



the UNIGRAM

Coming Back Together

Rev. Dr. Barbara Coeyman, Interim Minister

This month I want to continue conversation started by Ben Strack, UUCM Board President, in August. Ben reflected on the call from many in this congregation for “healing” following divisiveness, pain, and fracturing in congregational life. This call reflects the importance of reconciliation and restoration, of forgiveness and compassion, as on-going cultural norms for UUCM. I join Ben in applauding your call for healing. I also underline his message that moving toward right --- or even better --- relations is not a single event. Instead, restoration of right relations is a process over time, supported by open, honest, and covenanted communications. Right relations unfold when we trust in the best intentions of each person in this community, and when we seek clarification if we are unclear about another’s intentions.

I also remind us that it is important to consider congregational restoration into the wider context of trauma and collective grief we have all been living in the past eighteen months. If you have experienced inordinate feelings of isolation, or discouragement, or frustration, take a moment to consider all the factors since March 2020 which may have contributed to these feelings: social and physical isolation from the covid virus, now

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Standing in Possibility

Rev. Dr. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, Community Minister

We as a congregation stand on the threshold of the unknown. The future lies open ahead of us—but what will that future look like? And how will we move into it? One thing seems clear to me: as a congregation and as individual congregants, we *need* healing, reconciliation, a reset on several levels. And I firmly believe, we *want* that as well.

We’ve already begun. We’ve been talking about what our shared ministry will look like going forward, and those conversations will continue. Ben Strack’s August *Unigram* column noted that the healing has already begun. We’re looking into being able to physically gather in our beloved church building in some fashion. Small groups are already meeting in the building, and

we’ve had the Friday evening campfire chats around our fire pit.

In this context, I want to offer some suggestions that might helpfully inform how we approach the work of the next year or so. These are things that have occurred to me; you may well think of others.

Perhaps the most basic is that we listen to and genuinely hear one another. The rest follow from this one. A wise friend of mine was fond of pointing out that communication does not occur when someone speaks, but when someone truly *hears* what has been spoken.

It isn’t possible from our current vantage point to see what forms this will take. It will also evolve as we move into it. How it will look six months into the

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Sunday Mornings at Our (Virtual) Church in the Woods

The theme for September is Embracing Possibilities

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

September 5 – “Imagining Possibilities Together” Rev. Coeyman

The worship theme this month is “Possibilities.” Believing in and embracing the potential, the “what-might-be,” is central to liberal faith. Affirming possibility, we realize its root meaning of “having and gathering power.” On this holiday weekend, let’s orient our time together around you, the congregation, and small-group conversations in which you imagine possibility and potential to move past challenges and explore new arenas: in your personal lives, in this congregation, and in the wider world which at times may feel quite impossible.

September 12 – “Are We Outgrowing the Need for a Church?” Rev. Coeyman

This question – Is church becoming obsolete? – was asked by Unitarian Rev. Anna Garlin Spencer in a Berry Street Essay in 1929. Garlin answered her own question: the church must change as modern life changes, so to reflect the divine which is manifest in each of us. As prelude to the topic of the town hall today after the service on Ministry Going Forward, let us extend Garlin’s question to consider how ministry might and should change as the role of the church changes. That is, how can ministry best serve UUCM in the coming years? What are the possibilities for Ministry Going Forward?

September 19 – “Revisiting ‘On Bended Knee’: Visioning and Embracing Possibilities for Shared Ministry” Rev. Coeyman

Recalling the theme of shared ministry in two presentations in August titled “On Bended Knee,” let’s consider possibilities for shared ministry at UUCM during this month when we focus on Ministry Going Forward. What are your visions for professional ministry, for professional staff, for congregational leadership, for congregational participation? How can you both envision these possibilities, but also embrace them and turn them into realities? How can this community live into its full potential for shared ministry?

September 26 – “From Gold to Collard Greens” Lora Powell-Haney, MDiv

In her book, *Emergent Strategy*, adrienne maree brown writes of shifting our nation’s economy “from gold to collard greens.” What does each thing currently represent as values? What could they mean? Weaving together culinary and cultural history, visiting speaker Lora Powell Haney explores what each of these things represents now, what they could mean for community building, social justice, and Unitarian Universalism itself.

Lora Powell-Haney served for nine years as Director of Religious Education at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Frederick, MD. She graduated from Meadville Lombard Theological School in May 2020, her study including ministerial internship at Towson Unitarian Universalist Church in Lutherville MD, and a chaplain residency in Hagerstown MD. Lora loves reading, drinking tea, telling imaginative stories, building Beloved Community, communing with her cat, and standing barefoot on the earth.

