

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bay County
1410 Airport Road
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UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Fellowship of Bay County  Newsletter

April 15, 2020

- ◇ Welcoming Everyone ◇
- ◇ Growing in Mind & Spirit ◇
- ◇ Empowering People ◇
- ◇ Leading in Social Justice ◇

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From Our President, Heather Ogilvie



To all my UU Family and Friends,

I don't think we could have imagined this, a record-breaking Category 5 hurricane followed by a global pandemic. Who could have guessed we would be selected for this unprecedented challenge?

Heroism notwithstanding, I find comfort every day in knowing that I belong to a fellowship of people who agree that each of us matters, that we are bound by a shared promise to be kind – and that we are, above all, committed to helping one another. Even in isolation, we are stronger together. For this, I thank each of you!

I had a wonderful conversation with Kathy McGowan, Congregational Life Staff of the UUA Southern Region. She called to offer me advice and encouragement (for presidents in pandemics), and to help as needed in supporting the health and vitality of our congregation. Her enthusiasm for our work here at UUFBC, including developing online services, daily Facebook interaction, bag lunches for children in need, running essential errands, continuing community work to UU the Vote and to promote Census participation, was heartfelt and

deeply reassuring. “In times where leadership is most needed, you have a responsibility to remember, that while our everyday lives in UU are full of love and joy, our role as leaders is not simply to build the happiest church. Our job is to remember our ultimate goal, honoring our obstacles and limitations, using our shared strengths and abilities, to build a better world.”

So, I think we are working toward this goal. Our Sunday service attendance has gone up dramatically, averaging 300 per Sunday! We have so many new friends, and unexpected conversations about Unitarian Universalism. Nicole’s friends at World Market donated the entire Easter stock of merchandise to UUFBC, to share with the community. We provided Easter treats for free to hundreds of families, and several community organizations!

Please, continue to stay in touch! Email, call, check us out on Facebook. I am so grateful to all of you for being a part of this amazing Fellowship. Thank you for being YOU!

I wish you all health and safety!

Peace and love,

Heather Ogilvie

Special Announcement

From the President of the Unitarian Universalist Association



Over the last few weeks, I’ve tried to offer a consistent message encouraging people to let go of what is not essential, to make time for self-care, and to remember it’s not about perfection. But I have a confession. I haven’t been following my own advice.

I am still holding myself to standards of perfection and trying to get it all done and more. This week, I spent way too long trying to get a recording just right. To everyone who is recording video and Zoom worship and trying to get the sound, editing, and images just right—I see you and send you gratitude, blessings and sympathy. It is not easy. Remember, it doesn’t have to be perfect. It just has to be real, honest, and rooted in care.

This is a time for community care, for pastoral care, to do what we can to love each other, to offer what we can to save lives and care about those who are most vulnerable.

It’s important to remember that people’s experiences of this pandemic—what it means in their own lives and the costs of it—are radically different. The stress that people are experiencing is real. There are families for whom having their kids at home can make it incredibly difficult to work, there are real financial fears within families, there are homes that for a variety of reasons are not safe, there are health concerns and loved ones sick, there are parents and caretakers trying to figure out backup plans for care if they get sick. Trying to work, lead, provide care, love and attention in the midst of all this is no small task.

At the UUA, we are trying to model community care, equity, and transparency in how we navigate these challenges as a staff team. We also recognize that in congregations, just like within families, living in such an uncertain and stressful time can exacerbate tensions. Communication really matters now. Talking

about issues as they arise, involving staff and leaders in helping to make difficult decisions or co-create new practices and ways of being for this time is important. The new federal policies and reimbursements for sick leave and family medical leave can help congregations create more flexibility and care for staff.

To support congregations and staff teams, the UUA has compiled resources for congregations as employers that include specific financial and staffing recommendations; information about new federal policies that need to be instituted by all congregations this week, and the resources and loans available to congregations through the federal stimulus plan.

These webpages contain information about employment issues during the pandemic:

- [Congregations as Employers During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Fact Sheets and Resources for Federal Policies Related to COVID-19](#)

The stories that give me hope are of UU's putting their phone number under the doors of their neighbors in case they need help, others bringing meals and groceries to people who are sick or can't leave their homes, congregations hosting story time a few days a week to engage children and support parents, religious educators reminding children to nurture music and art in their homes. It's beautiful to see people ask, "What gift can I bring, what can I offer?" and live into an ethos of mutual aid and community care.

