



2016 ~ December

The Bellnote

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

MINISTER REV. DR. CYNTHIA LANDRUM
CYNLANDRUM@GMAIL.COM

STAFF

PIANIST ANITA FOBES
AFOBES@JUILLIARDALUMNI.NET
CHILDCARE VICKI HAYNES
AND CLERICAL ASSISTANT FOR RE
KERMIT_210@YAHOO.COM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT GRATIA KARMES
GLK222@TDS.NET
VICE PRESIDENT ELISSA ALDEN
ELISSA.ALDEN@COMCAST.NET
SECRETARY DEB HARTSUFF
DEBHARTSUFF@GMAIL.COM
TREASURER KERRY HART
KHART247@SBCGLOBAL.NET
TRUSTEE TOM PEPPER
PEPPT49@COMCAST.NET
TRUSTEE ALYCE OOSTING
OOSTING115@COMCAST.NET

CARING COMMITTEE JANE VOLK
GJVOLK@COMCAST.NET

BUILDING & GROUNDS VIC MARSHALL
VBMARSHALL@GMAIL.COM

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY
GRETCHEN MARSHALL
AMARSHALLG@YAHOO.COM

BOARD/ELECTED NOMINATING COMM
STEVE KISH STEVEKISH982@YAHOO.COM
GRACE MULNIX



Minister's Column

Our theme this month is "Presence." To me, the theme speaks first about our presence in the community. UUCEL makes a lot of difference in the community around us – we're involved in the Jackson Personal Care Ministry, and our JXN Community Forums have been a regular presence for over a decade. Our presence is felt in various social justice initiatives and interfaith events. In the weeks since the presidential election, we've seen a bump in our attendance at East Liberty. I believe that's in part because of our presence in the community as a home for diversity of beliefs and for respecting the inherent worth and dignity of all people. Our presence in this community matters more than ever.

Another thing "presence" says to me is that we are present at East Liberty as individuals. This month we'll be celebrating all the things that your presence gifts us with, through our volunteer recognition where we note the important difference your presence and participation make.

One more thing that the theme evokes for me is something we talk about a lot in the training for the ministry: "ministerial presence." "Ministerial presence" is about growing into the understanding of oneself as a minister, about living into the role and embodying it. Some would argue it's about finding and maintaining a connection to the holy.

It feels appropriate to me, in this last month before my sabbatical, to be thinking on presence, since after this I will be physically absent for a while. In my absence, you may find yourself thinking about what ministerial presence means to you in a different way, and you may find yourself to have ministerial presence in certain ways, as well.

In this last month before my absence, though, we're going to have a lot going on. In these pages you'll find information about our Recognition Sunday and luncheon, about the Children's program and Santa's Workshop, about our monthly forum, the holiday baskets fundraiser, the Christmas Eve service, and more. I hope you'll be present at East Liberty this month for our festivities.

Namaste,

Rev. Cindy

Minister's Schedule:

Rev. Cindy will be taking a week of vacation **December 25th through December 31st** preceding her sabbatical which starts on January 1st. In case of emergency she can be reached by cell phone.

Notes from the Board

The board met at the church on Nov.4. We discussed the many recent and ongoing improvements to our beautiful church, including the paving project, schoolhouse steps, and T.V. We reviewed the goals set at our strategic planning meeting, and intend to complete them soon. We are working on ways to videotape the service, for those who cannot attend. The board will meet Wednesday, 12/7 at 6:00, at Dorothy's home.

Gratia

**Submitted by: Gratia Karmes
Board President**



Children are a Blessing, & We Welcome Them! To the Parents of Young Children, May We Suggest: Relax! The “wobble” in young children is a natural part of their development; don't feel like you have to suppress it in this church. All are welcome! Please sit where you'll be most comfortable. In the front it is easier for little ones to see what's going on. The back is convenient if you think you may need to step out with your child, or for those arriving after the service has begun. Sitting near the aisle is easier for children who will be leaving for religious education/Sunday school. Quietly explain the parts of the church service and actions of the minister, ushers, choir, piano player, etc. (Let the minister know if any questions!) Sing the hymns and participate in responsive readings and other parts of the service so that your children learn how things work by example. If you have to leave the service with your child, please feel free to do so; come back when you can! Remember that the way we welcome children to our church directly affects the way that they respond to the church, to spirituality, religion and to one another. Let them know that they are at home in this house of worship. Please let your child use the reverse side of this card (found in the pews holders) to draw and doodle. *On most Sundays, children are “sung out” to the nursery or classes about 15 minutes after announcements are completed. Children who do not wish to attend class/nursery are welcome to stay with you. Breastfeeding is also welcome.*

