



MCUUF NEWSLETTER—July 2018

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Summer is when we take off our shoes, kick back, and enjoy. I hope each of us can find a way to take moments of pause from our commitments. We are human *be*-ings, not human *do*-ings. Stepping away from the rhythm of our typical day can help us perceive our lives in fresh ways. Those insights can help us steer our lives rightly into a direction more in line with our deeper yearnings. It's easy to lose contact with our inner compass and its inherent wisdom amid all of life's demands.

A unique set of people has been several steps removed from the normal pace of life. Seven people have been on a three-year, cloistered retreat at Ser Cho Osel Ling, a Tibetan Buddhist retreat center near Goldendale. Two weeks ago, I attended a ceremony that concluded the retreat and formally opened the gates of the cloister. The retreatants left the cloister for the first time in three years and had face-to-face contact with people other than the retreat staff and teachers. It was a joyous and most auspicious occasion.

We were told that each retreatant had completed 12,000 hours of meditation. That is comparable to the number of hours of study to earn a Ph.D. That proclamation gave me pause. How many times have I expected what I want to happen, just because I wanted it? I hope I'll remember the retreatants' devotion the next time I feel like taking a shortcut. Spiritual hungers aren't likely to be satisfied with anything resembling fast food.

Sometimes it feels like what we do to foster spiritual growth doesn't yield results. The seemingly small acts we do to live in accordance with our ethics and UU principles don't seem to add up to too much. Expecting these daily acts to bring short term benefits is like expecting a tomato seed to bear ripe tomatoes not long after the seeds are planted. With good soil and regular, proper care many seeds will ripen and produce delicious tomatoes.

We are no different from the retreatants. They hoped their retreat would soon change them and bring deep insights. Yet the real fruit from those many months of retreat won't ripen until some time afterward. Lasting transformation is like that.

May this summer be one where we tend our spiritual gardens steadily and with patience. May we work together to tend the garden that is this religious community so that its fruit may nourish us and the generations to come.

With love, Rev. Judy

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

Social Justice Summit

On June 12, the board convened an open and lively discussion with seven members and friends of MCUUF to discuss our fellowship's Social Justice work. We were all inspired by the amount of work done by this fellowship!

And we all wanted to find ways to bring more attention both to the needs and to the work being accomplished. How can MCUUF support and appreciate the many people who work to address homelessness, food insecurity, immigration, political advocacy, etc.?

The group was in agreement that no one was particularly interested in making the committee more organized. Focus is clearly on doing good, and doing more of it. There was support for adapting the coffee hour to focus on social justice.

The group also agreed that the current mission is appropriate: To help members and friends of MCUUF connect with community activities that further social and economic justice. To establish MCUUF as a leader for community action in the Gorge.

The group identified these tasks as important parts of the committee's work:

- Supporting and appreciating people working for social justice.
- Providing opportunities to participate in social justice service or projects such as the food banks or warming shelters.
- Providing educational programs or opportunities.
- Coordinating and performing political advocacy
- Promoting the work of the committee to the board, fellowship, and community.
- Managing "Share the Plate."

The group identified these projects as important parts of the committee's work:

- Hood River Warming Shelter
- FISH Food Bank and Food Justice
- Scholarships for Undocumented Students
- The Holiday Project
- NORCOR
- Immigrant Welcoming & Supporting
- LGBTQ+ and the Gorge Pride Alliance
- Share the Plate

Paul Blackburn has agreed to be the convener and board liaison for this "lightly and loosely organized" group. The group wants to focus even more on the Share the Plate recipient each month. Therefore, Paul B, will be working with the group to designate the Share the Plate funds for the next fiscal year, taking into account the board's desire that all recipients relate to our UU Principles, be geographically diverse, and represent a broad array of issues.

At the June Board Meeting, board members were impressed by the results of this summit, and are poised to support more appreciation and opportunities for Social Justice.

SUNDAY SERVICES ***10 a.m. at the Rockford Grange***

Share the Plate – 1/2 of the funds collected in July and August will go to the Columbia Gorge Peace Village. For more information, go to ColumbiaGorgePeaceVillage.com

July 1: "This I Believe." Paul B. and several other MCUUF members will discuss some of their guiding principles

July 8: "The Larger Fellowship." Rev. Judy Zimmerman with Kristen D, celebrant. Conventions range from the boring and tedious to the frenetic and over-stimulation. Is our annual Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly just another convention? How did this most recent General Assembly in Kansas City show how our movement is living its faith?

Newcomer Circle:

If you are interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism and MCUUF, or if you just wish to chat with our minister, we'll have an informal conversation after the service every second Sunday of the Month. No obligation; just bring your curiosity and questions.
We'll meet from approximately 11:45 to 12:30.

