



UU Matters

(April 2015: Vol. 10 No. 4)

The Mt. Vernon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

~A Welcoming Congregation~

1600 Isabella, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

Sunday Morning Service Schedule

(All Sunday morning services are held at 10:00 a.m. at the Fellowship building and are open to the public. If you are interested in leading a service or delivering a sermon, please use the Service Sign-up sheet at the back of the fellowship hall.)

5 April: Debbie Czarnopys-White will lead this service, “A Man Connecting to Nature.”

12 April: From UUA’s Climate Justice Month, built around the four elements: water (reveling), fire (reckoning), air (reconnecting), and earth (committing). This week’s service is a Climate Justice Service on the topic of “Air: Reconnecting.” Air signifies connectedness, mobilization, breath, spirit. Roberta Price will lead this service on reconnecting with hope through relationship, which explores who is impacted by our energy sources.

19 April: *Earth Day Service*, “Earth: Recommitting to Caring for the Earth,” led by Donna Beaumont, Roberta Price and Theresa Rowe. Earth signifies realization, bringing visions into reality, fruition, culmination, and committing to long-term actions that will create a paradigm shift and grow the climate justice movement.

26 April: *Open Reading Service*. Please bring readings, music, and art work to share.

Please check the MVUUF [website](#)



for updates to **April** services.

Other Upcoming Events

(All Upcoming Events held at the Fellowship Building are open to the public.)

1 April **Board of Trustees Meeting**
-First Wednesday of Each Month-
-6:30 p.m.-

Meeting is open to anyone interested in MVUUF business. **Board of Trustees:** Paul Eatherton, Co-chair; Glenda Eubanks, Co-chair, Terry Schwitz, Co-chair; Nina Peacock, Secretary; and Larry Sidwell, Treasurer.

12 April **Social Justice Interest Group**
-Second Sunday of Each Month- -
11:30 a.m. following Social Hour-

Learn about, discuss, and take action on social justice concerns-- issues that affect local, national, and global communities. Our group seeks projects and issues to take action on as individuals, as a group, and/or as a congregation.

12 April **Buddhist Meditation**
-Second Sunday of the month- -9:00 a.m.-

Buddhist meditation group meets downstairs. One need not be Buddhist to attend. For more information: Debbie Czarnopys-White bdcw@frontiernet.net

None in April **Open Minds Discussion Group**
-Third Wednesday of the Month 7:00 p.m.-
Discussion returns in May

28 April **Meditation Group**
-Fourth Tuesday of the Month 6:00
p.m.-
-Upstairs in the Fellowship Hall-

For those who want to learn and practice a variety of visualization, meditation and relaxation techniques. For information: Nina Peacock at peacock.nina@gmail.com.



Tenth Anniversary of Mt Vernon UUF, Part Three

In January 2005, the Board of the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship agreed to support the exploration of possibilities for a UU Fellowship in Mt Vernon, and a Mt Vernon Committee was formed. Committee members included Randy Farrar, Tom Robinson, Vennie Anderson, Glenda Eubanks, and Rev. William Sasso. Three public informational meetings were held the last Wednesday evening of each month in March, April, and May. An article about the meetings appeared in *Mt Vernon Register News* before the April meeting. Glenda Eubanks recently received this remembrance from Vennie Anderson, who now lives in Florida:

Ten years! That's amazing! My first memory of the Mt. Vernon Fellowship is a good one and also a poignant one. A group of us went to Mt. Vernon to meet with Randy Farr (sic), who had announced that he had bought a church building and wanted to create a UU Fellowship in Mt. Vernon. We hashed around a lot of ideas and set up a plan and off we went! We never looked back. We never considered it "couldn't be done" as a possibility.

That first year I made a lot of trips to Mt. Vernon for various reasons--planning meetings, information meetings for the public, and so on. ... Watching the Mt. Vernon Fellowship grow from a tiny nucleus of dedicated people to a vibrant, thriving community offering alternatives to traditional religion in that area was such a pleasure! Every time I went to the Fellowship, I felt as if I had "given birth" and was watching my "child" grow and flourish. Of course there were many "parents" for this "child", and it couldn't have happened without a really determined group of people in both Carbondale and the Mt. Vernon area.

When we lost Randy, I felt for the fledgling Fellowship and was concerned if it could survive this blow. You not only survived, you thrived, and Randy would be so very proud of all of you ! I so much wish that I could be there to share some of this year's festivities with you, but I have health problems that make travel difficult. I will be thinking about you all and following what goes on through Facebook. Here's to ten more wonderful years!

I love you all!

We are grateful to that “really determined group of people” who laid the foundation for the Fellowship we enjoy today.





