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## Minister's Column in Brief

Every June we celebrate the Flower Communion. Flower Communion is celebrated by most Unitarian Universalist churches, although they may celebrate on different days – many churches choose Memorial Day weekend or Mother's Day, for example. I tend to hold it on the first Sunday in June, because that's close to the June 4 date of the first flower communion, held by Norbert Ěapek in 1923. This year will be the 91<sup>st</sup> year of the flower communion. Some object to the term "communion" for the ceremony, since Ěapek didn't use it, and "communion" holds a very specific meaning for some people. I like using the term "communion" because it gets me thinking about just what "communion" means. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary gives the first definition of "communion" as "an act or instance of sharing." Another definition is "intimate fellowship or rapport." Obviously the first definition of an act of sharing is what we mean, but I like to think it also carries a sacredness and an intimate fellowship.

For those new to our community, I'll share a little of the history of Flower Communion. Sometimes I share this on the day of our ceremony, but this year the service looks pretty full, since we'll also be celebrating graduations that day. So here's a brief version.

Norbert Ěapek was a Czech Unitarian minister. He was born in 1870, and was raised Catholic and then became a Baptist missionary when he became 18. He was arrested in 1889 for heresy, but was freed when nobody brought evidence against him. Over time he

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## Sunday Services at 11:00 am

**June 1 - "Flower Communion & Graduation Recognition" – Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum** - Bring a flower to share as we celebrate our annual Flower Communion. We will also be recognizing high school and college graduates on this day.

**June 8 - "The Little (and Big!) Things We Do" – Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum** - On this day we'll recognize volunteers and staff and thank our members for the work we do. If you would like to participate in thanking people, bring 50 small things to give away to your fellow congregation members – it could be fifty pennies or fifty little notes that say thank you or fifty pencils or fifty candles. We'll pass things around and share in the giving and receiving of thanks.

**June 15 - "Summer Principles Series, Part 1: The Inherent Worth & Dignity of Every Person" – Lay Leader: To Be Announced** - Our summer series begins! Rev. Cindy has assembled a worship series on our seven principles while she is gone for General Assembly.

**June 22 - "Summer Principles Series, Part 2: Justice, Equity, & Compassion in Human Relations" – Lay Leader: To Be Announced** - Our summer series on the principles continues with justice, equity, and compassion.

**June 29 - "Summer Principles Series, Part 3: Acceptance of One Another and Encouragement to Spiritual Growth in Our Congregations" – Lay Leader: To Be Announced** - Part three in our summer series on the UU principles focuses on acceptance of one another and spiritual growth. What does that mean to you?

## Calendar - June

1 Sunday	~~~~ Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ 11:00 am
4 Wed.	Board Meeting ~ 6:30 pm
5 Thurs.	AUUW Meeting ~ 12:30 pm
8 Sunday	~~~~ Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ 11:00 am
8 Sunday	Caring Committee Meeting ~ After the Service
10 Tue.	Meet Your Neighbor Coffee ~ 9:00 - 11:00 am
12 Thurs.	Membership Committee ~ 11:00 am
12 Thurs.	Outreach/Forum Committee ~ Not Meeting this Month
15 Sunday	~~~~ Service ~ Lay Leader: To Be Announced ~11:00 am
17 Tue.	Worship Comm. ~ Meets at Members' Homes in the Evening
19 Thurs.	Personal Care Ministry ~ @ 1st Baptist Church, 201 S. Jackson ~ 4:30-6:30 pm
22 Sunday	The Bellnote Newsletter ~ Submissions Due
22 Sunday	~~~~ Service ~ Lay Leader: To Be Announced ~ 11:00 am
25-29	General Assembly ~ Providence, RI
29 Sunday	~~~~ Service ~ Lay Leader: To Be Announced ~11:00 am

# Meetings and Events: at or affiliated with U.U. Church of East Liberty

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became more radical and also came to America. When he was here, he and his wife, Maya, discovered Unitarianism and joined in 1921. He then proposed to the American Unitarian Association that they help fund him in bringing Unitarianism back to Czechoslovakia, which they did. Shortly upon his return to Czechoslovakia he created the flower communion. His wife Maya then brought it back to the United States, where it became very popular. Maya was also an ordained minister. Maya came back to the US in 1938, and was unable to return to Czechoslovakia due to World War II, and she and Norbert were separated from that time on.

Norbert Ěapek remained in ministry in Czechoslovakia, and came under suspicion by the Nazis for his radicalism. For his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday his congregation bought him a short-wave radio. When the Gestapo finally arrested Norbert Ěapek, he was accused of two things: inciting people to treason, and listening to foreign broadcasts. They found him innocent of the first, but guilty of the second. He was jailed, and eventually sent to Dachau, where he died.

If you're interested in learning more about Norbert Ěapek, there's a lot available on the web, and there's a biography of him available through the UUA Bookstore. His story also intersects with the story of Waitstill and Martha Sharp. Waitstill was a Unitarian minister and the Sharps were recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Israel.

Peace,

**Cindy**

## JXN Community Forums

..are free and open programs to encourage dialogue about the challenging issues of our day. The series is sponsored by the Universalist Unitarian Church of East Liberty and the Jackson District Library. All forums are held at the JDL, 244 West Michigan Ave., Jackson, MI and they are usually on the third Thursdays at 6:30-8:30 pm. Childcare may be available for a modest donation: (See Supplement Page for more contact information to RSVP for childcare). Call Debby Sears at the library at 517-788-4087 ext. 234 for more information or see theJDL website at [www.myjdl.com](http://www.myjdl.com).

The JXN Community Forums will be taking a break for the summer months and will return on Thursday, September 18. Watch for more information to come.

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