



The Pathfinder



A Publication of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of DeKalb

Volume 62, Issue 3

158 N. Fourth St.

DeKalb, IL 60115

Jun-July 2021

OUR MISSION

Together as a religious community, we put our liberal faith in action, striving to nurture our families and our spiritual lives, protect the earth, eliminate poverty, and stop oppression, while offering love and hope for all.

(UUFDF mission statement adopted May 17, 2009)

DEADLINE

The deadline for the August edition of the Pathfinder is **July 18**. Please note that this is the third Sunday of the month. Submissions are to be sent to the church office via email: office@uufdekalb.org.

Online Worship

For the duration of the COVID-19 crisis, UUFDF is holding online worship services at our usual time – Sundays at 10 a.m. We use Zoom, which is easily installed on a computer, tablet, or smartphone. Join the service each Sunday at uufdekalb.org/live.

Fellowship Zoom starts at 9:30 a.m.

Sunday Services: Service 10:00 A.M. till 11:15 A.M.

June Theme: Care of the Soul

No Special Collection Jun-Aug

Rev. Nancy Shaffer asked, “How shall we mend you, sweet Soul? ...Come sit. Come tell me.” The soul is understood as our essence, as the core of our being. It is sturdy, but not invincible. Subject to the tragedies that touch our lives, the fabric of the soul can be torn. Shaffer concluded, “We will mend you with pieces of your own sweet self, sweet Soul.” The care of the soul is important work for it is self-care.

June 6 – Rest My Soul

Maylan Dunn-Kenney, Worship Leader
Dan Kenney, Assistant

June 13 – The Ties That Bind Us One to Another

Rev. Allen, Worship Leader
Ed Miguel, Assistant

June 20 –

Diane Johns, Worship Leader
Dorothy Coleman, Assistant

June 27 – GA Online Sunday Service

Ed Miguel, Worship Leader
Vanstrom Dracul, Assistant

July Theme: Journey

Lynn Hough wrote, “life is a journey and not a destination.” Life is a series of waystations woven together by our journey. No straight line. A meander with dead-ends, amazing vistas, dense forests, cool waters, treasured companions, and mountains, always mountains. It is getting lost and being found again. It is the present moment and distant memory. We use the journey to discover our self.

July 4 – May the Summer Be With You

Ed Miguel, Worship Leader

July 11 – Nature, Earthly Interdependence and Cosmic Force

Rev. Allen, Worship Leader

July 18 – Are We There Yet?

Maylan Dunn-Kenney, Worship Leader

July 25 –

Diane Johns, Worship Leader

CONTACTS:

MINISTER: Rev. Allen Harden (minister@uufdekalb.org or 773-288-2394)

OFFICE MANAGER: Kathryn Jones (**Please contact her online or by phone**)

PRESIDENT: Tom Stamatakos

TREASURER: Ashley Ford

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Web site: uufdekalb.org

In case of an emergency, call Board Past President Jenny Stamatakos, or President Tom Stamatakos.

Minister's Thoughts

Our Touchstones theme for June is 'Care of the Soul'. This is an idea that each of us might explain in a different way, but my guess is that it probably works out to pretty much the same thing for most of us. Every one of us has needs, and finding ways to feed them is how we continue our never-ending process of personal formation, enrichment, and growth. Few of us really know what will feed our souls (or where we might look to find our souls), and we spend much of our lives in search for wellness and harmony. All self-care is care of the soul, and we should all think of what makes us feel most whole and most healthy.

I write now as Pat and I return to Chicago on a flight from Albuquerque. We spent this week at a small family gathering in southwestern Colorado. There were six – myself, my younger brother, my older sister, and our spouses. We got together to mark our mother's recent death, to honor her life, to share memories, and to return Mom's physical remains to the universe. We accomplished her memorial in a way that felt right. Marking and owning important life milestones is caring for our souls.

My siblings and I appreciate one another, but we rarely visit, and we always counted on Mom to keep us informed about what the others are doing. Part of what we did this week was to reconnect, share memories, and reinvent our family. And, it felt really good to tighten the bonds to those I have known the longest. The reminder that I am a part of something larger than myself -- a family of shared genes and common memory – does help me know myself and bring me to a place where I feel I belong. Caring for our connections is caring for our own souls.

Another way this trip fed my heart was by bringing me into nature – often big and sensational nature. The drive from Albuquerque to Colorado was an amazing sequence of desert and mountain, with buttes, mesas, canyons, colorful rock formations, rivers, wind, sun, and sky – each with animal and plant life that is new to me. I find that humility is easy to come by when surrounded by such im-

mense glory. Appreciating our place in the natural order is caring for our souls.

