the UNIGRAM

What Does It Mean to Belong? Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd, Minister

Belonging means to be accepted some place for who you are, whereas fitting in means you have to change who you are in some way to be accepted. In a sense then, belonging is the feeling we get when we are the recipients of unconditional love - when we are loved just for who we are. That belonging feeling can also happen under other conditions though, such as when we're in a gathering or community that values us for just the way we are. Whether it's through unconditional love, an accepting community or some other way, feeling like we belong is a powerful experience.

My hometown Unitarian Universalist congregation was probably the place where I felt like I most belonged when I was a kid. I would roam the halls

before and after the service. playing with my church best friend, the Director of Religious Education's daughter, Megan McDonald. Church was a safe place, a place where I could be myself, a place where I was unconditionally loved and supported by an amazing community. Which is a good thing, because I sure didn't feel like I belonged at school. And I even had a hard time feeling like I belonged as a young adult, after college. I had a great group of friends when I lived in Philadelphia, and I certainly belonged with them to a large degree. And I was a member of and belonged to the First Unitarian

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Belonging in a BSU Stairwell

Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, Community Minister

I'd met a friend on campus for lunch. I'd parked in the Emens Auditorium parking structure because it was close to where we were meeting. My emeriti faculty hangtag doesn't allow me to park there unless I park as a visitor. On this crowded day, that meant parking on the very top deck. When I was ready to leave, that, in turn, meant walking up four flights of stairs. I later learned that there is an elevator, but I didn't know that at the time.

I've been moving quite slowly and with great difficulty of late due to a worse than usual time with chronic hip

and leg problems. As I began to make my way up the stairs one slow step at a time, I became aware of a young woman behind me. I turned and smiled at her, and invited her to go around me. What happened next surprised me. She declined, willingly keeping pace with my slowness. We had an absolutely delightful conversation all the way up the stairs, and parted with warm wishes and smiling hearts when we reached the top. We both *belonged* in that brief encounter.

I've been thinking a lot about what being able-bodied, or not, means in our culture. Rich Harris, who worked with what I believe was then called "disabled student development" before his retirement from Ball State, often said that we are all "TABS," his acronym for

Exploring faith. Practicing inclusivity. Living justice.

Sunday Mornings at Our Church in the Woods

Services begin at 10:45 am

January Theme :: Belonging

For more information about this month's theme check out Theme Exploration on page 3.

Sunday, January 1 Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer	<i>"Stones and Flowers: A Meditation for the New Year"</i> Start your New Year off with an opportunity to reflect on the past year and what it means to you for the year to come. Take home a reminder of your reflection.
Sunday, January 8 <i>Rev. Dennis McCarty</i>	<i>"The Beauty of Change"</i> Rev. Dennis McCarty, the Minister Emeritus at our sister congregation, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbus, Indiana will be our guest speaker.
Sunday, January 15 <i>Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd</i>	Rev. Seth returns from a mini-holiday break to lead us in our first exploration of our monthly theme of Belonging.
Saturday, January 22 <i>Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd</i>	The choir will sing for us as we continue to explore the monthly theme of Belonging. We'll also hold our annual Age of Reading ceremony, where we honor our young ones to the world of reading.
Sunday, January 29 Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd	Rev. Seth wraps up our monthly theme of Belonging – check out the Friday eBlast for more specific details on the upcoming Sunday sermons.

Religious Education for Children & Youth :: 10:45 am

Sunday, January 1 Social Action Sunday	On this Sunday, our children and youth will create cards for the Caring Committee.
Sunday, January 8 <i>Curriculum Sunday</i>	Join us as we continue our religious exploration!
Sunday, January 15 <i>Curriculum Sunday</i>	Join us as we continue our religious exploration!
Sunday, January 22 Age of Reading Ceremony Curriculum Sunday	We wish to celebrate your child's joy of reading! In this ceremony the children walk through a special archway and receive a special book and bookmark.
Sunday, January 29 <i>Curriculum Sunday</i>	Join us as we continue our religious exploration!

