



the UNIGRAM

Who Am I?

Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd, Minister

If asked to answer the question “Who am I?” – how would you answer? No context, no setting, no defined purpose for asking, just the question: who am I? If you haven’t already, stop reading and take a moment to think about it, right now. What would your answer be? Who are you?

* * * * *

Identity is such a tricky thing – it’s fluid, and our answers to the question of who we are both change and don’t change over time. Ten years ago, I wouldn’t have answered “minister,” but now that’s a central part of who I am. Five years ago, I wouldn’t have answered “husband,” but my marriage is now a central part of my life. Three years and one week ago, I wouldn’t have answer “father,” but now

parenting is a central focus of my day-to-day activities. On the other-hand, male, straight, white, and Unitarian Universalist are all identities that have remained a constant throughout my life. Even those though – my understanding of them has changed over time. For example, I have a much more nuanced understanding of my whiteness now than I did ten years ago. And the way that I am Unitarian Universalist in the world has evolved considerably across my lifespan. So even my relatively “fixed” identities have changed. And yet, despite all this change, I still feel like the same me at my core. A changed me, but me nonetheless.

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Identity, Names, and Stories

Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, Community Minister

My relationship with my own name, or, more accurately *names*, is something of a saga. It mirrors the relationship between name, identity, and story as it has played out in my own life. It’s a story I’ve not told often. I hope it encourages you to reflect on story, change and continuity in your own life.

In the beginning (don’t all good stories start this way?), I was born Julia Kay Sheridan. Sheridan, of course, was my father’s name; in the 1940s, what else would it have been? The whole process of naming kids was pretty automatic. When I married (at the tender age of 19, but that’s another story), I never gave a thought to doing

anything other than taking on my new husband’s name: Kinschner. In my mind, we women were still properly identified with our husbands, and adopting his name legally embodied that identification for all the world to see. It never occurred to me to do otherwise. It was the 1960s, but I was stuck in the 50s alongside June Cleaver.

Fast-forward through several years of marriage, one child, the rest of college and then seminary, and the (very) faint rumblings of greater consciousness. Oh, and graduate school. When my first husband and I divorced during my graduate school years, I kept his name, in part because it seemed easier if my daughter and I had the same last name. But then he remarried, a lovely woman who was the new Mrs. Kinschner. That felt odd to me, somehow not quite fair to her.

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Sunday Mornings at Our Church in the Woods

Services begin at 10:45 am April Theme :: Identity

For more information about this month's theme check out Theme Exploration on [page 3](#).

Sunday, April 2 Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd	Rev. Seth begins our exploration of our monthly theme of Identity as we celebrate Membership Sunday. Membership Sunday combines two formerly separate Sundays: Heritage Sunday, where we celebrate our long-term members, and New Member Sunday, where we honor new members from the past year.
Sunday, April 9 Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd	Rev. Seth leads us in our continued exploration of April's theme of Identity.
Sunday, April 16 Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd	Join us for a family-friendly multi-generational service on this special Easter Sunday! There will be balloons in the sanctuary for the children, and our service will look at the intersection of identity, birth and re-birth, and the Easter story.
Sunday, April 23 Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd	Rev. Seth's final sermon of the month, topic TBD. See that week's Friday eBlast for more details.
Sunday, April 30 Rev. John Gibson	Guest Minister Rev. John Gibson, State Coordinator for Earth Charter Indiana's bicentennial initiative, Sustainable Indiana 2016, will join us to speak about the environment and Earth Day. Rev. Gibson is a co-founder of the Earth Charter movement in Indiana and has had a leadership role in its activities since the organization began in 2001.

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

Sunday, April 2 Curriculum Sunday	Join us as we continue our religious exploration!
Sunday, April 9 Curriculum Sunday	Join us as we continue our religious exploration!
Easter Sunday, April 16 Special Multi-Gen	This morning we will not be holding religious education classes, as we welcome all ages to remain in the sanctuary. Childcare for our preschool and kindergarten youth will be available in the Blue Room.
Sunday, April 23 Curriculum Sunday	Join us as we continue our religious exploration!
Sunday, April 30 Curriculum Sunday	All RE teachers and their families, and those who would like to know what we do in RE and are interested in possibly teaching or assisting next year, please attend our luncheon following the service.

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. Check out all the offerings below!

Every Sunday – Red Room Adult Discussion Group	This group is s a chance for people with various personal beliefs to get together and openly discuss a variety of topics. Check the eBlast for weekly topics.
Every Sunday – Violet room Muncie UU Pagans	This is an open discussion group to explore the differences in our pagan traditions. People of any belief are welcome.
2 nd Sunday – Indigo room Landscapes of Aging and Spirituality	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.

