

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 March, 2013

March 3

SAFE AND SOUND

Rev. Deborah Mero

What does safety mean to us in this day and age? We are bombarded with so many stories in the news that are geared to frighten us. In the midst of so many perceived threats, we can find our spiritual center to find safety wherever we are.

March 10

MORNING MEDITATIONS

Rev. Deborah Mero

We will dedicate this morning to meditate—to listen, to take in whatever sounds and thoughts come our way. This service will include guided meditation as well as silent meditation. With all the words we are constantly surrounded by, let us take some time for quiet contemplation.

March 17

HELP, THANKS, WOW!

Rev. Deborah Mero

That's the title of a new book from Anne Lamott. She says that these are the three essential prayers. I will look at these three words and what they convey in collaboration with Miriam and the Spirit Singers.

March 24

CHOICES

UCWC Youth Group

In today's world, no matter what the subject, it seems we have a smorgasbord of choices. Whether it be which toothpaste to use, what fast food to have for lunch, or who you listen to for advice.

March 31

NEW LIFE BEFORE THE RESURRECTION

Rev. Deborah Mero

Over the past several years we have explored many ways to look at Easter through Unitarian Universalist perspectives. Today we will look at some of the Pagan roots from which so many of the Easter traditions came.

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

THE SONG OF DEBORAH

We're at an exciting moment in our congregational life. After many years of talk and several earlier attempts at design, we're about to launch our new website at long last. I feel like there should be a drum roll and some way of smashing a bottle of champagne against the prow to send it off, but there is no prow.

It isn't a physical tangible thing. Yet it represents a huge leap forward with an intent to be informative, more active and interesting and with more content than we have been able to include in the past. We will be involving more people, committees, and teams in providing the content. The structure of the site has a lot of possibilities that will take us time to discover and implement.

HUGE THANKS go to Sandy Retzlaff, Juan Leon, and Debby Kern for the time and effort they have put into the design and implementation of the new web site. It has been a much larger project than anyone could have imagined or done alone.

I remember the first time I attended a workshop at one of our General Assemblies in the early 1990's when the subject was this new thing called a web page. The presenters were explaining how our congregations might want to have one, and what kind of information we might want to put on it. Those were the early web days, when we had dial up modems that took forever, and AOL was the content

provider most people were using. We couldn't possibly conceive of what an indispensable tool the web was to become. Now, we don't know what we would do without it to get our news, to read articles, to research and make travel plans, to shop, and to learn. In those days, when we said "look it up" we meant in a dictionary or at the library. Instant video at our fingertips was a dream.

Now we communicate more through our keyboards— via e-mail, Facebook, twitter, and texting on smartphones— than by actually calling people or meeting face to face with them. If we can't find it on the internet, it couldn't possibly exist. I am awestruck by the technological changes that have taken place since I entered the ministry 22 years ago. And I have to admit, sometimes my head hurts just trying to keep up and teach myself how to use the many tools, software, and hardware that are being incorporated more and more into my work.

Why do it? The core and aim of it all is communication— methods of transmitting information among ourselves and to the outside world. We are constantly trying to let everyone know about us and about what is going on at the UCWC. We want to invite you in, to let you know how you can get involved, and how you can make personal connections with one another. We

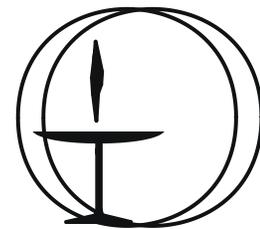
are trying to communicate in every way we can think of. We are always open to suggestions of how we can do it better. The new web site even has a page for feedback. Please use it. We want to hear from you.

All of the technology at our disposal cannot take the place of personal interaction. The best way to get connected and feel part of a community is to come join with us. Come to services on Sunday mornings, sing in the choir, get involved with a hospitality team, teach in Sunday School, attend an Adult Exploration class, volunteer for something, anything.

When you find your way to our web site (ucwc.org) in the coming week, you will see a transformation. It is being transformed as we hope you, by your participation in this beloved community, are being transformed. Yes, it has taken time and effort to make this change. Any change worth making usually does.

– Yours in faith
Deborah

We want to invite you in, to let you know how you can get involved, and how you can make personal connections with one another.



WOMEN IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

Women in the Hebrew Bible continues on Wednesday nights through March 27. All are invited to join in the Midrashic study of some very interesting characters. For more information see http://revdeb.org/page2/Adult_Exploration.html

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

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REMARKS — DRE SABBATICAL UPDATE

During the past month, many of you have come up to me during coffee hour and said, "Congratulations on your sabbatical. Where are you going?" I've loved the air of celebration around those greetings, as well as the accompanying hugs. Thank you!

