

# THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOLUME 26 ISSUE 3

MARCH 2017

## March Services

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

**March 5**

**Head, Heart and Hands: Becoming a Progressive Activist – *Karen Malcolm***

Karen Malcolm will share reflections on how her identity as an activist has evolved over the past thirty years.

*Karen Malcolm, currently an organizer for the Protect Our Healthcare Coalition RI, has worked with the R. I. Community Food Bank, Ocean State Action, and organized labor.*

**March 12**

**New Information and Old Assumptions, or, the Magic of Open-Hearted Listening – *Rev. David L. Helfer***

Our society teaches us to talk rather than listen. Today, we work to strengthen the listening muscle and explore what possibilities exist beyond right and wrong.

*Rev. David and the Social Justice Team invite you to attend a Chalice-Side Chat after the service to determine the next evolution of our faith into tangible action.*

**March 19**

**Question Box Sunday – *Rev. David L. Helfer***

Bring your questions, ponderings, and hopes to today's service. Rev. David will offer ideas about those tough questions that life brings us. Is there evil? Why do bad things happen?

What is my purpose? Join us, and bring your questions!

**March 26**

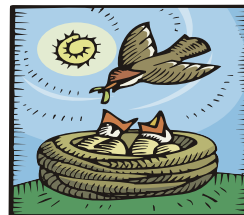
**It's Not About Sunday Morning Worship: The Truth about Ministry – *Rev. David L. Helfer***

As we prepare ourselves for this afternoon's installation, Rev. David will lead us on some truth-telling adventures. Where do we want this shared ministry to take us?

**March 26 at 3:00 p.m.**

**Installation of *Rev. David L. Helfer***

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County will install Reverend David L. Helfer as our second settled minister. Please join us— all are welcome.



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

### **Church Office**

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)

Randi Marten (2016-2018) ■ Elise Bender (2015-2017)

Sally Barney (2016-2018) ■ Leah Canin (2015-2017) ■ Natalie Herbermann (2016-2018)

### **Committee Chairs**

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Jean Bowen, Social Justice Team • Judi Marcy, Caring Connection

(vacant) Religious Education Committee • Mary Finnegan, Personnel Committee

Marcia Boyd, Finance Committee • Chris DePaola, Facilities Committee

Emily Jacobs, Music Committee • Linda Whyte Burrell, Social Events Committee

Val Follett & Mike Henry, Hospitality Coordinators

David Floyd, Music at Lily Pads Coordinator • Amber Kelley Collins, Worship Committee

Dave Ruede, Stewardship Committee • Penny Hall, Pastoral Care Committee

Dennis Bowman, Communications & Publicity Committee

*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*



We do not have a monopoly on The Truth.

As Unitarian Universalists, as largely liberals and progressives, and as blue-state residents, it is almost a reflex right now to believe that our truth is the right one.

As the debates rage over immigration, healthcare, women's reproductive choice, LGBTQ rights, trade agreements, and so much else, the haves and the have-nots, the blue states and red states, and the liberals and conservatives are moving further apart rather than closer together.

It reminds me of those metal desk pendulums, popular some time ago now. One could pull back a metal ball and watch it encounter the other ball, pushing that one further away. Back and forth, the pendulum swung, almost indefinitely, until it slowed to a narrow movement and eventually stopped altogether.

That's the United States right now. We move in one direction, then another, unable to find a shared path forward.

And both sides claim Truth, willing to put bodies, hearts, minds, and money to work to assure that such truths are upheld.

I struggle with this as much as you do. The challenge to step out of that fight-or-flight response, to sit in the reality of what is, rather than the fear of what might be— that's hard spiritual work. Which means it is the work that calls.

For anything else is wasted energy. We know from science that all actions have equal and opposite reactions. It's engaging in a game that no one will ultimately win.

I suggest, instead, that we might look for deeper truths, universal truths. Where is our shared personhood?

I remember reading thirty years ago about Gaia, the notion of shared consciousness. Buddhists come at this same idea, if slightly differently, but with the same notion, that there is truth beyond where our ego state takes us. However it is said, the idea is the same— there is consciousness, peace, and possibility far beyond what our day-to-day minds allow us to see.

