

THE FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester

February 2023



NOTES FROM REV. DAN

New Year of Trees

Did you know there is a Jewish New Year of Trees?

For nineteen centuries or more, Jewish people around the world have celebrated *Tu BiShvat* each year, honoring the trees, their fruits, and the earth that gives them life. For ancient farmers, *Tu BiShvat* marked the end of one agricultural year and the beginning of another. During the Babylonian exile, it was a way to remember and honor a connection with the land. Today, for many, it's a time to plant trees, celebrate the natural world, and work to preserve the environment. There are even special Seders, or ritual dinners, to mark the occasion. (Yep, Seders aren't just for Passover!)

In our climate, the *Tu BiShvat* comes at a time when the trees are mostly bare, dormant for the winter. The lushness of our forests has been replaced by a stark beauty, the silhouettes of trunks, branches, and twigs black against the February sky. They seem almost lifeless, and it might feel odd to celebrate a New Year of Trees in the cold of winter. But this is also the time when sap begins to flow more freely, as days lengthen, and trees enjoy more sun. This is the season of maple syrup, Japanese witch hazel blossoms, and the first indications of the Springtime still to come.

It isn't just trees in winter. New beginnings often come this way, in the quiet of in-between times, when everything is still, or even bitter and cold. We may be going through a winter of the spirit, when hope seems impossibly



Photo of big oak tree at
Bryn Coed Preserve, taken by Rev. Dan

If the ground is soft enough, consider planting a tree, or making plans for Spring plantings.

distant and renewal just a dream. But just as the Spring emerges slowly from the cold, our spirit may begin waking before we ever notice. Slowly, we stir from our dormancy, reaching toward the emergence to come.

February brings the New Year of Trees, a time for celebration! If the ground is soft enough, consider planting a tree, or making plans for Spring plantings.

Do something for the Earth. Enjoy a walk on a sunny February afternoon. And as you wander under the bare trees, feel the new life stirring in your heart.

In Faith, Dan

Our Mission

Our mission is to:

*GROW in spirit, heart
and mind*

*LOVE through care
and community*

*SERVE beyond
ourselves*



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.

February 5 10 am THE BEST WITHIN US Rev. Dan Schatz

We come to religion with the hope of finding guidance in living good lives. How does Unitarian Universalism help us find the best within ourselves?

February 12 10 am GOOD FOR THE HEART CHOCOLATE SUNDAY Rev. Dan Schatz and Cassie Lengel

On this special Sunday, we look to our hearts, nurturing love within and around us. This all-ages service will be followed by our beloved Feast of Decadent Chocolate.

February 19 10 am WHAT COMMUNITY? Pat DeBrady

Join us for an exploration of authors who continue to influence a personal definition of community.

Patricia DeBrady has presented/taught African and African American literature to classes, communities, and gatherings of interested others for the past 50 years. Her Unitarian Universalist membership of more than 60 years provides a particular understanding of black presence within predominantly white cultures. Being party to the struggle that had potential to rive the UUA has provided her with some insight (however contestable) about the issue of American diversity. She is a member of the UU Church of the Restoration.

February 26 10 am A COMMUNITY OF CARING Rev. Dan Schatz

As a congregation we care for one another in many ways, from Small Group Ministries to simple friendship. Together, we "love through care and community."

Chocolate Service

A balanced diet is chocolate in both hands, and we all know that happiness doesn't have calories. Join us for an Intergenerational Service on Sunday, February 12, as we share our love — and our love for chocolate — with one another.



Proposed Changes to the UU Principles and Purposes

Come explore the proposed changes to the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes. Every fifteen years, Unitarian Universalists review the part of our bylaws that include the Principles and Purposes and ask ourselves how it might be changed, so it can stay relevant and move us onward. This year, major changes have been proposed, with significant new wording.

Rev. Dan Schatz and Cassie Lengel will host a series of online sessions to provide opportunities for as many of us as possible to look at the current draft. The sessions will be based in the draft text itself,

rather than a direct comparison with the current Principles.

Please consider attending one of these sessions. (So that we can accommodate as many people as possible, we ask you to attend only one session.) You do not need to RSVP.

All sessions are on Zoom and use [this link](#):

Monday	January 30	7:00-8:30 pm
Tuesday	January 31	7:00-8:30 pm
Wednesday	February 8	7:00-8:30 pm
Thursday	February 9	1:00-2:30 pm

From the President

For me, one of the great attractions of Unitarian Universalism is our “free and responsible search for truth and meaning.” We have no creed, no dogma.

But if we UUs can each hold our own beliefs, then what holds us together as a faith community?

