

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 August, 2012

August 5

A JOYOUS HEART

Joshua Sweet

How can a man who loses his job and his standing in society, all while his wife is expecting a baby, end up happier than he was before? Joshua Sweet, a new member and amateur philosopher, will explore his own journey to happiness and will celebrate some of the things we do as a congregation that improve our general happiness.

August 12

COMING INTO YOUR OWN AND COMPROMISE

**Az Azarak
and Young Adult Group Members**

Do I want this? Do I need this? Is this who I am? These are difficult times for everyone, and particularly difficult times for those trying to establish themselves in the world. Members of the Young Adult Group share some of their thoughts and experience in compromise, what it has taught them, and how it has affected them.

August 19

WOODY GUTHRIE AND OTHER FOLKS

UCWC Folk Singing Group

2012 marks the one hundredth anniversary of Woody Guthrie's birth. The UCWC Folk Singing Group, to whose monthly get-togethers, all are welcome, will celebrate the year with a sampling of songs written by Woody, sung by Woody, or influenced by Woody. Come sing with us this Sunday.

August 26

A STARLIT SUMMER

Rev. Deborah Mero

All sorts of stars lit up the summer, those earned, those given away, those observed...we are awash in stars. This Sunday I will share some of the stars that lit up my summer.

Services at 10:00 a.m. in the summer. No Religious Education.

REmarks THOUGHTS ON LIFE, DEATH AND LOVE

My vacation this summer wasn't a "getting away." It was a "going toward."

I went to Santa Rosa, California to spend some time with my 90-year-old aunt who is in hospice care. As part of the journey, I knew I would have to face my fears around death and loss.

When I walked into my aunt's room, I was shocked. When I had last seen her just eight months earlier, she was getting around nimbly with a walker. Now, she was confined to bed and didn't have the strength to turn over on her own. It was even an exertion for her to tug a Kleenex tissue from the box.

Though it was hard to see someone I love reduced to this kind of existence, the trip was a huge blessing to me.

There is nothing wrong with my aunt's brain or sense of humor, and we talked and laughed as always. We listened to music and watched the evening news on TV. While she napped – which was frequently – I read, reflected and journaled.

When she was awake, I helped her brush her teeth, rubbed lotion into her dry skin and massaged her feet. It felt so good to be able to do these small things for her. It was also good to be able to tell her – in words and deeds – how much I love her.

What surprised me was how much life, light and love is still in my aunt – a woman who has lost a breast to cancer and whose hands and back are contorted by arthritis. I got to see how mind and spirit – while residing in the body – can be so distinct from it.

And I had an odd experience with faith, which is either really so non-UU or completely UU. I haven't quite figured that out yet. My aunt, raised Mennonite, is not afraid of dying. She's had her memorial service all planned out for over a year, and I think her only regret – if she has one – is that she won't be at the party.

Even more, my aunt is looking forward to seeing the Lord and to being reunited with loved ones on the other side. The odd part is that there is something in her staunch belief that makes me believe that this will happen for her; that she will see Jesus, my grandparents, her husband, her sister.

This doesn't mean that I believe this for myself. But it has raised a question for me, which is: in death, as in life, do we manifest what we believe?

What I do know is that this experience has given me something new to think about and has begun to transform death into something I no longer fear so much.

– Pam Baxter
Director of Religious Education

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Congregation's new board met informally for the first time in early July. We outlined tasks that we must undertake this year. Some of these tasks we have already begun to tackle, while for others we are gathering information.

At our congregational planning meeting in May participants identified Leadership Development and Growth as our two main foci for the year. As a first step, our Leadership Development Team is gathering information about our committees and listing our resources.

In regards to growth, there are several branches that require our attention. Revisiting what growth means to us is one, how to attract and retain members is a second, and where should we be located is another.

This could be the year where we make a decision to look for a new location/facility that is better suited to our needs. Last year, our building committee gathered information enumerating the upcoming maintenance requirements and expenses. This year, we will research what options are available to us for a new facility.

The Board will also reexamine our budget so that the 2013-14 budget more fully reflects our support for the UUA and JPD. There is much to do, and we have begun. I look forward to working with the fresh faces and ideas of our new Board members.

