



the UNIGRAM

Authentic Blessing

Rev. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, Chaplain

Recently, one of you in our congregation recommended a book to me, one that I think is worthy of a wider audience. It’s Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie’s *The Lives We Actually Have: 100 Blessings for Imperfect Days* (Convergent Books, 2023). Kate Bowler is a religion professor at Duke University; Jessica Richie is the executive director of the Everything Happens Project at Duke. Bowler is a practicing Christian, and her language is sometimes different than mine, but that doesn’t detract.

The authors had my interest at the title, because it suggested a healthy dose of realism might lie between the covers. Sugar-coating, Pollyanna approaches don’t work for me; I’ve lived too long and lived through too much. Knee-jerk “have a blessed day” comments usually mean that I must remind myself (which I usually can do) that the speaker is wishing me well in the way that best fits their theological and linguistic world. And it’s just this mindset that the authors address, with both grace and refreshing candor. The authors also take on the outlook, very prevalent in the self-help industry and among many New Age followers, that everything that happens reflects our own choices.

For me, however, the real impact of their work is elsewhere. They joyfully acknowledge that our days are sometimes filled with times when the inherent holiness and wonder of life stops us in our tracks. But they’re also honest about most days being filled to the brim with routine. And all too frequently, our days are marked by difficult times and events, global, national, and personal, often layered over one another. Sometimes, if we’re really being honest with ourselves, life just sucks. And not by our choice; it simply happens to us that there are times like that.

So, what can we do? What can we do in the face of problems that “feel unsolvable as they continue to go on and on”? When “our minds churn and our hearts lurch at the thought of what crisis we must confront

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Sunday Mornings at Our Church in the Woods

Lifespan Religious Education Hour – Sundays at 9:30 am

Join us for our Lifespan Religious Education Hour, every Sunday at 9:30. We have three weekly offerings: Religious Education for Children & Youth, Adult Discussion Group, and Friends & Fellowship. We will also have additional groups and special offerings.

Religious Education for Children & Youth – Yellow / Blue classrooms

Youth RE will take place in the Yellow classroom during the LRE Hour at 9:30. Adult RE programming will also be available, but a child's grownups are always welcome to attend class with their children! When Youth RE is over, the group will move to the Blue classroom for snacks and fellowship while they wait for their grownups to pick them up. During the 10:45 service, all children will be in the Sanctuary with their grownups and church community. Families are invited to sit wherever they are comfortable. We have an area designed for young families with pillows, books, a variety of manipulatives, and a tent at the back of the sanctuary near the tables. A nursery for infants and toddlers up to 23 months is available starting at 9:30 am.

For more information about our Religious Education Program, please contact our Director of Lifespan Religious Education, **Jesse Daniel**, jesse@uuchurchmuncie.org.

Adult Discussion Group – Red classroom and via Zoom

This group is a chance for people with various personal beliefs to get together and openly discuss a variety of topics. You'll find weekly topics in the eBlast each Friday. Zoom check-in at 9:15, discussion at 9:30 am
<https://zoom.us/j/4326211304> Passcode: UUcm#1859 (case sensitive)

Friends & Fellowship – Sanctuary

Sip some fresh, hot coffee and share in some conversation with friends, new and old, in the Sanctuary. Work through a puzzle together, catch up about the week, or enjoy getting to know someone new each Sunday at 9:30 am.

Sunday Service – Sanctuary and via Zoom

Multi-Platform Worship 10:45 am Online Service: <https://bit.ly/UUCMSundayservice>

August's Dedicated Offering recipient is Red-Tail Land Conservancy. The offering will be collected August 4th & 11th. September's recipient is League of Women Voters and will be collected on the 8th & 15th. Check out the Friday eBlast for information about each month's Dedicated Offering.

August 4 – "Protecting and Restoring Land" JoAnna Darda, Red-Tail Land Conservancy

August 11 – UUCM Panel on Personal Theologies & Worldviews Rev. Joel Tishken

August 18 – "Letting Go of Letting Go" Rev. Joel Tishken

August 25 – Trevor Oakerson, Muncie OUTreach

September 1 – Rev. Joel Tishken

September 8 – Linda Hanson, League of Women Voters

September 15 – "Moral Fatigue" UUCM Homecoming Rev. Joel Tishken

September 22 – "Banned Books" Rev. Joel Tishken & Jesse Daniel

September 29 – "UU Climate Revival" Rev. Joel Tishken

[Please note that topics are subject to change. Be sure to check the Friday eBlast for more detailed information about the upcoming Sunday service.]

What's Happening in Lifespan Religious Education (LRE)?

