

# THE FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester

June 2023



## NOTES FROM REV. DAN

Early the other evening, Venus sat above a perfect crescent moon. The bright planet shone against the darkening sky, like a spark from some celestial chalice. As I looked at the scene from my back door, I felt a sense of peace and wonder.

I needed it. It has been a challenging season for many in our congregation, filled with difficult conversations and dilemmas, strong feelings, and open questions. (I still don't know how I'll vote on the proposed new wording of our UU values when it comes up at this year's General Assembly.) To be honest, that day I had been feeling it all pretty deeply.

But there was the moon, and there was Venus, low over the trees, stunning, graceful, and delicate all at the same time. And here in our congregation, alongside the stress, there has been so much grace and beauty.

We welcomed seven new members this past month, and an eighth has joined since. We shared our flower celebration and picnic in the largest in person gathering we've held in three years — a day filled with love and warmth. We heard thoughtful credo statements from five youth in our

Coming of Age class. We've reached out to each other in community and compassion.

I thought about all of this as I looked at a magical sky, and then I remembered.

Unitarian Universalism is not about a set of statements that summarize our principles, values, or covenant, as important as these things are. It isn't about a set of policies, or even a budget — though yes, we have to have one. Our religion is simpler and deeper than that.

Unitarian Universalism is about openness to wonder, to the revelation of this holy moment. Unitarian Universalism is about the love we share in community. Unitarian Universalism is about the freedom to explore spiritually and the responsibility to take truth seriously. Unitarian Universalism is a radical expression of respect for humanity in all our diversity. Unitarian Universalism is about our connection with each other, all of life, our planet, the cosmos.

Like a sacred spark from an otherworldly chalice, we take all of that — everything we find through this radical religion of ours — and use it to bring a light of hope to the world.

— In faith, Dan

***We take all of that — everything we find through this radical religion of ours — and use it to bring a light of hope to the world.***

## Minister's Office Hours

Office hours in June are by appointment. During the week of June 19, Rev. Dan will be at the Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly.

## Our Mission

*Our mission is to:*

*GROW in spirit, heart and mind*

*LOVE through care and community*

*SERVE beyond ourselves*



A Welcoming  
Congregation

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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.*

**June 4 10 am RE SUNDAY — RE IMAGINE! Cassie Lengel**

Children and youth, parents and grandparents, members and friends and neighbors — join us as we play and imagine on RE Sunday. Come sing a song with us, learn what the classes have been doing, collaborate with others as you share your ideas, try your hand at some crafts, and help us recognize the hard work our teachers have put in this year. This service is always a time of joy and gratitude, and we hope you will love attending it as much as we've loved planning it.

**June 11 10 am CIRCLES OF COMPASSION Rev. Dan Schatz**

Unitarian Universalism is a compassionate faith. How do we embrace compassion and build on it to create beloved community?

**June 18 10 am INTERSECTING WITH PRIDE UCWC LGBTQ+ Members**

It is June, LGBTQ+ Pride Month. Rainbows are everywhere, including the flags on our sign and the front of our building. What does this mean for our LGBTQ+ Community? Is it merely performative, or is it truly part of a welcoming congregation? In this all-ages service, hear stories of being LGBTQ+ and stories from some of our LGBTQ+ members of how their identities as UUs intersect with their identities as LGBTQ+ people. There will be many ways to participate in this service, from home or in person, including anonymous sharing as part of the respect for each person's inherent worth and dignity.

**June 25 10 am YE OLDE HYMN SING Michael Werner and Jason Shaefer-Valerius**

After a pandemic-based hiatus of several years, please join us as Michael Werner and Jason Shaefer-Valerius return to lead us in a song-fest of our favorite hymns. Since 2001, Michael and our hymnists have helped us explore our hymnal and gather together to sing our favorite hymns. We've given up trying to stump the pianist and hymn leader; now we focus our energy and voices on old favorites, new melodies, and general good fun as we celebrate our congregational voice. Bring your hymnal and a list of hymns which you want us to sing, a sense of humor, and a warmed-up voice, and be a part of the largest pick-up choir in Chester County.

