



THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOLUME 26 ISSUE 9

OCTOBER 2017

October Services

SUNDAYMORNING SERVICES ARE AT 10:00 A.M.

October 1

Something to Celebrate! – Rev. David L. Helfer

What is good in your life? Today, let us celebrate the change and the constancy that comprise all that is our lives.
Meet Bethany Vaccaro, our new Director of Religious Education, during coffee hour.

October 8

Resistance is Futile, and Other Untruths – Rev. David L. Helfer

We are so certain of what we know to be true. But faith, and Unitarian Universalism, require that we explore those certainties more deeply. What might we discover if we question our most basic assumptions?
A "UU 101" class for potential new members will be held from 11:30 to 1:00 in the nursery.

October 15

What do you mean when you say, "I believe in God"? – Katrin Jomaa

In the modern world, many people, no matter what their faith, see religion as a passive dogma—a set of beliefs one embraces but does not put into practice in the secular world. But for traditional Islam, passive dogma is no religion at all. Professor Jomaa will tell us about the traditional Muslim view of the place of religion in life through stories about the Prophet Abraham, whose religion is described in the Quran as the "best religion."

Katrin Jomaa, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Islam and Middle Eastern Politics in the departments of political science and philosophy at URI.

October 22

Our Zombie Obsession, or, Why We Embrace Fear – Rev. David L. Helfer

As long as there's been human life, there have been stories of the end times.

Why do we tell ourselves such tales, and how does this foster growth?

A fire drill will immediately follow the service. Please stay and take part in this important effort.

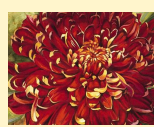
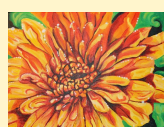
October 29

On Being Human – Nancy Reed

What does it mean to be human, to treat others "humanely"? Most kindergarten students are taught the Golden Rule. So why do some people treat other people with disregard, intolerance or even violence?

We will explore this question. The service will include a dance performance based on *The Metamorphosis*, Franz Kafka's novella about being un-human and inhumane.

Nancy Reed is a member of Westminster Unitarian Church. She has a bachelor of fine arts degree in dance and a master's degree in occupational therapy, and is a member of the Balliamo Dance Company.



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

REV. DAVID L. HELFER, MINISTER

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

Bethany Vaccaro, Religious Education Director ■ **Michael Galib, Music Director**

Karen St. Peter, Office Administrator

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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Betsy Dalton, Facebook manager

At the Water's Edge

Rev. David L. Helfer



Dear UUCSCers,

As I write this, a(nother) hurricane is bearing down on Puerto Rico. Among other places.

But Puerto Rico has a particular tug on my heart.

This is always true: when we travel somewhere, and get to know the local community, it imprints itself— usually pretty indelibly— on us.

I've been to Puerto Rico several times, but I didn't get to know it, really, until I went there on a service trip with thirteen youth in 2014.

We had prepped for this trip for months. For while Puerto Rico is part of the U.S., its physical separateness has rendered it politically, culturally, and financially quite distinct from most of the continental United States.

And lest I understate the fact, this is to say that the U.S. has all but absolved itself of the "Puerto Rico problem." Politicians long ago stopped worrying about the substance of this small island filled with dark-skinned Americans. Puerto Rico has been suffering, for some years now, the impacts of policies that more or less ignore its very existence.

So when we arrived for our service trip in 2014, once we left the tourist areas, we encountered a remarkably impoverished community. There was almost no governmentally-provided electricity or water; what existed had been extended by the local communities. Houses were almost entirely of the wood shanty variety, with a few having been converted to concrete after earlier hurricanes. It was clear that most everyone lived close to the margins.

Rarely, though, have I encountered a kinder and more generous people. I arrived with a gaggle of youth and a few other adults. We spent our mornings and early afternoon working with the homeowners, mixing concrete and pouring it into walls and floors. When the sun became too unbearable, we all headed into a makeshift gym, sharing food and sometimes pickup games of basketball. And a ton of conversation, despite some language barriers.

