



the UNIGRAM

The “iChurch” Revisited

Rev. Dr. Barbara Coeyman, Interim Minister

Friends, our spirits have been enriched by February’s theme of “Beloved Community.” In this Unigram I want to continue conversation about a lens on congregational life which I addressed in a sermon on “Beloved Community” on February 7. The topic generated engaging conversation after the service. Let’s continue to discern a concept called “iChurch” promoted by the Unitarian Universalist minister Rev. Frederic Muir. If you could not attend on February 7, there may be some new ideas here for you to consider. If you did participate that Sunday, perhaps you have some new thoughts for this conversation.

In that February 7 sermon, I grounded conversation about UU life in broader views of current American culture, as advanced by the sociologist Robert Putnam, in a recent bestseller called *Upswing*. Putnam describes current American life as an “I” culture: grounded on individualism, rather than on Beloved Community, which he calls a “We” culture. Think on Putnam’s ideas: how do you experience “I” and “We” in your daily life?

Putnam’s ideas resonate well with recent conversations among Unitarian Universalists, stimulated especially by my minister colleague Rev.

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Commitment: Staying in Relationship

Rev. Dr. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, Community Minister

Our beloved congregation has been wracked by conflict in the last few years. And while it seems to me that the force of the storm has quieted somewhat, it is far from over. A welcoming, safe, and thriving congregation doesn’t just happen; it requires commitment and hard work, the willingness to show up and to keep showing up, to take risks, to be present with our whole selves.

Our congregation is not, won’t ever be, should not be and cannot be homogenous. Not everyone will agree all the time, and it doesn’t mean that any of us has to check our opinions at the door. We can’t avoid conflict in order to “keep the peace.” We can’t always avoid hurting and angering each other. When we try to do

that, we hide our authentic selves behind a façade. It allows conflict and hard feelings to fester and boil beneath the surface. We can, however, trust each other and commit to the kind of relationships in which we can disagree and be in conflict with each other. We can learn, and commit to practicing, staying in relationship through conflict.

Rev. Barbara has been offering the Circles of Trust workshop series to the congregation the last couple of months. The program was developed by Parker J. Palmer and the Center for Courage & Renewal (www.couragerenewal.org). One element of that program is the “Touchstones,” a set of basic principles that guide how people in Circles of Trust agree to relate with one another. They are, in effect, a covenant for the group. Several of these

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Sunday Mornings at Our (Virtual) Church in the Woods

March Theme :: Commitment

Online Service at 10:45 am <https://bit.ly/UUCMSundayService>

March 7 – “What Will You Do Anyway?” Rev. Christin Green

The nature of commitment is practice. It takes practice to respect the inherent worth and dignity of every person. It takes practice to give and build and love with no guarantee of recognition or reward. What challenges your commitment? How can you practice? Join Rev. Christin Green for reflections on our faith in practice.

Rev. Green is Assistant Minister for Congregational Life at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax in Oakton, VA, a ministry she began in January 2021.

March 14 – “What Does it Mean to be a People of Commitment?” Rev. Coeyman

I have borrowed this sermon title from the Soul Matters packet for March, which calls us to realize the importance of our commitment to the interdependent web of all life for personal relationships, congregational life, and the future of the world community. Keeping the promises of our commitments can be challenging: sometimes we may not reach our goals. But even if we need to re-direct our travel, new destinations won't be part of our mindsets without commitments to be in the trip for the long haul.

March 21 – “History as Identity: History as Spiritual Practice” Rev. Coeyman

As participants in liberal religion, it is important for us to know the history of our congregations and the wider Unitarian Universalist movement. Our history explains much about our identity. Connecting with the past explains the present and informs our commitments to the future. Indeed, we may consider history as spiritual practice. Let's hear a few stories of the history of Unitarian Universalism and UUCM.

