



THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 4

APRIL 2014



April Services



April 6

'In Endless Song' – Rev. Dr. Judith Smith-Valley

As you are choosing a committee to launch your search for a minister, I am celebrating the 25th anniversary of my ordination. It seems to be a fitting time to share my thoughts and feelings about what it means to be a minister.

April 13

A Playful Mystery Play for Four Voices

In honor of our beautiful home, the Earth, we'll hear a four-part reading that explores the mystery of creation.

Rev. Dr. Judith Smith-Valley, Worship Leader

April 20

Our Search for Easter – Rev. Dr. Judith Smith-Valley

Even Unitarian Universalists search for resurrection and meaning this time of year. How do we go about the task?

April 27

Insights from Improv – Clare Sartori

Ensemble members from the Wakefield's Contemporary Theater Company, led by Artistic Director Christopher J. Simpson, will demonstrate how improvisational theater aligns with UU principles and is especially supportive during times of transition.

May 4

Singing Together: A UU Journey of Community and Justice – Matt Meyer

What does our music tell us about how we live out our faith in the world? What does it tell us about the community we build together? Join us for rhythm and song, love and justice, and be prepared to experience the holy in music.



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 • uuscscr@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.*

Rev. Dr. Judith Smith-Valley, Accredited Interim Minister

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Board of Directors

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MONEY MATTERS

News from the Finance Committee

Some important facts to remember as you consider your pledge for 2014-2015:

Our projected expenses for the current fiscal year come in at around \$228,000. This breaks down into two categories: fixed and discretionary.

Our fixed annual expenses this fiscal year, Facilities, Payroll and Denominational Membership fees (UUA and BCD), add up to approximately \$200,000.

The rest of the budget, categorized as discretionary expenses, comes to about \$28,000. That amount has to pay for *everything else*—our bookkeeper, office supplies, cleaning service, RE supplies, music supplies, computer software, etc., etc.

Our pledges come in at about \$197,000.

In order to balance our budget, we have been using up what remains in our Capital Campaign Fund. Currently there is about \$48,000 left. You can see that we will deplete this fund in two years if pledges continue to fall short of expenses.

We are on the path to fiscal adulthood and have reason to be proud of our efforts. Looking forward, we must consider closing our budget gap by increasing our pledge amount. Please do consider a 7% increase to your current pledge, as is suggested in the brochure from the Stewardship Committee. We depend on each and every one of us.

The Board of Directors and the Finance Committee have decided to use Vanco Services to allow members and friends to pay their pledges and other donations electronically through a secure website. Many of you have asked us to move in this direction. As soon as we're "up and running," we will give you more information.

— *Aline Couture*

In Between Time

Rev. Dr. Judith Smith-Valley

Accredited Interim Minister



The month of rebirth is upon us. Soon the earth will green here in South County and flowers will bloom. It is an expectant time. I was struggling to find a topic for April 6th when it occurred to me that the 25th anniversary of ordination is on April 9th. I will share with you what it means to be a minister and what it means to be set apart.

The UU Fellowship of Kanawha Valley in Charleston, West Virginia ordained me in the spring of 1989. Having graduated from Harvard Divinity School in June 1988, I began to serve in Charleston in September. A beloved professor told us that it is a New England custom for a minister to be ordained by his or her first congregation rather than his or her home or interim congregation. He stressed that the ritual should not take place for at least six months, to be sure the relationship is going to work. (The “call” is what makes it legal today.)

We intentionally waited for spring to come because it would be so much safer to drive on West Virginia roads. It turned out that the celebration was difficult for a few of the members. Having been lay-led for most of 40 years, they didn't appreciate how they were changing our lives. There was tension between those who were so happy to have a minister at last (because it gave them a credibility in the larger community) and those who would ask, “What can you do for us that we can't do for ourselves?” It is a fact of life that a religious organization is a human organization and there is no way to please everybody all the time.

I remember the redbud blooming on Kanawha Boulevard as my guests came into town that April weekend. Nature and her beauty has the ability to ease the bleak and make joy more visible, but not everyone can see it. My husband and I spent five years with that beloved congregation. Even today, the first notes of “Almost Heaven, West Virginia” bring tears to my eyes and a smile to my face.

The Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association will honor all UU ministers celebrating 25 and 50 years of ministry at a special worship service on UU Ministers' Days before the 2014 General Assembly in Providence. I am happy to be among them. I also will be part of the Service of the Living Tradition on Friday evening during GA. The UUA will officially recognize my retirement (though I will continue to serve as an Accredited Interim). Thank you for the serendipitous circumstances that I am serving here in Rhode Island as these special celebrations occur this year.

