



MID-COLUMBIA UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

NEWSLETTER – MAY 2013

LEADERSHIP LETTER

“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.”
– Margaret Atwood, *Bluebeard's Egg*

With the weather warming up, more life seems to be appearing all around, in the numerous wildflowers, the plethora of birds, and the beginnings of vegetable gardens. I feel like I am pushing out of the soil as well, feeling a little more invigorated and ready to use the energy I have stored and the lessons I have learned to push some outward growth. Sometimes the weather doesn't cooperate, though, with the freezing levels dropping and threatening harm on newly growing life. Today began blustery with dark clouds, and I just wanted to stay in bed. Such is spring.

However, I have enough Springs behind me that I know they always yield to summer, when sun and beauty are abundant and we reap the rewards of what we toiled to plant earlier in the year. So even when I don't want to get out of bed, even when I'm challenged by life as it presents itself, I have faith that if I put the work into planting myself on my path, using the lessons I've learned through the seasons, I will reap the benefits of growing myself into a good life.

We as a fellowship have learned much from the challenges (or opportunities for growth, as I like to call them) that we have faced over the last year. We have planted ourselves on the path to settled ministry with the faith that we will harvest a growing and stronger fellowship and community presence in the future. I encourage you all to attend the Annual Congregational Meeting on May 5th after the service to add your voice of support for this year's slate of board officers, the search committee, the nominating committee, and the annual budget.

In faith,
Maya Trook
President, MCUUF Board of Trustees

FROM OUR MINISTER

One of the important things about rituals is they help remind us what time of year it is. Certain rituals, such as celebrating Easter, for example, remind us that spring is coming. And there are other rituals – particularly rituals we do in church – that remind we Ministers that summer is coming. And no, I'm not talking about something as profound and wondrous as Flower Communion – I'm talking about something much more ordinary: the Annual Meeting of the Congregation.

And yes, you heard right – our Annual Meeting at MCUUF is this coming Sunday, May 5. Although it may not seem like a real big deal as we gather to establish a quorum and vote on budgets and vacant Board positions and the like, in a way it really is a big deal. Especially as we will be voting on some of you who have stepped forward and agreed to

serve in new leadership positions in the fellowship. It is also the time for which those who are retiring from a position of leadership will be formally relieved of their duties. To these people, especially, the Annual Meeting certainly is a big deal. In this sense, I think it should be for all of us, for it represents the beginning of a transition from one church year to the next, a time to reflect on the year completed and to renew our visioning for what we want to do next. As I wrote in my annual report to the congregation, that is something I very much look forward to engaging with you on.

We'll have opportunities to formally thank those of you who have given of your time and energy this past year to serve on the Board or some other leadership position. But I want to give special thanks here to our former Board President who sort of slipped away from her position without much formal fanfare – Holly Harrel. Holly served as your Board President during some of the tumultuous events of the past year, and did so with grace and poise. But most of all, as I quickly saw when I came on the scene last fall, she served with a loving heart. She does well the things a Board President needs to do well, including facilitating conversation, preparing agendas and making sure they are adhered to, keeping energy focused where it needs to be, etc. And she did these things in between lots of warm smiles and caring hugs. We'll miss Holly's leadership on the Board, for sure – but she remains one of the many blessings in this religious community.

See you all at the meeting Sunday!

In faith,
Ken

SUNDAY SERVICES

May 5 – Rev. Ken Jones, "The Cooperative Way."

Immediately after the service will be our **Annual Congregational Meeting**. The agenda will include the approval of a budget and the election of members to the board, the Nominating Committee, and the Search Committee.

May 12 – Elaine Castles: "UUs and Worship." Many of us UUs are uncomfortable with traditional religious language, yet we find ourselves showing up Sunday after Sunday for something that we call a "worship service." What is going on here, anyway? Join Elaine Castles for an exploration of why, how, and what it might be that UUs worship.

May 19 – Rev. Ken Jones, "UU101: A Life on the Edge." How can a religion that seems so simple sound so complex? Because it is a simple religion, this Unitarian Universalism -- but life itself is, of course, complex. This morning Rev. Jones will speak in memory of his late father, a lifelong agnostic, and tell us of some surprising lessons learned from the diverse community of family and friends who gathered to say goodbye to him seven years ago.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

May 5 - Annual Congregational Meeting, immediately after the service. The agenda will include the approval of a budget and the election of members to the board, the Nominating Committee, and the Search Committee. The proposed slate of candidates is as follows:

Proposed MCUUF Board Officers for 2013/2014.

President: Kristen Dillon

Vice President: Stacy Campbell

Secretary: **Elaine Castles

Treasurer: *Denise Endow (with Bruce's back-up)

At Large: Tom Kaser, **Dennis Carlson, Nick Kraemer

** Currently in position

* Moving to new position on board

Proposed Nominating Committee for 2013/2014

Tom Penchoen

Trish Hardin

Martha Usatine

Proposed Ministerial Search Committee.

