

EAST BREEZE



Newsletter of the James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Madison, Wisconsin
Volume 24, Number 12 — December 2015

Connections

I have great news to share! Last week, I received a letter from the Unitarian Universalist Association that I've been waiting for, which told me I've been granted my first renewal of Preliminary Fellowship. Here's what that means. There is a credentialing process for UU ministers. Before we can go on search, we need to be granted fellowship by the UUA, through the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. There are two stages of fellowship. The MFC grants preliminary fellowship to ministers after an intensive interview process, usually when the minister is near the end of seminary or just after they graduate. The minister stays in preliminary fellowship for several years, during which time they are said to be "in care" with the UUA. At the end of each year in preliminary fellowship, the minister and their congregation's Board and Committee on Ministry submit evaluations on their shared ministry to the MFC, and ideally, the minister is granted a renewal. After 3 renewals, which may or may not happen in consecutive years, the minister is granted final fellowship – the last stage. I'm very excited that the MFC saw in our evaluations the deep and rich ministries that are happening here at JRUUC, and how well we're working together.

In other news, our theme for December is freedom, a huge topic with too many facets to talk through in just a month. We couldn't have known how relevant discussions about freedom would be when we chose our monthly themes – but with the world in an uproar about refugees and terrorists and privilege and poverty, there is so much for us to delve into. I'm so grateful for all JRUUC does to live out our faith in our community, and I'm looking forward to having conversations about the role of freedom in this work.

I'm also looking forward to creating our Winter Solstice celebration and Christmas Eve worship with Heather Yonker and Rachel Avery and other

volunteers. Want to be one of those volunteers? Please let me know!

In faith and love,
Karen

Check-in Question for December: Share about an experience where you exercised or benefited from a freedom.

December 10 AM Sunday Services Freedom

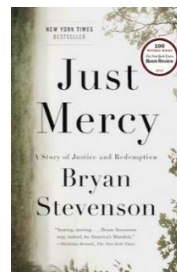
- 12/6 "A Faith for the Free"**
The Rev. Karen Quinlan
Hanukkah begins tonight – the celebration of the Jews' defeat of the Seleucids, the reclaiming of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, and the miracle of eight days of menorah flame burning with just one day's worth of oil. Today, we'll explore the Hanukkah story, and other freedom stories, in the context of free faith. Heather Yonker and members of the JRUUC Choir will provide the music.
- 12/13 "Bond And Free"**
Molly Mitchell
This time of year we gather with friends and family, and we think about connection and where we fit, sometimes comfortably, and sometimes not. This morning we'll explore how our longing for freedom and our need for community interaction. Molly will provide the music.
- 12/20 "The Longest Night"**
The Rev. Karen Quinlan
We're approaching the day on which people in Pagan traditions celebrate the rebirth of the Sun, and the day on which people in Christian traditions celebrate the birth of the Son. But before the Light is born, the longest night must be passed. Today we'll explore the connections between these

traditions, and how they might inspire us to let our own lights shine. Heather Yonker and the JRUUC Choir will provide the music.

12/27 “Freedom From Expectation”

Sara Goodman, Director of RE

When was the last time you ate at a restaurant without reading a review, or went to a movie without seeing the preview? What would it be like to go through life with limited expectations?



Join a Discussion of
Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption
7 pm Wednesday, December 2
In our Sanctuary

Holiday Services

Winter Solstice Celebration, 5:00 pm Saturday, December 19

Join us for our annual celebration marking the Longest Night and the Return of the Light, with songs, silence, stories, and candlelight, featuring Heather Yonker and the JRUUC Choir, with Rev. Karen Quinlan.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 5:00 pm, Thursday, December 24

Join us for an all-ages worship, featuring hymns, stories, candles, and a dramatic representation of the story of Jesus' birth. Rev. Karen will lead this service, and Rachel Avery will provide the music.



Minister's Office hours for December

Wednesdays, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm, at JRUUC

Thursdays, 12:30 – 2:30 pm, at Café Zoma on Atwood Ave.