## Welcoming Congregation Status Renewal

We are very excited to be looking again at our status as a Welcoming Congregation here at UCWC. We have long held our community to be a safe space for LGBTQIA+ families and friends — making space and offering services to share welcome. We have seen our country face increasingly scary ideologies and practices that make welcoming and inclusion dearly needed for people with these identities.

We will spend time this upcoming year updating our understanding of LGBTQIA+ issues, learning new language, practicing new strategies for welcoming, worshipping together, and creating a safer and braver space in our community. If you would like to join a group to help make this possible, please reach out to email: [DLFD](mailto:DLFD).

# Lifespan Faith Development

## 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, we want to give them the affirmation and attention they deserve. But we can't do this without you.

## REflections

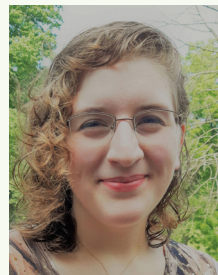
I love rainbows. And yes, who doesn't? But I really love them! They have always been an example to me of beginnings. The rain comes down, washes away the debris, soaks the ground, decorates leaves, and hangs in the air in droplets like tiny diamonds. And when the sun shines again, delicately embracing each droplet, together the light and water come together to create something new — a rainbow of colors.

Here in our congregation, we have seen how seemingly different things, like the raindrops and sunlight, can come together to create beauty. We've celebrated it at our Flower Service, we've sung it with our choir of voices, we've witnessed it in our Coming of Age Service. When our differences come together as one rich community, we all benefit from the minds and passions as we share with one another.

This June, we also see rainbows as we celebrate the diversity found in Pride Month. We welcome people of all different genders, sexualities, and walks of life to come together as we make this a safer and braver space that "can draw a circle" to include everyone inside. We especially are preparing to renew our status as a Welcoming Congregation, where the rainbow shines among us as we learn anew how to be inclusive.

The rainbow is a symbol of beginnings to me, and while June is the end of our year in RE, I think it is a perfect reminder that our journey together never really ends. This summer, take rest and replenish, for a new beginning is just around the corner.

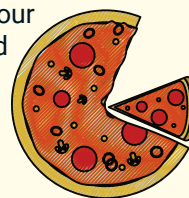
— Cassie Lengel, DLFD@ucwc.org



## RE Sunday Pizza Party

On June 4, after our RE Sunday Service, we invite our children and youth to join us downstairs to celebrate the end of another great year in RE together. Parents are encouraged to stay for the Annual Meeting, so we will offer a pizza lunch, and we will have games, activities, and crafts led by our very own DLFD Cassie Lengel.

If families have any games they would like to share, we would love to have you bring those with you. If you have any questions or dietary restrictions, please let us know as soon as possible at email: **DLFD**.



## RE Ice Cream Socials

Each summer our congregation's families and children, members and friends, gather to enjoy some sweet treats to beat the heat. Get to know one another and bond over chocolate and conversation while the children play and run off the sugar we'll bring.

This summer we will meet at West Goshen Park at the playground and pavilion, on Tuesday



June 20, Wednesday July 19, and Thursday August 17.

We will provide ice cream, and will offer vegan, low sugar, peanut free, and a variety of options to enjoy. Contact email: **RE** with any questions.

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## Stones in the Wall: Social Justice

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

## Diversity Book Group Selection Get Together (Used to Be Brunch) Sunday, June 25, 7:00 pm

Please come via Zoom (same link we've used all year) and bring 2-3 book titles that you think would be good for our Diversity Book Group to read next year. Bring a short description and a comment or two about each book. We'll share and keep a record, and then create a ballot to vote for our favorite nine books. You can suggest a couple movies for August and December, if we decide that's what we want to do.

Remember, any country, or culture, or group here in the U.S. that's different from us is deserving to be called "diversity" and would be of interest for us.

— Debby Kern

## Disrupt the Corrupt

On a beautiful Thursday evening, eight UCWC members joined about fifty others at our picturesque sister UU, the Unitarian Congregation of Delaware County in Media, for a multi-media presentation by March on Harrisburg (MoH).

