

THE FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester

May 2023



NOTES FROM REV. DAN

Some of my earliest memories are of flowers.

In the 1970s, when I was a child, there wasn't a lot of ritual to hold Unitarian Universalists together. We didn't light a chalice or share joys and sorrows, and the UU Principles of the day had grown stale, crusted over with dated and sexist language. Children usually spent the whole morning in Sunday School, although we did attend a kids' chapel afterwards — but if I happened to be in "the big service," it was a few hymns (also crusty), a reading and a sermon.

But each year, usually in May when Spring was at its peak, every single member and every child would bring a flower with them to the service. I don't remember exactly what we said about them, although I imagine we told the story of Norbert Čapek, the Czech Unitarian minister who created the flower celebration as a way to celebrate the beauty in diversity and the community we create together even when we have different backgrounds and views. (This year is the 100th anniversary of that first

flower service.) At the tender age of six, though, I simply knew how beautiful it all was, with flowers everywhere. I remember the fun of bringing a flower and getting to leave with a different flower. Me! I got to pick my very own flower! When you're six years old, that's pretty special.

That was a good long time ago, but the flower service remains my annual favorite, and not just because it's beautiful. To me it's a symbol of everything Unitarian Universalism should be. We come together in a community of diversity — a seemingly random assortment of flowers. None of us are perfect, but all of us have gifts, given to each other with love and respect. And when you put us all together in that spirit, we are gorgeous.

This year we'll hold this uniquely UU ritual outdoors at East Goshen Park (weather permitting) on May 7. Please bring a cut flower with you for each member of your family. We'll welcome new members and families, celebrate with all ages, and enjoy a picnic after the service. I, for one, can't wait.

In faith, Dan

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Minister's Office Hours

Rev. Dan is available for appointments on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. He can be reached at email: [minister](mailto:minister@ucwc.org) or by cell phone.

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.

May 7 10 am WE ARE LIKE THESE FLOWERS Rev. Dan Schatz

All-Ages Flower Celebration at East Goshen Park (Weather Permitting) The Flower Celebration, in its 100th year, is a beloved tradition in Unitarian Universalism. *Please bring a cut flower for each member of your family who will attend the service.* The service will also include a ceremony of welcome for our new members. Please reach out to email: [minister](#) if you have been thinking about joining and would like to sign the book.

Weather permitting, this service will be at the Veterans Pavilion in East Goshen Park, followed by an all-congregation picnic, with sandwiches provided. (There are two pavilions – this is the one further into the park where we held our Earth Day service and picnic last year.)

May 14 10 am TALK ABOUT LOVE Rev. Dan Schatz

There are many ways to think about love – a feeling, a force, a sacred power. On this Mother's Day, we'll talk about love, our lives, and our faith.

May 21 10 am COMING OF AGE Coming of Age Class

Throughout this past year, our youth have been exploring different spiritual paths as they begin to coalesce their own beliefs. Join us for this very special service to hear them share these beliefs with the congregation through their creative credos.

May 28 10 am SPIRITUAL PATHS Tom Tolt, Susan Bachelor, and Rachel Lane

Each of us is on our own journey. Join us as three UCWC members share insight on aspects of their spiritual paths.

Men's Group

The Men's Group will do things slightly different this time. Weather permitting, we will meet in person on Tuesday, May 2, at 4:00 pm in the parking

lot of **ChesLen**

Preserve at 1722

Embreeville Rd in

Coatesville. Further

details will follow via email. All men are welcome.

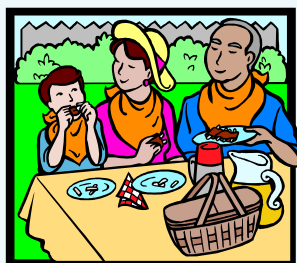


If you are interested in participating but are not yet on the email distribution list, please reach out to Mark or Dirk at email: [mens-group](#).