This is no time to go it alone. The more we can make space for people to bring and share their gifts, the more ministry will happen, even as we let go of some things that are not essential in this time.

We all are holding so much. I am witnessing all of you doing so much to care for your communities—for your people of all ages and the wider community—to minister and hold people in this time.

I pray you are finding ways to take time to breathe, to let go of all you are holding for a moment, to check in with your heart, your spirit, listening for what you need to care for yourself. Remember you are a good gift and you need rest and nourishment also.

Take good care of yourself. And know that as I write this, I am writing it to myself as well.

Yours in love,
Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray



April 10th - April 11th
Drive-Up Easter Goodie Giveaway!



As a result of COVID-19, Cost Plus World Market stores across the country were forced to close for the entirety of April. Instead of returning their merchandise to vendors, a decision was made companywide to donate this merchandise to the community. We were so fortunate to be the recipients of our local Pier Park World Market's haul of Easter merchandise!

Anchorage Children's Home was the first recipient of some goodies. I brought them 9 Easter baskets, chock full of chocolate, candy, little games and assorted trinkets. It was so nice to reconnect with the fine folks at Hidle House! They were very happy to receive them.



While setting up our tables (with ample space between them), families filed in line. We had 3 "customers" before our opening time of 10 am. With only a little redirection, everyone understood clearly our "one car at a time" protocol and patiently waited, so everyone could browse exclusively.



It was a stunning display of cooperation, and brought a little unexpected cheer to many of the families in the community. Even though it was not intended to be a fundraiser, we put a collection jar and some informational material on a table, and by the end of the weekend had made \$154.89.





Derrick Robinson from the Love Center Missionary Baptist Church came by right at 2 pm on Saturday, the last minute of our last day, and gathered what remained. It was split between his church, and the House of Hope. All in all, it was an extremely successful event!

Thank you, Cost Plus World Market! We appreciate your generosity. Our community is so grateful.





What does it mean to be a people of LIBERATION?

True wisdom comes in understanding that sometimes, you are both the prison and the key.

- Johnathan Jena

Jena is right. Liberation is much more complicated than we usually tell ourselves. It would be so much easier if life really was divided up neatly between the good and bad guys, between those trapped and those holding the key. There are certainly times when the fight for freedom is about calling out and challenging “those people.” But true liberation seems to rest with those who have the courage to start with themselves and notice how “me” and “them” are more entangled than it appears at first blush.

And seeing ourselves as both prison and key is only the beginning. Sometimes we are also the guard, carrying out orders we don’t like but are too afraid to challenge. And what about the many ways we are funders of the entire jail? The wise ones are right: dismantling oppressive systems begins with noticing the many ways we ourselves prop it up.

So does this mean that confession plays a bigger role in liberation than we’d like to admit? Well, yes, a bit of healthy self-confrontation seems a must. We need to push ourselves when we play the helpless victim, put on the holier-than-thou cloak of self-righteousness and hide behind those stories about having “good intentions” or “clean hands.”

Yet, as every religion worth its salt says, confession by itself leads down a dark road. It must always be paired with compassion. We’ve got to remember that as well. We’ve got to remember that we are all liberators and oppressors, victims and victimizers. It’s not just you that is prisoner, key, guard, warden and jail funder wrapped into one. It’s all of us. You, me, them. We all play all the parts. We’re all caught up in the mess, pain and tragedy of it together.

Which seems to mean we all need to be a bit more humble and a bit more kind.

Indeed, in the end, maybe those are the most important keys. Maybe that’s the way we all can make it out together.

Companion Pieces

Recommended Resources for Personal Exploration & Reflection

The following resources are not required reading. We will not analyze these pieces in our group. Instead they are here to companion you on your journey this month, get you thinking and open you up to new ways of thinking about what it means to be part of a people of liberation.

Wise Words

To be free...You must know, not that you
can do whatever you want... You
must know instead, that inside you are entire
Universes [and]... you must fight for the entire
Universes inside of everyone else...

[Rev. Theresa I. Soto](#)

No one who has ever touched liberation could possibly want anything other than liberation for everyone.

[Rev. angel Kyodo williams](#)

i am learning that getting well in community is liberation. we are interdependent. when one of us attains freedom it elicits/rekindles that longing in each of us.

adrienne maree brown

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone and as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give others permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

Marianne Williamson

There is something in you that waits and listens for the sound of the genuine in yourself. It is the only true guide you will ever have. And if you cannot hear it, you will spend your days on the ends of strings that somebody else pulls.

