

# THE FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester

July 2023



## NOTES FROM REV. DAN

I had been at General Assembly for only a few hours when a colleague handed me my first ribbon of the week. It was an auspicious beginning – when I first attended GA, 36 years ago, the word in the Youth Caucus was “Whoever dies with the most ribbons wins.” I don’t subscribe to that philosophy anymore (though I could see many of our youth still do), but this ribbon was worth wearing. It proclaimed, “My thoughts on Article II are too complex to fit on a ribbon.”

Article II is the part of the Unitarian Universalist Association’s bylaws that currently contain the Principles and Purposes. We are required to consider changes every fifteen years, and this week, by an overwhelming margin (86.3%), the General Assembly voted to continue the conversation about a proposed new Article II that articulates a set of values centering around love.

While our current principles read like a poetic statement of faith – I sometimes grimace when I hear it referred to as our “creed” – the new proposal feels less like poetry and more like an agreement among congregations about how we want to be in the world. The emphasis is not on “affirming and promoting,” but on doing and living.

***We should be asking ourselves these questions anyway, not because there might be a UUA bylaw change, but because they will help us deepen as Unitarian Universalists both individually and as a congregation.***

As the week went on, I came to realize that the proposal does not really replace the Principles; instead it creates something new. The seven Principles will remain as important to us as ever, for as long as we choose to honor them. As our new President, Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, commented, “Bylaws are not the only place we hold our promises.” She also observed

that nobody can take the Principles away from anyone who holds them dear. (“I have never seen anyone take anything from a Unitarian Universalist,” she observed, “We are some of the most stubborn, proud, and beautiful people in the world!” She wasn’t wrong.)

Whatever our initial reactions to the proposal itself, I hope we can set our opinions aside long enough to talk deeply about the important questions it raises. What could it look like to center our Unitarian Universalist faith on love? What does “covenant” actually mean in our free religious community? Who are we as a people? What does it mean to be a Unitarian Universalist in the reality of the times we live in? How does our faith call us to live in the world?

We should be asking ourselves these questions anyway, not because there might be a UUA bylaw change, but because they will help us deepen as Unitarian Universalists both individually and as a congregation.

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## 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.*

**July 2 10 am**

## **MY COUNTRY'S T'ISMS AND THEE**

**Janet  
Hutchison**

UCWC member Janet Hutchison will explore the topic of patriotism and other "ism's" that define our individual and collective identities, while celebrating America in song.

**July 9 10 am**

## **COLLECTIVE HEALING FROM THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA**

**Emily  
Dougherty**

Emily Dougherty is a trauma informed yoga teacher who works with survivors of complex trauma. She will talk with us about the impact of trauma on individuals, communities, and society, and how you can support collective healing.

**July 16 10 am**

## **MAKING PEACE WITH GOD**

**Robin Garrett and  
Chris Hyson**

The faith of modern UUs draws on, "Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life." For those of us who are not theistically oriented, what level of comfort do we have with God talk in our services, in our faith, and in our lives?

Might we seek to open ourselves to God talk to better bridge the divide between the theistic and nontheistic both in our congregation and elsewhere and also perhaps enhance our spiritual lives?

**July 23 10 am**

## **THE ROLE OF HOPE IN OUR UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST LIVES**

**Mark Bernstein**

Sir Francis Bacon wrote, "Hope is a good breakfast, but it is a bad supper." While Hope springs eternal, what good is it if we don't spring into action? In this sermon, Mark will explore the relationship between Hope and Action and share his thoughts on our responsibility as Unitarian Universalists to engage in both.

Mark Bernstein is a former full-time staff member with the Central East Region of the UUA and currently works as Adjunct Staff with the Region. He has been a hopeful member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Delaware County in Media for the past 30 years.

**July 30 10 am**

## **SINGING THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES**

**UCWC Folk  
Singing Group**

After a three-year Covid hiatus, the annual summer folk singing service returns. Our theme this year asks you to raise your voices with us in praise of the Seven Principles.

Well-known as well as not-so-well-known songs will be sung, so printed lyrics will be distributed. A splendid time is guaranteed for all.

