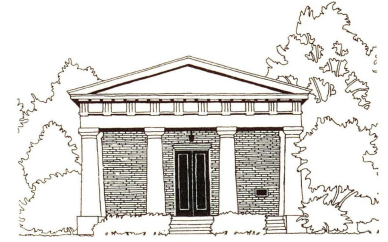


THE ORACLE

Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville

346 Chestnut Street, Meadville, PA 16335

814.724.4023 – www.uumeadville.org



“You need not think alike to love alike.” Francis David, 1568

RevElations

I write to you immediately upon returning from 2.5 days at Salt Fork Lake Park in Ohio with 16 other ministers from the Ohio Meadville Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association. Retreating with these ministers is an important experience for me: there is no need to explain (or defend) my UU theology – we can just get on with it – **striding boldly and deeply** into the work of listening, learning, and exploring issues of congregational life, faith development, leadership development, AR/AO/MC endeavors (anti-racism/anti-oppression/multicultural social justice), worship, lifespan religious education, and all shared ministries within the congregations and communities we serve as Unitarian Universalist ministers.



Soon I will be gathering with our congregational leaders (including the Board and all committee chairs) to discuss the work of the coming year. As we proceed into the second half of our second year together, I wonder where **we** might boldly and deeply stride together, as Minister and Congregation serving the UU Church of Meadville? I encourage you to share your ideas, your worries, and your questions with any of us as we consider what it means to be the Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville. What is our purpose? What is our vision? By what mission are we guided as we make programming and business decisions to sustain the life of our Congregation and to **live our faith boldly** as Unitarian Universalists? What myths about us need to be busted by us? What dreams need to be tended? What old identities need to be released, and what new ones embraced? What questions would you add to this list?

As you consider all of these things, I happily remind you that we are part of a larger religious movement that is growing and changing. I was happily reminded of this, myself, as I gathered with my ministerial colleagues from throughout this District (serving 44 UU congregations in Ohio, West Virginia, Western Pennsylvania, and Western New York); as I prepare for our work of co-hosting the Ohio Meadville District Annual Assembly (March 23-24, 2012); as I consider a recent letter from UUA President, Peter Morales, to all UUs in which he acknowledges that “the nature of congregations and religious life is changing”; and, as I consider the daily anti-oppression practices suggested by the Standing on the Side of Love Month of Love Calendar. I celebrate that we, the UU Church of Meadville, are part of larger religious movement and faith tradition known as Unitarian Universalism. **We are not alone and we need not feel isolated as a liberal religious community of faith. This is good news, indeed.**

Please be in touch with me or any of our congregational leaders as we consider “What’s next?” for us, and for our larger movement. Your voices, as well as your heartfelt and thoughtful contributions, are a welcome and essential part of this exciting conversation!

See you in Church,

Carmen

P.S. For information regarding the Ohio Meadville District Annual Assembly go to:

<http://www.ohiomeadville.org/districtassembly/dageneralinfo>

Ctrl-Click here for [RevElations](#) (next page)

Sunday Services

February 5

Compassion (Part 1 of 2)

The Rev. Carmen Emerson

February 12

Compassion (Part 2 of 2)

The Rev. Carmen Emerson

We'll consider, together, theologian Karen Armstrong's 12 steps of compassion and what they mean for us, as Unitarian Universalists.

February 19

Source Sunday - # 5

We'll consider the Fifth Wisdom Source of Unitarian Universalism: "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.

The Rev. Carmen Emerson

February 26

Why Church?

Rick Holmgren, Guest Speaker

Who we are ...

Our mission is to offer a welcoming and safe community that reaches out to and receives spiritual seekers. We provide a voice for religious diversity and encourage personal transformation as we strive toward a better world.

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

Standing on the Side of Love

Month of Love Stories: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day through Valentine's Day 2012

"Harnessing love's power to stop oppression."

About Standing on the Side of Love – Standing on the Side of Love is a public advocacy campaign that seeks to harness love's power to stop oppression. It is sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association (www.uua.org) and all are welcomed to join.

Why – This is a time of great hope and possibility, yet our communities are threatened by the increased prevalence of acts motivated by fear and hate. No one should be dehumanized through acts of exclusion, oppression, or violence because of their identities. In public debates over immigration, LGBT rights, and more, religious people stand on the side of love and call for respect, inclusion, and compassion.

How – The Standing on the Side of Love campaign elevates passionate religious voices to influence public attitudes and public policy. Through community activism, social networking, and media outreach, people across the nation are equipped to counter fear and make love real in the world.

