

From the Minister's Study

Happy New Year everyone! As I write, it is 2 weeks until Christmas and I am looking forward to being back among you after the holidays. I am sure a lot has happened in your lives while I have been away, and it will be good to hear about how you are doing and what has changed in your lives these past few months.

A lot has happened in our family since the days of summer ended: first, we moved into our new house just weeks before our baby was born, and then Daniel came...all 10 pounds 10 ounces of him. We were lucky to have my mom here those first few weeks and in November, David's parents, Jean and Roger, moved here for the year to be with us and get to know their new grandson. They are really helping me get ready to come back to work and will be taking care of Daniel when I need to be at church.

My maternity leave has been a real blessing for me: a time to be with my son and take care of my family. It has also been a wonderful time for me to reflect. Not in the way I'd imagined, mind you: I honestly thought I'd have tons of time to read and study while I was away (I know all you mothers out there are laughing as you read this!) and that certainly didn't happen. But a new baby commands your full attention and shifts your day-to-day reality to such an extent that you can't help but see the world from a new vantage point. So, seasoned with my son's wide-eyed wonder at our world, my perspective has shifted in both large and small ways. Most of all, I can't help but feel my Unitarian Universalist values are even more critical when I think about Daniel's life and our future as a nation, and as a planet. I look forward to being with you and seeing you as the events of your lives are shifting your view of things, too.

May rich blessings pour into all of your lives this New Year, and may each of us find ourselves in a close encounter with fresh possibility and the chance to come to this world as though all things are new.

I am grateful that this is the community that companions me as I remake my own life again and again, and thankful to the many of you who cared for our family with meals, friendship, and song over these past few months. I can't wait to come back and serve the greatest church in the city!

I look forward to seeing you in worship!

Jennifer

Reflections: *A Chosen Faith* submitted by Lisa Todd

On the first Wednesday of every month, a small group has met to discuss the book *A Chosen Faith*, a primer on Unitarian Universalist thought and, more specifically, the sources of our faith. Our discussions are brief—a catalyst, really, for more personal exploration. I invite you to join in on future sessions. We take a New Year's holiday in January but will meet again on Feb. 6.

In the meantime, consider the question we last discussed: If you had to identify the one Unitarian Universalist principle that was a "core value" for you personally, which one would it be? How would other people know what your core value was? Look at the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism listed below. Do the ways in which you spend your time, talents, and treasures reinforce your core values?

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence.

The vibrancy or relevancy of a faith community is seen in our efforts to live out our core values. The process of discovery and awakening and the movement to action and service must be ongoing, cyclical. We are invited to reflect and our reflections call us to deeper action, which then allows us to reflect more deeply and on and on. My hope for the church is that every person becomes engaged in that cycle. We don't have to do it all. We just need to focus on one or two things and encourage others to do the same.

When you look at your calendar, your checkbook, and your habits, what core values emerge? May greater alignment between your values and your life be the gift you give yourself in the New Year. Peace to you in the journey.

From the Board of Trustees: The Unity In Our Community

Happy New Year!

In Rob Eller-Isaac's sermon last month, he discussed the historical roots of the Unity Church—specifically, the fact that the Unity movement arose from a strong belief that there is one singular experience of the Holy, but that there is room to arrive at that “unified” experience through a myriad of different personal paths and religious viewpoints.

That got me to thinking about the unity in *our* community—as we ring in the New Year, how are we unified? And what are the different paths we are each choosing to get there? As I look around on Sundays, I see and feel that our community is vibrant and healthy, with many new faces and many familiar folks mingled together at coffee hour. The next time you're in church, take a look for yourself and notice all of the different passions that are in evidence. We have so much going on in our community right now—the building and expansion of our always strong

Lifespan Faith Development program, a reenergized hospitality force, new initiatives addressing the rights and equality for others, a music program that rocks, a strong staff that knows us and takes care of us. So many great things!

