

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 January, 2013

January 6

STUMBLING STONES

Rev. Deborah Mero

Stumbling Stones or STOLPERSTEINE, are stones inset in the pavement with names of people on them marking the places where Holocaust victims once lived or worked. A person is forgotten only when their name is forgotten. These are memorials meant to remind people of history so it will not be repeated. What are the stumbling stones in our own lives accidentally or intentionally placed in our way? As we move into the new year, what might this story mean for each of us?

January 13

ONENESS

Alan Coffey

Alan will explore the concept of "oneness" that is present in many spiritual traditions. He is a member of the Unitarian Fellowship of Newark and on the Board of Directors of the Joseph Priestley District of the UUA.

January 20

THE DRUM MAJOR INSTINCT

Rev. Deborah Mero

"A Drum Major for Justice" is only part of a longer quotation from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was etched in stone on his memorial in Washington D.C. and will be removed because it is missing the context of the whole statement. On this Sunday we will look further into what Dr. King was saying to us when he preached about the Drum Major Instinct.

January 27

ENVISIONING DIVERSITY

Embracing Diversity Team

While most of us feel quite comfortable with the idea of a more diverse congregation, we as a congregation may not reflect this vision. How will we need to change, and what will we need to do differently to accommodate other groups? The Embracing Diversity Team has been on a two-year journey to try to answer these key questions. A recent visioning retreat with outside facilitators has provided somewhat of a blueprint. Come and hear our reflections on this.

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

THE SONG OF DEBORAH

I have read a lot of words about the horrible shooting that took place in Newtown, Connecticut. The early news reports got most of the facts wrong in their haste to be first to report it. The opinion writers have filled pages, paper and electronic. Some fundamentalist preachers have weighed in about the sin in our society being a cause. I am profoundly saddened, at the loss, at the many, many lives which will be forever touched and haunted by the actions of one man. Yes, we need better gun control. Yes, we need better mental health services. Yes, we need to ratchet down the culture of violence that seems to become more rather than less intense with each passing day.

This is the kind of event that provokes the question, where was God in all of this? How could a just and loving god let this happen? Rabbi Harold Kushner went on at length in his book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* about his own quest for answers. My answer is always "God is in the response to the tragedy," which closely mirrors a wonderful quote from PBS' Mr. Rogers that has been printed anew lately:

"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.' To this day, especially in times of "disaster," I remember my mother's words, and I am always comforted by realizing that there are still so many helpers — so many caring people in this world."

Our congregation is filled with helpers, with caring people. In the aftermath of the shooting, one thing is hauntingly clear to me—we need one another. We said those words when we opened our service on Sunday Dec. 16, at least those of us who were at the services that morning. Saying the words is a good reminder, but actually showing up and getting involved with the community makes it real. We have had a number of people, since I arrived here, for whom the UCWC has been a lifeline in challenging times. There have also been folks who didn't want to connect, and when things happened to them they disappeared rather than reach out or let us reach out. It is always an individual's choice, of course. But nothing can replace having a supportive community when you are in need. We hope you want the congregation to be part of your support network.

Many of you are already connected and doing a lot, showing up, teaching, learning, singing, cooking, ushering, greeting, etc. Many of you are on the fringes and perhaps wondering how to more easily connect. Many of you have not been around for a while and may or may not be looking for a way to re-engage. We started our Hospitality Team program last spring for just that purpose—to help people jump in without making a huge commitment. We took a map and essentially divided the congregation into four teams closely trying to resemble four quad-

rants on the map. Most of you know which team you are on. Those of you who are new to us most likely don't know. If you don't—please ask and we will get you connected with your team.

Each hospitality team serves the congregation for four straight Sunday mornings providing ushers, greeters, coffee hour goodies, décor, and general coordination of the service tasks. None of it is difficult. In return, each team has a party either before or after their "shift" and then is not asked to do anything for

12 weeks until the teams have cycled through. It is a great way to meet and get to know new people and mix it up a bit. You also will find out who lives near you, which may be helpful for other purposes.

On our part, we have a few kinks to work out in getting everyone on-board and getting the communication working in the easiest way possible. We are also aware that it takes a while for this kind of program to become part of the culture of a congregation. We have learned from other congregations who are using this system that though it took time to get off the ground, it has changed the entire culture of the congregation in fabulous ways. So please help us help you get better connected, because it really will make a difference in your life. You can ask anyone who is active with the congregation what their involvement does for them and you will hear that people get out of it at least as much as they put in, if not more. We do need one another to share our celebrations and our burdens. I hope as the new year begins, you will want to engage in the activities of our community and grow with it. As resolutions go, it is a great one to make and an easy one to keep.