The answer is that geographically, I'm not going very far—here and there in our Joseph Priestley District—but I expect that personally and spiritually I will travel some great distances. Here is some of what I have planned:

On March 4, the very first day of my sabbatical, I will be driving down to the University of Delaware to take part in a DRE Study Group devoted to exploring Rites of Passage. This is something that interests me deeply: these observances that both mark a specific event and also point to something deeper, often impossible to put into words. These events, from small to large, private to public, help connect our inner selves to our outer world of belonging. How can observing these and creating ritual around them, deepen our children's spiritual lives; help them feel a part of something bigger than themselves?

On five of my Sundays away from UCWC I will be traveling to several other UU congregations to observe different models for RE; programs known to DREs as Workshop Rotation, Spirit Play, and Youth Spirit, as well as traditional curriculum-based programs such as we use here. I will also be sitting down for conversations with each DRE to learn both the logistical details of the particular model they use, and the overarching philosophy. From all this, I am sure I will find much that can enrich our own program.

If the technology holds up, I am hoping to be able to Skype or FaceTime from wherever I am, let the kids at both congregations have a virtual meet-up for a few minutes, and help our kids understand that there are UU kids everywhere.

This sabbatical is a first, both for me and for the congregation. I know it's going to feel strange to me to not be doing my regular work as DRE, to not be at our building, to be away from everyone.

I will be traveling to several other UU congregations to observe different models for RE...I will also be sitting down for conversations with each DRE.

It will probably also feel strange to return. But I know that it is good to be able to step away from something and come back to it with fresh eyes. My time away also gives our excellent RE Team the opportunity to get their own different perspective on our RE program. We've talked about and planned for this; they are ready to take charge.

For the rest, I reference Robert Fulgum in his book, *From Beginning to End: The Rituals of Our Lives*, part of the required reading for the Study Group I mentioned above. In this passage, Fulgum describes why we attend conventions. He might be talking about sabbaticals, and so I've replaced that one word:

We go to get new ideas, new energy, confirmation of who we are and what we do. This is recreation. A serious word—recreation—a renewal of self. If a [sabbatical] is truly successful, this is what happens to you.

– See you in May,
Pam

MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS BENEFITS NEW PATH TO MEMBERSHIP CLASSES STARTING

On Sunday, March 3, our first in a series of three sessions will begin. Membership at UCWC is not a stipulation to be engaged within our community – however, you will find it has benefits, with connections open to members that are not available to visitors and friends. For example, we just had our wonderful annual New Member Potluck, honoring our new members in a festive way. Some of the immediate benefits are:

- Participating in and voting at congregational meetings
- Holding an elected office and membership in some committees open only to members

(like finance, pastoral care, nominating)

- Participating in a blessing and dedication ceremony for your children
- Having memorial and wedding services performed free of charge
- Receiving a free subscription to *UU World* magazine
- Having the full weight of the Congregation behind you in times of need.

There is also the hard-to-put-in-words feeling that comes from the awareness that you have chosen UCWC as your community, and that you are contributing along with

everyone to ensure that we continue to be a beacon of light for all. Perhaps, you are fairly new and desire to learn more about our principles and focus. These classes are a great place to engage with others on this path.

Participants can choose to join the UCWC after the final class or at a later date. We invite you to join us in our **Path to Membership** classes held after the second service at 12:15 p.m., March 3, 10 and 17, with light refreshments provided. Please contact Barbara Long at email: membership or Rev Mero at email: minister.

NOTES OF APPRECIATION

The Board is pleased to express our gratitude to Cyndy Bullaughey for her many years of service to our congregation and community. Cyndy is held in highest regard by all that have worked by her side. She has been active in the congregation for over 30 years.

"She has done so much over the years that it is hard to think of anything that she hasn't worked on," reported one person who was contacted for this article. "She likes to work behind the scenes, and whatever she does is done beautifully and with the highest professional quality and integrity. In addition, she is kind and caring and generous."

The list of her volunteer service to our congregation is extensive. Though this is not nearly complete, it will attempt to provide a hint of her selfless support of our mission and our congregation's many activities. Cyndy spent many, many years as our income treasurer. With this tremendous time commitment, she made reports and budgets, recorded every income transaction, participated actively in annual meetings, and helped write policy. She has worked with the current finance committee to set up the new cloud finance system.



