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UUFC NEWSLETTER

December
2017

"May you be blessed with peace, [and] enough to share."

Between Us.

The Fellowship is not part of mainstream Christianity, but Christianity is part of our heritage. One part of that heritage which we claim is a dedication to radical love and inclusion. It's a constant challenge, and we never fully achieve it. Part of the challenge is that we're also dedicated to freedom. Every individual is free to come and go from the Fellowship, to participate or not participate. With more than 500 people coming, going, connecting in different ways at different times, it's very hard to know what each person needs. The minister, staff, Care and Support team, and many members are ready and willing to help when help is needed, but we can't help if we don't know!

So, to make it easier to communicate needs, we've set up a new e-mail system. If you have an important event or transition (e.g. illness, hospitalization, death, birth, engagement, moving, etc) that you'd like us to know about or announce, please

e-mail transitions@uucorvallis.org, so that we can follow-up with you about next steps. This e-mail is not a general announcement; it will be monitored by ministers and pastoral care staff. Please do use it, to help us help each other.

The winter holiday season is complicated. For some, it's a time of great joy and celebration. For others, it's a hard time, exacerbated by the short days and long nights. In the past few years the Fellowship has offered a gathering for all who are living with depression, their own or someone else's. We'll gather again this year starting on Monday Dec. 18, 7 PM. All are invited. Follow-up meetings will be scheduled depending on what people need and want.

The holidays can be somewhat confusing too. We're not a Christian church, so Christmas is not our main December event. Still, Christmas is part of our heritage, and is very important to many Fel-

lowship members. We do offer Christmas Eve services, at 5:30 and 9:00 pm on December 24. The dedication of babies and children is a Fellowship tradition at these services. There will also be a Solstice/Yule celebration on Dec. 22, regular kirtan gatherings during most of the month, and the always popular Christmas Carol Sing-Along on Sunday, Dec. 17.

Again this year, as you contemplate how and why and what to give, I encourage you to think of gifts which can really make a difference. Our Christmas offerings will be dedicated to our support of refugees and addressing homelessness. Please join me in making a generous gift.

May you find what you need in this complicated and beautiful season, and may you be blessed with peace, enough to share.



See you Sunday! *-Jill*

Governance

Board of Trustees News

House Sale Revenue to Go to Building Enhancement Project, Initially

Now that the City has approved the Corvallis Zen Circle's application for a change of use, the house sale will go through in the next few weeks. (Hooray!) We will receive a down payment upon closing and a monthly payment thereafter. A portion of the money that CZC will pay us will be to buy the solar power system on the house. That money is to be returned to our endowment. The Board deliberated how to use the remainder of the money, which will be approximately \$65,000 over the next three years and decided to apply it to the Building Enhancement Project during the period when the Fellowship is actively paying down the project costs. The Building Design Team will determine exactly how this money will be applied to the project. Future Boards will consider how to designate the house payment income after the building project is completed.

Plans to Achieve Board Goals for '17-'18

The Board has adopted a set of goals for the year, as summarized in the box below. At the November board meeting, we held small group discussions to develop detailed plans to achieve the goals. We are working on most of the goals already, but we need to have clear objectives to make sure we are doing the right things and making progress.

Board of Trustee Goals for 2017-18

- Explore Board Organizational Structure and Governance Options
- Develop Key Issue Goals: Climate Change Work and Anti-Racism Work
- Renew the Bylaws
- Redesign the Annual Meeting
- Initiate Assistant Minister Discussion

Revenue Generation Report

As a part of the Board's effort to build a solid financial foundation for the Fellowship, we heard a presentation of the history and current standing of income for our operations. We are in a strong financial position and are in line with other congregations in the UUA.

Our operating income comes almost totally—98 percent—from pledges. However, a significant portion of pledge income is from a few large donors. The Board has begun looking at opportunities for revenue generation in addition to pledges.

Additional Tree Removal Coming

The Board approved funding for the unexpected, but unfortunately necessary, removal of additional trees along the north edge of the property. Several incense cedars have been identified as being in poor condition. Fellowship neighbors are nervous about potential damage to their own property, and so the Board approved the recommendation for tree removal.

To wrap up this month's highlight, a reminder that UUFC Board Meeting minutes are posted online in the File Cabinet (bottom of page). Also, the UUFC Board meetings include a time for member comments as a way for Board members to be in conversation with members. Generally, meetings are on the second Mon. at 7:00pm. And with that, we're off to more good work in the month ahead!

Worship Services



"Finding Strength in Humility"

Rev. Jill McAllister

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A year ago we wondered what it would be like to live with humility. Perhaps we know more now. Reflections on a challenging year, from a well-known story of waiting.

"Winter Dark Earth"

Rev. Jill McAllister

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Here, where we live, it's the darkest time of the year. The season of short days, bare trees, cold fog, and wet earth. Human cultures tend to bear this season by focusing on lights and the return of the sun, but it's good to remember the gifts of darkness and winter as well. We need the gifts of winter, of earth and of darkness, as much as we need other seasons.

