

**Not-So-Great Expectations**

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

Our theme for September, Expectation, led me to think about what happens when our expectations aren’t met. One name for unmet expectations is “disappointment.” *Disappointment is our emotional and mental response to not getting what we want, what we expect, when we want or expect it*. It’s the dissatisfaction that arises when our expectations aren’t matched by outcomes we perceive to be congruent with them.

Unmet expectations are one key dimension of what’s happening in our church community right now. We went into the search process that resulted in hiring Rev. Seth as our new settled minister with expectations, both communal and individual. We had additional expectations of what our church community would be like after he arrived. While unmet expectations aren’t the whole story of what’s happened, they are certainly a significant part of it. As we begin the healing process, perhaps it is useful to look at this aspect.

The *types* of situations that lead to disappointment tend to fall into one of several broad categories. I’d invite you to reflect and see whether you can identify these disappointment triggers in your own experience.

* We can be disappointed by *other people*. They don’t meet our expectations, or they say or do things that hurt us. We come to feel they aren’t quite who we thought they were. They don’t “measure up,” as we see it. Some of us clearly feel this kind of disillusionment now. By itself, this sense of things can lead to putting all the blame on one person, a “scapegoat.” When we do this, we sidestep the discomfort of taking any responsibility for the situation in which we find ourselves. And it is also disempowering.
* We can be disappointed in *situations* over which we had at least some control and therefore feel some responsibility when they don’t turn out as we’d hoped. After all, a majority of us voted to hire Rev. Seth. The recognition of this aspect of disappointment provides a checkrein on the human tendency to look for a scapegoat. It isn’t easy to accept that we may be partially responsible. Accepting appropriate responsibility, however, empowers us to make positive changes, to do things differently.
* We can be disappointed in *ourselves*. We fail to live up to our own expectations of ourselves. This is where the discomfort with accepting responsibility comes from. If we had only [fill in some form of “been more aware, done things differently…] maybe this wouldn’t have happened.

The teachings of the Buddha provide me with some hints about how to live creatively with the reality of disappointment. Buddhism teaches that there are three (or four, depending on which teacher we’re following) characteristics that pertain to all of existence. They tell us about the nature of existence and help us to know what to do in response. Remember that the Buddha’s teaching always had a therapeutic bent. He wasn’t interested in the characteristics of existence for their own sake, but because understanding them can help lessen our distress in the face of adversity.

The first characteristic of existence I want to focus on here is dukkha. Dukkha is a Pali term that roughly corresponds to several English words including suffering, pain, unsatisfactoriness, sorrow, affliction, anxiety, dissatisfaction, discomfort, anguish, stress, misery, and frustration. It isn’t far-fetched to suggest that *disappointment* might be yet another way to interpret dukkha.

Dukkha means that all of existence, by its very nature, includes disappointment. The Buddha did not in any way mean that there is no pleasure, no comfort, no joy and happiness—far from it. He did mean that disappointment is part of the whole picture. As the poet Khalil Gibran said of joy and sorrow, they are inseparable: “Together they come, and when one sits alone with you at your board, remember that the other is asleep upon your bed.”

Dukkha—in its manifestation as disappointment—simply *is*. It’s an aspect of reality, woven into the fabric of our existence. This suggests to me that a first step in living creatively with disappointment is to accept it. When we’re disappointed, we’ve simply gotten one of our pieces of a universal human experience. It’s a natural, normal aspect of life.

Another way of looking at it is to remember that when we expect reality—ourselves, other people, life in general—to be other than it is, we’re headed straight for dukkha in one form or another, often as disappointment. We make mistakes; other people make mistakes. Things don’t turn out as we had planned, expected, hoped. That’s the way it is.

