

**SERMON  
TOPICS:**

- Nov 2—How Coyote Lost His Songs, Music and Dance
- Nov 9—Ethics & Global Warming
- Nov 16—Getting on Noah's Ark
- Nov 23—Gratitude & Thankfulness
- Nov 30—The Waiting Time

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This article should be inspiring to small congregations like UUCE. Some of the ideas would not work with our church, but for those who would like to see our congregation grow, this should give us hope.—Tina Sizemore

## Ready for Change by Elaine McArdle

Just five years ago, things were so bleak at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder, Colorado, that there was a question as to how much longer it would survive. The congregation went years without paying the mortgage on its building. It hadn't paid its [Fair Share denominational dues](#) to the Unitarian Universalist Association since the 1990s. The building was dilapidated, the minister's office was hard to find, and the religious education building was unavailable because the church, desperate for income, rented it out to local schools.

Worse, it had the cliquy atmosphere of a social club, so unwelcoming that the church flunked a "secret visitor" evaluation when a UUA Mountain Desert District representative attended a service unannounced. At one point, membership dwindled to eighty, with so much infighting that when longtime member Barbara Richards became congregation president in 1993, friends warned her she would need a sledgehammer to call meetings to order.

But since the Rev. Howell Lind arrived as part of a bold experiment that has evolved into the UUA's new Developmental Ministry program, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder has more than doubled its certified membership, from 110 to 233, with an unofficial count of 270. It has swept away a \$50,000 deficit and raised \$170,000 for capital developments, including a beautiful new playground and solar panels. It has

become a teaching congregation for student ministers; it has pioneered Mindful Meetings to give a spiritual base to all church business; and it has instituted a Small Group Social Change Ministry model for social justice, with church-wide events that build community.

In what may be the most exciting development, it now includes fifty-five young adult members between 18 and 35—an astonishing fifteen-fold increase in five years—who attend church services on Sundays, meet at least weekly outside church, and are deliberately incorporated into all levels of church leadership. "The environment is just so much more exciting and fun to be a part of," said Susie Belmont, who was one of only three young adults when she joined the church in 2009.

While the members appreciate outside recognition, they are more delighted that they have rescued their beloved community by choosing to stay at the table rather than giving up and by being open to significant change and experimentation.

"People who've come back to the church after having been away ten years or whatever, they find it's a different place—there's excitement, enthusiasm, and the noise level [at coffee hour] is unbelievable," said Lind.

Founded by a young mother in 1947 as the American Unitarian Association's [first fellowship](#), the

church had more recently developed a quitting culture, where disgruntled members would leave rather than staying and working through conflict. By the mid-2000s, with no money in the coffers and a couple of bad matches between ministers and congregation, the church was on life support.

But a core group decided they needed to pull themselves together, and they reached out to Mountain Desert District Executive Nancy Bowen. With the Boulder church about to enter a ministerial search, Bowen suggested an innovative lifeline: decide what they as a congregation needed to do to become functional, then hire a minister who would help them reach those specific goals over a five-year period.

They jumped on it.

"I think we wanted to find a direction that would be successful instead of this constantly rotating door of un-success, so we were willing to try something new," said Jenny Fitt-Peaster, immediate past-president of the board. After much explanation and lobbying by the board, the congregation voted unanimously to switch to a new kind of search.

"They knew that they were in really bad shape and in some ways on a path to self destruction. It was time for someone to come in from outside," said the Rev. Keith Kron, director of the UUA's Transitions Office, which



## Sermon Topics

Nov 2—Suzanne Perrey and Ashley Perkins will lead a multi-generational service called **How Coyote Lost His Songs, Music, and Dance**. No children's RE classes today.

Nov 9—Lisa Kretz, guest speaker, will talk about **Ethics & Global Warming**. Tom Moor worship leader.

Nov 16—Visiting UU Minister Krista Taves—**Getting on Noah's Ark: Diversity as Salvation**. Suzanne Perrey worship leader.

