

A newsletter for Emerson Unitarian Universalist Chapel
A liberal religious voice in West St. Louis County www.emersonuuchapel.org

Home Maintenance Begins with Planning

Have you ever started a home repair project and found that what started as a simple task turned into a major project? In my home, a wish for a better kitchen faucet led to a major kitchen rehab, including new sink, range, counter-tops and, yes, a very nice faucet. We also switched the range from electric to gas, so that led also to new gas logs in the family room (the home rehab "domino effect"). The result was fabulous but it was three months, \$5000 and waiting-at-home-for-fourteen-contractor-visits later to enjoy it.

At Emerson the wish arose in 1997 for more classroom space for an expanding RE program. What began with a plan for temporary trailers in the parking lot led to identifying our real need for sanctuary space and ministry, and eventually to moving into our new building in 2002. Long before the first design was drafted the Bricklayers Committee conducted surveys, held information-gathering meetings, and drafted a detailed Program Statement outlining the specific needs of the congregation.

Emerson is now facing a new decision point for our future needs. Fortunately we have a planning committee, the Beacon of Hope Task Force, that is doing the hard work of information gathering and planning long before the first dollar is spent.

In this issue see several articles related to this process:

- Rev. Krista Taves in her letter invites us to take part in this process (page 2)
- President Leigh English discusses the value of our religious neighborhood. (page 3)
- The announcement for the Kindling the Flame planning meetings (page 6)
- A full schedule of programming (page 5)
- Don't forget to have fun! Family Game night is Feb. 7 (page 6)

Tom Kibby, ed.



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KRISTA'S CORNER

MINISTER'S NOTES FROM REV. KRISTA TAVES



Finding Our Place

Beginning Sunday February 1st, the Beacon of Hope Committee is ushering Emerson Chapel into a time of reflection and discernment. This is a great accomplishment. This has come to pass because the congregation has met the goals it set for itself in the last decade.

The desire at that time was to become a "full service church." For years Emerson had functioned as a lay led fellowship. There was great appeal in that way of doing church. It had a small family feel where everyone knew everyone. But somehow, the membership at that time felt that it was called to something different. It was time to grow the church, even if it meant leaving behind some of what had become comfortable and familiar.

There was considerable reluctance. There always is around change, but enough people felt the same way and decided to move forward. They developed two goals: expanding the building and expanding staff. Out of that time of discernment, the decision was made to build a

new sanctuary and to move to full time ministry. With considerable dedication, generosity of time and money, and a willingness to take responsible risks, these goals have been met.

So now it's time to regroup and to ask: What next? Two years ago, the Crystal Ball Committee was formed, with the task of addressing our space needs. Do we stay in our residential neighborhood and expand our facilities, or do we sell and move somewhere with more visibility?

As the committee began its deliberations, it became clear that we could not answer that question without asking bigger questions. Who are we on a faith level? As people of progressive faith, what do we stand for? Who do we serve? What do we want to become? Given our Unitarian Universalist faith and principles and the way we live them, what are we called to do as a congregation? We need to ask these deeper questions and from the answers that emerge we can then move on to the nuts and bolts of buildings, properties, and so on.

On February 1st we are starting this process. The Beacon of Hope Task Force is hosting two Kindling the Flame sessions: one February 1st during the Religious Education Hour, the other is the following Sunday in the evening. These are identical sessions so you need only attend one. These sessions have been created to be fun, creative, and filled with opportunities to connect with people. If you have recently

begun attending Emerson, these sessions are a wonderful way to meet people and to feel more at home here. We need all your voices – long time and not so long time, young and not so young, families and singles. This is your church and you determine how we move into our future.

Out of these Kindling the Flame sessions the Beacon of Hope Task Force will be drafting a Mission Statement which will be presented to the congregation for approval at our May Annual Congregational Meeting. And then, we'll move onto the next step.

I so look forward to these next few months and I look forward to enjoying them with you.

*In faith,
Rev. Krista.*

Rev. Taves Office Hours

Available by appointment:
Feb. 2 - 8: We Th Sa Su
Feb. 9 - 15: We Th Sa Su
Feb. 16 - 22: On vacation
Feb. 23 - Mar. 1: We Th Sa Su

Pastoral Care

For emergency pastoral care please call 417-343-8657.