I assert that we are unified around our mission of living out our values in the world, and that we have found a balance between individual needs and congregation-level priorities. We truly are holding faithful to a love that embraces both diversity and conflict, which allows us to talk openly about issues and resolutions without the discussion leading to personal strife. Most importantly, we are unified around each other, and the special gift of accepting whatever path has led us to 2U and whatever connections we have developed to keep us here. We even have a Community Night now on Wednesdays, which has taken off like wildfire as a time in the week where we can be together in fellowship before running off to different programs and

activities.

As you read this, we will have had a successful Special Gifts Campaign, Rev. Jennifer Owen-O'Quill will have rejoined us as our minister, and we will be saying goodbye to Rev. David Owen-O'Quill, who so wonderfully guided us during Jennifer's maternity leave. Personally, I am now looking forward to the natural next step—entering a period of stability as we deepen our current connections while preparing for the continued and inevitable growth that comes from being a community that others want to join and participate in.

What will 2008 bring for you, your family, and your involvement at 2U? As you move forward on your own personal path, just know that it is you, along with every other member of 2U, that brings the unity to our community.

In faith and partnership,

Denise

2U Kids Social Justice News submitted by Monica Drane

Now that the one million native-prairie Turkey Foot and Indian Grass seeds we collected at the North Park Village Nature Center in October are snug beneath the snow, it's time we turned our attention to another social justice cause that matters to us as Unitarian Universalists: hunger. We enjoyed having “guests at our tables” during December and during the next few months, we have the opportunity to serve fellow Chicagoans who need help.

Kids Volunteer Day at the **Greater Chicago Food Depository** is scheduled for **Saturday, February 2** from 1:15 until 3:30 p.m. Please join other 2U families for this annual 2U event. Children aged 5 to 12 years, accompanied by an adult, will tour the food depository's impressive facility, learn about hunger in Chicago, and pack food for distribution to the city's food pantries and shelters. Space is limited (only 10 kids and 10 adults), so please contact

Monica Drane as soon as possible. The depository is located at 4100 W. Ann Lurie Place.

The 2U kids will sponsor a **food drive** for the **Lakeview Pantry** in conjunction with the food depository event. Please bring non-perishable food items (such as stews, canned fruit, canned beans/chili, peanut butter, canned tuna, soup, and juice) to church on any of the following Sundays: **January 20, January 27, and February 3**. Watch for the “canned-good cairns” to help you find the collection bin!

2U's Social Justice Committee plans to participate in the UUA's **Green Sanctuary Program**. If you are interested in helping find ways for our children to contribute to this effort, please contact Monica at the number listed above.

Collyer and Unity In Chicago's Den of Fire *by Jill Althage*

This article is the fifth in a series examining the historical roots of Second Unitarian Church.

In the last article, we left Reverend Collyer with his trip home to England to visit his mother and his travels in the Continent, where he saw (in France) the devastation wrought by the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune riots. Shortly after his return to Chicago, while lecturing to a large group at Unity Church on an October Sunday evening about the devastation he had witnessed in Europe, a fire broke out in Chicago.

The "oldest settlers" of his congregation had remarked that the summer had been the driest they could remember. Indeed, a previous fire had burned a neighborhood section of Chicago, and there was growing concern about the wooden structures in the north and west sides of our city.

As Collyer returned home from his lecture that evening, the fire's smoke "hung over our city from the far away, and the sad tidings came to us of small lumber towns burning, the loss of many lives, and of many more who were only saved by standing up to their necks in the water." Neighbors became alarmed. Some didn't think the fire would cross the river. As he took his children over the bridge "to see the spectacle," Collyer noticed the court house was ablaze. The fire was gathering its strength, so they hurried home. After the very bridge they had crossed was burned, the wind rose to "a hurricane".



His good friend and former mayor, John Wentworth, ran by the Collyer home with a few papers in his carpet bag and said, "The fire will take the whole North Side. Get your family away."

