



MID-COLUMBIA UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

GORGE UU NEWS – December, 2011

FROM OUR MINISTER

Sometimes our light goes out, but is blown again into instant flame by an encounter with another human being. Each of us owes the deepest thanks to those who have rekindled this inner light.

-Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965, German theologian, organist, philosopher, physician, and medical missionary)

Staying at my friend Jill's house over Thanksgiving, the pilot light blew out on her stove. Each burner made that "click click" sound, followed by the smell of gas, but no flame. I searched around for a match and lit one burner for the teapot. After that, all the burners worked fine and I nestled into the couch with my tea and a good book, appreciating some quiet moments in the midst of a full holiday week.

I've spent lots of time on Jill's couch over the years— gabbing, resting, playing games, crying, reading, listening, and laughing. Jill and I have rekindled each other's flames many times over the years when our pilot lights have blown out, or simply grown weak.

Last month, I asked what your spiritual practices are – those things that renew your spirit and remind you of the greater Whole to which we are all connected. This month, I ask you to whom do you turn when your inner light goes dim? How attentive are you to others who haven't been to worship in a while, or who seem to be having a rough time at work or in town?

For me, this flame-tending is central to religious community. Unitarian Universalism calls me to remember the interdependent web of existence of which we are all a part – in times when I'm full of energy and life to share, and in times when I'm hurting or alone.

Whether you celebrate the Solstice, Christmas, Hanukkah, none of the above, or all of the above; whether you believe in God or not; whether you are new to this community or an old timer: we are in this together, seeking meaning and supporting each other in times of spiritual crisis and joy, and challenging each other to live out our values in our everyday lives.

In worship, I hope you take time to notice the status of your inner flame and that you find fuel to feed that flame to sustain you for the week to come. You'll notice that we're experimenting with some aspects of our liturgy (the order of worship elements). Change is often unsettling, and I encourage you to bring a spirit of curiosity and an open heart to worship as we experiment. Paul Blackburn (Worship Coordinator) and I would love to hear feedback from you about how worship is feeding your inner flame.

December is a time of bright lights and much darkness. This season, may we seek to tend our own inner flames, reach out to those whose flames seem dim, and find gratitude in both the light and the darkness.

In faith and love,

Cathy

Cathy's dates

I will be in the gorge December 2-4 and December 16-18 this month. Please call or email me to set up time for tea, a walk, or a meal – I would love to spend time with you.

IN MEMORIAM

It is bittersweet to report that Anatole "Tolya" Sergeivitch Fetisoff, a long-time member of MCUUF, passed away on Sunday, November 27. We say "bitter" because we've lost our dear friend, but we also say "sweet" because Tolya's spirit is now liberated for the next phase of his journey of existence. We wish him well.

Tolya was born on April 14, 1924 in Moscow, Russia to Sergei Petrovich Fetisoff and Klavdia Ivanovna Turkin. His surviving family members include his wife, Jane Fetisoff, her daughters, Laurie VanCott and Lisa Nelson, and his sons, Jeffrey and Jay Fetisoff as well as grandchildren Darren, Ella, Nelson, Amre, Adam, and Brooke.

To celebrate his remarkable life, we will gather this coming Saturday (not Sunday), December 3 at 3:00 at the Grange Hall. Please wear colorful clothing. Our minister Cathy Rion will lead the celebration along with Rev. Kozen Sampson from the Trout Lake Abbey. We hope you can come and share in the joy that was Tolya's life.

After the celebration, we will have a potluck downstairs to continue telling stories about Tolya, Jane, and their amazing adventures. We hope you can join us for that, too.

