



MCUUF NEWSLETTER—April 2016

The next meeting of the MCUUF Board will be 6 p.m. Thursday April 16 at the Dan and Lori's home. All are welcome to attend.

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Happy Spring! All this sunshine is pulling me outdoors, so I will make this short and sweet. The board is focused on preparations for the upcoming annual congregational meeting. Now that the pledge drive has wrapped up, we are able to set the budget to present to the fellowship for approval. The other very important piece of the annual meeting is voting for new board members. Our nominating committee is hard at work finding members to serve on the board for next term. You may have been approached already or may be approached soon, and I urge you to consider this request carefully before answering. The time commitment is minimal, really just a few hours a month, and the experience is well worth that time. I am now in my third year on the board and I feel that I have gained a valuable understanding of our fellowship, its members, its operations, and its connection to the greater UU faith. There are certainly many ways to be involved in our fellowship, but service on the board is unique. I encourage you to consider the request to serve, and I hope to see you at the first 2016-2017 board meeting in July!

In faith,
Stacey C.
President, Board of Trustees

THE MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Here in the higher elevations of the upper Hood River Valley, daffodils' sunny faces have finally appeared within this last week. Peonies, chives, and rhubarb are growing taller after being cut back last year. Cherry and pear trees are just about to blossom. The joy of springtime and creation is in the air.

We were blessed when some of our young people helped bring the story *Hope for the Flowers* to life on Easter Sunday. We don't think of parenting and caring for the next generation as an act of creation. It's one thing to imagine the future. It's another to create that future and help make it happen, as parents and families do every day.

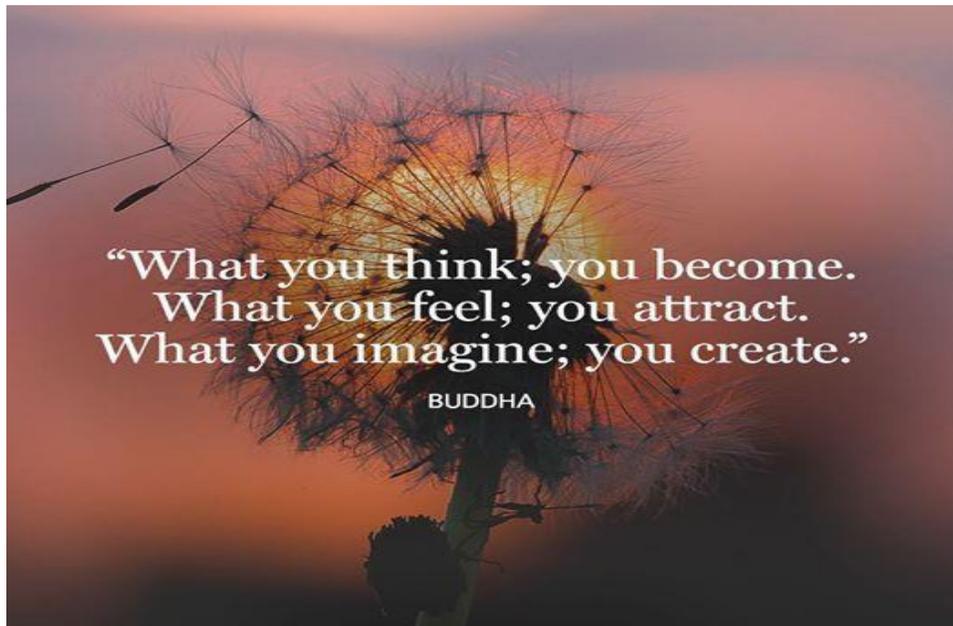
Parenting is among the most spiritually daunting undertakings we can ever do. Our children and youth learn more about what it is to be human from observing their parents and family in the myriad moments of daily life—moments whose impact far outweighs all the planned activities of family life. Parenting off the cuff, when we're least aware, is the rule, rather than the exception. And that's where spiritual life enters in. A prayer life, meditation, or other contemplative practice offers a means to examine and understand the deeper layers of who we are. These are what leap out when our child stops us to ask for something when we're rushing about, all stressed in the morning getting ready for work and school. These deeper recesses are what express themselves when we're dog-tired after a long day, and we're tempted to lull out and ignore the bickering upstairs or to ease off on enforcing screen-time rules.

Parenting is far more than ensuring that our children reach adulthood. In earlier generations, when public health and life expectancy were diminished, living long enough to become an adult was quite an achievement. Parents must do so much more today. Part of our covenant with one another in this fellowship, and in our wider Unitarian Universalist movement, is to encourage and promote one another's spiritual

growth. And that's why I'm excited about something new happening in this congregation: *Family Fourth Fridays*.

This is an opportunity to form a wider circle of caring to support parents and families in their work of creating our next generation and to say "yes!" to being part of the proverbial village that it takes to raise children. We hope that parents will feel empowered to share and live their Unitarian Universalist faith at home and that they will grow as families and in community. Family to family. We will have activities for youth, and activities for children. Food, fun and fellowship will abound! Oh, what will we create! You'll read more about Family Fourth Fridays later in our newsletter. See you at our first Family Fourth Friday—if not before.