Take five minutes each day; more if you have it. Hold the world in your heart. Practice releasing anger, the notion of right and wrong. Imagine, just imagine, what coming together and finding common truth might look like.

Does this sound touchy-feely to most of you? Probably. Unfamiliar and uncomfortable? Sure.

But it is worth being uncomfortable to create peace, is it not?

Let us grow and stretch together, allowing in new ideas and shedding practices that do not serve us well.

Namaste.

*Rev. David*

# The President's Letter

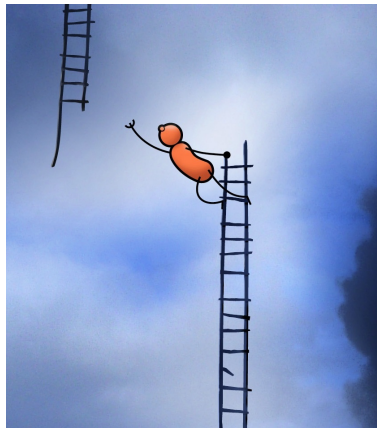
*"Turn and face the changes."* I don't often begin my message with a quote from David Bowie, but it seemed to be appropriate at this time when we are experiencing so many changes— some very good, some devastating, and some that cause worry day after day. I certainly feel many of these changes, and find that when I can turn and face them, and at least strive to take some sort of action, I do feel more positive and hopeful.

This year, we experienced such great positive change for our congregation through our new minister, Reverend David Helfer. Many times since last August, when he began his ministry with us, I have found myself thankful for his presence, his caring, his vision, his intelligence, and his love for us.

Now, with the many changes happening across our country and our community, he is challenging us to reach out beyond our comfort zones and face the change in the broader community and to find paths to greater action, whether individually or as a congregation. After the service on March 12, there will be an opportunity to discuss some of our community challenges and move toward a shared plan for action. Rev. David and the Social Justice Team will lead the discussion. I encourage everyone to come, listen, share, and plan.

Recently, your Board of Directors took a step toward action by signing on, with other congregations around the country, to an interfaith *amici curiae* ("friends of the court") brief filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, arguing against President Trump's January 27 executive order. The

brief, which is available in the office and on our website, argues that the executive order profoundly harms refugees in their most desperate hour of need, and offends religious freedom and equality. By signing on to this brief, we joined with "more than 50 diverse, interfaith religious and interreligious congregations, associations, and organizations, freely pursuing their respective faiths alongside each other and standing for the right of all believers to practice their faiths, as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution." Our support extends to other briefs that may be filed in the future relating to this issue. We believe that this action is appropriate and in keeping with our UUCSC principles.



*Changes.* Members of our congregation have experienced devastating losses recently—the sudden loss of a brother, a family losing their mother in a tragic and senseless carbon monoxide accident, and other losses that I know have caused great pain. At times like these, we are reminded of how fragile life really is, and how it truly can be gone in an instant. We are reminded of our own humanity, and of the deep pain that

comes with the loss of a loved one. And we are reminded of the importance of love, and of showing and sharing our love for each other every day. Life is brief and fragile but it is also joyous and meaningful when we find ways to share our love.

With spring comes many positive changes. On Sunday, March 26 at 3:00 p.m. in our sanctuary, we will celebrate the installation of Reverend David Helfer as our settled minister. Many of Rev. David's friends and family members will join us for this beautiful ceremony. Everyone in the congregation is invited to attend.

*Changes.* I would be remiss not to mention our upcoming staff changes. Kathy Carland, who has been with us for nearly seven years, will move on to a new position with the South County Art Association. Pamela Santos, who has led our Religious Education program with energy, creativity, and love, must finish her time with us in June for personal family reasons. We love and will miss them both, but we are thankful for the time they were here with us. I have faith that other wonderful people are out there just waiting to come forward and join our staff. Our search process is in full gear.

