

UUCM NEWSLETTER (Fall 2017)

Susan Jhirad, Editor

From the Board of Trustees (*Brendan Shea, Nancy Kurtz, Robert Heintz, Betty Walters, Joan Trudell, Loren Bernardi, Molly Ruggles*)

Hello from the board! We hope everyone had a restful summer, and are excited about the new church year! Here are some highlights we wanted to share:

- We've updated our website! Check it out at uumedford.org.
- We had a successful workshop on **Worship, Covenant and Goals**. You can see the notes from that workshop [here](#).
- We're excited to engage in [Soul Matters](#), which provides themes and resources for our services, and we're glad to see that so many of you have signed up for [Soul Matters Small Groups](#)! More Soul Matters updates can be found in this newsletter.

On the topic of Soul Matters: Our November theme is **Abundance**.

And speaking of "Abundance" our Food Pantry volunteers and partners are supplying an abundance of good food and good work to the community!



The Food Pantry

Liz Ammons, Co-Director

The Community Cupboard Food Pantry located in the church continues to



serve large numbers of people in need in the community. Clients are diverse in age, race, gender, and nationality and come for a variety of reasons. Some are elders on fixed incomes, some are people who have lost their jobs, some are people with disabilities, and many are heads of households who work

fulltime at poverty-level wages. Much of the food goes to children. A group of volunteers from the church and community work together to keep the Pantry open every week regardless of the weather. We rent a truck and go to the Greater Boston Food Bank each month for food. Also we receive food from the Boston Area Gleaners, Food Link (a food rescue organization), local school drives, and area churches and the synagogue; in addition, we buy dried beans from a local supermarket.

Normally about 70-90 clients come to the Food Pantry each week, many of them to get food for an entire family. We are especially grateful to the Master Gardeners who planted the vegetable beds by the church and Osgood House, tended them all spring and summer, and each week have harvested the produce to provide beautiful fresh food for the Food Pantry clients. The harvest season is coming to a close and we want to issue a big thank you to them! Also we want to thank Wegmans Market, newly opened in Medford, for creating a partnership with us that is providing us with bags for produce and free almost-expired but still good food one Thursday a month. It's wonderful to have this new partner.

Worship



Carolyn Cronin

Our Worship services are so inspiring it is hard to pick highlights.

Our church year started with our annual Water Communion ritual in which we bring water from our summer and share where it came from. During the service we each put it into a bowl to be comingled with others as a symbol of coming together from different places both literally and spiritually. This year, we also expressed our hopes for those impacted by hurricanes and shared our offertory with the UUA Hurricane Relief Fund. After the service the water was boiled to sanitize and is available for use in a child dedication or other blessings throughout the year.

September was also the kickoff of theme-based Worship which will have our Worship, RE and Small Groups exploring the same theme each month such as September's Theme "What does it mean to be a People of Welcome?" Rev Marta preached on "Naming as a Form of Welcome" and encouraged us to really learn and use each other's chosen name. in a multi-voice lay led service, Cheryl Harwood Bell, Andey Amata-Kynvi, Michael Glenn and Steve Schmidt shared their impressions of ways UUCM is Welcoming.

October's theme was "What does it mean to be a people of Courage". October also brought us **Interim Music Director Alex Cumming** who plays accordion and piano as well as leading the choir. Among music highlights was the choir singing "Harriet Tubman", a woman who certainly embodied the Courage theme. Tammy McKanan explored Alternative Facts (ask her about her story of the model employer) and Susan Jordan shared from her experience volunteering in prison.

November's Theme "What does it mean to be a People of Abundance" includes the challenge of noticing what we have. At UUCM we are blessed to have Rev. Marta, lay leaders and guest ministers share their ministry. Upcoming services are listed on UUmedford.org and our Facebook page.

December brings some extra special services:

- *December 17* - Holiday Pageant featuring youth and children of UUCM
- *Thursday December 21, 7:30 p.m.* - Winter Solstice Service. A ritual to embrace the darkest day
- *December 24, 11 a.m.* - quiet service led by Steve Schmidt
- *December 24, 5 p.m.* - Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols, Candlelight, and special music, led by Reverend Marta.