New Member Sunday

Have you been thinking about membership in our congregation? We will hold a new member welcome ceremony on Sunday, May 7, and would love to include you. If you would like to join, please reach out to email: [minister](#) to arrange a time to sign the membership book.

Stewardship Picnic



We will conclude our stewardship campaign with an outdoor service and celebration picnic on Sunday, May 7, at East Goshen Park. The service starts at 10:00 am with the potluck picnic following at 11:30 am. Everyone is welcome. Sandwiches from the renowned Hank's Place will be provided. Bring your own beverage and a side dish or dessert to share. Musical instruments are also welcome.

From the President



My professional career was as a journalist, most of it in Alaska. I spent 20+ years there with the opinion section, where our center-left editorial stances often angered many

within our largely conservative readership. But we didn't suppress those opposing views; we welcomed them. We viewed our opinion section as a forum for robust debate and arguments on issues of the day.

However, we also set certain standards. Some particularly noxious views were beyond the bounds. Opinions had to be based on facts, not speculation or false information. In short, I was a dreaded media "gatekeeper" — routinely accused of "censoring" opponents. I often had to tell someone: "You have a right to your opinion; you just don't have a right to see it published here."

As the internet grew, social media offered forums with no gatekeeper, no guard rails at all. Cyberspace became a free for all, and that rhetorical bilge flowed back toward legacy media. During my two years at the Harrisburg newspaper, reader comments posted to online articles devolved into a sewer of invective and fake information. Reasonable people fled those forums.

All this is to say that there have always been settings where sideboards apply to "free expression." The US Constitution's First Amendment is robust, but it has limits, such as libel law. In Congress, remarks impugning a colleague's personal integrity can be "taken down" or the speaker may be temporarily silenced. It's an effort to manage conflict and allow Congress to function amid deep differences.

So, there are many settings where an individual may find some limits on free expression, especially if they occupy a certain role in an organization. As UUs, we affirm and promote, "a free and responsible search for truth and meaning." Among other things, "responsible" might mean considering diverse views, refraining from insults and intentionally offensive remarks, and not using manipulative rhetoric. It's a high standard we set for ourselves.

The UUA's Article 2 commission is asking us to reconsider our UU statement of foundational values and principles. For me, one big question is what range of views will be considered "in bounds" and what sideboards might apply to how those views are expressed. We UUs need to be able to disagree about that question, and others, without being disagreeable. Those of you who attended our Town Hall on Article 2 did well on that score. I hope we will continue to uphold that high standard going forward.

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Pastoral Care

The **Pastoral Care Team** contact for this month is **Barbara Dallara**



Spiritual Practices

Join us on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month via a 7:00 pm Zoom session 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**.

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

This flower service is a beautiful metaphor to express the beauty and diversity that each person brings into the community.

We Need RE Teachers



As one example of how you can get involved and offer your time and talents, I would ask that you consider becoming an RE teacher working with our children and youth. We have been working with a handful of very dedicated volunteers who show up and give of themselves week after week, and they need help.

We have always relied on parents to help in our programs, but they need to know we stand by and with them in support. Our children want to be here learning with friends. We want to offer them programs they will enjoy, and we want to give them the affirmation and attention they deserve. But we can't do this without you.

REflections: Religious Education Update

Shakespeare has oft been quoted with the famous line, "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet," from the play *Romeo and Juliet*. Well, as we come into the spring season, full of blooms and beautiful flowers, I find this quote to be entirely accurate according to my allergies. A rose by any other name would still spread pollen.

However, as we prepare for our Flower Service on May 7, I find that my heart disagrees with the bard. You see, each year we gather for a flower service, a tradition that goes back 100 years to Norbert Chapek who wanted to find a ritual that would celebrate community in his congregation.

This flower service is a beautiful metaphor to express the beauty and diversity that each person brings into the community and the gifts we give to one another within our community. Each person is like these flowers – we all have our own name and beauty, we bring different gifts and have different needs, we each thrive in different conditions, but we all need the support of those around us.