Theme Exploration – Identity

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 a meditation titled "Soul Lifts" by Tess Baumberger:

Wouldn't it be great if you could take a picture of your soul?

Then when your mother wanted to brag about you she could show people the picture and say, "That's my daughter, doesn't she have a beautiful soul, all sparkly and many-colored and flowing all around her?"

Wouldn't it be great if we walked around surrounded by our souls, so that they were the first things people saw instead of the last things?

Then people would judge us by who we really are instead of how we look.

Imagine no more racism, ageism, sexism, fatism, shortism, homophobia.

Imagine falling in love with who a person is, just by looking at them.

It would be a kind of cloaking device, hiding physical faults defects or even perfections. I'd want it to be mandatory.

Then people would work at making their souls more attractive instead of their bodies and faces.

Imagine people knowing by your soul that you really need a hug.

Imagine people helping each other and their souls changing colors or growing.

Imagine soul gyms with exercises to get your sagging soul in shape. Imagine the long lines forming for soul-lifts at churches, temples, mosques, synagogues or nature's grand cathedrals.

Questions for Reflection

What makes up the essence of your being, your core identity – your "soul," as it were? What would people see if this core or essence was the first thing they saw about you?

How have your many different roles and identities changed over time? How have those changes impacted your life?

Suggested Sermons

"A Case of Mistaken Identity" – Rev. Wayne Arnason
<https://goo.gl/QrKysQ>

"How Big Is Our Tent?" – Rev. Peter Friedrichs
<https://goo.gl/ooewFa>

Spiritual Practice or Reflective Practice

Using a medium of your choice – journaling, collage, photography, free writing, a musical instrument, etc. – take some time to create an answer to the question: who am I? Share your creation with someone you care about, explaining anything that needs explanation if you wish. If you have a willing partner, try doing this with someone else and sharing your about your identities together!

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*



April 2, 12:15-1:15 – Multigenerational Workshop

Please join us in the fellowship hall for “Zentangling” and “Mindfulness Coloring.” All the materials needed, will be provided. This is a great opportunity to use your creativity, meet new people, and catch up with old friends!

April 16 – Easter Sunday, Multigenerational Service and Easter Egg Hunt

This morning we will not be holding religious education classes, as we welcome all ages to remain in the sanctuary. Childcare will be available in the Blue room for preschool and kindergarten children. There will be an **Easter Egg Hunt** for children & youth following the service. Please gather in the fellowship hall for guidelines on how many eggs to search for and to pick up an Easter sack to collect eggs. Our nursery and preschool youth’s Easter Egg Hunt will be in the playground. The older youth’s Easter Egg Hunt will be on the front grounds and along the sidewalks. *Donations for our Easter Egg Hunt will be greatly appreciated. A box for donations will be on the kitchen counter.*

April 30 – Teacher Appreciation and Recruitment Luncheon

Invite to RE teachers: Please join us with your family for our Religious Education Teacher Appreciation Luncheon following the service in the fellowship hall. We want to take this time to do something special for you and your family as our way of thanking you for your love and support to the children & youth of our church. Please accept our thanks by taking a Sunday off from cooking lunch for your family and spending it with us. To help us prepare, please RSVP to the Sign Up Genius form that I will be emailing to everyone.

Interested in possibly teaching or assisting next year? This year, we are expanding our Teacher Appreciation Luncheon to offer an invitation to those who are interested in learning about what we do in RE and who may be interested in teaching or assisting in Religious Education next year. Please come and enjoy lunch with us and hear about our program! Please send me an email, if you plan on attending.

Nadine

April Youth Programs News!

*Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd,
Coordinator of Youth Programs*

April 7-9 + Middle School Election CON at UUCTC in West Lafayette, IN
Sunday, April 9, 12 noon-2pm + Service Journey Fundraiser Lunch and MS and HS Joint Youth Group

Sunday, April 9, 2:30-4 pm + Service Journey Parents Meeting

April 21-23 + Senior High Bridging CON at TJUC in Louisville, Kentucky

Sunday, April 23, 12 noon-2pm + Service Journey Fundraiser Lunch and MS and HS Joint Youth Group

Elizabeth

The Religious Education Program for Children & Youth is always appreciative of donations of apple juice and cheese crackers for our Sunday morning snack and packaged cookies, crackers, chips, and pretzels for our Middle School and High School Youth Group meetings.

Splinters from the Board

Exploring faith. Practicing Inclusivity. Living Justice.

