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## First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor, Michigan

*Nurture Your Spirit. Help Heal Our World.*

# August Newsletter

August 1, 2015 - Vol 11, Issue 7

## Worship @ UUAA

### Congregational Links

#### UUAA Links:

[Calendar of Events](#)

[Social Justice at UUAA](#)

[UUAA.org](#)

#### Other Links:

[MidAmericauua.org](#)

[Standing on the Side of Love](#)

[UUA.org](#)

Join Our Mailing List!

Worship Services begin  
at 10:00am  
followed by Social Hour.

### August 2, 2015

#### "Dignity"

Dr. Charlie Clements, guest preacher

Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout, pulpit host

Dignity: at the core of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Unitarian Universalism, and central to many religions.

Elusive to define, easy to undermine, but often simple to restore.

Charlie is a public health physician and human rights activist. For seven years he served as President & CEO of the UU Service Committee. He is currently Executive Director of the Carr Center for Human Rights at the Harvard Kennedy School.

### August 9, 2015

#### "A Place for Poetry"

A Worship Service crafted by members Kathy Edgren, Rebecca Manery, and Theresa Rohlck with the UUAA Community of Writers.

Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout, pulpit host

At UUAA, you'll find poetry in the hymns we sing and the readings we recite. Poetry is quoted in sermons, displayed in our bookstore, and penned in our Community of Writers. What makes poetry such an important complement to our principles? What role can poems play in our work for social justice and spiritual growth?

### August 16, 2015

**"CHANGE"**

Rev. Gail R. Geisenhainer, Senior Minister

Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout, Director of Music, pulpit host.

Everything that lives is changing.

We welcome 2015-2016 Consulting Minister,  
Lindasusan Ulrich.

**August 23, 2015****"Music in Practice"**

Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout, pulpit host

and Theresa Rohlck, worship associate,

with Katlyn Cameron, Allison Halerz, Gregg Peterson,  
and Brandy Sinco.

Musicians from our Congregation share stories of music as a vital part of life and songs that bring strength, companionship, assistance, drive to their being human.

**August 30, 2015****"Aim for the Heart: AIM to Be Inclusive"**

Rev. Gail R. Geisenhainer, Senior Minister,,

with Accessibility Team members

Theresa Rohck, pulpit host

Our Accessibility Team works to fulfill for all individuals with disability the UU principles that affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person, with justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

At General Assembly this past June, the national UUA Accessibility & Inclusion Ministry (AIM) program (motto: AIM to Be Inclusive) opened its certificate program to all UU congregations. UUA is a pilot site helping to develop that program -- and we expect to apply for our AIM certificate next spring.

Two Accessibility Team members will share their stories of how they feel welcome, included, and able to participate in our Congregation. The work towards being inclusive involves us all and is never done. In this Worship Service, we open our hearts and focus our aim toward deeper inclusivity

**Gleanings**

Reflections from Rev. Gail R. Geisenhainer, Senior Minister



Dear Ones, All,

There is creative change emerging in the UUAA offices. New staff to "on-board" (who KNEW that was even a verb??). Structures and expectations to streamline as we push toward the October deadlines of living sustainably and within our means.

### **Restructuring Update: Staffing Changes**

Joining our staff team in July was **Aaron Gibson** as our **Programs Coordinator**. Aaron brings an MSW from the University of Michigan and comes to us from a year on staff with the Ann Arbor Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice. His passion for community organizing will support, first, our Spiritual Growth and Development ministries. His creativity and communications skills will inform all our ministries, over time. Aaron's start date was Sunday, July 26.

Joining our staff team on August 10th, **Lindasusan Ulrich** will be our **Consulting Minister**. A graduate of Starr King School for the Ministry, Lindasusan comes to us from her year as the Hallman Ministerial Intern at Unity Church-Unitarian in St. Paul, Minnesota. She will be introduced to our Congregation when I am next in the pulpit on August 16th.

Please do join me in welcoming these folks as they learn their way around our vibrant and complex Congregation.

And please do receive my warmest gratitude for the generosity, purpose, and passion that make it possible for me to make these hires. Your support of our Congregation is crucial to creating, supporting, and sharing widely, the good news that is Unitarian Universalism in Ann Arbor.

