

THE FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester

August 2022



NOTES FROM REV. DAN

Sometimes we find joy and hope in the farthest places. And in a summer that has seen such

dramatic setbacks in the struggle for reproductive rights, gun safety, and voting rights, not to mention a pandemic that stubbornly refuses to allow things to really get back to normal, I admit my soul needed a boost.

It came from the edge of the universe, courtesy of NASA's newest telescope. The first image — a "deep field" of thousands of galaxies — stunned me with the size and glory of the universe. And wait — in the upper right corner — could that be? Why, it is!

Yes, my friends, it's the cosmic flaming chalice.

Scientifically, of course, it's a complete fluke that a particular part of the sky, photographed in a particular way, would look like the symbol of Unitarian Universalism. The elements that make up the space chalice aren't even all in the same part of space, so if anything, this is a reminder that in a cosmos this big, coincidences will happen.

We who emphasize the guidance of reason and results of science need to accept that. But it's still fun — and after all, part of what makes images of space important is that they remind us not only of the universe's size, but also its beauty. I challenge anyone to look at the "cosmic cliffs" of the Carina Nebula, or the galaxy group Stephen's

Quintet, and not be inspired. It could bring you closer to God, if you believe in God, or it could simply strengthen the connection between yourself and the wholeness of being.



The power of these images for me is in more than their beauty, though. At a time when so much seems to be regressing in the world of politics

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and policy, it gives me hope to see learning for learning's sake, science in search of pure knowledge, technology made to serve human inquiry. It is a reminder that progress, once established, can never truly be undone, and despite some bitter setbacks, we are still building a better future together.

I hope you find some hope, this August, and some joy. I hope you experience wonder. I look forward to sharing our hope and joy together.

In faith, Dan

Our Mission

Our mission is to:

GROW in spirit, heart and mind

LOVE through care and community

SERVE beyond ourselves



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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.

August 7 10 am WAITING FOR JESUS AND SUPERMAN Beth Monhollen

What stories do we tell ourselves to make sense of the ever-uncertain world? What saviors do we search for in calamity and how might curiosity and wonder serve us more fully as people of a covenantal faith?

Beth Monhollen is originally from eastern Kentucky but has lived in Milwaukee since middle school. She was first introduced to Unitarian Universalism through reproductive rights activism in the late 1990s and officially joined her home congregation, the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee, in 2013. It was through her involvement at her congregation that she began to discern a call to ministry that would allow her to use skills gained as a writer, actor, and educator for the spiritual development of others and she enrolled in the Master of Divinity program at Meadville Lombard Theological School in the fall of 2020 and plans to graduate in May 2023.

Beth worked in higher education for twenty years and left that career in the summer of 2021 to complete an intensive chaplaincy training at a hospice in Milwaukee. She is serving as the ministerial intern at WellSprings UU, a role that has been multi-platform for the last year, but she just moved to an apartment in Phoenixville this July and is looking forward to having more time in Chester County.

Beth's grounds her theology on experiencing the divine through our interconnections and interdependence with one another and in fostering mutuality in all our relationships.

August 14 10 am LIVING OUR COMMITMENT TO RACIAL JUSTICE UCWC Racial Justice Working Group

Description to come.

August 21 10 am A SENSE OF PLACE Rev. Dan Schatz

Rescheduled from last month, on this Sunday we will explore a sense of place together. In the season of vacations and adventures, we become more conscious of our surroundings – a mountain cabin, a day on the shore, an afternoon in the park. We can find spiritual fulfillment in any place or moment, if we allow ourselves to let go and simply be. We might even discover enlightenment in our own backyard.

August 28 10 am FEAST OF REASON Rev. Dan Schatz

Unitarian Universalists embrace of inquiry in religion and human thought. When we come together in reason and community, our unique way of being religious becomes a joyous celebration.



From the President

I'm sitting down to write after attending our July 24 service, "Reproductive Justice in a Post-Roe World." The service drew in part on the statement of public witness the UCWC board approved after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, thus terminating a fundamental right that American women have held for half a century, the right to control their own bodies during pregnancy.



Our UCWC statement addressing this draconian ruling reads in part:

We support the rights of all people — no matter their race, gender, religious belief, or wealth — to self-determination, to decide whether to have children, to safeguard control over one's own body, and to express one's sexuality freely.

As a liberal faith that honors humanity's diverse views on religion, we believe that no one should be forced to live according to the dictates of someone else's religion. Those who oppose abortion on religious grounds remain free to live their lives in accordance with that belief. However, in our pluralistic society, they have no right to impose that belief on others. Our courts are failing to protect the rights of vulnerable citizens from attacks by a small but politically powerful minority.

We're already starting to see women's lives threatened by worries that a completely natural miscarriage will be seen as an illegal abortion that can put a woman or her doctor in jail. We are being forced to debate long-settled matters like whether a ten-year old girl must bear her rapist's child, or whether a common and highly effective form of birth control, the IUD, is illegal.

