

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PEOPLE OF **COMMITMENT?** (from Soul Matters, adapted for UUFM)

There's a natural, and important, go-getter quality to this month. After all, huge payoffs come when we keep our commitments. Maintaining loyalty to healthy habits not only lengthens our lives but enriches them. Faithfully following through on our relationship commitments allows us to fully realize ourselves as the interdependent creatures we are, as well as increases just about every metric of happiness, meaning and success out there. And keeping the promises we make to ourselves ultimately gives us the strength, groundedness and self-confidence needed to follow through on all those promises we make to those around us.

Add it all up and what we get is a picture of commitment that looks a lot like climbing a mountain. The path is long and littered with challenges, but there's definitely a beautiful view waiting for us at the top. Staying on course is the goal. What's needed most in our backpacks are the qualities of endurance, focus, determination and grit. And, of course, no commitment climb would be complete without a handful of coaches offering us motivational words and strategic tips, along with a supportive crowd that lines the path and cheers us on with encouraging shouts of "You can do it!"

There is no doubt that such climbs are worth it. All of us certainly need a few of these successful journeys to feel fulfilled. But what about those we notice along the way? What about those we see sitting on the side of the trail, bruised and tending to their wounds? What about those we see walking the other way? Those who have stopped half-way up and are now traveling back down the path?

There's the friend whose marriage was good for so many years but, through no real fault of her or her spouse, that relationship has now just grown thin. She is the one sitting there struggling to accept the sad reality that some marriages just weren't meant to last a lifetime. There's also the co-worker that is proud to have maintained a successful career for 20 years that supported his family, but who-because of that commitment to stable work – had to turn his back on an earlier dream of being a writer. And over by that turn in the road sits your sister who gave her faithfulness but only got betrayal and infidelity in return. Then, of course, there are the many fellow travelers who bravely remain committed to the long-haul goals of health and security, but who walk wearily because addictions or bad luck have turned their journey into a one of one step forward and two steps back. All of which is to say that maybe what's needed most this month is for us to tone down all the motivational talk so we can make at least a little room for mourning.

Yes, the path of commitment is a lot like climbing a mountain, but it is just as often more like trudging through a thick forest where all sorts of paths complicate our journey. Not every path of commitment is clear and long, with a reward waiting at the end. Some just lead to dead ends. Others start out along beautiful streams but mid-way through snakes slither out through the grass. Some trails are simply too steep and must be abandoned, not just for our safety but for the safety of those we love. And almost always there's that fork in the road. We want to travel both, but we are forced to choose. So commitment to one necessarily means traveling with regret and "What ifs.

In such woods, our backpacks need to be filled with more than just endurance, focus and grit. Self-forgiveness, acceptance, and the ability to let go or admit "I was wrong" need to be tucked in there too.

In such woods, people need us to be more than coaches and cheerleaders. They need something more like pit stop crews. A trusted circle of people willing to offer them repair and rest.

We need to remember that for every person wanting to hear "push through the pain," there are two needing someone to say, "It's ok to tell me about your pain." Sometimes the best advice is "break it down to one step at a time;" other times the wisest words we can offer are "It's ok to stop trying."

Less pushing grit and more encouragement to forgive themselves. Less shouting "You can do it!" from the sidelines, and more whispering "I'm here to listen."

Yes, there's no doubt that's exactly what so many need this month.

And maybe that's exactly what you need too ...

MARCH 2021 SUNDAY SERVICES

Our Soul Matters theme in March explores "What does it mean to be a people of **Commitment**?"

MARCH 7 "THE TRANSIENT AND THE PERMANENT: WHAT IS WORTH OUR COMMITMENT?"

Rev Jonalu Johnstone speaks. In 1841, Unitarian Theodore Parker preached a sermon "The Transient and Permanent in Christianity," that created a stir. He rejected as transient beliefs that orthodox Christians thought were permanent. No matter our time or place, we need to continually sift through our heritage and our hearts to find what is transient and what is permanent, what is worth our commitment, and where our commitments become idolatrous. Our convener is Dick Beeman at 785 317-7576 or <u>rbeeman@cox.net</u>.