To the Members of our Church, May We Suggest: The presence of children is a gift to the church, and a reminder that the church is growing. Please welcome our children and give a smile of encouragement to parents. Leave seats in the back open for any latecomers and parents with little ones. Remember that the way we welcome children to our church directly affects the way that they respond to the church, to spirituality, religion and to one another. Let them know that they are at home in this house of worship. **Kids:** Please feel free to draw or write on the back! (found in the pews holders)

Our Spiritual Exercises

Option A:

Uncover A World in Itself

“The moment one gives close attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself.”

~Henry Miller

This exercise invites you to tap into Henry Miller’s magic. Simply do as Miller suggests: **Pick one place, object or animal and give it your attention and presence until it becomes a world unto itself.** Additionally, figure out your own way of recording the progression from a singular or simple object to an entire world. Maybe you keep a journal and write about something new you notice each time you return to it. Maybe take a new photo of it each time and look back at the photos to see what changes and emerges over time. Maybe just sit with your chosen focus for a whole day and see where it takes you. Take your time as you chose your focus. Maybe it is a blade of grass or a singular flower. But then again maybe it’s that food truck outside your office at lunch time. Or the old toolbox your dad passed on to you whose story and world you’ve yet to discover. As always, consider bringing a picture to your group. Seeing your uncovered world, they just might more easily see even more of their own.

Option B:

The Presence of God “Joy is the infallible sign of the presence of God.”- **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**- Teilhard de Chardin’s quote reminds us that “otherness” is not other. The presence of the divine presents itself in very ordinary forms. And it is a different form for each of us. Yes, it visits many of us through joy. But for others, it is encountered as the presence of hope or longing, reassuring quiet or unexpected kindness.

What is the infallible sign of the presence of the holy for you? Hope? Longing? And when does it come? When you feel most inwardly centered or most outwardly connected? What physical form does it ride in on? The soft wind when you’re walking in the woods? The vibrancy of color as it makes a painting or the sky come alive? The softness of your beloved’s skin? This exercise asks you to name it. Come to your group ready to fill in the blank: “___ is the infallible sign of the presence of holiness for me.” And after you fill in the blank, share one story of when that presence showed up and gave you its gift.

Option C:

Make Your Presents About Presence- “Your children need your presence more than your presents.” – **Jesse Jackson**

It’s not just our children. We all need it. Who wants a new tie when they could have the gift of being seen? Yes, the grandkids want that check from Grandma, but what they will remember is you asking them to join them for a Saturday as you go through the boxes of old stuff in the attic and telling them the stories connected to that so-called junk. This exercise asks you to creatively engage this truth that Jackson lifts up:

Pick at least one person this year and make their holiday present about presence! There are so many ways to come at this. Offer your presence by making the gift something you do together. Show them you are present to them and really see them by picking a gift that reflects something especially unique about them. Or help them be more present to life by giving them a gift that helps them stay focused on what’s important or that helps them step back from the blinding busyness of routine life.

As novelist Cecelia Ahern reminds us, “Sometimes, people can go missing right before our very eyes.” Ultimately, that’s what this exercise is about. Give a gift that helps you find those you love again and helps them find you.

Caring Committee

Caring Committee monthly meeting will generally be held on the 2nd Sunday of the month after church at 12:30 in the Nursery. If you are aware of any issues or concerns involving any of our church family for which the Caring Committee can lend a helping hand, please contact any member of the Committee. Those serving on the Caring Committee are: Debbie Hartsuff, Debbie and Fred Marshall, Gretchen Marshall, Alyce Oosting, and Jane Volk as chair.

