

**MID-COLUMBIA UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP**

MCUUF NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY, 2013

FROM OUR MINISTER

“Do not ask what the world needs.
Ask what makes you come alive, and then go do it.
Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”
■• Rev. Howard Thurman

Last month Holly Harrel gave a nice introduction of me, your new Interim Minister; and I’ve taken advantage of some of my pulpit time to introduce myself a little as well. But just to make sure I don’t miss anything, here’s one more opportunity for me to say something about myself so you can know me better.

I come to MCUUF most immediately from my home in Yakima, WA, where I am a half-time single dad and a half-time Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Yakima. I’ve been in Yakima for about two and a half years now; the answer to the question “where were you before that?” is a long and complicated one. But here’s a shot at it.

I was born the middle child in what I think is a *very* typical middle-class American family – I was even born in Peoria, Illinois (can’t get much more “middle America” than that.) Before my tenth birthday, my family settled in suburban Detroit, Michigan, which is what I call home in the sense that is where I was raised. I earned a telecommunications degree from Michigan State University in 1984, and then spent several years living and working around Detroit. I wound up in the field of Electrical Equipment sales, and worked for General Electric for nearly a decade. GE moved me to North Carolina then to Seattle in 1992. I instantly fell in love with the Pacific Northwest, and for the last twenty plus years have called it home, in the sense that’s the place I’m connected to. Aside from leaving for a few years to attend seminary and do an internship, I’ve lived in Washington ever since.

My family attended a pretty mainstream Presbyterian church while I was growing up, which I left behind and enjoyed being an atheist philosopher through college and into my young adult years. There was still a yearning in my spirit, though, and before leaving Michigan I got connected with the Unitarian Universalist Church. By the time I landed in Seattle, there was no doubt in my mind that the UU church was my spiritual home. It was only three years later that I left Seattle to go to Starr King School for Ministry in Berkeley, CA. After completing my studies (there and in Boston) I was thrilled to come back to Washington by accepting a call to be Minister at the UU church in Tacoma. I ministered there for eight years, before resigning to experiment with my (now ex-) wife in sustainable, off-grid living on a piece of property on the Spokane Indian reservation in NE Washington. I suppose you could say the experiment failed when we split up and sold the property less than two years later. I then spent about a year living in an intentional community in the same area. I was very happy to get back into Ministry in

Yakima in 2010, and even happier now to have another half-time “gig” here in Hood River, which allows me to call myself a full-time Minister again!

As Holly stated last month, I’ll be here for up to eighteen months as your Interim minister, while you all discern how you’ll go about finding a more permanent, more settled Minister. I’ll be commuting down from Yakima, leading services here twice a month (usually the first and third Sundays of each month.) I’ll also be spending a few additional days here each month, to attend Board meetings, do Pastoral Care, and support your work as best I can. I look forward to having the opportunity to meeting and getting to know all of you in the coming months – and please, if you’d like to arrange a time to talk or whatever, let me know by contacting me by email at revkbj86@yahoo.com or by calling my cell 509-714-9861. Then I can hear your stories of where you’re “from!”

In faith,
Ken

Rev. Jones will be in Hood River February 3rd through the 7th, and the weekend of the 16/17th.

SUNDAY SERVICES

February 3: Rev. Ken Jones, “The Forgiving Mirror.” One of the most basic and important spiritual practices is the ongoing exercise of forgiveness. And the most important kind of forgiveness is the one we do when looking in the mirror, Ken says. **This is a sUUp Sunday** - Plan to stay for a savory lunch after the service.

February 10: “Learning to Sing,” Kristen Dillon. Sometimes our careful plans go hopelessly awry, and sometimes it’s for the best.

February 17: “On the Eighth Day, God Created...” On President's Day weekend, Rev. Jones will hold up the intrinsic value of human beings in a world where that is sorely needed. We'll look closely at the legal precept of "corporate personhood," and how that precept is not only bad policy, but indicative of a culture that often ignores the value of real persons and the foundations of human rights and dignity. “Welcome New Members” ceremony.

