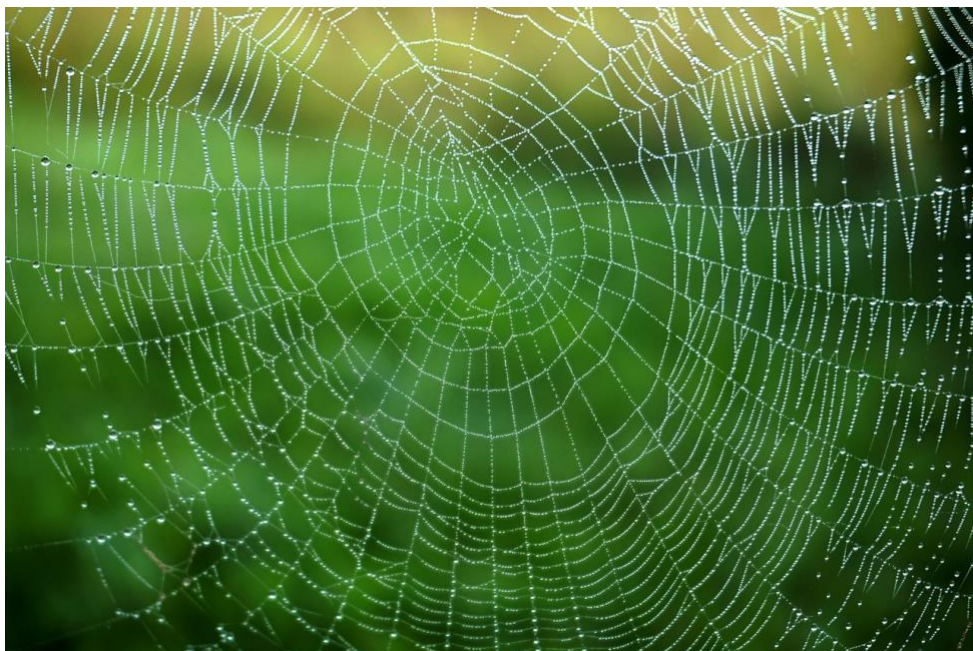




the UNIGRAM



Moral Fatigue

Rev. Dr. Joel Tishken, Developmental Minister

Whether we call it interconnection, interdependence, or interbeing, human beings have long appreciated that individuals are connected to the whole and our actions all have an impact—sometimes far wider and in ways we don’t always appreciate. This sentiment was expressed in the quotation I selected for this week by Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, “All things are implicated with one another, and the bond is holy; and there is hardly anything unconnected with any other thing.” The sentiment is also expressed in UUism’s 7th principle, “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”

Today I want to get us thinking about the shadow side of interconnection—moral fatigue. In an online article in *Medium*, author Diego Lujan provides a list of nine ways we can live our interconnectedness. The list contains things ranging from gratitude and mindfulness to considering how our actions impact future generations. His list connects to essentially everything. And none of the things on the list are simple either. This means that if we really want to live interconnection as a value, it must always be on our mind.

Take Lujan’s second item as an example, “Living in harmony with nature and recognizing our impact on the environment.” The statement encapsulates every thought and action we could have about the environment and striving to be greener. So, let’s say I’m at the grocery store and I want some fruit juice. Frozen, refrigerated, and shelved juices all have different carbon footprints based on packaging, size, storage,

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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>

October's Dedicated Offering recipient is UU Animal Ministry. The offering will be collected October 6th & 13th. November's recipient is UUCM's Feeding Our Hungry Neighbors Shopping Project and will be collected on the 17th & 24th. Check out the Friday eBlast for information about each month's Dedicated Offering.

