



# the UNIGRAM

## Forgiveness: Clearing Space in the Soul

*Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd, Minister*

The scene is all too familiar. Whether it's a small break of trust, a major mistake, or a huge violation, we have all experienced someone doing something wrong to us, creating a situation where we are called upon to forgive. The acts we may be called upon to forgive range from accidental distress caused by someone forgetting and no-showing on a lunch date, to mean-spirited words said with the intent to harm, all the way up to high impact events like infidelity in a romantic relationship or an act of violence committed against you or a loved one. Being called upon by circumstance to forgive is an inevitable part of the human experience.

We do have a choice about whether to actually forgive or not though. We may not be able to avoid situations that cause us to feel anger, resentment and distrust, but we can choose whether we want to forgive or not. Most of us choose to forgive at least some things to some people, some of us choose to forgive most things, and some of us choose to forgive very little. Where do you fall on spectrum? Do you forgive most things? Do you hold onto grudges forever? Or do you fall somewhere in between?

We often in our culture tend to rely on an apology from the

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## Why'ja Even Do That?!

*Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, Community Minister*

We've all been there: Someone has done something that has hurt or angered or disappointed us deeply. Or we have done something that hurts or angers or disappoints someone else, someone about whom we care. Or we've done something that leaves us severely disappointed in ourselves. And we wonder... why'ja even *do* that?!

The stories we tell ourselves about *why* someone—ourselves or others—does what they do affect our ability and willingness to forgive. Even though we

don't fully grasp our own motives, let alone those of other people, what we do understand—or think we understand—about these motives influences our attitude, sometimes profoundly.

Case in point: I was raised with the view that when someone (myself or other people) did something that upset someone else, it was because the "perpetrator" was a bad person, didn't care about the person they had hurt, and had acted as they did because they

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## Sunday Mornings at Our Church in the Woods

**Services begin at 10:45 am September Worship Theme :: Forgiveness**

For more information about this month's theme check out the article on [page 4](#).

Sunday, September 6 <b>Rev. Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd</b>	"God Is Not..." Can we come to an understanding of what we do believe by articulating what we do not? Join us as we explore so-called "negative theology" and how we can use it to make meaning in our lives. Dedicated Offering: Motivate Our Minds
Sunday, September 13 <b>Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd</b>	Rev. Seth kicks off our first exploration of this month's theme of Forgiveness. Also don't miss our Teacher Dedication ceremony, held during the service. Dedicated Offering: Motivate Our Minds
Sunday, September 20 <b>Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd</b>	"All of the Answers" - On this Question Box Sunday, Rev. Seth will respond to questions you submit! Just about anything is fair game, so send your questions in to Rev. Seth at <a href="mailto:seth@uuchurchmuncie.org">seth@uuchurchmuncie.org</a> with "Question Box" in the subject line. We will also have our Board & Committee Chair Dedication ceremony.
Sunday, September 27 <b>Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd</b>	Rev. Seth will take us on our second exploration of theme for the month, Forgiveness. The Sanctuary Choir performs for the first time this fall.
<b>Religious Education for Children &amp; Youth, 10:45 am</b>	
Sunday, September 6 <b>Goofy Olympics!</b>	This Sunday we will enjoy games of skill and silliness. Activities will be outdoors, weather permitting.
Sunday, September 13 <b>RE Open House</b>	On this special Sunday, we will be dedicating our wonderful staff of RE teachers and classroom aides in the service. Following the service, please accept our invitation to join us for coffee in the RE Wing and visit our classrooms, meet our teachers, visit with our RE families, and view the curriculums we will be using this year. As a special treat, you will find a tasty delight in every classroom!
Sunday, September 20 <b>Religious Education classes begin!</b>	Our classroom divisions this year are nursery (infants through the age of 1), preschool, K-2 grade, 3-5 grade, 6-8 grade, and 9-12 grade. The Religious Education Prospectus for 2015-16 is available on the welcome table in the foyer and in the fellowship hall.
Sunday, September 27 <b>Curriculum Sunday</b>	Join us this Sunday morning as we continue our new fall curriculum in each class!
<b>Pre-Service Discussion, Every Sunday, 9:30 am, Red classroom</b>	
Sunday, September 6 <b>School Discipline</b>	No Child Left Behind brought with it pressure on schools to produce certain numbers. As a result school discipline and retention policies have changed quite a bit, often leading to the marginalization of a specific group of students. <b>Janay Sander</b> will lead as we discuss how schools are handling the "problem" children.
Sunday, September 13 <b>The Greening of Middletown</b>	"The Greening of Middletown" is a documentary that was created by BSU students, and is being promoted by Sustainable Indiana 2016. We'll watch this short film and have a discussion lead by its creators.
Sunday, September 20 <b>The Separation of Church and State</b>	Thursday the 17 <sup>th</sup> is Constitution Day, in honor of the September 17 <sup>th</sup> , 1787 signing of the U.S. Constitution. Join us as <b>Alice Bennett</b> leads a discussion about the role that separation of church and state plays in our laws and government.
Sunday, September 27 <b>Forgiveness</b>	Monthly Themes are back at the UUCM! In an open conversation we will consider September's monthly theme of Forgiveness.

