



MID-COLUMBIA UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

## MCUUF NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2013

### LEADERSHIP LETTER

*Want what you have.*

*Be who you are.*

*Do what you can.*

– Rev. Forrest Church

Nearing his death in 2009, Rev. Church wrote that these three lines best captured his Universalist theology as a guide for living. I think most of us in the First World stand to benefit from diligent practice of the first line. In less-resourced parts of the country and the world, it probably doesn't need to be said so explicitly.

The second phrase challenges us to discern what's in the authentic core of ourselves. It's not just a challenge to know who we are, but to "be" that as well. It calls us to live courageously, facing the vulnerability that comes when we live honestly.

As for the third challenge, my reflection is that we each need to decide when to focus more on the "do" part and when to focus more on the "can." Our Unitarian Universalist theology says important, life-saving things about the sacred nature of each of us. Sacred. As is. But some assembly is required. Every virtue can hold within it aspects that pull us in the opposite direction.

The shadow side of individual worth and dignity is self-satisfaction. Taking the first principle too far, we can indulge ourselves in the fiction that our life task is self-actualization: at the gym, the bookstore or the car dealership. It's not enough to "Be who you are." Rev. Church and I agree that the world calls us to respond with action.

For other people and other times in life, a focus on "can" may be the more life-affirming. It's not about doing everything that needs to be done. It's not your job to respond to all the crying need you see in the world. According to Rev. Church, it's your call to do what is possible and to discern that with care and generous love for the world.

May we go and do likewise.

In faith,  
Kristen Dillon, Board President

### FROM OUR MINISTER

As a parent, I've come to experience summer as a distinctly different time of year: the time of summer vacation. Our "normal" schedules and routines are all different from the time school gets out until the days just before it starts again. Just like when *I* was a kid.

I also know this change of routine, to some extent, as a Unitarian Universalist Minister. There is a long and probably strange tradition in Unitarian Universalist churches to take the summer off, or, at least, run fewer and more informal programs during the summer than we do during the "normal" church year. Personally, I like this tradition – not only as a parent who's schedule has to adjust in the summer, but also as someone who likes to spend lots of time outdoors mostly when the weather is fairly nice. In fact, it's one of the things I list as a "perk"

about my vocation: the hours are pretty erratic and the demands wide-ranging, but heck, at least I get the summers off.

Of course, that's not entirely true. My job is one that I never fully turn off, and there's lots to engage in over the summer months even if my preaching schedule is greatly diminished. (In July and August I'm preaching once a month rather than twice.) But even as I personally enjoy some degree of "break" over the summer, I also recognize the importance of religious community as being available and vibrant all year long – primarily because we're in the "business" of being with people through the ups and downs of life, and as we all know, life doesn't happen only some months of the year.

I've been missing you all as I've spent less time in the gorge this summer, but heartened to hear that the activities of the fellowship are humming along nicely. I am in particular awe of the members of the Search Committee, who have been engaged in the tremendous tasks required to fully engage the UUA's established search process. But it's all happening – preparation for an outstanding lineup of Sunday Services, planning for the Our Whole Lives program, and many other projects that keep Unitarian Universalism alive and thriving in the gorge.

Yes, I enjoy a break from the routine. But now that I start thinking about it, I'm looking forward to being back in it with you all soon.

In faith,  
Ken

## SUNDAY SERVICES

**August 4 - "Spiritual Invitations of the Climate Movement."** Rev. John Boonstra, minister emeritus of Bethel Congregational Church in White Salmon, speaks about his new ministry: coping with climate change.

**August 11 - Rev. Ken Jones, "The Transient and Permanent Life."** Rev. Jones has been reflecting a lot this summer on "things" – things we keep, things we throw away, and things that change (or not). How and why does the "stuff" of life define us and give meaning to us? In a culture that seems to revel in novelty and innovation, how do we retain value for those things that not so long ago were themselves new, but are now hopelessly obsolete? Should we?

**August 18 - Kozen** from the Trout Lake (Buddhist) Abbey pays us his seasonal visit to remind us to treasure this present moment.

**August 25 - The Creative Process.** Musician Aaron Keim wowed us last time with his stories and music, and he is paying us a return visit.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Our Whole Lives Lifespan Sexuality Education**

Seventh through ninth graders are invited to join the "*Our Whole Lives Lifespan Sexuality Education*" program, which will start in mid-September and meet approximately two Sundays per month at the Grange during church services. There will also be a few additional meetings in the fall.

*Our Whole Lives* helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. It equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health,

and society and culture. Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, *Our Whole Lives* not only provides facts about anatomy and human development but also helps participants clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality. Unlike many other sexuality curricula, this program is comprehensive and progressive. In an inclusive and developmentally appropriate manner, it addresses sensitive topics that are typically excluded. The curriculum was developed by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ. The program does not promote a specific religious doctrine. The underlying values of the program reflect the justice-oriented traditions of both denominations. More info is available at: <http://www.uua.org/re/owl/>

To register for the program, to get a copy of the draft schedule, or for additional information, please contact Alicia B.

We need to recruit additional youth for this program, so please help us spread the word about this unique opportunity!

**The Woman's Awareness Circle** will meet on Friday, Aug 30, from 7-8:30 p.m. at the home of Debbie O. The topic will be: "Pondering the Quandary of Death." For Directions, please call Debbie.

#### **You can be a gift to a teen!**

Join fellow UU s in mentoring teens through **Mentor For Success**. We have many kids aged 14-18 waiting to be matched with caring adult mentors. The teens are referred by school counselors and desperately need the stability and encouragement of a mentor. It's fun and rewarding and can be the critical ingredient for a struggling area teen. Contact Bonnie New at [bnew1@live.com](mailto:bnew1@live.com) or 541-490-9919.

#### **Care Team**

MCUUF strives to be a community that supports each other. If you or someone you know in the fellowship has a need—because of a loss, illness, or other difficulty—please notify the Rev. Ken Jones or any member of our Care Team: Jane F, Anita J, Ray K, Jay L, or Tom P. The Care Team will do its best to organize respectful and appropriate help for this situation.

### **UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION**

#### **A Moral Imperative - Raising Minimum Wage**

The Rev. Peter Morales, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), and the Rev. Bill Schulz, president and CEO of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, have issued a joint statement in support of legislation to raise minimum wages in the United States. The statement reads in part, "It is time to ask that everyone share in corporate success, not just a handful of executives. As people of faith, we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and raising the minimum wage is vital in ensuring that dignity. . . ."

To read the full statement, go to:

<http://www.uua.org/news/pressroom/pressreleases/289076.shtml>

