



Mid-Columbia Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



MCUUF NEWSLETTER—March 2018

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Our local mountains are finally filled with winter's snow. After a heavy snowfall, nearly everything turns white. Against a bluebird sky, a winter wonderland looks pristine.

White is associated with purity, and mid-winter time is filled with festivals and practices that cultivate purity. The Christian period of Lent, the Hindu festival of Holi, and the Celtic pagan feast of Imbolc are among them. Among Unitarian Universalists, encouraging purity hasn't been much of a focus.

We have a lot of understandable ambivalence around purity. For many of us, purity conjures up connections with repression, sinfulness and depravity. Unitarian Universalism arose in opposition to the notion that humans were born sinful and needed purification if we were to know peace and salvation. Our Unitarian forebears stressed that salvation was ensured by developing upright character. Our Universalist ancestors put their stock into doing good works in this world, rather than waiting for an afterlife where all would be eventually be saved.

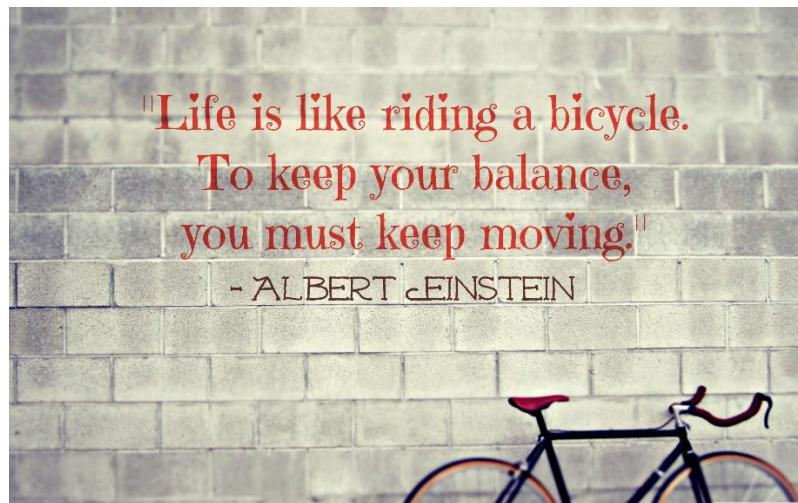
Given this history, it's not surprising that purity has been ignored as a focus in our liturgy, worship, and theology. I'm concerned we're making the proverbial mistake of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Might purity be getting a bad rap?

If a stream is to flow with clear water, dirt must stop coming into it. We know that when cattle graze near streams, they create conditions that result in the movement of debris into the water. We were born originally blessed, not sinful, with a gleaming chalice of our being. We also have lived a lifetime where we've acquired some habits that hold us back from realizing the full promise of that blessedness. If we were to substitute good habits for the troublesome ones, who might we become? What debris needs to stop pouring into the chalice of our being so that the water it holds will shimmer with transparency?

The Spring Equinox is a time when light and dark are held in precious balance. May the approaching equinox be an occasion to reflect on where we are with finding equilibrium between purity and promise, between unwholesome and wholesome habits. May each of us live into the fullness of our humanity and know peace.

With love,

Rev. Judy



SUNDAY SERVICES
10 a.m. at the Rockford Grange
This month's theme: "Balance"

March 4: "Getting the Love You Want," Rev. Judy Zimmerman, with Dan B, Celebrant. The first principle of our Unitarian Universalist faith proclaims the worth and dignity that each of us has as our human birthright. Nevertheless, we're drawn to relationships where it seems we have to prove our worthiness in order to know love. How can we align getting the love we think we deserve with the love we truly want?

March 11: "Divine Discomfort," Rev. Judy Zimmerman, with Paul B, celebrant. Technological convenience has liberated us from much of the drudgery of domestic life. Has this less-arduous life promoted self-development and civic engagement? Where might equilibrium be found between efficiency and ease—and the discomfort that sages say is necessary for spiritual growth?

March 18: Spring Equinox Ritual: Kirk Thomas, a Senior Priest of Ár nDriúacht Féin and leader of the Druid Sanctuary at the Trout Lake Abbey. The ritual will be indoors and welcoming for all ages and physical abilities.

