



## ***MCUUF NEWSLETTER—January 2020***

### ***MINISTER’S MESSAGE***

While visiting one of our neighbor churches for a meeting recently, a number of toys were left out on the side of our meeting area. One of them caught my eye: an Etch-a-Sketch. I picked it up, gave it a shake to erase what was on the screen, and turned the knobs to make a drawing. I gave it another shake and made a second drawing on the refreshed screen. I felt the draw (pun intended) to erase the screen and play some more. With this toy it seems as though possibilities are endless. All that’s needed is to shake it and begin again.

This month we are we are leaving a year behind and beginning a new decade. The opportunity to start afresh is here. Casting visions for the new year leads us to reckoning with the past. How is your approach more like an Etch-a-Sketch, where the past is erased? Starting anew without the hindrances of the past seems appealing. A blank slate seems like it would help us feel motivated. Our “Unitarian Universalist DNA” also encourages an Etch-a-Sketch approach. Unitarian Universalism tends to be less bound to history or tradition. We tend to be much more focused on the future than the past. The month of January is named for the Roman god Janus, who had two faces. One face looks forward, one face looks back. Understanding the past can help us know where we are headed and how best to get there. There is merit to this dual perspective. An Etch-a-Sketch approach to the future leaves us empty of wisdom.

The many wonderful volunteers that lead this fellowship are engaged in a Janus-like balancing act. Leaders aren’t superheroes, nor do they have extraordinary abilities or achieved perfection. They are people who care about this fellowship and what it is trying to do in the world. One group of leaders, our Board of Trustees, has identified three priorities for coming year: reimagining our Religious Education program, fostering more spirit-filled worship, and promoting more small-group activities. As leaders engage with these goals (and you along with them), they see a changing landscape, where patterns of participation in faith communities are unlike those in previous generations. Attendance is different. This does not mean people are less interested in religious matters or less committed. People’s lives today have different demands than in the past. What worked well in the past isn’t working now. The plans for “doing church” in this changing landscape have only recently begun to be drawn.

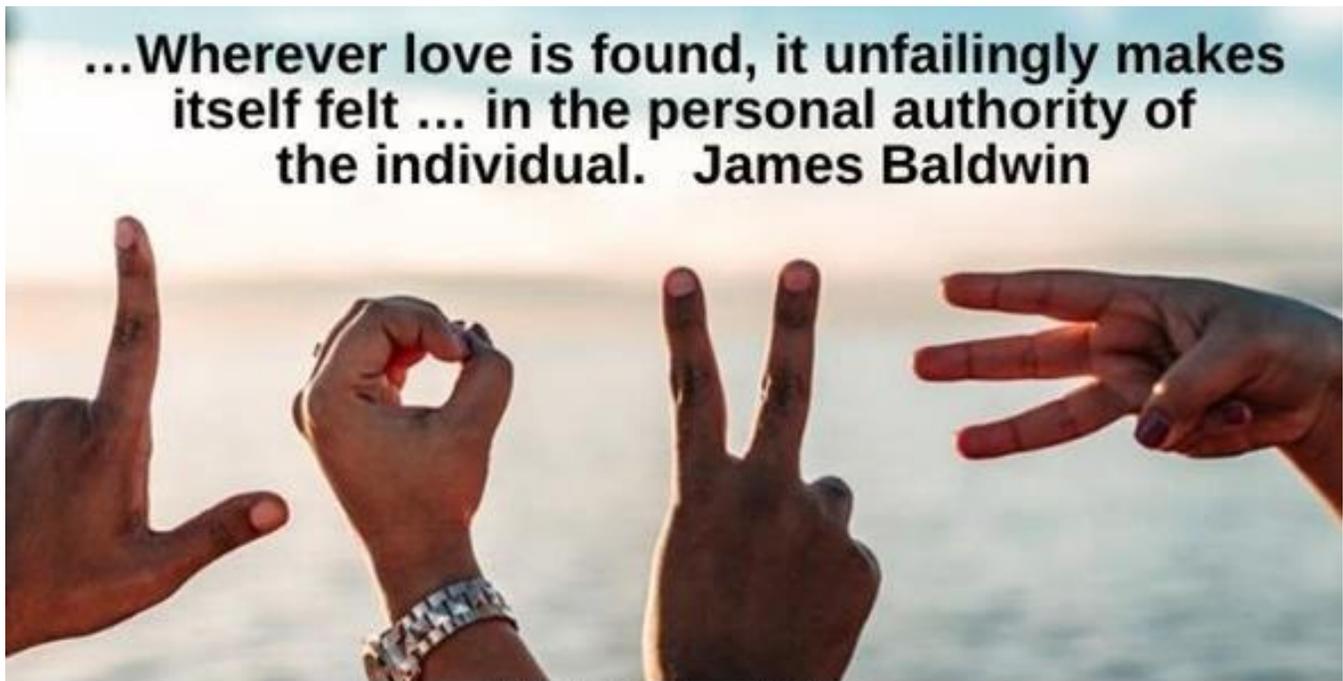
Our theme for this month is Authority and Leadership. “Leadership is a series of behaviors rather than a role for heroes”, says Margaret Wheatley. That’s good news, for it means we can all learn to be leaders, in some way. Leadership also has less to do with technique and much more to do with our spiritual lives. That’s especially so when the current and future landscape is a changing one. Our spiritual life can anchor us amidst seas of change.