MARCH 14 "TEMPTATION:

WHAT KEEPS US FROM FOLLOWING OUR COMMITMENTS?"

Rev Jonalu Johnstone presents this service. No matter how strongly we embrace our commitments, we often fail to follow through. Brene Brown talks about an "aspiration gap," that is, the difference between what we aspire to be and what we find ourselves actually doing. What keeps us from walking the talk? Where do we stumble and fail? How do we get better at keeping our promises to ourselves and others? Our convener is Susan Adamchak at 785 477-4707 or <u>sadmachak@kansas.net</u>.

MARCH 21 "HOW FAR WOULD YOU GO TO KEEP A COMMITMENT?"

Rev Jonalu Johnstone speaks. Many have paid an ultimate price for keeping a commitment--from Michael Servetus burned at the stake for his commitment to Unitarianism, to James Reeb and Jimmie Lee Jackson who sacrificed their lives for voting rights. When we are bound to service beyond ourselves, we may find a deeper level of commitment than we imagined possible. Our convener is Cathy Hedge at 785 537-1101 or <u>catherinejeanhedge@gmail.com</u>.

MARCH 28 "MANHATTAN MUTUAL AID"

Fellowship friend Andrew Elliott speaks. Our convener is Katie Kingery-Page at 785 341-5650 or <u>kingerypage@gmail.com</u>.

There will be <u>NO in-person attendance</u> at Sunday services at this time. Find a link and instructions to join us for lively and well-attended **VIRTUAL SERVICES** on Zoom at <u>uufm.net/zoom</u>.

MARCH RACIAL JUSTICE MEETINGS

The UUFM Racial Justice team gathers Sunday, MARCH 7 and 21, at 4 pm, to continue our exploration of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change's final report, *Widening the Circle of Concern.* Details on page 6 of this newsletter.



UUFM is a WELCOMING CONGREGATION

Learn more about the Welcoming Congregation initiative at www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/program

UU FELLOWSHIP OF MANHATTAN

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SUNDAY SERVICES begin at 10:45 AM at https://zoom.us/j/92604313401?pwd=OXlye W1RQ0I4U1cxQ1FpU0x2TlZqdz09

Watch weekly announcements as our COVID-19 response evolves.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Jonalu's Journal	3
Racial Justice Team mtgs	3
Minister's Virtual Hours	3
Religious Ed / Zoom into RE	4
DRE's Virtual Hours	4
UUFM BELOVED COMMUNITY PAGE	4
Activities, Events / Caring Team	5
PATH TO MEMBERSHIP CLASS	5
Social Action / Helping Hands	5
UUFM Blessing Box / Fair Trade	5
PLEDGE DRIVE LAUNCHES	6
Racial Justice team schedule	6
Learn About Our Fellowship	6
Race and Reconciliation Mtg	6
Administrator's Virtual Hours	7
Sunday Services on Zoom	7
March Calendar	9

COMING UP ...

Post your photos on our **BELOVED COMMUNITY PAGE**. Learn more on page 4 of this newsletter.

Learn about caring for each other at UUFM. Join us on Zoom for a **CARING TEAM MTG** Wednesday, **MARCH 3**. More on page 5.

The **RACIAL JUSTICE** team gathers Sunday, **MARCH 7** and **21**. Learn more on page 6. As I write, we are coming out of the deepest freeze I have been through since I moved away from Wisconsin in 2000. The sun is shining, and I am ready to believe that spring is coming.

In the sunshine, we can imagine springtime returning to our lives. Many of you have received vaccinations. Our democracy survived an insurrection. We are beginning to believe that we, too, may survive.

