

THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOLUME 24 ISSUE 10

NOVEMBER 2015

November Services

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

November 1

The Idea of Hell – Rev. Jan Knost

For centuries, orthodox religion threatened its adherents with the probability that if they did not keep close to the admonitions of “holy mother church,” they would suffer endless punishment in the “afterlife.” Then came the Universalists. Wow! What a revolution occurred after that!

November 8

An American Catholic Reacts to the Visit of Pope Francis – Carol Shelton

Carol Shelton, a former nun, member of the Genesis Community, and long-time member of the Catholic Left, will reflect on the effects of Pope Francis’s recent visit to the United States and talk about what his legacy might be. *Carol Shelton left the Sisters of Mercy in 1970 and married former priest Henry Shelton, with whom she has raised five children. She has taught nursing at Rhode Island College for thirty years and is now an adjunct professor.*

November 15

Living Our Way Beyond . . . – Donna Dolham

This service will offer an opportunity to consider how we embody our Unitarian Universalist principles during times of transition by breaking down barriers and opening our doors to the world. *Donna Dolham has facilitated Beyond Categorical Thinking programs as a volunteer for the UUA since 2001. She is a clinical social worker and a student at Andover Newton Theological School.*

November 22

Inner and Outer Weather – Rev. Jan Knost

This will be our intergenerational Thanksgiving service. We’ll visit the main themes of the season and sing some “old songs,” too. The sermon takes its title from a poem by Robert Frost.

November 29

Protracted Ambiguity – Rev. Hank Peirce

There are times when we find ourselves stuck in neutral, and no matter what we do, we can’t move. Often in those moments we fret and flail, but maybe it is a time when God is telling us to sit back, observe and prepare. *Rev. Hank Peirce, currently interim minister at First Parish Church in Milton, Mass., is a Fairhaven native who worked as a bike messenger, roadie for a punk band, and a house painter before becoming a minister. He has served congregations in Auburn, Maine, Medford, Mass. and Westford, Mass.*



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 pamsantos@room35.com

Michael Galib, Music Director

Kathleen Carland, Office Administrator and Calendar Keeper

Office Hours: Tuesday 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. ■ Wednesday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. ■ Friday 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Board of Directors

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Steve Harrison, Treasurer ■ Mary Fulton, Clerk

Randi Marten ■ Elise Bender ■ Clare Sartori ■ Leah Canin

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Dennis Bowman, Communications & Publicity Committee

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For the Time Being . . .

by Rev. Jan Knost

They were a young couple struggling to make ends meet. She had intentionally quit her job to raise her family. It was clear that they believed in the old adage, “Nurturing children during their formative years counts.”

On my way home from hospital calls, I stopped in front of their house. I had not planned to; it was just a spontaneous response. She came to the door and, to my surprise (I was usually careful to avoid unannounced calls) she said, “Gee, it's really good to see you. We were just talking about calling you this morning. Come in! (Well, I thought to myself, here's a chance to hear some good news to cap a long work day!)

Her husband came into the room and shook my hand with genuine warmth, saying, “Thanks for stopping by, Rev.” We sat down and I waited. We smiled back and forth and I suspected they were waiting for me to begin the conversation. I didn't. More smiles, verging on the uncomfortable. “Sure is good to see you!” the husband suddenly blurted as if to fill the vacuum. “Thank you. It's good to see you both, too. How is everything?”

The next twenty minutes were filled with their report of recent happenings in their little family. He had lost his job and was working two part-time jobs that called for unskilled labor. She was doing telephone solicitation to pick up a few dollars. Their baby had a serious skin ailment and their daughter was being treated for diabetes. And “Oh!” they said, “How the bills were rolling in!” Both sets of parents had died. The landlord was raising their rent. There didn't seem to be any end to it.

I was thunderstruck. Wordless. I sat there, my heart pumping with concern and a sense of out-and-out helplessness. I had stopped to say “Hello” and was in an avalanche of human pain. Then, as in so many times past where all the seminary training, all the books and all the studied thought were rendered useless, they ministered to me! “It was great to be in church last Sunday with all our friends. To us, it's our new and loving family,” she said, to which he added, “Your sermon really helped. It's been tough, you know.”

As I looked into their eyes, marveling at their quiet strength, I wondered with confusion at how many people bear their private pain. Here were two young people who faced heavy odds. But they hadn't given up on the risky business of living. They abided, and in doing so they would quietly persevere.

Friends, we need ever so much to be sensitive— to read the subtle signs— and love one another through the darkness to the light! Stay close!

Reverend Jan

The President's Letter

*Dear UUCSC members
and friends,*

In November, we often reflect upon all that has happened during the year, both positive and perhaps not-so-positive. We think of our families, our neighbors, our friends, and often those who are less fortunate than we are, and we give thanks.

