



THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

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DECEMBER 2017



December Services



Sunday Morning Services are at 10:00 a.m.

December 3

The Essence of Buddha's Teaching – *Thupten Tendhar*

More than 2500 years ago, Shakyamuni Buddha made his teachings accessible to millions of people, regardless of caste or gender. The essence of his teachings is the interdependence of every living thing, and nonviolence.

Thupten Tendhar earned a doctorate in Buddhist philosophy at Tibet's Drepung Loseling Monastic University. He currently works at URI's Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies.

December 10

Lighting Our Path Forward – *Rev. David L. Helfer*

This day of celebration will include welcoming new members, a multigenerational solstice play, and opportunities to ponder the constancy of change.

December 17

Making the Magic Happen – *Rev. Jan Knost*

Christians observe Advent, from the Latin word *adventus*, or “coming,” as a period of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Could this ancient observance have any meaning for Unitarian Universalists?

Saturday, December 23

Annual Christmas Eve Eve Service

Bring your open heart and your childlike spirit, and let us celebrate together. The service begins at 6:00 p.m.; doors open at 5:45. Childcare will be available, but everyone is welcome. Let us experience the magic of this night together! Stay after the service for cookies and connection.

December 24

Waking to a Changed World – *Joan Youngken*

Christmas is a reminder that profound change can happen overnight. Other changes, too— both good and bad— can happen in sudden and profound ways. How do our core beliefs, our emotions, and our hopes determine how we respond to unexpected shifts in our world and in our personal lives?

December 31

“That Time When . . .” – *Rev. David L. Helfer*

Each of us has a story to tell; a moment when, by choice or circumstance, our life shifted. How does that moment influence what follows? Come ready to participate fully for this interactive worship.

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

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Karen St. Peter, Office Administrator

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday

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At the Water's Edge

Rev. David L. Helfer



"Things are not getting worse, they are getting uncovered. We must hold each other tight and continue to pull back the veil." - Adrienne Maree Brown

Dear beloveds,

The first few times I read this quote, I felt irritated by it. I couldn't— yet— see the validity of the statement.

But my perspective has changed.

From the international #metoo campaign to our The Collective bookstore and community organizing space right here in Peace Dale, the world is changing. And changing for the better in some substantial ways.

With the elections of a few weeks ago, local and state governments are beginning to vaguely represent their constituencies. With the election of non-binary (transgender, gender queer, and gender fluid), Muslim, Sikh, and a huge number of women, many of us felt a resurgence of hope. Rightly so.

Things are getting uncovered. We are pulling back the veil.

Progress is occurring because of the power of people organizing for change. For the first time in some of our lifetimes, conversations have become actions and actions have become movements.

Difficult and imperfect conversations are happening. About race, gender, and so much else. In meeting after meeting, people around the country— and the world— are struggling through similar conversations, and bringing each other forward bit by bit.

Sometimes it doesn't feel like near enough to counter what's being wrought upon this country. But these challenges didn't begin with this Presidency and it won't end with it.

Keep talking and acting. About misogyny and sexism, race and environmental justice, gender binaries and the spectrum of sexuality. Educate yourself about how these oppressions intersect; question your assumptions.

I know a holiday letter is more typical for this time of year! And I do wish you a good holiday, filled with love.

The best gift I can give you, however, is faith in you— in your ability to effect change, and encouragement to be part of the movements that are exposing us to truth and possibility.

May our faith continue to inspire our actions.

With love,

Rev. David

A Note from the President

Ed and I just ended a family visit— cousins through my mother's line. Hugs and laughter . . . and talking. Stories. High volume. Everybody talking. Many stories, repeated, that we all know. Some stories never heard by many. Tales of travels to the "homeland," the island of Bequia in the Grenadines, British West Indies.

One cousin trying to tell a story was cut off by her mother. The cousin said, "Let me finish!" She said it a few times. But her mother, matriarch of this family line, is a notorious hogger of the floor! She is never interrupted because she talks a mile a minute, arms flailing, dramatic presentation, a few colorful words. Always entertaining. And funny.

Old photographs were brought to be given to the matriarch. In one photograph she is seated in a chair, less than one year old! Lovely baby on a beautiful wooden chair, her left hand clutching a

gold chain around her neck. "I still wear that chain!" said ninety- three year old Molly as she pulled it out from inside her blouse. I took a photograph of her today holding onto it with her left hand.



