



FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF CHICAGO

August 2017 Newsletter

First Unitarian Society of Chicago 5650 S. Woodlawn Ave., Chicago IL 60637 (773) 324-4100

Impermanence Rev. Teri Schwartz

In the late summer, a family of field mice began to gather corn and nuts, wheat and straw, because winter was coming. They worked day and night—everyone except Frederick the mouse.

"Frederick, why don't you work?" they asked.

"I do work," said Frederick. "I gather sun rays for the cold, dark winter days."

And when they saw Frederick sitting there staring at the meadow, they said, "and now, Frederick?"

"I gather colors," answered Frederick simply, "for winter is grey."

And once, Frederick seemed half asleep. "Are you dreaming, Frederick?"

But Frederick said, "Oh no, I'm gathering words, for the winter days are long and many."

The winter days came. When the first snow fell the four little field mice took to their hideout in the stone wall that ran through the field. In the beginning, there was lots to eat and the mice told stories of foolish foxes and silly cats. They were a happy family. But little by little they had nibbled up most of the nuts and berries. The straw and corn was gone. It was cold in the wall and no one felt like chatting. Then they remembered what Frederick had said about the sun rays and colors and words. "What about your supplies, Frederick?" they asked.

"Close your eyes," said Frederick. "Now I send you the rays of the sun. Do you feel how their golden glow...." And as Frederick spoke of the sun, the four little mice began to feel warmer. Was it Frederick's voice? Was it magic?

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This beloved little mouse story is from the classic children's book, Frederick, by Leo Lionni. Though it first appears our little poet-

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mouse was lazy and slacking off during the harvest, he was hard at work, in his own way. Frederick collected the rays of the sun, the colors of summer, and the words of beauty that would help the little mice bear the winter. Of course, the little mice needed food. But they couldn't live by bread alone.

Impermanence is one of the three marks of existence in Buddhism. Everything in life changes. All physical and mental events come into being...and end. Everything is in flux. Like the weather, our moods, our seasons of life, and our very life itself, come into being...and pass away. So often, we notice the end of something good, be it a good fortune, a celebration, a happy season in life, a good state of mind or health. But how often do we notice when a challenge ends? When a difficult period ceases? When we have healed? When a dark time gives way to light?

We are now entering late summer. For many of us, the summer is a time when demands of school, family, and work may be a bit

lighter; we may have more time for play and even joy. It is the time for us to gather the light, the colors, and the words to feed our spirits through the next season—whatever it might hold.

If this season of summer is one of refreshment and delight, know this: it will pass. That's the pain of impermanence. Gather the rays of light, the colors, and the words that will sustain you through your winter. If this season of late summer is one of challenge for you, know this: it will pass. That's the gift of impermanence. Know that a season of light, colors, and words of comfort will be yours in time.

Whatever season you're in now, know this: it will pass. Yet also know this, too: the church is at your side, and we're collecting rays of sun enough for everyone for seasons to come.

Blessings,
Rev. Teri

First U's New Director of Religious Education Beth Moss



I have been working with kids of a variety of ages and abilities since 2006. After receiving a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Iowa, I took the DRE position at Peoples Unitarian Universalist Church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. As someone who believes in social justice, equality, pluralism, and promoting these causes, I was so pleased to find this position available. I enjoyed working to create meaningful lessons, service projects, and special events that would help youth learn about different cultures, religions, values, and themselves. I also enjoyed creating opportunities for youth and families to participate and connect to church life.

Although I loved my job, after two and a half years I still had the desire to explore the world of classroom teaching and expand my professional experience base. In 2011, I left the church to accept employment as a multi-categorical special education teacher in the Cedar Rapids School District. I taught special education for five years, and I spent one year teaching fourth grade. It was a joy to watch my students learn and grow.