Words for Reflection

Here's to epiphanies great and small, whenever they occur. A blessing on all Wise People, East and West. Here's to pilgrims and stargazers who are still brave enough to follow their starts, who travel by night, who bestow their uncommon gifts on us all.

~Patrick. T. A. O'Neill

December Events

- 2 Holiday Fair 9 AM - 3 PM at the UUFC.
- 11 UUFC Board Meeting, 7 PM.
- 17 Join us for the 6th annual UUFC Christmas Carol Sing-Along! 4-6 PM. Around the piano in the Sanctuary; then food in the Social Hall.
- 18 Living with Depression Gathering at 7 PM in Room 9.
- 22 Winter Solstice (Yule) Gathering at 7 PM.
- 29 New World Kirtan Band at 7 PM.

Justice

Immigrant and Refugee Support Team

This new Justice team is hard at work. We attend and advertise presentations and training to learn more of what it means to be an immigrant today in this country, and how to be good allies. One of our goals is to local organizations that support immigrants; we plan to help with Casa Latinos Unidos Spring fundraiser gala. We attend Interfaith Immigrant Support group meetings monthly. We explore whether and how we might offer sanctuary in conjunction with other congregations here, and ways to help Burundian UUs in Burundi and in exile around the world.

Religious Exploration

Religious Exploration: A Mummers Play

Who doesn't love a holiday pageant? There's something magical and fun about celebrating the advent of the holiday season with a big, collaborative, theatrical ritual in which adults and children work as a team to create something exciting. When I was a child, I participated in more holiday pageants than I can count, usually as an angel (because I like to sing and I was really into tinsel at the time). The pageants got boring after awhile, though, because they always told the same story in the same way.

That's a shame, because our Western cultural heritage has some other fascinating stories to tell around the holidays. One of my favorite examples is the British tradition of the mummers play. While "mumming" or "guising," a ritualized holiday practice not unlike trick-or-treating in which costumed performers would go door to door singing and dancing in exchange for cakes and ale, goes back at least 600 years, mummers plays are a nineteenth century iteration of the practice. Around the Solstice or during the twelve days of Christmas, mummers put on goofy plays about figures of British legend that

symbolize the cycle of summer and winter and of life and rebirth.

It's a pity that this entertaining tradition isn't more widely known here in the US, so we're going to give it a whirl here at the Fellowship! Join the Religious Exploration program at the 11:00 AM service on December 17 to experience our very own UUFC Mummers Play, presented by the children and youth of the Fellowship. If you (and/or your children!) would like to contribute to this collaborative celebration, join me, RE Associate Rachel Kohler, at the children's craft table during the Holiday Bazaar on December 2nd from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, where I'll be inviting everyone to work together to create props and costumes for the pageant.

Adult Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education:

Adult OWL will be offered in April/May of 2018 - Watch for future announcements.

About OWL Sexuality Education

Honest, accurate information about sexuality changes lives. It dismantles stereotypes and assumptions, builds self-acceptance and self-esteem, fosters healthy relationships, improves decision making, and has the potential to save lives. For these reasons and more, we are proud to offer Our Whole Lives, a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education curricula.

Interactive workshops and lessons engage participant's needs by age group. Our Whole Lives (OWL) helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. With a holistic approach, OWL provides accurate, developmentally appropriate information about a range of topics, including relationships, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual health, and cultural influences on sexuality.

OWL offers: accurate information presented in developmentally appropriate ways; affective and emotional learning; guiding values and principles; activities that help participants clarify values and improve decision-making skills; a safe and supportive peer group; acceptance of diversity, and a social justice approach to inclusive sexuality education.

OWL gives clear messages about the following key sexuality issues: self worth, sexual health, responsibility, and justice and inclusivity. OWL affirms parents as their children's primary sexuality educators, and recognizes and respects the diversity of participants with regard to biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and disability status. Trained volunteers facilitate OWL, and receive support from Fellowship RE staff.



9:30 AM "Hannukah: Not a Jewish Christmas" with Rev. Jill McAllister. It's the story of a miracle (or two), worth pondering for these times

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11 AM Holiday Pageant with Mummers Play Religious Exploration Classes Don't miss this re-enactment of an old English tradition (brilliantly updated by Rachel Kohler), presented by our RE classes and helpers. A service for all ages.

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"Stories of Christmas" ONE service, at 11 AM

Elizabeth Sollie, Rev. Jill McAllister, and All One morning service only, at 11 am. (no 9:30 am service). All ages will gather to hear stories of Christmas, new and old. Baby and toddler care will be available.

Council

We're also reading books and watching documentaries about the immigrant experience, and invite you to join us. This month we recommend:

Outcasts United by Warren St. John (non-fiction) and 14-minute TED Talk by Luma Mufleh (2017) "Don't feel sorry for refugees - believe in them." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wNif5SIN08>

Our next meeting is Monday, Dec. 4 at 2:30 PM at the UUFC. We welcome anyone interested in learning more.

