



# THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOLUME 22 ISSUE 10

NOVEMBER 2013



## November Services

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



**November 3**

### **In the Face of Death, How Do You Find Meaning and Fulfillment in Life? – Al Killilea**

Earlier this year, Al, a retired URI professor, edited a book of essays his students wrote for his Death and Politics course. He and Professor Michael Vocino are working on a second book of one-page essays addressed to the question above. Al will talk about the themes he finds most compelling in those essays, including the idea that allowing death into our consciousness forces us to acknowledge that life is brief and precious.

*Daylight saving time ends today at 2 a.m. Remember to set your clocks back one hour.*



**November 10**

### **The Three-winged Bird – Rev. Dr. Judith Smith-Valley**

Recent scientific theories give organizational structure a new perspective. They also enhance our ideas of theology and religion and give us a whole new way of connecting to spirituality.

**November 17**

### **Entrusting Ourselves – Rev. Dr. Judith Smith-Valley**

To have confidence in who and what we are, as individuals and as a congregation, is one of our tasks as Unitarian Universalists and a goal of this interim time.

**November 24**

### **Worship is Where the Heart Is – Joan Youngken**

What is the role of “sense of place” in our practice of faith? As the holiday season begins and many of us will be traveling, we'll consider how we worship when we're not able to attend services at UUCSC



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



# THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

PUBLISHED ELEVEN TIMES A YEAR

Karen R. Ellsworth, Editor

Deadline: The 20th day of each month

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## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

[www.uusouthcountyri.org](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:uucscri@yahoo.com) • 783-4170

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# In Between Time

*Rev. Dr. Judith Smith-Valley*

*Accredited Interim Minister*



November is upon us. The brilliant colors of autumn soon will be spent. The forests take on the prickly texture of winter with the browns and grays of the leafless trees mixed with the deep greens of various pines. Cool, almost cold nights are suddenly here. The yard of the house I am renting in Kingston is deep in various dried brown leaves. The month ends with Thanksgiving and the start of the holiday season.

Whoa! Let's enjoy the now and not hurry toward the end of the calendar year. Let's seek out harvest and the bounty of this season.

My list of tasks of interim ministry— the ways I seek to help you as a congregation— is beginning to jell. (There is still time to ask to see me one-to-one so I can know you better.) Another way to look at it is with these questions:

- Who have you been? Coming to terms with your history and what it means.
- Who are you? Claiming your strengths and encouraging awareness apart from your former minister.
- How are you? Developing new, clear and appropriate structures. Finding the difference between “governance” and “ministry.”
- With whom are you connected? Strengthening connections with the larger UU world. (Almost a no-brainer, because General Assembly is in Providence June 2014. You wouldn't want to miss five to six thousand UUs coming to Rhode Island's biggest city!)
- Who will you be? Strengthening stewardship. Making commitment to new leadership (including your new settled minister) and enthusiastic participation in the future.

An interim is a time to try out different things. The Worship Committee and I have been tweaking the service in recent weeks. We are asking the congregation's leaders (beginning with the Board of Directors) to offer the Welcome and Announcements on Sunday mornings. Soon, I hope to have other lay leaders participating in those services led by the interim minister. I hope you will put names and faces together and you (especially those of you recently new) can begin to know your leaders and each other. (Me too.) We will have sessions for the Path to Membership this month and start December with a New Members Ceremony.

Thanksgiving Day is one of my family's most beloved holidays. My favorite ritual (after cooking the feast— an activity which I love, although my husband always did most of the other cooking during the year and we are often now the guests of our children's families) is when the food is waiting on the table and we are all gathered around holding hands. Each person, young and not-so-young, shares one thing for which he or she is grateful.

You and I are well blessed, and understanding that fact is important as we move into the weeks of preparation for the December Holiday celebrations and gifts. I am honored to be among you.

In Faith,

*Rev. Judy*

# The President's Letter

## Improvements in communications and the election of the president

At its October 16 meeting, the Board of Directors approved two new policies to foster better communication within our congregation. Another topic— how we elect our president— was opened for future discussion.

