

**MID-COLUMBIA UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP**

NEWSLETTER - JANUARY, 2013

LEADERSHIP LETTER

*“Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson*

There were several (it seemed like several thousand) times during 2012 that I wondered if the year would ever end. It was certainly a year of big and abrupt changes—losing our minister, losing the use of the Grange for months, as well as the not-quite-as-overwhelming but still fretful issues of how to continue to pay for a half-time minister AND where we should park, one Sunday to the next. Not to mention that our personal lives were sometimes filled with sorrow: illness, separation, and the death of one of our own beloved members.

How can I tell you how proud I have been of all of you? From my fellow Board members to lay leaders to those of you who cheerfully continued to come to Sunday service whenever and wherever AND responded so generously to our Pledge Drive, you have all shown tolerance, patience, commitment and courage. Throughout the year, I have again and again been proud to be a member of such a wonderful congregation. You rock!

The New Year has begun with a sense of calm and hope. We have a new Interim Minister, the Reverend Ken Jones. Reverend Ken will be with us for up to 18 months to support us as we search for a long-term minister. I've already had several of you ask if we couldn't just have Reverend Ken as our minister, and skip the search, so I know he's made a great impression already. But sadly he can only be with us for this short period of time. Reverend Ken has a wonderfully calm, reassuring presence that I think is just what we need at this time. Please welcome him along with his daughter Willow to our congregation and help them to get to know us.

Our Search Team will be working very hard over the next 18 months, as a ministerial search involves a lot of time and energy. They will be asking for input from all of us—please support their work by participating in upcoming workshops and questionnaires so they can find a minister who hopefully will be with us for years to come. I understand the Team will be expanding to include more members, but here's the current slate: Steve Castles, Paul Blackburn, Don Hardin, Debbie Olson and Alicia Bhatti. I'm sure that gift cards for caffeinated drinks will be in order, as well as hugs of thanks.

Here's hoping 2013 is free of crises for our Congregation, free of despair in our personal lives, and free of injustice in the wider world. I'll end with a verse from Reverend Ken's favorite hymn (#151 from Singing the Living Tradition):

*I wish I knew how it would feel to be free,
I wish I could break all these chains holding me.
I wish I could say all the things I could say,
Say 'em loud, say 'em clear for the whole world to hear.
Say 'em loud, say 'em clear for the whole world to hear.*

Happy New Year!
Holly Harrel
Board President

SUNDAY SERVICES

January 6: “Mea Culpa” by member **Dr. Tina Castanares**. Guilt, remorse, and all their cousins.

January 13: Ken Jones will speak to us about the process we’re embarking on—**“The Interim Year.”**

January 20: Good without God. What is morality? Where does it come from? Why does it matter? This service will introduce the format of the new monthly discussion series, **ODES on a Theme**, beginning January 28, as we explore together the sources and nature of our moral values.

CALENDAR

Rev. Ken Jones, our Interim Minister, will be in Hood River January 7-9, 12-13 and 26-27. You can contact him by email (revkbj86@gmail.com) or by phone (509-714-9861).

ODES on a Theme is a new adult Religious Exploration discussion program. Each month a new theme will be introduced before we break into small groups to further consider, explore, and share our beliefs on these important topics. No advance reading or preparation is required. Emphasis is on participation, not prior knowledge. Watch for more details in a separate email. The schedule for the first two months of 2013:

Mon. Jan. 28, 6:30-8:00 pm. Hood River Library Meeting Room (downstairs): “Good without God: What is morality? Where does it come from? Why does it matter?”

Tues. Feb. 26, 6:30-8:00 pm. Hood River Library Meeting Room (downstairs): Theme to be announced.

Coming of Age Program Schedule

Jan. 13, 10 a.m., Session 13, After Death Beliefs (Part 1) (Grange).
Jan. 27, 10 a.m., Session 14, After Death Beliefs (Part 2) (Grange).
Feb. 3, 10 a.m., Session 15, The Elevator Speech (Grange).
Feb. 10, 10 a.m., Session 16, God Beliefs (Part 1) (Grange).
Feb. 24, 10 a.m., Session 17, God Beliefs (Part 2) (Grange).

January MCUUF Teen RE Schedule:

1/6/13 - Reviewing first principle and its significance for us.
1/20/13 - Review Second Principle.

Earth Care Summit: "Living Waters"

Members from several local Unitarian Universalist congregations and other faith groups are planning to attend and co-sponsor the fourth annual Earth Care Summit, "Living Waters." The event brings together a diverse group of congregations to share best practices and resources. We will learn about water issues facing our global, region and local areas, with practical ideas on how to address them. Times and location:

Monday, January 28: tour at 4:30 p.m., gathering at 5 p.m., simple seasonal dinner at 5:30 p.m., and program and workshops until 8:45 p.m. Location: St. Andrews Lutheran Church, 12405 SW Butner Rd. (off Hwy 26) in Beaverton, Oregon. A table (8 seats) for the event can be purchased for \$200. Information about the event can be found at www.emoregon.org or contact Jenny Holmes at 503 221-1054 x210.

YOUTH

Teen Update:

Wisps of incense filled the air at the Trout Lake abbey, home to Kozen Sampson, last Saturday, 12/29, when 7 of our youth group, along with Theresa and Cindy, traveled there for the meditation service. Despite having gotten up early on a Saturday during Winter Break, we were able to sit in meditation for some time, and also participated in a moving meditation and were exposed to Buddhist chanting. Several of our group had never been to a Buddhist service before, and had their "cultural eyes" opened when exposed to this new spiritual experience.

We also enjoyed looking at the alpacas there that were seen outside the glass door that led to a sheer drop from the temple. After the generous offer from Kozen, we headed inside for tea and cookies and a platter of local cheese made by one of the celebrants. Half the group then traveled to an alpaca store, full of fluffy polar bears, socks, caps and sweaters. Heading back down from Mt. Adams, we stopped for some huckleberry shakes and I was ghastly surprised that one of our members had never had one before. A great time was had by all.

Danielle Horton-Schleicher

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

January 8 training for the homeless warming shelter

Want to join our UU team at the warming shelter? If so, the shelter leaders are having an orientation/training on Tuesday, January 8, in the evening. If you're interested, contact Mike H.

FISH food bank

Our commitment to the FISH food bank is for Jan. 21, 23, and 25. We already have all the volunteers we need for the 21st, but we still need volunteers for the 23rd and 25th. We start at 3:30 p.m. at the Concordia Lutheran Church, 1107 Pine St. If you are willing to serve FISH clients on either the 23rd or 25th, please contact Jane F. or Dennis C.

Greeters Needed

Pamela Z. needs greeters for January and future months. She is happy to train new greeters. Please contact her if you're interested in helping.