– Wishing you a wonderful, warm, connected 2013

Deborah

...help us help you get better connected, because it really will make a difference in your life.

The Fellowtarian is the monthly newsletter of the
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REMARKS – RELIGIOUS EDUCATION UPDATE

This month I had planned to write about our Sixth UU Principle, and the focus of a recent Children's Worship: "Build a fair and peaceful world." And then, just a few days ago, someone brought weapons into an elementary school in Connecticut and the possibility of peace on earth seemed more remote than ever.

When things happen that are so hurtful and make no sense, I confess that I sometimes have moments of doubt. When our bright, eager children come to church on Sunday mornings, how do I look into their faces and encourage them to respect all people (our First UU Principle) and to show kindness and compassion (our Second Principle)? Shouldn't I be telling them how dangerous the world is, and instructing them in how to stay safe?

It's only a momentary flicker of thought. In an instant my heart and mind return to me. Of course we must teach our Principles and strive to live by them. They point a light of reason and sanity in a sometimes insane world.

Rather than say much else, I want to share these words of the sixth century Chinese philosopher Lao-Tse. These are words that we talk about in Children's Worship at least once a year. Words that I revisit at times when peace seems far away:

*If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations*

*If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities*

*If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.*

*If there is to be peace between neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.*

*If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.*



– Pam Baxter
Director of Religious Education

ANNUAL NEW MEMBER POT-LUCK DINNER

Our UCWC community is looking forward to a great tradition at UCWC, Sunday, January 27, at 6 pm. The Annual New Member Pot-Luck is a time where we honor our newest members, invite recent visitors, and celebrate being together. As in the past, we will have a Bio board to introduce the folks who have signed our historic Membership book over the past year. This amazing book contains all the names of people who believed in us and in themselves and chose to be part of this loving community since 1954.

We ask everyone, except for our honored new member guests, to bring a dish, either a main dish, a vegetable, or a dessert. The array of foods is always a big hit with our pot-lucks. The evening would not be complete without a mystery "Getting to Know You," game which takes place at each of our tables.

The Membership Committee cordially invites you to attend and encourages you to RSVP (email: membership), so we can plan accordingly. Also, if you have children and need child care, we ask that you let us know ahead of time at the above email. Our purpose and vision for this event can be summed up by a quote from Clarence Clemons, a prominent member of Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band until his death last year: "Being involved in the well-being and advancement of one's own community is the most natural thing to do."

DRE SABBATICAL

The UCWC Board is pleased to announce that our Director of Religious Education, Pam Baxter, will take a sabbatical in the Spring of 2013. The sabbatical will happen in two parts – the first segment will run from mid-March to mid-May, and the second will take place in June, after RE has finished for the congregational year. With advance planning and RE Team support, RE will continue to run the same program with no impact on the UCWC budget.

In February, 2013, Pam will have completed 12 years as DRE of our congregation. During that time, Pam was instrumental in building the RE program, including curriculum development, creating policies and procedures for registering children (including a framework for children with special needs), teacher development, and parent volunteer opportunities. Pam has worked to create a clean, bright, and welcoming environment for children and families. It's time for Pam to take some time to recharge and renew through a sabbatical.

Pam's time away from our congregation will allow her to have experiences outside of our own UU community which she may incorporate into our RE program. Included in Pam's plans are visiting other congregations to observe a variety of program models and innovations currently in use in other RE programs.

Pam has been working with the Sabbatical Task Force (comprised of Board members) and the RE Team to plan for the continued smooth operation of the RE program during the sabbatical period. Members of the RE Team will take over many of the tasks performed by Pam each week, so that the children will continue to receive the same lessons and curriculum each Sunday. Plans for congregational support for the RE Team as well as more details about Pam's sabbatical will be forthcoming in the next two months. Watch for future *Fellowtarian* articles from Pam and the RE Team.

NOTES OF APPRECIATION MARIE STEELE

This month we would like to acknowledge Marie Steele who, over the years, has shown selfless dedication working quietly, hard, and long to make this congregation fun, a rich experience, and solvent. Many of us in the congregation know Marie for occasionally singing with Who Needs Nigel, our resident rock band. Or, perhaps you see Marie working the room, selling tickets to a forthcoming event. This is only the surface of her contribution.

