

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Missoula – Volume 20 Issue 2

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News From the Chair:

I had thought that this letter was basically finished, but didn't send it to Josh because I wanted to look it over one more time. Then I walked to work this morning, and thought of lots of changes I wanted to make. Somehow, when I'm walking, I can think so much better than when I'm sitting in front of my computer. Now, let's see if I can just remember all the points I wanted to add!

I was reading something at work the other day, and came across a phrase that just struck me as so appropriate. It was "Make each day a joy rather than a burden!" Now, I don't normally think of myself as making burdens of my days, but I must confess to occasionally wishing my life away. Oh, I just need to get through this Monday. I'll be so glad when the weekend gets here. I can hardly wait for spring, or summer, or next month. While I do like to have things to look forward to, I often forget to notice how much there is to enjoy today.

Obviously, a big theme with November, and Thanksgiving, is gratitude. Next week, our second Chalice Circle Service is on gratitude. We will be sharing some of the things we are grateful for, so start making your lists. Towards the top of my list is the chance to make connections within this UUFM community. I have met such a wide range of wonderful people. Every week there are interesting people to share stories with, new people to get to know, and familiar people to get to know better. I am grateful that I can count as a friend a wonderful musician like Judy Fjell. All who saw her, Beth, and Janet in concert last month had a real treat. And as I walked this morning, I came across so many more things to be grateful for. The sun lighting up the mountains around Missoula. The two dogs running and playing in the schoolyard while their owners watched on. The pumpkins that survived Halloween to still bring a smile to my face as I walked past them. Yes, there were several smashed in the streets, and I have to acknowledge that things are far from perfect. However, that doesn't mean I have to live in a gloom and doom world.

While we're listing the things we have to be thankful for, let's also think a minute about learning to feel truly joyful for the good fortune of others. I can't be the only one who sometimes (maybe often) feels the twinge of envy, of judgment. Do they really deserve that? As if I, or anyone else, knows the whole story of who deserves what! Maybe we believe there is only so much good fortune to go around, and we want to make sure we get our share. Could looking at God's love as a zero sum game be a reason for intolerance between religions? If God looks favorably on one group of people, we just naturally assume another group is losing favor?

I am especially thankful not to have it held against me when I get a bit preachy. Writing a monthly column, basically about whatever I want, sometimes makes that hard for me to avoid! I am also grateful that Josh is not as picky about deadlines as I would probably be.

Take care,

Mary

**"Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die; so, let us all be thankful."
-Buddha**

November UU Events

Tuesday evenings - Game Night, mainly Scrabble, sometimes Go, Fellowship House, 6:45. If your fave isn't one of those, bring it along and introduce it to everybody.

November 7 - The leaves are falling, and should be almost all out of the trees by Saturday. The Fellowship house is due for a good **Fall Cleaning**. Please come this Saturday and help us rake, vacuum, dust, and just generally spruce things up. We will get started at 10:00 am, and the Fellowship will provide lunch.

November 8 - After the service, stick around for **Getting to Know UU**. If you're interested in becoming a member we ask that you attend a Getting to Know UU session so you know what exactly you're getting yourself into. Current members are also invited to attend and share their thoughts on the Fellowship. Also, our copies of **100 Questions Non-Members Ask About UUism** are here and in the Library at the Fellowship; feel free to borrow a copy of this great resource.

November 8 - It's also time for our **Second Sunday Potluck**, so bring along 'dem tasty vittles and stick around after the service to enjoy the autumnal feasting.

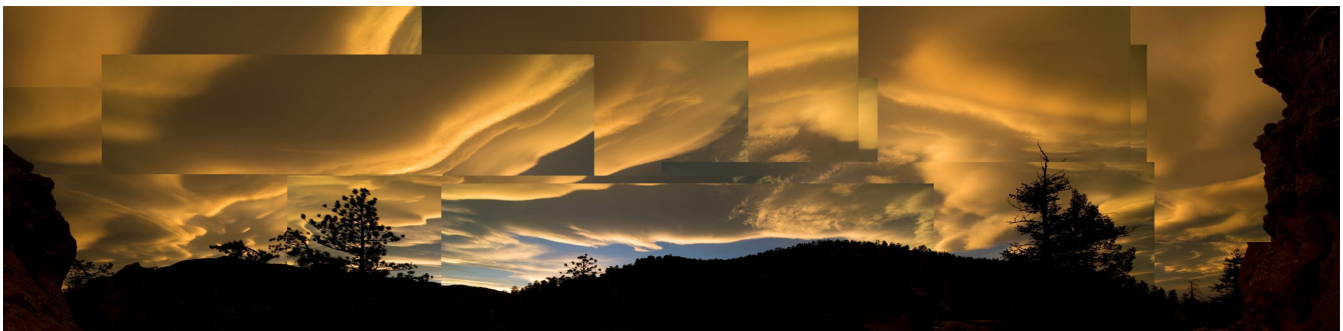
Monday evenings- Lama David Curtis talks about **Tibetan Buddhism** every Monday at 7 pm at the Fellowship house. Suggested donation of \$10.