Submitted by: Jane Volk

Meetings and Events

U.U. Church of East Liberty

Recognition Sunday, Dec. 4, w/ Appreciation Luncheon Following Service at Beach Bar

Our church is blessed with members and friends who devote many, many hours of their time and talent to make the church a place where you can come to find peace, community and meaning. One of the defining attributes of East Liberty is our history of member involvement in the tasks that make the church function smoothly (most of the time). This may be the main reason our small rural church is heading for its second century of service in Jackson County. There are so many tasks performed continually that if one tries to name them all, some will certainly be missed. The same is true in naming individuals who provide their time and effort. Again, some would certainly be missed. We usually celebrate our volunteer recognition in the Spring, but this year because of the extraordinary work we've done in the fall, we're moving our volunteer recognition to Sunday, December 4, where we will celebrate and recognize the efforts of all members and friends during our regular Sunday service. Our church is fortunate to also have the help and guidance of professional non-members and non-attendees who have generously provided their time, talent and financial resources to help us succeed in our mission to provide liberal religion to Jackson County. Certificates of appreciation will be awarded to Gary Klumph (Klumph Accounting Service) and Kirk Mercer (R.W. Mercer Construction). Both Kirk and Gary have provided a significant amount of their time and financial assistance to East Liberty. On Sunday the 4th we will also celebrate the paving of our church parking lot. This much needed, addition will make access to the church safer for our senior members and those who need accessible parking. Immediately following the service all are invited (at no charge) to a luncheon in the Patio Room of the Beach Bar on Clarklake. The menu will include a pizza buffet of assorted varieties, homemade clam chowder and tomato soup and self-served tossed salad with choice of dressing. Soda, tea and coffee are also included with the meal. There will be a cash bar. So please come and enjoy the fruits of your labor and celebrate the contributions of all your friends and neighbors to our special community at the Universalist Unitarian Church of East Liberty.

Submitted by: The Board

~ 4 ~

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...

"Defying the Nazis: The Sharp's War"

December 8th, the 2nd Thursday

This is the Ken Burns documentary about Unitarian minister Waitstill Sharp and his wife Martha, who left their children behind and spent two dangerous years saving scores of imperiled dissidents and refugees fleeing the Nazis in Europe. **Submitted by: Outreach Committee**



Holiday Gift Basket Silent Auction

November 20 - December 11

Please get creative and donate a basket, box, or bag of special items to our annual Holiday Basket Silent Auction. Some ideas from the past were coloring books and art supplies, children's books and games, movies, candy and popcorn, pet supplies, bird feeding supplies, fashion accessories, holiday supplies and goodies. Food items should be either commercially packaged or home canned. Bidding begins on Sunday, November 20, and ends on Sunday, December 11, after the service. See Nena for more information

Submitted by Nena Obits



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.

~Upcoming Fund Raisers ~

~ Talent Show coming in March

from the Board

Santa's Workshop

Will be after the service on **Sunday December 18**. Fun craft projects are being planned and will be taking place possibly in the school-house this year. Some of the activities/projects you will be able to take home with you and some will be given away

Submitted by: RE Committee

Thank You

Thanks to all who helped with the leaf clean-up: To our "leaf blowers": Rob Gaecke, Tom Pepper and Marion Shroyer. To our rakers: Gordon Sr & Jr, Michael & Jeremy Bernstein, Donna & Tommy Hinton, Kathy Haynes, Nancy Smith, Gaea Gaecke, Alyce Oosting, Lynn McClean, Jon, Kerry & Aubrey Hart, Gretchen Marshall, Paul Jenkins, Jennifer Brautigan & husband Matt Merfert & their daughter. All of those helping hands made short work (about 1 hr.) of all of those dry leaves that hadn't yet been rained on and compacted. Thank you one and All!

Submitted by: Vic Marshall

Talent Show

Attention talented and/or fun-loving UU's ... Just a heads up: another wonderful Talent Show is coming up and getting planned for this March! Start thinking!!

Submitted by: Elissa Alden

Sabbatical Update

Can you believe that it has been almost six years since Rev. Cindy's last sabbatical? The Board, Worship and Sabbatical Committees are now in the final weeks of preparation for her next sabbatical. The Board and Rev. Cindy have agreed that this sabbatical will not be as long as the last sabbatical. We will have less work for us to cover during her time away; Rev. Cindy's sabbaticals will be shorter and more frequent than called for in her initial agreement. Remember that sabbaticals are a time away from the stress of the job so that one can recharge their spirits and develop new skills and insights. Sabbaticals are very common in the academic world so that teachers can keep up with new ideas and developments.

Rev. Cindy's last official service will be the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Be sure to wish her well on her quest! She will then use a week of her vacation time off, and her Sabbatical will officially begin on January 1st, 2017 through March 31st, 2017. She will use another week of vacation as she transitions back into ministerial duties, with her official return to the pulpit scheduled for April 9th, 2017. The service will be about what we (congregation and Rev. Cindy) have learned during the time away. Following that service, we are planning a potluck dinner during social time.