At the same time, we are aware that not everyone did survive, and that not everyone will survive. We know that human mortality is real. And that it will be awhile before we are gathering in person in the ways we used to. Still, we are encouraged that spring may be around the corner.

In ancient times, people may have been more aware of the passing of the seasons. They lived closer to the beauty and terrors of the natural world. They created stories to explain, explore, and grasp the cycles of nature. Stories like that of Osiris's life and death, of goddesses of fertility like Cybele, Inana, and Eostre, of the connection between daughter Persephone and mother Demeter. Remembering the tales reminds us that spring, though new each year, is never really



new. It has come again and again.

This year, though, we don't even get a spring break! Despite that, this month is a good time to reconnect with spring and the natural cycles. Get ready for flowers and thunderstorms, for moderating

temperatures and prairie burns. Look forward to relaxed outdoor strolls and sitting in the sun.

One of the great teachings of the natural world is that cycles endure. Even now, as we brace ourselves through climate change, the cycles of the seasons continue. They offer me an anchor--a belief that through the changes, a thread continues to link and weave, a piece of that interconnected web of all existence. I remember the Japanese traveling poet Matsuo Basho who wrote in the seventeenth century:

Long conversations beside blooming irises – joys of life on the road. I connect with his joys so terribly long ago and remember my own joys. I am glad and rejoice in the coming of spring. I hope you do, too.



Contact Jonalu at 405 627-3859 or <u>revjonalu@uufm.net</u>. Read Jonalu's blog at <u>uufm.net/topic/minister-blog/</u>

RACIAL JUSTICE TEAM MTGS

The UUFM Racial Justice team gathers on Sunday, MARCH 7 and 21, at 4 pm, to continue our exploration of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change's final report, <u>Widening the Circle of</u> <u>Concern</u>. Find details and future meeting dates on page 6 of this newsletter.

Rev Jonalu Johnstone's Virtual Office Hours

Rev Jonalu Johnstone will be available during virtual office hours from from 3 to 5 pm, on Tuesday, MARCH 2, 9, 16, and 23 and Thursday, MARCH 4, 11, and 18. Log in at



https://uuma.zoom.us/j/9797400824?pwd= WjNTUldoci9VWjNtMFNsNjBsMIZTZz09. Find a link at uufm.net/contact-us. Or you can phone in by calling 669 900 6833. When you hear the recorded voice say, "Welcome to Zoom. Please enter your meeting ID followed by pound" dial 979 740 0824#. Contact Jonalu at 405 627-3859 or revjonalu@uufm.net (emergencies only March 25 through 31).

FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Looks like it'll be a little bit longer before we're back together at the fellowship, but with spring just around the corner we plan to start back up with Saturday, outdoor gatherings. Watch for more information.

In the meantime, we'd like to do some one-on-one Zoom (or possibly in-person, yet distanced) visits in order to catch up on what you've been doing. Kids might especially like to visit during spring break week. Molly is working on a schedule so stay tuned for more information on how to sign up.

In anticipation, Sandy Nelson

Contact Sandy at 785 341-0135 or dre@uufm.net.

POST ON UUFM'S BELOVED COMMUNITY PAGE

Here's a project that I hope you'll enjoy ... making connection with our beloved community. It's as simple as sharing a comment or a picture. We'd love to hear from you about 1) your favorite local spot, 2) your favorite COVID activity, 3) your favorite UU principle. Here's a link where it's all happening: <u>http://bit.ly/3sMq5oR</u>. If you have difficulty posting, feel free to contact <u>Sandy</u> and she'll post for you.

ZOOM INTO RE!

Kids and parents are invited to check in with Sandy Nelson, from 10 and 10:30 am, before Sunday services. Log in at us04web.zoom.us/j/4849854310?pwd=TDhOZ1RRbGpOU1p sZG9PSVEzcnNadz09. Meeting ID is 484 985 4310. If you're asked for a password, use *024920*. Learn more from Sandy at 785 341-0135 or DRE@uufm.net.