### Personnel handbooks

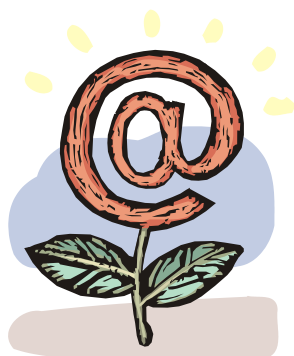
We have a very active Personnel Committee, which according to Rev. Judy is a rarity. They have spent the past year creating concise personnel handbooks for our professional staff. These easily-referenced guides spell out the process for goal setting, budgeting and performance-review procedures for each of our staff members. The handbooks were condensed to a few pages from our 32-page personnel manual, which is still our main policy document covering staff.

The process was initiated after the difficult and divisive departure of our previous religious education director last spring. That process was not handled as well as it should have been for various reasons. Among them was a lack of clear guidelines for staff evaluation and program evaluation. Communication broke down and the situation did not come to the attention of the Board until things had become quite volatile and emotional. This is not the way to manage our paid professional staff. One of our tasks in this interim period will be to improve how we manage our staff. It was the second time this has happened in recent years. Our previous music director left under difficult and divisive conditions a few years back. The Personnel Committee deserves a big thank you for their work in developing these tools, which will improve how we manage our professional

staff.

### “All congregation” e-mails

In an effort to reduce the volume of e-mail to our members, the Board has approved a policy that clarifies the criteria for sending these e-mails. It will take more advance planning on the part of each of us to make sure that routine announcements make the deadline for the



weekly Order of Worship insert and the E-Weekly Highlights. The only e-mails that will go out to all congregation members on the e-mail list will concern timely matters such as deaths and urgent notices of events such as cancellations, closings, weather alerts, disasters, and emergency assistance. Other announcements will be included in the E-Weekly Highlights. The office administrator, in consultation with the minister or the congregation president, will determine urgency.

### Succession process for congregation president

The congregation currently is without a vice president, which means there is no one in training to assume the office of president next year. This has happened before, and it means a two-year term for the sitting president. One of my goals as president is to clarify and simplify the duties of president. One way

will

be to create clearly-defined processes for routine decisions that can be handled by a wider group of people. In fact, the duties of the Board as a whole will be examined in the coming months to determine what should and should not be brought to them.

While the actual duties of the president are not that much more than other Board members, it is a position of visibility for the congregation. The position requires a person who is ready, willing and able to serve our congregation. Part of preparing people for the role is giving them a chance to learn and understand the process. Several folks whom I have approached about serving as vice president said the same thing: “I would prefer to gain some experience first as a Board member before taking on the job of vice president and then president.” This was my own answer when I was first approached by Nancy Rose and the Nominating Committee.

I wish to propose the following process for discussion:

*Succession to the position  
of president would be  
a three-year process*

One of the four trustee positions on the Board of Directors would be designated as the “executive seat.” The person elected to that seat would serve one year as a trustee, one year as vice president, and one year as president. The Nominating Committee would be encouraged to nominate candidates for this position who have previous experience as a committee chair.

During the first year, instead of serving as a liaison to a specific  
*continued on page 5*

# The Path to Membership

If you're curious about Unitarian Universalism, you're in luck! Rev. Judith and the Membership Committee will offer our Path to Membership classes this month. These classes are held every spring and fall for people who would like to learn more about Unitarian and Universalist history and theology and are curious about the way our congregation functions. And as an added bonus, you'll meet others who are on the same path.

Anyone is welcome to attend the



classes. You may come just to learn more, or you may come because you are interested in becoming

a member of the congregation. If you do intend to join, we highly recommend that you do attend. Child care is available if you let us know in advance. If you have any questions, please speak to a member of the Membership Committee (Linda Dupius, Val Follett, Jenny Watson, and Ann McNamara) or Rev. Judith.