Social Concerns

In December we'll raise funds and awareness for Community Outreach through bake sales and Sunday collections. <http://www.communityoutreachinc.org/>

Community Outreach, Inc. (COI) has been helping individuals and families in our community who face the most challenging times in their lives for 46 years. The compassionate staff knows how to match their needs with resources in our community with dignity, and respect. COI provides housing for families, a nature-based childcare center, behavioral health services, medical and dental clinics and community services such a food bank, crisis intervention, a community kitchen and showers. While funding for these services comes from federal, state, city and county sources, their major funding (29%) comes from individual donations. Please support the bake sales in December generously with your donations.

Dedication of Babies and Children on Christmas Eve

Fellowship members who wish to have their children dedicated at either of the Christmas Eve services (the early service at 5:30 PM or the late service at 9:00 PM) should contact Jill McAllister (minister@uucorvallis.org). Child Dedication is a Unitarian Universalist tradition of naming, blessing and welcome for babies and children.

UUFC Building Enhancement Project



Connections Council

The Building Design Team reports that the soils engineering analysis has been completed, and nothing alarming has been unearthed (no pun intended). A complete boundary, infrastructure, and topographic survey has been completed as well; and armed with these important pieces of information, our architects are working on the schematic design for the new social hall, kitchen, and restrooms. A preliminary meeting with the City of Corvallis Building Department went well, and answered many questions about obtaining permits for our path forward.

Near the end of November, a seismic/structural assessment of the existing building will be completed. Task forces focusing on the memorial garden, trees/landscape, and sanctuary flooring have convened to advise the Board in decision-making; and a kitchen design group will meet after the holidays.

As definite calendar dates are determined, they will be posted in newsletters, and on the Building Enhancement Project blog: <https://oursharedfutureuufc.wordpress.com/>

CONNECT UP offers opportunities for us to gather in a variety of interest based small groups to better get to know one another. **SIGN UP** on Sunday, Dec. 31 to participate in or to host an activity in January! In November, our Connect Up opportunities included walking, wine tasting, crafts and soup, intergenerational crafting, and an Alaska Travelogue.

What are your interests? Questions: contact Wendy Sutton connect@uucorvallis.org. For current events, visit Connect Up on the UUFC website: http://uucorvallis.org/?page_id=3776.

Winter Solstice (Yule) Gathering 7 PM on December 22

Join us in the Sanctuary for a Winter Solstice (Yule) gathering. Come honor the longest night of the year and celebrate the gradual return of the light with song, movement, readings, sharing and candles. Contact Cliff Pereira (541-760-4541 or peartree15@comcast.net)

Russian Dinner Fundraiser in January

Plan to join in a delicious homemade Russian Dinner fundraiser at the Fellowship on Jan. 6, 2018. The meal will include borscht, cabbage rolls, and other hearty delights for \$20 per person. There are 80 seats available for the dinner and we also have about 10 spots open for kitchen volunteers. After costs, all proceeds will benefit UUFC justice and outreach work. RSVP by Dec. 7 to Ernest Cardona at cardonalaw3@gmail.com or 541-753-0423.

Worship

Services



Christmas Eve Services

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5:30 PM Family Service of music, carols, stories and sharing for all ages, including dedication of babies and children. Please let Jill know if you have a child you wish to have a child dedicated.

9:00 PM A Meditative Service of readings, silence, and special music from the Choir, including selections from Handel's Messiah. Child dedications are also welcome at this service.

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"Dreams for a New Year"

Rev. Jill McAllister

On the cusp of the turning calendar, we can look both back and ahead, from the present moment. Once again, you're invited to bring poems, prayers, words, or songs to share; things you find helpful in these changing times. A service for all ages. Baby and toddler care will be provided.

Art Exhibitions

Featuring Fellowship artists has been the focus in our Gallery this year. The final exhibit going up in December is called "Our Endangered Earth". Fifteen Fellowship artists present their interpretations of this theme in a multitude of different mediums. Each artist has provided a statement on how their work personally demonstrates this theme. Devastation of the earth, love of the earth and everything in-between are presented. It's provocative and heartwarming and gives insight into the deep feelings within our community about concern for our planet.

The exhibit to begin the new year will be "Florals". As we move away from the bright lights and bright colors of the winter holiday season we will look to new growth and the beauty of the flowers getting ready to burst forth as spring nears. This is again an all fellowship exhibit. Open to artists of all mediums. Deadline to submit work to be juried is nearing: December 15. Please submit electronic images (up to 4 pieces) to: niyabeth@gmail.com. Include: Title, medium, size (when matted and framed / ready for hanging) and price or insurance value if NFS. Don't delay and get caught up in the holiday hustle – start now and look through your images and those piles of art just waiting to be shared! You can start sending the images to be juried right away. For additional information contact Niya Standish, Art Exhibition Chair niyabeth@gmail.com.

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Any other enquiries **541-752-5218**

4 Do you have an interesting story to tell that we can include in the next newsletter? Email us! office@uucorvallis.org

The UUFC Office will be closed: Monday, Dec. 25 - Monday, Jan. 1. We'll still be available by email.