



Monthly Musings from Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer

Dear ones, it is just about time for me to come back to work and I am glad because I am ready to return. I have missed you!

Thank you so much for the time to be away from my responsibilities at church to welcome our new baby Rylan into the world. The time was so important, especially because our sweet boy had some eating troubles that pretty much occupied our attention for the first several weeks of his life. I am relieved to report that he has eating pretty well down now and is gaining weight well. With that worry behind us, we have been able to spend the last few weeks enjoying our son, getting to know more about his emerging personality and bonding as a family. It has been a wonderful gift and I am so grateful to you for the time and all your well wishes.

I want to extend special thanks to Christie, Renee and George and to all the staff and lay leaders for guiding and supporting the church so well in my absence. I also want to celebrate the purchase of the Mills family property. We have actively been trying to purchase additional property for at least three years

now and dreaming about it for many years more so this has been a long time coming. I am looking forward to the next steps in our expansion process and hope that many of you will be involved in the work of finalizing our building plans and planning for our capital campaign. This is an exciting time for our church. As in many exciting ventures, we are bound to feel a little nervous at times as we chart our course. We will need courage as we find our way. Thus it is fitting that courage is our worship theme for the month of January.

Though I only took one year of Latin, one of the things I carry with me still is the recognition of Latin roots in many English words. In thinking about the word courage, I saw the Latin word for heart and wanted to learn more about that history. In my looking I came across this insight from the social work professor Brené Brown:

"The root of the word courage is *cor*—the Latin word for heart. In one of its earliest forms, the word courage had a very different definition than it does today. Courage originally meant "To speak one's mind by telling all one's heart." Over time, this definition has

Sunday Services

9:45 and 11:30 am

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minister-uukent@sbcglobal.net

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Tuesday - Friday
By appointment

Congregational**Administrator:**

MaryBeth Hannan

Office hours:

Mon. through Fri. 9 - 4

Religious Ed. Director:

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DRE's Office Hours:

Tuesday and/or Wednesday
By appointment

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Hal Walker

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Deadline:

The 20th each month



Children
rehearse their
Christmas story
for the Dec.
22nd service.

changed, and, today, courage is more synonymous with being heroic. Heroics are important and we certainly need heroes, but I think we've lost touch with the idea that speaking honestly and openly about who we are, about what we're feeling, and about our experiences (good and bad) is the definition of courage. Heroics are often about putting our life on the line. Ordinary courage is about putting our vulnerability on the line. In today's world, that's pretty extraordinary." [from *Courage is a Heart Word (and a Family Affair)*]

There are many dimensions of courage, but this one resonates with me personally right now. More than once as I've sat feeding and rocking my baby at 3am, I have been gripped by a feeling I don't quite know how to name. It is some intense combination of fear and hope and longing that leads me to utter a silent prayer. Please let this baby live a long, healthy and happy life. Please let me live long enough to see him grow and to get to know the adult he will become. I know there are no guarantees. I know that all we truly have is now and that this moment is where I am called. And yet, I can't help but see so clearly in those wee morning hours that deep love must eventually give way to deep loss. We all know that at some level, and still we go on loving. We let people and pets into our hearts knowing full well that our love for another makes us vulnerable. On the cusp of Christmas this seems to me one of the most beautiful gifts we can give one another - the utterly ordinary and still extraordinary courage of love. May you know the joy of giving and receiving this most precious gift.

Looking forward to seeing you in church,

Melissa

UPCOMING SERVICES

9:45 and 11:30 am

January 5 - A New Chapter

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

A brand new year lies stretched out before us. With its opening our thoughts may be drawn to the possibilities of beginning anew. But to truly do or become something new requires more than just a turning of a page. We look this morning at the courage it takes to make a new start.

January 12 - You Be You

*Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer
and Worship Associate Elaine Bowen*

Just be yourself. That advice is often given when we are worried about performing well or making a good impression. It sounds so easy. Just be yourself. This morning we look beneath the easy advice for the courage it takes to be authentically ourselves.

January 19 - Arresting Art

*Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer
and Worship Associate Ted Voneida*

This Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend we will honor his legacy by reflecting on the courage it takes to resist oppression. Drawing on our recent tradition of Art Sunday, we will explore the courage of resistance through the arts. Is there a photograph or a painting, a song or a play or some other work of art from the civil rights movement that speaks to you of courage? If so, send me a note with the name of the artist and the piece. I'd like to include some of the art that has spoken to you in this service.

January 26 - A Lion's Heart

*Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer,
Director of Religious Education Karen Lapidus
and Worship Associate Justin Czekaj*

I don't think I've ever taken a Disney movie as a text for a worship service, so this will be a first. What can *The Lion King* teach us about mature courage? Not just for kids, everyone is invited to join us for this lively, multigenerational celebration of life.

Important Dates to Note

Sunday, January 5th

Regular RE classes and schedules resume. (The Middle School Youth Group will start the service in the sanctuary.)

