

THE FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester

December 2020



NOTES FROM REV. DAN

What gifts will we give one another this holiday season?

I realize it's a little odd to ask that question — this year has been disrupted from beginning to end, and the holidays are no different. Many of us will have to let go of holiday gatherings that have been part of our lives since we were born. Others will be taking extra precautions and dealing with greater anxiety.

Here at the congregation, we're moving Christmas online — and it will be beautiful (the music alone assures me of that), but it's definitely going to be different. And now I'm bringing up gifts.

(I imagine you reading this and thinking, "I can't even do my shopping the same way I usually do. And this guy's bringing up gifts? Like I need more hassles in my life?")

Yes. We need each other's gifts, although you've probably guessed that I'm not thinking about the ones you buy, or even those you make. We need each other's care, compassion, and consideration. We need each other's kindness. We need each other's heart.

We also need to give our patience to one another, especially during a

holiday season that is more than likely to have its share of disappointments, sudden changes in plan and overturned expectations. That kind of thing could leave anyone cranky, and we've been through ten months of it.

So, when I say we should give to one another, I'm thinking of all the things we already have and already know how to do. It's just a matter of being a little more intentional about it than we would usually have to be.

This Christmas, and this Chanukah, I hope you will give your kindness, and your patience and forgiveness. And when you've given all of this to the people around you, and the people you love

whether they are near or far, give some to yourself as well. You deserve it.

May this very different December be nevertheless merry for you and all of yours.

In faith, Dan

This Christmas, and this Chanukah, I hope you will give your kindness, and your patience and forgiveness.

In person office hours are suspended during the epidemic, but Rev. Dan can be reached by email at email: **minister**, or on his cell phone at 484-653-5011

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.



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.*

Dec 6 10 am

THE BEAUTY OF NOW

Rev. Dan Schatz

There is hidden beauty in every moment, even the difficult ones. We need that beauty, especially when the times are hard.

**Mon Dec 7
7 pm**

**BLUE HOLIDAY
VESPER SERVICE**

**Rev. Dan Schatz and
Cassie Lengel (Zoom)**

The holiday season is often one of enforced good cheer, but many of us struggle in this season, even in the best of times. A "Blue Christmas" or "Blue Holiday" service is a chance for us to come together and acknowledge that December isn't always "the most wonderful time of the year." This simple service on Zoom will include readings, music, and a chance for us to share personally with one another.

Dec 13 10 am

**HANUKKAH: THE SACRED
FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS**

**Brett Goldman,
Ed Cohle, Larry Lesser**

Hanukkah is a time to rededicate ourselves to the miracle of light in a season of darkness and the miracle of trust in a time of anxiety. (Amanda Udis-Kessler, uua.org) The Hanukkah message of courage in adversity and overcoming great odds is vitally important in our time of uncertainty and societal fracture. Please join us as we hear from members of the UCWC Congregation sharing about what this holiday festival has meant in their lives with these people who grew up with it. We will light the sacred lights in our hearts.

Dec 20 10 am

**A SOLSTICE
CAROL**

**Rev. Dan Schatz, Cassie
Lengel, and UCWC Musicians**

On this special Sunday, we'll celebrate the coming of the dark and the return of the light with a seasonal service featuring songs, readings, and story. Older children are invited to join their parents for this special service.

**Thu Dec 24
4 pm**

**ALL-AGES
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE:
A CHRISTMAS RADIO PLAY**

**Rev. Dan Schatz,
Cassie Lengel, and
UCWC Families**

Join our families on YouTube live for a very special Christmas Eve video broadcast for all ages, with carols, the Christmas Story, and a cast of many from our congregation. If you are interested in being part of our play, please contact Cassie Lengel at email: DLFD.

**Thu Dec 24
7 pm**

**CANDLELIGHT
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

Our candlelight Christmas Eve service will be a very special one this year, with contributions from The Spirit Singers and many other musicians, a reflection from Rev. Dan Schatz, and "Silent Night." We invite you to light a candle in your own home as we come together online – from our homes, and from our sanctuary – for this service.

Dec 27 10 am

**LETTING GO AND MOVING ON:
2020 TO 2021**

**Kathy Beatty and
Cheryl Pittenger**

Together we can still keep our year-end tradition of endings and beginnings. While we can't congregate at the burning bowl and create a constellation of candles of hope, we can separately and together let go of negativity and sorrow that weigh on us from the past year, and envision and empower our positive intentions and hopes for 2021. Please bring a small piece of paper, a pen or pencil, and a candle for each family member attending the YouTube live service. Join us as we relinquish the past and embrace the future.

