

THE FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester

March 2024



NOTES FROM REV. DAN

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.

This simple sentence, created by the members of our congregation years ago, is part of every Sunday service in our congregation. Like our current mission statement of "Grow, love, serve," it reminds us who we are, what brings us together, and who we intend to be. We call it an "affirmation," but it's really a vision for our congregation as a whole.

It involves all of us and requires all of us. Caring means more than offering a hand, here and there, although that's absolutely an important part of our congregational life. It also means opening our hearts and minds to each other's truths, listening deeply, and helping to create a congregation in which we can meet all kinds of needs.

Welcoming means more than greeting people when they come in the door. It means reaching out and inviting people in, and being willing to embrace new ways of being together as our congregation grows and changes. And thriving means more than paying our basic bills – it means getting to the point where we can expand our programming, with more staff, resources, and tools to be the

caring and welcoming congregation we are.

This month we begin our annual stewardship campaign. Some of you have been members a long time, and I hope that as you pledge for the coming year, you think not only about what this congregation means to you, but what it will take to create the thriving, caring, and welcoming congregation of your dreams.

Others are new to our congregation, and to pledging. If you are ready to pledge, I hope you will give from the heart, recognizing the fulfillment, joy, and meaning you've found here, and giving so that others may find the same. (If you need help figuring out how or what to pledge, just write to email: **stewardship**, or reach out to me and I'll help connect you.) And I hope all of us will think of our friends who might just be Unitarian Universalists without yet knowing it and invite them to come and experience this congregation with you.

We aspire to be a thriving, caring, and welcoming community. Together we can and will make that happen.

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

Religious Education
and Babysitting
Sundays at 10:00 am



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Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Care Team contact for this month is **Cathy Vogt.**



March 3 10 am KICK IT UP A NOTCH Rev. Dan Schatz

Come celebrate our UCWC community. This service will feature special music from The Spirit Singers and the Intergenerational Choir, as well as several of our UCWC musicians, along with words from Rev. Dan and others.

March 10 10 am IT'S A SURPRISE Janet Hutchison

UCWC member, Janet Hutchison, will "surprise you" in a talk about surprises of all kinds. How can your spiritual beliefs and journey help you deal with surprises, and how do surprises affect your faith and spiritual journey? Come and hear. You might be surprised!

March 17 10 am THE INTERDEPENDENT WEB Rev. Dan Schatz

Honoring the interdependent web of all existence has long been a core value of Unitarian Universalism. Nurturing our relationships with the Earth, with humanity, and with reality itself can become an important part of our spiritual growth.

March 24 10 am TRANSGENDER VISIBILITY Rev. Dan Schatz with Eben Hilpert

As we honor Transgender Day of Visibility (a week early), we will share reflections and that lift up the lives, experiences, and joys of transgender and non-binary people. We also welcome our special guest Eben Hilpert to our service. Eben (he/him) has a masters degree in clinical mental health counseling from Antioch University and has been a counselor at Arrive Therapy for the last two years. Eben has over eighteen years experience in the mental health field, working with the trans community, in court systems, health clinics and homeless shelters. Eben came out as queer in 1994, and started his transition in 2001.

March 31 10 am LISTEN TO THE MORNING Rev. Dan Schatz

How does hope come into our lives? On Easter Sunday, we explore the renewal of dawn – and the second dawn.

Men's Group

The UCWC Men's Group will meet in-person on Tuesday, March 5, at 7:00 pm, in the sanctuary – **no zoom this time.** Tilo will lead a discussion on "Immigration." All men are welcome. 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

Rev. Dan is available for appointments on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. He can be reached by email at email: minister or by cell phone.

From the President



Have you noticed that a number of new people have been coming through our doors on Sunday? Like a lot of you, I tend to talk with the people I know after services. Lately, I've been making a renewed effort to not do that but to seek out new folks to make them feel welcomed and comfortable. All sorts of people walk through that door on Sunday. Some are very reserved, anxious, and apprehensive.

I remember the first time I attended services in various UU congregations in the past. Sometimes I was ignored, left to myself. It was not pleasant, and I did not want to return. I remember how that felt, and I think about these new folks doing the same thing I did many years ago, looking for a warm friendly place. Even the outgoing, long-time UUs that I've met are looking to see if we are that type of congregation.

Our congregation has a lot to offer, and we want people to experience all that we offer. We want people to come back. I'm asking each of you to seek out people new to our congregation and spend some time after service with them rather than just running to the same people that I know you want to see.

Each of you are our "welcoming ambassadors." Introduce any new person to others in the congregation. Try to get some conversation going. I know we are that kind of congregation, but we sometimes forget. Offer to take the person back to get coffee or a snack. Leave yourself some time to talk with the folks you also see every Sunday. I see a few of you already doing this and appreciate your efforts.

