



The South County UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SOUTH COUNTY

VOLUME 28 ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2019

February Services

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

February 3

In Those We Trust – *Rev. DL Helfer*

Join us for a morning of the poetry and prose by the great poet Mary Oliver, who died on January 17. Let us reconnect ourselves, through her work, to that which stirs our souls, hearts, minds, and spirits.

February 10

Accidental Sanctuary – *Mary-Kim Arnold*

Mary-Kim Arnold was adopted from Korea at the age of two. She will reflect on how researching and writing her memoir, *Litany for the Long Moment*, helped her understand the historical, social, and cultural conditions that led to her adoption.

Mary-Kim Arnold earned her bachelor's and master's degrees at Brown University, where she teaches in the nonfiction writing program. She lives in Pawtucket with her family.

February 17

Baring Our Souls: Truth-Telling as Survival – *Rev. DL Helfer & Martina Muller*

During this service, we will explore the work of eco-philosopher Joanna Macy and others, as we consider and practice radical truth-telling as an entry point into healing ourselves and our world.

February 24

A Spiritual Helping Hand for Coping and Thriving – *Tracy Hart*

In this stormy time of civil and environmental chaos, how do we anchor ourselves?

Tapping into several faith traditions, and with assistance from Sally Barney and Sarah Bell, Tracy will explore ways to deal with turmoil and will provide guidance for “watering seeds of joy” and living vibrant lives. You are invited to bring bells for the bell meditation that will conclude the service.

Tracy Hart is a past president of UUCSC and a licensed clinical social worker.



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.*

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Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday

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At the Water's Edge

Rev. DL Helfer



Dear UUCSCers,

You've spontaneously and generously donated more than \$1,200 for those seeking asylum at the El Paso border. I am surprised and grateful for that generosity, both monetary and spiritual. Thank you for your support and love and affirmation. Thank you for saying YES to my decision to go to El Paso to be of use there, in solidarity there, for a bit.

And it sets the stage what's been brewing in me, hoping you'll join me in saying YES to more.

As I said in a recent sermon, it's natural for each of us, for different reasons, to get comfortable with where we are—aging or illness, patterning or habit, perhaps long-held anxieties, or commitments for someone else's care. If we combine the oft-felt anxiety about our democracy, well, it's natural to reach for comfort.

I wonder if that's what we actually need, though. Comfort.

If any of us wanted to seek spiritual ease, we wouldn't be Unitarian Universalists. That isn't the purpose of our shared faith tradition.

Someone stopped me after service to offer a room in their house to any refugee who might need it. Others have asked, "Where can I work with refugees? Where can I be of service?" A few of you noted to me how you wished that you, too, were heading to El Paso.

The truth is, there's work to be done here, too. But in saying yes to that, we open the doors to that which is discomfoting to acknowledge— that we live with refugees among us now, people having to live in hiding, people part of our communities, and yet people without the basic rights and freedoms that we take for granted. Because we can.

It's up to us to say YES to changing that. Saying YES to seeing and changing the structures meant to perpetuate oppression. Saying YES to moving towards discomfort if it means the freedom of others. Saying YES to showing up in ways that scare us.

If you're able to and wish to volunteer, there's the Dorcas International, the Refugee Dream Center, and AMOR, to name but a few organizations that welcome help of all sorts. There's work close to home, too— next time you're out and about in Rhode Island, ask yourself, "Who is it that I come across in my everyday life, knowing the political structures in this city/country, who might be undocumented or in danger of wrongful deportation?" You don't need to rescue that person, and it might be ill-advised for you to try to. But the awareness matters.

The more we say YES to seeing what is unacceptable, to recognizing the long-held aphorism that none of us are free until all of us are free, that will begin to change us. When we change ourselves, we change the world.

Such is my work in El Paso. To be changed. And to bring that back to you.

In faith,

Rev. DL

A note from the President

So, I find myself under the gun for a newsletter column. One week back from a road trip I am still on vacation brain, so lost track of the deadline date. I pick up the dreaded laptop— with which I am most unfamiliar. Strange things come up on the screen. I can't find things or do things. "Self," I say, "try number one son."

Blessedly, he is between jobs as an electrician/lighting person on movies and a TV show (the one that was filming in Rhode Island).