Lifespan Faith Development

Being BRAVE is about living the best you know how in the midst of uncertainty and finding new moments to laugh and cry and take care of yourself.

Take Our Adult Religious Education Survey



The Adult RE Committee would like to hear from you. What are you interested in delving into together this year? What topics would you like to see? What formats work best for you? At what times are you available?

This survey will help us plan events and opportunities that interest you and meet your needs, so please participate.

You can access the survey [here](#). Contact Cassie Lengel at email: [Adult-RE](#).

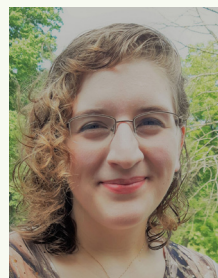
REflections

"Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens..." So begins the classic holiday song describing "My Favorite Things" This season is one of MY favorite things — with the music and the decorations and celebrating with those I love. But as we go into this December, I know I'm not alone in wondering how we can celebrate our favorite holiday traditions when everything is so different during this pandemic. Our plans and expectations are up in the air and our anxiety is higher than ever.

And yet, I remember just a few short months ago at our ingathering service, when we encouraged one another to lean in, and we introduced our RE theme this year: being BRAVE. If we remember, being BRAVE is not about pretending or putting on that happy face. Being BRAVE

is about being authentic and being there for one another. Being BRAVE is about living the best you know how in the midst of uncertainty and finding new moments to laugh and cry and take care of yourself. Being BRAVE is facing countless moments of newness and rethinking with creativity and compassion for ourselves and others.

Remember we are BRAVER when we are together, so as we enter this holiday season, don't forget to LEAN ON one another.



Cassie Lengel
Email: [DLFD](#)

Holiday Party

All our children and youth are invited to join us on December 19 at 3 pm for a virtual holiday party. Show us your tree, tell us your wishes and plans, decorate cookies together, and do Christmas crafts and games. If you would like to receive a cookie decorating kit, please RSVP to email: [DLFD](#).



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 contact email: [SGM](#).

Pastoral Care

The **Pastoral Care Team** contact for this month is **Diane Cohle**



Member Loans Coming Due Capital Campaign Update

The member loans are due at the end of December. The current balance is \$23,000. Pledge and gift donations that come in before the end of the year will reduce the balance on these loans. The remaining balances will be paid off by taking out a new member loan that will be paid from the operating budget going forward.

We have commitments from several members, which will reduce the amount of the new loan, but we still expect a sizable shortfall. Additional campaign donations arriving after the end of December will be gratefully accepted and will help pay off the new loan early.

UCWC appreciates the four generous families for making member loans, which helped cover the cost of renovations while people fulfilled their capital pledges.

Thank you to everyone who donated to the capital campaign and helped make this huge endeavor a great success. We look forward to all of us gathering again in our beautiful home.



Men's Group

The Tuesday evening men's group will meet on December 1 at 7:00 pm via Zoom. Jack Butler and David Cohen will lead a discussion on free speech and suppression of free speech.

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 Matteson or Dirk Troltenier at email: **mens-group**.



End of Life Planning for Mid-Life People

**A Four Week Class on Zoom: 6:30 pm
January 18 and 25, February 15 and 22**

It's never too early to begin thinking about what you want at the end of life, either for yourself or someone else. This class, sponsored by the Adult RE Committee, will provide a safe space to discuss, share, and ponder the various choices and options for the end of life experience in today's modern and complicated world.

Combining group discussions, documentaries, and teaching by Rev. Carin M. Bonifacio, each week will explore a different topic related to death and dying. In addition, each participant will receive a workbook that they can use to fill in their instructions and wishes for end of life care. The cost for the class and workbook combined will come to \$90.

For more information or to register, click **here**. Contact Cassie Lengel at email: **Adult-RE**.

Adopt a Family Completion

This year we are so excited to be partnering with The Domestic Violence Center of Chester County again to help support a family of six, a mother and her 5 children, for Christmas. Thank you to all who have already bought gifts to donate. We will be collecting all **wrapped** gifts on Friday and Saturday, December 4 and 5 from 2-4 pm at our UCWC building. If this time frame is not possible, please contact Cassie Lengel to set up an alternative drop off time.

Direct questions and comments to Cassie Lengel at email: **DLFD**. The wish list can be found **here**.



