

THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 11

DECEMBER 2014



December Services

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES ARE AT 10:00 A.M.



December 7

Mary's View of Things – *Rev. Jan Knost*

It being the season of Advent, we have the opportunity to consider the timeless march of humanity through the years as it relates to the birth story. A strong progenitor of a different view than the traditional one is Bishop John Shelby Spong, the "maverick bishop" of Newark, N.J. Some will find his way of thinking an attractive alternative to the usual.

December 14

"Happy Holidays, with love from the Buddha" – *Joanne Friday*

The Engaged Buddhism movement applies insights from dharma teachings and meditation to social, political and environmental situations. Want to truly enjoy the holidays? Engaged Buddhism could help you do that.

Joanne Friday, who lives in South Kingstown, is a dharma teacher in the Tiep Hien Order who has studied with Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh for 22 years.

December 21

Druids in a Strange New World – *Rev. Jan Knost*

The Winter Solstice is upon us! Again it is time to celebrate "the turning of the sun's arc" through the heavens, and with it, stories of ancient sages who strengthened the lives of the people with their wisdom.

Come and learn about the Druids, then and now. Warmth will come again!

Tuesday December 23 at 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Eve Candlelight Service

This is one of the singular celebrations in our calendar. It is a time of joy as we listen to the old stories, sing the old carols, hear fine music and create the magic time of sharing light in a darkened sanctuary.

December 28

Kwanzaa: Its Roots, its Stories, its Music – *Mixed Magic Theatre*

"A Kwanzaa Song," an original production, is an annual event at Mixed Magic Theatre in Pawtucket. Three cast members, Jeannie Mae Carson, Danette Briggs and Victor Terry, will use stories and songs to illustrate the principles of this week-long African American celebration.

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



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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 Members

Rev. Jan Vickery Knost, Interim Minister

Pam Santos, Religious Education Director ■ **Michael Galib**, Music Director

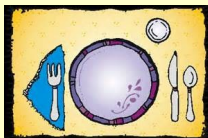
Kathleen Carland, Office Administrator and Calendar Keeper

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Randi Marten ■ Penny Hall ■ Clare Sartori ■ Nancy Rose, Past President

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Chair ■ David Floyd, Music at Lily Pads Coordinator ■ Susan Strakosch, Worship Committee Chair ■ Roni
Meyer, Flower Committee ■ Jean Bowen, Publicity



The Women of Wisdom return!

Our monthly Women of Wisdom (WOW) lunches are back, but simplified. On the first Monday of each month, UUCSC women are invited to gather for lunch at 12:30 p.m. No reservations are needed. The monthly lunches will be at one of three restaurants that give separate checks— Seven Moons, 6900 Post Road (Route 1, just north of Route 403), North Kingstown; the Shelter Harbor Inn, 10 Wagner Rd., just off Route 1 in Westerly (on the Westerly-Charlestown line); and the Wood River Inn in Wyoming-Hope Valley, at the intersection of Routes 138 and 3.

The December WOW lunch is on Monday, December 1 at the Shelter Harbor Inn. The January WOW lunch is on Monday, January 5 at the Wood River Inn.

For the Time Being . . .

by Rev. Jan Knost

It has always pleased me to work with what has been broadly referred to as “institutionalists.” It is such as these who dedicate their efforts to the establishment of institutions whose principles will last over the years and not only survive but serve the greater good.

I believe that in the long run, that is just what we are about here at UUCSC. Such ideals inevitably come about in ways to serve the members of our religious community well.

Permit me to share an illustration of just what I mean.

There is a chapel in Leicestershire, England whose doorway bears a stone with the following inscription. It alludes to the establishment of a church during the English Civil War and it reads:

*In the Year 1653
when all things sacred were
throughout the Nation
either demolished or profaned
Sir Robert Shirley Baronet
founded this Church
whose singular praise it is
to have done the best things
in the worst times
And
hoped them in the
most calamitous.*

The times in which we live are not as measurably devastating. However, one would like to believe we here at UUCSC are about the same work in our time. We will always stand short of our goals of service and religious presence, but that is all right. No aspiration attained was ever achieved with ease.

“The Rev”

Worship Leader training

If you're interested in being the Worship Leader for Reverend Knost or one of our guests, please join us for a short worship leader orientation and training after the service on December 14. We'll meet in the Sanctuary at 11:30 a.m.

Even if you're not sure it's something you'd like to do, please come anyway see what it entails. It is a great way to serve the congregation. For more information, please speak to Sue Strakosch.