Here's a schedule you can cut out and hang on your refrigerator:

## UUCSC Path to Membership Classes

Sunday, Nov. 10 – 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Unitarian Universalist History  
Sunday, Nov. 17 – 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – Unitarian Universalist Theology  
Sunday, Nov. 24 – 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. – How our congregation functions

## Improvements in communications and the election of the president

*continued from page 4*

committee, this trustee would serve “at large” and would be expected to attend at least one meeting of each of our permanent committees. He or she also would attend the Board agenda planning session each month with the minister, vice president and president.

During the second year, as vice president, this person would be the chair of the Program Council (consisting of the chairs of all permanent committees) and would be the liaison to the Personnel Committee. The vice president also would preside in place of the president during at least one Board meeting.

*Replacing the Past President seat with a Youth seat.*

The Board seat reserved for the

past president (currently a voting position) would be eliminated, but all previous presidents would be asked to take part in a President's Advisory Council, an online-based discussion and advisory group. This experienced group would be a valuable resource for the Board and a way to strengthen our institutional memory.

The Board seat formerly reserved for the past president would be reserved for a youth member elected to a one-year term. The religious education director and committee members could suggest candidates to the Nominating Committee. (The bylaws say that anyone 16 or older may become a member of the congregation and would have the right to vote and hold office 30 days after signing the membership book. - Ed.)

While youth or student positions on boards are often non-voting positions, we should consider the possibility of giving this seat full voting authority. If we want to empower younger folks to be part of our Congregation, then perhaps we should empower them with a vote.

As we grow as a congregation, we need to decide how we are going to run this place, including how much will be handled by professional staff and how much will be handled by volunteers. In particular, we need to clearly define the duties and responsibilities of the minister, office administrator, and president, and determine how these positions relate to each other. I believe this should be done now, before we look for a settled minister.

– Steven M. Harrison



# General Assembly 2014 is in Providence!

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association. The 2014 General Assembly will take place in Providence. The theme is “Love Reaches Out.”

General Assembly attendees from throughout the United States and Canada worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through the democratic process. Anyone may attend; the general sessions, the worship services, the programs and workshops, the exhibit hall, the networking, the music and the fun are available to everyone. To attend as a voting delegate, you must be appointed by your congregation.

GA will take place from the afternoon of Wednesday, June 25 to Sunday afternoon on June 29. Most events will be at the Rhode Island Convention Center. A Waterfire lighting will take place on Saturday night.

The UUA's Ballou Channing District is the host district for the 2014 General Assembly. Beth McGregor ([BethGA14@gmail.com](mailto:BethGA14@gmail.com) or [epjmcb@aol.com](mailto:epjmcb@aol.com)) is the District Coordinator for the 2014 General Assembly.

Everyone who participates in a General Assembly event (delegates and non-delegates) must be registered and pay a registration fee. The GA Volunteer Committee provides registration in exchange for volunteer work at GA. Adult volunteers are required to contribute 24 hours. Youth (grades 9-12) volunteers and those who qualify for reduced registration rates are required to contribute 14 hours. Volunteer applications must be submitted by March 31. The on-line application will be available on March 1 at the UUA website. Applicants will be notified of award decisions by April 23. (Don't register for General Assembly if you plan to submit a volunteer application.)

These are just some of the volunteer opportunities available:

- Accessibility Services – Providing information and assistance to individuals with mobility difficulties and those who request other services.
- Ambiance – Hanging UU banners and move props.
- Cyber Café – Assisting attendees who need help checking e-mail, editing documents, printing boarding passes, or using the on-line people finder.
- Exhibit Hall – Helping exhibitors check in.
- Greeter – Greeting people arriving at the convention center; answering questions and giving directions.
- Information Desk – Providing information about Providence and Rhode Island, and maintaining message boards.
- Recycling – Helping attendees put waste in the right place.
- Registration – Working with UUA staff at registration.
- Usher – Counting votes during Plenary sessions; maintaining order at large functions; distributing materials; checking badges. Ushers may not be delegates.
- Volunteer Office – Handling volunteer check-in and short term, last minute assignments during GA.
- Youth Media Volunteers – Photographing, video recording and sharing Youth Caucus activities through social media.

There's lots more information available on the UUA website at [www.uua.org/ga](http://www.uua.org/ga).





