



# the UNIGRAM

## Living and Breathing Through Hard Times

*Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd, Minister*

This is a hard time in the life of our church. I have tendered my resignation, effective 13 months from now, August 1, 2020, and the Board of Trustees has accepted it. If you haven't had a chance yet, I encourage you to read both the Board's letter announcing my resignation (<http://bit.ly/2J2KLEe>), as well as my letter to the congregation (<http://bit.ly/321LrP>).

Additionally, a petition was submitted at the June Board Meeting calling for a special congregational meeting to vote on removing me from my position. The Board has set the special congregational meeting for Sunday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, after the Sunday service. It saddens me that we are here, and my hope remains that the congregation will find healing and a healthy path forward. As I wrote in my letter, you have my commitment that I will do whatever I can to help on that journey in the time I have remaining with you.

Three Sundays ago, in my first sermon after coming back from sabbatical, we explored the practical, spiritual and theological importance of breathing during difficult times, and that advice continues to hold resonance for me. As I shared in the sermon, one of the common mistakes yoga practitioners make when attempting a difficult pose is to hold their

(continued on page 6)

\*\*\*\*\*

### In This Issue

Sunday Mornings 2

Religious Education News 3

Splinters from the Board 4

Special Congregational Meeting 5

Sharing Gratitude 8

July Calendar 9

\*\*\*\*\*

## Who Do We Want to Be?

*Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, Community Minister*

There is a lot going on at UUCM right now, to dramatically understate the obvious. Some of us, I'm sure, see in what's happening in our beloved congregation as a cause for hope, some a cause for discouragement. Some of us feel a heavy sense of sadness and grief, and some relief, expectation, perhaps even satisfaction. All those feelings and more engage in an ever-changing dance within our hearts and minds. Too, what's happening here plays out alongside what is occurring in all the other arenas of our lives—personal, familial, communal, the UUA as a denomination, national, global and environmental. It is a time of upheaval on many levels.

We are in a very conflicted situation in the face of this, and people have taken sides. And that's only natural. We are a diverse people, and we cherish both our diversity and our opinions. Some people want to force Rev. Seth out within a three-month time frame. Others accept his resignation as of August 1, 2020. Those two sides have become polarized. There is a better way than conflict.

There is a larger focus, a wider angle that I hope we can all embrace. Rather than focusing on "what I want," can we focus on "what's best for our church"? Can we look past our own hurts and dissatisfactions, past the rumors and half-truths, and ask "how can we restore our UUCM

(continued on page 7)

## Sunday Mornings at Our Church in the Woods

**Service at 10:45 am**

July marks the beginning of our “summer holiday” from themes, so there is no unified theme for our Sunday services this month. Please check the eBlast on the Friday before if you’d like to know the topic of that Sunday’s service.

July 7 & 14 – Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd

July 21 or 28 – Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer

July 21 or 28 – Guest Speaker, TBD

## Religious Education for Children & Youth

**Classes at 10:45 am**

Our RE Summer Program, written by **Nicole Kaplan**, continues all month. Come join in the fun!

July 7 – Around the World and our 7 UU Principles

July 14 – Around the World and our 7 UU Principles

July 21 – Around the World and our 7 UU Principles

July 28 – Around the World and our 7 UU Principles

## Adult Religious Exploration Offerings

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 on Sunday mornings.

Every Sunday, 9:30 am  
Red Room  
**Adult Discussion Group**

This group is a chance for people with various personal beliefs to get together and openly discuss a variety of topics. You’ll find weekly topics listed in the eBlast each Friday.

## Other Monthly Events

There are a variety of regular events on Sunday mornings at UUCM. Be sure to check the calendar for Youth Group meetings, Sack Lunches for the Soup Kitchen of Muncie, and much, much more... so many opportunities to connect with each other in our beautiful church in the woods!