I want to begin this column by offering the Board's thanks to the members of the Two Services Task Force for all their work over the last year and a half: **Bea Sousa, Jerry McKean, Susan Taylor, Ben Ewing, Janay Sander, and Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd**. It has been intense, challenging, emotional work. I know they are tired – but their dedication has brought us to a place where we can better understand the system our congregation is operating within, and why we have certain challenges. We're not unique and we're not alone; other churches have experienced the same set of problems. We're now focused on a possible solution, based on sound research, and on May 21 we will make a decision about how to move into the future.

The upcoming vote over adding a second service is still causing a lot of uncertainty and anxiety for many of us. The Board has been hearing some recurring questions, such as, "How does this fit into a long range plan? Do we *have* a long range plan? What about paving the rest of the parking lot first? If the issue is really about church growth, then why is it called the Two Services Task Force? Why did you jump to that idea right away? Isn't that sort of putting the cart before the horse?"

To that last question the answer is, "Yes, you're right." With hindsight, studying church growth first would have made sense. But the one statistic we knew at the beginning of all this was that "a worship service will tend to stop growing when 80 percent of the desirable seats are occupied on a regular basis; newcomers won't come back, current members will attend less frequently, or both." [Alice Mann, *The In-Between Church*, p.11] (A key word here is *desirable* seats. There might be 15 empty chairs in the front that not even long-time members want to use!) Attendance was up, we began to realize that we had a space issue in the sanctuary, and so we decided to explore the idea of adding a service.

Once that research was underway, the task force began to understand there's much more to it than Sunday morning attendance numbers. We discovered that we fit the description of a hybrid, transitional church. Here are two key characteristics:

- Transitional churches tend to use up and burn out lay leaders.
- Transitional churches tend to need new programs, staff, and facilities *all at the same time*. This leads to confusion and a sense of continual frustration as the leaders run to keep up. [Kevin E. Martin, *The myth of the 200 Barrier*, p. 63]

The Board has been experiencing these challenges first hand. I suspect that former Board members going back several years would also recognize our church in these two statements. We're stuck. It's hard – almost impossible – to move forward on long-term goals when you're still trying to get committees populated. We need to climb off this plateau and grow into a fully-functioning program church, and I believe it's worth trying a second service as a way to grow.

Meanwhile, the Board has drafted a beginning framework ([found on page 6](#)) for a long-range plan which puts the two services idea into a broader context. It outlines additional goals which we believe are vital to our mission; we fully recognize that a second service, if tried and if successful, is not an answer by itself. We hope this framework will help you understand the Board's work this past year and our thoughts about the future.

Again, my thanks to the task force, and to all of you who have read, listened, considered, given feedback, asked questions, or discussed this important topic. And there is still time for much more reading, listening, etc., as we prepare for the vote!

Holly Hanauer, President

UUCM Long Range Plan – A Framework

To help provide context for the upcoming congregational vote on adding a second service, the UUCM Board of Trustees has drafted the following outline of what a Long Range Plan for our congregation might look like. It is not intended to be “the” Long Range Plan or a full Long Range Plan; it is just a broad framework. The Board intends to appoint a Long Range Planning Task Force in the fall of 2017, once a decision has been made about adding a second service. The task force could use this framework as a springboard for further research; it would also perform a needs assessment, and gather input from the congregation.

Primary Goal

Address size-transition issues. The research the Board has done over the past year indicates that the primary challenge facing our congregation at the moment is that we’re a Hybrid church, meaning that we’re stuck between being a Pastoral- and a Program-sized church, and likely have been for close to twenty years. Symptoms of a Hybrid church include underpopulated committees and burn-out among committed volunteers.

Potential steps to consider to achieve this goal include:

- Increasing our opportunity for growth by adding a second service
- Improving our membership integration process
- Increasing the size of our physical building space
- Creating a leadership development program

Some of these potential steps are already in progress:

- The Two Services Exploration Task Force is currently creating a proposal for a one-year experiment of adding a **second service** to accommodate current numerical growth and to create the opportunity for future numerical growth. This proposal will be voted on at our May Congregational meeting.
- The Membership Committee is now populated and hard at work implementing programming to improve our **membership integration process**. Development of a small group ministry program is also coming soon.

Steps that the Board expects to be on the church’s agenda soon include:

- **Expanding our physical building space:** Dedicated adult meeting space is needed (currently there is none); more office space is needed; expanding the

kitchen and sanctuary spaces are also possibilities, which would all require a **capital campaign** in the near future.

