

THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOLUME 24 ISSUE 5

MAY 2015

May Services

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

May 3

Rise Up and Sing! – *Jeannie Gagné*

Jeannie Gagné returns with jazz, music to sing along with, spiritual musings, musical meditation, and reflections on bringing Unitarian Universalist music beyond the church.

An author, professional singer and life-long UU, Jeannie teaches voice at Berklee College of Music.

May 10

"Her Children Rise Up And Call Her Blessed" – *Rev. Jan Knost*

Multi-generational Mother's Day Celebration

Our hope is that you will want to join us as, again, we honor our mothers and grandmothers in ways familiar and different. The R.E. children will join us for the service.

May 17

"This I Believe" – *The Senior Youth Group*

What do you value? Where did your beliefs come from? How do they affect your relationship with the world around you? The teenagers among us will tell us how they would answer those questions.

May 24

Being Our Own Best Selves – *Rev. Jan Knost*

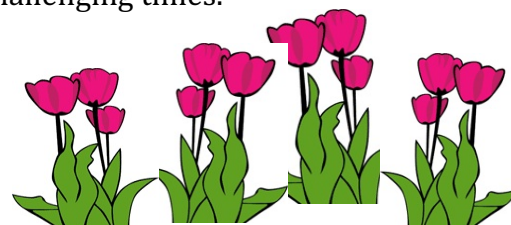
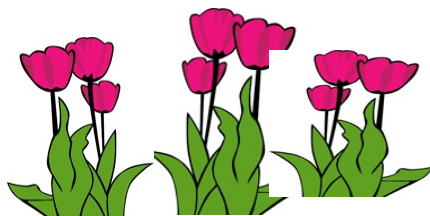
As we crash into the springtime and summer, our moral compasses can become triangulated among work, play and obligations. Rev. Knost hopes that by summoning new ideas on how to "get along with ourselves" regardless of the tensions around us, we can correct our headings and fully enjoy what's to come.

May 31

Building Bridges over Troubled Waters

Annual Bridging Ceremony

We will celebrate the bridging of our graduating youth into adulthood and explore relationship-building in challenging times.



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 Members

Rev. Jan Vickery Knost, Interim Minister

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

Kathleen Carland, Office Administrator and Calendar Keeper

Board of Directors

Steve Harrison, President ■ Betsy Dalton, Vice President ■ Harry Buffum, Treasurer ■ Mary Fulton, Clerk
Randi Marten ■ Penny Hall ■ Clare Sartori ■ Nancy Rose, Past President

Committee Chairs

Linda Dupuis & Jenny Watson, Membership Committee ■ *Judi Marcy*, Caring Connection

John Glasheen, Social Action Committee ■ *Suzanne Paton*, Religious Education Committee

Mary Finnegan, Personnel Committee ■ *Marcia Boyd*, Finance Committee

Ed Burrell, Facilities Committee ■ *Susan Moreland*, Music Committee

Lisa McHenry, Hospitality Committee ■ *Linda Whyte Burrell*, Social Events Committee

David Floyd, Music at Lily Pads Coordinator ■ *Susan Strakosch*, Worship Committee

Roni Meyer, Flower Committee ■ *Jean Bowen*, Publicity

DIRECTORY UPDATE

The UUCSC office will prepare a mid-year updated to the directory of members and friends. The update will include changes since December 2014. If you would like to update your directory listing, please e-mail the information to office administrator Kathy Carland at uucscri@yahoo.com.

For the Time Being . . .

by Rev. Jan Knost

April 20, 2015

What a service yesterday in celebration of music, don't you agree? Can't say thank you enough to everyone for making it happen. Then this morning on public radio we heard about the "flying mailman" landing his "flying bicycle" on the Capitol lawn to call attention to how our democracy is crumbling due to the way Congress ignores its responsibilities to those who elected them, preferring rather to be bought by the billions of dollars from "big money."

This got me to thinking. And I suddenly recalled a movie titled *The Exorcist*. The P.R. folks sure knew what they were doing to promote it. They opened the movie with a maxim which read, "During the dark season, the cult will turn to alternative sources of power to help them through." Wow! There were people fainting and vomiting in the first audiences, and the media told us about it.

Our founding fathers turned to a different source of power when the going got tough. They wrote a Constitution in a land where they envisioned that freedom would become a way of life. Sadly, that same Constitution is under fire today.

Currently, with our nation's morale at a seemingly all-time low, with climate change being denied or affirmed and with incessant wars around the globe, it is easy to see how the pundits of gloom and doom tempt the trodden masses to accept as dictum that we are doomed. "The system hasn't worked." "The system is becoming too socialistic." "The system won't work unless everyone does it our way."

Well, as with the movie, it's nice to be scared out of one's wits occasionally, as long as we know it's a movie. But there is a kind of paralytic effect that the nay-sayers bring with their "Swiss cheese" rhetoric. They embrace words like fear, danger, liberalism, communism. Obviously, they shun words like reason, truth, patience, forbearance and character. They condemn them as hollow and false.

