



Monthly Musings from Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer

A flashlight, a small cardboard box with a piece of paper inside, an empty shampoo bottle and several of his books – these are among the things that captured my child’s attention this morning as we all got ready for the day. Rylan’s little life is drenched in wonder about his world. So much is brand new, curious and worthy of wondering exploration. What is this? What does it do? Does it make a sound? How does it taste? (actually, that one should probably be first on the list). People often say that children are excellent teachers in the ways of wondering. It just comes naturally to them, a birthright gift.

The biologist and conservationist Rachel Carson wrote about this gift in her book *The Sense of Wonder*. “A child’s world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision,

that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood. If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength. If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder without any such gift fairies, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.”

I aspire to be that kind of companion for my son. However, I know that the degree to which I will be successful does not depend solely on my

Sunday Services

9:45 and 11:30 am

228 Gougler Ave.
Kent, Ohio 44240
Phone: 330-673-4247
Fax: 330-677-4772
www.kentuu.org

Minister:

Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer
minister-uukent@sbcglobal.net

Minister's office hours:

Tuesday - Friday
By appointment

Congregational**Administrator:**

MaryBeth Hannan

Office hours:

Mon. through Fri. 9 - 4

Religious Ed. Director:

Karen Lapidus
dre-uukent@sbcglobal.net

DRE's Office Hours:

Tuesday and/or Wednesday
By appointment

Music Director:

Hal Walker

Commissioned Lay**Leader:**

Rev. Christie Anderson
christiea@neo.rr.com

Affiliated**Community Minister:**

Rev. Renee Ruchotzke
zimlar@juno.com

Newsletter editor:

Saul Flanner
newsletter@kentuu.org

Deadline:

The 20th of each month



Meg Milko and Lois Weir
show off their own childlike
sense of joy and wonder at
November's service auction.

ability to pay attention to him and his wondering about the world. To be successful, I must also cultivate my own ability to wonder and marvel at this world in which we live. Like many adults, it is easy for me to get focused on my agenda and keep myself busy with all kinds of tasks. I can't just put "cultivate my sense of wonder" on my to-do list for today and expect to squeeze it in like another task. Cultivating a sense of wonder is more a stance than a task, more a way of being than doing. I think wondering also responds well to a sense of spaciousness; both in ourselves mentally, emotionally and spiritually and in our calendars, too.

This month we will wonder together about the gift of wonder. Maybe we'll even find a way to practice wondering too. Whether you approach the holidays ahead with a joyful or heavy heart or some mixture of bittersweet, this is a good time of year to cultivate our capacity to wonder.

I hope to see you in church,

Melissa

UPCOMING SERVICES

9:45 and 11:30 am

December 7 - What Wondrous Love

*Rev. Melissa Carvill Ziemer
and Worship Associate Justin Czekaj*

Love is wondrous and so is life. This morning we will lift up spiritual and scientific insights about the critical role that wonder plays in our capacity to embrace it all. Come let this service help you prepare to embrace the wonders of this time of year.

December 14 - A Rose in the Wintertime

*Rev. Melissa Carvill Ziemer
and Worship Associate Sophie Smith*

Throughout the Americas, many amazing stories have been told about Our Lady of Guadalupe. Have you ever wondered what inspiration she might have for you and your own search? This is your chance to explore!

December 21 - Winter Wonder Wonderful

*Sandy Eaglen,
Director of Religious Education Karen Lapidus
and Worship Associate Bonnie Harper*

Join us for our annual holiday pageant as we explore through story and song how Hanukah, the Solstice and Christmas converge in wonder.

December 28 - Laughter Sunday

*Mike Hovancsek
and Worship Associate Lori McGee*

9:45 only!

The less said about this service the better. Fair warning: Those of you sitting in the first three rows will get wet.

January 4 - Spiritual Activism

*Andrew Rome
and Worship Associate Mary Lou Holly*

Our faith calls us to action. As we work to build a better world this new year, we'll hear stories of the spiritual lessons learned from activism. Come and renew your commitment and renew your spirit.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

4:30 pm - Young Family Friendly Service

*Rev. Renee Zimelis Ruchotzke
and Director of Religious Education Karen Lapidus*

This interactive service is designed especially for families with young children who are sure to be filled with wiggles and excitement. Dress your child in their Christmas finery or their Christmas pajamas – whichever will be more fun – and come join the celebration.

