



Mid-Columbia Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

We are a welcoming community

MCUUF NEWSLETTER–August 2016

The MCUUF Board will be having its annual retreat on August 24. There will be no regular Board meeting.

THE MINISTER’S MESSAGE

In the conclusion of the original version of the film *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy wants to leave the Emerald City and go back home to Kansas. Following the instructions of Glinda, the Witch of the North, Dorothy clicks the heels of her ruby slippers three times and murmurs her wish. Poof! And in the next instant, she awakens in her bed back home.

Images of Dorothy occupied my mind more than I would have liked when I was on retreat last month, as feelings of restlessness arose. The group of us on retreat followed the same routine as the nuns and monks who lived at the abbey year round. Couldn’t I just click my heels and wish myself back home—and be in comfort, without the restrictions we were following?

I wondered about the monastics around me. I knew I’d leave this schedule and constraints in a week. The monastics lived daily with these restrictions—and the dreaded duo of discipline and devotion.

Those are tough nuts to crack for Unitarian Universalists. We see this in the database of worship resources at the Unitarian Universalist Association, where there are oodles of search tags to find worship materials—yet no tags exist for “devotion” or “discipline.” Those words are missing from our UU vocabulary.

The nut that really needed cracking was my attitude. I was focusing on all I thought I was missing, confusing discipline and devotion with punishment. No coffee. No sleeping in. No talking. Hurumph!

No musician or athlete has ever gotten better by simply wishing that improvement would happen, or persisting in the belief that it would come easy. They train and practice—sometimes when they don’t want to. And then one day they notice they’ve taken steps forward. The same goes for those who worked for women’s suffrage, civil rights, marriage equality and other justice movements. Those undertakings were marathons, possible only with discipline and devotion.

My attitude at retreat shifted towards the better when I started thinking of the monks and nuns whose discipline and devotion made it possible for our retreat to even happen: monastics who persisted in practice for centuries, passing teachings from one generation to the next. I thought of Unitarian minister and abolitionist Theodore Parker, who continued to offer fugitive slaves safe passage, writing sermons with a pistol in his desk drawer for their protection.

When we practice discipline and devotion, we align ourselves with something greater. With that more expansive view, “deprivations” can be seen as actions that form part of a larger fabric knit across time and space. Everyday worries become lighter. Practice becomes joyful. Who needs ruby slippers? Discipline and devotion can bring us home—to our true nature and deepest, best selves.

With love, Rev. Judy



BOARD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

After a two-week R&R, in which I had much time for reflection, I retain a wonderful fullness of heart and spirit. Sprawling on the grass in front of our home with Dan and Shadow, I feel so happy to be here, with my family, in this beautiful place. We've chosen so well our place of retirement. I am so grateful for our supportive friends and UU family. Love and hugs to all!

And now for an abrupt switch to the less emotion-filled aspects of life as a temporary board president (Yes! Break that glass ceiling—oh no, wait, that's old news for the UU's—thankfully). I ask for your valued input as we head into our Board of Trustees retreat on August 24. We will be discussing priorities and path forward for our UU congregation. We appreciate any input that you have to complement this discussion. Please contact me or any of the board members (contact info at the bottom of the newsletter) with your thoughts. And oh yes, love and hugs to all!

Lori G., Acting Board President

SUNDAY SERVICES

August 7: Question Box, Rev. Judy Zimmerman. Do you have a question about Unitarian Universalism? A theological or ethical curiosity—or one about a current event? Your minister's responses will be the sermon in this service. If you already know your question, please send it to jzimmerman@uuma.org.

“Even to question, truly is an answer.”

--#354, Singing the Living Tradition.

Conversation Circle, August 7. Join us after coffee time next Sunday from 11:45-1:00 as we share what concerns us about the current national political and cultural climate, what is helping us, what we need, and how we see this affecting us here in the Columbia River Gorge. For more information, contact Rev. Judy at jzimmerman@uuma.org

August 14: Poetry and Music featuring Bob S.'s piano.

August 21: “Gathering Sparks,” Rev. Judy Zimmerman. Given the presidential race, mass shootings, and rising economic inequality, it seems like the world is splitting wide open. What are we to do to keep our own heads on straight? How might gathering sparks help?

August 28: “Where can UUs turn in times of trouble?”—Elaine C.

In the face of life's inevitable travails, many Christians rely on a loving God to watch over them and hold out hope for a better life in the hereafter. But most of us UUs find it hard to accept these conventional sources of solace. Where, then, can we turn when times get rough? Join Elaine for a reflection on this important but little-discussed issue.