## Religious Education News and Events

By Pam Santos, Director of Religious Education

As we harvest our gardens, clear our yards of leaves, and prepare our homes for winter, let us give thanks for the sunshine, hard work, and friendship we enjoyed during the warmer months that have brought us to this place.

In our Religious Education classes:

- ✧ We give thanks for our beautiful downstairs space.
- ✧ We give thanks for the friends we have made at church.
- ✧ We give thanks for the wisdom of the adults who guide us.
- ✧ We give thanks for coffee hour.
- ✧ We give thanks for our Unitarian Universalist Seven Principles.
- ✧ We give thanks that we have the freedom to visit other places of worship.
- ✧ We give thanks for the laughter of the littlest UUs in the nursery.
- ✧ We give thanks for our responsible teenagers.
- ✧ We give thanks for the love and support of the entire congregation.
- ✧ We give thanks.

If you are interested in becoming involved in the good works of our religious education program, we have a spot for you! On the first Sunday of each month we get busy with a community service project. We call this our Service Sunday. On November 3, we will be making toys for the cats and dogs at the Animal Rescue League of Southern Rhode Island. Come join us and see what our community service is all about.



We are also looking for committed folk who would be interested in serving on the Religious Education Committee. We meet once a month to support and enhance our programming efforts. Please speak to Suzanne Paton, the chairperson, for more information.



## Letters to the Editor

### *Who are we, and where should we be going?*

To the Editor:

Who are we and where should we be going?

The short answer is, “anywhere we decide to go.” The long answer will take every bit of the remaining twenty months of this interim period.

Now that we are one-sixth of the way through this process, some things are becoming clear to me:

#### *Change is normal.*

Change is normal in this interim period. Everything is fair game. We have to try things, new things; things we have never done before and things we may never do again. Some of those things will become a part of our culture, and some of them thankfully will fade away. That is the value of this time for us. We can mess with things. We need to embrace this time as the time to experiment.

I fully understand how profoundly change can affect us. At one point I took time away from the Congregation for a few months. Others may decide to take a leave in this period. I do not see this as a bad thing.

Yes, reasons for taking a leave are varied, and often, as in my case, fraught with anger, sadness and confusion. But such feelings can serve us well as a motivation to delve deeper into our own val-

ues, needs and goals.

So if you are uncomfortable with change, then a leave might be appropriate for you at this time. Perhaps we will settle into a model that you will once more find attractive. Perhaps you will discover that our positives outweigh our negatives and you will return to work with us again to further our mission. Or perhaps we will have grown apart and you will find another spiritual home. Whatever the outcome, may each of us find what is best for ourselves.

Just remember that the interim period is of finite length.

#### *We must grow.*

We have no choice but to grow. I see this process happening organically, naturally, and with plenty of bumps and tangles along the way. We really have no choice at this point.

Ownership of our home has its conveniences and its monetary responsibilities. Our Congregation needs to attract more members in order to support what we have. We also need to grow so we can be heard. I believe Unitarian Universalists can become a strong force for reason, compassion and love on the world stage. It is our time.

We need members who not only share our core principles, but

also bring a sense of responsibility to participate in the continued success of this Congregation. Give us your time, talent and treasure as you are able and we will give back a community that will show the world how it should be done.

#### *Remember why we're here.*

Upon attending my first UUCSC service a few years back, I read the back of the order of worship and discovered that this Congregation shares my core beliefs. We may hold diverse opinions on many other things, but we must not forget how those Seven Principles have brought us together.

So let's see this interim period for what it is: a finite period of experimentation during which we are free to try new things without fear of failure. Let's talk, dream, take risks, argue and debate—and have fun while we do it. Let's do it with compassion, understanding, respect and love. Let's be quick to laugh and quick to forgive each other's mistakes.

And remember, whatever we may disagree about, it is not as important as how we treat each other.