RevElations continued

To read the full text of UUA President, Peter Morales' letter "Congregations and Beyond" go to:

<http://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/officers/president/moralespeter/192145.shtml>

To review the Standing on the Side of Love Month Calendar go to:

<http://standingonthesideoflove.org/national-standing-on-the-side-of-love-month-the-story-of-us-the-story-of-now/>

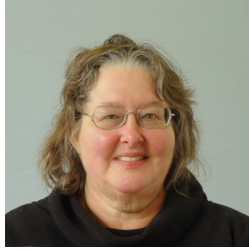
Amazon Associates Shop

Remember that our church is a member of the Amazon Associates program. Use the search box on our web site at <http://www.uumeadville.org/amazon.htm> when you shop Amazon.com. Please note that items must be searched through the search box on the web site in order to qualify!

The church will receive a percentage of the purchase price of your shipped items. Money raised is used to subsidize the programs of the church. Remember that Amazon sells many items besides books. Use Amazon for school supplies, electronics, music, books, and more.

Board Briefs

The first meeting of the 2012 UU board met on Sunday January 22, 2012, following the worship service at the church. Present: Joyce Milberg, President; Christian Maher, Vice-President; Ron White, Treasurer (overlap time); Rick Holmgren, Treasurer 2012; Amelia Carr, Stewardship; Deb Lehman, Mission and Outreach; Cynthia Burton, Secretary; and Carmen Emerson, Minister; and Harmony, friend of the church. Joyce called the meeting to order and welcomed the new board. We lit the chalice, checked in with each other and shared our vision for the coming year.



Themes of our shared vision: we hope to continue deepening our relations with each other as a congregation, develop a rich shared vision, and come to know ourselves as a church community. What would that look like? With a stronger shared vision would come a stronger commitment to the church. If the commitment is there, the financial and human resources are there to do what we truly want to do. Specific actions emerged: continue to strengthen R.E. Program – teen drop in center and Harry Potter Camp, leadership development – more sharing of the work of the church by more people, more face to face communication – once a month a board member will speak to the congregation from the pulpit making us more visible.

\$\$\$ Money Discussion

The December 2011 Minutes and Treasurer's Report for December 2011 were accepted. Highlights of the December Treasurer's Report: Pledge receipts were about 95% of the amount pledged. Total income for the year was 99% of the total budgeted. Money collected at the Christmas Eve service was transferred to the minister's discretionary fund. The December share the plate total was \$130 and went to the Soup Kitchen.

We discussed the 2012 budget as revised and passed at the congregational meeting in December:

Carmen's compensation has been adjusted for the 5% raise as approved at the annual meeting. Total income and total expenses are still not equal. In discussion, Joyce strongly recommends that the budget as a planning document show actual costs so that we know what it takes to run the church. If someone donates the cost of a program, that figure should appear both in the income and the expenses areas. We will continue to look at refining the mechanisms to give us all the information we want/need. Rick and Joyce will meet to explore what changes would be helpful.

By February, we will have added the additional pledges that were made toward paying for the 5% raise for the minister. Joyce received a letter from

the UUA requesting that we make a payment toward our annual UUA dues. (UUA fiscal year ends in June). The board had more discussion about this commitment and how it relates to other budgeting practices and to discussions at previous annual meetings regarding our obligations to the UUA and to the OMD. Christian Maher made a motion: We use \$1500 of the unspent 2011 funds to add to the 2012 budgeted amount of \$500 to bring the total payment for the UUA dues to \$2000. Amelia seconded. Motion carried. Point of information: OMD dues for 2012 are \$1000 and remain unchanged.

Joyce will file the 2011 Treasurer's report for audit.

We discussed the ongoing project to put our **member directory** on the website. We need to be sure that it is password protected and that we have sufficient protections in place. Christian Maher, Eric Mountjoy (IT committee), Amelia Carr and Rick Holmgren will work on this.

Minister's Report

We thanked Carmen for her very detailed January report. Among many things, she is exploring possibilities of having a new committee to work on adult RE and covenant groups. UU 101 classes are coming up in April with New Member Sunday planned for June 10. She is working with the OMD planning committee and Amelia on the upcoming Ohio Meadville District Annual Meeting hosted by our church and our cluster church members. (**March 23-24, 2012 in Meadville**) She reminded the board about the deadline for the second renewal materials (June 1) that needs to be completed by the Board and the Committee on Congregational Ministries.

Committee News

From Deb Lehman, the **Mission and Outreach** group (Worship, Fellowship, Membership, RE, and Social Action) have all met this year, except for Social Action which is not staffed. Mission and Outreach hopes to have a group meeting in February to share plans and ideas.