After a couple texts and a photo sent, we get on the cells. He and his wife on speaker, get them remotely controlling our

laptop, guiding me to untangling the mess on the screen, and I am



able to complete the task I attempted over an hour earlier. And, the time has passed to get my unwritten column to our fearless, and infinitely patient, newsletter editor!

So, Gordon, number one son, suggests that my column be about him and the miracle of

technology that has been my morning.

Ain't that life? One unexpected delight after another— if we can see them that way. Things happen, and we always have the choice of seeing them as obstacles to block us and make our lives miserable. Or we can see them as hurdles which strengthen us and get us on our way.

I'm hoping that our fearless, and patient editor, sees me as a hurdle!

Happy hurdling to you all, on your journeys.

Peace'n'Luv,
Linda

Dining for Women members share a potluck dinner on February 5

Dining for Women (www.diningforwomen.org) is an international organization that brings women together once a month to dine for a worthy cause. Members share a potluck meal and donate the money they would have spent eating at a restaurant. Donations go to nonprofit organizations that benefit women in developing countries.

The local chapter of Dining for Women meets for a potluck dinner on the first Tuesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. in the Oneto Community Room. The next meeting is on Tuesday, February 5. February's donations will go to the Maji Safi Group in Tanzania, which teaches safe water, sanitation and hygiene practices.

Everyone is invited. For more information, call Gail Burchard at 294-6789.



Have you ever had a gong bath?

A gong bath is sound therapy designed to get rid of your stress and calm your anxiety. Instead of immersing yourself in water, you're immersing yourself in sound waves. You lie comfortably on your back as the vibrations wash over and through you.



UUCSC's Wellness Team sponsors regular gong baths in the sanctuary. There's one scheduled for Saturday, February 2 from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m., and one scheduled for Sunday, February 10 from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m.

The gong players are Marion Hearn, Kevin Bell, and Sarah Bell. The suggested donation is \$15. If you have questions, please call Sarah at 207-1634.

An urgent request for helpers

The Facilities Committee, which cares for the church building and grounds, consists of five dedicated individuals who use their extensive construction, maintenance, and property management expertise to guide the committee in solving maintenance issues and developing improvement projects. The committee has sub-groups for aesthetics, landscaping, and on-the-spot projects such as cleaning parties.

The committee presently is in need of a few people willing to help with the following operational tasks:

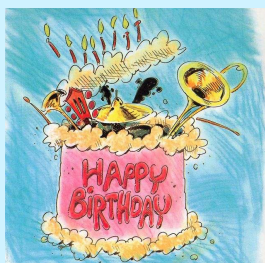
- ! Arrive by 9:00 a.m. on Sundays to hang the handicapped parking signs, check the walkways to make sure icy spots are sanded or salted, and similar opening-up tasks.
- ! After the service is over on Sundays, bring in the handicapped parking signs and check to make sure that all lights are off, windows are closed, and doors are locked.
- ! Once a week, drain the high-water shutoff system on the boiler. This is not a complicated job, and expert training will be provided.



These jobs could be done by one person who stays all morning or two people, one who arrives early and one who leaves late. The committee would like to have a team of about eight people who can share these tasks on a rotating schedule and, if necessary, fill in for one another.

The committee also would like to have an “on call” team— a few people who live nearby and have flexible schedules who could respond to a phone call when the need arises.

Would you be willing to help out with any of these tasks? Please contact Sally Barney at sbarney07@aol.com or 932-1647.



John's Birthday Bash

Come help celebrate John Glasheen's 82nd birthday with snacks, drinks, cake and jazz on Saturday, February 9 from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Pump House Music Works, 1464 Kingstown Road (Route 108), Peace Dale. No gifts, please!

Newcomers luncheon on Sunday, February 3

If you're a newcomer to UUCSC, or if you are considering becoming a member of the congregation, Rev. DL Helfer and the Membership Committee invite you and your family to a newcomers luncheon on Sunday, February 3 at 11:30 a.m. in the church library.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Membership Committee members Betty Bogutt (ebogutt@verizon.net) or Elise Bender (ejmb@cox.net)

Messages from the border

On Monday, January 21, Rev. DL Helfer began two weeks as a volunteer at Annunciation House, a nonprofit, privately-funded and volunteer-staffed facility about ten blocks from the Mexican border in El Paso Texas. Annunciation House provides food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and other help to undocumented migrants.



