

The Fellowship Focus

Monthly newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Elkhart
August 2023



Meet the Board

Members are: Pam Wycliff- President,
Laura Snow-President Elect,
Ken Clayborn-Treasurer,
Lorna Lane-Secretary,
Dwight Fish-Trustee,
Linda Gill-Trustee,
Taylor Chadwick-Trustee

Also pictured in photo from the Retreat held 7/22/2023:
Mary Adams, Chuck Bower, and Annette Long

Sundays at UUFE

Sunday, 8/6, 10 am: “Building Relationships in Community”, Luana Leftwich, Luana Leftwich is Senior Director for Strategic Partnerships at the Boys and Girls Club of Elkhart County. Luana will speak about the important work of the Boys and Girls Club and the opportunities for mentoring and volunteering. Following the service, coffee, tea, and refreshments will be in the Gathering Place, and our Meditation program will be held at 11:45.

Sunday, 8/13, 10 am: “Tree of Life – Rooted in Love”, Rev. Carolyn Hunt The Rev. Carolyn Hunt will return to our pulpit with a message entitled, “Tree of Life – Rooted in Love”. We look forward to her message! Following the service, coffee, tea, and refreshments will be in the Gathering Place, and our Meditation program will be held at 11:45.

Sunday, 8/20, 10 am: “Flip Flops, Pop Tops, and Life in General”, Rev. Dr. Jimmy Clifton The Rev. Dr. Jimmy Clifton will return to our pulpit with a message entitled, “Flip Flops, Pop Tops, and Life in General”. This will be very interesting! We will also have 3rd Sunday Joys and Sorrows. Following the service, join us for Potluck Sunday lunch. Please bring a dish to share for potluck lunch, and if you forget, don’t worry, there is always plenty. There will be no Meditation program this Sunday.

Sunday, 8/27, 10 am: “We Would Be One”, Marianne Rauch Marianne Rauch is a friend of our Fellowship, and will share a message entitled, “We Would Be One.” Is this a hint for one of the hymns we'll be singing? Come to find out, and our accompanist will be Marva Netherland! We will have the 4th Sunday Candle, as well. Following the service, coffee, tea, and refreshments will be in the Gathering Place, and our Meditation program will be held at 11:45.

Sneak Peeks beyond August:

Sunday, 9/3: Carl Rust speaking on an Education topic.

Sunday, 9/10: Water Communion

Sunday, 9/17: Rev. Izzy Harbin returns to our pulpit, with her congregation joining us for potluck Sunday

Sunday, 9/24: Breanna Allen, Executive Director of Tolson Center, "Revitalizing Tolson: Opening Doors to Bright Futures"

August 2023

Birthdays

		1 7pm Book Club	2 6pm Membership	3 6pm Yoga	4	5
6 10am Service Coffee Hr 1145 Meditation	7	8 2pm Science & Society 7pm Worship & Arts	9	10 <i>Pam Wycliff</i> 6pm Yoga	11	12 <i>Sue McDonald</i>
13 10am Service Coffee Hr 1145 Meditation	14 <i>Abbie French</i>	15	16	17 6pm Yoga	18	19 10am Memorial Service for Charlie Bussard
20 10am Service Potluck	21	22 1pm Endowment 2pm Science & Society	23 11:30 Feasters	24 6pm Yoga	25 FOCUS INFO DUE	26 <i>Bill Schmidt</i>
27 10am Service Coffee Hr 1145 Meditation	28	29 <i>Carolyne Andersohn Karen Kehr</i>	30 <i>Sheila Shaw Chuck Bower</i>	31 6pm Yoga		

Science And Society
from Ken Clayborn

In August we will investigate the human brain with two Nova episodes.

On Tuesday August 8 th at 2 PM in the Gathering Place we will view the documentary: Your Brain - “Perception Deception”.

Is what you see real? Join neuroscientist Heather Berlin on a quest to understand how your brain shapes your reality, and why you can't always trust what you perceive. Learn the surprising tricks and shortcuts the brain takes to help us. (54 minutes)

On Tuesday August 22 at 2 PM in the Gathering Place we will view the documentary: Your Brain - “Who's in Control”?

Are you in control of your brain, or is your brain controlling you? Dive into the latest research on the subconscious with neuroscientist Heather Berlin to see what's really driving the decisions you make.

Meditation Group
from Ken Clayborn

The meditation group will meet at 11:45am, in the RE classroom, on Sundays August 6th , 13th , and 27th. We will take off for the potluck on the third Sunday (August 20th) so we can all enjoy the meal together. We generally share thoughts on our meditation practices and then join in a group Guided Meditation. The sessions usually last about an hour. There is no charge for this program, and all are welcome.

Celebration of Life: Charlie Bussard

We will celebrate the life of Charlie Bussard with a memorial service. It is planned for Saturday, August 19th, 10 am, in the Sanctuary, and weather permitting, with time in the Memorial Garden viewing the beautiful fence he built.