Nov 23—Ed Howard will lead **Gratitude and Thankfulness**. *Potluck following service.*

Nov 30—Reverend Doddie Stone returns for **The Waiting Time**. Tom Moor worship leader.

## Ready for Change by Elaine McArdle continued

now oversees the Developmental Ministry program.

They began with an interim minister, the Rev. Becky Gunn, now minister at the UU Society of Bangor, Maine, who got them headed in the right direction. In 2007 the board devised a set of goals to get the church back on its feet. The board worked with Bowen and the Rev. John Weston, then-director of Transitions at the UUA, to find a minister whose expertise was on point. They chose Lind, an expert in organizational systems and finances who, in addition to ministering to churches in three states, served fourteen years as district executive of the UUA's Metropolitan New York District.

"My experience as a field staffer for the UUA helped, in that I'd seen a variety of congregations—those with bad practices and those with good—so I had learned what works," said Lind, who is married to Bowen. "Ministry to spiritual needs is more than just pastoral; it also means knowing how to build a community. It's having a sense of

how to motivate a congregation to move the way it wants to. I think the Developmental Ministry program is an excellent way to do that."

It's important to note that the goals were set by the board, not by Lind, creating shared leadership. And because the minister contracts with the board for five years, it gives them incentive to make the relationship work.

The board made governance changes and amended bylaws and policies so it could move toward its goals, and most of its members have attended the UUA's regional Russell Lockwood Leadership School. The changes began to build on themselves. In a controversial move, the board stopped renting out its religious education building so the church could use its own space. As the congregation got healthier, it took on a series of intern ministers, who proved essential to attracting and retaining young adults, and Lind gave them room to be creative.

"There was never any ego in it, in terms of what [Lind] offered to us," said Richards, a

decades-long member and hospitality ministry coordinator.

At the same time, Lind's persistence proved invaluable: "His stubbornness allows him not to care that people don't like everything from the beginning. He doesn't bend to appeasement." When Lind encountered criticism to changes, rather than backing down he'd urge the congregation to ride it out with the idea of tweaking things down the road.

A capital campaign raised \$65,000 for a new playground, and at least 100 members of the rapidly growing congregation came together over four days to build it, with teens and seniors sawing and hammering next to each other. It was an important community-building event. The church raised \$105,000 more for other projects, and it donates \$2,000 a month from the weekly offerings to local social justice organizations.

The young adult group is especially organized, tight knit, and enthusiastic. The group immediately adds visitors to its email list and invites them to get-togethers at local pubs,

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## Ready for Change by Elaine McArdle continued

where five to twenty people gather each week. Lind seeks the group's input for Sunday services, and as a result the music is more contemporary, said Belmont. Young adults serve on the board of trustees and on every other committee.

"We worked really hard to incorporate young adults immediately into the leadership," said Lind. "They want to be taken seriously and they want their vision and values to be heard." The success of the young adult group in creating community has inspired an over-35 group, Wine and Spirit, and now the church is focusing on attracting and retaining more

young families.

The congregation has reached its goals so quickly that it's now working on a five-year strategic plan that seeks to extend improvements in worship, family development, buildings and grounds, and more. Lind, who has enjoyed the challenge, has agreed to stay on until a settled minister is called; the congregation's search will begin soon.

"It takes about seven years to change a church culture," said Lind, who may take on another developmental congregation. "If they choose someone next year, that'll be seven years, and enough culture change has already hap-

pened to get it out of the social club. It doesn't mean the work is all done, but I think they're more than stable now, to the point where congregational polity can be returned and they can call a minister."

He's leaving them in excellent shape, they say. "When you look at where we were, and where we are," said Richards, "there's no comparison."

"There is something better, and it can be done—that's the message we can carry forward," says Fred Cole, a member for forty-seven years. "Change takes work, dedication, commitment—and it takes the whole village."

## Tribute to Isabel

As we age, we are often reminded that change is the only constant. The first big change for many is when we leave the comfort of home to build a life separate from Mom and Dad.

