



## Monthly Musings from Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer

A Garden Prayer  
by Rev. Deanna Vandiver

*That shrimp plant  
so determined to be seen  
poking through the ginger and the fig  
like a four year old  
waving skinny arms and red cheeks  
to those towering above*

*That shrimp plant  
grown from cuttings of a friend  
who no longer lives in this country  
from a house  
that has since burned down*

*That shrimp plant  
breaks at its knobby knees and elbows  
when the wind blows too hard*

*drops to the ground  
and grows again*

*Universe  
today I pray  
please  
please grant us the resilience  
of that shrimp plant.*

If I ever saw a shrimp plant, I certainly didn't know what I was seeing. The internet informed me that shrimp plants are native to Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico and grow well in the warm Southern regions of the United States. The author of this prayer, Rev. Deanna Vandiver, lives in New Orleans. For her, the shrimp plant is a natural symbol of resilience. If I had to choose one plant that embodies resilience in my own garden, it would have to be lemon balm. We planted some when

**Sunday Services**

9:45 and 11:30 am

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**Deadline:**

The 20th of each month



Melissa and  
Rylan enjoying  
some horseplay  
in Fessenden Hall.

we first moved into our house ten years ago and it has slowly endeavored to overtake our entire herb garden – even the mint! This despite the fact that we've cut it back and even pulled it out multiple times.

If you had to pick a plant or an animal or some other living thing to symbolize resilience, what would you choose? If you need a little inspiration, Mary Lou Holly introduced me to a marvelous picture book called *Ubiquitous: Celebrating Nature's Survivors* by Joyce Sidman. Beetles, crows, ants, coyotes and even dandelions all have something to teach us about the arts of resilience. Resilience is widely discussed in psychological fields. This month we are going to explore it from a spiritual perspective. How can we strengthen our capacity for resilience, not just individually, but collectively? Come to church and be part of the exploration.

In faith,

*Melissa*

## UPCOMING SERVICES

9:45 and 11:30 am

### March 1 - It Starts At Home

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

The stories we hear and the lessons we learn about resilience in the places we call home have a tremendous capacity to lift us up or bring us down. How can we get better at lifting each other up?

### March 8 - Selma Sunday

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

This month marks the 50th anniversary of the historic march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. As thousands travel to Selma, we will join millions of others in expressing our solidarity with the work that remains for us to do. Resilience is not just a solo act. Collective resilience is part of what it takes to “bend the moral arc of the universe toward justice.”

### March 15 - What If You Don't Have Boots

*Lori McGee and Worship Associate Elaine Bowen*

### March 22 - Lean On Me

*Rev. Melissa Carvill Ziemer  
and Worship Associate Jeff Marsh*

When we ask people why they come to church, community is one of the most frequently cited responses. This morning we will consider the critical role of communities in helping people cultivate and maintain resilience.

### March 29 - Failure's Gifts

*Rev. Melissa Carvill Ziemer  
and Worship Associate John Marfy*

It's often been said that failure is an essential ingredient in growth. How can we learn to embrace failure as a gift and use it as a catalyst to greater resilience?

### Editor's Note:

Many apologies for the delay in the release of this month's newsletter. May better health and better weather bless us all in the coming months.



### Support, Sustain, Envision our UUCK Community

The FY2016 Stewardship Campaign runs from February 22 until March 22 (See page 6 for more details).

Please respond to your canvasser's call and return your pledge card at the Stewardship Table in Fessenden Hall during Coffee Hour and after 2nd Service, or to the Church Office, or you may complete your pledge securely on the Church web site, [www.kentuu.org](http://www.kentuu.org), on or before March 22nd. Thank you for your generous support.



## Nurturing Resiliency

### from Karen Lapidus

It can be tough to be a UU kid. As Michelle Richards, religious educator and frequent blogger for the UU World notes in her article “Raising Resilient Nonconformists” from the August 9, 2010 edition, our children and youth often find themselves in situations where their faith is being questioned and even ridiculed. I imagine that every one of us has been in a situation where, despite our valiant attempts to explain our Unitarian Universalist faith to others, people refuse to listen or to move from their stance that our faith is a cult or inauthentic or just not right or downright weird. Even Unitarian Universalists who consider themselves to be theists struggle with the challenges of being considered outsiders.



aged children might be comfortable using the words of our chalice lighting to define who we are. “This is the church of the open mind, the helping hands and the loving heart”. Our middle and high school youth, who are in the midst of discerning their own personal faith, might be most comfortable preparing a short script or “elevator speech”.

