



The BEACON

News from the Unitarian Church of Lincoln • October 2020

As October – Pledge Month – begins, our church is still exemplifying the commitment to be the church of open minds, helping hands, and loving hearts who show up. Though we are not physically together in the building, we have found many ways to stay connected – to **Stay Strong**.

We need to maintain that strength as we consider our pledges for 2021. This year's theme – **Let's Stay Strong!** – reflects our commitment to weather the current challenge of not being able to gather together, and to maintain our financial position despite the need to do so "remotely."

Last year, the Board of Trustees met and set some long term goals, then broke the time frame into more immediate goals. The goals set for 2021 were reviewed in recent months, and the Board has recommended maintaining those goals! That's one way we can **Stay Strong**. The goals are these:

- Enhance our technology resources to better serve the congregation and to keep us connected
- Continue our racial justice initiatives among our congregation and in the larger Lincoln community through education and training
- Make robust plans for how best to return to the church building and to maintain our programs

We know there are some who are experiencing financial struggles due to the repercussions of COVID-19. We ask that you pledge with that in mind. If you are struggling, we understand. If you

are able to help provide extra for those who cannot give as much this year, we appreciate it.

The expanded Pledge Form provides the opportunity to allow your pledge to roll over, as in years past, but also encourages reviewing the UUA

Fair Share Contribution Guide. Members have the opportunity to give, separate from their pledge and NOT subject to rollover, a one-time extra donation. For those who can do so, this will be a way to support the

church when other members are struggling.

You will receive a pledge letter, pledge form, and [Fair Share Contribution Guide](#) in the mail in the first week of October. During October's Sunday Services, there will be members sharing brief stories of why they support the church. You can also pledge [HERE](#).

If you have questions about the Pledge Form, the Fair Share Contribution Guide, giving electronically, or any other related topic, we ask that you reach out to a Pledge Drive member by phone or email.

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From the Minister

On March 15, I spoke these words from the pulpit, after announcing that we were closing UCL's building to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic:

In September of 1870, 150 years ago this fall, a group of friends gathered in the still-under construction Nebraska State Capital. They believed that in the aftermath of the Civil War, in the midst of a new city, there was a hunger for the message of Universalism. This congregation's 150th anniversary is coming up this fall, and that's what I kept coming back to this morning as I tried to figure out what to say.

One hundred fifty years. That means that this place, this community, has been through financial panics and crop failures, the Spanish Flu, two World Wars, three presidential assassinations, the Cuban missile crisis, 9/11, and countless other world-shaking events.

Countless moments where we have gathered, maybe not knowing what to say, but knowing that we are hungry for a religion of hope and of love. We're going to be figuring our way through this, and we'll make some mistakes on the way, but we are going to do it together. I love you all.

Six months later, heading into an election, a pledge drive, a reckoning with institutional racism, and an ongoing global pandemic, I'm still in that place of remembering - this is a congregation that has seen hard times, and it has proclaimed love throughout. So regardless of what month it is, or whether we meet in person or online, we will keep proclaiming love for another seven generations.

Be at peace beloveds, Oscar



Forty People will Engage in Beloved Conversations

Task Force for Dismantling White Supremacy

In the wake of the church's recent virtual retreat, more than forty individuals responded to the passion and commitment of the Task Force's "Time to Show Up" workshop on dismantling white supremacy by signing up for Beloved Conversations. "We hoped to inspire at least 20 people to sign up for the first phase, 'Within', but we weren't sure we'd get there," said Lori Straatmann, chair of the Task Force. "We are thrilled with the response."

Registrants will soon undertake this important work privately and in "pods" with UU's from all over the nation. The three-phase workshop conceived by the Fahs Collective at Meadville Lombard Seminary, is designed to guide UU congregations through learning that is personal ("Within"), congregational ("Among") and community-focused ("Beyond"), all work that catalyzes dismantling white supremacy.

In addition, several people have said their schedules will allow for them to enroll in the spring in the re-offer of "Within". The Task Force is grateful for a Judy Cole Memorial Grant that made it possible for registrants to cut their registration fee in half. The Denominational Affairs Committee offered funds to defray the cost even further for church members who would benefit from additional support. "We did everything we could to remove obstacles for participation in this important work," Straatmann said. "Apparently, it made a difference."

Meanwhile, members of the Task Force continue their own deep dive into Layla F. Saad's book, *Me and White Supremacy*. As Dan Payzant put it, "Even though it is hard to look at all this, it is something I want to be able to tell my kids... that I am doing the work."

150th Anniversary Celebration Launch

From Kathy Disney

Since January, the church's anniversary committee has been busy planning how to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Universalist Church in Lincoln. We brainstormed ideas that included a long paper timeline that stretched down the hallways, Gallery exhibits, monthly Middle Hour presentations, and a re-enacted basketball game. Then the church building closed in March and we have had to figure out how to celebrate this anniversary when we cannot meet in person.

