



# Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

November 2014

Vol. 21 No. 11

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Office hours:  
Monday - Thursday,  
1:00 - 4:30 pm



**Monthly Theme:**  
Spiritual Growth  
~ 3rd Principle:  
Acceptance of  
one another and  
encouragement to  
spiritual growth

Minister's Column  
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President's  
Column  
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Committees' and  
Groups' News  
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Deadline for the  
next newsletter  
is November 20.  
Please send articles  
to news@uufames.  
org. For a current  
calendar, see www.  
uufames.org

## Sunday Service times are 9:15 and 11:00.

### **2 Guides Along Our Spiritual Pathway**

Melody Griesdorn, Sarah Carlson

There are people who passed before us and have inspired us as our paths crossed. Fellowship members will share stories to honor the memory of those who influenced their own spiritual growth.

### **9 Apps for the Soul**

Rev. Kent McKusick

The great mysteries of life remain. The way in which we explore the great questions of life and how we connect to one another is constantly changing. How are technological advancements and applications changing our spiritual journeys? Is technology the new theology?

### **16 Holy Wholly Holey**

Toby Ewing

We walk on it without giving it a thought, but it feeds us and will receive us when we die. We deploy troops overseas to protect American soil, while letting tons of it wash down the Mississippi every year. If you think the topic is dull as dirt, come prepared to find that your opinion was groundless! This service will explore spiritual aspects of the soil and how we Earthlings relate to it.

### **23 What is Spirituality?**

Rev. Kent McKusick

On New Member Sunday, this service will explore the notion of spirituality. Elizabeth Lesser, cofounder of the Omega Institute asks, "If spirituality is not religion or cynicism or sentimentality or narcissism, then what is it?"

### **30 Transylvanian Harvest**

Rev. Kent McKusick

Come honor our partner church in Tordátfalva, Transylvania and hear first-hand stories from Ministerial Candidate Linda Barnes who recently visited Transylvania as part of her seminary experience. A traditional Harvest communion will be offered as a way of remembering and celebrating the connectedness of past, present and future.

## **Ninth Iowa Meal Sunday, November 9 at about 12:20 pm**

It will be a potluck meal with a focus on locally-grown ingredients and home made breads. No reservations nor charge. Simply bring food to share and join us in the Fireside Room. Entertainment will include music by Rick Exner, a short video by Helen Gunderson, and door prizes. On Sunday, November 2, there will be a sharing table of locally-grown produce that people can take on a first-come-first-served basis to prepare for the meal. The Meals Group includes coordinators Sue Ann Peck and Jan Vine plus Peggy Earnshaw and Helen Gunderson. Jonah Powell and Alexandria Coffman are coordinating the bread extravaganza.

- Submitted by Helen Gunderson

## The theme for November is Spiritual Growth

As human beings, we are always in a state of transformation: physically, emotionally and spiritually. Growing our understanding and experience of spirituality does not have to be initiated during a crisis of faith or a time of fear, loneliness, lostness or isolation. For me, difficult personal or professional times are reminders that I need to reconnect with my inner and deeper self, my ground of being, and the sense of who I am. Having a daily spiritual practice is an opportunity to experience all the possibilities of who I can become.

During a time of crisis in seminary, I sought out the advice of a spiritual director, a person who helps another discover the wisdom, encouragement, and discernment of all that is holy in one's life. I told her how lost and derailed I felt. She gently laughed and said, "You haven't lost your faith or even fallen off the path. You're just moving too fast. Think of your life as a speeding train. The view and images are blurred because you're moving so fast. Find moments in your day to pause and savor the view. This will help you rediscover and see the path you're on." Knowing my love of the outdoors, she suggested that I pause and give thanks whenever I became aware of nature and beauty around me in the city. I stopped whenever I felt the warmth of the sun on my face. I stopped whenever I saw a sunset, an inviting cloud in the blue sky, a flower or flower garden while walking in the city, the stars at night, a hummingbird. The practice gradually expanded. I started pausing to give thanks for kindness extended, for meals, fresh air, a stranger's smile, for the work of unseen hands. These momentary pauses of gratitude are affirming and strengthen my sense of the holy in life...this full and richly rewarding life. In one of my favorite poems, *The Summer Day*, Mary Oliver writes, "I don't know exactly what a prayer is. I do know how to pay attention...how to be idle and blessed."<sup>1</sup>