March 25: "Dukkha and the End of Dukkha," Kakumyo Lowe-Charde, with Dan B, celebrant. Dukkha means suffering, discontent, dissatisfaction. The Buddha taught the truth of the human condition as being one of dukkha. Understanding and following the Four Noble Truths there can be an end to dukkha. What is the Zen Buddhist understanding of these truths? How can we use them in our daily lives to ease our own dukkha? Kakumyo is the co-abbot of *Dharma-Rain*, a Soto Zen Temple in Portland.

MOMENTS IN UU HISTORY
By Bonnie W.

Birth of a Movement—Fellowships

At the end of World War II, the American Unitarian Association, with membership primarily focused in the Northeast, was languishing. A mail-order idea, Church of the Larger Fellowship had begun in 1944 and was servicing far-flung Unitarians with sermons and RE materials. In March of 1945, the AUA voted to explore the notion of establishing lay-led congregations. Wheels began to turn, and in 1948 the first fellowship was recognized in Boulder, Colorado. With the tireless circuit-riding of AUA staffer Monroe Husbands, fellowships began to sprout. Members of CLF were invited to

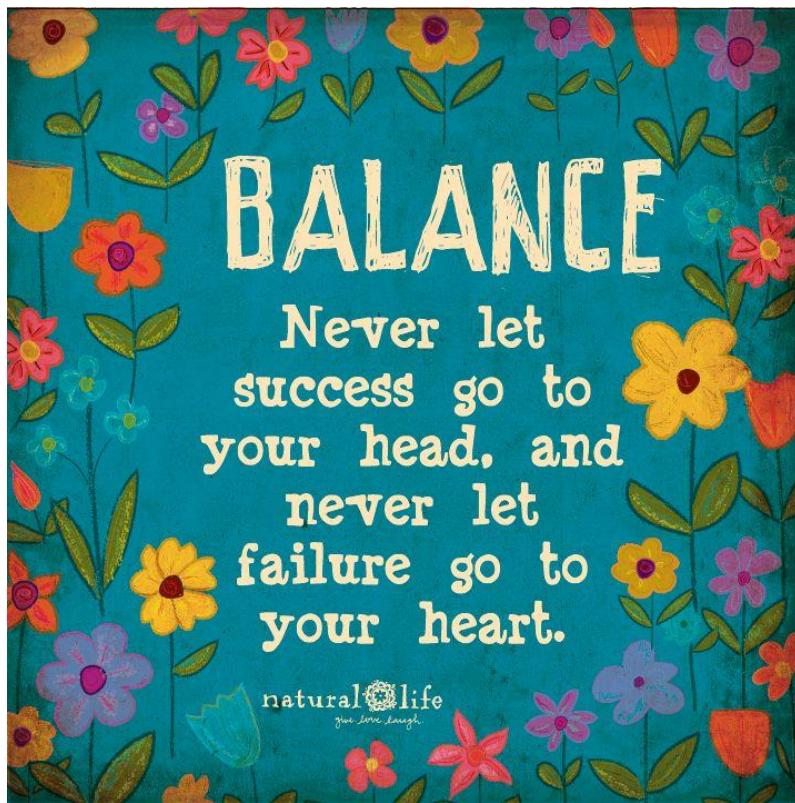
gather, newspaper ads were posted, and the plan was outlined to groups across the continent. With 10 committed members and a financial pledge, the group would be admitted to the AUA. Support was provided from headquarters with travelling consultants and monthly packets of program and RE materials.

Between 1948 and 1967, when the program office was closed, around 300 fellowships had been formed and 30 percent of new members had come through that route. A successful experiment? That depends on whom you ask. Many of the fellowships moved on to stabilize with buildings and/or professional leadership (although this was not the initial goal). Others died out and a few became in-groups with little connection with UU principles. It is difficult today to determine how many lay-led fellowships remain, since not all of them changed their names to "church" once they hired clergy. Nevertheless, with their celebration of individual responsibility, social justice, and shared ministry, fellowships have changed the face of Unitarian Universalism.