Stones in the Wall: Social Justice

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

Diversity Book Group

December 13 7:00-8:30 pm Zoom

Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson

Leader: Sandy Schaal

Jacqueline Woodson, one of today's finest writers, tells the moving story of her childhood in mesmerizing verse.

Raised in South Carolina and New York, Woodson always felt halfway home in each place. In vivid poems, she shares what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and her growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement.

Touching and powerful, each poem is both accessible and emotionally charged, each line a glimpse into a child's soul as she searches for her place in the world. Woodson's eloquent poetry also reflects the joy of finding her voice through writing stories, despite the fact that she struggled with reading as a child. Her love of stories inspired her and stayed with her, creating the first sparks of the gifted writer she was to become.



Safe Harbor Project Looking for a New Coordinator

Rick London will retire as our Safe Harbor Project coordinator at the end of December. Rick has communicated with Safe Harbor staff and organized volunteers to be sure we provide the meals they need as conditions change. Thank you, Rick, for leading this important service project through a tough year of pandemic. If you are interested in coordinating this very important project, contact Linda Sander, email: social-justice.

UCWC has been providing monthly meals for Safe Harbor since 1998. Rick has led the project for two years. During his tenure, he initiated monthly dinners for the women residents. (We had previously only been providing monthly dinners for the men.)

2020 has been a year of changes and challenges. Although we normally serve 40 meals a month, this year the pandemic has caused the number to vary from month to month. For a while we were making bagged breakfasts (rather than served dinners) while the residents were in a hotel. The residents are now back at Safe Harbor shelter albeit with reduced numbers. We are currently dropping off dinners — but not serving.

Thanks to everyone who works to make this project a success. It takes many volunteers — including youth group and RE who sometimes take a turn — to dependably provide 40 meals a month, 12 months a year.



Defenders of Democracy Election 2020 Wrap-up

Now that the election is over, it is time to reflect. 31 UCWC members participated in hundreds of ways in efforts to get Pennsylvanians to vote. Our efforts joined thousands of UU's all across the country involved in spurring people to participate in this historic election, which resulted in the highest voter participation in American History. Thanks to everyone who participated.

What is our next step? With new voting districts about to be drawn in 2021 and experiencing once again the outdated and sometimes anti-democratic effect of the electoral college, it is obvious that our democracy is still in need of fixing, protecting, and improving. Join us on the first Sunday of the month at 7 pm for our monthly meeting on Zoom. Contact email democracy to be included.

Tom Buglio, Charlot Barker, Matt Zencey

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

You can donate to the Food Cupboard on the UCWC donation web page — click [here](#) and select “**Grocery Cards for Food Cupboard**.”

Contact Cyndy Bullaughey, email: [grocery-program](#), for more information.

The West Chester Food Cupboard commits to provide a variety of fresh and nonperishable healthy food items to anyone who resides in the West Chester Area School District ...because no one should go hungry!

Sanctuary Team Sunsets

As of November, the UCWC Sanctuary Team has disbanded. Thank you to Kathryn Racette and Barrie Eichhorn for their leadership.

This committee started in 2017. They provided rides to immigration court and medical appointments, networked with other immigration support organizations, attended protest rallies, held an event writing cards to children in detention, encouraged people to participate in teaching English, and more.

Barrie also did a Sunday service and led a four-session discussion group. He also created a data base for immigrant services in the area. The committee had dwindled to only two people.



UUA Common Read 2020-21

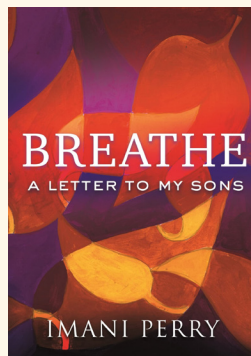
Breathe by Imani Perry

Every fall I watch the UUA website for the announcement of this year’s UUA Common Read — seldom do the titles disappoint me. UCWC has joined other UUs to read *The Death of Josseline* and *Centering*. Many of us have also read *The New Jim Crow*, *The Indigenous People’s History of the United States*, and other titles that have been part of the Common Read program.

This year’s book is Imani Perry’s *Breathe: A Letter to My Sons*. InSpirit, our UU bookstore, describes the book: “Emotionally raw and deeply reflective, Imani Perry issues a challenge to society to see Black children as deserving of humanity.”