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Lifespan Faith Development

Gabrielle Parra, Director of Faith Development

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January Classes

2U Social Justice Institute

Dates: Sundays on January 6, 13 & 20, 12:30-2:00

Social justice has long been a passion for UUsers—but have you ever wondered WHY our UU faith compels us to act? What is the spiritual connection between our UU faith and the call to promote social justice? What social justice movements have been spearheaded by UUsers and others in the past? And how do we bring about social justice through community organizing? Find out answers to all of these questions—and join in the discussion, too. Lunch provided. **Guest speakers:** Jan. 6, Rev. David Owen-O'Quill; Jan.13, Professor David Bumbaugh, Meadville Lombard Theological School; Jan. 20, Jennifer Gonzalez, Lakeview Action Coalition. This course is co-sponsored by the 2U Social Justice Council and the Lifespan Faith Development Council.

Articulating Your Unitarian Universalist Faith

Dates: Thursdays, on January 17, 24, 31 & February 7, 7:00-8:30

This class is designed for people who want to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and are ready to deepen their own faith. The focus of this class is on articulation—practicing how and what to say in various settings where you might be called upon to declare yourself religiously. Such moments are precious opportunities to deepen your own path and perhaps grow a happy awareness in someone else about the rich living tradition we share. Yet, many of us struggle to adequately describe our religion to others. This course provides inspiration and resources. Suggested donation: \$15. **Facilitators:** Allison Farnum & Karen Mooney (seminarians at Meadville Lombard Theological School).

Leadership 101

Date: Sunday, February 3, 1:00-3:00 ** New Date**

This workshop is for members who have joined within the last twelve months. Participants in this session will learn the basics about "how to get things done" at 2U and receive a historical and logistical tour of the building. Identify the ways that you can best connect with your new church community. **Facilitator:** Lisa Todd.

UU Spiritual Practices II

Dates: Wednesdays on January 16, 23 & 30, 6:45-7:45

This class is an expansion of the Spiritual Practices I class held in September. All are welcome (including newcomers and people who want to deepen their spiritual exploration), even if you were unable to attend the September sessions. In these three sessions, we will be reflecting upon how music, social service, and worship services play a part in our spiritual life. Experiment hands-on with the some of the most common UU spiritual practices. Suggested donation: \$10. **Facilitators:** August Staas & L.S. Quinn

Theological Reflections Small Group Ministry

Dates: Sundays on January 20, February 3, 17, March 2, 16, 30, April 13 & 27, 2:00-4:00

This class is designed for people who have taken the Our American Roots class, long-time Unitarian Universalists, and people who want to delve deeper into their faith. Participants will explore the nature of the Ultimate through the six UU sources, with the goal of individual faith development. Participants will write a belief statement at the beginning and end of the experience. Space is limited. Suggested donation: \$25. **Facilitators:** Jenny Abate & Jenny O'Grady.

February Classes

A Chosen Faith: 1st Wednesday Book Discussion

Date: Wednesday, February 6, 6:45-7:45

This class is designed for anyone who wants to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and explore their own beliefs. A monthly discussion of the six Unitarian Universalist sources from which we draw our personal beliefs: Mystery & Wonder, World Religions, Judaism & Christianity, Prophetic Men & Women, Humanism, and Earth Centered Traditions. Reverends John Buehrens and Forrest Church's book, *A Chosen Faith*, will serve as our guide (available in the church bookstore). Each month, we'll read one section of the book and discuss one UU source. How does that source inform Unitarian Universalism? How does it affect your life? Register for one, several, or all of the discussions. Suggested Donation: \$5 per session. **Facilitators:** Dr. Kay Read.& Lisa Todd

Group Meditation

Dates: Wednesdays on February 13, 20 & 27, 6:45-7:45

This class is designed for participants of the UU Spiritual Practices classes and people who want to deepen their faith. Relax, relieve stress, renew yourself, and develop a spiritual practice. For people who have never mediated before, and experienced meditators. Practice in community and share your experience. Suggested donation: \$10 per series. **Facilitator:** August Staas (who has 30+ years of experience in experiencing, and providing instruction on, various meditation practices).