Charlie became a member in 1993 and passed away on March 23rd, 2023. At this time, we are not aware that any family members will participate. The service will be led by Chuck Bower, Carolyne Andersohn, and Karen Kehr. If you would like to help with refreshments or cleaning after the service, please contact Chuck at 574-361-6166.

BLESSING BAGS PROJECT

In recent discussion with the Care Committee, Karen Cripe suggested assisting the two local Lutheran Churches, Augustana and Grace, with an on-going project they operate for the homeless of Elkhart. The Committee agreed to go ahead and support this project with the help of UUFE member donations.

The first distribution for 2023 was June 15 and was very successful.

The tubs for collection will remain in the church Gathering area throughout the year. The next distribution will be in the early fall – date to be announced.

The tubs are clearly marked for the items to be placed in them. Bring things from Sunday to Sunday so we can reach our fall goal for distribution.

Thanks, Karen and Steve Cripe

See Side with Love Social Justice Activities in Atlanta including the following

#LetAtlantaBreathe: Stopping Cop City & Defending The Forest

LOVE RESISTS ACTION

August 3, 2023 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM ET, Online

"Cop City" is a \$90 million militarized urban warfare training complex, proposed by the Atlanta Police Foundation, in partnership with the Atlanta City Government and a committee of more than 40 corporate donors. The planned site is in the heart of a predominantly Black neighborhood and will destroy 381 acres of remaining green space in Atlanta. The 2023 Action of Immediate Witness Stop Cop City calls on all UUs to join ongoing organizing efforts to put a stop to this project. This event will provide background on Cop City and why all UUs around the country need to take action to stop cop city and other efforts to increase militarization of public safety. <https://secure.everyaction.com/P6mECF41Xkq6-p1YT1hUJA2>

Social Justice Outreach

One of the outcomes from the recent Leadership Retreat is the recommendation to resurrect the Social Justice Outreach Committee. Anyone interested in helping on this committee please contact Ken Clayborn (kclayborn52@gmail.com) or Taylor Chadwick (t_chadwick@hotmail.com) by August 25th. We anticipate it will include some of the things we currently do, such as road clean up, voter registration, Blessing Boxes, Women's Shelter Collection etc. We may wish to expand to other organized activities such as the Elkhart Crop Walk, expanded CCS volunteer work or additional activities.

A meeting will be held in late August or early September to discuss organizational details, including electing a chair if possible, and listing details for future activities. More details will be communicated as we gauge the level of interest.

UUFEB Board/Committee Chair Retreat July 22, 2023

from Pam Wycliff

The Board conducted a retreat for the 2023-2024 Fellowship year and Committee Chairs were invited to participate. After getting acquainted and reviewing the past year's accomplishments and obstacles, retreat participants began reviewing homework which led to goal setting for the coming year. The following major goals were developed:

- Affirming and continuing the Search Committee's process to procure a part-time, contracted minister;
- Re-energizing our Religious Education program, building a committee to bring children's RE, family activities, and adult education. An organizing meeting was held after the service July 23rd. Our goal is to build a formal program to be in place by September 1st.
- Another major goal is to build a Social Justice & Outreach committee & program, with an organizing meeting to be conducted by September 30th.
- Another major goal is to revisit & clarify our Mission Statement and Vision. We will seek input through small group meetings.

At our conclusion, we summarized the results of the retreat, followed by a debrief of our communication and behavior. Hard work was necessary and fun was also derived. Thank you to Dwight Fish and Oxana Werbiansky for supplying food and drinks to keep us going. The retreat was held at the Elkhart Environmental Center, and a donation is being given to the Center for their generosity.

The retreat was followed by a regular monthly board meeting.

Worship and Arts News

from Chuck Bower

We've been very pleased with the Fellowship's participation in worship services. Thank you to everyone who has lit the Chalice, rang the Gong, provided a Morning Musing, or otherwise participated. A big thanks also for everyone who brings refreshments, flowers, makes the coffee, and cleans up afterwards. You truly embody "Love is the Spirit of this Church, and Service is its Law."

The ongoing heat reminds us; there is still quite a bit of summer to go before autumn arrives. And services too! One of many highlights is Anna Hagen's "Harp and Heart Longings" service on Sunday the 30th. We also have a packed August of services, encompassing two guest ministers (Rev. Carolyn Hunt and Rev. Dr. Jimmy Clifton), Launa Leftwich from The Boys and Girls Club of Elkhart County, and Marianne Rauch, speaking with a message entitled, "We Would Be One." We're looking forward to these services and hope you are, too!

Finance Committee

Ken Clayborn

1. Fiscal 2022-2023 is now over. It has been a tumultuous year fiscally. We were able to manage the parking lot expenses (over \$290,000) and the new roof (\$37,000) and still maintain our budget without any major pitfalls. Obviously, the finance committee did not do this alone. We had great support from the Board and especially from the Endowment Committee to bring the resources together to make these large projects happen.
2. Speaking of large projects, Linda Becker and her great group of volunteers are closing in on the completion of the learning center refurbishment project. We received an insurance settlement in March for damage incurred from a leak in the water system during the Covid shutdown. The Board authorized the use of those funds to make improvements to the facility in case we have a part-time minister who could use the house. Linda sent out a detailed report of the progress. We have contracted Five Star Painting to prep, seal and paint the foundation of the house. That work will be completed in the next few weeks.
3. The pledge summaries for fiscal 2022-2023, which ended at the end of June, have been sent out to everyone.