## RE Corner :: The Joy of Teaching!

**Nadine Tringali,**  
**Director of Religious Education**

The RE Committee and I have planned for an exciting year in Religious Education for our children & youth and we hope that you will want to be a part of our teaching team! This year our youngest levels have been redesigned, as our two-year-old attendance has grown tremendously. Our nursery will be for our infants and toddlers through one year of age, and our preschool class is designed for our children 2-4 years of age. Our early elementary and upper grade class divisions and curriculums will be: K-2 (Picture Book Bible Tales and Picture Book Unitarian Universalism), 3-5 (Tapestry of Faith curriculum – Sing to the Power), 6-8 (Coming of Age), and 9-12 (Tapestry of Faith – World Religions, Neighboring Faiths, current events, social justice, and special events).

We have an exciting year planned and I'm hopeful that you will want to be a part of our program! We can accommodate a variety of levels of support, but in order to start up our RE Curriculum year, first and foremost, we need teachers for our Curriculum Sundays. This coming year, we still need teachers interested in working with our preschool, K-2 and 3-5 grade youth. Other levels of support include assisting as a teacher aide, as a special presenter in a classroom, or helping with special events.

Please consider the joy of teaching in our Religious Education program this year!

**Nadine**

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## RE News & Events

### Teacher Orientation :: Thursday, September 10, 6-8:30

The RE Committee and I want to thank all our teachers and classroom aides who have volunteered to teach this year! The Orientation will provide an opportunity to meet the RE Committee, your classroom liaison, our wonderful team of RE teachers and aides, to schedule your teaching dates, share ideas and experiences, and to ask questions.

Dinner will be provided and will begin at 6:00 pm. Orientation will begin at 6:30 pm. **Please confirm your participation by contacting Nadine at [nadine@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:nadine@uuchurchmuncie.org). If childcare is needed, please contact Nadine by September 3.**

### Multigenerational Special Event :: Origami Workshop! Sunday, September 20, noon

Please bring a sack lunch and join us in the fellowship hall for a Multi-Gen Origami Workshop. **Amy Shaw** has volunteered her paper folding expertise. We will have paper and patterns available for all ages!

## What a Year Ahead

**Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd,**  
**Coordinator of Youth programs**

We have an incredibly full year ahead of us in our youth program! We have already begun our fun with a trip to Ivanhoe's for ice cream and games. Not only did we enjoy delicious summer treats, we also ran around for a while playing partner tag to work off all of that sugar. It was a lovely start to the year when there will be more opportunities for fun, silliness and laughter. Keep an eye out for fun field trips and special events!

We plan to travel to even more youth CONs this year. These events are full of fun and fellowship, opportunities to connect with youth from all over the region, and offer our youth workshops and worship as they forge their own spiritual paths. Our goal is to attend three with our high school youth and two with our middle school youth. I am sure that these events will continue to be meaningful and enjoyable for our youth.

In addition to all of this, I will be spending some of my time working with the Coming of Age Program that we are offering for our Middle School Youth. This program is incredibly exciting, as it leads youth through the process of exploring and articulating what they believe. As the title suggests, it is a time when we acknowledge the growth and development that these younger youth have been making. In the spring, the congregation can look forward to hearing from these wise young souls as they share their credo statements in a special Coming of Age service. You will certainly not want to miss it!

