



MID-COLUMBIA UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

GORGE UU NEWS – January, 2010

LEADERSHIP LETTER

"If I could give you one key, and one key only, to more abundant life, I would give you a sense of your own worth, an unshakable sense of your own dignity as one grounded in the source of the cosmic dance, as one who plays a unique part in the unfolding of the story of the world. When you and I look at these trees, these flowers, anything at all, we are the universe looking at its handiwork. You have perhaps seen the pattern of cross and yarn called the "eye of god" made first in our Southwest in homage to the sun. We, too, all of us together, all the eyes of all the creatures, are the eye of god. That is why we need each other, our many ways of seeing, that together we may rejoice, and see clearly, and find the many keys to more abundant life.

Once we are sure of our innate worth, something that cannot be taken from us, we no longer need to prove it in elaborate ways so often damaging to others and to ourselves. Once secure in our own dignity, we no longer need someone to hurt, whole classes of people to despise. Secure in the sense of our own worth, we can rejoice in the worth of others and love out of fullness instead of an inner emptiness that eats others alive. Let us affirm one another as "unique, irreplaceable" persons." GWC

I love this quote and, though you may change the wording to fit your particular belief system, I think the concept holds true whatever word you use to substitute for ones with which you feel uncomfortable. My hope is that we not get caught up in the wording, and allow the truth of things to penetrate our psyche and make us stronger people and a stronger community as a result, no matter what we call it.

And FYI, the minister search process is taking longer than expected, but we will keep you updated as possible. Peace, Cindy H.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Our Whole Lives sexuality education curriculum for youth in grades 7-9 starts this Thursday, January 7, at Riverside Church. Youth field trip to First Unitarian Portland tentatively scheduled for Jan 10, watch your email or contact Peggy Neuman for more information.

SUNDAY SERVICES

January 3 – The Comfort of Strangers, Rev. Thomas Disrud via CD. Celebrant Bonnie New will conduct worship this day. This is a **Youth Sunday**, and youth will be meeting downstairs with their advisors this day. **Please plan time to stay for soUUp afterwards!**

January 10 – Amateur Theologians, Kristen Dillon. That is, after all, what we are...

January 17 – Moon Power, Rev. Emily Campagne.

January 24 – “Why Believe?” Tina Castanares. Tina will share reflections about the examined life, moral development around values and beliefs in our adult years, cultural norms around changing beliefs, and what might be litmus tests to engage in holding, revising, or jettisoning certain beliefs.

January 31 – Will Work for Justice, Kristen Dillon. This Sunday we join with congregations throughout the region in Equality Sabbath. Sponsored by the Community of Welcoming Congregations, we celebrate together the contributions of Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Transgender people to our communities and congregations, and look forward to a more just future for all.
Youth Sunday.

CALENDAR

Deadline for February Newsletter – Sunday, January 24.

Inviting all **FISH Volunteers** to attend Gorge Ecumenical Ministries Annual Meeting Jan. **10 at 5:30pm for a Potluck and Program**. GEM will present the Inspired Service Award to Becky and Pat Rawson, recognize FISH Volunteers for their service, and listen as Maija Yasui challenges Faith communities to continue to serve the Gorge Area. We hope we will see you at St. Mark's Episcopal Church at 400 11th St. Hood River at 5:30pm, Sunday January 10th.

Game Night – Saturday, January 23 7pm at the home of Debbie and Lloyd Olson. Contact Paul Blackburn to RSVP and to get directions.

NEW UU class - Considering becoming a member of our fellowship? One of the suggested steps on your path is attending a "New UU" class to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation. Next class – **January, 2010**. Contact Cindy Horton.

Saturday February 6, first Circle Suppers, see below...

New Member Welcome Ceremony – Interested in signing the book and becoming a member of our congregation? The next opportunity will be during worship on **Sunday, February 7**. Contact Cindy Horton

The next book discussion group will be **noon, February 7th** facilitated by Aera Atkins.

FELLOWSHIP NEWS

We are still feeling the loss of our friend Phillip Larsen earlier this month. Please hold his family in your love during this difficult time. Jay Larsen has written a memorial for Phillip. You can view it at <http://www.mcuuf.org/upclose.php>

ONGOING PROGRAMS

CIRCLE SUPPERS ARE COMING!!!