6:30 pm - Family Friendly Service

*Rev. Melissa Carvill Ziemer,
Director of Religious Education Karen Lapidus
and Worship Associate Lori McGee*

Created with families with school aged children in mind, this service of lessons and carols features the beautiful music of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent Peace Choir and Tone Chimers as well as uplifting story, candlelight and a chance to reflect on the meaning of Christmas. Nursery care for infants and toddlers will be offered only at this service.

8:30 pm - Adult Oriented Service

*Rev. Melissa Carvill Ziemer
and Worship Associate Lori McGee*

Created with adults and older teens in mind, this service of lessons and carols also features the beautiful music of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent Peace Choir and Tone Chimers as well as inspiring poetry, candlelight and a chance to reflect on the meaning of Christmas.



Our Holiday Pageant: A Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent Tradition

from Karen Lapidus

It's that time of year! One of my favorite activities of the holiday season is to help to coordinate the church pageant. This special multigenerational worship service has been held on the last Sunday before Christmas for the last several years. This year it will happen on December 21st at both the 9:45 and the 11:30 services.

In past years we have produced a version of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and put on a rollicking version of *Emmet Otter's Christmas* complete with a jug band. We have done two very-close-to-traditional tellings of the nativity story with *The Last Straw* and last year's *Welcome All, Welcome to the Stable*.

For many churches, such as the United Methodist church of my childhood, involvement in the annual Christmas pageant serves a rite of passage for children. I began my "pageant career" as an angel and then graduated to a shepherd. I dreamed of playing Mary, of course, like most of the other girls, but alas, that wasn't to be. It really didn't matter, because I simply loved participating. Looking forward to being a part of that long-standing tradition and helping to make Christmas more joyous for my family and friends brought me great joy.

It is said that the Christmas Pageant tradition was initiated by Saint Francis of Assisi in 1223 in a cave in the hills above Greccio, Italy. He imagined that if the story of Jesus'

birth was staged by real people and animals, then the story would be more accessible and real.

Of course, as Unitarian Universalists, we bring our own traditions and points of view to the process! We honor the Christian traditions while assuring that the presentations align with our own theologies.

This year we are blessed by the good timing of Christmas, the winter Solstice and Hanukkah all occurring during the same week. This will give us the opportunity to stage a wonderful pageant which will address the beauty and commonality of all three holidays.

According to my records, this year will be the fifth time that Sandy Eaglen has headed up our efforts. Sandy brings such joy, commitment and experience to our pageants. Hal Walker, our Music Director, again will be working with the Golden Tones to provide some lovely music. Our many actors are busy studying the script and considering their costume choices. It is great fun!

Join us on the 21st for *Winter Wonder Wonderful*.

In faith and with love,

Karen Lapidus
Director of Religious Education



Church members proudly display their creations from the Ugly Christmas Sweater Decorating event



Holiday Gift Collection

The RE Committee is sponsoring a NEW toy collection for Kent Social Services. Unwrapped toys and/or gift cards for teens, can be placed in the box downstairs in Fessenden Hall until Dec. 7th. Monetary donations to benefit the residents of Freedom House, a homeless shelter for veterans, are also being accepted until Dec. 21st. All money collected will be used to purchase gift cards for the veterans. Checks should be made payable to the church, with "Freedom House" written on the memo line.



Members of the Golden Tones
Youth Choir perform for
the congregation.

COM! Have You Heard of Us?

Our church has so very many committees that sometimes you might learn about one you never knew existed! The Committee on Ministry is one that does its quiet work each month with little fanfare. We meet once a month to discuss the well-being of the congregation.

We function as a vision or oversight group and we make sure that there is open and appropriate communication within the church. Many changes are happening in our church and you may feel some issues need further examination, such as concerns about a member's actions or concerns about the actions of a group within the church. The Committee on Ministry is just the group to do that!

The current committee consists of the Chair, Eric van Baars and members: Trish McLoughlin, Amanda Rome, Mike Hovancsek and Melissa Carvill-Ziemer (ex officio). Everyone on the committee is open to hearing concerns from members of the congregation.