My spiritual practice is to find the time to pay attention and be momentarily idle and feel blessed. I take time from my day to reflect on something I've read, I pause before eating...sometimes playfully...sometimes formally...sometimes silently. I greet the morning and end my day in silent reflection or prayer (if you will) to recognize moments of grace, struggle, appreciation, or moments when I am less than the person I want to be. Just before sleep...I try to clear my mind of every thought...and keep reminding myself to be quiet and still in the darkness. Before sleep, I sometimes remember the words of Anne Lamott: "Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: you don't give up."<sup>2</sup>

There are many ways to be on a spiritual path. We will explore several during this month. The third UU Principle calls us to be accepting and encouraging of each other, especially as we work to engage the deeper meaning of our lives as individuals connected in community. We are entering the season of shorter days and decreasing light, a fine time for spiritual reflection and growth. May we find hope in each other as we anticipate the returning light.

- Rev. Kent McKusick

1 Mary Oliver, "The Summer Day," *New and Selected Poems* (Boston: Skinner House Press, 1992).

2 [http://thinkexist.com/quotation/hope\\_begins\\_in\\_the\\_dark-the\\_stubborn\\_hope\\_that\\_if/12721.html](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/hope_begins_in_the_dark-the_stubborn_hope_that_if/12721.html)

### **Spiritual Growth: Recommended Reading**

- Alexander, Scott W. *Everyday Spiritual Practice*. Boston: Skinner House, 1999.
- Andrew, Elizabeth J. *Writing the Sacred Journey: The Art and Practice of Spiritual Memoir*. Boston: Skinner House, 2005.
- Belletini, Mark. *Sonata for Voice and Silence: Meditations*. Boston: Skinner House, 2008.
- Bennet, Sage. *Wisdom Walk: Nine Practices for Creating Peace and Balance from the World's Spiritual Traditions*. Novato: New World Library, 2007.
- Braestrup, Kate. *Beginner's Grace: Bringing Prayer to Life*. New York: Free Press, 2010.
- Dalai Lama. *How to Practice the Way to a Meaningful Life*. New York: Atria Books, 2002.
- Harris, Rachel. *20-Minute Retreats: Revive Yourself in Just Minutes a Day with Simple Self-Led Exercises*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2000.
- Housden, Roger. *Ten Poems to Change Your Life*. New York: Harmony Books, 2001.
- Kushner, Harold. *To Life: A Celebration of Jewish Being and Thinking*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1999.
- Lesser, Elizabeth. *The Seekers Guide: Making Your Life a Spiritual Adventure*. New York: Villard, 1999.
- Nouwen, Henri. *Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith*. New York: Harper One, 2006.
- Thurman, Howard. *With Head and Heart*. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1979.

## From the President

Complexity and change continues to be a theme of life at the fellowship. A new administrator should soon be hired, we are in the search process for a director of religious education, and people weave in and out.

Fall is always a struggle for me as I'm never ready for the change that comes. The cold may be welcome to some, but it always comes too early, with shortening days that drain my energy. I struggle with this, as everyone in and out of the fellowship has their set of struggles. However, it is beautiful outside, with no mosquitos biting. As the famous quote reminds, "The only thing that is constant is change". I hope I continue to embrace the complexity that change brings, and of course, remember to be as kind as possible, as everyone has their own challenges to deal with. No one is perfect, but we are all in this together.

To reflect and help us become better through this time, make sure to join us for discussions with a midwest region consultant on November 8.

~ Amber Anderson Mba, President, Board of Directors

## Board Highlights for Newsletter

The Board of Directors held its monthly meeting on October 8th. Following are the highlights from the meeting:

- Good news—we have a Vice President!! The board unanimously approved Jan Vine as the 2014-15 Vice President. The nominating committee is now looking for someone to fill Jan's board member seat.
- The Finance Committee completed the annual internal review. Thank you to the committee members for all your hard work.
- Sara Schaefer has been hired as our Religious Education Coordinator while we search for a new Director of Religious Education. Congratulations, Sara!

The next board meeting will be held November 12th. Fellowship members are welcome to attend.