And thank you, all of you, for your steady, caring, generous support of our Congregation and its ministries.

My Love Abides  
Rev. Gail



## **Board of Trustee News**

### **President's Message**

**Beth Hospadaruk, Board President**

Welcome to the Dog Days of Summer. When I thought of this saying, I said to myself, "What does that even mean?" so I looked it up! Of course it has a meaning and a history; how many of you know it? I'm not going to tell you, I'll let those interested search and learn! But here we are, mid-summer and as I settle down to write to you all, I'm thinking about the wonderful, fulfilling, and tiring time I had at this year's General Assembly in Portland, Oregon. The theme this year was "Building a New Way", seems appropriate as we here in



Ann Arbor are finding our new way with changes and challenges surrounding us every day. The GA always takes on a life of its own and I love being a part of it. This was my 14th time attending GA and I find it to be a place that I can learn, participate in the governing of the Unitarian Universalist Association ([uua.org](http://uua.org)), grow as a UU, and renew my commitment to this faith. I hear inspiring sermons, attend informative workshops, meet UUs from around the country, and listen to and sing along to wonderful music. This year was particularly special because our own Glen Thomas Rideout attended his first GA and was able to join other musicians on stage several times leading those assembled in song. You would have been proud to sing joyously along, Ann Arbor style, to his leading of "You Gotta Sing (when the spirit says sing)" just prior to the Ware Lecture with Cornell West. [You can watch here](#). It was truly an awesome moment for me.

One story that I have heard over and over again is the story of how this faith has changed people's lives. Glen Thomas told us his story on March 1 in his sermon "The Art of the Matter". What is your story? Has this faith changed your life? How? Are you raising your children (or raised your children) in this faith so they don't have to "find us" later in life? I would love to hear your story. Tell me about what this faith or Congregation means to you. Catch me in coffee hour, put a note in my mailbox or send it to me at [president@uuaa.org](mailto:president@uuaa.org) Please, inspire me!

Your Board of Trustees spent Saturday, July 11 together at our annual retreat. Many thanks to several members of this Congregation who attended and presented information. We heard from Tim Richards on the topic of Shared Leadership Governance, Dixie Hibner on Reflective Conversations, Paul Morris on CCT (Communication and Coordination Team), and Kathy Friedrichs, Tom Reischl, and Mary Lynn Stevens from the Leadership Development Team, all helping to support the work of the Board on your behalf. Confidently, I can say, "To the work of this Congregation, Which is weaving a tapestry of love and action, We dedicate our lives and these our meetings".

Be well, friends!  
Beth Hospadaruk  
2015-2016 Board President



## Spiritual Growth and Development

### SGD Staffing Additions by Stephanie Surfus

Aaron Gibson, our new Programs Coordinator, has a passion for social justice. Aaron earned his Master of Social Work from the University of Michigan, with a concentration in Community Engagement and Organization. Aaron has great experience in the area of volunteer recruitment through his work with Interfaith Center for Peace and Justice and other organizations. Most recently, Aaron coordinated the Ann Arbor CROP Hunger Walk, empowering eight volunteers, over 40 CROP walk recruiters, and over 350 walkers to raise money for local and international hunger relief. Donations exceeded \$50, 000, the highest amount raised in two years.



Aaron has worked with United Way as the AmeriCorps Vista Associate to further the goals of the "Meet Up and Eat Up" initiative, a program aimed at alleviating childhood hunger

associated with summer break. Aaron has experience creating safe spaces for youth to interact and learn from one another. He was a Youth Mentor in church, a spiritual life advisor to student residents during college, and mentored children with autism through weekly play therapy sessions. Aaron has organized international service trips for youth.

Aaron's experiences abroad in Guatemala, Cambodia, and Colombia solidified his belief in partnering with local communities to address issues and problems with practical solutions and with respect for the culture of the community. Aaron believes, "Religious and spiritual groups are some of the last communities that meet together on a regular basis with the unified mission of making the world a better place. Harnessing that community impact is critical for social justice."