Lifespan Faith Development

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Parents* As Spiritual Guides

Dates: Sundays on February 3, 10, 17, 24 & March 2 & 9, 11:15-12:45

**Or teachers or grandparents or aunts or uncles or future parents....*

A sense of wonder at the natural world, of connectedness to all living things, of responsibility to and compassion for others, and the courage to be who one is—these are some of the most precious gifts that we, as Unitarian Universalists, wish to give our children. But how do we give our children this spiritual foundation, especially in a culture that often seems to send them opposite messages? In this class, we will consider how we might more effectively convey our own deeply held convictions to our children. We will honor your role as your child's most important guide to spiritual growth and faith development and offer tips for developing rituals and celebrations that nurture family ties and support spiritual development. This class is for anyone who has children in their lives; it is not limited to parents. Suggested donation: \$25 per family (childcare provided). **Facilitators:** Andrea Redfeairn & Lee-Ann Meredith.

When Bad Things Happen to Good People: Buddhism Workshop

Date: Saturday, February 23, 10:00-1:00 (with an extended meditation from 1:00-2:00)

How can we deal with the issues of God, responsibility, praise, and blame? Why do we want to put our issues outside of ourselves instead taking individual responsibility? This workshop will focus on both Christian and Buddhist perspectives on praise and blame. Lunch will be provided. Suggested donation: \$7 per person. **Facilitators:** Charlotta Koppanyi & Mui Baltrunas. Sensei Mui holds a PhD from the Pali and Buddhist University in Sri Lanka with a specialty in Abhidhamma (Buddhist Psychology). Charlotta holds a M.S. in Psychology and a B.A. in Contemporary Religion from Stockholm University. She has studied depth psychology, humanistic psychology, leadership, and Buddhism since the late 1980s.

From the Director of Faith Development

The New Year dawns; we look forward to the future and dream about possibilities. As I dream about the future, I think about the Child Dedication ceremony we just held on December 16. We welcomed nine children into the life of this community. For me, nothing holds more promise and hope than children. In order to express this feeling, I would like to share with you a poem my mother wrote for me when I was just two years old.

Faithfully,

Gabrielle

Mender of Hearts

by Lynn Montgomery

bare dusty feet
slide on cool oak floors
scoot up to the hutch
up toes
finger tips
capture sunbeams
visitors to the glass

heaven's blue
shines in baby's eyes
renegade ponies' tails
arch gold rainbows
sweep dust motes

smallest frame
stretches itself
giggles
self smiling surprise

time closes
heaven's quick toes
tuck their sleep
in baby's frame
wreckless gold
escapes its bands
sun sets in heaven's blue
sweet sleep
mender of hearts

Sunday Services & 2U Activities, Times & Dates

Week of January 6

Sunday, January 6

~CYFD Spring Registration~

Worship Services

10:00 & 11:30

I Did It On Purpose

Leader: Rev. Jennifer Owen-O'Quill
Rev. Owen-O'Quill will begin a two-week series exploring how to live a purpose-filled life. Too often life can leave us feeling like it is happening to us. How, then, do we begin to move through our days with a sense of faithful purpose?

Young Adults Circle Worship, 11:45-2:15, Fleishman Hall

2U Social Justice Institute, 12:30-2:00

Emancipation Proclamation

Pageant, 1:30-3:00, First Unitarian Church

OWL, 3:45-7:30

Tuesday, January 8

Choir Rehearsal, 7:00-9:00, Sanctuary

Wednesday, January 9

NO Community Meal

Thursday, January 10

Retiree Potluck Lunch, noon-1:30, Palmer Room

Saturday, January 12

2U Council Meeting, 9:45-11:45

Week of January 13

Sunday, January 13

Worship Services

10:00 & 11:30

I Did It On Purpose

Leader: Rev. Jennifer Owen-O'Quill
Rev. Owen-O'Quill concludes her series on living life with a sense of faithful purpose.