Religious Education for Children & Youth

Outdoor RE Program – Saturdays 10:30-noon

In the month of September, we will continue to meet on Saturdays for our **RE Outdoor Gatherings**. Please bring your own water bottle and snack. We will have an activity and plenty of free time to play on the playground. Masking and distancing is required.

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

Even though we do not have a plan fully in place for this year's programming, we want to be able to contact you once we do. Please register your children and youth for this year's religious education and we will keep you in the loop with our fall plans. An email with the link to the registration has gone out to all our families. If you did not receive this email, please contact me at nadine@uuchurchmuncie.org.

In the month of September, we will continue to meet on Saturdays for our RE Outdoor Gatherings from 10:30-noon. Please bring your own water bottle and snack. We will have an activity and plenty of free time to play on the playground. Masking and distancing is required.

Nadine



Youth Events

Nicole Kaplan,
Coordinator of Youth Programming

When Youth Group meets on Zoom, we are in Zoom #2 <https://zoom.us/j/5150188364> Passcode UUcm#1859

September Birthdays

Isaac - 9th

Office Hours

I now hold office hours every Wednesday from 10-2 unless otherwise noted. The best way to contact me during this time is by calling my cell phone (765) 729-0395. The first Wednesday of each month, I have a regional meeting that begins at 1. Otherwise, I will be available to meet with you to discuss questions, concerns, ideas, and more. As always, I also offer appointments other times. Just contact me to schedule something. I look forward to hearing from you.

Everyone's Invited!

September 18 - Youth Group will be participating in the White River Cleanup from 8 am to noon. We are inviting everyone who is able to join us in this remarkable event where we really put our Seventh Principle into action. Please visit <http://beautifulmuncie.org/white-river-clean-up/> to pre-register and fill out the waiver. If you ordered a "Do U care?" t-shirt, please wear it to this event.

Dates

September 5, 1:30-3 - Zoom Games

September 12, 1:30-3:30 - Summit Lake (hiking, paddle boats, canoes, etc)

September 18, 8-noon - White River Cleanup

September 25, 7:30-9 - Saturday Night Zoom (games)

Caregiver Gathering

Keep an eye out for information about our first gathering of the year. These small group parent/caregiver gatherings will be scheduled periodically throughout the year and will provide the parents and caregivers of middle and high school youth an opportunity to grow in community and self. I'll be sending out an email soon.

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

Nicole



Splinters from the Board

Benjamin Strack, President

On Sunday, August 29 the Board of Trustees was able to come together in person for a retreat, following our small-group COVID restrictions once again fully including masking for everyone in the building. With all of last year's retreat being virtual, this was a welcome step forward. I wanted to share some thoughts from the retreat, which ending with a discussion of, "Where are we going?" I asked what this church community looked like in 10 years. A few of the words and thoughts used include:

- Healthy
- Opportunities for Community
- Space for Adults to Interrogate their Beliefs
- Having fun
- A few key Social Justice Endeavors
- Being Seen in Muncie
- Perhaps a presence Downtown
- Interconnectedness

I think these types of visioning conversations always give me a lot of hope. Not in the specifics they provide but knowing that we're still dreaming of bright futures for our beloved community.

In the nearer future, I feel the need to mention our outlook toward reopening, more specifically for reopening Sunday Services. Obviously, the Delta variant is requiring us to be more fluid with our planning than we'd hoped, and our return to some sort of normal seems to be moving away from us just as we're reaching out for it.

The good news is that behind the scenes there are more honest, grounded, and practical discussions of reopening than I think we've had at any point in the

pandemic. The COVID taskforce continues to do important analysis and advising, and we're looking to a sort of Return-to-Worship task force for to address the practical intersections of welcome, worship, music, technology, and above all, safety.

In the meantime, I encourage you to find new ways to get involved. (Want to join a committee? Talk to a board member!!) Small groups are still permitted in the building after reserving space and time with Christie, and meeting masking and number limits for a space. I'd also highly encourage joining with one of Rev. Barbara's Coming Back Together small groups, another step in the path toward healing. In the meantime, I hope to continue seeing many of you on Zoom.

In loving service,

Ben

UUCM Fireside Chat

Hey everyone! As a way to begin reuniting, I want to create an opportunity for folks to gather in-person and reconnect. So let's have some casual conversation time around the church campfire on Fridays at 7pm. Think of this as all of our missed random coffee hour or parking lot chats from the past year.

There will be a limit on how many people attend, so I'm asking that folks RSVP by emailing me if they'd like to attend. And if this Friday fills up, I'll put you on the list for next Friday! Or we can begin additional gatherings if necessary.