Cyndy taught RE for many years, helped to make our first sign on the lawn. She helped to plan and build the RE classrooms and snack area in the basement as well as the kitchen in our present building. She started up donations for grocery cards for the West Chester Food Cupboard, organized the Islam class, participated in AIDS walks and peace marches, and visited local politicians.

She was instrumental in planning the 50th anniversary celebration and created the history time line for our congregation. Cyndy served on the ministerial search team that called Deborah and produced a beautiful magazine about our congregation as part of that process.

She continues to work with the membership committee, assisting with Path to Membership classes, and she creates a yearly report for UUA. She has created flyers and participated in creating our membership data base, has spent endless hours putting together our phone directory, and continues to participate in hospitality teams and offers support to members in need.

In addition, Cyndy has given many hours to her children's schools, assisted with the Human Relation Council of Greater West Chester in the creation of their first Community Appreciation Luncheon Booklet, and now enjoys time caring for her grandson.

Though there are many more items that could be listed, there just isn't enough space or time to get it all down. The most important thing to note is that we are all thankful for Cyndy's time and care and continued investment in our congregation and in our lives. We are blessed to have her on our team. Please thank her when you see her.

- For the Board of Trustees and all UCWC members,
- Shelly Case

"...whatever she does is done beautifully and with the highest professional quality and integrity."

SPIRIT SINGERS ON THE ROAD

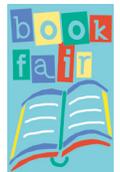
This coming May, our choir, the Spirit Singers, will go on their first road trip for a collaborative weekend sing in Greenville, South Carolina. Our choir director's former congregation, The **Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship** (GUUF), will host our singers for a weekend of song and fun. Miriam Davidson and GUUF's music director, Christian Elser, will coordinate a program for a Sunday morning music service that will feature both choirs.



Spirit Singers sing at UCWC services once a month and rehearse three Thursday evening's monthly. All members are welcome to come and join in the fun. Experience is not necessary, only the desire to join a great group of dedicated folks who enjoy raising their voices in song. Join us, and come along on our song, barbecue, and bourbon tour the first weekend in May. (Vegans, vegetarians and teetotalers strongly encouraged, too.) For more information please contact Miriam at email: choir.

COMING TO UCWC: UUA BOOK FAIR

Grow your soul. Come browse the wide selection of books that will help you do that at the **UUA Bookstore Book Fair** on April 21, April 28, and May 5 here at UCWC. We'll be selling both adult and children's books after services and placing orders from the catalog, if you don't see one that suits you.



They make great gifts and summer reads. Food for thought.

STONES IN THE SAME WALL – SOCIAL JUSTICE

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

The chill and the snowflakes are still with us, but touches of spring are beginning. The Philadelphia Flower Show starts the first weekend of March, and daylight savings time returns on March 10. Maybe you, too, are ready to shed the heavy coats and mittens and get moving once again.

Well, stay tuned for the coming activities and projects of the Social Justice Committee. Let us know, too, what projects you feel could positively benefit our community as we live out our UU values and beliefs. We need your energy and participation, as we move forward in the months ahead. A new sub-committee on gun safety (email: gun-safety) under the chairmanship of Tom Buglio has already begun to develop a coalition of members and other concerned community individuals focused on the prevention of gun violence and is working to affect national legislation through various activities, including letter-writing campaigns. Join their next meeting on Tuesday, February 26, at 7 p.m. and/or help write letters to our federal politicians in support of President Obama's recommendations. Check *Connections* for other committee activities and projects. We want and need your support.

– Carol Dukes

FIRST SUNDAY FOOD COLLECTION PROJECT

THIS MONTH'S SUGGESTED ITEMS: PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY

Our monthly food collection is Sunday, March 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 the 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 for helping neighbors in our community. Contact Shelly Case at email: food-cupboard.



SHARE-THE-PLATE GENEROSITY

The Social Justice Committee's Share-the-Plate program raises money for 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 March 17 (third Sunday of the month) is [Habitat for Humanity](#).

One-third of the people in our nation have housing problems. Habitat for Humanity is dedicated to providing decent, affordable homes for those in need. Decent, stable housing leads to stability for the children, growth in a family's sense of dignity and pride, improvements in health, physical safety and security, and an increase in educational and job prospects.

Thank you for your generosity to the December recipient, [Maternal Health and Child Health Consortium of CC](#), in the amount of \$740 and to the January recipient, [Safe Harbor](#), in the amount of \$440.



