

# the UNIGRAM

## **Integrity, Not Perfection**

Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd, Minister

What does the word integrity mean to you? If I asked you to think of someone in your life who has integrity, or someone who has a lot of integrity, who comes to mind? What qualities does that person possess that makes them have integrity? What do they do, what actions do they take, what choices that make, that gives them that quality of integrity? It can be easier to think of integrity in this wholistic way, instead of trying to define it, because the definition can sometimes feel a little slippery.

A "common definition" if there is one consider integrity to mean some version of living with good moral character, and being honest and ethical. I think there is more to integrity than that – <a href="mailto:check out my sermon from January 5th">check out my sermon from January 5th</a> if you're interested in exploring a broader understanding of integrity with me. Sticking with this definition though for now though, and applying it to people we know – we might go so far as to think that the person with the most integrity is the person who meets these high standards the most, that the highest integrity belongs to those who come as close as possible to achieving perfection. My suggestion is though is that perfection is not the goal – doing our best, and willing to be accountable and responsible, is.

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## A Tale of Two Churches

Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, Community Minister

Many of you know that I received my theological school education at a United Methodist seminary, although I wasn't and never have been United Methodist. It was 25 miles north of where I lived at the time. I still value the outstanding education I received there. Even more, I treasure the warmth and acceptance, the community, I found there; I belonged, with my "heretical views," not despite them. That sense of belonging and community is one of the reasons church is so heavily about human community for me.

Through the years, I have continued to follow the affairs of that denomination with interest. Most recently, I've watched with concern the ongoing debate

over full inclusion of LGBTQI persons in the denomination. It's a dispute that has alternately simmered and boiled for many years. A vote at the 2004 Annual Conference was overwhelmingly in favor of remaining united, even in their disagreement. Even then, though, leaders sensed that remaining united was fast becoming untenable. At the Annual Conference in 2016, the denomination had struggled without success to reach a consensus.

The kettle pretty much boiled over after a February 2019, meeting in which the global church voted against full inclusion. There would be no ordination for openly LGBTQI persons, nor would same-sex marriages be officiated by Methodist clergy. Those

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## **Sunday Mornings at Our Church in the Woods**

Service at 10:45 am January Theme :: Integrity

Our theme for the month of January is Integrity. Among other topics, we'll examine what how our understanding of integrity might expand beyond "honesty" and "good character" to encompass living a life of wholeness. Special events include Bill Frederick preaching on the life, character, and spirituality of Muhammad Ali on January 19<sup>th</sup>, as well as that same day our annual Age of Reading Ceremony where we welcome new readers on their journey of exploring the world of books.

January 5, 12 – Rev. Seth Carrier-Ladd

January 19 – Bill Frederick

January 26 - Rev. Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd

## **Religious Education for Children & Youth**

Classes at 10:45 am

#### January 5, 12, 26 - Curriculum Sundays

Join us as we continue our religious exploration!

#### January 19 – K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade *Age of Reading Ceremony,* Curriculum Sunday

We wish to celebrate your child's joy of reading! In the service this morning, children in grades K-3<sup>rd</sup> are invited to walk through a special archway and receive a gift of two books. If your child would like to participate, please let me know by *January 13*.

## **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 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, 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!

#### 2019-20 Themes

September – Expectation February – Resilience
October – Belonging March – Wisdom
November – Attention April – Liberation
December – Awe May – Thresholds
January – Integrity June – Play

January 2020 the Unigram

## Theme Exploration – Integrity

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 titled "I Want to Unfold" by Anne Lamott. She wrote:

Rilke wrote: "I want to unfold. I don't want to stay folded anywhere, because where I am folded, there I am a lie." We got folded by trying as hard as we could to make everyone happy, to please everyone, and to fill every moment with productivity. Our grown-ups said this would bring approval, and approval would bring satisfaction, and they would like us more. But we also learned to sabotage ourselves so that they wouldn't feel eclipsed. High achievement made the family look good, but also seemed to be another nail in Dad's coffin. We agreed to get folded at school and in jobs, to get ahead, shine the family star, fill our Swiss-cheese holes. We got folded and fooled into airless states of accomplishment, estrangement from ourselves, squandering our very short lives. Then we folded ourselves so we wouldn't annoy or embarrass our kids. Self-importance fueled by performance anxiety, people-pleasing, sloth, and bad self- esteem, wrapped us into small crisp squares like professionally laundered shirts.

I was there this week. I liked it briefly, because folded feels like home, small, familiar, hugged. I like smells of soap and steam and starch. Then it becomes oppressive and disorienting. Even a lot of caffeine and cheery new curtains don't help. You see, we got creased in those places such a long time ago that it seems hopeless to begin the great unfolding now. Our integrity got broken. I am not sure we got strong at the broken places, although people love to say this happens...