~ Becky Coppoc, Secretary

## Six Degrees of Separation – Six Degrees of Connection

On Saturday, November 8th, meet with UUA MidAmerica consultant Patricia D'Auria to share your hopes and wishes, fears and concerns for UUFA. How might we build a community of connection, transparency and trust while engaging our passions for work in social justice, religious education and spiritual development? There will be a general session from 9 to 10 am followed by small group listening sessions at 10:15 and 12:45 (more if needed). To attend a small group session, please sign up by 4:30 pm on Thursday, November 6th. Sign-up sheets will be available this Sunday in the Fireside Room, or send an e-mail to [uufa@uufames.org](mailto:uufa@uufames.org).

The UUFA Board is pleased to bring Patricia D'Auria to meet with you. Patricia has served as a consultant in the Central Midwest District since 2007. She is a member of UU Church West in Brookfield, WI, where she coordinated the Small Group Ministry Program for seven years and is currently in her third year of coordinating the UU Wellspring program. Professionally, she is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist working with individuals, couples and families.

Childcare will be available for the general session. Please let us know if you would like childcare for a small group session.

Thank you for your participation in this important event.

~ the UUFA Board of Directors

## Dustin Berger Memorial Library

*The Omnivore's Dilemma*, by Michael Pollan, asks us to consider what we eat. What to have for dinner affects every omnivore...you can eat some things...but should you? Our culture has derived from people drawn from different populations each with its own food culture. This has led to three principle food chains - industrial, organic, and hunter-gatherer. These food chains have multiple effects on humans. Obesity and diabetes are more prevalent farther down the socioeconomic scale since the industrial food chain has made energy dense foods the cheapest in the market.

In our state, Iowa, there is great emphasis on a major crop....corn! There are more than 45,000 items in the average super market and more than one-fourth contain corn. This book discusses the multiple uses for corn including high fructose corn syrup. Additionally the book discusses the development of animals for the market including using corn feed lots to "fatten for market" as opposed to grass grazing.

Hunting and gathering is still used in some parts of the world. Some animals are hunted--such as deer, ducks, and geese, and used as nourishment for humans. Today, gatherers usually work on more specialized things such as mushrooms.

Many people assume that organically grown food is less hard on the environment. However, organic food is nearly as drenched in fossil fuel as its conventional counterpart. The food industry burns nearly one-fifth of all petroleum consumed in the US (about the same as cars use) – mostly in processing and moving the food around.

Reading this book will broaden your knowledge of foods, biases, choices, and examine the impact of them on our culture. It is shelved at Dewey 810 in our library.

- Reviewed by Jane Johnson

## Conscientious Crafters

Conscientious Crafters: Our group will not meet in November because of a conflict with the Iowa Meal, which is scheduled for November 9, the second Sunday when we have regularly met. We are currently rethinking our schedule of meetings and events. Contact Sue Ann Peck or Mary Richards if you have questions or comments.

-Submitted by Sue Ann Peck

## Women's Book Group

On November 3, the UU Women's Book Group will meet to discuss the Earnest Cline novel *Ready Player One* at 7:00 PM at the UUFA. This novel set in a dystopian future, is fast-paced, entertaining, and suspenseful. The author weaves the story of a young computer hacker who enters a contest to win the untold wealth of a deceased genius and architect of the a virtual universe that the people of the real world depend upon for survival.

Please join us for another fun discussion! Questions? Call Barbi Greenlaw 292-5317 or email at [barbi.greenlaw@gmail.com](mailto:barbi.greenlaw@gmail.com)

December 1 *Here if You Need Me* by Kate Bruerstrup

January 5 *One Summer: America 1927* by Bill Bryson

February 2 *Empire of the Summer Moon* by S.C. Gwynne

March 2 *Orange is the New Black* by Piper Kerman

April 6 *100 Year Old Man Who Climbed Out a Window and Disappeared* by Jonas Jonassen

May 4 *Mary Coin: A Novel* by Marisa Silver

June 1 *The Wives of Los Alamos* by TaraShea Nesbit

- Submitted by Barbi Greenlaw

## Iowa UU Witness/Advocacy Network News

We had a wonderful Launch Celebration!

Please contact [TerryLeeLowman@gmail.com](mailto:TerryLeeLowman@gmail.com) if you're interesting in working for these justice issues. Or give him a call at 515-441-9844.

