

UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF WEST CHESTER
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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

February, 2013

February 3

TELLING MIDRASH

Rev. Deborah Mero

Midrash is the Hebrew word for the story behind the story. One of the more fascinating ways of reading the Bible, learning the Bible, is looking into the deeper layers and ancient interpretations of what only shows on the surface of the text. As we re-visit the women in the Hebrew Bible in our adult exploration, the midrash explains a lot more about these characters than we ever could have imagined.

February 10

WHAT IS IT ABOUT CHOCOLATE, ANYWAY?

Rev. Deborah Mero

Chocolate has been the focus of several films that have delighted the senses. UCWC has a gift for chocolate as is amazingly displayed at our annual "Feast of Decadent Chocolate" happening on this day. For some of us, we see chocolate truly as Theobroma, the food of the gods. For others, if not the taste, perhaps it is the idea of a special taste, a special texture that takes us away from the everyday and lifts our spirits. So what's the big deal?

February 17

IT'S ABOUT TEAMWORK

Rev. Deborah Mero

This Sunday we will spend time for team-building, hospitality teams that is. We began this program less than a year ago and want to take some special time to figure out what this "team thing" is all about. Come join us for a fun Sunday of making connections.

February 24

HEALTHY CONFLICT

Paul Heck

Conflict among groups and between individuals can be healthy, respectful, and rewarding. It can motivate us to learn about differences, grow spiritually, and change attitudes. Learn how we can use healthy conflict to enhance our relationships with others, both friend and foe.

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

REMARKS – RE UPDATE

Seeing ourselves through others' eyes

Last month I went to a meeting, held at the home of a couple I'd never met. A typo in the email I received gave a start time half an hour early. I ended up sitting at the kitchen table with the couple while they finished their dinner.

There isn't space here to give the back story, nor is it really necessary. Let me just set the stage with the players: The Wife (host mother), The Husband (host father), A High School-Aged Boy From China (living with this couple while attending the Kimberton Waldorf School). One other thing helpful to know: in Waldorf education, children are kept away from electronics, especially TV and computers, even at home. The computer thing, which can come across almost as a phobia, is one of the reasons we didn't send our son to the Waldorf school.

Back to that night. The father asked the boy how his school paper was going, and the boy complained good-humoredly that his wrist was tired. I commented (good-humoredly) on the fact that he said "wrist" rather than "wrists." Which would have been the complaint if he'd been typing rather than writing long-hand.

The host father gave me a withering look and said, "At Waldorf, they still know how to *write*. They don't use *computers*." Like I was an idiot. And assuming that I know nothing about the Waldorf model and values system. "They can pick up computers *later*," he said. And then he proceeded to tell me, essentially, that Waldorf is right, and all other education models are wrong. And, by implication, that anyone who doesn't do Waldorf is a moron. All without knowing anything about me.

As the father's words chopped through the space between us, I tried

to feel bemused rather than berated. Then I enjoyed the meeting. And then I left, glad to be out of a space that never shed its atmosphere of intolerance. It was on the drive home that I thought of how many times, believing I'm incredibly right about something, I've probably unintentionally bludgeoned someone with my own conviction. For instance, how might it seem to an innocent visitor or acquaintance, when I extol Unitarian Universalism?

It's such an easy thing to do. And hopefully I can catch myself at it; or, better yet, catch myself before I ever begin. Better still, to do more describing than proselytizing, e.g., "One of the things I love about Unitarian Universalism is that we're encouraged to explore other

religions and different spiritual practices." Where I remember to use my "I" words.

We took a small but important step in this direction when we changed the chalice-lighting words that begin Children's Worship each Sunday. Instead of the "the" of proprietary ownership, we have been using a more expansive "a." So, instead of, "This is **the** church of open minds, loving hearts and helping hands"—as if UUs have the corner on that market—we now say, "This is **a** church of open minds, loving hearts and helping hands."

Just one little word, but I think it makes a big difference.

– Pam Baxter

Director of Religious Education

2013 JPD WORSHIP ARTS FESTIVAL FEBRUARY 22-23 UU CHURCH IN CHERRY HILL, NJ

Are you interested in meeting UUs from other congregations? Looking for new ideas for worship? Seeking personal growth in speaking, singing, and/or leadership? Want to be challenged to serve UCWC more? Then you don't want to miss the 11th JPD Worship Arts Festival at the UU Church in Cherry Hill, NJ, on February 22-23.

Our featured presenter this year is UU Growth, Ministry, Religious Education, and Media Consultant, Peter Bowden. He will speak on Worship and Social Media in the new Age of Collaboration.