Then, comes a new kind of love followed by marriage. Then Children. They grow up and move away, and we retire. Regrettably, this is often followed by the death of our spouse.

Finally, the realization that the house is too empty, the winters too cold, and we want to see our children and grandchildren more often.

I believe this summarizes what Isabel Lavens, the senior member of our Congregation was reflecting when she announced at a recent Church service that she is moving to Hawaii to live with her son and daughter in law. We will miss her.

Isabel, a birthright Unitarian, whose father and brother were UU ministers, was among a small group of free thinkers who, in 1951, decided to form a Unitarian Church in Evansville.

No such Church had existed here since the late 19th Century when members of the congre-

gation split over issues of doctrine and the church fell apart.

The 1876 Victorian building at 6th & Walnut Streets was sold to the Nazarene Church for \$3,000. This money was turned over to Church headquarters in Boston where it was held in trust in hopes a new group would someday re-establish a Unitarian Church in Evansville. When Isabel, who hails from the Boston area, researched the local history and learned about the money, she felt the newly-formed Evansville group had a just claim to it.

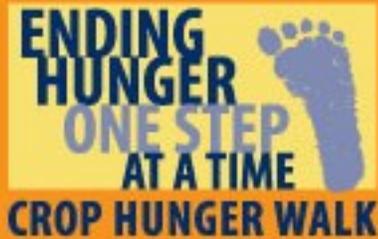
Accordingly, while visiting family in Boston, she marched into Unitarian Headquarters and insisted on having it. She likes to say she "wore them down". Knowing how resolute Isabel can be, we can believe that. That money, plus \$1,800 willed to the group, became the seed money for a fund drive and the purchase of a large old home at 856 South Kentucky Avenue. Through the years, Isabel demonstrated her leadership not only in the Church but in the Community, serving on the School Board, for example.



Photo of Isabel Lavens, founding member

One might describe Isabel as a "health nut". She does all the right things regarding diet, exercise, and healthful living habits. In partnership with Ruth Hetzel, another longtime member now deceased, and Adele Cottrell, owner of a local health food store, she helped promote a healthful diet in the community. And it paid off for her. Now, at age 97, and in remarkably good health and with a sharp mind, she evokes wonder and awe.

We wish you the best in this new change in your life, Isabel. We will miss you, but we know you will thrive in Hawaii near those whom you love and who love you.



## UUCE Participating in CROP Walk

The CROP Walk is a locally sponsored walk to raise funds for world hunger relief. It is an interfaith community event, with walkers from many different churches in the area participating. We'd like to see participation from UUCE. The walk takes place beginning at 10am on Saturday, November 8th. It begins at Simpson United Methodist Church (2201 W. Illinois St.) and lasts about 3 miles. If you are interested in walking or sponsoring, please see David Fentress (473-0314, df27@evansville.edu).

## Thanksgiving Dinner

The Congregational Life Committee will once again host a Thanksgiving Dinner for all members and friends on Thursday, November 27 at 2pm at the church. As always, turkey and dressing will be provided, but those attending are asked to bring a salad, side dish, dessert, or rolls to complete the meal. There will be a sign-up sheet in the church foyer, where persons planning to attend should indicate what food or foods they are bringing and how many will be in their party. Please join us for an afternoon of good food and fellowship!



*"Bless our food,  
Bless our friends,  
Come, Spirit, be with us.  
May our hearts fill with peace,  
Let your presence  
surround us.  
Spirit of Love  
May you bloom and grow,  
Bloom and grow forever.  
Bless our food,  
Bless our friends,  
Bless our lives forever."  
-Jan Evans-Tiller*

## Church Directory Updated

The Church Directory has been updated and posted in the "Members Only" section of the website: [www.uuevansville.org](http://www.uuevansville.org), under the "Community" tab. If you would like a hard copy of the directory or need the password to access the "Members Only" section of the website, please notify Ashley Perkins at [aoa@uuevansville.org](mailto:aoa@uuevansville.org) or call the church at (812) 474-1704 during office hours: Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays between 10am to 2pm. (Ashley will be out of the office on Thursday, November 27th and Friday, November 28th).