#### **Questions for Reflection**

Is integrity harder or easier for you than it was when you were young?

What did your family of origin teach you about telling the truth? How about telling the truth of yourself?

Who is most likely to walk away if you stop hiding?

Which is easier for you? Telling the truth to others or telling the truth to yourself?

#### **Resources for Going Deeper**

Article: Designing Your Life by Anthony Ongaro http://bit.ly/36u2YnF

Video: When to Take a Stand... And When to Let It Go - Ted Talk by Ash Beckham http://bit.ly/35tXgRp

#### **Spiritual Practice**

#### **Collect Five Stories of Awe**

Integrity and value-clarity go hand in hand. But do we really take the time to name and bring our core values into awareness? And do our self-proclaimed values match how others see us? This exercise invites you to wrestle with both of these questions. Here's how to engage it:

- 1. Pick your five core values from this list: http://bit.ly/2FouDKu
- 2. Give a blank copy of the list to someone close to you and ask them to pick the five they think are your core values, without letting them know which you picked earlier.
- 3. Compare lists and discuss the differences, as well as why each of you picked what you did.

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

## **Religious Education Corner**

Nadine Tringali
Director of Religious Education

This month our theme is *Integrity*. We have purchased a year-long *Soulful Home* subscription for our families to enjoy! Families will receive a packet at the beginning of each month that is organized around eight distinct family "spaces" with ideas and resources to fill those spaces with UU-theme based exploration. It is about creating memorable and amazing moments! I will be emailing the packet on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month.

#### K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade Age of Reading Ceremony

On Sunday, **January 19**, we wish to celebrate your child's joy of reading! Children in kindergarten through third grade, are invited to walk through a special archway and receive a gift of two books. If your child would like to participate please let me know by **January 13**.

#### Nadine

## **Youth Programs**

Rev. Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd Coordinator of Youth Programming

#### Mark Your Calendars!!

#### Youth Group - Hygge

Friday, January 17, 5 – 9 pm

We'll gather to focus on cozy comfort and selfcare. We'll make and enjoy warm beverages and comfort food while turning inward to find the resources we need to make it through the cold, dark winter.

#### **Youth Group**

January Sundays: 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>; 12:30-2pm February Sundays: 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>; 12:30-2pm

Elizabeth



## **Splinters from the Board**

Exploring faith. Practicing inclusivity. Living justice.



New year's resolutions have been around for about 4000 years. The focus of the resolutions has changed over time from celebrating the planting of crops and returning borrowed items, to the current tradition of improving our lives by exercising more, eating less, quitting smoking, volunteering more, etc. etc. Statistics vary, but about 60-80% of people making resolutions don't follow through for a month, let alone an entire year. Amanda Zantal-Wiener in her article A Brief History of New Year's Resolutions: Where they Began and Why they Fail gives two reasons: 1) the goals are too big and 2) the stakes aren't high enough.

Segue to our transition year(s) at UUCM. Let us resolve to commit to building a healthier church; a strong community of people who listen to and care for each other, a community of people who respect the philosophical diversities and affectional orientations that exist among us, a community of people who remember why this church and its people are so important in their lives. This is a grand resolution upon which we can all agree. We have been divided but we will again be united.

Which brings us to Zantal-Wiener's first point of goals being too big to be workable thus bringing about discouragement and letting it all slide to be started again the following year. We must divide our goal into baby steps, this goal of building community among ourselves. Your UUCM board of trustees has learned through advice, discussing, and reading that this is the right path. These are the building blocks of the future, one block at a time, each one building trust and love.

Consider the following "baby steps" as we transition into 2020.

- Come sing with the choir which is fun fun with Jim Helton. 7:30 Tuesday night, snacks after, babysitting available if you contact Jim.
- Participate in challenging discussions at 9:30 on Sunday mornings. Meaty issues (granted on the secular side) are discussed in this group. One Sunday of the month is devoted to the Soul Matters theme of the month.
- See what the Worship Associates have planned for Sundays when there is a guest minister. Rev. Seth will be using his study leave and vacation time for candidating and other activities.
- Call Rev. Julia about those special folks who can no longer come to the service, they would love visits.
- Contact Liz Lowe or Julie Fritz about helping when someone needs a meal.
- Take food to OUTreach—contact Laura Janney.
- Church member Connie Gregory leads the Homesaver effort—contact her about how you can help make houses accessible for their occupants.
- Nadine needs snacks for the kids, drop them off any time.
- Martin Luther King Day is a great volunteer activity. And yes, Rev. Seth is participating.
- Property maintenance workdays are coming up, please help.
- Join a dinner discussion group, contact Eleanor Trawick or Markie Oliver.
- There are Body Life dinners at 6:00 every Tuesday, contact Markie Oliver.
- There is a book group that meets once a month, contact Annemarie Voss.
- Stewardship is gearing up, remember your love for this church and be generous, even though you may not be here on Sunday mornings.

