

THE ORACLE

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF MEADVILLE
346 Chestnut Street Meadville, PA 16335
(814)-724-4023
WWW.umeadville.org

MARCH 2023

Join us for our weekly online 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.

Our **VISION** is to be a dynamic organization guided by the six sources of Unitarian Universalism and supports the spiritual health of Meadville and the surrounding area.

The Six Sources of Unitarian Universalism

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic people which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

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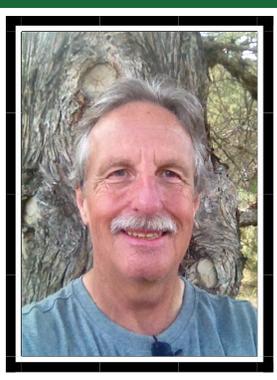
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MARCH



MINISTER'S MUSINGS ALONG FRENCH CREEK

“May You Live in Interesting Times”

Many of us probably know this ancient Chinese curse above. It's sardonic and can mean many things both positive and negative.

There's one problem. The quote doesn't come from Asia or even China. The earliest use of the term appears to be in a speech given by an English member of parliament in the late 1930's before the beginning of World War II.

We know what happened after that...

Nevertheless, the quote has an ironic truth to it. We live in turbulent times filled with uncertainty: the climate crisis, war, a racial reckoning in this country and beyond, polarization in politics and culture, etc. There is very little certainty about the future except for the truth of the old adage “death and taxes.”

That uncertainty is also true in religious circles. The likely split of the United Methodist Church is just one example.

Last Sunday I spoke about the major changes currently going on in the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). I believe many of those changes toward equity and a departure from ‘it's always been done this way’ mentality are very important ones. Black people in particular along with other marginalized groups have justifiably demanded change from the white-male-centric approach to ministry and staffing within the UUA and its congregations.

The devil is in the details.

Several weeks ago, I posted the link to the report of a special Article 2 Commission appointed by the UUA Board of Trustees. That Commission was charged with the task of reviewing and rewriting what we know as the Seven Principles and Six Sources. The premise is that the UUA must move forward into the 21st century and not cling to past models of ministry and governance. In other words, a new vision.

Here's the link again: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPQmvIMBUOg>

I know some of those who were on the Commission and I believe their intentions have been genuine and positive.

One major proposed change is to remove the Seven Principles and Six Sources entirely. They would be replaced by an image of a chalice with the word “Love” and encircled by six words: Interdependence, Justice, Equity, Generosity, Pluralism, and Transformation. The report explains the use of each word.

I have strong personal feelings about these changes but you (and the people in many congregations) will need to discern your feelings about the evolution of the UUA. I will not take sides but I will give you as much information as I can on the arguments being presented.

I have presented some questions for you all to ponder as you consider the changes. Here they are:

What types of Love are they referring to? Unconditional or Conditional Love? A Universalist form of universal Love with no one left out?

Earlier drafts of the report speak a great deal about mutual accountability. Churches are mutually accountable to one another; individuals are accountable to each other and to call out the breaking of covenant. Who determines the validity of accountability? Are some more accountable than others?

How is “Justice” a means to dismantling wrongs? Whose definition of Justice is the right one? Who has the final word about what is Just and what is not?

Dr. King’s words in the opening words speak to love and power. Do these changes help balance the two or not?

Is there a broad theological grounding similar to the Six Sources?

