



MID-COLUMBIA UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

NEWSLETTER – MARCH, 2013

LEADERSHIP LETTER

"Life itself is more like a river than a rock. Life is in flux; it changes, twists and turns, ebbs and flows. When a river encounters a boulder, the boulder may win for a while. But eventually, even the most massive stone is worn away by the currents of time." --Doug Kraft

Dear Ones,

After lots of agonizing thought and talking with my loved ones, I have come to the conclusion that for the sake of my health, I must resign from the Board of Trustees. I do not do this lightly. It has taken the river that is my life a long while to wear away my determination to finish what I undertook almost two years ago. But my body has finally gotten my attention, and I think it is best to listen.

I want to reassure you that you will be in good hands. Maya Trook, our vice president this year, has agreed to step into the president role through June 30. The other five members of the Board—Elaine Castles, Bruce Bolme, Denise Endow, Leanne Hogie and Dennis Carlson—along with the Rev. Ken Jones, will work with Maya to ensure that the Mid-Columbia UU Fellowship continues to run as smoothly as possible. I know they will continue to work harmoniously together to lead our fellowship.

I am honored to have been a part of such a great team, and I am honored to have been entrusted with being the president of such a wonderful congregation. I am proud to be one of you and will continue to be proud to be among you as I work to heal and find my way.

Thank you for all the love and support I've received. I'm very grateful.

In faith and love,
Holly

FROM OUR MINISTER

Last time I was in town, I had the opportunity to attend a wonderful Circle Supper with some good folks from MCUUF. At that supper, we were asked to share what was important to us. A great conversation came from that, with many interesting things emerging that are important to all of us. I found myself saying something that I would not have predicted: that one thing that was important to me was hearing about other people's passions. Not that I ever thought that other's passions are unimportant; I just would not have predicted that that particular occupation would be on the top of my list.

The great thing about our fellowship—church, if you prefer—is that we have opportunities to get to know other people in a way that is different from that many of our other social situations. A question like "What is important to you?" may not have anything to do with your job, school, or any other outcome; it just is. We meet not as co-workers or neighbors but as regular, questing human beings.

I've been thoroughly enjoying chances like this to meet and get to know you all over the past couple of months. Unfortunately, I have far too few opportunities like this since I'm in town for only a few days a month. (It didn't help that when I was here in early February, I came down with a nasty bug that cut my visit short.) But I have been pleased with the opportunities that I've had and look forward to more meetings, gatherings, conversations, and other forums to meet as simple, questing human beings. For the next few months, my schedule has me here in the gorge on the first and third Sundays of each month and sticking around for a few days after the first Sunday. If you'd like to meet for any reason—talking about a personal challenge, pondering spiritual questions, strategizing about church programs, complaining about the weather, whatever—please let me know and we'll try to find a chance to meet during one of my forays into the area.

Being a minister in a church community is a hard thing to do when one is physically present only a few days a month. Sure, I can make an effort to organize my time in town effectively so that I meet with as many people possible and am in touch regularly by phone or email when I'm not in town, but the work of ministry doesn't always happen on a regular schedule. Those who have been around MCUUF for a while have experienced this kind of part-time ministry before. But it doesn't have to be this way. The process that your board and district leadership have recommended to initiate to facilitate the search process for a settled minister is meant to offer a new model for this church. Even though the position may still be defined as a part-time position, the expectation is that we'll be able to find a minister who will relocate to the area and practice ministry not just a few days a month but as a member of the greater community. Even though this person may not preach more frequently or attend more board meetings, he or she would also become a part of the community that MCUUF is a part of, and that will open doors to personal engagement and long-term growth. The first step in this process takes place at the special congregational meeting scheduled for after the service on March 17. I urge you all to attend this meeting, ask questions, and ultimately cast a vote for a future of a growing UU ministry in this community.

One further note: Many, many apologies to those who planned to attend our "inquirers" class last month; due to my aforementioned illness, we had to postpone it. But we have rescheduled it for Wednesday, March 6, at 6 p.m. at Riverside Church. This is an important opportunity for those who have been considering joining MCUUF to talk to me and others about what this means, as well as an opportunity to learn more about the history and programs we offer. I hope to see many of you there—it will also be a chance to discover surprising things about ourselves and others.

In faith,
Ken

SUNDAY SERVICES

March 3: Rev. Ken Jones, "Love on Fire: A History of Universalism in America" In this first of a three-part series on the history of Unitarian Universalism, Rev. Jones looks at the passion held by our Universalist forebears and how that influences our religious movement today.

This is a sUUp Sunday - Plan to stay for a savory lunch after the service.

March 10: "Wildflowers of the Columbia Gorge," Don Hardin. From Boston, 1871, to Columbia Gorge, 2013: in our history and spiritual values, is there a Unitarian Universalist connection? A fast-paced photo program of Columbia Gorge wildflowers selected from a gallery of over 5,000 wildflower photos taken during the summer of 2012.

March 17: Rev. Ken Jones "Heretics or Prophets?" This morning Rev. Jones will bring us the second in a three-part series of sermons on the history of Unitarian Universalism. This one's focus is on American Unitarianism, and it ponders the question of whether we are heretics or prophets—or perhaps a little of both. We'll include a New Member Welcoming Ceremony.

NOTICE OF SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MARCH 17. The board has called a special meeting, immediately following the service, to consider whether we should pursue a search

for a settled half-time minister. Please plan to attend so that you can share in making this important decision.

Should MCUUF seek a half-time settled minister?