~Ben Strack

Email: Benjamin.strack@gmail.com to RSVP

In Recognition of Service as Worship Associates

Rev. Dr. Barbara Coeyman

With this Unigram edition marking the start of a new church year, the Worship Associates and I want to recognize two dedicated “WAs” who are stepping down from this important volunteering to UUCM. Worship leadership from **Bea Sousa** and **Caroline Sullivan** together represent twenty-five years of service to this congregation. While all volunteering in our religious communities asks of its volunteers both time and talent, the role of “Associates” (Worship and Pastoral) requires particular training and dedication. I won’t review here data we conducted last winter about preparation time for any given online worship service, but – trust me – worship preparation involves hours of meetings, research, coordination with other worship leaders, and more, not to speak of effective public speaking during the actual Sunday morning service. Responsibilities of the Worship Associate are especially busy for services which include a visiting minister or speaker. Over the years Bea and Caroline both have exemplified the best in lay worship leadership.

Twenty years ago, Bea Sousa was one of two congregants who initiated the Worship Associates program during the ministry of Rev. Thomas Perchlik. Bea has provided leadership and mentoring for the many other associates, current and past. While serving as chair or co-chair for much of her twenty years on this team, Bea has insured a successful summer worship series each year, offering capable presenters and challenging topics. Our records indicate that Bea served as WA for 140 services: that is as many weeks as a full-time minister’s worship responsibilities for four years! Her energy, knowledge, and abilities will be missed by the worship team.

Caroline Sullivan ends five years of volunteering as a Worship Associate. During those five years, she also served in other important arenas of congregational life: on the Board for three years and chairing the interim search committee last year. How did she do this all! Caroline has brought a wealth of institutional knowledge to worship services. Through her service the congregation also enjoyed the benefit of having a board member in the pulpit during a time of great change.

Bea and Caroline will be missed as Worship Associates, but our congregation will continue to be pleased to sit with them on Sunday mornings in person or virtually. Perhaps you, dear reader, would like to send a personal thank-you to Bea and Caroline for their dedicated service to UUCM.

September Dedicated Offering: Bridges Community Services

Our dedicated offering for September goes to Bridges Community Services. Bridges Community Services works with low income individuals and families experiencing homelessness in East Central Indiana to provide immediate, emergency, and long-term housing solutions that are tailored to fit the unique needs of their clients.

Bridges advocates work to get individuals into housing that meets their specific needs. They operate an emergency family shelter and six tiny homes, as well as a number of rental properties that are rented below fair-market value for low-income individuals and families. They work with local landlords and property management companies to help our clients and friends find long-term housing solutions.

Bridges also offers supportive services for homeless veterans, assistance to homeless individuals to move into permanent housing, a Housing Utilization Building (HUB) that offers shower and laundry services to those experiencing homelessness, and emergency services including warming/cooling stations and vending machines at fire stations #1 and #3 that provide necessities. Housing advocates can provide tokens for these machines.

Bridges believes in the intrinsic and inherent value and worth of every single human being (a basic principle of Unitarian Universalism), that housing is a basic human right, and that services should be offered with respect and empathy, in the spirit of hope and recovery.

More information about Bridges may be found at their website: <https://www.bridgesmuncie.org/>

You can donate via text during the Sunday service on September 5 or 12, or mail a check to the church office and note "Bridges DO" on the memo line.

Pastoral Associates at UUCM

Pastoral care, including what our Pastoral Associates provide, is "primarily a ministry of intentional and faithful presence." (Francesca Nuzzolese, Methodist Theological School, Associate Professor of Pastoral Care). Our PAs are committed to our UU Principles. They are able to witness to what is real for a person, without turning away, judging, fixing or trying to fix, simply holding a safe space for them to be who they are and feel what they feel, to name it, and to tell their story. Our PAs are self-aware and attuned to their own feelings, able to own their own "stuff" and maintain appropriate boundaries.

Our Pastoral Associates work closely with Rev. Julia and Rev. Barbara. They enhance and extend our ministry of caring for one another.

Our PAs might visit those who are ill at home, or in an extended care or assisted living facility, hospice, or in the hospital. They can maintain contact with those who are unable to attend church. They can help support friends and family members involved in care giving. They can provide a steady presence for someone going through a life crisis or comfort those who are grieving. Nor are they available only for life's difficult times. They're happy to provide a listening ear when you have good news to share, too.

In the next few issues of the *Unigram*, you'll be hearing from some of our Pastoral Associates about why they became a PA and what gifts they bring to their ministry among us.