Jesse Daniel, Director of Lifespan Religious Education



In my year of learning about religious education, there is one refrain I keep coming back to- something I heard on my very first day of my very first class. “The congregation is the curriculum.” I remember writing it down at the top of my notes, later coming back to underline and highlight it. It’s come to be a daily reminder that the way to do my best at this job is to just keep trying to meet the congregation where you are. Sometimes, this is confusing. Often, it is surprising.

This is a big change from the idea of “curriculum” I was used to as middle school teacher. In my classroom, I had 28 standards to meet for 7th grade and 26 for 8th grade. The state of Indiana told me exactly what skills my students should have at the end of the year, spanning reading, writing, speaking, and listening. On paper, we had 36 weeks to get this done. In reality, state testing started in March and those standards had to be taught, retaught, reviewed, and refined by the time the students left for Spring Break. On paper, each student came into my classroom having already mastered the standards for their last seven or eight years of school. In reality, their average reading level was third grade. Faced with these truths at the beginning of each year, it often felt like there wasn’t time to breathe, let alone stop to play. Creativity had to be backed by the standards, exploration needed to be purposeful. Everything needed to be documented, analyzed, and supported by data. My students were not in the curriculum, let alone *the* curriculum.

There are some remnants of that curriculum that I find helpful in my job now; I need to be relentlessly self-reflective and continuously flexible. I can evaluate what worked and what didn’t, then decide where to go next. The very best difference between my old curriculum and this new one we are making? When something doesn’t click, that doesn’t have to feel like wasted time. I’m not falling behind when I spend time working on a program that I think will be a hit, only to have it flop. This is not a high-stakes test we are all trying to pass together. Instead, we get to try again. We can keep playing, talking, attempting things until we are successful. I will keep learning, searching for new and different ways to meet your needs. And the congregation will keep telling me what works and what doesn’t. Together, we are writing our own curriculum.

~Jesse

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next”? Or when we’re stifled by “the dullness of a set of obligations that makes each day a tight routine”?

Bowler writes that we need “a language of acknowledgement for the lives we *have*, not simply the lives we wish for.” We need a language that enables us to name *all* our experience, whatever and however it is for us. Bowler writes from hard experience—she is a stage IV colon cancer survivor.

She turned to the language of blessing to find a way to acknowledge her experience, to name it, to give it shape and form. She points out with wonderful irony that our culture is not one of blessing, but of *#blessed*.

By contrast, the *authentic* language of blessing is about noticing and naming the truth about ourselves, our lives, and the holy, no matter what that truth is for us in the moment. It allows a kind of spiritual reassembling of who we are and what

we know, a fitting of things into a larger context. It helps us put our “spiritual house” in order, even when, and perhaps especially when, our lives seem utterly out of order. For me, it says I can fit myself and my myriad experiences into the “interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” Or, in Paul Tillich’s metaphor that means a lot to me, it allows me to rest myself and my experience firmly in the Ground of Being.

She follows up her brief introduction to the language of blessing with a series of 100 blessings for all sorts of days: ordinary, tired, grief-stricken, beautiful, holy, and more. There truly is something here for nearly every situation and every person. I’ve turned to her words myself, and, as a chaplain, can recommend them to others, especially if you’re struggling with life’s difficult moments.

~*Rev. Julia*

Needed: New 5th Sunday Coffee Team Member

We are all sorry to hear that **Christine Lussier** and **Tim Allison** are moving back to Fort Wayne. They will be sorely missed. For the past year Christine has served as leader of the 5th Sunday coffee team. **Beth Gonser**, bless her, has stepped forward to become team leader.

So now we need to find an additional team member. This position is perfect for anyone who wants to take a small step into church responsibility.

- 1) The task is only 4 times a year; in 2024-25, it will be the last Sunday in September, December, March and June.
- 2) Your first job will be to wear a friendly smile as people pick up their coffee and treats. Then you can learn the other tasks of team membership.
- 3) Team members, coordinated by the leader, share the responsibility to bring treats, and half & half.
- 4) We regroup in the late summer of each year, so you are not signing up for a lifetime responsibility.

Questions? Ready to step forward? Text **Bea Sousa**, Coffee Team Coordinator, 765-215-9573

It's Choir Season!

Do you like to sing? If so, please consider joining the choir! Ability to read music is not necessary, only a love for singing. We present music to the congregation one

Sunday per month. Rehearsals are Tuesdays, 7:30 – 9:00 pm, after which we

linger for fellowship and light refreshments. Our season begins on Tuesday, August 27. Childcare is available if you let Jim know in advance. If you have questions, you are welcome to reach out to Jim

at jim@uuchurchmuncie.org.



