

THE FELLOWTARIAN

Newsletter of the Unitarian Congregation of West Chester

May 2024



NOTES FROM REV. DAN

“OK, but what do you believe?” For many Unitarian Universalists, this is the dreaded question, when we’re trying to explain who and what we are as a faith community. And like good Unitarian Universalists, we are likely to answer the question with another question: “Do you mean what do Unitarian Universalists believe, or what do I believe? They’re two completely different questions.”

Our personal beliefs vary widely. Some of us are Christians, following the teachings of Jesus. Some of us find meaning in a personal God, while others have a more amorphous view of the divine, or don’t use God language at all.

Some of us practice Pagan rituals and worship the goddess, or many gods. Some of us are scientific Humanists. Some are Jews, or Muslims, or Hindus, or some mixture of many or all of these theologies. Unitarian Universalists believe many different things.

We used to pass out a little red card with “ten points” to help with these questions – “What Do Unitarian Universalists Believe?” it said on

the front, which many of us noted was a question. The first word, when you opened it up, was “Perhaps.” And while the ten points were good ones (“All individuals should be encouraged to develop a personal theology”) it never really answered the question, because the question was never really answerable. Lists of principles or values have the same issue – they can never really define Unitarian Universalism, because we cannot be defined in that way.

We are people who realize that community is better when we are not all alike.

What makes us Unitarian Universalists is not adherence to any list, but our way of living and making meaning in the world. We are people who are never closed from the possibility of spiritual growth.

We are people who care enough about the truths we find and the values we hold to live them in the world and in our interactions with each other – not only when we agree, but also when we do not. We are people who realize that community is better when we are not all alike.

What do Unitarian Universalists believe, you ask? It’s not about belief. It’s so much more.

In faith,
Dan

Our Mission

Our mission is to:

GROW in spirit, heart and mind

LOVE through care and community

SERVE beyond ourselves

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. Dan will be on Study Leave and available for emergencies only from May 19-26.



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 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.*

May 5 10 am ANNUAL FLOWER CELEBRATION "THE RAINBOW COLLECTION" Rev. Dan Schatz, Miriam Davidson, and Cassie Lengel

Celebrate the beauty in diversity with a Sunday of music and flowers! This very special all ages service will feature The Spirit Singers, our Youth Ensemble, our new Pianist Lisa Bennett, and other UCWC musicians. *Please bring a cut flower for each member of your family attending the service.*

May 12 10 am THE GIFT OF COMPASSION Rev. Dan Schatz

Of all the gifts we can give to each other, perhaps the most precious is our understanding compassion.

May 19 10 am RITUALS Rev. Dr. Gabriele Parks

Are rituals only seemingly senseless acts, or are they an important way to give our life more meaning? Or both? And what makes a ritual either this or that? Is there a difference between ritual and tradition? Sorry, but Rev. Gabi will not have a comprehensive, all-inclusive answer for those questions. However, she will try to explore what it is about rituals that make them either weird or very important. Come ready to participate.

The Reverend Dr. Gabriele Parks came to the United States from Germany in 1991, with her husband Roger and her then six-year-old twins. She felt the call to UU ministry and went to Lancaster Theological Seminary in 2001 where she received her Master of Divinity degree. Since then, she has served five congregations as an intentional interim minister; now called transition minister. In 2015, she went back to seminary where she graduated with the Doctor of Ministry in the field of Narrative Theology. She served her congregation in York, Pennsylvania, until her retirement in February of 2019.

May 26 10 am THE LOST MODE OF PRAYER AND GALILEO'S WISH Robin Reichert

Sparked by scientific research and Robin's personal experiences, this provocative program invites you to open to new ways of thinking, feeling, and being. This is an exploration of a new way of prayer as a non-religious, non-beseeking practice. As the song goes, "The times, they are a changin'!" Robin offers examples of how it is possible to move through adversity and invoke grace by tuning in, listening, and acting from your heart.

Robin Reichert is an author, storyteller, speaker, artist, mystic, retired massage therapist, and body-centered psychotherapy practitioner. She implements her storytelling skills as a lay liturgist and Sunday service presenter for Unitarian Universalist and other churches. In 2011 Robin participated in the 25th anniversary of the World Interfaith Summit for Peace and Justice in Assisi, Italy.

Her most recent book, *Diary of a Man Called Jesus - His Life and Missing Years, a Novel*, offers a surprising new slant on a 2000 year old story. She also authored *Earth Divine - Adventures of an Everyday Mystic*, *Feather Gifts for All Ages*, and has one storytelling CD *Mystic - Stories of Wonder and Magic*.

Budget Town Hall May 5

On Sunday, May 5, at 11:15 am there will be a Town Hall to present the proposed budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. The meeting will be both in person and on Zoom. There will be an opportunity for members to comment on the budget. This will be the last presentation of the budget before it will be voted on at the annual meeting on June 2.

