimes feel during the holiday season, especially this year. The zoom ID is 868 026 1933.

On Sunday, Dec. 20, we will have a special inter-generational holiday service that lifts up the light in the holidays celebrated at this time of year. Our families and children will play a special role in this service! Finally, on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 at 3 p.m., we will gather at the Fairview Park pavilion. We will sing Christmas carols, light

candles, and wish each other a Merry Christmas!

I'm very much looking forward to celebrating this season with you, even if it's far different than we could have imagined a year ago.

I recognize that the Fellowship has been through many changes in the last year, this fall in particular. I encourage you to pay attention to your response, breathe through whatever feelings come up for you, and reach out if you ever want to talk. I am here for you.

If at any time you would like to talk to me about anything at the Fellowship, or would just like to talk, feel free to reach out to me at 312-248-3538 or use my calendly link on the Fellowship website to find a time to talk. I would love to be in conversation with you!

*In community,  
Rev. Karen*

Dick Zaker is  
newsletter editor.  
January edition deadline:  
Dec. 23  
[Newsletter@uufd.org](mailto:Newsletter@uufd.org)

## Holiday fun comes thick and fast during December

Happy Holidays UUFD Friends and Families! Are you ready for an exciting month of activities? We have so many things planned to keep everyone connected and in the holiday spirit!



**Lisa Coates**

Registered RE students who have requested materials will be receiving remote learning and activity kits this month. We are preparing for a holiday program, and scripts will be placed in the packets.

Packets will be delivered to homes by Dec. 7. Due to so many events planned for RE students this month, we will not be holding regular classes. Please see below for our list of events.

Our Peacekeepers program for adults will have a special treat this month! We will have a Zoom holiday party on Saturday, Dec. 5, at 8 p.m. in place of our regular Thursday gathering. Details will be provided in the Facebook group. Peacekeepers is a monthly meeting and Facebook group for any adult caregiver looking for support, resources and socialization during these bizarre COVID times. We discuss self-care and raising children, all centered around monthly themes.

RE children will have a special Story Time night on Thursday, Dec. 10, at 6:30 p.m. Rev. Karen Madrone will read to our group! She plans to speak about Hanukkah.

Everyone, please mark your calendars for a special IN-PERSON yet SOCIALLY DISTANCED event at UUFD on Sunday, Dec. 13. Please visit the UUFD parking lot anytime from 2 to 3 p.m. to celebrate the



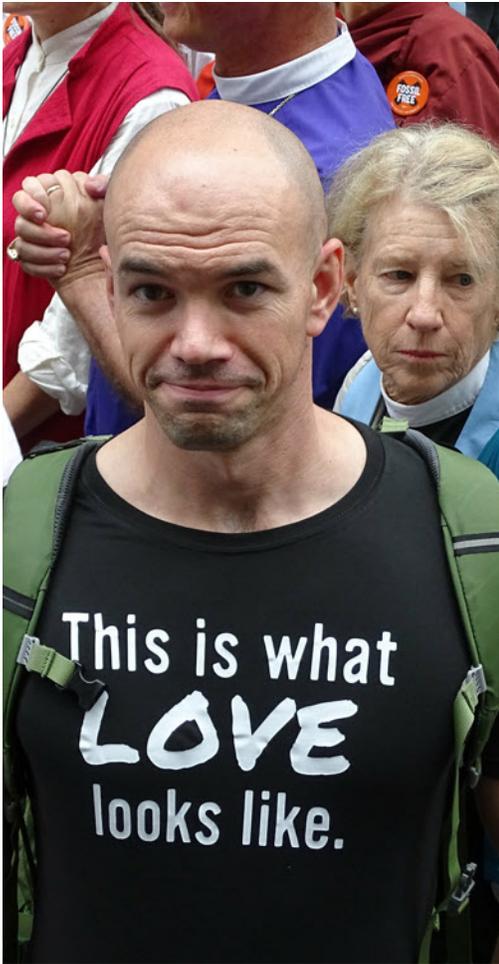
Winter Solstice. We will have stations set up to create natural birdfeeders. You may also pick up

a kit and to take home with you if you feel more comfortable. While at UUFD, we also will be collecting donations for the Boys and Girls Club of Decatur. They would appreciate financial donations as well as children's winter wear, specifically new hats, gloves or mittens.