- Creating a **leadership development program**

Secondary Goals

There are other concerns the congregation needs to look at beyond the size-transition issue. Based on the needs the Board has observed, we see the following goals worthy of consideration, in no particular order:

- Enhancement, improvement and repair of our physical grounds, both inside and outside the building, could also be addressed via the potential capital campaign. The **Grounds Vision Task Force** has met with key stakeholders, and is currently formulating a plan to revitalize our grounds outside the building.
- Increased programmatic offerings, especially in the area of Adult Religious Education
- Greater connection and involvement with the Mid-America Region and the Unitarian Universalist Association
- Improved community outreach beyond our church walls
- Expanded church social justice presence

This is certainly not an exhaustive list; there are likely items missing that a full task force review and input from the congregation would bring to light. We are sharing with you what we see as the goals of the church, based on the needs that we have been called on to address as your Board of Trustees, and the research we have done about those needs.

We strongly encourage church members who have questions about our size-transition struggles to read copies of three chapters about church growth available in hard copy on the table outside the church office, and/or to read copies of the books, [The Myth of the 200 Barrier](#) and [The In-Between Church](#), which are available to borrow in the church office. We will also be happy to discuss any concerns you have, and will do our best to answer your questions.

UUCM Board of Trustees

Holly Hanauer, Sherry Ware, Jerry McKean, Susan Bossung, Sharon Seager, Usha Shivaswamy, Anna Dillinger, Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd

Proposed Bylaw Changes

The Board of Trustees has proposed the following Bylaw amendments to be voted on at the May 21 congregational meeting. New language is underlined; language to be removed is shown with strikethrough. UUCM's complete Bylaws are available on our website; go to "Members" and then "Governance Documents."

The two substantive changes are to 1) add a Youth Representative position to the Board of Trustees, as is common in many UU congregations, and as is true for the UUA Board of Trustees, and 2) change what constitutes a quorum of board members from "three" to a "majority." Questions about these amendments may be directed to any Board member.

ARTICLE X

Board of Trustees

Section 1. Members

The Board shall include the six (6) officers of the congregation, ~~all of whom shall have voting power.~~ An additional Board member representing the youth of the church may serve on the Board, to be elected at the May congregational meeting for a one-year term. The president of the congregation shall be chairperson of the Board. All members of the Board must be members of the church and shall have voting power. In the event the youth representative on the Board is not a member of the church due to the age requirement, that member shall serve in an *ex officio* capacity without voting power until such time as the youth becomes a member of the church and assumes voting power.

Section 2. Meetings

A schedule for monthly meetings shall be set by the Board at the beginning of each fiscal year. Additional meetings may be called by the President or upon petition of one (1) or more Board members. ~~Three (3) Board members shall constitute a quorum.~~ A majority of voting Board members shall constitute a quorum. In the absence of the President, the President-Elect shall preside. In the absence of the President and President-Elect, the Vice-President shall preside. Except for Executive Sessions called to consider personnel and litigation matters, meetings are open to all members of the congregation.

Stewardship In Action

Our Church Rocks

The UUCM 2017-18 Stewardship Campaign has reached 87% of its \$286,000 goal, with \$38,000 remaining.

*When courage, genius, and generosity hold hands,
all things are possible ~Unknown*

We Are Stewards In Action

Financial Stewardship will enhance capabilities for the vitality and growth of this inclusive community. Thank you for being part of this stewardship.

We are deeply grateful to the UUCM members and friends who have committed their financial pledge and to each of you for the tremendous amount of time committed to stewardship in our church.

The Stewardship Committee continues to work diligently, via emails and phone calls, to contact the church members and friends who have missed turning in their pledge commitments. Please help reach the goal!

Download the form here: <https://goo.gl/bm4Pve>

Complete and return to the church office.

*Life is an echo –
what you send out comes back ~Unknown*

Two Services Task Force Update: Dates for Your Calendar

Special Issue of the Unigram

The Task Force is compiling a **special April issue** of the Unigram to lay out the proposal we are writing. The issue will include discussion to put the proposal in context so that you can make an informed vote. Please be sure to read this issue!

Discussing the Proposal

Two post-service discussions will be held to discuss the particulars of the proposal; put **Sunday, April 9** and **Sunday, May 7** on your calendar.

Congregational Vote

After the service on **Sunday, May 21**, members of the congregation will vote whether or not to move to two services as a one-year experiment. It is vital that you are there to vote!

The Inquirers Series

The Membership Committee is pleased to announce that a new program has begun, the **Inquirers Series**, held Sundays from March 19th through May 7th, at 9:30 am. The series offers visitors and new members more detailed information about our church and what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist. Created by the First Unitarian Church of Dallas, and adapted for our specific setting, the Inquirers Series introduces participants to our minister, history, religious education, liturgical year, social justice, pastoral care, and congregational life with an eye towards member integration and participation. Current members, if you're interested in a refresher and/or meeting some of our visitors and new members, please feel free to join us. Details for each particular Sunday program and who is leading it can be found at the Welcoming Center in the foyer of the church.