UUPLAN

WANTED: PERSON(S) INTERESTED IN PROMOTING MORE SOCIAL JUSTICE IN PENNSYLVANIA...

- working with UU issue teams to explore advocacy options
- engaging in the development of action plans for national, state, and local issues as a team member
- sharing advocacy opportunities with the entire congregation

We need you as our congregation's representative to [UUPLAN](#)...the Unitarian Universalist Pennsylvania Legislative Advocacy Network. Join representatives from the 40 UU congregations throughout the state via the web and conference calling, so we can continue to make a difference in the justice issues surrounding us. If interested, please contact the Social Justice Committee at email: social-justice.



GUN SAFETY

The West Chester Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence is an outgrowth of the Social Justice Committee, and seeks to partner with members of other faith groups and members of the outside community in an effort to educate and advocate for gun violence prevention. We have met four times over the last two months, with interesting guests such as Bruce Miller, the head of the proactive Heeding God's Call group, and David Scholnick, a local leader in Mayors Against Illegal Guns, the lobbying group headed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Right now, our group is concentrating our efforts on a letter-writing campaign to our congressman to support the many gun safety bills that are percolating in Congress right now.

We have a link to a sample letter to send to Rep. Jim Gerlach at www.ucwc.org/gun_letter_to_gerlach.pdf. We invite you to use this as a model and to write a personal letter to your U.S. Representative and to Senators Casey and Toomey urging them to support the bills that deal with the most common sense safety proposals:

- universal background checks for all gun sales
- banning assault weapons
- banning large capacity bullet clips
- cracking down on gun trafficking and gun fencing
- increased funding for school safety
- increased funding for mental health services

After Sandy Hook, we can no longer shrug our shoulders about the scourge of gun violence that wreaks havoc on this country. With 30,000 Americans killed every year in schools, churches, malls, and inner cities – by suicide and by accident – it is long overdue to cry out for responsible, sensible change now.

– Tom Buglio and Carol Dukes



EARTH HOUR 2013

This year **Earth Hour** is Saturday, March 23, from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. Turn off your lights for one hour to show your concern for Earth. For more information, go to www.earthhour.org.

YOUTH GROUP – BUELLER? BUELLER? BUELLER?

Over the last few months, the Youth Group has been quite busy. On January 11, we locked ourselves into the UCWC to spend the night watching movies with some friends from the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Lower Bucks. *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* is always a good way to start an evening. Around 4 a.m. when *The Princess Bride* finished, the three adults who were still awake looked

around and realized all the youth were asleep, so off went the DVD player, and everyone got at least four hours of sleep.

February started with the "JUJustice For All SoUUs Con" at All Souls Unitarian Church in Washington, DC. It was a COLD Ground Hog Day weekend, and that old building is a bit drafty. Working with the UUA's United Nations Office (UU-UNO), the JPDYSC team

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

The Human Stain by Philip Roth is a book about race, ethics, and deep secrets. Set in 1998 in a small New England town, an aging classics professor is forced to retire when his colleagues decree that he is a racist. Although the charge is false, he cannot use the truth to rescue himself, because to do so would require him to reveal the ironic secret about who he is and where he came from, something even his wife and closest friends do not know.

This astonishing private history is, in the words of *The Wall Street Journal*, "...magnificently interwoven with the larger public history of modern America." Lorrie McKinley will lead our discussion.

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



put together a fun experience filled with learning and fellowship.

As if we hadn't done enough, we followed that up the next weekend with preparing and serving dinner to the men at Safe Harbor of Chester County. Just so you know, it's not all play and no work; we're busy planning the Youth Group Sunday Service for March 24. Y'all come for that service, ya hear?

FOLK SINGING

The next folk singing get-together is Saturday, March 30, at 8 p.m. at the home of Linda and Steve Sander. All are welcome. No singing talent or experience is necessary, just a desire to have fun.

Capable musicians should bring instruments. Bring a munchie, if you wish. Maps are in the foyer. Contact Steve at email: folk-singing.



COFFEE HOUSE

The next coffee house is Saturday, March 9, at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary. Our featured act is singer/songwriter, Jake Michael, confidant and organizer of our successful coffee house for the past six years.

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 fundraiser.



LUNCH GROUP

Lunch group will meet Friday, March 22, at 11:30 a.m. at Panera Bread, 1103 West Chester Pike, near Shop Rite. Newcomers are welcome.

