



2016 ~ September

The Bellnote

LOCATED 3/4 MILE WEST OF U.S. 127

MINISTER'S OFFICE HOURS:

Monday: Minister's day off
Tuesday: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Wednesday: 9:00 am - 6:00 pm
Thursday: 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Friday: Sermon-writing day,
no office hours
Saturday: By appointment
Sunday: By appointment

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Minister's Column

Unitarian Universalists often get asked what they believe. In our society "religion" is so often synonymous with "belief" that it takes a while for people to wrap their heads around the idea that a religion could be defined by anything *but* belief. Even for UUs, we can sometimes get caught in the debate about whether or not Unitarian Universalism is a religion, based on the fact that we don't share a common creed.

Back when I used to teach world religions, the textbook I used, *Experiencing the World's Religions* by Michael Malloy, defined religion as an entity which held some of the following things: belief system, community, central myths, ritual, ethics, characteristic emotional experiences, material expression, and sacredness. Many religions do not contain *all* of these elements, but every religion I can think of contains at least one. As you can see, Unitarian Universalism has many of these, even though it lacks a creedal belief system and central myths. We have shared community, rituals, ethics, and a sense of sacredness. "Material expression" means a religion uses objects (or places) to perform rituals or express beliefs – our flaming chalice is a material expression of our faith.

Asking us what we *believe* is misunderstanding the very nature of our religion for Unitarian Universalists. Belief isn't the tie that binds us. So having established that we can be non-creedal and still be a religion, what binds us together? The answer that many Unitarian Universalist theologians and scholars give is *covenant*. So the proper question for a Unitarian Universalist isn't "What do you *believe* in your church?" but rather, "What do you *covenant about* in your church?"

The answer to that question is something we'll be exploring this month, as our theme for the month is "Covenant." But one answer comes from the covenant in our hymnal by James Vila Blake that many UU churches recite every week:

Love is the spirit of this church,
and service its law.

This is our great covenant:
To dwell together in peace,
To seek the truth in love,
And to help one another.

That covenant gives us a great deal to live up to, and sums up what many people find wonderful, even sacred, about our church – love, peace, truth, help, and service in community.

Namaste,

Rev. Cindy

Religious Education News

The big news in our religious education program is that we are hiring Vicki Haynes in a one year appointment to be our Religious Education Assistant. The REA is a different position than our previous Religious Education Coordinator. It has fewer hours and fewer responsibilities. So Vicki will not be doing everything that Sharon and then Jackie did for us, including running special programs, helping with worship, curriculum planning and selection, and teaching. What she will be doing is contacting the teachers weekly and making sure they have a copy of their curriculum and the needed supplies. We're excited to have Vicki entering a new role with our RE program!

This year in our Religious Education (RE) Program, we will again be having two classrooms, one for our Kindergarten through fifth graders, and one for our middle school and high school students. The K-5 class will be using the curriculum "Holidays and Holy Days." "Holidays and Holy Days" uses stories, food, and activities to teach children about world religions through sharing their holidays. The K-5 class meets every Sunday that is not intergenerational from September through early June. Intergenerational Sundays occur once or twice per month.

Our Youth class usually meets twice per month. Usually about once per month the youth have the option of joining the Sunday service or joining with the K-5 class. Once per month they have a more informal curriculum where they will use poetry and music to explore various themes. For these sessions they'll be guided by their own interests but also by the curriculum "Exploring Our Values through Poetry." We'll use this program to utilize poems and music that are concerned with elements of the spiritual life: acute observation, conscious and continuous inquiry, the unveiling of reality, hope and hopelessness, the afterlife, and the tenderness of the human condition. In the other session each month, our youth will have a more structured curriculum called "Heeding the Call" where they will explore social justice issues.

