

Michael Servetus Unitarian Society

Volume 50, Issue 2
October 2016

President's Letter

I had the privilege of attending the Midwest Leadership School in Beloit, for a week in July.

The purpose of the school is to develop lay leadership in UU congregations. There were 30 participants in the group from Minnesota, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Iowa and Nebraska congregations.

Youth leadership school was also going on at the same time. Adults and youth participated in two worship services at the beginning and end of each day. A group of youth and adults planned and led the services. We were encouraged to try new things in worship. Guided meditations, building with Legos, singing rounds, and sharing responses to a question were tried by various worship planning teams.

Participants attended presentations by Midwest Regional congregational consultants packed with interesting and practical information. We heard presentations on UU history, covenant, mission, systems, intercultural competence, conflict, emotional intelligence and change.

Two small group sessions a day (Leadership and Credo groups) provided the opportunity to get to know people and work together in a more interactive format. Leadership group gave us the opportunity to discuss leadership and practice it in a group. Our first assignment was to define leadership. Here is the definition my group wrote. "Leadership is the ability of a person to organize, motivate and mobilize a group to set goals, and accomplish tasks toward the achievement of a shared vision." Credo group allowed us to explore beliefs, think deeply and reflect on who we are as leaders.

Open space session allowed participants to post topics they wanted to discuss and interested people could attend those sessions. Great conversations occurred at mealtime and lots of information was shared about budgets, growth, conflict, staffing, and more. I shared information about our hospitality teams that was very exciting to people.

The sharing continues. A Facebook page was established and questions and discussions are continuing as we start the new church year.

I highly encourage members to consider attending leadership school – both adult and youth. There is money in our budget for leadership development. The experience would be beneficial for an individual's personal growth and for the congregation.

Laurie Young, President, MSUS Board of Trustees

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Minister's Message



IN THE MIDST OF A WORLD,
By Rebecca Parker

We enter October with the worship theme of healing. This theme finds us at a time when we are feeling the loss of Bob Randall and reflecting on his passing. Rebecca Parker, President of the UU seminary Starr King, for 25 years, names the beauty and challenge of our very human lives. Her poem, *In the Midst of a World*, acts as a litany stating, "there must be those..." over and over again. She points us toward the range of human experiences, emotions, actions, witness, and care that are present in a faith community.

In the community circles following Bob's death and in individual conversations with congregants the very real struggle with "shoulds," "coulds," "if onlys," and "what ifs," have been spoken. The verbalization of these thoughts is healthy and I know that for each time these words have been spoken they have been echoing in many people's minds and hearts a hundred times more. I believe that no one could have saved Bob. In a recent walk with a dear friend who has a sister who is struggling with depression and suicidal thoughts, she said, "If it was brain cancer, we all would know there is nothing we can do to stop it." Yet, there is something about the human heart and hopefulness of companionship that wants us to believe otherwise.

It is important to note that there are those who knew Bob well and others who were simply blessed by his gift of music and song. We will need to continue to provide space for this early and continued healing. When someone dies, it often stirs grief that has accumulated over our life time. In our silence and sharing we can continue to honor Bob and to hold those who are suffering. This is the work of the church, this is the love we are called to and the first step in a long period of healing. May you each find your place as we hold and support the healing of one another. Whether you are a theist and walk humbly with God or are a humanist who finds your holy center in human-relations and love, we can call on a greater strength to heal, transform, and bless our own, and each other's, one precious life.

Please know that I am always available for appointments if you need support.

In love, Rev. Laura

*In the midst of a world
marked by tragedy and beauty
there must be those
who bear witness
against unnecessary destruction
and who, with faith,
rise and lead
in freedom,
with grace and power.
There must be those who
speak honestly
and do not avoid seeing
what must be seen
of sorrow and outrage,
or tenderness,
and wonder.
There must be those whose
grief-troubles the water
while their voices sing
and speak
refreshed worlds.
There must be those
whose exuberance
rises with lovely energy
that articulates
earth's joys.
There must be those who
are restless for
respectful and loving
companionship among human beings,
whose presence invites -people
to be themselves without fear.
There must be those
who gather with the congregation
of remembrance and compassion
draw water from
old wells,
and walk the -simple path
of love for neighbor.
And,
There must be communities of -people
who seek to do justice
love kindness and walk humbly with God,
who call on the strength of
soul-force
to heal,
transform,
and bless life.
There must be
religious witness.*

Children's Religious Education

Anna Paquette, Acting Director of Religious Education

With our church year in full swing, I am looking forward to some exciting upcoming events!

