

THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 5

MAY 2014

May Services

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.

May 11

Mothers All – *Rev. Dr. Judith Smith-Valley*

Mothers Day Service

Each of us has had a mother, whether by birth or adoption— or someone in our lives who was like a mother to us. Let's recall and celebrate all of those mothers, how they affect our lives, and how they change the world. We will welcome our new members during this service.

May 18

**Diamond or Quartz? A Genuine Faith Community has Many Facets
– *Rev. Dr. Judith Smith-Valley***

Congregations are genuine faith communities when they are places where we can come together to participate in and practice our shared religious values and find our individual and collective identity. What makes us genuine here at UUCSC?

May 25

A Musical Worship Service – *Michael Galib & the UUCSC Choir*

The UUCSC Choir performs a special musical service, filled to the brim with choral music and sermonettes from Music Director Michael Galib.



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

<http://uusouthcountyri.org/wp/>

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.*

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

Staff Members

Pam Santos, Religious Education Director

Michael Galib, Music Director

Kathleen Carland, Office Administrator and Calendar Keeper • uucscri@yahoo.com • 783-4170

Board of Directors

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(vacant) Vice President

Harry Buffum, Treasurer

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In Between Time

Rev. Dr. Judith Smith-Valley

Accredited Interim Minister



I will be away during the first week in May on planned vacation time. Paul and I will travel to New Jersey. We are participants in our grandson Dillon Smith's Court of Honor as he is recognized as an Eagle Scout. Grandpa Paul will be the eldest Eagle there and I am the "designated clergyperson." Are we proud! I will be back at UUCSC on May 7.

During my time off and continuing this month, it is exciting that Transition Team and Board members are joining together to lead various activities geared to help UUCSC answer three important questions: Where did you come from? Who are you? Where are you going? The first was included in activities at the Stewardship Potluck on April 26 and after the service on April 27 ably crafted by Clare Sartori. At this writing I have not yet had a report as to what is planned for the forums after services in May.

Please realize these are questions whose answers are imperative to your successful ministerial search and both your institutional and numerical growth in the future. A congregation cannot move forward without knowing their past and recognizing their present. Only then will you have the basis to understand the future you will to make happen. Remember your Appreciative Inquiry experience and play it forward. The first question I asked when I arrived in Peace Dale was, "Who are you without the former minister?" I am delighted an answer is forthcoming.

Mystery, mystery, life is a riddle and a mystery.



This past week I spent five days in Texas with more than forty other interim ministers. Each April we meet for collegiality and continuing education at the UU Accredited Interim Ministry Guild meeting. We spent two days learning about emotional intelligence, which has five components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills.

Reported to be a primary feature of effective performance in the business world, some sources say emotional intelligence is a ninety percent factor in success. Emotional intelligence uses the neurotransmitters of the brain's limbic system to learn and improve. It is a useful tool in any minister's skill set.

I was struck by the suggestion that stress, grief or pain may impede a person's ability to use his or her emotional intelligence effectively. Any of those three make us more vulnerable in our relationships. We need to remain extra vigilant at those times. Some people are born with a high emotional Intelligence, while others learn from life's experience. Research in the past decades suggest it is possible to be intentional in acquiring and improving this important "people skill."

At the Accredited Interim Ministry Guild annual meeting, as a member of the Steering Committee for a year, I was elected Chair. I am humbled and honored to be their leader. The two other committee members and I are tasked with planning next year's meeting in Texas, among other responsibilities, working closely with the UUA Transitions Director around interim issues.

See you in church when I get back.

Rev. Judy

The President's Letter

Our interim time has been one of excitement, dissatisfaction, anticipation, anger, joy and frustration . . . in other words, completely normal.

At this point it feels to me like dawn after a night of fitful sleep. Tired and not quite rested, but with a growing optimism as the sky shifts from starry black to blue. Things that seemed overwhelming before, in the dark of night, seem to be a bit more manageable after a hot shower and some coffee. Workable solutions now seem like a real possibility.

I am letting go of the panic. I am moving back from defending what ever piece of mental and emotional ground I was so attached to. Flowers are cropping up on the bleak and scarred landscape. The smell of the garden dirt and the warming sun whisper renew, refresh, and feel joy.

The arrival of spring doesn't eliminate any of these problems, but it can give one the confidence to deal with them. It can help us all take the first step toward a solution. It can soften the edge on the negative energy and encourage the expansion of positive energy.

As members of this Congregation we do have some problems we need to deal with.