July 15: “The New Unsettling Force,” Rev. Connie Yost with Todd D, celebrant. In our seventh principle, we affirm the interconnected web of all existence. The evils of our time—systemic racism, systemic poverty, militarism and ecological devastation—likewise are interconnected. What would happen if we truly joined with all our sisters and brothers to bring hope, healing, friendship and justice to all? Come be inspired by this *New Unsettling Force, the Poor People’s Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival*.

July 22: “Spiritual Foundations of Social Activism,” Elaine C. Listen as several MCUUF members and friends discuss the spiritual values that inspire and support their commitments to social and environmental justice.

July 29: “Black UU Humanism,” Rev. Judy Zimmerman with Dan B, celebrant. Humanism has ties to Unitarianism and has spread beyond our faith. How have black Unitarians like the Rev. Lewis McGee shaped humanism? And what are black voices adding to humanism today?

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Summer has been fabulous so far for our RE program. We are heading into a great month of pagan traditions and an introduction to churching for our littles.

Our OWL class is meeting Sunday evenings from 6-730p and is currently full.

The MCUUF RE program is currently looking for volunteers in the fall to assist our staff in coteaching once a month. If this interests you please contact our DRE Alicia B.

MOMENTS IN UU HISTORY

By Bonnie W.

Salvation for All

What name comes to mind when you think about the origins of the Universalist half of our name? John Murray? You’ll get half-credit for that one, but Dr. George DeBenneville was preaching Universalism in America 30 years before John Murray landed. (Murray holds the distinction of insisting on a separate, defined church.)

DeBenneville was born an aristocrat in 1703 but gave up his privileged life to go to sea at age 12. In his travels he learned there are many ways to be human and many ways to express religious belief. Rick Steves would have approved of the way DeBenneville embraced and celebrated the diversity he observed in his travels.

After a near-death experience, DeBenneville formulated his belief that hell is not a place of punishment but rather a place to perfect oneself. Everyone is saved in the end by an all-loving, benevolent God. This was a radical idea, and DeBenneville was threatened with death more than once. In fact, King Louis XV spared his life at the last minute as DeBenneville knelt on the scaffold. He went on to preach throughout Germany, where it is believed he received medical training.

Once DeBenneville came to America in the mid-1700’s, he continued to preach his message of hope and heaven for all, and he practiced medicine. His work with Native Americans included trading herbal medicines with them. This work continued to his death at age 90.

These brief highlights hardly capture the richness of the life of this UU pioneer. I hope you will use your Google finger to fill in the picture.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



SAVE-THE-DATE

Our fabulous family picnic was so much fun last year we're going to repeat it this year. Games for all ages! Do not miss it—put the date on your calendar:
Saturday, Sept. 8, 4-7 p.m. in Parkdale.

PASTORAL CARE & CONNECTION:

The MCUUF Men's Group Meeting will be held on July 11 from 6:30 to 8:30 at the Rockford Grange. The topic for discussion will be: "Boundaries."

MCUUF Care Team: Our MCUUF 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's members and friends to help each other in time of need. For example, the team coordinates rides to our services, doctor appointments, hospital and home visits, and helps with 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.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Somos Uno will again be marching in the 4th of July Parade. Gather at 9:30 a.m. at the intersection of Woods Court and Pacific Ave. Home-made, pro-immigrant signs welcome.



Marching in the 2017 4th of July Parade

Immigration Justice: NORCOR Daily Vigils M-F 5-6

p.m.; Saturday & Sunday 12-1: Gather in solidarity with immigrants held under inhumane conditions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in our regional public jail. Join with Gorge Ecumenical Ministries members and concerned citizens at the NORCOR jail: 211 Webber St., The Dalles. Your presence brings our Immigrant Welcoming and Supporting Resolution to life.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Meditation Workshop every Friday evening at the Grange.

In the face of life's challenges and these anxious times, meditation can help us find our own center, a place of deeper wisdom, stillness, and bliss. Meditation can also relieve stress, help concentration, and improve well-being, or it can simply be time away from the demands of the day.

In step with Unitarian Universalism's engagement with theological diversity, the workshop will meet **Fridays from 7 to 8:30 p.m. beginning June 1 at the Rockford Grange.** It will explore a variety of meditation techniques based on the world's wisdom traditions. Meditation instruction and practice will be followed by discussion and tea. Beginners and experienced meditators are welcome. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Chairs and some benches, cushions, and mats will be available—or bring your own. The sessions are free. This is an ongoing, open class. Sessions are facilitated by Rev. Judy Zimmerman and Kyri Kengan Treiman.

Mid-Columbia Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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Please send your submissions to Brad at mcuuf1@gmail.com