



## ***MCUUF NEWSLETTER—September 2016***

### ***THE MINISTER'S MESSAGE***

When I went out to water my kitchen garden this morning, I noticed a complete spider web glistening with dew between the woodpile and edge of one of the raised beds. It's been quite dry the last few weeks. Now that autumn is around the corner and kids are back in school, moist overnight air has made a return appearance, gifting me with a treasure.

Being part of religious community is another treasure. Mysterious substances in the spider's silk somehow hold the strands of the web together. What holds Unitarian Universalism and its congregations together? Ours is a non-creedal faith, where we do not share common beliefs about ultimate reality. We have chosen not to be joined by belief. Our seventh principle speaks of the "interdependent web of existence, of which we are a part." What connects us to one another in this congregation? And our congregation to the larger Unitarian Universalist Association to which we belong? What is our UU spider silk? It is *covenant*.

Covenant speaks of how relationships bind us to one another. We are not meant to live alone. Inmates held unjustly and unmercifully in solitary confinement suffer greatly. We need others in order to thrive—not just survive. Relationships of covenant have trust and mutual accountability. In her sermon during Sunday morning worship at General Assembly this year, the Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd preached about the sandpaper of (covenantal) relationships and how "it smooths the way for the sacred even as it rubs us." We become most fully human and our best selves within relationships of covenant.

This month during each worship service and in children's religious education we will explore the theme of ***Covenant***. At the end of the month, we'll have the first of many opportunities to reflect on our congregation's Covenant of Right Relations. This covenant offers a formal expression of this congregation's highest values and commitments. During the coming year we'll engage in a process to update our current covenant, which was adopted 2007.

This process begins with a workshop facilitated by the Rev. Millie Rochester, who has served congregations in Winnipeg, Canada, and in Florida and Chicago. Prior to entering our ministry, she was the director of religious education at the UU Congregation of Salem, OR. Please come to one of two sessions with Millie: **Friday, September 30**, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Rockford Grange or **Saturday, October 1**, from 9 a.m. to noon in the home of Kristen and Paul B. You'll be hearing more about these meetings from the Committee on Ministry: Elaine C, Tom K and Kimberly H. May these gatherings enrich our relationships, grow love, and inspire us in service to our wider community.

Yours in love, service, and relationship,  
Rev. Judy

## **BOARD PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Last Wednesday we had our annual board retreat. Our goal was to set priorities for the board and the congregation. We started our discussion on what we see as important to us as UU's, what we see as our congregational strengths, and what can we improve upon. Building on this, we developed these main areas upon which we wish to concentrate:

- Improve transparency, communication, and feedback
- Communicate social and environmental justice activities to the Fellowship—for awareness and opportunities for involvement
- Religious Education—getting more children and youth involved

The board will be reviewing each of these items in detail and work with committees, our staff, and the congregation to develop action plans and set timelines and responsibilities.

Thank you to those who provided input prior to our retreat. As always, if anyone has questions or comments, please feel free to contact me or any other member of the board.

Lori G., Acting Board President

### **Questions to Live By**

***What promises have you made to Life itself? To God? To your inner voice?***

***Has society ever broken its promise to you? How have you responded when you've witnessed society breaking its promises to others?***

***Some of us attempt to preempt heartbreak by leaving relationships before others have a chance to break their promises and our hearts. What is keeping you from the risk and pain of covenant?***

***What promises have you made to those who have gone before?***

***What promises have you made to those who will come after?***

### **SUNDAY SERVICES**

***This month's worship theme is "Covenant"***

***September 4: "Compassionate Community."*** Our own ***Kristen Dillon*** was the keynote speaker at this year's Gorge Ecumenical Ministries annual meeting. Come hear what Kristen had to say and what the fuss was all about.

***September 11: Homecoming and Water Communion; Rev. Judy Zimmerman.*** Let's welcome the beginning of our program year in this service that symbolizes the essence of being in a Unitarian Universalist congregation. Please bring a small amount of water that is special to you for

our Water Communion ceremony. Children, youth and adults will worship together. Nursery care will be available.

**September 18: From You I Receive, To You, I Give; Rev. Judy Zimmerman.** After his time living in Nazi Germany, Unitarian Universalist theologian James Luther Adams wondered what differences there were between himself and the people who remained silent as they watched a parade of Nazi party officials. What do Adams's observations tell us about the power of covenant?