Joyce Milberg proposed appointing the following people to serve on the **Personnel Committee**: Mary Larson, Corinne Chaffey, and Susan Hegel. Christian seconded. Motion approved.

Audit Committee: Joyce made a motion to appoint the following to the 2012 Audit Committee: Vanessa Shaffer, Jane Anderson, and Michael Thomson. Christian seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Committee on Congregational Ministries: Stu Rothman is the new chair. Ron Arnold has agreed to replace Joyce Milberg on this committee.

Member-at-Large position: The board discussed the "portfolio" for this new position approved at the annual meeting in 2011. Most ideas put forth clustered around splitting off some of the areas of Mission and Outreach. We

will talk to Leadership Development committee and we will continue to explore this new position.

Upcoming Events

Saturday January 28, the **Ohio Meadville District Planning Committee** will meet all day at the church to work on the upcoming District Annual Meeting. We received one request for home hospitality and Carmen is hosting the person. Josh Searle-White is coordinating morning snacks and lunch.

We have a request from **Pennsylvania Power and Light** for a contact person. Lisbet Searle-White agreed to serve in this position.

OMD Assembly March 27-28, 2012

Amelia has a list of duties for the host congregations. She will share it with the board via email. She will also be forming committees from our membership to oversee various tasks that we are responsible for. She is also in contact with someone from the Erie UU church who can help us with some of the work. The other churches in our cluster in addition to Erie are Oil City, Girard, and Slippery Rock.

Ariel, OMD staff, and Erie's Director of RE are working on children's activities and childcare for the event.

Carmen and Aimee Reash are working on music for the opening and closing worship services.

Carmen is working with Michelle Buhite on the opening and closing worship services.

Home Hospitality – need to find a coordinator.

Friday evening reception: need to find a coordinator.

Parish Board Meetings: The Board will now meet on the **third Tuesday** of the month at the church; meetings will begin at **6:30 PM** (note changes).

The Board will have a retreat at the church in February.

Sharing the Plate:

January: Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

February: Standing on the Side of Love (Re-imagining Valentine's Day)

March: Soup Kitchen

April: Tamarack Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center

May: CASA

June: French Creek Project

Oracle articles: The Board will have one board member write an article for each *Oracle* exploring the work of the Board and reflecting on what it means to be in leadership.

Meeting adjourned at 1:42 PM

Cynthia Burton, Clerk

NEXT ORACLE DEADLINE: Deadline is last Thursday of each month, thus – **Thursday February 23.** Thank you!

R.E. Connections

Spirit Play

Last Sunday, Ariel asked me if I'd be willing to write some articles on what's happening in the RE program. Obviously, I agreed. ☺ This month marks the first in what will hopefully become an ongoing conversation about the children of our church, the RE program, and what it means to grow up UU.

Like many of you who aren't directly involved in RE, I made mental note of the curriculum, *Spirit Play*, and thought to myself ... oh, I'm sure it's very nice ... and moved on, that is until Ariel asked me to write about RE and sent me some background material on *Spirit Play*. Reading the material, I was impressed. *Spirit Play* struck me as far more than just a series of weekly lessons. It is really an entire approach to growing up UU.

Based on Montessori principles, *Spirit Play* encourages children to think freely, and ask BIG questions in a safe and supportive environment. It encourages creativity and doesn't demand a particular way of thinking from its participants.

A child growing up UU, who has the church as an important part of her experience, is blessed indeed. Such a child is free to learn about world religions in a safe and non-dogmatic way, and to grow into his own unique spiritual life, supported and encouraged by caring adults. Our children regularly encounter the dominant voices of religion in our culture, and not always in a good and healthy way. For example, when my daughter was in first grade, another child told her she was going to hell. Experiences with RE like *Spirit Play* go a long way to help buffer our children from harsh religious views like the one my daughter encountered.

Do you know a child who could benefit from RE? Think about it.

Rebecca Hecking

Wild Tangents and Random Musings

Many of you know that I am deeply involved in caring for my elderly parents. They are both 83, and live about two hours away. For 2 ½ years now, every week I have made the trip to their home (yes, they are still in their home) to help care for them, returning the next morning in time for work. It has been a difficult journey, exhausting and challenging on many levels. I am grateful to my wonderful husband and children for working together to help things go smoothly in my absence.