Thanksgiving is truly an All-American, all-denominational, and all-inclusive holiday, as it is one of the few holidays that did not grow from the base of one particular religion. Rather, it is based in the tradition of freedom of religion for all, and the sacrifices that were made to seek such freedom in the face of great adversity.

Fortunately for those early Pilgrims, the indigenous peoples of America not only welcomed these wanderers but helped them to get established in this New World. In those first difficult years, native Americans acted humanely to help provide food, shelter, and instruction which allowed the Pilgrims to survive through the winter and begin to flourish. Many of today's pilgrims throughout the world are not as fortunate.

Fear and prejudice and misperception will grow when we do not know or do not understand the individu-

als on the other side of an issue, or problem, or conflict.

We see this in the news every day, and we may even hear it coming from the mouths of those we work with, go to school with, or come in contact with. Empathy and understanding can only grow when we put ourselves in the other person's shoes. How do you handle your own prejudices and fears? How do I? I have come to recognize in myself that this is, and always will be, an ongoing effort. I'll never fully complete it and I'll always have more to learn and understand.



It is for this reason that our Ministerial Search Committee has arranged for the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop on Saturday, November 14 to provide the opportunity for each of us to dig deep within our individual and collective minds and hearts. We must seek out our prejudices and address them as we prepare ourselves for the wonderful process ahead — to find

and embrace our new settled minister.

As you know, I am somewhat new to this congregation, having first come to UUCSC in 2011. In this time, however, I have learned much about the history of the congregation, and have come to understand that issues of prejudice did emerge in past ministerial searches. In spite of (or perhaps because of) the outcomes of the past, it is so important that we seek to move forward together — to do everything that we can to understand ourselves and each other, and to keep our minds and our hearts open — as we meet together each Sunday, as we work together in our committees and groups, and as we enter into our search for the minister who will lead us forward spiritually. Is this important to you? I do hope that the response is a resounding “yes,” and that each of you will follow your hearts to be a part of Beyond Categorical Thinking. We are the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County. Let us move forward . . . together.

I wish you and your families the greatest blessings of Thanksgiving. May peace be with you.

In faith,

— Betsy Dalton

BEYOND CATEGORICAL THINKING

When you think of a minister, what's the first image that comes to mind? Is it a person of a particular gender, race, or age? If we keep that image in mind when we're searching for a new minister, could our categorical thinking cause us to overlook a person who is actually the best match for us?

When congregations are searching for a minister, they are sometimes guided by their collective subconscious image of an ideal minister. As a result, ministers who are not white, or male, or heterosexual, or able-bodied, or of a certain age, or a certain social class or ethnic group, are sometimes considered less than the ideal. UU ministers who are people of color, bisexual, gay, lesbian, female, transgender, disabled, or of certain ethnicities face discrimination in the ministerial search process.

As part of our effort to find a minister who's the best match for us, the Ministerial Search Committee will sponsor a Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop on Saturday, November 14 from 9:00 a.m. to noon.



Donna Dolham, an experienced workshop leader, will meet with the Ministerial Search Committee on Friday, November 13, will lead the workshop on Saturday, and will deliver the sermon on Sunday, November 15. With Donna's assistance, we'll have a chance to see how our own history,

both personal and congregational, might interfere with our search efforts, and learn how to avoid letting our biases become a part of the ministerial search process.

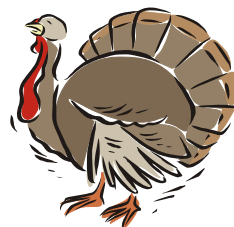
Donna has been facilitating Beyond Categorical Thinking workshops since 2001. She has a masters degree in social work and has worked in the field of social work for 30 years, specializing in working with people who identify as transgender. She currently has a clinical social work practice in coastal Maine and is a student at Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Centre, Mass.

Please plan to attend the workshop on Saturday. Come and enjoy morning refreshments, and please be prompt, as we will begin at 9:00 a.m.

– Val Follett and Jean Bowen,
on behalf of the Ministerial Search Committee

Thanksgiving Open House at Vikki and John's

Once again this year, Vikki LePree and her husband John Jackson will host an open house at their home in Green Hill for members of the congregation on Thanksgiving Day. They're serving a traditional Thanksgiving dinner buffet from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. All members of the congregation are welcome, and guests may bring a dish if they would like to. An RSVP to Vikki at 793-1649 would be appreciated.

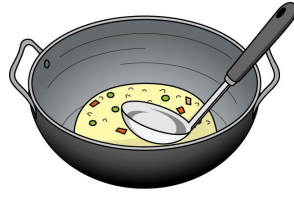


Give Thanks and Share Soup

A delicious thank-you to everyone from the Board

The UUCSC Board of Directors wants to thank everyone in the congregation for their contributions of time, talent and treasure, so we're starting a new tradition.

