

MCUUF NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2015

LEADERSHIP LETTER

*Oh, to love what is lovely, and will not last!
What a task
to ask*

*of anything, or anyone,
yet it is ours,
and not by the century or the
year, but by the hours.*

-Mary Oliver, *Snow Geese*

I've started keeping poetry on my phone. Reading for a few minutes feels like landing on a tiny bobbing lily pad between the solid shores of daily routine.

Well, I'm not keeping poems, actually, since the books are borrowed from the county library two weeks at a time. That helps with another component of my exercise, practicing non-attachment to the words and the process. No archiving, no keeping on the bedside table until they're all fully read, no sitting on the crowded bookshelf for the "someday" they'll be needed. Thoroughness is one of my gifts, but it becomes a problem when everything in one's life must be done completely and with focus.

Got a few down moments? Just woke up? Read a poem. Book gone now, expired and returned to the ether? Pick another at random and read some more.

It's easy for me to see life as a journey from here to there across solid ground. Hosting poetry reminds me that life-like-a-journey is only one of many tales that live side-by-side. Life is also like an ocean, and I'm more patient and gentle with myself and others when I hold that in mind. The poetry reminds me. The tide of words flows in and the tide of words flows out, and I touch some in their passing.

In faith,

Kristen Dillon
Board President

FROM OUR MINISTER

Spring break typically marks a time for fun and frolic. As I gaze up at our nearby sentinels, Mt. Hood and Mt. Adams, I think of the times I've spent skiing or hiking in those mountains on spring breaks in my past. I've noticed a sharp increase in the traffic in downtown Hood River and White Salmon now that spring break is here.

On spring break 50 years ago, the newspapers weren't full of the usual stories of getaway destinations or college student revelries and pranks. The papers were covering stories

about the rising tide of violence in Alabama as people from all across the nation gathered in pursuit of voting and civil rights for black Americans.

Viola Liuzzo was one of those people. This white, married mother of five from Detroit, an active Unitarian Universalist, had seen the reports about Bloody Sunday on March 7, 1965. The ranks of activists swelled to over 20,000 that day, and many people were brutally attacked. When the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., put out a call to come to Selma, Alabama and support the cause of civil rights, Viola Liuzzo heeded that call. She drove back home those who were too weak to complete another march from Montgomery to Selma. On March 25, 1965, while driving black civil rights worker LeRoy Moton to Selma, she was shot to death by four Ku Klux Klansmen. Moton lay bleeding and near death beside her.

A few weeks later, after the “Turnaround Tuesday” march on February 26, 1965, Unitarian Universalist minister Rev. James Reeb of Boston was badly beaten by a group of Klansmen. He was among many clergy who traveled to Alabama to work for black civil rights. He expired a few days later in a local hospital. The first white people to die in the civil rights movement were Unitarian Universalists.

As I look back on these martyrs of our faith, I wonder what moves us so strongly that we would place ourselves in danger? What motivates us enough that we would put our children into the care of relatives so that we might work for justice? What call from within or beyond stirs us such that we cannot ignore it? And to ignore it would mean that our lives were lived in vain.

Perhaps this is why we became involved in this religious community. Lives of meaning and purpose are created here, with the help of each other and our dear Unitarian Universalist faith. Deep inside we know the path to healing and wholeness begins when we open ourselves to a love that is greater than any one of us alone.

As we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the marches in Selma, may the transformative power of a love that knows no bounds fill our hearts—and move us to make compassion and justice present in our daily lives and the world around us.

In faith and fellowship,

Rev. Judy

SUNDAY SERVICES

April 5: “Radical Generosity”—Music Croo (Paul B, Theresa N, Rachel M., and Rod K) will present a discussion in words and song of this exciting idea.

April 12: “Holy Non Sequitur, Batman!”—Rev. Judy Zimmerman. Do we need to believe in a personal God in order to pray? Why do we pray when we’re in need? How might prayer work? Might Batman’s sidekick have been praying, though he was unaware? This morning, Rev. Judy will help us explore some of the faces and functions of prayer.