**Affordable Care Act (ACA):** Iowa is next to the last in getting people signed up so again this fall, we're working to help expand healthcare to all Iowans. Starting November 15, we need volunteers to assist people get signed up. For more information, contact Terry.

**Anti-bullying:** Iowa's anti-bullying law was passed in 2007 and now it needs updating. We want a law that incorporates best practices and that means the bill can't have parental notification (parents can be bullies too, especially for LGBT children). We want your help collaborating with OneIowa and Interfaith Alliance to help make this happen.

**Driving Permits for Undocumented Immigrants:** All drivers having legal identification, meeting requirements for driving and being able to carry insurance are benefits for everyone. To function in Iowa, driving is virtually a necessity. We want your help to prod our legislators. We join a broad coalition: the ACLU, law enforcement (who want positive IDs) and immigrant advocates.

**Death with Dignity:** Although Death with Dignity could be a long term goal for IUUWAN, we've just added Tami Haught to our team to make this happen. She is receiving the "Friends of Iowa Civil Rights" award along with Tom Harkin. <http://www.accesslineamerica.com/tag/friends-of-iowa-civil-rights/> She was the lead lobbyist who got another long shot law changed. Here's an article about her work <http://thegazette.com/subject/news/new-hiv-transmission-law-makes-iowa-model-for-nation-20140529>

First Unitarian in Des Moines has been working on Death with Dignity, but to make it happen, we will need to build a bigger coalition and Iowa UUs will need to be engaged.

Sign up for our emails either on [facebook.com/IUUWAN](https://www.facebook.com/IUUWAN) or on our website, [iuuwan.com](http://iuuwan.com) And, of course, you can "like" our facebook page, too.

- Submitted by Terry Lowman, Lead Organizer, Iowa UU Witness/Advocacy Network, IUUWAN

## Good Neighbor News

You are invited to attend the Good Neighbor Combined Choir Benefit Concert on Sunday afternoon, November 9th, at 2:00 pm at Bethesda Lutheran Church, 1517 Northwestern Avenue. Doors open at 1:30 pm.

Please join us for this annual concert that has become a fall favorite drawing both audiences and performers who appreciate good choral music. This year 15 ensembles from the Ames area will perform. Ms. Lesley Lackore, Music Director at United Church of Christ-Congregational Church, will direct the combined concert choir for the afternoon finale. A free will donation will be received to benefit Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance, Inc., and its mission of providing emergency rent, utility, food, and gas assistance in an atmosphere of dignity, comfort and encouragement of Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance, Inc. Our own Fellowship Voices will be part of the concert!



We hope to see you there. For more information about the work of Good Neighbor, visit [www.gnea.org](http://www.gnea.org).

- Submitted by Lynne Van Valin



## Memory, Social Justice, and connecting the Past and Future.

The following announcement appeared in a recent weekly update and sparked a wave of historical memory in me. This is what it said, “After many years of organizing Tuesday meals at the Emergency Residence Project, David Den Haan and Carolyn Myers are stepping down. A coordinator is needed to organize volunteers to bring food on Tuesday nights (around 5 pm for around 10 residents). Ideally the volunteer stays and has dinner with the residents, but that is not required. If this is a way you would like to help your community, please contact the UUFA. Depending on the response from the Fellowship, the UUFA needs to decide if we will continue this mission.”

This is an accurate statement of the situation today, and great thanks for the dedication of Carolyn Myers and David Den Haan to a relationship between the UUFA and the Emergency Residence Project that goes back before it was established in 1987. At that time Fellowship member, Lynn Avant, was director of United Way and was active in the negotiations to start a “homeless shelter” in Ames. It was also the year that our first settled minister, Sydney Morris, was with us and she actively supported the new ERP director Vic Moss. Fellowship members helped move furniture, our FROGS (youth group) painted a room, and we provided a permanent member of the ERP board (some of these have been Joan Matthews, Carole Kazmierski, and Greta Anderson) Diane Mumm started the weekly meals with people staying to meet the residents (like a family dinner at the old house where the ERP is located). Diane operated in the era of the clipboards (passed during Sunday programs to the consternation of ministers) so she always got lots of sign-ups, and she called on Monday to remind them of their Tuesday obligation. JoAnn Barnes and Chris White carried this forward (without passing clipboards) until Carolyn and David stepped in.