~Rev. Julia

Coming Back Together

Rev. Barbara Coeyman (continued from page 1)
 compounded by the run-away Delta variant; the many incidents of social and environmental oppression, and subsequent need for justice-making activities, especially to support the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) population; the assault on American democracy, which peaked on January 6 with the storming of the Capitol but sadly continues, as in the proliferation of challenges to voting rights; and so many more factors which explain past and on-going trauma.

This summer I explored several new resources about trauma: perhaps one or more can apply to your personal experiences. *The Body keeps the Score* by Bessel van der Kolk emphasizes that aftereffects of trauma to our spirits continue to reside in our bodies until we do intentional cleansing work. Resmaa Menakem's *My Grandmother's Hands* reminds us how social and cultural marginalization intensifies trauma for BIPOC. *What Happened to You?* by Bruce Perry and Oprah Winfrey (yes, that Oprah Winfrey) reminds readers to ask not "what did I, or we, do wrong?" but "what happened to us?" As I explain the concept of "afterpastor" this year, I will invoke this premise: that reconciliation from recent divisiveness at UUCM can be explored in the context of both immediate circumstances as well as cultural habits which have built up over decades. More on the concept of "afterpastor" throughout this church year.

Even through the throes of online congregational life since I began serving UUCM in August 2020, I have seen the beginning of healing, reconciliation, and transformation ("transformation" being a topic we discussed during the recent Berry Street Essay in worship on August 22 and 29). Still, there is much more to be done. In collaboration with both staff and lay leadership, I plan to devote significant time and energy in my ministry this year to encouraging this community to rebuild and reconnect through open, honest, and compassionate communications.

Still, I expect many of you are asking, what specifically will we do for healing and reconciliation? For the rest of this Unigram article, I want to tell you about a series of Small-Group conversations – "**Gathering Together Again**" --- beginning in September to provide an

opportunity for each congregant to talk to a few others. These conversations will be located in the UUCM sanctuary. I look forward to this chance to be with many of you in person for the first time. Be assured that all current protocol for covid prevention will be strictly followed when you return to the sanctuary.

We are holding these Small Group conversations in the sanctuary because there is much evidence that returning to spaces and seeing individuals for which we have deep emotional connections after months of pandemic shut-down may well elicit strong memories and reactions: perhaps tears, perhaps laughter (regrettably we will need to reframe from hugs). Perhaps the first time you re-enter the sanctuary, you will re-play the last time this community was together in this room, in March 2020, when admittedly tensions were running high. Rather than waiting until this community comes together *en masse* for the first worship service, which will be no sooner than the beginning of November, I encourage you to participate in these Small-Group, one-hour conversations starting in September. This time of the year of Jewish High Holy Days can inspire us to engage in conversations of forgiveness and atonement.

To lead these conversations, I will follow a particular method of storytelling defined by the community organizer Marshall Ganz. Our conversations will include individual reflection, dialogue with one or two others as you wish to voice your personal reflections to others, and finally all-group conversations, especially to vocalize to other congregants your words of hope, gratitude, forgiveness, visions for the future, and more. Rest assured, all conversations will be grounded in the UUCM All-Congregation Covenant, approved last spring, and accountability which accompanies covenant, as well as the first principle of Unitarian Universalism: respect for the inherent worth and dignity of each person.

As President Ben wrote last month, this will not be simple work. Each person must recognize hurt she or he or they has felt from others, as well as owning hurt they inflicted on others. These Small-Group conversations are NOT intended as a time to repeat past controversies, to argue about who was "right" and who was "wrong" in recent conflict, to critique or

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Rev. Barbara Coeyman (continued from page 7)

“bash” particular individuals. These Small-Group conversations ARE intended as a time to go more deeply and safely to expressing forgiveness you would like to offer to others, and to accepting apologies from others. We want these Small-Group conversation to be a safe place to voice your needs for healing and reconciliation.

Please open [this form](#) to begin the registration process. These conversations are very important: please don't pass up this opportunity to begin the process of **Coming Back Together**, slowly and safely.

Note that the form includes a place for you to identify if you absolutely cannot travel or meet with others in-person: while not embodied experiences, we will schedule a group or two via zoom.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions: barbara@uuchurchmuncie.org

In “Coming Back Together,” we all move forward!

See you in Church!

Rev. Barbara

Standing in Possibility

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

process will not be how it looked at the beginning, nor how it looks at the end. We need confidence that we can trust the process itself, and trust those who are in the process with us.

Rebuilding trust, one of the themes that Rev. Barbara has focused on, will be a crucial part of this process. Our trust has been eroded—trust in our ministers and other staff, trust in the Board of Trustees, trust in one another and perhaps trust in the bonds that bind us together in community. This affects each of us differently. Each of us will need to work to rebuild our trust. This also calls on each of us to be *trustworthy*, honest, and dependable.