Our history of having short-term contract (or consulting) ministers at MCUUF may change. In early December, our UU district executive, Janine Larsen, led our congregation in a visioning workshop focused on our alternatives for ministry. She made a strong recommendation: that we are most likely to attract a minister willing to live and remain in our community if we seek a settled half-time minister rather than a contract minister. Would you like MCUUF to have a half-time settled minister? We need to decide fairly soon. We will vote at the March 17 congregational meeting on whether to seek a half-time settled minister.

A settled minister is a minister who plans to stay for an indefinite period of time. Since the Search Committee would seek our settled minister from across the United States, it is probable that our settled minister will be making a major commitment to us. In particular, the minister and his or her family would be relocating to accept our call. Similarly, we would be making a major commitment to that person. We would be committing support at an agreed-upon salary package that would be negotiated in advance. And it would be assumed by the minister and the fellowship that this level of support would be continued for an extended, indefinite number of years. In addition to this financial commitment, we would be committing to what the UUA calls a “shared ministry” with the minister: we would be committing to work with him or her to carry out our vision for our fellowship.

If the members of the fellowship vote to proceed with the search for a settled minister, we will begin a process to determine what qualities we desire in a minister. Members of the Interim Search Committee will be available after the service every Sunday between now and March 17 to answer your questions and hear your opinions. Please join in the discussion.

CALENDAR

MCUUF Inquirer Class: Wednesday, March 6, 6-9 p.m.

Riverside Community Church, 317 State Street, Hood River

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 Morneault.

The Welcome New Members ceremony is scheduled for March 17 during the Sunday service.

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 Einhorn. All discussions are from 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the Hood River Library meeting room.

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?”

March Religious Education Schedule:

3rd: What is culture? What is yours?

10th: In Our Hands – A Peace and Social Justice

17th: St. Patrick’s Day

24th: Primitive Faiths

31st: Easter

Coming of Age Program Schedule

March 3, 10 a.m., Session 18: Faith (mentors should attend).

March 17, 10 a.m.-11:20: Interview Your Mentor (mentors should attend).

11:20 – 12:40: Lunch/Interview Minister (without mentors; tweens provide food).

April 14, 10 a.m., Sessions 21, Faith Statements (mentors should attend).

11:40 a.m., Session 22, Faith Statements.

April 28, 10 a.m., Session 23, When People Try to Convert You.

COMMUNITY ACTION

Community Action: UUs Focus on Gun Violence

The UUA has long taken a strong position fighting gun violence in the U.S., including authoring three general resolutions on gun control (1972, 1976, 1991). The UUA will join the National Council of Churches in presenting Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath Weekend March 15-17.

How YOU can help: SPEAK UP for Obama's gun reform proposals:

Go to www.bradycampaign.org to urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to pass Obama's proposed gun reform legislation immediately.

Current Gun Legislation in OR

Rep. Mitch Greenlick (D, Portland) has introduced HB 3200 to ban private ownership of assault weapons and large-capacity magazines. The bill currently has eight co-sponsors in the state House and eight in the state Senate.

Surveys show that the majority of Oregonians want action on assault weapons. For more information: <http://www.ceasefireoregon.org/>.

How YOU can help: SPEAK UP for Oregon's HB 3200:

#1 Email (rep.tinakotek@stare.or) or call House Speaker Tina Kotek (503-986-1200) now and tell her HB 3200 deserves a hearing and a vote.

#2 Call now, and urge your state representative to support HR 3200.

Call your State Rep: 800-332-2313, or his/her local #. *Need info on your OR State Rep?*

You'll be speaking with an aide or secretary, not the Representative. Prepare your message:

- Give your name and address.
- "I am calling to urge Representative X to support HR 3200" (the assault weapons ban).
- You can also add some personal input, like why banning private ownership of assault weapons and large capacity magazines is important to you.

SOLV Beach Cleanup on March 30.

Come meet, play, and work with other UU's on the Oregon coast. Adults and youth from Portland-area congregations (including MCUUF) will be meeting at Cape Lookout State Park on Saturday, March 30, to participate in the annual beach cleanup, followed by a pot luck and socializing. This is a great chance to get together with other UU's, perform some good work, and spend a day on a lovely section of the coast. More details will be coming out shortly. For more information, please contact Elaine Castles.

Save the date for Portland Gay Pride Parade on June 16

This year MCUUF will be joining with other Portland-area members of the Mt. Hood Cluster of UU Congregations to participate as a group in the Portland Gay Pride Parade. Imagine the impact of hundreds of UU's, all clad in yellow "Standing on the Side of Love" tee shirts, marching together for equality and human dignity. Please contact Elaine Castles if you might be willing to serve as our local site coordinator for this event.

SOUND THE ALARM!

Climate Change Clocks keep ticking....It is time to answer the alarm!

Noontime rally and march Wednesday, March 13th Noon to 1 PM

Gorge Ecumenical Ministries & Power Past Coal Coalition

The alarm clock is ringing

- Time to wake up to the realities of climate change everywhere!
- Time to give “wake-up” attention to threat of coal exports in the Columbia Gorge!
- Time to send a clear message to Governor Kitzhaber by April 1st to deny upcoming permits for the Ambre Energy’s Morrow-Pacific Project.

Gather at Riverside Community Church, 4th & State Hood River.

Welcome and Orientation

Bring your lunch. Light snacks and beverages will be provided.

Bring your own bell to ring as we march!

We’ll march to Overlook Memorial Park ringing bells and carrying signs!

We’ll ring bells in solidarity with a similar event in Salem.

Brief remarks from leaders of local faith communities, Hood River Mayor Arthur Babitz, and a youth speaker from the HRVHS Earth Club.

The alarm has sounded: Let’s answer it!