



# The Chalice Flame

The Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent

June 2012

**Sunday Services**  
9:30 and 11:15 am

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**Kent, Ohio 44240**  
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Tuesday - Friday  
By appointment

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**Deadline:**  
The 15th each month

Mistakes used to be a big topic of conversation in our house. Back when my nieces came to live with us, they were going through a period during which it was extremely difficult for them to tolerate their own mistakes. In response to our correction, my nieces would fall apart into sobbing or angry little heaps, depending on their moods. It seemed they simply couldn't tolerate the feelings that came with the knowledge that they had messed up. We did a lot of talking about how everyone makes mistakes, how we sometimes make the same mistakes over and over again, and how the important thing is to try to learn from our mistakes. I even learned a Hannah Montana song that I would sing for them as a reminder: "Everybody makes mistakes. Everybody has those days. Everybody knows what I'm talking about. Everybody gets that way. Nobody's perfect!"

We know that, of course. And yet, our actions don't always demonstrate perfect understanding. At least mine don't. Sometimes I take my own mistakes pretty hard. I can get quite fierce with myself for my failings. When that happens I often need to spend extra time doing something like the "Loving-Kindness Meditation" to help me let myself off my own hook. If this sounds at all familiar to you, you might be interested in a bunch of new research which is arguing that learning to be gentle with ourselves can improve our physical, mental and spiritual health. For a quick introduction you might take a look at "Go Easy on Yourself, a New Wave of Research Urges" by Tara Parker-Pope in the New York Times Health and Science blog.

One of the central ideas of the research on self-compassion is that beating ourselves up for our shortcomings and missteps isn't actually effective. Dr. Kelly McGonigal is a health psychologist and a senior teacher at the Stanford Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education. She has found that self-compassion is actually a much more effective means of helping us tolerate, learn from and grow beyond our mistakes. For example, she has found that people who practice self-compassion rebound to reengage with their goals more quickly than those who cut themselves down for their setbacks. She has also found that the more self-compassionate people are, the more responsibility they are willing to take for their mistakes and the more likely they are to be able to receive and even seek critical feedback. By contrast, when we are our own worst critics, the last thing we want to hear is someone else's critical feedback. She has even found that when people are trying to do something difficult like quit smoking or stick to a diet, they have greater success in the long term when they are able to be compassionate with themselves when they fall short of their own goals in the short term.

One of the leading researchers in this field is Dr. Kristin Neff, Associate Professor in Human Development and Culture at the University of Texas at Austin. If you'd like to learn more, I encourage you to check out her website "Self-Compassion: A Healthier Way of Relating to Yourself." There she writes that there are three elements of self-compassion: mindfulness, recognition of our common humanity and kindness towards ourselves.

*Continued p. 2* —————>

## Upcoming Sermons

27 May

### *Curiosity Cure*

Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer and Worship Associate Trish McLoughlin

"The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity" - Dorothy Parker

In speaking of the curiosity cure, we are not referring to a cure for curiosity but rather the cure that is curiosity. This Memorial Day as we remember the veterans who have lost their lives in service to our country, we will lift up the possibilities that curiosity might have to offer in helping bridge the gaps that lead to so much of the world's strife. We will also celebrate our annual Flower Celebration this morning; please bring a flower or two to share during worship.

3 June

### *Coming of Age Sunday*

Coming of Age Youth, their Facilitators and their Mentors.

Publicly presenting their Faith Statements is the culminating event of the Coming of Age program. The youth have been in discernment all year to determine what they believe and have created an inspiring worship service to present their faith statements. The facilitators and the mentors will share a glimpse into their experiences, as well. This momentous worship service is akin to a Jewish bar or bat Mitzah or a Christian confirmation. Each Coming of Age youth will speak.

10 June , 10:30 at Plum Creek

### *Share the Wealth*

Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer and Worship Associate Kathy Kerns

One Service Only at 10:30 AM at Plum Creek Park

Join us for our annual outdoor service at Plum Creek Park! This will be a joyful service for all ages lifting up the riches that come of sharing kindnesses. There will be one service only at 10:30 am followed by an all church picnic. Please bring a lawn chair or blanket, sunscreen, water and a dish to share. Feel free to bring your frisbees, wiffle balls and bats and any other lawn games you might want to play after lunch.

