

 **the**
FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Fellowship of West Chester

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SUNDAY SERVICES May, 2009

May 3

TOPSY TURVY

An Intergenerational Alice

Join us for our own Adventures in Wonderland as we explore the nature of doing things backward, turning things around, seeing things differently, and some general fun. See Pam Baxter's RE article, p. 4, for more information. *The services will be followed at 12:30 by a pot-luck Brunch and UnBirthday Party for ALL!*

May 10

A MOTHER'S DAY PROCLAMATION

Rev. Deborah Mero

Mother's Day was started by Julia Ward Howe when she issued her Mother's Day for Peace Proclamation. Given the times we live in now, what would be your proclamation if you had the ability to declare one? Be ready to share your ideas. (See the Song of Deborah, p. 2)

May 17

FAITH AND PUBLIC ADVOCACY

Rev. Sandy Strauss

Rev. Strauss is the director of public advocacy for the Pennsylvania Council of Churches. Its goal is to empower people of faith to make a difference for the common good in the public square. She will discuss how she attempts to live her faith and achieve spiritual wholeness. Rev. Strauss is a Presbyterian minister and motivational speaker.

May 24

WALKING THE SACRED PATH

**Rev. Deborah Mero and
Tamara Gohean**

NOTE: Two different services at 9 and 11 a.m. We will welcome a guest, Tamara Gohean, who will help me introduce the Labyrinth, a walking meditation experience, to the UFWC. At 9 a.m. we will have a "normal" worship service which will lead then to clearing our floor space after the service to actually set up a canvass labyrinth that will then be experienced both between the services and will be the worship experience for those coming at 11 (or staying through).

May 31

CELEBRATING MARRIAGE

Rev. Deborah Mero

Unitarian Universalists have been at the forefront of the movement for marriage equality. It may be a while before PA is ready to take this step, but it is important for us to share our stories because that is what has led to the legalization of same sex marriage in four states now. Let us celebrate the progress we have seen and keep the conversation alive.

Services and Babysitting at 9 AM and 11 AM. Religious Education at 9 AM only.

THE SONG OF DEBORAH

When I was a child growing up in Chicago we used to go on field trips a lot with our school classes. We went to the Field museum of natural history – I never did like the Mummy Room, but the elephants were really cool. We went to the Art Institute – I loved the Thorn Room miniatures, scale model rooms of different times and places. But my favorite museum in Chicago was the Museum of Science and Industry.

There were a lot of reasons for liking that museum. There was “Yesterday’s Main Street” with turn of the century shops and a little movie theater showing line drawing cartoons; there was the coal mine; there was the hatchery where we could watch chickens hatch out of their eggs. But mostly there were buttons to push and the feel of interacting with the exhibits. They were not static which is what made them more inviting.

The word “worship” when traced back to its origins refers to what it is that we wish to hold up that has worth to us. As I have been thinking about our worship experiences together, our new Mission Statement, and conversations I have had with some of you about a variety of subjects I thought that it would be interesting to invite more interaction and participation from you. So May is going to look a bit different, and I’m really hoping that many of you will want to share in the experience.

Please see what Pam has written about the May 3 service we have planned, and you will be hearing more about it as we get closer. But in addition to that I am hoping that you will want to share some of your own

thoughts and stories with us all on several of the other Sundays. The month of May will incorporate all three of the pillars of our mission, providing an environment for spiritual growth, meaningful connections, and social justice.

Mother’s Day began when Unitarian Julia Ward Howe issued her Proclamation for Peace in 1870. Given the opportunity to issue your own Proclamation, what would you

want to say? What is your wish for our society? For your children? I’ll work on my own and I would like to invite you to write one as well. Several of yours will be shared in the service. Please think about this and send me your proclamations.