While in Colorado, we added human culture and history to our natural exposure by visiting the Pueblo cliff dwellings and other archeological sites at Mesa Verde National Park. In an awe-inspiring setting, we repeatedly saw evidence of the inventiveness and persistence of the peoples who inhabited the area 1,000 years ago. Appreciating our shared humanity is caring for our souls.

I needed this trip. After months of quarantine, any travel would have been nice. Pieces of my trip were just relaxing and bringing pleasures to my senses – diversion is nice. As I return to my more normal life, it is with resolve to keep on moving, keep on learning, keep on sharing. More than anything, these are the things that seem to feed me, to help me grow my soul.

In faith,
Rev. Allen



UUFd Staff News

Minister's "office" hours:

Please feel free to email, text, or call Rev. Allen at any time. In the absence of physical gatherings, this is the main way he communicates with congregants. His phone number is 773-288-2394, and his email address is minister@uufdekalb.org.

Rev. Allen plans to gradually reestablish a physical presence in DeKalb, with decisions guided by caution and continuing concern for our health and safety. Allen has been fully vaccinated since Feb 4, and is eager to meet with individuals or (very) small groups. How we do this depends on everyone's vaccination status, the latest health advisories, and the weather. Please call or text him to make arrangements if you wish to schedule an in-person visit.



Mark Your Calendar For These UUFD Events



At this point, most in-person events are canceled, except the drive-up WE Pantry and the Hope Haven meal. Keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for more updates. And please reach out to the church office to subscribe to the weekly electronic news if you haven't already done so.

Ongoing Events

Yoga with Ed Miguel – via Zoom only. Saturdays at 5 p.m. Please contact Ed for Zoom link and details.

Restorative Meditation – Cancelled

Buddhist Study Group via Zoom – 1st & 3rd Sundays at 11:45 a.m.

Zoom links are sent to everyone on the Buddhist Group mailing list. If someone not on our mailing list would like to join us, please contact Howard Solomon at dochoward00001@gmail.com.

The Gazebo Gang, a.k.a. Ordinary Folk Musical Gathering via Zoom – 2nd & 4th Sundays at 2 p.m.

June 2021

Jun 17 – Touchstones Small Group Discussion – 7:30 p.m. via Zoom

Jun 13 – Board Meeting – 11:45 a.m. via Zoom

Jun 15 – Hope Haven Meal 6:30 p.m. (3rd Tuesdays)

Jun 26 – Drive-thru WE Pantry 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

July 2021

TBD – Board Meeting – 11:45 a.m. via Zoom

July 15 – Touchstones Small Group Discussion – 7:30 p.m. via Zoom

July 20 – Hope Haven Meal 6:30 p.m.

July 31 – Drive-Thru WE Panty 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Vaccination Registry

We are starting to compile a listing of vaccination status for UUFD. Knowing which members and friends are fully vaccinated helps us track possibilities for in-person encounters, and may guide us as we look forward to a possible reopening of the church. If you are comfortable doing so, we ask that you please send an email updating your vaccination status to office@uufdekalb.org.



The worship theme for June is Care of the Soul; for July the theme is Journey.

The worship leaders will use these themes to guide their services throughout the month. We encourage you to take a look at the Touchstones Journal on our website at uufdekalb.org/touchstones (or pick up a copy at the table by the magazine rack) and hope it will lead to deeper discussions!

JOYS & SORROWS



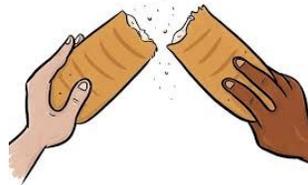
Our thoughts are with those struggling with health issues at the moment.



A huge thank you to everyone who supported the UUFD Welcome Essentials Pantry on Give DeKalb Day! We raised enough money to continue the pantry for many months to come.

If you have a joy, sorrow, or milestone to share, please reach out to Kathryn at the church office, and she'll include it in the Pathfinder.

Hope Haven News



UUFD provided two tasty meals for the clientele of 60+ visitors and residents of Hope Haven homeless shelter in April and May!

Remember to thank our cooks and food providers

- **April Ham Dinner** - Thank you to Sharon Blake, Sheryl Nak, Gretchen Sigwart, Beth Schewe, Mary Von Zellen, Linda Slabon, Maylan Dunn-Kenny, Danica Lovings, Ashley Ford, Toni Tollerud, Charles Sigwart and Virginia Wilcox.
- **May Chicken Pot Pie** - Thank you to Beth Schewe, Sharon Blake, Ashley Ford, Sheryl Nak, Maylan Dunn-Kenny, Gretchen Sigwart, Linda Slabon, Charles Sigwart, Toni Tollerud, and Virginia Wilcox.