I also find my mind disagrees with Shakespeare, for this quote suggests that names do not matter, but there is power there if we embrace it. There is power in our history as Unitarian Universalists. There is community and support in our congregation as the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester. There is a message when we say that Black Lives Matter or that we are a Welcoming Congregation. There is welcome when we say, "Hello, My Name Is..."

So, whenever we see a flower this month, I hope we'll remember our own worth and power, but also the needs and interconnectedness of our community. We are each of us unique and beautiful flowers, bringing our own gifts and thriving in our own ways, but we claim a common name as our identity as Unitarian Universalists. What does that mean to us?

Cassie Lengel, email: DLFD



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

We are so excited to be running this program for our members and new folks to get to know one another. "Explorations" is a small-group style program with guided readings and discussion questions to explore what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist as we delve into our common faith and our individual experiences. Our last session will be May 4 at 7:00 pm via Zoom. Didn't make it this go around? No worries! We run this program every year. A special thank you to Jim MacFadyen and Cathy Vogt for facilitating for us.

Stones in the Wall: Social Justice

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

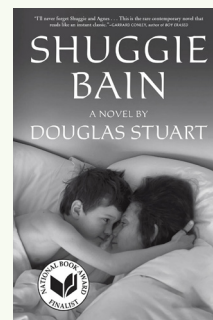
Diversity Book Group

Shuggie Bain by Douglas Stuart (Goodreads Author)
May 21 7:00-8:30 pm Zoom Led by Barb Crellin

Shuggie Bain is the unforgettable story of young Hugh "Shuggie" Bain, a sweet and lonely boy who spends his 1980s childhood in run-down public housing in Glasgow, Scotland. Thatcher's policies have put husbands and sons out of work, and the city's notorious drugs epidemic is waiting in the wings.

A heartbreaking story of addiction, sexuality, and love, **Shuggie Bain** is an epic portrayal of a working-class family that is rarely seen in fiction. Recalling the work of Edouard Louis, Alan Hollinghurst, Frank McCourt, and Hanya Yanagihara, it is a blistering debut by a brilliant novelist who has a powerful and important story to tell. 430 pages.

Contact Debby Kern, email: diversity-book-group.



Social Justice Update

- Susan Batchelor has agreed to be our UUJusticePA Reproductive Rights Liaison. She is working with an active committee at the Main Line Unitarian Church to create educational events around current reproductive justice topics in Pennsylvania. We are happy to have her leadership on this important issue.
- Rosanne Bennett resigned as our UUtheVote leader. Rosanne led several voter registration efforts and worked to get out the vote for the November elections. She is resigning from a leadership role, but she will continue to help with Social Justice efforts. Thank you, Rosanne.
- UCWC gave a \$1,000 grant from our Social Action Trust Fund to the West Chester NAACP Scholarship Fund. Every year they give scholarships to local high school seniors who are going to college. The Social Action Trust Fund grants go to social action projects originating in West Chester. Our 2021-2022 grant went to Act in Faith.
- Our UCWC social justice email discussion list has news about all the UCWC social justice teams, projects, discussions, and events as well as updates from the West Chester Refugee Resettlement Project. Contact Maggie at Email: office to subscribe.

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 May 21 (third Sunday of the month), **Hope Beyond Borders**.

Over its 13-year history, Hope Beyond Borders has worked to help children and youth in Coatesville (and abroad) overcome the challenges of educational inequity. Educational inequity is a systemic condition that puts children and youth living in low-income communities at a disadvantage when trying to flourish. Recent school district comparisons among Coatesville and surrounding public schools show that adjacent school districts including Downingtown, Unionville, West Chester, and Kennett Square all are rated in the top ten percent while Coatesville falls in the bottom five percent statewide.

Hope Beyond Borders is a long-serving resource, having been in operation since 2009. It serves over 250 local students each year. Hope Beyond Borders improves educational outcomes through the local program Coatesville Kids to College (CKC), that offers pre-school, after-school, summer camp, youth entrepreneurship, and leadership development programs for children and youth from pre-K to college or trade school placement.

