This phrase, from ancient Chinese Zen, sums up the understanding that it is in doing the simplest, most ordinary and necessary tasks, that our spiritual life is polished and burnished. You might be surprised to know that in Zen monasteries the most common activity, after meditation, is – cleaning. Lots and lots of cleaning.

When I was a teen, I was profoundly lazy. All I wanted to do was curl up in corner and read a book, and any necessary or requested activity – dishes, homework, weeding the garden – was a source of profound resentment (ah, my poor mother).
It wasn’t until I went on a three-month Outward Bound course at eighteen, with twenty other young adults, that I finally began to get a glimpse of the joys of working together, of chopping vegetables for the evening meal, of rowing hard against a headwind. It was a revolutionary discovery. All those daily activities that had seemed impossibly tedious were suddenly a source of pleasure and connection.

A few years later, when I became a Zen student and lived in the monastery, I discovered how ordinary work and service – sweeping, cooking, doing dishes, even cleaning toilets – were opportunities for taking care of others in the community, creating beauty and order, and bringing awareness to each moment. And I discovered that the simpler the task, the more it was possible to take it on as a spiritual practice and an opportunity for mindfulness.

Recently I helped with dishes after Fellowship hour on Sunday morning – much to the surprise of a first-time visitor to our church, who didn’t think he would find the minister with an apron on - and I was reminded again of the joy of simple service.

In church life there are thousands of opportunities to serve one another, to take care of our beautiful spaces, and to do these things as spiritual practices. Being a committee member, or a leader, is certainly also a spiritual practice, but I’m talking about the very simplest, material ways we can support one another, using our hands and bodies. Handing out programs on Sunday morning. Weeding the flower beds. Bringing food to share. Taking the kitchen towels home to be washed.

When we were trying to decide if we should hire someone again for our dishwasher position, the Board surprised me by suggesting that doing dishes would be something people in the congregation would enjoy doing. If you choose to serve in this way, I invite you to do dishes as a spiritual practice, as a mindfulness practice, as joyful service to the larger community, and see what that’s like.

Here are few lines from a Marge Piercy poem, “To Be of Use”:
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/57673/to-be-of-use

...I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart, who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience, who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward, who do what has to be done, again and again....
The work of the world is common as mud. Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust. But the thing worth doing well done has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident....
The pitcher cries for water to carry and a person for work that is real.
Greetings From Your Board Of Trustees
Randy Locke, Chair, Board of Trustees

As you may have noticed, there are many wonderful, new faces around the church these days. Our membership is up over 320, thanks to more than 80 new members that have joined during the last two years. That is an incredible amount of growth, and it tells me that our congregation is an inviting community that offers many opportunities for engagement, as well as, personal meaning and fulfilment.

Of course, there are many factors that make it such a place including the inspiring work and sermons of our minister; the highly proficient and professional staff; the religious education programs; and the amazing dedication and talent of people like you who support the church in so many ways. Our congregation truly is vibrant and growing. We also have several efforts that are underway to best meet the hopes and dreams of the congregation well into the future. The Dream Team (being led by Karen Folk) is engaging the congregation in a strategic visioning process that will produce a 5-year plan. And in a coordinated effort, the Religious Education – Exploring the Future (REEF) Team (being led by Michele Grove) is in the midst of a 3-year Interim Religion Education process that is exploring how to adapt and expand our curricula for all ages.

While such significant change can be exciting, it can also be challenging. So, I remind myself periodically that we can help each other through transitions by deeply listening, assuming good will in the actions of others, and doing our best to live our principles.

To further guide our endeavors, the Board of Trustees has updated its goals for 2019-2020. Those goals, in turn, provide a framework for the Minister, Interim Director of Religious Education, and other staff to set their priorities.

One priority for the board this year is to facilitate the process of updating our operations manual and policies. Another priority is for the board to increase its transparency and engagement with committees and the congregation. The board generally holds open meetings at 6:30 pm on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays every month. Business meeting materials will generally be available about one week in advance. Board information and meeting materials are available on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall and as referenced in eNews on the 3rd Thursday of the month the week before the business meeting. I encourage you to attend board meetings. It’s a great way to get engaged and give us your direct input on current issues.