At the national level, one answer is provided in our Seven Principles. At UCWC, we have our beloved unison affirmation. Both are elegant foundational statements that leave plenty of room for each individual to interpret and apply in life. They invite people to come to us as searchers and find community together with us from there. We grow. We love. We serve.

A growing current of thought in UU circles holds that our foundational values are **too individualistic**, that **our current principles are merely “aspirational” — because they do not include a commitment to act on them.**

In this view, being UU means being part of a community, a community that makes commitments to action. A call to make those commitments appears in the **latest update to our**

UU principles being proposed by the Article 2 Study Commission.



The proposal lists six “shared values” and says we “are accountable to one another” for living them. Each of the new values explicitly says “we covenant to” take certain actions, including, “to dismantle racism and all forms of systemic oppressions.”

To me, the commitment to take action, embodied in a “covenant,” with an unspecified kind of “accountability,” begins to sound an awful lot like a creed.

True, the new proposal specifically says a congregation cannot require members to “adhere” to a creed. It also says, “Congregational freedom and the individual’s right of conscience are central to our Unitarian Universalist heritage.”

However, our “heritage” has transformed substantially over two centuries. And one of the newly proposed UU values is “transformation.” So I’m left wondering — “Will a congregation effectively sign away our treasured UU congregational freedom by agreeing to “collectively transform” via these new covenants?”



Spiritual Practices

What is a spiritual practice? What if I’m not a spiritual, touchy-feeling person? What are the different kinds of practices? What are you doing that you could share? What helps you make it work? Where and when do you practice? How has your practice been going?

Join us from March to May for two sessions a month via Zoom to learn briefly about some different topics and actions found in spiritual practices and support one another in the journey of your personal practice. Each session is independent from the whole and invitational for newcomers, though the more sessions you can attend, the better the support we can cultivate. For more information, contact Robin Garrett or Cassie Lengel, or email: **Adult-RE.**

Coming in March Stewardship Pledge Drive

Stewardship Sunday, on March 5, kicks off our annual pledge drive, with the theme of “Connecting”.

We want to connect with you! We strongly encourage everyone to register for a small group gathering in March.

There will be many choices; in-person or virtual, inside or outside, with children or without, on weekends, evenings or lunchtimes, in homes or at UCWC. There is bound to be a gathering that fits with your schedule. The sign-up link will be available soon.

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 contact Email: **SGM.**



Lifespan Faith Development

RE Open House

Did you know we have a whole basement here at UCWC? Of course we do! That's where our children and youth gather to share and explore together in RE classes.

Why don't you come on down to visit us and see for yourself. Coming up this March we invite you to our Open House to get to know the teachers, see the classrooms, and get excited about our programs here! See *Connections* for more details soon.

Join Our Tremendous Teachers and Creative Committee

Robert Frost once wrote, "I am not a teacher, I am an awakener!" While this jab at our early mornings in RE classes may make us laugh this off, the sentiment is actually pretty sound. As William Ellery Channing wrote, "The great end in Religious Education is not to stamp our minds irresistibly on the young, but to stir up their own." So, in a way, what we do in RE really is awakening.

We celebrate the lives of our children, we inspire wonder, we explore questions, and of course we have fun too. Part of the beauty of getting involved in RE is that you end up learning at least as much as the children, so don't worry about feeling unqualified — our children know that every person is important and brings their own talents and ideas. So, what are you waiting for? Get in touch with Cassie Lengel or any current RE teacher.

REflections Religious Education Update

What has love got to do with it? Unitarian Universalism is bound by a common thread of love throughout our many beliefs, values, and practices.

Love brings us together in this place, where we greet one another with a smile and share our joys and sorrows.

Love inspires us to search for truth and walk beside one another on our journeys of faith.

Love creates a new world of possibilities and understanding with our children and youth in their RE classes.

Love listens to the community, love guides our hands to serve one another, and love stands and marches alongside our neighbors of every identity.

Love speaks in our voices, through reason and advocacy, through kindness and empathy.

Love is inclusion of all peoples, and our circle is ever widening. How will you grow this love?



Cassie Lengel
DLFD@ucwc.org



"Explorations" A Program for Beginning and Deepening our UU Journeys



Come one, come all! Whether you're new to Unitarian Universalism or you've been with us for years, join "Explorations." This is a small-group style program that is a great way to make some connections and deepen your relationships with others as you engage some guided readings and discussion questions together.

This program examines what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist through weekly topics that bring us together as we delve into our common faith and our individual experiences. Let's grow together our spiritual practices and make new friends. Keep an eye out for more information on dates and facilitators in *Connections* and/or contact Cassie Lengel at email: **DLFD**.