October 6 – "Speciesism and the 7th Principle" Katie Williams

October 13 – "The Long Charade" Coming Out Day Charlize Jamieson

October 20 – "Keeping Community Through Kindness and Connection" Bibi Bahrami

October 27 – Day of the Ancestors Jesse Daniel & Rev. Joel Tishken

November 3 – "Existentialism" Rev. Joel Tishken

November 10 – "Ghost Dance" Rev. Joel Tishken

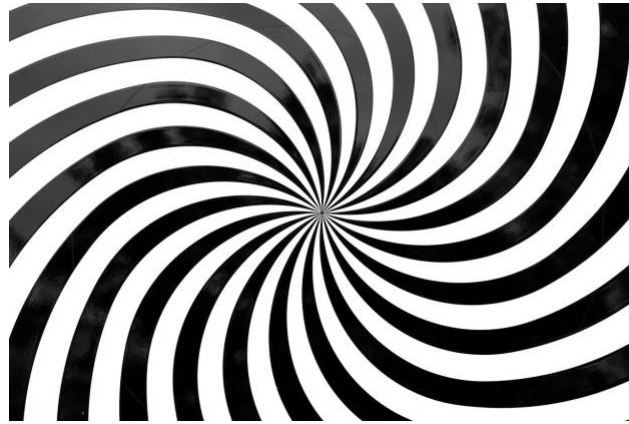
November 17 – "Jesus Never Ate a Banana" Kirk Robey

November 24 – Harvest Lunch 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 last article, I promised to continue to bring new Adult RE offerings until we find some winners. So, allow me to introduce the newest Adult RE choices coming to UUCM this October:

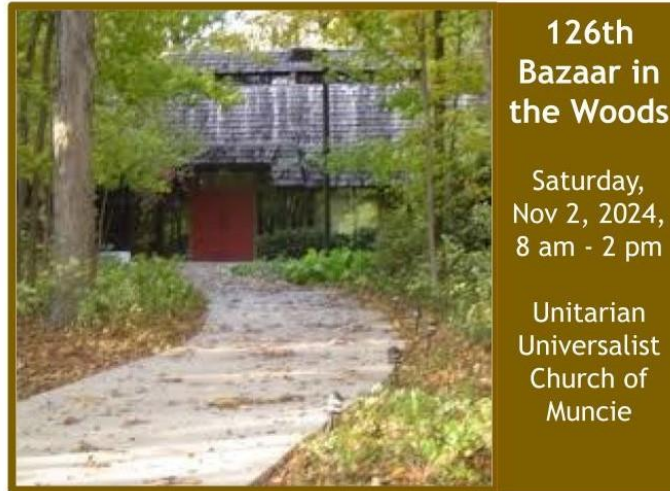
- The Fifth Dimension, a Twilight Zone based, starting October 13
- Sunday Morning Soul Matters Small Group, starting October 20

Just in time for Spooky Season, we'll be starting **The Fifth Dimension for Adults** in October. The original Fifth Dimension curriculum, written for middle schoolers, has been around since 2014 and continues to be a popular youth program. The new edition, written in 2024 exclusively for adults, focuses on the increasing polarization and isolation in American society. Each session starts with us watching a full episode of *The Twilight Zone* together; afterwards, we'll use the provided discussion prompts to begin a conversation about what we took away from Rod Serling's story telling. The creator of The Fifth Dimension for Adults, Karen Hager, hopes to spark discussion about how our faith helps to shape our values, the gray areas of value-based choices, and how our specific perspective affects our point of view.

Rod Serling, born to a Jewish family, converted to Unitarianism in college and joined the UU Community Church of Santa Monica, California. The Rev. Ernest Pipes, who was the minister at the time, has said Serling's philosophy on life aligned well with the UU point of view. According to Pipes, Serling was a "naturalistic humanist...racial issues, class, power- you find all of these in his writings." Rod found himself fighting against censors and with many of his early scripts, most of which were TV dramas. In 1959, Serling expressed his frustration: "I think it is criminal that we are not permitted to make dramatic note of social evils that exist, of controversial themes as they are inherent in our society." However, he found his niche with both the censors and the sponsors with *The Twilight Zone*. Carol Serling, Rod's wife, credits his move to science fiction, saying the people who pushed back against Rod's point-of-view in his straight drama scripts "basically just didn't understand what he was doing" with his hit series. The series won Serling three Emmy Awards, and incorporated Serling's liberal social views on racial relations, war, gender roles, addiction, extremism, violence, ageism, consumerism, industrialization and other social issues of the time.