You have entrusted the board to guide the administration and operation of the church and we take that responsibility to heart. We welcome your thoughts on how we are doing and what we can do better to make meaningful strides in our congregation and beyond. Please take a moment to talk to or email any one of us and let us know your thoughts.

With deep respect and gratitude,

Randy Locke
chair@uucuc.org
The Birth Of A Religious Education Council
Michele Townsend Grove, Interim Director of Religious Education

Last year, religious education leadership examined the current religious education committee and decided to restructure to meet the growing needs of our congregation’s lifespan religious education program. After several months of discussion and research, the new Religious Education Council came into being. The council meets three times a year for 3-4 hours and is open to anyone who wishes to participate. At these council meetings, the gathered will vision for the future and build working systems for the current program. In between council meetings, working teams carry out the creative visions of the religious education council. It is an exciting model which:

- Reduces the number of meetings needed to run a lifespan religious education program.
- Creates spaces where leadership and service are guided by interest and passion.
- Can expand or contract based on the number of persons willing to serve.
- Provides ample space for dreams and evaluation

The core of the religious education council includes a religious council chairperson, core leaders for each work area (children, youth, adult and multi-generational religious education), and staff. These key leaders interact with the working teams to resource and guide the work. The working teams may be short-term teams with a specific project (the winter pageant) or long-term projects (Sunday morning religious education). Current leadership includes:

- Barbara Hudgings, Religious education council chairperson
- Mona Shannon, Children’s work area coordinator
- Angie Urban, Multi-generational work area coordinator
- Rev. Florence Caplow, staff working with adult religious education
- Emily McKown, staff working with youth

I will continue to work with the full council and working teams as they coordinate efforts and build their identity. The council is also dedicated to working with all areas of the congregation since learning is a valuable part of all we do. When lay leaders work with professional staff, the potential for lifelong learning grows exponentially. The future is promising, and learning is a priority. We look forward to the possibilities as they unfold.
Being a part of a vital bustling church community can be inspiring and highly motivational. But, if we’re not careful, it can also lead to overload and over-extending. When you feel that you might be burning the proverbial candle at both ends, here are some tips to remind you to pause and cherish the moment:

1. Take a deep breath. Close your eyes. Go within. Hold space for the moment and connect with the Oneness of all.

2. Take a “penny hike”. Take nothing with you but a single penny and venture out into whatever neighborhood you find yourself. Begin walking. When you come to a corner, flip the penny. “Heads” you go right. “Tails” you go left. Enjoy the adventure of allowing the penny to direct your journey.

3. If you’re unable to physically step out into your neighborhood, shine your light of attention on imaging yourself on a “penny hike”. Sustain your mental gaze until you’re lost in the experience and you’ve entered into a different state of consciousness. According to Dr. David Bresler (neuroscientist, board certified acupuncturist and health psychologist, author, and educator) “The body tends to respond to mental imagery exactly as it would to a genuine external experience.” What does this mean for you? Total immersion into an imagined “penny hike” will have much the same effect as physically taking one.

4. Eat one piece of dark chocolate. Savor it. Let it melt slowly in your mouth.

5. Practice a minute of mindfulness. It doesn’t matter on what you focus. The point is to enter that “different state of consciousness” referenced in point #3. Simply pick something... the big toe on your right foot, your breath, the pen laying on your desk, the tree outside your window. Pour all of your awareness into mindfully experiencing that on which you’ve chosen to focus.

6. Repeat an affirming simple mantra. Something like…. “I choose well-being”, “I am in charge of how I feel and -- in this moment -- I’m choosing happiness”, or “I am enough”.

7. Mindfully eat one raisin.

8. Breathe and for one minute do nothing but experience your breath.

9. Yawn and stretch for 10 seconds. Fake a yawn if you have to. That will trigger a real one. Breathe a sigh as you exhale. Notice how a yawn interrupts your thoughts and even your feelings and brings you into the present moment.

10. Take a digital break. Walk away from all devices and connect with something in nature. If possible, actually touch it. Feel its energy and how it grounds and nourishes you.

11. Eat another piece of dark chocolate. This one’s worth repeating!

As you begin to practice cherishing individual moments, doing so will come more and more naturally and you’ll soon find that you automatically return to the practice without conscious effort.