Adult Religious Exploration Offerings :: 9:30 am

Our mission statement begins by calling us to a continuing exploration of our faith. In pursuit and support of that goal, we offer our Adult RE during the Sunday morning 9:30-10:30 am pre-service slot.

goui, we oner t	Check out all the offerings below!
Every Sunday – Red Room <i>Adult Discussion Group</i>	This group is meant as a chance for people with various personal beliefs to get together and openly discuss a variety of topics. See page 7 for weekly topics.
Every Sunday – Violet room <i>Muncie UU Pagans</i>	This is an open discussion group to explore the differences in our pagan traditions. We will also be discussing the reasons that so many Pagan and Earth-based religions find homes in UU congregations. People of any belief are welcome to attend.
2 nd Sunday – Yellow room <i>Landscapes of Aging and</i> <i>Spirituality</i>	Rev. Julia leads an adult RE class based on Kathleen Montgomery's edited book, <i>Landscapes of Aging and Spirituality</i> , a collection of essays on various topics relevant to spirituality and aging. The book is available through Skinner House.
2	

Theme Exploration – Belonging

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

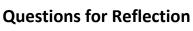
Our "sacred text" this month is made up of two quotes, the first from Brené Brown, and the second from Win Butler:

"A deep sense of love and belonging is an irreducible need of all people. We are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong. When those needs are not met, we don't function as we were meant to. We break. We fall apart. We numb. We ache. We hurt others. We get sick." ~ Brené Brown ~

"I'm not practicing, I don't go to church, but what I got from it was a sense of belonging to something bigger. What I really miss is being forced to be in a community with people that aren't the same as you. Then, you really have to work through the ways that you're different." ~ Win Butler ~

Spiritual Practice or Reflective Practice

Find a piece of paper and a pen or pencil, and write down all the communities of which you are a part. Then write down or mark or indicate in some way to which communities you feel like you most belong, and which communities the least – not as a form of judgment, but as simple reflection of your reality. Think about what it is that you makes you feel more like you belong in the communities that you "belong more" to more, and what makes you feel less like you belong in others. Is there anything you could do to change or increase your feeling of belonging in any of these communities?



What does it mean to you to belong somewhere? How important is a sense of belonging in your life?

Where are places in your life, past or present, where you've felt like you really belonged? Places like you felt really didn't belong?

Suggested Sermons

"Longing for Belonging" – Rev. Margaret Beckman https://goo.gl/TU5DPJ

"Belonging" – Rev. Lyn Cox https://goo.gl/AluCAf

2016-2017 UUCM Themes

September – Change October – Humility November – Emotional Intelligence December – Peace January – Belonging February – Power March – Humanism April – Identity May – Ambiguity/Paradox June – Care of the Soul



Religious Education Corner

Nadine Tringali, Director of Religious Education

Age of Reading Ceremony

A tradition in my family to kick off the New Year is to head to the kitchen the morning of January 1st and start making a batch of bread. Family traditions also include sitting in a good comfy chair with a book, while the bread rises. Reading is such an important part of our lives. We can use our imagination and travel to places all over the world! On Sunday, January 22, we will be honoring our youngest readers in grades K-2 in our Age of Reading Ceremony. In our annual ceremony our youth will travel through a special archway and receive two books, Unitarian Universalism is a Really Long Name by Jennifer Dant, and The Kite Surprise by our very own Bill & Katie Frederick. Families with youth in grades K-2 (who have not already participated in this ceremony in previous years) are asked to please contact me by Monday, January 16, if your child or children will be participating.

Teachers Needed!

Time spent with our children & youth is so valuable, both for them and for us. Please consider offering a New Year's gift of your time in either our preschool or 3-5 grade class. Our Sunday morning attendance has grown tremendously in these two classrooms and classroom aides would be very much appreciated. If you are interested, I would be very happy to answer any questions you may have!

January Youth Programs

Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd, Coordinator of Youth Programs

Youth Programs News!

It is that time again! Time to plan Youth Sunday! In January, we will meet on most Tuesday nights and during our regular youth group time. All Youth Sunday planning sessions are open to middle and high school aged youth. Tuesday night sessions will happen right after Body Life Dinner. We will gather and eat in the multigenerational space of dinner, the youth program will provide a contribution to the dinner and then we will gather in the Violet room to plan until Choir time.

