

# THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOLUME 25 ISSUE 10

NOVEMBER 2016

## November Services

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

**November 6**

### **Born Okay the First Time: Stories from a "Born Again" UU – *Amber Kelley Collins***

When Jesus told Nicodemus that one must be born again to see the kingdom of God, Nicodemus replied, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb?" UUs reject the traditional Christian idea of being "born again," but it has value as a path to personal renewal and way to reach out to new members.

How can we embrace this concept without letting go of reality?

**November 13**

### **Public Spaces and Private Talk – *Rev. David L. Helfer***

One can feel bounced around between faithful honesty and political correctness.

How do we learn to follow, then, the truths of our hearts?

**November 20**

### **The Gift of Nothing – *Rev. David L. Helfer***

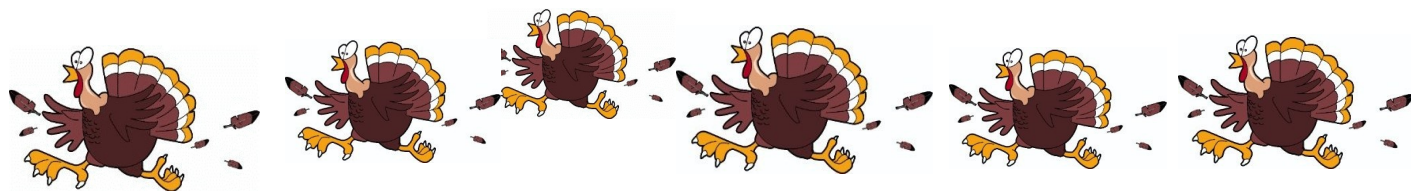
In the Buddhist tradition, we will ponder what it means to create empty spaces in our minds, our schedules, and our lives.

**November 27**

### **To Touch the Hem of God – *Deb Meunier***

For some artists, the act of creating a dance, or dancing itself, is a spiritual practice that has much in common with the rituals observed by many religious traditions.

*Deb Meunier is the founder and Artistic Director of Fusionworks, a modern dance repertory company now in its 29th season.*



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)

---

## 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)

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

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

### ***Committee Chairs***

Linda Dupuis & Carla Bowman, Membership Committee

John Glasheen, Social Action Committee • Judi Marcy, Caring Connection

Suzanne Paton, Religious Education Committee • Mary Finnegan, Personnel Committee

Marcia Boyd, Finance Committee • Ed Burrell, Facilities Committee

Susan Moreland, Music Committee • Linda Whyte Burrell, Social Events Committee

Val Follett, Hospitality Coordinators

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

Patience Peck, Flower Committee • Dave Ruede, Stewardship Committee

Dennis Bowman, Communications & Publicity Committee

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

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

<https://www.facebook.com/UUCSC>

# *At the Water's Edge*

*Rev. David L. Helfer*



In mid-October, I spent time with our smart, funny, and perceptive Senior Youth Group. They had thoughtfully prepared in advance with a list of questions for me, and we spent much of our hour together talking, discussing, debating, and sometimes laughing about our answers. One of my favorite questions: “What’s your favorite sandwich?” (Answer: that post- Thanksgiving one, the one with leftover bread, turkey, cranberry sauce, stuffing, and all the fixings!)

Later, I realized my answer about the Thanksgiving sandwich reflected a deeper wish: to be held in the love of family and good friends, especially during the holiday times. It can be a wonderful time of year. We bake familiar things, reach out to those we love, gather together, and exchange gifts.

This time of year can be also fraught with expectations about the “perfect” family holiday. My experience— and likely yours— is that those pictures in our heads sometimes don’t bear out in real life.

And if you’re alone, you may feel that particularly acutely. I remember a holiday season not so long ago. I was single, and had just moved to a new city. My close friends were all away on holiday in warmer climates. And I felt quite sorry for myself.

Until a friend reminded me of all I have: safety, warmth, food, love. “Go help those truly in need,” she said, “and you’ll feel better.” I did . . . and I did.

There’s so much need, right here. Is there someone in the congregation who would like to spend a holiday with you? Does Welcome House, the Johnnycake Center, or someplace else need your hands to help? How might we each be of service?

As the holidays— Thanksgiving, Solstice, Hanukkah, Advent, Christmas, and more—come upon us, meet them with intention. What is it you seek this holiday season and how might you create just that? Maybe it is to be less reactive or more direct with that family member who gets on your last nerve? Perhaps it is to be in community with others. Or it is an opportunity to be alone and in reflection?

Whatever you choose, build, and create, may the love and dedication of this community feed your spirit, nourishing you as you navigate this time of year.