What a pity. In life there are times when we are tempted to drop our defenses and embrace new deities. The pariahs and zealots are always ready to let us fall into their nets. The test comes when one resists such ideas and leans on the strength of the human heart.

So who needs movies like *The Exorcist* when there are realities around which, if left to continue, would be much scarier than a horror flick!

Trust your heart and your reason, gentle reader, and you'll abide.

"The Rev"

The President's Letter

My time as your President comes to an end next month. It has been an interesting two years for this congregation, beginning with a difficult first year of transition but ending with what seems to be a much calmer second year of Interim.

As we prepare to call our next settled minister, we still have much work to do in figuring out who and what we want to be as a congregation. Do we remain a cozy little fellowship of like-minded folks who kind of do their own thing? Or do we continue on our current path of growth, and build this congregation into an organization that can bring tangible benefits to both our members and the wider community?

Our third year of Interim can be a valuable time for learning what it will take to achieve success as a larger organization. Part of that process should include some inward reflection. Let me share a story of my own experience in self discovery.

Sometime in high school, I began a secret indulgence that carried so much shame that I kept it hidden away in a drawer of the old desk in my room. I wrote poetry—painfully bad poetry. All the turmoil and confusion of those adolescent years spilled onto paper in awkward self-conscious words. I did not even like to read what I had written most of the time, but I could not stop my scribbling.

I kept a journal too, in a legal-size ledger book with the light green paper and a thin red margin. One day I had left it out on the desk and my best friend just picked it up and started reading it. He found what I had written about the infamous second fight between Muhammad Ali and Sonny Liston that ended with Ali knocking down Liston in the first round. It was a stunning surprise that created a storm of controversy for years to come. Ali's commanding presence outside the ring captured the attention of even non-fight fans

like myself. My own surprise at such an unexpected outcome sent me to my journal that night, and as I wrote, it was the first time that I fell into a place of synchronicity between thoughts and words.

Dick laughed as he read it—which amazed me, because when I wrote it I actually was trying to be funny. It was one of the first times someone had read my stuff, and to my relief, it seemed he really liked it. That jolt of acceptance probably helped me to keep putting things down in words.

However, during the next several years I

rarely shared any of my work with anyone. I was still a closet writer.

When I was off to college, I collected all those accumulated sheets of paper and my journal, put them in a little old scruffy brown leather suitcase, and carried them from apartment to apartment, adding more secret writings all the time. I met Linda, fell in love immediately, and after a couple of years we finally decided to get married and move from New Jersey to Manhattan. In our last college apartment we were a bit cramped, so I put the suitcase in the garage out back. Somehow in all the confusion of moving I left that suitcase behind.

Over the years I kept thinking about stopping and asking about it, but something kept me from doing so. I was still a closet poet, and most of those early pieces still carried a stigma of shame and embarrassment for me, but I also could not help myself from continually writing more.

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Questions and Answers from the Ministerial Search Committee

Your Ministerial Search Committee has been hard at work doing the behind-the-scenes jobs necessary to find a new minister. The main task now is writing and designing the substantial packet of photographs and information about our congregation to send to candidates who express interest. We hope to be finished by the time summer arrives.

In the Oneto Community Room, you will find a box, decorated with a bright pansy flower motif, for your questions for us. Please do ask any questions you may have!

Q: When will the congregation become actively involved in choosing the next minister?

A: In the spring of 2016, if all goes as planned, the candidate will visit our congregation for a week and give a sermon. The congregation will then vote on that candidate. For the candidate to be called, this vote will have to be strongly in favor. In the meantime, don't forget that the better the salary package we can offer, the better the chances of attracting a range of excellent candidates. Your pledge makes a difference now!

Q: Will there be another opportunity for input from the congregation?

A: Great question! As it says above, your Search Committee always welcomes your input. The Question Box in the Community Room is one way to reach us. Another is to e-mail a member of the committee: Jean Burke, Amber Kelley Collins, Cindy Berry, Val Follett, David Fulton or Jean Bowen. We are also considering the option of having another "Search Party" in the fall if members wish for one. With the extra year of search, new ideas and thoughts may arise.

The President's Letter



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Eventually I became comfortable with showing my work to Linda, and once in a while she would hand it back and say, "Mmm, not bad." It kept me going. But I never went back for that suitcase.

After 45 years, I finally found closure. For one thing, not knowing what happened to that little suitcase is a comfort. I never burned it or tore it up, I just abandoned it to Fate. I left that pain and shame behind and moved on, but I took my memories with me.

Oh, it could be interesting and amusing to

read through it today, but finding out for sure that it was gone would destroy any remaining sliver of hope that it still exists somewhere. For myself, the actual paper and words have little real importance anymore. What was valuable was the experience itself. At last I am content to let go of that little old scruffy brown leather suitcase.

My memories of that suitcase are more valuable to me now than anything it might contain, because the valuable stuff was inside me all along.