January Youth Schedule

Tuesday, January 3, 6-7:30 pm - Youth Sunday Planning

Saturday, January 14, 12:30 pm - Sunday, January 15, 9:30 am - *Hogwarts Lock-In*

This month is our last Hogwarts Lock-In. We will look at the final book and the themes of horcruxes, death, legacy, wholeness and loyalty. It will be fun and full of meaning.

Tuesday, January 17, 6-7:30 pm - Youth Sunday Planning

Tuesday, January 14, 6-7:30 pm - Youth Sunday Planning

Sunday, January 29, 12:30-2 pm - Youth Sunday Planning

Tuesday, January 31, 6-7:30 pm - Youth Sunday Planning

Elizabeth

Splinters from the Board

Exploring faith. Practicing Inclusivity. Living Justice. The UUCM Board had a long and productive December meeting; here are a few developments you should all know about.

Winter is most certainly here, and we have established a policy for the decision-making and notification process when bad weather results in a cancellation of Sunday activities. The full policy is published elsewhere in this newsletter, and will also be available in the Policy & Procedure Manual on the UUCM website.

At the fall congregational meeting, our treasurer, **Usha Shivaswamy**, presented a summary of the financial statements for the 2015-16 fiscal year in a clear, easy-tounderstand power point presentation. If you'd like to see

paper copies of those slides, they're available in the church office, along with the full, detailed income and expense statement and balance sheet.

"Unitarianism" Harshman Panel Photo by Günther Cartwright

A new task force has been created to work through the process of becoming Freethinker Friendly. This is a UU Humanist Association program that helps congregations become more welcoming to non-theists in our use of language and ritual. This is just one action that has come out of our discussions with secular humanists in the congregation.

The 1859 Forum has been officially reactivated. **Ginny Nilles** has volunteered to recruit community members to establish a board, which will present speakers, workshops, or discussions for the community on important topics. UUCM is the caretaker for the funds for this community program. We're thrilled that Ginny is bringing it to life again at this challenging time in our country.

2016 has sped by. It was a year of highs and lows for me: my mother died, my daughter was married, the election... I've experienced grief, joy and anxiety. I've spent a lot more time at my desk than usual, doing board work. And I've grown a lot through all the challenges. Thank you all for being my community, my friends, allies and mentors. May a restful holiday season prepare us all for the new year and the vital work ahead.

Holly Hanauer, President

Roots & Wings and New Member Joining Ceremony

If you're interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism, or are a long-term member but would like a refresher, please consider attending our Roots & Wings class offered by Rev. Seth. The class will cover Unitarian Universalist theology, history, worship practices, and more, and will meet on Sunday, January 15th from 9:15 am-10:15 am, in the Yellow Room. If you're interested in becoming a member, we ask that you participate in this class before signing the book. If you can't make the class, but want to become a member, contact Rev. Seth to set up a meeting. There will then be a New Member Joining Ceremony on Sunday, January 22nd at 10:15 am, in the Sanctuary, so if you're interested in joining, talk to Rev. Seth, and consider coming to the class!

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January 2017

Belonging in a BSU Stairwell Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemever

(continued from page 1)

"temporarily able-bodied." I've clearly lost my TAB status, and that's had me reflecting on the topic.

Along with other forms of prejudice such as racism and sexism, ableism clearly violates our First Principle. "Ableism is the discrimination or prejudice against people who have disabilities. Ableism can take the form of ideas and assumptions, stereotypes, attitudes and practices, physical barriers in the environment, or larger scale oppression. It is oftentimes unintentional and most people are completely unaware of the impact of their words or actions," (Urban Dictionary). It is, in other words, often part of the set of lenses through which we see and experience the world. Intentional or not, conscious or not, ableism fails to respect the inherent worth and dignity of those who don't fit the able-bodied ideal. Far too many of those who are TABs misconstrue their situation and regard themselves simply as ABs – abled-bodied.