This year's teachers are an experienced and dedicated group:

K-5: Rob Gaecke, Jon Hart, Kerry Hart, Donna Hinton, Kristina McKinney, Peter Morrison, Janette Mraz, and Nancy Smith

Youth: Lynn Hightower, Gretchen Marshall, Alyce Oosting, & Elizabeth Walker

Substitutes: Gratia Karmes, Cecily Savick

Nursery: Joan Bernstein, Kathy Haynes, Jackie Johnson & Nena Obits

We are still looking for one more K-5 teacher and more substitutes, so if you're interested please speak with a member of the Religious Education Committee (Jackie Johnson, Nancy Smith, and Elizabeth Walker), Rev. Cindy, or Vicki Haynes. Teachers teach about eight sessions no more than once per month from September through May, and are asked to have a simple background check done.

Thanks to all who make our program possible!

Rev. Cindy

Notes from the Board

The Board met on August 3rd, at the church. We were very excited and pleased to hear a brief presentation from Vic Marshall, on the progress made toward completion of the parking lot paving project, and other much needed improvements. We believe that by the time the first snow is here, we will have a much safer place to park, walk into church, AND ramp to the schoolhouse. Many thanks to all who are reading this for your time, energy, and financial contributions toward this goal. We are also looking forward to our second biggest fundraiser, the Grandma's Attic Sale, the weekend of **September 16th and 17th**. Many donations of furniture, decorative items, clothing, tools and just about everything else are already pouring in.

Please plan to shop, and if you can, also volunteer a couple of hours; that would help make this a success.

We will meet again on **Wednesday, September 7**, 6:30 at the church. The full minutes of this meeting will be posted in the social hall.

Gratia

**Submitted by: Gratia Karmes
Board President**

Spiritual Exercises on the Covenant Theme

Option A: Whose Am I?

Quaker teacher, Douglas Steer writes:

The ancient question, “Who am I?” inevitable leads to a deeper one: “Whose am I?” – because there is not identity outside of relationship. You cannot be a person by yourself. To ask “Whose am I” is to extend the question far beyond the little self-absorbed self, and wonder: Who needs you? Who loves you? To whom are you accountable? To whom do you answer? Whose life is altered by your choices? With whose life, whose lives is your own all bound up, inextricably, in obvious or invisible ways?

So, whose are you? This exercise invites you to honor this core covenantal question by living with four different photographs this month. Here are your instructions:

1. Find and print out four pictures of four different people:

~~ one of a person that represent your promises to those that have gone before you

~~ one of a person that represents your promises to those who will come after you

~~ one of a person that represents your promises to someone central to your life right now

~~ one of yourself — past or present — that represents your promises to yourself

2. Put these four pictures in a place you will see every day this month. Perhaps tape them to your bathroom mirror or stick them in your wallet.

Maybe frame them and place them on your desk or stick them with magnets on your fridge.

3. Make a conscious effort to reflect on them every day and do at least one thing to further or honor your promise to one of these people.

4. Bring your four pictures to your small group and share how living with them altered your days.

(Note: consider making this a group effort and do it as a couple or as a family.)

Option B: Return & Repair

In this month’s introduction, Rev. Haley writes:

What our faith asks of us, what our faith imagines for us, is that somehow, right at that moment when our hearts break, we will find our way to see through that heartbreak. We will stay put – not close off, not run away, not hurt back – but keep on being in relationship, doing what we can to repair the world and each other.

This exercise asks you to do the work of return & repair. Pick a relationship of heartbreak in your life. Maybe it involves a friend or family member, maybe even someone who is no longer living. Maybe a neighbor. Maybe even an institution, like your church or our government. Whoever or which-ever it is, make time this month to return to that relationship and work on repair. Simply ask yourself “Where have I withdrawn, been betrayed or broken something myself?” Your heart will know the answer. Listen to what it says. Then open your heart one more time and lean into relationship once again, doing what you can to repair what you can.

Option C: Live in the Plural

UU minister and writer Victoria Safford writes:

We are bound by coven-ant, each to each and each to all, by what theologian Rebecca Parker calls “freely chosen and life-sustaining interdependence.” The central question for us is not, “What do we believe?” but more, “What do we believe in? To what larger love, to what people, principles, values, and dreams shall we be committed? To whom, to what, are we accountable?” In a tradition so deeply steeped in individualism, it becomes a spiritual practice for each of us to ask [these questions], not once and for all, but again and again. ... The life of the spirit is solitary, but our answers to these questions call us to speak, call us to live, in the plural.