While Aaron is new to Unitarian Universalism, his values and interests certainly align with our beloved community. Aaron and his wife, Katie Gibson, are from metro Detroit. Let's warmly welcome Aaron and Katie (along with their two cats, Boots and Bailey) to Ann Arbor and to our UU community.

Questions? Contact Stephanie Surfus at [stephaniesurfus@hotmail.com](mailto:stephaniesurfus@hotmail.com).



## Activities and Events

### Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL) \* Saturday, August 1



There will be a monthly meeting of the Ann Arbor Chapter from 12:45pm to 2:45pm in the Jackson Chapel. All are welcome to join for a dial-in call to a national CCL expert talk, followed by local discussion. For more information go to [citizensclimatelobby.org](http://citizensclimatelobby.org). Questions? Contact Larry Junck at [ljunck@umich.edu](mailto:ljunck@umich.edu).



### Senior Dinner \* Wednesday, August 5

Come and join fellow seniors at Gourmet Garden at 6 pm. All are welcome and no reservations are required. Questions? Contact Marie Duke at 734-769-0467 or [omaduke7@gmail.com](mailto:omaduke7@gmail.com).



### Alpha House Host Week \* Monday - Sunday, August 24 - 30



The next Host Week at Alpha House, the shelter for homeless families, will be Monday, August 24 to Sunday, August 30. More than 100 volunteers will be needed. Volunteers are needed to provide meals, serve, and clean-up for dinner, play with the kids, stay overnight, and to serve as Day Hosts. Sign up for the August Host Week at [SignUpGenius.com/go/20F0D4DAAA2EA02-august1](http://SignUpGenius.com/go/20F0D4DAAA2EA02-august1) or at the Alpha House table during Social Hour.

Questions? Contact UUA Alpha House Coordinator Angela Barber at [abarber@gmail.com](mailto:abarber@gmail.com).



## Announcements and Notices

### General Assembly (GA) Vote Update

At 2015 GA, the first significant vote was on the proposed Statement of Conscience (SOC): Reproductive Justice. After much discussion in the mini-assembly, the delegates debated five "unincorporated amendments" - ones that the mini-assembly couldn't make a decision on. The delegates rejected the one on helping eliminate barriers to adoptees getting information on their biological parents, feeling that this was too big of an issue to be a part of the SOC and needs to be addressed separately in the future. The delegates added an amendment to "believe the survivors who share their experience of sexual and/or interpersonal violence..." The final version of the SOC is not yet available online.



The delegates voted against the proposed UUA bylaw changes to the nature of the Commission on Appraisal, which is the group that appraises what the UUA Board is doing. The proposal would have made this commission a part of the board instead of separate. To avoid potential conflicts of interest, a vote on changing the finance leadership was adopted doing away with a Finance Committee and having the whole Board make financial decisions.

The delegates adopted three Actions of Immediate Witness. These are actions that the General Assembly adopts that may then be advocated for in each congregation. The three were: Support the Black Lives Movement, Act for Livable Climate, and End Immigrant Child and Family Detention Now.

Lastly, the delegates voted for the amendment making the bylaws neutral regarding the governance structure of districts and regions, removing from the bylaws the concept of districts or regions as an entity of UUA governance. Though the MidAmerica region had suggested voting "no" on this, after some pertinent amendments were added to the proposal that protected a district or region's rights to participate in UUA decisions, the regional delegates were satisfied enough to vote in favor of this bylaw change.

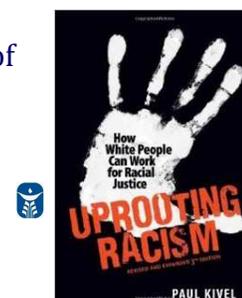
Complete details, as they are available, can be found at [uua.org/ga/virtual/2015/business](http://uua.org/ga/virtual/2015/business).

Questions? Contact Cathy Muha at [cathymuha@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cathymuha@sbcglobal.net).



## Challenging Racism

All are invited to participate in a congregational Common Read beginning fall 2015. This intriguing book is the 3rd edition (2011) of *Uprooting Racism - How White People Can Work for Racial Justice* by Paul Kivel. It is available in the QUUest Bookstore. Each book discussion will focus on: How can we be strong white allies? Questions? Contact Edie Croake at [ecroake@wccnet.edu](mailto:ecroake@wccnet.edu).