WHAT? Circle suppers are small potluck dinners, held in members' homes, that give MCUUF'ers a chance to socialize and converse in a relaxed setting. Each dinner will have about 8 attendees. Everyone who would like to attend (or to host a dinner) will sign up, and then the coordinator (Elaine Castles) will assign guests to hosts based on geography, kid-friendly or not, and perhaps her own fancy.

WHEN? Saturday, February 6 (pray to our Mother Goddess that it does not snow!)

HOW? Elaine Castles will have sign-up sheets at fellowship each Sunday during January. You can also sign up by e-mailing Elaine or calling her. Please give Elaine your name, number of people attending (adults and kids), where you live, whether you prefer kid-friendly or not, and whether you are vegetarian. If you are willing to be a host, please indicate the maximum number of guests you can comfortably accommodate.

If attendees have a great time at this first round of suppers, we'll make it a regular event.

UU Meetups is a grassroots casual social group meant to nurture friendships and a sense of belonging within the fellowship.

Grassroots means that whoever has an idea for an activity "announces" it by sending an email to the list. Interested participants reply to let the organizer know how many to expect. (Drop-ins are also welcome).

Planning is either in advance or last-minute spur of the moment.

Ideas: A movie, a play, lunch, a cup of coffee, skiing, a visit to a museum, a concert, or charitable and civic activities... If you're interested in being on the email announcement list, please send an email to Anita at anitajj@yahoo.com.

Hiking Group - The newly formed UU Hiking Group is always looking for participants. If you'd like to receive announcements of hikes, please send an email to Anita Johnston, and we'll add you to the email list.

sUUs On First Sunday of Every Month—Plan to stay for a savory lunch after the service.

TRIP REPORTS AND OTHER IMPORTANT STUFF

First Meetup! We had the first UU Meetup in early December. The group consisted of Pam and Michael Zachary-Morneault and their daughter who paid a surprise visit from Portland, Joe and Martha Usatine, Tom Pencheon, and Steve Castles. We met for supper at the Crazy Pepper restaurant at 5:30 pm which gave us enough time to thoroughly enjoy one another's company. Then we walked down to the Columbia Center for the Arts and were entertained by an excellent cast of children and adults in "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever". A good time was had by all. - Steve Castles [email Anita Johnston (anitajj@yahoo.com) to get your name on the mailing list and be part of the fun! – ed]

Caroling at Ashley Manor – A bunch of kids, teens, and grownups caroled for the residents of Ashley Manor, a memory care home in Hood River, on Sunday December 20 after brunch. We had a great time and received many smiles in return, as well as some of the audience singing along with the words from years ago.

Full-Spectrum Joyfulness Book Now Available

A new book has just been published by UU minister Rev. Amanda Aikman of Everett, WA. *Full-Spectrum Joyfulness: Easy-to-Remember Games, Songs and Practices for Creating More Joy in Your Everyday Life* is a 100-page book that also contains a CD of seven songs by UU musician Kathleen Tracy.

The book is based on current happiness studies and has a unique, UU-flavored approach. It features short, to-the-point chapters and a wealth of ideas for creating a customized joyfulness-enhancing program that anyone can use to add delight to their everyday life. The songs on the CD serve as reminders that joy comes in many forms and is accessible to everyone at any time. The book was developed in the joyfulness classes and workshops Amanda has been offering at UU churches and at Eliot Institute. It is published by Spirit of Life Publishing (Montpelier, Vermont) and can be found on the company's website.

From Linda Short, MCUUF member and secretary of the Rockford Grange:

As you may recall, the Grange must meet certain state Grange requirements to hold possession of the building. Some of you have graciously become members which was very helpful. For quite some time now, the Grange has not met its quorum requirements of seven people at each meeting. Several people have dropped their membership as well.

This not only puts a strain on the local Grange committee, but on the forward growth of the Grange overall. Besides meeting our own UU needs, it would be nice to re-ignite the Grange to its historical presence in the community, protecting the family farm, promoting simple living and restoring the environment. Values I'm sure most UU's hold dearly.

While the meetings can be painfully slow and antiquated, they don't really represent a holistic picture of Grange function. This Grange is running on the barest of minimums. That said, we can not only help keep the Grange afloat, but we can help make the Grange into something that will be vital and functional again for the community.

Please consider joining, or if you are already a member, **please try to attend some meetings**. We could even divide ourselves up and take turns attending if that would help. The meetings are the second Monday of every month at 7pm in the dining room. Thanks for your support! – Linda

CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING, WHEN, AND WHERE? Go to www.mcuuf.org

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