The Transition Team

The Transition Team (Nancy Dean (chair), Sally Barney, Linda Whyte Burrell, Hank O'Reilly, Joan Youngken, and Penny Hall) meets with Rev. Jan Knost on the second Wednesday of each month to support his work during this interim period, discussing issues that arise and bringing up needs and concerns of the congregation. Please let us know about anything you'd like us to work on!

The President's Letter

My father built our house next door to where he grew up, and by the time I was about fifteen I was making wooden bowls and lamps on the old wood lathe in my grandparent's basement. I think I made everyone's Christmas presents that year, and I still have a small mahogany bowl next to my chair that I gave to my grandmother. The bowls were completed with the tools I had down there, but the lamps that I turned from discarded bowling pins required that a hole be drilled down the middle of the pin for the wire. These pins had a plastic coating that I turned off to reveal the hard maple wood underneath. When sanded and finished the beauty of the wood came through, even though the design was a bit campy. I had an unlimited supply of pins from the bowling alley down the street, and plenty of mahogany from extra table leaves that were no longer used. But I had to take the finished pins to my father's machine shop to drill them on one of his seven drill presses. It worked fine, and one drill press was my favorite for doing this. But it rankled me to have to go outside my basement shop to do this task. I wanted a drill press of my own. I wanted that drill press. As Christmas approached I hinted and hinted to my father about what I wanted, and he seemed to be open to the idea. At least he did not tell me a definite no, but he also did not give me a definite yes.

I grew up middle class in the time when being middle class was quite comfortable. His business was small, but sound, and we were probably on the upper side of middle. Each Christmas the best and biggest gifts seemed to come from Dad. One year a whole train set was set up in the basement. Another year a BB gun

appeared. Dad was the one with the zinger gifts. I thought the drill press was in the bag.

The relatives came over on Christmas Eve to open gifts, and I was primed with excitement as I opened the gifts from all the other relatives. And then I had a rather small heavy box from Dad. Okay, it's definitely not a drill press. I opened it and it was a Sears and Roebuck bench grinder. You know, a motor with two abrasive wheels on each side to sharpen drills and cutters. My heart started to sink. He saw that I was visibly upset, and we walked



out onto the back porch. He probably felt as bad as I did as he explained that he had thought about the drill press and he said that he gave me the grinder instead because it was a vital tool for any shop, and the drill press would not be as important as a grinder. He knew I did not really need a drill press as much as I needed a way to sharpen tools, but I could not understand it at the time. I was devastated. We went back to the family gathering, then nine of us; grandparents, aunts, my sister.

I think it was the start of my emotional shift from a time of excitement and joyful anticipation to one of darkness. It was not abrupt or sudden, but it was the start. Years in the catering business made holiday time one of intense work, and it became a

time of long hours and unending demands. The holiday time was a time to survive and somewhere in there, I lost the joy.

That all happened years ago. Now I am retired from the food business, and I work in the office for my son who has, interestingly enough, a wood shop where they make custom cabinets. The machines are huge and mostly driven by computer. There is one lone drill press that sits mostly idle in a corner, and it is almost identical to the one I coveted so long ago. Of all the family who gathered back then, I am the only one still living. Of all the Christmas gifts I received in my childhood, I do not think I have any of them any more. Except one. I still have that Sears and Roebuck bench grinder. It went into the basement shop, and it was invaluable in sharpening the lathe chisels. It travelled with me to college, and it moved from house to house. The switch finally went a few years ago, but after forty years, that was to be expected. I bought a new and bigger Sears bench grinder for the lawnmower blades, but I still have that gift Dad gave me. It is in the front closet and sometimes when I am rummaging around I come across it. I remember my Dad. I remember what it was like to be disappointed. I remember how something that was so unappreciated became so valuable. The gift and the wisdom that came with it were perhaps not given in the best manner, but the wisdom has stayed with me more than any other gift.

Perhaps the true value in this time of year is to be appreciative of what we have. We have so much, let us be thankful. To me that is the spirit of this season. Thank you, Dad.

— Steve Harrison

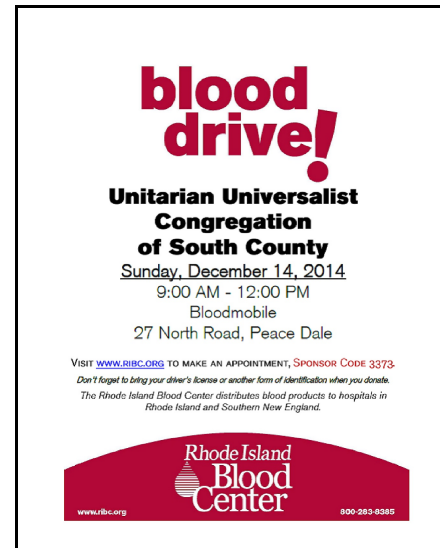
Blood Drive on Sunday, Dec. 14

The UUCSC will host a Blood Drive on Sunday, December 14 from 9:00 a.m. to noon. The Bloodmobile will be parked at Lily Pads outside the front door.