Evenings and Saturdays by appointment

Please note that there will be no office hours December 30 or 31, while Rev. Karen is on vacation for the winter holidays.



Join the Many Hands Coalition for the Hanging of the Greens Friday December 4th

We will begin with a potluck at 6:00 PM, followed by music, merriment, and Decking the halls for the upcoming holidays. Come help us put up lights and decorations and the Giving Tree, under which donations for those in need may be placed during the following weeks. Questions? Contact Paul Quinlan 469-2164 or paul_quinlan@att.net



President's Column: Who Do You Miss?

I have been affiliated with JRUUC for more than a decade, and in that time, I have connected and reconnected with many members and friends that have come and gone from regular attendance at Sunday service and other Reeb events. I am always pleased when I run into them somewhere, eager to learn how they are. Lately, though, I feel pulled to do more than greet them out in the community.

I want to invite them back into this Beloved Community.

So I'm asking everyone who has been a member or friend of JRUUC long enough to have made a friend that they haven't seen recently at Reeb to think about how they might reconnect with them. And reconnect them to Reeb.

There are so many reasons folks come to Reeb, get involved, take on leadership roles, join groups, put their children in religious education classes, and attend services and events here. There are just as many reasons why people stop coming. The challenge is to discover if they are open to returning in some capacity, or at least sharing why they no longer attend.

Over the next couple of months, I am going to lead an effort to reconnect with individuals and families that haven't been back in a while. I invite you to take out your Directory of Members & Friends from a couple of years ago and peruse it for the name of someone you miss and would like to see back at Reeb. After all, part of being a Beloved Community means not only inviting the stranger and the seeker, but also those who may have fallen by the wayside.

Email me at harrisonvirginia@rocketmail.com with any questions or ideas you may have about reconnecting with former Reebers.

Blessed Be,
Virginia

Virginia Harrison,
Board President



Financial Update

	October	Fiscal year to date
Income	\$12,411	\$62,905
Expenses	\$17,828	\$57,839

We spent more than our income during October, but are still on track to meet our expenses for the year. The final income from Reeb Rave will be over \$6,400.

Jeanne Lydon, Treasurer



December in Religious Education

This will be a busy month with RE, starting with the last Sunday of November, when the Children and Youth Religious Education Committee will be leading the Multigenerational service of Stories of Belonging. We hope that this engaging and interactive service will feed the souls of children and adults alike.

As the Holidays approach, we take the time to remember the Guests at our Table by putting some change in the boxes that you took home November 22nd. Let us remember that the holidays can be both a joyful and difficult time for all of us, including our children and youth.

December 20th will be a Multigenerational service to celebrate Solstice and we will have a wonderful Christmas Eve service on December 24th that will be wonderful for the whole family.

Winter Term

This year the Children and Youth Religious Education Committee has decided to do something different – we are having a short winter term, much like our summer term, where we focus on one curricula for all of the children. Beginning December 27th and running through January, we will be doing a Harry Potter-themed curriculum! If you would like to sign up to teach or assist one week of this curriculum, please let Sara know by December 21st! (re@jruuc.org or 619-889-7457).

Youth at JRUUC

Starting in 2016 JRUUC will be offering the well-loved and vitally important **Coming of Age** program for our youth! Because the Our Whole Lives program has been so successful, we have decided to proceed with this model. We will offer Coming of Age once a month February through May, and will return to it again in the fall.

There will be three Lock-Ins (sleepovers) over the year, which provide excellent opportunities for bonding and in-depth conversation. The Program will culminate in the youth presenting their credo statements as part of a special worship service. All of our youth are invited to participate! (Youth must be at least 12 years old by January 1st). For more information, see next month's Newsletter, or contact Sara Goodman at re@jruuc.org or 619-889-7457.

Music Matters at JRUUC



(November 8th Special music "Us and Them" l.to r. music director Heather Yonker, choir members Sarah Hallas, Rebecca Everett and Molly Mitchell)

A heartfelt Thank-you! To the choir, for your contribution in helping me to realize one of my original compositions in SATB format and also for the way you rally to help make the music special every week. This photo from November 8th reflects so much genuine love of the music making! Though some of us are still new to this choir group, and we are all getting to know each other better, shaping our experience together, I felt the bonds of comradery growing here this past month. I commend the long-time choir members for spreading their loving tentacles out to the rest of us and contributing to our sense of belonging.