On Sunday, November 22, the Board will host a luncheon for the entire congregation — members, friend, new-comers — directly after the service, or as quickly as we can set up tables and chairs in the Sanctuary. (Volunteer help for set-up would be appreciated.)



The food will be provided, prepared and served by members of the Board as our "thank you" to everyone who gives to UUCSC throughout the year in many ways. Several different kinds of soup, both vegetarian and non-veg-

etarian, will be on the menu, along with breads (regular and gluten-free), cookies (regular and gluten-free), coffee, tea, and other beverages.

Please join us for this community thanksgiving event. No RSVP is necessary. Just come and share a meal with your friends and neighbors and the Board.

— Betsy Dalton, on behalf of all the members of your UUCSC Board of Directors

The Path to Membership begins this month

Are you curious about Unitarian Universalism? Would you like to know more about what we believe and how our congregation works? Please plan to attend our Path to Membership classes. The classes are strongly recommended for anyone who wishes to join the congregation.



Three classes are offered on Sundays after the service from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The entire series will be repeated in the spring. Child care is available if you let us know in advance that you will need it.

On Sunday, November 1 we'll discuss the history of Unitarian Universalism. On Sunday, November 22 we'll learn about Unitarian Universalist theology. On Sunday, December 6 we'll talk about how our congregation functions. A New Member ceremony will take place during the Sunday service on December 13.

If you have any questions, please contact Carla Bowman (cbow5@aol.com) or Rev. Janmony will take place during the Sunday service on December 13. Knost, or speak to a member of the Membership Committee: Linda Dupuis, Suzanne Marcy, Janice Marielle, Lisa McHenry, Patience Peck, and Jenny Watson.

Newcomers' potluck dinner rescheduled to November 13

The Newcomers' Potluck Dinner scheduled for October 23 had to be postponed due to illness. It has been rescheduled to Friday, November 13 at 7:00 p.m.

Dennis and Carla Bowman are the hosts. The address is 183 Twin Peninsula Ave. in South Kingstown. If you'd like to attend, please get in touch with Carla at (401) 792-1116 or (804) 380-9936 or e-mail her at cbow5@aol.com.



Religious Education News and Events

By Pam Santos, Director of Religious Education

That Sunday Morning Struggle

As the mother of five, I am more than familiar with that Sunday morning struggle to motivate children to attend church. As Unitarian Universalist parents, we do not have the guilt factor to pull out of our bag of tricks to get our families up and out the door on Sunday mornings. We have faith that the divine can be celebrated not only in our church, but on a morning walk in nature, at home meditating, and even with a hot cup of tea in front of warm wood stove!

So why do we encourage our children to participate in our Sunday morning Religious Education classes?

Our Sunday morning classes begin with the lighting of the chalice. "We are the church of the open mind, helping hands, and the loving heart." The children repeat the words together. Each child then reaches into the basket of beach stones and with the others listening, shares a great joy or sorrow he or she has experienced during the past week. The children are getting to know each other; they are developing empathy.

As the morning's activity begins, the adult volunteers assist each child as needed. The children become familiar with the adults in their class, they laugh and learn as they generate a morning routine. Together they create a covenant, an agreement of mutual respect and kindness for the classroom. The youngsters can look around to see photos of themselves and their classmates. This is "their" room. They feel a sense of belonging.

Yet, the most important piece of the children's morning is their connection to the other children. Just as the adults upstairs in the sanctuary and at coffee hour are weaving community, our children also benefit greatly from their own church community. Our church draws from many different school districts, as well as many homeschoolers. Church friends are different from school friends. Sometimes it is the children encouraging the parents to come to church so they can see their church friends.

To support this beautiful community in our RE classes, we need to ask for consistency in attendance. I have seen the sad look of disappointed children as they see that none of their church friends have shown up. When the classrooms are full, the energy, enthusiasm, and joy are easy to observe.

On those Sunday mornings when it is difficult to get out of the door, please reflect on the importance to the children of their effort to create their own beloved church community.

Ever wonder what's going on downstairs while you're enjoying the services?

This year started off with all of the classes joining together for a peace project. Many bright faces, both familiar and new, and many busy hands made peace flags one day.

The next week, we created a "beloved community" from clay, pipe cleaners, and imagination. We had a horse farm, a pool, a church, and a road. It was great to see the children connect and create as a group.

I look forward to my session with the K-2 (kindergarten through second grade) class this fall. What will they come up with next? – Heather Williams

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27 NORTH ROAD
PEACE DALE, RI 02879



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Tiger got to hunt, bird got to fly;
Man got to sit and wonder, 'Why, why, why?'
Tiger got to sleep, bird got to land;
Man got to tell himself he understand.

– Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

Kurt Vonnegut's novels blend satire, gallows humor and science fiction. An occasional Unitarian who described himself as a "Christian-worshipping agnostic," Vonnegut was born in Indianapolis, Indiana on November 11, 1922.