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## **COME TOGETHER :: Love Your Church**

#### 2020-21 Stewardship Campaign



**Thankful**:: 1859 founders vision started our spiritual house. Our gift was expanded in the 1960s with this Church in the Woods. Our current members and friends continue the work of our seven principles.

**Exceptional**:: Our congregation of today dedicates enormous time and talent to our spiritual house. Members and friends undertake a wide range of ongoing activities to keep our church bustling!

Accomplishments:: Giving your time and your talents bring value to your life.

It helps us reflect on an astounding greatness of our community, on what we achieve when we draw strength from one another, and on how we help to shape the future for our multigenerational congregation and our community.

**Financial Statement**:: It is vital. It enhances our continued influence on each other and our community. It permits us to continue to bend the arc of history towards social justice. Allow your church to exist, thrive, and grow.

Budgets require ample promises from every member and friend of this church. Consider your pledge and be prepared to pledge your support by February 16. Giving and pledging are on the side of right.

**Generous**:: Currently UUCM has 103 pledging households; pledges range from \$10-\$18,000, totaling approximately \$268,000. The average pledge is \$2600. Most pledges fall between \$500-\$1000.

In broad categories:

51 pledges from \$10-\$1000

23 pledges from \$1001-\$3000

15 pledges from \$3001-\$5000

10 pledges from \$5001-10,000

4 pledges over \$10,000

#### **COME TOGETHER :: Love Your Church**

**February 9:** Kick-off Sunday with special music, member reflections and homily, and donut holes during coffee hour.

February 16: Giving Sunday

Great music from the choir and children, a special story for all ages, heartfelt reflections, and collections of pledges. Master Chef Robey will prepare delicious lunch, shared in the sanctuary. Child care available in the nursery for those who need it.

Stewardship Committee: Holly Hanauer, Nan Barber, Bea Sousa, Katie Frederick

COME TOGETHER :: Love Your Church

#### **Integrity, Not Perfection**

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

Brené Brown, author, shame-researcher, storyteller, writes in her book Daring Greatly about what she calls the "aspiration gap" – the different between what we say are our values, and the choices we actually make as we live in the world. Far from this being a problem, she lifts this up as the normal human condition – we regularly fall short of living into our best values, and that's ok. Perfectionism is something tends to bring up shame in us, feeling of not being good enough. When in reality, it's totally ok to accept and embrace our imperfection, as long as we keep aspiring towards the goals and values we've set for ourselves. Being a person of integrity doesn't mean you're perfect, it does mean being willing to take responsibility for our actions and choices, it does mean being willing to be accountable to others.

Taking responsible and being accountable, especially when we've made a mistake, or acted in way that isn't line with our own values — that's hard. It requires being vulnerable, especially at a time when we might be feeling some shame ourselves, because we know we've made a mistake.

There is certainly far too much lack of integrity in the people serving in our government right now. Deflecting, avoiding, shifting focus, blaming, there are so many tactics being employed to avoid accountability and responsibility. The #metoo movement has introduced some higher measures of accountability too, which is important. If you harass or assault women, you should not be a senator or a supreme court justice. It's important to name hypocrisy and corruption in government and in the public sphere, and to take action to hold those at fault accountable. It can also be really easy to wag the finger, when we ourselves are regularly encountering our own aspiration gaps.

Most of us may not be serving in positions of important public office, and, that doesn't change the impact in our own life and in the lives of the people around us of the choices we make. It is so easy to deflect, or to blame back. As but one

example: "You didn't do the dishes last night like you said you were going to." "Well you didn't do them on Friday like \*you\* said you were going to." This second statement may be true, and may even be worthy of further conversation at a later time, but it is not an appropriate response to the first statement. It's often so much harder to say, "you know, you're right, I got tired and I didn't do them, and I should have, I'm sorry." Often we spend so much time trying to avoid the uncomfortable feelings that come with being accountable and responsible, that we forget that it actually does usually ultimately feel better to do so — not to mention the benefits it can bring to our relationships.

Where do you see aspiration gaps in your own life? And, when someone points out those gaps to you, how do you respond? How you respond when your aspiration gaps are pointed out to you, that shows far more to me about how much integrity you have, compared to the frequency with which you make bad choices. I hope, as we go about days, as we go about our lives, as we go about our business of being a community and a church family, that we can aspire to integrity, not perfection.

