



the UNIGRAM

Unity in Our Diversity

Rev. Barbara Coeyman, Interim Minister

As I write this column, I know I join many others in grieving the death of a giant, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. To fully enumerate the breadth and depth of Justice Ginsburg’s contributions to American law and justice-making is beyond the scope or capacity of my reflections here. The words of one commentator I heard the other day articulated well what I was feeling. Yes, RBG taught us much about the American legal system. Even more important, however, she taught us how to live, with a spirit of community, compassion, and equity for all life. May we hold the life lessons of Justice Ginsburg before us as we move forward, as individuals and as a congregation.

To the theme of moving forward as a congregation, in my sermon on September 20 about “Shared Ministry,” I referred to “congregational polity.” “Polity” means method of organization and governance. There are various methods of polity in religious life. Unitarian Universalism practices congregational polity. This means that in this free faith, responsibility for organization and governance lies with the congregation: with the people. No surprise, since American congregational religious organization evolved as our colonial ancestors in the eighteenth century shaped a democratic method of political organization.

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Listening with Ears of the Heart

Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, Community Minister

Rachel Naomi Remen writes: “The places we are seen and heard are holy places. They remind us of our value as human beings. They give us the strength to go on. Eventually they may even help us transform pain into wisdom.”

I recently heard a podcast of a talk by Buddhist teacher Tara Brach. She titled her talk “Listening with Ears of the Heart,” and I borrowed the title for this column. She cites three conditions that are necessary if we are to truly listen deeply.

1) We must have the conscious *intention* to be present in the listening. Our physical presence is not enough.

Even our mental attention is not sufficient. It takes a conscious decision to be fully present, present with our whole being.

One practice I used as a hospital chaplain and continue to use at the outset of any pastoral or spiritual care visit is to pause and simply *breathe*. It brings me into the present, into that place and time, with that person. I invite the other person to do the same. It’s surprising what a few mindful breaths can do.

2) We must also listen to what is going on *inside ourselves*. How are we reacting? Are we really present? Has the other person said something or used a tone of voice that triggered something

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Sunday Mornings at Our Church in the Woods

Service at 10:45 am October :: Deep Listening

October 4, at 11 am – “250 Years of Universalist Heritage and Its Meaning for Our Time”

Rev. Justin Schroeder, First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

This first weekend of October marks a celebration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of Universalism with the arrival of the preacher John Murray to the American colonies. The Sunday morning service will be “shared worship” with First Universalist Church of Minneapolis, a congregation which invited many in for shared worship earlier in the summer. This will be a complete service, with a few recorded pieces but with major portions live. Congregations zooming in will be able to send messages in the chat. Login info will be in the Friday eBlast and on Facebook.

Rev. Justin Schroeder serves as Co-Senior Minister of First Universalist with Rev. Jen Crow. They work closely together with the Board of Trustees and staff to ensure that First Universalist moves toward fulfilling its mission in the world. Justin’s portfolio includes all of the development work in the church, as well as overseeing the racial justice and faithful action ministries. Rev. Justin earned his Master of Divinity degree from Meadville Lombard seminary in 2007.

October 11 – “Deep Listening: Door to Wider Connections” Rev. Coeyman

The worship theme for October is “Deep Listening,” that capacity to not only hear the words and meaning from communication around us but also to be fully present to the sources of that communication. Especially during these times of staunch positioning in American culture, deep listening is critical to our capacity to extend a hand across the aisle to those who think differently from us. Further, deep, attentive listening is core to congregational life and especially important during this time of online connections. The author Mark Nepo invites us to “Seven Thousand Ways to Listen.”

October 18 – “Growing through ‘Circles of Trust’” Rev. Coeyman

I am passionate about a method of bringing people together in small-group ministry called “Circles of Trust,” a program based on the spiritual writing of Quaker Parker Palmer. I have included “Circles of Trust” in many recent interim ministries I’ve served, to positive effect. Trust is central to building Beloved Community and deep listening is central to building trust. Stay tuned for more about getting involved in a “Circles of Trust” as UUCM.

October 25 – “Creating Covenant through Deep Listening” Rev. Coeyman

The free faith of Unitarian Universalism is grounded not on common beliefs but on common covenants: our promises for how we will be in compassionate, loving relationships with one another. Understanding the history of this approach to religious community since the seventeenth century affirms all the more the importance of covenants to move this free religion forward in the 21st-century. Today let’s examine “covenant:” its meaning, its practice, its importance, especially during these times of social distancing.