So as we engage with the three priority goals our Board has discerned, may we support one another in keeping a Janus-like approach: learning from the past, and not being chained to painful stories about it; looking towards the future with a “beginners mind.” Our future is bright, for we can do more when we work together than we can alone.

Yours in love, faith and solidarity,

*Rev. Judy*

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



**...Wherever love is found, it unfailingly makes  
itself felt ... in the personal authority of  
the individual. James Baldwin**

Photo by Tyler Nix on Unsplash

## ***NEWS FROM YOUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES***

Because of the inclement weather, the Board did not meet in December. However, our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 16 from 5:30 – 7:30 PM at the Grange. All are welcome to attend. As the new year begins, we are looking forward to the launch of our first-ever Fellowship Drive, celebrating our connections with one another and our UU faith. Stay tuned for more information from the energetic Generosity Team. We are also continuing our search for a new Religious Education Coordinator and working on ways to more fully welcome our children into our services. As always, we would love to have your feedback on these or any other issues. Please feel free to contact any of your Board members. In addition, we now have a system through which you can email feedback or suggestions. Just click on <https://goo.gl/forms/U7e4IW11jBnqfugX2> to leave your comment; the link is also included on our website at [mцуuf.org](http://mцуuf.org). And best wishes for a rich and blessed New Year to all of you.

What is leadership, after all, but the blind choice of one route over another and the confident pretense that the decision was based on reason. Robert Harris