Sunday's service, led by Janine Galen and Anwyl Scott, urged us to take action in defense of the rights the Supreme Court stripped away. At minimum, we need to learn where candidates in this year's election stand on protecting women from government control over their bodies and then vote accordingly. We should also consider what we can do to help others who can't get the health care they need and deserve — such as helping pay for care or counseling, or providing travel and lodging, or contributing money to groups already offering those services.

One option is for us at UCWC to create our own reproductive justice action fund — a ready pot of money that can help on short notice with expenses and advocacy in these critical areas. If you'd like to join those of us who are exploring that idea, contact me at email: president.

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Small Group Ministry

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.

If you are interested in joining a group, please write to email: sgm.

Minister's Schedule

During the Summer, Rev. Dan's office hours are by appointment. In August he will be on leave and study/prep time through August 14.

If you have pastoral needs during this time, please contact email: pastoral-care. For other questions, contact the office at email: administrator.



Lifespan Faith Development

Religious Education Wish List

This is just a reminder that while your RE Committee does request a budget to help buy supplies for our classrooms and activities, we also embody the values of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and try to be thrifty with our purchases.

If you find yourself with extra craft supplies or furniture that you were planning to donate, consider reaching out to email: **DLFD** to see if we could use it at a discounted price or donation. Thank you for helping us to support RE while we care for our environment as we strive not to add to local waste.

RE Ice Cream Social

As we've done each summer, the RE Committee is putting together three ice cream socials over the summer to create a space for our families to get together in support and fellowship.

This summer we will meet at a West Goshen Park, and we will bring a cooler of individually wrapped ice creams, popsicles, and cold treats to share while we visit and play. Join us on August 18 at 7 pm.

Reflections

Religious Education Update

The great end in religious instruction is not to stamp our minds upon the young, but to stir up their own...not to form an outward regularity, but to touch inward springs...In a word, the great end is to awaken the soul, to excite and cherish spiritual life.

— William Ellery Channing

What is the purpose of Religious Education classes? Why bother expending energy for a volunteer position? Why should I rouse my family on a Sunday morning? What do we get out of it?

There is a power in our RE program, something greater than myself or even one congregation. The power of religious education is in empowering our children and youth within themselves, as they interact with others, and as they strive to form the world they dream of. Our Unitarian Universalist heritage offers us the freedom to explore, the guides to advise, the friends to accompany, and the community to celebrate. When we value and actively support religious education, we offer a glimpse of a world in our congregation that we would want to see in our society around us.



As we gather in RE, our goal is not to lead nor to follow, but to walk alongside one another. Our ambition is to validate the inherent worth and dignity of each person by cultivating a safe space of equity, diversity, and inclusion. We seek to build a community where wonder is encouraged, and beliefs respected. Our work is to see the injustice of the world and show that we can change it. Our power in RE is in our people — YOU!

I won't lie. Sunday mornings come way too early, organizing a family to get out the door is a feat, and I know we all have a finite amount of energy to spend each week. But I hope you will consider the child who gets left behind by the system. Consider the child who hears rhetoric every day that they aren't enough, that their thoughts don't matter. Consider the child who doesn't see people who look like them and their family during the week. Consider that you are this child, and what a place of safety would mean to you. Now consider that you are the adult and while every smile of encouragement counts, every action speaks volumes. Support RE. Teach if you can.

— Cassie Lengel

RE Fall Sneak Peak

Looking ahead to this fall, we are very excited to be offering our Twilight Zone curricula for our older children, and a new LEGO curricula teaching our Principles and Sources for our younger children.

More information will be coming soon, but for now we hope our families will get excited and anyone who would like to help with RE and/or teach will reach out to email: **DLFD**. Thanks!

Adult RE: An Exploration of World Religions

We are continuing our study of World Religions as based on Stephen Prothero's book, *God is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World*, and the podcast "Interfaith Voices."

This summer we will cover the last few chapters together as we look at Judaism, Atheism, Humanism, and more. You do not need to have read the book to join us, nor do you have to have attended any previous classes.

Join us on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 pm via Zoom. Please send new RSVPs to email: **Adult-RE.**



Pastoral Care

The **Pastoral Care Team** contact for this month is **Marilyn Gross.**



Report from Your Delegates to the UUA General Assembly

UCWC was eligible to send four Board-approved member delegates to the General Assembly (GA). They were Wayne Bullaughey, David Cohen, Cheryl Pittenger, and Pam Sapko. Also attending was Minister Emerita delegate, Kate Rhode, and Sandy Schaal. All of us participated via Zoom.

We will share vital information from the GA and proposed changes to the UUA's Purpose, Principles, and Sources in the fall. Much of the focus this year was presenting the ongoing work of the Article II Study Commission. Delegates also approved a commission charged to rewrite the entire UUA bylaws, an effort that will take multiple years.

In the meantime, we wanted to share a bit of what we learned and heard. An annual element of business was the presentation and ranking of up to three Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs) selection for the delegates to vote on during the GA. Each AIW must:

- Pertain to an issue that requires immediate action
- Call on UUA member congregations to take specific meaningful action
- Present an opportunity for member organizations to build partnership and/or act in solidarity with marginalized groups beyond and within the UUA
- Be grounded in UU theology and practice
- Be crafted in anti-oppressive and inclusive language that is conducive to justice.