The anniversary project will unfold from late September to March 2021. We don't yet know how we will culminate our anniversary celebration in March. For now, we are working on a virtual timeline that will be housed on the church's website. The timeline will list significant events or moments in our church's history as well as a parallel timeline with local, state, national or denominational events. When possible, the event listed will have a hyperlink to original source material or a more detailed explanation of the event. We will also be producing Fireside Chats - recorded presentations about ten minutes in length by individual members or groups of members of our committee. In the Fireside Chat, each committee member or group will delve deeper into some aspect of our church's history that they are particularly passionate about or find deeply interesting. At some point, the links to these chats will be on our virtual timeline but you may see them in other venues as well. In addition to the Timeline and the Fireside Chats, there will be occasional newsletter articles and other cool things - as we think of them - during the coming months. Stay tuned! Anniversary Committee: Kathy Disney, Fritz Hudson, Curt Donaldson, Craig Imig, Mary Ann Meisner, Judy Hart, Frank Edler, Mary K Stillwell, Harry Heafer.

HELP Us - HELP yoUU

From Jean Helms

Checking in about masks and coffee. We have mask makers who continue to supply adult and kids masks to the Little Free Pantries. We have at least two people who are still making masks for our members and friends for a suggested "other donation" of \$10 or \$20. If you need masks for your family please reach out regardless of your financial situation: admin@unitarianlincoln.org.

Want to help a friend who had a dramatic reduction in their SNAP benefits? ...or think beyond your doorstep to see if there are neighbors that you could surprise with a package of fair-trade coffee. Maybe put a few bags in a Little Free Pantry? Buy coffee. Coffee is being delivered by Carol Kendrick. We have French Roast (whole bean or ground) and Fellowship Blend (reg or decaf). All coffees are \$10 to "Other Donations."

Little Free Pantry Food Drive

Sunday October 4 • NOON - 2:00PM

Unitarian Church of Lincoln (UCL) Parking Lot

If you are interested in helping out with the Little Free Pantries and would love to throw some of the following items in the back of Michael Reinmiller's truck, it would be a HUGE help!

Items that are hard to keep stocked:

1. Boxes of breakfast cereal
2. Women's hygiene products
3. Hand sanitizer
4. Dried fruit
5. Think of dried foods that do not require cooking or a kitchen; they move fast! Some folks do not have kitchens or a way to cook.

NO CANS PLEASE (they don't move and it is about to get cold and they will freeze). If you are not able to bring food this day and still want to help you can make a donation [HERE](#).

RELIGIOUS GROWTH & LEARNING MINISTRY

Family Spotlights

In an effort to stay connected with UU families this year, we will occasionally spotlight people in our community. Ashleigh Fuson was generous enough to offer our first article in this series. If you are a member of the church with small children in our Sunday School program, please sign up for a day when your family can be highlighted in our newsletter at this link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d49a5ab2ea5fe3-family>

Peace, Faith, and Love, Chelsea

The Fuson Family

ASHLEIGH: We have been members at UCL for about nine years. We moved to Lincoln from Kentucky in 2010 for Bob to study at UNL with every intention of leaving after graduation. I began attending UCL because I didn't know anyone and I needed a break from the kids (a preschooler and an infant). I threw myself into volunteering with RGL then lured Bob to a couple services by raving about the music. I went on to serve as RGL Committee Chair, Childcare Coordinator, Youth in Action Leader, and OWL Facilitator. I have taken that wealth of experience and now serve Second Unitarian Church in Omaha as their Director of Religious Education. Bob is now the Music Director at UCL.

Our children are Carter (14), David (10) and Theo (5). Bob's sister, Alexa, joined us after their mother passed away. Alexa works as a childcare provider at UCL. We also have two cats, Reggie and Mimi.

It is convenient for Carter that the church closed right around the time he hit the 'I don't want to go to church in the morning' age. Before that it wasn't

really a struggle, especially once he began attending the middle school class. He especially liked the Simpsons/Twilight Zone curriculum and having David Williams as his teacher. He does not miss carrying his dad's numerous saxophones in and out of the building.

David misses going to church and often asks to go into the office with his dad just so that he can be there. He says he loves the open space and he misses seeing Jean in the office and his teachers. He also misses hiding in the wooded area out back and when people bring treats to coffee hour.

Theo misses "the giant treehouse" play structure and he misses his best friend, Aurora. He also misses "helping baby Ailish" who is no longer a baby and has never needed his help but has always been tolerant of his attempts.

I fondly remember all the SoUUpper Supper events and holidays where all ages gather and sing together. I love participating in UU Pen Pals and my days playing with the FIUUte group.