November 15- The Program committee meets after services. Hang out and help plan our upcoming services.

November 19-The Book club meets to discuss The Last Chinese Chef by Nicole Mones. See the **Eclectic Readers** section below.

December 6-Two of our younger folks, Abaki and Ekoo Beck, host their second Fundraising Chili Feed to raise money for the Helping Hands Tree. Good food plus good cause equals good time. Don't miss it!

UUFM will be having a **Winter Bazaar** to coincide with our **Christmas Potluck** on December 20. Even with this short notice, we should be able to come up with some crafty items to sell. There should be no excuse for not having a good selection of goodies!



Sunday Programs for November

November 8th It's time for Round Two of our introduction to *Chalice Circles*. These are small "compassionate listening" groups that have become an integral part of many UU congregations. This month's topic is Gratitude. See below for some preliminary readings to get you in the mood, and think about a few things for which you are especially grateful to share with your circle.

November 15th *Beth Youngblood* joins us once again for another service of music and song. I always find that mid-November is an excellent time for making a joyful noise unto the gourd [apologies for the seasonal punning-ed.]

November 22nd It's more audience participation with the much anticipated return of our semi-annual *Poetry Service*. Bring a poem to share as we spend a morning in linguistic reverie.

November 29th We take a page from Edward R. Murrow's playbook with our *This I Believe* service. John Sptizberg, Mary Whitsett and Josh Davis share their wide-ranging beliefs about life, the universe and everything.

December 6th *Covenantal-not Creedal*. Mary Nordhagen explains the difference between the UU idea of spiritual community based around a shared covenant of how we relate to each other, versus the more traditional basis of a shared belief system. Followed by a New Member ceremony. (If you're interested in becoming a member, please attend the *Getting to Know UU* session after the service on November 8th.)

Eclectic Readers

This month's book club selection is *The Last Chinese Chef*, by Nicole Mones. The Wall Street Journal says: "Both entertaining and learned, *The Last Chinese Chef* just might be the perfect leisure read. It effortlessly weaves together a fast-paced romantic plot with profound precepts from ancient Chinese food culture. This delicious book will leave you with an intense craving for perfectly prepared Chinese food." November's meeting is at 7:00 pm, Thursday, November 11, at the home of Barbara Cragg, 123 E. Foss Court.

For those who like to plan ahead, next month's book club selection is *Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Strout. According to the *New York Times*, the pleasure in reading "Olive Kitteridge" comes from an intense identification with complicated, not always admirable, characters. And there are moments in which slipping into a character's viewpoint seems to involve the revelation of an emotion more powerful and interesting than simple fellow feeling – a complex, sometimes dark, sometimes life-sustaining dependency on others. There's nothing mawkish or cheap here. There's simply the honest recognition that we need to try to understand people, even if we can't stand them.

UU History Corner

November 17, 2003: The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court issued its decision in the case of Goodridge v. the Department of Public Health of Massachusetts. The court held that under the Constitution of Massachusetts, it is illegal to deny to people of the same gender the same marriage rights granted to people of different genders. The primary plaintiffs were Hillary and Julie Goodridge. Of the 14 plaintiffs, seven were Unitarian Universalists, including Hillary Goodridge. The Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association of the Massachusetts Bay District filed amicus curiae briefs in the case.

[from This Day in Unitarian Universalist History, by Frank Schulman]

Chalice Circles: Readings on Gratitude

If the only prayer you ever say in your life is "thank you," it will be enough.

--Meister Eckhart

Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy.

--Abraham Heschel

A thankful person is thankful under all circumstances. A complaining soul complains even if he lives in paradise.

--Baha'u'llah

To be grateful for the good things that happen in our lives is easy, but to be grateful for all of our lives – the good as well as the bad, the moments of joy as well as the moments of sorrow, the successes as well as the failures, the rewards as well as the rejections – that requires hard spiritual work.

--Henri Nouwen

May it be delightful, my house;
From my head may it be delightful;
To my feet may it be delightful;
Where I lie may it be delightful;
All above me may it be delightful;
All around me may it be delightful.

--Navaho chant

A Gentle Thanksgiving

Join Sue Eakins and the Western MT Vegetarian Society for a meat-free Thanksgiving feast. Taking place at the Fellowship House on Saturday November 14th at 12 noon. Find out more about the monthly V-Potlucks by visiting the New Dawn MT Farm Sanctuary website at www.NewDawnMT.com or email Sue at newdawnmt@gmail.com.





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