The day of the Blood Drive remember to have breakfast and drink plenty of healthy fluids before donating. Please bring an ID with you. Most people can donate blood even if they're taking medication. You must be at least 16. If you're 16 you must weigh at least 130 lbs. and have a signed parental permission form. If you're 17, you must weigh at least 110 lbs but no permission form is required.

You can sign up using the Rhode Blood Center's on-line donor system at www.ribc.org. Our sponsor code is 3373. Or you can contact Charlie Donnelly at charlieandiris@yahoo.com or 788-7754 to make an appointment or ask a question.

Please give the gift of life this holiday season, please give blood.



Soul food

If you're driving to church, you need gas to get your car there. You don't put gas in your car unless you intend to go to a specific place, or a goal to achieve. Even if you're out for a Sunday drive to enjoy nature, you're using fuel to feel connected.

It's the same with this congregation. A significant amount of fuel is necessary to maintain the connections that we have here.

We need monetary fuel to achieve our goals. We believe that the congregation will receive the fuel it needs to keep going if we all take a moment to realize what we have. Do you think our music director and choir are the best? Do you look forward to hearing them each Sunday? If the answer is yes, are they worth a 32-inch TV? A Kenmore washer and dryer? A 2009 Camry? A four-week winter vacation in the sun?

At frequent intervals, in items in

this newsletter and elsewhere, we'll be asking questions that are intended to increase your awareness of what we really have to cherish at UUCSC. We hope to enhance your sense of gratitude.

– The Stewardship Committee



The Jonnycake Center is our 'Share the Plate' partner for December

The collection during the service on Sunday, December 7 will be shared with the Jonnycake Center.

The Jonnycake Center was opened in 1974 by community members who saw a need for an agency that could help people who might not qualify for support through established agencies. They named it after the jonnycake, a staple food in colonial days, because the founders' goal was to provide basic necessities for local people in need. The Center was operated from a store front in Wakefield before moving to its present location at the rotary in Peace Dale.

Today the Jonnycake Center's Emergency Food Pantry provides food to individuals and families who are having a hard time making ends meet. Households can come to the Center once a month and receive nutritionally balanced food baskets that contain enough food including milk and eggs to prepare three meals a day for an entire week for all household members. Frozen meats and fresh fruits and vegetables are also provided whenever available. Last year the Center was able to distribute more than 100 tons of food! How much more can they do with our support?

Ministerial Search Committee continues its work

The Ministerial Search Committee continues to be busy, and has met since the congregation voted to extend Rev. Knost's interim tenure. The one-year extension gives us more time to get our finances in order, to continue the healing ably assisted by Rev. Knost, and to prepare a really inviting packet for ministerial candidates to peruse.

Our goal this year was to do a congregational assessment of wants and needs. We accomplished this through the survey and the "search parties." The committee has also consulted with the Finance Committee to get an accurate projection of finances for the next year and a half. We have accumulated quite a bit of information and have concluded that it probably will be quite accurate a year from now. Therefore, we have decided to continue as planned with some slight modifications.

We are hard at work on the Congregational Record, which will be submitted soon. Then we will develop the Congregational Packet, which will go

live next fall for candidates' review. We are gathering letters from past ministers, photographs of church activities, and profiles of staff and members to include in the packet. We're planning to finish it by May, and then use the summer to tweak it to reflect any variations in statistics or data that may have occurred between May and September.

Later this winter or in early spring, Rev. Keith Kron of the UUA will present his "Beyond Categorical Thinking" seminar for us. There will be no need to hear candidates preaching at a neutral pulpit this year— that step can be pushed off to next year.

The committee members are Cindy Cole Berry, Val Follett, Jean Burke, Jean Bowen, Mary Iacobbo, Amber Kelley Collins, and David Fulton. (Asa Fox Collins is a de facto member of the committee. His mother takes all his calls.) If you have any questions about what we're doing, please don't hesitate to call or e-mail any of us.

Respectfully, Cindy Berry

The Pastoral Care Team is back!

The Pastoral Care Team is newly energized and expanded, thanks to Rev. Jan Knost's enthusiastic support. Current members are Penny Hall, Pat O'Reilly, Patience Peck, Joan Ray, Mary Lynne Rainey, Paulette Chamberas, Barbara Beckwith, and Barbara McKenna. The team has met twice and organized to serve folks in the congregation who can't get to church or need a listening ear and compassionate support during challenging times. If you or someone you know in our congregation needs a call or regular visits, please contact a member of the team or Rev. Knost.