April 19: “Everybody Needs a Rock,” Rev. Judy Zimmerman. The planet we call home has been experiencing unprecedented climate change. Building a movement to

respond to this crisis is the biggest challenge humanity has ever faced. In this service commemorating the Unitarian Universalist Association's Climate Justice Month, we open our UU backpack in search of tools to build this movement—and one of those tools is a rock.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Save the Dates:

This year's congregational meeting will be immediately after worship on **Sunday, May 17**, likely starting around 11:15 a.m. An agenda will be approved and published by our Board of Trustees in early April.

MCUUF will be hosting a family fun night starting at 5 p.m. on **May 16**. We will meet downstairs at the Rockford Grange. Bring the whole family.

My Experience as UU Youth by Martha N.

I have had a truly amazing experience with the Pacific Northwest District UU Youth Programming during my time in high school. There are so many incredible and life-changing opportunities for youth in our district; we are very lucky to have this program! Through participating in it, I was able to come into myself as a leader and as a spiritual member of a beautiful community, build lasting friendships, and experience UUism in a very engaging way.

Youth CONs (conferences) happen every fall and spring; these are weekend long retreats covering a range of topics. I loved attending them because of the powerful atmosphere of intentional community and "radical inclusivity." Through them, I met some of my closest friends and was offered ways to express myself in leadership. This was incredibly valuable experience, and I use skills I learned in the PNWD Youth Community every day. I was continually touched and inspired by those around me and was later able to give back to the community in meaningful ways. I had the opportunity as well to participate in the youth programs of District Assembly.

My sophomore year I attended Goldmine Leadership School, which really changed the way I look at myself as a leader and empowered me to all the things I am capable of in my community. I would not have the level of self-confidence I do today without this experience. In my senior year I also had the incredible opportunity to attend a chaplain training program. I was incredibly inspired and empowered by this as well. Being a chaplain is very important to me and a big part of my identity now. I am currently studying human services and am considering a career in counseling. This passion and ambition comes from my experience as a youth chaplain.

I highly recommend that our youth attend CONs and get involved in the youth community of the PNWD. I am very grateful for the experiences I have had and the love that surrounds me now from the youth community. Without it, I would not be who I am or where I am.

-- Martha is away in Massachusetts completing her first year in college. She is the daughter of Peggy and Albert N.

It's Spring—Let's celebrate with Circle Suppers!

Mark your calendars now for the next round of Circle Suppers, which begins the evening of **Saturday, May 2**. Circle suppers are small potluck dinners, held in members' homes, that give MCUUF members and friends a chance to socialize and converse in a

relaxed setting. New people and visitors are especially welcome, and at least one of the dinners will be “family friendly.” If you would like to attend this round of dinners (either as a guest or a host), please e-mail Elaine C. She will also have sign-up sheets available in church for a few weeks before the suppers.

Needed for upcoming Youth Service: Our teens are looking to borrow a standing drum and cymbals April 24-26. Please notify a teen or Alicia B. if you could lend these items.

The next Women’s Awareness Circle will meet in the home of Jodie H. on Friday, April 24, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. This will be a meeting for open sharing. Please bring one reading to share. All UU women are welcome. Please RSVP to Debbie O.

Care Team

MCUUF strives to be a community that supports each other. If you or someone you know in the fellowship has a need because of a loss, illness, or other difficulty, please notify Rev. Judy or any other member of our Care Team: Jane F, Ray K, Shelley B, Tom P, or Tom K. The team will do its best to organize respectful and appropriate help for the situation.

MCUUF COMMUNITY ACTION

National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI). The next two meetings of the newly formed Columbia Gorge chapter will be on Monday, April 6, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Mid-Columbia Fire and Rescue Station, 1400 W. 8th Street, The Dalles, and on Saturday, April 18, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at the Hood River Library. NAMI offers support, education, and advocacy for families, friends, parents of children, and adults affected by mental illness. Washington and Oregon residents welcome. For more information contact Rev. Judy.

Immigration Reform and Sen. Jeff Merkley, April 6: Immigration reform will be one of the topics discussed at a town hall meeting held by U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley at 6 p.m. Monday, April 6, in the Hood River Middle School cafeteria (not the auditorium). This is an important issue to the Building Community Connections Committee of Gorge Ecumenical Ministries, of which MCUUF is a member. Rev. Judy and Tom Kaser are MCUUF's representatives on the committee, which aims to build bridges between Hood River's Latino and Anglo communities.

Join: Want to help on the Community Action committee? Have a CA project you want to lead? Contact Bonnie N.

MCUUF

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