On Memorial Day Sunday we will have a special experience. Our 9 AM service will be informative and our 11 AM service experiential. Tamara Gohean, a friend of Ellen Schipul will be with us to introduce us to the Labyrinth, a pattern on the ground used for walking meditation. The classic labyrinth is embedded in the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France. Over the past two decades many churches around

the country and beyond have constructed these geometric paths in a variety of forms both indoors and out. At 9 we will learn about the Labyrinth. Then we will clear the chairs to the sidelines and unfold a canvass labyrinth which will then be available for walking. At the 11 AM service we will, in effect, be walking the sacred path. Come to one or both services. It will be a wonderful morning.

Then on May 31 we will celebrate *Marriage Equality*. This will be an opportunity to share our stories of connection. Having served congregations in Vermont and Massachusetts, I have my own stories to tell about civil unions and marriage, and I’d like to invite your stories whether it is about you, your friends, or family members. Please let me know if you have a story to tell.

My hope for May is that we make some meaningful connections through our worship experience. I hope it will be fun, stimulating and moving for us all. Please join me and add your voice as we share our faith, hope and stories.

– Deborah

The word “worship” refers to what it is that we wish to hold up that has worth to us.

GROCERY STORE CARDS

Reminder: Don't forget to buy grocery cards after each Sunday service in the back of the sanctuary. And you can also make financial donations to the Food Bank at the grocery card table.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The most important part of UFWC, in my opinion, is that we are a faith-based community, with community perhaps being the key word in that description. This came through loud and clear in the input and the final draft of our new mission statement, and it has always been a key aspect of our fellowship to members and friends. It has also been the most obvious factor about us to visitors and has drawn many of us in, myself included. This sense of community is needed now more than ever.

We are in transition on many fronts, and it's unsettling. Our country is going through a massive change not only in governing style, but in world status and influence. Our local county is being transformed faster than we can keep track of. For many of us our short and long term employment situations are forever shifted as the economy goes through a massive change. Our own fellowship is going through enormous change as well as we work through the implications of growth, our new minister, new governing style, and many new faces. By remembering that at the core we are a community which supports each other in all the ways we promise to do so, and by acting vigorously in support of that community, we provide each other and the community at large a haven in these confusing times.

As most of you know I and the Board have been very engaged in the process of transforming our fellowship governance to a Policy Governance model. Perhaps you're interested in what that means, and I hope most of you are since there is a role for everyone in that model. Perhaps you think that we're spending too

much time on such arcane matters and not enough on the real reason we exist. I'll cede the latter point as a short term matter; we have been very busy with this work this year. But I want to make sure that everyone is clear that we set a very aggressive goal to finish the base work this year, and that we're nearly complete with that.

Once the basic policies are in place, and the leadership roles are more clearly defined as a result, my expectation is that we will be able to run this fellowship much more effectively and with much less confusion about who does what. We can immediately put our focus back on the true job at hand – accomplishing our mission.

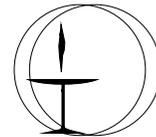
This takes us back to community, and to the role that every "congregant" has in accomplishing that part of our mission. I am soon to embark on a transition back to a role of congregant myself, and I will leave the governance in the capable hands of Diane Cohle and the Board and Executive Team and Council of Committees going forward.

My role will be to help build this community. I will no doubt want to take a break from responsibility in general, and my family and job search activities will be glad for that. But I cannot drop my responsibility to reach out and help wherever I can to foster this precious community, this magical place called UFWC. I will greet new visitors and members I haven't yet had time to meet. I will offer my funds to the budget whether I fully agree with the current focus or not. I will be constructive and open and honest about my criticisms and opinions in order to help move the community forward. I will do whatever I can

to encourage new people into the door so they can experience what I have been so lucky to have experienced. I will remain informed about the issues facing our leadership and help where I can. I will attend activities, send cards to sick friends, help cut the grass, and come to work parties. I need this community to be part of my life, and I will do what I can to foster it.

Our mission statement calls for us to build meaningful connections – my feeling is that this is important work that needs to be done actively by all of us. Please join me in keeping the magic of community in all its ups and downs alive in West Chester.