News from the Office Administrator

Starting this month, the church office will be open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Friday office hours have been eliminated, as former administrative assistant Christine Giroux has taken a job with the South Kingstown School Department. We all appreciate Christine's work with us during the past two years.

Also starting in December, of-

fice administrator Kathy Carland will assume Virginia Carter's disbursement duties. All accounts payable and reimbursements will be processed through the office. Virginia or another authorized officer will continue to sign all checks.

December 4 is the deadline to send revisions or corrections to the office for the new UUCSC Directory. If you're not sure whether the current directory information for you is correct, please call the office at 783-4170. The new directories will be

sent electronically to all friends and members by December 11, and paper copies also will be available. Please call the office if you would like us to mail a paper copy to you.

The office will be closed from December 25 through January 5, re-opening on January 6. If you have an item for the order of service insert on January 4, please send it to uucscri@yahoo.com by December 22.

Thank you and Happy Holidays!
— Kathy Carland



Religious Education News and Events

By Pam Santos, Director of Religious Education

Welcoming UU Families

One of the many joys this congregation provided me ten years ago when I first attended a UUCSC service was the opportunity to see families who had values similar to mine. I came to visit the church first, before bringing my family along with me. I wanted to be sure that the values embraced by this congregation were those I could be proud to share with my five children. I wanted to know we would be welcome. On that first Sunday I was pleasantly surprised by the warm greetings I received and that I already knew a number of the families in attendance, although I had not know they were Unitarian Universalists. These were families I knew from our small town and I admired them! It was so wonderful to know I was welcome into this faith home with like-minded families.

Over the years the teenagers who have looked after my young children have graduated and gone on to their adult lives. And a few of my own children, having participated in RE classes, Youth Group, and Nursery volunteering, have now dipped their toes into adulthood. The joy of watching our children thrive in a soup of UU values, supportive community, and guidance toward social justice is hard to describe. We often recognize the depth of it during the Youth Service in the springtime.

Providing for and supporting our UU families is not always easy. Families with children can be complicated, inconsistent and sometimes disruptive. We come with sullen teens, squirmy toddlers, and hungry infants. We come as sleep deprived parents who need a dose of spiritual uplifting to recharge our souls. We hope to be able to sit upstairs while our babies play happily in the Nursery, but this does not always work out. We hope our congregation will support us as we are.

During our recent Congregational Survey we learned that we are a "mature" congregation (more than 70% of us are age 60+). We also learned that 80% of us would like to see our congregation grow. Many of the shared comments included a desire to increase the number of young adults and young families. A healthy, vibrant, congregation is one with people of all ages. Together we celebrate the business of life, learning, aging, trying, failing, struggling, rejoicing, accomplishing, supporting, and most importantly, loving.

Again, I think back to my first Sunday at the UUCSC, when I was welcomed by families and individuals alike. I want to welcome young families in to our congregation with equal enthusiasm. During the next few weeks I will be reaching out to folks who may have ideas about how we can do this with gusto. If you have thoughts or ideas you would like to share with me, I welcome hearing from you.

In the spirit of intentional hospitality,
Pam Santos

COMING EVENTS IN R.E.

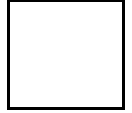
Sunday, Dec. 7 - Service Sunday - We will create a "giving tree" for those in need during this holiday season and decorate cookies.

Sunday, Dec.14 - Gift making workshop. Together we will create our own little workshop where we will make homemade gifts for the season.

Sunday, Dec. 21- Winter Solstice Celebration

Sunday, Dec. 28 - No RE Classes (have fun in the snow!)

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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

“John is a fool; Jane is a genius: nevertheless, John being a man shall learn, lead, make laws, make money; Jane being a woman shall be ignorant, dependent, disfranchised, underpaid.”

– *Thomas Wentworth Higginson, in "Ought Women to Learn the Alphabet?" a satirical article published in the Atlantic Monthly in 1859.*

A Unitarian minister, fervent abolitionist, and ardent supporter of women's rights, Higginson was one of the "Secret Six" who helped John Brown raise money and procure supplies for his intended slave insurrection at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia; a correspondent and mentor to Emily Dickinson; and a colonel the first federally-authorized black regiment in the Civil War. After the war he lived in Newport, where he desegregated the schools during his tenure on the School Committee.

Higginson was born in Cambridge, Mass. on December 22, 1823.