

THE FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester

August 2020



NOTES FROM REV. DAN

The ranger rolled down her window. "What are you doing here so late at night?"

"We were hoping to see the comet," I told her, "and we heard French Creek had the darkest skies in the area."

"Well, I'm locking up this part of the park, so unless you want to spend the night, you can't stay here. Besides, I think these trees are too tall. I've been looking for that comet every night but I haven't known where to find it."

"Us too. It should be ten degrees below and just to the right of the Big Dipper. Any suggestions as to a good viewing spot?"

"There's a field that might work if you go out the road you came in, turn right, take the second left, it'll come to a Y, turn left — tell you what. If you can wait a few minutes you can follow me out."

Fifteen minutes later, we all pulled out by the side of a field, put on our masks, took out our binoculars, and looked into the North sky. "I see it!" said our new friend. "Wow! Just between those two trees!"

There, streaked across the horizon, sailed Comet Neowise, its spectacular tail a stream of light above the distant



PHOTO BY TOM MASTERSON, USED WITH PERMISSION

woods. We watched together, gazing in wonder at a visitor Earth would not see again for six thousand eight hundred years.

This year has seemed short of bright spots, and there have been very few opportunities to find communion with anyone outside our closest circles. But for a few minutes, on a magical night, in the middle of a pandemic, we stood in awe with a stranger and witnessed a miracle.

In faith, Dan

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.

Minister's Hours

In person office hours are suspended during the epidemic, but Rev. Dan can be reached at email: **minister** or on his cell phone at 484-653-5011. He will be on leave the week of August 17. If you have pastoral needs during this time, please contact email: **pastoral-care**. For other questions, contact email: **office**.



A Welcoming
Congregation

501 South High Street
West Chester PA 19382
610-692-5966
office@ucwc.org
www.ucwc.org

Sunday Services



We gather, aspiring to be a thriving, caring, and welcoming community that supports each person's spiritual journey, embraces diversity, challenges us to live responsibly, and is a catalyst for a just and compassionate world.

NOTE:

All services are online for the foreseeable future. Links can be found [here](#).

Aug 2 10 am RESTING IN THE UNKNOWN Rev. Tracie Barrett

With everything going on in our world right now, it can be very scary. We don't know what is coming next nor how long it will take. Rev. Tracie Barrett will give us some strategies for managing this time and how important it is for all of us to find times to rest.

Rev. Tracie Barrett lives in Winter Springs, Florida, and considers herself to be a UU Evangelist, sharing the good news about our liberal faith. She has served as the student minister at Tri-UU and for three years as the consulting minister for the UU Congregation of Lake County. Now, she is the Minister of Ritual and Liturgy for *Soul.Fire: a Unitarian Universalist Ministry*, an experimental, experiential, ever-expansive digital ministry focused on worship and retreat functions rooted in Unitarian Universalist values.

Aug 9 10 am THE MASKS WE WEAR Rev. Dan Schatz

These days, masks are on everyone's minds – and when we go out, our faces as well. We have always worn masks of different kinds – many not seen – throughout our lives. In this time of mask wearing, how do we embrace our authenticity?

Aug 16 10 am IS IT SUPPOSED TO HURT LIKE THIS? Rev. Edith Love

An exploration of what abuse looks like within intimate partner relationships. What does a healthy relationship look like? Is violence within a relationship ever okay? What are our obligations if we learn someone is being abused?

Rev. Edith A. Love is a Unitarian Universalist minister who believes part of her calling is to hold sacred space with everyone who has ever felt unwelcome, unloved, or outcast in her beloved hometown of Memphis, Tennessee. She believes all people are her people, the streets are her parish, and everywhere we are, we are standing on holy ground. Rev. Love is the founder of the Church of Resistance, a Unitarian Universalist congregation that meets in a cathedral of trees in a public park.

Aug 23 10 am BEING WITH ANXIETY: FINDING A PATHWAY THROUGH FEAR Rev. Pete Fairbrother

This Sunday we take time and care to acknowledge the anxiety many of us have been experiencing during this time of pandemic, and we'll give thought to ways in which we can care for ourselves and each other when we feel anxious.

Rev. Peter Fairbrother is Minister of St. Mark's Unitarian Church, Edinburgh, Scotland. He was ordained in 2016 (OneSpirit Interfaith Seminary), and after a short period as a guest service leader, was appointed minister to St. Mark's in 2018. His focus is fostering greater understanding of the importance of self-care and exploring the defenses we build against love. He considers that his greatest challenge is living what he preaches.