- ◆ Our first Spiritual Practice Saturday session of the church year will be from 10 AM - 11:30 AM on Saturday, October 15th. We'll gather together in RE Room 3 (the large classroom upstairs) to explore the different reasons and methods that people pray. If your first reaction to the word prayer is a vision of hands pressed together, never fear! There's SO much more than that. Childcare will not be provided as this event is open to everyone who is interested in participating. Discussion and activities presented will be accessible to all ages. The sign-up sheet and informational flyer is available in the social hall so please RSVP if you're coming so I can be sure to have enough supplies for everyone. (Online RSVP can be made here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/548602938661569/>)
- ◆ On Sunday, October 30th, there will be a multigenerational service called "Gabby & Gámez – Día de Los Muertos," which will have youth participants and invite us to more closely examine the "masks" we choose to wear each day. There will be NO regular RE classes on October 30th as this is a service designed for all ages.
- ◆ There will be a Christmas Eve service at 5 PM again this year, and we'll be doing something I'm calling the "No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant." All members and friends, young and old, are invited to come and participate to the extent that they are comfortable in a night full of your favorite Christmas carols and the traditional Christmas story. As the story is told, we will be asking the congregation for help in acting out the various parts. If you'd prefer to simply sing along and watch, that's just fine but, if you've always longed to be an angel, shepherd, or wise person, now is your chance! This will be especially fun for our children and youth, so I hope to see many families there.

We've been having a great time with our Seuss based curriculum and some deeper conversations have grown out of the stories on several occasions. We're blessed with some highly inquisitive and imaginative children and youth, and it's been a joy to watch them unpack the deeper meanings in Seuss's work. There are only a few opportunities left to lead a lesson or read the story before the end of 2016, so be sure to get your name on the sign-up sheet in the social hall, or upstairs outside the RE office, before you're stuck waiting for the new year! (Online sign-up is available at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090f4eaeae2aabff2-religious>)



Race: The Power of Illusion

A Three-Part Series

Join us as we watch these three documentaries and have an opportunity to reflect in small groups. Come to one or all three. In the press release describing this series the films are described as revealing how the myth of race took hold and retains its power.



“What if we suddenly discovered that our most basic assumption about race - for instance, that the world's people can be divided biologically along racial lines - was false? And if race is a biological "myth," where did the idea come from? How do our institutions give race social meaning and power by advantaging white people?

These are just a few of the questions raised by *Race - The Power of an Illusion*. It is the first documentary series to scrutinize the very idea of race through the distinct lenses of science, history and our social institutions. The series is narrated by CCH Pounder (*The Shield*). By asking, "What is this thing called 'race'?" a question so basic it is rarely raised, *Race - The Power of an Illusion* challenges some of our most deeply held beliefs.”

EPISODE 1: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US, Tuesday, Oct 18, 2016, 7:00-9:00 pm

Everyone can tell a Nubian from a Norwegian, so why not divide people into different races? That's the question explored in "**The Difference Between Us**," the first hour of the series. This episode shows that despite what we've always believed, the world's peoples simply don't come bundled into distinct biological groups. We begin by following a dozen students, including Black athletes and Asian string players, who sequence and compare their own DNA to see who is more genetically similar. The results surprise the students and the viewer, when they discover their closest genetic matches are as likely to be with people from other "races" as their own.

Much of the program is devoted to understanding why. We look at several scientific discoveries that illustrate why humans cannot be subdivided into races and how there isn't a single characteristic, trait - or even one gene - that can be used to distinguish all members of one race from all members of another.

EPISODE 2: THE STORY WE TELL, Tuesday, Nov 1, 2016, 7:00-9:00 pm

It's true that race has always been with us, right? Wrong. Ancient peoples stigmatized "others" on the grounds of language, custom, class, and especially religion, but they did not sort people according to physical differences. It turns out that the concept of race is a recent invention, only a few hundred years old, and the history and evolution of the idea are deeply tied to the development of the U.S.

"**The Story We Tell**" is an eye-opening tale of how deep social inequalities came to be rationalized as natural - deflecting attention from the social practices and public policies that benefited whites at the expense of others.

