

UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF WEST CHESTER
501 S HIGH ST
WEST CHESTER PA 19382



the FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester

Telephone: 610-692-5966 Web: www.ucwc.org

Our Mission: *As a diverse liberal faith congregation, we make a difference in our lives, our children's lives, and the wider community by creating an environment for spiritual growth and fulfillment, for building meaningful connections, and for actively advancing peace and justice in the world.*

SUNDAY SERVICES

April, 2012

April 1

**THE JOKE'S ON US! CELEBRATING THE SILLY,
AN INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP EXPERIENCE**

**Rev. Deborah Mero and
Rick London**

Humor has always been used in the worst of times as well as the best of times to lighten our loads. Come join us on April Fool's day for a morning of laughter and merriment. Bring your best jokes, your silliest clothing, and be willing to go along with any jokes and jests that come with the fun.

April 8

ALAS, POOR JUDAS!

Rev. Deborah Mero

Reviled as the greatest betrayer of all time, Judas Iscariot's story and role in the death of Jesus is far more complex than it is often portrayed. Unitarian Universalism asks us to look deeply into stories for context and not take things on face value. This Easter Sunday we will do just that. Did Judas get a bum rap? Hats anyone? Put on your Easter Bonnet and join us.

April 15

NOT AFRAID TO FAIL

Rev. Deborah Mero

It is college letters time of year. The baseball season has begun. How are these two related? Being the die-hard Cub fan that I am, I have to talk about baseball, at least a little, at this time of year. Wins and losses, successes and failures, all are opportunities for growth, and Spring is the season for growth.

April 22

LEAVING A LEGACY

Mike Harris, JPD President

It's been said that the only certainties in life are death and taxes. This service offers some perspectives on death and dying along with some ideas on what we might want to leave behind when we go.

April 29

HONEST TO GOD

Rev. Deborah Mero

Lies, prevarication, dissembling, all words for something regarded by religious people as a sin. Is honesty a matter of faith? Has it become passé in our culture? What does lying do to the person who lies? What about the person lied to?

Services and Babysitting at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Religious Education at 9 a.m. only.

REMARKS – RELIGIOUS EDUCATION UPDATE ANOTHER CHAPTER IN OUR STORY

February 12, 2012 was a momentous day for us – we voted to change the name we were “born” with and held for almost exactly 58 years. Most of us were jubilant, some of us relieved, and probably some were disappointed. Among those disappointed were some of our children.

Several of the 5th graders protested, “Fellowship says we’re friendly and want to include more people. Congregation sounds like a business.” I explained that to many of the adults the reverse was true: “fellowship” connotes exclusion and “congregation” is more inclusive. Unconvinced and passionately opposed, the kids scurried off to make their own paper ballots and cast their votes.

That incident stuck with me. Why were these kids so upset? We had talked about the possibility of a name change during worship downstairs, and the children had all been enthusiastic about the prospect as we brainstormed possible names. But not everyone is at church every Sunday. Obviously, we had missed at least two children who felt strongly about the change in our identity.

I know that they will adjust. “The Congregation” is, after all, still the same warm, welcoming, supportive and fun place it was when it was The Fellowship. But I wanted to help the children frame the change in a context they could understand. So, during our Children’s Worship the following Sunday I talked about stories and how we have just begun a brand new chapter in “The Story of UCWC.”

Each one of us is the main character in our own story. When we come together at church, the pages of our individual stories overlap; we become characters in the shared story of the church. This story began nearly 60 years ago, and most of those characters who featured prominently in the beginning chapters are not a part of the current chapters. As the months and years go by, new characters are introduced and we say goodbye to some of the old ones. None of us who are now characters in The Story know how long our parts will last. And just last week, a character who had walked out of The Story twelve years ago walked back in.

Often times, a name is a manifestation of something that has been in process for a long time already – a baby is named after nine months gestation; two individuals become “Mr. and Mrs.” after a relationship of months and often years; after years of living the life of a congregation, a fellowship takes on the name it has already grown into.