— Steven M. Harrison



# The inherent worth and dignity of every being?

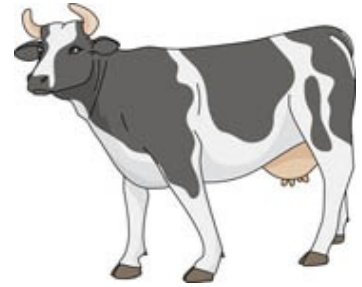
Some of you may remember that last spring, I proposed a change to the UUA First Principle (“The inherent worth and dignity of every person”) to include other species in addition to humans.

The Seven Principles are part of the UUA bylaws, and the bylaws are not easily changed. Several steps are required.

The UU Animal Ministry has a proposal to replace the words “every person” with the words “every being.” They are well under way with their “First Principle Project.” After much thought, I have decided it is better to join them than to divide the support with a competing proposal.

Soon I will be conducting a survey of your preferences regarding revision of the First Principle. The survey will be conducted using Survey Monkey. Please watch for it. The survey will be very brief— it will just ask you whether we, as a congregation, agree with and should endorse the suggested change.

– Larry Kelland



## Gentle Yoga begins this month at UUCSC

Beginning on November 1, Gentle Yoga classes are available on Friday mornings at UUCSC from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

These slowly-flowing yoga classes will focus on gentle stretching and strengthening poses to enhance ease in the body and promote a greater sense of harmony and balance. We will also practice breathing awareness to cultivate clarity in the mind and explore expanded consciousness. There will be time at the end of the class for deep relaxation to integrate the benefits of the practice.

Chair yoga is a possibility. If you'd like to do yoga on the floor, please bring a yoga mat or a blanket. Layers of comfortable clothing are suggested.

New and experienced yoga students are welcome.

Sarah Bell, a certified yoga instructor, will lead the classes. The suggested fee is \$13 per class or \$40 per month.

If you have questions, please get in touch with Sarah.

## This month's flowers



The floral arrangements in the sanctuary were created by Roni Meyer and Patience Peck. They were inspired by the poet Mary Oliver, who wrote, in her poem entitled 'October,'  
“I want to love this world as though it's the last chance I'm ever going to get to be alive and know it.”

## An app for Unitarian Universalists

“Illuminations” is the name of the new Unitarian Universalist app for mobile devices. The app currently is available from iTunes for Apple devices including iPad, iPhone, and iPod. It has a digital chalice with a dynamic realistic flame in five different designs, a library of more than 350 inspirational passages and a Seven Principles guide in English and Spanish. An Android version of the app is in development.

You can see what Illuminations looks like in action on the Ballou Channing District website blog. Go to <http://bcduuablog.org/>.

# Learn about nonviolence as a strategy for social change



FossilFree RI, a political action group that promotes action on climate change, including fossil fuel divestment, is the sponsor of a two-day training workshop on nonviolence as a strategy for social change.

The workshop will take place on Saturday and Sunday, November 16 and 17, at the Providence College Smith Hill Annex at 231 Douglas Ave. in Providence.

The sessions are based on Dr. Martin Luther King's philosophy of nonviolence, including his Six Principles of Nonviolence and Six Steps of Nonviolent Social Change. Dr. Bernard LaFayette, a confidant of Dr. King, designed the training program and certified the workshop leaders.

The Saturday sessions will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the Sunday sessions will take place from 11:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

For more information, contact Nick Katkevich (480-573-3456, [nkatkevich@gmail.com](mailto:nkatkevich@gmail.com)) or Lisa Petrie, and contact Lisa if you'd like to carpool. You can register for the workshop on the FossilFree RI website (<http://fossilfreeri.org/>). – Lisa Petrie

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## Bountiful crop of a good time at the Harvest Fair



The First Annual Harvest Fair by UUCSC was a success in all ways.

By last count at least fifty-eight members and friends volunteered at the Fair on Saturday the fifth of October. Deep gratitude to all who helped in any way to create the atmosphere of fun, friendliness, helpfulness and peace.

Energy and enthusiasm, cooperation and coordination were in bountiful display.

Fourteen vendors from outside the congregation voiced pleasure with our effort, and interest in being with us again.

Our UU musicians were fabulous out by the pond, and our president Chef Steve and others cheerfully grilled organic hot dogs on specially baked rolls. Roasted vegetables and cut fruit were happily eaten on a day that started with rain, then brightened to a gorgeous fall day.