Once again we are offering a special incentive: Register five participants from the same congregation, and the sixth registration is free. Please contact Marie Steel (email: music) if you want to attend. There are a few people from the congregation who will attend, and we are trying to get five participants to receive the one free for one of the youth in our congregation who is attending.

AUCTION INVOICE FOLLOW-UP

If you did not receive an invoice at the November annual auction, and you need one, please send your request to Mike Miller, email: finance.

SABBATICAL UPDATE FROM THE RE TEAM

Last month the UCWC Board announced that our Director of Religious Education, Pam Baxter, will be taking a sabbatical in the Spring of 2013. The sabbatical will happen in two parts - the first segment will run during the congregational year, from mid-March to mid-May. The second will take place in June, after RE has finished for the congregational year.

Pam's last day of teaching prior to her sabbatical will be March 3, and she will return on May 12. While Pam is gone, the RE program will continue as usual, with the RE Team in charge, filling in key parts of Pam's job. Pam will leave lesson plans for Childrens' Worship to continue while she's away, to be led by RE Team member Jen Roth. The other RE Team members are Heidi Frayer (Team Chair), Lauren Erion and Larry Lesser.

If you have any questions, or would like more detail about the sabbatical, please contact Pam before she leaves.

Teachers: Pam will be setting aside times for teachers to meet with her after RE on Sunday, February 10 and Sunday, February 17. Although teaching assignments and schedules currently in place will not change, we hope that each teacher will make an effort to meet with Pam on one of these dates to ensure that any questions can be addressed. While her sabbatical is underway, procedures have been set up for dealing with any issues that arise (i.e. classroom management, teacher absences) which are normally handled by Pam. Pam will be providing additional details about these procedures as we draw closer to the sabbatical.

Parents: The RE Team will be asking for your patience and additional support during this period. Since Team members are currently performing other duties on Sundays, such as RE Greeting and support for teaching teams, we will be primarily relying on you to provide support through Floating Volunteer

activities and by continuing to bring your children each Sunday.

The RE Team will go on its annual retreat this month, where the topic will be sabbatical planning. Part of the planning process will require us to ask the question, "What can the Team learn while Pam is away?" Although our focus been primarily on what Pam will be doing and how her sabbatical experience will enhance the RE Program, the RE Team will also have an opportunity to grow and to

see the program from a somewhat different perspective. We hope this experience will lead to new insights and ideas which can be blended with Pam's renewed perspective and insights when she returns. Ultimately, we expect that this experience will help the RE Team to gain a deeper understanding of our role in supporting the RE Program at UCWC.

– Heidi Frayer
Religious Education Committee
Chair



WELCOMING THE STRANGER

We've all been a visitor at one time or another. Welcoming visitors is everyone's privilege. Each one of us is an ambassador for UCWC, not just the Hospitality Team of the month, or the Membership Committee, or the minister. Below are some tips to help us on this path of welcoming visitors. These suggestions originally came from a Protestant Evangelism Coach, who said, "The most expensive piece of furniture in a church is the empty pew," in our case, chair. We have so much to offer our visitors. Statistics have shown that a visitor must make seven new friends within the first six months, to keep them coming. Thanks for your valuable part in making this happen.

Understand the mind of the guests. They want to be welcomed. They want to observe our service and be provided an easy opening if they choose to come again. Most of all, they don't want to be pressured.

Welcome everyone. Not only newcomers need your warm welcome. Regular attendees also need a friendly greeting. Develop a good handshake and warm hello. Be enthusiastic – about the day and about the service that is about to take place.

Anticipate the newcomers. When people enter the door whom you do not recognize, approach them by saying something like, "We're glad to have you here today. I don't recall meeting you before." Avoid, "Is this your first time?" You might embarrass yourself or offend a regular attendee.

Help newcomers connect. While you are getting to know them, introduce guests to another regular attendee who walks in, and suggest they sit together, or feel free to invite first time visitors to sit with you.

Say goodbye with warmth. After the service, bid farewell to visitors, inviting them to return next week. Ask them if they have any questions. Introduce them to other members and to Deborah. If they have been attending several times, you can suggest they attend an informal "Getting to Know UU's Coffee," generally held the third Sunday of each month, in-between services. After visitors have gone, you are free to visit with other people.

Avoid congregation business. Avoid using pre- or post- service activities to conduct business that could be done over the phone during the week. Instead, focus on visitors.

– Barbara Long,
email: membership

FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

As our Stewardship Season nears, we will try a new approach this year. We are modeling our approach after one used in Lancaster with great success. It involves the following key changes to our current process.

