



Connections January 2017

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

Calendar

Monday, 2 January: DIMH dinner. Head chef Julie Price
Wednesday, 4 January, 7pm: Mindfulness Meditation at CBS
Sunday, 8 January: Social Justice Sunday benefiting UU Service Committee
Sunday, 8 January, 11.30: Social Justice Committee meeting at CBS
Sunday, 8 January, 11.30-1: New-Comers Orientation at CBS
Sunday, 15 January, 11.30: Corruption of Democracy discussion group at CBS
Tuesday, 17 January, 6.30pm: Diners Club at Franco's
Wednesday, 18 January, 7.30: Board meeting at CBS
Sunday, 22 January, 11.30-1: New-Comers Orientation at CBS
Sunday, 29 January, 11.30-1: New-Comers Orientation at CBS

Services

Sunday, 1 January: "Serendipity Sunday" Sheryl Winsby

There will be kosher fruitcake to eat, plus opportunities to share recorded or live music, readings, poems, jokes. Bring your favorites to share, or your hopes and dreams and concerns for the new year. We will have nursery care, but no religious education on this date.

Sunday, 8 January: "The Evolution of Humanism" Rev Greg Chute

Scholars often refer to the rise of "humanism" in the early renaissance; that time when there was a great awakening of interest in the pre-Christian classical world. Art and philosophy were being rediscovered. New ways of thinking and of expression were being explored. The idea arose that human beings had a great capacity for creative genius. The organization of society and the political climate all came into question. The term itself didn't come into existence until 1808 however, and since then the definition has undergone a great transition. It is well worth exploring the evolution of the idea and to better understand the world view it represents.

Sunday, 15 January: "Unitarian Universalist Fitness" Chris Knight, member UUFN

Fitness is a resource that we can use to live our principles. What is it and how is it cultivated? Consistent with our faith, we are free to define fitness as we choose and decide the ways and extent to which we pursue it. In this service, we will explore a comprehensive definition of fitness that goes beyond the mainstream concepts of body image and peak athletic performance.

Sunday, 22 January: “Salvation by Character” Rev Greg Chute

James Freeman Clarke in 1886 identified five points of the Unitarian faith: “the fatherhood of God; the brotherhood of man; the leadership of Jesus; salvation by character; and the continuity of human development in all worlds, or the progress of mankind onwards and upwards forever.” Each of these affirmations raise significant questions. One of the more beguiling might be: What does salvation by character mean?

Sunday, 29 January: “The Work” Rev Greg Chute

Wes Moore in his book The Work recounts his search for “a life that matters.” He writes of finding “success’ only to discover that it wasn’t what he thought it would be, and then moving on. How often have you felt that way? How do we move on? How do we discern what it is we’re actually seeking? How do we know if we found it? How do I find my life work?

Wednesday Women

Hello Delaware Unitarian-Universalists,

Wednesday Women is a group of women of all faiths who wear hijab on Wednesdays, starting with World Hijab Day on Wednesday, 1 February 2017, and continuing until the end of the Trump/Pence administration or until the administration makes an official public statement, backed with concrete action, disavowing all forms of religious discrimination. That means no registering Muslims, no surveilling mosques, no restricting travel or immigration based on religion--no religious discrimination in any form.

We do this to show support for our Muslim sisters and brothers who face persecution in this volatile time, and to show the world that Americans will not tolerate this.

We invite you to join us. Please distribute this information to your congregation, and to any group or person you think might be supportive.

For more information, see our website:

<https://www.facebook.com/Wednesday-Women-1824262824491518/>

Thank you.