This summer, my husband and I decided to move back to Chicago to be closer to family. In this time of political unrest, I truly believe

the seven principles and purposes that Unitarian Universalists support are more important now than ever to promote. That is part of why I am overjoyed to be returning to life as a DRE in a city that I love, near the people that I love. I am excited to again be a part of a community that spreads the message of dignity, justice, acceptance, truth, conscientiousness, peace, and respect. Thank you very much for welcoming me into your congregation. I hope you will feel free to reach out at any time if you have any questions, concerns, or thoughts to contribute.

10 AM Sunday Services

August 6th

Class Stories: Embracing Our Diversity
Kellie Kelly

For most Americans, socioeconomic class is one of the last taboos. This Spring, the UUA Commission on Appraisal released the report on their 3-year study on class within our religious association. Kellie Kelly shares her class story and invites us to consider what a class-inclusive Unitarian Universalism might look like.

Kellie Kelly is a student at Meadville Lombard Theological School, steering committee chairperson of UU Class Conversations, and Unity Temple's ministerial intern. As a third-generation single mother, she became the first person in her working-poor family of restaurant workers to attend college, completing her undergraduate degree at the age of 41. Kellie is an "out" mental health advocate, trying to reduce the stigma of mental illness. She feels a strong commitment to work with and for the people society pushes to the margins, whether based on the color of their skin, their class, or their perceived disabilities.

August 13th

Untangling the Divine
Allen Harden

We UUs sometimes sing of a "God of Many Names", and we frequently invoke nuanced names to point to the divine when we gather in worship—"Spirit of Life" comes to mind first. Each of us holds personal, and probably unique, ideas of our 'god', our 'god-concept', or of 'not-god'. In order to really share our thoughts with one another, we need to have a way to understand and describe these notions we use to define our own relation to human meaning and our place in the universe. The way we know the ultimate is created by us—we are the authors of our own higher meaning. If we can begin to unpack our constructions of what is ultimate, we have a better chance of understanding and finding that meaning in a way that is useful to us and that we might share, and compare, with others.

Allen Harden is a candidate for Ministry with the UUA. His candidacy was sponsored by First Unitarian, where he has been a member for over 20 years. Allen received his M.Div. degree from the Meadville Lombard Theological School this past May, and plans

to pursue his second career in church ministry. He has been mostly absent from our church for the past few years, while serving as Intern Minister at the UU Fellowship of DeKalb, Illinois, but has maintained connection to the First U Humanist Group. Allen lives in Hyde Park, where he and Pat are thrilled to be discovering the joys of grandparenting.

August 20th

Hymn Sing! Singing the Living Tradition
Jeffery Hamrick

I invite you to join me for our annual Hymn Sing worship service, to be held this year in Hull Chapel. Our hymnal, *Singing the Living Tradition*, is full of many well-known tunes but also offers some lesser-known delights that are just waiting to be sung. We'll enjoy

performing some of our favorites and uncover some of these hidden gems as well. Come add to your beautiful voice to the mix. It won't be the same without you!

August 27th

Eclipsed by Wonder
Rev. Teri Schwartz

On August 21, a total solar eclipse will trace a path across North America. Our Living Tradition draws upon our direct experience of mystery and wonder, but it takes our commitment to have eyes to see, even when wonder comes to us! We are teeny-tiny beings in a large cosmos—but the cosmos is simultaneously inside of us. Experiencing that duality is a way to engage with wonder and grow our spirits: it's an amazing improbability—and gift—to be alive.

Call to Song Jeff Hamrick

All singers are warmly invited to join music director Jeff Hamrick and members of the First Unitarian choir for Summer Choir.

We'll meet in the sanctuary at 9 a.m. on August 6, 13, and 20.

We will warm up together, sing through hymns, and prepare a short and simple anthem or choral response for each service.

All ages are welcome. Come sing with us!

Church Office Hours

Monday – Friday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm
Saturday 9:30 am – 3:00 pm

Co-Ministers' Office Hours

Rev. David Schwartz, by appointment on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Sunday

Rev. Teri Schwartz, by appointment on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday

First Unitarian Newsletter

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