First, if we don't hear otherwise, we will assume that last year's pledge will be repeated this year – perhaps with a small inflation increase. Everyone who pledged last year will get a letter indicating that amount, with an opportunity to alter that pledge either up or down. If we do not hear from you, we will assume the pledge is the same.

Second, we will not expect to speak directly to every pledge unit every year. For many, the annual renewal letter will be sufficient. For others we plan to have a combination of small group meetings and some one-on-one meetings to provide an opportunity to talk about the congregation and our collective hopes and concerns and looks toward the future – with stewardship being just one part of the discussion.

Here are some benefits that we expect based on Lancaster's experience:

1. This approach is more reflective of our culture of personal responsibility as it becomes incumbent on members to inform us of their intentions. It also avoids the very painful and anxious work of trying to chase busy members for their pledge as the spring wears on.

2. While there still are stewardship activities in the spring with group meetings and one-on-ones, the heavy

handed Stewardship Season is more subdued, and leaves us room for other activities and money related discussions which in the past have been pushed aside for the campaign.

3. There will likely be more communications and meetings to talk about our operating budget and other funds, but these can be spread across the year instead of compressed into Stewardship Season.

4. With less focus on the budget campaign, we should have more opportunity to discuss larger financial issues such as our social justice endowments, planned giving, or capital funding. These topics are currently low priority as we struggle with our budget.

5. We can focus on our largest short term question, the 2014 budget.

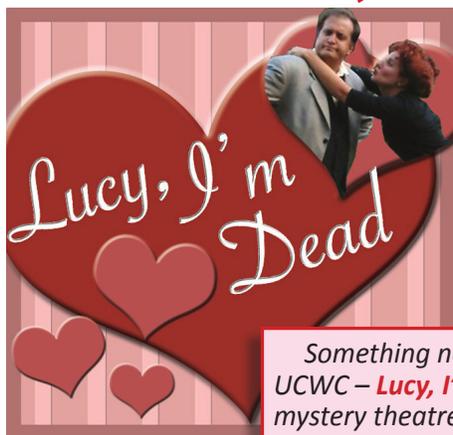
The Stewardship Committee welcomes comments, suggestions, and help with some of the tasks as we adopt new processes. There are many details to work out, developing letters and mailings and meetings. Thanks for any input or help you can give.

You can expect a letter to come out in February detailing your own pledge information as well as other details. Watch for notices in *Connections*, letters in the mail, and the board in the lobby for additional information.

– Bob Scott

Stewardship Committee
email: stewardship

Murder Mystery Theatre



Seating is Limited.
RSVP to
email: music

Sat., Feb. 16 at 6 p.m.

\$35 Per Person includes:

Wine, Hors d'oeuvres, Finger Food

Chocolate Desserts and the Show!

Cash or Check at the door.

Open to the Public.

Adult content 15+ yrs.

Babysitting Available

*Something new (fund raiser) is brewing at UCWC – **Lucy, I'm Dead** is our mid-winter murder mystery theatre performed by Without a Cue Productions.*

Shake off your cabin fever and join us for a great evening of fun and laughs. Tickets are now on sale Sundays or at the door – cash or check accepted. Snow date if necessary.



FLEA MARKET HEADS-UP

Our annual flea market is back, scheduled for April 20. It's not too early to start putting aside items to contribute. Remember, best-sellers are jewelry and collectibles, small appliances, kitchenware, household goods, linens, garden tools, and toys. Clothing should be of consignment store quality. Books are great sellers except for encyclopedias, textbooks, manuals and magazines, which do not sell.

Look for more details in future issues of *The Fellowtarian*. Contact Keith Dallara, email: flea-market.

STONES IN THE SAME WALL – SOCIAL JUSTICE

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

The new year 2013 has begun, and with it comes the hope of new friendships, new opportunities, and new challenges that can make our community a better place for all. On MLK Day, we participated in service projects throughout the area alongside members of other faiths – painting, reading to young children, preparing meals for shut-ins, bagging food for families overseas, and knitting hats, for instance.

We laughed together, shared stories, and maybe made a few new friends while celebrating our efforts and the finished “product” that will add to the quality of life for others. Let us continue to affirm our UU values as we reach out to those organizations who need our support and TLC to provide services to those most in need. Consider volunteering at Safe Harbor to prepare and serve dinners, building with Habitat for Humanity, serving as an issue team member for UUPLAN, or adding your voice to the Social Justice Committee. Let’s put our hearts and hands together every day of this year.