This, then, leads to the other feature of reality that’s most relevant here, a fourth according to some teachers. *The same reality that is beset by the pain of disappointment, frustration and shattered expectations, is also Nirvana*—the supreme state free from suffering. Freedom *for* life. This precious human life, human community, at its best. The point, I think, is that we do not have to be buffeted about by the winds of disappointment. Things can be better. There are ways, of which Buddhism teaches us some, to make our lives better, calmer, happier, less troubled:

* Disappointment is simply part of life; it isn’t aimed at us personally.
* Reality is what it is in any given moment, and we do well not to expect it to be different than it is.
* Everything changes. Nothing is permanent, including disappointment.
* This very life—with its inevitable disappointments large and small—is indeed Nirvana, just as it is.
* If we keep these things in mind, we free up our mental and emotional energy to work to change the things we can change to make things better.

May we use our disappointment as a springboard to work together toward a new reality.

***Rev. Julia***

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Expectations are powerful. One piece of advice that ministers often offer to couples whose weddings they are going to officiate is to have reasonable expectations for their wedding day. For most weddings, there is an incredible amount of planning and work that goes into making the special day memorable. And inevitably the day of wedding, with so many moving parts, something doesn’t go quite according to plan. For brides and grooms who expect and need every single thing to be perfect, that thing or those couple of things that don’t go according to plan, whatever they are, can leave folks feeling like their special day was ruined. The suggestion is thus to always to expect something to go wrong, and to just roll with it and go with the flow if possible, so that the happy couples can experience and remember the day as a joy-filled, and not anxiety-stricken. Perhaps this sounds like just common sense to many of you, but I can attest it is not always common sense for everyone in the moment.

This advice is reflective of the fact that an experience approached with high expectations can feel disappointing. The same exact experience, approached with moderate to low expectations, can be enjoyable or entertaining. The only thing that distinguishes the two experiences is our expectations, and those expectations are enough to dictate two very different outcomes for the exact same things that happen.

Another area where expectations can be powerful is in relationships. If you are expecting a conversation to be kept confidential and I am not, and I share what you told me, significant harm can come to the relationship. If you are expecting a romantic relationship to be monogamous, and your partner is not – problems, definitely. Sometimes our expectations of each other are reasonably clear, but other times they are not, and need to be negotiated. Swearing in casual conversation for someone who grew up in a home where swearing was a normal part of discourse may be totally normal, whereas for someone who grew up with different familial expectations, it can feel highly uncomfortable. In social time among friends, there isn’t necessarily a right or a wrong in this scenario, but the friends are going to have to communicate, and work out what their shared expectations are of each other.

I’ll never forget the time when I was kid, maybe around nine or ten, when a new sports bar/restaurant opened near our house and the advertising said it was going to have all kinds of amazing games. I loved sports and games, and the impressionable young kid I was, the advertising had a substantial impact. I and my expectations were through the roof for our first trip to this sports/games/eating heaven. Predictably in retrospect, I walked away incredibly disappointed. I don’t think anything could have met the expectations the advertising combined with my imagination had managed to concoct together. What was a fun experience for the rest of my family left me disappointed and disillusioned.

Fortunately for us as grownups, we tend to get a little bit more savvy about things like restaurants, movies, and other fun experiences. Not totally savvy, as noted by the wedding advice I and other ministers feel compelled to offer shows, but usually more. When it comes to managing our expectations in our relationships with others though, we adults still sometimes struggle. Sometimes, we’re not even aware that what we have of others is “expectations” and not just “the accurate and true clear-cut reality of the only correct way they should behave.” If your expectation based on your childhood experience is that every Mother or Father’s Day will involve breakfast in bed, and your spouse’s childhood was different resulting in no breakfast in bed, you might have to ask. If your expectation as a husband is that your wife will by default manage all household tasks and chores including all the cooking and cleaning, you might in this modern day and age need to re-examine your culturally-based gender expectations about what fairness and equality in a relationship looks like.