Stones in the Wall: Social Justice

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



First Sunday Food Collection

We are currently not collecting food on the first Sunday of each month. However, as always, you can still make a financial donation. 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!

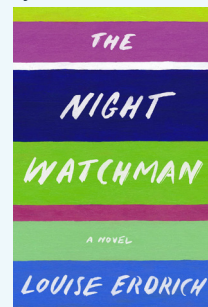
Diversity Book Group

Feb 12 7:00-8:30 pm Zoom

The Night Watchman by Louise Erdrich. Winner of the 2021 Pulitzer Prize for fiction, *The Night Watchman* is based on the extraordinary life of National Book Award-winning author Louise Erdrich's grandfather who worked as a night watchman and carried the fight against Native dispossession from rural North Dakota all the way to Washington, DC.

Erdrich weaves a story within stories. Thomas, the night watchman, lives in an impoverished reservation community along with Patrice, who is searching for her "relocated" sister. Other characters include young Chippewa boxer Wood Mountain and his mother Juggie Blue, her niece and Patrice's best friend Valentine, and Stack Barnes, the white high school math teacher and boxing coach who is hopelessly in love with Patrice.

Led by Sandy Schaal.



Criminal Justice Team

UCWC



CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM Team

The Criminal Justice Team invites you to **Act Now to End mass Incarceration in Pennsylvania.**

Individuals and organizations across the state are coordinating efforts to get legislation passed in Harrisburg during the 2023-2024 session to expand medical and geriatric parole and to end DBI/LWOP (Death by Incarceration/Life without Parole Sentences) in Pennsylvania.

To learn more about these issues we encourage you to learn more at [this website about Second Chances.](#)

If you are ready to give even as little as one hour per month in support of these efforts, contact email: [criminal-justice](#) to join this worthy cause.

UUJusticePA & Gun Violence Prevention

The new year inspires new beginnings and hope for positive change. With new leadership in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, there is the possibility of some commonsense gun safety legislation coming forward for a vote. With gun violence an ongoing, unrelenting epidemic in our country, the effort to understand the problem and the solutions and to advocate for progressive change is needed now more than ever.

If you would like to be part of the solution, join our statewide group of UU's who care about this issue. We meet monthly on zoom on the fourth Tuesday of every month. Please email gun-safety@ucwc.org in order to get the monthly link and reminders. Help us grow the movement of gun safety activists who push for a safer world in 2023.

—Tom Buglio

UUSC Update

Today the people of Haiti continue to face huge challenges: A despotic and incompetent government that refuses to listen to civil society; unimaginable instances of violence in Port-au-Prince and surrounding communities; the complete collapse of the law and vital social supports to protect those in need.



The current Prime Minister, Ariel Henry, was never elected to office, yet he is supported by the US government. The Biden administration could take **three steps**:

- Restore separation of powers between the three branches of government.
- Ensure that Henry allows provisional legislators to take office.
- Help restore the rule of law and end corruption by disrupting organized crime.

Follow [this link](#) to call on the Biden administration to pursue these goals.

You can also donate to UUSC's Emergency Response Fund for Haiti [here](#).

Natural disasters, political corruption, and violence will never subsume the bold history and spirit of the people of Haiti.

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 February 19 (third Sunday of the month), LCH, formerly known as La Comunidad Hispana.

La Comunidad Hispana was founded in 1973 by Kennett Square residents, clergy, and advocates as a bilingual social services agency to serve the primarily Latinx population working in the local mushroom industry.



Since then, it has continued to grow and evolve into a multifaceted Federally Qualified Health Center serving southern Chester County. They provide healthcare to anyone, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.

Their healthcare services include primary care, pediatrics, women's health, dental care, and behavioral health care. In addition to healthcare, they provide free ESL classes, citizenship classes, and workforce development classes. Finally, they have a robust social assistance department, which provides a free legal clinic, assistance with public benefits, case management, and transportation. They do receive federal funding; however, more than half of their annual budget relies on donations.

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 LCH."
- 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 December recipient, Coatesville Youth Initiative, in the amount of \$635.



You Are Invited

Anti-Racism Training for Philadelphia Area UUA Congregations

You've done the "outside" work. You've supported equal justice for all, integration, police reform, equal opportunity, etc. Maybe you marched in the George Floyd protests. But have you done the "inside" work?

We rarely take time to consider that we have grown up in a country with racist roots baked into the fabric of our society. You have probably absorbed a lot of this unconsciously. It's often thought that doing the outside work is enough, but taking the time to look inward, deeply inward, in a guided way can be important to you as a person and important to us as a society. This is an invitation, an opportunity to do the "inside" work.