March 28 – “Meet Lydia Jenkins: A Woman of Commitment” Rev. Coeyman

March is Women's History month. I want to tell you the story of Rev. Dr. Lydia Jenkins, the first woman – a Universalist – ordained to ministry, in 1860. Lydia's story was lost to history: most UUs know Olympia Brown as the first ordained woman minister. Lydia broke many glass ceilings: in liberal ministry, in woman's rights, in alternative health. Let's consider how her commitment to making the world a better place sustained her, during both joys and challenges of being a radical reformer in the mid-nineteenth century.

Religious Education for Children & Youth

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

March 7 – PreK-4th grade class 10-10:30 am; 5th-12th grade class 12:30-1:15 pm

March 13 (Saturday) – RE Outdoor Gathering at UUCM (all ages), 1:30-2:30 pm

March 14 – No RE classes

March 21 – Story Time with Nadine (all ages welcome) at 10:00 am

March 28 – Social Action (all ages welcome) at 10-10:30am

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

RE programming

Please join us as we continue our religious exploration online via Zoom. The RE zoom links will be posted each week in the UUCM Friday eBlast. Please note, that in place of a 2nd Sunday RE class, we are holding a 2nd Saturday outdoor gathering.

- **Sunday, March 7 – Soul Matters Anti-Racism Curriculum:** PreK-4th grade class 10-10:30 am w/Andrea Wolfe; and 5th-12th grade class 12:30-1:15 pm w/Jerry McKean.
- **Saturday, March 13 – RE Outdoor Gathering at UUCM** (all ages), 1:30-2:30 pm
- **Sunday, March 21 – Story Time** with Nadine (all ages welcome) at 10:00 am
- **Sunday, March 28 – Social Action** with Susan Taylor at 10:00am: Cards for the *Muncie OUTreach Community Card Program*

For the Scavenger Hunt and Outdoor Gatherings at UUCM, wearing masks and physically distancing six feet is required.

Family Activity – Heroes of the Civil Rights Movement Scavenger Hunt

Our Scavenger Hunt for the month of February and March is on the theme **Heroes of the Civil Rights Movement**. Pick up a Scavenger sheet and marker from the bin by the RE door and learn about Civil Rights Heroes as you mark off the ones that you find! **Please leave the rocks where you find them for another group to discover.** I would love to hear from you!

Social Action w/Susan Taylor – Sunday, March 28

For our March Social Action, we will be making cards for the **Muncie OUTreach Community Card Program**. Holiday cards, birthday cards, thinking of you cards – all cards for any occasion are welcome, but they highly recommend cards of cheer and affirmation. Draw a picture, break out your glitter, or include a lovely doodle! These extra touches can convey the special attention, love, and care you put into something just for the recipient. Not a crafty

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March Youth Events

Nicole Kaplan, Coordinator of Youth Programming

Youth Group meets most Sundays from 1:30 - 3 pm on Sundays in Zoom Room #2

<https://zoom.us/j/5150188364>

Passcode UUCm#1859

Special Dates

March 14 - Youth Group will meet from 1:30-3 pm, outside and masked at church. We will check in and then have games that we can play while socially distanced. We will have our new fire pit ready to test out! Bring a chair and dress appropriately for the weather.

March 27 - Virtual Youth CON from 8 pm - midnight. Registration opens March 3. Contact me if you would like to help lead (youth) or chaperone (adults with background check).

March 28 - 10-11 am - Virtual CON youth service

March Family Activity

For the March Family Activity, I am encouraging you to head over to UUCM to participate in the Civil Rights Heroes Scavenger Hunt that DRE Nadine set up.

30 stones painted with spirals and numbers are hidden on the church grounds waiting to be found. Grab an info sheet from the RE bin and see how many heroes you can find. Do you recognize the names?

Take a family photo, selfie, or a picture of our beautiful grounds to post to social media. Be sure to check-in and tag UUCM when you do!

Remember to put the stones back where you found them so that the next family can find them. Have fun and good luck!

Virtual Youth CON

Join together with youth from TEN different congregations in our region for a night of fun on March 27 from 8pm to midnight. Registration is FREE

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Splinters from the Board

Emily Wornell, President

We all had other things we could be doing for three hours on a mid-Sunday afternoon – reading, working, spending time with our families, going for a long walk, fixing a chicken coop – but a shared sense of responsibility, dedication, and comradery brought us together for our second board retreat that afternoon. It was a productive – and dare I say, enjoyable – time together, but this report to the congregation isn't going to be about the important work we did together.