17 June

### *Uplifting Kindness*

Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer and Worship Associate Trish McLoughlin

After an unremarkable 25 years in parish ministry, Joseph Tuckerman took up what he called a ministry-at-large in Boston in 1826. Thus Tuckerman became one of the very first Unitarian community ministers as well as a pioneer in American social work. This morning we will explore the theological ideals that lay at the heart of Tuckerman's ministry and consider their relevance for our own morally complex times.

24 June

### *Magical Outreach: Teaching UU Values At Hogwarts*

Joe Kuemerle and worship associate Max Grubb

The Kent UU Hogwarts program was founded as an alternative to Christian Bible School and uses the themes of Harry Potter and Hogwarts to engage with children while taking that opportunity to teach them about how we as UU's think about the world, spirituality and justice. Come and join some of the Hogwarts staff as we share how we are working to expand the reach of our faith's core values while also having a lot of fun.

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Our worship theme this month is kindness. What this research is telling us is that we will be better able to extend kindness to others if we learn how to extend kindness to ourselves. Far from being self-indulgent, such a practice stands to make us stronger, more resilient and more motivated to be the kind of people we want to be. If you want to check out some tools for practice, Dr. Neff includes several guided meditations on her website. We may even use of them at church this month. Come worship with us and we'll practice together.

In faith,



## Congregational Assessment by UUA June 8-10

In preparation for our capital campaign, we have requested an assessment visit from the UUA Office of Congregational Stewardship Services. We are pleased to announce that UUA Congregational Stewardship Services Consultant Bill Clontz will conduct the assessment visit from June 8-10.

The purpose of the visit is to provide our congregation and our leaders with an objective eye in gathering information and identifying strengths, opportunities, and areas needing improvement. This visit will examine all areas of the church; Bill will meet with the church professional staff, lay leaders, and volunteers throughout the visit. We have been in correspondence with Bill for some time and are providing him a great deal of background information on our church and our operations. Following the visit, Bill will develop a sequence of priorities and recommended actions to help us be in the best possible position we can be before formally launching our capital campaign. These will be designed to help us attain our long-term goals and to address our near term requirements and opportunities.

Observations and Recommendations will be given at the end of the visit and are followed by a detailed written report within two weeks of the visit.

There will be a full day of meetings on Saturday, June 9. The agenda is included in this newsletter. You will note there is an open session at the end of the day, during which Bill is available to talk with anyone about any issue that may be of interest. In addition, all meetings on Saturday are open to members of the congregation who wish to participate along with those who have primary responsibilities in the areas noted on the agenda.

On Sunday, June 10 Bill will speak briefly to the congregation during the service and he will remain for the picnic to meet and talk with members of the congregation. We hope you will take this opportunity to meet our consultant and to share your views and hopes about our future.

Questions? Please contact Rev. Melissa Carvill-Ziemer or our administrator MaryBeth Hannan. Thank you for helping our congregation get the most out of this assessment visit; it's a great opportunity for us to see where we are and where we are going.

### Assessment Visit Schedule

#### Bill Clontz, Stewardship Consultant, Unitarian Universalist Association

##### Friday

- 3:30 to 5:30 Meeting with Minister, Church Administrator MaryBeth Hannan and Commissioned Lay Leader Christie Anderson - Introductions, goals for the weekend, insights into congregation. Brief tour of current buildings and grounds with minister or other guide.
- 6:00-8:00 Working dinner attended by 6-10 selected congregational leaders

##### Saturday

- 8:30 - 9:30 am Stewardship Campaign leaders
- 9:45 -11:00 Capital Campaign Committee/Master Plan Committee
- 11:15 -12:00 Finance Committee
- 12:00 - 1:30 pm Working lunch with the outgoing and incoming Boards of Trustees
- 1:30 - 2:00 Religious Education Committee
- 2:00 - 2:30 Social Justice Committee/ Green Sanctuary Committee
- 2:45 - 3:45 Membership Committee & Communications leaders
- 4:00 - 4:30 Worship Associates and Sunday Program Committee
- 4:30 - 5:30 OPEN TIME for any members or friends of the congregation