Wednesday Women

Announcements

- Anyone interested in attending the MILLION WOMAN MARCH in D.C. on January 21, please speak to or email Kerry McElwee (kcmcelwee@yahoo.com) or Sara Russell (srr1023@outlook.com). There is now a possibility that we can join another group to ride a bus to D.C. Details will be forthcoming as this event is organized. Please be prepared to do some walking as drop and pick points are always an unknown for such large events. Again let Kerry and Sara know if you are interested in attending this rally.
- The winner of the raffle for the very festive seasonal piece of Eldreth Pottery was Karen Veits of Smyrna. Karen has just begun attending UUCD so you can imagine her surprise when her name was drawn! The proceeds from the raffle will be credited towards our fund raising budget.
- Diners Club! We're back yet again. Last month 13 of us met at the Korean BBQ for a scrumptious gastronomic experience and a delightful evening out. This month we're meeting at Franco's Italian Eatery at the intersection of routes 10 & 1 in Dover. Be sure and let me know if you intend to attend so I can include you in our reservation. Everyone invited. See you then. Yuumuum! - Greg
- We will be having our annual new-comers orientation meetings on January 8, 22 and 29 after coffee from 11:30 to 1:00 at CBS (Congregation Beth Shalom). These sessions are designed to share some information, to get acquainted, to explore what we are each looking for, to consider what Unitarianism & Universalism have to offer, and to consider how UUCD fits into our journeys. It is important to attend all three sessions in order to fully experience integrating into our UUCD community. There will be some materials distributed to read and to reflect upon. Please let me know if you intend to attend, and if you have any questions. Thanks. Enjoy - Greg
- Good Neighbor Groups: The Stewardship Committee and Fellowship Committee have recently gone through our data on members and friends and discovered some alarming information. Many people live quite near or adjacent to other UUCD folks but don't even know it. So we went through and identified four districts or expanded neighborhoods by zip code and have sent you all a list of people who live near you. The districts are North (19977 & some 19901), South (19934 & some 19901), West (19904 and one 19953), and FMM (Felton, Magnolia, Milford). Each district currently has 14 people, except for South which has 15. It's up to you what you might consider doing with that information. I know we already have a mothers group, a women's group (no men's group yet?), a bridge group, a covenant group, a diners club. This is an opportunity to augment that with some local connections (less commuting). Be creative. How might you like to engage with your neighbors? Enjoy - Greg

Birthdays

Presley Deskiewicz & Tes del Tufo(8), Alisha Smith (11), Alex Conall (13), Ryan Marsh (19)

The Corruption of Our Democracy discussion group

Our monthly meeting to explore the Congregational Study/Action Issue (CSAI) "The Corruption of Our Democracy" is scheduled for January 15th after fellowship time. In December we viewed the video Legalize Democracy. This video provided an excellent historical review of

court decisions determining rights of individuals and corporations. Three timelines were detailed: 1- the history of corporate influence on US Democracy, 2- the history of structural racism on US Democracy, and 3- the history of people's movements and US Democracy. In January, we will use the UUA readings and discussion guide to further explore the impacts of structural racism on our democracy.

"Can democracy be more than an abstract ideal, when tens of millions of its citizens feel alienated and marginalized by what have become the "normal" and routine consequences of American racialization in daily life?" ~ Manning Marable

Sample Letter to Representatives

Since the elections, many of us have been feeling disenfranchised and, well, pretty much beat up by the whole situation. This is a topic that the Social Justice committee has been exploring and we have been discussing things that we can do as individuals as well as a congregation to help us feel a little better with what has happened. One of the things we can all do is contact our elected representatives in Washington and let them know that we're watching. Seeing as Donald Trump has been appointing some of the most divisive and unqualified people for his cabinet and many of those appointees must face hearings in the Senate, letters to Senators Carper and Coons could very well be the best start. Here is a letter I plan on sending to them that you may wish to borrow from.

Dear Mr. Senator,

I am writing you this letter in regards to the current state of affairs there in Washington with our President Elect and his appointments for his cabinet. As you are aware, all throughout the campaign, the President Elect put forth a litany of lies, rhetoric and vitriol that only served to divide this great nation with fear and hatred.