REGISTER YOUR CHILD(REN)

Remember, all children must be registered for the 2020/2021 school year. Registration forms are available at <u>http://form.jotform.us/form/51486475507160</u>.



SANDY FOUND SOME FRIENDS AT THE FELLOWSHIP. SEE MORE AT uufm.net/march-2021/.

BOOKS TO LEND

Sandy reminds us, "I am blessed to live in a house with many books. If you're tired of digital media and the library is still not easily accessible, I've got some to lend." View the list at https://bit.ly/2S89QBL.

DRE'S SCHEDULE

Sandy will be available on Zoom during virtual office hours **Tuesdays** and **Thursdays**, from 3:30 to 4:30 pm.

Call or text Sandy at 785 341-0135 to arrange a video chat.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS - EVENTS ARE OPEN TO ALL

- The **WOMEN'S COFFEE** group meets on Zoom MONDAYS and THURSDAYS at 9:30 am. Join us for morning coffee and conversation. Contact Jane Pelletier at 785 537-0954 or <u>mjanepelletier@gmail.com</u>, for an invitation.
- The **Men's Lunch** group meets virtually EVERY WEDNESDAY, at 12 noon. If you would like an invitation to this Zoom gathering, please contact Kathleen Oldfather at 785 537-3738 or <u>kjoldfather@gmail.com</u>.
- Join UUFM members and friends for **DINNER HOUR CONVER-SATION** on Zoom, THURSDAYS, from 5:30 to 6:45 pm. If you'd like to attend, contact Sue Turner at 785 537-2349 or <u>office@uufm.net</u>.
- The UUFM **BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP** meets Friday, MARCH 26, at 10 am. Currently we are meeting on Zoom. We welcome new members. Learn more from Lorrie Cross at 785 539-7883 or <u>Imcross@kansas.net</u>. To request a Zoom invitation, contact Susan Adamchak at sadamchak@kansas.net.

UUFM CARING TEAM MTG

During our month of Beloved Community, we shared our concern with one another with cards and postcards, a sign of the love and support we extend as individuals and as a congregation. Caring for one another remains an important part of our community, even though it is harder in these pandemic times to keep track of what we need from one another. If you would like to be part of extending caring and weaving the community together, please join our Caring Team. We don't meet very often at all, but we do extend care on a regular basis. We meet via Zoom, at https://uuma.zoom.us/j/9797400824; meeting ID: 979 740 0824, or call in at 1 312 626-6799, on Wednesday, MARCH 3 at 6 pm. All are welcome. If you cannot be there and want to let us know of a caring need or of a way you want to volunteer, contact Jonalu at jonalu@sbcqlobal.net or 405 627-3859. And, whether or not you are part of the Caring Team, thank you for all the ways you reach out and care for other members and friends of the congregation.

SOCIAL ACTION NEWS

HELPING HANDS

In MARCH, Helping Hands contributions will be collected for **WONDER WORKSHOP**, providing opportunities for growth and learning to area children. Learn more at www.wonderworkshop.org.

In February, Fellowship members and friends gave Sunday morning collections to the Kansas Abortion Fund. THANK YOU for your generous donations!

While we meet virtually, our Helping Hands recipients count ono the annual contributions our congregation provides more than ever. Donate on-line to Helping Hands, or give to UUFM's General Operating fund, at <u>uufm.net/donate/</u>.

FAIR TRADE COFFEE

anne cowan@sbcglobal.net.



Equal Exchange whole bean, ground, and decaf coffees, and chocolate and tea are still available for purchase from Anne Cowan, who has stock available at home. Contact Anne at 785 537-2025 or

Equal Exchange works in collaboration with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), following the standards and principles of fair trade on 100 percent of its products.



