

# THE ORACLE

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF MEADVILLE  
346 Chestnut Street Meadville, PA 16335  
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WWW.uumeadville.org

JULY 2017

## The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism

- 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.

Join us for our weekly worship service, religious education and social hour Sundays at 10:30 am.

### ALL ARE WELCOME!

Our **COVENANT** is to be a loving, joyful community that nurtures spiritual growth, promotes compassion, social responsibility, and service in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Our **MISSION** is to be a faith community devoted to love and respect, reason and justice.



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A portrait of Rev. Robin Landerman Zucker, a woman with reddish-brown hair, wearing a black top and a green necklace, standing outdoors.

## ROBIN'S BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

REV. ROBIN LANDERMAN ZUCKER,

INTERIM MINISTER

My ministry here, in proximity to Lake Erie, has gotten me to musing about my childhood summers at Camp Wingfoot, just up the road a piece in North Madison, Ohio. My fellow pigtailed pilgrims and I had come to this lakeside outpost for many summers to ride horseback, to practice archery and riflery and tennis, to craft mosaic trivets, to swim and water-ski and camp out and sing. For eight too-short weeks, we worshiped at a muggy, buggy shrine of competition and camaraderie, complete with its share of glories, betrayals, confessions, and redemptions. But there was more to it than that; we were bound up in an intricate web of genuine friendship and love, and we knew this on a visceral level too deep for a young girl to articulate.

The last few days were filled with preparations for the *Wishing Boat* ceremony, a ritual held at dusk on the very last night of Camp. Each cabin from the wee 8-year-olds to the seasoned 15-year-olds would fashion boats for the event. Down at the beach or in the woods, you could happen upon scores of shipbuilders collecting buoyant pieces of driftwood, bits of bark, errant feathers, acorn caps, twigs, leaves, shells, and the like. In the Craft Barn, competition for the glue, the paint and the glitter was intense, but Helen, the 70-ish Angel of the facility would just smile and smooth down the egos and scurry joyfully from one charge to the other.

On the fateful evening, our trunks packed, our eyes stinging from tears, our hearts bursting, we gathered around the pool's edge, already grieving the loss of the summer's protected freedom, and draped in stillness and a quiet of almost sacred proportion. One by one, each cabin lit the candles that had been affixed to the deck of its boat, recited the cabin's "wish" (corny and sweet), and launched its craft towards the center of the glistening turquoise water. By the time the oldest campers had completed this ritual, 13 boats would be gliding, bobbing, and twinkling like fireflies in the twilight, and we would all be sobbing. Inevitably, one or more of the boats would tip or capsize. We'd giggle a bit, but we didn't gloat over the misfortune...we were comrades above all, and we would never forget this magic, this wishcraft.

My hope is that during this summer of 2017, if we encounter a flurry of fireflies or find ourselves wrapped in the sacred stillness of water or the camaraderie of friends, that we'll pause to make a *wish*; a four-leaf clover, penny-in-the-fountain, shooting star, rainbow connection, daisy petal, birthday candle *wish*; something corny, sweet and simple, with no bottom line, no outline, no strategy, and no contingencies. One of my wishes will be that the season renews each of us in some way; that our hearts will laugh like loons and our spirits float like dandelion seeds blown hopefully into a wishful breeze. Happy summer. I'll see you in August.

In faith,

Rev. Robin

## WORSHIP MATTERS – JULY 2017

June 25: Worship from the UUA General Assembly,  
“In All Thy Getting, Get Understanding”, *Susan Hegel*

July 2: Music, *Josh Searle-White & Friends*

July 9: Drumming, *James Reedy*

July 16: Progressive Deep Muscle Relaxation , *Rich Chafey*

July 23: Creating Art, *Deb Barnhart*

July 30: Mandalas, *Mary Spicer*

August 6: Readers' Theater, “A Day in the Spiritual Life”,

*Rev. Robin Landerman Zucker, Interim Minister*

August 13: Energy and Movement, *Karen Schreiber Mason*

August 20: Church Picnic at Roche Park, Shelter 2, *Deb Lehman*

\*\*Worship returns to the Sanctuary on August 27, with

Rev. Robin preaching, “Truly, Madly, Deeply: Why Do We Work?”

Mary Lynne Peters providing music.



*“THINKING IT THROUGH WITH THE TRANSITION TEAM”:*  
SUMMARY OF FINAL DISCUSSION IN APRIL 2017



## Transition

The Transition Team held its final “*Thinking it Through*” discussion with congregation members on April 30, 2017. The discussion focused on two topics: (1) how we might build stronger partnerships with area UU churches, and (2) concerns about supporting our Church programs if we continue to have a part-time minister.

It was observed that our relationship with the Erie UU church may not be strong enough and there may not be enough commitment on either side to support a shared minister with Erie at this time. Those observations led to a discussion of how we might build stronger relationships with UUs in our area. Participants had the following suggestions to begin this work of partnerships:

- Explore the idea of developing a Northwest PA “cluster” of UU churches. Clusters are geographically defined networks of UU churches being promoted by district, regional, and national UUA professionals as a way to help churches support one another and create stronger programs in each church.
- Remember that any relationship starts with small steps, and find smaller, low-risk ways to engage with Erie and other regional churches before embarking on a shared ministry. At the March multi-site workshop, this was noted as analogous to dating before getting married.
- Work with area UU churches to help congregants connect with one another.
  - \*Ask the church leaders to distribute information to their members describing how to get on the email distribution lists or mailing list of area UU churches.
  - \*Ask each church to update their web sites to include links to area UU churches.

Concerns were also expressed about whether we had sufficient capacity to continue supporting our programs without a full-time minister. Providing ongoing support for quality worship experiences when we don’t have full-time leadership was a particular point of concern. Suggestions to address this included,

- Host a workshop or meeting for people who might want to lead a service to help them begin the work of pulling together a service. Invite congregants who might be interested in leading a service but lack the confidence to do so to attend.
- Sponsor a commissioned lay leader from our congregation if there is anyone interested in pursuing that work.
- Seek ways to exchange services with area churches.
- Be more intentional about connecting with district and regional UU professionals to get help supporting programs. Support congregational engagement in denominational and district events like OMD summer institute and the UUA General Assembly.

## SUMMARY OF FINAL REPORT TO THE BOARD FROM THE TRANSITION TEAM

The Transition Team presented its Final Report to the Board at its June 2017 meeting. The Report included a summary of work over the last 2 years and options for the Board to consider for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 Church years. In its conversations, the Transition Team found general agreement among the congregation that a part-time minister—either a half-time contract minister or a minister shared with other area churches—makes most sense for UU Meadville for at least the next few years. We also determined that the current relationships among area UU churches are probably not sufficiently strong to support a shared ministry. Given this context and the fact that Rev. Robin is already contracted on a part-time basis for the 2017-18 church year, the Transition Team identified two viable options for 2017-18 and 2018-19 Church years:

Option 1—Extend Rev. Robin’s contract for a third year (2018-19). Create a Partnership Team (separate from the Board) to support the development of partnerships with area churches during the 2017-18 Church year. At the end of the 2017-18 Church year, the Partnership Team would make recommendations to the Board regarding pursuing a ministerial search during the 2018-19 Church year.

Option 2—Form a Search Committee for the 2017-18 Church year, with the goal of engaging a half-time contract minister (other than Rev. Robin) with a one-year renewable contract to begin in the 2018-19 Church year.

With both options, the Church would continue to be served by a part-time minister who would lead approximately 20 services per year, supervise paid staff, and provide executive leadership by supervising paid Church staff and by helping the Church organize teams to support essential Church functions (worship, RE for children and adults, community events, church administration).

The Transition Team strongly recommended, and the Board agreed, that Option 1 was most suitable for our congregation at this time. Rev. Robin has indicated that she is interested and available to serve in this capacity, and the Board will pursue extending her contract for a third year. In addition, the Board will form a new Partnership Team for the 2017-18 Church year. With guidance from Rev. Robin, the Partnership Team will build on the Transition Team’s work, but shift its focus to exploring / building a network of support among area UUs. Giving ourselves another year before formalizing a ministerial search will give us a better understanding of partnership options.

## THINKING IT THROUGH WITH THE TRANSITION TEAM CONTINUED

As we conclude our work as members of the Transition Team, we are very optimistic about our congregation's ability to continue to move forward in a positive way. We would like to thank the Board for entrusting us with the responsibility of exploring our best options during the interim period. Many thanks also to Rev. Robin for her energy, ideas, enthusiasm, and support during all of our meetings and throughout the process. Thank you, Jodi, for helping us communicate with the congregation via our B&B announcements and Oracle articles. And finally, thank you to all congregation members for participating in our various discussions, for providing thoughtful feedback, and for being patient during this extended interim period. We look forward to the next phase of our shared history!