Not to be aware of ableism and its consequences also runs afoul of our commitment to justice, equity and compassion in all human relations. As with other forms of discrimination, ableism is at heart an issue of justice and equity. It calls us to challenge the structures that help to make ableism a still-acceptable form of discrimination. It calls on us to challenge the attitudes that allow someone who openly mocked a reporter who has a joint abnormality to be elected to the office of the Presidency of the United States. Trump has also fought hard against accommodations for persons with disabilities in many of his properties, saying that such accommodations were simply too costly. It calls us to challenge the climate in which Jeff Sessions, the Alabama senator who identified mainstreaming of special needs children and its correlate accommodations as a cause of much of the evil in our public schools, could be chosen as the US Attorney General, charged with the responsibility of protecting the rights of all citizens.

Language isn't the whole of it, by any means. But it's a place to start and an important tool for raising awareness. Many of us like the hymn "Standing on the Side of Love," the lyrics of which were written by the Unitarian Universalist minister Rev. Jason Shelton. It's given rise to a whole campaign. I recently learned from Rev. Erika Hewitt, who curates our Worship Web, that Rev. Shelton has changed the wording "Standing on the side of love" to "Answering the call of love" – in direct response to ableist concerns that not everyone can stand. His insightful changes can become a means of enhancing congregational awareness of "hidden" ableism.

In the face of ableism, we can choose to answer the call of love. We can choose to live the values and choices that have truly helped to "make America great" in the past such as inclusion, justice, and compassion. Anything less tells those with visible or invisible challenges they are less than welcome in our culture. It tells them they do not belong, at least not in the same way that their more able-bodied counterparts do.

Rev. Julia

MLK Day of Service at Second Harvest!

Monday, January 16, 2017, is our biggest volunteer day of the year! Come on out from 10 am to 12 noon for an MLK Day of Service at the Second Harvest Food Bank Warehouse (6621 N Old State Rd 3, Muncie, IN 47303). The last several years we've had over 50 people show up to volunteer, thus turning their day OFF into a day ON for service. All ages are welcome!

We never know what we'll be asked to do, but we know that our group efforts will make a difference in helping that worthy organization achieve its goals of helping the food insecure. Second Harvest is expecting a big group. **Let's not let them down.**

Then, after our two hours there, come back to the church for our traditional post-volunteering **soup luncheon.** In all, a great opportunity to do good together, and then chow down!

RSVPs are appreciated so Second Harvest and the lunch crew are ready for us. Just contact Susan Taylor (<u>susantaylor68@hotmail.com</u> or 741-8711).

Thanks for all you do! Feeding Our Hungry Neighbors Task Force Social Justice Committee

What Does It Mean to Belong?

Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd

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Church of Philadelphia when I lived there. But the place where I've felt like I've really and truly belonged the most, where I was really welcomed, accepted and celebrated for being me, was seminary. It was almost like coming home in a sense... I was with my people. Of course, I also feel like I belong here at our church – I had this deep sense of connection and excitement on the plane on the way back from my first meeting with the search committee that didn't happen with any other congregation. I remain incredibly grateful for that sense of connection and belonging here, which remains to this day.

Belonging is also not something that always just passively happens. Sometimes, you show up, and you know you just belong. But other times, a sense of belonging is something that is created, over time, through the building of connections relationships. Their perhaps needs to be a fertile ground for belonging to grow and flourish, it's not the case that anyone can create belonging in any group simply by working at it. But given the right circumstances, a powerful sense of belonging can develop, and that development can involve intent – kind of like some of the intentional relationship and community building we often do in our church community.

I do wonder though if sometimes in our increasingly consumer culture where we're able to customize so many aspects of our life, that we have begun to we confuse "belonging" with "having everything exactly the way we want it." Because belonging isn't about everything being exactly the way we want it – it's about being accepted for who we are, which is different. For example, while I certainly felt my most profound sense of belonging in seminary, not everything there was the way I would have arranged it. It was a Christian seminary, and while most often that led me to a richer and deeper learning experience as I encountered that which was different from me, there were times where I was just uncomfortable, or wished things were more UU. It wasn't my ideal seminary, it wasn't my dream-of-your-perfect world seminary, but it was a great seminary, one where I belonged, despite the occasional discomfort and the frequent challenges.