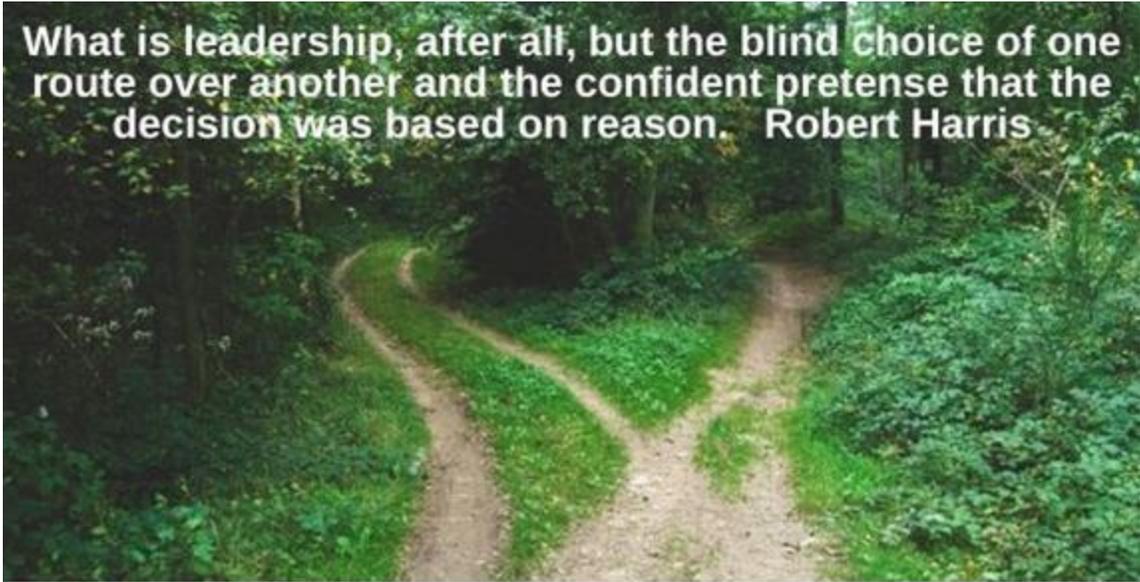


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## ***SUNDAY SERVICES***

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

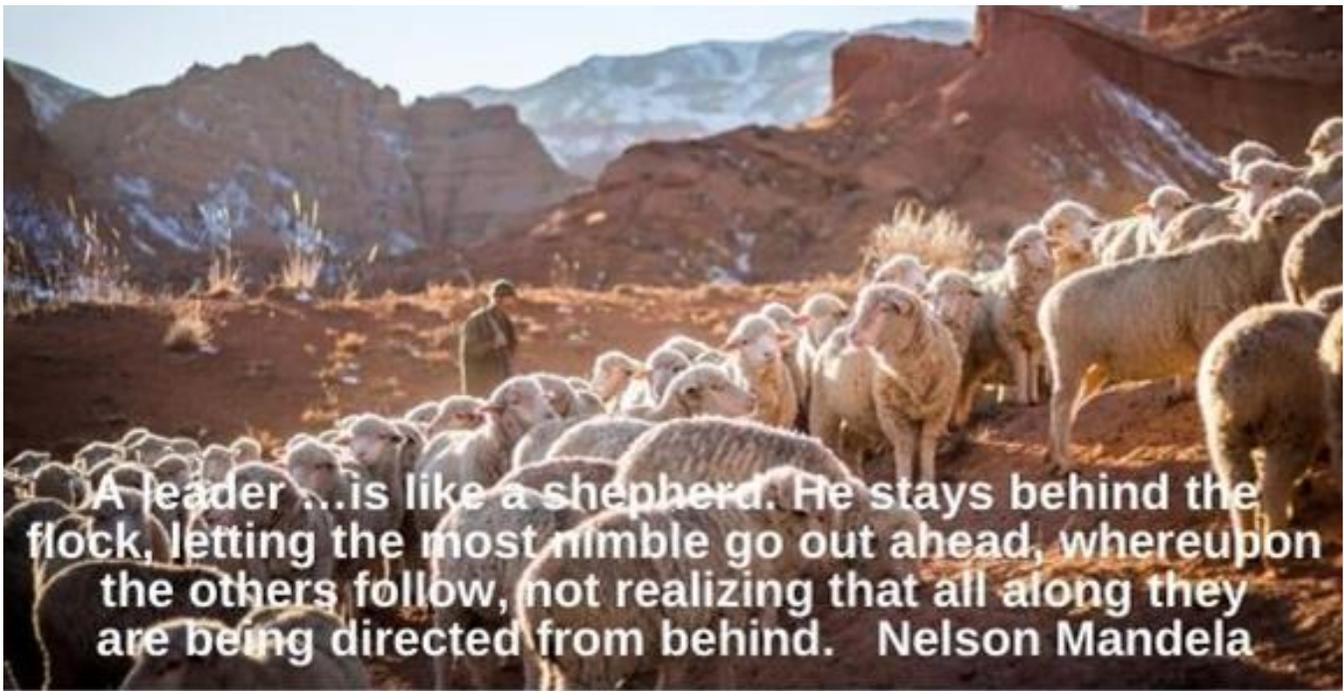
***This Month's Theme: "Authority and Leadership"***

***January 5, "Our Sacred Fire," Rev. Judy Zimmerman,*** with Elaine C, celebrant. What is the burning coal at the center of our faith? How does that sacred fire remain burning? Join us as we mark this first Sunday in the beginning of a new year and decade.