I invite you, as we explore our theme of “Expectation” this month, to consider the practice of asking yourself, if you’re feeling frustrated or unhappy about something someone else did, to ask yourself, “are my expectations reasonable?” Often, they probably will be totally reasonable. But maybe every once in a while you’ll notice that your expectations were simply that, expectations, and the other person’s behavior was actually reasonable or neutral. Or maybe you’ll discover of instances where yes, your expectation was reasonable, but your friend/family member/significant other had a rough day, and that you’re willing to cut them a little slack. Sometimes being aware that a conflict is arising out of differing expectations, and not one or the other party being right or wrong, is half the battle.

Expectations have power, and expectations can be tricky. I look forward to exploring these ideas and more together with you this upcoming month! See you in church.

peace, love and blessings,

***Rev. Seth***

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**Managing Our Expectations *Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd, Minister***

**the Unigram**

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| **Sunday Mornings at Our Church in the Woods**  **Service at 10:45 am September Theme :: Expectation** | |
| September marks our return to themes, with Expectation serving as our theme for the month. We’ll explore the powerful role expectations play in shaping our experience of reality, how our expectations impact our relationships with each other, and more. Special services include our Ingathering/Water Ceremony on Sunday, September 9th, and our Volunteer Dedication Ceremony on Sunday, September 16th.  September 1 – Rev. Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd  September 8,15, 29 – Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd  September 22 – Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer | |
| **Religious Education for Children & Youth**  **Classes at 10:45 am** | |
| **September 1 – Game Day!** Come dressed to move! We will have activities set up outside, weather permitting.  **September 8 – RE Kick Off! - Water Ceremony** Come and join us as we begin our “Religious Exploration” Sundays for the year! We have classrooms for preschool, K-2nd, 3rd-5th, 6th-8th, and 9th-12th. The nursery is always available from 9:15-12:15 every Sunday.  **September 15 – Curriculum Sunday** Join us as we continue our religious exploration!  **September 22 – Curriculum Sunday** Join us as we continue our religious exploration!  **September 29 - Curriculum Sunday** Join us as we continue our religious exploration! | |
| **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. | |
| ***Adult Discussion Group*** Every Sunday, 9:30 am  Red Room | 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 on **page 9**, and 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 Soup Lunches, Youth Group meetings, assembling 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! | |

**Theme Exploration – Expectation**

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 email them to Rev. Seth.

***Sacred Text***

*Our sacred text this month is by Alice Walker.   
She wrote:*

Expect nothing. Live frugally

On surprise.

become a stranger

To need of pity

Or, if compassion be freely

Given out

Take only enough

Stop short of urge to plead

Then purge away the need.

Wish for nothing larger

Than your own small heart

Or greater than a star;

Tame wild disappointment

With caress unmoved and cold

Make of it a parka

For your soul.

Discover the reason why

So tiny human midget

Exists at all

So scared unwise

But expect nothing. Live frugally

On surprise.

***Questions for Reflection***

Who taught you the most about defying expectations? How did their courageous living spill over into your own?

Do you live in the world as it should be or in the world as it is?

Whose belief in you helped you expect more of yourself and become more?

Do you know what your fellow black and brown UUs expect of you? Do you know if you’ve met their expectations? (Brittany Packnett)

Is today the day you put down all the expectations and just lie back and float?

***Resources for Going Deeper***

Article: “Great Expectations: Studying Expectancy’s Effects - Utne Reader” by Jessica Cohen  
http://bit.ly/2LguICu

Video: “2018 UU General Assembly Ware Lecture - Spirit of Expectancy” by Brittany Packnett  
http://bit.ly/2Lh1Km4

***Spiritual Practice***

**Take a Penny Hike or Drive**

Sometimes the best journeys are those without destinations. Letting a hike or a drive unfold in unexpected ways is a reminder that we don’t always have to be in control or bend our paths to fit our exact desires. Penny hikes (or drives) involve flipping a coin at every fork in the trail or road to determine which way you will go.

In the spirit of letting life lead you into the unexpected, don’t decide ahead of time what you hope to get out of the drive or hike. Don’t determine its meaning or message until you are done. Or if hiking and driving aren’t your thing, find your journey of exploration into the unknown and unexpected.