Religious Education for Children & Youth

10:00 am & 12:30 pm

Please join us as we continue our religious exploration online via Zoom each Sunday morning! The RE Zoom links will be posted each week in the UUCM Friday eBlast.

October 4 – PreK-1 & 2-5 RE classes at 10:00 am. *We will not be holding a MSHS class.*

October 11, 18, 25 – PreK-1 & 2-5 RE classes at 10:00 am / MSHS Class at 12:30 pm

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

Our online religious education classes began on Sunday, September 13. For more information about our Religious Education Program, please visit the UUCM website.

- For *Preschool through Fifth grade*, we are using the UUA theme-based curriculum, *Soul Matters*. One session each month will focus on a different aspect of dismantling white supremacy as it relates to the theme. Please note that our online Preschool-1st grade grouping is geared toward children 4 years and older. Children 3 years of age are always welcome to join us, but will need closer parental supervision.
- For our combined *MS and HS class*, we will begin the year with ***On the Road Together***, a *Soul Matters* theme-based youth resource filled with creative, faith-based worship, games, mindfulness moments and discussion starters. One session each month will focus on anti-racism as it relates to the theme.

We have purchased a year-long *Soul Matters Soulful Home* subscription for our families to enjoy! **The theme for October is Deep Listening.** 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!

On Sunday, **November 1**, we will be holding our annual **Halloween Parade** in virtual form at the end of the service! Please send me a picture (attached jpeg file) of your child/ren and youth in costume to nadine@uuchurchmuncie.org by Sunday, October 25.

Nadine

Youth Programs

Nicole Kaplan

Coordinator of Youth Programming

Youth Group meets most Sundays from 1:30 - 3 pm, in Zoom Room #2 <https://zoom.us/j/5150188364>

Special Dates

Oct. 4 - Youth Group will meet from 7:30-8:30 to vote on the name of our new mascot. Attend to find out if it's a woodland faerie or a dragon.

Oct. 17 - 2 to 4 pm - Youth Group will meet at Morrow's Meadows. Masks are required. We will gather together at 2 pm with Reverend Barbara for a brief meet and greet. Then everyone will have time to play soccer or frisbee, walk and chat on the track, or sit by the river making art. New friends are always welcome.

Oct. 18 - 7:30-8:30 pm on Zoom - Youth Group will not meet in the afternoon, but there will be a short evening meeting for Youth Sunday planning.

Youth Sunday

Many of our youth are working on the song [Towards the Sun](#) for Youth Sunday on November 15th. I can't wait to see the product of their hard work and dedication. This year's Youth Sunday theme is *Hope*. We are regularly dedicating a little bit of each youth group session to planning. If you want to participate in Youth Sunday, but can't, for any reason, attend Zoom Youth Group, please let me know.

Secret Samhain

We all have a strong desire to be connected and for many of us, Zoom meetings just don't cut it. So this year, instead of waiting for the end of December to take care of our Youth Group friends, we have turned “Secret Santa” in “Secret Samhain.”

Youth are braiding cords that will represent our interconnect web and choosing a small item for their person based on [a survey](#) that will help us get to know each other better. This trinket exchange was created in an effort to make sure that each of our youth know that they are cared for by the group whether or not they want to attend virtual gatherings.

I am extending the deadline to participate in the trinket exchange, so if your middle or high school youth has not already filled out the survey above, please have them do so before October 10th.

Have a wonderful month! I hope to see you around!

Nicole

Splinters from the Board

Emily Wornell, President

The big, scary DTR!

I'm fairly certain that the monthly Splinters writing is the hardest part of my presidential term. I'm no stranger to writing – it's a significant portion of my job and something I do for pleasure – so why do I find this activity so burdensome? I believe it stems from the lack of defined boundaries. Maybe more than most, I am a person who thrives within boundaries. I *want* to have expectations and relationships defined so that I better understand how to situate myself within (and occasionally push against) them. I don't think that I'm alone in this perspective, however. Being completely unfettered and undefined might be appealing in theory, but most of us need some kind of touch point to understand how and where we fit into society. Without boundary or definition setting, we not only can find ourselves rudderless and unsure how to interact with those around us in a particular setting, but hard feelings can develop when someone behaves in ways that we think are inappropriate for the setting.