Advancing human rights is the work of many joining hands

The UUSC Link

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is an independent human rights organization, supported through the volunteer efforts and financial gifts of its members and supporters, and linked to UU congregations through local representatives. The four focus areas of its work include: *Rights in Humanitarian Crises; Civil Liberties; Economic Justice; and Environmental Justice.*

Not only are we at MVUUF celebrating an anniversary. The UUSC is celebrating its 75th anniversary. Did you know that UUSC got its start by responding to Nazi oppression during World War II? Or that UUSC hosted congressional delegations to Central America in the 1970s that helped change U.S. policy? Delve into UUSC's origins at <http://www.uusc.org/celebrating-75-years-of-advancing-justice>.

The Good Buy (UUSC's online store) spotlights the good work of [United By Blue \(UBB\)](#), a Philadelphia, PA-based company which focuses on ocean and waterway pollution. *One Green Planet* shares a staggering statistic: "700 marine species might go extinct because of plastic pollution." UBB's mission of removing one pound of trash from U.S. waterways for every product sold is a simple way to have a tangible and measurable impact on one of the most pressing environmental issues facing the planet.

So far, UBB has hosted 116 cleanups and removed over 200,000 pounds of trash from rivers, streams, creeks, and beaches across 21 U.S. states. This spring, you can sign up for upcoming cleanups on the Delaware River, Meadow Lake, Conococheague Creek, and other locations. Can't volunteer? [Make an impact for water rights by purchasing products](#) from the Good Buy, and they'll remove a pound of trash from waterways on your behalf at one of the cleanups.

To learn more about UUSC, take a look at the **Choosing to Make A Difference bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall, visit the UUSC website at www.uusc.org or on Facebook, attend a meeting of the Social Justice Interest Group each second Sunday after social hour, and watch this space at *UUMatters*.**

Donna Beaumont, *UUSC Local Representative*

UU Women's Connection: Spring Conference June 5-7

Marsha Forrest, Native American and Mayan teacher, healer and spiritual guide will be the keynote for the UU Women's Connection Spring Conference to be held at Pilgrim Park at Princeton IL, June 5-7. Her conference theme: "Journeys of the Spirit" is about answering the call to the ongoing adventure and our place in the Circle of Life. Her workshop, "Aligning Ourselves with the Natural World," outlines the teachings of the seasons and the connections of that season to the directions, the elements, the natural world, the spiritual realms, and one's place within the Circle of Life. An "Earthing" workshop is planned, as well. Contact Debbie Czarnopys-White, bdcw@frontiernet.net or 201-3753, for more info and registration.

March Board Meeting News

The Board discussed Paul Oakley's request for a contribution to the Emerson Unitarian Chapel in West County St. Louis. They are asking a few UU a congregations to donate \$25,000. The board decided to not make this decision, but to have Paul take it to the congregation the next Sunday. A quorum of board members were present on Sunday, Mar 15 and came to a consensus that we would recommend a donation of \$300. This was announced following the Sunday Service. Then Paul gave further details of the predicament that brought about the need of help. There were questions asked and answered appropriately. It was decided to donate \$300 as board recommended. Also there were personal contributions made. Paul was pleased to announce last Sunday that there is now \$600 to send to EUC. If anyone else wants to donate, please contact Paul Oakley.

Building Your Own Theology Sunday Meetings

The Programing committee is checking for interest in the [Building Your Own Theology](#) program, a ten-week discovery group, possibly for this spring on Sundays following the Social Hour. Some of our Fellowship have been through the course, early in the life of our fellowship. If interested let Glenda, Donna, or Roberta know.

Unitarian Universalists claim no statement of doctrine, and believe there is no one right way to lead a religious or spiritual life. Each individual's spiritual journey is valued. Unitarian-Universalists believe in reason, freedom, equality, and love. Visitors are welcome to this gathering of community, seeking peace and justice for all persons.



MVUUF Book Group

Plans are proceeding for the first book group gathering in the latter half of April to discuss *"The Red Tent"*, by Anna Diamant. To make the time as inclusive as possible, if you're interested to attend, please indicate which day or days of the week would work best. Also please indicate a time. We'll share information received and arrive at the best mutually agreeable time possible. Please respond with an email to Debbie at bdcw@frontiernet.net or call her cell at [618-201-3753](tel:618-201-3753).



Book Review: *A God That Could Be Real: Spirituality, Science, and the Future of Our Planet* By Nancy Abrams Published March 5, 2015 200 p. ISBN 978-0807073391

Review by: Leland R. Beaumont



One of the most intriguing books I have read in some time, this book shows us a way forward toward a coherence that transcends the divisive religious doctrines that deny the well-established truths of the universe and the sterile scientific models that ignore or dismiss the power of spirituality.

Historically theologians did their best to make their image of God consistent with the universe as they understood it to be. Today our understanding of the universe has advanced far beyond what the gods of traditional religions explain. This book proposes a concept of god that is up-to-date with our present understanding of the universe.

The book emerges from a dilemma faced by the author. Because her husband is Joel Primack, a prominent physicist who studies the origins of the universe, she is conversant with up-to-date research describing the origins of the universe and its composition, including dark energy and dark matter. Based on her husband's research, she has total confidence in the accuracy of these scientific findings. She lived as an atheist most of her life. However, recently she has been able to recover from an addiction to overeating using the spiritual approach of a twelve-step program. She conceived of the higher power called for in the program as a "loving but unbullshitable witness to my thoughts."

