



Minister's Column

Dear Members & Friends,

Who would have thought that our summer would end with marches of white supremacy and anti-Semitism and a national debate about how we tell our history through monuments and memorials? While there's important work to be done about the former, and to some degree I think the discussion about monuments and history-telling is a distraction from the vital work of resistance, I find myself drawn into thinking about the latter. I'm sure that my interest in the subject comes in part from my own family legacy in the South. But I also find it interesting that the country is having this discussion at the same time as we are embarked in a project of creating memorialization in our church in a more deliberate way and telling our story through our history wall(s) in the social hall.

I've been thinking about those UUCEL ancestors a lot. Our church was founded in 1881, so it was founded around the end of the "Reconstruction" era. Our church narrative tells of the founders coming from New York. New York was a vital place in both the women's rights and abolition movements. The first women's rights convention was in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848. Frederick Douglass had a press, the North Star press, which he ran out of Rochester from 1847-1851. Both Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass were Unitarians, but New York Universalism was strong and active, as well. New York was the headquarters of Universalism from 1825 until the merger in 1961, and St. Lawrence University in New York was Universalist.

When I think about our church ancestors, I have a lot of questions. Why did they come here from New York? Where in New York did they come from? What were their

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Calendar

- 3 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ Lay Leader; Lynn Hightower ~ 11:00 am
- 6 Wed. Board Meeting ~ 6:30 pm
- 7 Thurs. AUUW Meeting ~ 12:30 pm
- 10 Sunday RE Breakfast ~ 10:00 am
- 10 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ 11:00 am
- 10 Sunday Caring Committee Meeting ~ After the Service
- 12 Tue. Meet Your Neighbor Coffee ~ 9:00 - 11:00 am
- 12 Tue. R.E. Meeting ~ 5:30 pm
- 14 Thurs Membership Meeting ~ @JC North ~ 6:30 pm
- 17 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ 11:00 am
- 17 Sunday The Bellnote Newsletter ~ Submissions Due
- 21 Thurs. Personal Care Ministry ~ @ 1st Baptist Church, 201 S. Jackson ~ 4:30-6:30 pm
- 21 Thurs JXN Community Forums Maintaining Financial & Legal Control as We Age
- 22 Fri Matt Walsh entertainment evening ~ 7:00 pm
- 24 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ 11:00 am

Sunday Services at 11:00 am

September's Theme is: Welcome

Sept 3 - "Testimonials" Lay Leader; Lynn Hightower - Participatory service with testimonials by three members on a welcoming theme - What made you feel welcome here and how did you know this was your "home?"

Sept 10 - "Water Communion and Ingathering" — Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum - Bring water from your home or a special place as we celebrate the beginning of our year with this ingathering service where we name the generations of our history, bless the backpacks of our school-goers, and talk about water and justice.

Sept 17 - "Radical Welcome" – Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum - Rev. Cindy will talk about the religious value of creating a space of welcome. How do we welcome the stranger? How do we welcome people different than "us"? How do we welcome children and people of all generations?

Sept 24 - "The Right to Read" — Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum - September 24th begins Banned Book Week. We'll talk about the values of the freedom to read, freedom of the press, and freedom of speech, and how they intersect with our religious values. And, yes, we will read some from banned books on this Sunday! Do you know what the most banned book was last year?

Rev. Cindy's Column Continued...

relationships, and their parents' and grandparents' relationships to the abolition and suffrage movements? When they came to East Liberty, did they bring a message of social justice? What were the causes that were vital to them in our area at the time?

And I wonder what relationship our Universalist founding families had to the Unitarians in Jackson at the time. Did our Universalist ancestors interact with our Unitarian ancestors? Did they partner on justice issues? Did they build common ground in the area together?

Finding mentions of the Jackson Unitarians is difficult. A few snippets I can tell you: First, the Unitarian Church in Jackson was the religious home of Austin Blair, Michigan's Civil War governor, a noted abolitionist. He returned to Jackson the same year our church was founded. He spoke at the Unitarian church upon occasion. Secondly, a small anecdote: In 1899, the minister, Rev. Fred. V. Hawley, was part of a series of talks at the Western Unitarian Sunday School Society on "Methods of Church Work in the City and in the Country." Our Unitarian minister was part of the country side of the discussion. Third, the Christian Register, the Unitarian publication for many decades, printed a little article in 1915 that said, "At Jackson, Mich., where the church after the sale of its building had been dormant for several years, there has arisen the possibility of a joint movement between the Universalists of Michigan and the Unitarians..." We know that joint movement discussion didn't amount to much, but how interesting to hear that the Us and Us of Michigan, centered here in Jackson, were talking about joint ventures that early in our history. Remember the merger didn't happen until 1961!

The answers to my questions about our ancestors may be lost to history, but what the controversies around the

memorials is telling us is that how we tell our history matters. It matters what we choose to omit, and what we choose to include. I know as our board members create our history wall(s) they are trying to tell our story in as clear a way as possible with the information that is available to us, and to do so in ways that honor our history but are honest with our history.

Rev. Cindy

Visitor's Orientation Question & Answer

Would you like to learn more about the church? Please join the minister after the service for a short, informal conversation about any of your questions; Rev. Cindy will have the answers. On **Sunday, September 17** meet in the foyer after the service. Following the Q and A we can have a tour of our buildings if you would like. We will also be having a new member(s) joining service soon. Please let us know if you would like to be a part of that joining service.

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