

# Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis

February 2020 Monthly Update



## Between Us

*Jill K. McAllister, Senior Minister*

For the past few years, I have often needed to look specifically for positive news, or what I like to call “The Good Report.” Thankfully, there are several great online resources, such as “Future Crunch,” which recently included these bits of good news for the first two weeks of January:

- ~ In 2019, renewables produced 43% of electricity in Germany, wind power alone contributed 47% of electricity in Denmark, carbon emissions from electricity in Spain fell by 33%, zero carbon electricity outstripped fossil fuels in the United Kingdom for the first time ever, and in the United States, overall emissions fell by 2.1%.
- ~ US cancer death rates dropped 29% between 1991 to 2017, and the most recent update saw the largest single-year decline in mortality ever reported. [Link: NYT]
- ~ As of last month, more than half of Colombia’s municipalities are free of landmines, and the country is on track to remove all mines by 2021. [Link: Reuters]
- ~ Tunisia has become the first Arab nation to begin providing sex education for elementary and middle school students. [Link: Washington Post]
- ~ Following a major drive to tackle pollution, water quality in China has improved significantly: since 2003, average chemical oxygen demand is down 63% and ammonium nitrogen levels have dropped by 78%. [Link: Phys.org]

It really helps me to be aware of progress and good news from around the world. But honestly, even more of the good news that helps me is happening right here at the Fellowship:

- ~ At least once a week I see or hear of people working to make amends, to understand each other when they have had a misunderstanding, to apologize when needed.
- ~ I see our justice teams helping Fellowship members take action: a few recent examples include transporting immigrants to ICE appointments, drafting climate-related policies for the city, getting started on voter turnout for November.
- ~ Most importantly, every day I hear about people taking care of each other – reaching out, calling, visiting, sending notes, providing support, and simply getting to know each other better.

### February 9 – A Celebration for Israel Buffardi

Our Assistant Minister for Religious Exploration, Israel Buffardi, is about to become the Rev. Israel Buffardi. He will be ordained to the UU ministry on February 2, by the congregation in North Andover, Massachusetts, where he served as a ministerial intern last year. The decision to hold the ordination in Massachusetts was made for family reasons; most of Israel and Abigail’s family and closest friends are in New England. Three representatives of the Fellowship will attend and participate: Jill McAllister, Rev. Monica Jacobsen-Tennessee, and Kari Gottfried (Monica and Kari both live in Massachusetts).

Israel was approved by the UUA Department of Ministry to take a ministerial position when he came to the Fellowship. He was granted the credential of Preliminary Ministerial Fellowship in September, which was needed in order for him to be ordained.

On Sunday, Feb. 9, we’ll celebrate his ordination here and add our congratulations, with a special ceremony during worship, and a reception during the coffee hours. We hope you’ll join in.

### Worship Leaders in February

Feb. 2	Committee on Ministry
Feb. 9	Rev. Jill McAllister
Feb. 16	Rev. Jill McAllister
Feb. 23	Rev. Israel Buffardi

All of these things are right relations in real time, and this is what ethical living is made of. Moment by moment, person to person, choices we make and actions we take every day. This is how we learn, and by learning grow. There is always more to learn.

Which reminds me to ask – are you setting out to specifically learn something during Black History Month? Given our commitments to helping dismantle white supremacy, I encourage you to take at least one more step. We'll publish some ideas in the weekly announcements.

See you Sundays -- Jill

## **E**xplorations *Israel Buffardi, Assistant Minister*

### **Creating a Vision for Lifespan Religious Exploration**

The process of religious exploration is a communal one here at the fellowship. Together, we explore our beliefs, name our values, and find our common purpose. Because our process of religious exploration and meaning-making is a communal one, it only seems natural to me that the heart and soul of our religious exploration program must beat in all of you. The center for this program and the mission of this program must be carried by the members of the fellowship.

Since I have been contracted to work as your Assistant Minister for Religious Exploration, a ministerial and administrative role once fulfilled by a long-term lay Director of Religious Exploration (DRE), I have been excited to help you create a vision for the future of your RE program. It is a significant change that the RE program has undergone, both to have transitioned from long-term leadership and to have the role of DRE taken up by a minister rather than a layperson. The lay to ministerial change is an opportunity to see the work of RE in a new visionary light, and the change in long-term leadership is also an opportunity to look at the program with new eyes.

Therefore, we find the program in a transition period, a time that calls us to look at what we are doing together in RE and to ask how our program needs to grow and change to meet the needs of a changing world. In this time of transition, we must ask questions about our RE program to each other. We must invite each other into the process of dreaming and visioning, for this time is truly an opportunity to figure out how to ensure that the fellowship will remain a center for spiritual discovery and enrichment for future generations.