Our first episode is *The Lonely*, which is episode seven from season one. The theme of our discussion will be loneliness and isolation, with a focus on our use of technology.

~Jesse



Our 2024 UUCM Bazaar is fast approaching on Saturday, November 2, from 8am - 2pm. Since the bazaar is such a significant fundraiser for our church, we all need to think about what we can do to make it a success.

We will need gently used clothing for the Encore clothes booth. We also need plant cuttings, and garden items for the plant booth, items for the Collectibles booth, and don't forget those special items for the Silent Auction. Plus, the This & That booth is great for getting rid of those items that are still useful but might be better in a new home.

Want the full list of booths? Here it is! Let it inspire you as you consider what *you* could donate!

- Used Books & Media
- Children's Corner
- Collectibles
- Encore! Fashion Boutique
- Food Booth
- Holidays
- Jewelry
- Plants, Pots & Garden Ware
- Puzzles
- Silent Auction
- Textiles
- This & That
- Tool Shop

Please hold onto items you want to donate until the week of October 28 as we do not have the space to accommodate early donations.

Your help is also needed to staff those many church booths! Look for sign-up sheets in the church foyer, and let us know where and when you can pitch in.

What about food for bazaar helpers and patrons? Well, the day will begin with coffee, juice, and **Kirk Robey's** wonderful cinnamon rolls. And **Eleanor Trawick** is organizing a delicious chili & cornbread lunch!

The bazaar has always been a highlight of Muncie's bazaar season, and we want to maintain that reputation. If you would like to be a part of this event – whether in a small or large way – please contact us! This is a great way to meet people and get involved in a fun and worthwhile project.

What's left?

- Contact Bazaar Chairs **Mary & Kirk Robey** with questions at mrboobthecat@hotmail.com.
- Watch the eBlasts and the special Unigram edition later in October for more information.
- And get ready for our best bazaar yet!!



Congregational Meeting – Sunday, October 20

The fall congregational meeting will be in the sanctuary on Sunday, October 20, following the service.

The agenda will be:

1. Approve the minutes of the May 19, 2024, Congregational meeting.
2. Treasurer's Report with a special announcement.
3. HVAC replacement status report.
4. Article II update.
5. Presentation and vote on the proposed update to the Developmental Goals.
6. Comments from the President regarding sanctuary technology updates.
7. Adjournment.

All are encouraged to attend - please mark your calendar!

To be eligible to vote, please ensure that you are a member in good standing according to the following passage from our bylaws: Article III, Section 2. *Persons who have been admitted to membership for at least thirty (30) days, who make a financial pledge to the church and make a good-faith effort to pay it, who donate their time and services, and who attend church services and activities are deemed to be voting members with all rights and privileges. Members who by reason of health have not been able to participate in church affairs and members who by reason of financial hardship have not been able to make a monetary contribution, are nonetheless viewed by the church as being members.*

Please note that a contribution of record for the 365 days preceding this meeting must be received by the church by 4:00 pm, Monday, October 14, to fulfill the financial contribution requirement.

Feed My Sheep Food Drive – Please Donate

Every year since 1996 Feed My Sheep has provided a free Thanksgiving meal to anyone who needs it on Thanksgiving Day. In addition, they've sent those families home with bags of food so they are fed for more than just that one day.

Please participate in this year's food drive so they can fill those bags with shelf-stable food. A plastic tote will be available in the foyer between October 23 and November 21 to collect donations. Let's make sure to fill it to the brim with canned goods, boxes of cereal, pasta, canned meats, etc. (And yes, this is in addition to our "every-Sunday" donations to Christian Ministries.)

Thank you in advance for your generosity!