So that was the second day of family gatherings. Thursday was Thanksgiving dinner with my sister's sons and in-laws and offspring, and my three kids and in-laws and offspring. Great food, too much pie . . . is that possible?

It's that time of year. Families of all sorts gather. Blood, legal, adopted (legal and not). Vikki and John gathered their family for their annual T'day dinner. Probably never have the same mix at the table from

year to year. Some create their families through years of shared experiences. Ain't that the way with families? Folks gather, most often in love and respect; sometimes not so much. Some families struggle, disagree, even disrespect each other.

Our family at UUCSC strives to be the first type of family. We love each other, we honor the worth and dignity of each and every one of us. Then having shared, and having been strengthened and enriched by our bounty, we step forward into the world to share our bounty in whatever we do for the world.

As we continue through this season of holidays and gatherings, large and small, may we spread widely the love and respect that we share in UUCSC. Let us be the Peace on Earth that we seek.

Peace'n'Luv to the World,
Linda Whyte Burrell

Winter Solstice Labyrinth Walk is December 17

Our annual Winter Solstice Labyrinth Walk is on Sunday, December 17 at 4:30 p.m.

The Winter Solstice Labyrinth Walk is a contemplative, meditative experience we have offered during the Advent season for many years. A spiral of evergreens is laid out in the center of the sanctuary. Each individual takes a turn walking into the center, lighting a candle, and placing the candle along the spiral while walking out, while everyone present sits in silent contemplation. In this way we support each others' gentle entrance into the darkest days of the year.



All ages are welcome to participate, although children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

We need evergreen branches for the spiral. If you can bring a few cuttings, please drop them off Sunday morning on the tarp that will be laid out near the front door, or bring them to church by 3:00 p.m. at the latest. Thanks!

“Sew-In” to support reproductive rights

Join us on Saturday, December 30th for a “sew-in” to assist the Woman Project and help protect reproductive rights.

All ages are welcome to help stitch together fabric squares that have been signed by supporters of reproductive freedom. The finished product will be presented to the Rhode Island General Assembly when its 2018 session opens in January.



Some sewing machines will be provided, although more are welcome. Children are welcome, and childcare will be provided.

You are welcome to stay from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or for any part of that time. A simple but tasty lunch will be provided.

For more information, get in touch with Jordan Hevenor at The Woman Project (jehevenor@hotmail.com) or speak to Rev. David Helfer.

Remembrance Vigil on December 5

The annual vigil that started as a memorial to the victims of the Sandy Hook shooting in Newtown, Conn. on December 12, 2012 has become an interfaith service to remember and honor the thousands of lives lost to gun violence.

This year's vigil will take place on Tuesday, December 5 at 7:00 p.m. at First Unitarian Church in Providence. Sponsors include the Rhode Island Council of Churches, the state chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense, the Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence, and the Religious Coalition for a Violence-Free Rhode Island.

Social Justice Team chair Jean Bowen and others from UUCSC have taken part in the service in past years.

If you're interested in attending this year's service and would like to car-pool, get in touch with Jean by e-mail at jeannbowen@gmail.com.

Guest at Your Table is here!



For the next six weeks at meal time, we'll put our coins into our own GAYT collection boxes to support of the work of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

This year we're collecting contributions for four very compelling projects. You can pick up a brochure about this year's GAYT drive at the Social Justice table in the Community Room. For more information, contact Essjay at sjgraymare@aol.com or 284-0634.

Covenant Groups will form next month

At his "Chalice Side Chat" in April, Rev. David Helfer helped to clarify our newly re-organized Small Group Ministries program.

Beneath the umbrella of Small Group Ministries, we now include Short-Term Spiritual Reflections Groups, Affinity Groups, and Covenant Groups (formerly known as Small Group Ministry groups). Each type of small group experience has a particular focus and format, but all have the goal of spiritual deepening and community building.

While Affinity Groups can be

formed as interest and need emerges, and there are plans to initiate a Short Term Reflection Group in the near future, in January we would like to start some Covenant Groups.

Covenant Groups are characterized by a commitment to continuity of attendance twice a month. A minimum of six people are required, but membership is limited to ten people. The groups forming now will meet together for one year. Those who are interested are asked to commit to participate for at least

three months. Enrollment in a newly-forming group is initially open to all, but is later limited so group members have a chance to bond.

If you are interested, please fill out an availability form. You can find the form on the Small Group Ministries board in the Onto Community Room. We appreciate the folks who filled out a form last spring, but ask that you fill out a new form with your current availability.

— Sally Barney and Essjay Foulkrod, coordinators



Like to dance?

The Christmas Eve candle-light processional is an opportunity to bring dance into the worship service as an offering of prayer. It's a beautiful, serene element of our evening service. It's open to all, any gender, aged 10 and up. We will rehearse three times during the weeks leading up to the service on Saturday, December 23rd. If you're interested in joining us, please contact Sally Barney at sbarney07@aol.com, or give her a call at 789-0723.

New Year's Eve bash

Come dance to the music of the Patterson-Smith Trio on New Year's Eve. The dance will be at Lily Pads on Saturday, December 30 from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m.

The Patterson-Smith Trio's repertoire spans more than eight decades of music, from Duke Ellington to Jimi Hendrix and beyond, and includes original compositions and unique instrumental and vocal arrangements. Admission of \$10 is requested but not required.

Conversations Around Death

Last month, in recognition of the Day of the Dead, the Wellness Team held a gathering called "Conversations Around Death." The group, led by Sally Barney with Sarah Bell's assistance, shared thoughts, interests and concerns about death and dying. Sally shared what she learned at a home funeral workshop and at the National Home Funeral Alliance conference. She also shared information from the nonprofit Funeral Consumers Alliance of Rhode Island.

Participants came with questions about funeral options such as "green burial," and home vigils and funerals, and the goal of developing a supportive network within the congregation to facilitate carrying out our own funeral and burial wishes. Another gathering is tentatively scheduled for late next month. Plans include learning about funeral options available in southern Rhode Island and cemeteries that offer "green burial," and developing a list of resources for the congregation.





Religious Education News and Events

By Bethany Vaccaro, Director of Religious Education

Dear Families and Friends at UUCSC,

Recently I've noticed that I enjoy the holiday season less as an adult than I did as a child. The magic and glee I felt have gradually been replaced by dread and extra long to-do lists. This can make the whole season from October through December feel like a burden rather than a joy.

Yet, I can also see examples around me of dear friends who use the holiday season as a way to strengthen their relationships and savor the good things in life. It can be a time to celebrate our values and live with increased awareness of the Mystery all around us, if we choose for this to be.

RE can be a central part of making this happen in your life this year. Together this December, we will be keeping the focus on service, gratitude, and celebration. Together we will be learning how to live with sacred awareness.

Come join us for the first and second Sundays in December as we prepare for our "no rehearsal" pageant. If you want to immerse yourself in the signs of the Solstice season, while enjoying the many laughs sure to come, we'd love to have some extra adults to help pull it off.

You can also look for our Giving Tree in the Community Room. We've adopted a family through Dorcas International Institute in Providence, and you can supply a gift for them by taking a tag and purchasing the item listed. Please drop off all gifts under the Giving Tree by Saturday, December 16.

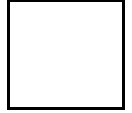
As many of you know, we are starting up a Spiritual Parenting discussion group for caregivers on the third Saturday of every month. We will meet on Saturday, December 16 for discussion and a cookie swap! Come join us as we explore how to infuse your family's lifestyle with the intentional awareness of sacredness.

Our youth will have a special role to play during the traditional Christmas Eve service on Saturday, December 23. We will all be invited to an experience of awe and gratitude. Invite friends and loved ones to share in our celebration!

Sharing this, and other traditions unique to your family, is the perfect antidote to the dreaded to-do list. Let's make this a season of BEING through every opportunity we can. I, for one, plan to enjoy myself this year.

Blessed be!
Bethany

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27 NORTH ROAD
PEACE DALE, RI 02879



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

“There is less misery in being cheated than in that kind of wisdom which perceives, or thinks it perceives, that all mankind are cheats.”

– Edwin Hubbell Chapin (1814-1880)

Chapin, a Universalist minister, was a star of the Lyceum lecture circuit as well as editor of the *Christian Leader* and a poet. His preaching was described as hypnotic. Chapin was born in Union Village, Washington County, New York on December 29, 1814.