All of this work that we are called to do in this time of transition is part of the communal process of discovery. Therefore, I am calling all of you to join in this process and create a vision for your RE program. I have called together a group of people from the fellowship to become a part of the RE council. The RE council will work to create a vision and a mission for the RE program, and they will also generate recommendations for how we can carry out that vision, which will be presented at a town hall meeting in mid-April. I have already asked several people to join in this visioning process, and I welcome anyone else with a passion and investment in the Lifespan RE program. This is all of you really, because all of you are a part of this process of communal meaning-making. Together we will draw our attention to seeking our spiritual center. I invite you to join in the process.

# Board of Directors Report

*Scott Bruslind, UUFC Board President*

The Fellowship Board of Directors met on Monday, Jan. 13, 2020. Notable at this meeting, and of considerable import to our Fellowship is the Board agreement to authorize spending up to \$2 million on the first part of our building construction project – the new classroom/meeting room wing. The Board has directed the building construction team to return to Gerding Builders (2020 Corvallis Large Business of the Year) and Varitone Architecture & Interior Design to move from a conceptual drawing to a building design that can serve the needs of our program and building use. This action gets us back on track for new construction.

Presently we have \$1.2 million in the Building Enhancement Fund and about another \$300k yet to come in from our capital campaign. An option to bank/invest the capital campaign funds was considered and not approved. A building project finance team is now looking at other funding sources for the overall project, including grants, bequests, savings, borrowing, and further fund-raising. Our current capital campaign, “Our Shared Future” will end in June, so there’s still time to give.

Over the past 3 months and several open meetings, we’ve looked at very rough estimates as high as \$4.5M for the whole project, which includes converting the current RE space into a kitchen and social hall. In case you’re new to the Fellowship, here’s a brief overview of how we got to this new stage: At the April 2019 Building Enhancement Town Hall, we reviewed our work from DiLoretto Architects and decided to make a change in the direction of the project. We prioritized our dreams to live within our means and to work locally. At that Town Hall, the consensus was to go with option #1: “Cancel plans for seismic retrofits to the existing classroom wing. Build a new classroom wing to the north of the current worship space in the area previously anticipated for a new social hall. Deconstruct the current classroom wing down to the floor and use that footprint for a new social hall and kitchen.” (Later, in September the building team decided to renovate the existing classroom wing into a new social hall and kitchen). The consensus of this Town Hall was reiterated at the Annual Meeting on May 19th, 2019. The two compelling drivers for new construction are: 1) Seismic resiliency, especially where youth are at risk. 2) Energy efficiency and a goal of a lowest possible greenhouse gas emission (Green Sanctuary). A few people have asked about delaying work on a new social hall and kitchen. I get that. Over the years, while engaged in RE, I would sometimes feel disconnected from the folks who spend time in the worship service and social hall. We have an opportunity to bridge that gap. While focusing on design for the new wing, we’ll also begin a project of visioning for the future of Religious Exploration. The modes and models of UU RE are being renewed and changed throughout the UUA. Israel Buffardi will soon help a new RE council engage in program review and planning for the future. Given Israel’s wide-ranging curriculum vitae, I think it’s not beyond comprehension that we may come to a revelation that our RE curriculum will include creating sacred space through the culinary arts. Stay tuned, stay engaged.

Our next Board meeting will be February 10, 2020 at 7pm. Meetings are open to observers. You are encouraged to RSVP. -Scott

## Words For Reflection

***UUFC Right Relations Covenant, 2005: Summary Statement:*** As a member of this Fellowship, I will strive to create a welcoming, respectful, and vibrant religious community where each person can search for truth and meaning in an environment that builds connections, renews spirit, and inspires action. I further commit to thoughtful, active participation in the life of this religious community; caring and respectful relationships with one another and with visitors; cooperative support for the minister, staff, and volunteers; and individual and collective contributions to the wider community.

# February Events

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Time &amp; Location</i>
2	Action Lunch	12:00 PM, SH/K
3	Earth Month Meeting	5:30 PM, 6BC
4	Transgender/Non-binary Meetup	11:00 AM, SH/K
5	Living with Depression	5:00 PM, Room 9
8	Men's Monthly Gathering	9:30 AM, Room 7
	Dance Planet!	7:30 PM, SFH
10	UUFC Board Meeting	7:00 PM, Room 7
16	7 Principles Cafe	12:30 PM, LIB
17	Shawl Ministry	7:00 PM, 6B
	Living with Depression	7:00 PM, Room 10
18	Elder's Conversation Café	10:00 AM, SH
	Transgender/Non-Binary Meetup	3:00 PM, SH/K
20	Johanna Beekman Kirtan	7:00 PM, SFH
22	Russian Dinner Fundraiser (advance tickets required)	Off-site
23	First Steps Class	11:00 AM, LIB
	Young Adult Pizza Hour	12:30 PM, Room 9
25	Transgender Support Group Potluck	6:00 PM, 6BC
	Town Hall & Pancake Supper	6:00 PM SH/K
28	Vagina Monologues	SFH
29	Vagina Monologues	SFH