In the spirit of our wildly successful Stewardship Sunday in February, I want to use this space to specifically recognize and thank the current board members for incredible gifts of time and talent. It's been a difficult couple of years, as you all well know, and the dedication your board members, particularly those longer-term members, have shown to this community is inspiring and humbling. Regardless of how they are being treated in the church – which, frankly, is not always heartening – your board continues to show up, putting in hours of deep thinking and consideration as we discern the best, most responsible way forward in these uncertain times. It takes so much to keep a community like ours functioning well and meeting the needs of our members and friends, and **Caroline Sullivan, Ben Strack, John Bartlett, Jennifer Hollems, Brandon Mundell, and Rev. Barbara** all have my heartfelt thanks for playing their part in making it happen.

In loving service,

Emily

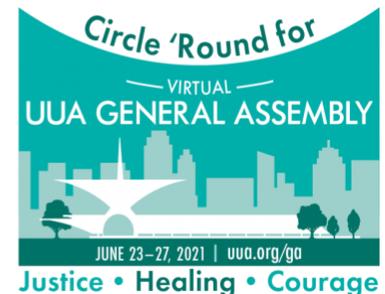
Unigram Changes Coming in April

As we approach the 1-year mark since we closed the UUCM building and our lives changed in ways we couldn't imagine, it's time to make some necessary changes to the way we communicate.

Mailing almost 200 copies of our Unigram each month has become increasingly difficult to maintain. Our Office Administrator, **Christie Williams**, has been folding, sealing, and labeling them without her lovely volunteer folding teams.

We are now below the threshold to continue mailing at bulk mail prices. We will save a significant amount of money by only mailing to a small number of people who do not have internet access. This will also reduce our use of paper and other supplies – a way to be kinder to our environment.

If you currently do not receive the email version of the Unigram please visit this link to sign up (<http://bit.ly/2NURhIJ>) so you can continue to enjoy the articles and information shared on these pages each month.



General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Participants worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Anyone may attend.

The UUA Board of Trustees has passed a resolution making the 2021 UUA General Assembly a **100% virtual event**. Let's reach record-breaking attendance **June 23-27, 2021!**

Please visit the UUA website for more information.
<https://www.uua.org/ga>

STEWARDSHIP 2021-22 ★ CARRY THE LIGHT



On a bright sunny Saturday, February 20, families, couples and singles came in over 55 cars to celebrate the Stewardship Pandemic Parking Lot Pledging. The dark clouds were gone and we saw enjoyment in their smiles. They read the “Burma Shave signs,” checked in near the fire pit, and gave their pledges!

Pledges from these UUCM people bring the current total to \$247,901!

With a goal of \$290,000, Stewardship is asking the balance of our community to please step-up, get your pledge to the church office and help raise the balance of \$43,000. **For those who did not make it to PPLP: will you increase your pledge by 8%?** Visit the website to download a pledge form or to pledge online: <http://www.uuchurchmuncie.org/members/forms-and-information/>

Stewardship consistently asked for and received help. Thank you: **Christie Williams** who gives over and above to every project/program at our church; **Cindy Peters** for arranging to get the parking lot plowed, and **Sue Errington** for donating her recycled campaign signs for the “Burma Shave” drive. Thanks to **Kirk Robey, Susan Calvin, Lisa Dwenger, Sue Errington, Susan McGrath, Jean Filson, Beth Gonser, and Cindi Marini** for organizing and baking breads for the goody bags, and to **Bruce & Judy Craig, Steve Chalk, Ron & Jan Moore, and Eleanor Trawick** for delivery to those who couldn’t come to the church. We also appreciated the firewood from the **Trawick-Oliver** and **Hanauer** estates that kept the fire burning during PPLP.