These are just some tastes of what is to come! Our year is shaping up to be full of time to connect deeply with one another in the spirit of our faith. If you would like to deepen your faith, or just giggle more than usual, grab me for a chat about whether becoming a youth advisor would be right for you!

Blessings,

**Elizabeth**

## Theme Exploration – Forgiveness

Selecting a theme for our worship services each month allows us to explore specific important theological topics in greater breadth, while also challenging us to go deeper. If you have a reading, poem or personal story to share that relates to our current or upcoming theme, please e-mail them to Rev. Seth.

### Sacred Text

Our “sacred text” for this month is an excerpt from *A Little Book on Forgiveness* by UU minister Rev. Marilyn Sewell:

Forgiving is difficult. When someone does something hurtful to us, it is natural to feel anger, to want to strike back, to want to hurt this person in return. Forgiveness is antithetical to that natural human inclination: it is a spiritual response that requires both humility and relinquishment. Pride steps in and says, “No, I’m not going to take that! No way!” The judge in us comes forward and says “Relinquishment? Ha! You owe me. Pay up.” Forgiveness asks us to go beyond that understandable impulse to judge and to punish. It is a softening and a healing of the heart, in response to pain or injustice. It is a gift, not to the offending party, but to ourselves, as we become no longer willing to nurture the hurt and keep the anger alive. We know that holding onto anger hurts us. The word *resentment*, in fact, comes from the root word *ressentir*, meaning “to feel again.” And that is precisely what we do when we refuse to let go of resentment – we review, redo, rehearse our pain again and again. We become rigid and unyielding, not just in regard to the one who has hurt us, but often to the world in general. Our tenderness hardens, our judgment becomes clouded with distrust, and we cannot make room for love and joy, even when they come begging for our attention. Our positive energy is eaten up; our good will, sacrificed to the object of our anger and hate.

### Suggested Reading

Online:

The Forgiveness Project –  
<http://learningtoforgive.com/9-steps/>

Mayo Clinic – <http://goo.gl/lyP586>

UU Resources:

Book – *A Little Book on Forgiveness* by Rev. Marilyn Sewell

### Spiritual Practice/Reflection

- 1) Reading – *Singing the Living Tradition* (grey hymnal) #461, We Must Be Saved by Reinhold Niebuhr
- 2) Buddhist Loving-Kindness Meditation –  
<http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/loving-kindness.htm>
- 3) Book – *A Forgiveness Journal: Letting Go of the Past* – by Kristin E. Robertson

### 2015-2016 UUCM Themes

September – Forgiveness

October – Inclusivity

November – Grace

December – Waiting

January – Freedom

February – Sexuality

March – Brokenness

April – Truth

May – Creativity

***“Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude.” ~Martin Luther King, Jr.***

## Rev. Seth Returns Half-Time & Question Box Questions Needed!

If you've sent me an e-mail in the past few you weeks, you've likely received the automated response back letting you know that I've returned to work half-time. I only used three weeks of my parental leave in June, and then took my regular time off in July, and so it seemed too much to also be gone all of August. So after discussing it with the board, I came back half-time for six weeks, instead of taking three more weeks off, starting August 5th, running through September 16th.

The focus of my limited time has been and will continue to be on leading worship on Sundays, as well as attending key meetings such as the Board, Program Council and Worship Associates, and working on a couple of key projects to kick off the year. I will thus generally not be taking appointments or responding to e-mail during this time, so that I can focus on worship and the important tasks that need to happen to kick off our church year successfully.

Please contact our Community Minister, **Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer**, at [julia@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:julia@uuchurchmuncie.org) with any pastoral care needs during this time, and she will keep me updated, so that I can respond as needed. Non-pastoral issues should be directed to our Office Administrator, **Christie Williams** at [christie@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:christie@uuchurchmuncie.org), or to Board President **Sherry Ware** (her contact information is in the church directory). You can also contact the

appropriate staff person or committee chair with questions related to their specific areas. I'll be back full time as of Wednesday, September 16th.

It has been really great to be back with you all on Sundays - I have missed the love, joy, and connection of our wonderful community while I've been away. It has also been really profound and meaningful to get to spend time connecting with and getting to know Theo. On both counts, I feel lucky and blessed for all the goodness in my life.

