

THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOLUME 26 ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2017

February Services

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

February 5

Climate Change—and Climate Change Denial—Are Real – *Rev. David L. Helfer*

Even among progressives, climate change is often ignored in favor of seemingly more tangible societal issues. How do we open our eyes, minds, and hearts to the our ever-changing world?

February 12

To Whom Do We Belong? An Interfaith 'Preach-In' – *Rev. David L. Helfer*

Today, congregants at mosques and churches and synagogues around Rhode Island will all explore this same question of how our faith inspires us to act to end homelessness and poverty.

February 19

Not Living the Principles – *Amy Abel*

What would you do if you were surrounded by people with principles so completely different from yours that you could not safely be your genuine self? Could you learn to live in that situation without surrendering your own beliefs?

Amy is a member of Westminster Unitarian Church.

February 26

Rose: Weaver of Story and Song – *Rose Weaver*

Singer, actor and playwright Rose Weaver will talk about her coming of age as a black actor in Rhode Island and her role as Billie Holiday in "Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill," the longest-running show in the history of Trinity Repertory Company.

Ms. Weaver, a Georgia sharecropper's daughter, earned degrees from Wheaton College and Brown University. She is currently an artist-in-residence at Brown's Rites and Reason Theatre.



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. DAVID L. HELFER, MINISTER

Office telephone: (401) 284-3321 • e-mail: 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.

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At the Water's Edge

Rev. David L. Helfer



I recently watched the move “Hidden Figures,” the stories of three brilliant female African-American mathematicians working at NASA. America was desperate to catch up after the then-Soviet Union beat us in the space fight, becoming the first country to successfully launch manned space flights. And though the United States wanted to regain its sense of supremacy, that was not sufficient incentive for the white men in power, the engineers at NASA, to treat African-American women as anything approaching equals.

These men chose power over progress.

It thus took longer than it might have for our country to launch Astronaut John Glenn into space, in part because the sheer intelligence of non-male, non-white individuals seemed beyond communal comprehension.

I wish I could say much has changed. Some has, certainly. At least on the surface, the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision ended formal segregation. More opportunities became open to those of all races, and for a while, there was even affirmative action to “help even the playing field” for those who had so long been denied basic rights.

But you know, and I know, that the vision of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, and the hope of beloved community, is far from attained. Racism just helped place an inexperienced and volatile man as President of the United States. White men— and others, this time, as well—chose power over progress.

And to some extent, this is the last gasp of those feeling the loss of control. This election signals the extent that some were willing to risk in order to remain comfortable with their sense of the status quo. The danger is that they’re willing to try to take everything down with them. It’s like that child who takes away their toy— if they can’t play with it, no one will.

So much could be taken away, rolled back, and damaged during the next four years. The depth and breadth of possibility is more than a single person can address.

Even I am not sufficiently optimistic to deny the fear and worry of what might be.

What I do know, though, is some of what is possible, despite what racism has wrought. The people and communities who will create change over the next four years, much like the women in the movie, won’t be particularly visible or appreciated. It’ll be people working behind the scenes, at the town, county, and state level, holding the line on laws protecting the most vulnerable. It will be the unseen supporters, walking with women into abortion clinics. It will be people insistently doing the work, regardless of the consequences, that their hearts tell them must be done. It will be individuals refusing to be moved from what they know is fair.

This will be hard. The road will be long.

And the work must be done.

I keep thinking of the chant at Obama’s inauguration. Si, se puede! Si, se puede! Yes, we can! Yes, we can! And we must.

With faith, hope, and love,
Rev. David

The President's Letter

Hello, everyone,

I had originally planned this message to go in a different direction. However, with the events of this past month so vivid in our minds and our hearts, I am compelled to focus on a most critical issue—preserving and protecting human rights, and deciding what we are ready, willing, and able to do, both individually and collectively, to make a difference.

As I stood at the foot of the Rhode Island State House on January 21, with so many of our UUCSC congregation physically or spiritually with me, it was reassuring to find that the world has not truly moved off of its axis and that the values and rights that we hold so dear are shared, in solidarity, with millions of individuals (women, men and children) around this country and around the world.

As “Rise Up” was chanted over and over and over, inspiring songs and speeches washed over the crowd, many delivered by young grassroots activists who felt the call to share their hopes, their dreams, and their resolve to continue to speak up, to sing out, and to work for human rights that they see as threatened by recent political changes.

