

APRIL | 2022

NEWSLETTER

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis



Between Us

Rev. Jill McAllister

April is Earth Month in the "liturgical year" of the UUFC. We return to it each year, including Earth Day, to review and renew our understanding of how we inextricably belong to the Earth; to review and renew our commitments to live in right relations. In this Earth Month we'll make that a focus of Daily Practice as well.

April is also Stewardship month. Our annual pledge drive begins on April 10 - we are **Coming Back and Moving Forward**. The pledge drive is the yearly call for pledges of financial support which are the primary source of funding for the Fellowship.

Response to this call is how we know who is "part of" the Fellowship - not just a name on a list, but a participant, a person who cares about and for the life of the Fellowship. Pledging is easily done online, but I hope you won't make your pledge until you first thoughtfully consider what is needed and your part of meeting our shared needs. And then I very much hope you will make your pledge!

We are certainly coming back together - more people are gathering for Sunday services in person each week. The RE staff are cleaning out classrooms and storerooms, getting ready for a new RE curriculum called "Spirt Play." Choir practice is beginning again. Small groups are meeting.

And just as we come back, I'm getting ready to take a much-needed sabbatical time, beginning on April 18. While I'm gone, many many other people will share responsibility for the life of the Fellowship - as always! I hope that includes you. With this newsletter you'll find information about the sabbatical, including contacts for the various parts of Fellowship life. I'll return on Sunday August 21 - and that day we'll hold a celebration of life for Nancy Leman, as well. I am deeply grateful for being able to take this time, and I have plenty of faith and trust in the shared ministry of the Fellowship - which is all of you - to keep us moving forward while I'm away. Thank-you all!

Monthly Newsletter

About this publication

This monthly newsletter focuses on the life of the Fellowship. Each month we're sharing reports from Fellowship leaders, councils, teams and projects and exploring Unitarian Universalist (and Fellowship) history and practice. We're also sharing important 'save-the-dates' information.

APRIL SUNDAY SERVICES - via Zoom, and in-person indoors, for up to 50 persons. No reservation required. All COVID protocols apply.

Live Zoom Sunday Service
at 10 AM:

[https://zoom.us/j/96231448170?
pwd=cUoxaWxyei9wOTE5cVFVZ0t0Qk5
KUT09](https://zoom.us/j/96231448170?pwd=cUoxaWxyei9wOTE5cVFVZ0t0Qk5KUT09)

Board of Directors

from Ann Marchant, member of the UUFC Board of Directors

The Board focused on the following items during its March zoom meeting:

We received an update from the Nominating Committee: they have prepared a list of members in good standing who are eligible to serve on the Board and nominating committee, and are now beginning to contact those candidates.

Fundraising – The Board is considering reviewing and updating our fundraising policies, so that raising funds outside of the operating budget is a process which is fair and equitable between all teams and groups. It is recognized that many of us enjoy creating and contributing to fundraisers above and beyond pledges, and that fundraising is a necessary part of both our operating budget and our outreach work.

The Board continues to be aware of topics of conversation among UUFC members involving race, gender, and other identities, that have been extremely hurtful to some in our congregation. The safety and well-being of all Fellowship members is a priority and we're all responsible for educating ourselves and each other about the lived experience especially of those with marginalized identities, and recognizing that speech can be both hurtful and harmful. The Board is taking steps to review and update our congregational right relations covenant and determine next steps to address these concerns.

The Board discussed the upcoming stewardship campaign, which will kick off on April 10.

April Sundays

April 3 Rev. Jill McAllister

April 10 Rev. Jill McAllister

April 17 Revs. Jill McAllister & Lois Van Leer (Jill's last Sunday before sabbatical)

April 24 Rev. Lois Van Leer

Upcoming Events

April 3 "Scheduling as a Means of Inclusion" 12:30 on Zoom

April 24 Coffee and Cocoa for Caregivers and Kiddos, 3 PM

April 30 UU Path Class, orientation to UUFC membership, 9-11 AM

“Change only happens in the present. The past is already done. The future is just energy and intention.”
- Kino MacGregor



Religious Exploration Council



LET'S TALK ABOUT...PUNCTUATION...!?

On Sunday, April 24th, join Director of Religious Exploration (and ex-writing teacher) Rachel Kohler for a post-service intergenerational discussion about punctuation norms in the age of the internet and the iPhone. This was one of the most-talked about topics at our iGen Labs discussion meeting following our intergenerational exploration services in January, and it's such a fun and interesting subject. Bring your coffee and join her out under the trees on the far side of the patio!