Friday, March 28th

District Assembly 2014 will take place at the Avalon Hotel and Conference Center, Erie, PA March 28-29, 2014 with the Rev. Meg Barnhouse as the keynote speaker. Regionalization will undoubtedly be a topic of discussion. Put this date on your calendar, you won't want to miss it!



This is the third year in a row that the fates have not been kind to Kay Clatterbuck during the hanging of the greens. Here she experiences a Wizard of Oz moment when the large Christmas tree falls on her. Last year she was snared by a large red ribbon.

Our Generous Community

from Karen Lapidus

It has become my tradition to use my column in the January newsletter to report how much money our congregation collected for either the Miller Community House or the Freedom House and to report how many new toys were donated to Kent Social Services to be distributed to area families as Christmas gifts.

I love reminding everyone of how generous we are!

This year we collected nearly \$1100.00 to purchase

presents for the family of four that we “adopted” at Miller Community House, one of the homeless shelters in Kent. This large donation allowed us to purchase everything on their wish lists and to give them gift cards for gasoline, food and household items, as well, for when they move

into their own home. This is the first time that a family has asked for either new or used gifts. Families from our congregation donated their used television, DVD player and iPod to complete the fulfillment of their wishes. Our Grades 3-4 Religious Education class made a beautiful fleece blanket for our family, too.

The new toy drive was a great success, as well. I measure the toy donations by “car-trunkfuls”. This year we had two, filled to the brim, deliveries! This meets the donations in past years.

In addition to the money and toys donated this past holiday season, so many people have given of their time and talents. So much care and intention has been put into the planning of the various holiday and multigenerational worship services. Our church was so lovingly decorated by people of all ages. Our Caring Team has been busy supporting our members who have needed some extra assistance. Both the

people who organized the Holiday Gift Fair and those that made or donated items to sell have shown great generosity. People are showing up and gathering in community in the spirit of generosity. We are even generous with our Facebook

“likes” and support each other with our loving comments, affirmations and condolences!

It is a joy to be among such grateful, gracious people.

In faith and with love,

Karen Lapidus
Director of Religious Education



The Moderator's Musings

Dear UU Church of Kent family,

As your elected Moderator, I have the delight in sharing good news. By now, you know the really GOOD NEWS which is we have purchased 221 N. Mantua St. in total - all the property and the dwelling. We were able to pay for it outright from generous early gifts to the Capital Campaign Fund. No mortgage is a very good thing! We are so grateful to all donors for the time, talent and treasures that went into this acquisition.

Your Board of Trustees is currently assembling a Building Expansion Team (B.E.T.) of 5 members; this effort is in the capable and enthusiastic hands of Asst. Moderator, Max Grubb and Trustee for Buildings and Grounds, Randy Ruchotzke. We plan to introduce the B.E.T. to you by mid to late January when their work will begin in earnest. These are exciting times as we live into our vision of expanding our footprint to better serve our beloved community within and perhaps even more importantly, the community we wish to reach out to and invite in to our home of liberal religious theology.

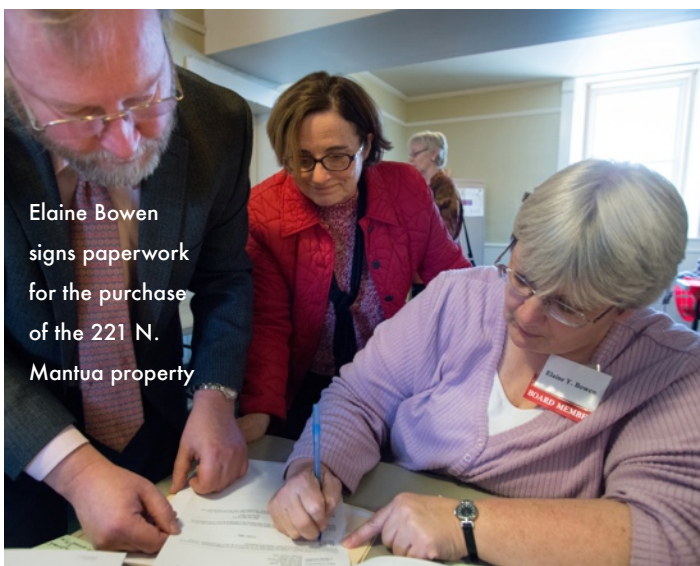
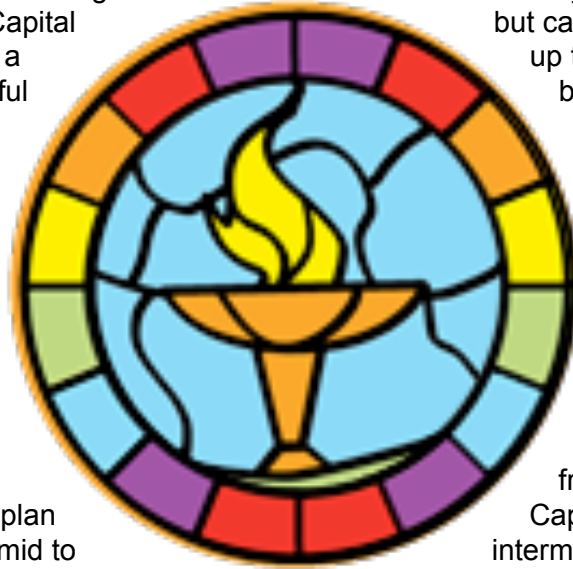
On behalf of your Board, it is also my duty to share a growing and significant concern. There is

