



Connections December 2016

The Unitarian Universalists of Central Delaware
340 North Queen St.
Dover, DE 19904
uucd.org



uucdcontact@gmail.com or pastoruucd@gmail.com

Emergencies: Rev. Chute (302) 369-6499

We are a welcoming congregation!
Chartered 2009

Announcements

- There will be 30 minute crash course sessions on the new communications app, Slack, after service on the 4th and before service on the 18th. If you are able to bring a mobile device, we can set you up to cruising speed very easily! Once you get the hang of it, you'll love it. Please email me at Laura.e.parks@gmail.com with questions.
- Hymnal donations would be most welcome! We need about ten more. They are available on uua.org for \$28 and used copies on Amazon.com for about \$20.
- Gloria and Greg are updating the Caring Committee volunteer list. Please contact either if you would like to be added to the list of folks willing to visit, provide transportation or meals. We do have several opportunities for helping within our UUCD community. (rv.grandmom@me.com or pastoruucd@gmail.com)
- We are planning a fundraiser for UUCD on Sunday, 11 December after the worship service. We are looking for UUCD members who do direct sales to participate in a Vendor's Demonstration at UUCD that day. If you are interested in participating, please contact Honey Young at YoungHunLi@yahoo.com.
- We also intend to have a small Christmas celebration on 11 December during the coffee & sharing time.
- We have added a Solstice Service on Wed eve, at 7PM, 21 December. If you are interested in planning/participating, please contact Greg at pastoruucd@gmail.com.
- Diners Club is back! Not the card, the monthly evening restaurant gatherings. The first for this year will be at the Yukon Korean BBQ on Tuesday, 13 December. We will meet there at 6:30. Please contact Greg if you intend to attend so he can make appropriate reservations. Bon appetite!
- Just a reminder to save December 11th for our Annual UUCD Holiday Party. Please join us right after the service on Sunday, December 11 for a festive holiday celebration for all during the coffee and sharing time. We'll have plenty of finger food available. The kids will have the opportunity to make ornaments for family/friends.

Joseph Priestley District Board Meeting

The Joseph Priestley District Board will hold its quarterly in-person meeting at the Southern Delaware Congregation in Lewes, Delaware on January 27 and 28. The Board is extending an invitation to leaders or representatives of congregations in the Delmarva Cluster to join us for a meal and discussion to share your stories or ask your questions. We will schedule the meal/discussion either for dinner on Friday (1/27) or lunch on Saturday (1/28), based on responses we receive with your preferences by December 31. We look forward to seeing you there! Please RSVP including your contact information (so we can confirm time/date) and any questions to Paul Pinson (paul@thepinsons.org) or Rev. David Pyle (rev.pyle@gmail.com) so we know how much food to prepare.

Services

Sunday, December 4: “The Heretical Gnostic Gospels” Rev Greg Chute

How very differently some of the earliest “Christian” writings portray Jesus, his teachings, his relationship with god, and his vision of human nature from currently accepted doctrine and dogma. These recently uncovered/recovered sources provide an alternative understanding of the man and his mission. Small wonder they were declared heretical by the establishment.

The Children’s Religious Education lesson will explore the theme “We Revere Life.” The class will include discussions and activities focused on the special role children play within communities and the importance of respecting and protecting animals, plants, and all parts of our natural environment.

Sunday, December 11: “The Stories of Christmas” Rev Greg Chute

Christmas may be by definition about one story, but hundreds (or more) stories have been created through the years which capture the essence of the season, touch our hearts, and enrich the meaning of the holiday. What do they say about the human spirit and what we are yearning for?

Sunday, December 18: "A Very Unitarian Christmas" Jayce Lesniewski

Unitarians in America have a significant connection to modern Christmas traditions, including many Christmas carols and songs. We will sing several of these songs, and we will discuss their history and the lessons that we can learn on how to survive America's current bleak midwinter.

The Children’s Religious Education lesson will explore “Signs of Caring.”

Wednesday, December 21, 7pm: “A Winter Solstice”

This is a quiet evening in recognition of the turning of the seasons; a time to sit with the darkness in quiet celebration, reflection and anticipation.

Saturday, December 24, 7pm: “The Magic of Christmas”

Christmas eve is full of hope, possibility and portent. It is a mystical moment when it seems like anything is possible; when we are invited to participate in miracles and magic, not because they are real, but because we want them to be real; and in so doing, we are transformed.

