

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Summertime is playtime, a time when we find ourselves outdoors soaking up the sunshine and enjoying our favorite outdoor activities, be they gardening, evening strolls, star gazing, camping, hiking, biking, paddling, sailing, or kiting. Boy, are we lucky to have so many fabulously fun things to choose from here in the Gorge! The last school days are a distant memory, and the upcoming school year isn't even a blip on the radar. It is a time to get away and vacation, visit family, or explore a new destination.

There is a fair bit of research about the importance of leisure and play, particularly in childhood development, but it is also being recognized more and more as a fundamental part of health for adults. In addition to being an integral piece of life balance, leisure activities can also promote civic engagement and are important in creating peer-to-peer and peer-to-community relationships. The social context of play connects those positive human things to each other and to our environment. Play is so important, and we who live in the Gorge are really good at playing!

Summer is also the time when attendance each Sunday is notably low. Our minister herself has spent July taking a well-deserved vacation. It has been a rare Sunday that I have made it to service this summer, but when I have been there I found the experience sweet and intimate. I don't find the small numbers at Sunday service discouraging in the least; in fact, find it heartening to know that so many of us are out playing—taking that time to engage in the activities that nurture our spirit.

So as we go into this last month of summer soak it all up and play your heart out! I look forward to hearing all about your adventures when we see each other next.

In faith,
Stacey Campbell
Board President

FROM OUR MINISTER

The so-called dog days of August will be forever different for me. Instead of marking the waning days of summer with some of our hottest days and dry, brown grass, August has become sweet like the ripening pears that dot the orchards surrounding our Gorge home. August now commemorates the start of our shared ministry. We have passed my first anniversary. And oh, what a wonderful year it has been.

This congregation is filled with warmth and a caring spirit. I've seen you reach out and help one another countless times. We are blessed to have a dedicated

Care Team as we work together to build the shelter of each other. Sunday worship continues to feed our spiritual hungers, thanks to a talented team of celebrants and accompanists. What a joy it has been to craft worship with them. Our hospitality volunteers insure that coffee hour after Sunday service is filled with tasty treats and drinks. Under the direction of Alicia Bhatti, our Religious Education staff and volunteers create space where our children and youth can grow spiritually and feel part of a wider web of love and care. Our Membership Team has matured and blossomed this past year in so many ways, ensuring that members, friends, and visitors feel connected to this dynamic faith community. In the interfaith and community outreach work that I've done this past year, I've heard many exclaim, "UUs are everywhere!" There's a clear sense that MCUUF members and friends are outward reaching, involved supporters of their wider community. Our volunteer Board of Trustees and Administrator Brad Amer have worked diligently, often behind the scenes, to keep the wheels of this dear fellowship running smoothly. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Many unsung heroes help this fellowship to thrive. This fellowship is living proof of the power that flows when people join together in shared purpose, working towards the common good.

We are leaders. We are movers. We are learners. We are a spirited, warm-hearted, creative, justice-seeking people with a bright future. That future is taking shape via our new rental agreement with the Rockford Grange. The lower level of the Grange is available for four hours each week now. Please keep this facility in mind as you schedule meetings and gatherings. Soon small group ministry and classes will be taking place in the Grange, too. We thank the Board of Trustees and Rockford Grange leadership for this new agreement.

Our new rental agreement means that I'll be holding regular office hours at the Grange. These are times to just drop by and visit. You'll find me upstairs in the "blue room" by the water fountain on **Tuesdays from 10 to 11 a.m.** and **Wednesdays from 4 to 5 p.m.** You can contact me to set another time, too. I also accept Facebook friend requests from this community. Knowing you and being with you is one of the great joys of my ministry.

In love and service,

Rev. Judy

SUNDAY SERVICES

August 9: Kevin Lawson: "Resting in the River" – What are the lessons of the pebble as it rests in the bottom of the river? Beauty and Grace are reflected in the balance of being and non-being. Kevin Lawson will speak on the teachings of Thich Nhat Hahn and the mindfulness we can bring to our summer rest and relaxation.

August 16: TBA

August 23: *Sudanto from the Pacific Hermitage* in White Salmon will speak to us about Loving Kindness.

August 30: Rev. Judy Zimmerman and MCUUF Song Leaders: “Joy of Singing Sunday” Let's fill our hearts with song as we experience favorite songs from our hymnals in new ways. MCUUF members and friends will take turns leading us in singing. This is a *multi-generational service* where children, youth and adults worship together. Helen Krehbiel will provide accompaniment on piano.

REFLECTIONS ON GENERAL ASSEMBLY

From Peggy N.