Connecting with the Wider World of Unitarian Universalism

Two opportunities to experience the wider world of Unitarian Universalism are coming up. The MidAmerica Regional Assembly is April 28-30 in Oak Brook, IL (Chicago area.) The schedule includes workshops, the MidAmerica Annual Meeting, a UUA Presidential candidate forum, and worship services (this year Rev. Seth will be preaching and leading the Sunday morning service). There is still time to register; check out midamericauua.org.

The Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly is June 21-25 in New Orleans. This longer event includes the same sorts of activities as the regional assemblies, but there's more of everything, plus special programs for children and youth. Our congregation can send five delegates to vote on official business, including the UUA Presidential election, and delegates do not have to physically attend to participate; plenary sessions are live-streamed. Let Rev. Seth or a board member know if you'd like to be a delegate. Early registration rates are good through April 30. You can take in the whole convention or just a day or two. Learn more at uua.org.

I attended GA in Columbus, OH last year and really enjoyed the whole experience. It was enlightening and enriching to be with UUs from across the whole nation and to learn what other congregations are doing. My favorite activity between workshops was browsing in the InSpirit Bookstore; I came home with a small pile of books that I'm still working through. If either of these conventions would fit into your schedule, I really encourage you to attend.

One more plug: the MidAmerica website has a long list of archived webinars that you can watch or listen to on almost any topic within church life. I've listened to several that were excellent. There's so much to learn, and this source is so accessible. No travel, no fees – just find a free hour and listen from your favorite chair.

Holly Hanauer

Roots & Wings and New Member Joining Ceremony

Interested in becoming a member? Just looking to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and our church? Long-time member looking for a refresher? Everyone is invited to attend our "Roots & Wings" class, which will be offered on Sunday, April 9, at 9:15 am in the Yellow Room. For those who are interested in becoming members, there will be a New Member Joining Ceremony the following week, Sunday, April 16, at 10:15am in the sanctuary. Attendance at Roots & Wings is generally required before becoming a member – we offer it every month now, so if you can't make it this month, look for the May dates in the next Unigram!

Mary Jo & Chris Reidy Benefit Concert April 8, 6:00 pm, at UUCM

Come and support Mary Jo Reidy (and family) as she recovers from a traumatic brain injury suffered on January 27th, 2017. Mary Jo is on the board of Muncie OUTreach and her husband Chris helps in the book booth at our bazaar. The event includes performances by 4 bands, food, drinks, and a silent auction (including a Fender Precision bass!). All proceeds will go toward Mary Jo's hospital bills and recovery expenses.

\$10 per person \$15 per couple \$20 per family
For more information or to make a donation,

contact **Laura Janney**

muncieoutreach@gmail.com.

Spotlight on UUCM Board of Trustees and UUCM Staff

This is the twelfth in a series of articles about the ministries of our church. Everything we do is part of our ministry to one another and to the community, both within the church and beyond. The series spotlights the work of a committee or task force that contributes to the broader ministry of our congregation.

Linda Hanson, for the Committee on Ministries

Spotlighting the UUCM Board of Trustees and the UUCM Staff in one article highlights the bones of our church body. The **staff—including our ministers**—enable, lead, facilitate, and support our ministries day by day and week by week. The **Board** tackles major issues for the ministry of the church in order to formulate policy for the long term. Staff and board members do not work in isolation; they forge the connections that strengthen our church skeleton and flesh it out. This article can offer only an overview of our bones; future articles will highlight how some of those bones are fleshed out, for RE and preparation for Sundays, for example.

The staff meets weekly. They take time for personal check-in as well as professional check-in, providing the connections and information that enable them to all move in the same direction, to speak with one voice on issues. They bring multiple eyes to an issue or task, whether working on monthly themes or on multigenerational services together. Their retreats and regular weekly meetings foster mutual support through open communication. They are an effective team.

Christie Williams, our Office Administrator, has her hands on the pulse of every event, activity, communication, and record keeping for our church. She knows her job so well that she can anticipate and plan and schedule others.

Nadine Tringali, Director of Lifespan Religious Education, works with the Religious Education Committee to provide faith exploration and discovery experiences for our children and youth. To give a sense of her work, see <https://goo.gl/UDC9Wu>

Dr. James Helton, Director of Music, currently directs the choir, plays for most Sunday services, and arranges for special music, always in collaboration with the minister and the Worship Associates. See <https://goo.gl/RzgFSI>

Rev. Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd, Coordinator of Youth Programming, extends the opportunities beyond Sunday morning for youth to explore their faith and build community as they come of age. To give a sense of her work, see <https://goo.gl/HTG6xD>

Megan Wenning, Membership Coordinator, greets visitors and new members every Sunday and supports the work of the newly revived Membership Committee.

