

THE FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester

January 2024



NOTES FROM REV. DAN

Ring out the old, ring in the new – 2024 is upon us! It's time for New Year's Eve parties, noisemakers, and lists of resolutions. In my home, it's also the beginning of a weeks-long struggle to get the pine needles out of the carpet. Of course, New Year's is just a date on the calendar, and in some sense celebrating the day is a little like getting excited when all the numbers in the odometer to flip back to zero. On the other hand, many of us do get excited about that.

What New Year's can do is give us a chance to reflect on where we've been and where we're headed. (If we're given to introspection, the odometer does the same thing.) It's a marker in our lives and a way of taking stock.

When I think of the past year, I remember friends lost and friends made,

What New Year's can do is give us a chance to reflect on where we've been and where we're headed.

moments of wonder, and of beauty, and of fear. I remember hard good-byes, and the joy of old friends returning. I remember laughter and tears and sometimes both at the same time. I remember deep breaths, difficult conversations, understanding, forgiveness, and love. In our congregation, it's been largely the same.

With the new year comes new beginnings. In our congregation we're welcoming Kelly Piscitello as our new Office Administrator. There will be new members, services, and celebrations. There will be conversations, discernment, and connections. And this year, too, there will be love.

There is always love.

May your new year be blessed with sweet memories of the old, peace in this moment, and joyful anticipation of wonders to come.

In faith, Dan

Our Mission

Our mission is to:

GROW in spirit, heart
and mind

LOVE through care
and community

SERVE beyond
ourselves

Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry continues its work related to the health of the ministries of the Congregation. We were pleased that many were able to attend the recent in-person meetings to process questions and emotions related to the challenging situations that ended in the resignation of our emerita minister. Many expressed interest in continuing those conversations.

We would like to hear from you about what is needed for next steps. One option is a Zoom meeting to let folks on-line participate. While Zoom meetings have their limitations, we want to be open to including all interested parties.

Please reach out to the Committee on Ministry to let us know what you would specifically like to discuss and what format (zoom, in person, other) you prefer. Please contact email: **COM** and let us know your thoughts.



A Welcoming
Congregation

501 South High Street
West Chester PA 19382
610-692-5966

office@ucwc.org
www.ucwc.org

Sunday Services

Religious Education
and Babysitting
Sundays at 10:00 am



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.

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 email: **SGM**.

January 7 10 am

PILGRIMS Jen Feld, Janet Hutchison, Chris Hyson, Mark Steel

Pilgrims are different from tourists: they travel for spiritual reasons, not just to relax or for fun. Pilgrimage is a search for meaning, purpose, values, and truth. Several UCWC members share their pilgrimage stories today.

January 14 10 am

CHANGEMAKERS Cassie Lengel, DLFD

Join us for an all-ages service in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. as we explore what it means to be changemakers. Bring your helping hands as we practice interactive activities and listen to stories to inspire us to action.

January 21 10 am

THE STRENGTH WE NEVER KNEW

Rev. Dan Schatz

We often associate strength with stolid rigidity. Yet many traditions teach a different kind of strength, one that can carry us through our most challenging times.

January 28 10 am

EVERY SOUL

Rev. Dan Schatz.

What does it mean to be an inclusive faith that values equity, inherent worth, and human dignity?

Men's Group

The UCWC Men's Group will meet in-person on Tuesday, January 2, at 7:00 pm in the Social Hall. (No zoom this time.). The topic will be "What is Beauty?" 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**.

Introducing Kelly Piscitello

Welcome to our new Office Administrator, Kelly Piscitello!

With a career spanning non-profits, human services, and marketing & development, Kelly has honed her administrative skills while navigating social media and tech landscapes. Prior to this, she spent a number of years as an EMT and a paramedic and embraced an 11-year stint as a stay-at-home mom to her four kids aged 20, 16, 8, and 2.