Please, if you see Rev. Cindy and/or her family while she is off, don't pretend that she is invisible and ignore her! Socialize the way you regularly would do. Just **do not** involve her with church events or issues. The Board, Worship and Sabbatical Committees will be handling all of those situations so that she can have a break! The Board will decide if she needs to be consulted or informed on church business. If you have any questions about the sabbatical, please don't hesitate to ask Rev. Cindy, a Board Member or a member of the Sabbatical Committee, Vic Marshall, Joan Bernstein & Kathy Haynes

Submitted by: Vic Marshall

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, **December 22** 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

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• **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>
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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 DECEMBER ISSUE, INFORMATION IS NEEDED BY: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20. ~~~~~ SEND SUBMISSIONS TO: UUCEL_BELLNOTE@YAHOO.COM OR IN WRITING TO KATHY OR VICKI, THANK YOU -

WE WANT TO THANK; REV. CINDY LANDRUM, VIC MARSHALL, 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



December

- 1 Thurs. AUUW Meeting ~ 12:30 pm - (maybe, the editors was not told otherwise)
- 4 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ 11:00 am
- 7 Thurs. Board Meeting ~ 6:00 pm at Dorothy's
- 8 Thurs. JXN Community Forum ~ **Defying the Nazis: The Sharp's War** ~ 6:30 pm @ JDL
- 11 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum, ~ 11:00 am
- 11 Sunday Caring Committee Meeting ~ After the Service
- 11 Sunday Holiday Gift Basket Silent Auction ~ Ends at 11:00 am
- 13 Tue. Meet Your Neighbor Coffee ~ 9:00 - 11:00 am
- 14 Wed. Membership Meeting ~ 2:00 pm
- 14 Wed. Sabbatical Committee ~ 3:00 pm
- 15 Thurs. Personal Care Ministry ~ @ 1st Baptist Church, 201 S. Jackson ~ 4:30-6:30 pm
- 18 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ 11:00 am
- 18 Sunday Santa's Workshop ~ After the Service
- 18 Sunday The Bellnote Newsletter ~ Submissions Due
- 24 Saturday Christmas Eve Service ~ 7:00 pm
- 25 Sunday ~~~~ No Service Today ~ Merry Christmas

Upcoming Events

Weekly Volunteer Schedule

Sunday	Greeter	Nursery	Ushers	Social Host	R.E. K-5	R.E. Youth
Dec 4	Alyce o	Vicki H & Kathy H	Gary & ___	Nena O & team #4	Nancy & Kristina St Lucia Day	Elizabeth & Lynn Poetry & Music finding our Mission
Dec 11	Grace M	Vicki H & Jackie J	Gary & ___	Jane V & team #5	Janette & Peter Maulid al Nabi	Gretchen & Alyce The Call for Empathy
Dec 18	Joan B	Vicki H & Joan B	Gary & ___	Sue R & team #2	Intergenerational	
Sat. Dec 24	Carole H			Joan B team #7	Intergenerational	
Dec 25	No	Service	Today			

**All Sunday Services Start at 11:00 am ~ Celebrating Over 150 Years of Liberal Religion
December's Theme: Presence**

Dec 4 - "Recognition Sunday"

- Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Our Volunteer Recognition Sunday is coming early this church year because we have so much to celebrate! Come join us as we dedicate our new parking lot, recognize volunteers, and more! See details on page 4 about our special luncheon following the service.

As the children and youth share the Grinchy tale, Rev. Cindy will share how the Grinch's predecessor, Scrooge, changed how we understand Christmas. We invite children and youth to share musical talents on this special Sunday, as well. Following the service will be our "Santa's Workshop" – see details on page 5.

Dec 11 - "Christmas Presence"

- Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

On this Sunday, Rev. Cindy will explore this month's theme of Presence and what it can mean to us in the holiday season.

Dec 24 - Saturday 7:00 pm "Christmas Eve Candlelight Service" – Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

Join us for our Christmas Eve service where we celebrate the old and new as we share the age-old story, tell new stories of Christmas spirit, sing carols, and light candles.

Dec 18 - "How Scrooge Changed and the Grinch Stole Christmas"

- Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum

UU Religious Education Program and Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum – Our children's program this holiday season celebrates the 50th anniversary of the TV Special of the How the Grinch Stole Christmas.

Dec 25 - There will be **no service on Christmas Day** to allow our staff and volunteers to celebrate Christmas with family. See you on New Year's Day!

Continued on next column...

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