*Bees do have a smell, you know,  
and if they don't they should,  
for their feet are dusted  
with the spices from a million flowers.*

~Ray Bradbury

## Religious Education Corner

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

Our **RE Summer Program**, “Around the World in UU Principles” written by **Nicole Kaplan**, will continue through the month of July, ending on Sunday, August 18. Nicole is leading a group class for our K-5th graders and **Maggie Bartlett** is leading the preschool class. The K-5th grade class begins following the *Story for All Ages* in the sanctuary. The preschool room is available at 10:30 for childcare for those preschoolers who do not begin in the service. The preschool class will begin following the *Story for All Ages*. Both classes end at noon.

Each Sunday, we need one volunteer per class to assist the teachers. Please contact Nicole Kaplan if you are interested. This is a great opportunity to meet the children and youth of our church and support our summer program and teachers. Middle and high school youth are also welcome to assist!

**Nadine**



**Iris Chalk** speaking at the Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly, June 2019.

## Youth Programs

**Rev. Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd**  
*Coordinator of Youth Programming*

General Assembly is always a reunion for me. It is a literal family reunion in some ways, as members of my extended family attend each year. But in the broader sense it is a gathering of my people. Friends that I have cherished since I was a youth. Or friends of my father since he was a youth. Colleagues that I have grown close with over years of working together to advance our faith. Family that I have never met but are still so clearly mine.

Each year, youth and young adult leaders plan and lead a bridging service called Synergy. It is always a highlight for me to watch this milestone. In 2001, I walked across that stage myself to mark my becoming a young adult. In 2010, I was asked to speak at the Synergy worship as a young adult voice. This year, a youth I have been honored to mentor led the worship with more grace than I could have imagined. **Iris Chalk** served as the Junior Worship Coordinator for Youth Caucus this year at General Assembly.

When I ran into my old friend, Bart Frost, the Director of the Youth and Young Adult Office at the UUA, he told me that Iris had written large portions of the service herself. This did not surprise me, of course, because we all know her to be an incredible liturgical writer. Yet it did bring such pride that I thought my heart might burst.

Sitting in that Synergy Worship, witnessing this moment in the ministry of Iris Chalk was so profoundly meaningful for me. Whatever she does for her work, she will do incredible ministry because it is who she is. Thinking about so many other youth in our program, I am in awe of how much they embody Unitarian Universalism at its finest. They remind me why I stay in this faith. They call me into deeper understanding of what this faith is all about.

Perhaps next year a few more of our young folks will travel to Providence to be a part of the action?

**Elizabeth**

## Splinters from the Board

*Exploring faith. Practicing inclusivity. Living justice.*



It has been an honor to serve the congregation this past year as President. My hope is I have represented you fairly and honestly. Your Board of Trustees has expended much time and effort to manage the wide-ranging affairs of the church.

We are now facing an enormous challenge in deciding how to accept the end of Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd's ministry with us. People hold strong opinions on all sides of Rev. Seth's ministry and on how to handle his leave-taking. Rev. Seth has resigned and the Board has accepted this resignation effective the end of the business day July 31, 2020.

A special congregational meeting has been called for Sunday, August 4, 12:30 pm, due to a petition presented to the Board at the June Board meeting. A motion will be made at that meeting to terminate

Rev. Seth's employment with us. I urge all members to attend this meeting, listen to all sides of the discussion, and vote on this important issue.

**Caroline Sullivan** becomes President of the congregation July 1. She will work to guide us through this difficult year no matter what the outcome of the special congregational meeting. She will need your support. I urge you to continue to give of your time, talents, and treasures to help provide a place where we continue to value:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Living in community and loving kindness with you,

**Mary Johnson Robey**

### Financial News

You can help our Office Administrator apply your pledge payments and other gifts to the proper account by including a note with your check or by a notation on the memo line (i.e. 2019-20 Pledge, Dedicated Offering, Food Pantry, etc.). Payments received with no account indication will be applied to the current pledge year/general fund for 2019-20. ***Our current pledge year began July 1.***

Sign up anytime to have automatic pledge payments deducted monthly from your checking or savings account. Forms are available on the website, on the table in front of the office, or by emailing [uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org).