—Wayne Bullaughey for the Finance Committee

Whichever way things go, it may take a while to get past all of our feelings, but hopefully we will all support and be kind to each other.

Annual Congregation Meeting

Our annual congregation meeting will be on Sunday, June 2, at 11:30 am. All congregation members are encouraged to attend. We will arrange childcare during the meeting to allow folks with kids to attend.

The annual meeting is important for everyone as the business of UCWC is conducted and decisions made that affect the coming year — new board members are elected, bylaws amended, budget accepted, etc. Your attendance is appreciated and necessary for input into decisions that must be made. Please mark it on your calendar while you are thinking of it.

Welcome Lisa Bennett

We are pleased to welcome our new pianist, Lisa Bennett, to the congregation.

Lisa has taught music, both privately and in schools, for over thirty years and was the recipient of the 2021 Citation of Excellence in Teaching Award for District 12 from the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association. Currently she teaches piano, world music drumming, and AP music theory at the Center for Performing and Fine Arts, Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School. She also composes, directs an *a capella* group, and previously served as the pianist for the BuxMont Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

Outside of music, Lisa enjoys hiking, kayaking, yoga, needlecrafts, and gardening, as well as spending time with her husband Carl, her three adult children, and two cats.



From the President

Thanks to all the members who attended our recent Town Hall on Article II of the UUA bylaws. The discussion was respectful and rich in opinions, feelings, and concerns about the proposed Article II and the current one.

The adoption of the proposed Article II will be voted on in the upcoming General Assembly



being conducted through Zoom this year. Regardless of whether or not a change occurs, it is my hope that the strength and connections of this congregation (as with most congregations) lies in our relationships with each other. We will all still be the same people, with the same interests and the same connection to each other. That won't change.

Whichever way things go, there will be some people angry, disappointed, apprehensive, dejected, overjoyed, relieved, and on and on. It may take a while to get past all of our feelings, but hopefully we will all support and be kind to each other.

I would like to lift up and celebrate the work that the Committee on Ministry (COM), chaired by Shelly Case, has done for the past two years. This committee covers all the ministries of UCWC. The COM is who you can go to with concerns about any ministry at UCWC.

While members need to take responsibility for their concerns and feelings (not something the COM can do), members of the COM are a sympathetic ear and more than willing to support members in resolving concerns in a healthy manner. After a very busy two years, new members are being recruited to replace all the current members. Members of the COM — know you are appreciated.

Ed Cohle

Lifespan Faith Development

Each of us brings a unique contribution to our community, and we will never have another you, nor will our congregation ever look exactly the same way.

RE Schedule for May

Join us this month as we gather for more RE opportunities. On the 5th we will gather for an all-ages flower service and Music Sunday in the sanctuary. Then on the 12th and 19th we will enjoy a Time for All Ages story before heading to our RE classes. And on the 26th we will have a special children's worship circle with our normal RE classes. Save the date for June 2 for our RE Sunday Service to celebrate our kids and all they've done this year.



REflections

Religious Education Update

A smile's a gift you give yourself by giving it away, because it comes back to you in a warm and friendly way.

— Clay Harrison

After all the recent rain and some temperature rollercoasters, I know I've been spending as much time as I can lately out looking at the flowers. Everything is in beautiful bloom — and just in time for our Flower Service coming up here on May 5th. This is a beautiful service where we'll be celebrating how we come together as a community full of beauty and diversity. We each bring a flower to represent ourselves, we gather them all together in bouquets to represent our community, and then we each leave the service with a different flower than we brought.



When we come together in community, we bring our whole selves — we bring our worries and concerns, our sorrows and stressors, we bring our joys and laughter, our love and passion. We bring our helping hands, our different searches for truth and meaning, our backgrounds and knowledge — until our community is formed by individuals creating something greater than we can by ourselves. And whatever we bring is held by everyone, and we are sent out with what we need — comfort, companionship, understanding.

Each of us brings a unique contribution to our community, and we will never have another you, nor will our congregation ever look exactly the same way. The flowers of our community need all shapes and sizes and colors and scents and stages of growth, and how they come together in one bouquet can't be replicated. So too is the coming together of these people, in all our current stages of life, with our backgrounds, with our hearts, with how these interact with everyone around us — unique.

So I guess what I'm trying to say is that you matter, you belong, and we love you. Let us bloom together.

A smile's a rose that when returned becomes a spring bouquet, a smile's a gift you give yourself by giving it away.

— Clay Harrison

— Cassie Lengel
email: DLFD

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 before services

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, self-awareness, emotional health, memory, kindness, and better sleep quality.

Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Care Team contact for this month is **Eleahn Kahn**



Explorations Last Session 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**.

This final session is May 1, 7:00-8:30 pm via Zoom, but you can still join us, even if you have missed the earlier sessions.

Men’s Group

The Men’s Group will meet in person on Tuesday, May 7, 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 **mens-group**.



