



The Chalice and the Flame

Diverse people. Diverse beliefs. One community.

A Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem, OR

December 2023

Women's Alliance Bazaar December 10

Sunday, December 10 is the day and Hanneman Hall is the place for the annual Women's Alliance Holiday Bazaar. As always it will feature homemade goodies, poinsettias, handmade jewelry and crafts, holiday items, and themed gift baskets. Sales will start immediately after the Sunday service.

This popular event is one of Women's Alliance's major sources of income for the coming year. Funds raised from the bazaar go toward purchasing or maintaining items not covered in the church's general budget. This year WA helped purchase new ovens and paid for redoing the kitchen floor. Possible projects for 2024 include interior painting and/or the professional cleaning of chairs.

In addition to your attendance, we welcome your homemade, handmade, and/or holiday themed items to add to the bazaar. They can be brought to Hanneman Hall on Saturday, December 9 between 10 am and noon or December 10 starting at 10 am. For questions email Becky Hickox at bhickox@gmail.com or call 503-393-3841 (no texts).

Jolly Diners December 13

Jolly Diners ride again in December! Join us on December 13 at 6 pm at Marco Polo Restaurant. This is a perfect way to prepare for holiday stress! The spirit of Jolly Diners is guaranteed to get you through the holiday season with good cheer! Come one, come all to Marco Polo Restaurant, where all tastes are catered to! And we have an unlimited supply of exclamation points! RSVP to Steve Rosen at sjr1948@gmail.com.

Giving Tree for Persons with Mental Health Conditions

The Mindful Organization for the Recovery of Psychological Health, (M.O.R.P.H.) asks for your support this holiday season by providing gifts for people with significant mental health conditions who are without support from friends or family. Please join us in reaching out to those who are so often alone and forgotten.

You are invited to select gift tags which will be on a Christmas Tree in the entryway. Return the tag attached to your wrapped gift or to the holiday card in which you have placed a gift card no later than December 17. The tag helps identify the recipient. The tree will be available December 10, and December 17. The last time for returning the gifts is after the service on December 17.

We appreciate your caring and generosity. For questions contact Nina Donnelly at 503-949-6266.



Invitation to Zach and Emily Davis Marriage Reception December 23

Everyone is cordially invited to join us for a reception on Saturday December 23 at 3 pm at UUCS to congratulate our son Zachary and his new wife Emily on their marriage. On November 25 I officiated at their wedding in Bath, Ohio. Please join us.

~Rev. Rick and Gordana.



Reverential Ramblings

~ Rev. Richard Davis, UUCS's minister

Several years ago, I surveyed a room full of my ministerial colleagues and asked how many of them had had nightmares wherein they suddenly found themselves in the pulpit on a Sunday morning facing their congregations, only to realize that they were woefully ill prepared and/or ill clad for this occasion. Every hand in the room went up, save one, and I was heartened to learn that I was not alone in this. In my last such dream some years ago I suddenly found myself in the pulpit on some high occasion with distinguished guests in attendance and I had no sermon to offer, and I was wearing raggedy clothes. It didn't look good for me, yet then my dreaming self took the bull by the horns, and I honestly confessed to everyone: "Sorry, I'm not prepared today—I guess I blew it—so, let's just make the best of it". Once I spoke those words an oppressive dread was lifted and I realized that although this was far from an ideal situation, I would make it through thanks to the congregation's tolerance and understanding. In this dream you were a dream congregation.

You're welcome to interpret this dream however you will, but for me it signaled a psychic shift wherein I realized "I'm not in this all alone and I don't have to be perfect, just authentic."

Then, some years later, I experienced another psychic shift that naturally followed from this. I had long been troubled by the recognition that in one respect I was mostly alone in that my ministerial voice was often heard from our pulpit and your voices were too seldom heard. I do strive to make mine a representative and unifying voice. But still, something important was missing—your authentic voices, your wisdom, your sacred yearnings, your pains and sorrows and struggles were too seldom heard and acknowledged. So, I resolved to do all I could to end the ministerial monopoly of the pulpit at the UU Congregation of Salem.

Thus began our unique "Homilists and Storytellers Ministry" (*I've never heard of any other congregation that has such a program.*) A solid core of you joined, went through our training and orientation, and were ordained into this ministry of the spoken word.

Now, when I am not speaking from the pulpit, you will often hear one of our own homilists. This empowers and enriches us. To ensure that this ministry thrives and continues at UUCS we resolved to renew and refresh our Homilists and Storyteller program every two years when ongoing members would once again participate in our training and potential new members could join us.

Our **next homilists training and orientation** will be held on four successive Saturday mornings, January 27, February 3, 10 and 17, from 10 to noon. Please give it serious consideration. Attendance at the training will give you more time to explore before you make a commitment.

Joining me in leading this training is my good friend and colleague the Reverend Craig Moro, who has spoken here dozens of times over the years and has much wisdom to share. The training material largely derives from the lectures and books written by the teacher who introduced me to the subtle arts of crafting a sermon, Dr. Fred Craddock, who Newsweek Magazine rightly regarded as "one of the top preachers in the English-speaking world." I am forever indebted to him and pay him back by paying it forward.

Finally, on another note entirely, please see the announcement elsewhere in the newsletter inviting you to our **reception** on Saturday, December 23 at 3 pm for my son Zach and his new wife Emily.

Love, Rick



~Molly Brown, Director, Lifespan Religious Education~

Happy Holidays!

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving weekend with family and friends!

In the LRE Program, this year’s overarching frame is The Gifts of Our Faith. We will focus on ten beloved UU values and explore their potential to shape us and, in turn, shape the world. This month our LRE Program will explore **The Gift of Mystery**. This week we will be learning about **The Mystery of our Amazing World!** We will be creating beautiful snowflakes out of Q-tips for an art project! Please feel free to bring in any extra Q-tips you might have lying around the house! Next week, we will be learning about **Noticing Mystery in the Ordinary!**

The reason our religion wants us to pay attention to mystery is that it reminds us how lucky we are to live in an amazing world. Mystery is something which we don’t know, like “why are we here,” “how our universe came into being,” “the nature of God,” “why people die,” or “the meaning of life.” These questions likely will never be answered and figured out. And that’s ok. The important part, says our faith, is to allow mysterious things to make us feel grateful and happy. Just like when you go to a magic show. We have no idea how the magicians do their mysterious tricks; all we know is that we feel excited and lucky to be there to experience it! Another way to put this is to say, mysterious things change how we feel. Mystery transforms us! When we feel life is boring, they make us feel that life is exciting. When we feel like a know-it-all, they make us humble and curious. These are all important lessons that are essential to your child’s religious education.

Updates:

The LRE Youth Group is hosting a **Holiday Rummage Giveaway** on December 17 at 2 pm! Everything is free! If you’d like to donate, please bring your items (that can fit in a paper bag) to UUCS before the 15th. You can leave it in the Youth Group Classroom or leave it with Emma, the office manager and let her know what it’s for. Each person will get to fill up one bag of items! To volunteer, please text me at (971) 239-7384 or reply to this email! This is an excellent way to give back



to the community!



With our kids living in a world of YouTube and TikTok, they should be educated about the things they are seeing and hearing. UUCS is offering the **Our Whole Lives (OWL)** sexuality education program for youth in grades 7 and 8. Classes will be on Tuesdays from 7 to 9 pm from January 9 through April 23, 2024, at UUCS, 5090 Center Street NE, Salem, OR 97317. Learn more at the **required** two-part Parent Orientation on December 5 and 12 from 7 to 9 pm. RSVP for the Parent Orientation by [clicking here](#). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time or email me to schedule a meeting!

Sincerely,

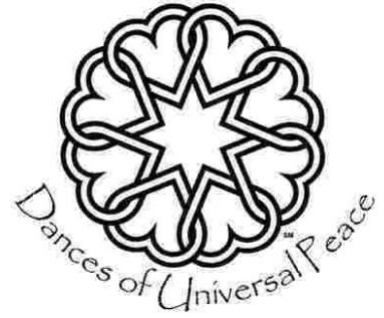
Molly Brown (she/hers), DLRE, (971) 239-7384

More Happenings and Highlights

New Year's Eve Global Peace Dance and Potluck

Join us in dances for peace and to celebrate the New Year on Dec 31, from 8:30 pm to midnight. The first dance session will be from 8:30 to 9:45. The potluck and social is from 9:45 to 10:25. After that, until midnight, there will be more dancing, a New Year's ritual, and a Peace Bells celebration to ring in 2024.

For those coming from out of town, join dancers from Newport and Eugene in bringing your own sleeping pad and sleeping bag to stay overnight, as well as breakfast snacks to share. Bring potluck items if you'd like and bring bells to ring in the new year. There may be some late night and early morning dancing!



Memoir Writing Class Offered in January



Everyone has a story to tell. If you've ever considered that you might want to write your story down, put your journey into words, leave a written legacy as a gift to your family, now is the time to get that adventure started! Gloria Holland, a retired English teacher and printed memoir writer, will gently guide you through the process of getting your story told.

Gloria will be offering a 6-week memoir writing class at UUCS each Monday from January 8 to February 12 from 10:00 am to noon. The cost is \$30 (\$5 per class), which will be added to the UUCS Fundraiser budget. This small tuition will be accepted at the first class and may be paid by cash or check. Please make your checks out to "UUCS" and note that it's for the "Memoir Class".

If you are interested in taking this class or would like more information, please contact Gloria at gigiholland@comcast.net, or call or text 503-551-0579.

Article II Study Commission Revisions Adopted

On October 31, 2023, the UUA's Article II (two) Study Commission released its final version of the proposed revision of Article II of the UUA's bylaws, which can be seen by [clicking here](#). This version will soon be presented to the UUA Board of Trustees for approval and, if approved (as expected), it will then be presented to the delegates at the June 2024 General Assembly for a final vote. A two-thirds vote of congregational delegates will be required for adoption. You can download a PDF version [at this website](#).



Dancers at Sunday Service

"Centering the Thread in the Dance of Life" was the theme of the homily on November 26. Dancers Annie Joslin and Jessi McDonald danced after Homilist Sara Pickett's presentation.

News of the Community

Hey, have you heard the exciting news? Well, you will hear some of it here. Here are some fun things that people have been doing or will be doing soon:

George and Elsa Struble and their family recently found out, “there’s no place like home.” Their original plan had been for George, Elsa, daughter Laura and husband to fly to Annville, Pennsylvania over the Veteran’s Day weekend to meet other family members. It was to be a whole family Big Bash with a rented Airbnb and everything. The celebration? Well, George’s mother founded the library of Annville, Pennsylvania in 1939, and guided it for almost 50 years! Just this year, the library added a big expansion, adding a community room plus more library space, and wouldn’t you know, they have named one of the spaces “Lillie’s Place,” in honor of George’s mother! The whole family contributed to the expansion project and the library has become part of their heritage. They feel so blessed and honored.

Well, as they say, “the best laid plans of mice and men.” Their flight Portland to Chicago was delayed by a mechanical problem, and they would have missed their connecting flight. Because of the holiday weekend, no flights were available to any city close to Annville. Ultimately, they had to stay home. A big disappointment, but not a calamity! The other five family members had a wonderful time and took lots of photos. George’s prepared remarks were read to the library celebration and the dinner. Appreciative emails went both directions. And the best part is that the family all want to go again this spring, not on a holiday weekend!

Simenfalva News: Check out this photo of children in the village prepping for a Christmas pageant happening later in December. Apparently, they are to meet every Friday to prepare. The community building where you see them working, we provided the funds to build. It is good to see them using it so much!



Do you have something you want to share for the January Newsletter? Email me at sara@uusalem.org by December 27 or catch me some Sunday and tell me!

~Sara Pickett

Help Wanted and Appreciated!

Poinsettia Donations Needed for Christmas

We are looking for donations of poinsettia plants to be used to decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas Eve Service. You can bring them by the church or contact Janet Stevens at stevens.janet.kay@gmail.com.



Photos Needed for Christmas Eve Service

The Christmas Eve service team needs photos of UUCS parents and children, which will be used in slides shown during the service and should reflect the loving bond between parent and child. Please submit your photos to productionteam@uusalem.org by December 15, 2023. Thank you.

Facebook Help Wanted

Love to Facebook? Want to help UUCS for about 2-5 hours per month, all from home?

We need a Facebook editor, familiar with Facebook, very comfortable with email, and willing to be trained on Trello, our workspace organizer (it’s easy!). We write the words, usually provide a picture, and you just post it. Contact facebook@uusalem.org.



~The Communications Team

Social Justice News

Increasingly, the weather is becoming more extreme. The weather is becoming warmer, colder, drier, damper, and windier. Weather is seen as something that happens and we have no influence over it. That statement is both true and false. It's true that we cannot influence today's, tomorrow's, or next week's weather. It's false in that humans have no influence on the weather: our actions influence earth's climate which determines the weather we experience or will be experiencing. How can this be? Anything that changes the amount of energy received from the sun or radiated from Earth to space influences our climate.

Global warming, manifesting itself as climate change, has and will impact all of us. The most obvious impact of global warming is the increasingly frequent extreme weather events. What we haven't fully seen are the secondary impacts on water, food, and health. What we sacrifice today to address global warming will be miniscule compared to global warming's future impact.

Discussions about global warming often are indirectly about our standard of living, reducing the value of investments, or stranding corporate assets. Collectively, these are about people not wanting their standard of living reduced. We have been using Earth's energy savings, fossil fuels, to fund our standard of living without regard for pollution of our air and water and extreme weather events caused by using them. Those who benefit economically from producing and using fossil fuels have made global warming into a zero-sum game where they win, and we lose. It doesn't need to be that way.