Each evening, we were exhausted, and yet sorry to leave. The youth exchanged friendship bracelets, taught each other card games, and shared their music.

We connected. And in that connection we began to truly see each other.

This is why we leave our comfort zones. This is why we find ways to be of service to each other. And this is how we become less caught up in our own worlds, convinced that our experience is everyone else's experience as well.

These are people— in Puerto Rico, St. John, Dominica, and so many other islands— who have been left bereft, possibly permanently homeless. This rebuilding effort will extend for years. As the hurricanes leave, and the immediate losses move out of the public eye, let us remember our shared need for sustenance, safety and love.

In faith, hope, and solidarity,

Rev. David

The President's Letter

We offer many opportunities to express joy and delight

The UUCSC Board of Directors met on September 20 to do the good work of maintaining the smooth operation of our beloved community.

At one point during the meeting we considered who might perform a particular task to serve our congregation. We learned that more than one of the people considered are dealing with various personal issues that do not allow time and energy for deeper congregational involvement. We hold these individuals in our healing circle. Other people we felt are currently successfully carrying out ministries to us all. Might any of them— or you— be interested in changing to a different Ministry at this time in our journey? At another point in our conversation, someone on the board was invited to take on a new task. The affirmative response was one of delight and joy.

I was struck by the wide range of responses possible to the invitation to participate in the good work. Some are thrilled to be included in the deep, active involvement in the workings of UUCSC. One person said, "I LOVE meetings!" Some people do best in a solitary ministry. Some tasks are finite: there is a beginning and an end. No meetings. No discussion groups. In a phrase—

just do it. Several of these quietly completed tasks, if not performed, would be glaringly obvious by their absence. Our smoothly- operating community would have bumps and pot holes. The performer of the task, while seemingly invisible (most probably a favorite state), is a vital link in the chain of good will and good energy that is UUCSC.



Most of us come to UUCSC for a supporting, embracing, affirming and spiritually uplifting community. Some folks come with boundless energy that can immediately be directed to ministry— with delight and joy: "Oh, thank you for asking! I love you for asking me!" (Direct quote.)

Others of us come to UUCSC needing and seeking energy. Safe harbor is needed and sought during difficult times. Hugs and encouragement, yes. Invitations to share responsibilities, not so much.

And others of us are just slow

bloomers; it takes them time to get their bearings and establish a comfort zone. No committees. No meetings. And then, like the night-looming cereus, the awaited flower. We will wait. We will accept your timing. There is a time for every purpose.

You may not be invited to be involved in the active, deep ministries at UUCSC— and you might like to be invited to participate. (My ears and heart are always open to receive what you'd like to say.) You might be invited at a time that is not optimal for you. We will accept your "no." We may inquire as to why your answer is no. Is it because the timing is not right for you? Is it because that particular task is the wrong fit for you? Sometimes even I take on a task, and later realize it is not the right fit for me or for UUCSC.

So invited or not, know that we are blessed to have you as part of our beloved community. Please know that we accept you, and your delight and joy— and your "No." Express your delight and joy quietly as you gather strength and energy, or express your delight with a "Yes, thank you!" We treasure you, whichever you you are every day.

- Linda Whyte Burrell

Meet our new Religious Education director

We are delighted to welcome our new Director of Religious Education, Bethany Vaccaro.

Bethany is a writer, teacher, and certified expressive arts facilitator. She has taught philosophy and writing at the University of Rhode Island for almost ten years, and designed curricula for URI's Honors department that incorporates creative and expressive exercises and a whole-person perspective.

Her personal essays have been published in national print and on-line publications. She has twice received honorable mention in Best American Essays, an annual anthology of magazine articles published in the United States that is part of the Best American Series published by Houghton Mifflin.

