



# the UNIGRAM

## Life Calls Us On

*Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, Community Minister*

Back in the 1980s, when I was a relatively new assistant professor in the Philosophy and Religious Studies Department at Ball State, publishers had reps who traveled around to talk with faculty. I always enjoyed chatting with them and was sorry when the publishers decided that method wasn't cost-effective and the reps disappeared, to be replaced by printed and later, on-line catalogues. One morning, the Prentice Hall rep showed up in my office. He asked me what I was using for my Religion in America course. I bemoaned the fact that I simply had not found a book that did what I wanted it to do and thought it needed to do, but what I was using seemed as close as I could come. He looked at me and replied, "Why don't you write one?" Well, because I'd not really thought of doing so!

Prentice Hall published the first edition of *Religion in America* in 1990. Seven editions later, it came time for yet another revision and updating. At that time, I decided that it was time for me to step back as sole author and bring on a different first author with me remaining as consultant. That's pretty typically what happens as textbook authors grow older, retire from classroom teaching, and progressively step back from academic life. I even had someone in mind who I hoped could take on the

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## Splinters from the Board

*Emily Wornell, President*

Last Saturday, I said goodbye to my parents after a thoroughly restful and enjoyable eight days with them at our house. As an introvert, saying goodbye is bittersweet; I'm happy to have my space (physical and emotional) back, but being 2,500 miles away from the closest family is hard. Not that living close to my family would be easy, however. Don't get me wrong – I love my family. I miss them, being so far away, but we have our difficulties. I was raised in a fairly conservative and very religious household. Today, I am neither of those things and that sometimes causes conflict. We've never been a group to shy away from conflict, however, so our differences in social, political, and

religious beliefs is a pretty common topic of conversation. While someone occasionally leaves these conversations with hurt feelings, for the most part we've been able to not only manage but grow from these conflicts.

Family comes in a lot of different forms: the family you're born into, the family create with your significant other, your chosen family of close friends, substitute parents, grandparents, or siblings. And it's natural for families to go through periods of strife and disagreement; why should church family be any different? Conflict is hard, to state the obvious, but it's not inherently *bad*. Indeed, some level of conflict in any relationship is

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## Sunday Mornings at Our Church in the Woods

**Service at 10:45 am**

This month we will continue to explore the sources of our Unitarian Universalist tradition. Join us via Zoom at 10:45 am, every Sunday! Links for the Zoom and the Order of Service will be in the eBlast each Friday, and posted on Facebook early Sunday mornings.

**August 2** – Source 5: Humanist Teachings with Mike Sullivan & Tom Lowe

**August 9** – Rev. Katie Culbert (rescheduled from May 17 when Zoom crashed our service)

**August 16** – George Wolfe will be our guest speaker this Sunday

**August 23 & 30** – Watch the eBlast for information on these services.

## Religious Education for Children & Youth

**Summer Sundays 10:00-10:30 am**

Please join us as we continue our RE Summer Sundays, **Backyard Zoom Bonanza!** The zoom link will be posted in Friday's eBlast.

## Adult Religious Exploration

**Adult Discussion Group**  
Every Sunday, 9:30 am  
Via Zoom

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 and a Zoom link listed in the eBlast each Friday.

## Religious Education Corner

*Nadine Tringali*

*Director of Religious Education*

**Please join us as we continue our RE Summer Program, Backyard Zoom Bonanza!**

Our summer program is open to all children and youth, but is targeted for children from preschool through 5th grade. Class will be from 10:00am- 10:30am every Sunday.

Families will receive an email at the beginning of each week with recommendations of outdoor activities to try or supplies to collect for the following Sunday's class. Activities will vary each week and will encourage children to find things that make them go "Wow" and to discover new ways to play.

If your children don't have time during the week to do the activities, they are still encouraged to attend on Sundays for time to share and gather together.

Please contact **Nicole Kaplan** (she/they) with any questions at [nicole.c.kaplan@gmail.com](mailto:nicole.c.kaplan@gmail.com).