2U Social Justice Institute, 12:30-2:00

Welcome to Unitarian Universalism

1:00 – 2:30

OWL, 3:45-7:30

Tuesday, January 15

Anti-Bias Action Ministry, Open-Visioning Session, 7:00, Loft

Wednesday, January 16

Community Meal, 6:00-7:00, Palmer Room

UU Spiritual Practices II, 6:45-7:45, Loft

Choir Rehearsal, 7:00-9:00, Sanctuary

Thursday, January 17

Articulating Your UU Faith, 7:00-8:30

Board of Trustees Meeting, 7:00-9:00

Week of January 20

Sunday, January 20

~2U Kids Food Drive Begins~

Worship Services

10:00 & 11:30

Leader: Jim Simonis

Jim has been a lively member of the 2U community for more than 30 years and, most recently, founded our Folk Ensemble!

2U Social Justice Institute, 12:30-2:00

Theological Reflections, 2:00-4:00,

Offsite

OWL, 3:45-7:30

Monday, January 21

~Martin Luther King, Jr. Day~

Wednesday, January 23

Community Meal, 6:00-7:00, Palmer Room

UU Spiritual Practices II, 6:45-7:45, Loft

Choir Rehearsal, 7:30-9:00, Sanctuary

LFD Council Meeting, 6:30-8:00

Thursday, January 24

Articulating Your UU Faith, 7:00-8:30

Friday, January 25

Movie Night, "Contact," 6:30-9:30, Offsite



Week of January 27

Sunday, January 27

~New Member Ingathering~

Worship Services

10:00 & 11:30

In the Beginning

Leader: Rev. Jennifer Owen-O'Quill

Over the next three weeks, we will examine how things get started and, guided by creation stories, reflect on how we might create and recreate possibilities in our own lives.

GLBTQ Brunch, 12:45

New Member Potluck, 1:00-3:00, Loft

Monday, January 28

Pastoral Care Team Meeting, 7:00-8:45

Wednesday, January 30

Community Meal, 6:00-7:00, Palmer Room

UU Spiritual Practices II, 6:45-7:45, Loft

Choir Rehearsal, 7:00-9:00, Sanctuary

Thursday, January 31

Articulating Your UU Faith, 7:00-8:30

Saturday, February 2

Building and Grounds Work Day, 10:00-2:00

Kids Volunteer Day at the Greater Chicago Food Depository, 1:15-3:30

In Chicago's Den of Fire *continued from Page 3*

The Collyers began to gather what they could save to take refuge in the church. Everyone took a load. Collyer hoped to save his precious books, "but within an hour the fire leapt on the house, and my books were burnt offering to the monster."

The next day, "in the forenoon," he saw Unity Church swallowed by flames. They battled the blaze with the water generously offered by the folks from the neighboring Ogden house "[b]ut, in spite of everything we could do, the fire swept through the slats in the spire, and the church began to burn up there." Once again, they took what they could carry out and buried their silver in a nearby celery patch. Holmes quoted Collyer's memory of his last minutes in the beautiful church: "I crept upstairs alone to my pulpit, where I had stood the night before and spoken to nearly a thousand men and women. I took one long last look at it, the church and the dear, sweet, noble organ, then I took the Bible as it lay where I had left it, got out at last and locked the door, put the key in my pocket and walked away. By that time the roof was ablaze, and I thought my heart was broken."

The family moved a total of five times that day with what they could carry. At one point, Collyer became "blind and helpless." His eyes and hands would no longer work for him. The Price family, members of Unity, welcomed the Collyers but when it became obvious that their house, too, would succumb, they buried more things in the garden's dry sand. These were later recovered without damage. The Collyers were rescued again by another family who lived northwest.

We can imagine the horror, shock, and depression that set in. In his book, *Some Memories*, Collyer related that he broke down and wept. Mrs. Collyer comforted him with words he quoted, "Sorrow may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning."

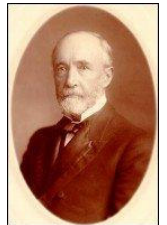
Charles Wendte, then the minister of Third Church, who later helped organize the 1893 Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago, "came through the burning waste of the four miles with a team, and found us." Once again, the Collyer family moved in with people with open hearts. They remained there until they could find an affordable place to rent with other friends. Collyer wrote, "We were poor as Job's turkey, as my mother used to say." Although they had money in the bank, the banks had all burned down. Deacon Mears "emptied" his pockets of money into Collyer's

hands so he could "look decent." It must have been trying to be the one people looked to for hope when you had no choice but to accept the kindness and generosity of friends. But these acts of kindness show how much the congregation loved and cared for their minister and his family.