##### Sunday

- 9:00 - 9:30 Initial feedback from Bill Clontz to the leadership delivered at the church
- 10:30 - 1:30 Bill attends Sunday service at Plum Creek Park
- 11:30 -12-30+ Bill attends picnic, available to talk to anyone interested afterwards

Two weeks after Visit (June 22): No Later than target date for Assessment Report with Recommendations and Schedules to the congregation to be provided by Bill.



## Summer Religious Education for Children “Stories That Inspire”

Our summer RE program for children will begin on Sunday, June 17 at the 11:15 service. During the month of July, we will be having just one service at 10:30 and then two services resume in August.

This summer’s theme is “Stories That Inspire”. We will be starting with a combination of classic and new children’s literature to offer lessons that align with our Unitarian Universalist principles and values. We will be engaging with books such as *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera B. Williams and *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst and aligning the messages in the books with our values and mission.

All children who were in Spirit Play through Grade 8 this church year are invited to join the group in Fesenden Hall. The activities are designed to engage children in a large age range. The plans include art, outdoor games, drama, poetry and conversations. Of course, we will “light” our flannel chalices (a summer RE tradition) and share our joys and concerns.

No program will be offered during the first service in June and August. Any children and youth attending first service should go to the worship service with their parent, guardian or other designated adult.

Nursery care will be offered for little ones at every worship service during the summer.

*Karen Lapidus, Director of Religious Education*

## Book Group

The Book Group will be meeting on Tuesday, June 12 at 7 pm in the home Mary Ann Kasper, 1719 Merrill Road in Kent. This month we will be reading *Swamplandia!* by Karen Russell. The Bigtree alligator-wrestling dynasty is in decline, and *Swamplandia!*, their island home and gator-wrestling theme park, formerly #1 in the region, is swiftly being encroached upon by a fearsome and sophisticated competitor called the World of Darkness. Against a backdrop of hauntingly fecund plant life animated by ancient lizards and lawless hungers, the author has written a novel about a family's struggle to stay afloat in a world that is inexorably sinking. In July we will read *Unsaid* by Neil Abramson, and in August we will read *The Paris Wife, a novel* by Paula McLain. If you have any questions you may contact Bonnie Harper.

## ACME Community Cash Back

50 lashes with a wet noodle for me! I forgot to let you know that the grocery tape collection for Acme's Community Cash Back program resulted in a check to the church for \$248.61, 5% of \$4972.23 in eligible purchases. This is much improved from the previous year with \$162.50 cash back.

THANK YOU to all who saved receipts & brought them to church faithfully and to MaryBeth, our administrator, who kept up on the Thread from the Web reminders! Watch for information in early September about this program restarting; it's the easiest fundraiser ever.

*Elaine Bowen*

The 4th and 5th grade children pose for a Record Courier article about their social justice project involving origami birds.



## Consequences of *Citizens United*: Dysfunctional, Deformed Congress

The 2010 *Citizens United* decision, considered by some to be one of the most destructive in the history of the Supreme Court, allows corporations (and unions) to pour unlimited funds into the campaigns of Congressional, state and local candidates (as well as judges, who are elected in 39 states). Union spending is dwarfed by the hundreds of millions being spent by corporations by way of "Super PACs", which do not have to abide by the \$2500 limit on donations to actual campaigns and they can easily avoid rules for reporting sources of contributions. These Super PACs have established nonprofit arms that are allowed to shield contributors' identities so long as they spend no more than 50% of their money on electoral politics. As a result, the identity of most Super PACs will never be known to the public, even though they are already playing a decisive role in the 2012 election season. One example of this is Carl Rove's *Crossroads Complex*, which operates both as a Super PAC and as a nonprofit. The influence such groups can have on the electoral process is clearly exemplified in the 2010 congressional elections: of the 53 competitive House districts where Rove and his compatriots backed Republicans, the Republicans won 51.