Being accepted for who we are also doesn't mean that we are perfect human beings who are never going to be challenged to grow and change. Indeed, this is written directly into the seven UU (continued on page 8)

Adult Discussion Group

Sundays at 9:30 am – Red room

January 1 – December's Theme: Peace

In December we looked at peace as not just a state of being, but a goal to actively pursue, to *fight* for (in a peaceful way). We'll talk about all the things peace means.

January 8 – January's Theme: Belonging

What does it mean to belong? While maybe a little harder to define, we all, at some time, have known clearly what it *feels* like to *not* belong. Finding belonging and helping others belong – we'll figure it all out.

January 15 – The Facing Project: Facing Racism

In honor of Martin Luther King's birthday, Annemarie Voss will tell us about The Facing Project and its efforts to fight racism today.

January 22 – Roe v. Wade Anniversary

The law on abortion was settled this date in 1973 and has been fought about ever since. Indiana has led the way in passing restrictive laws, testing what will be tolerated or overturned by the courts to try to push restrictions to the edge. Many Trump voters said they didn't support Trump but couldn't vote for Hillary *just* because of her abortion stance. New, more limiting laws are being considered, designed to be taken to court with hopes of reaching a Supreme Court leaned toward overturning Roe v. Wade by the next appointed judge. **Leslie Duvall** will lead the discussion.

January 29 – Effective Altruism

The winter 2016 issue of "UU World" raises questions about the impact of foundations on addressing inequalities. The plot is even thicker. Since 1990 religious giving has been in steady decline. Assuming altruism even exists, how can we reinvent private giving to more adequately address the problems of the needy? Please come and help us address this issue. **Tom Lowe**, Discussion leader

Sharing Gratitude



Thank you to everyone who donated to the Mitten Tree of UUCM. 51 cute, warm, colorful items and \$15 were given to the Clothing Bank at Friends Memorial Church. ~Julie Fritz, Chairperson Mitten Tree

Thanks and appreciation to **Liz Lowe**, for yet again being the primary organizer in helping prepare the saffron buns we all enjoyed at our Santa Lucia celebration in December. We couldn't have done it without you Liz!

Gratitude and thanks also to all the members of the **Fellowship Committee**, who helped organize the food, setup and clean up for this year's wonderful Harvest Feast at the end of November. We appreciate all of you!

If you have a gratitude you'd like to submit for the next Unigram, please send it to <u>uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org</u>, subject line "Sharing Gratitude," by January 18.

What Does It Mean to Belong?

Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd (continued from page 7)

principles, the third of which states that we affirm and promote "acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations." There's an old saying that floats around the church ether that the task of religion is to "comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable." Being a member of a Unitarian Universalist church community means that sometimes we're going to be challenged spiritually and emotionally. Spiritual growth and change can be an exciting and invigorating process, where we learn or discover new things and new directions. Emotional growth in change, growing in terms of how we relate to others - that kind of challenge is often more difficult. It can be hard to admit when we haven't been acting our best selves, or living up to our own values. I know it's sure hard for me to admit when that's the case. Spiritual and emotional growth and learning though is part of what we're to do... even though sometimes it's not comfortable, even though sometimes it's painful. And it doesn't mean we don't belong here - it just means we're human, and that we're part of a community that has committed itself to helping each of us become our best selves.

So. My hope as your minister is that everyone who wants to be a part of our community has that special feeling of belonging here, of feeling like they're coming home – like you're coming home. But I also hope we all know and understand that that doesn't mean that everything is going to be exactly the way we'd like it, or that we'll never feel challenged. Belonging is important and powerful – and it's not always easy, and it's not always comfortable.

See you in church!

peace, love and blessings,

Rev. Seth

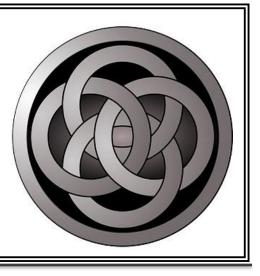
Wheel of Life

Long-time church member **Mary Elizabeth Burch** died on Sunday, December 4th, 2016. While Mary was not recently able to attend or be active at church due to her health, she was an important part of our community for many years. She will be missed.