Items left over from the White Elephant tables were offered again in a Yard Sale after the service on Sunday the twelfth of October.

Through the two events, \$3,089.32 was raised for UUCSC.

Lessons were learned and ideas are already forming for the 2014 Harvest Fair by the Pond.

Please start to think about what you can donate to the Second Annual Harvest Fair.

Thank you again to all who served on the committee, all who organized booths and activities, all who donated and volunteered and worked at the Fair and to all who purchased anything from the Fair and Yard Sale.

And that beautiful giant pumpkin . . . weighed in at one hundred forty-nine pounds!

– Linda Whyte Burrell, chair of The Harvest Fair by the Pond

## MUSIC AT LILY PADS

*Saturday, November 9th*

### An Evening with Genticorum

They're back! Lily Pads welcomes the return of the outstanding Quebecois power-trio Genticorum (Pascal Gemme, Alexandre de Grosbois-Garand and Yann Falquet).



The group has become a fixture on the international world, trad, folk and Celtic music circuit. Known for its energy and its stage presence, Genticorum has given more than 800 concerts in no fewer than 15 countries.

Genticorum weaves precise and intricate fiddle and flute work, gorgeous vocal harmonies, energetic foot percussion, and guitar and bass accompaniment into a big and jubilant musical feast. Their distinctive sound, sense of humor and stage presence make them a supreme crowd pleaser.

Last December's Lily Pads concert was a sell-out. Don't miss the return of one of our favorite bands. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. and the concert begins at 7:30.

*Sunday, November 17th at 3:00 p.m.*

### Joni Mitchell's Blue: A 40th Anniversary Celebration

This live-and-recorded-music performance project celebrates Joni Mitchell's Blue album, one of the classic American recordings of a creative giant.

In the first set, Chicks With Dip — Honor Finnegan, Allison Tartalia, Elisa Peimer, Sharon Goldman, Carolann Solebello, Victoria Lavington, Anna Dagmar, Allison Scola, Meg Braun, Karyn Oliver, Catherine Miles, and Cheryl Prashker— perform the songs on the album consecutively.

In the second set, the group performs more music written by, or inspired by, Joni Mitchell.

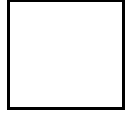
This is a special Sunday afternoon concert. We hope to see you there!



*Tickets for both shows are available at [www.BrownPaperTickets.com](http://www.BrownPaperTickets.com) and locally at Sweet Cakes Bakery and Café, the Alternative Food Co-op, and Looney Tunes II.*

*Music at Lily Pads is online at [www.musicatlilypads.org](http://www.musicatlilypads.org) and on Facebook.*

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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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**“I stood down in a well with tiers of seats rising all around me . . . and the seats were filled with unruly, impatient, hard-boiled young men. I looked them over and opened my mouth to begin the lecture. Instantly, before a syllable could be heard, they began to clap thunderously, deafeningly, grinning, and pounding their palms together .”**

*– S. Josephine Baker, M.D. (1873-1945)*

Sara Josephine Baker, a physician, was a pioneer in public health widely credited with saving the lives of 90,000 inner city children. She helped to establish New York City’s school nurse program, which led to the virtual elimination of head lice and trachoma in schools. In the summer of 1908, while working for the city department of public health, she sent school nurses to the homes of newborns to teach mothers how to care for their babies. There were 1,200 fewer infant deaths in 1908 than in 1907. She led the battle to allow midwives to be licensed, developed the dispenser for treating newborns’ eyes with silver nitrate to prevent gonococcal infections and subsequent blindness, and developed a newborn formula by adding water, calcium carbonate, and lactose to cow’s milk. Her most famous achievement was to twice track down and hospitalize the woman known as “Typhoid Mary.”

Perhaps the most discouraging discrimination she faced was from the students she taught at New York University who were studying for the Doctor of Public Health degree. They disrupted her lectures with their thunderous clapping for 15 years.

Dr. Baker, a Unitarian, was born 140 years ago this month.