Volunteer shortage: Filling all of our volunteer spots was tough in April and May. Please give a special thanks to Mary Von Zellen and Ashley Ford for doing double duty filling two spots. Thank you also to our couples who filled two spots (and regularly fill two spots) - Gretchen and Charles Sigwart and Toni Tollerud and Linda Slabon. The meals couldn't have been complete without your extra contributions!

Upcoming Meals:

June dinner theme - Tues., June 15th: Tater-tot Casserole - Please see the [June Volunteer Sign-up Sheet](#) to volunteer!

July dinner theme - Tues., July 20th: Submarine Sandwiches - Please see the [July Volunteer Sign-up Sheet](#) to volunteer!

Please contact Danica Lovings for information and tips & tricks for volunteering - Phone/text: 815-901-4625; email: danica855@gmail.com. And thank you!

Treasurer's Report – Closing out the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year

(written by Ashley Ford May 25, 2021 in preparation for the Congregational Meeting)

This has been a challenging year for UUFD logistically, emotionally, and spiritually as we've been kept from gathering by the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, it's been a good year financially, due somewhat to reduced operating costs from the building being closed, but due mostly to several unexpected and generous windfalls from members gone but not forgotten. In December, Marion Guthjahr made a \$500 donation in memory of Dennis Durler with the request that it "go to those in need." This doubled our reserve for the Ministerial Discretionary Fund. Twice, we have received \$700 from the UUA Umbrella Giving program via the Kowalskis. Most astonishingly, in February we received \$18,210 dollars from the Sylvia O'Neil Memorial, for which we are so humbly grateful! If you're wondering why the "Nonpledge donations" budget line is at 377% of our expected income for the year, this is why. Our Secretary, Sharon Blake, has been faithfully prompt with the thank-you notes. These gracious contributions have bolstered our budget where other categories of income have lagged.

We've received 79% of expected Pledge payments so far this year, with 90% of the year passed. Cost sharing via building use has been impossible this year due to the pandemic, and fundraising efforts have been equally challenged. The memorial contributions more than made up for these shortfalls, however, and we have realized 105% of our projected income for the year at this point, with one month left to go before the start of the new Fiscal Year. As far as expenditures go, the Board set an austere budget last year in anticipation of the COVID crisis, and the church has managed to spend even less than what was allotted. Our electric bills have been half of what they usually are, and we haven't needed to pay for trash pickup. We've not had a Musical Director or a Pianist this past year, and the Worship Team spent very little in the way of supplies, guest speakers, or musicians. (Worship Team, please don't feel like you need to hold this line. Your budgeted amounts for these categories will remain the same going forward, and we hope you find opportunities to use that resource!)

We have had some unexpected expenses this year that caused us to exceed our projections in a few places: we had to have some areas of the roof repaired after leaking water pooled so much as to cause a minor collapse in the ceiling near the Locust Street entrance. Apex Exteriors did those repairs, and the roof no longer leaks, but the ceiling still needs to be patched. We are increasing next year's Maintenance budget in anticipation of that repair, of possible updates to our HVAC system to improve ventilation, and for any other surprises that may pop up when we start using the building again. We also needed to make some unanticipated upgrades to our internet service and equipment in order to facilitate our Zoom worship services. We will need to make yet another upgrade to our DSL service once we are gathering in person again, because our goal is to continue to offer our live services remotely.

Even with these unexpected expenses, our spending for the year is at 87% of what was projected, with 1 month remaining. With our memorial donations, this means that for the second year in a row, UUFD's Operating Budget will end in the black. Rather than the anticipated shortfall we started with, our projected excess for the year is \$12,198 (thanks again, Sylvia O'Neil!). What does this mean in practical terms? Keep in mind that the Operating Budget is an estimation, guided by past experience, of how much money the church is likely to receive in one year's time versus how much we are likely to spend. It is not a representation of our existing assets. For that information, please see the bottom of the budget report under the heading, "What's in the Bank Right Now?" UUFD currently has \$78,804. That is \$9709 more than we had this time last year. That is great news! Some of that money is set aside in reserve for specific purposes, such as the Building Our Future fund, RE Development, Choir, and the Ministerial Discretionary Fund. Reserving those categories, UUFD currently has \$59,551 available with which to pay the bills. This means that if we were to receive no money at all in the next year, barring emergencies and based on past spending patterns, we could probably make it to next April before we ran out of money. That's our cushion. This is a helpful thing to understand when we discuss things like projected budgetary shortfalls.

