



The South County UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOLUME 28 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2019

January Services

Sunday Morning Services are at 10:00 a.m.

January 6

Making the Impossible Possible – Rev. DL Helfer

A new year is always rife with possibilities. Let us share our hopes and explore whether we might be able to open a new door and make the impossible possible.

January 13

Moving Beyond Dualism – Rev. DL Helfer

We are living in an "either/or" time. How can we change our mindset to see things in a "both/and" way?

January 20

Living the Legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

– Rev. DL Helfer and Bethany Vaccaro, Director of Religious Education

For some, Dr. King's work is a lived experience, but for many it is only written history. This multigenerational service will attempt to breathe life into Dr. King and his work.

Nursery care will be available for children five and younger.

January 27

“De Exaddis” – Ron Daise

The Gullah, or Geechee, are African Americans who live in the coastal regions of the southeastern United States and share a distinct culture. “De Exaddis,”

the story of the deliverance of the Hebrew children, resonated with the enslaved ancestors of today's Gullah Geechee. Ron Daise, an author, educator, and performing artist, will tell the story in the Gullah Geechee language.



OUR HOME IS AT LILY PADS PROFESSIONAL CENTER, 27 NORTH ROAD, PEACE DALE, R. I.

THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Karen R. Ellsworth, Editor

Deadline: The 20th day of each month

Material should be submitted by e-mail to kellsworth6@verizon.net

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

www.uusouthcountyri.org

OUR HOME IS AT LILY PADS PROFESSIONAL CENTER

27 NORTH ROAD, PEACE DALE, R. I. 02879

(401) 783-4170 • uucscri@yahoo.com

Services and Children's Religious Education on Sundays at 10 a.m.
*We welcome all individuals without regard to race, color, physical challenge,
sexual orientation, age, or national origin.*

Staff

REV. DL HELFER, MINISTER

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Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday

Board of Directors

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Mary Alice Kimball, Treasurer (2018-2019) • Linda Dupuis, Clerk (2018-2020)

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Karen R. Ellsworth, Weekly E-News editor kellsworth6@verizon.net

Johnnie Rodriguez, Coordinator, Music 'n' More at Lily Pads

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Betsy Dalton, Facebook manager

At the Water's Edge

Rev. David L. Helfer



Dear UUCSCers,

As the new year dawned, I thought of you. Of who and how you are in the world, and especially with each other. I thought of a poem I've shared in several contexts, "To Be of Use," by Marge Piercy. Here is one stanza:

*I want to be with people who submerge
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest
and work in a row and pass the bags along,
who are not parlor generals and field deserters
but move in a common rhythm
when the food must come in or the fire be put out.*

It is from that heart place that I, too, act.

It is from that place that I have volunteered, with the Board's support and encouragement, to serve for two weeks in at the U.S.–Mexico border in El Paso in late January. I'm not sure yet if I'll be called, if I'll be needed.

The work is hard and without fanfare. It's helping to "process" individuals seeking asylum. It's helping to feed and house scared and tired people. It's buying bus and airline tickets, trying to reconnect families who have been separated from each other, and especially parents and young children.

And yet this work calls, tugs on my heart. It reminds me to live my Unitarian Universalist values outside of our congregational walls— the very same invitation I make to you.

I've arranged my schedule to be open to this while creating the least impact on you, meaning that I won't miss leading worship for you. But I would be absent for the better part of two weeks, although the Board assured me, and which I know is true, that you would take good care of each other in my absence.

I know many of you have done, or would do, the same thing. You would let life call you into places that scare you, because you know that's where your Unitarian Universalist faith takes you. The same is true for me.

This is how we live into our deepest truths. Outside our walls, in ways that invite us to stretch and grow past our comfort zones, putting our faith squarely into action.

I know that if I am asked to go, I will take your blessings with me, and I am ever so grateful for that.

With love,

Rev. DL

A note from the President

For the past several years we have been amazed, delighted and inspired by the creativity of our Music Director Michael Galib. He has lead our Choir and all of us in the congregation. And, on the 23rd of December, we celebrated mid-winter at our brilliant Christmas Eve Eve Service—the culmination of what Michael calls his “tax season” . . . the busiest time of the year for him.

As skilled as Michael is with music, he is similarly skilled with arithmetic and mathematics! One does hear that music and math go hand-in-hand. The study of one helps a person in performing the other. Well, all these years that Michael has been blessing us with his musical skills— often with his back to us, so he has been unable to see our silent hands waving wildly in ovation— he has also been salting away ducats against a rainy day.

After a couple of resuscitations, it was determined that our twenty-year-old electronic piano

was ready for retirement. (It will be moved to the Religious Education level for light use.) Those rainy-day ducats that Michael had been tucking away for years enabled him and the Music Committee to buy a brandy-new electronic piano— with no unexpected strain or drain to our budget! Hurray and thank you Michael for your foresight.