For regular pastoral care, please contact the Care and Concern Committee through the Church Office
(office@emersonuuchapel.org)

BETH'S DESK

Chapel Administrator's Notes - Beth Harmon

New Office Hours M,Tu,Th,F: 8:30 - 12:30

In December this generous congregation donated a total of \$227.50 for 100 Neediest Cases. In December we welcomed four new visitors.

Beth is requesting that members and friends keep her updated of their current phone, address and e-mail to be ready for the next update of the Chapel Directory.

Beth can be contacted by calling the chapel office at: 636-256-7393 or by e-mail at: office@emersonuuchapel.org

Emerson Emissary

Serving the members and friends of Emerson Unitarian Universalist Chapel. Editor: Tom Kibby

All submissions are due by the 18th of each month. All groups are requested to send their meeting notices monthly to ensure their accuracy. Send to: newsletter@emersonuuchapel.org

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LEIGH'S LINES

President's Notes from Leigh English



After our mid-year congregation meeting, I attended the Second Annual Martin Luther King Celebration at the First Baptist Church of Chesterfield. I recommend it as one of the finest churches in the area. The church is literally in my neighborhood within walking distance from my home. There is something nice about a church in the neighborhood even if it isn't my church. It is a church of enormous stature, a predominantly black congregation whose door is open to both members and neighbors.

The first time we visited was September 12, 2001. The nation was in shock over the events of the previous day, and I was in mourning over the loss of a friend caught in the wrong place at the wrong time on September 11th. First Baptist sponsored time for their congregation and their neighbors to meet and be with each other—to hold each other, as we all fought anew to find our footing. Now we find this a special place to celebrate the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday because we know we are be welcome, but more importantly we find a common focus and share that even if it is only on this one special day.

My experience at Emerson is not just for one day--the

ground we share spans many diverse commonalities. I remember the first time we visited Emerson. We immediately had some common ground established by the name of our religious organization, but over time we shared the heart of it all; our needs, the needs of our children, and the needs of our loved ones. We shared our hopes, dreams and fears. We shared our happiness and our sorrows; our yesterdays and tomorrows; our talents and our lack of talent. We shared our financial resources and the limit of financial resources as well. We have the opportunity to share the immediacy of each day with all of its possibilities. Each and every day contains a full spectrum of what we at Emerson Unitarian Universalist Chapel hold in common, so each day is a renewed opportunity to find our footing and help others find theirs.

Emerson Unitarian Universalist Chapel is in my neighborhood, not in the same way as First Baptist Church of Chesterfield, but in its philosophical/theological location relative to my thinking. It is located close to my "home," that place where I live all the time regardless of where I am. The real estate we share has a physical location on Strecker Road, but the lives we share, the neighborhood, is created and recreated by our common values, interests and a common and liberating language. Thanks for making your home part of our neighborhood.

Grace and Peace,

Leigh

A Month of Services

February 1–
**“Unitarian Universalist
 Theology III:
 Eschatology”.**
 Rev. Krista Taves

Eschatology is a theological term for where we think we’re headed. Some forms of Christianity believe we’re headed for the rapture where some are whisked into the Kingdom of Heaven and the rest are left behind. In Buddhism, all souls are reconnected with Nirvana. Unitarianism has its own eschatology – the present is better than the past, and the future will be better than the present. Universalism’s eschatology states that no one is left behind; everyone is reconciled to the spirit of life. What happened when Unitarianism and Universalism merged in 1961 and what is our eschatology now?

Musician: Ron McGowan, piano
Adult RE: Beacon of Hope Committee: “Kindling the Flame”

February 8
**“Unitarian Universalist
 Theology IV: Soteriology”**
 Rev. Krista Taves.

Every religion identifies certain dangers in life (or eternity) and develops a

theology to save us from that danger. Unitarian Universalism is no different. We’ll be exploring the Unitarian Universalist concept of salvation and its meaning for our lives.