Howard Thurman

The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion.

Camus

The truth is, however, that the oppressed are not “marginals,” are not people living “outside” society. They have always been “inside”—inside the structure which made them “beings for others.” The solution is not to “integrate” them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become “beings for themselves.”

Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed

If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

Lila Watson

Videos & Podcasts

Love Liberates

Maya Angelou

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbeckv2xR14>

Still I Rise

Maya Angelou

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=59&v=JqOqo50LSZ0&feature=emb_logo

“You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I’ll rise.”

Forget Shorter Showers: Why Personal Change Does Not Equal Political Change

<https://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/forget-shorter-showers/>

Today I Rise: A call for and celebration of female liberation

<https://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/today-i-rise/>

Body Liberation – A Fearless Rebel Radio interview with Jes Baker

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSMGef8FJdA>

On choosing “body liberation” over “body love” ...

The Problem with Body Positivity, by comedian Sofie Hagen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxlcGkugZ18>

The Long Road to Pride

<https://www.facebook.com/DublinBusNews/videos/836998473340636/?v=836998473340636>

“You shouldn’t look at life as a journey. You should look at it as a dance. But it has to be a journey until you shed the loads that you are carrying. And then you can dance!”

On laughter and liberation, Anthony McCarten

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2qM1I-JCEQ>

“Humor obliges us to have an open mind. It obliges us to empathy and forgiveness. If you lose the power to laugh you lose the power to think. Sometimes only humor can break down entrenched positions and rigid ideology... If we can laugh together, we can live together...”

Stuck On An Escalator

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrSUE_m19FY&list=PLjTi_2sPB4uanB-9mwgWb_UFW1m5rIXiL&index=3

A Simple Way To Break a Bad Habit - TED Talk

Can we break bad habits by being more curious about them?

http://www.ted.com/talks/judson_brewer_a_simple_way_to_break_a_bad_habit?utm_source=newsletter_weekly_2016-02-06&utm_campaign=newsletter_weekly&utm_medium=email&utm_content=talk_of_the_week_button

Articles

We Must Reclaim Our Lives from Anti-Black Racism

Chris Crass

<https://ummahwide.com/for-white-people-who-want-the-racist-nightmare-to-end-we-must-reclaim-our-lives-from-anti-black-27ce57887af2>

Breaking Silence as Our Mightiest Weapon Against Oppression

<https://www.brainpickings.org/2017/03/20/rebecca-solnit-mother-of-all-questions-silence/>

A reflection on Rebecca Solnit's idea that "Liberation is always in part a storytelling process. Breaking stories, breaking silences, making new stories. A free person tells her own story, a valued person lives in a society in which their story has a place..."

Your Liberation Is on the Line

Rev. angel Kyodo williams

<https://www.lionsroar.com/your-liberation-is-on-the-line/>

"No one who has ever touched liberation could possibly want anything other than liberation for everyone... It comes down to this: if you don't get on your path, I don't get to finish mine. We're bound..."

Books

How We Fight White Supremacy: A Field Guide to Black Resistance

Akiba Solomon & Kenrya Rankin

"A celebration of Black resistance, from protests to art to sermons to joy, offers a blueprint for the fight for freedom and justice... brings together voices such as Tarana Burke, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Harry Belafonte, Alicia Garza, Kiese Laymon, Imani Perry, Dr. Yaba Blya, Mahogany L. Brown, Aja Graydon, Christopher Rashad Green, Damon Young, and many, many more."

Interview and talk by the authors: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?459562-1/how-fight-white-supremacy>

When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir

Patrisse Khan-Cullors & asha bandele

A personal story and communal call about struggling for liberation in a culture that declares innocent Black life expendable.

Interview with Khan-Cullors on Democracy Now!:

https://www.democracynow.org/2018/1/16/when_they_call_you_a_terrorist

Part two of the interview: https://www.democracynow.org/2018/1/16/we_are_not_the_terrorists_black

Movies & TV

[Rectify](#)

[Fearless](#)

[If Beale Street Could Talk](#)

[BlackKlansman](#)

[13th](#)

[Wadjda](#)

[Iron Jawed Angels](#)

[Ladies in Black](#)

[The Diary of a Teenage Girl](#)

[Period. End of Sentence](#)

[Too Late to Die Young](#)



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