*Supporting our changes.* Our Stewardship Committee has been hard at work planning our 2017 pledge drive. As you think about your annual pledge, please know that it is only through pledges that we know what resources we will have to support UUCSC and plan for the future. Pledges are what sustain us. They provide a path to continue our growth. Your generosity will help everyone. Please pledge generously. Thank you, and may peace be with you.   
- Betsy Dalton

# Office Administrator Kathy Carland leaving UUCSC

Kathy Carland, who has been our office administrator since 2011, is beginning a new job as executive director of the South County Art Association. Here is her letter to the congregation.

February 8, 2017

Dear UUCSC Members and Friends:

*This year has brought wonderful change to UUCSC in the person of Rev. David! Welcoming him has been a joy for staff as well as the congregation. It seems hard to imagine that I have worked here for nearly six years. During this time, I have always felt your warmth and consideration. You truly are a welcoming congregation. I have seen this congregation evolve and grow in so many wonderful ways; your commitment and energy are evident in all you do.*

*I knew one day I would be leaving, but never planned it would be now, midway into Rev. David's first year. Rev. David has so much to offer this congregation and the community. I anticipated providing transitional support at least through this year and next. However, an unexpected employment opportunity recently emerged, a significant opportunity to utilize the full breadth of my experience. I have accepted a job offer as Executive Director of the South County Art Association in Kingston. My last day at UUCSC will be Friday, March 3.*

*Whoever becomes your next administrator will be fortunate indeed. These years with you have meant so much to me. I will always be grateful for our time together.*

*In Deep Appreciation,  
Kathleen Carland*

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## UU Legislative Ministry annual meeting Sunday, March 19

Help select the issues that Rhode Island UUs will lobby for or against at the State House this year.

The UU Legislative Ministry of RI is a cooperative effort by the five UU congregations in Rhode Island to push for policies in line with our values. The UULM-RI will hold its annual meeting on Sunday, March 19 from 2:00 to 4:0 p.m. at Westminster Unitarian Church, 119 Kenyon Ave. in East Greenwich.

Come learn about some of the bills coming before the Rhode Island General Assembly this year and how you can get involved. Some of the issues we'll be talking about at the annual meeting include homelessness, gun violence, immigration and sanctuary cities, the environment and climate change, mass incarceration, and women's rights, including reproductive rights.

We will vote on a few issues to prioritize. You'll be able to sign up to stay informed on the issues that matter most to you. Now, more than ever, we are

called to stand up for what we believe in and band together to protect those who are under threat. Let's make this our biggest-ever UULM-RI annual meeting.

Please contact Lisa Petrie or John Glasheen if you have any questions. — Lisa Petrie

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## The Path to Membership continues

Our Spring Path to Membership program continues on Sunday, March 5 at 11:30 a.m. with a session about how our congregation operates. It will be led by the Membership Committee.

A New Member Ceremony will take place during the service on Sunday, April 9. For more information, contact Carla Bowman at [cbow5@aol.com](mailto:cbow5@aol.com).



## Greater impact from our Share the Plate program

About six years ago, this congregation committed to Share the Plate, a program in which we donate half of the proceeds of the Sunday collection on the first Sunday of each month. It's an opportunity for our members to give to local, state and national non-profits that serve people, champion the environment and teach children and adults skills. In addition to raising money for worthy causes, Share the Plate also benefits the congregation by increasing the amount placed in the collection plate.

The Social Justice Team decided it was time to overhaul Share the Plate in an attempt to enable it to have an even greater impact on the community.

During the next year, we will provide mini-grants to small, local non-profit organizations that promote social justice. We will place emphasis on organizations that will assist and grow local movements. We'll also consider grants to national organizations that have local affiliates. The recipients will have to be non-profit corporations that comply with section 501(c) of the IRS Code so you'll be able to deduct your contributions.

Our intention is that these mini-grants will enhance our visibility in the communities from which we draw members. We will encourage communication between UUCSC and the recipient on our

websites and in social media.

Beginning in March, we will sponsor the recipient organization for two months instead of donating to a different organization each month.

Our recipient for March and April will be the Tomaquag Museum in Exeter. The museum's mission is to educate the public and promote thoughtful discussion about Native Americans history, arts, and culture.