Is your interest piqued? Although it was written in 2002, Warren Ross's *UU World* article on the movement is balanced, thorough, and fascinating. See it at:

<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/the-bold-experiment-the-fellowship-movement>

Another good article is at: <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/the-fellowship-movement> (2008)



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SOCIAL JUSTICE:

Our MCUFF FISH Food Bank team needs a new leader. MCUFF provides the volunteers who operate the FISH food bank on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of one week out of every nine weeks. Our FISH food bank effort needs a new leader. The main task is to send out mass distribution emails to an established list of volunteers before each MCUFF volunteer week. Several emails are usually required to fill the MCUFF volunteer positions. Susan T. is stepping down from leading our FISH food bank team because of her overwhelming involvement with the warming shelter and other duties, but she will gladly help you get started. This is a must-have position for our MCUFF FISH food bank effort. Please consider volunteering to lead our team. For more information, contact Susan.

Opportunities for Activism: Immigration Justice.

(1) Several immigration detainees at NORCOR have expressed interest in having pen pals. While housed at NORCOR, detainees do not get face-to-face visits with friends or family. Cards and letters bolster detainees' spirits and let them know they are not forgotten. If you'd like to participate, contact Rev. Judy at jzimmerman@uuma.org

(2) Immigration detainees have requested paperback books, magazines, and comics. Bring your donations to Sunday Services on March 11, 18, and 25. Annie M. will have a box to collect them. Contact Rev. Judy at jzimmerman@uuma.org for more information.

PASTORAL CARE & CONNECTION:

The Women's Awareness Circle will meet in the home of Irene K. March 9 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. The question for discussion will be: What do you need to feel at home? All MCUUUF women are invited. Please RSVP to Gail A.

The UU Men's Group will meet at the Grange on Wednesday, March 14, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The topic of discussion will be "Aging, Growth and Change." All UU men are welcome to attend.

Circle Supper Weekend, March 16 and 17. MCUUUF will be holding two more potluck Circle Suppers in March: one on Friday, March 16, and the other on Saturday, March 17. If you missed the suppers in February and wish to attend one in March, reserve your dates now—first come, first served. **The March 16 Circle Supper** will be at the home of Elaine and Steve C. Contact Elaine directly. **The March 17 Circle Supper** will be at the home of Stacey C. and Todd D. and is a family-friendly potluck. Contact Stacey and Todd directly to reserve your space.

New Feature: "Community Corner." Do you have an anniversary or other milestone in your life that you'd like to share? Do you know of a community event in line with our UU values and MCUUUF mission that you want others to know about? Do you want to connect with other MCUUUFers and attend a community happening together? Please send your contributions to the "Community Corner" at mcuuf1@gmail.com. When you do so, please tell our editor that the submission is for this area.

MCUUUF Care Team: Our MCUUUF Care Team responds to members and friends in case of a significant loss, illness, or other personal difficulty. No one in our community should feel isolated or abandoned. The team offers opportunities for our fellowship members and friends to help each other in time of need. For example, the team coordinates rides to fellowship and doctor appointments, hospital and home visits, calls and cards. If necessary, the team helps to coordinate care with friends from the fellowship. The Care Team relies on members to let us know if someone may need assistance. The team then ascertains if the person in need would like help, and if so what kind. Confidentiality is paramount. If you or someone you know needs help, contact any of the team's members.

GENEROSITY AND GIVING

Want to be a Good Neighbor? Then help represent our UU fellowship at Good Neighbor Saturday, May 5, from 8 a.m. to noon. This eighth annual event is organized by Volunteers in Action, Providence Community Caregivers, and provides faith communities an opportunity to help seniors or persons with long term health concerns with yard work in Hood River and Klickitat counties. Please email Cindy Allen at womaninthehood@gmail.com by Sunday, March 18, if you want to be a good neighbor. Besides helping our most vulnerable neighbors, a delicious breakfast will be provided!

December Share-the-Plate donations for NORCOR immigration detainees totaled \$282. So far this has allowed six detainees to receive funds for video visitation calls with their families. Your generosity helps eases the loneliness of detention and puts love into action.



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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 (11:59 p.m.) Monday. The MCUFF Newsletter comes out on the first Wednesday of each month (unless otherwise announced).

**The deadline for inclusion is midnight of the prior Monday.
Please send your submissions to Brad at mchuuf1@gmail.com**