Love,
Rev. Judy



Questions to Live With—Creation

What are you building, painting, composing or planting with your life? ("All the arts we practice are apprenticeship. The big art is our life." --M.C. Richards)

When was the last time you created (or helped create) something that will outlive you?

What if you started every day with a creative act?

How do your immediate world and people closest to you need beauty?

What is preventing you from creating what you've envisioned in your imagination?

What would a social justice movement or action look like was guided by the joy that comes from creation?

SUNDAY SERVICES Worship Theme: Creation

April 10: "Accepting All Offers," Rev. Judy Zimmerman. In its traditional sense, grace has meant free and unmerited divine assistance. Does this mean grace is like an unearned increase in the credit line on a cosmic credit card? And for humanists, atheists, and agnostics, does grace even have a place in spiritual life? Join us as we explore some of the meanings of grace.

April 17: Local rabbi Rob Abramovitz speaks to us about Passover.

On Sunday, April 17th, the Fire Department's Blossom Day Pancake Breakfast will take place (from 8 to 11 a.m.). So will the Grange's Plant Sale (north side of the building, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.). All cars will be parked together, but plan on a crowd. Of course, all UU's are welcome to come early for breakfast.

April 24: "Working the Shelter" Our Shelter team reflects on the service and wonder of this community service.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Family Fourth Friday

Come join us at 5:30 p.m. Friday, April 29, at the Grange for our very first Family Fourth Friday. Let your kids run free-range at the Grange! We will plan on meeting every fourth Friday of the month (this one however, is on the fifth) for a family-centered evening full of community and support. Bring your kids and a dish to share for a pot luck dinner, and be ready to have a ton of fun with other UU families in a casual family setting. Contact Mandi Rae P. with any questions or if you can contribute in any way.

MCUUF Annual Congregational Meeting. The annual meeting of the members of the Mid-Columbia Unitarian Universalist Fellowship will be on **Sunday, May 15, at 11:15 a.m.**, immediately after worship. Our agenda will include election of officers, election of the nominating committee, and adoption of the 2016-17 budget. As required by our bylaws, an official announcement and full agenda will be circulated in April.

Additionally, we are planning on holding town hall-style informational meetings following the services of **Sunday, May 1, and Sunday, May 8**. These times are intended to answer any questions members may have in regard to the upcoming meeting agenda items.

The Women's Awareness Circle will meet Friday, April 8, from 4-5:30 p.m. at the home of Jodie H. Our friend Jane F. will share her travel experiences with us. 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: Shelley B, Aera A, or Tom P. The team will do its best to organize respectful and appropriate help for our members and friends who need it.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

New gleaning project seeking donations: Columbia Gorge Gleaning, operating under Gorge Grown, will improve access to fresh local produce by harvesting farm surplus and donating it to local organizations serving low-income, hungry, and marginalized Gorge residents. The project brings together growers, gleaners, food banks, and consumers. Your donation will help provide sufficient and nutritious food to those in need. Donate downstairs after service on Sundays or send a check made out to Gorge Grown (with "Columbia Gorge Gleaning" in the memo line) to Theresa N.

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



NEW MEMBER PROFILE – Gail A.

Like many UUs, Gail was not raised a UU. She was raised Catholic in an Italian parish on Chicago's south side. "It was a warm, endearing religious community; it even had a children's mass," she recalls. "But as a young girl I began having doubts and differences. We weren't allowed to visit other churches, and I began lying in confession. I felt, 'This guy doesn't need to know what I'm thinking.'"

Her alienation continued when her family moved to Garden Grove, CA, and the parish there "seemed mostly interested in raising money." Meanwhile, many social changes were taking place in the country. Gail married, and when the first of her three sons was born she set about finding a church in which she and her family could feel "at home." She found it in the Long Beach Unitarian Church, whose minister was "very humanistic, very well liked, and gave great sermons," she recalls. She was a member there for most of the 70s.

During that time she divorced, remarried, and in 1979 she and her second husband John moved to Whidbey Island, WA, where they helped start the island's first Unitarian church, which thrives today. She also began a 20-year career teaching English at Oak Harbor High School, an hour's drive from where she and John lived at the other end of the island.

John died in 2006, and three years later Gail decided to try Internet dating on Match.com, where she met a widower in White Salmon, WA, named Frank S. They liked each other's profiles, and three years ago they married, settling in a new house just outside of White Salmon, where they live today.

Gail remembers her 30 years on Whidbey Island with fondness. "Like White Salmon, it was a rural community, and it has a thriving arts community, even more so than here," she says. "The Gorge, by contrast, is more about nature; people here are more involved in the outdoors."

And the Gorge has the Mid-Columbia Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, which she loves “for its sense of community, its acceptance of differences, its commitment to social justice, and its curiosity about everything. “I feel I fit right in.”



MCUUF

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The deadline for inclusion in the weekly eNews is midnight Monday. The deadline for inclusion in the monthly newsletter (which comes out on the first Wednesday of the month) is midnight on the last Monday of the month. Please send your announcements to Brad A. at mcuuf1@gmail.com