UUFM BLESSING BOX

UUFM is sponsoring a **BLESSING BOX** and **LITTLE FREE LIBRARY** at Wonder Workshop. Doug Walter reports our box has received notably increasing demand, especial-

ly in the past few weeks. To contribute shelf-stable food, cleaning and hygiene products, or childrens' and youth books, contact Doug at <u>kbsi@cox.net</u>. Or, drop by Wonder Workshop, at 506 S 4th Street, and stock the boxes with your items. The boxes are for people to take what they need and leave what they can. You can donate funds to help support the boxes at <u>uufm.net/donate/</u>.

BAG LADY AUCTION - MESI

The Manhattan Emergency Shelter's annual Bag Lady Auction will not be held this year, to accommodate COVID restrictions. MESI still needs the support of the community. Contribute to the Emergency Shelter at www.mesikansas.org/donate.html.

PLEDGE DRIVE STARTING SOON!

Background work has started on the UUFM pledge drive for the coming year [2021/2022]. You soon will be hearing from a member to talk about our pledge goals and how you can help. So, check your texts, emails, or you might even get an old-fashioned call! Take care and looking forward to the summer,

Daniel Swenson, UUFM Treasurer

Contact Dan, at 785 341-1973 or swenson.home@gmail.com, with your guestions about Fellowship finances, or to make your pledge.

JANUARY 2021 HELPING HANDS CONTRIBUTIONS

In January, our Helping Hands recipient was UFM's Project EXCELL. Members' and friends' gifts to our Sunday offertory collection during January totaled \$568, which will assist Project EXCELL's mission to provide a college-like experience to developmentally delayed adults. THANK YOU EVERYONE, for your support of local non-profits through the UUFM Helping Hands program. In March, our Helping Hands recipient will be Wonder Workshop. You can give to the current Helping Hands organization at any time, at uufm.net/donate/.

UUFM RACIAL JUSTICE TEAM

The UUFM Racial Justice Team has committed itself to studying the UUA Commission on Institutional Change's final report, Widening the Circle of *Concern.* This means meeting more often than we usually do. Since we have endorsed Black Lives Matter, this seems a good next step to understanding the changes we may have to make in order to become more antiracist and multicultural. We welcome anyone in the congregation to join us.

We meet at 4 pm on Sundays, on scheduled dates seen below.

- MARCH 7 Session 7, Educating for Liberation
- MARCH 21 Session 8, Innovations and Risk-Taking
- APRIL 4 Session 9, Restoration and Reparations
- APRIL 18 Session 10, Accountability and Resources
- MAY 2 Session 11, Where Do we Go from Here?

We are meeting on Zoom. Log in at <u>uuma.zoom.us/i/9797400824?pwd=</u> WjNTUldoci9VWjNtMFNsNjBsMlZTZz09. The meeting ID is 979 740 0824. The password is zeandale. Learn more from Jonalu Johnstone at revjonalu@uufm.net.



Conversations on Race and Reconciliation

Listening to **Local Voices**

Race | Justice | Safety | Policing Let's talk, MHK!

Monday, March 29, 2021 7-8:45 pm (sign in at 6:45pm)

Virtual Event - Registration required

Preliminary interviews will be posted on www.facebook.com/manhattanksConversations or: @manhattanksConversations Register at: bit.ly/justiceMHK to receive event access link

SPONSORED BY

Manhattan Nonviolence Initiative Manhattan MLK Memorial Committee Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy

ALL ARE WELCOME

Deepening Understanding Developing New Perspectives Discussing Community Concerns



LEARN ABOUT OUR FELLOWSHIP

If you have been considering becoming a member of UUFM, Rev Jonalu Johnstone has prepared a list of readings and videos to expand your knowledge and understanding of Unitarian Universalism, and our Fellowship. Visit uufm.net/exploring-membership, to find links, and information of interest to all. If you have questions, or would like to learn more about membership, contact Jonalu at revionalu@uufm.net, or Membership Chair Shirley Hobrock at shirleyhobrock2@gmail.com.