**September 25: "Covenant and Community."** The Committee on Ministry shares ideas about the role of covenant in Unitarian Universalism and our congregation as we prepare to revisit our fellowship's Covenant of Right Relations the following weekend.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Covenant of Right Relations Workshops** on Friday, September 30, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Rockford Grange or Saturday October 1 from 9 a.m. to noon in the home of Kristen D and Paul B. Come and share your hopes for this religious community and shape its future. For more information, contact the Committee on Ministry: Kimberly H, Tom K or Elaine C.

**Telling Your Story: A Sermon Seminar.** Within each of us lie stories that are touchpoints of our spiritual lives. Within each of our lives wisdom and insight are found, as well as values that orient us towards what is important. In this workshop we will gather to develop tools to write from our lives and bring those stories into spoken word. This day of spiritual renewal is open to anyone in our congregation. Join us on **Saturday, October 15**, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Mt. Hood Town Hall 6575 Highway 35, Parkdale. Please RSVP so we can plan for materials and refreshments. – Rev. Judy

**Religious Education** MCUUF RE had an incredibly successful summer this season with some really wonderful speakers from both the fellowship and the community. We covered a wide range of topics such as personal interest as poetry and gaming, functional topics like first aid and even a lively session learning how to display the principles as a nonverbal theatrical presentation. We as a fellowship were incredibly lucky to play host to these guests and we thank them for taking the time to make our summer so warm!

September has arrived and with it a new year and new curriculum for the Youth, Elementary, and Pre-K. This year the pre-K and Elementary aged students will be mirroring the same themes as the adults. This month's theme is 'Covenant' where we will create our own and define for us the values we hope to hold ourselves to.

With the younger youth (7th-9th graders) we will be starting our OWL program. Bonnie N, Tom H, Rheva W, and myself will be co-facilitating this comprehensive sexual education curriculum which parallel not only our seven principles but also students have the opportunity to define and deepen their own values. This month we offer both our parents night for current and potential OWL students on Sunday September 11th from 7p to 830p and an overnight retreat on Saturday the 17th at 430pm until the end of service the following morning.

### **September 4th**

Pre-k and Elementary-What is a covenant? Rheva and Alicia

### **September 11th**

Water communion (all ages)

OWL-Parents night 7-830p

### **September 17th**

OWL-Overnight with Tom H. and Alicia (arrive at grange at 430p)

## September 18<sup>th</sup>

Pre-k and Elementary-Our covenant in action. Rheva and Alicia

## September 25<sup>th</sup>

Pre-k and Elementary-The seven principles. Alicia and Sullivan

OWL-examining values with Rheva and Bonnie

**September Family Fourth Friday.** Join us for family fun, food, and fellowship as we gather for Family Fourth Fridays! This month we will continue our tradition at the Rockford Grange

**September 23 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 P. with any questions.

**The Women's Awareness Circle** will meet Friday, September 9, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at the home of Jodie H. The word "faith" will be discussed. All UU women are welcome. Please RSVP to Debbie O.

**Opportunities for involvement** are suggested to help new friends find a way to become more involved in MCUUF. 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 available at the visitor table and has all of the activities. **This week's opportunity: Musicians are most welcome. Those who either play instruments or sing are encouraged to volunteer.**

**Oregon Unitarian Universalist Voices for Justice** (ORUUVfJ) invites you to its Seventh Annual Meeting in Salem on Saturday, October 15. We gather together to celebrate our accomplishments, make plans for the coming year, and commit ourselves to supporting each other in our quest for a more just Oregon. The ORUUVfJ board has suggested 4 broad campaigns for the coming year: Environmental Justice, Deepening Democracy, Human Rights, and Income Inequality. The meeting agenda includes choosing specific issues within each area and organizing to be effective advocates. The Oregon Legislature will be meeting for a long session in 2017. Much will be on the table; much is already happening in Salem. Let us make sure UU voices are represented during the Legislature's deliberations.

Visit the web site [www.uuvoicesoregon.org](http://www.uuvoicesoregon.org) to learn more about our campaigns and find out how to propose issues to address within a campaign. Pre-registration is encouraged but not required. Please RSVP to [oregonuuvoices@yahoo.com](mailto:oregonuuvoices@yahoo.com) by Oct. 10.

**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 Baxter, Aera Atkins, or Tom Penchoen. 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](http://www.mcuuf.org)

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Thank you.

**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](mailto:mcuuf1@gmail.com)**