



MCUUF NEWSLETTER—February 2019

MINISTER’S MESSAGE

At the recent Martin Luther King Jr. community celebration here in the Gorge, Valarie Kaur’s Sikh prayer was read. Kaur wrote and shared that prayer in the week following the November 2016 election. In that prayer, she spoke of a revolutionary love that must be part of any mass movement towards justice. For Kaur, this revolutionary love is more than a feeling. It is sweet labor—messy, imperfect, and life-giving. Let us not give up hope, Kaur said. We are in the midst of birthing a new nation.

At MCUUF we are birthing a future. Last year the Dream Team led a series of conversations about our vision for the future of this congregation. After our February 24 Sunday service, we will gather to continue this dialog. What an opportunity this will be! We will listen to each other and share how we understand our mission to “*come together as a welcoming religious community that nurtures our spiritual growth, broadens our minds, and supports us in service to the wider world.*” Our mission is a living and evolving understanding. What does this mean for us today? How do we see ourselves rising to what this mission calls us to do?

This fellowship has been experiencing sweet labor pains. We have grown to a circle of over 100 members and friends and are transitioning from a “family-sized” to a larger “pastoral-sized” congregation. The birth process is filled with ambivalence. We know there will be a welcome result—a new child, a new congregational vision. Birthing is hard work. I heard one childbirth educator say that birthing is like running a marathon. The path to delivery is uncertain. We know there are phases of labor, yet we don’t know how long each phase will last, how long before delivery occurs, or what the phases will entail. Childbirth educators and health professionals emphasize that birthing is a process of opening up and letting go. The pangs of labor express the deep power contained within—a power that brings new life. This fellowship has reservoirs of mettle and creativity to sustain this labor and give birth to a bright and glorious future.

On the February 24 we will learn more from each other about what this new life might look like as it moves into the next two to five years. How would our lifespan religious education program and spaces look if they were to more fully support us in living into our mission as we currently understand it? What would an expanded music program look like? How would we gather to nurture connection outside of Sunday Services? What would it take to reach more people who need to hear the good news of our liberal religious movement? What else is needed to live into our mission? And what is most important to us in realizing that mission?

We are a congregation built on a foundation of love. So says our Covenant of Right Relations. The revolutionary love that Kaur speaks of is alive in this fellowship. Let us birth a future where that love bursts forth into wider world. The future is ours to claim.

In faith and solidarity,

Rev. Judy

Want to meet? Please call (503-970-0564) or email jzimmerman@uuma.org and let's find a time that works.



Photo by Steve Halama on Unsplash

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

UU and Stewardship

Two questions come to mind when I think about UU and stewardship. What is stewardship? What does it mean for our fellowship?

The concept of stewardship has evolved over time and is now generally recognized as “an ethic that embodies responsible planning and management of resources.” You see it applied to the environment, economics, health, and, yes, even theology.

If this is what stewardship is, what does it mean for our fellowship?

Our mission states: “We come together as a welcoming religious community that nurtures our spiritual growth, broadens our minds and supports us in service to the wider world.”

To keep true to our mission, we need to be responsible stewards.

Stewardship is giving generously to support our caring for each other, religious education programs for adults and youth, our minister, and our thought-provoking, enriching Sunday services. Stewardship isn't just about money. It is also all the things we do together to make our fellowship function, thrive, and matter.

Cindy A., Board Treasurer



“I realize there’s something
incredibly honest about trees in winter,
how they’re experts at letting things go.”

Jeffrey McDaniel

Photo by Ian Schneider on Unsplash

SUNDAY SERVICES

10 a.m. at the Rockford Grange

This Month’s Theme: “Surrender/Letting Go”

February 3: “Light Without Heat: The Celtic Holiday of Imbolc” Catharine Clarenbach, with Dan B, celebrant. In Celtic mythology, the first signs of spring, the snowdrops popping up through the hard ground, were said to be the steps of the goddess Brigid. Spring was considered to be just peeking its head out of winter's grip, thanks to the appearance of Brigid, who over time became St. Bridget, the patroness of Ireland. Come explore with us as we look at this holiday, as well as the transformation of a pre-Christian figure into a saint of justice and protection welcomed into the life of a complex Celtic Christianity.

February 10: “Music and the Creative Process” Local music legends “Big Ronnie” Ontiveros and “Medium Ben” Bonham will play—and discuss—their music.

February 17: “Release, Renunciate, Rejoice,” Rev. Judy Zimmerman. Renunciation conjures up images of ascetics in sackcloth, forced abstinence, and denial. How is renunciation an act of domination? How could renunciation be a path towards greater authenticity and abiding happiness?

February 24: “Just Being Here,” Eli Bello, with Todd D, celebrant. Join us as we embark on a journey of an immigrant toward Openness and Letting Go. Through that journey we will discover how Openness and Letting Go helped him learn the craft of just being here.

MOMENTS IN UU HISTORY

By Bonnie W.



Here's an easy question: As the Titanic was sinking, what tune (allegedly) was the band playing? Most of us believe it was “Nearer, My God, to Thee.” And here's the hard one: Who wrote that hymn? None other than a lifelong Unitarian, Sarah Flower Adams, who was born on February 22, 1805, in Harlow, England.