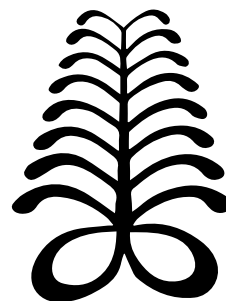
I’ve just ordered my copy. I hope you’ll join me and UUs around the country in reading and discussing Perry’s new book. The Adult RE Committee and the Black Lives Matter Committee will collaborate in bringing a discussion of *Breathe* to the congregation — specifics will be forthcoming.

If you are interested, you can purchase the book at InSpirit and contact either the **Black Lives Matter Committee** or the **Adult RE Committee** for more information.



— Sandy Schaal

Share the Plate



The December Share the Plate recipient is **Black Women of Chester County in Action**.

You can make your donation [here](#).

UUSC Update

In early November two category 4 hurricanes hit Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras within 14 days and 15 miles of each other forcing Central American families to navigate the compounding effects of repeated disasters on top of the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Because of our existing partnerships in Central America, UUSC has been able to provide a rapid response. UUSC has committed emergency funds to address some of the most urgent needs and support the disaster response activities that our partners, such as Fundación San Alonso Rodriguez, are leading on the ground. This includes supplying immediate essentials like clean water, medicines, and shelter.

Response teams are also addressing sanitation issues to mitigate water-borne illnesses that result from flooding. Long-term assistance includes bolstering our partnership with **Fundación entre Mujeres in Nicaragua**, where food insecurity is an issue due to extensive damage to crops. Read more

about UUSC's crisis response in the region in our latest update [here](#).

Please support UUSC's work.

The 2020-21 Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Guest At Your Table season kicked off on Sunday, November 22. Click on the links below to learn about the personal stories of four of UUSC's partners and to support UUSC's work.

- [Stories of Hope.](#)
- [Make your own Guest At Your Table box.](#)
- [UUSC Guest At Your Table Donations Page](#)

Donate here if you would like to make your donation in memory of our beloved UCWC member Tom Townsend. (Note: Be sure to complete the part of the form to indicate that your donation is in memory of Tom Townsend with a notification of your donation going to Dorothy Wavrek, 518 Beechwood Drive, Kennett Square, PA 19348.)

Thank you.



Criminal Justice Update

Criminal Justice Reform

Robin Garrett is now serving as UCWC liaison to the **UUJusticePA Criminal Justice Reform Team**, whose work focuses on ending mass incarceration, especially of people of color, and particularly in Pennsylvania, which has the highest incarceration rate in the Northeast and the second highest rate in the country. They also work to promote programs to rehabilitate prisoners and assist returning citizens.

Robin also works with **FAMM** (Families Against Mandatory Minimums), developing a coalition of faith-based communities working towards criminal justice reform.

Contact Robin at email: criminal-justice if you would like to help work on these issues, and watch for messages from Robin about timely actions.



Criminal Justice Live Panel

The Adult Religious Education (ARE) Committee and the UCWC Criminal Justice Reform Group brings faith development and social action together the first week of December to look at issues related to the recent rise of COVID-19 cases and deaths in our jails and prison.

The FAMM Foundation is screening a YouTube live panel entitled "Expanding Second Chances in the Age of Covid" on December 1 at 7 pm. The panel features Lt. Governor John Fetterman, Naomi Blount Wilson (commutation specialist in the Lt. Governor's office), K. Celeste Trusty (FAMM PA statewide policy director) and Jason Flom (CEO LAVA Media LLC and FAMM Board member). Shortly after December 1, a recording of the panel discussion will be posted on YouTube in case you miss it when it is shown live.

A Zoom follow-up discussion of the panel presentation and related topics is scheduled for Monday, December 7, at 7 pm. Another good panel discussion to watch on YouTube in advance of the December 7 discussion is FAMM's panel discussion on their Second Chance Agenda originally shown on September 14. It is available [here](#).



Fun & Fellowship

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 moving to this platform. For easy instructions, click [here](#).

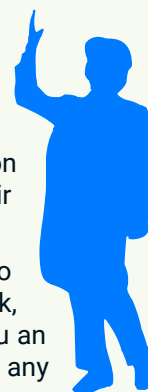
New Year's Eve Limerick Challenge Party

Missing the joys of our usual holiday gatherings? There are still an unlimited number of available "seats" for the new and unique **UCWC 2020 Virtual Family Friendly New Year's Eve Party and Limerick Challenge**.