I miss the youth that were in the midst of the High School OWL class when we had to close the building. Every time we dedicate a new child, I remember how Chelsea would take David as a baby and walk with him in the Gallery until he was asleep. That was the only time that I didn't have a child attached to me and I was so grateful to have found a loving village for my family.

BOB: My fondest memory is the Tent Revival last October. I'm always unsure what the reaction is going to be when I throw out a new idea and I feel lucky when I am met with enthusiastic support. Musicians don't always find jobs where they get to flex their creative muscle so I feel blessed to work with Oscar who is generally receptive to my ideas. I thoroughly enjoyed putting together a service with the ambiance and energy of a Big Tent Revival that delivered a message of love and inclusion. It was a meeting point of heritage and progress that I am proud to have been a part of.

Spiritual Practice

From Kelly Ross

Spiritual Practice is a 12-session series that helps participants develop regular disciplines of the spirit – practices that help us connect with the sacred. Spiritual Practice affirms religious diversity while seeking unity in our communal quest for meaning and wholeness. Each session lasts about 45 minutes and offers a forum for learning, sharing, and growth that can enrich our personal faith journeys. This course lasts six weeks and meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:00PM on Zoom. To register, email Kelly at memberadmin@unitarianlincoln.org.

The schedule is as follows:

TUESDAYS

- 10/13 - Defining Spiritual Practice
- 10/20 - Keeping Sabbath
- 10/27 - Meditation
- 11/03 - Worship and Ritual
- 11/10 - Hospitality and Belonging
- 11/17 - Retreat

THURSDAYS

- 10/15 - Finding your Spiritual Practice
- 10/22 - Prayer
- 10/29 - Mindful Walking and Eating
- 11/05 - Discernment and Devotional Reading
- 11/12 - Work and Service
- 11/19 - Life as Spiritual Practice

Share the Plate Oct 2020

Sunday, October 11 • Community Crops

The Share the Plate recipient for October 2020 as voted on by our members last Spring is Community Crops. An interview with Megan McGuffey will go live on our YouTube channel later this month and you will see a portion of the interview as a part of the Sunday Service on October 11.

LUF Committee Sponsors Financial Literacy Class

Sunday, October 18 • NOON • Zoom

This spring the Lincoln Unitarian Foundation (LUF) Committee conducted a survey of congregants on their interest in participating in presentations on different topics related to financial literacy. Based on those responses the committee has developed a one-hour virtual class on the "Secure Act of 2019: What is it and how can it impact me?"

The class will be held on Sunday, October 18 at NOON. Anne-Lise Wiegand, CPA, will present the class. She is Chief Financial Officer and Managing Director of Sentinel Trust in Houston, TX. Should you have any questions regarding the presentation, please contact Gene Hanlon, Chair of the LUF Committee at gene.hanlon@gmail.com.

You must register for the class which can be done here: <https://forms.gle/3cWmpPqMCySFmXBQ7>.

Is the Nominating Committee for you?

Leadership development is crucial to the successful future of the church and the Nominating Committee plays a part in that area. The Nominating Committee is charged with finding church members to serve on the Board of Trustees, the Program Council and the Nominating Committee.

There are two three-year positions on the Nominating Committee as of December 2020. If you are interested in learning more about serving our congregation in this capacity, please contact Kristi Wamstad kristiwamstad23@gmail.com.

Green Corner

From Gene Hanlon

Lincoln Electric System Petition

LES is currently determining possible decarbonization goals. Zach Renshaw, a local youth from *Our Climate*, has developed an on-line Petition to ask LES to achieve 100% Renewable Energy by 2040. The goal is to get as many signatures as possible by October 15 and submit it to the LES Board at their October 16 Board Meeting. If you are willing to sign you can access it [HERE](#). Thank you for supporting this important step in dealing with climate change locally.

Coalition for Environmental Improvement

Members of the Green Sanctuary Committee have taken a leadership role with the Coalition of Environmental of Improvement. The Coalition is made up of close to 20 local environmental and community organizations. The group sponsored a climate and environmental forum for City Council and Mayoral Candidates in the spring of 2019. They will host a virtual climate and environmental forum of Lancaster County Legislative Candidates on Thursday, October 1 at 7:00PM

The Coalition submitted a number of strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for the city's consideration in developing Lincoln's Climate Resiliency and Action Plan. The draft should be announced soon with a public comment period to follow. Coalition members are also following the city's update to the Comprehensive Plan in an attempt to ensure that it contains strong sustainability elements.

Showing Up for Social Justice

From Jackie Kehl

Get Out the Vote

Vote Forward votefwd.org

Join those who have written millions of letters to tell others why you vote to encourage them to vote. Print the letter, add your few sentences, and mail the letter. (You provide the stamp.) You select from twelve states and write to Democrats and/or traditionally underrepresented groups.