It is a great adventure to be in this particular chapter of our story with you. I’m looking forward to many more to come.

– Pam Baxter, Director of Religious Education

RADICAL HOSPITALITY

CREATING BELOVED COMMUNITY FOR ALL CHILDREN

A one-day workshop by Sally Patton.

Saturday, May 19 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at UCWC

\$40 per person. Parents or Teams of 3 or More: \$30 per person.

This workshop, for parents, educators and others interested in how to embrace the whole child, is coming to UCWC. Sally Patton presents this workshop around the country – we are fortunate to have her coming right to us. Sponsored by the UUA and the Joseph Priestley District, the cost includes lunch and a light breakfast. For information and to register, go to <http://lbt.me/RadicalHospitality>. For an informational flyer, email: DRE.

Please help spread the word to those you know who would be interested in this program.

STEWARDSHIP

Our Annual Stewardship Dinner was a great success. Around 117 people came for a wonderful dinner prepared by some of the finest chefs in Chester County, good conversation and testimonials, and some great entertainment. It was good to see so many of us in one place.

Now we are actively working on the campaign itself. We had one group session last weekend. Eighteen of us gathered to acquaint or reacquaint ourselves with each other and to talk about why we love and support this particular congregation and how it makes such a huge difference in our lives. One question Ed Cohle asked everyone to ponder: Where would you go if there were no UCWC?. I ask everyone to ponder that question, as well as this one: Who in our community is in that situation because they don’t yet know about us?

There will be a session in the sanctuary on April 1, starting at 12:30 p.m. with some refreshments followed by the presentation/discussion. Please try to make this session if you can.

After that we will assess where we stand, but I expect to have at least one or two more group sessions in early April, Stay tuned to Connections, and let me know if you would like to host one.

Finally, if you can’t make it to one of the sessions, please see me at the service on Sunday, or let me know through email: stewardship, and I’ll give you your pledge card. As you fill it out think again about why this community needs UCWC, and why we need it to be here and to be strong. See if you can answer Ed’s final question of the day: If you have a number in mind, think about whether you can add \$10/month to that number – or more – to help keep the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester going strong as the vibrant place it has always been. We’re needed more than ever.

– Bob Scott
Stewardship Chair

FROM THE PRESIDENT

This time of year we all seem to be thinking about money – perhaps we just paid off the last of our holiday bills, or we are wondering what kind of a vacation we can afford this year or what to do with our tax return. For our congregation, this is the time to plan our budget for next year.

The deficit concerns that began the year have abated somewhat. While the year isn't over, our income – which is mostly your pledges and donations – has been coming in at a pace which is supporting our budget. There are less than two hundred of us pledging, so everyone's contribution is important. With your help, we hope to avoid the quandary we faced last spring by completing the stewardship drive on time so that there is enough time for our Finance Committee to present us with a balanced budget.

The budgetary process is for the committees to send the Finance committee their budget requests in February or March. The Finance Committee develops a draft of the budget from this information. In March and/or April, the draft budget is discussed and modified by the Council. In May, the budget is reviewed by the Board. At our annual Congregational meeting, on June 6, the congregation votes to approve the budget or modify it. Our fiscal year begins on July 1.

As you can see from the 2011-12 budget (www.ucwc.org/UCWC_Budget_Actual_3.12.12.pdf), our building and our staff are the largest outlays. In a few years, our mortgage will be paid off, but we have some major building repairs looming – a new roof and renovations to our roof drainage system and basement. Our staff includes Rev. Deborah Mero (our full-time minister), Pam Baxter (our $\frac{3}{4}$ time Director of Religious Education – DRE), Barbara Robinson (our $\frac{1}{2}$ time Office Administrator), Miriam Davidson (Choir Director), Alex Marthaler (Pianist), and Barry Miller (our newly hired cleaning person for two evenings per week).