Role-playing can be helpful in preparing our children to respond with confidence and clarity. It can help to reinforce their responses as well as to support their own understanding of what we believe. I can imagine the value of dinner conversations focused on considering

what would be appropriate responses to a variety of possible questions from their peers.

As parents, caregivers and those that care about the nurture of our children and youth, our challenge becomes how can we support them as they undoubtedly face the curiosity and scrutiny of their peers. How do we equip them knowing that we cannot fully protect them? How do we help them be resilient during such encounters?

Helping them to be prepared for the inevitable encounter is important. Through conversation and reflection, parents and children can create age-appropriate responses to the question, “What do Unitarian Universalists believe?”

Perhaps for our littlest ones, a statement that we believe that people should love each other is sufficient. School-

Perhaps the most important thing that we all can do to help our children and youth be more resilient in affirming their beliefs is to be a part of our faith community. Having shared experiences with other Unitarian Universalist children, youth and families strengthens our resolve and counters the feelings of isolation that accompany the scrutiny of others. Sharing success stories and difficulties in our covenanted community is a valuable gift we give to one another.

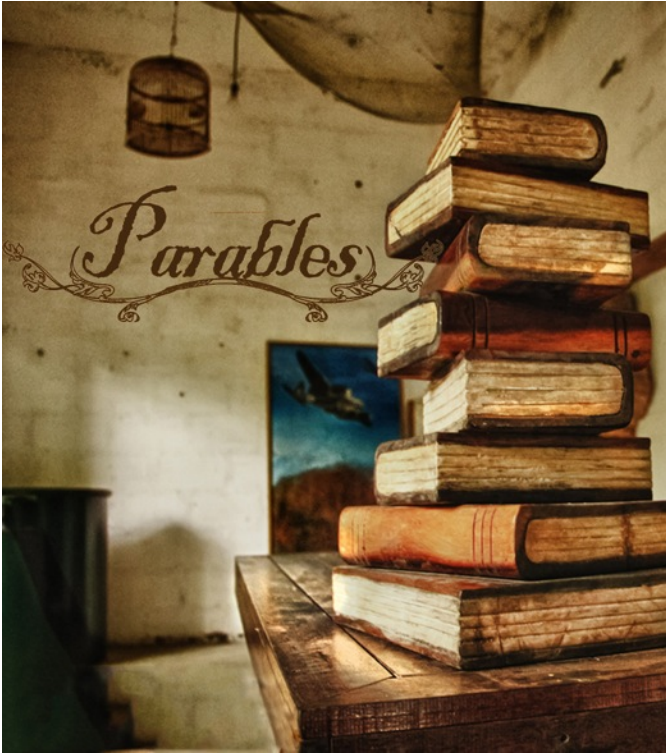
In faith and with love,

Karen Lapidus  
Director of Religious Education



Congregational meeting and celebration in Fessenden Hall to kick off our new Capital Campaign and building expansion project.





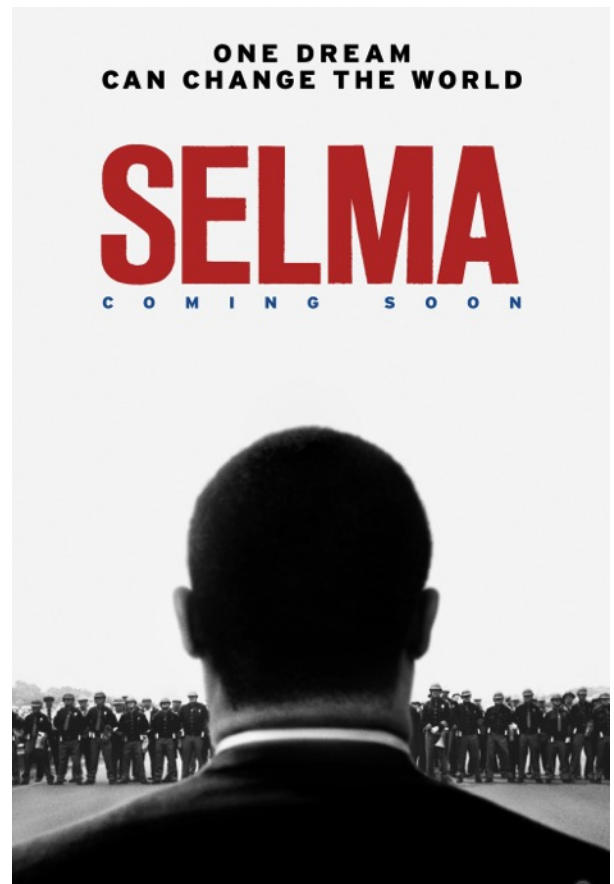
## Pondering Parables

### Starting One Week Later

Wednesdays in April, 7pm - 9pm

Last fall a group of us gathered to explore several important passages in the Hebrew Bible. This spring we continue our Bible study with an exploration of the Christian scriptures through some of Jesus' parables. Bring a Bible and join us for any or all of the following evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 pm: April 1, April 8, April 15 and April 29. We will meet in the Founders Lounge.