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*The material in this article is sourced directly from our Soul Matters theme packets.*



***Youth Sunday Planning***

Sunday, September 8, 12:30 - 2 pm

***Youth Sunday Planning***

Sunday, September 15, 12:30 - 2 pm

***Youth Sunday Planning***

Sunday, September 22, 12:30 - 2 pm

***Youth Sunday Planning***

Sunday, September 29, 12:30 - 2 pm

**Mark Your Calendars!!**

***Friday, October 18 - Sunday, October 20  
Heartland Area High School Youth CON***

***hosted by UUCM***

Our church will host the fall regional conference, open to high school aged youth from all over the Heartland area (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana and some of Kentucky). Youth will converge on our church for a youth-led weekend full of worship, workshops, games and connection. It will be epic. If you are an adult who would like to help make this incredibly special community happen for UU youth, please be in touch with Elizabeth at elizabeth@uuchurchmuncie.org.

***Elizabeth***

**The Religious Education Program Needs You!** We have a variety of positions to fill and room for everyone! September is here and we still have open positions on our teaching teams for our new curriculum year. Time spent with our children & youth is so valuable and rewarding. Please consider offering the gift of your time and volunteer one Sunday a month to teach in one of our RE classrooms. Other levels of support include volunteering as a classroom assistant, as a special presenter in a classroom, or helping with special events. Please contact me if you are interested. I would be very happy to answer any questions you may have! The RE Committee and I have scheduled a **Teacher** **Orientation** on Thursday, **September** **5**, 6pm - 8pm. Please contact me and join us if you are interested in teaching this year!

**Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education (OWL) -** We are so pleased to be able to offer **K-2 grade, 4**-**6** **grade,** and **7**-**9** **grade Our Whole Lives** programs this coming year! OWL is a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education curricula built with interactive workshops and lessons to engage participants. With a holistic approach, OWL provides accurate, developmentally appropriate information about a range of topics, including relationships, identity, types of consent, sexual health, and cultural influences on sexuality. If you are interested in having your child or youth participate in OWL, please let me know.

For more information on OWL, please go to our UUCM website and click on Religious Education / Sexuality Education. Watch for details concerning an informational meeting. We look forward to getting to know you and your family’s individual needs. Our facilitators for the OWL K-2 grade and OWL 4-6 grade programs are **Nicole** **Kaplan** and **Elizabeth** **Carrier**-**Ladd**. Our facilitators for OWL 7-9 grade are **Denise Ewing** and **Ben** **Ewing**.

***Nadine***

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

**Youth Programs**

***Rev. Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd***

***Coordinator of Youth Programming***



“Be the change you want to see in the world” is one of those ubiquitous quotes that we find on magnets, cards, and bookmarks. It is purported to have been said by Mahatma Gandhi, but delving a little deeper it is more than likely a paraphrase of Gandhi saying this: “If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him.”

*Segue to the annual retreat held by the board of trustees.* No one likes to give up an entire Saturday for sure but the drive to the Robey’s lovely home in the countryside and knowing Kirk was fixing our lunch made all of us more amenable to spending a long day together. **Janay Sander** had agreed to facilitate the entire morning, perhaps the first time a non-board member facilitator had been used for a UUCM board retreat.

In discussions prior to the retreat Janay said the board should have shared values and only then would it have the ability to lead the congregation forward. She told me there could be some difficult dialog; there would be emotionally focused conversation with the intent of starting more healing conversations. She said the glue to hold us together would be the ability to hear what was being said. Tough stuff.

The magic began as we were enjoying vegan, gluten free blueberry muffins and coffee. We said what we loved about the church and what we thought was so special about each board member—looking each other in the eye while saying this. Talk about reaffirming! We dug a little deeper into our feelings about what was happening at church and the emotions we were feeling. By building trust in each other and respecting the confidentiality inherent in our positions, we were able to have those difficult dialogues with a sense of grace and love. We were building skills of hearing and questioning that would carry us forward in our work this difficult year. We were learning how to be the change we want to see in our church community. (Thank you, Janay.)