This is a Social Justice history that we can be proud of, but things really have changed in twenty-five years, so I called Vic to see whether the meals were still needed. In a long and nostalgic conversation I came up with the following things to consider:

1. With the advent of Food at First, which serves meals 365 days a year, the need to feed men (families and women live elsewhere) dinner at the shelter is no longer essential every day.
2. There is a psychology class that volunteers on Tuesdays a semester at a time.
3. ERP is one of two food distribution places that can accept prepared food – leftovers from catered events etc., so they often have food in their freezer available.

So why shouldn't we drop it? What Vic talked about (and I know from experience) were the relationships – the Fellowship families he had met over the years—and the education about homelessness that those who bring the meals get. “Homeless” doesn't equal “unemployed.” Many of these men have temporary jobs or even permanent jobs but are saving money for rent deposits. Others are just passing through. Usually one or two are eager to tell their stories. It's a way to naturally interact with people you would never “see.” You don't have to fix a fancy meal – in fact, it's probably better if you just fix a single hearty dish. There's salad, bread, and dessert already at the shelter. Just come with your family and learn.

- Submitted by Susan Franzen

### The Caring Corner

One of the “arms” of the Caring Network is the card group. We have around 15 people that send cards when people need them. We use milestones and word of mouth to determine who needs some card. We also need members of the congregation to let us know of needs. You can e-mail me at [lrvanvalin@gmail.com](mailto:lrvanvalin@gmail.com) with names or call me at 296-1821. Several people have told me how much cards have meant to them. They show people care, are not intrusive and can be looked at again and again. If you would like to be a part of the group that sends cards please let me know and I will add you to the group. If you do not know someone, you do not have to send a card. We are all part of our congregation Caring Network in some way. - Submitted by Lynne Van Valin



#### UUFA Caring Network

[caring@uufames.org](mailto:caring@uufames.org)  
515.292.5960 (main office)

The Rev. Kent McKusick  
[minister@uufames.org](mailto:minister@uufames.org)  
515.292.8929

*Sharing Our Caring*

# UUFA In Home Potlucks begin!

Would you like to get to know other UUFA members and friends better? What better way than sharing a meal together. We have opportunities for hosting and attending in home potlucks through May!

## UUFA Fellowship Potluck Signup 2014-15

### Attendee Information

Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Number in your party: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I/we would like to attend potlucks in the following months:

\_\_\_ October \_\_\_ November \_\_\_ December \_\_\_ January \_\_\_ February \_\_\_ March \_\_\_ April \_\_\_ May

It is 100% OK to sign up just to attend! You don't have to host.

### Hosting Information (optional)

How many guests can you accommodate (not including yourself/your family): \_\_\_\_\_

Are you able to accommodate children at your event: Yes No

General location of your home (i.e. West Ames, Downtown, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

I/we would like to host a potluck in one of the following months:

\_\_\_ October \_\_\_ November \_\_\_ December \_\_\_ January \_\_\_ February \_\_\_ March \_\_\_ April \_\_\_ May

I'm really into potluck hosting, so I could host more than once: Yes No

## Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

### Our Mission

*We are a diverse community of caring individuals who come together to provide an environment that nurtures and educates our children, stimulates the study and practice of ethical and liberal religious ideals, supports the creative spirit in us all, and demonstrates concern for the environment and the broader community.*

**Minister:** the Rev. Kent McKusick .....minister@uufames.org – 515-292-8929

**Youth Coordinator:** Julia Collett .....youth@uufames.org - 515-292-5960

**Congregational Administrator:** ..... uufa@uufames.org – 515-292-5960

**Projects Coordinator:** Diana Crosswait .....projects@uufames.org – 515-292-5960

**Caring Concerns** ..... caring@uufames.org – 515-292-5960

**Campus Group** .....campus@uufames.org – 515-292-5960

**Board of Directors** ..... board@uufames.org

### Officers of the Board

President	Amber Anderson Mba
Vice president	Jan Vine
Past president	Joel Geske
Secretary	Becky Coppoc
Treasurer	David Slade

### Board Members

Joydeep Bhattacharya	through 2016
Andrew Denison	through 2015
Jill Mortensen	through 2016
Wesley Shank	through 2015
(open)	through 2016
Thea Brenner	youth representative

**Next Regular Board Meeting:  
November 12, 2014, 6:30 pm**