**Nadine**

## Dr. James Helton

*Director of Music*



Hello everyone. I have some long overdue acknowledgements that I'm eager to make. (The summer really flew by!) Working backwards chronologically—and no, he hasn't been thanked too much yet—I want to thank **Ben Strack** for the invaluable help he's been to me, Zooming the music on Sunday mornings. Admittedly, I would have been fine without his last stroke of genius that allows *everyone* to stay in the safety of their homes, because Sunday mornings are now quite surreal... in the church... playing hymns to people I *assume* are singing. (*You know who you are.*) Given that it's 5:00 somewhere, here's a drinking game suggestion: since I don't have your singing to help me track the verses, see how long it is before I lose count of them and play too many or not enough. Trust me; it will happen!

Many thanks to **Michael Rigney** for playing the few Sundays in July that I had to be away. It's a relief to know that you are in good *hands* (ha-ha, get it?) when I'm out. Back before we realized the full risks that singing presents, I was grateful to have some talent help me to lead hymns, specifically **Ben Strack**, **Elizabeth Carrier-Ladd**, **Eleanor Trawick**, and that mystery voice, which was yours truly. Don't worry, the mic was across the room so I could physically distance from myself while I was singing! And how did I do that? Our piano is truly the gift that keeps on giving. As some of you know, our Yamaha grand piano is a Disklavier™, which means that it has widgets and gadgetry I am only starting to understand. When we were completely remote, it enabled me to record my best versions of the hymns and special music, so that when Ric came to record, all I had to do was push "play." The Disklavier became a player piano, and Ric didn't have to sit there listening to me run something five times, cursing until I got it right(ish). So it also allowed me to push "play," and then sing with my own accompaniment. **Ric Dwenger** is the person with whom I started this COVID19 scariness, recording with me since our very first remote Sunday. It was also Ric who nudged me to work with the Disklavier. (Remember that you cannot plug in my preferred technology, the piano, unchanged since the 1890s.) I cannot thank him enough for his expertise and good humor. We kind of bonded.

Back in June you may remember that **George Wolfe** played a beautiful Native American flute solo during one of our meditation times. I thought it was haunting, and I look forward to him offering this again. As we think outside the box, if there's even a box left, I hope to add more variety to our Sunday morning music.

Stay healthy.

~Jim

## Life Calls Us On

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

project, with me as consultant, and carry it into whatever its future would be.

Two things happened next: The person I'd hoped would come on board was not able to do so in light of their other obligations. We did, however, spend several hours discussing the prospect over coffee, and as we talked, my interest in writing the 8<sup>th</sup> edition myself began to rekindle. I decided to remain as sole author for one more edition. I began researching, thinking, envisioning what a new edition might look like, and even writing.

Then, as I wrote in the introduction to my annual report this year, "the world changed, and then the world changed, and then the world changed." Our *congregational* world changed. We had already been through a couple of really hard years as a congregation with the escalating conflict between the congregation and Rev. Seth. That conflict led to his resignation. When Rev. Seth went on parental/study leave, my role changed to help us in making our way through this new reality together.

This month, we will meet (some already have) our new transitional minister, Rev. Barbara Coeyman. It will be good to have her on board and to carry on the much-needed work of healing, but it will bring more change as well. It will also bring challenge; the work of healing is both holy and hard.

Then my *personal* world changed. My broken femur back in October left me with significant disability and chronic pain. Beyond the necessity to accommodate to my new, frustrating reality and learn new ways of accomplishing everyday tasks, I've also had to work through the loss of my identity and self-image as a relatively able-bodied person and learn how to be one who is much more restricted in what I can do.

Then came covid-19, and *everyone's* world changed hugely. Our church went virtual, almost overnight. We learned Zoom, figured out new ways of staying

connected and learned to get along without hugs and coffee hour. Thanks to the hours of intense work done right at the beginning by Rev. Seth and on-going by our amazing tech folks, Worship Associates, and Board, as well as everyone else, we are doing virtual worship as well as I've seen it done. Thanks to our Pastoral Associates, we *are* staying connected. Beyond the Pastoral Associates, however, our entire congregation has reached out to each other in care and concern. In some ways I think we are more connected than we were before. But all this has called for a huge outpouring of energy, as we all know.