You can also make cash payments on your pledge (or for other giving) and receive an annual statement for tax purposes by using our Cash Donation envelopes found on the table in front of the office. Please completely fill out the information on the envelope to receive proper credit. Envelopes can be dropped in the collection baskets or in the lock box in the church office. *Thank you for your support of UUCM!*

## Special Congregational Meeting :: Sunday, August 4, 12:30 pm

A special congregational meeting was requested by petition signed by 18 people, 16 of whom are in good standing in accordance with the by-laws. The petition read:

*We the undersigned petition the Board of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Muncie to request a special congregational meeting, to call a vote for the removal of the current settled minister, Seth Carrier-Ladd.*

The meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, August 4, at 12:30 pm. This is a very important meeting and all are urged to attend. If you wish to vote, you must check in with the secretary and pick up your voting card before the beginning of the meeting. If you are not sure of your membership/voting status in accordance with the by-laws please contact the Office Administrator ***no later than July 10*** ([christie@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:christie@uuchurchmuncie.org) or 765-288-9561).

Please note that a contribution of record for the 365 days preceding this meeting must be received by the church office by Sunday, July 28, to fulfill the voting member requirement. The agenda is published below.

### UUCM Special Congregational Meeting

**Sunday, August 4, 12:30 pm**

1. Call to Order
2. Establish that a quorum is present (require 20% of congregation to reach a quorum).
3. Introduction: purpose for the meeting.
4. Budgetary implications
5. Call for Motion: Remove Seth Carrier-Ladd as a settled minister at the end of 90 days with severance of three months, to follow thereafter.
6. Vote (secret ballot)
7. Closing words
8. Adjournment





## Living and Breathing Through Hard Times

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

breath. Logically of course, when we think about it, holding your breath when trying something physically challenging doesn't make a lot of sense – breathing, getting oxygen from the air to your bloodstream through your lungs, clearly is helpful. And yet in the moment, when in the stressful position of trying to attain or hold a challenging yoga pose, so often yogis forget to breathe. Yoga teachers can thus often be heard saying “don't forget to breathe, don't forget to breathe.” Which can sound kind of funny, because who forgets to breathe? But we do, I've been guilty of it many times myself.

The same advice often holds true in times of high stress in the life of a community such as this. People are frustrated, people are unhappy, there is a high degree of anxiety for some – and it can be really helpful to remember to slow down, and breathe. One of the practices I suggested in the sermon is called box breathing. In box breathing, you breathe in for a count of four, hold your breath for a count of four, exhale for a count of four, and hold the exhale for a count of four. Four equal sides makes the box. And I have to say, this is by far the most effective breathing practice I've encountered for me personally – without fail, when I remember to do it, box breathing helps me relax during times when I'm feeling stress or anxiety.

So in the midst of these challenges, I hope we can all remember to breathe – I'm certainly doing my best to do so. I also hope we can continue to do the very important work of the church. I was blessed last week to be able to do some of that important work, when I, along with our Director of Religious Education, Nadine Tringali, accompanied eight of our youth on their Boston Bound Heritage Trip to Boston. My own experience paralleled the feedback we heard from the youth – the trip was fabulous. We visited Unitarian Universalist Association headquarters, where we learned a great deal about both our past and present. We visited Walden Pond, the site where our famed Transcendentalist forebearer Henry David Thoreau wrote his acclaimed book Walden, and learned more about his life and spiritual journey. One fact that I hadn't known before was that Thoreau didn't actually

live in isolation during his time in the woods – he was close enough to civilization to hear the train go by, and he regularly both entertained folks at his cabin in the woods, as well as visited friends and family in nearby townships. We have a tendency to romanticize his individual spiritual journey, when really, he was still living in community.

It turns out community was a common theme in our trip – we also visited the first Unitarian and the first Universalist churches in America, Kings Chapel in Boston and the Gloucester Unitarian Universalist Church respectively. Founded in 1686, the King's Chapel community has evolved quite significantly over time, including separating itself from the Church of England. Our tour guide at the Gloucester church, founded in 1779, was careful to point out to us that they still called the church building the meeting house, because the church was made up of the community of people who attended it. On our trip, we learned about how both of those communities went through quite a lot, and overcame some significant challenges, to remain thriving congregations today.