Our big Holiday Intergenerational service will be held on Sunday, Dec. 20. RE families will be spreading the holiday spirit through stories and songs in a program titled, "Finding the Light." This will take place during our regular service times at 10:15 a.m. via Zoom.

To close out the month in a spectacular way, RE and the Hospitality Committee have joined forces again to bring you another game night! Please join us via Zoom at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 27. Similar to the Halloween party, we will have a contest. Please wear your most EXTREME HOLIDAY ATTIRE! The more antlers, sequins, bells, glitter and red noses, the better. Find your best ugly Christmas sweater and bedazzle it! We have a variety of games planned! Children can play, too, as well as choose activities from their packets. We do this to allow parents the opportunity to engage with the congregation and play along.

Please contact me at [RE@UUFD.org](mailto:RE@UUFD.org) for more information on Religious Education programming. I would love to hear from you!



This photo goes back a few years, to a People's Climate march, but the sentiment is pretty spot-on.

## *Trivia bites*

- 1) Does DRE Lisa Coates have more sons or daughters?
- 2) Lisa's husband has a pretty interesting job. What does Chris Coates do?
- 3) In what state was Rev. Karen's most recent church?
- 4) Who faithfully and generously donates the tall tree every Christmastime?

**Answers: 1) 3 great daughters 2) Herald & Review editor 3) Utah 4) Marge Evans**

## President brings us up to date on changes board making, thinking

From President Pat Rossiter,  
Vice President Tim McMillin

As we wrap up our Thanksgiving celebrations, we want to take a moment to share how thankful we are for everyone at UUFD. This year may have been challenging, but the UUFD board is grateful to share our space and time with such an amazing group of people.

We are also thankful to announce that Shelli Brunner has been nominated and accepted the vacant position of Board Member at Large. We are excited to have Shelli helping us with the work on the mission of the Fellowship.

In addition, the board members have voted to accept a new Board Covenant which we are hopeful will help us to unify our vision for the church moving forward.

### **Soul Support group will be revived, re-imagined**

This social group will provide another way to be connected. The first meeting will be Wednesday, Dec. 9, at 8 p.m. The Zoom link will be announced. Contact Shelli

Next, the UUFD board will continue our review and update our organizational bylaws and constitution. If you are interested in helping with this task, please contact Pat.

As the holidays are approaching, we encourage everyone to do everything in their power to remain safe and social distanced while staying in touch with friends, family and loved ones. The continued rise in COVID cases this fall has elevated the need for physical distancing, but thankfully we continue to have a multitude of options available to us to keep in contact socially.

The holidays are always a time to reflect and celebrate, and this year is no exception. We encourage you to reach out to one loved one, in or outside UUFD, and share your appreciation during these challenging times.

Brunner, 972-8066 or shelli.brunner@gmail.com for more information. Please share a picture of yourself as a child or on a special vacation, for example, for the discussion.



## Glimpses of the interconnected web

Once again, Terry Ankrom has given us wonderful examples of aviary art. The pelicans have burst upon the Lake Decatur scene in greater numbers than in recent memory. They possess a singular style of grace. At lower left, an Eastern bluebird contemplates its next move in its autumn day.



## Steal some time to join us in “Feather Thief” discussion

The Third Thursday Book Club has selected “The Feather Thief: Beauty, Obsession and the Natural History Heist of the Century” for December.

Please join us on Thursday, Dec. 17, at 8 p.m. to discuss this true story, written by history scholar Kirk Wallace Johnson about the 2009 heist of the British Natural History Museum at Tring.



Reviewers say the book “exposes interesting connections between anthropology, materiality and the natural world.”

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87963980421#success>.