GA Delegates Wanted

The General Assembly (GA) will meet this year virtually from June 20-23. You can attend from the comfort of your own home. There is no cost to just attend the business portions of the assembly. Time commitment for our delegates is just for those business portions of the UUA. There are also a lot of interesting and informative workshops, lectures, etc. you may be interested in at additional cost.

To be a delegate, you only need an open mind, knowledge of our congregation, and a commitment to attend and listen to business portions of the GA. More can be found **here**.

If you would like to be considered as one of our voting delegates to GA or want more information, please contact Ed Cohle at email: **president** as soon as possible.



Folk Singing

We are planning to have a folk singing get-together in May, but the date has not been finalized yet. It will be late in the month, so please check the web calendar and Connections for details.



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**.

Social Justice



Diversity Book Group

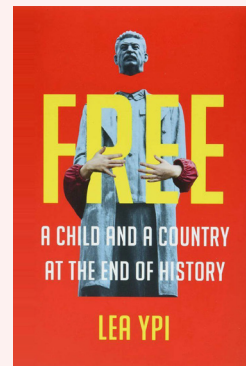
Free by Lea Ypi

Sun, May 19 7:00-8:30 on Zoom Led by Roger & Pat Bove

Note: Date is Third Sunday because of Mother's Day

Free is an amusing memoir about a daughter of a bourgeois family as she recounts living through the end of Communism in the Balkans as a child. She begins school life being taught about the benevolence of Communism and not knowing what it means when people are sent away to "school."

Family and nation formed a reliable bedrock of security for precocious 11-year-old Lea Ypi. She was a Young Pioneer, helping to lead her country toward the future of perfect freedom promised by the leaders of her country, the People's Socialist Republic of Albania. Then, almost overnight, the Berlin Wall fell, and the pillars of her society toppled. The local statue of Stalin, whom she had believed to be a kindly leader who loved children, was beheaded by student protestors.



UUSC Update

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) partners with more than twenty grassroots organizations to support democracy, justice, and accountability in Burma. UUSC has been partnering with human rights groups in Burma since 1995.

After decades of targeted persecution of ethnic and religious minorities by the military junta, which continues to burn homes and villages, nearly a million people are living in refugee camps across the border.

Our partners document and publicize human rights abuses, advocate for equality for religious and ethnic minorities, campaign for justice and accountability, run civic empowerment and conflict resolution trainings, and build diverse coalitions across grassroots activists.

Our partners distribute essential humanitarian aid and equip communities with resources to stay connected and protected. For example, they provide technology to alert civilians of bombings and village raids, which can help families move quickly and save lives. In refugee camps in Bangladesh, our assistance includes educational opportunities for Rohingya children and youth who are denied formal schooling. And at the international level, our partners are involved in efforts at the International Court of Justice to hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes against humanity.

Advancing human rights is the result of many hands joining. **Support UUSC.** Any donation makes you a member. Thank you.



UCWC Postcarding for Gun Safety



Please do your part to send postcards to Pennsylvania State Senators holding up lifesaving Gun Safety Legislation in the Senate Judiciary Committee. Help push Universal Background Checks, Red Flag Laws, and Ghost Gun regulation bills through the legislative process with postcards in the UCWC lobby on April 28 and May 5.

Want to do more? Join Us for Advocacy Day in Harrisburg on Tuesday, May 7. Sign up [here](#). For carpool information, contact Tom Buglio at gun-safety@ucwc.org.

Calendar

All email addresses
@ucwc.org

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



**Don't miss
the Annual
Congregational
Meeting on
June 2.**

- May 1 Wed Explorations.** 7:00 pm. Zoom. See p. 5.
Small Group Ministry Leaders. 7:00 pm.
- May 2 Thu Chime Choir Rehearsal.** 6:15-7:45 pm. Sanctuary.
- May 5 Sun Postcarding for Gun Safety.** Before and after the service. Lobby. See p. 6.
Town Hall Budget Meeting. After the service. See p. 3.
- May 6 Mon Racial Justice Ministry.** 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact email: [racial-justice](#) for more information.
Executive Committee Meeting. 7:00 pm.
- May 7 Tue Men's Group.** 7:00 pm. Natural Land's Stroud Preserve. See p. 5.
- May 14 Tue Board Meeting.** 6:30 pm.
- May 15 Wed UUJusticePA Reproductive Justice Meeting.** 7:30 pm. Zoom.
- May 19 Sun Share the Plate Sunday.** Benefits [Citizen Advocacy of Chester County](#).
Diversity Book Group. 7:00-8:30 pm. Zoom. See p. 6.
- May 20 Mon Racial Justice Ministry.** 5:00 pm. Zoom. Contact email: [racial-justice](#) for more information.
- June 2 Sun Annual Congregational Meeting.** After the service. See p. 3.

EVENTS OCCURRING REGULARLY:

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

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

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