While our church community isn't quite that old, we still have an impressive history, with our founding in 1859. We too have overcome significant challenges in our past, and I have faith that we, and you, will also be able to overcome this one. King's Chapel, Gloucester UU and our church didn't overcome those hurdles though without a lot of hard work, difficult conversations, and growth and learning though. So I offer to you then, as we navigate these difficult times, this: may we, and you, remember to slow down and breathe. May we, and you, not forget and continue well the vital and important work of the church. And may our shared history encourage us, and you, to do the necessary hard work ahead to ensure the Unitarian Universalist Church of Muncie remains thriving another hundred, two-hundred years into the future.

See you in church!

peace, love, and blessings,

**Rev. Seth**

## Who Do We Want to Be?

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

congregation to a healthier state?" Can we learn new ways of relating to each other and communicating? Can we extend to each other forgiveness, grace, and forbearance? Can we embrace our diversity while at the same time concentrating on living in harmony with each other? We will not agree on everything. Recognizing and accepting that is a good starting point.

We can disagree, however, without allowing ourselves to become "factionalized" (if there is such a word). That is a challenging task, but one that I am sure we can do, because that's who we are. We do not have to agree, and we will not. But we must commit to being civil even as we disagree. Doing so is the only way to move forward with the work our Board of Trustees has called us to do: "to heal the rift that has developed within our church and rebuild the strong community that we all love" and to "work to hear each other and to build bridges."

I've reminded us of the centrality of our First Principle several times recently, and I will continue to do so because it's important. We must be more than just civil. Because that's who we are. Even as we differ and challenge each other, and yes, argue and sometimes hurt each other, we must hold unwaveringly to our affirmation that each and every one of us is a person of inherent worth and dignity. No exceptions, no exclusions. No "yes, buts." The congregation, the Board, Rev. Seth, his supporters and detractors, the rest of the staff. And we must do the hard work of calling each other out when we fail on this but do so in the spirit of building up rather than of tearing down.

I've asked more questions in this column than I have proposed answers; in the first place, I certainly don't have all the answers, and second, each of us will arrive at our own answers over time. The questions, however, are worth considering:

- Can we ask not only what's wrong but also what's possible?

- How can we start the conversations that matter, that will work toward the good of the entire congregation?
- Can we be intrigued rather than put off by our differences? Can we approach them with an attitude of friendly curiosity?
- Can we hold our own opinions more lightly, with an open palm rather than a tightly closed fist?
- Can we stay together in community and embrace our shared humanity?
- Can we trust the yet unknown future?
- Can we stay with the process?

Perhaps most important, can we hold in the forefront of our minds and hearts that we all want the same thing: We want to be the best church we can be, so that we can continue to be an outspoken and coherent voice for progressive, inclusive religion in our city and the region, just as we have been doing since 1859. I believe we want to be a church that is a force for positive, progressive social action. I firmly believe as well that we want to become a community in which all persons feel welcome, valued, and safe, a community of acceptance and compassion. We will differ on exactly what this looks like and how to go about it. But I truly believe that we are unified in our commitment to these goals, because that's who we are.

We are indeed facing a time of transition and ending, but also of new beginnings. T.S. Eliot said it best near the conclusion of his *The Four Quartets*:

*What we call the beginning is often the end  
and to make an end is to make a beginning.  
The end is where we start from....  
We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.*

Come, let us explore together.

**Rev. Julia**

## Sharing Gratitude

Thank you to **Beth Gonser, Jean Filson, Sue Errington** and **Susan Calvin** for all their hard work to make the extended coffee hour for our volunteers on June 23<sup>rd</sup> possible.

~*Rev. Julia*

Thank you to everyone who helped make the youth's Boston Bound Heritage Trip to Boston possible. They and we had a fabulous time there together, and they learned a great deal about Unitarian Universalism and our history.

~*Rev. Seth & Nadine*

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."



### UUCM Anti-Racism Task Force Call-out Meeting

We raised funds for the Hurley Goodall Statue Maintenance Fund, now what's next? To help answer this question, the Social Justice Committee invites anyone interested in church anti-racism efforts to attend a call-out meeting for the Anti-Racism Task Force on Wednesday, July 17, at 7 pm, at Starbucks on Tillotson Ave. The agenda will be to share updates, and if there is enough interest to continue, identify leaders, discuss plans, and select action items.