For me, those speakers served as the voice of hope that allayed at least some of my fears about the direction the

world had recently taken. It was surely a fine day of solidarity.

And then, as I listened further, I heard drum beats and chanting of a different sort. I became aware that there was a second rally, somewhat distant, that was speaking up against this Women's Rally and in support of the newly elected President and his platform. I had not expected this, but as I listened, I remembered that many people had chosen to support candidates with political and personal beliefs much different from my own.



More chants—“Rise Up, Rise Up,” and “Rise Up” once more. Gradually, the drumbeats and the opposing voices grew fainter and fainter, and then they were gone. The Women's Rally in Providence moved forward in peace. But, as I think back on this incident, I find that I am grateful to those

who had the courage to speak up for their opposing views. It reminded me that there are so many reasons, valid and important reasons, for why the election ended up the way it did. I am reminded that I alone, or my friends, or my colleagues, or my UU congregation, do not have sole possession of the truth. We come to our own truths through the intersection of our experiences and our desires, tempered with reality as we see it. One thing that these past few months have shown me is that I just don't know everything. I know what I experience, but my experiences are limited and often do not reflect the experiences of others—even though I might want them to, or perhaps had assumed they did.

Sometimes, when I am strong in my personal view, I start to believe that my view is the best one, the most valid one, the one that is true. It is hard to find a way to honestly and sincerely see, and hopefully better understand, those with opposite views. What does this require of us? Of me? Reaching beyond our comfort zones. Venturing into discussions with those who have opposite views, and honoring their right to hold these views. Listening—*truly* listening. Delaying judgement (not often easy). Reaching past

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Rev. David L. Helfer's installation ceremony scheduled for Sunday, March 26

On Sunday, March 26, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County will install Reverend David L. Helfer as our second-ever settled minister. The installation committee—Linda Whyte Burrell, Natalie Herbermann, and Reverend David—is busy planning this event, and we want you to know why it is so special.

The installation service is a ceremony that celebrates our calling of Reverend David and his agreement to serve as our settled minister.

The service will be the culmination of more than three years of work that began with the decision to search for, and call, a settled minister. In most other denominations, a minister or priest is sent to a congregation by some governing body. In our tradition of congregational polity, or self-determination, it is up to us to call the minister who we think is the best match for us, and for that individual to decide if he or she will accept the call.

Our search committee worked tirelessly to listen to the needs of the congregation and find a minister who could best meet our needs. We have found a wonderful match. Now we need to make it official.

As part of the installation service, which will take place at 3:00 p.m., the congregation and Reverend David will formally enter into covenantal relationship with one another. We will be supported by Unitarian Universalist ministers and religious professionals, family and friends of Reverend David, our UUCSC board, and the Search Committee.

More than anyone else, though, we need you there to help mark this joyful occasion. After the service we will gather for food and fellowship to celebrate. What better way to enter our second quarter-century as a congregation! — *The Installation Committee*

The President's Letter

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our prejudices. Now this does not mean that we abandon our own beliefs, or our rights, or the principles of our chosen faith. Nor does this mean that we are or must be silent. But it does require that we recognize this very large and diverse world, with its great many needs and its great many ways to understand and address these needs.

While we often may believe that we have the “right” answers or the “right” views, I am reminded of how much more I need do in order to *truly listen* and understand. I plan to try harder.

And as the Women's Rally continued on, I heard a new chant: “This is what democracy looks like.” And I agree. This is what democracy looks like.

With liberty, and justice, and free speech for all! Yes, this *is* what democracy looks like, and I am so thankful to have the opportunity to participate in democracy with all the people, especially those I will disagree with. The challenge is to go further—past disagreement and toward understanding. Are you up for the challenge?

— *Betsy Dalton*

February 5 is Solar Sunday at UUCSC

Rhode Island Interfaith Power & Light has teamed up with SmartPower (www.smartpower.org), a non-profit dedicated to promoting clean energy and energy efficiency, to launch the Interfaith Solar Initiative, a statewide program that provides information about solar energy and guides homeowners through the process of installing rooftop solar.



Solar energy experts from the Interfaith Solar Initiative will be at UUCSC on Sunday, February 5 from 11:30 to 1:00. Brief presentations from Robert Tyce, Professor Emeritus of Ocean Engineering at URI, a certified Renewable Energy Professional and a member of Westminster Unitarian Church, and Karen Stewart and Malinda Howard from SmartPower, and a question and answer session, will end at about 12:15. The speakers will stay to talk individually to anyone who wants more information. Resource packets will be available, and you'll be able to sign up for a free solar evaluation of your home. You'll also be able to speak to people who have already installed solar panels on their homes.