Thank you for your generosity to March recipient, The Family Center, in the amount of \$595.



Are you outraged that our **PA legislators**
can receive **unlimited gifts**? **WE ARE!**

It's time to **END CORRUPTION**.

Join us to learn how you can help!

MAY 18TH

DOORS OPEN AT 6:30

7:00 PM

Refreshments
available



SPEAKER: RABBI MICHAEL POLLACK
Executive Director, March on Harrisburg

Unitarian Universalist Church of Delaware County

145 West Rose Tree Road, Media, PA, 19063

Did you know there are no limits on what a lobbyist can give to a public official in PA? March on Harrisburg is a nonpartisan grassroots organization seeking ethical reforms like the Gift Ban Bill, HR 484.



CORRUPTION HURTS EVERYONE
and OBSTRUCTS PROGRESS.
Learn how to get involved
and participate in a group action.

Learn how corruption
works in PA --
and how to make it illegal.

Let's build a democracy
that allows us all to **THRIVE!**



supported by

UUJusticePA
Unitarian Universalist Justice Pennsylvania

INDIVISIBLE

RSVP here:



bit.ly/UUDelawareDisrupt

UUSC Update



On Wednesday, March 29, the United Nations General Assembly voted to request the International Court of Justice offer an advisory opinion about the obligation of states in addressing the impacts of climate change.

This is an historic victory for those working in the climate justice movement. It introduces a new mandate for action on climate change on an international level.

UUSC and its partners have been consistently advocating for this resolution. The hope is that the Court will clearly establish the climate obligations of states as well as clarify the consequences for failing to meet or breaching these obligations. A successful advisory opinion from the Court will help to educate and empower governments, judiciary bodies, and concerned citizens.

UUSC will strategize with **Pacific Islands Students Fighting Climate Change** (PISFCC) and partners regarding next steps. Watch this **video** to see what the Resolution means for Pacific youth.

For more about UUSC's climate change work in the Pacific islands see the **November 2022 Fellowtarian** p. 6.

The **Unitarian Universalist Service Committee** works for justice around the world. Any donation makes you a proud member. Thank you.

UUJusticePA

UUJusticePA is sponsoring a collaboration between UCWC, Main Line Unitarian Church and Unitarian Universalist Church of Delaware County to host an evening with March on Harrisburg, a non-partisan pro-democracy activist group working to reduce corruption in Pennsylvania.

All are welcome to join us. Details in the flyer, above.



UUJusticePA
Unitarian Universalist Justice Pennsylvania

Refugee Resettlement

The West Chester Area Refugee Resettlement Project is putting together a team to welcome new refugees through the Welcome Corps program. UCWC members are welcome to help. Contact Pam Sapko at email: **refugees** for more information.

Criminal Justice Reform

Second Chances Matter

Across our nation, faith communities and NGO's are working to make change for the thousands of people who are sentenced to long-term incarceration with little or no opportunity to apply for parole regardless of how long they have been in prison, how young they were when they were first incarcerated, and in what ways they have grown, matured, changed, and rehabilitated themselves.

Compared to neighboring states with populations similar to or larger than ours, (Ohio, New Jersey, and New York) Pennsylvania has the highest number of people sentenced to life in prison without any hope of parole, and also has the second highest number of people serving LWOP (life without parole sentences) of any state in the country, – regardless of the state's total population – and is one of only six states that does not provide for the possibility of parole to lifers.

What Can You Do?

- Educate yourself. Take three minutes to **read this brief overview** from FAMM (Families Against Mandatory Minimums).
 - Take time to call your state representative and state senator and ask them to support current legislation which will expand medical and geriatric parole. You need not go into detail – just tell whoever answers the phone you support this legislation because all incarcerated individuals should have the opportunity to apply for parole at some point in their incarceration. Contact email **criminal-justice** to get more detail on these bills if you want to go beyond this basic message.
 - If you know folks in Pennsylvania who live outside of Southeastern Pennsylvania, share this information with them and ask them to make calls as well. In our region there is a lot of support for this legislation. Statewide there is ever-growing potential for broad-based support for making progress on these issues, and increasing this broad-based support is key to passage of the legislation.
- Please note that in our state – as is the case across the nation, – poor people and people of color of all economic classes are disproportionately affected by mass incarceration. You too can be part of the solution.