See you in church! peace, love and blessings,

Rev. Seth



#### A Tale of Two Churches

Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer

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who did could face removal. Seminaries and churches weighed in heavily on both sides of the issue, and a significant proportion of clergy announced their availability to officiate same-sex unions despite the ban. My seminary and many of my Methodist clergy friends were firmly in favor of full inclusion.

Legislation calling for an "amicable separation" has been submitted ahead of the denominational global gathering in 2020. The proposal would divide the historically united church in two. A significant proportion of United Methodist churches in the United States favor full inclusion, as do the laity. A strong majority of those in other parts of the world do not, and that's where the conflict comes in. Leaders are debating a division into liberal and conservative organizations prior to the 2020 annual conference.

Although the issues are clearly different and at first glance may seem unrelated, the situation reminds me of what we've experienced in our own congregation, and some of the comments from United Methodist leaders ring true for me. The Reverend Keith Boyette, president of the Wesleyan Covenant Association, the conservative group, is saddened when he thinks of their division, but observes "it would be sadder to me if we remained mired in continual escalating conflict." That situation prevents the church from focusing on being the church and living out its mission. "We're distracted from that in many ways because we're consumed by this conflict," he notes.

I've sensed a lot of this among our members and friends. Few are celebrating Reverend Seth's forced resignation, but most, I think, would agree the conflict that has swirled around his ministry among us has distracted us from our mission and made it hard to hold onto our vision. It has been hurtful, rancorous and divisive for everyone concerned. It feels consuming.

And it offers possibility, if we can reach out and grasp it. As one person put it of the United Methodist situation, "it's a breaking up, yes. But it's also a breaking open. And there's a lot of potential there." This, it seems to me, is our challenge: to avoid getting bogged down in the hurt, rancor and division so that we can see and realize the potential that is present underneath our pain. We must be able to say with Reverend Boyette, "We're done fighting. Let's find a way to release each other and go forward, and pursue the vision we each have." Can we creatively imagine what our church will be on the other side of this pain? Can we envision a new wholeness? Reverend Seth's resignation and eventual departure will "release" both him and us in a structural, formal sense. Can we *genuinely* release each other in an emotional and spiritual sense? For all of us to move forward, that must happen.

My hope for all of us is that we can come into this new year with renewed hope, renewed commitment to the well-being of our beloved community and of Reverend Seth, and to each other, for the good of all.

With Renewing Hope for a New Year,

Rev. Julia



#### **Splinters from the Board**

Caroline Sullivan (continued from page 5)

 Come to a continuing series of forums sponsored by the board after church, let your voice be heard.

These are just a few of the ways you can contribute to building a healthier church. Each of you is important in the life of this church and your involvement is so crucial as we are in this time of transition. Did I say take a board member out for coffee and share your thoughts and concerns?

Zantal Wiener's second point underlying failure to meet resolutions was that the stakes are not high enough. That may apply if you are trying to stop smoking and paying money into a fund when you slip and slide. However, with regards to our church community, the stakes are exceedingly high. The life and vitality of this church are of the utmost importance. The future and wellbeing of us all depends upon our willingness to work together, discuss together, have patience, and be respectful. We will not fail; we may do some of that slipping and sliding as we progress into our future, but we will succeed.

One more baby step: read the Unigram, eBlast, and insert in the order of service. This is how you know what is happening. You may need your directory as well to call about participating in some of these events. Happy New Year to you all—a good year it will be.

In love and leadership,

#### Caroline Sullivan

Before you speak
let your words pass through three gates:
At the first gate, ask yourself, "Is it true?"
At the second gate ask, "Is it necessary?"
At the third gate ask, "Is it kind?"

~Rumi

## **MLK Day of Service**

Monday, January 20, 2020 is our biggest volunteer day of the year! Come on out from 10 am to 12 noon for an MLK Day of Service at the Second Harvest Food Bank Warehouse (6621 N Old State Rd 3, Muncie, IN 47303). The last several years we've had well over 50 people show up to volunteer and turn their day OFF into a day ON for service. All ages are welcome, including kids!

We never know what we'll be asked to do (we've relabeled cans, boxed groceries, and gone through cabbages) but we know that our group efforts will make a difference in helping that worthy organization work towards achieving its goals of helping the food insecure. Second Harvest is expecting a big group. Let's make sure we don't let them down.

Each volunteer has to fill out a Volunteer Information/Waiver form. While they'll have copies of the form there, it speeds the process if you can print out forms at home and bring them in on MLK morning, all filled out for each person in your family. You can find the form at this link: https://forms.gle/g6beuooophRs35Tf7.