Marie has a passion for music. She loves to sing, and she's good at it too (her favorite styles are 1960s - 1980s, and *I've Been Cheated* is at the top of the list, confounding her husband). She's played music before and the joy of singing was like bumping into an old friend where the conversation starts again without pause, seemingly interrupted only by a comma. Her first instrument was the trumpet, and with that horn she made history, breaking the glass ceiling in becoming the first female invited to play with the all-boys Bonner Prendergast Catholic High School band. Quite a distinction, which is not found in the Wiki entry for Bonner at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monsignor_Bonner_High_School. With her permission you may want to make this entry.

Ask anyone Marie has played, sung or worked with, and you get a similar thread from all: her love of singing comes not from studying or years of practice, but from a heart with purpose that seems limitless in giving and a devotion to others around her. "Kindness", "selfless", "caring", "helping", "committed", "role model", "driving force", "really wonderful", are just a few words used by those around her to describe Marie and the attitude she brings to her work every day: here, at home, and at work. She lives the principles and mission of our congregation. Helping is simply part of her DNA.

Marie and Mark joined our congregation in 2005, relatively recently when looking at such an impressive resume of volunteerism. Coming from a Catholic background, they found a home here for themselves and their children, Erin and Taylor. As Mark said, even though Marie didn't jump in to help right away upon arriving at 501 South High Street (Who of us do?), it wasn't long before she started making a difference. That difference continues today:

- David Roth concert this past December and years before? Marie.
- The NOW Music Society Concert at the WCUC in October? Marie.
- The forthcoming Murder Mystery Dinner scheduled for this month? Marie.
- The many free performances by Who Needs Nigel? Marie (and others in the band/congregation).

We are lucky to have Marie among us. Working behind the scenes to make events enjoyable and memorable and as a creative source to help raise the funds that keep our doors open. It takes hard work, a big heart and, yes, sometimes vocal chords to bring it all together. How do you say thanks to a person that gives so much and asks only that you enjoy the moment she helped to create? You can start by saying thanks to her this month. Not once or twice, but as many times as you find an enjoyable moment at the UCWC, because there's a strong possibility Marie had her hand in the making of that moment.



GROCERY CARD PROGRAM NOW INCLUDES WHOLE FOODS

We've added Whole Foods to the list of stores offering grocery cards each Sunday. Whole Foods Markets are located in Wayne, Glen Mills, Plymouth Meeting and many other locations. We offer grocery cards from Acme, Giant, Shoprite, Wawa and now Whole Foods.

Buying grocery cards is a quick, convenient way to shop. It helps UCWC earn up to 5% for each card you purchase – and it costs you nothing. For example, you buy \$100 worth of grocery cards for \$100. You use them like cash at the store for \$100 worth of goods. But the congregation has only paid \$95 for the cards, so we earn \$5 (or 5% of the purchase).



Simply visit the grocery card table after each Sunday service and use cash or a check payable to "UCWC" to purchase cards for the store of your choice. Come back every week, and keep helping your congregation.

COFFEE HOUSE

The next coffee house is Saturday, January 12, at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. Our featured act is singer/song writer, Denise Moser.

This venue continues to be a fund raiser for UCWC with a \$5 suggested donation at the door. Performers may sign up at 6:30. Please come out and support this wonderful fund raiser.



STONES IN THE SAME WALL – SOCIAL JUSTICE

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

Throughout 2012, our congregation has offered support in many forms to a diverse group of community agencies/ organizations that provide direct services to individuals and families who have critical needs. With our monthly food collections, our Share-the-Plate donations, the volunteer work at the Food Cupboard and preparing dinners at Safe Harbor, cleaning for the Food Bank and wielding a hammer for Habitat, our members have been active participants in making a difference.

Our thanks to you who have been making this happen. And we know there is more for us to do. As our country mourns again the tragic loss of life, this time in Connecticut, may we assess also how we can help our governmental leaders deal more effectively with the violence that permeates our society. The “to do” list for 2013 is growing. May we gather strength from each other and continue to strive toward a more peaceful, just and sustainable world. From Hymn #131, “Love will guide us; peace has tried us, Hope inside us will lead the way.”

Blessings of the season to you and your family!