Our minister works with our Religious Services Committee to produce Sunday services that are consistent with our principles and professionally presented as well as sermons that are crafted with a sincere desire to inspire our members and guests. She prepares and presents worthwhile adult religious education classes. She is very active in West Chester's Religious Council. Energy and passion are words that come to mind when one thinks of Deborah.

You would have to look far and wide to find a DRE who brings as much enthusiasm and care to her tasks as Pam does. One has only to watch Pam interact with our children to recognize the importance of the attitudes and manners we model for our children. Time and space do not allow me sufficient opportunity to describe the work of all our employees. Yet each year, we must review their work and their compensation.

On March 31 from 9-10 a.m. please attend a meeting to discuss how we allot the Congregation's funds – particularly regarding our staff's compensation. The Board will be present to hear your comments. Members of the Committee on Ministry and Finance Committee have also been invited. If you are pleased with how we have been apportioning our funds, we need to hear from you just as much as if you want changes made. Please attend or contact the Board at email: board.

– Mary Yeager

FINANCIALLY YOURS WHAT IS YOUR LEGACY?

You are invited to free lunch and a free workshop on Sunday, April 22, from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in the UCWC sanctuary. Joan Priest, Director of Development at the Joseph Priestley District of the UUA, will explain what is planned giving and how it works. She will be accompanied by Nik Tsouros, Attorney at MacElree Harvey, who will give free advice (how often can you get free advice from an attorney?) on wills, Powers of Attorney, and the easiest and best ways to set up planned gifts in the state of Pennsylvania.

Please let Pam Sapko (email: giving) know if you'd like to attend, so you'll be guaranteed a lunch.

– Pam Sapko

BUDGET DISCUSSION MARCH 31 9-10 A.M.

The Congregation's Board of Trustees is asking members and friends to discuss the 2012-13 budget. Right now, committees are submitting their future financial needs to the Finance Committee. Likewise, the Board is considering its part of the budget and reviewing staff compensation. Come on Saturday, March 31, and let the Board know what you think are budget priorities. No staff will be present at this discussion.

A significant portion of our budget goes to pay our staff's salaries and benefits, so please give this topic some serious thought. If you cannot attend on March 31, please speak to a Board member (or email: board) before that date. The finalized budget will be voted upon at our Annual Congregational Meeting on June 6. Please plan to attend both meetings.

ATTENTION CONGREGATION MUSICIANS

In preparation for a special music Sunday coming up on May 6, I am collecting names from anyone interested in participating musically. All genres, modes, instrumentation are welcome. We will fill the entire service with musical offerings, and I would love to include as many as folks we are can. Please contact Miriam Davidson at email: choir .

– Miriam Davidson

A VIEW FROM THE PAST AS WE LOOKS TOWARDS THE FUTURE

At our Sunday services recently, we've heard compelling personal affirmations as members of the congregation have shared brief highlights of the transformative experiences they've had with us. We speak of the transformative power of our faith, because that's what it is. We have been changed for the better by our active participation in this intentional community.

As we seek to shine our light more brightly in the West Chester area, be mindful of actively welcoming the stranger into our midst. Step out of your comfort zone a bit, if necessary, to introduce yourself to a visitor, to welcome them with the same energy you were once welcomed when you stepped through our door for the first time. But also be mindful of sharing your story with your friends and acquaintances, too. Many of us came here because someone we trusted once said, "Y'know, you sound like a Unitarian." If you know someone who, "sounds like a Unitarian," bring her or him along with you one Sunday.

Our congregation is alive with a brilliant energy now as we seek to change the world, globally and locally, and to change ourselves with the wonderful transformative fire of our faith. Let's use that energy to grow the congregation, to welcome the stranger as we were welcomed and to share a path with friends.

– Rob Sartain

EXPLORING DIVERSITY BOOK GROUP DATE AND TIME TBA

Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother by Amy Chua is a provocative and much maligned memoir that is not intended to be a parenting guide as many have assumed, even though Chua states on the book's cover, "This was supposed to be a story of how Chinese parents are better at raising kids than Western ones. But instead, it's about a bitter clash of cultures, a fleeting taste of glory, and how I was humbled by a thirteen-year-old."