To discuss related issues and ideas, join the UUCM Anti-Racism Task Force on Facebook.

Please contact **Tania Said** at [said.tania@gmail.com](mailto:said.tania@gmail.com) for more information.



## July 2019 UUCM Calendar

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

### Regular Weekly Events

Worship Service	Sundays	10:45 am
Religious Exploration for Children & Youth	Sundays	10:45 am
Adult Discussion Group	Sundays	9:30 am
Revival Hour (see online calendar for location)	Wednesdays	5:30 pm

### July Events & Activities

Social Justice Committee	Monday	July 8	7:30 pm
Pastoral Associates	Tuesday	July 9	5:15 pm
Board of Trustees	Wednesday	July 10	6:30 pm
Church Office Closed :: Summer Break		July 12-28	
Roots & Wings :: New Member Class	Sunday	July 14	12:15 pm
Program Council	Wednesday	July 17	7:00 pm
Committee on Ministries	Thursday	July 18	7:00 pm
New Member Signing Ceremony	Sunday	July 21	10:15 am
Adult Discussion Committee	Sunday	July 21	12:15 pm
UUCM Building Closed for floor waxing		July 22-27	
Sack Lunches for Soup Kitchen of Muncie	Sunday	July 28	9:30 am
Unigram Submission Deadline	Monday	July 29	9:00 am
Church Office Reopens	Monday	July 29	1:00 pm



### July Office Schedule

Office Administrator **Christie Williams** will be on vacation July 12 – 28. Please make a note of the following dates & deadlines:

- The church office will be closed July 4 & 5.
- Publicity submissions (eBlast and Sunday announcements) for July 14, 21 & 28 must be received by 9 am, Tuesday, July 9. Use the easy **Publicity Request Form** found on the UUCM website under the Members > Forms & Information tab.
- Submissions for the August Unigram are due by 9 am, Monday, July 29. Send as attached Word docs to [uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org).
- The church office will be closed July 12 – 28. It will re-open Monday, July 29, at 1:00 pm.
- The UUCM building will be closed for floor waxing beginning after church on July 21, through Saturday, July 27.

## UUCM Staff & Leadership

**Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd, Minister**

[seth@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:seth@uuchurchmuncie.org)

**Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, Community Minister**

[julia@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:julia@uuchurchmuncie.org)

**Nadine Tringali, Director of Religious Education**

[nadine@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:nadine@uuchurchmuncie.org)

**Christie Williams, Office Administrator**

[christie@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:christie@uuchurchmuncie.org)

**Dr. James Helton, Director of Music**

[jim@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:jim@uuchurchmuncie.org)

**Rev. Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd, Coordinator of Youth Programs**

[elizabeth@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:elizabeth@uuchurchmuncie.org)

**Marcel Ramalho, Choir Director**

[marcel@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:marcel@uuchurchmuncie.org)

### Board of Trustees

**Caroline Sullivan**

President

**Emily Wornell**

President Elect

**John Bartlett**

Vice President

**Brandon Mundell**

Secretary

**Jennifer Hollems**

Treasurer

**Mary Johnson Robey**

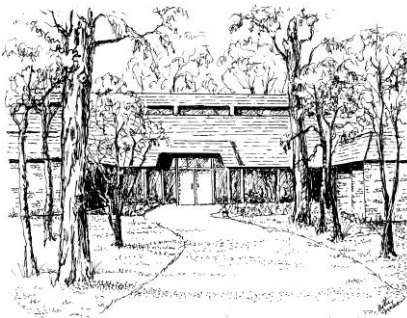
Past President

765.288.9561 | [uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org) | [www.uuchurchmuncie.org](http://www.uuchurchmuncie.org)

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

## Unitarian Universalist Church of Muncie

4800 West Bradford Drive  
Muncie, IN 47304



Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit 635  
Muncie, IN

Return Service  
Requested

**DATED MATERIAL**