No experience is necessary, only a willingness to meet the Bible and consider what wisdom it might have to offer you.



## A Discussion of Selma

March 3rd and March 11, 7pm - 9pm

In this 50th anniversary year of the civil rights struggle that unfolded in Selma, I invite you to a discussion. To prepare, please go see the movie *Selma* and read Mark Morrison-Reed's book *The Selma Awakening: How the Civil Rights Movement Tested and Changed Unitarian Universalism*. The book is available from the UUA bookstore:

[www.uuabookstore.org/The-Selma-Awakening-P17456.aspx](http://www.uuabookstore.org/The-Selma-Awakening-P17456.aspx) or as an ebook from Amazon: [amzn.com/B00NVSHS6M](http://amzn.com/B00NVSHS6M)

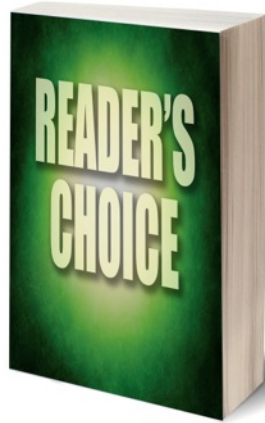
Rev. Melissa will host discussions on Tuesday, March 3 in the Founders Lounge and Wednesday, March 11 in Fessenden Hall from 7 to 9 pm. Feel free to come to either or both.



## Reader's Choice

The Patricia Pownall UU Book Group will be meeting on Tuesday, March 10 at 7 pm at the home of Chris Hurlbut,

Meet at the church at 6:30 if you want to carpool. This month it is reader's choice of a novel that was turned into an Oscar or Golden Globe award winning movie. If you have any questions, you may contact Bonnie Harper. All are welcome.



"Raising the Bar," our Stewardship Campaign theme for the upcoming fiscal year, is calling on us, the Members and Friends of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent, to go a step farther, to jump a little higher, to stretch ourselves a bit. As I was preparing to write this invitation, my [Google] research led me to the Old English word for steward, *stigweard*, meaning "keeper." Each of us is called to be a keeper, or steward, of our precious UUCK heritage. Stewardship is an action, "the careful and responsible management and protection of something entrusted to one's care, of something considered worth caring for and preserving."

By this publication time, you will have received, by mail, your Stewardship packet. You will have read of the continuing and additional needs that exemplify the quality of programming that will keep our Beloved Community vital and thriving. Our Program Budget invites us to visualize, and to realize with our additional support, the expansion of our music ministries, the augmentation of our commitment to fair compensation for our professional staff, enhancements to our social hour experience, and allowance for professional association opportunities for our first-ever ministerial intern.

Our hard-working Finance Committee has determined that \$30,000 over last year's budget will bring these intentions to fruition. In practical terms, this amounts to an average pledge increase of \$150. Or, 41 cents a day. You may think of it as an increase of 0.5% of your take-home pay added to your current pledge.

As you reflect upon your bond within our Community, whether you identify as a Supporter, a Sustainer, a Visionary, or a Tither, please be mindful that the abundance of treasures that our Community affords requires our faithful stewardship, and respond in kind with your generous pledge. Let your values sing and lift us up – up and over "the Bar."

In faith,

Claudia Miller for the entire Stewardship Team:  
Kathie Slater, Meg Milko, Claudia Miller,  
and Treasurer, Sandy Eaglen

## Upcoming Congregational Meetings

The Capital Campaign Team would like to announce a series of congregational meetings that will take place in March.

**March 1, 12:45pm**, in the sanctuary Celebration and Information meeting: Help us celebrate the launch of the capital campaign, and hear all about the proposed capital campaign project. All members are encouraged to attend this meeting to hear about our new capital campaign project. A light lunch will be provided. Bring your questions!

**March 15, 10:50 - 11:20am**, in the sanctuary Informal question and answer session. Members of the Capital Campaign and Building Expansion Teams will be available to answer your questions.