In her personal life, Kelly thrives on camping adventures, crafting cozy crochet projects, whipping up delicious baked goods, and lending a helping hand wherever possible. Her ultimate dream? A snug, off-grid cabin nestled in the woods, complete with a wood stove, a thriving garden, and a band of feral cats — just as long as the Internet manages to find its way there.

Lifespan Faith Development

UU History and Theologies

Monday, January 29, on Zoom

What's the difference between a Unitarian and a Universalist? Who were the Socinians? What does Count Dracula have in common with the Unitarianism? Who was Pete Seeger's favorite circuit riding Universalist preacher? What does it mean to be a religious liberal? Could it be that UUs actually have a theological tradition of our own?

We'll cover this and more in Rev. Dan Schatz's Zoom class and slideshow on **Unitarian Universalist History and Theologies on Monday, January 29 from 6:30-8:30 pm.** There will be stories, new perspectives, and some mind-blowing theology. Bring your questions and invite a friend if you know someone who is interested in learning more about our "Faith of the Free." The class is open to all — newcomers as well as those who would like to grow in their understanding of Unitarian Universalism. "Walk-ins" are welcome, but it is extra helpful to RSVP in advance to email: [minister](mailto:minister@uua.org).

REflections

Religious Education Update

As we are a few months into our RE Program year, I wanted to share some of the highlights that I've witnessed from our children.

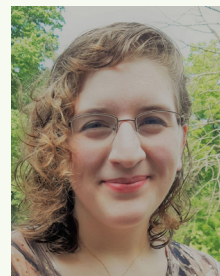
I've seen the gummy smiles of babies and the playfulness of our young children as they explore our nursery and get to know Amy, our new staff person. The play kitchen is definitely a favorite, although the parachute is a close second.

I've seen new teachers interacting with the children and how our children have acted like ambassadors guiding them through what we do in RE with kindness and flexibility.

I've seen the creativity as our children take inspiration from world religions and stories to create artwork like their own personal Tree of Life, or watercolor meditations, or a wreath of their helping hands in service and activism, and so much more.

I've seen our youth group thrive with laughter and silliness, then turn around and question the socioeconomic problems their story faces or stand up for the rights and safety of animals.

I've seen our RE program be small, but persistent; our children bringing light and life to our space with their bright minds. I've seen friendships made, new faces welcomed, big questions explored, and I can't wait to see what is coming next. I facilitate RE, our teachers make it happen, but our children bring it to life.



Cassie Lengel
Email: [DLFD](mailto:DLFD@uua.org)

Article II Training

The new proposed Article II of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) represents a different way of expressing our UU identity and our UU community. At the General Assembly this coming year, the delegates from each congregation will vote on the adoption of the proposed Article II. To that end, the Board would like to invite you to a conversation about the Article to understand, explore, and clarify what it means to you, to our congregation and to the UUA.

This is meant to be a conversation to deepen our knowledge of what is in the proposed Article, to try it on to see if it fits. The board will also sponsor a session in the spring where members will get a chance to share and air their opinions on whether this proposed article takes our congregations in a direction that makes sense or whether the current wording is a better fit. A session led by the UUA will be held on Zoom for several congregations from our region on February 14 — but more about that later.

This session, facilitated by the Board, will take place in our building on Saturday, January 20, from noon to 2:00 pm. Lunch will be provided, so please RSVP by January 16 — but walk-ins will not be turned away. If you need babysitting, please let us know (email: [board](mailto:board@uua.org)) by January 13, so that we can make arrangements.

From the President



This is the season when the word gratitude comes into mind. I find it a good exercise to stop occasionally, to look at what is around me so I can appreciate the present and anticipate the future. Just to know that this congregation exists, that kindness, caring, and acceptance are more than

just words might be enough but there is so much more.

I am thankful that there is a place where I have been able to develop and follow my spiritual journey, where I have made some good friends, where I have been given the opportunity to learn about many social issues through my past involvement with social justice projects, attended classes and groups that helped me think at a deeper level, and had a chance to be creative. That's my personal appreciation but my gratitude toward the wider congregation also looms large.