Musician: Karen Gottshalk, Soprano
Adult RE: “Voluntary Simplicity, Living the Not-So-Big Life”

February 15
**“Getting, Giving, and
 Keeping Love”**
 Rev. Krista Taves
 [Youth Pew]

In honor of Valentine’s Day, members and friends of Emerson Chapel will be sharing their experiences of finding love, giving love, and keeping love in their lives. Rev. Krista Taves, Lisa Parnell, Janie & Walt Fowler, Nancy Vosnidou & Charles Lewis, and Les & Sally Armontrout.

Musician: TBA
Adult RE: “Valentine Special: What Makes a Good Marriage?”

All Sunday Services
begin at 10:00 AM

**February 22 “Jewish
 Tales and the Power of
 Paradox”**
 Dr. Belden Lane

Ask a rabbi a deep theological question and you’ll not likely receive an answer. Instead you’ll be told a story. This is probably the best way of doing theology anyway - creatively weaving the truth into narrative. On this Sunday, we’ll be listening to stories from the Jewish tradition that summarize important themes in biblical thought, and deal with some of the basic paradoxes of human existence.

Musician: TBA
Adult RE: Dr. Belden Lane

February 25 7 PM
Vespers
Ash Wednesday
 Rev. Krista Taves

On the first day of Lent in the Christian calendar, Christians placed the sign of the cross on their foreheads with ashes, a symbol of repentance. We will be honoring this day with an evening service that reflects Unitarian Universalism’s understanding of this holy day.

Programming

Our Unitarian Universalist Roots

February 24, March 3, &
March 10,
7 PM - 8:30 PM

This class is an excellent introduction to anyone new to Unitarian Universalism or new to this congregation, as well as those considering becoming a member. This is also a great opportunity to meet others who are new at Emerson Chapel.

The three session class will be held on three consecutive Tuesday evenings. The first session will cover the history of Unitarian Universalism; the second will explore UU theology; and the final session will cover Emerson Chapel's 25-year history and next steps for making this your religious home.

Participants benefit most by attending all three sessions, although we will certainly welcome you if unable to attend all three.

Please call (636 526-7393) or email the office administrator (office@emersonuuchapel.org) by February 15th if you plan to attend any or all of the sessions. Childcare will be arranged upon request.

Voluntary Simplicity An Adult Religious Education Course

The five sessions will be: The Meaning of Simplicity; Living More with Less; Making a Living; Do you Have the Time?; and Living Simply and Sustainably. Times yet to be determined. At Emerson check back for details of where, and exact dates and time.

Learn more at adultre@emersonuuchapel.org

Daytimers Club

The next Daytimers will be held *Thursday* February 12 rather than Wednesday February 18th as Rev. Taves will be away on vacation at our normally scheduled time. Bring a bag lunch and room for great conversation. We will return to the regular schedule in March.

Circle Suppers

Next Circle Suppers are the week of Feb. 20 - 21 If you did not receive an email with the information and you have signed up to participate, please call Camille Herman or e-mail at Circle@emersonuuchapel.org.

Spring Retreat

OWNING YOUR
RELIGIOUS PAST:
A Spring Retreat April 3-4
at Emerson Chapel

Rev. Taves will be offering a weekend retreat beginning Friday evening, April 3rd and continuing through the day on Saturday April 4th.

The retreat offers participants the opportunity to explore who they are religiously, what their past religious perspectives and experiences have been, and who they hope to become as Unitarian Universalists.

This retreat provides some simple tools through which people may reexamine and retrieve positive aspects of past religious connections. It addresses the affective elements of these connections, rather than dogma.

The workshop is designed to provide both group sharing and private exploration.

Look for more details about registration in our weekly email, This Week At Emerson and in the March newsletter.

**Emerson Chapel Strategic Planning
Phase One: Kindling the Flame
with our Mission and Vision**

**What purpose should Emerson serve?
What dreams do you have for this congregation?
What will attract people to join Emerson?**

Please join us for one of the meetings below to share your thoughts on these three questions, as we work together to develop our new mission & vision statements.

February 1 11:30 am –1:15 PM

Bring an appetizer to share

OR

February 8 7:00 – 8:45 PM

Bring a dessert to share

Though it is not required for attending, we encourage you to pick up the exploratory exercises on the welcome table to help stimulate your thoughts on the topic.