**March 29, 10:50am**, in the sanctuary. Voting meeting, quorum needed. Congregation will vote on whether to proceed with proposed capital campaign.

Kathy Kerns and Marion Yeagler  
Co-chairs of Capital Campaign Team

## Chalice Lighter Programs: Helping Our Congregations

"We talk about money, not because of what we want from you, but because of what we want for you." This quote from Rev Andy Stanley, lead pastor of North Point Church in GA, sums up how we feel about our SLD and OMD Chalice Lighter programs. We need to explore the deeper reasons behind why we donate and how we support our sister congregations in our UU family.

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will also be."

Many of us have come to know that a generous Unitarian Universalist with a generous heart is also a spiritually mature person. Consequently, we can't just look at Chalice Lighters simply as a practical way to meet the acute needs of some congregations. This is a spiritual matter that goes way beyond simple donations - it's a matter of supporting healthy spirits and hearts in all of our congregations. Since we are concerned about your heart, we talk about money and ask for your donations.

Where is your heart? Will you give to support the growth of Unitarian Universalism in our districts? Will you share your treasure to help spread the message of liberal religion loudly and clearly? Will you become a generous Chalice Lighter - that is, an individual who pledges to respond with a contribution when the call comes to help one of our sister congregations in the OMD or SLD.

In this month's Up-Close, you will see stories of how generous Chalice Lighters have positively impacted several of our congregations. And you will see the current Chalice Lighter projects that are asking for your support.

Nurture your own spirit and generous heart and become a Chalice Lighter.

### Who have calls benefited in 2014?

#### **Allegheny UU Church**

to help soundproof their fellowship hall ceiling.

#### **The OMD Relief Fund**

to assist congregations following disasters

#### **UU Congregation Erie**

to purchase AV equipment for their sanctuary

#### **North UU Congregation**

to purchase audio equipment for their sanctuary



### Current Chalice Lighter Call

The Oberlin UU Fellowship is justifiably excited about the building they purchased in August 2012, after meeting in rental spaces for years. However, it has one big drawback: No kitchen.

Instead, the Fellowship depends on makeshift used cabinets, mismatched countertops and an array of microwaves. What they really need is plumbing so they can install the three sinks required by the local health department.



Recognizing the importance of a kitchen for hosting congregational and community events that support congregational growth, Chalice Lighters has selected the Oberlin UU Fellowship to be the recipient of the call for donations from Feb. 15 through May 15. All the donations will go directly to the Oberlin Fellowship for this project.

Your donations to the Oberlin kitchen fund will help them add plumbing from a bathroom 24 feet away to a room adjacent to the social hall. The initial project is to install three sinks: one for food preparation, another for dishwashing and a third for hand washing.

The Fellowship plans to do much of the kitchen construction themselves, but needs support from their Chalice Lighter friends to help them with this major expense. They look forward to increased involvement with Oberlin Community Services and other service groups when the building can handle more events.

Learn more about the OMD Chalice Lighter program at [www.ohiomeadville.org/challight/clprogram](http://www.ohiomeadville.org/challight/clprogram)





## Simple Gifts received...

### **Eric van Baars**

In honor of Heidrun Hultgren

### **Mike Kreyche**

In gratitude of Rod Thompson

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.



## Ohio Meadville District News

### **District Assembly 2015**

District Assembly 2015 will take place on March 27-28, 2015 at the Niagara Falls Convention Center, Niagara Falls, NY as a joint event with the St. Lawrence District. 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 and SLD districts.

Some very important votes will be taking place at this year's district assembly as well as discussion on the topic of regionalization. Start planning now to make sure your congregation has it's full complement of delegates! Registration closes March 15th. For more information, visit [www.ohiomeadville.org/program/da](http://www.ohiomeadville.org/program/da)

### **Youth Trainings Available**

Looking for Youth Trainings? Fundamentals of Healthy Youth Ministry is being offered at the Toledo congregation May 1-3, 2015. Chaplain Training (for youth, young adults and adults) is being offered at the Kent church April 24-26, 2015. Registration is open for both events. Learn more and register at [www.ohiomeadville.org/events/events](http://www.ohiomeadville.org/events/events)

### **Looking for Resources and Help?**

The CERG On Demand Learning Center offers videos of webinars and workshops on your time schedule. All congregational life topics covered. Newly redesigned and updated! Check it out at [www.cerguua.org/ondemand](http://www.cerguua.org/ondemand)





For a complete and up-to-date church calendar, please visit [www.localendar.com/public/uukent](http://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.