Be sure to vote on or before November 3! If you are voting by mail, you are encouraged to mail in your ballot ASAP after receiving it, no later than October 26.

Disaster Relief

If you are wondering how you can help UUs and others affected by the current disasters (fires, hurricanes, pandemic), here are two suggestions:

UUA Disaster Relief Fund: <https://www.uua.org/giving/areas-support/funds/disaster-response/2017-disaster-fund-activity>

UU Service Committee: Check out the initiatives <https://www.uusc.org/initiatives/> including crisis response, climate-forced displacement, and Central American migrant justice.

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, October 21 • 7:00PM • Zoom

All are welcome. If you would like to join us, check the eblast or contact Jackie Kehl jekehl@hotmail.com for the Zoom link.

Write Here! Write Now!

Stay tuned to the eblasts and Facebook Social Group for more about October's letter-writing focus. Remember that you can use the information from UUs for Social Justice to learn about the issue and to submit your letter. They have refined the process to make it easier to use.

Grounds Cleanup

Saturday, October 17 • 10:00M • Grounds

The growing season is ending. Thanks to everyone who helped keep the church grounds looking beautiful this summer. Our work is especially commendable at a time when there were few visitors to appreciate it. Now there are extra tasks ahead to prepare the grounds for their winter's rest. Please come join in a masked, socially-distanced fall cleanup, Saturday, October 17 from 10:00AM to NOON. The church has plenty of leaf rakes, but please bring pruners and loppers if you have them.

Feel free to call or email Martha Horvay with any questions at 402.432.8423, marthahorvay71@gmail.com.

Program Council Corner

From Karen Heafer

The Program Council met on September 3. Carrie Holloway joined the meeting as the Adult Program Cluster Liaison, substituting for Duncan Case. One of the responsibilities of the Council is to review and modify cluster budgets and submit them to the Finance Team. Performing this duty was the focus of our meeting.

Cluster Liaisons contacted each committee in their cluster to get the needed budget information. Church Treasurer Theresa Foresman attended the meeting and was helpful in clarifying budget requests and updated the liaisons on the 2020 budget. The Council discussed repairs to the parking lot entrance as well as a request from a congregant for a bench in memory of Amy Birky. Program Council Cluster Reports are available by contacting Council Chair Karen Heafer kheafer@neb.rr.com.

Adult RGL Offerings

From Duncan Case

The following five courses are offered this Fall. If you are interested or have questions, respond to the course's contact a week or so before the date of the first session. The contact person will send you Zoom links.

PEACE IS EVERY STEP Buddhist Meditation

by Thich Nhat Hahn

Facilitator: Burt Smith - 6 sessions

Tuesday September 29, Oct 13, 27, Nov 10, 24, Dec 8 from 7:00 to 8:00PM

Find a place of peace and quiet in your week.

Contact: Burt.smith@ymail.com

DIABETIC: HOW TO SAVE YOUR TOES

Facilitator: Duncan Case - 2 sessions

Saturday, October 3, 17 from 10:30 to NOON.

Why toes are vulnerable, and how to curtail infection and amputation.

Contact: frankcase4346@gmail.com

THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES by Dr. Gary Chapman

Facilitator: Rev. Jennifer Davidson - 1 session

Saturday, October 10 from 10:00 to 11:00AM.

Re-offered by popular request.

Contact: 248.933.8907 Jendavidson54@gmail.com

SPIRITUALITY AND AGING

Facilitator: Rev. Jennifer Davidson - 4 sessions

Monday October 12, 19, 26 and November 2 from 6:30 to 7:45PM.

Contact: 248.933.8907 Jendavidson54@gmail.com

PARENTING TRANSGENDER YOUTH

Facilitator: Carrie Holloway - 2 sessions

Saturday November 7, 21 from 10:30 to NOON.

Both the experience of transgender parenting and being a transgender person are worthy of our understanding and support.

Contact: holloways5@yahoo.com

Milestones, Millstones and Stepping Stones



We mourn the loss of church member Ed Lanning in September. A Celebration of Life will be held virtually October 3 at 3:30PM. Contact Kelly MemberAdmin@unitarianlincoln.org for the link.

Staff members Bob Fuson and Alexa Daye are mourning the loss of their grandmother Betty Fryman "Mamaw" in September.

Are there people who you haven't seen online or in person for a while? Give them a call to check in with them this month.

Check the REALM online directory for phone numbers and addresses if you would like to make contact with these members.

if you have any questions, please contact Kelly: MemberAdmin@unitarianlincoln.org.

The Beacon is published monthly. Newsletter deadline for submissions is the 18th of each month to news@unitarianlincoln.org. The Beacon is available online at www.unitarianlincoln.org/newsletter.

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