Please see Beacon of Hope: Kindling the Flame committee members Susan Stafford, Melissa Grizzle, Stan Herman or Pam Foresman with any questions.

**2nd Annual Family Game
Night February 7, 6-9pm**

Food & Fun for all ages!
Bring the family, friends and neighbors for an evening of board games, card games, sports games, mind games, every kind of game except video games! (See [web page](#)) Food and soft drinks provided by M&Ms Covenant Group.

Sign up in the Hearth Room or call/e-mail the Emerson office, There couldn't be a better way to spend a cold winter's evening than sharing a warm meal and then matching wits with kids of all ages. All you need to bring is your competitive spirit!

Donations welcomed to benefit Emerson Chapel operating budget.

Carole Behrer's Art on Display

The Emerson Aesthetics Committee is pleased to announce the Winter art exhibit: "Carole Behrer - Traditional Folk Artist." Carole is an Emerson member whose art is traditional Scherenschnitte, German Papercutting, in False-grained frames. The papercuttings are painted in watercolor and tell stories with whimsical themes. The exhibit will hang in the Sanctuary January 18 through February 15. You may see examples of Carole's art at <http://www.bestofmissourihands.com/carolebehrer.htm>.



Barb Brown and Linda McAffrey are recognized for their service at the Annual Meeting January 18

RE VIEW

We are just now starting our second “semester” in Emerson’s RE program. While we are lucky enough to have all of our teachers continuing from the previous semester, we do have some changes.

First, for K to 7th grade, the lessons in the classroom will be shifting from learning about our Jewish and Christian heritage to learning about religions of the world. We will start with lessons about Hinduism, led by H. Shukla, the parent of one of our newest Youth Group members, Neil Shukla, and lessons about Paganism, with help from parents Melissa Cynova-Glantz and Jennifer Nahm.

The other big news is our OWL program. OWL (Our Whole Lives) is the the award-winning comprehensive sexuality education program jointly developed by the UUA and the United Church of Christ. We offer OWL every two years for 7th – 9th graders. This year, we are offering OWL as part of a joint program with youth from Eliot Chapel and First Unitarian Church of Alton. We have seven youth participating. Without exception, parents who have told me about the program have had nothing but praise, and gratitude that their child was able to get such important information delivered in such a thoughtful, careful, thorough way.

I look forward to my own son having this opportunity in another 5 years. In the meantime, however the clock is ticking louder and louder. Soon, very soon, I must have The Talk with my son. He is almost eight, and just like you, I’m sure, I’d rather he get

correct information from me than incorrect information from his friends. But I don’t know when to do it. Worse, I don’t know how to do it. I don’t think there is a “right” time for The Talk, but I hope I find a good enough time. And I’ll muddle through, awkwardly. And it will be okay.

Do those kinds of parenting issues plague you as well? Would you like support from other UU parents as you face the challenges of raising your children? Susan Bell and Alice Stix are organizing a parents’ group so that Emerson parents can get together on a regular basis for socializing and for support. Watch for more information in coming weeks!

Youth Interface

It can be hard to keep up with out youth! One tool that has proven to be very useful is facebook. Most of our youth group is on facebook, and has joined the group “Emerson YRUU.” I also have been using facebook to create event listings for Youth Pew and other Senior Youth activities. This gives the group an easy way to RSVP, to invite friends, and to post any comments or questions. All event listings posted on facebook are also emailed to my Youth Group mailing list, which includes those for whom I have email addresses (some of whom are not on facebook) and all the parents.

In January, our group attended a peaceful protest at Planned Parenthood and met with Eliot Youth to continue planning the Spring Youth Conference “Once A Con A Time” scheduled for April 17 – 19.

*In peace,
Lauren Lyerla, DRE*

Religious Education Hour for Children and Youth: February 2009

*Please note we are reorganizing classes on February 1 into larger groups than usual – K – 3rd, and 4th – 8th,** 8th graders may choose to attend Senior Youth Group or Junior Youth Group class.