This has certainly been an issue for our church. Without expectations of how we will and won't be with one another properly defined, we lack both the touch point for grounding ourselves in our church relationships and the ability to hold ourselves and each other accountable within those relationships. The result, as we have seen, can be hurt feelings and harmed community. The UUA uses the term "covenant" to describe the process of defining how, to use Rev. Barbara's term, to "be in relationship with each other." I know "covenant" is a word with a lot of baggage for many of us who have been deeply wounded by the Christian church. I think it's okay to use a different word that works better for you; I personally, and ironically, like the term "DTR" or "Define the Relationship." It's not the terminology that truly matters, but the intention, process, and commitment. [\(continued on page 8\)](#)

October Dedicated Offering

The Feeding Our Hungry Neighbors (FOHN) Task Force is deeply honored to be the recipient of October's Dedicated Offering from the congregation. This article highlights FOHN's recent shifts in programming—and new attempts to provide important relief for the daunting problem of food insecurity in the Muncie area.

The shocking arrival of COVID-19 has altered and disrupted every life. We've all felt that—with increased uncertainty, anxiety, limits on mobility, and new daily risks to confront. But the disruption, sadly, means even *greater* vulnerability for folks already struggling on the margins: in isolation, separated from support, in poverty, and/or with food insecurity.

With the public health closure of large events, our task force has seen the core of its regular programming (temporarily, we hope!) hollowed out. Our food pantry inside the UUCM is not currently accessible. Our usual sponsorships (of meals at the Sleeping Room, dinners for Forward S.T.E.P.S. participants, mass volunteering at Second Harvest Food Bank) have been curtailed for public health reasons. But we know there are still great—and now even greater—needs to be met!

Since the COVID-19 lockdown in March, we have been using monetary donations to help meet regular food needs for a local family that has traditionally relied upon the UUCM pantry. We have begun, however, to broaden that scope, and to help more of those in need while protecting their dignity and confidentiality.

Thanks to our liaison at Forward S.T.E.P.S., *we are now assisting three additional local families who need help battling food insecurity.* That breadth means we're now aiding sixteen individuals—a four-fold increase from recent months. Task force members have begun making monthly grocery purchases for each family. Each of the new recipient families includes children at home, and a number of them are quite young. Provisions of healthy fresh foods are especially vital as these young ones grow.

In addition, Laura Janney plans a large, socially distanced, non-perishable giveaway at the Muncie YWCA to benefit participants in Muncie OUTreach and Finding Spirit. FOHN hopes to contribute toward that initiative, as well as toward ongoing assistance for the four families we're sponsoring.

We will use your generous financial donations, via text during a service or check mailed to the church, to purchase important food and household staples. And we will use the UUCM's weekly eBlasts to keep you updated about those we are assisting. Thank you so much for your deep kindness and generosity. We cherish our terrific volunteers!

Unity in Our Diversity

Rev. Barbara Coeyman [\(continued from page 1\)](#)

Congregational polity is in effect a lateral method of governance: that is, distributed across the membership. Congregational polity contrast with various methods of “top-down” organization in religious community, such as in a system led by bishops. I expect most people who find a home in Unitarian Universalism are drawn to free religion in part for its more equitable, democratic method of organization. Congregational polity represents not “power over” but “power with” one another. Congregational polity embraces the mindset of “shared ministry” which I spoke of. Americans have been the beneficiaries of Justice Ginsburg’s mindset of shared ministry toward all life.

More specifically, under congregational polity, the membership of each congregation, including UUCM, owns several critical responsibilities for church organization. Generally we define these in three broad areas: 1) overseeing ownership of property (i.e. the building and grounds are not property of the Unitarian Universalist Association); 2) defining particular methods of organization and governance (determined in part by the size of a congregation); and 3) choosing its own professional leadership (for example; clergy are “called” or “hired” by the members, not “sent” by denominational officials). Being congregational indeed places responsibility on the people for operations of their churches. Can you see how a congregational approach meshed well in theory with our colonial ancestors’ establishing of a democracy?