## Meet UUCE's Newest Members

AMANDA CATT is a stay at home mom to 2 boys, Tyler and Brandt. She served for 6 years in the Indiana National Guard as a medic. She enjoys reading and crafting in what little free time she has. Born in Vincennes, she has lived in various locations in Southern Indiana and spent 10 years living in Florida along the east coast.

JOSEPH CATT has spent the majority of his life in southern Indiana. He joined the U.S. Army on March 11, 2003; he was injured and received a medical discharge in August, 2004. He has held various occupations since his discharge, including assembly worker, armed security, and tech support. He returned to school in 2011 at Vincennes University with a double major in Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM) and Industrial Maintenance and CIM robotics. He graduated Magna Cum Laude after two years of study, and is currently employed at Evana Automation as Controls Technician II, programming automated systems and robots. On September 11, 2013, he married Amanda.

CRYSTAL FOLZ lives in Poseyville with Cory, her husband of seventeen years, and two sons, Sylvester and Simon. She runs a Halloween prop manufacturing company. Her hobbies include playing piano, dance, drumming, oracle cards, spiritual house clearings, herbal remedies, and gardening. She has a vegan household, and with her husband, is teaching her children to be kind, supportive of others, and most of all, HAPPY!

ZACH NANCE was born in Florida and moved to the tri-state when he was 5. He graduated from Castle High School in 2008 and went to college and USI and dropped out. Zach currently works as a dishwasher and is in a transitional period, trying to find his place. He is happy to find this church and looks forward to finding his place within this congregation and the world.

JASON SCHAPKER is a 27 year old IT consultant and practicing Wiccan for about 15 years. Jason has a beautiful daughter and lovely fiancé. He still lives at home with his mother and father, because they need help around the house. Jason has one older brother who has helped him become an IT consultant. His brother served in the military as D.O.D and works with computers.

Jason has decided to become a part of this church because it is like other covens in his religion: it is a family. It is a family that accepts everyone and expels no one. It does not matter your race, sex, sexual orientation or what your religion. This is what he has been looking for so many years.

LYNN CONNORS-SMITH grew up in Minneapolis, Minnesota and went to the First Unitarian Society growing up. She moved to Bloomington, Indiana for work almost 12 years ago, and moved from there to Washington, Indiana almost 6 years ago. She has a bachelor's of science in Electrical Engineering from Michigan Tech, a Master's of Science in Engineering Management from Rose-Hulman and is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Business Administration. She is an avid volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America and is extremely glad to have found and be joining UUCE.

COREY SPRADLIN was born in Weatherford Texas on September 20, 1970. Corey has been married twice and has 2 children from his first marriage: son, Ashton is 17 and daughter, Cali is 16. He is currently dating a woman in Evansville. Corey has served about 25 years in the active and reserve military. In 2006 and 2007, he was deployed on a Tactical Psychological Operations Team for the Army in Kirkuk (ker-cook), Iraq. Corey never saw any direct combat, but he experienced several IED's and his base was rocketed and

mortared on a daily basis. As a result of his time in a combat zone, Corey is inflicted with severe post-traumatic stress disorder. Corey hopes to start a business restoring and repurposing antique items and also customizing motorcycles. He currently attends Ivy Tech Community College with a double major in Heating and Air and Advanced Automation and Robotics Technology. Corey is the Vice President of the Student Veterans Organization at Ivy Tech and is spearheading the dedication of a designated service animal break area on the campus grounds. Corey is a member of Soldier Dogs for Independence of Evansville: a non-profit organization that pairs disabled veterans with service animals and trains them both for registration as a federally licensed, medical assistance animal and handler. Corey has his own service animal named Dakota that has just graduated the program. Dakota is Corey's lifeline and best friend. Corey considers himself an agnostic that hasn't been presented with evidence of a higher creator. He hopes to obtain employment in Indiana and remain a member of our congregation for as long as it will have him. He feels his involvement with this church has enriched his life and he is honored to be accepted into the role.