Enjoy the journey.
**A Visit From Joe Pierce**

Kate Barton, Facilities Manager

Recently, I got a call from Joe Pierce, whose father was a minister here at UUCUC from 1945 to 1948. He explained that he has been meaning to stop in on his annual trip with his wife Carol, from Glasgow, Kentucky to Minnesota and wanted to know if someone might be available to show him around.

It was a joy to be able to visit with someone who had stories to tell about a time here at the Church that most of us have no idea about. My first reminder that Joe had not been here in over 70 years was that he didn’t know that the Birch Street (ECIRMAC) door wasn’t the entrance to the Church office anymore.

When I took Joe into the old office room he told me that, he remembered it being decorated with his father’s swords and books. An entrance to the sanctuary which has been covered up now was located in the room, as well.

(Continued on page 8)
A Visit From Joe Pierce, continued...

Joe asked to see the Rood Loft and we sat up there for awhile as he told me a story of how the family stayed in that room while the parsonage was being made ready for them in the area where Fellowship Hall now stands. Each Sunday they had to put away their belongings to make space for a women’s group to meet before services. He also shared with me that the family who lived in the High Street house gave him his first dog. Thank you for sharing your stories, Joe!

1945-1948 The Ministry of Ellis E. Pierce
Of all the ministers who occupied the Urbana pulpit none was more picturesque than Dr. Ellis Pierce from the Hornell, New York Church. He earned B.A. and M.A. degrees from Syracuse University, a B.S.T. degree from Boston University and a Ph.D. degree from Drew University. Dr. Pierce was a student of classics, a devotee of fencing and mystery stories, and his full beard and clerical garb readily became well known in community circles. He was a preacher of the application of intelligence, reason, and experience to the problems of religion and life. During his three year ministry 40 people joined the church. In 1948 Dr. Pierce was appointed Craig Professor of Biblical Languages and Literature at St. Lawrence University.

Hospitality Team Happenings!
Peggy Patten, Hospitality Team Coordinator

Retiring, Continuing, and New Hospitality Team Leaders
Thanks to the following Hospitality Team Leaders who have stepped down from years of service: Tamara Ducey & Trisha Locke. Thanks to the following Team Leaders who are continuing in their roles: Jenna Zeidler, Pam Richart, AJ Herzog, Jen Livingston, Marcy Joncich, Wendy Graves, Anne Sharpe, Priscilla Kron, Katie Madigan & Kathy Robinson. Thanks to the following new Team Leaders this year: Kelly Halcom & Gail Hueting.

Be the Face of Sunday Morning: Join a Hospitality Team
Hospitality Teams are in charge of Sunday morning hospitality (e.g. bell ringing, welcoming, ushering, providing decorations and refreshments) for two months during the year. Hospitality Teams are a great way to meet people and serve our congregation in a fun and important way. All members and friends are encouraged to join a Hospitality Team. Each Team has 30-40 members so you do not need to help on every Sunday assigned to your Team. Stop by the Hub table on Sunday mornings to sign up for a Hospitality Team (or to find out if you are already assigned to a Team.) Questions? Contact Peggy Patten, mspeggypatten@gmail.com.

Book and Magazine Exchanges Returns
The Book and Magazine Exchanges will take place on the third Sunday of most months throughout the church year. On Book and Magazine Exchange Sundays you are invited to bring in a small amount of books and/or magazines to exchange in Fellowship Hall after Sunday services. Books and magazines should be in good condition and can be for adults or children. Remaining magazines will be recycled. Remaining books will be donated to UC Books to Prisoners or the Urbana Library. Questions? Talk to Kristi Mercer or Peggy Patten.
The VAHEST Trust: Advocacy And Assistance For The Elderly Of Our Society

Marsha Clinard, Chair

Victor A. Hoersch (1893-1994) was a math professor and a member of our congregation. His last will and testament included the following:

_I have provided for trust funding for a program to provide advocacy, ombudsman and personal assistance for the elderly and it is my continuing direction and bequest that worthwhile and charitable services of this nature be provided by means of the Victor A. Hoersch Elderly Service Trust._

_The trust shall establish, maintain and continue for as long as it shall be feasible, under the laws of the State of Illinois, a charitable trust to provide for the needy elderly of our society such as advocacy, ombudsman, personal assistance services as it deems appropriate. Date: March 1982_

For the past 40 plus years, the VAHEST trust, as it is known, has been providing funding for agencies and programs within our community as directed by the VAHEST Trust Advisory Committee (which makes recommendations after receiving grant requests) and the Trustees of the VAHEST Trust (who manage the finances of the Trust and review and approve the Advisory Committee recommendations).