Congratulations choir member John Steill on the new job! I hope it is a liberating experience! We're so happy that you're so happy! We are also looking forward to a special service prepared by Molly Mitchell on December 13th, wherein she will set free some of her own music! What a tantalizing opportunity, to explore "Freedom" in the month of December, a month usually laden with "shoulds"

and "musts" and a long string of expectations from all directions! I am anxious to listen and hear what freedom is to all of you here at JRUUC. Musically, there will be a "Call to Silence" and we might "Listen as the Snowflakes Fall." Thanks to the nurturing by Marla and Heike, the children will be joining the choir for "This Little Light" of ours on December 20th.

December's "Hymn of the Month" will be #130 "Oh Liberating Rose." We hope to help the congregation become more familiar with music from our hymnals and know the joy of singing! Who can say what other music might evolve in the spirit of freedom?! I sense excitement about the coming preparations for the Winter Solstice. If you haven't wanted to commit to choir all year round, then perhaps you would like to participate at least for December? Singing is one of the best ways I know to set free what you have been holding up inside of you. Just look at those women at the top of the page, can you see it? That's freedom

Let it Sing!

Heather Yonker, Director of Music
music@jruuc.org

Many Hands Coalition Workday

Saturday December 12

9 AM to 1 PM

Various tasks to be determined

Contact Paul Quinlan with
questions or ideas:

469-2164 or paul_quinlan@att.net

Many Thanks to everyone who came to the Many Hands workday October 18 and shared their time and talent to care for our building. They organized the storage room, painted in the narthex, shoveled the leaves off the roof, mowed weeds around the building, and got ready for winter by sealing cracks and cleaning ductwork. Tell these folks "thank you" when you see them:

Beth Esser, and Miles and Ila; Becca Everett; Art Hackett; Kelly Kearns; Martin and Janice Knapp-Cordes; Adije Podebradsky; Jean Skinner Catherine Quinlan

If we missed your name, please let us know!

Justice at JRUUC



Each year we put up a Giving Tree in our lobby and choose a recipient for gifts from the Congregation. This year the recipients will be the men and women in the Dane County Jail. We have two ways for you to be involved. First, we will be preparing cards for individuals to brighten their days. We will have cards (with instructions) hanging on the tree that people can take home and personalize and return to James Reeb. We are also planning a time when people can get together at James Reeb and make cards together. (Time to be announced).

There are several items that are regularly distributed by the Chaplains. We will be collecting these items during the month of December. This is a list of items requested: Men's underwear, T-shirts, thermal shirts and tube socks -- all in white. Reading glasses (1.0-4.0 strength), greeting cards, stamped envelopes, writing paper, composition notebooks (not spiral), pencils, drawing/sketch paper, colored pencils, playing cards, calendars and Spiritual books (The Bible, Quran, Torah - in English and Spanish).

The Peace, Justice, & Sustainability

Group meets the second Monday of the month. Our next meeting will be 7 pm December 14. All are welcome to participate. Questions? Email Barb at bwhitney@chi-squared.org

Recent Share the Plate Totals

Options in Community Living	\$198.00
Dreamweavers, Inc.	\$178.00



Holiday Craft and Bake Sale Sunday, December 20

This event will take place in the lobby on December 20. We will again be selling Betsy Tuttle's great crocheted potholders and other knit and crocheted items. Cindy will have the felted wool dryer balls (to replace the use of dryer sheets). Stop by to see the variety of items available and do your last-minute Christmas shopping.

Now is the time to get your cookies and baked goods for the holiday get-togethers. We always have a great variety. The items for this sale are all donated and the proceeds go to the James Reeb general fund. **We could use more donations of crafts and baked items.** For information contact Cindy Rudd, 608-469-5269 clrudd47@gmail.com.