***January 12:*** Our guest speaker for January 12 will be ***Susan Hess***, the publisher of the online and print environmental news publication, *Columbia Insight*. Susan is a long-time advocate for environmental protections, and a strong advocate for earth friendly landscapes that include the use of native plant materials. She and her husband, Juergen, have created native plantings, and protected parklands and open spaces throughout our Hood River community.

***January 19, "Leading with Love". Rev. Judy Zimmerman.*** Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King took inspiration from Mohandas Gandhi's notions of nonviolence to promote social change. What does it mean to practice nonviolence – or *satyagraha* as Gandhi called it? How might this practice help us in our daily lives? What might this practice mean for activists and leaders?

***January 26: "Listening to the Earth"*** – Join guest minister Rev. Mira Mickiewicz for an all-ages worship exploring our connection to land and one another. How does our engagement with the earth inform who we are? What can we learn if we take the time to listen to the earth? This inspiring service, which will also include special music, is the kick-off to our Fellowship Drive, in which we celebrate our connections with one another, our UU faith, and the larger world. Don't miss out on the fun!



A leader ...is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind. Nelson Mandela

Photo by Patrick Schneider on Unsplash

## ***RELIGIOUS EDUCATION***

### ***Virtual Town Hall: RE-Imagining Religious Education. January 14, 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.***

What might the future of Religious Education look like at MCUUF? What might whole-family Sunday worship services be like? How might adult religious education happen? What are your hopes for RE? Join us in this internet conference call and video meeting as we continue conversations from the Fall. We'll use the online service called Zoom. This can be downloaded for free onto a smartphone or your computer. After you've downloaded and opened the Zoom program, enter the meeting by clicking on the link at <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/2459479513> Questions? Contact Rev. Judy at [jzimmerman@uuma.org](mailto:jzimmerman@uuma.org) or Rheva W, Acting Coordinator of Religious Exploration.

***New Religious Exploration Coordinator.*** MCUUF is seeking someone to work 40 hours per month/10 hours per week to lead our K-12/family religious exploration program. Our co-op program relies on volunteers. Applications accepted until the position is filled. If you are interested in applying or know someone who would make a good candidate, please see the RE Coordinator Description at our website. For more information contact Rev. Judy at [jzimmerman@uuma.org](mailto:jzimmerman@uuma.org) or any member of the Board of Trustees.

***The Religious Exploration program is also seeking volunteer teachers and helpers*** for our mixed-age K-5 Sunday-morning class and for our tween-teen youth group. We are a co-op program, and volunteers keep our program going. They will work with activities already prepared by our acting coordinator of religious education, Rheva Wren. Learn about Unitarian Universalism and support the future of our faith and community. Contact Rheva W. to sign up.

## ***MOMENTS IN UU HISTORY***

By Bonnie W.

### **Meet a Renaissance Woman**

As I have poked about in various biographical resources for these little essays, I have been pleased...and surprised to find the stories of many African-Americans who have been members of UU congregations and who have worked prominently in the service of social justice long before the '60's. One of these discoveries is Florida Yates Ruffin Ridley who was born in Boston on January 29, 1861, where her parents were distinguished citizens. Ridley's father, George Ruffin, was the first African-American to graduate from Harvard Law School and the first Black judge in the United States. The family had moved to England to raise their children in a free country, but returned during the Civil War to work against slavery.

Ridley became the second African-American teacher in the Boston Public Schools. Once she married, she had to leave teaching but remained in public life, welcomed in Boston Society. She founded the Society of the Descendants of Early New England Negroes, where she combined her interest in history with her passion for social justice. She also founded and worked with the League of Women for Community Service. She and her husband were members of the Second Unitarian Church in Brookline.

Florida Ridley died in 1943. Her legacy continues with a new honor. A school will be named after her in Brookline, Massachusetts in September 2020.