February 1

Preschool-PreK: Black is beautiful
K – 3rd*: Hinduism and Holi
4th – 8th*: Paganism and Imbolc
Senior Youth Group: Continuing exploration of famous Unitarian Universalists and how they have lived their values

February 8

Preschool-PreK: People of all colors are important.
K – 8th**: Native American Spirituality: Guest speaker Maria Swope Kwartka teaches about her Chippewa heritage
Senior Youth Group: Articulating your UU Faith

February 15

Preschool – 8th**: No Religious Education Classes – instead, we will have a social justice project for all classes.
Senior Youth Group: Rev. Krista Taves continues discussion of Youth Pew topic.

February 22:

Preschool-PreK: Bodies are beautiful.
K – 8th**: Buddhist scholar Shoshin returns to Emerson for a dharma talk with our young people.
Senior Youth Group (9th – 12th): Youth Making a Difference project

Children and Youth Religious Education is every Sunday from 11:15 until 12:15

MONEY MATTERS

Susan Bell, Treasurer

When doing your family budgeting, please consider purchasing grocery certificates from Emerson. We offer certificates to Dierbergs, Whole Foods & Shop N Save in denominations ranging from \$25 to \$100. Emerson purchases the certificates at a discount and is able to offer the certificates at face value to its members & friends, thereby earning 5% profit to apply towards operating expenses. Grocery certificate sales are down from last year and below budget. If you had previously shopped at Dierbergs, maybe consider purchasing certificates from Shop N Save if you are watching your budget. Both stores have locations within 1-2 miles of Emerson.

Thank you to all who provided funds to support the bookkeeper. With this move, Emerson is taking a critical step forward in its fiscal responsibility to its members & friends. Stephen Rudolph comes highly recommended from Eliot and currently performs bookkeeping services for Eliot and another church. Peggy Colwell has been instrumental in making the bookkeeper transition a reality. She has put in tireless hours to review our previous financial statements and provide

Finances December 31, 2008		
	Year to Date	Monthly Average
Pledge Income	\$74,296	\$6,191
Other Income	\$20,133	\$1,678
Total All Income	\$94,429	\$7,869
Total Expenses	\$102,986	\$8,582

information to Stephen Rudolph, the new bookkeeper. Please give Peggy a big thank you when you see her. In addition, Barb Brown deserves a thank you in assisting with the transfer as she continues to answer questions about the finances. She may no longer be the treasurer but she is still willing to provide answers and support on how the finances were handled in the past. Thanks, Barb & Peggy!

ARE Conference 2009: March 13-15, Kansas City, MO Allies for Racial Equity

The annual conference provides opportunities for UUs to come together in a multigenerational learning environment to develop skills and analysis so that we might participate in dismantling white privilege and undoing racism.

This year's theme is Identity. Together, we will explore issues of white identity, look at what it means to identify

as a white anti-racist ally, learn about ways in which identities and oppressions intersect, and discuss how to be white allies in multiracial coalitions.

Highlights of the conference will include:

- * Keynote presentations from the Rev. James A. Hobart and Julian Sharp.
- * Small-group discussion opportunities.
- * A number of excellent workshops led by people with diverse perspectives.
- * Sunday morning worship at All Souls Church.
- * Pre-conference training and educational opportunities.

Dates and Times

The formal conference program will begin at 6pm on Friday, March 13, and end with worship at All Souls Church on Sunday, March 15.

[Click here to register](#)

Questions?

Contact the Rev. Michael Tino, ARE Vice President, at mtino@uuma.org.

Emerson Readers Circle

Our February selection is "The Glass Castle" by Jeannette Walls. Join us at the Chapel on Monday evening, Feb. 16th, for dessert and discussion of this poignant memoir. Some meet at 6:30 to share a brown bag dinner; others come at 7 for the sweets and the good conversation. We're usually done by 8. No commitment - just come and enjoy the company if the book strikes you as interesting. Contact Pam Foresman for more information, or to let her know you'll be attending.

Emerson's Got Talent

Calling all thespian's, quasi-thespians, wanna-be thespians, or extroverted UU'ers... If you are creative, enjoy bringing fun ideas to life, or making people laugh, then WE NEED YOU in the Emerson Canvass Players! Contact Linda Giddy or Camille Herman to find out more. We are "casting" a troupe of writers and players for the entertainment portion of our Canvass Dinner Celebration scheduled for Sunday night, April 5th. Don't miss out on the fun.