But it has not been without an upside. I say this not with



Pollyanna-ish optimism, but rather as someone who has been knee-deep in care-giving for the long haul. In fact, it has been in this long haul that real nuggets of life wisdom have distilled out from the day-to-day muck of busy-ness. Perhaps there are areas of your own experience (not necessarily care-giving) that you may find relate to mine. And so, without further ado, I offer you the following:

It is imperfect. This has become my mantra. I repeat it to myself constantly, as a statement of fact. Accepting that there will always be things in my parents' lives that I *cannot* change for the better has helped me not beat myself up for not achieving the impossible. Do you set yourself up to fail by laying impossible demands upon yourself? Repeat after me: it is imperfect.

"My best" is not a constant. This is a close cousin to *it is imperfect.* Like you, I am "doing my best" in any number of situations. But what my best is varies from day to day. My best on a day when I'm fighting a head cold isn't the same as my best when I'm feeling fine. My best when I am emotionally wrung-out isn't the same as my best when I have just finished a weekend retreat. Allowing myself to realize that I'm doing my best for today, whatever that may be, is liberating.

Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, be gentle with yourself. Realize that it is imperfect, and that you really are doing your best. Blessings.

Rebecca Hecking

Assignments

Greeters

Dave and Jane Anderson will give you a warm greeting all through the cold month of February.

Ushers

Feb 5: Stu and Kathy Rothman
 Feb 12: Jan Day and ??
 Feb 19: Jan Day and ??
 Feb 26: Ron and Judy Arnold

Coffee Hour Hosts

Feb 5: Milt Sipple
 Feb 12: Ann Sheffield
 Feb 19: Gary and Pam Williamson
 Feb 26: Tom and Aggie Ritchey



A big thank you to all these volunteers who help to create our Sunday morning worship and fellowship experience. **THANK YOU!!**

Our Community

A Valentine Happening



Friday February 17, 5 to 7:30 PM

Join the Creating Landscapes Afterschool Tutoring program folks for a delicious home-made spaghetti dinner with salad and bread, in our parish house. This is the traditional annual fundraiser for *Creating Landscapes for Families*, which in the past took place at the school; however they may no longer use that facility. We encourage your attendance – you don't need reservations, you don't need to sign up, you aren't requested to bring a tureen. Just yourself, to support, and to get acquainted with, our friends from Second District. Donations will be accepted. Let's help them make this a successful evening!

If you'd like to help or have questions, please contact Joyce Klasen

(joyce.klasen@crow.org; 814.671.1961); or

Erin Sweeney (sweeney@allegheny.edu; 814.573.7976).

They look forward to hosting this dinner in cooperation with the church community.



Yummy!



Friday the 13th was a slippery snowy day, but some UU die-hards showed up at soup kitchen to feed home-made chili and garlic bread etc to 39 folks. **Our next soup kitchen date is Friday February 11, 10 AM at Stone Methodist Church.**

Thanks to these volunteers:

- ★ John Bender
- ★ Emmy Boughton
- ★ Jim Emerson
- ★ Deb Holland
- ★ Ruby McFerren
- ★ Marty Thaeler
- ★ Ron White

Goods and Services Auction
Saturday June 2, 2012
Save the date!
Save your pennies!

© Cartoonbank.com



"The bidding will start at eleven million dollars."

A Goods and Services Auction sells the promise of services and goods upfront to the winner of the bid. Members, friends, and local merchants donate goods and services that are compiled into a catalog. The first step is to create a catalogue of offerings that has a little bit of something for everyone.

"What can I offer?"

You may offer something you **like to do**, something you have **created**, your **time**, your **labor**, your **expertise** to the highest bidder.

Some Ideas: cook a dinner, paint a room, weed a garden, plant perennials, share your summer house, paddle a canoe, braid hair, bake a birthday cake, chart the stars, write a story, babysit for an evening, chauffeur to shopping, walk in the woods with a picnic, knit mittens, share vegetables, arrange flowers, teach a craft, clean a closet, wash a car, walk a dog, cuddle a kitty, haul stuff, dig a garden, type a paper, tutor a friend, tame a computer, bake brownies, cater a lunch, rub a back, tickle feet, clean up for a party, sew a skirt, mend fences, sing a mushy song, plan for a party...

How can I donate? Fill out the donor form on the next page and email it to church@uumeadville.org or bring it to the church office. Questions? Email miriam.bowman@gmail.com or cburton@allegheny.edu .

Instructions: Fill out this form and bring to the church office.

Or: Mail to the Unitarian Universalist Church 346 Chestnut Street Meadville PA 16335

Or: Email it to church@uumeadville.org

Alternative ways to donate: Go to our website and use our online form.