## THE SHARED MINISTRY OF COFFEE HOUR HOSTING

The coffee hour/ community table schedule has been published and emailed to the participants. There is a copy on the front counter of the Parish House and one on the refrigerator. Schedule for coffee hour for July:

- July 2nd: Christine Cooper & Joe McHugh
- July 9th: Michele & Mike Baker
- July 16th: Peggy and Ross Bell
- July 23rd: Bob & Michelle Ackerman
- July 30th: Anne Jones & Shayna Morrison



## PLANNING AHEAD

**ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC-** August 20 at Roche Park, Shelter #2

**CHURCH DIRECTORY PHOTOS - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24.** We're putting together a new Directory (with a mobile app as one of its features!) Lifetouch Directory photographs taken – Sunday, September 24 12:30 -7:30 p.m. (sign ups will be available over the summer – info to follow) The directory photo shoot is free, although photos will be available for purchase. If necessary, we will add time on Monday, Sept. 25 for photos.

## FRENCH CREEK CLEAN-UP 2017

Saturday, September 9th

The French Creek Valley Conservancy is a private 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the exceptional water quality, natural habitat, biological diversity and recreational opportunities of the French Creek Watershed in Northwest Pennsylvania. Our work in land protection, stewardship, education and community outreach is supported by our members, donors, foundations and partner organizations. Our volunteer board of directors is focused on facilitating the citizens of the watershed to be the caretakers of the watershed.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville has been a proud sponsor of the French Creek Clean-up for the past three years. We will collect donations to reach our sponsorship goal of \$250 through out the summer. Checks can be made payable to the Unitarian Universalist

Church of Mead-  
Clean-up in the  
collection box in  
also organize an-  
clean-up. Last  
third in the most  
with our antique  
available in the  
clude your best  
shirt size. The

will be held at Sprague's Brewery in Venango. I hope to see you there! -Jodi Sipos



ville with French Creek  
memo. There will be a  
the Parish House. We will  
other team for this year's  
year, our tem placed  
unusual find category  
rim. A sign up sheet is  
Parish House. Please in-  
contact number and t-  
drop off and after party



## FAITH IN ACTION

### SURJ

SURJ: Showing Up for Racial Justice Group - a Coalition for Change in Crawford County – Join the Conversation!

A newly-formed group in Crawford County is bringing together a coalition of people from various community and religious groups to Show Up for Racial Justice (SURJ). You can find the group on Facebook at SURJCrawfordCounty. UUCM resources for more information are Lisbet Searles-White ([lisbetsw@gmail.com](mailto:lisbetsw@gmail.com)) and Shayna Morrison ([shaynajmorrison@gmail.com](mailto:shaynajmorrison@gmail.com)). The group meets Mondays at 6:00 pm at Pizza Villa. The group will also meet Fridays at 12:00 pm in Diamond Park. Everyone is welcome to attend these open meetings and to join in these efforts.

### WHY WE SHARE: JULY'S SHARE-THE-PLATE RECIPIENT: TAMARACK WILDLIFE AND REHABILITATION CENTER

Tamarack specializes in the rescue, treatment and release of injured, orphaned and sick wildlife. Additionally, Tamarack provides public education programs and materials on the behavior, feeding habits, and natural habitats of many of Pennsylvania's species of wildlife.

Thank you for all who donated in June. The recipient was the Meadville Neighborhood Center.

### BOX TOPS AND LABELS FOR EDUCATION: CREATING LANDSCAPES LEARNING CENTER

There is a collection basket in the Parish House for box tops and labels for education. They are being collected for the Creating Landscapes for Families Learning Center. For more information and a list of participating products please visit [www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com) or [www.labelsforeducation.com](http://www.labelsforeducation.com).



An independent elementary school dedicated to fostering natural curiosity, individuality, academic achievement, and creative expression.

### JULY SAVE THE DATE

#### SOUP KITCHEN

Friday 14th, 10:00 am

#### ORACLE SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE

Monday 24th by 9:00 am



## RESOURCES

### OUR CARING CONNECTIONS

Pastoral care is available to all members and friends, new and longstanding. Our lay pastoral team works with our minister to offer support, practical assistance, and companionship. Please let us know (through our team, staff, musical or affinity groups) of needs for our caring connections. Please contact Rev. Robin or Fran Smith: 814-337-2822(home), 814-853-9177(cell) or smith-fb65@zoominternet.net.

### UU-seful Web Links

UU Church of Meadville:  
[www.uumeadville.org](http://www.uumeadville.org)

Oracle: [www.uumeadville.org/Oracles](http://www.uumeadville.org/Oracles)

UUA: [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)

UU Service Committee: [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org)

*Ohio-Meadville District:*  
[www.ohiomeadville.org](http://www.ohiomeadville.org)

### Amazon Associates Shop

Remember that our church is a member of



the Support us when you shop at amazon. [smile.amazon.com/ch/25-1322866](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/25-1322866) and Amazon donates.

**Stewardship:** Peggy Bell  
([Peggytbell@gmail.com](mailto:Peggytbell@gmail.com))

**Secretary:** Ariel Denman  
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### Church Staff

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*Fri: By Appointment*

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