Green Thoughts

Have you considered more eco-friendly alternatives to dry cleaning? The active chemical in dry cleaning is tetrachloroethylene, known as perc. It is a known carcinogen, does not readily break down in the environment, and is becoming a major groundwater contaminant. Look instead for dry cleaners that use alternatives such as liquid carbon dioxide or silicone-based cleaners. Chesterfield Cleaners on Chesterfield Airport Road and Pleats Finest Cleaners on Manchester in Des Peres are two local cleaners using silicone. Consumer Reports rates these two cleaning methods as cleaning better than perc. Other eco-friendly alternatives include home dry cleaning, using the gentle cycle on your washing machine, and steam cleaning. Of course, the best method is to avoid buying clothing requiring dry cleaning

Susan Stafford

Do you like to Sing?

The Emerson Singers (a.k.a. the choir) will sing on Easter Sunday, April 12. We will rehearse on Tuesday nights at 7:00 beginning Tuesday, March 3rd. If you would like to join us, please contact Camille Herman at Music@emersonuuchapel.org.

Circle of Concern

Emerson Chapel will be supporting the Circle of Concern food pantry as an ongoing project this church year. We will be collecting food items on a continuing basis, concentrating on a particular type of food each week. The suggested item will be announced in the weekly email of what's happening at Emerson this week, and in the announcements in the Order of Service. Let's get together to make this happen; get your children involved, and on occasion, some of us (including youth) can go to the Circle to help bag items for the needy families.

In Times of Need

At the December Board meeting the board approved dedicating one Sunday collection a month to the Minister's Discretionary Fund. This Fund is intended to support those in our congregation who are experiencing financial need. Any requests should be taken directly to Rev. Taves. All requests will be held confidential.

Canvass Dinner Celebration – Sunday, April 5th

Contact Marcy Saphian to help with the dinner portion of the evening. She needs cooks and people to help with set-up and clean-up.

FEBRUARY

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1 Service 10AM Rev. Taves "UU Theology III: Eschatology" Strategic Planning 11AM	2 Womyns Web	3	4 Movie Matinee Men's Group 7PM	5 The Spiritual Journey 7PM	6	7 Family Game Night 6-9 PM
8 Service 10AM Rev. Taves "UU Theology IV:Soteriology Strategic Planning 7PM	9 Living the Journey - Emerson 6:30PM M&Ms 7PM*	10 Wyse Womyn 1:30PM*	11	12 Daytimers Club 11AM	13	14
15 Service 10 AM Rev. Taves "Getting, Giving and Keeping Love" BOARD 1PM	16 Readers Circle 7PM	17	18 Men's Group 7PM Caregivers 7:30PM*	19	20 Circle Suppers	21 Circle Suppers
22 Service 10 AM Dr. Belden Lane "Jewish Tales and the Power of Paradox"	23 Living the Journey - Emerson 6:30PM M&Ms 7PM*	24 Wise Women 1:30	25 Wednesday Vespers 7PM "Ash Wednesday"	26	27	28
1	2 Womyns Web	3	4	5	6	7

All events occur at Emerson unless noted with an *
 Child care may be provided to any Emerson Sponsored event, please call the Chapel office.
 Confirm with Covenant Group (CG) leader for meeting location and time.

Upcoming events:

- Circle Suppers March 13/14, April 10/11
- Canvass Dinner Celebration Sunday, April 5
- April 17-19 Youth Con, Eliot Chapel

Emerson Covenant Groups Invite New Members.

Emerson's Covenant Groups, our program of small group ministry, welcomes new members. Groups of up to ten people meet once or twice a month with a focus on deep listening and sharing personal experiences. Prepared session plans are used to guide each session, with topics such as forgiveness, gratitude, or saying good bye. Groups also do service projects for the church and community. Participants find that they get to know themselves, and often others, more deeply in these small groups. For more information about specific covenant groups, please see the church [website](#) or pick up a copy of the Emerson Program Guide at the visitor table. If you are interested in joining a covenant group, please email office@emersonuuchapel.org and we will be in touch with you.



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EMERSON EMISSARY

Congregation established 1994
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