Of course, you know that our Stewardship Campaign is about to start. Thanks to all those working on the kickoff dinner and the campaign itself. Hopefully everyone is thinking about what they can afford to pledge this year.

I know the reflex is to look at what you gave last year and then make a decision. I've always found that hems me in a bit. Start from a clean slate and see what you think you can give. Thanks to everyone for your support in keeping our congregation a vibrant community.

— Ed Cohle

March Is Pledge Month

The stewardship drive is underway. You should have already received a letter from Rev. Dan and Board President Ed Cohle along with the stewardship brochure. If not, please contact the Stewardship Committee (see below).

Our financial commitments to this congregation form the basis of what we can do together. Please make your 2024-2025 financial pledge this month. Pledge cards will be available before and after the service the first two Sundays of March. We hope you will attend the special Stewardship Sunday service on March 3.

You can make your pledge online at ucwc.org/pledge or by returning your pledge card. If you have questions or would like to be contacted about your pledge, let us know at email: stewardship.

Stewardship "Thriving, Caring, Welcoming" Dinner and Entertainment March 2 5:00-8:00 pm

Ready for some fun? Our stewardship campaign kicks off Saturday, March 2, with a catered dinner from Bella Cucina — lasagnas, sides, garlic bread, and a gluten-free, vegan entrée. BYOB (beer or wine) if you choose; non-alcoholic beverages will be provided. We will start with hors d'oeuvres and fun activities. Later there will be entertainment from a few musicians you may know from UCWC who will play songs you know and a couple you can sing along with.

Everyone with an interest in UCWC is invited. There will be activities for children in the RE space.

RSVPs ([click here](#)) are appreciated by February 27, whether or not you are coming (enter 0 if you cannot come). You can indicate your dietary restrictions/preferences and children's ages on the RSVP form, and there is the option to bring an hors d'oeuvre or dessert if you choose — these will not be catered.

Don't know if you can come or not? Walk-ins are welcome. Can't participate in person due to health concerns? Let us know — we will deliver a treat to you the next day. Contact Nancy Artus at email: stewardship.

Lifespan Faith Development

Kids Activities at the Stewardship Dinner

Families, children, and youth are invited to join us at the stewardship dinner on March 2. We will gather with everyone to enjoy a catered meal, then invite children and youth to join us downstairs for a game night. Bring your favorite board games or group activities for a night of fun and fellowship.

REflections: Religious Education Update

What do we mean when we say that something is thriving?

This year we have gathered together to celebrate and support one another and the congregation with the words Thriving, Caring, and Welcoming, but what does that mean for us to truly be thriving? Is it a matter of numbers – adding members subtracting issues and multiplying money? Is it a matter of sustaining and enriching our community with quality relationships and meaning making? Is it a matter of being visible and standing up for things? Is it a matter of being innovative and creative?

We might quibble about which we think are the most important of the above, though they all seem to be a part of thriving or thriving can be a part of them. But I contend that the most important indicator of thriving is joy. Imagine doing or having any of the above things, but without joy, and it no longer fits the description of thriving.

But joy, that is where our hearts and minds, our love, and our values, truly engage. Joy is a new child coming into class and becoming instant friends over snack and art time. Joy is laughing at the antics and terrible puns of Rev. Dan and Cassie at our services for all ages. Joy is holding each other's concerns with a proffered hug. Joy is that relief of flags and pronoun stickers indicating welcome. All this and more are just examples I've seen this month of the pervasive joy in our congregation, and that is where I see us thriving. Do what you can, do what gives you joy, come and thrive with us.



Cassie Lengel, email: [DLFD](#)

Religious Education Open House

Fidgets, singing, artwork, and smiles! Our children and youth have been busy this year in their RE classes, as they've gotten to know and welcome some new faces and returning friends. They learn and play together in RE – from our nursery friends and their sweet smiles, to our Spirit Play children and their bright wondering minds, to our Neighboring Faiths class and their thoughtful answers and creative artwork, all the way up to our youth group and the ways they have stood up for justice and searched for meaning in their Dungeons and Dragons group.

Join us for a special coffee hour after service on March 17 as we show you even a little bit of what amazing things we've been up to this year.

RE Schedule for March

Join us this month as we gather for more RE opportunities. On the 3rd we will enjoy a Time for All Ages story and a song from our Intergenerational Choir before heading to our RE classes. On the 10th we will have a special children's worship circle with our normal RE classes. On the 17th after our Time for All Ages and RE classes, we will celebrate with a special RE Open House Coffee Hour. On the 24th and 31st we will gather again for Times for All Ages and RE classes.