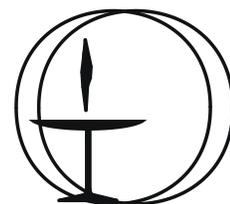
– Mary Yeager

The Fellowtarian is the monthly newsletter of the
Unitarian Congregation of West Chester

**501 South High Street
West Chester, PA 19382**

**Web: www.ucwc.org
All email addresses @ucwc.org**

Rev. Deborah Mero, Minister 610-692-4043 email: minister
Barbara Robinson, Office Administrator 610-692-5966 email: office
Mary Yeager, President email: president
Pam Baxter, Dir. of Religious Ed email: dre
Steve and Linda Sander, Editors email: fellowtarian



STONES IN THE SAME WALL SOCIAL JUSTICE

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

It was a hot and sweaty Sunday morning for our service reviewing the GA annual meeting held in Phoenix last month. Thoughts of cool lemonade and air conditioned breezes were swirling around in my head, until our members who participated at the meeting began to share their stories and their experiences about what was unfolding around them there.

They participated in a protest march and vigil at the tent city detention facility under the watchful eye of Sheriff Joe. They learned that this tent city houses about 2000 detainees who endure 120 degree temps and food with a side of maggots. They heard speakers at varied meetings tell of their family members who were deported by ICE and are now dealing with that loss and grief as well as their own anxiety about what the future holds for them. These experiences were shared with the congregation by each participant and were described as “transformative”, heartfelt, and life changing/challenging.

Thanks to Reverend Deborah, Eileen and Dan Kelly-Meyer, Marie and Mark Steel, Ed Cohle, and the Sweitzer family for representing us as we Unitarians strive to respond to the human rights issues in our world and in our community. May we all take some time this summer season to appreciate our own gifts and think about how and where we want to “Be the Change”. Let the energy and enthusiasm and commitment found in Phoenix grow with us.

– Carol Dukes, Social Justice Chair

THANK YOU AND WELCOME

Thank you to Ed Cohle for five years of peace and justice work as Chair of the Social Justice Committee. Ed reached out to the community with Beyond War and more recently with immigration issues. He was the force behind our annual involvement in the annual Martin Luther King Day of Service where 75 UCWC members participated this year. He organized our community forums, and he developed relationships with community leaders. He chaired meetings with humor and good judgment, and he helped our subcommittees organize. He will continue to be active in our work.

Our new social justice chair is Carol Dukes. Carol volunteers with Habitat for Humanity and is on the board of SHARE of Philadelphia, a food distribution organization. She is a retired Upper Darby school social worker and new member of UCWC. Welcome Carol.

– Linda Sander, Social Justice Co-chair



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

The next Habitat for Humanity volunteer work day for UCWC is Saturday, August 4. No matter what skills you have, they can be used to help build housing for people in need. Contact Mike Stevens at **email: habitat** to ask questions, volunteer your time, or to be placed on their e-mail list.



GLEANING

This month we will be gleaning at Pete’s Produce on two dates: Wednesday, August 15, and Monday, August 27. Both dates are from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. We will do whatever they need (i.e., harvesting, weeding, cleaning up). The food from these dedicated fields goes to the Chester County Food Bank.

To get to Pete’s from the intersection of Routes 202 and 926, go 2.3 miles east on 926, and then turn left onto Westtown Rd. After ¼ mile look for the small “Food Bank” sign, turn right into the driveway, and park. For GPS users, Pete’s address is 1225 E. Street Rd., Westtown.

Many hands make for light work (and a shorter time). For questions, contact Tom Townsend at **email: gleaning**. Thank you for your help.

FIRST SUNDAY FOOD COLLECTION PROJECT

This month's Suggested Items: Cereal

Our monthly food collection is Sunday, August 5. Look for collection baskets in the lobby. We participate in a special program that assures the West Chester 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 UCWC is helping those in need.



JOIN THE SPIRIT SINGERS

Calling all would-be, wanna-be, and currently-being singers: Come and sing with us. UCWC's Spirit Singers, the most fabulous group of singin' folks, starts rehearsing this fall. Little experience is necessary, but seasoned singers are very welcome.

Rehearsals start in September, Thursday nights from 7:15-9:15 p.m. For more information please contact Miriam Davidson at **email: choir**.



SHARE-THE-PLATE GENEROSITY

The Social Justice Committee's Share-the-Plate program raises money to give to local non-profit organizations who are trying to improve life for Chester County residents. We are pleased to announce the share-the-plate recipient for August 19 (third Sunday of the month) is The West Chester Food Cupboard. Their motto, "Neighbors Helping Neighbors," reflects their work as an all-volunteer organization fighting hunger in West Chester. Your contributions will be used to buy the food that is most needed.