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Race: The Power of Illusion A Three-Part Series

EPISODE 3: THE HOUSE WE LIVE IN, Tuesday, Nov 29, 2016, 7:00-9:00 pm

If race doesn't exist biologically, what is it? And why should it matter? Our final episode, "**The House We Live In**," is the first film about race to focus not on individual attitudes and behavior but on the ways our institutions and policies advantage some groups at the expense of others. Its subject is the "unmarked" race: white people. We see how benefits quietly and often invisibly accrue to white people, not necessarily because of merit or hard work, but because of the racialized nature of our laws, courts, customs, and perhaps most pertinently, housing.

As **The House We Live In** shows us, until we address the legacy of past discrimination and confront the historical meanings of race, the dream of equality will remain out of reach.

Third Thursdays: A daytime group for 60+

October 20, 2016, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm



We will launch a daytime group for congregants who want to gather for a one hour program and discussion followed by a simple lunch. Rev Laura led these monthly groups at two churches following feedback from older members that it is challenging to get to evening events. The topic will vary month to month and the format includes small group conversation. Sign up in the Social Hall or you can email Laura at revlaura@msuu.org or call her at 763-710-0435.



Holidays at MSUS



Many Holidays are fast approaching.
Mark your calendars with these events that will occur at MSUS

December Holiday Worship Services

This Christmas, we will be offering two services on Christmas Eve and a single 10:30 am service on Christmas Day.

'No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant'

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2016, 5:00 pm

Multi Generational Service. See the Religious Education Report on Page 3 for details

Christmas and Solstice Service

December 24, 2016, 10:00 pm

A service combining readings, music, and a homily celebrating Christmas and the Winter Solstice. If you are interested in participating, please contact Rev. Laura.

Christmas Day

December 25, 2016, 10:30 am

We will hold one worship service on Christmas Day.

Blue Christmas

Sunday, December 11, 2016, 4:00-5:30 pm

An opportunity to gather prior to the holidays for those who are experiencing grief at this time of heightened joy in society. Let us join together to find community and acknowledge the bitter and the sweet of this time of year.

Holiday Bazaar

Saturday, November 12, 2016, 9:30am -3:30pm

This year's fundraising Holiday Bazaar is scheduled for Saturday, November 12th from 9:30-3:30. There's lots of ways to help make it a success.

You can:

1. Donate baked goods
2. Donate craft items to be sold
3. Donate gently used holiday decorations
4. Sell your craft items on consignment
5. Volunteer for set up, cashiering or clean up.

More details and sign up sheets later. Questions? Contact Laurie Young

Holiday Concert

Friday, December 16, 2016, 7:00 pm

Join the Choir, Band, String Band and other MSUS Music groups for their annual Holiday Concert. There will even be an opportunity to sing along. Bring family and friends and Enjoy!



October 2016 Services

October Theme - Healing

October 2, 2016

Speaker: Rev Laura Smidzik

Service Leader: Doug Root

Having Faith

Special Music: MSUS Band

Hospitality: Carlotta Stomberg's Team

The Buddhist practice of Metta Meditation has been adopted by many Americans. How can this and other spiritual practices bring healing not only to ourselves but to the world?

October 9, 2016

Speaker: Carolyn Kerns

Service Leader: Marie Phillips

Cakes for the Queen of Heaven

Special Music: Terry Boelter—vocal / guitar

Hospitality: Pat Ferrian's Team

Today's sermon will be a story of how today's speaker Carolyn Kerns found the Goddess and has followed Her, and an overview of three broad aspects of Neo-pagan theology. Ms. Kerns is currently teaching a course of the same name as today's title at the UU church in Duluth. She earned her bachelor's degree in Religion at Macalester, taught World Religions for 5 years at a Duluth high school, and is currently earning an MDiv at Starr King School for the Ministry.

October 16, 2016

Speaker: Rev. Laura Smidzik

Service Leader: Carlotta Stomberg

Caring is a Healing Presence

Special Music: Connie Metcalf

Hospitality: Marie Phillips' Team

Our congregation provides a community of care for each other. What are previous ways we have embodied that commitment? What does a healing presence look and feel like? We will explore ways that congregations continue to grow in their understanding of and delivery of care.

October 23, 2016

Speaker: Rev. Laura Smidzik

Service Leader: Lynne Schuman

A Healing Presence Out In the World

Special Music: MSUS Choir

Hospitality: Beth Strootman's Team

What does healing look like on a larger, societal scale? Looking at Parker Palmer's book, *Healing the Heart of Democracy*, we will examine the inherent tensions of our times and how to aspire to live with an open heart.