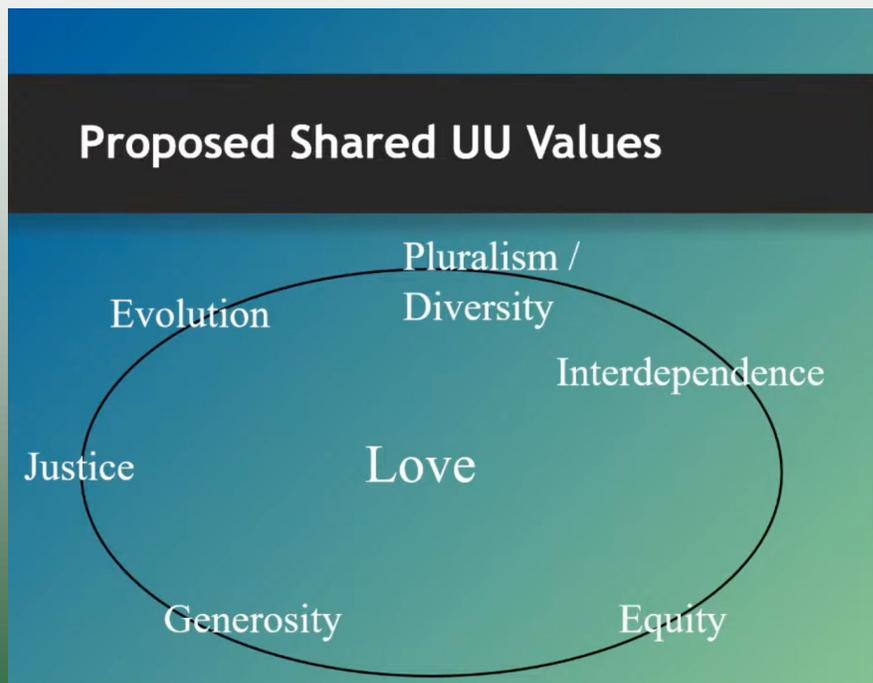
What is the role of Redemption in this new way of living UU’ism?

Several of you have asked for a Discussion Group to consider these questions and the changes going on. I’ll consult with the board and let you know when and how that group will be formed. It’ll most likely be on a Sunday after church.

I hope you’ll take part in these conversations before the General Assembly of the UUA takes place in Pittsburgh this June to vote on the report.

We are, indeed, living in interesting and uncertain times. That’s a reason for a liberal religious community to exist here.

Alex

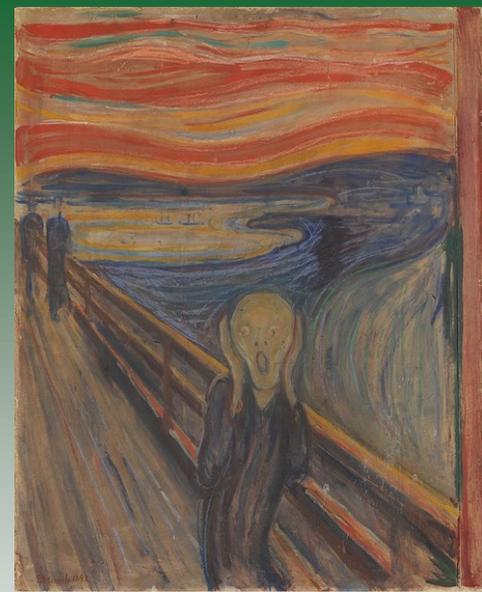


WORSHIP MATTERS – MARCH 2023

MARCH 5, 2023

"Making Friends with Anxiety"- Rev. Alex Holt

How do we face anxiety in this uncertain time by embracing it rather than turning away?



MARCH 12, 2023

"Encouragement to Spiritual Growth"- Rick Holmgren

Please join us as we continue our reflection on the UU principles by considering the third principle: As unitarian-universalists, we affirm and promote acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth.

MARCH 19, 2023

"The Vulnerability of Being Both/And"- Rev. Alex Holt

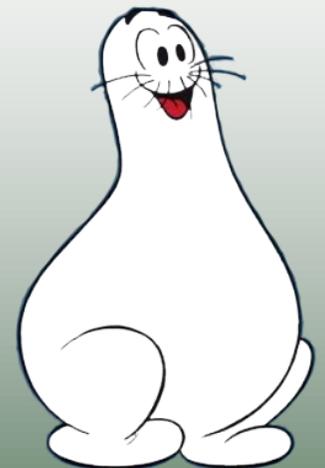
19th century author Alexis de Tocqueville speaks of American religion as being attracted to one extreme or another but leaving the middle way out. Is awareness of multiple choices in life better than a binary either/or approach to life?

MARCH 26, 2023

"What Can the Shmoo Teach Us About Economic Vulnerability?"