Speaking of which, it is time to discuss next year's Operating Budget. Even though we anticipate re-opening for Ingathering at the end of summer, the Board has still tried to keep projected expenses modest, in reflection of our shrinking membership. However, there are a few budget items that must be increased this year. Maintenance is one, as discussed earlier. Childcare is another; our beloved childcare provider, Megan King, moved away last summer, and we'll need to hire a replacement, keeping in mind Illinois' ever-improving minimum wage laws. Upgraded DSL internet service is another expense that we can no longer put off. The Board is choosing to fund these increases by dipping more heavily into the Building Our Future reserve than we normally do. Even so, we currently face a projected budgetary shortfall of \$22,743 for the upcoming year. Why is this? The Pledge Drive results are woefully short of our goal. We began this past Fiscal year with over \$57,000 in Pledged Income; right now, we're looking at \$38,000 Pledged for the upcoming year. So please, if you plan to pledge and just haven't gotten your Pledge Form submitted, do so ASAP. If you hadn't planned to pledge, please know that every little bit helps and is deeply appreciated.

Reflection on Motherhood, by Beth Schewe (presented at Mother's Day Sunday service)

Motherhood is a lesson in letting go. For those of us who became mothers through pregnancy, the lesson started early on. Having another being inhabit your body is a humbling and disconcerting experience – which occasionally feels similar to the famous scene from *Alien*. What becomes clear from the beginning is that you're no longer in charge around here. If you ever were. For those who begin with adoption, the lessons start equally early – the uncertainty and the waiting of that process, the lack of control over another person's decisions and the timing of her body's rhythms are equally nerve wracking.

And either of these is a fitting start for motherhood because the letting go only continues after the child arrives.

The first thing you let go of is your schedule, your sense of day and night, the routine passage of the hours, days, and weeks. You live in baby time those first few months, snatching sleep when you can, watching at 4 a.m. as your wide-awake infant plays with her mobile and coos like it's broad daylight. The haze of exhaustion and the excitement, the love and the fear, make that a period like no other. You start to ask yourself questions like, "When did I last take a shower" and "have I eaten yet today?" "Do I have time to change my clothes before she wakes up hungry?" Come to think of it, pandemic time is a bit similar to baby time, but hopefully with more sleep.

You also ask yourself the inspiring questions and the tough ones: What will she be when she grows up? Who will she be and what difference will she make in the world? How will she respond to a world that's full of suffering, that's out of balance, that's often unsafe? Was it even ethical to bring a child into such a damaged world? (Well – it's too late on that one. The kids are already here.)

The next thing you start to let go of is your ideals of parenthood. The parent who said "I would never let my child sleep in my bed" finds that's the only place her finicky toddler will rest. The one who said "I would never make my child go to sleep alone" finds that her child won't rest in her arms and prefers to be put down to find sleep on his own.

The food, the toys, the choices about television. Ideals fly out the window in the face of reality as your child eschews the expensive wooden toys so carefully researched and falls in love with the plastic junk from McDonald's, where you swore your family would never eat. Your one-year-old hates the fancy stuffed animal you bought for their first birthday, but loves the box, which he then proceeds to carry around with him like a security blanket for the next year.

The children cut their own hair, decorate their clothing with paint and scissors, decide to fry their own eggs and climb on the counter to reach the frying pan. They run away from home and end up at the local park or at grandma's house one mile away, with no shoes. They pick up your own worst habits and language, and your three-year-old yells at you to "Just leave me alone and let me put on my own damn mittens." Meanwhile your eight-year-old says she hates you and you're the worst parent ever because you said No to ... something. (Not all of these have happened to me, but most of them have.)

But – here's the secret to surviving parenthood: Most of the time, you can decide to stop caring about those things. I mean, some of them are important moral or safety issues. But the rest just doesn't really matter, and learning to let go of what other people think of your children, learning to let go of the idea that they're an extension or reflection of yourself, learning to ignore that judgmental voice inside your own head – is the most important lesson motherhood teaches.

Years ago, for example, I simply decided to stop caring about the clothing my children wore. It turns out you can do that. Just decide to stop caring about something – and it feels amazing! (That's a lesson I am looking forward to applying in other areas of my life, too.) Striped leggings with plaid shorts on top and a polka dotted dress. Sure. Costumes daily as regular clothes? OK. Nonmatching socks or shoes? As long as they keep your feet warm. Zeke wore his sister's dresses to school when he was two (until he later rebelled against wearing what he decided were girls' clothes), and his teachers happily taught him how to hold up his dress so he didn't accidentally pee on it while potty training. We got the occasional confused look from a fellow parent, but it turned out – nobody really cared. They were all too busy trying to manage their own confusing and complicated lives to pay much attention to ours. The kids got the fun and the practice of making their own decisions, and I had one less thing to worry about – one less battle to fight.