# Lifespan Faith Development

## 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 7:00 pm at West Goshen Park at the playground and pavilion, on Wednesday, July 19, and Thursday, August 17.

If you have trouble finding us, please call/text/email so we can connect you. 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.



## REflections: Religious Education Update

What do you think about when you hear that we are "Faithfully Becoming?" Several of our members, Rev. Dan, and myself just finished attending this year's General Assembly where this was the theme. With a forward focus, we explored where our faith and association stand right now, and where we want it to go. Who are we becoming as UUs? What are we dedicating ourselves to faithfully?

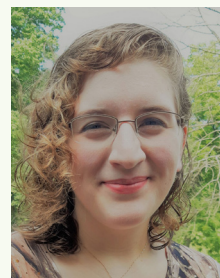
As usual, there were a million things I wanted to attend and connect with people about, but the Spirit of Life blows where she wills, and I ended up in many rooms, with different groups of folks, all talking about how we can make our Association, our congregations, and overall our UU faith a more radically welcoming and inclusive space for people of all identities.

How do we become more inclusive of and center the voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color? How do we make sure that people of every ability can fully participate and feel cherished in our spaces? How do we support our LGBTQIA+ communities in general, in light of current political decisions, and as people with inherent worth and dignity?

While the academic in me was ready to dig into big topics and philosophize on what we believe and why, instead I heard loud and clear the message behind "Deeds before Creeds." As UUs, we know that our actions speak louder than words, that we need to walk the walk and not just talk the talk. It doesn't matter what words we use to philosophically describe our tradition if we are not out there living it — and to me that means making space and building up radically inclusive spaces with and for people.

I hope to use this passion and energy to support the renewal of our Welcoming Congregation status this fall, to be true to this care and attention to the marginalized, to practice better relationships with the congregation and our families, and to help make UCWC a place where all are free to be their truest selves. Who will you faithfully become?

— Cassie Lengel  
Email: DLFD



## 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 the 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 welcome, 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**.

## Pastoral Care

The **Pastoral Care Team** contact for this month is **Carrie Sandler**



## Men's Group

The Men's Group will meet on the **second** Tuesday in July (the first Tuesday is July 4). Weather permitting, we will meet in person on Tuesday, July 11, at 4:00 pm in the parking lot of the Natural Land's Stroud Preserve at **454 North Creek Road** to hike. 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**.



## Minister's Schedule

Rev. Dan will be on vacation from July 5 through August 2, and sabbatical from August 3 through October 21. During the sabbatical, he will be unavailable by email, phone, or text.

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: **administrator** or the Executive Team at email: **executive-team**.

## 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.

If you are interested in joining a group, please write to [SGM@ucwc.org](mailto:SGM@ucwc.org).

## Fun & Fellowship

### Folk Singing

Our next get-together is Saturday, July 8 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 are still welcome, but you must wear a mask the entire night, even when singing.





## Stones in the Wall: Social Justice

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



Ready for some good news? The UCWC Criminal Justice team is pleased to share with you this **encouraging article** about collaborative community policing. (This *New York Times* link may not work for non-subscribers. If so, contact email: **criminal-justice** for an alternate source of this information.)

Want to learn more about the progress and problems with our local, state, and Federal criminal legal system? Want to find out ways you can make a difference and work for change? Contact us at email: **criminal-justice**, and we will help you find that part of the solution which will be a good fit for you to take on.

## UCWC Members Join Wear Orange Day in West Chester



A contingent of UCWC members concerned about the proliferation of gun violence joined other concerned Chester Countians to observe Wear Orange Day on Friday, June 2, on the old courthouse steps in West Chester. Wear Orange Day is a national yearly remembrance of those lost to gun violence ([wearorange.org](http://wearorange.org)), organized by CeaseFirePA. The West Chester rally featured speakers such as State Representative Chris Pielli, Chester County DA Deb Ryan, Rev. Daryl Perry of Coatesville (who lost a son to a shooting), and Madeline Barbezat, a high school senior who gave a strong view on how school shootings have overshadowed her life growing up.