KAITLIN ULMER is an Indianapolis native who came to Evansville for college. She graduated in May 2014 with her Bachelor's Degree in social work. She enjoys playing with her pets, looking at or making art, and spending time with her boyfriend when she is not cracking down on her graduate studies. She considers herself a shamanic priestess in training, who is deeply connected to the natural world and beings around her. She loves candles and making crazy faces, and has a similar personality to Hermione Granger.

## Upcoming Events & Activities

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Sun., Nov. 2: 9am Adult Discussion Group   | Sun., Nov. 16: 3-6pm Women's Goddess Circle                                       |
| Sun., Nov. 2: 10am How Coyote Lost His Songs, Music, and Dance—multigenerational service | Mon., Nov. 17: 6pm Down to Earth meeting  |
| Mon., Nov. 3: 6pm Down to Earth meeting  | Fri., Nov. 21: 3:30pm United Caring Shelter Dinner (sign-up sheet in foyer)       |
| Mon., Nov. 3: 7pm Board meeting  | Fri., Nov. 21: 7pm Crystal Drum Circle  |
| Fri., Nov. 7: 7pm Drum Circle  | Sun., Nov. 23: 10am Gratitude and Thankfulness. <i>Potluck following service.</i> |
| Sat., Nov. 8: 10am CROP Walk at Simpson United Methodist Church                          | Mon., Nov. 24: 6pm Down to Earth meeting  |
| Sun., Nov. 9: 10am Ethics & Global Warming   | Tues., Nov. 25: 6:30pm Spirit of Life—Adult RE workshop 3                         |
| Mon., Nov. 10: 6pm Down to Earth meeting   | Thurs., Nov. 27: 2pm Thanksgiving Dinner  |
| Sun., Nov. 16: 9am Adult Discussion Group  | Sun., Nov. 30: 10am The Waiting Time  |
| Sun., Nov. 16: 10am Getting on Noah's Ark: Diversity as Salvation                        | Sun., Nov. 30: 3pm Dances of Universal Peace                                      |



### Unitarian Universalist Church of Evansville

2910 East Morgan Avenue  
Evansville, IN 47711  
812-474-1704

Service on Sundays at 10:00am  
Youth RE on Sundays at 10:30am



### Coffee Order

Place your order for Equal Exchange Fair Trade chocolate, cocoa and coffee by the 15th of the month. Coffee prices average \$8-\$10 per 10oz package plus shipping. Your purchase supports the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Contact Chris Norrington for details [cnorrington@hotmail.com](mailto:cnorrington@hotmail.com).

### Support Teams

UUCE now has support teams in place to assist those members who need assistance with activities of daily living, such as grocery shopping, lawn care, meal preparation, etc., due to illness, death in the family, or other circumstance. If you or someone else needs such help, please notify Sharon Dennis at 431-9148 or [sdennis1.sd@gmail.com](mailto:sdennis1.sd@gmail.com), Bev Tonso at 476-9235 or [btonso44@att.net](mailto:btonso44@att.net), or Teddye Thompson at 402-2744 or [t.thompson@wowway.com](mailto:t.thompson@wowway.com)

### Board of Directors:

President  
President Elect  
Secretary  
Secretary Elect  
Treasurer  
Treasurer Elect  
Director  
Director  
RE Director

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Sharon Dennis  
Chris Norrington  
Jasmine Sturgill  
Mollie Pharo  
David Fentress  
Suzanne Perrey  
Tom Moor  
Ashley Perkins

### Other Volunteers:

Building and Grounds  
Communications  
Congregational Life  
Social Justice  
Stewardship  
Worship Associates  
Youth Leader  
Newsletter Editor

John Schaeffer  
Chris Norrington  
Chris Norrington  
Charles Luker  
Chris Norrington  
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Ashley Perkins  
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Webmaster  
Website