I write this article in grateful appreciation for the space in my heart that is filled by MCUUF and the community that is our fellowship. I joined our fellowship eight years ago with the hope that my children could learn about world religions and discover their own spiritual journeys within the safety of this liberal faith. While I joined for my kids, I've stayed for myself. I could not imagine eight years ago how important the UU community would become to me.

Pam Z-M and I had the honor of representing MCUUF at the UU's District Assembly in June. In addition to presenting amazing sermons, speakers and workshops, and heart-filled music, GA is a business meeting. UU delegates from across the county hear reports on UU initiatives and study, debate, and vote on a baffling array of topics, including governance and bylaw changes, “statements of conscience” on reproductive justice, an “action of immediate witness” on climate change, and much more.

GA coincided with momentous changes in our country on issues of importance to many (most?) UUs. Just prior to GA, Pope Francis issued an encyclical detailing climate change as a moral obligation. The Supreme Court upheld universal health care. Just a week later, our first African-American president gave an incredible eulogy during a service honoring those killed in the horrendous hate crime in Charleston and passionately called on Americans to do more to end racial discrimination.

Of the many powerful moments at GA, one of the most moving was when the regular business meeting was spontaneously converted to a massive spontaneous celebration at the announcement of the Supreme Court's decision legalizing gay marriage. UUA President, Rev. Peter Morales called to the stage those personally affected (which was hundreds) and spoke of the UU's 20 years of work on this issue. This picture from my cell phone does not do justice to the moment that preceded a rousing rendition of the UU hymn “*Standing on the Side of Love.*”



I enjoyed sharing GA with Pam (one of MCUUF's founders). Getting to know her better was just as fun as enjoying the powerful energy of a gathering of 4,500 UUs. I thank MCUUF for the opportunity to participate in GA and for supporting me on my spiritual journey.

From Pam Z-M

I, too, was thrilled and honored to represent our MCUUF at the General Assembly. I was a little overwhelmed by all that was going on and felt that it was important to come away with something that would directly enhance or affect our fellowship. I think those things will "come out" as needed. One of the best workshops that I attended, just because it sounded interesting, was on classism in our churches. When I got there I felt a bit guilty for not attending something specifically for our fellowship, but I quickly learned that it spoke to us, everybody else, and probably everything we do in our lives.

I was boggled by all the initiatives and voting as well as fascinated by the people who appear to be there primarily just for that! Thank goodness for them! I have never been to an old-fashioned revival, but I think I now have a tolerant understanding of it. Being there with 4500 other UUs felt very powerful, knowing that our seven principles were in action. I was amazed at the diversity in every way, including spiritual behaviors such as arm-waving, "hallelujahs" and "amens." It *all* seemed right to me and helped me to see and accept even more of my spiritual past in a small-town UCC church. A minister from Tulsa, OK, spoke of incorporating disenchanted members of a Pentecostal church into theirs. The music was phenomenal, and it was such fun to see our Dustin Hunley, who taught music in White Salmon, in action playing keyboards for the entire event.

A really special moment after the impromptu celebration on Friday morning was with Bruce Knotts, the UU representative to the United Nations. He was

standing alone, almost in a daze. Peggy's daughter Eliza and I introduced ourselves. He proudly showed us a picture of his husband in NYC and brought the importance of this decision front and center.

I LOVED the t-shirts as well as snuggling up in a room with Peggy and three young adults, who all had lively thoughts on the day. Whew. Thank you.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Religious Education Volunteers Needed.

September is fast approaching, and our RE program is looking for volunteers for both our teen program and our children's program. We are looking for two adults for both groups. You need not be a parent or a teacher, but we ask you have RE in your heart and the time to commit to one Sunday a month. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering, please contact Alicia B.

Snack sign up for RE: We are looking for parents to help with bringing snack in for our youngest RE class. We are looking for a once a month donation of healthy minded snacks that can be eaten after Sunday lessons. If you are able to help, please contact Alicia B.

The Women's Awareness Circle will take a summer break and resume meeting on Friday, September 25, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. It will continue to be graciously hosted by Jodie H. For questions, please call 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 Anita J. The team will do its best to organize respectful and appropriate help for our members and friends who need it.

MCUUF COMMUNITY ACTION

Anytime—Join MCUUF’s FISH produce gardening team! The new FISH food bank facility on Tucker Road now has large gardens to provide fresh produce for FISH clients. All of the gardening is by volunteer effort, so help is always needed. You could come regularly or for one-time work days scattered throughout the season. Contact Bonnie N.

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

MCUUF

Curious about what’s happening, when, and where? Go to www.mcuuf.org

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