Prior to ministry training, he worked in UK health and social services in a variety of roles, latterly in the field of addictions. Born in Northern Ireland, Peter has lived in Scotland for almost 20 years, and presently resides in a small seaside town on the outskirts of Edinburgh with his partner Phil. Among his interests are wildlife (in all its forms), a passion for the sea and coastal living, and a love of the Eurovision Song Contest.

Aug 30 10 am THE CALL OF THE AGE Rev. Dan Schatz

Unitarian Universalism has a powerful message for the age we live in.

From the President

Early in July, a prominent national politician visited a corporation in our area. His event brought out scores of supporters and a few dozen opponents.



Due to security arrangements, the two groups had to set up right next to each other. I got to chatting with a fellow from the other side of the political divide, where only one person was wearing mask. Everyone on our side was.

"Why no mask?" I asked.

His belief (and I say "belief," because it is **not**

validated by science): A mask does not protect either you or others. To him, the issue was freedom of choice. He said he respects my decision to wear one, and expects similar respect for his decision.

It didn't help his understanding that, early in the pandemic, masks were in short supply, and to avoid panic-driven mass hoarding, experts told us that masks aren't necessary for the general public. In the short run, that misguided advice freed up more masks for essential workers, but for the longer term, it encouraged more public resistance.

Mr. No-Mask also rejected the advice on social distancing — six feet, he said, was an arbitrary number, with no scientific basis. Droplets can travel much further. So, does he worry? No, his immune system is strong. He attends church in person every week, with no social distancing and plenty of singing. Afterward I realized I'd probably been standing too close, less than six feet. (It's been more than two weeks since the encounter, so apparently, I didn't catch anything from him.)

How could he and I hold such different understandings of this basic public health measure?

He said more than once, "I do my research." As do I. But like many Americans these days, he and I turn to different sources for our information. And that's easy to do in today's world, which supplies an ocean of partisan commentary, agenda-driven coverage, propaganda, deliberate disinformation, and even "deep fakes" of photos and videos. Social media makes it all too easy to spread them and prevent a common understanding of reality.

Because all of us are human, we favor information that reinforces our existing beliefs, a phenomenon known as "confirmation bias." We humans especially dismiss information that would undermine a foundational part of our personal identity. Otherwise, we suffer from cognitive dissonance — trying to hold two beliefs that are mutually exclusive or contradictory. Struggling to resolve that conflict demands heavy-duty work by our brain. It's much simpler and easier to prevent the mental strain by simply avoiding or pushing aside any contrary information.

It presents quite the challenge for us as UUs, as we pursue our "free and responsible search for truth and meaning." We need to be aware of the inherent tendency toward confirmation bias and turn off the auto-pilot mode of information processing that triggers it. We need to consider the source of information and ask ourselves how the story is being told and why.

Contrary to deconstructionist philosophers and political manipulators, there are such things as "facts" — and facts matter. People with no symptoms can spread COVID-19. Masks are not a panacea, but the science is clear: they do help. That said, science does evolve. COVID-19 is new to humankind, and it is mutating as it spreads. Science brings us new understandings about it almost every day.

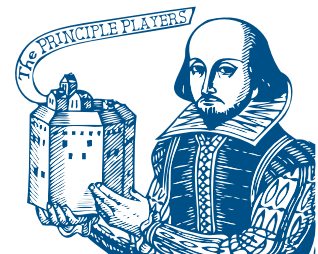
As the pandemic continues, stay informed, stay safe, and keep those masks handy.

As we pursue our "free and responsible search for truth and meaning," we need to be aware of the inherent tendency toward confirmation bias.

The UCWC Principle Players Present William Shakespeare's

The Tempest

Join the Principle Players for a premiere of The Tempest on **UCWC's YouTube Channel**. The play will begin at 7 pm on Saturday, August 1. Join us and chat with other viewers. We hope to see you there.



Lifespan Faith Development

An Interview with Cassie Lengel, Our New Director of Lifespan Faith Development

As we welcome our new DLFD, Elliot (9-year old RE student) has some questions to help our kids get to know Miss Cassie.