Our efforts to reduce the impact of global warming start with living our principles individually and collectively. Through our principled efforts and collaboration, we can and will mitigate global warming.

What can UUCS do as a congregation?

~John Prohovsky, Social Justice Chair

Splinters from the Board

Interim Ministry Group Board Report of November 11, 2023

The Board will hire an Accredited Interim Minister based on UUA recommended guidelines, will follow UUA search procedures in the UUA Transition Ministry Handbook and will hold monthly Board Forums to keep congregants informed and included.

The Transition Ministry group is working on beginning stages of the search, which include: compiling a documents package, updating the UUCS website page regarding Teams and Committees, referring budget considerations to the Finance Team for salary, benefits and moving expenses, and requesting that the by-laws be updated to state that the board conducts the search and hire of the Interim Minister and beginning contract considerations, including review of the current minister's contract.

The Search Process begins by notifying the UUA within 6 months of the start date, January 1. Per UUA guidelines, the search profile should be completed by mid-April 2024. Also, following UUA guidelines, the contract with the Interim Minister will provide for service for one year with the option to renew for another year.

~Lynn Cardiff, Christine Ertl, Robert Galloway.

Splinters from the November 13, 2023, Board Meeting

Various teams and committees at UUCS are working on safety issues. Some future activities will be CPR, first aid, AED and working with disruptive persons trainings, the opioid epidemic and what can be done.

Fundraising issues were discussed. We are encouraging teams and committees to hold fundraisers; the board will be having a Mardi Gras party on February 10, 2024. Put it on your calendar. We are also beginning work on the pledge drive in February and March 2024 for fiscal year 2024-25.

Note the article immediately above regarding the progress and process for the interim minister search. After the new year, members of the congregation will have an opportunity to give input on the qualities of an interim minister they believe would be helpful or needed at UUCS.

The topic for the next Board Forum on December 17 will be in the This Week publication of December 15, 2023. We had our largest turnout last month and hope to see many more of you.

~Lynn Cardiff, Board Chair

Sunday Services and Religious Education

Religious Education <i>In person, during service</i>	Sunday Service <i>In-person and Live-streamed</i>	Fellowship Time <i>In person</i>
10:30 am	10:30 am	After Service
Month Share the Plate Recipient: Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice		

Sunday, December 10

Bob Muir, Homilist/Storyteller

"Me or We?"

The Enlightenment celebrated individualism and intellectual freedom, which we still cherish. But do those qualities alone assure a healthy and just society? What do our UU principles affirm?

Celebrant: Barbara Stebbins-Boaz
Music: UUCS Choir

Sunday, December 17

The Rev. Richard R. Davis

"Living Up to the Promise of My Bumper Sticker and Hat"

December 16 is Beethoven's Birthday. How can you listen to classical music? Why? What effect will this have?

Celebrant: Brenna Norval
Cantor: Jon Chinburg

Sunday, December 24

Jon Chinburg, Music Director

"Come Sing a Song with Us"

Enjoy a brunch sing-along in Hanneman Hall on Christmas Eve morning. Jon will lead us in some festive Christmas songs while we enjoy yummy food and fellowship. Families are encouraged to come. There will be no live stream.

Sunday 7 pm, December 24

The Rev. Richard R. Davis

"Christmas Eve Candlelight Service"

Join us for the annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on December 24 at 7 pm. It will be an evening of music and carols, ancient stories, and prayers. All ages are welcome.

Celebrant: Janet Stevens, Gloria Holland
Music: UUCS Choir

Sunday, December 31

Nadene LeCheminant, Homilist/Storyteller

"Gifts of This Past Year"

Join us for what is becoming an annual UUCS service of saying goodbye to the old year and welcoming the new. There will be a continental breakfast afterwards.

Celebrant: Sara Pickett
Music: Barbara Stebbins-Boaz, Nadene LeCheminant, Loriann Schmidt

Unitarian Universalist Congregation Of Salem

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This issue was edited by Bob Muir with help from Vicki Cunningham, Elsa Struble and Kathleen McKinney.

EVENT SCHEDULING: use the [Event Scheduling Request](#) form on the UUCS website to add event to the UUCS calendar and/or reserve a UUCS space.

PUBLICITY and ANNOUNCEMENTS: Fill out the [Publication Request](#) form on the UUCS website for any announcement, event, or news item. This form is a one-stop place to put a notice in the monthly newsletter, the UUCS website, the *This Week* email and/or Facebook.

DEADLINES:

Newsletter: The deadline for the **next** newsletter is 8:00 pm on Friday, **December 29, 2023.**

This Week articles are due noon **Wednesdays.**