After the election results were announced and our nation witnessed a surge of hate crimes against the very groups Donald Trump's lies, rhetoric and vitriol were aimed at and intended to marginalize, he did nothing. The man who in a just a short amount of time will be sworn in as this nation's next President didn't address the nation and condemn these deplorable acts that were being carried out in his name. What he has done however, is to announce appointments to his cabinet that, quite frankly, are just as divisive as his campaign rhetoric. An Education Secretary who believes that we should do away with public education and funnel the funds from public schools into private schools (most of which are faith based), a Secretary Of The Interior who wants to sell off national park lands to the highest bidder, and several other appointees with a history of making racist statements and who have ties to white supremacist groups.

These divisions and policies are not good for our nation. They only serve those who only care about wealth and power and could very well be the death knell of the nation we love and our rights and freedoms.

And so I am asking that you stand opposed to the current batch of cabinet picks and send the message to the President Elect that the only acceptable choices are those who

are willing to work to ensure that we are ALL represented by his administration regardless of age, race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, nation of origin, social standing or economic background.

Thank You,
Ricky Shehorn

By the way, the addresses for our Senators are:

Senator Thomas Carper
513 Hart Senate Office Bld
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Christopher Coons
127A Russell Senate Office Bld
Washington, DC 20510



Food for Thought

*Your success and happiness lies in you.
Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and
you shall form an invincible host against
difficulties.*

- Helen Keller

I've been browsing the New Year Resolution (NYR) internet web pages out of curiosity. There is all kind of health, wealth and spiritual advice out there. There are 10 resolutions for a healthier you, 29 resolutions for a wealthier you, 100 resolutions on ways to improve your life, 15 resolutions on how to keep your resolutions, etc. There are online classes, gurus and consultants who will help you stick to it; and blogs galore with personal insights for success. 'Tis the season for resolution.

But I don't buy it. I learned long ago when I quit smoking that there is no actual barrier or boundary which distinguishes one day from another. There is no magical transformative moment, no auspicious date to quit smoking; or any special charm that exists between December 31 and January 1 that makes personal transformation less demanding or less difficult. Without a calendar or clock how could you ever tell one from the other? And it's not like we can in fact cast the old year behind us and start anew. Our habits and history come with us into the new day and the new year. So the notion of a NYR is anathema to me. The expectations inherent in any NYR are more often a formula for disappointment and discouragement than for success. I only ever kept one resolution anyway: to make no more resolutions. That has worked well for me.

Because I only finally quit smoking when we started a family (May 27, 1975). That moment was momentous. Everything changed. I didn't just decide/resolve to quit. My whole identity, my priorities and perspective changed. There is a significant difference in that kind of transformation.

It's not a matter of will, resolve or even of choice. I've been told it is often similar with addicts of any kind. Kicking any habit is more a process of becoming a different kind of person. It often involves a critical or quantum shift; and I should imagine that taking on new habits is similarly a process of becoming a different kind of person rather than choosing to act differently. It can happen at the end of May or the beginning of July or the middle of April. One day is pretty much the same as any other day, except for what we do with it.

That's why I like the quote from Helen Keller. In classic Buddhist fashion she suggests that we are in control of our own sense of self. We can define how we see ourselves and how we see the world. Is it a dark place, or a place full of light and grace? Do I laugh and sing and dance, or do I mope around? Am I afraid or intrigued? Ms. Keller strikes me as someone who speaks from experience. She certainly could have been a different kind of person than she became. I imagine it required great strength of character to overcome her host of difficulties; not just willpower.

So as this season of NYR's comes around I am once again resolved not to make any. Instead I will continue to embrace each day with wonder and awe and curiosity. As I write this, January 2017 is right around the corner; full of 31 days (and nights). I have great expectations and wonder what January 13th will be like. It's a Friday.

Enjoy - *Greg*

Once I knew only darkness and stillness... my life was without past or future... but a little word from the fingers of another fell into my hand that clutched at emptiness, and my heart leaped to the rapture of living.

- Helen Keller