Amy Chua dares to tackle the differences in parenting styles of some Chinese American immigrants and their Western counterparts and tells her story with humor and grace. Ruth MacFadyen will lead our discussion.

For more information contact us at email: diversity-book-group, or call Ruth MacFadyen or Shelly Case. All are Welcome.

ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING

MAY 5 9 A.M. - 2 P.M.

Every year, our congregation's leadership has met to make plans and set goals for the upcoming year. In the past, this has been done in August. We are moving this planning meeting up to May, so that we have more time to prepare for our start in September.

While all committee chairs, trustees, and executive team members are specifically asked to attend, everyone in the congregation is invited to participate. This is the time to map our strategies, programs, and initiatives for 2012-13. Revisiting our growth initiative is a big topic for next year.

Please come; we need your ideas and your enthusiasm. We will have the meeting here in our sanctuary. Lunch will be provided. Contact Mary Yeager at email: president if you wish to attend.

FLEA MARKET CANCELLED

The annual Flea Market, scheduled for April 21, has been cancelled.

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY DISTRICT ASSEMBLY

LOOKING BACKWARD, MOVING FORWARD: CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE JPD

April 13-15, 2012

Key Bridge Marriott, Arlington, VA

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Peter Morales, President of the UUA

Registration is now open.

Gathering with other UU's from all over the district is always an enriching experience. We bring back ideas of programs that would enhance our congregational life. Hearing others' stories, we are also reminded of what a wonderful community we have at UCWC. Anyone is welcome to come and join the fun.

FOR **MORE INFORMATION** AND **REGISTRATION**:

<http://www.jpduua.org/news-and-notes/register-now-jpd-assembly-april-13-15-2012>

STONES IN THE SAME WALL – SOCIAL JUSTICE

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

SPECIESISM OR ANIMAL RIGHTS: CHOICES AND CHALLENGES

At a recent Social Justice Committee meeting there was an extensive and interesting exchange concerning whether or not we should allow the share-the-plate offering to benefit organizations that provide service of some sort to animals (e.g., animal shelters). The discussion came down to some key points. Given limited resources, should we give funds that might otherwise be used to provide needed services to people to organizations that might benefit animals. There was general agreement that our 7th principle certainly suggests some responsibility, but what should that responsibility be? There were very clear ideas on this, and some in between. John Gribbin has written the following article outlining the position that we should use the share-the-plate to benefit animal support groups since other species are part of our “web of existence” and, therefore, worthy of respect. We hope that the congregation would give us some guidance since this is a discussion worth having.

Speciesism, a term coined by British psychologist Richard D. Ryder in 1973, is defined as “a prejudice against non-humans based on physical differences that are given moral value.” Ryder argues that speciesism amounts to discrimination and like all discrimination it overlooks or underestimates the similarities between the discriminator and those discriminated against. Proponents of speciesism proclaim that speciesism is not merely plausible; it is essential for right conduct, because those who will not make the morally relevant distinctions among species are almost certain, in consequence, to misapprehend their true obligations. For centuries, the Biblical verses from Genesis citing man’s dominion over all life forms have buttressed the speciesism position. Indeed, religions such as Hinduism, that proclaim a deep respect for animals, are often ridiculed.

Recently, a growing animal rights and animal welfare movement has voiced a distinctly different interpretation of man’s ethical relationship to other species. Some proponents of this movement such as Peter Singer, author of “Animal Liberation” take a protectionist position that focuses on suffering and its consequences. “Pain is pain, and the importance of preventing unnecessary pain and suffering does not diminish because the being that suffers is not a member of our own species,” he declares. All sides of the animal rights movement agree that animals should

be viewed as non-human persons and members of a moral community, and shouldn’t be used as food, clothing, research subjects or entertainment.