On a closing business note, don't forget that **Question Box Sunday** is coming up on Sunday, September 20th. Please send your questions to me at [seth@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:seth@uuchurchmuncie.org) by Sunday, September 13th - any and all questions welcome, though I can't promise I'll be able to answer all of them depending on the volume. We'll also be asking the children and youth again for questions for me to answer during the "Question Box Story for All Ages" on the 20th, so have them come prepared to share their questions during Religious Education time on the 13th, as the teachers will be asking for questions then.

It's great to be back!

**Rev. Seth**

### Muncie Meditation & Dharma

Are you interested in meditation and curious to know how to begin? Are you an experienced meditator and want to connect with others who value the practice? There is a group for you, right here at the UU Church. We meet 7 - 8:30 pm, every Sunday in the Blue classroom.

Muncie Meditation & Dharma is open to anyone who wishes to practice silent meditation, although our focus is on meditation as taught in the Buddhist traditions, drawing on Zen, Tibetan, and Therevada Buddhism, among others. First-time attendees are encouraged to come 10 minutes early for an introduction to the practice. For more information, talk to Randy Dillinger or connect with "Muncie Meditation & Dharma" on Facebook.

## Message from the President

A very wet summer is coming to an end and the good news is that members of the church voted unanimously at the August 9<sup>th</sup> Special Congregational Meeting to approve funding \$49,000 for a new membrane roof.

At an earlier April 19<sup>th</sup> Special Congregational Meeting, members approved \$31,500 in matching funds for the \$30,000 SUN Grant that was awarded to UUCM to install solar panels on the roof by December 31, 2015.

All funding is now in place. Repayment of the five-year loans from Mutual Bank will begin on September 2<sup>nd</sup> for the solar panels and October 2<sup>nd</sup> for the membrane roof.

The contract with Exterior Pro Roofing for the new membrane roof has been signed and sent. **Bruce Craig** predicts that we should be looking for the roof to be installed by the end of September or early October, with plenty of time for the solar panels to be up and going before the end of the year.

A special thanks goes to Past-President, **Nancy Behforouz**, for alerting the Green Task Force to the SUN Grant last

December. She worked closely with and encouraged **Wayne Meyer, Holly Hanauer, John Taylor, and Marnee Cooley** in pursuit of the Grant. **Bruce Craig** was invaluable in analyzing the present roof and investigating possible roof replacements. The Board was assisted by **Chuck Austin** and the Finance Committee in recommending how the projects should be funded. New Treasurer, **Usha Shivaswamy**, and **Marnee Cooley** were instrumental in procuring bank financing.

We couldn't have done any of it, without the help of the loyal members who stayed after church for two Special Congregational Meetings. Thanks to all, our church will join The Muncie Public Library, The Youth Opportunity Center, and ecoREHAB in demonstrating alternative energy resources.

Even if we have a wet winter, we should be dry inside and generating electricity on our roof.

*Sherry Ware*

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## Adult RE Classes Return: Theme Reflections & Exploring Your Theology

Rev. Seth's Sunday afternoon Adult Religious Education offerings will be returning this year, again meeting on a monthly basis for the 2015-2016 church year. First Sundays will see the return of the Theme Reflections group, in which we will use a connection group model based on deep listening to explore the theme for the month. This reflection group will be offered ongoing on a monthly basis, starting on Sunday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, and continuing the first Sunday of each month, from 12:30-2 pm. You do not need to come to every class to keep up, you can come when you'd like. You will need to bring or go get your own lunch, with the down time in between the end of the service and the beginning of the class allowing you to eat and/or run out and get something if need be. This group will meet in the Red classroom off the Fellowship Hall.