The approved 2022 AIWs were:

- We Do Not Consent: Rejecting Legal Challenges to Abortion (approved within days of the Supreme Court overturning Roe vs Wade)
- Anti-Racism and Reparations via Restorative Justice
- Stop the Privatization of Medicare

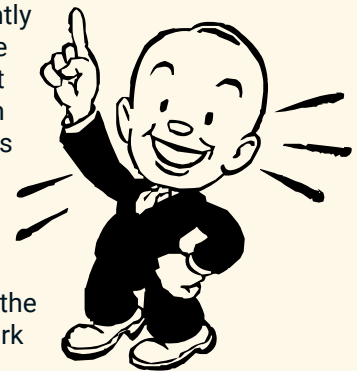
For complete text of the 2022 AIWS search: UUA actions of immediate witness.

— Respectfully submitted by
Wayne, David, Cheryl, Kate, Pam and Sandy

Men's Group

The Men's Group will do things slightly different this month: Weather permitting, we will meet in person on Tuesday, August 2, at 4:00 pm in the parking lot of Struble Trail on Norwood Road in Downingtown. The plan is to hike along the trail together — safe and socially distanced. Further details will follow 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.**



Stones in the Wall: Social Justice

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

UCWC



CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM Team

The Criminal Justice Team asks you to review this **2½ minute video** and hopes you will then be moved to commit to helping us advocate this September in support of the compassionate parole laws before the state legislature.

Advocacy can be as simple as sending an email or leaving a phone message on your legislator's voicemail system. Contact us at email: **criminal-justice** to let us know you are ready to pitch in, even if all you can manage is just one email.

UUSC Update

Suppose we asked which of the following people would qualify as a "refugee" under international law: someone fleeing a war (like the one currently unfolding in Ukraine)? Someone displaced by a natural disaster, such as a hurricane or an earthquake? How about someone who has to evacuate their home because of the more slow-building effects of climate change, such as soil erosion, crop failure, or rising seas?

The answer might surprise you: none would qualify. Current international law defines a refugee as someone fleeing persecution based on a specific aspect of their identity or views.

On Monday, June 20, UUSC hosted a webinar with experts from around the world who are seeking to broaden our understanding of who counts as a "refugee" — and of what we mean when we talk about forced displacement. Panelists representing UUSC partners and allies from four different countries — Haiti, Mexico, Burma, and Hungary — discussed the experiences of people forced into a state of migration for a wide variety of reasons: climate-fueled disasters, violence and disorder sparked by organized crime and political injustice, conflict, and authoritarian repression. Read more **here**.

Visit UUSC's **YouTube page** to see the webinar.

Support UUSC's work in these countries and other places around the world. Any donation amount makes you a member.

Thank you.



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 people who reside in the West Chester school district...because no one should go hungry!



Share the Plate Generosity

This month's recipient is the Maternal and Child Health Consortium's **Healthy Start** program. You can donate **here** or send a check to UCWC, 501 S. High St., West Chester, PA 19382. Please write in the check memo: "All to Healthy Start" or "Split between Healthy Start and UCWC." Thank you.

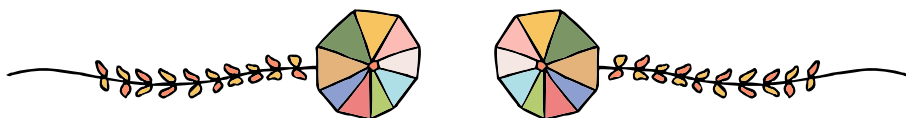


Fun & Fellowship

Coming in September: Annual Fall Picnic

We are planning a fall picnic at East Goshen Park on September 11 after services. More details will follow.

NOTE: There will be no game night in August. Keep cool and plan on joining in the fun in September.



Calendar

All email addresses
@ucwc.org

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



LAST RE ICE CREAM SOCIAL OF THE SUMMER



DESIGNBUNDLES.COM

- Aug 1 Mon** **Racial Justice Working Group.** 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact Pam Sapko.
- Aug 2 Tue** **Men's Group.** 4:00 pm. Struble Trail parking lot. See p. 5.
- Aug 7 Sun** **First Sunday Food Collection.** See p. 6.
- Aug 14 Sun** **Share the Plate Nominations Deadline.** See July Fellowtarian, p. 5.
- Aug 15 Mon** **Racial Justice Working Group.** 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact Pam Sapko.
- Aug 16 Tue** **Adult RE: An Exploration of World Religions.** 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 5.
- Aug 18 Thu** **RE Ice Cream Social.** 7:00 pm. West Goshen Park. See p. 4.
- Aug 18 Thu** **Religious Education Committee.** 7:00 pm.
- Aug 21 Sun** **Share-the-Plate Sunday.** Benefits **Healthy Start.** See p. 6.
- Aug 23 Tue** **Social Justice Committee Annual Meeting.** 7:00 pm. Zoom.

EVENTS OCCURRING REGULARLY:

- Various Dates** **Small Group Ministry (Several Active Groups).** See [web calendar](#) or contact email: [SGM](#).

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

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