UUSC UPDATE

Please turn in your Guest at Your Table boxes by Sunday, January 27, if you have not done so already. (Please replace cash with a check made out to “UCWC” and put “UUSC” in the memo line.). 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 mail a check to UUSC or donate online, please be sure to tell them you are from the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester.

If you donate at least the membership amount, you can renew your membership or become a new member. We have the largest membership percentage of any large congregation in the East. Let’s keep it that way. UUSC (Unitarian Universalist Service Committee) is the ONLY human rights organization in the world that begins with the letters “UU”. We can be proud of the work that they do in the United States and around the world. They receive NO denominational funding and NO government funding – we’re it! For further information please contact Linda Sander or Tom Townsend at email: uusc.

UUPLAN UPDATE

UUPLAN (Unitarian Universalist Pennsylvania Legislative Advocacy Network) held its annual meeting in December in Lancaster, which was attended by 80 representatives from 19 congregations state-wide. Inge Leonardos and Carol Dukes attended work sessions that focused on five key issues affecting the rights and dignity of individuals, the democratic process, caring for our environment, and the rights of women and people of color. These included:

Immigration Rights. Working to support fair and comprehensive immigration reform at the state and federal level.

Economic Justice/Basic Human Needs Team. Opposing the expansion of exploitative lending to the poor by payday lending operators.

Economic Justice/Justice for Restaurant Workers. Working for the raising of the federal minimum wage for tipped workers.

LGBT Equality. Including the legal benefits of marriage.

Environmental Justice. Focusing on unlicensed gas drilling and global warming.

Reproductive Justice. Guaranteeing access for all to reproductive health services.

Study/work teams have been formed and will begin with telephone conferencing in the next few weeks as action plans are more fully developed. More help is needed at the congregational level so that we can participate more fully in collaboration with other UUs to have a stronger impact on these important issues in the world around us.

Now is the time to get onboard. Let us hear from you at email: social-justice.

FIRST SUNDAY FOOD COLLECTION PROJECT

**THIS MONTH’S SUGGESTED ITEMS:
PERSONAL CARE ITEMS
(SHAMPOO, TOOTHPASTE,
TOOTHBRUSHES,
DEODORANT)**

Our monthly food collection is Sunday, February 3. 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 for the Food Cupboard in the collection plate on any Sunday. Please make it payable to “UCWC” and write “WC Food Cupboard” in the memo line.

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



EXPLORING DIVERSITY BOOK GROUP SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10 7-8:30 PM

Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide. From two of our most fiercely moral voices, a passionate call to arms against our era's most pervasive human rights violation: the oppression of women and girls in the developing world.

With Pulitzer Prize winners Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn as our guides, we undertake an odyssey through Africa and Asia to meet the extraordinary women struggling there, among them a Cambodian teenager sold into sex slavery and an Ethiopian woman who suffered devastating injuries in childbirth. Drawing on the breadth of their combined reporting experience, Kristof and WuDunn depict our world with anger, sadness, clarity, and, ultimately, hope.

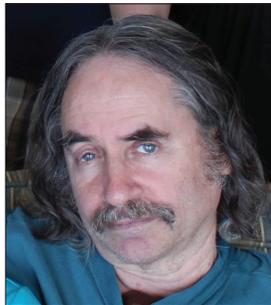
Amy Zadeh will facilitate our discussion. For more information, please contact us at email: diversity-book-group, or call Ruth MacFadyen or Shelly Case.

All are welcome.

NOTES OF APPRECIATION

This month we highlight an unsung hero, an off-camera producer, a protagonist incognito. Here's a short quiz: Who developed our current website and even now continues to maintain it? Who has edited the *Fellowtarian* for 25 years? Who maintains our current email system? Who developed the invaluable Excel spreadsheets we used for such things as the expense side of our accounting system in the past and currently for our service auction? To each question the answer is Steve Sander.

And those are only a few of the behind-the-scenes contributions Steve has made and continues to make to UCWC life. You might know more about Steve and his shoulder-length salt and pepper hair if you had a love of rock and roll and folk music as Steve does. He and Linda host the monthly UCWC Folksinging Get-together at their home. If you have been there, you know that Steve goes into his own world with a piano and a guitar. Linda describes him as, "the soul of rock and roll and the blues." He generously parlays these talents into planning our summer service folk singing programs, such as our recent tribute to Woody Guthrie.



Barbara Robinson, our office manager, calls Steve a godsend and said that Steve has made her life much less stressful. The two have partnered for the last five years in creating an effective calendar that has made our building a "conflict-free zone."

