

THE FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester

August 2021

From the President

In July, at the long-delayed celebration of my oldest son's marriage, I was asked to give a blessing for their union. (He and his wife had a tiny official ceremony last year during COVID.) Naturally, I looked to UU resources for inspiration – and I didn't find much.

We all know UUs were early and strong advocates of "marriage equality" – meaning same-sex unions. To a lesser extent, the UU concept of "equality" in marriage can also refer to the power balance in the partners' relationship. For decades, the main message UUs offered about marriage was to reject the patriarchal version that predominated until relatively recent times.

The UU sources I found did not have much to say about the value of maintaining a healthy, long-lived marriage, or the challenges of doing so. Writing in 2005, long-time UU and marriage counselor William J. Doherty observed: "Our congregations celebrate weddings and sponsor divorce support groups, but in between there is a big pastoral and theological hole." UUs, it seemed to him, viewed marriage as "a personal lifestyle that should not be subjected to so much social pressure about entering and exiting."

Of course, a partner must be free to end an abusive or emotionally stifling marriage. And it's true, sustaining a marriage takes two willing and committed partners. But I worry that we UUs pay too little attention to helping sustain the commitment a marriage represents.

In my search for inspiration about the joys and rewards of marriage, I turned to poets instead. But reading Doherty's critique, I but did come away with a theme to include in my wedding remarks. I said that those of us who came to help the couple celebrate are now a community of support for the marriage. Not merely for one or the other spouse's own individual path forward in life, but for the marriage itself.

I spoke to the same theme when I officiated the wedding of my youngest son and his wife in October. I said the marriage ceremony, and our attendance, united us all in a community that called us to be "friends of the marriage."

For all your loved ones who are married, may you serve as a "friend of the marriage."

— Matt Zencey



Our Mission

Our mission is to:

*GROW in spirit, heart
and mind*

*LOVE through care
and community*

*SERVE beyond
ourselves*

Summer Contacts During Dan's Sabbatical

Rev. Dan will be on sabbatical through August 20, and he will be unavailable by email, phone, or text. UU ministers will be on call for emergency pastoral support, and both our Office Administrator Maggie Christy and Director of Lifespan Faith Development Cassie Lengel will be able to get in touch with Dan in the event of a congregational emergency.

For regular pastoral support, please write to email: **pastoral-care**. For questions about adult programs or children's religious education, please write to email: **DLFD**. For other questions, contact our administrator at 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.

Aug 1 10 am

WANTING WHAT WE DO NOT NEED

Rev. Nancy Dean

One of the side-effects of capitalism is the encouragement of and inclination toward buying things we do not need. This can lead into a spiral of acquisition for its own sake which can be spiritually/emotionally negative. We can, though, learn to value what we have and avoid the constant push towards mindlessly acquiring that which we do not need or maybe even want.

Aug 8 10 am

FAITH IN WHAT?

Rev. Victoria Ingram

Say you're a Unitarian Universalist...and say you're not sure what you believe in! Even theists have questions sometimes. And atheists and agnostics can feel confused about how to respond to "what do you believe in?" This Sunday, we look at the various ways of having faith, and how to talk about it with people who may not share our perspectives and ideas.

Rev. Victoria Ingram recently retired from her ministry with the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton, Ontario after 11 years. During her tenure, the congregation significantly expanded their outreach and social justice ministries including advocacy, relationship building and community action for affordable housing and poverty reduction, anti-racism and anti-oppression initiatives, and sexual and gender justice.

Aug 15 10 am

WE ARE STILL HERE! 2.0

Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Leaders

Due to a technology error, we did not receive the video for this service, which was originally scheduled for July 11.

A Conversation with Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Leaders. Our building sits on land that was home to the Lenni-Lenape people. Yet many of us have learned little about the history of these people and what we can do to support current Tribe members. It is vitally important we hear from people that can speak to this experience, rather than from accounts written by white people, well-meaning or not. UUs across the country are recognizing the need for more awareness of the native people that inhabited the lands where our houses of worship are located.

Aug 22 10 am

THE GIFT OF ENOUGH

Rev. Christin Green

How often do you think to yourself, "I have enough" or "I am enough"? We can expect a lot of the world and of ourselves. Our capacity for generosity is deeply impacted by how we think of what we have and what we lack. Join Rev. Christin Green to explore our perceptions of abundance, scarcity, and enough.

Rev. Christin C. Green is the Assistant Minister for Congregational Life at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax in Oakton, VA. She is a scholar of language, identity politics, sound and energy healing, and liberation theology. She looks forward to sharing sacred time and good vibes together in beloved community.

Aug 29 10 am

FREE TO BE ME. RESPONSIBLE TO US.

Rev. Ben Bortin

Over the centuries, Unitarianism, and to a large extent, Universalism have been characterized by an "f" word --- freedom. "...no one shall be reviled for his (or her) religion by anyone..." stated a decree by the Unitarian king, John Sigismond of Transylvania in 1557. Being free "to be me," religiously and in general, is still a struggle in 2021. Freedom continues to be in extremely scant supply in our world. There is another related issue of concern, however. Some who celebrate the worthy aim of individual freedom also hold that each of us, free human beings, have no responsibility toward one another. That, as the ancient Hebrew prophets have reminded us, is also ethically misguided.