– Bob Scott



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Committee appreciates the interest and participation of the people who attended one or both of the Newcomer classes in March. Even if you're not a member, there are many ways in which to become involved in the community of the Fellowship. As a reminder, to be eligible to vote on the slate of officers and any Fellowship business at the Annual Meeting on June 7, you must be a member for 30 days prior to the Meeting. So if you're ready to become a Member and make the commitment please contact Rev. Mero, (email: minister) or Barbara Long or Mira Tryon of the Committee (email: membership).

REmarks – RELIGIOUS EDUCATION UPDATE

Maria Montessori is well-known for her revolutionary approach to children's education. But I wonder if you know that Montessori felt that the spiritual formation of the child was at the heart of her work.

On April 12, we had our first experience with Spirit Play, a Montessori-based approach to UU religious education. Thirteen children from Pre-K through fifth grade participated in a "story" about community, our UU principles and our symbol of the flaming chalice.

In "UULand," we generally use the term "Religious Education" rather than Sunday School. But the standard classroom model is still there: a teacher presents learning material to the children. There is plenty of give-and-take, and UU kids are lively contributors and debaters, but it is clear that the teacher is teaching and the children are (hopefully!) taking in new ideas and information.

Spirit Play approaches things differently. The lesson itself, rather than the presenter, is the focal point; in a sense, the story does the teaching. Through a specifically designed presentation method, the children are invited into the day's story, and then are brought even deeper into the story through wondering questions. This is at the same time a subtle and powerful means of conveying intangible concepts, ideas and principles; for opening the door to the world of spirit.

After the story, the children select the "Work" they want to do, choosing from a variety of art materials or opting to work with and retell the story of the day (or a previous story). Dur-

ing this time, they are free to use the materials to work through something in the lesson, or perhaps something that is going on in their lives.

The morning ends with Feast – a simple snack served by the children and shared in the circle of community. The children are responsible for cleaning up from the Feast, and also for cleaning up and putting away their Work materials.

Going forward, our intent is to use Spirit Play to enrich our existing RE program several times a year. Spirit Play also gives us a practical solution to

offering RE at some of the 11:00 services, since only several people are needed to run an individual SP class. People do need to be trained, in order to be able to successfully carry out the program.

Note: Since January, many new children have become part of our RE classes. Welcome to Elizabeth Cottage, Jamie Cottage, Eleanor Gisecke, Noah Greskiewicz and Sequoyah Walters – we're so glad to have you with us!

– Pam Baxter
Director of Religious Education

STEPPING THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS AN ALICE IN WONDERLAND SERVICE AND UNBIRTHDAY POTLUCK MAY 3, 2009

On May 3 we will be stepping through the looking glass into an Alice In Wonderland- themed intergenerational service, where we will take a look at what it's like to live in a topsy-turvy world.

Many of us feel a little jumbled up right now, as if we're in a strange land where the rules keep changing. Some, like the Red Queen, have run faster and faster just to stay in the same place. Some have smiles that seem disembodied from the realities of life. Some feel as if their life is a giant chessboard.

What is it like to look in the mirror and see someone you don't recognize? Or to feel either too large or too small in the world? We'll explore some of these things, and maybe even stand the service on its end in the process.

We invite you to **come in costume** as your favorite Alice In Wonderland character, and to stay after the second service for our first-ever intergenerational "Unbirthday Potluck Brunch" at 12:15. We will set up 12 tables – one for each month of the year. By sitting at your birth month table, you'll get to find out who the others are with birthdays in the same month. You might even find someone whose birthday is the same day as yours!

If you plan to join in the Unbirthday celebration, please bring a dish to share. We also need one baker for each table to take responsibility for creating a cake – the wackier the cake, the better! We will also need some gluten-free cupcakes. Look for the sign-up sheet on the table in the back of the sanctuary.

