



**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.

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**Sunday Services at 11:00 am**

**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.

**Calendar**

- 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

## Rev. Cindy's Column Continued...

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**

## 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. Call Debby Sears at the library at 517-788-4087 ext. 234 for more information or see the JDL website at [www.myjdl.com](http://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.

## Gramma's Attic Sale

The Annual Gramma's Attic Sale will be held on **Friday, September 16 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm and Saturday the 17 from 9:00 to noon.** Gratia Karmes will be the chair of this large fundraiser. The Gramma's Attic Sale is our name for a large yard sale held in the social hall and also inside and outside the schoolhouse next to the church. Come and shop the sale.

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

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