Jane requests that you do not send flowers. Memorial contributions may be made c/o Mid-Columbia UU Fellowship, PO Box 521, Hood River, OR 97031. Contributions will benefit the Fellowship, the Trout Lake Abbey, and Occupy Hood River. – *Mike Hendricks*

LEADERSHIP LETTER

This is your friendly reminder that December is the last opportunity to have contributions to MCUUF count as tax deductions for 2011. Although IRS regulations require a letter for single contributions more than \$250, I will send letters of thanks to each pledger whose total contributions exceed \$250 for the year 2011. And any pledger who would like a status report on their pledging can get it by sending me an email asking for it. – Bruce Bolme

When you're making your end-of-year giving plans, remember that gifts to MCUUF are tax-deductible. Please consider the valuable work we do together and perhaps make an additional donation to support it. Thanks! – Paul Blackburn

SUNDAY SERVICES

December 4 - Christmas is Unavoidable, Cathy Rion. The Christmas season we are entering evokes feelings from love to disgust to indifference, but it's impossible to avoid in our culture. Christmas is an important Christian holiday, yet many UUs don't identify as Christian. How do we stay grounded during this frenetic season? As we enter the season of Advent, what is meaning will you make of it this year? **This is a Youth Sunday with planned activities for ages 11-18.**

December 11 - The Monks of Pacific Hermitage. As Ahjan Sudanto has said, the Theravata Buddhist tradition is "short on theology and long on renunciation." These men have taken vows that require that they do not cook, store food, handle money or drive. They will share their message (and chanting!) with us.

December 18 – Find a Stillness, Cathy Rion. As we approach the shortest day of the year, we will gather to reflect on the gifts of darkness. Some of us thrive in the darkness, nestling into our homes with warm drinks and loved ones. Others of us become lethargic and depressed. Let us gather to celebrate and ponder the darkness with words, song, and silence. **This is a Youth Sunday with planned activities for ages 11-18.**

December 25 - Bonnie New. A service combining Christmas carol singing, readings and reflection.

CALENDAR

Newsletter Deadline for January will be Wednesday, December 28

Resistance and Transformation: Unitarian Universalist History of Social Justice

Scheduled on two more Sundays, 12-1:30pm at the Grange. Upcoming topics: Sexual Health on 12/4. Facilitated by Cathy Rion, Minister. Newcomers welcome!

Board Meeting December 16 – 6pm at Riverside Church

COMMUNITY ACTION AT MCUUF

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1140 Tucker Road Hood, is hosting a **launch party for the capital campaign to build a new facility for FISH Food Bank** on Thursday, December 1st at 10:30am, at Our Redeemer. The planned 6500 square foot building will be built on Our Redeemer's campus and will serve both as the FISH site and as church/community use space.

3P Advocacy Workshop (Potential-Power-Promise)

3P Advocacy Workshop shifts you into an active voice on social change. Practice effective strategies presented by statewide policy leaders.

When: 12/10/2011, 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Where: Riverside Community UCC, 4th & State St., Hood River

Suggested Donation: \$15 by Dec. 01 to the GEM representative in your congregation or \$20 at the door.

Sponsored by: Gorge Ecumenical Ministries

Worried about health care access, decreasing coverage, and increasing costs??

Come hear about: *“Improved Medicare for All - The solution to our current healthcare crisis”* AND *“How we got statewide universal health care in Vermont”*

At Riverside Community Church in Hood River (317 State Street)

Friday, Dec. 16, from 6:30-8:30pm

Presented by Oregon Single Payer Campaign and the Vermont Workers Center

How MCUUF Members & Friends Can Engage the Fellowship in Community Action Activities

MCUUF members and friends often wish to bring area social action activities to the attention of the fellowship. Our Community Action Task Force (CATF) has created avenues for doing just that:

1. You can publicize a social action activity to the Fellowship and invite interested people to participate. The CATF will get the activity posted in our Sunday Order of Service, in our weekly and monthly e-newsletters, and on our website.
How to do: Email your activity info to us on the *Community Action Request Form*.
2. You can seek the support or endorsement of MCUUF for a social action initiative in which you are significantly involved. The CATF will consider your proposal/request, requesting additional information as needed, and will bring it to the MCUUF Board for consideration as needed.
How to do: Email us the activity/project information and your specific request on the *Community Action Request Form*.