Sunday, 25 December: “Artemis and Apollon” Alex Conall

A pregnant woman near her time, fleeing persecution, seeks a safe place to shelter, to give birth to a child of light--think you know this story? Think again.

Sunday, 1 January: “Serendipity Sunday” Sheryl Winsby

There will be kosher fruitcake to share, plus opportunities to share (recording or live music, readings, poems, jokes). Bring your own favorite things to share, or your hopes and dreams for the new year. We will have nursery care, but no religious education on this date.

A Note From Our President

November was an interesting month. After the election, I felt like we were all in shock, many of us without much to say. We seem to be getting more visitors, which is good.

We had our fall congregational meeting which was good. We approved the minutes of our spring annual meeting and talked about finances. It was important for us all to realize that we balanced the budget in May by increasing fund raising, so increase we must. We got off to a good start with Leigh Hesselstine taking our collected junque to Wilson’s auction. Our first load brought almost \$300 and there was a second, whose price had not yet been reported. We plan to have at least one more of these during the year.

Fundraising activities were budgeted at \$8,619.00 of which we have raised only \$618 or about 7 percent. However, our biggest effort, by far, will be our silent and live auction, now named March Madness and planned for Saturday, March 4th. We have 3 months to make this our best event ever. Lorna McElhone is the organizer, but she will need volunteers, doing all kinds of different tasks, to make a memorable, enjoyable event.

Please start thinking of what you can offer to auction and how you might volunteer to help out with food or music, donations, etc. And, be thinking of who you can invite to accompany you to bid, dance and eat. Paint night is another great idea for a fun event. James Pernal has offered to help organize this.

I summarized who on the board is in charge of overseeing various aspects of congregational life. It probably doesn’t hurt to repeat this. Lorna is overseeing fundraising; Honey, worship (while Laura Parks is actually chair), membership enrichment and integration; Wendy, children’s religious education; Kerry, social justice; Sara, communication and administration; Jayce, publicity; me, the calendar.

Jayce has been polling members on how we might best utilize money that we apply for to help us grow (through the Grants for Growth program). There was quite a bit of interest in hiring a part-time administrator to help with some of the paperwork tasks that we have.

We also discussed how best to recruit for coffee hour and snacks. It was suggested that we try putting the sign-up sheet on the table with the orders of service. Someone else suggested that we have the sign up on an easel standing there. In addition, it was suggested that the people who are doing coffee for the current week might attempt to recruit people for the following couple of weeks, if no one has signed up by the time they start putting out the food. We also may try recruiting on SLACK. SLACK is a new electronic communication tool that allows for more interactive discussions to take place. We encourage everyone who has either a computer or electronic device to try it. Laura and Jayce will be giving little tutorials after some of the services. To join the SLACK team, you must be invited (through email) by someone who already has an account.

I am also encouraging people to check out our Facebook page regularly and particularly to like and share the sermon topics to their Facebook feed. In addition, when you come in to UUCD, please consider checking in on Facebook and noting others who are there. Please also consider inviting people you come across who seem to be looking for a community who seem to have liberal religious values.

We decided at the meeting to hold services on Christmas morning, 12/25 and New Year's morning, January 1st. There were at least a small number of people that committed to attend and said that they would value being with their community at these times. The service on New Year's Day will be a sharing, serendipity service, even a little more informal than our usual informal services. Please plan to bring something to share if you come—a thought or story, song or poem, for example.

We will be adding a more formal calendar to our website. For now, save these dates:

March 4th Live and Silent Auction

April 3-5 Reversing Inequality, UUs for Social Justice in the Capital Region

June 4th Annual Congregational Meeting

6/21-6/25 General Assembly (UUs annual convention) held in New Orleans in 2017.

Tom and I are off the West for the next two weeks. We are visiting Sedona, AZ and South Lake Tahoe, CA. We will be back for the last two weeks of the month. We hope to see as many of you as possible then—at one of our services as we close out 2016. We wish you all a happy holiday season and hope that good fellowship will replace the rancor of the campaign season.