STONES IN THE SAME WALL – SOCIAL JUSTICE

Each event, each action is another stone in the wall of social justice

ALMOST FINISHED – HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

The house is almost finished. Tom Buglio and Mike Stevens put together the coalition known as Co-Habitat. In partnership with us are West Chester University, Unionville High School, United Grove Methodist, St. Paul's UCC, St. John's Episcopal, Highway Gospel Community Temple, and Wellsprings. Current total collected by all the Co-Habitat coalition groups is \$76,301 which is only \$3,699 away from our goal of \$80,000 to complete the house, targeted for the end of May. This is the home stretch for this major Social Justice project, both in terms of fundraising and construction.

The next (and potentially last) UFWC volunteer week for Habitat for Humanity is May 6 – May 9.

FIRST SUNDAY FOOD COLLECTION PROJECT

A reminder that we will be collecting canned and boxed foods the first Sunday of every month. **The next food collection will be May 3.** The food will be donated to the West Chester Food Cupboard, which will distribute it to food cupboards throughout the county. All food items should be put into the baskets in the lobby. Thank you to everyone who contributed last month.

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

An Open Space Forum was held at the Chester County Historical Society in February. One of the panelists said that, although the population growth rate in Pennsylvania is one of the lowest in the U.S., the rate of land development is one of the highest in the nation. How can this be? People are moving out of cities into formerly rural areas. This creates a "hollowing out" of urban areas. Farmland and open space are being turned into housing developments.



What can you do? Two things: (1) help make local farms more profitable by buying local produce at farmers' markets, which can help farmers resist the temptation to sell to developers; (2) ask your Pennsylvania House representative to support House Bill 2752, the Land Conservation Tax Credit. To find your legislator, go to <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/find.cfm>. For more information about this or sustainable living in general, contact Jen Stevens at email: sustainable-living.

– Diane Maguire

UUSC UPDATE

Our Human Rights organization continues to be involved with many projects throughout the world. In a major advance for human rights, PepsiCo has adopted a human-right-to-water policy for its domestic and overseas operations. The new PepsiCo water policy was adopted after NorthStar Asset Management worked to create a PepsiCo shareholder resolution in 2008, with technical assistance from UUSC's Environmental Justice Program. PepsiCo's new policy is a commitment to fulfilling the human right to water as defined by the United Nations. PepsiCo is the first publically traded, multinational corporation to adopt such a policy.

UUSC worked closely with NorthStar, a socially responsible investment brokerage firm based in Boston, Massachusetts, to bring forward the 2008 human-right-to-water resolution. UUSC provided technical assistance, helping to educate staff on the human right to water, providing background legal documents, helping to draft the resolution, and advising on strategy for negotiations and shareholder meetings. PepsiCo uses tens of billions of gallons of water in its food and beverage operations globally, including in many nations facing water shortages.

Still haven't joined the UUSC? Contact Robin Garrett, Linda Sander, or Tom Townsend (email: uusc) who can tell you how to join and support global efforts to make the world a better place for all.

GLEANNING 2009

As you plant your garden this spring think about planting extra for the West Chester Food Cupboard.

If you are interested in participating in the UFWC gleaning project again this summer, please contact Ed Cohle and Linda Sander, e-mail: social-justice. We will need project volunteers and donors.

Also, contact Larry Welsch at the West Chester Food Cupboard at 484-885-0172 if you would like to volunteer to either help grow and pick food for the food cupboard on a field at the Westtown School or volunteer at the food cupboard.



SHARE-THE-PLATE GENEROSITY

The share-the-plate collection of \$335 for March was donated to the Ministers Alliance of Coatesville. This group is helping the many people who have been the victims of the arson fires in that area. Our recipient in May is the Domestic Violence Center. The Domestic Violence Center of Chester County serves women and their children who have become homeless as a result of domestic violence and abuse. One of their excellent programs is a daycare and after school program, designed to provide support to these often traumatized children. You can help our support our neighbors by giving generously May 17 when the next share-the-plate collection is taken.