Judy Thistlethwaite - Dec. 4  
 Dick Zaker - Dec. 4  
 Sara Cothorn - Dec. 13  
 Chris Yeagle - Dec. 16  
 Emily Richard - Dec. 20  
 Lorelei Zaker - Dec. 30  
 Eddy Brockway - Dec. 30

### Find us on the Internet

Facebook pages: UUFD Members & Friends, UUFD - Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Decatur, IL  
 Web site: [uufd.org](http://uufd.org)

## UUFD friend Mary Jo Comerford dies at 80

**Mary Jo Comerford**, a staunch advocate for social justice, passed away on Nov. 14.

She visited UUFD many times and was well-liked by many.



Her survivors include five children and nine grandchildren. Mary Jo was a registered nurse and an alcoholism family counselor at St. Mary's Hospital and a parish nurse at Mount Zion Presbyterian Church.

She participated in the the city's Human Relations Committee; Macon County Criminal Justice Group; Illinois People's Action; Compassionate Decatur; Study Class; Pink Smoke, a spiritual journey group for Catholic women; a book club; Persistent Sisters; and the Back Row Irish.

Donations were asked for Rock Springs Conservation Area or Decatur



Is this the UUFD look for 2021? This was a participant at the 2014 UUA General Assembly.

## 2021 General Assembly goes all virtual

General Assembly is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association. Participants worship, witness, learn, connect and make policy for the Association through

democratic process. Anyone may attend.

The UUA Board of Trustees has made the 2021 UUA General Assembly a 100% virtual event. Let's reach record-breaking attendance June 23-27, 2021!

## Keeping in contact

Consider using some down time to call or send a note to ones we don't see often:

**Irma Cushing**, 765 Christopher Dr., Forsyth, IL 63525, 207-242-0769, [gm.eun17@gmail.com](mailto:gm.eun17@gmail.com)

**Carolynn Devore**, 250 N. Woodlawn Ave., Decatur, 62522

**Marge Evans**, 5584 Traugher Rd., Decatur 62521

**Bobbie and Willa Hartman**, 1244 E. Whitmer St., Decatur, 358-2347 62521 [bobbiehartman3@gmail.com](mailto:bobbiehartman3@gmail.com)

**John Hays**, Heritage Health, 1225 Woodland Dr., Mount Zion, 62549

**Deonne Orvis**, 1100 Fairview Ave., Apt. 220, Parkway Apts., Pana, 62557  
**John Regan**, Hickory Point Christian Village Room 204, 565 W. Marion Ave., Forsyth 62535

**Rita Schwake**, Primrose Retirement, Room 119, 1145 W. Arbor Drive, Decatur, 62526, 791-6605  
**Darwin Shroyer**, 25 Forest Knolls Estate, Decatur, 62521, 429-7776, 433-3855

		<h1>DECEMBER</h1>			Activities on Zoom unless otherwise indicated		
		1	2	3	4	5	
					Happy Hour 5:30	Party for Peacekeepers - 8 p.m.	
6	"Tale for Tough Times"- Palmer	7	8	9	10	11	12
			Ladies lunch - noon	Soul Support - 8 p.m.	Story Time - 6:30 p.m.	Happy Hour - 5:30	Board- 10:30 a.m.
13	"Homeless Memorial Day" -Velez/Winter Solstice-2 p.m.	14	15	16	17	18	19
					"Holiday Blues" - 6:30 p.m.	Happy Hour - 5:30	
20	"Finding the Light"	21	22	23	24	25	26
				<b>Newsletter deadline</b>	"Lift Your Voices" 3 p.m.- Fairview Park		
27	Holiday Fun Party - 6:30 p.m.	28	29	30	31		
					"Out With the Old" - 8 p.m.		



Jessie R. Bates spoke to us on Nov. 1 about the Decatur Transitional Housing project. The object is to guide recently released, nonviolent inmates back into society. Bates is the president & CEO of Jessie R. Bates Enterprises & Jessie R. Bates Properties LCC

## UU in review

These are the Sources of Our Living Tradition:

**Direct experience** of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;

**Words and deeds** of prophetic women and men, which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;

**Wisdom from the world's religions**, which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;

**Jewish and Christian teachings**, which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;

**Humanist teachings**, which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;

**Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions**, which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.