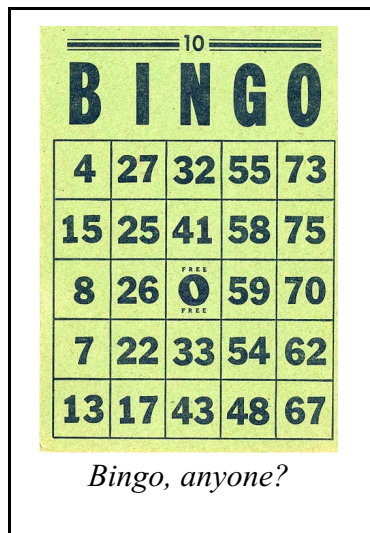
❶ Our financial situation as an institution is not sustainable.

❷ Our process for dealing with internal disagreements is not functioning.

Each of us has to take a personal responsibility for dealing with both of these problems. We

have to be honest with each other, we have to remember to treat each other with kindness, and we have to take personal responsibility for our own actions.

Gossip, rumors, and complaining in little groups does not reflect our Seven Principles. Voicing our concerns and frustrations openly and with the goal of reaching a solution through discussion and compromise is what those Seven Principles are all about.



A lot of negative energy was focused on our Interim Minister when she arrived, and a cycle of rumor and gossip ensued. The folks on the Board and Transition Team tried their best to deal with it, but it just kept building. A group of folks got together on their own to discuss their frustrations and they felt they had to do it outside the established framework. In retrospect, this is understandable since the established framework was not working.

Now it is time to use this experience

to our mutual benefit. Let us all open our hearts and minds with each other. We all need to stop with the gossip and stop spreading rumors. We need to approach those who disagree with us and just talk about it.

Let us all look at what is going on outside the confines of this organization and ask ourselves "What made this place so important to you in the first place?" Our personal agendas are always important, but didn't we come here to achieve a greater good? Sometimes we need to trust each other to find our way as a group, even if it means giving up a bit of that personal ground we are all so attached to.

I am trying. We all need to try.

Of course, all this has been about problem number two above. What about problem number one? We will not be financially sustainable unless we start working together for the good of this organization.

We have an able administrator with Rev. Judy, and we have to embrace these skills to our best advantage. We also have to support her by trying to understand what she is trying to do. We have to keep an open mind and listen to what she has to say. We have to work with her, and we have to pitch in rather than sit back and complain. That is what mature and viable organizations have learned to do.

We must all accept the necessity of change in this organization.

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The Music Corner

by Mike Galib, Music Director

On Sunday, May 25, Memorial Day weekend, the UUCSC Choir and I will be putting on a special musical program at 10:00 a.m. that will double as a worship service and a fundraiser for the music program through a second collection.

In years past we've had excellent guest choral groups come in for special concerts, though scheduling proved to be a great nemesis in coordinating that effort for a fourth year.

While we're aiming to be back to our tradition next year, for this spring we have the

UUCSC choir singing some of their "greatest hits" throughout the service, with some (I hope!) thought-provoking sermonettes from yours truly.

While it will still firmly be a worship service, do invite your friends to come and enjoy the choir— what better introduction to our church than through our music— and even if it's a one-time event for them, they'll walk away feeling uplifted and fulfilled, with perhaps a light spring in their step on the way home.

Happy Spring to all!

The President's Letter

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We must realize that we must operate in a more loving and mature manner so we can attract new members. We must build a strong and loving culture that abides by our Seven Principles through thick and thin. It is only in this way that we will grow enough to stay where we are. If

we are going to fight the changes that are coming, we'll need to find another place to meet. The American Legion hall where we used to meet is renovated and for lease. If we don't solve our internal process for dealing with conflict, then we will not solve our financial problem. The alternative will be to vacate this property and

find a less expensive space that a small, closed group of folks will be able to afford.

Do any of us really want to move back to the bingo hall? That's the real question before us, and we had better start discussing that topic in earnest before it's too late.

— Steven M. Harrison

Let's Talk!

The UUCSC Board has organized a series of forums after Sunday services so that we can talk together about where we are now and what we want in the future. The first forum, on April 27, focused on the process of searching for a settled minister. In May the forums will focus on these topics:

May 4 – Finances

May 11 – Communication

May 18 – Strategic Plan

Please come and share your questions and ideas! We know there are also other important activities happening after the service on those days, but we hope you will do them and come to our forums as well.

Board of Directors Update for April 2014

The April meeting of the UUCSC Board of Directors was our longest in at least the past few years, going until after 10:00 p.m.

No motions were passed. Two items were postponed and another was given only a portion of the time it deserved due to a report and extended discussion from an ad hoc meeting that was convened the previous Sunday at the request of some members.