In the words of one of my favorite hymns the first verse says angry and the final verse changes to loving:

“We are a gentle, angry people,

We are a justice seeking people,

We are young and old together,

We are a land of many colors,

We are gay and straight together,

We are a gentle, loving people,   
singing, singing for our lives.”

We all know change takes self-discipline and it takes time. We are a group of gentle, loving people who want what is the best for our beloved church and we may need to exercise patience during the coming months. Maureen Killoran wrote the closing words used at the board retreat which speak to us all:

“In this coming week, may you do at least one thing to support the problem, to welcome the stranger, to celebrate what is worthy, to do the work of justice and love.”

Let us be the change we want to see, one week at a time.

Yours in leadership and love,

***Caroline Sullivan***

P.S. Next month I would like to introduce your board to you person by person. You will see they are like all of us – too busy, active in the community, involved with family, and passionate about the church. Each is a fantastic person who, as you come to know him/her, will welcome your conversations and concerns.

# **Splinters from the Board** *Exploring faith. Practicing inclusivity. Living justice.*

**122nd Bazaar in the Woods**

**Saturday, November 2 🟋 8:00 am – 2:00 pm**

Co-Chairs: **Lisa Cox** (inweebee@yahoo.com, 765-717-5848)

**Mary Johnson Robey** (mrbobthecat@hotmail.com, 765-730-7162)

It takes the WHOLE CHURCH to make our annual Bazaar successful. We need your time, talent, and treasures. Below is the Bazaar week schedule. Mark your calendar to contribute your time.   
*We need all of you*.

***October 27: Set-Up Sunday***

After the church service stay to transform the sanctuary into the best Bazaar space in Muncie. Help put away chairs, set up tables and arrange them according to our Layout Map. The more people that help, the less time it will take. **John Bartlett** will lead the set-up committee.

***October 28 – November 1: Donation Drop-offs***

Drop off your donations from noon to 7:00 pm each day. Start now to gather your donations: jewelry, collectibles, priceless treasures for the Silent Auction, tools, rummage valuables, food (freeze now), books, plants, pots, garden items, gently used women’s clothing, holiday decorations, children’s toys & clothing.

***Friday, November 1, 5 – 7 pm: Helper Thanks***

Bazaar preparations are almost complete. All workers are invited to a pre-Bazaar meal from 5pm – 7pm, in the Fellowship Hall. We appreciate the time you dedicate to make our bazaar successful!

***November 2: Bazaar Day, 8 am – 2 pm***

Sign up to volunteer your time to help in one of the church booths or many of the other opportunities to help. Watch for the sign-up sheets to be posted late September or call Lisa or Mary to offer your help. If you are unable to volunteer at least make sure you attend and spread the word to your friends! They will thank you.

***November 2: Post-Bazaar Clean-Up***

It will be a busy day! However, it is not finished until the sanctuary is cleared and chairs put back in place for Sunday service, and all of the class rooms are back in order. Basically the entire Church should look like it did last Sunday. Please stay to help clean up.

Many thanks to all of you who helped with the August 4th special congregational meeting: you worked with the mics, you arranged virtual voting, you fed us, you timed us, you gave childcare to our youngest, you arranged activities for children ages 6 and above, you gave us advice about Roberts Rules of Order, you arranged and rearranged chairs, you wrote special words and made presentations. In other words, you made the meeting work. I am honestly afraid to list names because suppose one of you VIP people were forgotten! A special thanks to the Board of Trustees, **Bruce Craig**, **Christie Williams,** and all who participated in the process. ***~Caroline Sullivan***

*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.”*

**Sharing Gratitude**

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

**Not-So-Great Expectations**

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

**Adult Discussion Group  
Every Sunday :: 9:30 am Red room**

September 1: The theme of the month is Expectations. What positive develop-ments do we expect and/or hope for our church during this year? Shall we generate a list of suggestions to the board? Come bring your best ideas.