Matt Davis, Web Site Administrator, keeps us visible in the digital world. If you haven't looked at our website recently, check these additional relevant pages:

Brief bios of our church staff: <https://goo.gl/FvfViu>

About our Ministers: <https://goo.gl/hjt6wh>

Essentially the **Board** is responsible for overseeing the total life of the church, guiding and evaluating its functions. They initiate long-range planning, approve and enforce policies and procedures and in general promote the welfare of the church and its constituency. They are trustees of the physical plant, the personnel, church insurance, and our financial well-being. That means recruiting the right people for tasks! As part of their leadership practice, they covenant to "Work unselfishly on behalf of the church, for the betterment of the whole church, present and future." Their three main goals for this year help us fulfill our Mission and achieve our Vision:

- to monitor and support key committees & task forces
- to educate ourselves & the congregation about size transition and other key topics

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Who Am I?

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

And, there are other ways to define ourselves still. When I paused just now, to answer the question “who am I?” the first response that came into my head was “I’m someone who is committed to learning and growing throughout my lifetime.” That’s a value, a belief. It’s not the only way I identify myself, but in this moment at least it felt like the most important. There’s also of course parts of identities that we might consider of lesser import or weight – for example, I’m also someone who loves science fiction and fantasy novels, I’m also a Boston sports fan, and I’m also a technology enthusiast. I wouldn’t say those are “the most important” things to know about me, but they’re part of who I am.

Then there’s the value in our identities to consider. I’ll never forget the sermon I heard, as a layperson attending my UU church in Philadelphia, from a UU minister who was serving as the director of a retirement home. She lifted up her concern for the folks she was working with that they seemed to have lost value in the eyes of so many in our society because they were no longer working. One of the first questions we typically ask when we get to know people is “what do you do?” with the clear assumption being that everyone has a job. Which is why if someone is answers that question by saying they are a stay-at-home parent, or they currently unemployed, the ensuing conversation often feels awkward. Our culture places value on, and assumes that we all are, working. This minister shared with us how she was aware of how often her clients seemed to be diminished by no longer having a “culturally valued” job – not just in interactions with others, but also in many cases just in life in general, and challenged us to remember *everyone’s* inherent worth and dignity.

Which parts of your identity are valued most by our American culture? Which parts of your identity do you value the most yourself? Is there ever any conflict or tension between the two?

As we embark on our exploration of our April theme of Identity, I hope you will join me in wrestling with these questions and more. Our identities change over the course of time, sometimes by intentional choice,

sometimes by natural evolution, and sometimes against our will – think loss of a job or loss of a spouse, among many other possibilities. Taking the time to name our identities, and to think about which ones have value for ourselves, and in our culture, can help us better understand who we are and what is most important to us in our lives. And it can help us better understand and deal with threats to our identity, as well as help us better navigate identity transitions.

May we engage in identity exploration together this month with intention and thoughtfulness, so that we may deepen ourselves, each other, and our community.

See you in church!

peace, love and blessings,

Rev. Seth



Spotlight on UUCM Board and Staff

(continued from page 9)

- to explore more deeply integrating Mission & Vision

Individually, members of the Board of Trustees have specific tasks, but together they must be responsive to all ministries of the church. They must be keen observers as well as problem solvers to determine what’s necessary to keep our church body healthy in its second century. Current members are **Holly Hanauer**, President; **Susan Bossung**, Vice President and Chair of the Program Committee; **Jerry McKean**, President-Elect; **Sharon Seager**, Secretary; **Usha Shivaswamy**, Treasurer; **Sherry Ware**, Past-President and Chair of Nominating and Personnel Policies committees; and **Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd**, Minister – *ex officio*.

The officers, their duties, and the responsibilities of the Board are described in the by-laws:

<https://goo.gl/Gp7W7o>

Identity, Names, and Stories

Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer [\(continued from page 1\)](#)

Thus began my quest for a new name. That search had begun a few years before, when I started grad school. I'd always been called by the nickname "Julie." When I began grad school, I felt a need for a change, for something with what seemed to me to be of more substance, more weight, more maturity. I intentionally embraced my given name. To this day, I often introduce myself as "Julia with an a" to make that point clear, and I tend to correct those who call me Julie by pointing out that "it's Julia with an a." From my current vantage point, decades of experience later, I'm simply not Julie. Julie was the socially-awkward kid with thick glasses and crooked teeth, the kid who had been abused by her father and laughed at by her peers. Julia is the gritty survivor I had become.