Elliot: *Why do you want to be our DLFD?*

Miss Cassie: I know that you have asked me to come and be the DLFD to teach and facilitate conversations about religious learning, but ever since I learned about UCWC, I knew that working with you would teach me so much as well. I want to be your DLFD because I want to grow with you as we think about our own spiritualities, as we embrace our neighbors in the community, as we fight for social justice for all living things, and as we unite together as Unitarian Universalists around our common core of beliefs. I have seen in you the spirit of growth and learning, so how can I not want to join in?

Elliot: *Do you like dragons?*

Miss Cassie: It's funny that you would ask, I LOVE DRAGONS! I actually met the love of my life because we were both obsessed about dragons. They are by far the coolest magical creature, and the ways they've been used in stories across the world have fascinating spiritual and societal implications. I love learning about them, everything from *The Paper Bag Princess* by Robert Munsch, to the amazing world of Pern by Anne McCaffrey, to Eastern depictions of dragons in religion. I hope this means you like dragons too.

Elliot: *Do you plant trees to save the earth?*

Miss Cassie: I have not yet had the opportunity to plant a new tree for the earth, but I enjoy caring for the trees that are around me. My nieces and I love to water them, do bark coloring, and go on nature scavenger hunts through the trees where we live. What is your favorite thing to do around trees?

Elliot: *Do you have a tomato plant?*

Miss Cassie: Not yet. But I do have two poinsettias from Christmas that are somehow still alive and thriving. They have managed not only the changes

in seasons but moving twice as well. I also have a lively purple cactus, and I'm trying to keep my poor wildflowers alive too. I do hope to put in a garden at some point, though for now I'm just a pot planter. What do you grow, and is your thumb greener than mine?

Elliot: *What is your favorite animal? Why?*

Miss Cassie: My favorite animal is a frog. I used to catch toads with my brother and sister growing up and keep them as pets. Of course, that is hard work since you then have to catch all the bugs to feed them too. I don't know why they are my favorite, but they are such a cool part of the ecosystem, and I love the varieties.

Elliot: *What book do you like to read to children best? Why?*

Miss Cassie: This is one of the hardest questions you've asked. I love reading. But right now my favorite book to read to children is *The Magic Locket* by Elizabeth Koda-Callan. This book was really important to me growing up, and if you ever see me walking around with a small golden locket on, it came from this book. I don't want to spoil it, but the beauty of this story is that it empowers the reader with a very special magic power.

Elliot: *What is your favorite part of being a DLFD?*

Miss Cassie: My favorite part about being a DLFD is meeting and truly getting to know people. I love simply talking to people and using relationships as the basis for engaging religious discussions. I want to work towards building a community that is invested in one another's lives — from the mundane to whatever fulfills you — and I want to journey with you in creating a more just, loving, and equitable world.



Pastoral Care

The **Pastoral Care Team** contact for this month is **Eleahn Kahn**.



Grocery Store Gift Cards

Grocery store gift cards are still available for purchase at email: **grocery-program**. Convenient, safe arrangements can be made for the transaction. At no extra cost to you, a donation of 5% of the cost of your purchase goes to UCWC.

Also, if you are able, donations of grocery gift cards can be made to the West Chester Food Cupboard by sending a check or other form of payment to "UCWC" noting "Food Cupboard" in the memo. The cards will be delivered to the Food Cupboard.



Membership

Coming this Fall

Explorations: Exploring Unitarian Universalism in a Small Group Setting

This six-week (a twice-monthly Zoom gathering) small group style program is designed for both beginning and deepening Unitarian Universalist journeys. All are invited, from newcomers to UCWC veterans and everyone in between. Share journeys and experiences as we get to know each other — and Unitarian Universalism — better.

Facilitated by Rev. Nancy Dean, this program is also a good opportunity for those who may be interested in what the Small Group Ministry experience is like but may not have yet joined one of the UCWC groups. Participants are encouraged, but not required, to attend all six sessions, and newcomers are welcome at any time.

Stay tuned for more information about dates and times in next month's *Fellowtarian*. Please contact us at email: **membership** for more information or to make sure you find out all the details as they are set in place.



Our Community

What is Zoom?

Zoom is a web conferencing service that allows us to see and hear each other without being in the same room.

It is a wonderful way for us to stay connected when we are physically apart, and most of our classes, meetings and other smaller events are using this platform. For easy instructions, click **here**.



Men's Group

The Tuesday evening Men's Group will meet on August 4 at 7:00 pm via Zoom. David Cohen will lead the discussion on the topic "Men's Views of Women." All men are welcome.