Simple Gifts received...

Elaine Bowen
Sandy Eaglen
MaryBeth & Dan Hannan
Jane & Ed Krimmer
Rhonda Richardson

In honor of Rylan Alexander Carvill
Ziemer's dedication and 1st birthday

Renee & Randy Ruchotzke
in honor of John Ziemelis,
beloved father

Joel & Kathie Slater

In celebration of Walden and in honor
of Jill Forsman, Bruce Richards, Mary
& Randy Leeson & Colleen Norris

Meg Milko

In honor of Trish McLoughlin's years of
work on the auction as the volunteer
coordinator. I miss you already, it's not
as easy as you made it look. Thanks!

Bonnie Harper

in memory of Caroline Arnold

Paulette Thurman

in honor of Caroline Arnold

Our Simple Gifts program is designed to encourage everyday giving. If members and friends of the congregation continue to remember the church with regular gifts, we will be well on our way to building the kind of endowment that can help ensure our congregation's continuing health and vitality.

No gift is too small or too large. Donations can be made in celebration, in honor of someone or something, in appreciation or to note a special occasion. If you would like to participate, the blue Simple Gift envelopes can be found in the pews; please include your dedication and name so we can provide you with a donation credit. Thank you.

Raising the Bar

"The religious life does not come easy, and it is not cheap. Churches that set the bar high in terms of membership and charitable giving will find that people strive to achieve the standard."

—Wayne Clark



We are a generous people. Our history is comprised of examples of generosity of time, spirit, and treasure. We were founded as a Universalist Church after the most bloody war in American history when a small group of Kent residents gathered to proclaim universal love amidst the sorrows and grief of reconstructing a country. What an example of generosity of spirit.

More recently (the 90's), when faced with a seemingly insurmountable hurdle of financing a new roof for our beloved, but aging building, the UUCK congregation rallied to do so. This feat occurred after two decades of determined effort and giving of time and energy to repair and refurbish our church. Walls were scrapped and repainted. New ceiling tiles were placed in the sanctuary. Fessenden Hall was renovated and stenciled. However, the funds did not seem available for the \$20,000 replacement of the roof. Church leaders developed a plan.

At the annual Service Auction, a surprising call was made to "Fund an Item"—the roof. The auctioneer called for a donation of \$5,000. Everyone looked around without much expectation for a reply. A quiet moment, followed by a hand going up and the words, "We will." An audible gasp from the crowd was heard.

"I have an offer of \$5,000. Is there another?" Silence.

"Is there a pledge of \$4,000, \$3000?"

Another voice was heard . "\$2,000"? Again a voice.

"How about \$1000?" Two more voices. "\$500?" Several voices.

\$100?" Many voices. "\$50? Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. \$25?" Again, many voices.

In a matter of ten minutes, the roof and "bar" was raised. UUCK took another step towards creating a wider culture of generosity. We celebrated our feat and looked at each other with new and more confident eyes. We were a generous people striding towards our future.

This year the community once again showed a strong belief in our future and in generosity with a similar call for funds for the roof of the annex at the Annual Auction of Goods and Services. Almost \$4000 was raised.

Thank you.

The Stewardship Team

Kathie Slater
Meg Milko

Sandy Eaglen
Marion Yeagler

Claudia Miller



KentHogwarts Winter 2015 The Philosopher's Stone

Session dates – February 14-16, 2015

Priority Application Deadline – January 4, 2015

Open Application Deadline – January 11, 2015

The next KentHogwarts session will be February 14-16! KentHogwarts, a ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent, is a day camp for children in Kindergarten* through age 17. We use the wizarding world of Harry Potter to explore Unitarian Universalist principles and values.

Classes such as Potions, Herbology, Divination, and Charms provide opportunities for students to discover the most powerful Defense Against the Dark Arts is LOVE!

Applications will be mailed on December 7 to returning students and children of the UU Church of Kent. If you would like your child to receive an application, please let us know at registration@kenthogwarts.org or leave a note in the Hogwarts mailbox in the annex. We accept students based on postmark date through January 11 with priority given to UUCK children whose applications are postmarked by January 4. We are very grateful for this community's continued support as we embark on our 14th year of KentHogwarts!