The Board recognized that the ad hoc meeting happened because the established process of resolving conflicts either was not followed or it did not work as planned. As a result of this discussion the Board decided to convene a series of forums in May that will focus around answering these questions: “Who are we?” “Where did we come from?” “Where are we going?”

These questions are at the very core of the Interim process, and working as a congregation to reach an understanding of them will be critical in our search for a settled minister.

Another issue that was raised during the discussion was that our strategic planning is not getting the attention it deserves. When we bought this building we did so with the knowledge that we

would have to find a way to achieve financial stability, and that has not happened.

On deferred items:

Rev. Judy and Kathy Carland have compiled two important documents, Building Use Guidelines and Building Use Procedures. The discussion and adoption of these manuals was deferred to May.



The financial implications of these documents are an important part of our financial well-being, since they contain a fee schedule and contractual obligations for outside groups using the building, and they clarify guidelines for use of the building by our own members. Rev. Judy reported that we have already booked some functions under these guidelines that will bring in about \$1,000 in rental fees.

The UUA has revised the employee retirement policy and the new policy must be approved by June. This affects all our professional staff. The discussion of this matter was also postponed to May.

Finally, discussion of the process for selecting the Settled Minister Search Committee was pushed to late in the evening, and some Board members felt it did not get the time it deserved. The Board spent the following week discussing the matter via e-mail, which was a bit more cumbersome. The Board asked the membership for their recommendations for the Search Committee and 76 names were mentioned. We decided to send an invitation to each of them, and the Board will select the committee from those who apply. The committee will be finalized by the Annual Meeting in June, and it will start work soon after.

The May Board of Directors meeting will be on May 21 (the third Wednesday of the month) at 7:00 p.m. All members and friends are invited to observe. Agenda items should be submitted by the second Wednesday of the month. Please e-mail them to me at chefsteve@cox.net.

— Steve Harrison



Religious Education News and Events

By Pam Santos, Director of Religious Education

"It takes a village to raise a child."

Our congregation heard from the Senior Youth Group on March 30, during their annual Youth Worship Service. The Sunday of the Youth Service has consistently been one of the most well attended services of the year.

While popular culture often paints teenagers as hotheaded, selfish, and unapproachable, I believe in this congregation there is a profound respect for the teens participating in our Senior Youth Group. Maybe it's their carefree ease playing music together, their friendly faces accepting a cranky toddler into the nursery, or their willingness to reach out to other UU youth in our area. Our young people are respected.

Indeed, it is a powerful thing to see teenagers wanting to attend their faith home, wanting to participate in a Youth Service, willing to commit the time to organizing a Youth Conference. Our young people respect our UU faith.

How did this all happen?

I believe that children, youth— all of us, in fact— are paying attention to the adults around us. When children see adults committed to becoming involved in their faith home, volunteering, trying to make a difference, they are paying attention. When we see someone sign up to make a homemade meal for our neighbors at Welcome House, we pay attention. When we see a group of UUs up at the State House standing up for something they feel strongly about, we pay attention. When we hear of a family spending their vacation in a developing country trying to help, we pay attention.

When the adults around them outwardly live their UU values, children pay attention. Right now our "future teens" meet weekly in their religious education classes with adults they are paying attention to. These are adults who have offered their time, energy, and enthusiasm to the religious education program right here at the UUCSC. Each week these adults gently guide our young people through UU experiences, lessons, community service, and worship. They work with children named Aimee, Suzelle, Jack, Eli, Ruby, Brady, Shane, Camryn, Ethan, Linnea, and Madyln. Along with making a difference for these children, the volunteers have the good fortune to get to know each of these kids individually— they know their names and personalities. It is a gift.

During May I will be sharing my profound thanks to the people who have volunteered to take part in religious education during this church year. I will also be looking for adults who are interested in volunteering next year with our RE Program. I hope you see this as an opportunity to live your faith and become involved. It truly does take a village to raise a child, and our children are our future.

Thank you.

COMING EVENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

May 4 - The children have been invited to participate in a musical event with Matt Meyer during the beginning of the service, and then we'll walk over to the Scallop Shell Nursing Home to plant flowers for our community service. Please join us in the backyard at 11:30 for our May Day celebration as we celebrate with music, flowers, bubbles, and of course a beautiful May Pole.

May 18 - Religious Education Volunteer Appreciation. Together we will recognize the volunteers who have helped out during this past year in RE.

June 1 - Service Sunday. We'll be planting our own backyard garden.

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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

"Solvency is maintained by means of a national debt, on the principle, 'If you will not lend me the money, how can I pay you?'"

– *Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)*

The Unitarian essayist, lecturer, and poet who led the Transcendentalist movement in the mid-19th century was born 203 years ago this month.