Thank you to everyone who have made and continue to make UCWC a vibrant spiritual community. There are so many contributions to our community including attending services, being part of a small group ministry, bringing children to the RE program, teaching RE, participating in adult

religious education opportunities, volunteering time, taking our values and principles into the community via social justice efforts, pastoral care, financial support, and a host of other ways that your involvement adds to our spiritual community.

It takes the involvement of people to make our community work. Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the people who make the coffee every week for after service. My gratitude to everyone who has taken a leadership role as well as our wonderful professional staff, Rev. Dan, Cassie, Jason, Miriam, and Maggie. I'm also grateful to those who have been part of the greater community of UUs by attending the General Assembly and bringing back information, those who have attended national and regional trainings, read the UU magazine, etc. What are you grateful for at UCWC (personally and for the congregation)?

This is also a time when I think about new beginnings as we enter the new year. We will have a new office administrator, a new person heading up our Stewardship Committee, a revitalized Membership Committee, new members, and whatever else lies ahead yet to reveal itself. I look forward to traveling on the road with all of you and wish everyone a healthy, happy and rewarding New Year.

— Ed Cohle



Stones in the Wall: Social Justice

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

TED How Racism Hurts Us All TED

A Series of TED Talk Conversations

The Racial Justice Ministry invites you to TED Talk sessions, held after service every Sunday during January from noon to 1:30 pm in the social room. Join in for a pizza and salad lunch, and view and discuss the presentation. Come for one week or all four.

Jan 7 Heather McGhee

Racism Has a Cost for Everyone

Jan 14 Dan Gannon

Facing Racism: What You Can Do to Fight Injustice

Jan 21 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

The Danger of a Single Story

Jan 28 Kimberle Crenshaw

The Urgency of Intersectionality

Contact email: racial-justice with any questions. Childcare may be available. Please let us know at least a week in advance if you need childcare. We look forward to seeing you there.

A Temporary Ask Becomes a Fulfilling Ongoing Collaboration West Chester University Resource Pantry

Last September, a temporary need expressed by the West Chester University Resource Pantry at The Center for Civic Engagement and Social Impact at WCU, is now a collaboration that is in its second year. CCESI needed volunteers to transport food from the West Chester Food Cupboard to the WCU Resource Pantry on campus every Thursday.

A few volunteers solicited from UCWC's Safe Harbor volunteer list began picking up and delivering these weekly shipments as a temporary solution. It worked so well that UCWC volunteers were asked to continue, and they transported the food once a week for a total of 35 weeks during the fall 2022, spring 2023, and summer 2023 semesters. We are now an additional thirteen weeks into the fall 2023 semester and are still going strong.

The West Chester University Resource Pantry helps address food and basic needs insecurities among WCU students. At the resource pantry, all WCU undergraduate and graduate students can find food, personal care items (e.g., deodorant, shampoo, and toothpaste), school supplies, and career clothing. Most of the food comes from the Chester County Food Bank, the West Chester Food Cupboard, and the WCU South Campus gardens.

If interested in participating in this collaboration, please speak to Joshua Munz (email: wcu-pantry).

Diversity Book Group

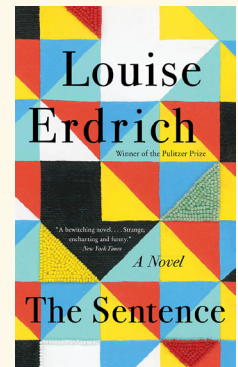
Sun, Jan 14 7:00-8:30 Zoom
Led by Sandy Schaal

The Sentence by Louise Erdrich (author of
The Night Watchman)

In this *New York Times* bestselling novel, Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winner Louise Erdrich creates a wickedly funny ghost story, a tale of passion, of a complex marriage, and of a woman's relentless errors.

A small independent bookstore in Minneapolis is haunted from November 2019 to November 2020 by the store's most annoying customer. Flora dies on All Souls' Day, but she simply won't leave the store.