To **Tania Said, Jennifer Parks-Strack, Janay Sander, Linda Hanson, Mary Johnson Robey, and Kirk Robey** – thank you for the inspiring reflections. Thanks to everyone who recorded a video on the priceless time and talent they have contributed to this congregation: **Nan Barber, Kelsey Brasel, Nancy Chamberlain, Bruce Craig, Sue Errington, Denise Ewing, Bill Fredrick, Elsbeth Fritz, Diane Hill, Cindi Marini, Jerry McKean, Janay Sander, Lynn Sousa, Ben Strack, Susan Taylor, John Taylor, Malissa Tong, Eleanor Trawick, Jeff Turner, Cindy Turner, Annemarie Voss, Emily Wornell.**

We are humbled and appreciative for every person who embraced this atypical pledge drive. The UUCM congregation consistently answers the call for help. Helping Stewardship “Carry the Light” warmed our hearts.

In Peace and Gratitude,

Holly Hanauer, Bea Sousa, Kelsey Brasel, Margaret Reeder, Katie Frederick
Stewardship Committee

Service Auction 2021

It’s coming! The 2021 Virtual Service Auction will take place online from **April 15 to April 17.**

We will again be using Auctria to host our online auction.

Donations

A hosted event? A pool party? A service like leaf raking, window washing, child/pet care? A meal via porch-delivery? Homemade bread? Lessons? Tech Support? The list of ideas is **endless**, so go with your passion! But don’t ponder too long - we need donor sheets by April 1st. [Access the digital donor sheet here.](#)

If you have any questions, reach out to a fundraising committee member! **Denise Ewing** dewing218@gmail.com, **Mary Johnson Robey** mrboobthecat@hotmail.com, **Linda McKean** lwmckean@comcast.net, **Jennifer Parks-Strack** jennifer.e.parks@gmail.com, **Malissa Tong** mtong2@bsu.edu

The “iChurch” Revisited

Rev. Barbara Coeyman (continued from page 1)

Frederick Muir, long-time minister at the UU congregation in Annapolis, Maryland. In several talks and in a recent book titled *turning point*, Rev. Muir examines how Unitarian Universalism over the decades has become increasingly individualistic rather than grounded on the collective. He offers three observations. 1) Unitarian Universalism as an institution is being held back by a “pervasive and disruptive” commitment to individualism, just as Putnam spoke of. 2) Many UUs also cling to an ‘exceptionalism’ that can be off-putting to newcomers, ultimately defeating the good news of this faith. 3) Many UUs are reluctant to acknowledge and modify their allergy to power and authority. Paralleling Putnam’s nomenclature, Muir calls this the “iChurch,” to stand for the misplaced emphasis on arguing about difference rather than celebrating commonalities.

Rev. Muir asks how UUs became an “iChurch.” He agrees with a common explanation, attributed to founders such as Ralph Waldo Emerson. For all the spiritual inspiration which Emerson contributed to nascent Unitarianism in the mid-nineteenth century, his promoting of “Self Reliance” has shadow sides. Even as Emerson and others in free faith promoted the democratic belief that we can achieve whatever we strive for, many UUs may have interpreted independence as an inordinate emphasis on individualism. I expect many of liberal faith resonated with Emerson’s spirit, as we learned about the UU alternative to denominations which had no place for diversity. It felt welcoming, and still does, a religion which welcomes individuals who assert their way of seeing the world. Muir doesn’t refute individual creativity and insight, but he does refute an “individualism,” which promotes an operating premise that there are no guidelines, that we can do and believe anything we want. Certainly, the first Principle of UU-ism promotes the inherent worth and dignity of each person, but let’s not forget about the seventh principle, promotion of the

interdependent web of all creation, of which we are all a part.

In addition to cautions about individualism, Rev. Muir also challenges UU exceptionalism, especially for how we explain this faith to others. Think on how you tell others what church you attend: with what cast, what impression? Perhaps you experience liberal faith as unique and even life-saving --- I know it was for me when I found Unitarian Universalism in the 1990s --- but UU faith is not the only way to change the world. Rev. Muir asserts that exceptionalism can be as much of an obstacle to growth as is the third quality he describes: the allergy to power and authority among some UUs. Distrust of power and authority, in both congregational and denominational structures, often results in misuse of power. We can’t create a life-giving future if we distrust leadership and one another.