Rev. Ben Bortin served 8 years as minister of First Unitarian Church in Duluth, MN, and 21 years as minister of the Unitarian Church of Staten Island. He also served as Membership and Volunteer Coordinator at the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY, for 12 years. He is past President of the UU United Nations Office Board.

Lifespan Faith Development

New Small Group Ministry Opportunity

After a wonderful Explorations series this spring, we have decided to open an additional small group for more folks who are interested. This group meets the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month at 2 pm and follows the same lessons as the other small groups.

So whether you're new to the congregation, or just haven't tried our small group ministry yet, you are welcome to join us. Contact Cassie Lengel at email: **DLFD** for more information.

Call for Volunteers

We want YOU to join us as teachers, advisors, and facilitators in our religious education programs for children, youth, and adults. Each of you have unique gifts and perspectives that are powerful ways to engage in real relationships as teachers and co-learners in RE.

You do not have to have children in our programs and you do not have to have teaching experience. All you have to do is to be willing to bring who you are into the classroom and think about all the big and little things in life.

This fall we have a variety of classes including: Spirit Play, Creation Myths, Neighboring Faiths, Our Whole Lives, High School Youth Group, Adult World Religions studies, and more. Stay tuned to **Connections** for more information or reach out to email: **DLFD** to volunteer.

August Ice Cream Social



Join us on August 19 at 7 pm for our next Ice Cream Social. This will be a special social as we reconnect and get excited for the new program year. We'd love to see you there.

Please see **Connections** for more details or contact Cassie Lengel at email: **DLFD**.



REflections

Religious Education Update

August is such a busy month as the back-to-school energy reaches a peak. The stores are all decked with supplies and sales, children get new school clothes, teachers decorate classrooms, parents juggle events and signups, and so much more. It's a time that celebrates the end of the summer as well as a new beginning.



Our lives are full of new beginnings. Some of us follow the turning of the seasons and their earth-centered celebrations.

Some of us mark the big transitions – birthdays, new grades and graduations, new jobs, or new homes, New Year's Eve on December 31, or even the new year of our religious traditions.

New beginnings happen on these big transitions, but they also happen more frequently – the start of a new week or weekend, the start of a new day, the start of a new project, the start towards a new goal, etc. For anyone who finds it hard to just get started on whatever new beginning is coming, know that we don't have to wait for any particular moment or make any particular change in order to create a new beginning.

As we have been working to get ready for the new school and RE year here at UCWC, I find myself reflecting on new beginnings. We've all got a lot on our plates right now, as we are gradually coming out of the pandemic, and trying to find a new normal is like trying to fit into last year's pants. We've changed, whether we recognized it formally in a new beginning or not.

So as we are preparing ourselves, I hope we will offer ourselves some grace this August. Grace to show up as best we can. Grace to wake up and try again each day. Grace to seize these new beginnings and see what they hold in store.

As for us here at UCWC, know that we will be here and support you however you need in this transition. Know that we offer you grace and opportunities to get involved as you are able, with no demands or judgement. Know that we're thinking of you and sending you energy in this time.

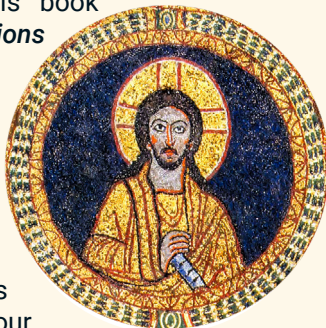
— Cassie Lengel
EMAIL: **DLFD**

Christ for Unitarian Universalists

After a successful four-week study of selections from the book, *Christ for Unitarian Universalists* by Scotty McLennan, we will continue to finish this book together. Please see *Connections* for details.

Many of us have come from Christian backgrounds, and we all live in a predominately Christian society, and this book offers some insights in how to think and recapture who Christ is and what he can offer us as Unitarian Universalists for our liberal religion.

Each chapter should be able to stand alone, so you would be welcome to join us as you can. Books can be purchased online and there will be a few copies to lend from UCWC. RSVP to email: **Adult-RE** for more information.



SANTA PRASSEDE CHURCH MOSAICS, ROME
PHOTO STEVE SANDER

Ethics Discussion Group Based on "The Good Place"

The Good Place



This Adult RE discussion group will meet the first and third Wednesday of each month to watch and discuss an episode(s) of the hit TV show on NBC, "The Good Place" and discuss its ethical questions. This show is hilarious, and it offers a fun way to discuss and explore our morals and values.

How do we form beliefs and how do they stand up to time and testing? How do we decide to live a moral life, what are the ramifications, and what about an afterlife? How do we integrate the inherent worth and dignity of ourselves and others into how we act? And so much more!

RSVP to **Adult-RE** or join us for any session. We are finishing season 2 and entering season 3 this August. We can loan the DVDs to help you catch up.