Bethany also draws from a social services background, working with diverse populations and focusing on child development, women's issues, and family dynamics. She is active in leading spiritual circles for women and children, and she facilitates expressive arts workshops at various locations in Southern Rhode Island.

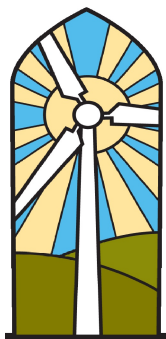
Bethany is a Rhode Island native. She attends the Quaker meeting in Westerly (the Westerly Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends). She and her husband Joseph have two young daughters, Luciana and Rosabel. They have a "happy, messy home" in West Kingston.

You can meet Bethany at coffee hour after the service on Sunday, October 8. If you'd like to reach her by e-mail, the address is uucsdre2@gmail.com.



10th Annual Interfaith Conference on Climate Change is October 16

Rhode Island Interfaith Power & Light (RI IPL) will hold its 10th Annual Interfaith Conference on Climate Change on Monday, October 16 from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. at Providence College, 251 Huxley Ave. in Providence. This year's theme is Transforming Prayers into Passionate Action. The event will feature Tim DeChristopher, a UU and a leader in the climate justice movement.



Have dinner, network with climate justice enthusiasts, and become inspired to take action on climate change. A group of Rhode Island-based environmental organizations and companies will be available to assist you.

Rev. David, who is a member of the RI IPL board of directors, will be there, and a group from UUCSC will be carpooling. Admission is \$30 (\$10 for students). Register by Sunday, October 8 at www.ri-ipl.org.

If you have questions or you'd like to carpool, contact Lisa Petrie at teonlisa@juno.com or call her at 364-3002.

Living our 5th Principle: Use of the democratic process

by Jean Bowen, Chair of the Social Justice Team

It is heartening to see the impact of the work done by our members in social justice. As I sat in the gallery at the State House on September 19 during the special session, waiting for bills to be called, I took pride in the work our Social Justice Team has done to improve the lives of women and immigrants, to achieve racial justice, and to protect the environment.

Dave Reude was there on behalf of the Racial Justice Steering Committee to witness passage of the Justice Reinvestment Package, 13 bills to reform Rhode Island's criminal justice system, on September 19. The bills include changes to laws on sentencing, probation, and parole. The reform package was a top priority of the RI UU Legislative Ministry. Open these links for the text of the key bills:

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText17/SenateText17/S0005.pdf>

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText17/SenateText17/S0006A.pdf>

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText17/SenateText17/S0007B.pdf>

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText17/SenateText17/S0008B.pdf>

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText17/SenateText17/S0009A.pdf>

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText17/SenateText17/S0010B.pdf>

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText17/SenateText17/S0011B.pdf>

Lisa Petrie has led the Green Task Force in its tireless efforts to oppose the Invenenergy power plant in Burrillville and National Grid's proposed LNG production facility at Fields Point in Providence. The Task Force has collaborated with Fossil Free RI, RI Interfaith Power and Light, the Environmental Council of Rhode Island, and Nature's Trust RI. Our members have led efforts to improve the environment for Rhode Islanders.

Kari Kurto, Gail Burchard, Barbara Holtzman and Mary Alice Kimball participate in The Woman Project and advocated for the Reproductive Health Care Act, which would prohibit the state from interfering with a woman's decision to prevent, commence, continue, or terminate a pregnancy prior to fetal viability. Open this link to read the text of that bill:

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText17/SenateText17/S0274.pdf>

Aline Couture and I are advocates for Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. This grassroots organization advocated for the Protect Rhode Island Families Act. The bill, enacted on September 19, prohibits possession of a firearm by a person convicted of domestic violence or a person under a domestic abuse-related restraining order. To read the text of the bill, open this link:

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText17/H5510Baa.pdf>

The Moms, who attend legislative sessions in their red tee shirts, made a final push for this bill in September after three years advocating for it. It was heartening to stand with other Rhode Island UUs dressed in red as we put into practice our 5th Principle, "The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large."