Abrams abandons the tired question "Does God Exist?" as a hopeless distraction and instead pursues the question "Could anything actually exist in the universe, as science understands it, that is worthy of being called God?" The price of a real God is that we have to consciously let go of what makes it unreal.

Rejecting intelligence, tool making, and language as the defining characteristic of humans, she proposes that humans are unique because we aspire to something more. After illustrating the concept of emergence she presents the core thesis of the book: God is endlessly emerging from the staggering complexity of all humanity's aspirations across time. God is all that drives us forward toward what we can be and what we want to be.

Abrams gives practical suggestions for renewing and reinventing religion. After describing actions to bring religion into harmony with reality, she identifies three sacred goals: 1) to protect our extraordinary jewel of a planet, 2) to do our best for future generations, and 3) to identify with humanity's story. She then outlines a "Planetary Morality," considering the essential question: "How can we individually expand our moral sense to care about our collective effects at size scales and timescales we are just beginning to grasp?"

This book is both poetic and scientific. Within a rigorous scientific framework she passionately discusses spirituality, prayer, love, identity, common bonds, heaven, and hell. "For the first time we can have a coherent picture of reality that meets our highest scientific standards, reveals unexplored terrain in ourselves, has a meaningful place for an awesome God, and frees our spirits to strike out with fervor— and not a moment too soon."

Read this important and thought-provoking book. It is boldly conceived, well written, clearly argued, and backed by reliable evidence.

Open Minds

Open Minds Discussions

The Social Justice Interest Group hosts the Open Minds discussion series as a monthly meeting on the third Wednesday **at 7 p.m.** at the fellowship building, to encourage exploration and discussion of social justice and related issues. The series is open to the public.

The April discussion on Watersheds is postponed. For May, presentation and discussion is on the topic of Healthcare, led by Sue Trotter. For June, the topic is Genetically Modified Organisms.

If you are interested in presenting an Open Minds program, please talk with Donna Beaumont or Vito Mastrangelo to schedule a date. We are glad to help with logistics. We are interested in supporting informed participation in the democratic process.

Other UU Matters

Considering MVUUF membership? Please ask a Board of Trustees member for a prospective member folder, or a membership form.



Library Matters

The MVUUF Library catalogue is available online at www.librarything.com/catalog/MVUUF. Recent donations to the library have been added to the LibraryThing catalog at and are now available on the shelves at the fellowship.

Committee Matters

Nominating

Vito Mastrangelo, Chair

Religious Education

Deb Czarnopys-White, Chair

Memorial

Theresa Rowe, Chair

Welcoming & Hospitality

Terry Schwitz, Co-chair

Theresa Rowe, Co-chair

Glenda Eubanks, Co-chair

Publications & Library

Nina Peacock, Chair

Building & Grounds

Greg Gibbs, Co-chair

Terry Schwitz, Co-chair

Music *

Ellen Silverman,

Co-chair

Programming

Glenda Eubanks, Co-chair

Donna Beaumont, Co-chair

LGBT

Deb Czarnopys-White, Co-chair

Contact committee chair via information@mtvernonuuf.org

Newspaper Announcement Guidelines

Submissions for the Friday "church news" sections of both the Sentinel and the Register-News are sent on the Monday morning prior to the service or event. **If you are leading a service, or planning a Fellowship event, please email your information to Debbie at: bdcw@frontiernet.net by 8 p.m., on the prior Sunday.** A few sentences is fine. Many new attendees have told us that they found MVUUF through articles in the newspaper, so this is an important way to let people know what is happening.

Newsletter Guidelines

Please email submissions for *UU Matters* to [marji.gibbs\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:marji.gibbs(at)gmail.com) by **Friday, April 24** for the May issue. **Please email April dates for the website as soon as available.** If you are leading a service or speaking in a service, please send title, date, and description of your service/sermon. If you are coordinating a special meeting or event that is open to the public, please submit the date and description of the event.

UU Matters is an opportunity for you to share your personal work relating to Unitarian Universalism, to the MVUUF congregation, or to liberal religious thought in general. Please consider sharing your photography, poems, short stories, "deep thoughts," favorite quotes, etc.

Treasury Matters

Financial contributions may be made in the round bowl on the back table in the Fellowship Hall. If you would like to mail a contribution, please mail to: MVUUF, 1600 Isabella, Mt. Vernon, IL, 62864. Please make checks payable to MVUUF. If you would like your offering to be used for a specific purpose, please clearly mark that purpose on the memo line on your check or on the envelope in which you place your offering.

Contact Information

For more information about the Mt. Vernon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship or to be added to our mailing list, please contact us in one of the following ways:

1. By Mail: The Mt. Vernon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 1600 Isabella Mt. Vernon, IL 62864
2. By visiting our website: www.mtvernonuuf.org
3. By emailing our Fellowship: information@mtvernonuuf.org