FIRST SUNDAY FOOD COLLECTION PROJECT

THIS MONTH'S SUGGESTED ITEMS: CANNED FRUIT

Our monthly food collection is Sunday, January 6. Look for collection baskets in the lobby. We participate in the “Circle of Giving” program that assures the [West Chester Food Cupboard](#) of specific items on any given month according to a schedule provided by the food cupboard.

For this month's needs, see above headline – of course, other items are appreciated as well. Please be sure that the date on food items has not expired.

We encourage members to bring in items the first Sunday of each month, but if you forget, we will accept non-perishables at any time. You can also put a check in the collection plate, payable to “UCWC” with “WC Food Cupboard” in the memo line on, any Sunday.

Thank you for participating in this project and helping neighbors in our community. Contact Shelly Case at email: food-cupboard.



MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF SERVICE MONDAY JANUARY 21

For the past several years we have been partnering with St. Paul's Baptist Church and many other churches and organizations in the community to dedicate a day to serving others. Advance registration information will be coming to you in Connections and will be announced at Sunday Services.

Registration and gathering will begin at 8 am at St. Paul's, One Haggerty Blvd. (off 202 across from the Agway), where we will be sent off to our projects. After our service, we re-gather for lunch and fellowship at St. Paul's.

This year's projects will include food drives, visits to nursing homes, reading to children, fix-it projects, quilting, knitting, assembling meal kits for Stop Hunger Now (yes, we will be hosting that activity again) and many others. A new addition this year will be a basketball tournament at the Melton Center. There will be lots to do and great opportunities to meet and work with others in the community.

Please plan to participate. More information will be forthcoming. This is one of the biggest projects we have been involved with. Last year 75+ members and friends took part. We hope you will plan to join with us as we honor the memory of Dr. King with service, collaboration and cooperation. It will be a great day!



ANIMAL MINISTRY HOSTS VEGGIE NIGHT OUT

Following up on the recent success of its initial Veggie Night Out, the Animal Ministry Chapter is hosting another event on Friday, January 25, at 7 p.m. The dinner will be held at the popular Su Tao Cafe located at 81 Lancaster Avenue in Malvern. [Su Tao Cafe](#) offers a wide array of vegan offerings sure to satisfy both long-time vegetarians and vegans and those interested in experiencing new dietary choices.

In addition to the enjoyment of good food and company, Veggie Night Out offers participants an introduction to the upcoming projects of the Animal Ministry Chapter which supports a variety of animal welfare issues. For a pleasurable and informative evening, join us Friday, January, 25. Contact John Gribbin, Ralph Mero or Alan Pittenger for details at email: animal-ministry.

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 that the share-the-plate recipient for January 20 (third Sunday of the month) is [Safe Harbor of Chester County](#).

Safe Harbor is an independent nonprofit located in West Chester that provides food, shelter, friendship, counseling and recovery opportunities to homeless men and women. It is an emergency homeless shelter for 20 men and 20 women who, because of addictions or mental health issues, do not qualify for other shelter programs operating in the area.

Safe Harbor's goal goes beyond just feeding the homeless and providing shelter. They seek to understand each person's background, define short term action plans designed to address their problems and needs, and monitor their progress. Their goal is to help rebuild lives and life skills, reestablish self-esteem, and help people overcome the issues that prevent them from leading independent, productive lives. They depend on community donations and volunteers. Over 300 volunteers donate more than 12,000 hours annually. Our congregation provides a dinner there each month.



Thank you for your generosity to last month's recipient, [Maternal Health and Child Health Consortium of CC](#) in the amount of \$470.

Please Note: In January, we will accept new nominations for Share-The-Plate recipients. The deadline for nominations is January 15. Congregation members who are interested in submitting a nomination please contact Beth Daniels at email: share-the-plate. She will send you an electronic nomination form to complete and return to her.

Our selection guidelines state that recipients should be local Chester County groups that help people in the area. Preference is given to small, local organizations that do not have large amounts of funds from government or other sources to sustain them. The Social Justice Committee will select Share-The-Plate recipients for April through September 2013 at our January meeting.