CALENDAR

Mid-Columbia Unitarian Universalist Fellowship INQUIRER CLASS Spring 2013

Wednesday February 6, 6-9 pm

Riverside Community Church

317 State Street Hood River (Supper included)

Got questions? Come to this question-and-answer session to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and about this Fellowship. All newcomers are encouraged to attend!

Please contact Pam M. to register

The “Welcome New Members” ceremony is scheduled for February 17 during Sunday’s service.

Sign up for Circle Suppers!

The next Circle Supper will be held Saturday, February 16. These are small potluck dinners, held in MCUUF members' homes. Visitors and newcomers are especially welcome. If you would like to attend, either as a guest or a host, please contact Jonathan E.

ODES on a Theme is a new adult Religious Exploration discussion program. Each month we will form small groups to consider, explore, and share our beliefs on a different topic. The emphasis is on participation, not prior knowledge. No advance reading or preparation is required, but excerpts and questions are available on request. Contact Eric E. All discussions are from 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the Hood River Library meeting room according to this schedule:

Tues., Feb. 26th: **“BYOB (Bring Your Own Beliefs—God optional).** How we experience religion or spirituality personally, and in a community such as UU, with or without believing in God.”

Tues., Mar. 26th: **“Who da Man?** What is ‘authority’? Where does it come from? Can we trust others who speak or act with authority? Can we trust ourselves to recognize authority?”

Adult Religious Education Book Discussion Group Celebrates Fourth Anniversary.

Just over four years ago an announcement appeared in the MCUUF newsletter inviting participation in a quest about “who we are, where we came from, where we are going, and what our lives mean?” The discussion group has since met every other Wednesday morning from 10 a.m. to noon. It is still going strong with eleven current members (including four members temporarily out of the area). Since its inception, group members have read and discussed an eclectic mix of 19 religious books, including *World Religions*, by Huston Smith; *Rationale Mysticism*, by John Horgan; *Elite*, by Mark Harris; *Buddhism Without Belief*, by Stephen Bachelor; *Standing in the Light*, by Sharman Russell; and *Battle for God*, by Karen Armstrong.

On **February 13** the group again opens to new members as we start discussion of the next book, *Freethinkers*, by Susan Jacoby. Those interested in joining please contact Don H. There is no charge, just great camaraderie and thoughtful inspiration.

Religious Education schedule for February

Feb. 3, Where do you get your news and information?-news cast.

Feb. 10, Valentines.

Feb 17, Presidents day – why the UUs believe in the power of vote.

Feb 24, Music and sharing of UU songs.

Coming of Age Program Schedule

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).

Ma. 3, 10 a.m., Session 18, Faith (Grange).

Ma. 17, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Session 19 and 20. Lunch with Minister and other elders.

Piano Recital

Bob Schwarz will perform a piano recital at noon on Tuesday, February 19, at Columbia Gorge Community College in The Dalles. The recital is free, but donations will be gladly accepted, and will support local food banks. The concert includes works by Chopin, Debussy, Mozart, Ravel, Gershwin and Schubert. The event takes place in the auditorium, on the third floor of building 2.

FISH Food Bank Building Project Fundraiser

Valentine Dance

February 9, 2013

Featuring: Larkspur

8:00 PM; Cost: \$7.00

Hood River Elks (open to the public)

Meals are available prior to the dance .

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to our own Mike Hendricks, who was recently named **Big Brother of the Year** for Hood River County!

Other MCUUF members and friends who serve as Big Brothers or Big Sisters in the Gorge are Eric Einhorn, Brad Amer, Tom Kaser, Mike Ballinger and Colleen Ballinger. For more information on this worthwhile and rewarding program, please talk to one of these people or call Justine Ziegler at 541-490-9979.