Letting go of the superficial stuff gives you more time to think deeply about the important choices. Choices like: How can you spend a little special time with each child each day, doing something they enjoy? (By the way, you have to let go of your idea of what you think they *should* enjoy... I'm still working on that.) How can you be present with your child as they experience anger, fear, frustration, and joy – emotions as deep and compelling as those of any adult?

Because big emotions and big ideas come in little packages, and we underestimate children at our own peril. They see and understand more than we realize, and they soon recognize that the world is both a wonderful and a frightening place. When I cuddle a small body and kiss a sweaty little forehead, I often marvel at the knowledge that there's a whole world in there. We often can't control or fathom our own emotions and ideas, so why would we even try to control those of another being – who may have grown first within our own body but is separate from ourselves, different in surprising and unexpected ways.

And that's where the real letting go happens. My parents used to tell me – "If we do our job right, you won't need us anymore." Our kids are still young, and we haven't gotten very far down that path yet. But I hope the letting go we do early will prepare us for what's to come, for accepting that these humans will need to make their own decisions, and mistakes, and will need to suffer. And not only is there nothing I can do to stop that suffering. When I try to protect them too much I'm not allowing them to build the tools and resilience they'll need to deal with the inevitable suffering of life. All I can hope to do is give them a safe place to land, where no idea or emotion is too strong or too scary to face, where they can yell "I hate you," and I do my best to respond, "That's OK. You don't have to love me, but I love you anyway. No matter what."

I often return to a poem by Kahlil Gibran when I'm struggling to let go.

"Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams."

Sunday, May 9th Mother's Day thoughts....

By Donna Veeneman

I went back in my journals last night to read about the time around our son's birth and that prompted what I am saying today. When I think about being a Mother one word comes to mind and that is love. Drew came into the world surrounded by love. We waited and hoped for his arrival for 5 years. He was born into a small community of Unitarian Universalists on Dec. 31, 1980 in Bossier City, Louisiana. One week earlier I had stood in front of that small church singing "Come, O Come Emanuel" in our choir.

A small room off the maternity ward was filled to overflowing with exuberant UU's a day or two after his birth. It is a memory I treasure to this day! I wept tears of joy being in their presence.

About two weeks before his birth a dear friend from All Souls UU gave me this poem:

*There aborning Donna goes
Carrying her child protectively
beneath her ribs
Tiny baby in fetal position,
safely growing,
Unaware of his/her mother's lovely smile
Her gentle voice and caring ways.
Little one, what a treasure
Of love you're to inherit
Anxiously we wait to welcome You
To Donna with all my love, Grace Landry*

A year and a half went by and that love held us, him, as we watched him grow. On his first Christmas watching him take his first wobbly steps, I wrote this poem trying to describe the over-flowing love I felt for him.

His First Christmas

*A year you've journeyed with us now
blonde, blue-eyed, dimpled boy –
from a tiny warm bundle barely six pounds
to a creeping, crawling, walking, falling,
dancing, smiling, babbling song.
Twenty five pounds of bouncing sweet music,
this was your first Christmas my son.
Reflections of this year like pieces,
like colored glass, like winking lights
play upon the blessed Yule tree.
Chubby fingers tearing paper, eyes sparking,
lips laughing, you walked uncertain round and round.
Books, colored eggs, balls and bubbles, my boy
how beautiful, how like a melody you are, so precious you sweet life – and ours!*

He is now 40 years old and that love for him has never wavered nor his deep love for Steve and I.

On Being A Grandmother by Diane Johns (May 2021)

Just as life doesn't prepare one to be a parent, it doesn't prepare one to be a grandparent either. As a mother, I thought I knew what it felt like to love a baby with all my heart and soul, but the experience was different when my grandchildren were born. The love I felt was fierce, expansive, and all-encompassing. These special children are a visible, tangible link to the future, and being with them reminds me of what I was like as a child and keeps me feeling young and playful and curious about the world. Their presence in my family has also fostered an altered relationship with my adult daughters, as I revel in watching *my* kids interact with *their* kids. I've also had to let go of the control I enjoyed as a mother, because I no longer make the parenting rules. But that's okay, because I've found that being a grandmother brings all of the joys and fewer of the responsibilities of being a parent.

It is truly a blessing.