~ **Bea Sousa & Susan Taylor**
of Feeding Our Hungry Neighbors



Sharing Gratitude

Thank you to everyone for a successful Homecoming service on September 29. A special thank you to our Fellowship Committee for taking care of lunch and clean-up.

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."

Moral Fatigue

Rev. Joel Tishken ([continued from page 1](#))

transportation, and contents. The same is true for the sort of fruit the juice is made from. If I truly thought entirely through all the resources and energy it took to make a thing, and how it differed from other options, I could easily find myself fatigued. And this is just one consumer choice among so many others about how we feed, cloth, and shelter ourselves, how we use energy, how much we travel, and so on.

Interconnection is not new and is as old as humans. Even early in human history, when all of humanity were hunter-gatherers, their choices had implications for the web of life of which they were part. Digging up tubers, picking fruits and berries, and spreading seeds can transform the flora of a region. Whenever human beings migrated to a new place, the population of megafauna dropped dramatically, and in some cases to extinction. Existing has environmental consequences and impacts the web of life. All of our choices matter, whether we're a hunter-gatherer living 30,000 years ago or someone living in the modern US. The question is not do we leave environmental footprints, but how large are our footprints.

Additionally, I think it fair to say that our ethical decision-making burden is greater than in times past. I say that because the globe has steadily gotten more interconnected over the course of human history. With every advancement in communication and travel, we've gotten more interconnected with people and places at greater distances. People, goods, information, and diseases all move faster and at greater distances than ever before.

All these changes mean that now, instead of making my own cider, or buying it at the local store made by someone local, I have all sorts of choices of mass

manufactured fruit juices with fruits from all over the place. And now we know that some chocolate is produced with child labor, some diamonds are blood diamonds, and animals in factory farms suffer horrible lives... and on the list can go. We have more options, and we know far more about those options than we did before. All of this adds up to interconnection at the global level, with access to information greater than humanity has even known, placing a burden on our ethical decision-making that is greater than ever before.

Given that existing always has an impact upon the web of life of which we are a part, and our awareness of our impacts is now greater than in the past, is it any wonder that we can often feel confused, conflicted, overwhelmed, depleted? There are times when we make choices, not because we don't know, or we don't care, but because we're exhausted from constantly trying to make the best choices, especially on those occasions when the best choices aren't always clear. I am confident many of us can relate to this, at least some of the time. It's called moral fatigue or moral exhaustion. I've got four tips for us on what we can do when we find ourselves morally fatigued.

- 1) **Be mindful of our all-around self-care and rest.** Caring for our bodies by exercising, eating and sleeping well, taking care ourselves socially, taking time to do things we enjoy—all of these add up to a better physical, mental, and spiritual state. And the better we are feeling overall, the easier it is to engage whatever the world has to offer or whatever life may force us to endure, including our moral choices.

([continued on page 8](#))

Moral Fatigue

Rev. Joel Tishken (continued from page 7)

- 2) **Assert control:** One way we can assert control is by focusing on one decision at a time, and allow ourselves time with it. Be in charge of the decisions, don't let the decisions be in charge of us. Anxiety can make decisions feel urgent. And urgency can add to our sense of overwhelm, confusion, and exhaustion. A second way we can assert control is to think creatively about how to reduce our moral anxiety. If making decisions at the grocery store is giving me moral fatigue, I could go there on an off time when there are fewer people. With fewer people around, I might feel more comfortable taking my time and I won't have as big of a crowd giving me another source of anxiety.
- 3) **Share your exhaustion.** We're never alone in feeling confused, overwhelmed, or depleted in our moral decision-making. That said, it may sometimes be wise to share it strategically. Be vulnerable at the right times and places. We all have people in our lives that we know aren't going to be good listeners about some things. One advantage of this community is that, whatever it is that has you feeling morally fatigued, odds are that you will find a safe space for sharing about it here. It wouldn't be surprising if it has other people fatigued too. We share a common set of values here, and many of us are probably morally fatigued on the same issues.
- 4) **Extend self-compassion.** Remind ourselves that caring and trying, not constant perfection, is what matters most of all. Are we morally doing our best with where we are? If the answer is yes, then it is enough