Paralleling congregational organization, Unitarian Universalism also promotes a lateral mindset to theology and spiritual practice. This free faith is a multi-dimensional way of being religious --- many fonts of inspiration to shape our spiritual paths. I know many of you are well schooled in this premise from your recent summer worship series on the Six Sources of Unitarian Universalism. This multi-cultural mindset means that when we come together, in person and virtually, we each bring our own particular perspective on this stuff of being human. Perhaps more important, we also respect the diversity of perspectives which others are bringing to the

community. Also, any of our individual perspectives may change tomorrow, or next week, or next year: indeed this liberal faith is a “Living Tradition.” Grounding in the Six Sources affirms UUs identity as “multi-cultural,” one component of the current commitment of every congregation to promote “AR-AO-MC:” that is, Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression, Multi-Culturalism.” (More about AR-AO-MC in future Unigrams.)

Admittedly a lateral approach to religion can be a bit challenging for newcomers to grasp, especially for folks who know an orthodox approach in which membership is contingent on commitment to common beliefs. We often hear questions such as, “What do UUs believe? If individuals follow different theologies or spiritualities, what holds this denomination together?” That is, what is the “glue” of Unitarian Universalism? The glue is common values that each congregation commits to upholding. These values are expressed most broadly in the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism (another topic for future Unigrams): perhaps most pointedly, the First Principle, which affirms our commitment to the “inherent worth and dignity of each person,” and the Seventh Principle, our commitment to the “interconnected web of connections, of which we are all a part.” A commitment to these values makes it possible to come together as a single community --- a congregation --- made of up individuals who bring a breath of theological, spiritual, and social diversity to those communities.

As I come to know you, the members and friends who are the heart of the congregation, I am touched by the diversity of life experiences, engagement in social justice, and spiritual practices which I am learning about in this congregation. You are indeed a diverse community “glued” together by commitment to this congregation, a beacon of free faith in the greater Muncie community.

The theme of unity in our diversity will be at the core of our conversations during this transitioning, interim period. I look forward to walking with you in this shared ministry, holding before us the inspiration of those who came before us: from our colonial religious ancestors to Justice Ginsburg. They continue to inspire us to shape a loving, justice-oriented community

See you in Virtual Church!

Rev. Barbara

Listening with Ears of the Heart

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

within us? Is our sick child on our mind? Are we just too tired to give the other person the kind of attention that will enable them to feel fully heard?

3) We must give the other our open, receptive attention. “Who is here?” “What’s really here?” One way we do this is to give conscious intention and effort to distinguishing between who is *really* present to us and who we *think* is there. See the person, not our *idea* of the person.

Setting these kinds of intentions enables us to hold a healing space, to offer a safe container in which another person can speak authentically. It enables a space which is nonjudgmental, confidential, and accepting. It allows deep trust to develop, perhaps for one of the few times in someone’s life.

We need deep and compassionate listening in our community, now more than ever. We need to restore trust among us, and one way we can bring that about is to help one another feel heard, deeply, truly listened to. We can create safe spaces into which hard truths can be spoken and in which they can be heard.

From what I have observed about some of the spoken exchanges between people in our congregation, a practice suggests itself. We could think of this as a spiritual practice—one that we practice consistently and with intentionality. We can think of it as a “holy moment,” an act that opens up space into which the holy can come. Let’s say we’re having a congregational meeting or a meeting of a committee. Someone says something and we feel hurt, embarrassed, or angry (or all three!). Perhaps our first reaction is to strike back, to say something snarky. Or, maybe we curl up emotionally into a tight little ball and shut down. Possibly we feel like letting other people know how horrible the offending individual is. Don’t.

Instead, stop and breathe. It really can be that simple. The pause allows us to get our bearings again, to release the initial reaction and consider what a better response might be. We may be able to

approach the person directly and calmly, being honest about our differences and about the emotional pain that has happened. None of this will make what happened right or OK, and it may not lead to reconciliation nor to agreement. It can, however, limit the damage and avoid escalating the conflict, instead holding out the hope of healing.

There are, of course, all manner of specific factors that cause us as individuals to speak or act unskillfully. Similar factors result in others reacting less than skillfully. And that’s when things can spiral into a morass of negativity that goes beyond the initial event that precipitated it. However, it seems to me there are also two factors that currently affect us as a congregation.