UUF Library Resources

from Phyllis Hostetler

Here are a couple of books recently added to the UUF library. Although published a few years ago, they do still apply to the current concern about AI.

[The Most Human Human](#) by Brian Christian, 2011

The Most Human Human is a provocative, exuberant, and profound exploration of the ways in which computers are reshaping our ideas of what it means to be human. Its starting point is the annual Turing Test, which pits artificial intelligence programs against people to determine if computers can "think."

[Almost Human: Making Robots Think](#) by Lee Gutkind, 2006

Almost Human: Making Robots Think is a book written by Lee Gutkind, founder of Creative Nonfiction. Gutkind spent six years as a "fly on the wall" researcher at the Robotics Institute at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh. He observed scientists and students working to design, build, and test robots so advanced that they will one day be able to work alongside or, in some cases, even replace humans. *Almost Human* is an intense portrait of the robotic subculture and the challenging quest for robot autonomy.

Photos now available in the picture folder on the office computer

from Phyllis Hostetler

For the archives I have been keeping a file of photos taken at UUFEE many from things posted on Facebook. I recently copied them onto the office computer at UUFEE so they will be available to anyone. In the past, printed photos have been put in albums which are kept in the archives but digital photos have replaced that. If anyone has photos that would be appropriate to add they should see me.

**Anyone wishing to be on the Stewardship Committee
beginning in early 2024, please contact a Board Member.**

UU Feasters

Feasters will meet at 11:30am on Wednesday, August 23 at Rocky River Tap and Table, 1032 E University Dr, Mishawaka, IN 46545.

Let Mary Adams know that you can come so that she can reserve adequate space for us. Contact her at 619-921-0613 or createenjoy@yahoo.com.

UU Feasters is a social outing for those interested in sharing a monthly luncheon together. Please consider coming and having a wonderful social time with others from our Fellowship.

2023 BBQ & Brew Fest/Fundraiser

Saturday, August 5th, 2023

4:00 PM-10:00 PM

Elkhart County Fairgrounds 17746-D County Road 34 Goshen IN

WE'RE IN A NEW LOCATION THIS YEAR AT THE ELKHART COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS!!

BBQ & Brew Fest is a community event to raise money for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Elkhart County's Elkhart and Middlebury Clubhouses.

Enjoy live musical performances and quench your thirst with craft beer by local brewers and libations from the full-service open bar. Taste burgers prepared by local teams representing businesses and organizations from around the county and cast votes for your favorites as they compete in the 2023 Grill Masters Burger Competition! BBQ & Brew Fest features a child-safe, alcohol-free zone with activities for families and children available during the event hours from 4 to 10 p.m.

With VIP Wristbands priced at \$75 for adults, \$40 for Designated Drivers, \$20 for students age 13-20, and children 12 and under admitted free.

BBQ & Brew Fest Silent Auction will close on Saturday, August 5th at 8:00 p.m.

Winning bidders do not need to be present to win. Packages will be available to take home at the end of the auction. If winning bidders are not present, Boys & Girls Club staff will arrange a time for package pick-up or drop off.

General Assembly Report

By Terry Mark and Annette Long

Note: A version of this was first presented as a Morning Musing at the July 9, 2023, worship service. This is an excerpt from the beginning and the link to continue reading is provided below.

Good morning, I'm Terry Mark and I have been a member of this congregation for 18 years. I live on the ancestral lands of the Potawatomi. My pronouns are he and him. I'm a cisgender Chinese-American male in his early 50s with silver-flecked black hair and wearing glasses. I am wearing a blue-and-white-checked shirt and navy blue shorts.

Hello everyone. My name is Annette Long. I am a short, middle-aged white female of ample size with long blonde hair. I am wearing glasses and am attired in a charcoal gray General Assembly T-shirt, and my pronouns are she/her. I also live on the lands of the Potawatomi. Like Terry, I have been a member of UUFE since 2005.

Volunteer Service at GA

The way we just introduced ourselves -- with our self descriptions for those with visual impairment and with indigenous lands acknowledgment -- represents two of the many ways that General Assembly modeled inclusive and justice-centered practices.

From June 21-25, we participated in General Assembly, commonly referred to as GA, held this year in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. So, what exactly is General Assembly? GA is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists from across North America and other parts of the world which happens during the third week of June every year. At GA, UUs join together for educational workshops, enlightening speakers, music, worship services, and fellowship. A lot of time is also spent on official business where congregational delegates discuss and vote on matters of policy that affect all UUs. This year there were more than 3,600 registered attendees including 2,300 on-site and 1,300-plus online.

Continue reading at:

https://uufe.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/GA_Report_2023.pdf

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