no easy way to say this. As of the end of November, planned pledge income is \$11,000 **below** budget YTD. As of the end of October, it was \$7,000. This is a not a financially healthy or sustainable trend.

Fortunately, expenses are under budget but cannot be trimmed further to make up this shortfall. Our operating budget relies solely upon the pledges and donations of church members and friends. We do not receive money from a diocese or funding from any other outside body. We need to be self-sustaining and currently, we are not living up to the expected income we pledged last spring. Please understand that funds from an operating budget and a Capital budget are not freely intermingled and are for specific purposes. We cannot use Capital funds to make up the shortfall in the operating budget. At 6 months into the fiscal year, we ask those of you who are able, to "catch up" on your pledge if you may have fallen behind. Hopefully, with every member contributing to the best of her/his ability, we can turn this around. That is our hope; that is our prayer.

In service and in faith,

Elaine

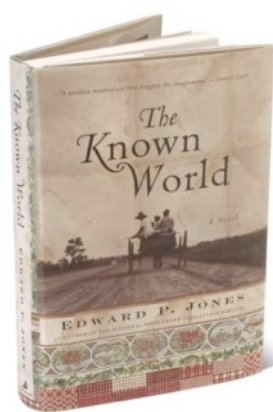
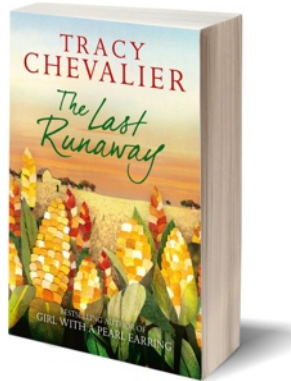


Literary Liner Notes

The Last Runaway

The Patricia Pownall UU Book Group will be meeting on Tuesday, January 14 at 7pm at the home of Betty Kendrick. Please bring a snack to share. This month you may choose between two books on a similar topic.

One choice is *The Last Runaway* by Tracy Chevalier. Forced to leave England and struggling with illness in the wake of a family tragedy, Quaker Honor Bright is forced to rely on strangers in the harsh landscape of 1850 Ohio and is compelled to join the Underground Railroad network to help runaway slaves escape to freedom.



The second choice is *The Known World* by Edward P. Jones. This book tells the story of Henry Townsend, a black farmer and former slave who falls under the tutelage of William Robbins, the most powerful man in Manchester County, Virginia. Making certain he never circumvents the law, Townsend runs his affairs with unusual discipline. But when death takes him unexpectedly, his widow,

Caldonia, can't uphold the estate's order.

In February we will be reading *Empire of the Southern Moon* by S.C. Gwynne and in March we will be reading *The Signature of All Things* by Elizabeth Gilbert.

If you have any questions you may contact Bonnie Harper. All are welcome.

Words to Live By...

"Let our New Year's resolution be this: we will be there for one another as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of the word."

—Goran Persson

Ohio Meadville District News

Multicultural Training

The OMD is pleased to offer *Building Capacity for Authentic Diversity* on January 11 at the UU Fellowship of Wayne County with Rev. Renee Rutchotzke and Evin Ziemer. This training is for leaders to learn how to build relationships effectively across differences including ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, gender and more. It is ideal for leaders of congregations who both have racial and ethnic diversity and those who do not. Details and registration available on the OMD website at www.ohiomeadville.org/omdevents/648-diversity

Interested in Multicultural Congregations?

OMD Growing in Racial and Cultural Equity Team is seeking people interested in helping organize cluster conversations. We're looking for ways to support each other in developing and exploring transformational strategies for building intentionally multicultural UU congregations. We're also seeking people of color interested in a spring gathering of UU's of color. Contact Evin Carvill-Ziemer at eziemer@uua.org or Samuel Prince at sprince@coloursofliving.com to get involved.

CERG Regional Youth Con

The youth of the Central East Regional Group are planning a youth con for February 14-17, 2014. This is an opportunity to meet others from around the region and learn about similarities and differences in con structures. For details visit www.cerguua.org/cergevents/545-youthcon.html



Logan Bores
assists with the
annual Hanging
of the Greens in
the church
sanctuary.

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.