Men's Group

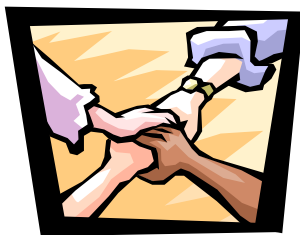
The UCWC men's group will meet August 3 at 7:00 pm via Zoom. Bob Stein will lead a discussion about "Israel and UU". The Zoom link will be sent out directly via email.

All men are welcome. 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**.



Pastoral Care

The **Pastoral Care Team** contact for this month is **CHRISTIE JUDGE**.



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**.



Building Repairs

Large areas of the lower-level wall plaster were puffing and peeling due to water vapor coming through the walls causing efflorescence. Several people, led by Dexter Chisholm, have been busy working to remedy this so the rooms can be ready for in-person classes again.

Almost every wall had some peeling, the worst areas were in the back stairwell, classroom 6, and the fireplace room. We scraped the plaster where it was not adhering, then the areas were wire brushed, rinsed with white vinegar, rinsed with water, and treated with a lithium silicate densifier to convert free calcium to insoluble silicates to reduce the migration of calcium salts that cause efflorescence, followed by epoxy primer.

All the underground wall area was then painted with a blue rubberized vapor barrier. Still required are a second coat of the rubberized vapor barrier, two coats of white latex vapor barrier paint, and possibly a coat of regular paint to match the original color.

We will need volunteers to help with the last coats of paint towards the end of August and beginning of September. Please let Alan Pittenger (email: building) know if you can help.



Women's Group Zoom Meetings Discontinued

Due to lack of interest and participation, the two Women's Group Zoom meetings, Kaffeeklatsch (Tuesday at 9 am) and Corona Cocktail Party (Friday at 7 pm) are discontinued. If there is interest at some point in the future, we'll reconsider rescheduling for times that are available to more women in the congregation.



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

Stones in the Wall: Social Justice

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

Time for Share-the-Plate Nominations

The Social Justice Committee will choose the 2021-2022 Share the Plate recipients in August and would like to invite nominations for organizations to support. If you would like to nominate an organization, please request a form from Emily Sweet at email: share-the-plate. The deadline for nominations is Sunday, August 15.

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.

Share-the-Plate Generosity

The Social Justice Committee's **Share-the-Plate program** raises money to give to local non-profit organizations working to improve life for Chester County residents. We are pleased to announce the share-the-plate recipient for August 15 (third Sunday of the month), **Unite for Her**.

Unite for Her is a local organization whose mission is to enrich the health and well-being of those diagnosed with breast and ovarian cancers — for life — by funding and delivering integrative therapies. Unite for Her programs help those with breast and ovarian cancer diagnoses bridge the gap between often debilitating but necessary medical treatment and complementary therapies such as acupuncture, massage, nutrition, yoga, and counseling, which are proven to have a positive impact on recovery, health, and wellness.

Please note the following as you prepare your donation:

- All checks should be payable to "UCWC".
- Checks with memo "All to charity" or similar go to the charity. Clearest is "All to [charity name]".
- 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 June recipient, West Chester Food Cupboard, in the amount of \$645.



Criminal Justice Reform Team Events



Viewing of TED Talk August 16 at 7:30 pm

"A prosecutor's vision for a better justice system" with discussion to follow. (Rescheduled from July)

Criminal Justice Reform Team Planning Meeting August 25 at 4:30 pm

All members and friends of UCWC are welcomed to attend. Two topics in focus are "Probation and Parole in Chester County" and "Youth Aid Panels" — what we in the community can do to support progress and positive change.

If you cannot attend at these times and want to learn more about how you can help advance the cause of criminal justice reform, contact Robin Garrett at email: criminal-justice. Excellent information is also available [here](#).

Calendar

All email addresses
@ucwc.org

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



**New Small
Group Ministry
starting.**

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.)

Aug 1	Sun	First Sunday Food Collection. See below.
Aug 3	Tue	Men's Group. 7:00 pm. See p. 4.
Aug 4	Wed	Adult RE - Ethics Discussion: "The Good Place". 7:00 pm. See p. 4.
Aug 15	Sun	Share-the-Plate Sunday. Unite for Her. See p. 6. Deadline for Share-the-Plate Nominations. See p. 6.
Aug 16	Mon	Criminal Justice Team TED Talk. 7:30 pm See p. 6.
Aug 18	Wed	Adult RE - Ethics Discussion: "The Good Place". 7:00 pm. See p. 4.
Aug 19	Thu	Religious Education Committee. 4:30 pm. RE Ice Cream Social. 7 pm. See p. 3.
Aug 25	Wed	Criminal Justice Reform Team. 4:30 pm. See p. 6.

EVENTS OCCURRING REGULARLY:

2nd & 4th Mon	New Small Group Ministry. 2 pm. See p. 3.
Most Thursdays	Spirit Singers Practice. at 7:15 pm. For specific dates, contact Miriam Davidson, email: choir .
Saturdays	Open Zoom Session. 7:00 pm.
Various Dates	Small Group Ministry (Several Active Groups). See web calendar or contact email: SGM . See p. 4.

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 also 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 school district...because no one should go hungry!

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