We at UUCSC have been rolling along, seeing rain clouds on our horizon. Those who attend summer services know that our air-condition-ing system has received repeated resuscitation. This fall our oil company made a few visits to keep our staff and tenants warm and comfortable.

Our budget has run with a

\$3,000 to \$5,000 deficit these past few years. Usually extra income brings us into balance at the end of the fiscal year on June 30th. A full failure of our heating, ventilation and air conditioning system would be a calamity— which we hope to dodge.

The Board of Directors of UUCSC has charged an ad hoc committee to carry out a huge fundraiser to discharge our mortgage, which currently stands at about \$350,000. The hope of the Board and the Finance Committee is that by discharging our mortgage we can adopt the practice of our musical “tax man” Michael. One of several soon-to-be-determined budget items to which our annual pledges and gifts will be applied will be a nest egg for future major repairs.

Using your comments and thoughts from our most recent Cottage Meetings, UUCSC will continue to be a beacon of fiscal self-sufficiency, which is one of our greatest ministries.

Peace'n'Luv,
Linda

Social Justice news

The 11th annual Fighting Poverty with Faith vigil, sponsored by the Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty, will take place in the State House rotunda on Tuesday, January 8 from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. The purpose of the vigil is to remind members of the General Assembly and other elected officials of the needs of impoverished Rhode Islanders. If you are interested in attending and would like to carpool or volunteer to drive, contact Jean Bowen at jeanbowen@gmail.com

Members of the Racial Justice committee attend the monthly meetings of the South Kingstown Housing Authority, which take place on the fourth Monday of each month. The Housing Authority recently learned that its request for a Community Development Block Grant to add a laundry facility at the Champagne Heights development has been approved. On November 26, the South Kingstown Town Council appointed Susan Jacobsen, a friend of the congregation, to a five-year term on the five-member Authority.

A Commitment to Accessibility

The new year is a good time for us as a congregation to consider who we are and who we want to become as we move forward together as a caring community.

Many in our community have differing needs, and during the past several years we have made important strides toward creating an assessable environment for all.

When our congregation moved to Lily Pads, we recognized that the stairs would be a barrier for some. The response was to install a ramp. Several handicapped parking spaces were also designated. Later, accessible seating in the sanctuary was marked, temporary additional accessible parking spaces for services are designated, and a sign shows the ramp location. Progress continues. In the fall, we received an accessibility grant through the Paul V. Sherlock Center at Rhode Island College to partially pay for an automatic door opening system at the top of the ramp. Installation should begin in January.

Many members and friends have hearing challenges. A few years ago, we set up an assistive listening system in the sanctuary consisting of electronic loops, supportive speakers, digital FM devices, and high-quality digital microphones.

Some congregation members have difficulty reading the Order of Service and other written information. Large-print Orders of Service are available each Sunday, and several sets of large-print hymnals were donated recently. An accommodations tab at the top of the UUCSC website homepage helps readers enlarge the text or hear text spoken.

The UUCSC's Disability Justice Team, part of our Social Justice Team, recognizes that there still is much to do to make our congregation accessible for persons of all backgrounds, ages, and needs. The sanctuary's hearing loop is adequate, but the supporting speaker system does not operate as it should. A new speaker system is under consideration. Also, we recognize that our coffee hour, as currently structured, causes difficulty for those with anxiety and spatial issues.

The Unitarian Universalist Association assists congregations with their accessibility challenges. Accessibility guidance is available on the UUA website (<https://www.uua.org/accessibility>) and through the New England Region UUA Office. Physical access is just one part of the challenge. Developmental, social, mental, and emotional needs and hidden disabilities must also be supported.

Members of the Disability Justice Team believe that in order to live up to the words of our shared covenant, "To dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one and other," our congregation must make a commitment to accessibility.



A Celebration of Black Storytelling at Lily Pads

Ron Daise, a singer, songwriter, storyteller, and Gullah Geechee culture preservationist, will perform on the Music 'n' More at Lily Pads stage on Saturday, January 26. Joining him will be performers from Rhode Island Funda Fest. The show is presented by the Rhode Island Black Storytellers. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the show begins at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are \$15 and are available at www.BrownPaperTickets.com or at the door.

Guest at Your Table winds up on Sunday, January 7

Our Guest at Your Table fundraising effort for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, which began in November, is winding up this month. Please plan to hand in your GAYT box, envelope, or check on Sunday, January 7. David Fulton will be at the Social Justice table in the Oneto Community Room to collect the donations. Your contribution will make a difference for immigrants in need of support.



Have you heard about the changes in pastoral care at UUCSC?

The October 2018 newsletter included an article by Rev. DL about adjustments being made in our approach to pastoral care work. In response to the changing needs of our congregation, Rev. DL collaborated with the Pastoral Care Committee chair, Cindy Berry, prior chair Penny Hall, and Caring Connection chair Judi Marcy to re-think our approach to helping members of our faith community in time of need.