October 23, 2016

Speaker: Rev. Laura Smidzik & RE Youth

Service Leader: RE Youth

Gabby and Gámez— Día de los Muertos (A multi-generational service)

Special Music: RE Youth

Hospitality: April Anderson's Team

The customs of Halloween, evolved with the influences of the Celts, the Romans, and the Christian holy days of All Saints Day and All Souls Day. We honor Día de los Muertos and the Aztec people of Mexico with a worship service created by a UU colleague. This service will show how death (not only physical death, but significant change) can bring about opportunity for growth as well as fear.

Michael Servetus Unitarian Society
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E-mail: office@msuu.org

MSUS is a vital and vibrant congregation where religious liberals of different religious, political and social beliefs can join in loving community to explore religious and ethical questions and serve the community beyond our walls.

Submissions for the Newsletter need to be emailed to office@msuu.org. Deadline for November Newsletter is noon, October 19, 2016.

Announcements for Order of Service: need to be emailed to office@msuu.org no later than Thursday evening; if a late breaking event causes you to miss the deadline, hand your legibly written announcement to the Service Leader no later than 10:15am.

The mission of Michael Servetus Unitarian Society is to:

Promote Unitarian Universalist traditions of liberty and respect, justice and compassion, and the use of reason; empower our members in their search for meaning by fostering intellectual and spiritual growth; support our members in living ethical lives based on integrity and service; celebrate together and minister to one another in good times and bad; and work, as individuals and as a congregation, to improve the larger community and our natural environment

2016—2017 Board of Trustees	President: Laures Young	Trustees: Christopher Greene
	Vice-President: Kate Burek	Connie Metcalf
	Recording Secretary: Jennifer Ray	Lisa Monson-Hokenson
		Santhi Muniandy
		Lynne Schuman
	Treasurer: Gerald Wichmann, Non-Board Position	Chad Snyder

Minister:

Rev. Laura Smidzik RevLaura@msuu.org
Office hours are flexible to meet the needs of the community.
Please call or email 763-710-0435 to schedule an appointment.

We're on the Web!

www.MSUU.org

Office Administrator / Bookkeeper:

Elizabeth Hughes Hitomi office@msuu.org
Office hours are most Weds 12 - 4 pm, Fri from 8 - 11 am and Sun. from 8:30 - noon. If assistance is needed outside these hours, please email office@msuu.org. In emergencies, please call 763-334-3212 and immediate services will be provided.

Acting Director of Religious Education:

Anna Paquette DRE@msuu.org
Please contact Anna by email



A Member of the
Unitarian
Universalist
Association of
Congregations

Music Director:

Bruce Van Bronkhorst music@msuu.org
Please contact Bruce by email.

The MSUS calendar is located on the MSUS webpage. The calendar changes daily as committees, music and interest groups schedule meetings and the normal course of church business occurs. To obtain the most up-to-date information on what is happening at the church, please click on this [MSUS church calendar](#) link or go to <http://www.msuu.org/services-events-calendar>.

October Dates of Interest:

Music Rehearsals:

Tuesday, String Band 7:00 PM
Wednesday, Choir 7:30 PM
Thursday, Chalice Singers 7:30 PM
Sunday, Band Practice 8:30 AM
(October 2, 16 & 30)
Sunday, Delphi Jazz 3 PM

Regular Meetings:

Comm. Restructuring, Oct 11, 7:00 PM
Mom's Group, Oct 9, Noon
Worship, Oct 13, 6:30 PM
L&F, Oct 17, 7:30 PM
Membership, Oct 20, 7:30 PM
Board of Trustees, Oct 25, 7:00 PM
Comm. Restructuring, Oct 27, 7:00 PM

Offsite MSUS Events:

Women's Book Group, Oct 1, 9:00 AM
Installation of Rev. Laura, Oct 8, 2 PM
Sun. Night Book Group, Oct 9, 7:15 PM
Covenant Group, Oct 22, 8:30 AM

Member Opportunities:

L&F Yard Cleanup, Oct 1, 9:00 AM
Service Leader Training, Oct 11, 7:00 PM
Spiritual Saturday, Oct 15, 10:00 AM
Race - The Power of an Illusion,
October 18, 7:00 PM

Building Use

GSA Pickup, Weds 4 to 6 PM