With love and affection,

*Rev. David*

# The President's Letter

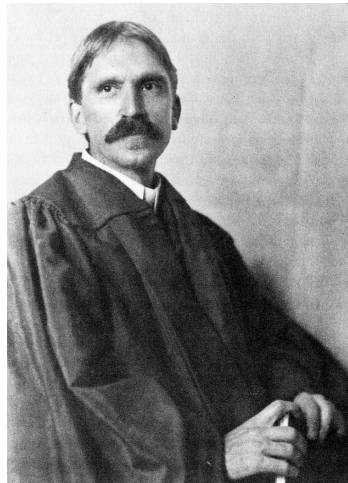
## *My Reflection: Time for Thanks and Forgiveness*

Hello, everyone.

As I sat down to write my monthly message to the congregation, I did so with the words and thoughts from this past Sunday still revolving in my mind. I was really struck by the tone and the beauty of Reverend David's sermon, "Whose Democracy Is This, Anyway?" and I am compelled to write about my thoughts.

What struck me so deeply was the realization that there really are no Bad Hombres (or Bad Señoritas or Señoritas, for that matter). In this highly-charged political season, it is easy for me to slip into the "holier than thou" place, and to do so without really realizing I'm doing it. As UUs, we do have our strong opinions and our strong beliefs, and these opinions and beliefs seem to become quite intensified around this time of year every four years, when we believe the political stakes for our country to be even greater than usual. It is so very helpful to me to be reminded that when it gets down to what is most important, I must keep in mind the basic humanity and worth of *every* individual, regardless of their personal views. It is hard, sometimes, to do so. But

for me, this just means that I need to keep on trying; keep on searching for better ways to listen to the views of others, and hopefully, to understand them. I will keep on trying, and I will work to keep forgiveness in my heart — forgiveness for others *and* for self. Sometimes it is self-forgiveness that is the most difficult.



*John Dewey in 1902*

In contemplating these thoughts, I came to some interesting realizations about myself. I came across an interesting Facebook post the other day about pragmatism. The best definition of pragmatism that I could find comes from the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, a peer-reviewed academic resource: "Pragmatism is a philosophical movement that

includes those who claim that an ideology or proposition is true if it works satisfactorily, that the meaning of a proposition is to be found in the practical consequences of accepting it, and that impractical ideas are to be rejected."

One of the more commonly-known pragmatists is John Dewey, founder of the progressive education movement in the early 20th century. Dewey was one of the foundational educators studied in my Education Ph.D. program. When I was in the program, Dewey's work always made a lot of sense to me — more than many of the other educational theorists — and now I have come to realize why: I am confessing to you now that I am a pragmatist. Yes, I believe this now from deep within my heart, I am a pragmatist. It is pragmatism that is the silent driver of my innermost thoughts and beliefs.

I came to realize this by reflecting on my own life and my own actions, good and not-so-good. Here is what I came up with: I am someone who determines value based upon what is done, not just what is discussed or thought about or believed. When I look at my roots, brought up

*continued on page 5*

## **“To Save Life on Earth: Civil Resistance as a Moral Imperative”**

### **Saturday, November 19 at UUCSC**

Peter Nightingale, a URI physics professor and one of seven climate activists arrested on May 16 outside the Washington, D.C. office of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, will talk about why he advocates civil resistance to stop the expanded production of fossil fuels on Saturday, November 19 at UUCSC.

“To Save Life on Earth: Civil Resistance as a Moral Imperative” will take place in the Sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. After the talk and a question-and-answer session, a reception with light refreshments will be held in the Oneto Community Room. The event is sponsored by the Green Task Force.

Professor Nightingale will discuss some of the latest scientific findings about climate change, the failure of government to adequately protect citizens from this threat, and why he believes nonviolent direct action is the most effective way to stopping the destruction of the natural world. He'll explain how he became a climate justice activist and some of the actions he has taken part in to stop fossil fuel expansion, including the May protest in Washington, D.C.



Professor Nightingale was one of seven people arrested for blocking the exit of the underground parking garage at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. The seven were charged with unlawful entry. Three have entered into plea agreements; Professor Nightingale and three others are currently scheduled to go to trial in December.

The event is free and open to the public.

---

## **The President's Letter**

*continued from page 4*

in a family of practical educators (a father who taught industrial arts and mother who was a teacher of secretarial practice), this begins to make sense to me. My parents taught others how to do things: how to cut wood, how to build circuits, how to type, how to take shorthand, how to design furniture.

In my youth (a few years ago now), I was more of an idealist, but this idealism was always tempered with the practical. I see the world through a pragmatic lens,

seeking ways to bring the idealistic or theoretical into my real world by asking myself, “How can this work? What are the actions that can bring this idea into reality?” A hard-core pragmatist; I admit it.

So, why bring all of this up now? Circling back to the beginning of this column, I suppose I'd ask each of you to take a moment, in the midst of all of the craziness around us, to find what you believe to be at your very own core: what drives you. What basic life philosophies

do you hold dear?