## Accessibility Team (AT) News

The Accessibility Team (AT) continues work to welcome and include everyone with disabilities and to help them to participate fully in all Congregational activities.

On Sunday, August 30, the worship team and AT will present "AIM to be Inclusive". Stories will be shared from two members with a disability who make UUAU their successful spiritual home and offer mindful attention to the full meaning of Inclusion.

Leadership transition and growth: Els Nieuwenhuijsen, the founding, pioneer leader, will complete service as Accessibility Team leader on Monday, August 31. Phil Tuchinsky was appointed co-leader in June and will succeed Els, who will then focus on Accessibility and Inclusion Education. The search is on for a next co-leader - does this sound appealing?

Meredith Ley and Tim Richards were welcomed by Priscilla Spencer, Els, and Phil as core leaders of AT at a Thursday, June 18 orientation. Meredith is the liaison to the Welcome Ministry with coordinator Hannah Hotchkiss. AT will participate in training for Welcome Ministry volunteers on Saturday, October 3. Tim will undertake a project in policy development that will carry the team's work forward and firm up the best practices to be developed.

Questions? Contact Phil Tuchinsky at [ptuchinsky@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ptuchinsky@sbcglobal.net).



## Chalice Circles Registration

There are more opportunities than ever to connect through a small group ministry. Participants in last year's Chalice Circle program had the following to say about their experience:

- "It was a relaxing respite for reflection and community, with a nice opportunity to discuss vital and relevant topics."
- "I got to know a small group of wonderful people on a deeper level and got to share myself in a safe space. It was great for a shy introvert."
- "I had just joined the church, and it allowed me to meet cool and interesting people. I really look forward to it every other weekend."
- "Insights from my circles life experiences were inspiring."

The Chalice Circle program will kick off its ninth year at UUAU. In addition to sustaining our traditional seven-month circles through the program year, snow bird circles, running September through December, and one-time circles, held in November, December, February, March, April, July, and August, will be held at UUAU.

The following sessions will be held from mid-October 2015 through mid-May 2016:

1st and 3rd Sunday afternoons	2:00-4:00pm	at UUAA
2nd and 4th Monday evenings	7:00-9:00pm	at UUAA
1st and 3rd Tuesday evenings	7:00-9:00pm	at UUAA
1st and 3rd Wednesday evenings	7:00-9:00pm	at UUAA
1st and 3rd Thursday afternoons	1-3pm	at UUAA
every other Thursday evening	6:30-8:30pm	in Plymouth
2nd and 4th Tuesday evenings	6:30-8:30pm	in Tecumseh
1st and 3rd Wednesday evenings	6:30-8:30pm	in Chelsea

Choose the circle that best suits each persons schedule. Child care is not available for Chalice Circles this year.

While openings remain, registration will continue during Social Hour through Sunday, September 20; and Sunday, August 30 for Snowbird circles. Registration for one-time Chalice Circles will happen throughout the year, a few weeks before each session. Registration will also be available by email; review the instructions at [uuaa.org/chalicecircles](http://uuaa.org/chalicecircles). Questions? Contact Ginny Preuss at [chalicecircles@uuaa.org](mailto:chalicecircles@uuaa.org).



### Climate Action Group (CAG)



Five CAG members will solicit signatures to put an anti-fracking measure on the Michigan ballot in 2016. For those who support this effort and haven't signed since the petition drive started on Friday, May 22, look for a person with a large clipboard in Social Hour. Questions? Contact Larry Junck at

[ljunck@umich.edu](mailto:ljunck@umich.edu).



### Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) News

#### Rights at Risk

The UUSC's Rights at Risk Program responds quickly to emerging human rights crises and protects a range of rights most at risk due to those catastrophes. This includes advancing the rights of people who are most overlooked or discriminated against in the midst of humanitarian crises such as forced migration, large-scale conflicts, genocide, and natural disasters.