Sharing Gratitude

With love and gratitude, we thank out-going board members **Eleanor Trawick** and **Jane Duckworth** for their service to the UUCM board. Eleanor served for a stretch of three years as president-elect, president, and then past-president. Jane served as treasurer for the past church year. We also thank our incoming members for their service: **Brian Reed** as president-elect and **Jennifer Hollems** as treasurer. ~**Rev. Joel**



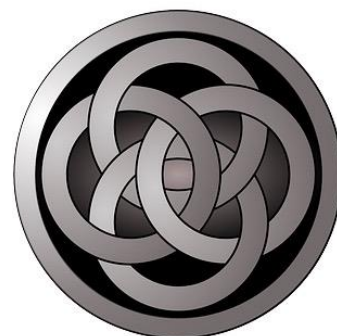
If you have a note of gratitude you'd like to share in the next Unigram, please send it to uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org, subject line "Sharing Gratitude."

I'd like to thank the following for the success of Aubrey Gouveia's Celebration of Life, June 15: **Rev. Dr. Joel Tishken** for organizing the program and for opening and closing the celebration; **Brian Reed** for his invaluable tech support for the celebration; **The UUCM Caring Committee** for organizing the reception. ~**Julia K. Gouveia**

Wheel of Life

Ron Moore, husband of **Jan Moore**, died on May 21 at their home near Alexandria. You may read his obituary on the Rozelle Johnson Funeral Site, rozelle-johnson.com/obituaries.html. Ron's Celebration of Life service will be held at UUCM on Saturday, September 7, time TBA.

If you have a milestone you'd like to share in the next Unigram, please send it to uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org, subject line "Wheel of Life."



August / September 2024 UUCM Calendar

Online calendar: <http://www.uuchurchmuncie.org/members/calendar/>

Regular Weekly Events

Adult Discussion Group: Multi-Platform	Sundays	9:30 am
LRE Classes & Activities	Sundays	9:30 – 10:30 am
Worship Service: Multi-Platform	Sundays	10:45 am
Social Hour	Sundays	After the service
Choir Rehearsal (beginning Aug 27)	Tuesdays	7:30 pm



August / September Meetings & Events

Staff Meeting	Tuesday	Aug 6	2:00 pm
Worship Associates	Wednesday	Aug 7	7:00 pm
UU Book Club	Thursday	Aug 8	7:00 pm
Parents Time Out	Saturday	Aug 10	1:00 – 3:00 pm
Social Justice Committee	Monday	Aug 12	7:30 pm
Board of Trustees	Wednesday	Aug 14	7:00 pm
Pastoral Associates	Sunday	Aug 18	12:30 pm
Staff Meeting	Tuesday	Aug 20	2:00 pm
Membership Committee	Wednesday	Aug 21	7:30 pm
Board Retreat	Sunday	Aug 25	12:00 – 5:00 pm
Staff Meeting	Tuesday	Sept 3	2:00 pm
Worship Associates	Wednesday	Sept 4	7:00 pm
Ron Moore Celebration of Life	Saturday	Sept 7	Time TBA
Social Justice Committee	Monday	Sept 9	7:30 pm
Board of Trustees	Wednesday	Sept 11	7:00 pm
UU Book Club	Thursday	Sept 12	7:00 pm
Parents Time Out	Saturday	Sept 14	9:30 – 11:30 am

UUCM Homecoming – Sunday, September 15, 10:45 am

Staff Meeting	Tuesday	Sept 17	2:00 pm
Membership Committee	Wednesday	Sept 18	7:30 pm
Roots & Wings New Member Class	Sunday	Sept 22	After the service
Pastoral Associates	Sunday	Sept 22	12:30 pm
Unigram Submissions Due	Wednesday	Sept 25	9:00 am

UUCM Office Hours

Monday

1:00 – 4:00 pm

Tuesday – Friday

9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Sunday Office Hours

Our next Sunday office hours will be September 15, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm.

Rev. Joel's Office Hours

Tuesdays 9:00 – 5:00
Phone and zoom meetings available at other times by request.

Jesse's Office Hours

Tuesdays 10:00 – 3:00

Items for the eBlast are due by 9:00 am each Thursday. Please use the [Publicity Form](#) to submit your announcements.

Articles for the Oct / Nov Unigram are due Wednesday, September 25. Please send as attached Word or Google docs to uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org

UUCM Staff & Leadership

Staff

Rev. Dr. Joel Tishken, Developmental Minister

joel@uuchurchmuncie.org

Rev. Dr. Julia Corbett-Hemeyer, Chaplain

julia@uuchurchmuncie.org

Jesse Daniel, Director of Lifespan Religious Education

jesse@uuchurchmuncie.org

Dr. James Helton, Director of Music

jim@uuchurchmuncie.org

Christie Williams, Office Administrator

christie@uuchurchmuncie.org

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765.288.9561 | uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org | www.uuchurchmuncie.org

Office Hours: Monday 1:00 – 4:00 pm | Tuesday – Friday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Unitarian Universalist Church of Muncie

4800 West Bradford Drive
Muncie, IN 47304