After doing this, see if you can recognize the barriers that these very beliefs put up between yourself and others.

I will be trying to do this very same thing, for as we move toward greater honesty with ourselves, we can move toward greater understanding and forgiveness of others, and of ourselves, and this is certainly something to be thankful for.

Peace be with you, my friends, and Happy Thanksgiving.



## The Path to Membership

Rev. David L. Helfer and the Membership Committee will offer Path to Membership classes on two consecutive Sundays this month. The classes are for newcomers who would like to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and for those interested in becoming members of our congregation.



Rev. Helfer will lead the first class, on UU history and theology, on November 13 from noon to 1:30 p.m. Refreshments will be provided. On November 20, the Membership Committee will talk about how our congregation functions. That class will be from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

A New Member ceremony will take place during the Sunday service on December 11.

If you're interested in attending these classes, please sign up in advance by contacting Carla Bowman at 804-380-9936 or [cbow5@aol.com](mailto:cbow5@aol.com) or Kathy Carland at [uucscri@yahoo.com](mailto:uucscri@yahoo.com) or 284-2297. If you will need child care, please let them know when you sign up. If you have questions, please contact Carla Bowman.

## Thanks for everything you do!

Our second annual Thanksgiving Soup Luncheon takes place on Sunday, November 6 after the service. The UUCSC Board of Directors is preparing the meal to thank all the members and friends who generously volunteer their time and effort through-

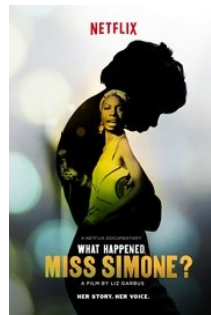
out the year.

A variety of soups will be served, including vegetarian and gluten-free choices, as well as breads, dessert, and coffee and tea. Please join us!

## REAL TO REEL DOCUMENTARY FILM SERIES

This fall's Real to Reel documentary film series concludes on Friday, November 18 with a 7:00 p.m. showing of the film "What Happened, Miss Simone?"

The film profiles controversial singer and activist Nina Simone. Born Eunice Waymon in rural depression-era North Carolina, Simone was a child prodigy who studied at the Juilliard School of Music.



Her musical style fused gospel and pop with classical music. She was a recipient of fifteen Grammy Award nominations, but she was just as well known as an outspoken civil rights activist. Married twice, first to a carnival barker and second to a New York City police detective who abused her physi-

cally and psychologically, Simone was diagnosed with bipolar disorder in her 50s and suffered from breast cancer for several years before her death in 2003.

"What Happened, Miss Simone?" premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2015 and was nominated for a 2016 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature.

A discussion will follow the film. Admission is free and open to the public.



## "Navigating Whiteness"

The New England UU Region's Racial and Cultural Equity Team will sponsor "Navigating Whiteness," a workshop at which UUs of different racial identities will talk about their experiences navigating whiteness within and beyond their congregations. It's on Saturday, November 12 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at First Parish Church, Weston, Mass. Members of UUCSC's new Racial Justice Steering Committee plan to attend. Registration closes on Monday, Nov. 7. Go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/navigating-whiteness-registration-28579410787> to register.



## Religious Education News and Events

By Pam Santos, Director of Religious Education

### Giving Thanks Every Day

Working with children gives rise to feelings of thankfulness. We see this when the children share their joys and concerns during religious education classes:

*"My kitten learned to climb a tree this week."*

*"My mom is making my favorite soup for dinner."*

*"Grandma called me on the phone."*

*"My new tooth is coming in!"*

*"I got to sing in a microphone."*

*"We saw a deer walk through our yard."*

*"I have boots all ready for the snow."*

*"I grew a whole inch this year."*

Children help us to realize that thankfulness does not need to be reserved for special occasions in our lives. When we live with profound thankfulness each and every day, we open our hearts toward the ordinary miracles of daily life. Once you allow yourself to feel your own gratitude toward simple experiences, thankfulness just becomes a way of being.

I see this in the children, and it is a beautiful way to be. May this season of Giving Thanks shower you with many small, ordinary blessings.

#### Upcoming Dates in Religious Education

*Sunday, November 6 - Community service day*

*Thursday, November 10 - RE Committee meeting at 7:00 p.m.*

*Sunday, November 13 - Guest At Your Table begins*

*Sunday, November 20 - Multigenerational Thanksgiving Service*

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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

---

*“What is the difference between unethical and ethical advertising? Unethical advertising uses falsehoods to deceive the public; ethical advertising uses truth to deceive the public.”*

*– Vilhjalmur Stefansson*

Born in Canada of Icelandic parents, Stefansson was an explorer and ethnologist who received the Founder's Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society in 1921 for his explorations of the Arctic. A Unitarian, he was born at Gimli, Manitoba, Canada on November 3, 1879.