The committee had its first meeting at the church on February 22, 1987 at which time they began to work out the means by which awards would be made. The advisory committee at that time was comprised of church members who were also social workers. The current committee is made up of three former social workers (Amy Meyer, Kathy Frizzell, and Marsha Clinard), one retired licensed clinical professional counselor (Pamela Van Wyk) and one retired geriatrician (Claire Barker). During that first year substantial awards were made to the Champaign County Nursing Home Council ($6500) and to our church ($9000) for the elevette and other items.

Over these last forty years the amount of money generated by the Trust has varied a great deal depending on the market. One year there was over $30,000 to distribute but in the recent past this amount has become less. For this year the amount available for grants is $11,600.

And over the years the process of applications has been streamlined so that everything is done electronically. Whereas in the past, awards were only made for three consecutive years, today awards continue to be made to the core agencies because of their need. The maximum amount of be awarded to single program has been $1500, although fewer requests have allowed us to provide a few larger grants.

The agencies which have received awards have been numerous. The primary recipients are Family Service of Champaign county which provides services to needy elderly through such programs as Meals on Wheels, RSVP and Telecare. A number of funded programs such as PeaceMeal relate to meeting the food needs of older adults.

Although the award amounts are less than in years past, the agencies, much in need these days, are most appreciative of the grants they receive. “Thank you for the recent VAHEST grants to Family Service....Family Service faces many challenges and opportunities to make a difference in the lives of children, adults and seniors in need. Your support is more critical than ever to that effort. We pledge to use your  

(continued on page 10)
 donation responsibly and thank you for being Friends of the Family.” From Frances Nelson, “The grant is very much appreciated and will assist in the purchase of a new EKG machine.” From EIRMAC, “Please thank the congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Church and the VAHEST Advisory Committee for selecting our agency for a VAHEST grant. Words can’t express how much your grant means to the agency because without the help of our friends within the community, we would not be able to provide the services we do.”

The Committee sends out grant applications in late February or early March to various programs and agencies which serve older adults. Completed grants are then evaluated by the Trust Advisory Committee and the recommendations are forwarded to the Trustees for their approval. If you are aware of programs of this kind, please feel free to suggest them to members of the committee for consideration next year.

I believe Victor Hoersch would be pleased to see that his trust continues to strive to meet the goals he set for it. We should all be proud of our church community which makes these awards possible for our community.

**Autumn Meditation**

Elizabeth M. Strong courtesy of the UUA

Please join with me in the spirit of meditation and prayer.

We know the leaves are dying. We know that their blaze of beauty is a preparation for death. It is a time when we appreciate the effort of nature to rise above the ordinariness of life and death. It is a time when we visibly comprehend glory and wonder. And we worship with thanks.

We feel now that the air is cold and crisp. We feel now a clearing from the skies of the heaviness of the hazes of summer. It is a time when we appreciate the crispness and sharpness of the realities of life and death. It is a time when we physically comprehend the relief that clarity and insight can bring. And we worship with thanks.

We hear now the dry rustle of plants and grasses. We hear now a crackling from the earth that tells of the withering of the fullness of life. It is a time when we appreciate approaching rest from the frantic fullness. It is a time when we hear a different voice within, and know that life is settling down for a well deserved wintering.

Let it be so within each of our lives as we prepare for an autumn in our own life cycle. For we all need rest and respite if we are to understand and appreciate the rhythm of life in our soul that enables us to worship with thanks.
Color Me! Harvest Basket Chalice

Courtesy of Jennie Freiberger
We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Our Worship
During the church year, we meet to worship at 10:15 am. Religious education classes for children and youth, as well as childcare for infants and toddlers, are available during this service. In June, July, and August, we gather together to worship on Sunday mornings in Fellowship Hall. Childcare and one multi-graded elementary class are available in the summer. Summer services are lay-led, and we also have intergenerational services at holidays and other times during the year.

Our Staff

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