Fun & Fellowship

Folk Singing

Our next get-together is Saturday, May 20, at 7:30 pm. We meet at the home of Linda and Steve Sander.

All vaccinated adults are welcome. Contact Steve at email: **folk-singing** with questions or driving instructions.

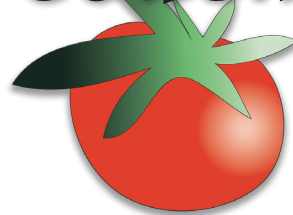
COVID Procedures.

Please do **one** of the following:

- Self-test negative within an hour before leaving your home. This is our preferred option.
- If you do not self-test, you may still come, but you must wear a mask the entire night, even when singing.



Support UCWC by dining at the couchtomato café



Menu features local and organic products, as well as a specialization in vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free offerings.



- Gourmet Pizzas •
- Specialty Salads •
- Signature Sandwiches •
- Homemade Soups •

Fundraiser SUNDAY MAY 21

11 am - 8:30 pm

31 W Gay Street in West Chester
Dine In or Take Out

*Before you pay, mention the promo code:
UCWC fundraiser and 15% of your
purchase will be donated to UCWC.*

Calendar

All email addresses
@ucwc.org

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

Wanted: WordPress Worker

UCWC needs a volunteer to help maintain our fine website. This is a WordPress site, so no coding experience is necessary. WordPress is an easy-to-use platform that allows you to create and maintain web pages in an intuitive, "word-processor-like" environment.

The job involves an hour or so a week at most — some weeks not at all — with the exception of auction and stewardship times, when several extra hours are needed.

Steve Sander is planning to step down as the webmaster, but he will remain involved, will help the new person learn the ropes, and will continue to do the primary work on the website during the two busy times noted above.

If you are interested, contact Steve at email: [webmaster](#).

May 1	Mon	Racial Justice Working Group. 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact Pam Sapko.
May 2	Tue	Executive Committee. 7:00 pm. Zoom.
May 3	Wed	Men's Group. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 2.
May 4	Thu	Small Group Ministry Leaders Meeting. 7:00 pm.
May 7	Sun	Explorations. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 4.
		New Member Sunday. See p. 2.
		Stewardship Picnic. 11:45 am. East Goshen Park. See p. 2.
May 8	Mon	Religious Services Committee. 7:00 pm.
May 9	Tue	Program Council. 7:00 pm. Zoom.
May 10	Wed	Spiritual Practices. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 3.
May 12	Fri	Family Game Night. 7:00 pm. Sanctuary.
May 15	Mon	Racial Justice Working Group. 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact Pam Sapko.
May 16	Tue	Board Meeting. 7:00 pm. Zoom.
May 17	Wed	UUJusticePA Reproductive Justice Meeting. 7:00 pm. Zoom. Contact Susan Batchelor, email: reproductive-justice .
May 20	Sat	Folk Singing. 7:30 pm. Home of Linda & Steve Sander. See p. 7.
May 21	Sun	Share-the-Plate Sunday. Benefits Hope Beyond Borders. See p. 5.
		Town Hall Budget Meeting. 11:15 am. Sanctuary.
		Dining Fundraiser. 11:00 am - 8:30 pm. The Couch Tomato in West Chester. See p. 7.
		Diversity Book Group. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 5.
May 23	Tue	UUJusticePA Gun Violence Prevention Meeting. 7:00 pm. Zoom. Contact Tom Buglio, email: gun-safety .
May 24	Wed	Spiritual Practices. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 3.

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 . See p. 3.



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

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