Sheryl

Calendar

- Sunday, 4 December 11.30: Slack crash course at CBS
- Monday, 5 December: DIMH dinner. Leigh Hesseltine, head chef
- Wednesday, 7 December 7pm: Mindfulness meditation at CBS
- Sunday, 11 December 11.30am: Social Justice Committee meeting at CBS
- Sunday, 11 December: Social Justice Sunday benefiting Friends of God's Golden Acre
- Sunday, 11 December: Christmas celebration and fundraiser after service
- Tuesday, 13 December 6.30: Diner's Club at Yukon BBQ
- Sunday, 18 December 9.15am: Slack crash course at CBS
- Sunday, 18 December: CSAI discussion after service "The Corruption of our Democracy"

Birthdays

Theo Newman (4), Phil Troxler (7), Krissy Deskiewicz (16), Ethan Lettieri (19), Hannah McLennan (20), Sandy Nelson (21), Stuart Marsh (25), Paul Kuras (28), Ariel Peters (29)

Please send any upcoming birthdays to Laura Parks (laura.e.parks@gmail.com)!



Food for Thought

*No one says much good of Winter,
except as something hard that
exaggerates the Spring reprieve.*

– Max Coots

I just put my roses to bed for the winter. Most of the leaves had fallen from the stalks. There were some few stragglers, of course; mostly turning grey from frost bite nipping at the edges. It was time. It had been a long and glorious summer. The season here in Delaware is far longer than I have experienced in New England. New shoots begin to swell early in April, and buds continue to struggle forth late into November. With careful pruning I can get up to four generations of roses during those incredible eight months. Now that these bushes (and I) have had the time to establish roots, they have rewarded me with a superabundance of color, and hue, and texture and scent. But it was time.

Time to sleep. Time to recover. Time to pause and to rest. Time to take a break from the constant effort and energy of bursting forth and blooming and blossoming and creating. Time to

bank the fires of life, to consolidate and to conserve. Time to lie in dormant silence and to briefly relinquish the primal urge to grow. Winter is that time. At least around here. It is that quiescent time when my roses, and assorted other local life forms, seek respite from both the glory and the demands of the summer season and slip into the inertia of slumber and repose. And I respect that. I even appreciate the necessity. After all, 'For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.' I read that somewhere (or heard it sung).

So I trim the canes back. As brutal as it sometimes feels, the stalks, which have stretched too far, have become over-balanced and place too much strain and demand upon the crown. They need to be pruned; and I sometimes feel like I can almost hear a soft sigh of thanks. It's almost as though the whole system can now breathe, can let go and let down, can relax. As I spread new mulch laced with rose food softly up against the core I feel as though I am tucking a child into bed for the night; to sleep, perchance to dream, and to rise again, refreshed and renewed. It is a sad-sweet departing. It is an evening ending tinged with thanks and the promise of a new beginning, a new morning and a new tomorrow. But for now, adieu. Parting is such sweet sorrow.

Me too. I feel those same things within myself as I put my garden to bed and we enter into this winter season together. I too (being a local life form) feel the strain of the growing season, feel the need to stop, to lie down, to let go, to rest and to bank the embers glowing, to breathe deeply again, to sigh and to sleep and perchance to dream. It has been a glorious season, full of rich experience, wonder, joy, enthusiasm, enchantment, color and delight. But I sometimes sense that my energy and effort seem also to be fully expended. So I, too, need to cut back (or to be cut back), to relinquish the overbalance and unbalance, to surrender many of the demands I and family and friends and others, place upon this fragile organism. Not so that I become something less, but so that I can not only survive, but can truly flourish. Perhaps this is the time and the season for all of us just naturally, to pause and to reflect; a good time to recover and to recollect. It is not only the dark time before the resurrection of spring, it is also the rich gentle time of inner peace and transfiguration. And so I welcome this season. I celebrate the advent of the cycles of life and living. I enter into this in-between-time with anticipation and expectation. For it also has its own delicious fruits.

So welcome to winter. May we each and all softly bank the embers. May we all feed the roots of our spirits, and shelter the core of our souls. May we all gather our strength, encourage our life aspirations, dream our dreams, and cherish this time of gentle peace.

In a way winter is the real spring, the time when the inner thing happens, the resurge of nature.

– Edna O'Brien

So may we also let the 'inner thing happen' and be transformed; and may god bless us, every one.

Peace, *Greg*



Please enjoy these pictures brought to you by Wayne Kling. Also, note how happy Arden is- you, too, could be so happy if you volunteered for fellowship!!