Bessie Louis Pierce, in *A History of Chicago: The Rise of a Modern City 1871-1893*, said about two thousand acres were destroyed. Chicago lost eighteen thousand buildings and ninety thousand Chicagoans were now homeless.

What was the loss from the point of view of Unity members? Holmes reported that there were 136 housekeepers; 56 owned houses that were burned; 56 lived in rented houses that were burned; 152 had their places of business destroyed; and 115 lost both their homes and their places of business. Their "aggregate" loss was \$2,350,200.

Collyer was not one to lick his wounds for long. He became anxious to learn about the status of his parishioners: "I found my friend Horace White, the editor of the Chicago Tribune, hard at work preparing the first imprint after the fire...." He was happy to insert Collyer's notice for all to meet the upcoming Sunday at Unity.



That Sunday gathered "a large company of our people, with other friends and many strangers," on the space before the church. One of the large stones had fallen in the place Collyer chose to use for his platform. With a borrowed Bible and hymn book, he began the service. The congregation of course had no hymn book, so he "deaconed out the hymns two lines at a time." They sang to the tune of the solemn "Old Hundred":

Before Jehovah's awful throne
Ye nations bow with sacred joy.
Know that the Lord is god alone;
He can create, and he destroy.

In his sermon, Collyer countered the idea that the fire was a judgment from God, who was angry over the wickedness of this city. He spoke, "First of all, judgments from heaven are not retrospective, but prospective, that is, they are never of the backward glance, but always of the forward. No such punishment could possibly do any good if it were only received as a

In Chicago's Den of Fire *continued from Page 8*

wilful reflection of the rod of heaven." He furthered that Chicago was a city that had its share of wickedness, but it also had great heart. It was more a matter of not using good sense and allowing poor materials in construction that fed the conflagration. He reminded all that homes can be rebuilt, money can be replaced, and hopes can be restored. Chicago still had the geography and the talented citizens; and it had the hope and will to rebuild from the ashes. At the end of his message, Collyer proposed that they not pay his stipend (\$5,000) for that year because he could take care of his family by again making horse shoes with his anvil. There were reporters there who telegraphed Collyer's words. One week after the service, Collyer received a letter from a gentleman in Boston. It said, "Do not be troubled about your stipend for the coming year. I will pay it, and enclose my check for the first quarter."

Generosity followed sympathy, from our country to "nations of kin to us in the old world". One man sent fourteen hundred loaves of bread. In 1876, Collyer tallied the contributions; the sum totaled almost five million dollars in money with an additional "vast bounty in food and clothing and whatever besides would be of instant use or worth."

Chicago's Mayor Mason and the Chicago Relief organization jumped into whatever action needed to be done and did it expeditiously. Chicago was divided into districts and each had a superintendent and

a cooperating committee. Collyer was made superintendent of one of them. He wrote an article in the November 24, 1871, Chicago Tribune entitled, "Among the Barracks The Buildings, the Inhabitants, and How they Live." He spoke about his visits to the barracks on Halsted, on North Dearborn, and on Centre Avenue. He was struck at first by the roughness of the buildings: "They are neither wind nor water-tight in the general run of them." But he praised the way Chicagoans made these shelters homey as much as possible. He did critique some of the sanitary conditions of waste removal. Nonetheless, on the whole, his words praised the noble efforts.

Collyer was asked by several cities to relate his story of the fire. As a result of his presentations to the Unitarian churches in St. Louis, the Church of the Messiah in New York, and the Music Hall in Boston, for which he received stipends, the Unitarian Association gathered

and held seventy thousand dollars for the rebuilding of Unity Church.

Three weeks after the fire, as Holmes relates, Collyer wrote an article for the Liberal Christian in which he spoke of his hopes for the future of Chicago Unity Church. He was not interested in building a stunning cathedral, but a practical meeting place that would welcome more people: "and so there is nothing I would love to do better than this, to fling the doors of the new church wide open, make all welcome, our whole city and our whole country... 'Whosoever will, let him come and take of the waters of life freely.'"