LIFESPAN RE IN APRIL

The Times Have Changed - And So Has Religious Exploration for Children and Youth

As we move into this transitional time between the upheaval of the pandemic years and new ways of finding in-person togetherness as a community, we must, as a Fellowship, grapple with the huge changes in our Religious Exploration program for our youth. The shift in our programs calls for a shift in our volunteer needs. We no longer require large teams of RE guides to make a year-long commitment to teaching a detailed curriculum. We need interested adults of all ages who'd like to hang out with young people perhaps once or twice a month, providing supervision and a sense of intergenerational community. Volunteers must be 18+, submit to a background check, and have an up-to-date vaccination card verified by Director of Religious Exploration Rachel Kohler. Volunteering with the RE programs for youth is a wonderful way to get to know people of all ages here at the Fellowship and to connect with families and younger members of our community.

These programmatic changes aren't are unique to us. Most UU congregations are facing what is essentially a hard reset of their programs. As the pandemic wore on, children, youth, and families, overwhelmed by the demands of digital schooling and the uncertainty of vaccination and masking, drew back from many RE programs all over the country. Which makes sense! But now, as we start to ramp up our own youth programs, we have to shift our practices and our expectations for this new reality.

For one, we expect our numbers to be small for a good while yet. Until children under 12 can get boosters and children under 5 can get vaccinated at all, it's understandable that many families might be reluctant to return to in-person events yet, especially ones held indoors. For this reason, we will, for the foreseeable future, be sticking to three age groups - infant and toddler care in our nursery, K-6 elementary activities, and a Teen Cafe spaces for discussion, hangout, and service projects for grades 7-12. In the summer, we plan to launch a brand new elementary RE program called Spirit Play, based on a Montessori-style child-directed philosophy of RE, so stay tuned for details on that. Once we launch Spirit Play, there will be some associated simple training in that program, but the volunteer commitment would still be no more than once or twice a month.

If you'd like to learn more about volunteer opportunities, please contact Rachel Kohler at reassociate@uucorvallis.org.

Stewardship

ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE DRIVE BEGINS APRIL 10

We are Coming Back and Moving Forward. In the Hebrew scriptures, often those called to some important task (prophets) had great doubts about their call. "Who? Me?" was more often than not their response. And why not? They were usually called to unknown lands, to uncertain futures, to certain dangers. Like them we are now called to something new and uncertain, and going there will certainly require boldness, courage, and sacrifice. This new "place" is the future of the UU Fellowship of Corvallis. From our vantage point here, there are reasons for trepidation. We live in the age of climate crisis, in a pandemic world, in a country broken open from political strife. What will it take for us to answer the call of the present and the future affirmatively? Will we be able to sustain our commitments to truth and freedom, to justice and love?

This is what stewardship means – to sustain commitments to our values and ideals. One essential part of this work is the making of a pledge of financial support each year. We, the members and friends of the Fellowship, share this responsibility: to sustain the resources which make the life and the aims of the Fellowship possible. Each person answers the questions about commitment to the mission, and sharing in the upkeep, and how much to give. Most important is for each and every member to participate. The future of the Fellowship is in all of our hands, together. This is the work of love. Please, join me in making your pledge to the Fellowship this year.

Worship Council

RETURNING TO MUSIC - WEDNESDAY CHOIR PRACTICE BEGINS

We're moving forward: singing together has led us to return to **Wednesday evening choir practice in April**, with new choir leader Steven Evans-Renteria. All who are interested in singing are invited. Our COVID protocol still limits in-person use of the Sanctuary to 50 persons, vaccinated, masked and with spacing. When the choir may sing in a worship service is still under consideration – but we're moving forward.

Connections Council

PLAN AHEAD FOR THE UUFC SERVICES AUCTION

The annual Services (and Goods) Auction has always been our largest FUNd-raiser and we need your help to continue that tradition. This year we're planning on a combination online and in-person auction and are scheduling it for **early June** so we can hold the in-person portion outdoors. Be thinking of a service of your time or expertise that you could donate (yardwork, teaching a skill, cooking a meal, organizing, bicycle tune-ups, etc.) or some desirable items (time at your vacation cottage, bike rides or hikes with you, useful like-new treasures that you're not using, beautiful art or jewelry, etc). This is really a FUN time for all and a real benefit to UUFC.

A TRIP HOME TO AFRICA

UUFC members Gisele Akimana and Blaise Ntakarutimana have launched a Go Fund me campaign for help with a trip "home" to visit their families – they've not seen many family members since they had to flee Burundi, and they want their children to meet their elders and learn about their roots. You can support them at this link: <https://gofund.me/b407f586>

Justice Council

THE UUFC DEMOCRACY ACTION TEAM

The UUFC Democracy Action Team has never stopped its twice weekly Zoom and Chat sessions. As always, we focus on two things: getting folks to vote in the November 8 midterm elections and passing federal level Freedom to Vote legislation to counteract legislation passed in states trying to suppress the vote. We invite you to join us in writing to voters in swing states to encourage them to vote. We write brief messages saying why we vote and giving them the information they need to cast theirs (details at votefwd.org).

