



MID-COLUMBIA UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

## MCUUF NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER, 2013

### LEADERSHIP LETTER

*“Unitarian Universalism at its best is a way at looking at religious questions without requiring that THE answer be found for everybody, without requiring that your answer be imposed on everyone else. There’s a built-in flexibility. . . . I prefer to think of it as a humble acceptance that I am not God. I am not the arbiter of these things. [T]he best I can be is a window through which they, the person that I’m with, can get a glimpse of something. And I can only do that by being as completely loving to them as I can be.” – Rev. Kate Braestrup*

Window metaphors figure prominently in the writing of many of my favorite modern Unitarian Universalist theologians. Rev. Forrest Church envisioned religion itself as a series of stained glass windows, coloring the light that shines in on all of us. Different windows, filtering the same light.

I listen to Rev. Kate Braestrup every chance I get. She serves as a chaplain with the game warden service in Maine. Her ministry is to the family of people lost, injured or killed in the woods, and the first responders who conduct the searches. Most of her work is with people unfamiliar with Unitarian Universalism and perhaps hostile to religion altogether.

As she serves people in crisis, Kate Braestrup models the religious life as a *way of being* rather than a way of knowing. She integrates the concrete experiences of the world here and now with glimpses of the forces of mystery in our lives. Her humility and sense of humor strike me as a lovely alternative to being overly serious and overly sure in a world replete with uncertainty.

Braestrup is one of a growing cadre of Unitarian Universalist chaplains, in health care as well as law enforcement and the military, who bring their presence to people in suffering. Our UU chaplains also come to this work with a strong grounding in ethical discernment and a vision of religion as an expansive way of life that welcomes all. While my work is not as a religious professional, I still seek to emulate their example. They model for the rest of us how to serve in the world as a window on the divine and the possible. For me there’s no better description of what it means to live religiously.

In Faith,  
Kristen

### FROM OUR MINISTER

Now that our Ministerial Search Committee has completed a survey of the congregation, talked to many people, and created a picture of what the ideal candidate for settled minister at MCUUF will look like, I’ll spill the beans and tell everyone that I could have saved us all the trouble. For the truth is, I already know what the ideal candidate will be like. To tell it, I’ve unashamedly stolen this description from a blog by UU minister Chip Rousch, which is his adaptation of a well-known portrayal of an ideal minister:

*The perfect minister is a young energetic person with a maturity beyond his years.  
Her sermons are thoroughly researched, intellectually satisfying, down to earth and touch her congregants’ feelings.  
He condemns injustice but never hurts anyone’s feelings.  
She writes sermons all day long and takes care of maintenance chores on her lunch break.*

*He is single—with a nice family.*

*She makes \$400 a week, wears good clothes, maintains an extensive library, drives a decent car and pledges generously to the church. And to National Public Radio.*

*He is 26 years old and has 30 years of experience.*

*She is a humanistic theist, with Buddhist and pagan influences.*

*On his day off, he meets with every committee and publishes the newsletter.*

*Always taking a stand, but never confrontational, she has a burning desire to work with the teenagers and spends all her time with the older folks.*

*He smiles all the time with a straight face because his sense of humor keeps him seriously dedicated to church work.*

*She makes 15 pastoral calls a day, in hospitals and homes, takes leadership roles in the denomination, meets weekly with the local interfaith group and is always available in the church office.*

So you see, there's no need, really, for all this research into what it is MCUUF is looking for.

Well, okay, maybe we do need to rein in our expectations quite a bit. Truth is, we're looking for a human being, one whose passions and talents will hopefully be a unique "fit" for us here at MCUUF and our ministry in the gorge. This article, some versions of which I've seen before, recently appeared in my inbox, and I thought it timely for us—timely so that as we prepare ourselves for the coming of a new minister, we remember that no one of us is going to be 100 percent satisfied with whomever we choose. But I have faith that 100 percent of us will recognize that a new minister will bring many gifts to our community.

And that's what matters.

In faith,  
Ken

## SUNDAY SERVICES

**Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour this Saturday night!**

**November 3—Rev. Ken Jones, "Deeper Than Skin."** It is sometimes thought that what is only "skin deep" doesn't matter very much. Yet we live in a culture in which the color of our skin—our race—has implications that go much deeper, to the very core of our being. With the stubborn persistence of racism in our society, we need to pay attention to how the privileges and oppressions that come with it affect who we are and what we are called to do. Ken will address this, paying particular attention to efforts over the last few decades for Unitarian Universalism to become an anti-oppression, multi-cultural religion.