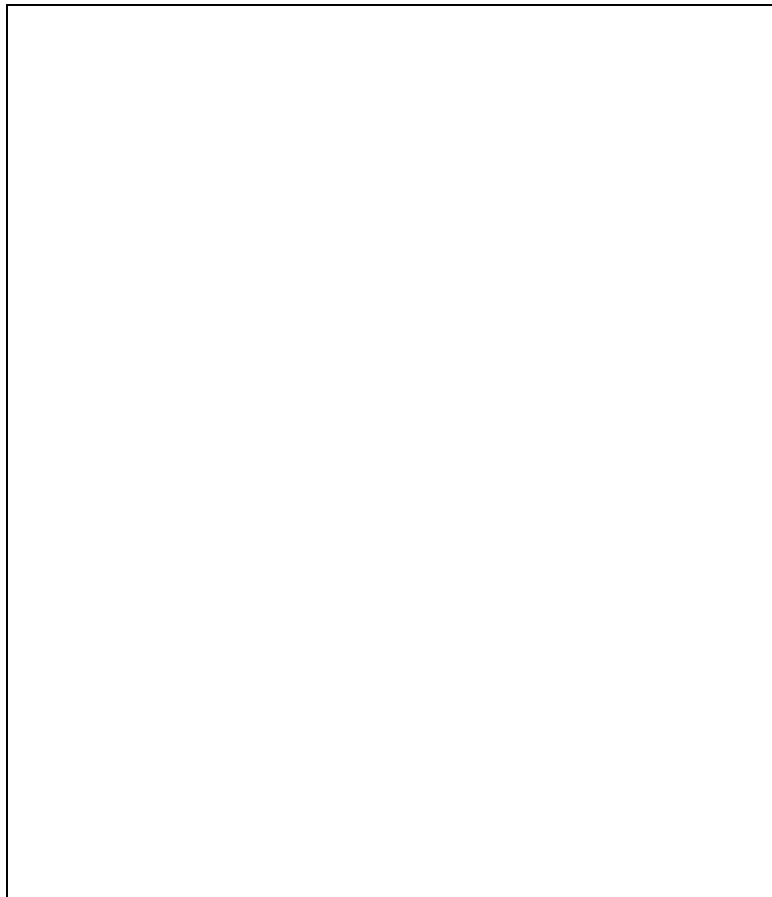
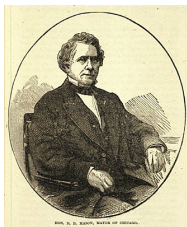
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The Dream I'm Currently Working On submitted by Ian McPhaden

Something new going on at 2U is the Anti-Bias Action Ministry. Some 2U congregants got together and said, "Hey! We all like to nip discrimination in the bud, right? And we all think that fighting bigotry is at least one part of the way we write our faith into the story of our lives, right? Yeah! Why aren't we pooling our knowledge and experience on this? Maybe other people at church feel the same way!" And Bang, there it was.

As there seem to be some questions about where the term "Anti-Bias Action" comes from, I thought I'd share a little bit about how we chose these three words. While some people may find that the word "Anti" has an abrasive connotation, we think it is important to use this prefix in order to display our convictions right up front. By saying confidently that we are against bias instead of for its opposite, we stake a public claim on our boundaries between good and bad, right and wrong.

The wrong and bad thing I'm speaking of here is *discrimination* against individuals based upon factors beyond their control; further, the *denial*, rooted in such discrimination, of rights and resources considered to be basic to the standard of living for a given society. Many of the overt acts of discrimination that we associate with racism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression are slowly built-up as individual (and oftentimes passive) decisions to accept shared biases as fact. Much like a wall being built, each successive level of discrimination is supported by a foundation of

previous assumptions that were accepted as established truths. By learning to address the individual instances of bias as they occur, we hope to chip away at the load-bearing arguments for injustice and, in doing so, make real and gradual changes in our world. Hopefully, the type of changes that can create the society in which we'd like to live.