## ***ANNOUNCEMENTS***

### **CONNECTION**

#### ***The MCUUF Fellowship Drive – Together We Thrive!***

This year, instead of our usual “canvas,” MCUUF will be holding a “Fellowship Drive.” This is more than just a name change. Our goal is to promote a spirit of generosity. We will benefit individually and as a Fellowship not only by our financial generosity but also by our generous commitment of time to

both the Fellowship and to the larger community. The Fellowship Drive will consist of a kickoff Sunday service on January 26, a packet of written materials for all members and friends, and cottage potluck dinners held in early February. The cottage dinners will be very similar to our Circle Suppers - sharing food, conversation, and friendship, with the added bonus of a short discussion on what MCUUF means to you, and all of us. Our goals this year are larger than just obtaining the funds needed to operate the Fellowship (although of course we are hoping to be successful in this). But more broadly, we are hoping to create a spirit of generosity throughout our congregation. The benefits of a spirit of generosity to individuals are well researched. They include a fuller, more meaningful life, leading to better health and a longer life. Together we thrive!

## PASTORAL CARE

***When to Contact the Care Team:*** Our Care Team stands ready to help anyone in our UU community. 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.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

***MCUUF's Social Justice Action committee*** will meet at Rockford Grange on Tuesday, January 14, from 4 to 6 p.m. We welcome all members who are interested in helping to plan MCUUF's social-justice work for 2020.

***Opportunity to join the MCUUF Warming Shelter volunteer team this season!*** New orientation and training dates have been announced for those wanting to become a volunteer. The new required training dates are: Friday, January 24, noon to 2 p.m., and Saturday, January 25, 9 to 11 a.m. in the Warming Shelter at Riverside Church. We hope to see you there! For questions, contact Fran F.

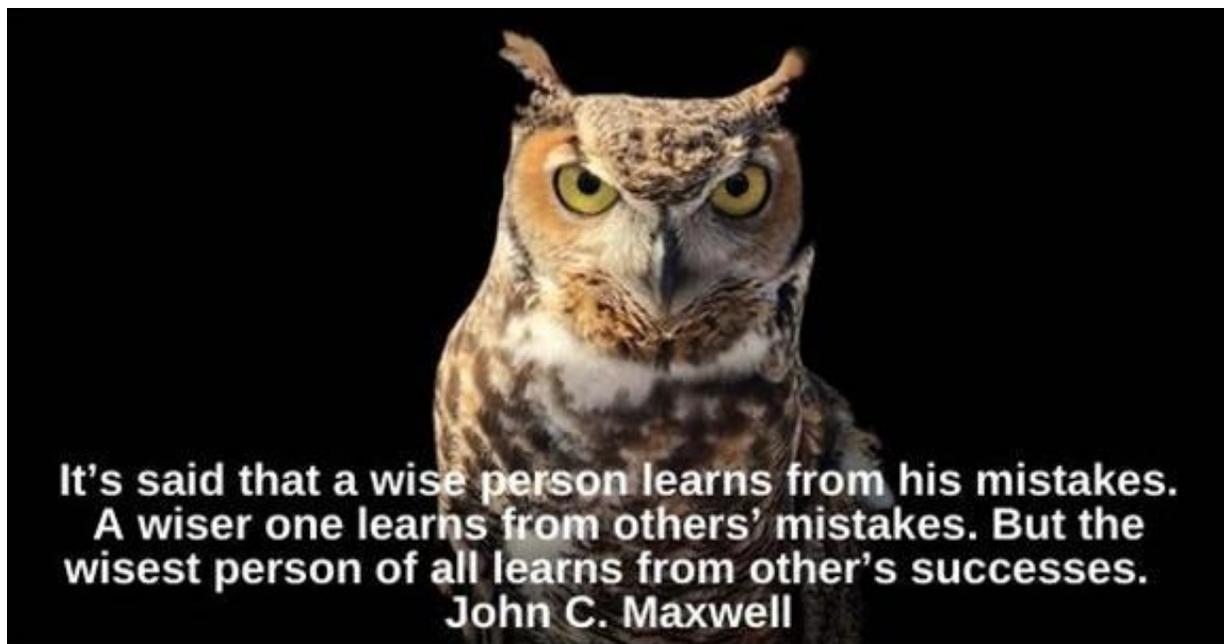


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# Mid-Columbia Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

Curious about what's happening, when, and where? Go to [www.mcuuf.org](http://www.mcuuf.org)

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