The second offering will be Exploring Your Theology, a class loosely based on the idea of the old Building Your Own Theology curriculum, but with different content. The reason for the name change is that Building Your Own Theology implies a one-time experience, where you build your theology and you're done. The reality is that our beliefs and theology are constantly evolving, and so it's good to spend some time every now and then exploring,

and hopefully growing and evolving, our beliefs and value systems. This class will also be offered on a monthly basis, starting Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, and continuing on second Sundays, 12:30-2:00 pm. Consistent attendance in this class is preferred, though not necessary – each class has been designed to stand on its own, but they also build on each other, and so consistent attendance will result in a more powerful group experience and deeper learning. Like the Reflections class, you will need to provide for your own lunch during the downtime between the service and the start of the class. We will cover different topics this year than we did last year, so if you came last year and would like to participate again, please feel free to do so. This class will meet in the Indigo classroom off the Fellowship Hall.

If you have any questions about either of these classes, e-mail him at [seth@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:seth@uuchurchmuncie.org). Childcare will be available during both classes - please send a request to [nadine@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:nadine@uuchurchmuncie.org) two weeks in advance if you will need childcare for one of these sessions.

Mark your calendars for our annual

## Bazaar in the Woods

Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup> from 8 am to 2 pm  
Co chairs: **Annemarie Voss** and **John McKillip**



Mary Robey helps Rev. Seth & Mira select fresh baked goods during the 2014 UUCM Bazaar. photo by Gunther Carnapich

If you have been a member for some time, you will know what this is all about. If you are new, please ask someone how to get involved in this wonderful project. Watch the Unigram and the eBlast for regular announcements.

It is time to choose:

- in which capacity you want to help
- whether you want to divide your house plants or plant starts
- how to cull your book shelves
- how to streamline your clothing stock to contribute to the Encore booth
- whether to pass on some of your kitchen and household treasures no longer in use
- whether to donate a special item you no longer need for the silent auction.

Come and join the fun! We need your help.

The special Bazaar Committee will meet on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 12:15 pm, in the Indigo classroom (bring along your treat from the Ice Cream Social).

The meeting with the booth chairs and anyone interested in being involved is scheduled for Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup> after the service in the sanctuary.

**Annemarie Voss**

## Living Lightly Fair

A number of UUs are involved in this year's Living Lightly Fair – Saturday, September 19, from 9am to 4 pm at Minnetrista. On the Speakers Committee are **Andrea Wolfe**, Chair, **Susan Taylor**, and **Jane Meyer**. **Mike Mayfield** is Volunteer Coordinator, and **Ric Dwenger** is Music Coordinator. Indeed, this “resource fair for sustainable lifestyles” is very consistent with some core UU values and principles, especially the 7<sup>th</sup> UU Principle, “respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”

The spiritual dimension of the motivation for and expression of sustainable lifestyles will be reflected in the presentation by featured speaker Wyatt Watkins, Co-pastor of Cumberland First Baptist Church, Indianapolis. Rev. Watkins will invite us to reflect on our individual “Sustainable Stories” of responsibility for the future of human well-being and this good Earth and, we’re sure he would agree, for the whole “interdependent web.”

The growing interfaith effort for sustainability and the environment is one of the more encouraging developments of recent times, as exemplified by Pope Francis and many other religious leaders. For example, on the national level Interfaith Power and Light defines itself as a “religious response to global warming.” Among the forty state chapters of IPL is Hoosier Interfaith Power and Light (H-IPL), founded in 2009 by Rev. Watkins and a diverse group of Indiana faith leaders. On the local level UUCM’s “Green Team” has just renewed cooperative efforts with Interfaith Earth Care, the Muncie affiliate of H-IPL, in planning for a weatherization project for disadvantaged homeowners.

Our spiritual motivation for reducing fossil fuel dependency and CO2 emissions was emphasized in the Green Team’s successful application for a SUN grant for subsidizing a rooftop solar installation at UUCM. At Living Lightly, solar power for sustainable living will be addressed by the VP of Johnson Melloh Solutions, a leader in the renewable energy industry and also BSU Prof. Jonathan Spodek, co-founder of ecoREHAB, another SUN grant recipient in Muncie. Also, from Muncie Public Library, another SUN grant winner, you can hear about its Kill-A-Watt program.

In addition, there will be a green marketplace, children’s activities, music, and food – lots reasons not to miss out on Living Lightly on Sept. 19.