But what about my last name? I still wasn't comfortable remaining Julia Kinschner. I decided to change it legally. I had friends who had resumed using their maiden name following a divorce, but I couldn't do that. At the time, I didn't know why, just that it felt all wrong; I'd learn more about the *why* of it later. I could not go back to being Julia Sheridan. Yet I wanted to maintain some sort of family continuity. My solution was to take both my father's and my mother's middle names, and use both. The court document records my officially becoming Julia Benton Mitchell. That worked. I gave my daughter the option of keeping her dad's name or using my new name. Something of a pragmatist even in junior high, she opted for Mitchell "because people can pronounce it and spell it." She still uses that name. For her, that's who she is, and marriage hasn't changed that.

Then I met the man who would become my second husband. I chose to adopt his name. The difference was that, this time, it was a conscious, intentional decision. It also wasn't motivated by my previous sense of women being identified with our husbands. It was, rather, a deep desire to bear witness to the very special thing that had come into being between us. I also kept Mitchell, often using both names. If memory serves, I'm Julia Mitchell Corbett in our membership book. I kept Mike's last name following his untimely death in 2001. The name continued to witness to the deathlessness of the love we had shared, and remained a deep source of comfort for me. Being Mike's wife had not been my whole identity, but it was a significant aspect of it. I had come into our marriage with deep psychological and spiritual wounds, and did a lot of healing work while we were married. My identity changed immensely during that time.

Mike's death was another cataclysmic change for me, as was meeting and marrying Tom Hemeyer. This, too, felt like a giant step into a new and different life. I was the same person, but in a very new phase. I brought everything up to that point into our relationship. Yet I willingly embraced significant newness and difference. Not the least of which, certainly, was my retirement from university teaching, the only profession I'd ever followed, to pursue ministry. I chose to keep both names, sometimes hyphenated and sometimes not: Corbett-Hemeyer. Doing so was a way to honor Mike and what our marriage had meant and continues to mean to me.

Historically and cross-culturally, people have taken new names to reflect a fundamental change in their identity. People who convert to Islam often assume a Muslim name. In India, those who become wandering forest dwellers may take a different name, or even become nameless to signify the extent to which they have passed beyond their previous selves. Nuns may be given a saint's name when they made their profession of vows. Buddhist nuns and monks are often given new names as well. Some African Americans take on an African name, or give their children one to reflect their birthright and to distinguish that heritage from the oppressive legacy of slavery. Children may be given family names or named after a person their parents admire.

Identity is both continuous and discontinuous. We do remain in many senses the same person throughout our lives. And yet we change, in ways small and large, in ways known only to us and in ways manifest to nearly everyone we know. This fluidity of identity is a central element that makes up the wondrous adventure we call life. It's why we as Unitarian Universalists value change and growth in our religion and spirituality. May you be blessed as you change and grow and remain who you are.

Rev. Julia (Kay Sheridan Kinschner Benton-Mitchell Mitchell-Corbett Corbett-Hemeyer)



Sharing Gratitude

If you have a gratitude you'd like to submit for the next Unigram, please send it to uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org, subject line "Sharing Gratitude," by April 19.



Much thanks to the Stewardship Committee for all their hard work on this year's Stewardship Campaign. While we are still finishing up the campaign, they have all stepped forward to make this happen in a big way, especially **Nan Barber** and **Lynn Hale**, who agreed last-minute to fill the much needed roles of co-chairs.



Gratitude also to everyone who gave gifts to fund the purchase of our new piano, as well as to our Piano Committee – **Mary Johnson Robey**, **Caroline Sullivan**, our Music Director, **Jim Helton**, and our Minister, **Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd**. Without everyone's hard work and generous gifts, this project wouldn't have come to fruition. Thank you to all involved!

Wheel of Life

Margaret Jane Devine was born on March 27th, 2017 to proud parents **Marc** and **Annie Devine**. Congratulations to Annie and Marc, and welcome to the world baby Maggie!

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



Freethinker Application Progress

The steering committee of the Freethinker Task Force has prepared a draft application to establish UUCM as a Freethinker Friendly Congregation. The draft is being forwarded to the entire task force for review. It is the intention of the task force to complete its work and submit the application to the UUCM board at its April meeting. Upon approval from the UU Humanist Association, this would allow UUCM to be identified as a Freethinker Friendly Congregation. The official Freethinker designation will help nones, atheists, agnostics and nonbelievers find us and know that they will be openly welcomed by our inclusive congregation.