Tookie, who has landed a job selling books after years of incarceration, must solve the mystery of this haunting while at the same time trying to understand all that occurs in Minneapolis during a year of grief, astonishment, isolation, and furious reckoning.



Your UCWC Criminal Justice Team

**ENSURING VOTING RIGHTS INSIDE THE WALLS • SUPPORTING CITIZENS RETURNING FROM PRISON
• SUPPORTING LIFERS AT CHESTER STATE PRISON • LOBBYING TO END SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN
PENNSYLVANIA AND END MASS INCARCERATION**

In addition to ongoing activities (below), lobbying efforts have expanded to participation in the campaign to eliminate solitary confinement in Pennsylvania. Learn more [here](#).

- Working with other local organizations to ensure access for qualified voters incarcerated at Chester County Prison
- Participating in Chester County's Re-entry Coalition to ensure that people returning from prison can, like every other citizen, find employment, access stable housing, support their kids and families, and become active contributors to their communities
- Visiting with elderly inmates including aging lifers at SCI Chester (the state prison in Chester, PA)
- Lobbying the state legislature for passage of laws to reduce and ultimately eliminate Pennsylvania's drastically excessive rate of mass incarceration

Email criminal-justice to join our efforts or just to learn more about any of the above.

Calendar

All email addresses
@ucwc.org

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

Pastoral Care

The **Pastoral Care
Team** contact for
this month is
Diane Cohle.



Jan 1	Mon	Racial Justice Ministry. 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact email: racial-justice for more information.
Jan 2	Tue	Men's Group. 7:00 pm. Sanctuary. See p. 2.
Jan 3	Wed	Small Group Ministry Leaders. 7:00 pm.
Jan 7	Sun	How Racism Hurts Us All, Session 1. Noon. Social Rm. See p. 4.
Jan 8	Mon	Religious Services Committee. 7:00 pm.
Jan 9	Tue	Council Meeting. 7:00 pm.
Jan 14	Sun	How Racism Hurts Us All, Session 2. Noon. Social Rm. See p. 4.
		Diversity Book Group. 7:00-8:30 pm. Zoom. See p. 5.
Jan 15	Mon	MLK Day of Service. Details to come.
		Racial Justice Ministry. 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact email: racial-justice for more information.
Jan 16	Tue	Board Meeting. 6:30 pm.
Jan 17	Wed	UUJusticePA Reproductive Justice Meeting. 7:30 pm. Zoom.
Jan 20	Sat	Article II Training. Noon-2:00 pm. At UCWC. See p. 3.
		Folk Singing. 7:30 pm. Home of Linda and Steve Sander. See below.
Jan 21	Sun	Share the Plate Sunday. Benefits Melton Center.
		How Racism Hurts Us All, Session 3. Noon. Social Rm. See p. 4.
Jan 28	Sun	How Racism Hurts Us All, Session 4. Noon. Social Rm. See p. 4.

EVENTS OCCURRING REGULARLY:

Most Thursdays	Spirit Singers Practice. at 7:30 pm. For specific dates, contact Miriam Davidson, email: choir .
Various Dates	Small Group Ministry (Several Active Groups). See web calendar for dates. Contact email: SGM for availability. See p. 2.

Folk Singing

Our next get-together is Saturday, January 20, 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. (We are not a performance group.) Capable musicians should bring their instruments. Bring a munchie if you wish. Maps are in the foyer. Please test for covid or wear a mask.

Contact Steve at email: [folk-singing](#) with questions or driving instructions.



Minister's Office Hours

Rev. Dan is available for appointments on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. He can be reached by email: [minister](#) or by cell phone. Dan will be on Study Leave through January 14.

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](#)
Ed Cohle, President email: [president](#)
Cassie Lengel, Director of Lifespan Faith Development email: [DLFD](#)
Steve and Linda Sander, *The Fellowtarian* Editors email: [fellowtarian](#)