**Jane & Wayne Meyer**

## Sharing Gratitude



It is such a joy on a Sunday morning, to see all our youth and children head to their classes after our Story for All Ages, or following our hymn Spirit of Life. Their smiles and excitement about what they will be doing in class has been especially apparent this summer, as they head out with Professor **Lisa Abner** to the "Wizards World of Harry Potter." Lisa and I wish to thank all the volunteers who have assisted this summer: **Adam Abner, Denise Ewing, Ben Ewing, Ben Bartlett, Luellen Smucker, Alyssa Farnsworth, Ryan Redmon, Tracy Whelan, Crystal Frayer, and Megan Biner.** "My heartfelt thanks also to my middle school and high school

Harry Potter fans, who have enthusiastically been a part of the program each week. Their exuberance and enthusiasm carried the day, and it was a lot of fun having them with us." – Lisa. I also especially wish to thank **Lisa Abner**, for creating our Harry Potter summer program, leading all classes, and her infectious enthusiasm! Without her, our plans for a Harry Potter summer program would not have been such a hit! ~**Nadine Tringali**

I want to share my heartfelt gratitude to **Nadine Tringali**. She is the kind of person who is always ready to jump in and help whenever and wherever she is needed. This summer, she went above and beyond helping me while I was welcoming Theo into our family, even when it interrupted her much needed vacation time. I cannot thank her enough for giving us the gift of that time together! She is a very generous soul! ~**Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd**

A huge thank you to **Lisa Kurascik** for "driving the bus" on the project to research and purchase a new projector for the sanctuary. If you hadn't noticed, we had a fancy new projector installed on Friday, August 7th, and the PowerPoints with the images and the words for the hymns on Sunday mornings have looked terrific ever since. Lisa did an incredible amount of research to make sure we purchased the right projector for a very challenging Audio-Visual space with all the light from our beautiful windows, and it turned out great. Thank you so much Lisa! This wouldn't have happened without you. ~**Rev. Seth**

If you have a gratitude you'd like to submit for the next Unigram, please send it to [uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org), subject line "Sharing Gratitude," by September 23.

### Wheel of Life

Welcome to our new Wheel of Life Section! This section will host short, two-three sentence long summaries of major life events and transitions that have happened or will be happening shortly to members and friends of the church. Examples of appropriate items for submission include births, graduations, marriages, plans to move away, significant illnesses, or deaths. If you have a major life event you'd like the church community to be aware of, please submit it to the Wheel of Life section of the Unigram at [uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org) and note "Wheel of Life" in the subject line.

**Theodore "Theo" Robert Carrier-Ladd** was born to **Revs. Seth & Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd** on June 9th, 2015. Sister **Mira** is excited to have a new little brother, and loves giving him hugs and kisses. Theo is already full of smiles, while mom and dad are exhausted, but overjoyed.

**Kian Michael Fluhr** was born on July 11th, 2015. Parents **Jacob Fluhr, Erica Fluhr** and **Dixie Hucke** are ecstatic to welcome Kian into the world! Kian's Dedication Ceremony, where we officially welcomed him into our church community, was held during the service on Sunday, August 23rd.

Members **Holly (Rittenhouse)** and **Dylan Ford** were married by Rev. Seth on July 18th, here at the church in our sanctuary. It was a beautiful ceremony, celebrated with family and friends, and a special day for everyone involved.

Our daughter **Sarah** was married to **Steven Barnes** on August 1, in a beautiful outdoor ceremony at Mounds State Park. It was a wonderful day of sharing their joy with family and friends. Sarah & Steven are making their home together in Portage, IN. ~**Holly & Brad Hanauer**



## Forgiveness: Clearing Space in the Soul

**Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd** (continued from page 1)

transgressor in our forgiveness process. If they apologize, we most often forgive them, unless we feel the magnitude of the transgression was too severe. If they don't apologize, we usually don't forgive them. This reliance on an apology, and a repair attempt from the person who harmed us – it is actually a giving up of power and choice, one that is built upon an understanding of forgiveness that is dependent on reestablishing trust and connection with the other party. This need not be the case.

A full forgiveness process with someone with whom we continue to be in relationship typically involves a need for rebuilding trust and connection. Forgiveness though, need not be dependent on rebuilding the relationship. Forgiveness at its core is about the feelings we are experiencing inside us. Most dictionary definitions of forgiveness involve some variation of "letting go of anger and resentment." And while that process may be aided by an apology from the offending party, too often, for a variety of reasons – whether due to unwillingness on the part of someone with whom we're still in relationship, or because the person is longer in our lives – an apology is not forthcoming. What do we do then? Are we stuck feeling hurt, angry and resentful for the rest of our lives because we did not receive an apology?