Please note - MCUUF does not have dedicated staff to initiate or run social action projects. Any proposal brought to MCUUF for support, endorsement, or other action must be driven by the volunteer effort of one or more members of the Fellowship.

For more info: www.mcuuf.org/CommunityAction

Have an item to submit? catf.mcuuf@gmail.com

ONGOING PROGRAMS

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

Women's Awareness Circle meets in the odd numbered months, alternating between private homes in Oregon and Washington. It is intended for all MCUUF women, and newcomers are particularly welcome. The monthly meetings are from 7:00-8:30 and are publicized in the month's newsletter. The meetings include a brief check-in of about 2 minutes per person followed by discussion of a theme or question.

FROM THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST DISTRICT AND THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

WhaleCoast Alaska 2012

Have you always dreamed of visiting Alaska? Are you curious about the lifestyles of Alaskan UUs? Do you enjoy getting to know your fellow travelers? If so, WhaleCoast Alaska 2012 is for you! Four Alaskan UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural and spiritual program this summer as we celebrate our 15th year! See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Sitka with friendly homestays and unique tour activities. See wildlife, including moose, bear, whales, bald eagles, seals, and caribou. Visit Denali National Park. Experience Native Alaskan culture. Enjoy all that our beautiful state has to offer. Programs led by Dave Frey, member of the farthest north UU congregation. To find out more about your Alaskan trip of a lifetime, visit www.WhaleCoastAK.org, email dfrey@whalecoastak.org, or call [907-322-4966](tel:907-322-4966). We would love to share our Alaska with you!

Training Opportunities through the PNWD!

- The first addresses a topic district staff are constantly asked about – stewardship. Plan to be in Eugene, OR on January 21 for **Meaningful Stewardship and Joyful Giving** to learn how to breathe new life into your congregation's stewardship. Whether you are brand new to the stewardship process or just need some fresh ideas, this is for you. Cost is only \$100 for your entire congregational team, and lunch is provided. Your congregational team's registration will be by board president (or designee) to the district office by January 13. (This workshop will also be presented in Olympia, WA on March 10.)
- A **Youth Chaplain Training** is being offered January 27-29 in Edmonds, WA. Chaplain training focuses on communication skills, working as a team, understanding confidentiality, using worship materials, and other vital skills. If you are a high school student or an adult (25 or older) and want to support conferees at youth events as a chaplain, plan to attend this training event. Attendees will also be eligible to apply to the District Chaplaincy Team. Registration is available online.
- February 25 brings another day-long event directed to congregational teams. Come learn about faith-based resources for congregational social change at **Social Change as Religious Vocation: The Fruits of the Radical Spirit**. Cost is only \$100 for your entire congregational team, and lunch is provided. Your congregational team's registration will be by board president (or designee) to the district office by February 17.
- We are offering a dozen webinars during just the first two months of the year! (Webinars bring participants together in a virtual classroom using conference call and website technology.) The lineup of **Winter Webinars** includes Youth Advisor Coaching, Policy Governance, Congregational Safety, Lay Ministry, and other popular topics. Each webinar is only \$15. Registration is available online.

You can easily access each of these events via the Quick Links on our front page: www.pnwd.org.

OTHER IMPORTANT STUFF

The Columbia Gorge Orchestra Association presents two concerts, Musical Magic, Memories and Memorials, on Sunday, December 4th at 2 PM and Monday, December 5th at 7 PM in the HRVHS Bowe Theater, featuring five centuries of eclectic choral music performed by VOCI Choir and Notables Ensemble. VOCI Choir is an adult mixed choral ensemble directed by Mark Steighner and sponsored by the Columbia Gorge Orchestra Association. The Notables is a small select vocal ensemble from Hood River Valley High School that performs a wide variety of music, from Renaissance sacred music to collegiate a cappella jazz and pop. Suggested donation is \$10 per individual or family. Don't miss this opportunity to experience and support local development and performance of classical music.

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