The plan that emerged is different from the previous system. It's intended to make pastoral care available to a larger number of people by making the care more limited in scope. Our current pastoral care committee includes Rev. DL, Barbara Beckwith, Sally Barney, Sky Kimball, and Joan Ray. The Caring Connection will no longer exist as a separate committee.

Rev DL will continue to provide pastoral care, while committee members will be trained to offer "ministry of presence," being with but not advising congregants in major life transitions. Upon request, the congregation will provide three meals after a hospital stay or during the severe illness of a member or friend of the congregation. Rides to doctor appointments will no longer be centrally coordinated.

The committee is also refocusing to ensure that local community resources such as housing services are readily accessible. We also have two excellent resources available for review on the reference shelf of the UUCSC library: a well-used guide to pastoral care resources, and a new book, *Senior Resource Guide of Rhode Island*.

A workshop on pastoral care is planned for sometime in the spring. – Rev. DL Helfer



January's Soul Matters theme is possibility

January's Soul Matters theme is possibility. What does it mean to be a people of possibility?

People make a wide range of resolutions at the beginning of the new year, all with hopes of the improving themselves or their surroundings in some way. Some resolutions are very common— eat healthier, exercise, begin the climb out of financial debt, spend more time volunteering or doing for others. Some are a bit more ambiguous— spend more time having fun, make amends with others, start a new project. Many people drop these resolutions soon after a gung-ho start, when the work begins to get harder.

Possibility means change— changing the way one acts, thinks, does. As we begin a new month and new year, we invite you to think of what some of your possibilities might be. Is it to gain more peace in your life? To improve yourself in some way?

In the words of Margaret Wheatley, "There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about. Ask, 'What's possible?' not 'What's wrong?' Keep asking. Notice what you care about. Assume that others share your dreams . . .".

With love,

Karen St. Peter, Office Administrator



Religious Education News and Events By Bethany Vaccaro, Director of Religious Education

Hello friends and families of RE,

What a pleasure it is to welcome in a new year surrounded by such wonderful community! It's been a pleasure to see our RE program blossom into the kind of place where people of all ages can have their souls fed.

I had the pleasure of attending a multi-generational UU conference at Star Island in New Hampshire this past summer. The focus was on lifespan worship and faith development. One of the speakers shared that, in order for a child to flourish and grow into their full potential, they need to have at least seven trusted adults in their life. These are people who take the time to talk to them, know their name, and ask them about their lives and care about the response.

As I was thinking about my own childhood and who my seven adults may have been, I realized the majority of them came from our church congregation. To me, this underscored the truly sacred work that is happening when we come together for RE. We as the adults are not simply entertaining the children while the real work happens upstairs. What goes on between our RE volunteers and the children is true soul food, the kind of relationship building that can ensure our kids— whether or not they are ours biologically— can meet the craziness of life with the supports they need in order to thrive. This is what is happening on a Sunday morning.

And I have also seen first-hand how, for the adults in RE, their time with our kids is their sacred practice. It is their spiritual food for that day; they are not missing out on anything, but are right in the center of their own practice. It's a beautiful things to witness.

We are opening up new avenues for all ages to become involved in RE, without having to make the traditional time commitment to volunteering for an entire session. If you have a skill to share— such as yoga, mindfulness and breathing exercises, crafting or artistry— we're open to finding a way to bring that into RE for a day. Please talk to me!

And if you want to move towards being one of those seven adults for a child in our congregation, whether or not you can teach, please keep your eyes open for the sign-up for our upcoming Mystery Friend program. Back by popular demand, this is the month-long “mystery” pen pal program for kids and adults. It's a fabulous way to form and nurture relationships across the lifespan! Don't miss out! Sign-up sheet and more information will be posted soon at the RE Bulletin board and the program will begin the first weekend of February.

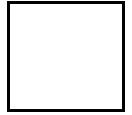
Also, we are looking for donations of gently-used wooden toys for our Nursery friends. As we move towards being a plastic-free space, we welcome contributions of wooden or fabric playthings and other types of crafty materials.

May your new year be blessed!

With love,

Bethany

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY
27 NORTH ROAD
PEACE DALE, RI 02879



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

"Those who may read this will think it strange that I could only find a field in run-down or comatose churches, but they must remember that the pulpits of all the prosperous churches were already occupied by men, and were looked forward to as the goal of all the young men coming into the ministry with whom I, at first the only woman preacher in the denomination, had to compete. All I could do was to take some place that had been abandoned by others and make something of it, and this I was only too glad to do."

– Olympia Brown

Olympia Brown was the first woman to graduate from a theological school, be ordained, and serve as a full-time minister. A Universalist, she was born in Prairie Ronde Township, Michigan on January 5, 1835.