**Children 5 years of age but not yet enrolled in Kindergarten will be considered on a case by case basis through Summer 2015. Beginning Winter 2016, Kindergarten experience will be required.*

There's a Book For That

I'd like to invite you to bring your kids into the Founders Lounge soon and browse the Family and Children's library. You can find all sorts of amazing titles for your child to borrow. The library offers books for all ages and covers a wide variety of topics. Did you know one of our sections is called The Interdependent Web? Borrow a book of science experiments or explore nature with your child. Learn about other cultures or teach your child fun and easy ways to care for Mother Earth. We have books for that!

From Harry Potter to Beatrix Potter, there is something for everyone.

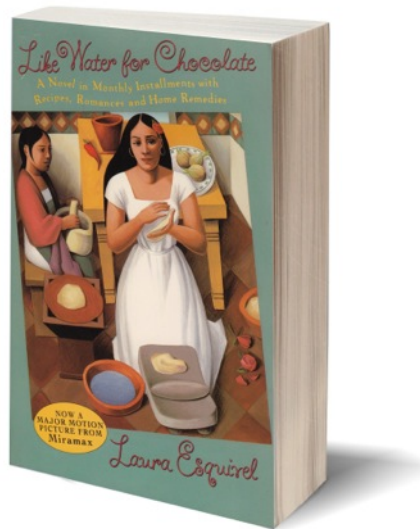
You will also find a section for life's more serious and difficult subjects to talk about with kids. You will find a large offering of story books covering multiple religious traditions and of course books on Unitarian Universalism for kids. Please come by and borrow a book or two!

If you would like to donate to the Family and Children's Library feel free to contact Colleen Thoele for details.

Words to Live By...

"Any book that helps
a child to form a habit
of reading, to make
reading one of his deep
and continuing needs,
is good for him."

~Maya Angelou



Like Water for Chocolate

The Patricia Pownall UU Book Group will be meeting on Tuesday, December 9, at 7 pm in the home of Janice Schelat. This month we are reading *Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel.

This tale of family life in turn-of-the-century Mexico is a winning blend of poignant romance and bittersweet wit. The classic love story takes place on the De la Garza ranch, as the tyrannical owner, Mama Elena, chops onions at the kitchen table in her final days of pregnancy. While still in her mother's womb, her daughter-to-be weeps so violently she causes an early labor, and little Tita slips out amid the spices and fixings for noodle soup. This early encounter with food soon becomes a way of life, and Tita grows up to be a master chef. She shares special points of her favorite preparations with readers.

In January we will be reading *A Teaspoon of Earth and Sea* by Dina Nayeri. If you have any questions you may contact Bonnie Harper. All are welcome.

Ohio Meadville District News

Have you heard of Faithify?

Faithify is the new UU Crowdfunding platform where UU organizations, congregations and groups can propose exciting new ideas and have interested individuals donate money to them. It is the UU version of Kickstarter. The program began at GA this year and thus far has seen \$123,082 pledged by 1,053 users for more than 30 projects. Learn more at www.faithify.org

It's Coming, only four months away!

Hey, SI Campers! Is it getting hard to remember the fun we had this July in Oberlin? Do you think you won't be able to make it to next summer without another bit of that ol' SI magic? Sounds like you're in need of Winter Institute! WI is all the fun and socializing of SI without the hectic schedule. Winter Institute is February 13-16 at Salt Fork State Park near Cambridge, OH. Registration is now open!. Details and links online at ohiomeadville.org/omdevents/552-wi2015

H-UULTI Is Flipping the Classroom!

Can you believe there might be things

We Don't Know

that might help us become the congregation

We Want to Become?

Can we open

Our Eyes and Minds?