Steve Castles

Paul Blackburn

Don Hardin

Debbie Olson

Todd Dierker

Cindy Allen

Circle Supper on May 18. The grass is green, the flowers are blooming, the birds are singing—and that must mean it's time for our spring round of Circle Suppers. If you're interested in attending one of these potluck dinners, either as a guest or a host, please contact Jonathan. He will also have sign-up sheets available in church. Newcomers and visitors are especially invited to attend.

Coming of Age Program Schedule

May 5, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Session 24, Rehearsal for Coming of Age Service.

May 17-19, Session 25, Wilderness Retreat. (Mentors are encouraged to attend for part of May 18.)

June 2, 10 a.m., Session 26, Coming of Age Service followed by congregational potluck lunch. (Mentors should attend.)

The **Women's Awareness Circle** will meet on **Friday, May 31 at 7-8:30 p.m.** in the home of Irene K. Jane F. and Trish H. will be co-discussion leaders. The topic will be: The Gifts of Aging. It is easy to think about all of the things we have lost as we have aged, but aging brings gifts as well. Aging occurs over our entire life span. What are some gifts that aging has brought into your life?

ODES on a Theme is an adult religious exploration discussion program. Each month we 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 downstairs meeting room of the Hood River Library.

Monday, 5/20, 6:30-8:00 pm: "Our Place in Nature, Muir or Less"—Recognizing, protecting, preserving, maintaining, and destroying wild places and natural balances. Our need for nature and nature's need for us.

Religious Education Schedule for May

5th Cinco de Mayo

12th Mother's day
19th The concept of paying it forward
26th Power of volunteering. What can we do to help?

General Assembly in Louisville, June 19-23

Our congregation is entitled to appoint two delegates to attend the UUA's General Assembly in Louisville in June. Those who have attended these gatherings report that it is a wonderful experience. If you are interested in representing MCUUF at the GA, please let any member of the board know as soon as you can. It is also possible to attend business sessions as an off-site delegate via the internet.

Parking Greeters for Sunday Mornings

The Fire Department has threatened to tow any vehicles parked on "their" side of the parking lot. In order to avoid this problem, the board agreed that we need to have "parking greeters" stationed outside each Sunday before the service. Some of our teen helpers have agreed to help. However, we are still seeking someone to coordinate their efforts. This is not a big job. Would some kind person be willing to coordinate our teen "parking greeters"? If you wish to have more information, please contact Steve C.

HELP NEEDED

Do you have a copy of the Evensong study packet?

Evensong was a UUA guided study conducted by MCUUF about 8 or 10 years ago. Debbie O. is looking for a copy of the study packet for the Women's Awareness Circle meeting in May. If you have one, please contact Debbie.

Volunteer for Good Neighbor Saturday on May 4

Providence Hospital's Volunteers in Action is again hosting Good Neighbor Saturday in Hood River this May 4. It is seeking volunteers to go out into the community to help with yard work for folks who are not able to get the job done on their own. If you would like to participate, contact Bianca Fernandez, Jesuit volunteer at Providence, at Bianca.Fernandez@providence.org, or tel: 541-387-6404 .

COMMUNITY ACTION

Immigration Reform happening NOW – Sign UUA petition

The debate over immigration reform continues in Washington, D.C., and Unitarian Universalists are advocating that immigration reform respect the inherent worth and dignity of all people. The UUA has partnered with the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON) to promote #Not1More, a project to overcome unjust immigration enforcement policies. A federal immigration reform bill is being formulated now, and *legislators need to hear from us to ensure that reform is compassionate.*

Go to www.notonemoredeportation.com to add your voice and say #Not1More. Learn more about what you can do to advocate for compassionate immigration reform here:

<http://www.standingonthesideoflove.org/cir>.

UUA Initiative: Reducing Gun Violence

Gun safety struck out at the national level because of the shameful pandering of many senators to the gun lobby. Oregon can and must do better.

These four gun safety bills will be voted on in the Oregon Senate in the next two weeks:

- *SB 700: Universal Background Checks* – Closes the private sales loophole so criminals and other dangerous people can't buy guns.
- *SB 347: Gun-Free Schools* – Gives school districts the authority to prohibit guns on campus.
- *SB 699: Guns in Public Buildings* – Ensures that citizens may not openly carry guns in buildings where public bodies are deliberating.
- *SB 796: Training for Concealed Handgun License* – Requires citizens to attend an in-person class before obtaining a concealed handgun license.

Now is the time to call your Oregon state senator to support Senate Bills 700, 347, 699, and 796.

Call 800-332-2313, or his/her local number. Need info on your state senator?

You'll be speaking with an aide or secretary, not the senator himself/herself. Prepare your message:

- Give your name and address.
- "I am calling to urge Senator X to support SB 700, 347, 699, and 796 (the 4 gun safety bills)."