<http://www.uumeadville.org/>

Questions? Email Miriam Bowman miriam.bowman@gmail.com

or Cynthia Burton cburton@allegheny.edu

Goods And Services Auction Donor Form ~ 2012 Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville

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I/We agree to donate the following item of service for the Unitarian Universalist Church of Meadville's 2012 Good and Services Auction. I understand that the item must be delivered or the service performed within one year of the date of the auction i.e. June 2012

"The bidding will start at eleven million dollars."

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email _____

1st Item or service Description _____

This service is for ___ people each time it is offered. You may sell this service ___ times.

Do not sell this item/service for less than \$ _____

(Optional) This item will be available the night of the auction – yes ___ or no ___

(Optional) This donation must be used by _____(DATE)*

Conditions or Restrictions:

Thank you for your support of the church. If you wish to donate additional items, please attach them to this form.

Miriam Bowman, Chair, Goods & Services Auction 2012

Meet Tempa Lama

Genye Tempa Kukte Lama is an ordained Tibetan Bon Lama, and the founder and spiritual director of Olmo Ling Bon Center, a Tibetan Bon Center affiliated with Menri Monastery, and the founder of Olmo Ling Publications. He trained from the age of six years, has lived in the US since 2000, and teaches regular retreats and workshops on contemplative healing practice and other Bon practices. During the month of February you have a couple opportunities to listen to and learn from him.

- Friday February 24: Tempa Lama will give a free public talk, *The Preciousness of Our Life*, at Allegheny College. The talk will take place from 7 to 8:30 PM at the Ford Memorial Chapel. This is free to all, and no registration is necessary.
- Saturday and Sunday, February 25 and 26: Tempa Lama will lead an inclusive, overnight retreat – *Open Presence* – at the McKeever Environmental Learning Center in Sandy Lake. The retreat includes one night's accommodations and meals for the cost of \$115.

For information about the above and to register for the retreat, contact Sharon at swesoky@allegheny.edu. Registration is limited and closes February 11.

Hot-Dish Haiku

As promised after the Hot Dish dinner on January 21, here are some haikus people submitted. Enjoy!

Into the kitchen
Whatever to make this time?
Must have tater tots.

With friends all around
Sharing memories and food
Warm inside toasty.

White pencil on white
Paper. Someone did not want
Me to write Haiku.
– Ron White

Hungry teenage son
What is there to fill him up?
Hot dish, hot dish, cake.

Much hot comfort food
Fills up my gut with sweet warmth
Dessert and coffee.

I do not do them
I don't engage mouth and mind
I'll just eat in peace.

Weenies cut in half
Lines up around the edges
Creamy Potatoes
– Deb Holland

Calories galore –
Cheese and ham and cake
Thank you UU friends!
– Corinne Chafey

Jello tastes okay
With sour cream and berries
I prefer lobster.
– Marty Thaeler

Clouds fog my glasses
Merino wrapped walks with dogs
Turn within for Winter.
– Cynthia

His eyes are blue green
Oh yes; and they match his shirt
Always, they're very alert

Cold breath winter sing
Resting with warm heart
Happy in my chair

Hot dishes, cold ones
All full of calories Plus
A round ball, that's Me!
– Jan Day

How much can one eat
Each bite better than the last
'Til breathing disappears.
– Miriam

Allergic to mushrooms
What's a girl to do?
Tainted pedigree.
– Lisbet

There was an old lady of note
Who tried to sail off in a boat
She pulled into shore
And said "Never more"
I'd better go home and VOTE!
– Margaret Stewart

Hot dish delight Yum!
A recipe for friendship
6:59ers.

There are a few more – check the next issue in March.

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2011 Church Officers

President: Joyce Milberg
Vice-President: Christian Maher
Secretary: Cynthia Burton
Treasurer: Rick Holmgren
Coordinator of Mission & Outreach: Deb Lehman
Stewardship: Amelia Carr

In the event of an
emergency, please call:
Joyce Milberg at
814.755.7766; or
Cynthia Burton at
814.333.8541

Church Staff

Minister: The Rev. Carmen Emerson
Mon-Tues-Fri 9:30 AM -4:30 PM
Wed: Study & Sermon Day
Thurs: Day Off
R.E. Coordinator: Ariel Denman
Mon & Fri: 10:30 AM-2:30 PM
Wed: 12-3 PM
Music Director: Aimee Reash
Administrator: Carole Schenberg
Mon-Wed-Fri: 10 AM-2 PM
Tues: 8:30 AM-12:30 PM
Custodian: Doug Schenberg

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH OF MEADVILLE**

*346 Chestnut St.
Meadville, Pa. 16335*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED