



# THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOLUME 25 ISSUE 11

DECEMBER 2016



## December Services



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

December 4

### **Defying Hate: The UUSC and its Global Collaborations – John Glasheen**

Members of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee invest in efforts to support marginalized peoples around the world.

December 11

### **Acting in Faith – Rev. David L. Helfer**

Unitarian Universalism is often mistakenly described as a religion in which one “can believe anything.” What does our faith tradition offer and promise?

*Join us for a Chalice-side Chat from 11:30 to 12:30. The topic is “Shifting Our Focus: Where and how will we spend our time and energies in support of building beloved community?” All are welcome.*

December 18

### **A Solstice Celebration – Rev. David L. Helfer**

As the darkest night of the year arrives, we are treated to the knowledge that the light is slowly returning. Where there is light, there is hope. Join the ritual celebrating this shifting of cosmic energies.

**Friday, December 23 at 7:00 p.m.**

### **Our Annual Christmas Eve Service**

Music Director Michael Galib and Rev. David Helfer will lead our annual service. Join us for music, story, and celebration.

December 25

### **Christmas Day Service**

Join us for a joyful time of singing and reflection.

January 1

### **Shining a Light on Hanukkah – Helene Gersuny, Peter Himmel and Barbara Holtzman**

A minor Jewish holiday that achieved greater attention by its proximity to Christmas, Hanukkah celebrates events of 2nd century Palestine when the Maccabees liberated their people from Syrian rule. The story will be told in readings, songs, and instrumental music featuring cellist Kathryn Jackson.



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](mailto:kellsworth6@verizon.net)

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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.*

### ***Staff Members***

**REV. DAVID L. HELFER, MINISTER**

Office telephone: (401) 284-3321 • e-mail: [uucscminister@gmail.com](mailto:uucscminister@gmail.com)

**Pam Santos**, Religious Education Director ■ **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***

Betsy Dalton, President (2016-2017) ■ Linda Whyte Burrell, Vice President (2016-2018)

Steve Harrison, Treasurer (2015-2017) ■ Mary Fulton, Clerk (2016-2018)

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### ***Committee Chairs***

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*Karen R. Ellsworth*, Weekly E-News editor [kellsworth6@verizon.net](mailto:kellsworth6@verizon.net)

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# *At the Water's Edge*

*Rev. David L. Helfer*



One of the questions I keep asking myself: “Is my hope realistic and am I denying deeper truths?” As I minister to and with you, at a time of such shift in our national mood, one could claim more cause for despair than for hope.

For the methodical dismantling of so much progress has begun.

Make no mistake—this is a well-planned campaign of change long sought. Part of the brilliance of the effort is to fire on so many cylinders at once. We people of the liberal faith are still at times suffering emotional whiplash. “Look here, at this horrible policy, this unthinkable appointee, that threat of loss.”

It’s difficult to alight on a specific need and focus there. That is intentional. A confused public is a submissive public.

More dangerously, there’s a lot of sleight of hand. While we’re looking at Standing Rock, we’re missing the run on exploration of fossil fuels in multiple states that has already begun. Every time we look here, something happens there.

It's enough to make one want to hide under the covers.

But there are better options. Necessary options.

History offers lessons, there for the taking, of how to respond in times of great change. We need strong hearts, consciences filled with resolve, and level heads.

I think of the biblical story of Noah. We know there’s a storm coming, a big one. What’s on the ship to prepare for it? Whom do we shelter? In what ways is resistance most effective, and where are our energies wasted? Noah fought against god for a while, unwilling or unable to believe that the world was changing. Finally he got on board and started planning.

As I stood talking with many of you after last week’s worship service, a small panda nudged my leg. I looked down, surprised, and found there one of our adorable youngsters, panda hat on, eyes wide open, smiling at me.

Him. It’s him and all of you, it’s the world we inhabit and all the beings known and unknown. That’s what we’re fighting for. It’s why hope must be on the table.

Join me on December 11th for our chalice-side chat, when we explore our next steps together. Until then, take care of yourselves and each other.

With love,

*Rev. David*

# The President's Letter

Welcome to the 2016 holiday season.

We are a congregation of diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Many of us may celebrate Christmas. Many may celebrate Hanukkah. Many may celebrate Kwanzaa. Many may celebrate the winter solstice and the return of the sun, and New Year's Day is just around the



corner for all. Quite a few of you will probably celebrate different combinations of these holidays, as families with blended backgrounds and traditions. It is that time of year when we make that extra effort to connect with friends and family far away, and we get together with our friends and families close by—and if we are particularly lucky, we may travel to be with our loved ones, or they may come to visit with us. It is a time of joy, of family, of food, and of celebrations of life.

Here at UUCSC, we look forward each year to our very special Christmas Eve service,

filled with music and stories and traditions of our congregation that draw us even closer together. We have other traditions, too, including our beautiful Giving Tree, organized by Pam Santos, to bring gifts and joy to people in need. This year, we are fortunate enough to be sharing our own bounty with ten children who recently immigrated to the United States. Giving of ourselves, be it through time, or task, or wealth, or emotional support, or love, is certainly the greatest gift that we can offer to ourselves, and to others. I make a donation of



blood each holiday season (as well as throughout the year), in thanks for the Rhode Island Blood Bank, which generously provides blood at no cost for everyone in Rhode Island—which I still see as an amazing achievement, and one that has helped countless families, including my own. You probably have your own personal giving traditions as well.

One thing is for sure: there are great needs and struggles out

there. The holidays are very hard for many folks. They may be alone. They may be hurt. They may be sad. They may be hungry. They may be experiencing discrimination. They may be



without money to buy what they or their own loved ones desperately need. With so many needs out there, and in our own community, how shall we move forward?

There are times when I listen to the news, or read the paper, or listen on our own Joys and Concerns, and begin to feel overwhelmed by the gravity and intensity of the needs of my own community, and of the world. I have thought, "What difference will the actions of just one person make?" But then I think again. I can prepare a meal for Welcome House. I can give blood. I can purchase a gift for the Giving Tree. I can visit a friend who is house-bound and lonely. I can volunteer at the animal shelter. I can march against the injustices that I

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# *The Advent Garden Labyrinth Walk*

## *Sunday, December 11 at 4:30 p.m.*

*Please join us for a meditative experience as we walk the spiral labyrinth by candlelight.*

*A spiral path of evergreen boughs  
A single candle's flame in the center  
One by one we walk, winding our way all the way to the middle  
Light our candle and begin the journey back out again  
Adding our own light to illuminate the path for others..*

*Children are welcome in the company of an adult.*



If you can help with set-up at 3:00 p.m. or cleanup, please contact Sally Barney at [sbarney07@aol.com](mailto:sbarney07@aol.com) or sign up in the Community Room. We need five people for each crew. If you'll be attending with children, please don't plan to help with set-up or cleanup with your children present, to preserve the magical quality of the event. If you can donate greenery, please leave it on the tarp near the ramp in front of the building before the service on Dec. 11.

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## **The President's Letter**

*continued from page 4*  
recognize in this world. I can sing for those who can no longer sing for themselves (except inside). I can make a promise that I will keep.

Through actions, whether great or small, I can make a difference this holiday season—and so can you. And this is the most wonderful gift we can give in the life we have on this won-

derful planet. Take heart that you *can* make a difference. And this is a wonderful time of year to realize your potential.

I will close by sharing that I feel so very, very fortunate to be part of our loving and caring community and I am quite sure that you do, too. Let us share our good fortunes with others, and let us celebrate this wonderful season of love.

One final thought. I do hope that you can join in celebration at our New Year's Eve dance, from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. at the UUCSC, featuring our own Nick Smith and the Repercussions. It will be a joyous evening and a wonderful way to end 2016 together, in community. Please come.

With joy and love,  
*Betsy Dalton*



FUN FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY!

# New Year's Eve Dance Party



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31  
7:00 to 10:00 P.M.

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

Live entertainment by

«« *The Repercussions* »»

Suggested donation \$10 • Proceeds benefit UUCSC Wellness Team activities



## Religious Education News and Events

*By Pam Santos, Director of Religious Education*

### Wisdom from our Elders

A boy and his grandfather enjoyed hikes in the woods together. They loved to look for wildlife, discover animal homes, and breathe in the crisp morning air. They did not walk on well-worn paths; they liked to make their own paths. Sometimes they had to climb over logs, sometimes they needed to duck below branches, and they usually got their shoes very, very muddy.

On one of these hikes, the boy noticed a strange little structure of grey thread woven at the fork of two small branches. Curious, he asked his grandfather what this might be. The grandfather explained that this was most likely a cocoon. The boy knew that this meant a caterpillar was inside, slowly making the changes to become a butterfly. How wonderful! He could hardly wait to see what would happen.

On their hikes, they now stopped regularly at the spot where this little cocoon lay. Weeks went by and there appeared to be no change at all.

One day the boy set out on a hike on his own. He stopped to take a peek at the cocoon, and to his surprise there was movement! Right before his eyes he could see a piece of the cocoon opening and two little legs reaching out. The boy could see that it was hard work to open up the cocoon. He decided to help the butterfly and gently pulled at the threads. After some time he was able to make a large opening in the cocoon. He looked forward to seeing the beautiful butterfly emerge. Instead, out of the hole in the cocoon tumbled a moist, bloated creature, struggling for life. The boy was shocked and frightened. He ran home to find his grandfather.

With desperation the boy led his grandfather by the hand to the spot. Together they looked at the lifeless creature on the ground. "I see," said the grandfather. "The butterfly was working its way out. I can see that you were trying to help. I know it's difficult to see a being in its own struggle. Hand in hand they stood in the silent woods. "What you did not know was that the effort of the butterfly to work its way out of the cocoon is what the butterfly needed to pump fluid from its body to its wings. What appeared to be a struggle for life was the very thing that the caterpillar needed to become a butterfly. Sometimes it is indeed a profound struggle to evolve into what you are capable of being."

The boy did not fully understand the lesson his grandfather taught him that day, but in time, he realized what a gift his Grandfather's perspective truly was.

#### Upcoming dates in RE

December 4 - Community Service - wrapping gifts for refugee teens

December 18 - Multigenerational Service

December 25 - No RE classes

January 1 - No RE classes

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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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*"Every man is his own ancestor, and every man is his own heir. He devises his own future, and he inherits his own past."*

*— Frederic Henry Hedge*

Hedge, a Unitarian minister and one of the founders of the Transcendental movement, was born in Cambridge, Mass. on December 12, 1805.