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

**November 10—Paul Blackburn** will be shamelessly promoting.

After the service and refreshments, **Bruce Bolme** will be presenting a talk entitled "**Growing a Beautiful Economy.**" He will be talking about the global economy, its history, what's happening to it now, what we should expect to happen to it, and what we can do to prepare proactively. The presentation will take about one hour.

**November 17—Rev. Ken Jones, "Acceptance and Beyond."** In this third in his series on the UU principles, Ken explores what it means to affirm and promote "acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth." Are these two objectives inherently conflicting? Or do they enhance one another?

There will be an **ODES discussion** after the service and refreshments, following the theme of the service, with details below.

**November 24—Ben Bonham** and friends will share their music and insights.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**ODES on a Theme** is an adult religious exploration discussion program. A topic is introduced, then we form small groups to provide the **O**ppportunity to **D**iscuss, **E**xplore, and **S**hare our beliefs and opinions. The emphasis is on participation, not prior knowledge. No advance reading, preparation, or commitment to attend is required. Discussions will occur one Sunday per month, either during the service or afterwards, from 11:30 to 12:30. If there are any questions, contact Eric E.

### **ODES on a Theme Schedule and Topics:**

**Nov. 17, 11:30-12:30: “Going Our Own Ways, Together.”** We encourage individual spiritual growth. Today we’ll share our own stories and discuss UU’s role in continuing our journeys.

**Dec. 15, during the service:** Topic to be determined.

### **OWL—Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education Schedule**

- Sunday, Nov. 3, Lessons #6/7, Gender Roles, Disability/Diversity Issues, 9:50 a.m., Rockford Grange.
- Sunday, Nov. 10, Lesson #11/8, Intro to Relationships & Sexual Orientation, 6-9 p.m., Rockford Grange. (Joint meeting with Riverside.)
- Monday, Nov. 11, Lessons #9/10/12, Gender Identity, Guest Panel, Relationship skills, 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Rockford Grange. (Joint meeting with Riverside.)
- Sunday, Nov. 17, Lessons #13/14, Friendship/Dating, Rockford Grange.

### **UU Meetup Group**

The UU Meetup and Hiking Group is an email list of people who like to share events with others. Examples of events that have been shared are musical and theatrical events at the Columbia Center of the Arts in Hood River, movies, school performances, charitable events and, of course, hikes. Sometimes we meet up for dinner before evening events. Anyone can initiate a UU meetup by sending an email announcing the meetup opportunity to the UU Meetup email list. If you do not have the latest email list, you can obtain it from Steve Castles or Anita Johnston.

If you would like to have your name added to that list, please email or call Steve Castles at [shcastles at embarqmail dot com](mailto:shcastles@embarqmail.com), (541) 296-0655 or email Anita Johnston at [anitajj at yahoo dot com](mailto:anitajj@yahoo.com).

**Marriage for same-sex couples** is now legal in 13 states, but Oregon is one of the 30 states that has

a constitutional amendment banning it. The only way to change that is through a vote of the people. Basic Rights Oregon has spent years working to build support for the freedom to marry in Oregon, and the national mood is very positive. Momentum is with us, but to win we must have conversations with our neighbors, co-workers, families, and friends about why marriage matters. And we must have the financial support to run an effective and efficient campaign. Please attend a house party on Friday, Nov. 1, to learn more about how you can support this watershed campaign—Oregonians United for Marriage (OR4M). For more information, contact Paul Blackburn.

### **The Women’s Awareness Circle**

The Women’s Awareness Circle will meet on Friday, November 22, 4-5:30 p.m. (Please note time change for winter.) It will be in the home of Irene Kurzweil, 583 Rocky Rd., Hood River. The topic will be “Connecting to People.” How do you go about connecting to people, making friends, new life situations? Please RSVP by calling Irene at 541-386-6837. This group is open to all MCUUF women.

**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 Ken Jones or any member of our Care Team: Jane Fetisoff, Anita Johnston, Ray Klebba, Jay Larsen, or Tom Penchoen. The Care Team will do its best to organize respectful and appropriate help for this situation.

**Upcoming Performances in Hood River**

Many UUs are involved in creating these opportunities in the Gorge.

- The December VOCI concerts are scheduled for Saturday, December 7, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, December 8, at 2 p.m. in the high school auditorium. It will feature choral music of wintertime from many traditions and cultures.
- Scenes from “The Nutcracker” will be featured in three performances: twice on Saturday, December 14, at 2 and 4 p.m., and at 2 p.m. on Sunday, December 15, at the Hood River Middle School auditorium.