and that's all we can reasonably ask of ourselves. And in those times when we find ourselves stretched and unable to do as much as we might like, perhaps that's a time to choose big and maximize our impact. Yes, all choices matter and add up. However, what we drive and how much we drive it, and where we set our thermostat and hot water heater, matter far more than fruit juice choices. When we have the bandwidth to do all the things, great. When we don't, we can narrow in on those moral choices that matter most. Do the best we can and choose strategically when we're stretched.

Respecting our place in the interdependent web of all existence of which we part is an important value for UUs. There are times, however, when doing our best to honor our place in the interdependent web can be fatiguing. Ignoring our moral fatigue is dangerous because moral fatigue can compound. When left unaddressed, moral fatigue, just like physical or mental fatigue, often gets worse. The good news is we can compound things in the reverse direction back toward greater health and renewed commitment. When we find ourselves in a morally fatigued situation, please remember the tips above.

May each of us find our way out of moral fatigue when we encounter it. May this community be a blessed source of support for those struggling with moral fatigue. May our values be a source of comfort and encouragement to be our best selves in creating the kind of world we wish to see. So may it be.

Adapted from message delivered September 15, 2024

© Rev. Dr. Joel Tishken

October / November 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	Tuesdays	7:30 pm



October / November Meetings & Events

Staff Meeting	Tuesday	Oct 1	2:00 pm
Worship Associates	Wednesday	Oct 2	7:00 pm
Church Office Closed :: October 7-11			
Din with the Min	Wednesday	Oct 9	5:15 pm
Board of Trustees	Wednesday	Oct 9	7:00 pm
UU Book Club	Thursday	Oct 10	7:00 pm
Fall Retreat at Pokagon State Park :: October 11-13			
Parents Time Out	Saturday	Oct 12	1:00 – 3:00 pm
Social Justice Committee	Monday	Oct 14	7:30 pm
Staff Meeting	Tuesday	Oct 15	2:00 pm
Membership Committee	Wednesday	Oct 16	7:30 pm
Sanctuary Read-In	Saturday	Oct 19	2:00-4:00 pm
<u>Congregational Meeting</u>	Sunday	Oct 20	After the service
Kitchen Cleaning	Saturday	Oct 26	10:00 am
Sunday Office Hours	Sunday	Oct 27	9:30 am
Bazaar Set-up	Sunday	Oct 27	After the service
Pastoral Associates	Sunday	Oct 27	12:30 pm
Bazaar Donation Drop-off and Prep Daily :: October 28 – November 1 (details coming soon in special Bazaar Issue of the Unigram)			
Staff Meeting	Tuesday	Oct 29	2:00 pm
Bazaar in the Woods	Saturday	Nov 2	8am-2pm
Worship Associates	Wednesday	Nov 6	7:00 pm
Rummage Sale	Saturday	Nov 9	8am-12pm
Social Justice Committee	Monday	Nov 11	7:30 pm
Staff Meeting	Tuesday	Nov 12	2:00 pm
Din with the Min	Wednesday	Nov 13	5:15 pm
Board of Trustees	Wednesday	Nov 13	7:00 pm
UU Book Club	Thursday	Nov 14	7:00 pm
Parents Time Out	Saturday	Nov 16	9:30 – 11:30 am
Unigram Submissions Due	Wednesday	Nov 20	9:00 am
Membership Committee	Wednesday	Nov 20	7:30 pm
Sunday Office Hours	Sunday	Nov 24	9:30 am
Pastoral Associates	Sunday	Nov 24	12:30 pm

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 October 27, and November 24, 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 Dec / Jan *Unigram* are due Wednesday, November 20. Please send as attached Word or Google docs to uucm@uuchurchmuncie.org

UUCM Staff & Leadership

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joel@uuchurchmuncie.org

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

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