DELIBERATE LIVING

Our next meeting is on May 3, the first Sunday of the month as usual. We meet at 12:30 p.m. downstairs after the second service. In living deliberately, we have asked ourselves questions: What are we really after in our life? What are some of the pathways toward reaching our authentic core, and how do we live it out? These pathways have many dimensions.

Bruce Neff will guide our thinking this time, coming from the book *How Large is God*, edited by Sir John Templeton, who proposes the idea of Humility Theology. We may have to change our views about how we fit into creation, based on scientific understanding, which in turn affects our spiritual views.

These discussions are significant opportunities for new friends and members to be integrated with our larger membership via a reflective and personable atmosphere. Come and join us to be a part of our typical dynamic flow of good energy. No preparation is needed. No commitment is required, though continuity is best. Any questions or comments contact Heidi Buss at email: deliberate-living.

YOUTH GROUP

The Youth Group has had a busy few months – planning and running two Youth Sunday services in March and sending a group to the JPDYSC Spring CON in Wilmington, Delaware in April. What's coming in May? A discussion/debate with a mystery moderator, and, on Saturday, May 23, costume bowling (at Palace Bowling, Downingtown) and a movie overnight (into Sunday, May 24) at UFWC. Watch your e-mail for details.

If you or someone you know in the UFWC family will be graduating high school this spring, think about participating in our annual Youth Bridging service. We'll have a workshop for our graduates (yes, non-youth-group-members are welcome), to think about joys and fears and goals for what lies ahead in their lives, followed by a terrific service with the whole congregation on June 7 to celebrate an important transition into adulthood. Please contact us (email: youth-group) if you're interested or have questions. JOIN US downstairs for meetings at 10:45 on Sunday mornings.

CAMPING IN JULY

The UFWC has reserved a large group campsite at Susquehannock State Park, for July 11, for up to 100 of us. Come join the fun. It will be a relaxed time to enjoy nature, folk singing, a campfire, stargazing, and good conversation. More details will be in the June and July *Fellowtarian*. RSVP to email: camping.

MOTHER'S DAY PLANT SALE

The UFWC Spring Plant Sale will be Sunday, May 10, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. with beautiful sunny and shady hanging baskets, annuals, perennials, herbs, and vegetables. Contact Sandy Rretzlaff (email: plant-sale) with requests. Baskets \$15 each or 2 for \$25. Saturday pickup is available for special requests. All proceeds benefit UFWC general fund.



Note: The date and times were incorrectly listed in the April *Fellowtarian*.

FOLK SINGING

The next folk singing get-together is Saturday, May 2, at 8 p.m. at the home of Linda and Steve Sander. All are welcome. No singing talent or experience is necessary. Bring a munchie, if you wish. Maps are in the foyer. Contact Steve at email: folk-singing.

LUNCH GROUP

Lunch group will meet Friday, May 8, at 11:30 a.m. at Panera Bread, 1103 West Chester Pike, near Shop Rite. Newcomers are welcome. To be added to the e-mail reminder list, contact Linda Sander at email: lunch-group. The reminders are an easy way to RSVP, so we can save enough seats for everyone. If you don't have e-mail or you change your mind at the last minute, come anyway. Everyone is welcome.

NATURE WALK AT STRUBLE TRAIL

Interested in learning a little about plants and birds? Join Nancy Artus on Saturday, May 30 at 9:30 a.m. at Struble Trail in Downingtown. We will take a slow, informal walk along the flat, paved trail and Nancy will teach you some basic botany and point out some of the native and invasive plants. We will see what birds we can spot while we are at it. Bring your binoculars, field guides and water.

We will meet in the parking lot on Norwood Road near the 30 Bypass entrance at 9:30 a.m. (next to JGM Welding). If you are a little late, you can easily catch up with us. All ages are welcome and there is no need to sign up. Dogs on a leash are allowed. We will cancel or reschedule if the weather is bad but not for sprinkles (watch for a special email announcement). For more information, contact Nancy at email: fun.