– Steven M. Harrison

Climate Justice Month continues

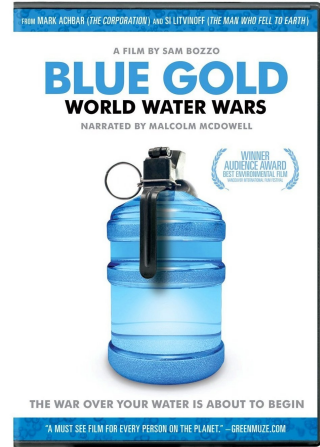
Climate Justice Month officially ended on Earth Day, April 22, but the celebration at UUCSC continues with two more films, our ongoing book discussion group, and a new opportunity to call on your alma mater to divest from fossil fuels.

FILM SERIES

Tuesday, May 5 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Blue Gold: World Water Wars

The Earth's water supply is finite, but we're wasting our limited supply. The more difficult it is to get, the more it's used for economic and political gain. To learn more about the film, visit the Blue Gold website at <http://www.bluegold-worldwaterwars.com/>



Sunday, May 17 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Symphony of the Soil

Discover the hidden life of soil and its key role in solving our most challenging environmental problems. To learn more, go to <http://www.symphonyofthesoil.com/>

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Join us to discuss Naomi Klein's new book, *This Changes Everything*, about the climate crisis and the opportunity it presents for transforming society. The group meets every other Monday at 7:00 p.m. in the Nursery. The final meetings will be on May 11, May 25, and June 8.

JOIN THE DIVESTMENT MOVEMENT WITHOUT LEAVING HOME

At the UUA General Assembly in Providence last June, delegates voted to divest the Common Endowment Fund from fossil fuel companies. In September, UUCSC became the first congregation in the state to pass a fossil-fuel-free investment resolution. We can send a powerful message to our alma mater: *'I want to give, but first you must commit to divesting from fossil fuels.'* To learn more and to donate, visit the Multi-School Fossil Free Divestment Fund at <http://www.divestfund.org/>. For more information, contact Lisa Petrie.

Thanks from your Stewardship Committee

The members of your Stewardship Committee would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to help in maintaining the functioning and future of this congregation of like-minded souls. What you have entrusted to us is at the core of the survival of UUCSC.



Every small and moderate-size UU congregation has similar financial concerns. We trust the Board of Directors will present ours to you in the near future. The fact of the matter is that our financial strength is paramount to our stability, our ability to attract new members, the quality of our programs, and our growth as a community.

We thank you for allowing us to begin to modify our culture into one in which financial obligations are not viewed in a negative light but rather as a positive opportunity.

– Cindy Berry, Dennis Bowman, Charlie Donnelly, and Peter Himmel



Religious Education News and Events

By Pam Santos, Director of Religious Education

As June approaches it may seem like the church year is winding down, but it is in this beautiful month of May that the RE Committee is gearing up their plans for an exciting and robust upcoming year in Religious Education. May is the month in which we invite interested, curious, even tentative individuals to sign up as an RE volunteer for next year.

You might wonder who makes a good volunteer for a Religious Education program like ours. Here is what I have found:

- ★ It isn't necessary to have a teaching background— just an open spirit.
- ★ It isn't necessary to know your “religious facts”— you'll learn a lot!
- ★ You don't need to be a parent— it takes a village to raise a child in a UU church.
- ★ You don't need to be young— the kids will make you feel young again.
- ★ You don't need to be organized— I'll organize for you!

This past year we have been teaching a curriculum focused on moral strength, tools for guidance, and social justice. Next year we will be using UU curriculum that explores our Christian and Jewish heritage through stories from the Bible. Creative classroom activities involve making costumes, creating sculpture, story telling, music, and plays, all to make learning fun.

K through Grade 2 – *“Special Times.”* Young children will be acquainted with our UU Judeo-Christian heritage and engaged in celebrating Jewish and Christian holidays and other special times such as the Shabbat/Sabbath, Thanksgiving, and birthdays.

Grade 3 through Grade 5 – *“Timeless Themes.”* Children will explore universal themes of humility, corruption, forgiveness, jealousy, compassion, and inner strength and as we learn about the stories from the Bible.

Grade 6 through Grade 8 – *“Compass Points.”* Adolescents will embark on a journey to begin to define their own identity, beliefs, and relationships within their UU faith. Each week they will be asked to take a stand on a statement and share with their group what they believe at this time.

Please consider volunteering with this congregation's Religious Education Program. You may be surprised at what you learn in the process!

Coming Events in RE

May 5th - Service Sunday - Service project - creating homes for pollinators
May 5th - May Day Celebration - 11:15-12:00- Everyone is invited!
May 10th - Multigenerational Service on Mothering
May 17 - Youth Service
May 24th - RE Volunteer Appreciation Ceremony
May 31st - Youth Bridging (High School Seniors)

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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*“God draweth straight lines
but we call them crooked.”*

– Horace Mann (1796-1859)

Mann, a Unitarian, served in the Massachusetts legislature and as president of Antioch College, but he is remembered primarily as an educational reformer. He was born in Franklin, Mass. on May 4, 1796.