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

RSVPs are appreciated so Second Harvest and the lunch crew are ready for us. Just contact Susan Taylor (susantaylor68@hotmail.com or 741-8711) or check your January e-blasts for a link to an online form that's easy to fill out.

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

### **Sharing Gratitude**

Thank you to all who went caroling December 17th. The joy you bring to others as well as the joy you give yourself is a true holiday gift. ~*Caroline Sullivan* 

A Special Thank You to our Santa Lucia helpers! Many thanks to Liz Lowe for carrying on Elsa Reichle's tradition of rising early on Saturday to make the saffron dough and to the many friends that arrived to help with the shaping, decorating, and baking of the buns: Judy Craig, Linda Morton, Iris Chalk, Annika Schaller, Sarah Bartlett, Elsbeth Fritz, Hope Bradford, Bob & Julie Fritz, Hannele Fritz, Erich Bertrum, Beatrix Bertrum, Nolan Bertrum, Judy Lowe, Cindy & Jeff Turner, Caroline & Mike Sullivan, and Velvet **Zorn.** Many thanks to the **Reichle family** for bringing this beautiful tradition to our church and for allowing us to continue to use the Santa Lucia crown that Elsa bought so many years ago in Sweden! Also, many thanks to our beautiful Santa Lucia, Iris Chalk, and to our Star Children that ranged in ages from high school all the way to our youngest in the nursery! I say this every year, but it is truly so - the procession of Santa Lucia with all the star children was magical! ~Nadine



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

Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom. Marcel Proust



#### Wheel of Life

**Kimm Porter**, her husband Dan, and their granddaughter Irie all died at home in a house fire on Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. Kimm was a beloved member of this community. We are sad and shocked at this horrific loss.

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

## January 2020 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 Group	Sundays	12:30 pm		
Stewardship Committee	Mondays	2:00 pm		
Body Life Dinner	Tuesdays	6:00 pm		
Choir Rehearsal (resumes Jan 14)	Tuesdays	7:30 pm		
Revival Hour (see online calendar for location)	Wednesdays	5:30 pm		

## **January Events & Activities**

Board of Trustees	Wednesday	Jan 8	6:30 pm
Worship Associates	Thursday	Jan 9	7:00 pm
Roots & Wings :: New Member Class	Sunday	Jan 12	12:15 pm
OWL 7-9	Sunday	Jan 12	2:15 pm
Social Justice Committee	Monday	Jan 13	7:30 pm
Pastoral Associates	Tuesday	Jan 14	4:15 pm
Program Council	Wednesday	Jan 15	7:00 pm
Committee on Ministries	Thursday	Jan 16	7:00 pm
Youth Group :: Hygge	Friday	Jan 17	5:00 pm
Elsa Reichle Celebration of Life	Saturday	Jan 18	2:00 pm
New Member Signing Ceremony	Sunday	Jan 19	10:15 am
Adult Discussion Committee	Sunday	Jan 19	12:15 pm
Church Office Closed :: MLK Day	Monday	Jan 20	
MLK Day of Service	Monday	Jan 20	10:00 am
Unigram Submission Deadline	Wednesday	Jan 22	9:00 am
Board of Trustees	Wednesday	Jan 22	6:30 pm
Film Discussion Series :: The Reluctant Radical	Thursday	Jan 23	7:00 pm
Sack Lunches for Soup Kitchen of Muncie	Sunday	Jan 26	9:30 am
Choir Rehearsal	Sunday	Jan 26	9:45 am
OWL 7-9	Sunday	Jan 26	2:15 pm

## Film Discussion Series January 23, 7:00 pm

Come see The Reluctant Radical, an award-winning documentary that examines the critical environmental issues we are facing, and also asks us to question what constitutes an appropriate moral response to them. Activist Ken Ward decided, after twenty years of leading efforts to change policies and practices that threaten our survival, to engage in acts of civil disobedience. The film challenges us to determine the moral justification of his response— and of our own.

The Reluctant Radical is
the first offering in the
Spring 2020 Film
Discussion Series, a
program offering monthly
screenings of films, each
selected for its
contemporary social
relevance, followed by
public discussion. Held on
the fourth Thursday of
each month at UUCM,
screenings are always free
and open to the public.

## **UUCM Staff & Leadership**

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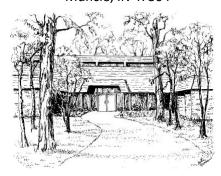
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## Unitarian Universalist Church of Muncie

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#### **DATED MATERIAL**