Easter occurs in April this year. Unitarian Universalists sometimes question Easter. Here is a simple answer to the question from Joan Goodwin, a beloved religious educator and former UUA staff leader. She died in 2006 but remains with us in her work, writing, and the inspiration she gave to numerous religious educators and ministers— including myself.

*Will there always be an Easter? . . .
Yes, as long as there is an Earth planet
and a sun
and springtime
and people who wonder about death and celebrate life . . .
for as long as that, there will be an Easter.*

See you in church.

In Faith,
Rev. Judy

The President's Letter

This year has been a journey of discovery for me while serving as your President. It has not been easy but it has strengthened my belief that what we are trying to do here is the right thing.

We have seven sentences that state what we are all about. They brought me here. Trying to live by them has kept me here. I am sure it is the same for each member of this Congregation.

The operative word is try. None of us is in line for UU sainthood. We are just regular folks who don't buy into a lot of the insanity of the world around us. Perhaps we want to make it better. Maybe we want to see fairness and common sense used in resolving conflict. Maybe we want to see more equitable treatment for the earth and everything upon it.

I sometimes face some pretty chilling opinions from people in my daily life. Folks who I know casually or in a business setting who seem like fine sensible peo-

ple may come out with things that make me uncomfortable. Sometimes what I hear is downright frightening. I am sure each of us has encountered these situations.



This makes it all the more important for us to remember to practice our Seven Principles here, with each other. No matter what the issue, no matter what the circumstances, we need to honor and strengthen our commitment to the spirit of those

Principles in our dealings with each other. We will not always succeed, but we can use them to bring us back on track.

This is especially important now as we move forward into our discussions of what the future of the UUCSC should be. We only have a few months to define what we want so that our Ministerial Search Committee can find the best settled minister to help us to realize that future.

Time is short, and the stakes are high. We need to come together and get those discussions going. What is the UUCSC going to look like in five or ten years? What is our purpose as an organization? How are we going to remain viable, both financially and spiritually?

We have a good starting point in those Seven Principles. What we do with them will make all the difference. What do you think? Let's all talk about it.

— Steven M. Harrison

Board of Directors Update for March 2014

It was a busy month for our Board. Besides our regularly scheduled meeting on the third Wednesday of the month, we met on two other occasions.

On Sunday, March 9, we had a lunch meeting after the service to assess our progress toward calling a settled minister. On Sunday, March 16, we met after the service with Rev. Judy Campbell, our Ministerial Search Representative from the UUA, who will assist the Ministerial Search Committee in their task of finding our next settled minister.

Interim Ministry Mid-Year Assessment

On March 9, the Board of Directors met with Rev. Judy to compile a mid-year assessment of the Congregation's progress during this Interim time. The Board and Rev. Judy prepared assessments separately and then we discussed the results together. Each assessment will be sent to the UUA Transitions Office. Two more assessments are scheduled, one in September 2014 and one in June 2015.

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Board of Directors Update for March 2014

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Overall, the Board feels that our interim process is proceeding in a satisfactory manner. This does not mean it has been an easy or simple process, nor is it supposed to be. We appreciate the training, experience and knowledge that Rev. Judy has brought to us as we navigate this challenging time.

This is a time for all of us to think about what the future of the UUCSC could look like. It is a time for exploring possibilities with an open mind and sharing those ideas with each other. We need to reach a consensus on what that future should be.

In June, the Ministerial Search Committee will be finalized. The committee will need to know what we want to achieve in the next several years so they can find a settled minister who will have the skills and the desire to help us realize that goal.

This interim time is not simple or easy, but it is valuable for us to reflect upon our past and set an intentional course into our future that will affirm and promote our Seven Principles. Let's use it wisely and with compassion as we dwell together in peace, seek the truth in love, and help one another.

At the Board meeting on March 19, we discussed three items and passed one motion:

Ministerial Search Committee

The Ministerial Search Committee must be in place by June 1 to be affirmed at the Annual Meeting. Board members will be calling each member of the Congregation in the next few weeks to solicit suggestions. We will ask each of you for one or two names of people whom you would trust to represent the best interests of the UUCSC as members of the Ministerial Search Committee. This list will be a guide as the Board approaches potential candidates to serve on that committee. Ideally there will be seven members who will serve for one year. At the end of that year, they will present a candidate to be called as our next settled minister at the Annual Meeting on June 6, 2015.

The committee's job will include:

- compiling an informational packet that accurately represents the UUCSC and our surrounding community
- reviewing applications and interviewing potential candidates
- bringing as many as three or four potential candidates in for a confidential weekend and observing while each one delivers the sermon at another church.

The committee's choice is then asked to be the candidate for the position of settled minister and invited to spend eight days with the congregation, including two worship services. On the second Sunday, the congregation votes on whether to call the candidate to be the settled minister.