The pandemic morphed as well. Many of us—including me—thought we were in for a few tough weeks and then things would slowly get better. We hadn't counted on the nature of the virus, nor on the ineptitude and downright malevolence of the president and his minions. It now looks more like an indeterminate time of ... we're not quite sure what yet. The adrenaline that powered us through those initial weeks has long since been replaced by the realization that we're in for a long, hard, and largely unknown slog.

Everyone's world has changed again, I think it's safe to say, with the growing realization of the dramatic racial divide in the United States, accompanied by protests, counter-protests, and violence. It's also about economic and class disparity, access to medical care, housing, and food insecurity, as well as other things. Like covid-19, it's far from clear what the end result will be or how long it will take us to get there.

While the book has been a significant aspect of my ministry, I will shift the focus of what I'm doing in the future. I have decided to step back as first author. I want to focus more directly on ministry, primarily in and with the people of this congregation who have come to mean so much to me. I don't feel I can do both and do either well. This is, I believe, the best decision for me and my family, for our congregation,

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## Splinters from the Board

**Emily Wornell, President** (continued from page 1)

not only expected, but productive and healthy. What makes conflict destructive is way that in which it's handled. When emotions are high our ability to face conflict in a productive way is diminished. People start taking sides. Folks stop listening to each other. Bad or hurtful intentions are assumed of those we disagree with. With unproductive conflict, family can feel less like the people we go to for comfort, love, and acceptance and more like the enemy. Frankly, this is where we – as a church family – have been for the last several years. Rather than seeing our conflict as an opportunity to grow and change, we took sides and doubled down.

As difficult and scary as the last 4 months have been, between the pandemic and continued police violence, it has also granted our church family the chance for a breather. Taking a time out, whether intentional or not, doesn't cure or solve the conflict. Rather, it lets everyone get some much-needed perspective and allows tempers to calm so that we can return to a productive model of conflict. And we must *return* to the conflict, as unpleasant as that sounds. If we let the destructive conflict stand, the hurt and mistrust in our congregation will continue to erode our family. The unkindness, finger pointing, disbelieving, name calling, and ignoring that happened between *us* has to be addressed productively so that we can grow past this difficult period.

I have high hopes that Rev. Barbara can help us through productive conflict, but we have to be willing to engage in that process. It won't be easy or fun. It will require deep reflection for all of us; each of us will have to examine the ways in which we have contributed to our conflict and take responsibility for our role in it. We will have to apologize. We will have to forgive. We will have to live our principles so that we can be that loving religious community that is so valued by all of us.

In loving service,

**Emily Wornell**

## Life Calls Us On

**Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer** (continued from page 4)

and for the ongoing progress of the book as well. The consultant/senior scholar role feels very right to me at this point in my life.

I do not have unlimited energy by any means, and that likely won't change. Nor, at age almost-75, do I have unlimited time, and that time could be cut abruptly short by covid-19. What I want to do with my limited energy and for the limited time I have left—whatever that might turn out to be—is to focus more single-mindedly on what will bring me the greatest joy and satisfaction, which is to hone in on ministry with and to this community of faith.

I'm not proud of my vacillation about this. Flopping around about a decision is. Not. My. Style. I prefer a straight-arrow approach. But this time it happened. The larger point is this: We are *all* dealing with unprecedented and constantly shifting circumstances. That is the context for every decision we make. In this situation, uncertainty, changing course, and starting over are going to happen. It's unavoidable, and we do ourselves and others a disservice if we expect otherwise.

Rev. Seth called out Jason Shelton and Kendyl Gibbons' hymn, "Life Calls Us On" in one of the last sermons he preached before he left for parental/study leave. As I've made my way through this time, it's become a theme in my life. The refrain is different in each of the four verses, at least in some versions: "Love calls us on" is followed by "Hope calls us on," then "Faith calls us on" and finally, "Life calls us on." As love, hope, faith and life itself call all of us forward together, may we allow for false starts and changing courses, without reproach.