UCWC members Shelly Case, Gerry Geiss, Edith Templeton, Kathy and Chris Beatty, and Rick London joined the rally. Tom Buglio, leader of **UUJusticePA's Gun Violence Prevention Team**, spoke at the end of the rally about an ongoing gun raffle (including an AR-15 rifle) by a local political group to raise money for upcoming elections.

After the rally concluded, he led around twenty people to the front door of their local office and dropped a signed letter requesting that they stop the raffle as others left chalk messages on the sidewalk. As a result of many letters, email requests, and coverage in the *Daily Local News*, the gun raffle has been postponed.

Interested in helping reduce gun violence? Join Tom (email: **gun-safety**) at his monthly Zoom meeting. The next meeting is Tuesday, July 25, at 7:00 pm.

## UUSC Update

We read about refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants so often, we're at risk of not thinking about each report fully, and it is easy to consider them as all the same. People may seek to be in another country for a lot of reasons – to earn income for work that changes with the seasons or due to climate change, escape a dangerous situation where they are at risk of harm, or fear of persecution because of indelible or other characteristics.

This UUSC article, "**An Introduction To Asylum-Seekers, Refugees, and Global Migration**," is a good place to start. It is also important to be aware of which countries host the most refugees, which host the fewest, and why. As a citizen of the world, what is the answer?

Your kind **donation to UUSC** will help, and it takes only a moment online. Thanks for considering it.

# Calendar

All email addresses  
@ucwc.org

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

## Notes from Dan

Continued

I hope that in the coming year, we find ways to get out from our social and congregational “bubbles” and hear from Unitarian Universalists across the country, paying special attention to those who are different from us, whether in age, background, or lived experience.

I hope we engage the conversation from a place of curiosity, abundance, and hope, rather than fear. I hope we are open, honest, and gentle in our conversations, and that we listen more than we talk.

Whatever happens in the final vote next year, we will still be the people and religion we are. We will still be the congregation that grows in spirit, heart and mind, loves through care and community, and serves beyond ourselves. We will still be the faith of the free. We will still be people with open minds, loving hearts, and giving hands. And if we do it right, then pass or fail, we will have grown deeper in Unitarian Universalism and closer with each other.

My Summer leave this month will be followed by a brief sabbatical in the late Summer and Fall (I’ll be back in time for the auction). I look forward to the conversations when I return. In the meantime, I ask that you love one another, listen together, and open your spirits to possibility.

In faith, Dan

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|--------|-----|---|
| Jul 3  | Mon | <b>Racial Justice Ministry.</b> 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact Pam Sapko for more information.  |
| Jul 8  | Sat | <b>Folk Singing.</b> 7:30 pm. Home of Linda & Steve Sander. See p. 4.   |
| Jul 10 | Mon | <b>Religious Services Committee.</b> 7:00 pm.   |
| Jul 11 | Tue | <b>Men’s Group.</b> 4:00 pm. Stroud Preserve Parking Lot. See p. 4.   |
| Jul 16 | Sun | <b>Share the Plate Sunday.</b> Benefits <b>Planned Parenthood.</b> Contact email: <a href="#">share-the-plate</a> for more information. |
| Jul 17 | Mon | <b>Racial Justice Ministry.</b> 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact Pam Sapko for more information.  |
| Jul 19 | Wed | <b>Ice Cream Social.</b> 7:00 pm. West Goshen Park. See p. 3.   |
| Jul 25 | Tue | <b>UUJusticePA Gun Violence Prevention Meeting.</b> 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 5.  |

### EVENTS OCCURRING REGULARLY:

**Most Thursdays (On Summer Hiatus) Spirit Singers Practice.** at 7:00 pm. For specific dates, contact Miriam Davidson, email: [choir](#), or if you are interested in joining when practices resume.

**Various Dates Small Group Ministry (Several Active Groups).** See [web calendar](#) for dates and email: [SGM](#) for available dates and times. See p. 4.

## The Fellowtarian Wishes You a Happy and Healthy Summer



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

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