COMING NEXT MONTH

MURDER MYSTERY THEATRE FUND RAISER

Saturday, February 16

6 PM: Cocktails, hors d'oeuvre, finger food, and chocolate desserts

Tickets: \$35 Per Person (Adult Content 15 years or older)

Invite your friends and family for a wonderful evening of fun and laughter

Contact: Marie Steel at email: music to RSVP

"LUCY, I'M DEAD." You are in for a treat tonight at the Club Babalu. Ricky's put together his best act ever, and what's more, a big-time producer is in attendance. This is Ricky's shot at Broadway, and he'll stop at nothing to make sure Lucy's shenanigans don't ruin this opportunity. However, when Lucy tries to sneak into the club, things spiral out of control — into murder!

Babaluuuuuuuuu!!

UUSC UPDATE

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE COLLECTION

January is the time to turn in your "Guest at Your Table" boxes. (Please replace cash with a check made out to "UCWC", and put "UUSC" in the memo line.) Enter the sanctuary and turn right. Look for the sign and the green tub in the corner next to the bathroom. Drop in your box. (If you didn't get a box, you can take an envelope, fill it out, and mail it with your check, or donate on-line at www.uusc.org).

If you donate at least the membership amount you can renew your membership or become a new member. Memberships are \$10 student, \$20 senior, \$40 individual, \$75 dual. In addition, Guest at Your Table Donations of \$100 or more will be matched by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock. Our congregation has always been an exceptionally strong supporter of UUSC, but our membership slipped last year. Please help us increase membership this year.

Visit UUSC.org to learn more about the only human rights organization with UU in its name. We do charity the UU way. We empower people.

Thank you.

– Linda Sander and

Tom Townsend

UUSC Co-representatives

FOLK SINGING

The next folk singing get-together is Saturday, January 26, 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.

CONGREGATIONAL CALENDAR

All email addresses @ucwc.org unless otherwise noted.

- Jan 1** **Tue** **New Year's Day.** Office closed.
- Jan 2** **Wed** **Religious Education Committee.** 6 p.m. Fireplace Rm. Contact Heidi Frayer, email: RE
- Jan 4** **Fri** **Potluck and Game Night.** Doors open at 6:30 p.m.. Games start a little after 7 p.m.. Sanctuary. Contact Lauren Kelly, email: fun.
- Jan 6** **Sun** **First Sunday Food Collection.** Lobby. See p. 5.
Guest at Your Table Membership Drive. See p. 6.
- Jan 7** **Mon** **Embracing Diversity Team.** 7-8:30 p.m. Office.
- Jan 8** **Tue** **Council Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. Office. Contact Cindy Heck, e-mail: program
- Jan 11-12** **Fri-Sat** **Youth Group Movie Night Sleepover.** Email: youth-group.
- Jan 11-13** **Fri-Sun** **Women's Retreat off site.** Mariawald Renewal Center. Contact Rev. Mero, email: minister
- Jan 12** **Sat** **Coffee House.** 7 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 4.
- Jan 13** **Sun** **Young Adult Group.** 12:30-2 p.m. Fireplace Rm. Contact Az Azarak, e-mail: young-adult
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
- Jan 15** **Tue** **Board Meeting.** 7 p.m. Office. All are welcome. Contact Mary Yeager, e-mail: president.
Share the Plate Nomination Deadline. See p. 6.
- Jan 20** **Sun** **Share the Plate Sunday.** Benefits Safe Harbor of Chester County. See p. 6.
Spirit Singers Perform. Both services.
- Jan 21** **Mon** **Martin Luther King Day.** Office closed.
Martin Luther King Day of Service. 8 a.m. St. Paul's Baptist Church. See p. 5.
- Jan 24** **Thu** **Religious Services.** 7 p.m. Minister's Office. Contact Gerry Giess, email: religious-services
- Jan 25** **Fri** **Veggie Night Out.** 7 p.m. Su Tao Café. See p. 5.
- Jan 26** **Sat** **Folk Singing.** 8 p.m. at the home of Linda and Steve Sander. See p. 6.
- Jan 27** **Sun** **Young Adult Group.** 12:30-2 p.m. Fireplace Rm. Contact Az Azarak, e-mail: young-adult
Social Justice Committee. 12:30-1:30 p.m. Office. Contact Carol Dukes, email: social-justice. See p. 5.
Annual New Member Pot-Luck Dinner. 6 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 3.

Groups meeting multiple times in a month:

Spirit Singers **Practices 7:15-9:15 p.m.** Sanctuary. Thursdays, January 3, 10, and 17, and 31. Contact Miriam Davidson, email: choir

Youth Group **Meets most Sundays.** 11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Youth Group Room. Email: youth-group.