

THE SOUTH COUNTY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOLUME 26 ISSUE 8

SEPTEMBER 2017

September Services

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

September 3

Labor Day Weekend; no service.

September 10

Rejoice: Water Communion and Ingathering – Rev. David L. Helfer

Is water a resource, a human right, a commodity, or a sacred gift? On this first day of the congregational year, we are reminded of the ways that water, comprising both our human forms and so much of the world, is an integral part of our lives and ecosystem. We will symbolically share water as part of our ingathering. You are invited to bring a small vessel of water to contribute. All are welcome to this intergenerational service.

September 17

Resist: How to Survive, and Perhaps Even Thrive – Rev. David L. Helfer

What do we do when what we know gets turned upside down and inside out? When what we trusted to be safe is no longer so? As change occurs, our individual and communal anxiety rises. Today we explore how to meaningfully calm those fears, and how faith community provides a forum to support each other's growth during such shift.

Religious education classes begin today.

September 24

The Refugee Journey – Omar Bah

As a refugee from The Gambia, Omar Bah understands the effect our country's current policies on immigration have on refugees and on the rest of us as well. His mission is to increase awareness of the global refugee crisis by telling the stories of individual refugees.

Omar Bah is the executive director of the Refugee Dream Center in Providence, a nonprofit founded by Mr. Bah and his wife Teddi Jallow that provides post-resettlement social services and skills development. He holds a bachelor's degree in communications, masters degrees in public administration and counseling, and certification from the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma.



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

(vacant), 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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At the Water's Edge

Rev. David L. Helfer



I've been thinking about the biblical story of Sarah.

For those who don't remember, or perhaps never heard or read the passage, it tells of Abraham and Sarah, who are getting older but have never had children. It seems that, in the parlance of the time, Sarah had determined that she was barren, unable to bear children. (The notion of barren as connected to a woman unable to have children seems an unkind and wholly incomplete metaphor to me, but that's an analysis for another time . . .)

Abraham is portrayed as good and as g-d fearing. He will ultimately be the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, though he doesn't know it yet. One's impression of Sarah is that she's more of a free-thinker, so when Abraham tells her g-d is going to impregnate her, Sarah laughs at the preposterousness of the idea.

Sarah knows that she is unable to have children. And yet, that's exactly what happens.

This summer, among other things, I unexpectedly began a yoga practice. It's not at all what I anticipated, and I'm admittedly slightly relieved to find my body is more flexible than hoped for. The surprising part of yoga, for me, is the hard work of remembering to be in the moment.

I think I manage to stay present for about half a second before my mind wanders. And I bring it back . . . as gently as I'm able to.

For as I understand it, this particular practice— yoga— is as much spiritual as physical. I am to listen to my body— to the Divine— which is all the same thing, I believe. If we shut out the noise of the world, of our own heads, even briefly, there's room for g-d or deeper truth or love to move into that space.

Now, I'm not saying I entirely enjoy this process of yoga, at least not yet. I get achy and uncomfortable and restless. The amazing, heart-open instructors remind us to simply notice what's happening.

In moments when my mind stops whirring for a second or two, I get glimpses of what might be; of ways that this world, or our impressions of it, might shift and change. What's the change, the birthing afoot, that might not yet be visible or feel possible?

This simple practice, yet another way to be present to what is, brings huge hope for our hurting world. Eco-theologian Joanna Macy calls this The Great Turning, when human beings, pushed toward their breaking point, go deeper. They— we— excavate the truths locked down deep inside us. We become aware of what we're capable of, what faith calls us to do, be, and be present to, and what we're willing to shift and change to achieve that.

This year, we'll integrate new and different spiritual practices into our worship and other ministries. No, I'm not expecting us all to do yoga! But, in a nod to Sarah, we will allow the power of ritual, of faith and hope, to take us further and deeper than we had previously believed possible.

With joy and excitement,

Rev. David

The President's Letter

The Richness of Ocean Waves

There is a story about a wave that thinks that it will die when it crashes onto the shore. Another wave tells it, "You're not just a wave. You're part of the ocean."

The ocean. We all love the ocean. Some of us dive into the ocean to swim through it. Some ride it on surfboards or boats. Some fish in it. Some paint images of it. Some park by it to simply gaze. We all cherish it, feeling a visceral connection with it.

UUCSC, our congregation, is an ocean, and each of us is a wave, a part of it. We ebb and flow in myriad ways dictated by the degree of our involvement and the frequency of our attendance. Sometimes we are like tsunamis, being super involved— think Alice Buckley, who served UUCSC as Project Manager during the rehab of our building back in 2008.