The Zoom link will be sent out directly via email. If you are interested in participating but are not yet on the email distribution list, please reach out to Mark or Dirk at email: **mens-group**.



Small Group Ministry

During the epidemic, our Small Group Ministries are meeting by Zoom. Small Group Ministry is a way to gather with other Unitarian Universalists twice a month for community, conversation and connection.

Each session is organized around a theme and includes a chalice lighting, readings, and questions to spark discussion. Groups are led by trained facilitators who meet regularly with Rev. Dan.

Currently, our congregation has five groups which meet at different times and places. If you are interested in joining a group, please write to email: **SGM**.

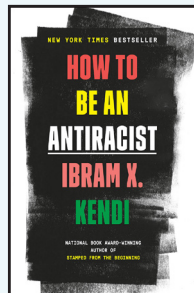
Stones in the Wall: Social Justice

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

Black Lives Matter

The **Black Lives Matter Committee** continues to explore ways of keeping the congregation aware of racial justice concerns. We recently hosted conversations regarding the **Debby Irving 21-day Challenge** aimed at making it a habit to be conscious of racial slights, injustices, and biases that occur in our daily lives.

We will hold a series of book discussions on *How to be an Antiracist*



by Ibram X. Kendi, broken down into chapters, August 9 and 23 and September 13 and 27 at 7:00 pm. You are also invited to watch his TED talks online. If you feel inclined to help keep the momentum going to end racial injustice but are not sure what you can do, please contact the committee at

email: **black-lives-matter**.



Defenders of Democracy

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD WITH A MAIL-IN BALLOT

Make sure your vote is counted • APPLY EARLY • VOTE EARLY

Last day to register: **MON, OCT 19**

Last day to apply for a mail-in ballot: **TUE, OCT 27**

Election day is: **TUE, NOV 3** (Polls open till 8 pm)

Go to **www.PaVoterServices.pa.gov** where you can:

- ★ Find out if you are registered.
- ★ Register to vote.
- ★ **Mail-in Ballot:** Apply online (if you have a PA drivers license) or download a printable application for a ballot.

Your mail-in ballot must be RECEIVED by TUESDAY, NOV 3, at 8 PM

PRODUCED BY THE UNITARIAN CONGREGATION OF WEST CHESTER DEFENDERS OF DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE

Diversity Book Group

The Diversity Book Group will meet Sunday, August 9, 7-8:30 pm on Zoom. Our book this month is *The Book of Longings* by Sue Monk Kidd.

Raised in a wealthy family with ties to the ruler of Galilee, Ana is rebellious and ambitious, a relentless seeker with a brilliant, curious mind and a daring spirit. She yearns for a pursuit worthy of her life.

Defying the expectations placed on women, she engages in furtive scholarly pursuits and writes secret narratives about neglected and silenced women. Her adopted brother, Judas, is a dissident against the Roman occupation.

When Ana meets the eighteen-year-old Jesus, each is drawn to and enriched by the other's spiritual and philosophical ideas. He becomes a floodgate for her intellect, but also the awakener of her heart.

Grounded in meticulous historical research and written with a reverential approach to Jesus's life that focuses on his humanity, this book is an inspiring account of one woman's bold struggle to realize the passion and potential inside her, while living in a time, place, and culture devised to silence her.

Debby Kern will be our leader. Contact email: **diversity-book-group**.



It's Time for Share the Plate Nominations

The Social Justice Committee will choose the 2020-2021 Share the Plate recipients in August. If you would like to nominate an organization, please request a nomination form from Emily Sweet at email: share-the-plate. The deadline for nominations is Monday, August 17.

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.

If you have nominated an organization in previous years, please re-submit a nomination form to update the information and re-affirm your desire to nominate the organization.

UUSC Update

We see astonishing acts of kindness as we see astonishingly difficult things happening in our world. Peaceful protesters are harmed, while musicians offer their music to calm our souls. Children are separated from their parents at the border, while neighbors are looking out for each other.



Take a moment to glance at the [UUSC website](#) and notice that our UUSC contributions are going to protect peaceful protests and directly call out our elected officials who are not supporting this basic American freedom.

The UUSC (Unitarian Universalist Service Committee) reports directly about the abuse of power in Portland and inequities in access to Cononavirus treatment for some communities.

Thanks for your support of [UUSC](#) so they can be our hands, as we stay home.