From the newsletter to musical performance, from volunteering at the Food Cupboard to helping with the construction of the classrooms in our basement, and from spreadsheets to social justice, Steve models the essence of what it means to give back unselfishly. Thank you, Steve. We greatly appreciate your time, talent, and creativity.

A brief word about these "Notes of Appreciation": They stem from the Volunteer Service Appreciation Program that your Board of Trustees initiated last year. Their intent is not only to formally appreciate the many strong volunteer efforts of our members but also to hold these volunteers up as examples for the rest of us. We all need role models, and fortunately UCWC has a generous share of them. So generous, in fact, that the Board encourages any member to nominate candidate(s) for a note of appreciation. Simply contact a Board member with brief information on why your candidate deserves special appreciation.

– For the Board of Trustees and all UCWC members,
Rick Marts

SHARE-THE-PLATE SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17

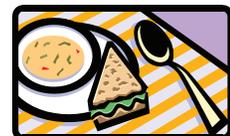
The February recipient of our monthly share-the-plate Sunday collection is the West Chester Food Cupboard.

The West Chester Food Cupboard, "Neighbors Caring for Neighbors", is an all-volunteer organization that fights hunger in West Chester. Your contributions will be used to buy the food that is most needed.



LUNCH GROUP

Lunch group will meet Friday, February 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.



CONGREGATIONAL CALENDAR

All email addresses @ucwc.org unless otherwise noted.

Feb 1	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.
Feb 2	Sat	Winter Building Clean-up. 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Contac Gerry Giess.
Feb 3	Sun	First Sunday Food Collection. Lobby. See p. 6.
Feb 4	Mon	Embracing Diversity Team. 7-8:30 p.m. Office. Contact Eileen Kelly-Meyer, email: embracing-diversity.
Feb 6	Wed	Religious Education Committee. 6-7:30 p.m. Youth Group Rm. Contact Heidi Frayer, email: RE Women in the Hebrew Bible, Adult RE class starts. 7:15-9 p.m. See p. 2.
Feb 8	Fri	Lunch Group. 11:30 a.m. Panera Bread. See p. 7.
Feb 9	Sat	Coffee House. 7 p.m. Sanctuary.
Feb 10	Sun	Spirit Singers Perform. Both services. Annual Feast of Decadent Chocolate. Chocolate pot luck after services. Contact Lauren Kelly, email: fun. See below. 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 Exploring Diversity Book Group. 7-8:30 p.m. Office. See p. 7.
Feb 12	Tue	Council Meeting. 7-9 p.m. Office. Contact Cindy Heck, e-mail: program
Feb 16	Sat	Lucy, I'm Dead. Murder Mystery Theater. 6 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 5.
Feb 17	Sun	Share the Plate Sunday. Benefits West Chester Food Cupboard. See p. 7.
Feb 19	Tue	Board Meeting. 7 p.m. Office. All are welcome. Contact Mary Yeager, e-mail: president.
Feb 22-23	Fri-Sat	JPD Worship Arts Festival. UU Church of Cherry Hill. See p. 3.
Feb 23	Sat	Folk Singing. 8 p.m. at the home of Linda and Steve Sander. See below.
Feb 28	Thu	Religious Services. 7 p.m. Office. Contact Gerry Giess, email: religious-services

Groups meeting multiple times in a month:

Adult RE	Women in the Hebrew Bible. Wednesdays February 6 - March 27. 7:15-9 p.m. See p. 2.
Spirit Singers	Practices 7:15-9:15 p.m. Sanctuary. Thursdays, February 7, 14, and 28. Contact Miriam Davidson, email: choir
Youth Group	Meets most Sundays, 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Youth Group Room. Email: youth-group.

FOLK SINGING

The next folk singing get-together is Saturday, February 23, 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.



FEAST OF DECADENT CHOCOLATE

The Fun and Fellowship Committee will sponsor our Annual Feast of Decadent Chocolate, one of our favorite Fellowship events, on Sunday February 10. Chocolate lovers will remember this occasion fondly and non-chocolate lovers will remember their amusement at the attraction chocolate holds for some people.

The "Feast" is actually just a special potluck chocolate social hour after both of the services on that Sunday. Everyone is encouraged to bring his/her favorite chocolate treat (preferably homemade) to share. A list of ingredients is helpful to anyone with special dietary concerns/ preferences.

NOTE FROM REV. MERO: Again this year for the Feast of the Decadent Chocolate you are urged to find and use fair trade chocolate in your offerings to one another.