This was a fixed bid \$10 per family auction item (lot 17) that is still open. Your \$10 bid gets you:

- An invitation to the party, December 31 from 7 to 9 pm on Zoom. At the party, the winners of lot 61 will recite their limericks. Fun will ensue.
- The right to submit original, family-friendly limericks to be included in our 2020 UCWC Original Limericks eBook, a one-of-a-kind, priceless tome. **Note:** Your bid gets you an invitation to the party even if you choose not to submit any limericks for the book.
- A copy of the book.

Please contact **Steve Sander** to secure your spot at this sure-to-be-memorable event. Steve will sign you up and send you a revised auction invoice to reflect your new \$10 bid. You will also receive instructions on how to submit your limericks. Limerick submissions are due by December 20 for inclusion in the book.



Christmas Eve Radio Play Spectacular for All Ages

Each year we gather on Christmas Eve to tell the story of the Nativity through play. This year we are leaning into our Virtual YouTube Broadcast by putting on an old timey radio show, and we need you. We need whole families to play our shepherds, angels, and wise men, and we've got plenty of parts for one or two.

If you like singing, we'd love to hear your voices with your families or with our choir. We'd also welcome some readers and chalice lighters to balance it out. So tell your extended families to tune in to see your pre-recorded performance at the 4 pm Christmas Eve service.



Minecraft Regional Play



We have been invited to join our local Unitarian Universalist RE programs to a regional Minecraft experience for community building as well as learning about sacred architecture and our own "spiritual homes." Groups will be split by age range, with one group running from 2nd-5th grade (ages 7 to 11) and the other group running from 6th grade (age 11) and up.

The groups will meet about two times a month on Sunday afternoons at 3 pm every other week. Youth would need access to a device on which to play, the Minecraft game, and Zoom access for audio conversations.

For more information, if you are interested in participating, or if you would like to register, click [here](#).

Calendar

All email addresses @ucwc.org

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

TOWN HALL

"What Does UCWC Mean to You?"

Don't miss the upcoming Town Hall on December 6 after the service.



zoom EVENTS LIST NOW ONLINE

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.)

Dec 1	Tue	Men's Group. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 4. Criminal Justice Panel. 7:00 pm. "Expanding Second Chances." See p. 7.
Dec 4-5	Fri-Sat	Adopt A Family Gift Collection. 2-4 pm. See p. 4.
Dec 5	Sat	Trivia Night. 7:00 pm. Details to come.
Dec 6	Sun	First Sunday Food Collection. See p. 6. Town Hall. After the Service. "What Does UCWC mean to You?" Defenders of Democracy. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 5.
Dec 7	Mon	Executive Committee. 6:30 pm. Criminal Justice Panel Follow-up. 7:00 pm. See p. 7.
Dec 8	Tue	Program Council Meeting. 7:00 pm. Zoom.
Dec 13	Sun	Diversity Book Group. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 5.
Dec 14	Mon	Religious Services Committee. 6 :00 pm. Contact email: religious-services .
Dec 15	Tue	Board Meeting. 6:30 pm. Zoom.
Dec 16	Wed	Religious Education Committee. 7:00 pm. Zoom.
Dec 19	Sat	RE & Youth Holiday Party. 3:00 pm. See p. 3.
Dec 20	Sun	Share-the-Plate Sunday. Benefits Black Women of Chester County in Action. See p. 6.
Dec 22	Tue	Committee on Ministry. 6:30 pm.
Dec 24	Thu	Christmas Eve Radio Play Spectacular. 4:00 pm. At the All Ages Christmas Eve service. See p. 8.
Dec 31	Thu	New Year's Eve Limerick Challenge Party. 7:00 pm. See p. 8.

EVENTS OCCURRING REGULARLY:

Tuesdays	Women's Kaffeeklatsch. 9:00 am. Zoom.
Most Thursdays	Spirit Singers Practice. at 7:15 pm. Zoom. For specific dates, contact Miriam Davidson, email: choir .
Fridays	Women's Corona Cocktail Party. 7:00-8:30 pm. Zoom.
Various Dates	Small Group Ministry (Several Active Groups). See web calendar or contact email: SGM . See p. 3.



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

501 South High Street
West Chester, PA 19382

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

Rev. Daniel Schatz, Minister 610-692-4043 email: [minister](#)
Maggie Christy, Office Administrator 610-692-5966 email: [office](#)
Matt Zencey, President email: [president](#)
Cassie Lengel, Director of Lifespan Faith Development email: [DLFD](#)
Steve and Linda Sander, *The Fellowtarian* Editors email: [fellowtarian](#)