The overall effect of such actions is clear: They result in a virtually dysfunctional and deformed Congress, such as the one we are presently stuck with. Recent polls show that 84% of Americans polled are behind an effort to address the issue of Congressional subservience to the corporate and financial power that determines who wins and loses elections to the U.S. House, Senate or Judiciary.

There is, however, some light at the end of this dark tunnel. One source of that light lies in the "Fair Elections Now Act", which proposes to provide matching funds to candidates who otherwise agree to rely on small, publically financed contributions from within their states and districts. These funds would be drawn, in the Senate's case, from a fee on major government contractors; in the House's, from the sale of unused broadcast spectrum. Such publically financed contributions have already been favorably tested in Arizona, Maine and Connecticut. In addition "Fair Elections Now" has been found to poll favorably across the political spectrum, having 95 co-sponsors.

Another source of light appeared on December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011, when the Montana Supreme Court upheld a century-old ban on corporate expenditures in state elec-

tions. This case, which has gone essentially unreported, sets up the first direct challenge to the *Citizens United* decision. "Free Speech for People", a nonpartisan national campaign challenging corporate personhood rights, filed an amicus brief in the Montana case, leading a coalition that included the American Sustainable Business Council, a network of more than 100,000 businesses and social enterprises, and the American Independent Business Alliance. Jeff Clements, author of the coalition's brief, is also the author of "Corporations are not People", in which he explains how some of the largest corporations took over our government, culminating in the *Citizens United* decision. He lays out a vision of how we can restore our democracy, through a constitutional amendment declaring what Clements calls "the simplest of propositions: Corporations are not people." This solution, while perhaps the most desirable, is also the most difficult to achieve. Constitutional amendments require supermajority support from both houses of Congress and ratification by three-quarters of the states. There are numerous examples, however, where they have been carried out. Maryland state senator and constitutional law professor Jamin Raskin has pointed out that "American citizens have repeatedly amended the Constitution to defend democracy when the Supreme Court acts in collusion with democracy's enemies, whether they are slavemasters, states imposing poll taxes on voters or the opponents of woman suffrage." In addition, there are numerous groups working toward that end, including Public Citizen, the Center for Media and Democracy, Move to Amend, Common Cause, People for the American Way and others. We would all do well to give our support to one or more of these groups.

*Much of the material for this essay has been drawn from articles which appeared in the February, 2012 issue of "The Nation".*

*Theodore J. Voneida*



## From the Library

The Library committee is indeed grateful to Carol Gould for her donation of an almost-new Acer Aspire laptop with a 17" screen. This will be tremendously helpful to the cataloging process of new acquisitions, and for maintaining all Library records. We are indebted to you for your generosity, Carol. Thank you.

The Library received an early edition of Bertrand Russell's Why I Am Not a Christian and Other Essays from the Library of John Michaels, given to us by his wife, Eunice Michaels. Thank you very much, Eunice.

The Library committee continues to search for a Chair to replace Martha Kluth who will step down next month. Although the duties of the Chair may seem intimidating, we would like to state, for the record, that this committee is a rollicking group of people, as dedicated to fulfilled fellowship and good laughs, as they are to developing the Library. A member of the Library committee may approach you; give it a try and come to at least one meeting to see this dynamic, witty group in action. You won't be able to resist their inspiring approach to building and maintaining our Library.

### *Now Available*

Joining Hands and Hearts: Interfaith, Intercultural Wedding Celebrations, by Reverend Susanna Macomb with Andrea Thompson, Simon and Schuster, New York, 2003.

Rev. Macomb is a licensed, ordained minister. Her book answers these questions:

- 1) How do we make sure that our ceremony is a reflection of our love and our relationship?
- 2) How do we remain true to ourselves and still make our families happy?
- 3) How can we create a wedding ceremony that merges our religious, spiritual and personal beliefs? Can we do this without offending or alienating anyone?
- 4) Who will officiate at our ceremony?
- 5) When and where will the ceremony take place? Which rituals will we include?