The Social Justice Team is planning a legislative forum on Wednesday, November 8 at which we will summarize progress on the key issues chosen by the RIUU Legislative Ministry in the spring. We have invited local legislators and will open the forum to our social justice partners in South County. Watch for more information about this event.

– Jean Bowen (jeannbowen@gmail.com)



Religious Education News & Events



By Bethany Vaccaro, Religious Education Director

Dear UUCSCers,

I'm so grateful for the warm welcome I've felt since stepping into the DRE shoes here at UUCSC.

I want to extend a big thank you to Rev. David and particularly the members of the RE Committee, not only for helping me as I get settled, but for putting in so much care and effort to ensure the RE program will be stellar this year. It's a pleasure to join the team and I am so looking forward to partnering with them and the wonderful teachers and other volunteers who will make this vision a reality.

Raising children is some of the most important work we will do. As a parent myself, I'm aware of the desire to raise "good kids," to equip them with all the tools they need to engage in our complicated and volatile world. I want to teach my two girls how to contribute to society, how to stand up and speak when they see injustice, and to get their hands dirty when their neighbor needs help.

But I also want more than this for my own children and for all of our children. I want them to understand and enjoy their own connection to sacredness. I want their own personal sense of spirituality to fuel their passions and engagement with the world. As a teacher, I believe the best way to impart this is experiential, to provide them with rich opportunities to interact with the world around them, the members of their community, and the wonders of the Earth itself.

I also believe no one should go this alone, and it's one of the jobs of community to invest in younger generations. Each of us— whether we are parents or not— have a responsibility to our children. The RE year already has powerful momentum behind it, with many people to thank for this. I am encouraged to be joining in with this effort and welcome all who would like to be part of this magic.

As a steward of the community we've been blessed with, it's an honor and a privilege to be part of your children's spiritual lives. I'm looking forward to a wonderful year in RE!

With love,
Bethany

Path To Membership classes begin on Sunday, October 8

Our Path to Membership classes are for newcomers who would like to learn more about Unitarian Universalism, and for those who are interested in becoming members of the congregation. Rev. David L. Helfer and the Membership Committee will begin this fall's Path to Membership classes on Sunday, October 8. There are two classes:

- *Unitarian Universalist History and Theology with Rev. Helfer on Sunday, October 8 from 11:30 to 1:00 in the nursery. Refreshments will be provided.*
- *How Our Congregation Functions, led by the Membership Committee, on Sunday, November 5 from 11:30 to 12:30 in the nursery.*

There will be a New Member Ceremony during the service on Sunday, December 10.

If you'd like to attend the Path to Membership classes or if you have any questions, please contact Membership Committee Chair Carla Bowman at 804-380-9936 or cbow5@aol.com, or Office Administrator Karen St. Peter at 284-2297 or uucscri@yahoo.com. If you will need child care, please let us know when you sign up.



Second annual holiday arts & crafts fair on December 2

The Second Annual UUCSC Holiday Arts & Crafts Fair will be held on Saturday, December 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



A wide assortment of quality hand-made products, including paintings, prints, photography, woodworking, jewelry, and holiday crafts will be available for you to explore. You'll also be able to purchase Equal Exchange fair trade coffees, teas, and chocolate. We'll

also have a luncheon menu, and all kinds of baked goods for sale.

Interested in selling your arts and crafts? The table fee for adult vendors is \$40; for youth vendors, the table fee is \$20. If you're interested, contact Betsy Dalton at 529-8733 or e-mail her at elizabethmdalton@gmail.com.

We'll need lots of volunteers to help out. If you'd like to volunteer, contact Marie Younkin Waldman at 787-5067 or e-mail her at teawithmarie@cox.net.

Memorial Service for Iris Donnelly on Saturday, October 7

Iris Falck Donnelly, a long time friend of UUCSC and the wife of Charlie Donnelly, passed away on Tuesday, September 12.