- Joe Tompkins

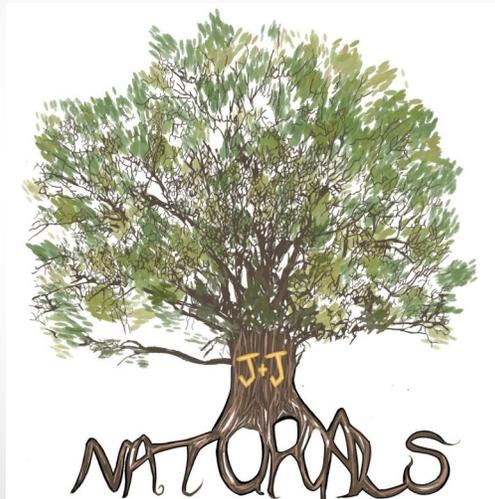
Economic vulnerability is the basis for exploitation, and exploitation is the root of all evil. So says the gospel of the shmoo.



BLARNEY BREAKFAST

BLARNEY BREAKFAST MARCH 18TH 9:00 AM

It's that time of year when we can all be Irish for a day! The Church will be hosting the annual Blarney Breakfast on March 16 from 9:00 a.m. to Noon as part of the St. Patrick's Day Event. If you are able to join us for the fun as a cook, wait staff or clean up crew contact Deb Lehman deblehman51@gmail.com or (814) 547-4627. The breakfast will include pancakes (gluten free available too), scrambled eggs, sausage, baked oatmeal, coffee and tea. \$9 for adults and \$7 children under 12.



J&J'S NATURALS FUNDRAISERS FOR UUCM

For the month of March, our For A Cause recipient will be the Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville. Fifty percent of the proceeds from the selected products will be donated to the Church to help them continue their mission and vision. We will add new products weekly. Check it out <https://jnjsnaturals.com/collections/for-a-cause>.

J & J's Naturals will also be present at the Blarney Breakfast selling St. Patrick's Day and Spring inspired jewelry to benefit the Church. Custom orders available by emailing Jodi at jnjsnaturals@yahoo.com.

SOUP KITCHEN

Every second Friday each month a group of UU volunteers serve meals at the Meadville Area Soup kitchen as a way to help alleviate some of the symptoms of poverty in our region. You are welcome to volunteer. Our congregation's contact is Jana Lantz, jmlantz@zoominternet.net 814-350-1265



MEDITATION GROUP

Wednesdays at 6:00 pm
Thursdays at 6:00 pm

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Thursdays at 7:15 PM

SOUP KITCHEN

Friday 10th at 10:00 am

WHY WE SHARE: MARCH'S SHARE-THE-PLATE RECIPIENT: FRENCH CREEK VALLEY CONSERVANCY

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.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday 14th at 11:00am

BLARNEY BREAKFAST

Saturday 18th 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

ORACLE SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE

Friday 27th by 9:00 am

Thank you for all who donated in January. The recipient was the Meadville Parks Program. We donated \$191.26.



RESOURCES

UU- Useful Web Links

UU Church of Meadville:

www.uumeadville.org

Oracle: www.uumeadville.org/Oracles

UUA: www.uua.org

UU Service Committee: www.uusc.org

RIDES TO SERVICE

If you need a ride to any event or to Sunday's worship service, please call the church office by 9:00 am on Fridays and leave a message (814-724-4023)

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 and Amazon donates.



2023 Church Officers

President: Rick Holmgren
(rick.holmgren@gmail.com)

Vice-President: Deb Lehman
(deblehman51@gmail.com)

Stewardship: Josh Searle-White
(jsearle@allegheny.edu)

Clerk: Jane Anderson
(jane.anderson811@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Mike Baker
(Rmbaker1@windstream.net)

Coordinator of Out Reach Teams:
Mark McGinty
(mcgintymark4@gmail.com)

Coordinator of Mission Teams:
Karen Schreiber Mason
(karen.schreiber1@gmail.com)

Church Staff

Minister

Rev. Alex Holt
(revalexholt@gmail.com) or
(814)- 724-4023 Ext. 302

Music Director: Aimee Reash
(areash@allegheny.edu)

Office Administrator: Jodi Sipos
(church@uumeadville.org) or
(814)724-4023)

Monday-Friday: 7:30 AM – 1:30PM