We are excited to announce that we will welcome a third child to our family in July 2017!

~Seth, Elizabeth, Mira & Theo Carrier-Ladd

If you have a major life event you'd like the church community to be aware of, please submit it to <u>uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org</u> and note "Wheel of Life" in the subject line.



January 2017 UUCM Calendar

Online calendar: http://www.uuchurchmuncie.org/members/calendar/

Regular Weekly Events

Adult Discussion Group	Sundays	9:30 am
Muncie UU Pagans	Sundays	9:30 am
Worship Service	Sundays	10:45 am – noon
Religious Education for Children & Youth	Sundays	10:45 am – noon
OWL 7-10 th Grade (no class Jan 1)	Sundays	2:15 – 3:45 pm
Body Life Dinner	Tuesdays	6:00 – 7:30 pm
Youth Sunday Planning (no session on 1/10)	Tuesdays	6:00 – 7:30 pm
Finding Spirit :: Transgender Support Group	Tuesdays	7:00 pm
Choir Rehearsal (resumes Jan 10)	Tuesdays	7:30 pm
Revival Hour (see web calendar for location)	Wednesdays	5:30 pm
Muncie OUTreach LGBTQ Youth Drop In	Fridays	5:00 – 8:00 pm

January Events & Activities

Feeding Our Hungry Neighbors Task Force	Monday	Jan 2	7:00 pm
Stewardship Committee	Tuesday	Jan 3	5:00 pm
Finance Committee	Wednesday	Jan 4	7:00 pm
Worship Associates	Wednesday	Jan 4	7:30 pm
Landscapes of Aging & Spirituality	Sunday	Jan 8	9:30 am
Chalice Marketplace	Sunday	Jan 8	9:30 am & Noon
Visitors Q&A	Sunday	Jan 8	12:15 pm
New Member Dinner	Sunday	Jan 8	5:00 pm
Social Justice Committee	Monday	Jan 9	7:00 pm
Membership Committee	Tuesday	Jan 10	11:00 am
Stewardship Committee	Tuesday	Jan 10	5:00 pm
Pastoral Associates	Wednesday	Jan 11	6:00 pm
Two Services Task Force	Thursday	Jan 12	7:00 pm
Youth Group Lock In	Saturday	Jan 14	Noon
Roots & Wings New Member Class	Sunday	Jan 16	9:15 am
Soup Lunch	Sunday	Jan 15	Noon
Adult Discussion Committee	Sunday	Jan 15	12:15 pm
Theme Reflections	Sunday	Jan 15	12:30 pm
Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon	Monday	Jan 16	Noon
Unigram Submission Deadline	Wednesday	Jan 18	9:00 am
Board of Trustees	Wednesday	Jan 18	6:30 pm
Committee on Ministries	Thursday	Jan 19	7:15 pm
Choir Rehearsal	Sunday	Jan 22	9:30 am
New Member Joining Ceremony	Sunday	Jan 22	10:15 am
Two Services Task Force Presentation	Sunday	Jan 22	Noon
Committee on Community Ministry	Thursday	Jan 26	7:30 pm
Sack Lunch Prep for Harvest Soup Kitchen	Sunday	Jan 29	9:30 am
Youth Sunday Planning	Sunday	Jan 29	12:30 pm

Mark Your Calendar

Stewardship 2017

Our annual Stewardship Campaign will begin in January, with official kick-off Sunday on February 12. Stewardship is a time to reflect on this wonderful legacy left to us by those who came before. As your family celebrates the holiday season with family and friends, please take a moment to reflect on the role that UUCM plays in your life. Happy New Year!

UU Book Group

The UU book group will be discussing *The Dead Wake* by Eric Larson in the home of **Linda Hanson** on Thursday, January 12, at 7 pm.

Save the Date

Sunday, January 22, please plan to stay after service for a presentation by the Two Services Task Force. We'd love it if everyone could be there, as we discuss the future of our church! Mark your calendar: 1/22!



Exploring faith. Practicing inclusivity. Living justice.

UUCM Staff & Leadership

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seth@uuchurchmuncie.org

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Muncie

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