Which leads us to "Action"; reminding us that imagining an ideal society gets us nowhere unless we put ourselves out on a limb and demonstrate the behavior that impedes passive acceptance of discrimination. I believe that each instance where I publicly question the use of prejudice as a valid basis for important decisions is a small victory, and worth more to the world than preaching to the choir.

However, it is really nice to know that there is a choir with whom I can trade stories and share strategies. Perhaps this sounds like something you could use in your life. Maybe you're unsure how the above fits into your experience at 2U but want to find out more. You might even be concerned that we are trying to establish a "political-correctness squad" for the church. Please come find out on **Tuesday, January 15th** at 7:00 p.m. in the 2U Loft! Attendance at this Open-Visioning session in no way implies interest in joining a committee, but we want a variety of viewpoints and experiences to inform the direction that will be taken. For more information, please send inquiries to ian.mcphaden@gmail.com. This ministry is just getting started and it is important to share all perspectives and learn what unspoken needs there are to be served.

Members New to 2U

Angie Alleman grew up in Aurora, IL. She attended the Geneva UU Church and the Lake Geneva Summer Assembly for many years. After graduating from the University of Illinois-Champaign with a degree in mechanical engineering, Angie moved to Chicago. She worked in the automotive industry designing transmission components, as a management consultant, and now works for the Chicago Public Schools-Office of New Schools, which oversees new charter schools. Along the way, Angie earned her MBA at Kellogg Graduate School of Business. Angie has volunteered in Ghana (where she taught math and HIV education at a girls' high school), Kenya, and Tanzania. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, photography, and running. Angie is glad to have found her new job and her new church and is looking forward to exploring her own spirituality further through classes and activities at 2U.

Erin Ferguson, a life-long UU, grew up in Saint Paul, MN. She attended the University of Minnesota, earning an inter-departmental bachelors degree and a master's degree in education. Erin lived in Baltimore for a year and then moved to Chicago, where she taught social studies at Robeson High School in the Englewood neighborhood. She is now the Executive Director of the Amandla School, a new college prep charter school for 5-12th graders, due to open in the fall. When not working, Erin enjoys biking and reading. She and her partner, Melissa Walker, have joined the Hospitality Committee and have enjoyed the Wednesday night dinners and meditation class.

Melissa Walker grew up in Champaign, IL. She attended Evergreen State College in Washington State, where she earned a liberal arts degree. After living in Seattle for a few years, Melissa moved to Chicago to attend the Art

Institute, where she earned a Master's of Fine Arts in writing. She is the Assistant Director of a non-profit foundation that provides mobile medical clinics for children with asthma. In her free time, Melissa enjoys writing and yoga. Melissa and her partner, Erin, looked around the Chicago area for a UU Church and felt 2U was the right fit. She and Erin enjoyed the spiritual practices class and are looking forward to more Wednesday evening community dinners and classes.

Monique Hanson grew up in Appleton, WI, where she was a member of the UU Church. She attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, earning a degree in history. Monique and her husband, Torrey, moved to Chicago ten years ago. She is the Vice-President and Chief Development Officer for the YMCA of the USA. Monique lives in Old Town and enjoys her two cats, Jack and Rocco. She is glad to have found 2U and is interested in social action issues.

Leah Dawson hails from Ann Arbor, MI, where she grew up UU. She received her bachelor's degree in creative writing and comparative literature from the University of Michigan and her master's degree in public policy from the University of Chicago. Leah works for the City of Chicago-Office of Budget and Management. In her leisure time, Leah volunteers at the Inspiration Cafe, enjoys running (is training for a half-marathon), reading, and cooking and is interested in political issues. At 2U, Leah has been active in the Young Adult Group and is interested in social justice issues.

Welcome to Angie, Erin, Melissa, Monique, and Leah !!!

**Church Office
Information & Staff**

Office Hours

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00 – 1:00
Wednesdays 9:00 – 3:00, or by appointment

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The Anvil

The Newsletter of the Second Unitarian Church of Chicago
A center for love and light—celebrating 150 years.

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