In Faith & Community as "Life Calls Us On,"

**Rev. Julia**

## Sharing Gratitude

**Nicole & Joe Kaplan, Tom Lowe, Jay Moorman, Christine Rothchild, and Mike Sullivan** generously contributed their time and talent in our 2020 summer series exploring the “Big Tent” of UU Six Sources. We are grateful for their participation and insights. Ongoing thanks to our dedicated “tech” team, **Ben Strack** and **Ric Dwenger**. There would be no services without their patience and expertise. Finally, thanks to **Steve Chalk**, and **Susan, John, Sophia & Riley Taylor** who made it possible for us to give a virtual goodbye to Rev. Elizabeth.

~**Bea Sousa and Bill Frederick, WA co-chairs**

*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.”*



### VOTING in the General Election – Important Dates

**October 5** – Registration deadline

**October 22** – Deadline to request absentee ballot

**November 3** – Election

**November 3 noon** - Deadline to return absentee ballot--postmarks do not count!

In-Person Absentee (Early) Voting – NO ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATION NECESSARY

Oct 6 – Nov 2 (noon) Voter Registration Office, 100 West Main Street, Room 104, Muncie, IN 47305.

#### Absentee Ballots

The Delaware County website claims that *Any resident* can vote with an absentee ballot prior to an election. *(That is not quite true – voters must indicate an “excuse” on the form.) IF YOU ARE 65 OR OVER, PLEASE REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT AND STAY SAFE! REQUEST EARLY (NOW!) AND POST BY OCTOBER 22 TO BE SURE IT IS DELIVERED BY THE DEADLINE.*

To download an application use this link:

<https://www.co.delaware.in.us/egov/apps/document/center.egov?view=item;id=5855>

October 22 – Deadline to request

November 3 noon - Deadline to return (Must be received--Postmarks do not count)

Visit this State of Indiana website for registration and voter information:

<https://indianavoters.in.gov/>

## August 2020 UUCM Calendar

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

### Regular Zoom Events

Check the eBlast for links to these Zoom meetings and more.

Adult Discussion Group	Sundays	9:30 am
RE Backyard Bonanza!	Sundays	10:00 am
Worship Service	Sundays	10:45 am
Youth Group	Sundays	1:30 pm
RE Story Time	Mon & Wed	3:30 pm
Board of Trustees	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	6:30 pm
Trivia Night	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Fridays	8:00 pm



#### Office Hours

I'm still here at our beautiful Church in the Woods during regular office hours. Even though our building is closed to in-person business, you can reach me by phone 765.288.9561 or email [uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org](mailto:uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org). I miss everyone's presence here, but I'm grateful we are doing our part to stay safe and well!

~Christie

#### Office Hours

*Monday*

1:00-4:00 pm

*Tuesday – Friday*

9:00 am-4:00 pm

### August Dedicated Offering UU the Vote

The dedicated offering for August goes to the "UU the Vote" organizing campaign. UU the Vote is dedicated to fighting voter suppression, and advocating for core values like criminal justice reform, LGBTQ rights, economic and environmental justice. And when election day has come and gone, we will have strengthened connections between congregations, State Action Networks and grassroots organizations in our communities.

The UU the Vote goal is to raise \$120,000 in order to reach one million voters by election day. Please contribute what you can to UU efforts to assure a fair election and maximize voter turnout. Financial contributions may be mailed to the church, earmarked **UU VOTE**.



"Unitarianism" Harshman Panel  
Photo by Gunther Cartwright

# UUCM Staff & Leadership

## Staff

**Rev. Barbara Coeyman, Interim Minister**  
Beginning August 15

**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)

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Office Hours: Monday 1:00 – 4:00 pm | Tuesday – Friday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

## Unitarian Universalist Church of Muncie

4800 West Bradford Drive  
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