The answer, of course, is no – we need not hold a grudge for the rest of our lives. We do not have to get that sick feeling of anger, hurt or shame in our stomachs every time we think of the incident. We have the freedom, and the power, to choose to let go. If someone refuses to apologize, it may be impossible to rebuild trust and connection. But their refusal doesn't mean that we have to sit there, stewing in our anger and resentment – that internalized pain certainly doesn't have any impact on the person who harmed us. It only hurts us. We have the power, and the choice, to be able to say, "I am going to let go of these feelings." Letting go of our feelings doesn't mean what the other person said or did was ok; it does mean that we choose to no longer allow their harmful actions to control and

dominate our feelings. It often takes time, and a continued setting of this intention, and sometimes even counseling or serious engagement with a spiritual practice, but forgiveness is a choice we can live into.

My hope, as we continue our exploration of forgiveness as our theme for this month in church, is that you can incorporate, or continue to incorporate, an active practice of forgiveness in your life. Because not forgiving – living with anger, pain and resentment, whether it's seething at the surface, or tucked away deep inside – that's usually worse than going through a forgiveness process. Whether it happens in conjunction with a trust rebuilding process or not, forgiveness clears up space in our soul, space taken up by pain, anger, resentment, and negativity. And really, who wants to live with that inside you?

See you in church!

peace, love and blessings,

**Rev. Seth**



*"As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison."*

*~ Nelson Mandela*

## Why'ja Even Do That?!

*Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer* (Continued from page 1)

intentionally and voluntarily “wanted” to be bad. And the line between *being* bad and *acting* badly was fuzzy at best. Cue full-on blame. Never mind what seems, at least to me, to be the illogic of this, in that if the perpetrator were fundamentally bad, could he/she have acted otherwise, and if not, then does it make sense to say that it was a *voluntarily* bad act? That’s a digression I won’t follow here.

There are, of course, socio-economic reasons or explanations: classism, racism, the growing divide between those of us in positions of privilege and those of us who are not, educational disparity. There are psychological reasons; as something I recently saw put it, “hurt people hurt people.” But I want to look at the spiritual reasons that human religions propose as more basic. These are not so much “explanations” as attempts to elucidate the meaning behind the wrong that we do.

Our religions suggest a variety of stories about why people do bad things. Judaism sometimes expresses it in terms of there being a good, positive spirit and also a bad, negative spirit that struggle against each other within each of us. Sometimes one wins out, sometimes the other. Any number of factors can sway the predominance of one over the other at any given time. The more often we choose the good, the stronger our tendency to do so becomes.

Christianity has tended to emphasize the ways in which human beings choose to willfully disobey God due to pride, self-interest, underlying sin, and the like. Because it also emphasizes human freedom, the weight tends to lean toward the independence we have to make the choice to do wrong. When we do, we rend apart the human family, sisters and brothers under the divine parenthood of God.

Followers of Islam tend to express the cause of human wrong-doing in terms of human unwillingness to submit to Allah/God. For those of us who have trouble with the idea of submission to an all-powerful deity, we might translate that into a failing to take into account the Holy, however we

experience that. We make ourselves the center of our universe.

Hinduism talks about maya, or illusion. We don’t see things as they really are, and the most crucial thing we fail to see is that everything is at root connected, and all is holy and sacred. When we act out of this ignorance and illusion, we do wrong because we perpetuate separation and conflict.

Buddhists sound a similar theme, focusing on ignorance and a failure to understand how the world really is, a tapestry of interconnectedness. This leads to greed, hatred, and ignorance, and from there to wrongdoing.

Finally in this brief summary list, Taoists would say that we behave in ways that go against the way nature is; we try to swim upstream and defy innate moral laws that are as natural and inevitable as the law of gravity.