Full article here: <http://www.uuworld.org/articles/bound-in-covenant>

What might it be like for you to live “in the plural”? For this exercise, get out a big sheet of paper and write “ME” in the middle of it. Then start adding the people, principles, values, and dreams you’re committed to. Draw lines of connection, creating a mind map of the network of covenant you live in.

When you’re done, set it aside for a few days. Then come back to it and notice what stands out for you and, also, what is *missing* in your web. What covenantal relationships do you have in your life? How might you more intentionally live in the plural? Bring your mind map and your insights to your small group.

Meetings and Events

U.U. Church of East Liberty



New UU Class

Visitors, friends, and new members are invited to join Rev. Cindy after the service on **Sunday, September 18th** for a "New U.U." class. We'll talk about the history of the church and Unitarian Universalism, how our church is structured, and the diverse religious beliefs within UUism, have a brief building tour, and answer questions. Plan for about an hour, and childcare will be provided. **Submitted by: Rev. 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 W. 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. Call Debby Sears at the library at 517-788-4087 ext. 234 for more information or see the JDL website at www.myjdl.com...

September 15: Candidate Forum

"Local offices, including contested County Commission seats (Districts 3 and 9), Prosecuting Attorney and Treasurer."

September 29: Candidate Forum

"7th Congressional District seat, State House 64th and 65th District seats". Co-sponsored by: League of Women Voters; Guest Sponsors: NAACP, Women4Equity, Rally the Vote. Watch for Oct. 20: Vote the Whole Ballot.

Submitted by: Outreach Committee

Pub Theology with Rev. Cindy

Jackson's "Pub Theology" group meets at the Grand River Marketplace and Brewery on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm. On **Thursday, September 20**, Rev. Cindy will be the group's host, so you are especially invited to attend! The Pub Theology group discusses questions of faith in an open and welcoming atmosphere. Discussion questions are announced at the group's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/JacksonPubTheology/>.

Submitted by: Rev. Cindy



Our Closing Song

Go now and live your religion.

Its truth reflect in all you do.

Go, may love's presence ever guide you.

Live the good life the whole day through.

Covenant Theme Group

This month we'll have a sample theme group to discuss the spiritual exercises on covenant. Ironically, these types of groups are often known as "covenant groups" and covenant is our theme of the month, so don't be confused if we hold covenant groups on other themes in the future! Unlike covenant groups, however, you are not making a long-term commitment to the group if you come this month. We'll run each month's group as a separate event, so you can come and go as you please, but the intention this year is to hold one group per month on the themes using the theme materials we'll include in the newsletter. This month's group, facilitated by Rev. Cindy, will be on **Wednesday, September 21st** at 6:30 at the church. Drop-ins are welcome and no sign-up is necessary. **Submitted by: Rev. Cindy**

SUPPORT THE JACKSON PERSONAL CARE MINISTRY!

Here's an easy way to support the Jackson Personal Care Ministry!

Have dinner at **Finley's Grill & Smokehouse**, **1602 W. Michigan Ave.** on **Tuesday Sept. 13**, **between 5 pm and 10 pm**, and Finley's will donate 10% of all sales that evening to JPCM.

Just give the coupon below to your waiter — or print one out from the Westminster Presbyterian Church Facebook page — or show it to your server on your cell phone the night of the fundraiser.

We need to show Finley's that at least 30 people have come to support JPCM in order to qualify. To make it easy, one coupon can cover an entire table.

The Jackson Personal Care Ministry handled more than 6,000 client visits from needy residents of Jackson County in 2015. With your support we will continue to serve. Thank you!



~~ Upcoming Fund Raisers ~~

Annual Attic Sale ~ Sept. 16 and 17

Submitted by : The Church Board

Future fundraisers for the Jackson Personal Care Ministry

Gospel Sing ~~ We'll be holding our Annual Gospel Sing on **Sunday, October 16**, 3PM at First Congregational Church. If anyone is interested in performing, or joining an existing choir, or forming a choir, please let Nena Obits know. Otherwise please come and enjoy an afternoon of music. Monetary donations are appreciated.