BUILDING USE AND SCHEDULING

The UUFM building is now available to reserve, with limited group size, length of use, and the expectation that those using the building will practice reasonable social distancing and cleaning following use. Please contact Susan Turner to schedule your meeting space, at 785 537-2349 or office@uufm.net.

MARCH NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for submissions to the March edition of *The UUFM Voice* is Monday, **MARCH 15.** Submissions received later may not be included in the newsletter. *If your group is meeting in a new way during the pandemic, please let us know* so that we can pass this information on to other members and friends who may want to participate. Send your newsletter contributions to Susan Turner at 785 537-2349 or <u>office@uufm.net</u>.

HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

- Contact Fellowship administrator Susan Turner at 785 537-2349 or <u>office@uufm.net</u> to **UPDATE YOUR MAILING ADDRESS**, **PHONE**, or **EMAIL**, or to **CANCEL YOUR SUBSCRIPTION** to this newsletter. You may also contact Susan to learn how to join our private **Coffee and Conversations FACEBOOK** group.
- If you've considered **BECOMING A MEMBER** of UUFM, ask Welcoming chair Shirley Hobrock at 785 776-3175 or <u>shirleyjhobrock@hotmail.com</u>, or Jonalu Johnstone at 785 537-2349 or <u>revjonalu@uufm.net</u>.
- Fellowship members may receive **UU WORLD MAGAZINE**, without cost. An audio version of *UU World* is available for those with vision or reading difficulties. To subscribe, contact Susan Turner at 785 537-2349 or <u>office@uufm.net</u>. Read *UU World* online at <u>www.uuworld.org</u>.
- Join in discussions of interest; receive information on community events, and last-minute updates and announcements on our UUFM **EMAIL LIST**. Contact Susan Turner at <u>office@uufm.net</u> to subscribe.
- Consider the convenience of **ELECTRONIC GIVING**. UUFM relies on the financial support of our congregation and automatic monthly contributions offer a simple and easy way to give on a regular basis. Learn more from Fellowship bookkeeper Sandy Nelson at 785 341-0135 or <u>sandralounelson@yahoo.com</u>. You can also make pledge payments, contribute to our General Operating fund, or give to our Helping Hands recipient directly, at <u>uufm.net/donate</u>. *Thank you!*

SUNDAY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please contact fellowship administrator Susan Turner at 785 537-2349 or <u>office@uufm.net</u>, *NO LATER THAN WEDNESDAY EVENING* with announcements and information for inclusion in slides displayed before virtual Sunday morning services, from 10:30 to 10:45 am.

CARING FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Providing support to one another is one of the most important things we do as religious community. Our Caring Team is ready to support you, or help you in supporting others. If you're sick and could use someone to do errands, or can use any kind of assistance or support, please let us know at 785 537-2349 or office@uufm.net.

PARTICIPATE IN VIRTUAL MEETINGS AND SERVICES

Join us from home to participate in virtual Sunday services. We begin announcements at 10:30 am. The service follows at 10:45 am. First, download Zoom at <u>https://zoom.us</u>, then click into the Sunday service at <u>https://zoom.us/j/92604313401?pwd=OXlyeW1RQ0I4U1cxQ1FpU0x2TIZ</u> <u>qdz09</u>. Or call 346 248 7799 to listen on your phone. Meeting ID is 926 0431 3401, and the passcode is *zeandale*. Find helpful hints and clickable links at <u>uufm.net/zoom/</u>.

ADMINISTRATOR'S VIRTUAL HOURS

Office Administrator Susan Turner will be available during virtual office hours from 3 to 5 pm, on SATURDAYS in March. If you haven't already done so, download Zoom at <u>https://zoom.us</u>, then log in at <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85495266852</u> any time between 3 and 5 pm. The meeting ID is 854 9526 6825. Contact Susan at any time at 785 537-2349 or <u>office@uufm.net</u>.



