

# EMERSON EMISSARY

Volume 10, Number 6

July 2009

A newsletter for Emerson Unitarian Universalist Chapel  
A liberal religious voice in West St. Louis County [www.emersonuuchapel.org](http://www.emersonuuchapel.org)



## Summer

*(While Rev. Taves is taking a well-deserved personal leave for the summer, her newsletter article from June 2008 is presented again -ed.)*

"Ah, summer, what power you have to make us suffer and like it."

Russell Baker

This never made sense to me until I moved to Missouri. I have learned to wake at 5:30 a.m. to enjoy a cool morning outside. I no longer walk barefoot on grass or to go into the woods without spraying down with citronella. Summer is often a time to retreat.

Things really slow down in the summer, and that includes church life. In June and July Emerson Chapel's services are laid back and social. There is no formal

## KRISTA'S CORNER

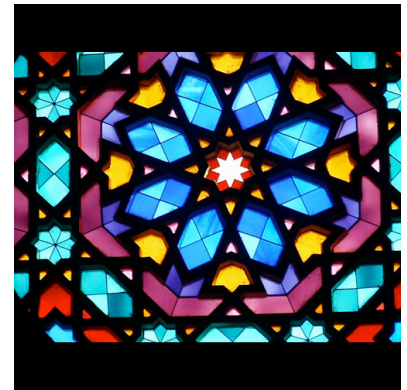
MINISTER'S NOTES FROM REV. KRISTA TAVES

religious education although there is child care (usually involving games outside if the weather is nice!).

I spend my summer refueling. Not only do I visit my family and spend time at home, but I also reflect on the previous year of ministry, with its mistakes and accomplishments. I read through the stack of books I collected during the year. I may worship in a different church each Sunday. It's great being in the pew for a change, and I also get new ideas and insights. I use the summer to fill my heart, soul and mind. By the time I rejoin with you in August, I hope to be renewed with fresh thoughts, ideas, and energy.

I hope you have a wonderful, restful summer. Stay cool, and I'll be glad to see you when I get back.

*In faith,*  
Rev. Taves



## Rev. Taves Office Hours

Available by appointment  
Rev. Taves will return to St. Louis the first week of August

## 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](mailto:office@emersonuuchapel.org)

# LEIGH'S LINES

## President's Notes from Leigh English



### Travels and Traffic

Sheila and I sat in a traffic jam for three hours on Highway 1 between Key Largo and Miami today. It was actually quite memorable although not particularly pleasant. We talked about our children, our parents, our parenting, our life together, our friends and of course our church families. In fact, our conversations were exactly like they are during free flowing traffic. Three hours in a traffic jam can either make you angry about life or make you very disciplined and reflective. I can boast that my choice for disciplined and reflective worked quite well given the company of someone I love and not being in a particular hurry. Traffic jams are physically all the same, differentiated only by duration, looming demands and the company we keep. Any of these three can make a forced pause in life either a useful moment or living hell. I've been fortunate with the forced pauses in my life—even the painful ones where very sad events break in or health issues are punishing. I can honestly say that my missed events and the unmet demands could be accommodated, and the company I kept was mostly loving and kind.

Summers are regularly filled with traffic jams—just too much going on, too many events entering into the decision-making process to seamlessly and expeditiously address everything and everyone. Just when we have effectively deceived ourselves into believing that we will have a nice relaxing month or two, the reality of our traffic jams become evident in ways we never imagined. In my small family Sheila and I are preparing to live in India for two years. That means arranging for all of the impacts our absence will create. Then of course there are all of the other events we are expected to attend to under every day circumstances. This is what traffic jams are about—no matter how hard you try, far more is entering your road than you can effectively deal with. Just when you have glimmers of hope and your speed goes from zero to 5 mph, your hopes are dashed to pieces as even more requiring your attention comes in.

We love telling ourselves we can do it all, cope with it all and love every minute of it, but our ability to cope is still bounded by the constraints of the traffic jam; the company we keep, the duration and what lies ahead. The problem is we may only be able to exert influence on one of these. The people I surround myself with I have some control over. It isn't perfect control but it is something. I can't control the duration or what comes next. Of course, this means that the people I choose to have along on my journey in life are the people I choose to have around me

during my traffic jams. They are my only and critical choice, and even this choice has some limitations.

Our religious community is a choice. We have invited each other on a journey but we don't always recognize the traffic jams we invite each other into. Unfortunately, we really can't have the smooth flow of traffic without the occasional traffic jam. The way we treat each does not depend on whether the traffic is moving or not. My experience with Emerson is in keeping with this insight and I hope yours is as well. I anticipate that the traffic jam of 2009 will recreate a smooth flow of traffic in 2010. I see the road clear for sports cars and minivans, SUV's and Scions. I see a road with plenty of rest stops and great sights to see along the way. If there are any jams, they will be met with good judgment, compassionate leaders, and a congregation that I would gladly travel with anywhere. Even though my time as Board President has been relatively brief, I have enjoyed the opportunity to serve you and work through a traffic jam or two now quickly moving into the recesses of roads traveled in the past. The congregation will soon have to decide how wide the road forward will be and adjust expectations to accommodate new companions on the journey. I admonish you all to keep that caravan filled with extended hands and open hearts. Until then, come and see us in India some time. I look forward to that.

*Grace and Peace,  
Leigh*

## A Month of Services

All Sunday Services begin at 10:00 AM

Summer services will be mostly lay-led but have a look and feel like regular services, just with our collar loosened for the heat! From Krista's May newsletter: There will be no Adult RE, children's programs will take place during service. We are redesigning our services to include some of the most beloved components of our traditional worship - chalice lighting, unison affirmation, joys and concerns, silence, and the offertory. Subjects will be chosen for their spiritual and intellectual depth. If you are familiar with the covenant group style of discussion, that is what we will be using.

**July 5**  
**"Progressive Patriotism"**  
Steve Coenen

Member Steve Coenen will begin with a reading "American Commitment" by Unitarian minister A. Powell Davies written in 1946. He will lead a discussion on being a religious progressive in turbulent political times. What are the ingredients of a healthy ethical patriotism?

**July 12**  
**"Dancing in the Spirit:  
How Faith Can Move You"**  
Rev. Claudia Hall

The discussion is centered on how we can find a center in the chaos of today's

world. Using the metaphor of life as a dance, how can we find our rhythm and know where we are to step next? This is a follow up discussion from an unanswered question at the question box sermon.

**July 19**  
**"The difference between  
Believing and Knowing"**  
Sam Faith

Why is there an emphasis on understanding the difference between believing and knowing? Because while belief opens the door to experience, it's still only a limited form of the ultimate truth and can easily be misunderstood and even abused.

**July 26**  
**"The Incarnation In All and  
Through All"**  
Jeff Gidday

An exploration of how each religion has a theology of the incarnation, or how the holy or ultimate is embodied in humanity or brought into the world. As examples, in Christianity, God is in Jesus, and in Hinduism, God lives within us, as us. "Namaste" represents this concept in Buddhism, meaning the God in me worships the God in you. Come and discuss your experience of incarnation and what a UU philosophy of incarnation might look like.

**September 13.**  
**Water Communion Service**

This intergenerational service invites you to bring water from a place that has symbolic value for you. During the service all are invited to pour their water into a communal bowl, a symbol of the interrelatedness of all things.

**Rev. Taves' Upcoming  
Sermon Series**  
**"The Essence of  
Faithfulness:  
Do Justice, Love  
Goodness, Walk Humbly"**  
and  
**"Unitarian Universalist  
Theologians from 1525 to  
2010"**

**MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR..**

**Unitarian Universalist  
Preaching 101**

Claudia Hall, Chair of the Worship Committee, will be offering both introductory and intensive classes on how to prepare and deliver a sermon. Participants will write a sermon and quite possibly, have the opportunity to preach it on a Sunday morning! Watch for more information later in the summer.

## Programming and Events



Third through seventh graders making stepping stones during RE May 24th (pictures courtesy of Marilyn Ortinau)

### RE VIEW

Lauren Lyerla, DRE

Dear Emerson UU Religious Education Families,

Emerson's summer is off to a great start. For the first time, we are offering summer programming for children. Everyone starts at 10 am in the Sanctuary, but the children are "sung out" to the Hearth Room after about 10 minutes for a variety of interesting and inspiring volunteer-led sessions. In July, our Summer Sundays Religious Education program will offer opportunities to explore nature with Sam Faith (July 12), sign language with Melissa Grizzle (July 19), scuba diving with Ian English (July 26), and collaborative story-telling with me (July 5). In August, we will start easing back into our regular programming – Rev. Krista Taves will be back in the pulpit, and regular Children's Chapel will return. There will be no religious education hour until September.

In September we will return to our full programming with Adult Education and Children and Youth Religious Education following the worship hour. We are still seeking volunteer teachers for the coming church year. Teaching is a great opportunity to get to know Emerson's young people, and to learn about Unitarian Universalism in more depth. Lesson plans are provided, but there's always room to add your own creative flair. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact me at [dre@emersonuuchapel.org](mailto:dre@emersonuuchapel.org).

Finally, we are also seeking to expand the Religious Education Committee. The committee and I work closely together to provide a complete

program, support teachers and students, and plan social justice projects and other special events. We try to meet once each month, and have been experimenting with alternating meetings at Emerson with "virtual" meetings held via instant messenger or conference call. Again, please contact me if you are interested in learning more about this important committee!

### Youth Interface

Notes for and about our Youth (Senior High)

As is our custom, we'll be kicking off the church year with a Sr. Youth Barbecue, this time at Krista's house. Please mark the date on your calendars: Sunday, August 16, at 4pm. The purpose of the barbecue is to reconnect after the summer, and to brainstorm Youth Pew topics for the coming church year. I'll send out an invitation in a few weeks via email and facebook, with directions and details.

You may also want to put the Fall Youth Conference (Fall CON) on your calendar: it will be Nov 6 – 8, held in Evanston, IL, at the Unitarian Church of Evanston. The theme is "Here CONs the Sun."

Barb Brown and I are taking a fresh look at planning classes and activities for the 2009-10 Youth Group, and are open to your suggestions. Krista is changing her teaching plans around, and will most likely spend 3 consecutive weeks teaching Youth Group in the fall, and another 3 consecutive weeks in the spring, instead of spending one week per month with you. Once Barb and I know the weeks Krista will be in the Youth Group room, we'll build the rest of the year

around those dates and your Fall CON.

I am excited to announce that Barb Brown has volunteered to act as a Youth Coordinator for us this coming year. As she has spent two years teaching Youth Group, she knows most of the group fairly well, and that will help us. She will help us find teachers for Youth Group for the coming year (again – we welcome your input on this: feel free to email me or send a PM on facebook with your suggestions!), find lesson ideas and activities for the group, and work with youth and parents to organize your special events such as CONs, lock-ins, and Youth Making a Difference projects. Barb and I work well together, and I look forward to having her energy and experience contributing to a wonderful year in Youth Group.

Lastly, a reminder: if you are on facebook and have not yet "friended" my professional profile, do look me up at [facebook.com/dre.lauren.lyerla](https://www.facebook.com/dre.lauren.lyerla). It's a great way to keep up on all the latest news.

*In peace,  
Lauren Lyerla, DRE*

### Money Matters

*(continued from page 6)*

Thanks for allowing me to serve as your Treasurer. It was an honor to provide some assistance during this particularly tumultuous period in our history.

*Susan Bell*  
[treasurer@emersonuuchapel.org](mailto:treasurer@emersonuuchapel.org)

## Administration

### **MONEY MATTERS**

Susan Bell, Treasurer

May was a stressful month for the finances. I am happy to report that we made it through May and will be able to meet all our expenses for June. As we look back at the month of May, we reduced our expenses for May to only \$13,727 which is less than the average expenses computed earlier this year at \$17,000 per month.

Our summer months are usually only slightly leaner when it comes to expenses and with attendance down, our pledge payments are more critical than ever. Please remember Emerson when writing your monthly checks. Regular payments such as salaries for our minister, DRE and administrator as well mortgage and utilities payments still continue. If you attend summer services less frequently, consider mailing your pledge, or setting up a automatic draft. Ask about the Vanco method to set this up.

May was also a tense time for the Finance Committee as well in producing a budget that was financially responsible based on the pledge income that was received. This meant the difficult task of reducing the hours for our staff. The upcoming year will be a challenge but also a year of growth as we reevaluate the duties of our staff and find ways to provide a spiritual home within our budget. It is our desire to return our staff to the same level of hours and pay that we enjoyed during the current year as soon as financially possible.

The ideal scenario is to live within our means for the upcoming year and develop a savings cushion. We will want to continue to use fundraisers as

<b>Finances as of May 31, 2009</b>		
	May 2009	Year to Date
Pledge Income	\$ 15,197	\$ 142,463
Other Income	\$ 1,248	\$ 38,438
Total All Income	\$ 16,445	\$ 180,901
Total Expenses	\$ 13,727	\$ 177,937
Difference	\$ 2,718	\$ 2,964

community builders and to provide additional financial support to the Chapel, but not to provide general operating funds. Emerson also has a history of a low amount of uncollectible pledge payments so the economy has not had as significant a role in our income levels as some might expect.

I want to acknowledge all the hard work of Lynn Murdoch, Leigh English and Krista Taves. Lynn stepped up to produce a budget that was responsible and immersed herself in the details to provide support. Leigh provided clarity to the Finance Committee meetings during these difficult times. Krista provided emotional support for a committee that was struggling with its duties.

We are now more knowledgeable than ever regarding our expenses and can act financially responsible in the future. If anyone would like a detailed financial report, please feel free to ask me or it is also in the in the board book outside the church administrator's office. Unlike a corporate income and expense statement that can show expenses in excess of income, our financials show the extra funds received by individuals who provided extra funding after our request in April.