Jewelry Drive ~~ We're looking for donations of unwanted jewelry, and planning for a sale for **November**. Please contact Nena Obits for more information. **Submitted by: Nena Obits**

Personal Care Ministry

The Jackson Personal Care Ministry provides personal and household products to those in need in Jackson County. An average of 150 guests are served weekly. Our team works at the distribution on the third **Thursday** of each month, **September 15** from 4:30 - 6:30 pm. Financial support and donations of new and gently used products are greatly appreciated. For more information, contact Nena Obits. See Supplement Page for her contact information.

~~Here is how you can help, by writing a Check made out to Westminster Presbyterian Church, with the words "For Personal Care" written on the memo line. This can be mailed to Westminster Presbyterian Church 2301 Ridgeway Road, Jackson, MI 49203, or handed to Nena Obits. Please note that there are a few other churches involved in the Personal Care Ministry and this church handles the money part.

Submitted by: Nena Obits ~ 5 ~

Common Read Book for 2016-2017

The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement, by The Rev. Dr. William Barber II and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove (Beacon, 2016), has been chosen as the 2016-17 Unitarian Universalist Common Read. Unitarian Universalists were electrified at General Assembly 2016 by Rev. Barber's call for building and sustaining a movement for justice for all people. The Common Read selection committee believes that this is a moment for Unitarian Universalists to answer that call. *The Third Reconstruction* offers helpful, practical guidance for engaging with justice movements born in response to local experiences of larger injustices. Drawing on the prophetic traditions of the Jewish and Christian scriptures, while making room for other sources of truth, the book challenges us to ground our justice work in moral dissent, even when there is no reasonable expectation of political success, and to do the hard work of coalition building in a society that is fractured and polarized.

Individuals are invited to purchase the book or find it in a public library and begin reading. A paperback edition will be available for purchase at the UUA's [inSpirit Book Shop](http://www.libertyuu.org) in late September. The UU Discussion Guide becomes available in October, so we will plan to have one or more discussion sessions in November and/or December. Start reading now!

Church Website

<http://www.libertyuu.org>

The Bellnote Newsletter

<http://www.libertyuu.org/newsletter.html>

Church's facebook page

<http://www.facebook.com/libertyuu>

Forum facebook page

<http://www.facebook.com/JXNCommunityForum>

We Welcome Your Membership Not a member?

We'd love to have you join our spiritual community. New members signify their commitment by signing the Membership Book during a scheduled church service. It is understood that members actively support their congregation through attendance, service and/or financial commitment. To start your process of becoming an official member of our lively, compassionate and challenging congregation, speak with Rev. Cindy Landrum, (517) 529-4221, or a member of the membership committee.

FROM THE EDITORS:

"THE BELLNOTE" IS A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF UUCEL.

IF THIS IS YOUR 1ST COPY OF THE CHURCH'S NEWSLETTER, WELCOME. OUR CHURCH YEAR RUNS FROM JULY 1-JUNE 30. THE CHURCH BOARD ASKS THOSE THAT RECEIVE THE PAPER VERSION OF THE NEWSLETTER PAY A \$17.00 PER-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION FEE.

NEW VISITORS WILL GET 3 MONTHS FREE, AFTER THAT A SUBSCRIPTION FEE WILL BE ASKED FOR, OR CHANGE TO AN ON-LINE VERSION THAT IS FREE OF CHARGE.

THE OCTOBER ISSUE, INFORMATION IS NEEDED BY:

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18. ~~~~~ SEND SUBMISSIONS TO:

UUCEL_BELLNOTE@YAHOO.COM OR IN WRITING TO

KATHY OR VICKI, THANK YOU –

WE WANT TO THANK; REV. CINDY LANDRUM, NENA OBITS, JANE VOLK, GRATIA KARMES OUTREACH COMM., CARING COMM. AND MEMBERSHIP COMM. FOR THEIR NEWS ITEMS THIS MONTH.