Thank you for your generosity to recent Share-the-Plate recipients:

- \$410 in April for Safe Harbor
- \$180 in May for Citizen Advocacy of Chester County
- \$195 in June for Maternal and Child Health Consortium (Kennett Square Family Center)

– Beth Daniels, UCWC Share-the-Plate Coordinator



A NOTE OF APPRECIATION

A look at our calendar gives you a taste of the many activities that are going on in our congregation; all of which are made possible by the work of our volunteers. We'd like to take a moment to let you know about one of our congregation's volunteers

Rob Sartain "joined" the youth group about nine years ago as a new adult advisor. He was the first of several adult advisors to be identified by the youth as a candidate for the position – a fact which speaks for itself. Rob provoked countless discussions on issues of the day, and developed and sponsored many AIDS walks in Philadelphia, chili-cooking events for Safe Harbor, band events as social justice fund raisers, and themed movie nights. Through it all, no one lost an eye, and the building did not burn down. In fact, our youth group is on course to earn its tenth consecutive YES award next year.

Rob's energy and humor brought much to the youth group, both at UCWC and at the JPD Conferences (CONs), where his passion for developing youth as leaders resulted in his serving several terms as an adult member of the JPD District Youth Steering Council (DYSC). Several times a year, Rob would dedicate a weekend to a district-wide youth conference. He, like the adult leaders before and since, took as much away from these weekend CONs as the youth who attended. His influence on the lives of our youth, and the youth of the district, cannot be understated.

While Rob has taken a step back from our Youth Program, he is still helping our congregation by managing our Grocery Card Program. He has steadily increased our income from this program, always striving to do better and succeeding. This year we will realize \$5,000 from the Grocery Card program. Also, until recently, Rob managed the program for counting the money from the Sunday Service collection. This is another important part of our income which must be handled with integrity and diligence. Rob did this in his usual low-key, unassuming manner. While Rob may be reserved about his part in our congregation's activities, we are making a bit of noise here to let you know how much we appreciate Rob, equally for his good humor and his good works. Three cheers for Rob!

CONGREGATIONAL CALENDAR

All email addresses @ucwc.org unless otherwise noted.

- Aug 3 Fri Potluck and Game Night.** 7 p.m. (doors open at 6:30). Sanctuary. Contact Mary Yeager, email: game-night.
- Aug 4 Sat Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Day.** 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. Contact Mike Stevens, email: habitat. See p. 3.
- Aug 5 Sun First Sunday Food Collection.** Lobby. See p. 4.
- Aug 9 Thu Social Justice Committee.** 7:15-9 p.m. Office. Contact Carol Dukes, email: social-justice. See p. 3.
- Aug 12 Sun Safe Harbor Dinner.** 6 p.m. Provided by the UCWC the second Sunday of the month. To help, contact Sharon Mayer-Conroy, email: safe-harbor
- Aug 15 Wed Gleaning at Pete's Produce.** 8:30-10:00 a.m. Contact Tom Townsend, email: gleaning. See p. 3.
- Ice Cream Social.** 7 p.m. Maggie Moo's (Main St. at Exton). Contact Pam Baxter, email: DRE. See July Fellowtarian, p. 3.
- Aug 19 Sun Share-the-Plate Sunday.** Benefits the West Chester Food Cupboard. See p. 4.
- Aug 21 Tue Board Meeting.** 7 pm. Office. Contact Mary Yeager, email: president
- Aug 23 Thu Executive Team Meeting.** 2 pm. Minister's Office.
- Aug 26 Sun Young Adult Group.** 11:30 a.m-1:00 p.m. Fireplace Room. 18 to mid-30s invited. Contact Az Azarak, email: young-adults.
- Ice Cream Social for New Members.** 3 p.m. at the Home of Deborah and Ralph Mero. See below.
- Aug 27 Mon Gleaning at Pete's Produce.** 8:30-10:00 a.m. Contact Tom Townsend, email: gleaning. See p. 3.

2012 DIRECTORY

During the summer Barbara Robinson, our office administrator, updates all the information in our Congregational Directory.

- If you have a new e-mail address, phone number, or residential address, please send the change to Barbara at email: office.
- If you would like to be included in our Directory, or you would like to be removed please e-mail Barbara with your request.
- The Directory also includes "Whom Do You Contact" with our Committee Chairs, Team Leaders, Board and Staff members. If you are stepping down from or stepping up to a position please contact Barbara with your information.



Don't forget to buy Grocery store cards after each Sunday Service.



ICE CREAM SOCIAL FOR OUR NEW MEMBERS

The Membership Committee, along with Rev. Deborah Mero, will host an Ice Cream Social for our new members. It will be held at Ralph and Deborah Mero's home, Sunday August 26, at 3 p.m. Invitations will go out to those who joined our congregation since January, 2011. It is a great time to get to know each other.