Participate in JUBILEE Anti-Racism Training: Learning Together About Systemic Racism, Friday, March 24, at 6:00 pm to Sunday, March 26, at 7:00 pm, via Zoom. This session will be for Philadelphia area UUs, and we have five spots reserved.

Racial Justice Working Group members think that this training is so valuable that Cassie and we will make it easy for you to participate with special youth programming for part of that time. The full training cost is \$170 (discounted for more than one family member). Partial scholarships are available. Please contact email: **black-lives-matter** if you are interested in registering or have questions.

Fun & Fellowship

2023 Spring Women's Retreat "She-Shore Days"

Friday Mar 31
to
Sunday April 2

3 Days, 2 Nights in a
Large Home in
Ocean City, NJ

Cost \$175-250 depending
on shared bed, shared
room, or private room

Expecting we can handle
10 -20 attendees

Contact Janet Hutchison
for more information
smilingdba@gmail.com
610-246-9999
(text preferred)

In February, We Feast!

Feast of Decadent Chocolate • February 12 • After the Service

The Feast of Decadent Chocolate is back. Friends and members bring a favorite chocolate dessert (preferably homemade and from fair trade chocolate) to share after service at coffee hour. Non-chocolate desserts are also welcome. Please include a list of ingredients and be sure to mention if there are known allergens used (nuts, etc.).

As the Covid numbers are all over the place these days, we will let everyone know if we need to have items individually wrapped so we can enjoy the treats at home.



Folk Singing

Our next get-together is Saturday, February 4, at 7:30 pm. We meet at the home of Linda and Steve Sander, 433 Crosslands Drive off route 926 just before the intersection with route 52.

All vaccinated adults are welcome. No singing talent or experience is necessary, just a desire to have fun. Capable musicians should bring their instruments. Bring a munchie if you wish. Maps are in the foyer. Contact Steve at email: **folk-singing** with questions or driving instructions.

COVID Procedures. Please do one of the following:

- Self-test negative within an hour before leaving your home. No mask required while singing. This is our preferred option.
- Obviously, if you test positive, do not come at all.
- If you do not self-test, you may still come, but you must wear a mask the entire night, even when singing.



Calendar

All email addresses
@ucwc.org

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

Pastoral Care

The **Pastoral Care
Team** contact for
this month is
Pam Seres

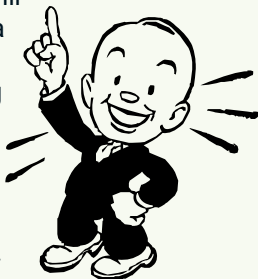


Jan 30	Mon	UU Principles Session. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 2.
Jan 31	Tue	UU Principles Session. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 2.
Feb 4	Sat	Folk Singing. 7:30 pm. Home of Linda & Steve Sander. See p. 7.
Feb 5	Sun	First Sunday Food Collection. See p. 5.
Feb 6	Mon	Racial Justice Working Group. 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact Pam Sapko. Executive Committee. 7:00 pm. Zoom.
Feb 7	Tue	Family Game Night. 6:00 pm. Sanctuary. Men's Group. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See below.
Feb 8	Wed	UU Principles Session. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 2.
Feb 9	Thu	UU Principles Session. 1:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 2.
Feb 12	Sun	Feast of Decadent Chocolate. 11:15 pm. Sanctuary. See p. 7. Diversity Book Group. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 5.
Feb 14	Tue	Program Council. 7:00 pm. Zoom.
Feb 16	Thu	Religious Education Committee. 7:00 pm.
Feb 19	Sun	Share-the-Plate Sunday. Benefits LCH. See p. 6.
Feb 20	Mon	Racial Justice Working Group. 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact Pam Sapko.
Feb 21	Tue	Board Meeting. 6:30 pm. Zoom.
EVENTS OCCURRING REGULARLY:		
Most Thursdays		Spirit Singers Practice. at 7:00 pm. For specific dates, contact Miriam Davidson, email: choir .
Various Dates		Small Group Ministry (Several Active Groups). See web calendar or contact email: SGM

Men's Group

The UCWC Men's Group will meet virtually via Zoom on Tuesday, February 7, at 7:00 pm. All men are welcome. Fred and Mark will lead a discussion on the book *American Nations* by Colin Woodard.

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 and Dirk at email: [mens-group](#).



Minister's Office Hours

Dan is available by appointment Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and can be reached by [email](#) or cell phone at any time.

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](#)