Presenter Rabbi  
Michael Pollack,  
Executive Director



**UUJusticePA**  
Unitarian Universalist Justice Pennsylvania

of MoH, made his case that corruption is deeply entrenched in our political system in Pennsylvania. From dark money, to gerrymandering, to political PACS with no contribution limits, to the ability of lobbying groups to give unlimited numbers of "gifts" to our legislators, corruption is endemic here.

MoH counts UUJusticePA as an ally in fighting to reform the system. Three of their big planks are:

- **Open Primaries.** Permit all to participate in primaries. This helps temper winners from appealing to the extremes in their parties.
- **Ballot Initiative and Referendum.** Institute them, as they are currently not legal in Pennsylvania.
- **Gift Ban.** Establish tight limits on gifts to public officials.

HB484 is currently in the Pennsylvania House. For a complete list of their ideas to improve our democracy, click [this MoH link](#). Watch for our UUJusticePA and Gift Ban table in the sanctuary coming soon.

— Tom Buglio

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## Fun & Fellowship

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## Folk Singing

Our next get-together is Saturday, June 10 at 7:30 pm. We meet at the home of Linda and Steve Sander.

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. 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

## Pastoral Care

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



## Men's Group

The Men's Group will do things slightly different this time: Weather permitting, we will meet in person on Tuesday, June 6, at 4:00 pm in the parking lot of ChesLen Preserve at 1722 Embreeville Rd, Coatesville, PA 19320. 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 [mens-group](mailto:mens-group).



## 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](mailto:SGM).

Jun 2	Fri	<b>Family Game Night.</b> 7:00 pm. Sanctuary.
Jun 2-4	Fri-Sun	<b>Jubilee Anti-Racism Training.</b>
Jun 4	Sun	<b>Annual Meeting.</b> 11:15 am. Sanctuary. <b>RE Pizza Party.</b> After RE. Downstairs. See p. 3.
Jun 5	Mon	<b>Racial Justice Working Group.</b> 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact Pam Sapko. <b>Mon Executive Committee.</b> 7:00 pm. Zoom.
Jun 6	Tue	<b>Men's Group.</b> 7:00 pm. Zoom. See left.
Jun 7	Wed	<b>Small Group Ministry Leaders Meeting.</b> 7:00 pm.
Jun 10	Sat	<b>Folk Singing.</b> 7:30 pm. Home of Linda & Steve Sander. See p. 4.
Jun 12	Mon	<b>Religious Services Committee.</b> 7:00 pm.
Jun 13	Tue	<b>Program Council.</b> 7:00 pm. Zoom.
Jun 18	Sun	<b>Share the Plate Sunday.</b> Benefits <b>West Chester Food Cupboard.</b>
Jun 19	Mon	<b>Racial Justice Working Group.</b> 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact Pam Sapko.
Jun 20	Tue	<b>RE Ice Cream Social.</b> See p.3. <b>Board Meeting.</b> 6:30 pm. Zoom.
Jun 21	Wed	<b>Diversity Book Group.</b> 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 4. <b>UUJusticePA Reproductive Justice Meeting.</b> 7:00 pm. Zoom. Contact Susan Batchelor, email: <a href="mailto:reproductive-justice">reproductive-justice</a> .
Jun 21-25		<b>UUA General Assembly.</b>
Jun 27	Tue	<b>UUJusticePA Gun Violence Prevention Meeting.</b> 7:00 pm. Zoom. Contact Tom Buglio, email: <a href="mailto:gun-safety">gun-safety</a> . See p. 4.

### EVENTS OCCURRING REGULARLY:

<b>Most Thursdays</b>	<b>(On summer hiatus).</b> Spirit Singers Practice. at 7:00 pm. For specific dates, contact Miriam Davidson, email: <a href="mailto:choir">choir</a> .
<b>Various Dates</b>	<b>Small Group Ministry (Several Active Groups).</b> See <a href="#">web calendar</a> or contact email: <a href="#">SGM</a> . See left.

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

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