Iris was a past chair of the Social Action Committee, and ran an annual film series with Nancy Rose on universal, community-building themes such as music. She was passionate about making the world a better place.

A dedicated educator, Iris taught French, Spanish, and Special Education during her long teaching career. A talented photographer, Iris captured award winning images of a wide array of subjects, people, and places.

A celebration of Iris's life will be held in the Sanctuary on Saturday, October 7 at 11:00 a.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Sophia Academy, 582 Elmwood Ave., Providence.

Human rights activist Gaspar Sánchez to speak here on November 7

Honduran human rights activist Gaspar Sánchez will speak at UUCSC on Tuesday, November 7 at an event co-sponsored with Witness for Peace and the Tomaquag Museum.

Sánchez is the sexual diversity coordinator for the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH). He will talk about how the struggle for LGBTQ rights among Indigenous communities plays a vital role in the dismantling of patriarchal and militaristic structures. COPINH is the first Indigenous organization in Latin

America to establish LGBTQ rights as a priority in its work.



Sánchez will also talk about what people in the United States can do to help COPINH and others facing repression in Honduras, including supporting the Berta Cáceres Human

Rights in Honduras Act (H.R. 1299), a bill pending in the U.S. House of Representatives that would prohibit the United States from providing financial support to Honduras for police or the military until the State Department can verify that Honduras has taken specific steps to stop human rights violations by its security forces and to prosecute members of the military or police who have committed murders and other human rights abuses.

The event will take place in the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. It is free and open to the public.

The Gilded Age and Downton Abbey: A Mindful Journey to England

Neighbourhood Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Toronto will offer a Mindful Journey to England in 2018, inspired by Downton Abbey, for UUs and their friends.

The fictional Cora of Downton Abbey fame was based on the American heiresses who arrived in England during the late 1800s to marry titled gentlemen. Many were looking for love and a title, while many of the gentlemen were looking for money to save their great estates from ruin.

On this trip, you can visit some of the locations where Downton Abbey was filmed, including Highclere Castle, home of heiress Lady Almina Carnarvon.

You can also explore the lives and homes of such American heiresses as Consuelo Vanderbilt, who married the 9th Duke of Marlborough and saved Blenheim Palace with her fortune, Jennie Jerome, who married the 8th Duke of Marlborough's brother and gave birth to Winston Churchill at Blenheim, and the great-grandmother of Diana the Princess of Wales, who lived at Althorp House and became the ancestor of future kings of England.

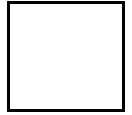


Travelers will stay for five nights in Oxford, a unique university town of amazing bookstores, unusual architecture, historic pubs, and eclectic free museums. You'll see where J.R.R. Tolkien met with the Inklings, Lewis Carroll dreamed up Alice in Wonderland, C.S. Lewis had a magical wardrobe, Inspector Morse solved many crimes, and Bill Clinton didn't inhale.

Two nights in the Midlands and one in London complete the itinerary.

The dates and itinerary for the tour aren't finalized yet because Highclere Castle and Althorp House won't post their opening times for 2018 until this month. When tickets are available for those venues, the tour details will become available. The journey will be mindful, fun, and informative. For more information, go to <http://beverlz.wix.com/beverlzzjournays> or <https://nuuc.ca/spiritual-growth/spiritual-practice/mindful-journays/> or send an e-mail to beverlz@me.com.

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



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

"We are the certain and the seeking, the lifers and the newcomers, the beloved and the broken hearted, the insiders and the rejected, all of whom have found a home in the extraordinary, yet intimate communities of Unitarian Universalism."

- Melissa Harris-Perry

Melissa Victoria Harris-Perry, a writer and political commentator with a focus on African-American politics, is Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Wake Forest University. She hosted a weekend news and opinion television show on MSNBC from 2012 to 2016. A lifelong UU, she was born in Seattle, Washington on October 2, 1973.