Please welcome Melissa Grizzle as your new Treasurer. Melissa brings a new energy and vitality to the position that I can't give at this time. She brings a great knowledge of business finances to the position. As Melissa comes on board, the Finance Committee is also reevaluating the roles and duties of the Treasurer, Administrator, Accountant and others who can assist Melissa to ensure that the role of Treasurer is not the overwhelming position that it has been in the past. In addition, with the hours of the Chapel Administrator being cut to 12 hours from the current 16, we must assist Randy to ensure that her efforts are directed towards recording the deposits including information on members and friends.

Please thank Peggy for her amazing dedication to our finances. She received the much deserved award as our Emerson Volunteer of the Year at our annual meeting to signify all her hard work and hours dedicated to our finances. She is also ready to take a break from her long hours. Peggy has been instrumental in working with the Accountant to ensure our reports are accurate. Melissa will also be analyzing how we utilize the role of our Accountant. *(continued page 5)*

## Bulletin Board

### Readers Circle

Our group of book lovers doesn't meet in the summer, but enjoys lazy months of reading whatever we choose. However, we do have the reading list for our SEVENTH year, starting off in September with "The Memory Keeper's Daughter" by Kim Edwards. The complete list is posted on the Emerson website or available by e-mail. Contact Pam Foresman to get on the Readers Circle e-mail reminder list, or for more information. Happy reading!

All Emerson members and friends are warmly invited to attend the Ordination of Margret O'Neall at the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis, Sunday July 19th at 4 p.m. Reception to follow.

As part of her ministerial preparation, Margret attended Emerson Chapel Executive and Board meetings during her final year of seminary. Margret extends her deep appreciation for our support of her ministerial formation.

### Green Thoughts

Summertime is often a time for grilling. Here are some ideas for more eco-friendly barbecues. Charcoal grills contribute to ground-level ozone (smog) more than other grills as well as releasing more carbon monoxide, soot, and particulates than other cooking methods. If you use natural gas in your home, you can often hook a gas line to your grill. If that is not feasible, propane burns cleaner than charcoal. If you must use charcoal, use lump charcoal instead of briquettes which have coal dust and other additives. You can also use hardwood briquettes from sustainably managed forests. Instead of lighter fluid, which contains volatile organic compounds, try a chimney charcoal starter or an electric starter. The cleanest method is a solar stove which needs neither charcoal nor cooking fuel.

*Susan Stafford*

### 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](mailto:newsletter@emersonuuchapel.org)

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To be removed from our mailing list, please call the chapel office or email the administrator at  
[office@emersonuuchapel.org](mailto:office@emersonuuchapel.org)

### RANDY'S DESK

#### Chapel Administrator's Notes – Randy Whitman

**Office Hours- beginning July 1  
M, Th, F: 9:00 - 1:00**

In May we welcomed 10 visitors. In May this generous congregation donated a total of \$337.46 to Heifer International. Thank you notes from previous outreach gifts are posted on the bulletin board in the hearth room. Please keep the office updated with current phone, address and e-mail. Randy can be contacted by calling the chapel office at: 636-256-7393 or by e-mail at: [office@emersonuuchapel.org](mailto:office@emersonuuchapel.org)

**The Red Wheelbarrow is collecting this month..**

Each month a new item is selected for local charities. Donations can be delivered to the red wheelbarrow in the vestibule. This month the Red Wheelbarrow is collecting:

**School Supplies**

# JULY

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
			1 Men's Group 7PM	2	3	4
5 Service 10AM	6 Womyns Web 7PM	7	8 Movie Matinee*	9 Daytimers 11AM  Spiritual Journey CG 7PM	10	11
12 Service 10AM  Living the Journey-St. Charles 2PM	13  M&Ms 7PM*	14 Wyse Womyn 1:30PM*	15  Men's Group 7PM Caregivers 7:30PM*	16 Daytimers Club 11AM	17	18
19 Service 10 AM	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Service 10 AM	27  M&Ms 7PM*	28 Wyse Womyn 1:30PM*	29	30	31	

### Upcoming events:

- Womyn's Web Retreat, Innsbrook, August 28-30;
- Rev. Taves will be in the pulpit for Sunday services beginning in August

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.

## 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](mailto:office@emersonuuchapel.org) and we will be in touch with you.



## OFFICERS

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Leigh English  
VP/Program Council  
Nancy Russell  
Secretary  
Rebecca Langrall  
Treasurer  
Susan Bell  
Assistant Treasurer  
Peggy Colwell

**EMERSON EMISSARY**

Congregation established 1994  
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