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](#).

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. "Explorations" examines what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist, as we delve into our common faith and our individual experiences. RSVP to email: **DLFD** for more information or see our calendar to join our sessions as you are able. We will be meeting on Wednesdays March 6, March 20, April 3, April 17, and May 1 from 7:00-8:30pm via Zoom.

Adult RE: Weekly Mindfulness Meditation

Join us every Sunday for a Mindfulness Meditation session to explore a topic, meditate together, and reflect as we support each other's spiritual journeys.

When: 9:20-9:50 am

Where: The meditation room
(between the coat closet and the name tags)

Who: Everyone is welcome regardless of experience level

Why: Meditation promotes relaxation, focus, emotional health, self-awareness, memory, kindness, and better sleep quality.

About the instructor: The sessions are led by Dagmar Cofer, a seasoned instructor and practitioner of meditation. Dagmar has a master's degree in applied meditation studies and over two decades of experience as a teacher of stress reduction and mindfulness practice and mindful meditation.

Calling All Newcomers!

Path to Membership Sun, Mar 24 1:00 pm on Zoom

Are you thinking about membership at UCWC? Our single session Path to Membership class, taught by Sarah Hyson and Rev. Dan, is a great way to learn more about our congregation and what membership is all about. Reach out to Rev. Dan at email: **minister** for more information. The link will be at **ucwc.org/zoom**. If you are interested in membership but unable to attend, just email Rev. Dan.

Social Justice

Diversity Book Group

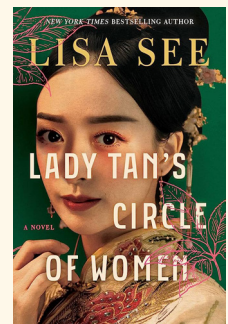
Sunday, March 10 7:00-8:30 Zoom Led by Marilyn Gross
***Lady Tan's Circle of Women* by Lisa See (author of *Island of Sea Women*)**

This novel (based on an actual historical woman, Tan Yunxian) celebrates the real life of a young female doctor living during the time of the Ming Dynasty. Tan Xunxian is raised by her grandparents and mentored by her grandmother who is one of only a handful of female doctors in China.

Despite her more liberal upbringing, Yunxian can't escape what society expects of her forever, including marriage, forsaking her independence, and leaving behind her best friend and confidant, Meiling.

The author does an incredible job emphasizing the significance of our own circle of women and the importance of building each other up. Readers of all kinds will find something compelling in *Lady Tan's Circle of Women* as it is part historical fiction, part mystery, part women's fiction.

Contact Debby Kern at email: **diversity-book-group**.



Calendar

All email addresses
@ucwc.org

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

Folk Singing

Our next get-together is Friday, March 22, at 7:30 pm. We meet at the home of Linda and Steve Sander.

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

All vaccinated adults are welcome. Please self-test before coming. If you choose not to self-test, a mask will be required, even while singing.

Mar 2	Sat	Stewardship Kick-off Dinner. 5:00 pm. Sanctuary. See p. 3.
Mar 3	Sun	Special Stewardship Sunday Service.
Mar 4	Mon	Racial Justice Ministry. 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact email: racial-justice for more information.
		Executive Committee Meeting. 7:00 pm.
Mar 5	Tue	Men's Group. 7:00 pm. Sanctuary. See p. 2.
Mar 6	Wed	Explorations. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 5.
		Small Group Ministry Leaders. 7:00 pm.
Mar 9	Sat	Women's Group. Noon. Email: womens-group .
Mar 10	Sun	Diversity Book Group. 7:00-8:30 pm. Zoom. See p. 5.
Mar 11	Mon	Religious Services Committee. 7:00 pm.
Mar 12	Tue	Council Meeting. 7:00 pm.
Mar 17	Sun	Share the Plate Sunday. Benefits the Educational Equity Alliance.
		Religious Education Open House. See p. 4.
Mar 18	Mon	Racial Justice Ministry. 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact email: racial-justice for more information.
Mar 19	Tue	Board Meeting. 6:30 pm.
Mar 20	Wed	Explorations. 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 5.
		UUJusticePA Reproductive Justice Meeting. 7:30 pm. Zoom.
Mar 22	Fri	Folk Singing. 7:30 pm. Home of Linda & Steve Sander. See left.
Mar 24	Sun	Path to Membership. 1:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 5.

EVENTS OCCURRING REGULARLY:

Sundays	Mindfulness Meditation. 9:20-9:50 am before services. See p. 5.
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. 4.

Town Halls Coming This Spring

April 21	Article II (Current and Proposed) Discussion
May 5	Continued Article II Discussion if Needed)
May 19	Congregation Financial Meeting

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

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