The first is the complex situation we all live in right now: Covid, racial unrest, vitriolic politics, socio-economic inequality on so many fronts, seemingly out of control wildfires spurred in part by climate change... The second is that we’re coming off a time of conflict within our congregation and between the congregation and our previous settled minister. I don’t need to rehash either of these. We’re angry, frightened, hurting, anxious, often at the same time.

It’s a time to offer one another the grace of assuming good intentions. Let’s cut each other some slack and not leap to judgment. Let’s try to remember that the other person is probably just as worried and unhappy as we are. Their life is complex and confusing right now too. As we are, they are struggling with their own situation. Let’s make room to allow one another to be fully human, with mistakes, bad choices and always worthy of compassion and respect.

I’m quite hopeful about what our time of transitional ministry will bring. There will be many opportunities offered in the next months for us to work on rebuilding trust and developing more mindful, skillful, and healthy ways of communication and resolving conflict. I encourage us to participate in these as we can. As always, our Pastoral Associates, Rev. Barbara and Rev. Julia are here to support you as we all move forward together.

May it be so among us,

Rev. Julia

The 2020 Quilt Raffle Is Still Happening!

Introducing "Rainfall," the 2020 Bazaar quilt! This beautiful quilt could be yours. Even though our wonderful Bazaar in the Woods has been cancelled, the Quilt Raffle will happen. Tickets will be available online **starting October 7**, and are \$5 each or 5 for \$20. Watch the Friday eBlasts or [visit our website](#) for details on how to purchase your tickets. A virtual quilt drawing will be Saturday, November 7, 2020.

The quilt was handmade by these talented women: **Nan Barber, Elsbeth Fritz, Beth Gonser, Holly Hanauer, Linda Hanson, Cheryl LeBlanc, Cindi Marini, Cindy Ruman, and Malissa Tong.** Thank you all for your artistry!



October 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 Classes: PreK-1 st & 2 nd -5 th grades	Sundays	10:00 am
Worship Service (Oct 4 at 11:00 am)	Sundays	10:45 am
RE Classes: Middle School/High School	Sundays	12:30 pm
Youth Group	Sundays	1:30 pm
Choir Gathering	1 st & 3 rd Tuesdays	8:30 pm
Board of Trustees	2 nd Wednesday	6:30 pm
Trivia Night	1 st & 3 rd Fridays	8:00 pm

October Meetings via Zoom

Check with committee chairs or church office for Zoom links

RE Committee	Sunday	Oct 4	9:00 am
Congregational Meeting	Sunday	Oct 4	12:30 pm
Transition Team	Monday	Oct 5	7:30 pm
Worship Associates	Wednesday	Oct 7	7:30 pm
Pastoral Associates	Tuesday	Oct 13	4:00 pm
Board of Trustees	Wednesday	Oct 14	6:30 pm

Splinters from the Board

Emily Wornell, President (continued from page 4)

This isn't the last time you'll hear about creating a covenant together – it's a priority of Rev. Barbara's, and one that I support (although it's still DTR in my head). In the coming months we will need to go through the process of defining how we function together and with our new minister. We need to understand what behaviors we collectively understand as appropriate to function as a healthy, thriving community. We will need to clearly define how we communicate with each other with love when these collective boundaries are breached. This isn't a process that meant to be punitive, tyrannical, or stifling; proper boundary setting is inherently healthy and freeing. It can foster great creativity and deepen relationships. Like all the work we're doing together as a church family, it's also participatory – your voice matters in this process, and I hope you'll participate when the time comes.

In loving service,

Emily

Gratitude

Phoebe's folks, the Carrier-Ladd family, thanks the congregation so much for your generosity and care!

Julie Fritz and Liz Lowe, co-chairs of your Caring Committee, are grateful to everyone who donated to the Caring Committee fund which allowed the Carrier-Ladd family to choose meals from restaurants following Phoebe's birth.

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."

UU the Vote

While we know voting alone won't save us, we also know that the difference between policies and politicians can literally mean life or death, especially for the most marginalized. There may not be a perfect candidate or policy, but that can't stop us from voting.

We can make a difference in 2020 by voting for people and policies that will do the least amount of harm in our communities. We can do everything we can to create justice, equity, and compassion in the world by voting with collective care in mind.

People know UUs for showing up and playing our part. This election, we must all play our part and show up for justice because that's the call of our faith. Join thousands of UUs as we commit to doing our part in this election. Visit uuthevote.org to learn more.

UUCM Staff & Leadership

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