For Unitarians Universalists the speciesist versus animal rights issue recently has received much attention due to the *Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice* statement released at the 2011 General Assembly. Recognizing the UU Seventh Principle’s focus on respecting the interdependence of all life, the statement urges us to “choose foods that minimize harm and are protective of the environment, consumers, farmers, and all those involved in production and distribution.” While the statement does not advocate a single dietary approach, it does state that concerns for the inhumane conditions incurred by animals during production, transportation and slaughter should be factors weighed before making our food choices.

What do you think about share-the-plate funds for organizations serving animals? Go to <http://ucwc.proboards.com/> and be part of the discussion.

SHARE-THE-PLATE GENEROSITY

We are pleased to announce the share-the-plate recipient on **April 15 (third Sunday of the month)** is **Safe Harbor**. Safe Harbor operates a low-demand, emergency shelter providing for the needs of 20 homeless men and 20 women who, because of addictions or mental health issues, do not qualify for other shelter programs operating in the area. We are willing to serve those with no place else to turn while maintaining a level of expectations that seeks to build self-esteem and empower individuals most in need. Thanks to everyone who donated last month to the Domestic Violence Center.



FIRST SUNDAY FOOD COLLECTION PROJECT

**This month’s suggested items:
Rice and Sides (Rice-a-Roni,
Stovetop Stuffing, etc.)**

Our monthly food collection is **Sunday, April 1**. Look for collection baskets in the lobby. We participate in a special program that assures the food bank of specific items on any given month so please keep this month’s needs in mind when you donate – see above headline. Please make sure that the date on the food item has not expired. As always, thanks for participating in this project. It’s just one more way UFWC helping those in need.

JUSTICE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

An Invitation from the President of the UUA, Rev. Peter Morales to our
Justice General Assembly:
<http://uua.org/ga/2012/invites/192553.shtml>

COFFEE HOUSE

The next coffee house is Saturday, March 17 at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. Our featured act will be **Gathered From Coincidence**, four multi-instrumentalists brought together by UCWC's own Craig Talbot.

This, the climactic event of a year-long celebration of septuagenarian Bob Dylan's songbook, will feature big hits, hidden jewels, and other strange wonders.

This venue continues to be a fund raiser for UCWC with a \$5 suggested donation at the door.



FOLK SINGING

The next folk singing get-together is Saturday, April 28, at 8 p.m. at the home of Linda and Steve Sander. All are welcome. No singing talent or experience is necessary. Capable musicians should bring instruments. Bring a munchie, if you wish. Maps are in the foyer. Contact Steve at email: folk-singing.

SECOND ANNUAL UCWC ART AFTERNOON

Reminder: The second annual UCWC Art Afternoon is Saturday, April 14, 2:30-4:00 p.m. RSVP by April 1 to Jaan Troltenier. Space is strictly limited to fifteen participants, adults or teens only, please. For more details see the March *Fellowtarian*, p. 5.

GAME NIGHT

Friday, April 6, is our next night for food, fun, and games. Everyone is welcome. Bring a dish and a beverage to share as well as any games you would like to play. This is an informal event; there is no need to call ahead or be there on time – just come. Contact Mary Yeager at email: game-night.

LUNCH GROUP

Lunch group will meet Friday, April 13, 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.

Unitarian Congregation of West Chester
presents

THEMES & VARIATIONS

with the music of
Mozart, Mendelssohn and Dohnányi

featuring
Don Bristol, piano
Elaine Friedlander, piano
Dana Weiderhold, violin
Yoni Draiblate, cello

Sunday, April 22, 2012
7:30 p.m.
Unitarian Congregation of West Chester
501 South High Street

\$10 adults / \$5 students & seniors
Tickets available at the door
or in advance by
contacting Marie Steel
(music@ufwc.org)

Proceeds to benefit
the Charles A. Melton Arts & Education Center
and
the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester

A large, detailed illustration of a violin, oriented vertically, serving as a background for the event poster.

FELLOWSHIP CALENDAR

All email addresses @ufwc.org unless otherwise noted.