Can we Learn a few new ideas

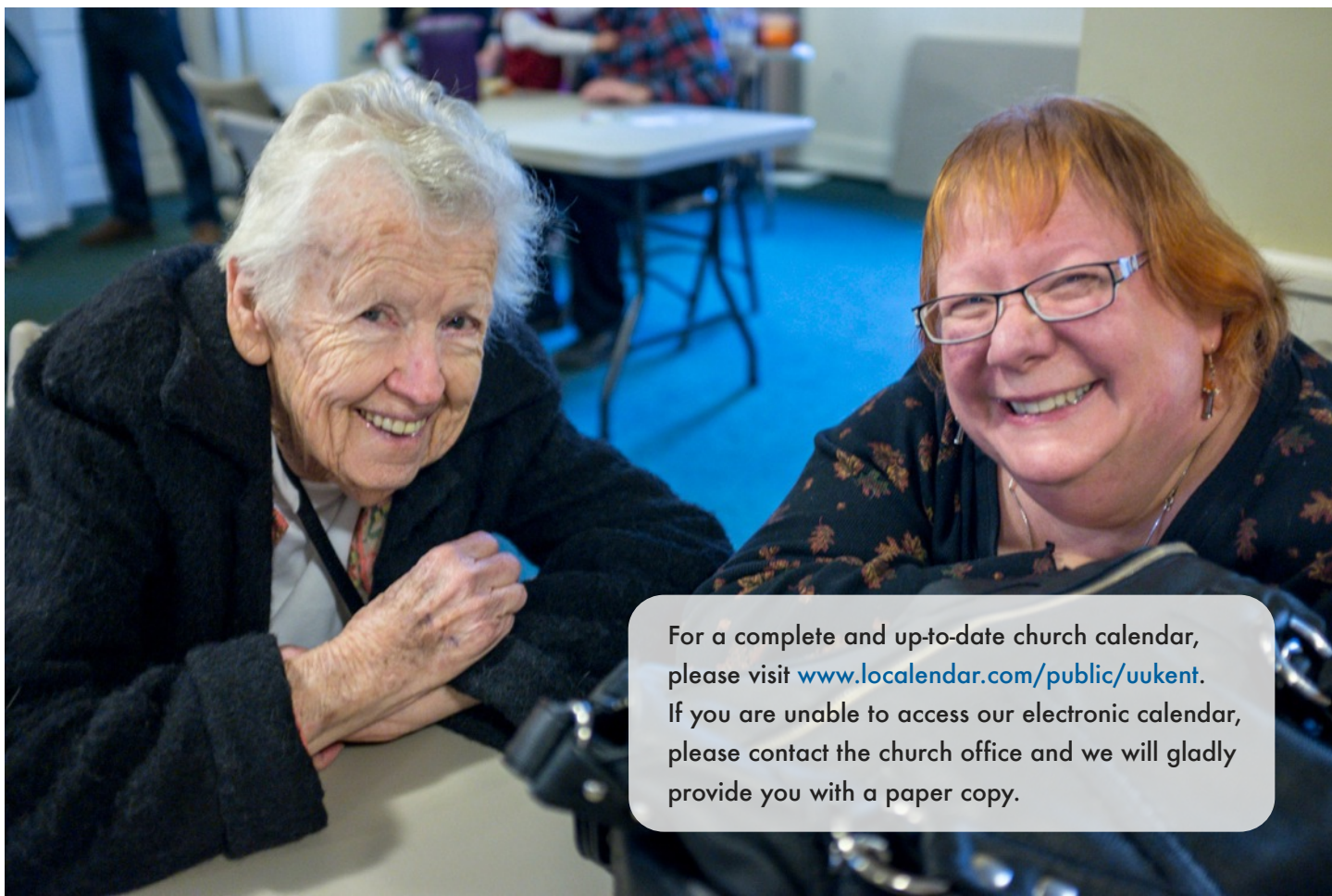
in Our PJs?*

Consider H-UULTI the Hybrid/Online UU Leadership Institute. Spring courses begin January 2! For more information visit cerguua.org/HUULTI

*except for three local Saturday meetings each semester

Save the Date! District Assembly

District Assembly 2015 will take place March 27-28, at the Niagara Falls Convention Center, Niagara Falls, NY. Our theme is *Strong Roots, Broad Wings* and our keynote speaker is Rev. Scott Tayler, Director of Congregational Life of the UUA. Gould Lecture will be presented by Rev. Tom Chulak, retired District Executive of the OMD. Make sure your congregation has its full complement of delegates!



For a complete and up-to-date church calendar, please visit www.localendar.com/public/uukent. If you are unable to access our electronic calendar, please contact the church office and we will gladly provide you with a paper copy.