Share-the-Plate Generosity

The Social Justice Committee's [Share-the-Plate program](#) raises money to give to local non-profit organizations which are trying to improve life for Chester County residents. We are pleased to announce the share-the-plate recipient for August 16 (third Sunday of the month), [The Melton Center](#).

The Charles A. Melton Arts & Education Center, known to many of us in West Chester as the Community Center, has stayed true to the spirit of its founder, Dr. Pinckney-Hill, who envisioned a center to serve those marginalized by and disenfranchised from society due to economic class, gender, and race.

The Center is open to all and provides programs that will bring people together to promote understanding and appreciation for each other. It offers education, recreation and cultural and civic events. The Melton Center depends on donations and community support to carry on its work for our community.

Please note the following as you prepare your donation:

- All checks should be payable to "UCWC".
- Checks with memo "All to recipient" or similar go to the recipient. Clearest is "All to Melton Center".
- Checks with memo "plate", "donation", "STP", or "share the plate" are split 50/50. Clearest is "STP 50/50".
- All other checks go 100% to UCWC, unless otherwise indicated.

Thank you for your generosity to May recipient, Youth Community Forward, in the amount of \$531.00. Contact Emily Sweet at email: share-the-plate.



First Sunday Food Collection

In this time of social distancing, we are not collecting food on the first Sunday of each month. However, as always, you can still make a financial donation — with no personal contact on your part. We will buy grocery store gift cards and give them to the Food Cupboard.

Please make your check out to "[UCWC](#)" and write "[Food Cupboard](#)" in the memo line. Mail your check to:

Unitarian Congregation of West Chester
501 South High Street, West Chester, PA 19382

During the pandemic The West Chester Food Cupboard commits to provide a variety of fresh and nonperishable healthy food items to anyone who resides in Pennsylvania, not just the West Chester school district...because no one should go hungry!



Calendar

All email addresses
@ucwc.org

Click [HERE](#) to access our
website main calendar,
which includes late
July events.



Tired of social
distancing?
Check out our
various Zoom
social
get-togethers?

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|--------|-----|---|
| Aug 1 | Sat | The Tempest. 7:00 pm. YouTube. performed by the Principle Players of UCWC. See p. 3. |
| Aug 2 | Sun | First Sunday Food Collection. See p. 7. Defenders of Democracy. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 6. |
| Aug 4 | Tue | Men's Group. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 5. |
| Aug 9 | Sun | Black Lives Matter Book Discussion. Zoom. See p. 6. Diversity Book Group. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 6. |
| Aug 11 | Tue | Program Council Meeting. 7:00 pm. Zoom. |
| Aug 16 | Sun | Share-the-Plate Sunday. Benefits the Melton Center. See p. 7. |
| Aug 17 | Mon | Deadline for Share the Plate Nominations. See p. 7. |
| Aug 19 | Wed | Black Lives Matter Committee. 3:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 6. Religious Education Committee. 7:00 pm. Zoom. |
| Aug 23 | Sun | Black Lives Matter Book Discussion. Zoom. See p. 6. Annual Social Justice Committee Meeting. 7 pm. Zoom. |
| Aug 25 | Tue | Board Meeting. 6:30 pm. Zoom. |

EVENTS OCCURRING REGULARLY:

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|-----------------------|---|
| Mondays | Open Zoom Session. 2:00-3:00 pm. Stop in and chat. |
| Tuesdays | Women's Kaffeeklatsch. 9:00-10:30 am. Zoom. |
| Most Thursdays | Spirit Singers Practice. August 13, and 27 at 7:30 pm. Zoom. Contact Miriam Davidson, email: choir . |
| Fridays | Women's Corona Cocktail Party. 7:00-8:30 pm. Zoom. |
| Saturdays | Open Zoom Session. 7:00-8:00 pm. Stop in and chat. |
| Various Dates | Small Group Ministry (Several Active Groups). Zoom. See web calendar or contact email: SGM . See p. 5. |

EVENTS LIST NOW ONLINE



zoom

Zoom meetings on this calendar are, for the most part, password-protected.

A list of password-enabled links is on our website – on a [password-protected page](#). (Access to that page will be distributed appropriately.)

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

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West Chester, PA 19382

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All email addresses @ucwc.org

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Matt Zencey, President email: [president](#)
Cassie Lengel, Director of Lifespan Faith Development email: [DLFD](#)
Steve and Linda Sander, *The Fellowtarian* Editors email: [fellowtarian](#)