Living with the process is itself part of the process. We cannot do an end-run around the process and get it finished before it's finished. In this context, it's important for us to keep in mind that we are moving through this process layered over the constantly changing covid situation, as well as other things that are in flux in our collective and personal lives. Think climate change and the natural disasters it has brought, political turmoil and humanitarian crises, disinformation on all fronts. We're living with a lot of change, uncertainty, and anxiety right now, and will be for the foreseeable future.

Because things may change quickly, it's important to stay in touch. Read the Unigram and the Friday E-Blast.

Check out our private group Facebook page (UU Church of Muncie).

We can look at one another as we are—persons of worth and dignity with whom we have chosen to walk in covenant.

Let's grant ourselves and one another the grace of a second and third chance, and more if needed.

Believe that each of us comes to the process with the best of intentions. Recognize that we all want the best for our beloved community, even when our visions of what that means, or our understandings of how to go about getting there, differ.

Trust we're doing the best we can right where we find ourselves in this moment. A few days back as I began to write this, I had not slept at all well the night before. I was cranky as a she-bear with a couple of cubs and my head felt like it had been stuffed into a too-small mixing bowl. Needless to say, my best right then was not what it would have been under different circumstances!

These are challenging times, and the work we are embarking on is challenging work. It calls on us to practice good-self-care, however you do that. It is also holy work; it is sacred work, whatever those terms mean for you. It is in itself a spiritual practice when we approach it with that intention.

Yours in Solidarity,

Rev. Julia

September 2021 UUCM Calendar

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

Regular Weekly/Monthly Events

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

RE Outdoor Gathering – see page 3 for schedule	Saturdays	10:30 am - noon
Adult Discussion Group	Sundays	9:30 am
Worship Service	Sundays	10:45 am
Youth Group – see page 3 for schedule	Sundays	1:30-3:00 pm
Choir Gathering via Zoom	1 st & 3 rd Tuesdays	8:00 pm
Board of Trustees	2 nd Wednesday	6:30 pm
Fireside Chats – see page 4 for details	Fridays	7:00 pm

September Meetings & Events

Check with committee chairs or church office for Zoom links

Church Office Closed	Monday	Sept 6	Labor Day
UU Book Club at UUCM	Thursday	Sept 9	7:00 pm
Town Hall	Sunday	Sept 12	11:45 am
COVID Task Force	Monday	Sept 13	5:30 pm
Pastoral Associates	Tuesday	Sept 14	4:00 pm
Committee on Ministry	Thursday	Sept 16	7:00 pm
Unigram submissions due	Wednesday	Sept 22	9:00 am
Worship Associates	Wednesday	Sept 22	7:30 pm

UUCM Office Schedule

Monday

1:00-4:00 pm

Tuesday-Friday

9:00 am – 4:00 pm

The office will be closed Monday, September 6.

The office is open by appointment only – please call or email before dropping in. Masks are required inside the building.

Items for the eBlast are due by 9:00 am each Thursday. Please use the **Publicity Form** to submit your announcements. Articles for the October *Unigram* are due Wednesday, September 22. Please send as attached Word docs to uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org.



Sharing Gratitude

We are grateful to Dr. Johanna Wu, Baha'i speaker this summer, for donating her honorarium back to our congregation for a social justice project. The Social Justice Committee will decide how to use the \$250.

~Bea Sousa

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."

Town hall

Friends, don't forget to mark your calendars for the UUCM Town Hall on September 12, immediately following Sunday morning worship service (that is, starting around 11:45) to discuss the topic of Ministry Moving Forward.

Join the meeting here:

<https://bit.ly/UUCMSundayService>

Ingathering in Complicated Times

UUA President, Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray shared a video message that you can view [here](#).

Watch the eBlast for more information about UUCM's plans for Ingathering this year.

UUCM Staff & Leadership

Staff

Rev. Dr. Barbara Coeyman, Interim Minister
barbara@uuchurchmuncie.org

Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, Community Minister
julia@uuchurchmuncie.org

Nadine Tringali, Director of Religious Education
nadine@uuchurchmuncie.org

Christie Williams, Office Administrator
christie@uuchurchmuncie.org

Dr. James Helton, Director of Music
jim@uuchurchmuncie.org

Nicole Kaplan, Coordinator of Youth Programming
nicole@uuchurchmuncie.org

Board of Trustees

Benjamin Strack
President

Steve Chalk
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765.288.9561 | uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org | www.uuchurchmuncie.org

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
Muncie, IN 47304