Beginning April 5, our Tuesday writing time will change to 5 pm to accommodate more folks. Here are the times and links:

Tuesdays, 5 pm: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89599559737?pwd=bXJ6YitGSmpYQTIJSXdlbVN3bytCZz09>

Thursdays, 3 pm: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87806068957?pwd=VElrRzBDVFFNRlFxeHhFTzI3Vy9zUT09>

Join us, even if it's just to say hi and then do writing on your own. If writing doesn't work for you, there will be other tasks (calling, texting, and perhaps helping us get ready for some in-person gatherings).

This year voting is more important than ever. All 435 seats in the House of Representatives are up for re-election, as well as 35 seats in the Senate. The next Congress will have an outsized influence on everyone's future. The primaries, in which each party picks its own candidate to run, will extend now through mid-September. All elections these days seem "critical" for our survival, because as a country, we have no safety margins left for "getting it wrong" to save democracy, a just future, and our very life support systems.

Nothing is as powerful as citizens pulling together for a great and noble cause! So join us as we write. Questions? Karen: kjosephson67@gmail.com; Claire: clairemtg@comcast.net

DANCE PLANET RETURNS

On Sunday, April 24, Dance Planet returns to the Fellowship. We'll be moving, each in our own way, to music from around the world and across the decades. If the weather is good we'll be outside; if not, we'll take the event inside. If we're inside, we'll follow the Fellowship's masking and social-distancing rules, whatever they are at that time. The all-ages event will go from 4 to 5:15PM. We'll accept donations of \$5 or more, 100 percent of which will be given to environmental causes. Come dance around the planet for the planet!

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS HAPPENINGS: BLUE CARBON

Shared by Deborah Clark, member UUFC Climate Action Team

Most people are aware that trees absorb carbon dioxide. But did you know that tidal marshes, eelgrass beds, and forested tidal wetlands (known as "blue carbon") also store greenhouse gases? **Oregon's forested tidal wetlands store, on a per acre basis, more than Pacific Northwest coast range forests and almost as much as old growth forests.** Increasing the storage of this blue carbon is a powerful nature-based tool in helping Oregon reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

The Oregon Global Warming Commission adopted a natural climate solutions plan for Oregon last fall - [*2021 Natural and Working Lands Proposal*](#). This plan includes one of the nation's first strategies that explicitly accounts for the blue carbon sequestration of coastal habitats. With the adoption of this strategy, *Oregon is poised to be a national leader* and an example for other states in harnessing the power of blue carbon ecosystems to drawdown carbon emissions.

Together we make a difference!

UUFC CLIMATE JUSTICE COVENANT 2018: INSPIRED BY SEVENTH PRINCIPLE

In 2010, UUFC achieved Green Sanctuary Accreditation, committing us to “work together to restore the earth as we renew our spirits.” UUFC also has voted to sign on to the Earth Charter, to repudiate the infamous Doctrine of Discovery, and to divest from fossil fuels. Thus, we, members and friends of UUFC, now pledge to consider the impact of all our decisions and policies on the environment and the climate of Earth, our home, which we hold in sacred trust for future generations. Through this new covenant, which reflects everything we do and are as a congregation, we secure our values around preservation of the environment, conservation of resources, and consideration of impacts on the climate. We understand that those humans (and other species) most affected by rising seas, ocean acidification, increasing droughts, chaotic weather events, and environmental degradation have done the least to cause these crises and are often powerless to mitigate them.

UU Ministry for the Earth

Unitarian Universalism has a long history of leadership among faith communities committed to caring for our Earth and taking action on our commitments. The seventh **principle** of Unitarian Universalism is “respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part,” and as a denomination we have passed more than three dozen social witness **statements** related to the environment and environmental justice, dating back to the early 1960s.

UUs across North America and the world have played a prominent role in environmental and climate justice movements for decades, serving as organizers through GreenFaith, 350.org, Greenpeace, and other organizations; as leaders of Interfaith Power & Light chapters; as activists in direct action campaigns and demonstrations (for example, at the landmark 2014 People’s Climate March in New York City, UUs made up the second-largest faith group present, after the Catholic contingent), and much more.

The mission of UUMFE is to be a wellspring of spiritual and educational grounding and practical support for bold, accountable action for environmental justice, climate justice, and the flourishing of all life. The Vision of UUMFE is a world in which reverence, gratitude, and care for each other and for the living Earth are central to the lives of all people.