Rev. Muir offers several solutions for moving from iChurch to Beloved Community. The most important habit is “Covenant.” Covenant is our promises of mutual support and trust, within a given congregation, across congregations, among all the participants --- lay and clergy, leaders and followers. Covenant underlines values we hold in common. Covenant defines how we support one another. Covenant builds community, through mutual respect and interdependence. As a covenanted Beloved Community, we can more readily answer the call to justice-making that is so necessary at this point in human history.

I ask you, dear reader: have you experienced “iChurch” at UUCM? Can you recall details of those experiences? What might be changed, so that next time a similar event or situation arises, you and others can transform those experiences from individualism to the collective?

I look forward to seeing you in virtual church!

Rev. Barbara

Religious Education Corner

Nadine Tringali (continued from page 3)

person but want to be involved? Muncie OUTreach is always in need of supplies for card writing and sending! They need things like: blank cards, envelopes, colorful gel pens, markers, stationary, stickers, and stamps. **Join Susan on Sunday, March 28 at 10 am, on zoom to show everyone the cards you have created or to work on your cards during class time. This is a wonderful time to socialize with all your friends!** Please deliver your cards and/or supplies to the RE bin at the back door of church by April 5 so our cards and supplies can be *delivered to OUTreach on April 6. Thank you!*

Soul Matters Soulful Home

I hope our families are enjoying the Soul Matters **Soulful Home** subscription! **The theme for March is Commitment.** Families 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!

Nadine

Youth Group

Nicole Kaplan (continued from page 3)

and will open on March 3rd. Be on the lookout for an email because registration will close on March 15th.

We will gather together as a large group for check-in and to build our group covenant. Then you'll have the choice of two different breakout sessions at 9 and 10 including movement, crafts, music/creative writing, and games. Charlotte Reeder will be helping lead the breakout session of games, so you know it will be a blast!

We will end the night with a coffeehouse where we will show pre-recorded performances from any youth who wants to participate. See the email on March 3rd for more information.

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

Nicole

March Dedicated Offering: Heifer International

For more than 75 years, Heifer International has worked with people all around the world to end hunger and poverty and care for the Earth. Heifer International was born from the simple idea of empowerment, and the organization has worked tirelessly to give families a hand up.

Heifer International works to end hunger and poverty in partnership with the communities they serve. It begins with a seed investment of livestock or agriculture, followed by mentorship to help project participants build a business. These families are able to earn a living income and continuously lift up their communities as they train the next generation of leaders.

The children and youth at UUCM have supported Heifer International for the past 20 years, raising funds through annual bake sales. The congregation has been very supportive through their purchases at our bake sales and also through Dedicated Offerings. The children and youth “voice their vote” when we gather on Heifer International Sunday to vote on the “Gifts” UUCM will be sending.

You can donate via text-to-give during the service on March 7 or 14, or mail your gift to the church. Please make your check out to UUCM and note Heifer International on the memo line.

Thank you for your generosity!

Commitment: Staying in Relationship

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

speak quite directly to the ways in which we commit to relate with one another in order to create a healthy, safe, welcoming congregation.

Our faith encourages “spiritual growth” and “a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.” The first of the Touchstones notes that people learn best in hospitable spaces, and that the giving and receiving of hospitality helps to make our congregation a space where genuine spiritual exploration and the search for meaning can be carried out freely. Sincere hospitality, the giving and receiving of welcome, is essential, especially when the subject at hand is tender, and we feel vulnerable, as is so often the case when we’re exploring our own spirituality.

Another of the Touchstones is “Be present as fully as possible.” It describes this as “Be here with your doubts, fears and failings as well as your convictions, joys and successes, your listening as well as your speaking.” The call for presence is one of the reasons welcome is so important. We’re being asked to show up, fully, to be present, to trust one another with *all* of who we are. If we are to do that, we must have the confidence that everything about us is welcome here, our strengths and our weaknesses, the aspects we’re proud of and those we aren’t.