September 8: **Gunther Cartwright** will present *The Aesthetics of Terror*- How photographers and editors utilize aesthetic sensibilities in the production and publication of images of “terror” and “dread.”

September 15: **Susan Bossung** will help us clarify what is racism and what is not.

September 22: TBA

September 29: TBA

**September 2019 UUCM Calendar**Online calendar: **http://www.uuchurchmuncie.org/members/calendar/**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Regular Weekly Events | | |
| Adult Discussion Group | Sundays | 9:30 am |
| Worship Service | Sundays | 10:45 am |
| Religious Exploration for Children & Youth | Sundays | 10:45 am |
| Youth Sunday Planning (except Sept 1) | Sundays | 12:30 – 2:00 pm |
| Body Life Dinner | Tuesdays | 6:00 pm |
| Choir Rehearsal | Tuesdays | 7:30 – 9:00 pm |
| Revival Hour (see online calendar for location) | Wednesdays | 5:30 pm |

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| September Events & Activities | | | |
| Stewardship Committee | Tuesday | Sept 3 | 6:30 pm |
| Worship Associates | Wednesday | Sept 4 | 7:00 pm |
| RE Teacher Orientation | Thursday | Sept 5 | 6:00 pm |
| Bazaar Chairs Meeting | Sunday | Sept 8 | 12:15 pm |
| Roots & Wings :: New Member Class | Sunday | Sept 8 | 12:15 pm |
| Social Justice Committee | Monday | Sept 8 | 7:30 pm |
| Pastoral Associates | Tuesday | Sept 10 | 5:15 pm |
| Board of Trustees | Wednesday | Sept 11 | 6:30 pm |
| New Member Signing Ceremony | Sunday | Sept 15 | 10:15 am |
| Soup Lunch & Ice Cream Social | Sunday | Sept 15 | 12:15 pm |
| Adult Discussion Committee | Sunday | Sept 15 | 12:15 pm |
| Unigram Submission Deadline | Wednesday | Sept 18 | 9:00 am |
| Program Council | Wednesday | Sept 18 | 7:00 pm |
| Committee on Ministries | Thursday | Sept 19 | 7:00 pm |
| OWL Informational Meeting | Sunday | Sept 22 | 12:15 pm |
| Sack Lunches for Soup Kitchen of Muncie | Sunday | Sept 29 | 9:30 am |
| Pokagon Fundraiser :: Pancake Brunch | Sunday | Sept 29 | 12:15 pm |
| OWL 7-9 Orientation #1 | Sunday | Sept 29 | 1:00 pm |
| Stewardship Committee | Monday | Sept 30 | 6:30 pm |

**Come Together**

**Love & Grow Your Church**

It’s never too early to mark your calendars!   
Come Together Stewardship Sundays:

*February 9 and 16, 2020*

Prior to those fun Sundays watch for fun stuff, tidbits, and announcements in your eBlast, Order of Service, and Unigram.

Chocolates involved!!!

Stewardship 2020-2021  
**Holly Hanauer**, Chair

**Soup Lunch & Ice Cream Social :: September 15**

Make plans to join your Board of Trustees, fellow congregation members, and friends of UUCM on the afternoon of Sunday, September 15, as we celebrate our community and gather in fellowship. Start with a bowl of soup from the kitchen and eat in the fellowship hall while fostering and renewing connections to others in our church community   
over a shared lunch.

Wander outside, where we will make homemade style ice cream in a traditional wooden crank churn powered by an antique gasoline engine built in 1921. Plan to stop by and see the process, and help us all eat the results together.

Free will donations will be accepted to support the work   
of the congregation.



**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

**Marcel Ramalho, Choir Director**marcel@uuchurchmuncie.org

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Muncie**

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