- The Values of UUMFE We are grounded in faith and spirituality. We affirm and promote the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism as well as the proposed 8th principle of Unitarian Universalism, and we understand climate justice to be a moral imperative.
- We are grounded in environmental justice. We affirm and promote the framework of race- and class-informed environmental justice and strive to center the leadership and needs of frontline communities.
- We are grounded in partnership and collective action. We know that individual consumption choices are not enough; it is only through partnership and collective action that we can save our biosphere.

[Learn more about UU Ministry for Earth here.](#)

UUFC Governance

THE ROLE OF COUNCILS IN FULFILLING THE FELLOWSHIP'S MISSION

How Councils Help Us to Explore, Love, and Act

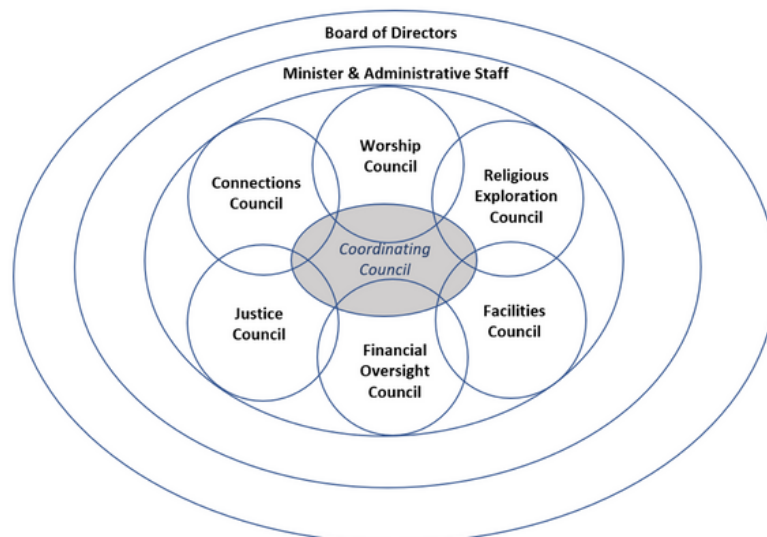
The ministry of the Fellowship is expressed in our mission statement: "Explore. Love. Act. We gather as an inclusive religious community to search for meaning, build deep connections, and inspire action toward a better world for all." Ministry is not just what the minister does; we practice shared ministry at the Fellowship. To promote our shared ministry and fulfill our mission, we have adopted a council structure, which consists of teams that are parts of councils.

Teams and Councils

Teams are groups that do specific work to help fulfill our mission. They are made up of people who are passionate about a specific part of our overall mission. Examples of our teams are the Welcome Team, the Membership Team, the Building Maintenance Team, the Library Team, the Immigration and Refugee Support Team. A full list of teams is available in the Participant's Guide to the UUFC.

To support the teams and coordinate their work, we created councils and assigned teams to each. A staff member works with each Council. Currently, we have seven councils:

- The Religious Exploration Council works to provide quality religious exploration curriculum and continually improve RE for youth and adults. Liaison: Religious Exploration Director.
- The Justice Council supports programs sponsored by the Fellowship related to social service, charity, environmental activism, and other justice issues. Liaison: Chaplain for Transformative Justice
- The Congregational Connections Council works to build deep connections among members of the Fellowship. Liaison: Church Operations Manager.
- The Financial Oversight Council provides informed, long-term financial guidance and oversight to the Board of Directors and the Fellowship. Liaison: Business Manager.
- The Facilities Council oversees the work of administering and managing the physical and communication infrastructure that facilitates and supports Fellowship life. Liaison: Church Operations Manager.
- The Worship Council assists the Minister in structuring all aspects of worship on Sundays and at other times and venues and in developing ideas for variations in content. It is convened by the Minister.
- The Coordinating Council includes a representative from each of the other Councils plus primary Fellowship staff, the Board President, Treasurer, and others who represent major operational areas of Fellowship life. It is convened by the Minister with the goals of improving Council and overall Fellowship collaboration and communication.



Fellowship staff

SENIOR MINISTER: JILL K. MCALLISTER

**AFFILIATED COMMUNITY MINISTER:
LESLIE CHARTIER**

**CONSULTING MINISTER:
MONICA JACOBSON TENNESSEN**

**CHAPLAIN FOR TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE:
JESSE FORD**

CHURCH OPERATIONS MANAGER: JAMIE PETTS

BUSINESS MANAGER: JEAN GILBERT

**DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION:
RACHEL KOHLER**

RE ASSISTANT: SKYLA KING-CHRISTISON

MUSIC DIRECTOR: DAVID SERVIAS

PIANIST: LAUREN SERVIAS

BUILDING MAINTENANCE: STEVE FERRELL

CUSTODIAN: FELISA TORRES

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**OFFICE HOURS: CURRENTLY CLOSED
PHONE AND E-MAIL ARE CHECKED REGULARLY.**

CONTACT US

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