*Ann Waters, Publicity*

## Meet Carol Gould

Carol Gould is one of the newest members of the UU Church of Kent. She began attending at the suggestion of Caroline Arnold and as a result of her friendships with Patty Miller and Ann Waters. And she discovered a community in which she wanted to invest her time and talents. Carol has a religious background both as a Unitarian Universalist and as a Presbyterian. She was recently widowed and has a grown daughter. She has many interests including music, orchestra and playing the viola in string quartets. She is also interested in knitting, crocheting and needle-point. Carol is by occupation a computer consultant.

Carol has a very interesting story about how she came to live in Kent after living in Manhattan for forty years. It was after 9/11. Carol's late husband, whose first wife had passed away, wanted to marry again, and initiated a search by a third party. Two of his criteria were that she must play the viola, and be willing to relocate to Kent. Carol was found, and she met the criteria. Aren't we fortunate that she made that leap of faith, and that she has chosen to join our church community. Carol is looking for volunteer opportunities, and I'm sure we'll be seeing a lot more of her around the church.



Carol Gould



### Food & Bags Needed

Kent Social Services is in chronic need of brown paper grocery bags and of course, food to put in them for pantry clients! School is almost out and summertime is tough for families with children due to no school breakfast and lunch programs. Let's continue to help because it's necessary and the right thing to do.

NEEDS: PB and jelly, dry cereal, tuna, mac n'cheese mix, pasta/rice/potato mixes, spaghetti sauce, meal-in-a-can, meal-in-a-box mixes, canned veggies, canned fruit, 100% juice & child friendly snacks. Please ~ NO open packages, rusty cans or oddball gourmet items.

Thank you!

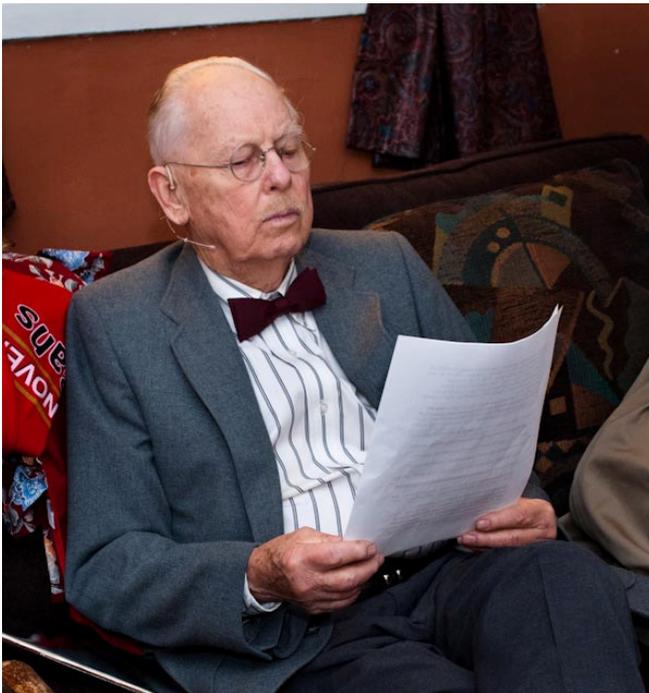
*Elaine Bowen*

### Threshold Congregations

The Threshold Congregation program is one that helps congregations who are on the brink of growing find the resources and develop the skills necessary to do so. The program began in 2010-11 with the first nine congregations selected for their three year journey. First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh was one of those nine. In 2011-12 the second nine congregations were selected and include UU Church of Akron and UU Fellowship of Wayne County in Wooster, OH. [Read the full article about this year's congregations.](#)

Congratulations to the OMD congregations selected for this program. Learn more about the threshold program including how to apply and the other 15 congregations selected in the past two years at the [CERG website Threshold Congregations Page.](#)

*The hyperlinks above are not active in the .pdf version of the newsletter. Sorry, Ed.*



Ted Voneida played the character of Harry Truman at church in a one-act performance. Ted also performed as Julia Childs, and others with Ted made hilarious comments about the cartoons of James Thurber.