Motherless from age 5, Sarah and her sister were educated by their editor father, a political and religious liberal. The family had close ties to Unitarian minister, Rev. W. J. Fox, with whom Sarah found solace for her religious doubts. Among her friends were Harriet Martineau, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Robert Browning, who encouraged her writing efforts, including many religious works. Her poetry, which focused on “spontaneous emotion and morbid thoughts,” (1) fell into the now (happily) forgotten school, the Spasmatists.

Sarah married in 1834 and was encouraged by her husband (who agreed that she need never do any housework) to try her hand at acting. Her performances were well received, but poor health and deafness forced her to abandon her career.

Rev. Fox asked Sarah to write some hymns for him, which he then published. The best known of these is “Nearer, My God, to Thee,” which was re-published in the U.S. by prominent Unitarian theologian Rev. James Freeman Clarke of Boston.

Sarah Flower Adams, always challenged by ill health, died at the age of 43 in 1848.

(1) www.christianity.com



Growth demands a
temporary surrender
of security.
Gail Sheehy

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MCUUF Town Hall: Join us for info and voting after the Sunday service on February 24 for a MCUUF Town Hall whose theme is "Our Future's So Bright." This discussion is a follow-up to our "Dream Team" process. Read the results of that process here: <http://www.mcuuf.org/dream-team.html> This will also be a Soup Sunday!

CONNECTION

Meditation Workshop Returns Friday night, February 1, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. after a winter break. The workshop meets at the Rockford Grange and explores meditation methods from the world's religions. Instruction and practice are mixed with group discussion. Beginners and experienced meditators welcome. This is a drop-in group. Cushions, mats and chairs are provided. The sessions are free and open to public. Our own Rev. Judy and Kyri Kengan Treiman of the Hood River Zen/Dharma Rain Center are the facilitators. For more information, contact jzimmerman@uuma.org or kohokengan@gmail.com

After Service Ski and Play: After the February 17 service, we will meet at Teacup Lake for a special day of ski and snow play. There will be soup, biscuits, and other goodies to warm us up. Ski gear is available at Doug's Sports, 2nd Wind Sports, and other local outlets. Trail passes are \$10/day donation and can be obtained on site at Teacup. A snowpark permit is needed for parking. These are available at Doug's and 2nd Wind as well. We would appreciate a head count for your family and friends. Please contact Pam M.

The UU Men's Group will meet on Wednesday, February 13 at the Rockford Grange. The topic of discussion has not been decided. All UU men are welcome! For more information, contact Brad A.

The MCUUF Directory is now ONLINE! Breeze is the online church-management system MCUUF is now using. Members and friends can easily access the website and the mobile app to see contact information for others, make changes to their contact information, check their annual pledge and giving history (only theirs, not others'), and email or text others in the system. It's easy to sign up and VERY user friendly. If you've not already signed up, please contact Brad at mcuuf1@gmail.com and he will email you an invitation to join and instructions.

PASTORAL CARE

When to Contact the Care Team: Our Care Team stands ready to contact anyone in our UU community who may need help. They may be in a tight squeeze and wondering if they can make rent this month. Their moving help may have fallen through. They may need a ride to MCUUF events or Sunday Service. They may be laid up for a while from surgery or illness. They may be having difficulty caring for a loved one.

These are but a few of the circumstances where our Care Team coordinates assistance with fellowship members, a private conversation with our minister or a care team member, or a referral to community or social services. We walk through the challenges of life together. You are not alone.

Note from Care Team: If anyone is having difficulty getting up and down stairs at the Grange, please be aware that we have a wheelchair and assistance to use the ramp when necessary, including during snowy or icy weather. Please have someone alert the greeters, and assistance will be found.

SOCIAL ACTION

FISH Food Bank. Our next Unitarian Universalist days to serve at FISH are Feb. 18-20-22. If you are interested in volunteering or learning more about this activity, please contact Susan T.

Share-the-Plate: Generosity Grows. In December, \$626.60 was collected during our "Offering for Congregation and Community." One half of this, \$313.30, will go to Minister's Discretionary Fund to serve congregants and community members not served by our social safety net. Your gifts help make MCUUF a caring community and put love into action. Thank you!

VOLUNTEER HELP NEEDED

The Financial Committee is looking for a volunteer that is interested and experienced in finances and financial management to help us evaluate financial options. Contact Lori G. for more info.

MCUUF Homestay Program—our fellowship hopes to start a homestay program for short term UU visitors to our area. The program will be modeled on similar successful programs around the country. The program will be organized through the fellowship, with guests contributing to the fellowship in exchange for a homestay. If you are interested in helping organize the program, or if you might consider occasionally hosting guests, please contact Peggy N.

Readers are wanted for a dramatic reading of "The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail," a play by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee. In this play, the history of Unitarian Transcendentalism comes alive. The characters face many of the same social and political dilemmas we face today. The play also explores the complicated, affectionate, but at times difficult relationship between two of the great luminaries of the 19th century: Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. The performance is planned for Sunday morning, March 24. Parts will be divided among three women and seven men. Volunteers are needed for the parts, and a first read-through will be held in the week of March 3. A second run-through with minimal staging will be held in the week of March 10. A dress rehearsal will be held in the week of March 17 (probably on Saturday, March 23). Rehearsal dates and times will be flexible. Please contact Dick W, play director, if you are interested in participating or if you have any questions.



"We need to learn to let go as easily as we grasp,
or we will find our hands full and our minds empty"
--Leo Buscaglia

Mid-Columbia Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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The deadline for inclusion in the weekly eNews is midnight (11:59 p.m.) Monday. The MCUUF 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 mcuuf1@gmail.com