Currently, hundreds of refugee women and their children are being unjustly held in for-profit detention camps, which are essentially jails, in Texas and Pennsylvania.

Malnourishment and severe sickness are common among children in the camps. Schooling appears to be sporadic. Overcrowded living conditions are the norm.

Although these women pose no danger to society, they have been denied parole, despite the fact that many have passed reasonable fear interviews by demonstrating a credible fear associated with returning to their home country. With limited access to legal counsel and resources while they remain indefinitely detained, these women have little chance of meaningfully presenting their cases for asylum.

By openly contesting the US Department of Homeland Security's practices, facilitating petitions to the Obama administration, and partnering with RAICES, an immigration legal advocacy organization, UUSC is championing the right to dignity, liberty, and due process for these refugees. To learn how to help, go to [uusc.org](http://uusc.org) and click on the "Rights at Risk" link at the lower right of the home page.

Questions? Contact Becky Hoort for the UUSC News reporters at [rhoort@umich.edu](mailto:rhoort@umich.edu). 

## On The Horizon

### "Gimme Shelter" Benefit

Support Alpha House on Friday, September 19 from 6:00pm to 9:30pm at the Gimme Shelter Benefit located in UM's North Campus Research Complex. This is the major fundraiser for Alpha House, which provides emergency shelter for homeless families in Washtenaw County. Other services provided by Alpha House include Housing Placement Assistance, Children's Services, and Home-Based Support to help homeless families secure and maintain stable housing.

The tax deductible portion of each benefit ticket sold will shelter a child for one night. Click on the "Gimme Shelter" link on the Alpha House web site to get tickets: [alphahouse-ihn.org](http://alphahouse-ihn.org).

Questions? Contact UUAU Alpha House Coordinator Angela Barber at [abarber@gmail.com](mailto:abarber@gmail.com). 

### Men's Retreat News

The 2015 Men's Retreat has been scheduled for Friday to Sunday, September 25 to 27 at the Judson Collins Campground. Come join with other men in the Congregation for fun and fellowship. Questions? Contact Mark VanKempen at [mark.vankempen@gmail.com](mailto:mark.vankempen@gmail.com). 

## Church Office News

**New Summer Building Hours:**  
**Sundays: 8:30am-4:00pm**  
**Mondays-Thursdays: 9:00am-9:00pm**  
**Friday: Closed**  
**Saturdays: 9:00am-12:00pm**

**\*\*\* Note these changes: The Building will be open on Saturday's from 9:00am to 12:00pm and open on Sunday's from 8:30am to 4:00pm. The building will be closed on Friday's.**

**The Church Office is open Mondays-Thursdays from 9:00am-5:00pm**

**Telephone: 734-665-6158**

**Fax: 734-665-7895**

**General Email: [office@uuaa.org](mailto:office@uuaa.org)**

#### **Communicating at UUAU:**

**The deadline for submitting UUAU event, news, and program notices for inclusion in the *Weekly Bulletin* is 5:00pm each Wednesday. Send submissions to [bulletin@uuaa.org](mailto:bulletin@uuaa.org).**

**The deadline for submitting UUAU event, news, and program notices for inclusion in the *2015 September Newsletter* is 9:00am on Friday, August 21. Send your submissions to [newsletter@uuaa.org](mailto:newsletter@uuaa.org).**

**Lay and staff program leaders may submit changes, additions, or updates for the website ([uuaa.org](http://uuaa.org)) to [webtech@uuaa.org](mailto:webtech@uuaa.org).**

#### **Building & Office Team:**

**Ed Lynn, Interim Administrator, [ed@uuaa.org](mailto:ed@uuaa.org)**

**Debby Casamatta, Office Administrator, [deborah@uuaa.org](mailto:deborah@uuaa.org)**

**Robert Klingler, Building Attendant, [robert@uuaa.org](mailto:robert@uuaa.org)**

**Venus Gregory, Congregant Room Scheduler, [venus@uuaa.org](mailto:venus@uuaa.org)**

**Dewon Lewis, Weeknight Custodian, [dewon@uuaa.org](mailto:dewon@uuaa.org)**

**Arthur Whigham, Weekend Custodian**



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