To be added to the email 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 email, or you change your mind at the last minute, come anyway.

Everyone is welcome.

TRASH TO TREASURE: SPRING FLEA MARKET

Something you have no use for might be a real find for someone else. Our spring flea market on April 20 is a great opportunity to clear out your un-needed, unwanted "stuff" and donate it for sale to benefit UCWC.

We hear every year that people "meant to" donate to the flea market, but at the last minute did not have time to rummage through all the places where "stuff" accumulates. So now is the time.

Start checking your bookshelves, cupboards, closets, attics, basements, garages, sheds, under the beds and all those other ingenious nooks and crannies where "stuff" hides away. Set aside a cardboard carton or two and a corner of your closet and start gathering items to donate.

Cleaning up, clearing out, and downsizing will feel good. It will unclutter your life, support the **reduce, reuse and recycle** principle, and help UCWC raise funds for the operating budget.

With the exception of high-value collectibles, we plan to maintain our low, low prices – a great help in these tough times. In addition to our UCWC shoppers, the flea market attracts many people from the community.

Great Opportunity for a Bake Sale

Once again we will also hold a bake sale to benefit a local charity. Can you help by baking some goodies for this wonderful program? Bring your donations the morning of the flea market, then stay and check out the merchandise. And bring a friend.



WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY'S NOW NEW MUSIC SOCIETY CONCERT SUNDAY, MARCH 10, AT 3 P.M.

West Chester University's NOW New Music Society will perform recently composed music at the UCWC. The music by current WCU students, recent graduates, and other living composers, is created in new and innovative ways, and the music can go in any direction encompassing many genres. (Those who are building new music are visionaries, upstarts, and disruptors.)

There's a little bit of everything: songs, solo piano, instruments and piano, string ensembles, and choirs. Those who attended the previous concert in October were surprised and delighted by the interesting mix of music that these folks produced.

This community event is open to all. Donations will be gratefully accepted at the door for the NOW New Music Society and UCWC. Questions should be directed to Marie Steel, email: music.



CONGREGATIONAL CALENDAR

All email addresses @ucwc.org unless otherwise noted.

- Mar 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.
- Mar 3 Sun First Sunday Food Collection.** Lobby. See p. 5.
Path to Membership Session 1. 12:15-2:00 p.m. Contac Barbara Long, email: membership. See p. 3.
- Mar 4 Mon Embracing Diversity Team.** 7-8:30 p.m. Office. Contact Eileen Kelly-Meyer, email: embracing-diversity
- Mar 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. 7:15-9 p.m. See p. 2.
- Mar 9 Sat Coffee House.** 7 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 7.
- Mar 10 Sun Path to Membership Session 2.** 12:15-2:00 p.m. Contac Barbara Long, email: membership. See p. 3.
NOW Music Concert. 3 p.m. Sanctuary. See p. 7.
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. 6.
- Mar 12 Tue Council Meeting.** 7-9 p.m. Office. Contact Cindy Heck, e-mail: program
- Mar 13 Wed Women in the Hebrew Bible, Adult RE class.** 7:15-9 p.m. See p. 2.
- Mar 17 Sun Share-the-Plate Sunday.** Habitat for Humanity. See p. 5.
Spirit Singers Perform. Both services.
Path to Membership Session 3. 12:15-2:00 p.m. Contac Barbara Long, email: membership. See p. 3.
- Mar 19 Tue Board Meeting.** 7 p.m. Office. All are welcome. Contact Mary Yeager, e-mail: president.
- Mar 20 Wed Women in the Hebrew Bible, Adult RE class.** 7:15-9 p.m. See p. 2.
- Mar 22 Fri Lunch Group.** 11:30 a.m. Panera Bread. See p. 7.
- Mar 23 Sat Earth Hour.** 8:30-9:30 p.m. See p. 6.
- Mar 27 Wed Women in the Hebrew Bible, Adult RE class.** 7:15-9 p.m. See p. 2.
- Mar 30 Sat Folk Singing.** 8 p.m. at the home of Linda and Steve Sander. Email: folk-singing. See p. 7.

Groups meeting multiple times in a month:

- Spirit Singers Practices 7:15-9:15 p.m.** Sanctuary. Thursdays, March 7 and March 14. Contact Miriam Davidson, email: choir
- Youth Group Meets most Sundays, 11 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.** Youth Group Room. Email: youth-group.

Don't forget to buy grocery cards after the service.
UCWC gets 5 percent of the proceeds, and it costs you nothing extra.