The Secret Friend reveal day. The young friend made two identical sock drawings, leaving one for his adult friend in a gift. They later found each other and exchanged gifts.



Dave Smeltzer with secret friend Vonn Wheatley



The annual book sale was bigger than ever, filling Fessenden and, a first, most of the sanctuary.



Deb Biggins, Jennifer May, and Beth Kuemerle taking the church survey during coffee hour.

### June Church Events

<b>27</b> 11:15 Social Justice Hour <i>F</i> 6:30 Choir <i>S</i> 7-9 <i>AA FH</i>	<b>28</b> 5-7:00 FinSecs <i>EA</i> 5:30-6:30 Tai Chi 7-9:00 Movie Night <i>F</i>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 7-9:00 Annual Mtg <i>church</i>	<b>1</b> 6-10 Hogwarts mtg. <i>F</i>	<b>2</b> COA dinner <i>F</i>
<b>3</b> 10:30-11 Annual mtg. 11:15 Social Justice Hour <i>F</i> 12:30-2:30 Social Justice <i>EA</i> 1:30-3 Sanctuary reserved 6:30 Choir <i>S</i> 7-9 <i>AA FH</i>	<b>4</b> 5-7:00 FinSecs <i>EA</i> 5:30-6:30 Tai Chi	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 7-9 SPAN <i>F</i> 7-9 Kent Sing <i>F</i>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 4-10p church reserved	<b>9</b> Annex and church reserved all day
<b>10</b> 10:30-1 worship, picnic, Plum Creek 11:15 Social Justice Hour <i>F</i> 7-9 <i>AA FH</i>	<b>11</b> 5-7:00 FinSecs <i>EA</i> 5:30-6:30 Tai Chi	<b>12</b> Noon Retirees lunch 6:30-8:30 RE cmte. <i>EA</i>	<b>13</b> 7:30-9:30 Board <i>EA</i>	<b>14</b> Hogwarts–Masonic Temple	<b>15</b> Hogwarts Newsletter dead- line	<b>16</b> 7a - 7p Hogwarts; church reserved
<b>17</b> 11:15 Social Justice Hour <i>F</i> 1-5 Hogwarts; church reserved 7-9 <i>AA FH</i>	<b>18</b> 5-7:00 FinSecs <i>EA</i> 5:30-6:30 Tai Chi	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> CUUPS Sabbat	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 11:15 Social Justice Hour <i>F</i> 2-5 Fessenden reserved 6-9 KNFC mtg. <i>S</i> 7-9 <i>AA FH</i>	<b>25</b> 5-7:00 FinSecs <i>EA</i> 5:30-6:30 Tai Chi	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 7:30-9:30 Ministry <i>EA</i>	<b>29</b> 5-8 church re- served	<b>30</b> 11-1:30 church re- served

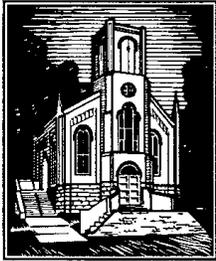
Tai Chi: 7:00 Advanced, 7:30 Intermediate, 8:00 Beginner - Yoga and Tai Chi are held in Fessenden Hall  
*EA- Eldredge Annex; FH- Fessenden Hall; FL- Founders' Lounge; L- Library; S-Sanctuary; N- Nursery; FC- Family and Community Services bldg.*  
*Calendar does not reflect changes or additions after May 21*

A complete and up-to-date church calendar can be viewed at  
<http://www.localendar.com/public/uukent> or through a link on our website at [www.uukent.org](http://www.uukent.org).



Sandy Eaglin coaches Spencer and Gia Marfy after church for a play audition.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent  
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The church held a Seder dinner, which marks the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Pass-over. The story of the liberation of Israelites from Egypt was told from the Haggadah, an ancient text. Seder includes a highly ritualized dinner with many symbolic foods as seen here. Reverend Melissa presided over the dinner.