Tomaquag's new program, the Indigenous Empowerment Network, attempts to eradicate poverty in

Rhode Island's Indigenous community through education, job training and employment, working with partners that include URI, Brown University, the Center for Women and Enterprise, Raytheon Industries, and the Steel Yard.

Lorén Spears, director of the Tomaquag Museum, spoke at our Sunday service on January 22. Under her leadership, the museum received the National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the nation's highest honor conferred on museums and libraries for service to the community.

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### Chalice-Side Chat on social justice March 12

All are invited, and encouraged, to join Rev. David and the Social Justice Team to determine the next evolution of our faith into tangible action. We'll have a chalice side chat on Sunday, March 12 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Parents, children, infrequent activists, and those not usually involved in Social Justice are particularly welcomed. Childcare is available, but must be requested by Wednesday, March 8.

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### Installation of Rev. David L. Helfer on March 26

On Sunday, March 26, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County will install Reverend David L. Helfer as our second settled minister.

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

During 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.

After the service we will gather for food and fellowship to celebrate. What better way to enter our second quarter-century as a congregation!



## Religious Education News and Events

*By Pam Santos, Director of Religious Education*

### Looking for Signs

This time of year I find myself persistently seeking out signs that spring is on its way. I peek at the branches of my fruit trees looking for buds, I listen at dusk hoping to hear peepers, I scan my yard for bunches of robins, I smell the air for that musty scent of thawing earth. There are dark and cold times each winter when I long for springtime and hope that spring arrives and we all make it to the warmer days. With each sign of springtime I am reassured that the familiar seasonal cycle is moving along just fine. All is well.

In a similar way, I also find myself seeking out signs of growth and maturity in my own children. I am the mother of five children aged 12 to 22 years. With each child, at various stages, I have wondered, and sometimes worried, about what kind of adult my child would become. I listen for statements of empathy, and watch for examples of kindness. I encourage moments of independence, and hope for confidence and creativity. I smile when I witness a sense of humor and am grateful when I witness perseverance. I am always looking for signs.

As our Director of Religious Education, I continue to look for signs in the children and youth of our congregation. It is a blessing to listen in on a game of "What Could You Do," when the children share their thoughtful and creative ideas to problem-solve everyday moral dilemmas. Their sense of empathy and kindness shines as they listen to each other's Joys and Concerns. The teens' growing confidence is reflected in their enthusiasm for the creation of the Youth Service, and their perseverance in support of Youth Conferences (CONs).

I have no doubt that the lessons, activities, and sense of community support here at the UUCSC have added to the fabric of who my own children have become. I see it each Sunday in RE as our children grow and challenge themselves to become the best human being they can be. I see it as they support each other and reach out to help those in the community they do not even know. I see it in their curiosity and understanding of those who practice different religious traditions, and have different lifestyles. These children are living our Seven UU Principles.

Parenting can be a messy business. There are times of questioning and doubt that things are going to turn out as you had hoped. But please take a piece of advice from this grey haired, seasoned mom: Keep looking for those signs and you will indeed be reassured that the familiar cycle is moving along just fine. Keep your eyes open. All is well.

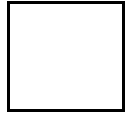
#### Upcoming dates in RE

**Saturday, March 4** - Religious Education Committee meeting

**Sunday, March 5** - Community Service: making healing blankets

**Sunday, March 26** - Installation of Rev. David L. Helfer at 3:00 p.m. — children welcome!

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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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*"That miracles are things in themselves possible, must be allowed so long as it is evident that there is in nature a power equal to the working of them . . . and certainly the power, principle, or being, by whatever name it be denominated, which produced the universe, and established the laws of it, is fully equal to any occasional departures from them."*

– Joseph Priestley (1733-1804)

Priestley, an English Unitarian clergyman, was the first person to isolate oxygen in its gaseous state. He was forced to flee England in 1791 after a mob burned down his home and church. He spent his last ten years in Pennsylvania. Priestley was born in the West Riding of Yorkshire, England, on March 13, 1733.