Working at the Children's Village in Kharang, India

By Martha N.

This summer I had the incredible opportunity to intern for the Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice, and I received a placement at the Annie Margaret Barr Children's Village in Kharang, India. Situated in the picturesque East Khasi Hills above Shillong, the capital of the Northeastern province of Meghalaya, due north of Bangladesh, the Children's Village is a group home and orphanage for children ages 7 to 17. It was founded by the British Unitarian minister Annie Margaret Barr. Reverend Barr lived with the Khasi people for most of her life and aided with coordinating funds and plans to open a Rural Dispensary Center, a local village school, and the Children's Village. Upon her death, the projects were adopted by the community and sustained by local Unitarian congregations and their partner churches in the United States and United Kingdom.



Before arriving in India, I never realized that Unitarianism existed beyond the US and UK. Somehow it had never come to my attention that there are large communities of UUs in India, the Philippines, South Africa, and Romania, among other countries. My heart started beating quicker when I saw the chalice symbol imprinted on a church near my residence in India, and over time, visiting congregations and meeting Khasi UUs, I came to realize that no matter where you go in the world, where there is a chalice, there will also be loving hearts, open hands, and a community to receive and accept you. Yes, there are vast cultural and practical differences between American and Indian UUs but our similarities, commitment to social justice, and belief that all humans are worthy, etc., are far greater.

Working at the Children's Village was powerful, challenging, and transformative. Most of my duties included aiding with daily operations such as cooking, cleaning, tutoring, and play. During the days I taught English and Math at the local school to grades 5-10. I grew to love the kids I worked with, and I greatly enjoyed the cultural exchange we shared. They would teach me things about Khasi culture and ask me questions about my culture. They showed me joy, positivity, and humor in the face of darkness, and the true resilience of the human spirit. For that I am deeply grateful.



My passion and small expertise lies in reproductive justice and women's health. Upon learning this, AMBCV gave me the opportunity to conduct health workshops with the girls at the Children's Village. I put together an age-based curriculum, and the staff reviewed it for cultural competency. I held a sexual and reproductive health workshop for the older girls and a puberty and coming-of-age workshop for the younger girls. It was a very positive experience and I appreciated the support from the staff and the conversations we had about how the material differed from culture to culture. Their patience and willingness uplifted me, and I gained a lot from them in building a community of learning together.

Unitarian Universalism in the Khasi Hills is distinct from how I have experienced UUism in the US; however, it is alike in the way that it has touched my spirit and changed my life. The congregation I attended in Meghalaya reminded my strongly of the beautiful congregation I grew up in: a small group of caring citizens committed to creating a space for joy and strength to stand for the values they believed in and work on the issues they see in their community. MCUFF is the place I come, and it is deeply heartening to know that across the oceans, there is another place where a candle is lit, joys and concerns are shared, hymns are sung, and people are held in a radical, revolutionary love that surpasses time and culture.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hood River Warming Shelter Needs a Home! Our unhoused neighbors are counting on us to have a place to stay when winter hits in earnest in mid-November. We don't have a facility to rent yet. All of MCUFF's eyes and ears are needed to find a shelter location for this season a.s.a.p. Please contact Fran F, MCUFF's representative to the shelter Steering Committee or Rev. Judy if you have any leads.

August Family Fourth Friday

Join us for family fun, food and fellowship as we gather for Family Fourth Fridays! We have been having a blast this summer getting to know each other and support each other's families. This month we will continue our tradition at the Rockford Grange on **August 26th at 5:30**. Dinner will be provided and all members of our UU family are invited, from newborn to great-grand parents. We hope you will come and play with us! Please contact Mandi Rae with any questions.

Volunteers needed to work at the FISH Food Bank. MCUFF will be staffing the food bank on: Monday, Aug 8, 3:30 to 5 p.m.; Wednesday, Aug 10, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.; and Friday, Aug. 12, 3:30 to 5 p.m. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Christy B.

Opportunities for involvement are suggested to help new friends find a way to become more involved in our Mid-Columbia Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MCUFF). Each week a different opportunity will be highlighted. Please ask Debbie O. or Steve C. for contact information or look in the blue booklet, which has all of the activities and is available at the visitor table for more information.

This week's opportunity:

The Hospitality Team hosts refreshments after Sunday services.

Pledges: As we start the new fiscal year, please remember to write "Pledge" on the checks that are put in the offering basket. Checks without this designation will be included in the "plate" and will be passed on to help meet needs we identify in our communities.

Care Team

MCUFF 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.

MCUUF

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

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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 Amer at mcuuf1@gmail.com