Relatedly, “Speak your truth in ways that respect other people’s truth.” If we are to allow others to know us, speaking our own truth is essential. At the same time, we need to respect other’s truth so that they, too, might have the freedom to give voice to that truth. It’s far too easy to fall into the trap of right vs wrong or arguing over differing interpretations of what happened. None of us knows with certainty what is in someone else’s heart and mind.

We can, in the words of another of the Touchstones, “Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions.” Questions like this elicit the best that is already within the other person. They are not

counsel or correction or advice in disguise. They are not leading questions, intended to elicit a particular response that the questioner thinks is the correct one. We’re called upon to set aside judgment to listen to others, and to ourselves, more deeply, more open-heartedly.

These kinds of attitudes call for *commitment*. For many of us, they aren’t our usual ways of approaching difference, especially when that difference leads to conflict. In a group setting such as a congregation, conflict can become amplified. People become locked into positions of their own or into opinions about how someone else “always is.” Trust is eroded. But with commitment to attitudes and practices that build relationships of trust, and trust in the process of relationship itself, we all can grow as individuals and as a congregation.

One piece in February’s Soul Matters asked, “What has been your best strategy for staying at the table? What practice or wise words keep you from running (or attacking) when things get hard?” or “How are you healing from having your hopes for Beloved Community dashed?” Reflecting on these kinds of questions is part of our interim work. Remember, too, that Rev. Barbara and I, as well as our Pastoral Associates, are available to anyone who would like to reflect on these questions, or others like them, in a confidential, safe listening space. Welcome to the journey!

Rev. Julia

Sharing Gratitude

Many thanks to **Julie Fritz** for donating all the fleece we could possibly need for our February Social Action project “No-Sew” blankets for the Animal Rescue Fund! ~**Nadine Tringali**

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.”

March 2021 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 – see page 3 for schedule	Sundays	
Worship Service	Sundays	10:45 am
Youth Group- see page 3 for schedule	Sundays	
Stewardship Committee	Fridays	11:00 am
Choir Gathering	1 st & 3 rd Tuesdays	8:30 pm
Board of Trustees	2 nd Wednesday	6:30 pm

March Meetings & Events

Check with committee chairs or church office for Zoom links

Transition Team	Monday	Mar 1	7:30 pm
Soul Matters Small Group Leaders	Thursday	Mar 4	7:30 pm
Pastoral Associates	Tuesday	Mar 9	4:00 pm
Board of Trustees	Wednesday	Mar 10	6:30 pm
UU Book Club	Thursday	Mar 11	7:00 pm
RE Outdoor Gathering	Saturday	Mar 13	1:30 pm
Program Council	Wednesday	Mar 17	7:00 pm
Circles of Trust: Session 3	Thursday	Mar 18	7:00 pm
Committee on Ministry	Thursday	Mar 18	7:00 pm
RE Committee	Sunday	Mar 21	9:00 am
Circles of Trust: Session 3	Monday	Mar 22	1:00 pm
Worship Associates	Wednesday	Mar 24	7:30 pm

Wheel of Life

John McKillip died Saturday, February 13th, 2021. John was active in many areas of church life, as well as in several community organizations. A son, two brothers, and a sister survive. There are currently no memorial events planned.

William “Bill” Wakeland died February 20th, 2021. Bill devoted much of his life to music in various ways. His wife Ruth, a son, and a daughter, along with a sister and his grandchildren, survive. There will be no formal funeral service, but there will likely be a memorial concert at a later date when pandemic conditions permit.

If you have a major life event you’d like the church community to be aware of, please submit it to uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org and note “Wheel of Life” in the subject line.

STEWARDSHIP 2021-22

★ **CARRY THE LIGHT** ★



Have you returned your pledge form? [Visit our website to submit your pledge virtually or to download a form.](#)

*We receive who we are before we choose who we will become...
We are born into relationship before we shape relationships by our conscious intention. We inherit covenant before we create covenant...
Covenant making must begin with the question, "What have we been given? What is the covenant we are already in?"*

~Rebecca Parker

UUCM Staff & Leadership

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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

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