EXPLORING DIVERSITY BOOK GROUP

MAY 17 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Our book selection for May is *Brother, I'm Dying* by Edwidge Danticat. Danticat's powerful and deeply felt retelling of her family's experiences both in Haiti and this country takes place amid political upheaval and bureaucratic red tape and is ultimately a story of love, loss and hope. Ruth MacFadyen will lead our discussion.

Please feel free to contact Shelly Case or Ruth MacFadyen at email: diversity-book-group. **All are Welcome.**

Coffee House

An evening of Music

Saturday, May 16

7-10 pm at the Fellowship

Featured Act

Craig Talbot, Guitar & Vocals

All members and friends are invited to be supporters and/or entertainers.

Contact Judy Perri at email: coffee-house

FELLOWSHIP CALENDAR

All email addresses @ufwc.org unless otherwise noted.

May 1	Fri	Game Night. 6:30-9 p.m. Sanctuary.
May 2	Sat	Folk Singing. 8 p.m. at the home of Steve and Linda Sander. See p. 7. Dinner for Eight. Offsite for those who have signed up. Host determines time. See April <i>Fellowtarian</i> p. 11.
May 3	Sun	First Sunday Food Collection. Lobby. See p. 5. Unbirthday Party (Potluck). 12:15 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 4. Deliberate Living. 12:30 p.m. Fireplace Rm. See p. 6.
May 6	Wed	Religious Education Committee. 7 p.m. OWL room. Contact Sue Quake, email: RE
May 6-9	Wed-Sat	Habitat for Humanity Work Week. 8:30-3:30 each day. Contact Mike Stevens, email: habitat. See p. 5.
May 8	Fri	Lunch Group. 11:30 a.m. Panera Bread. See p. 7. Exploring Our Spirituality Book Group. 1:30-3:30 pm, offsite. Contact Susan Gast or Harriet Singer, email: spirituality-book-group
May 9	Sat	Dinner for Eight. Offsite for those who have signed up. Host determines time. See April <i>Fellowtarian</i> p. 11.
May 10	Sun	Mother's Day Plant Sale. 8 a.m.-1 p.m. See p. 7. Safe Harbor Dinner. Provided by the Fellowship the second Sunday of the month. To help, contact Sharon Mayer-Conroy, email: safe-harbor
May 11	Mon	Beyond War Group. 7-8:30 p.m. Fireplace Room. Contact John Gribbin, email: beyond-war. Website Committee. 7:30 p.m. Office. Contact Mark Steel, email: program
May 12	Tue	Board Meeting. 7:30 p.m. Office. All are welcome.
May 13	Wed	Adult Enrichment. Reading Sacred Texts. 11a.m.–1p.m. Minister's study. Email: minister
May 14	Thu	Social Justice Committee. 7:15-9 p.m. Office. Contact Ed Cohle, email: social-justice. Evensong Gathering. 7:30 p.m., OWL Rm. Contact: Terry Rothermel or Heidi Buss, email: evensong-gatherings
May 16	Sat	Coffee House. 7-10 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 7.
May 17	Sun	Share the Plate Sunday benefitting Domestic Violence Center of Chester County. See p. 6. Exploring Diversity Book Group. 7-8:30 p.m. Fireplace rm. See p. 7.
May 23-24	Sat-Sun	Youth Group Costume Bowling and Movie Overnight. See p. 6.
May 24	Sun	Office Closed – Memorial Day.
May 26	Tue	Fellowship Council. 7-9 p.m. Office. Contact Mark Steel, email: program
May 28	Thu	Religious Services Committee. 7:30 p.m. Office. Contact Curt Hoganson, email: religious-services.
May 30	Sat	Nature Walk at Struble Trail. 9:30 a.m. Meet at parking lot on Norwood Rd. See p.7.

Groups meeting multiple times in a month:

- Choir Practice** Generally the three Thursdays before the third Sunday (which is when they sing at services). No practice on the fourth Thursday. Contact Helen Meacham, email: choir
- Youth Group** Most Sundays, 10:45-noon. OWL room. Email: youth-group. See p. 6.