Also, the Task Force elected **Grace Reef** as its honorary chairperson. For many years Grace has been in inspiration to UUCM members and friends as a freethinker and Humanist. **Tom Lowe**



"Humanism" Harshman Panel
Photo by Gunther Cartwright

April 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
Inquirer's Series	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	Sundays	2:15 – 3:45 pm
Body Life Dinner	Tuesdays	6:00 – 7:30 pm
Finding Spirit :: Transgender Support Group	Tuesdays	7:00 pm
Choir Rehearsal	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

April Events & Activities

Choir Rehearsal	Sunday	April 2	9:30 am
Visitors Q&A	Sunday	April 2	12:15 pm
Facebook Policy Forum	Sunday	April 2	12:15 pm
Multi-Gen Workshop :: Zentangle	Sunday	April 2	12:15 pm
Women's Connection Leaders	Sunday	April 2	12:15 pm
Feeding Our Hungry Neighbors Task Force	Monday	April 3	7:00 pm
Finance Committee	Wednesday	April 5	7:00 pm
Worship Associates	Wednesday	April 5	7:30 pm
Mary Jo Reidy Fundraiser	Saturday	April 8	6:00 pm
Landscapes of Aging and Spirituality	Sunday	April 9	9:30 am
Chalice Marketplace	Sunday	April 9	9:30 am & Noon
Youth Group Pizza Fundraiser	Sunday	April 9	Noon
Roots & Wings New Member Class	Sunday	April 9	12:15 am
Two Services Proposal Discussion	Sunday	April 9	12:15 pm
Service Journey Parent Meeting	Sunday	April 9	2:30 pm
New Member Dinner	Sunday	April 9	5:00 pm
Social Justice Committee	Monday	April 10	7:00 pm
Membership Committee	Tuesday	April 11	11:00 am
Pastoral Associates	Wednesday	April 12	6:00 pm
Program Council	Wednesday	April 12	7:00 pm
Two Services Task Force	Thursday	April 13	7:00 pm
New Member Joining Ceremony	Sunday	April 16	10:15 am
Adult Discussion Committee	Sunday	April 16	12:15 pm
Unigram Submission Deadline	Wednesday	April 19	9:00 am
Board of Trustees	Wednesday	April 19	6:30 pm
Committee on Ministries	Thursday	April 20	7:15 pm
OUTreach Prom	Saturday	April 22	7:00 pm
Youth Group Pizza Fundraiser	Sunday	April 23	Noon
Theme Reflections	Sunday	April 23	12:30 pm
Committee on Community Ministry	Thursday	April 27	7:30 pm
Kitchen Cleaning	Saturday	April 29	9:30 am
Sack Lunch Prep for Harvest Soup Kitchen	Sunday	April 30	9:30 am
RE Teacher Appreciation Lunch	Sunday	April 30	Noon

Stay After Church for Lunch and Support Our Youth

The Youth Program is planning to bring our high school aged youth on a UU College of Social Justice (UUCSJ) Service Journey to the US/Mexico Border in June of 2018. Information about this journey can be found here:

<http://uucsj.org/journeys/boardlinks/>. We will be organizing fundraiser lunches on 2nd and 4th Sundays, right after church. Join us for pizza and salad, donate what you can and support this important program for our youth!

UU Book Group

The UU Book group will be discussing *Foreign Gods, Inc.* by Okey Ndibes on Thursday, April 13th, at 7:00 pm, in the home of **Annemarie Voss**. *Foreign Gods, Inc.*, tells the story of Ike, a New York-based Nigerian cab driver who sets out to steal the statue of an ancient war deity from his home village and sell it to a New York gallery.

Congregational Meeting Sunday, May 21

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the spring UUCM business meeting after the service on Sunday, May 21. Agenda items will include proposed Bylaws changes (see page 7), 2017-18 Budget, and Board & Committee chair nominations. Check out next month's Unigram for the full agenda.

UUCM Staff & Leadership

Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd, Minister

seth@uuchurchmuncie.org

Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, Community Minister

julia@uuchurchmuncie.org

Nadine Tringali, Director of Religious Education

nadine@uuchurchmuncie.org

Christie Williams, Office Administrator

christie@uuchurchmuncie.org

Dr. James Helton, Director of Music

jim@uuchurchmuncie.org

Rev. Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd, Coordinator of Youth Programs

elizabeth@uuchurchmuncie.org

Megan Wenning, Membership Coordinator

megan@uuchurchmuncie.org

Matt Davis, Website Administrator

matt@uuchurchmuncie.org

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Anna Dillinger

765.288.9561 | uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org | www.uuchurchmuncie.org

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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