This program is open to the public. For more information, or if you've recently gone solar and would like to share your experience with others, please contact Lisa Petrie at teonlisa@juno.com or Karen Stewart, Community Outreach Manager for SmartPower, at kstewart@smartpower.org.

TO THOSE WHO WANT COFFEE HOUR TO CONTINUE -

Mike and I need your help. To lighten our load, we need two to four more people to join the Hospitality Committee, and a like number to learn to operate the dishwasher.

As always, we continue to need people to volunteer for Sunday mornings to serve the congregation our life-sustaining beverages. (The sign-up sheet will always be on or near the snack table on Sunday mornings.)

If we are unable to find these precious volunteers, we will go to plan B – having coffee twice a month, or plan C – social hour with no beverages served, depending on the help that is offered.

If you are willing to be a coffee hour angel, or want to try it out for awhile, please contact Mike Henry at Michael.g.henry.email@gmail.com or 789-1842, or Val Follett at valeriefollett@gmail.com or 789-7282.

The Path to Membership

Our Spring Path to Membership program begins on Sunday, February 5 with a class led by Rev. David Helfer called "UU101." The class will take place from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The second class, a session about UUCSC conducted by the Membership Committee, will be on Sunday, March 5. A New Member Ceremony will take place during the service on Sunday, April 9.

For more information, contact Carla Bowman at cbow5@aol.com.



The Monday Book Group

The Monday Book Group is reading *Georgia: a Novel of Georgia O'Keeffe* by Dawn Clifton Tripp, a southeastern Massachusetts native. The group will meet to discuss the novel on Monday, March 6 at 7:00 p.m. at Virginia Carter's home, and may invite the author to participate in the discussion. New members of the book group are always welcome.



Religious Education News and Events

By Pam Santos, Director of Religious Education

A Time of Possibilities

Over a weekend in December, staff members from the Unitarian Universalist Association presented a training here in our church. The training was called RE Start. It was a look at UU religious education programs (sometimes called Faith Formation)— where we have been, where we are, and where we may go. Seven people from UUCSC attended, in addition to people from three other congregations.

Together we took the time to identify the gifts, strengths, and possibilities of our congregation. We were able to learn about alternative approaches to Faith Formation and various ways of delivering curricula that go beyond the Sunday school classroom. This was a refreshing learning opportunity for all of us, and rife with possibilities for our own program.

It is a blessing to be able to adapt, develop, and grow our programs for young UUs. Bring on the creativity, and let's watch what we can do together!

The Religious Education Committee continues to look for interested members who would like to be part of this exciting growth and development. As a committee we meet about five times each year. We focus on ways to support programming for children and youth. Please contact me if you are interested in participating. We look forward to welcoming you.

We are looking forward to a bright new year.

Upcoming dates in RE

Saturday, February 4 - Religious Education Committee meeting

Sunday, February 5 – Community Service: assembling care packs for homeless people

Hosts, it's time to sign up for Dining for Dollars

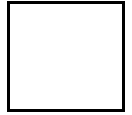
Since the spring of 2010, we've held eleven Dining for Dollars silent auctions, raising more than \$50,000 for our congregation. Hosts and guests alike enjoy these events. Now it's time to start planning the next edition of this fun and fund-raising auction.

If you've been to a D4\$ event and had a good time, and you'd like to contribute to the financial health of UUCSC, why don't you try hosting an event? We'll offer events scheduled for late spring, summer, and fall. Your event can be as simple as a pizza and movie night or as elegant as fine dining with the best silver and china.

If you're willing to help out, please contact Nancy Rose and she'll help through the easy process.



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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

"I feel myself the inheritor of a great background of people. Just who, precisely, they were, I have never known. I might be part Negro, might be part Jew, part Muslim, part Irish. So I can't afford to be supercilious about any group of people because I may be that people."

- James A. Michener

Michener, an orphan raised by an adoptive Quaker mother, was the author of more than 40 books. He was known for the meticulous research behind his work. His novels include *Tales of the South Pacific*, for which he won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1948. A Unitarian, he was born on February 3, 1907 in Doylestown, Penn.