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| Mar 31 | Sat | Budget Discussion Meeting. 9-10 a.m. Sanctuary. See p. 4. Board Meeting following Budget Discussion Meeting. 10-11 a.m. Folk Singing. 8 p.m. at the home of Linda and Steve Sander. See p. 7. |
| Apr 1 | Sun | First Sunday Food Collection. Lobby. See p. 6. Resilience Circle Formation Meeting. Between the services. Contact Deanna Gabe. See p. 2. Stewardship Session. 12:30 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. |
| Apr 2 | Mon | Embracing Diversity Team. 7-8:30 p.m. Office. Email embracing-diversity |
| Apr 4 | Wed | <i>Faith Like A River: An Adult Exploration into Unitarian Universalism.</i> 7-8:30 p.m. Office. Contact Rev. Deborah Mero |
| Apr 5 | Thu | Religious Education Committee. 7 p.m. Youth Group Rm. Contact Heidi Frayer, email: RE |
| Apr 6 | Fri | Potluck and Game Night. 7 p.m. (doors open at 6:30). Sanctuary. Contact Mary Yeager, email: game-night. See p. 7. |
| Apr 8 | Sun | Sprit Singers perform at both services. Safe Harbor Dinner. 6 p.m. Provided by the Fellowship the second Sunday of the month. To help, contact Sharon Mayer-Conroy, email: safe-harbor |
| Apr 10 | Tue | Board Meeting. 7 p.m. Office. All are welcome. Contact Mary Yeager, email: president. |
| Apr 11 | Wed | <i>Faith Like A River: An Adult Exploration into Unitarian Universalism.</i> 7-8:30 p.m. Office. Contact Rev. Deborah Mero |
| Apr 12 | Thu | Social Justice Committee. 7:15-9 p.m. Office. Contact Ed Cohle, email: social-justice. See p. 6. |
| Apr 13 | Fri | Lunch Group. 11:30 a.m. Panera Bread. See p. 7 |
| Apr 13-15 | Fri-Sun | Joseph Priestly District Assembly. Key Bridge Marriott, Arlington, VA. See p. 5. |
| Apr 14 | Sat | 2nd Annual Art Afternoon. 2:30-4 p.m. at the Trolteniers' home. See p. 7. Coffee House. 7 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 7 |
| Apr 15 | Sun | Share the Plate Sunday. Benefits Safe Harbor. See p. 6. Intergenerational Choir Rehearsal. 10:15 a.m. Downstairs. Contact Abby McGillivray email: intergenerational-choir After Services Potluck. 12:30 p.m. Sanctuary. |
| Apr 16 | Mon | Women's Circle. 7-9 p.m. Lobby. Contact Debby Kern, email: womens-circle |
| Apr 19 | Thu | Animal Ministry. 7-8:30 p.m. Fireplace Rm. Contact John Gribbin, email: animal-ministry Religious Services. 7:30-9 p.m. Office. Contact Diane Minka, email: religious-services |
| Apr 22 | Sun | What Is Your Legacy? Lunch and planned giving workshop. 12:30-2:30 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 4. Themes and Variations Benefit Concert. 7:30 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 7. |
| Apr 23 | Mon | Communications Team. 7 p.m. Office. Contact Sandy Retzlaff, email: communication |
| Apr 24 | Tue | Council Meeting. 7-9 p.m. Office. Contact Mark Steel, email: program |
| Apr 26 | Thu | Parent Support Group. 7 p.m. Office. Contact Sharon Meyer-Conroy, email: parent-support |
| Apr 28 | Sat | Folk Singing. 8 p.m. at the home of Linda and Steve Sander. See p. 7. |
| Apr 29 | Sun | Intergenerational Choir Rehearsal. 10:15 a.m. Downstairs. Contact Abby McGillivray email: intergenerational-choir |

Groups meeting multiple times in a month:

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| Spirit Singers | Practices 7:15-9 p.m. Thursdays, April 5, 12, 19, and 26. Contact Miriam Davidson, email: choir |
| Youth Group | Meets most Sundays, 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Youth Group Room. Email: youth-group. |