November Joining Sunday put us over 100! Please welcome new book-signed members: (Back row) Chris Glad, Rebecca Everett, Jean Skinner, Janice Knapp-Cordes, and Martin Knapp-Cordes (Front row) Ellie Connolly and Brian McNurlen
Welcome to this Beloved Community!



Stewardship Stirrings

Sometimes when people hear the word Stewardship, they automatically think that JRUUC is talking about *only* money. The Stewardship Team is dedicated to expanding that notion to include **All Three of the “T”s: Time, Talent *and* Treasure.** Stewardship Consultant Bill Clontz puts it this way in his blog post on successful budget drives: “As responsible members of this community, we are called to contribute in all 3 categories as *best we can* (emphasis added).”

How does this look in practice? Well, think of the recent success of the annual auction. Committee members met for hours to plan, implement, and follow-through on the Reeb Rave -- this was the TIME they shared. Then auctioneers, bakers, and record-keepers all shared their TALENTS on the night of the event. And finally folks who donated goods or services -- and others who then paid for those items or events -- shared their TREASURE. It took all three Ts for us to have such a successful fundraiser!

Have no doubt -- Reebers are generous with all three of their T's! Thank you for your generosity!



From the Office

I've always loved trees. To me, each tree is unique, kind of like people. This time of year, I especially love the evergreens. I just finished reading *The Christmas Tree: an evergreen garland filled with history, folklore, symbolism, traditions, legends and stories* by Daniel Foley, Jr. According to the author, evergreen trees have been considered sacred for thousands of years – long before Christianity was invented. People worshipped evergreens outside and in some areas brought them into their homes around the time of the winter solstice.

One Native American story included in Foley's book tells of God asking all the plants to listen to him for seven nights. By the end of the week, only the firs, pines, spruces, cypress, and a few others remained awake, still listening. To reward them, God gave these trees eternal life. I like this story for its emphasis on listening, which is also sacred to me (as it is to many Unitarian Universalists).

The magic of bringing a fir or pine indoors to decorate is one of my favorite Christmas rituals, though I have learned to let Sam (my husband) select the tree. Otherwise, I will bring home the first tree that catches my eye! Because all evergreens are automatically beautiful to me, I would instantly bond with the first tree, hearing it call out, “Elizabeth, take me home!” Insisting on its perfection, I'd purchase it immediately. After several years of Christmas trees with huge gaps in the branches and one that was actually wider around the middle than at the bottom, Sam told me that he would choose the tree in the future. Now I keep my mouth shut as each evergreen calls to me, waiting to say, “It's the perfect one!” until Sam has chosen. 😊

Happy Holidays!

Elizabeth J. Barrett, Office Administrator



Mark Your 2016 Calendar for:

MidAmerica Regional Assembly 2016
April 29 – May 1 in St. Paul
The WHO in the New Era of
Unitarian Universalism

We will look at WHO we want to be as faith communities in the coming years.

Who will we Unitarian Universalists need to be, to be relevant? How will we get there? Who will be joining us on this journey?

It is with great excitement that we announce our keynote presenters to help us explore these questions.

- **Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen**, Leadership Development Associate for Youth and Young Adults of Color at the UUA;
- **Rev. Jeremy Nickel**, minister of the Mission Peak UU congregation in Fremont, CA;
- **Kenny Wiley**, UU World senior editor and Director of Faith Formation at Prairie UU Church in Parker, CO.

They each will present highlights of their own work as they look forward to the future of Unitarian Universalism. There will be conversations with each other and they will take questions from participants.

And, as always at Regional Assembly, we will have worship services to inspire us and workshops to stimulate our thinking, along with plenty of opportunities to have fun with new and old UU friends.

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East Breeze is published monthly by James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation. To subscribe, unsubscribe, or change your mailing address, contact the newsletter editor (Elizabeth Barrett).

Newsletter submissions may be emailed to office@jruuc.org. The soft deadline for submissions is the 20th of the month at 5 pm. Please limit articles to 200 words. Please be careful not to include sensitive information.