OUR 7 PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES

WE, THE MEMBER CONGREGATIONS OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION, COVENANT TO AFFIRM AND PROMOTE:

- ~ The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- ~ Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
- ~ Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
- ~ A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- ~ The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
- ~ The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all
- ~ Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

The Bellnote Calendar

All events are at the church, unless otherwise noted



September

- 1 Thurs. AUUW Meeting ~ 12:30 pm
- 4 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ Lay Leader: Gordon Bernstein ~ 11:00 am
- 7 Wed. Board Meeting ~ 6:30 pm
- 8 Thurs. Membership Meeting ~ 2:00 pm
- 8 Wed. Outreach/Forum Committee @ JDL ~ 3:00 pm
- 11 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ 11:00 am
- 11 Sunday Caring Committee Meeting ~ After the Service
- 12 Tue. Meet Your Neighbor Coffee ~ 9:00 - 11:00 am
- 13 Tue. Dinner @ Finley's Grill ~ 5:00 pm - 10:00 pm ~ Fundraiser for Personal Care Ministry
- 15 Thurs. Personal Care Ministry ~ @ 1st Baptist Church, 201 S. Jackson ~ 4:30-6:30 pm
- 15 Thurs. JXN Community Forum ~ Candidate Forum/Local Offices ~ 6:30 pm @ JDL
- 16 Fri. Attic Sale ~ 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
- 17 Sat. Attic Sale ~ 9:00 am - 12:00 noon
- 18 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ 11:00 am
- 18 Sunday New UU Class ~ After the Service
- 18 Sunday Attic Sale ~ After the Service
- 18 Sunday The Bellnote Newsletter ~ Submissions Due
- 19 Tue. Worship Comm. ~ Meets at Members' Homes in the Evening
- 20 Thurs. Jackson's "Pub Theology" @ Grand River Marketplace & Brewery ~ 7:00 pm
- 21 Wed. Covenant Theme Group ~ 6:30 pm
- 25 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ 11:00 am
- 29 Thurs. JXN Community Forum ~ Candidate Forum/Congressional District Seat ~ 6:30 pm @ JDL

Upcoming Events

Oct. 16 Sunday ~ Gospel Sing ~ 3PM @ First Congregational Church

Oct. 20 Thurs. ~ JXN Community Forum

Weekly Volunteer Schedule

Sunday	Greeter	Nursery	Ushers	Social Host	R.E. K-5	R.E. Youth
Sept 4	Alyce O	Vicki H & Kathy H	Gary & ____	Vic M & Team #9	Intergenerational	
Sept 11	Grace M	Vicki H & Jackie J	Gary & ____	Donna H & Team #1	Intergenerational	
Sept 18	Joan B	Vicki H & Joan B	Gary & ____	Kerry H & Team #2	"First Day" of Holidays & Holy Days Jon/Kerry H & Peter M	Poetry & Music on Beauty Elizabeth W & Lynn H
Sept 25	Betty G	Vicki H & Nena O	Gary & ____	Carole H & Team #3	John Murray Day Nancy S/Rob G & Donna H	Heeding the Call: Gretchen M & Alyce O

September's Theme Is Covenant

Sept 4 - "Labors of Love of the UUCEL"

– Lay Leader: Gordon Bernstein

We will share our labors in the classroom, in the field, in the office, at home or on the road. And how those labors have enriched our lives. Bring your stories of work and its struggles and successes as we honor Labor Day.

Sept 11 - "Homecoming and Remembrance"

– Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum – Our annual homecoming service includes a "calling of the generations" and the retelling of our church's history. This service will also include a honoring of the fifteenth anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy.

Sept 18 - "Covenantal Faith"

– Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Our faith is not a creedal faith; it is a covenantal faith. UU minister Thom Belote writes, "I think that sometimes we stress the fact that we are not a creedal faith a lot more than we stress that we are a covenantal faith. We emphasize the creeds we are not asked to recite more than the covenants we are asked to share." This Sunday we will delve deeper into understanding our covenant(s).

Sept 25 - "Though You've Broken Your Vows..."

– Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Our theme this month is on "covenant," but covenants get broken all the time. What do you do when a covenant has been broken? This service will explore some answers.

Where people care about each other and care about the world.