Some of us are the regular, even waves who steadily carry out so much of the work that keeps UUCSC afloat— think Jeff Berry, keeper of the UUCSC fiduciary memory.

Some waves in the UUCSC ocean are becalmed, awaiting the moment in which to use their energy. Possibly, a moment to be a tsunami— fortunately that need is rare! Possibly, a moment to be part of a rhythmic group of waves on which UUCSC can sail through fun and pleasurable times.



There is need for every wave in our ocean. There are various areas that might utilize your energy.

A group of waves could swell to support a Yard Sale or Scavenger Hunt to be a FUNdraiser.

A group of waves could gather to provide fortnightly babysitting afternoons or evenings at UUCSC to enable our young parents to enjoy a few hours of free time.

A group of waves might explore ways to continue Music at Lily Pads— in the same format, or in a new way, a fresh new surge of fine seas.

Paraphrasing the language of my grandfather's sea logs, thus ends this season of our connection with the ocean outside of our congregation. Bring back to our UUCSC ocean every wave of you. You are needed, whatever your energy at this time. There is a time for every season. If this is your season of surge, we want you. If this is your season to be becalmed, we want you.

Our ocean rises in swells on Sunday September 10th. Bring your waters to our Water Communion.

– Linda Whyte Burrell, President

Planned Parenthood is September-October Share the Plate recipient



Planned Parenthood is a trusted health care provider that delivers vital reproductive health care, sex education, and information and promotes a common-sense approach to women's health and well-being based on respect for each individual's right to make an informed, independent decision about health, sex and family planning.

Half of the money in the collection plate at our services on September 10 and October 1 will be donated to Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, which operates the Planned Parenthood facilities in Rhode Island. A representative from the nonprofit will be at our service on Sunday, October 1.

RE classes begin September 17

Religious education classes begin on Sunday, September 17. The RE Committee has been meeting regularly all summer to develop a great year of programming. As the search for an RE Director continues, RE Committee members are assigning responsibilities in ways they hope will mitigate this absence. They are especially excited about service projects, creating dynamic opportunities for learning through story and play, and services and other experiences.

Much of what unfolds this year will be up to the unique chemistry brought by the littles, bigs, and young adults. The committee members hope that by providing some structure, whether through visual art, theater and improv, music, sharing ideas and feelings, food, (and more), the

wonderful volunteers and the RE attendees will explore ideas of Beloved Community and come away refreshed, renewed, and feeling good about themselves and others. – Sarah Toatley, for the RE Committee

Wellness Team seeks new members

The Wellness Team is looking for new members. If you're interested in supporting health in body, mind and spirit at UUCSC, the Wellness Committee would love to welcome you as a new member. In past years, Wellness Team members have offered or hosted programs on the power of mind-body connection, qi gong, yoga, nutrition, gong baths, community dances and organized bike rides. We need help to keep this

program going. If you're interested, please get in touch with Sarah Bell (284-1819 or sarahbell@earthlink.net).

Welcome House Picnic

The South County members of the Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty invite members of all faith groups in South County to a picnic on Tuesday, September 19 to thank the Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale and Welcome House of South County for all they do to assist the community.

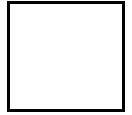
The event will take place at Welcome House, 8 North Road, Peace Dale, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Hot dogs, burgers and beverages will be provided. Please bring a salad, a side dish or dessert to share, and a lawn chair to sit in.

Seventh Annual Local Foods Banquet on September 22

Please join the Green Task Force for UUCSC's 7th annual Local Foods Banquet on Friday, September 22, at 6:00 p.m. Come celebrate the bounty of the season and enjoy the taste of fresh local food, good music, good company. After dinner, we'll enjoy live music and sing-alongs with our own Nick Smith and the colorful, delightfully irreverent Raging Grannies of Greater Westerly. Bring a dish featuring local or sustainable ingredients, and bring your own plate, cup, flatware, and napkin if you can. The event is free and open to the public. RSVPs to Lisa Petrie (teonlisa@juno.com or 364-3002) would be appreciated but are not required.



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27 NORTH ROAD
PEACE DALE, RI 02879



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Love Song

William Carlos Williams

I lie here thinking of you:—

the stain of love
is upon the world!
Yellow, yellow, yellow
it eats into the leaves,
smears with saffron
the horned branches that lean
heavily
against a smooth purple sky!

There is no light
only a honey-thick stain
that drips from leaf to leaf
and limb to limb
spoiling the colors
of the whole world—

you far off there under
the wine-red selvage of the west!

Williams, a poet, novelist, and practicing physician, was a lifelong member of the Unitarian Church of Rutherford, New Jersey. He was born on September 17, 1883.