Religious Education R.E. Director, Mimi Olivier

The Religious Education Committee hosted a Halloween Party/Potluck on Saturday October 28th. The party was a rousing success! Most folks came in costume and those that didn't could dress up in our "Costume Corner." We enjoyed a delicious meal thanks to everyone who brought food. There were tables set up with pumpkin carving, Halloween crafts, face painting, and Bobbing for Apples. Brian Wolf DJ'd and the music was thoroughly enjoyed in a long game of Freeze Dance which morphed into lots of spooky dancing on the stage! Thanks to everyone who attended and helped out!!



The "Our Whole Lives" sexuality education curriculum is being taught at UUCM to a mixed group of church and community youth. We have 4 trained teachers who rotate through the classes in teams of 2. A total of 11 youth attend each Sunday from 11:15 to 12:30. Topics we have addressed so far this year include anatomy and physiology of the reproductive system, the language of sexuality, and body image. This amazing curriculum presents a comprehensive and positive perspective on sexuality and is the best in its field. Please let the DRE Mimi Olivier know if you are interested in being trained to teach this program.



Soul Matters Groups Have Started!

Nearly 50 people have joined six Soul Matters groups. These are small, personal spiritually-based discussion groups using a theme for each month that goes with our church services. Using materials: poems, readings, songs, videos supplied by the UUA, our church has joined with a few hundred other U-U churches in exploring a common theme. Our theme for Oct. was **Courage**, with the question, “**What does it mean to be a people of courage?**” Of course, each of us answered this in our own personal ways and shared with our groups. **The theme for November is Abundance: What does it mean to be a people of Abundance?** We will explore this again with a variety of readings, videos etc. The groups are led by lay members of the congregation, with one group being led by our minister Rev. Marta Valentin. The goal is to deepen our experience of Unitarian-Universalist values outside the Sunday services.

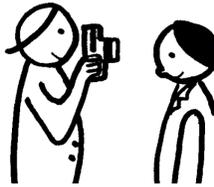
Community Book Groups



Our UUCM book groups began their second year this September. One group, led by Jenn Stiles, meets on Sunday afternoons. The other, on Monday nights, is led by Michael Glenn.

Our first book, *Just Mercy*, by Bryan Stevenson was the UUA 2015-2016 Read of the Year—a powerful, true story about the redemptive potential of mercy and a clarion call to fix our broken system of justice. Our second selection, *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi, was a rich debut novel by a Ghanaian-American woman, the story of eight generations descending from two half-sisters, one remaining in Ghana, the other enslaved in the United States. Currently (November) we are reading *Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry*, edited by Mitra Rahnema. This book is a project of the UU Ministers Association’s Committee on Antiracism, Anti-oppression and Multiculturalism, and offers the personal stories (and responses) of Unitarian Universalists ministers (and others) of color who are offering their religious leadership. As such, it’s a particularly appropriate read for our own congregation. December’s selection is Jan Morris's *Conundrum*, her stunning 1974 memoir of transitioning from James Morris, an accomplished soldier in the British military during WWII

and a daredevil reporter, to the Jan she knew she was since childhood. Our continuing reading list will include books on race and social justice, works of fiction by women of color, and books with a spiritual and/or religious theme.



UUCM COMMUNITY “ALBUM” PROJECT

We've launched a new project to create an album of people's photos and brief biographies... It's like a supplement to our church Directory... Over the past few years, our new members have written brief autobiographies for the induction service. Now we're inviting everyone else to write a similar brief personal history or description... Send your paragraph (about 125 words or less) to Steve Schmidt at lesapeuruu@gmail.com or Michael Glenn at michaelglenn01@comcast.net... Steve and Michael will also be taking photos of you over the next two months (you can even come up to us and ask us to take your picture), and we're hoping to pull the little album together "sometime soon." (New members can rely on their previously-written paragraph or update it: your choice)

Thanksgiving Potluck

Every year on the Sunday before thanksgiving, UUCM holds a community potluck Thanksgiving dinner after our Sunday morning service. All



members of our community are invited to join us. This is one of our most beloved holiday traditions. Members of the congregation provide turkeys, tofurkeys, vegetables, vegan options, mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, desserts and drinks. If you haven't offered to bring something yet, please contact Cathy Collins at

cacollins1@comcast.net and tell her what you will be bringing. If you are unable to bring anything, just bring yourself!