Rev. DL is posting messages about his experiences in El Paso on the UUCSC website homepage (www.uusouthcountyri.org) under "News & Announcements," and on his blog, More Together Than Alone (<https://moretogetherthanalone.wordpress.com/>). Here are excerpts from his messages of Monday, January 21 and Saturday, January 26:

January 21

... The morning sped by quickly as I helped to make 100+ pb&j sandwiches, and organize toilet-tries, clothes, toys, blankets, snacks, water, and more for the guests.

I'll admit, I still didn't understand entirely the process of refugees arriving and leaving a day or two later. That, too, soon became clear.

As I listened to the families — and the many children — from Brazil, Guatemala, and Honduras, primarily — what had been theoretical stories to me instead were family after family embodying the reality of our f'cked up immigration policies.

Yes, I had understood this caravan of beings fleeing danger in their countries of origin. Yes, I was down here because I knew of our broken immigration system and increasingly xenophobic policies, but I didn't know these stories, these individuals.

I learned that after long journeys, each of these people, upon finally arriving at the US border, was promptly arrested by ICE and held in a detention center. If they were lucky, their stay was only a few days, but the stays varied greatly for reasons which remain obscured . . .

January 26

... In response to 45's threat to start closing the borders entirely, ICE seems to have begun two new tactics simultaneously. One, they're dropping as many people on this side of the border as quickly as possible. Two, they're holding back some individuals, possibly for a year or more, on the Mexico side of the border.

This, not unexpectedly, is adding huge stress to an already strained system, and more importantly, to the people arriving.

For parents already desperately searching for their children or someone for another beloved, the separation goes from unknown to indefinite. Even being here, witnessing some of this, I can't imagine the horror of not knowing when, or if, you'll see your child or beloved again, or what kind of conditions they're being held in.

Those rumors of ice-cold ICE buildings, true. Word is getting around and those with means

arrive in layers. But that doesn't protect most, and certainly not those pregnant, very young, elderly, or ill . . .

Yesterday, I helped out more in the 'ropa,' provision of used but clean clothes. It was nice to help others pick out weather appropriate clothes, donated jackets, and the like.

After a shower, smiles began to return. A quick snack of quesadillas and mandarinas brought a bit of ease to all . . .



Religious Education News and Events

By Bethany Vaccaro, Director of Religious Education

Hello Families and Friends of RE,

Our Mystery Friend program kicks off this month!

It's not too late to join this super fun, inter-generational pen pal program. The first day to trade letters— and the last day to sign up— is Sunday, February 3. We welcome all to join in the fun!

Mystery Friends will run each Sunday this month, and end with a Big Reveal party on February 24, the last Sunday of the month. During coffee hour, our mystery pairs will finally learn who they've been trading letters with. It's a time with lots of giggles to be sure! It's a fun reminder to savor the little mysteries in life, to take advantage of small opportunities for joy.

One of my favorite things about the Mystery Friend program is how it emphasizes one of our key values in RE, which is the importance of building quality relationships with each other. Even though our time together is short, it's important to us that we spend it really learning how to be with each other— listening to each other, sharing with each other, playing together— creating Beloved Community every week. This is such a gift for all, both young and old!

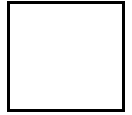
Looking for a way to get involved in the RE magic? Here's some opportunities!

- ! We're looking for adults who want to share their own handicraft or artisan skills on a Sunday morning. If you're a crafter or artist and can bring your materials and create something while RE kids look on, please let me know!
- ! Love holding babies and reading to toddlers? We're looking for a few extra volunteers to bring story, music, or crafts to our Nursery crowd. Ideas and materials can be supplied! Let me know if you are willing to help.

Looking ahead to next month, we will be planning our spring pageant. Extra volunteers are appreciated as we create our props, scenery, and costumes. Spice up the winter doldrums by joining in the pageantry!

Blessings,
Bethany

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27 NORTH ROAD
PEACE DALE, RI 02879



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

"If the misery of the poor be caused not by the laws of nature, but by our institutions, great is our sin."

– Charles Darwin

Darwin was best known for his contributions to the science of evolution. Although his family were Unitarians, Darwin was baptised an Anglican. Orthodox as a youth, he described himself in late life as an agnostic. He was born in Shrewsbury, England on February 12, 1809.