Across the board, human wrong-doing seems to have something to do with separation, as Paul Tillich puts forward. In theological terms, sin means estrangement: separation from the Holy, from Life, from Love, from other persons and beings, and from ourselves. From the Ground of our Being. And forgiveness means reunion of that which is separated. Forgiveness is “participation, reunion overcoming the powers of estrangement.” And when this occurs, we can act in ways that lead to union rather than to further estrangement. May it be so in our lives.

*Rev. Julia*



***"An eye for an eye, and the whole world would be blind."***

***~Kahlil Gibran***

## September 2015 UUCM Calendar

Online calendar: <http://www.uuchurchmuncie.org/web/calendar.html>

### Regular Weekly Events

Adult Discussion Group	Sundays	9:30 am
Worship Service	Sundays	10:45 am – noon
Religious Education for Children & Youth	Sundays	10:45 am – noon
Body Life Dinner	Tuesdays	6:00 – 7:30 pm
Choir Rehearsal	Tuesdays	7:30 – 9:00 pm
Revival Hour (see web calendar for location)	Wednesdays	5:30 pm
Muncie OUTreach LGBTQ Youth Drop In	Fridays	5:00 – 8:00 pm

### September Events & Activities

Finance Committee	Wednesday	Sept 2	5:30 pm
Worship Associates	Wednesday	Sept 2	7:30 pm
MS Youth Group	Sunday	Sept 6	12:30 pm
Theme Reflections	Sunday	Sept 6	12:30 pm
HS Youth Group	Sunday	Sept 6	6:00 pm
FOHN Task Force	Monday	Sept 7	7:00 pm
Pastoral Associates	Wednesday	Sept 9	6:00 pm
Program Council	Wednesday	Sept 8	7:00 pm
Teacher Orientation	Thursday	Sept 10	6:00 pm
Property Maintenance Workday	Saturday	Sept 12	9:00 am
Chalice Marketplace :: coffee & other Fair Trade items for sale	Sunday	Sept 13	Before & after the service
Bazaar Chairs Meeting	Sunday	Sept 13	12:15 pm
Building Your Own Theology	Sunday	Sept 13	12:30 pm
Social Justice Committee	Monday	Sept 14	7:00 pm
Board of Trustees	Wednesday	Sept 16	7:00 pm
Committee on Ministries	Thursday	Sept 17	7:15 pm
Circle in the Woods	Saturday	Sept 19	7:00 pm
RE Committee – Children & Youth	Sunday	Sept 20	9:30 am
Multi-Gen Event :: Origami Workshop	Sunday	Sept 20	Noon
Investment Committee	Sunday	Sept 20	12:30 pm
Adult Religious Education Committee	Sunday	Sept 20	12:15 pm
HS Youth Group	Sunday	Sept 20	6:00 pm
MS Youth Group Retreat	Saturday	Sept 26	
Sack Lunch Prep for Harvest Soup Kitchen	Sunday	Sept 27	9:30 am
Anti-Racism Task Force	Sunday	Sept 27	12:15 pm
Fellowship Committee	Sunday	Sept 27	12:15 pm

### Bits & Pieces

#### Talk with Your Mouth Full!

Dinner Discussion Groups are getting started for the 2015–16 year—a sign-up sheet will be in the back of the Sanctuary through Labor Day weekend. Please sign up, or e-mail to Eleanor Trawick [trawick.eleanor6@gmail.com](mailto:trawick.eleanor6@gmail.com).

Dinner Discussion Groups are informal groups of 8–12 people who meet over a meal approximately monthly. The groups typically meet at members' homes (whether large or small, neat or not!), at the church, or at other locations—creativity is encouraged. This is a great way to get to know fellow UUs over the course of a year. New participants are particularly welcome!

Direct questions to **Eleanor Trawick** or **Markie Oliver**, 282–1386 or at the email above.

#### Body Life Dinner

A reminder to join us each Tuesday night at 6 pm, for a pot luck dinner at the church. It's a time to enjoy a great meal and fellowship. Come nurture your body with good food and nurture your soul with good friends. All are welcome! Bring a friend. Please be sure to visit our [Facebook page](#), [Body Life at UUCM](#), for announcements such as upcoming themes!

## UUCM Staff & Leadership

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Office Hours: Monday 1:00 – 4:00 pm | Tuesday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm | Wednesday – Friday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

## Unitarian Universalist Church of Muncie

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