Membership on the committee is a responsibility that requires a generous time commitment and the ability to put the greater good of the UUCSC above a personal agenda. Those serving on a search committees have often formed friendships that last long after the minister has been called and the committee's work is completed.

Fundraising

Board members discussed fundraising by individual committees or groups and reached a consensus that before fundraising takes place, the committee or group should submit a budget request for the funds. If additional money is are needed, the committee should propose a fundraising project to the Program Council so the fundraising can be coordinated with other committees. The proposal should then be approved by the Board.

Building Use Policy

Kathy Carland, our Office Administrator, and Rev. Judy are finishing a draft Building Use Policy for review by the Board in April. Our goal is to have clear and well-defined guidelines to cover building use both by members and by the wider community. It will clarify such matters as reservation procedures, insurance coverage, and usage fees.

Electronic Voting by the Board

The Board approved a policy that outlines the procedure the Board should use for voting by electronic means rather than in person.

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Policy For Electronic Voting by UUCSC Board of Directors

A special meeting of the Board may be convened by the President to consider a motion made by e-mail, telephone or other electronic means only when the following circumstances are present:

1. A Board decision is needed on a matter that is time-sensitive, and delaying the vote until the next regularly-scheduled Board meeting could result in hardship, a loss, or a lost opportunity to the Congregation.
2. Motions must pass with a simple majority vote of whole Board. The voting process will remain open for at least five days or until a majority decision is reached.
3. Motions approved electronically will be ratified at the next regularly-scheduled Board meeting. When ratified, the decision will be considered effective and valid as of the date the motion was approved electronically. Motions that do not receive a majority vote electronically will be placed on the agenda of the next regularly-scheduled Board meeting.
4. The motion and the votes cast electronically will be recorded in the minutes of the next regularly-scheduled Board meeting.

All members and friends are welcome to observe Board of Directors meetings, which take place from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month. Agenda items should be sent to the President by the second Wednesday of the month.

— Steve Harrison

MUSIC AT LILY PADS

Saturday, April 5

Aoife O'Donovan



We are very pleased to present Aoife O'Donovan as part of our spring series.

Aoife O'Donovan is known as the lead singer of 'Crooked Still' and 'Sometymes Why,' and for singing on the Grammy-winning 'Goat Rodeo Sessions' with Yo-Yo Ma, Edgar Meyer, Chris Thile and Stuart Duncan. She has collaborated with some of the most eminent names in roots, classical, bluegrass, and jazz, including Alison Krauss, Gabriel Kahane and Dave Douglas.

With a guest to be announced. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. The music starts at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20.

The Honey Dewdrops with Jonah Tolchin

Saturday, April 12

Using a handful of acoustic instruments and two voices, the Honey Dewdrops strive for clarity rather than affect and ornamentation. Their music, with its raw simplicity, is what you have left when you strip everything away. It rocks, it reels, and then it consoles you when you come back down.

Sharing the bill is one of our favorite artists, Jonah Tolchin. He honored us with a stellar CD release show for his album 'Criminal Man' in 2012. Jonah was asked to perform at the Newport Folk Festival in 2012—an acknowledgment of his unique talent.

Doors open at 7:00 p.m. The music starts at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15 advance and \$18 the day of the show. They are on sale now at BrownPaperTickets.com.





Religious Education News and Events

By Pam Santos, Director of Religious Education

Random Acts of Kindness

Random Acts of Kindness were the focus of one Religious Education class last month. After we discussed kindness and shared personal stories about receiving kind acts, the children got busy.



Each child was given a springtime flower. Each flower had a note on it that said, "Please accept this act of kindness from me to you." We asked the children to bring their flower upstairs and give it to a grown-up who looked as if he or she could benefit from a random act of kindness. And so the flowers were shared.

In this way, the lessons we learn downstairs in our RE classrooms flow upward and outward. It's wonderful to receive an act of kindness, and it's even more wonderful to perform an act of kindness.

This giving and receiving between the generations is taking place right now in our Mystery Friend program. Each child is learning about his or her own grown-up friend. Adults are learning what means most to a child. Together they are weaving community.

Thank you to all who are participating, and thank you to Leah Canin for coordinating this effort.



Coming events in Religious Education

April 6 - 'Sunday Service' – Making a meal for Welcome House

April 13 - Mystery Friend Big Reveal at 11:30 downstairs in RE

April 13 - RE Committee Meeting at noon downstairs in RE

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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

“Not one, except the lack of a minister's wife.”

– *Anna Garlin Spencer,*
when asked what obstacles she had encountered
as a woman minister

Anna Garlin Spencer (1851–1931) was a Unitarian minister, an educator, one of the founders of the NAACP, and the first woman ordained as a minister in Rhode Island.

She was born in Attleboro, Mass. 163 years ago this month.