



# UU and You

*the monthly newsletter  
of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden*

*Ours is a religion of covenant rather than creed.  
Practicing Loving Community, Advancing Justice, and Nurturing Spiritual Growth  
are how we seek to live this faith.*

## From the Minister



As I write, spring is dawning at quarter past noon! Can you spot a crocus or a

ready-or-not-here-I-come daffodil?

How we need spring in this winter of needed resilience and resistance. Resilience works up a sweat. How to adapt, but not so much that we become chameleons, to the realities of our time? How to resist the intensifying oppression of our second ICE Age? How to counter the racism that continues to define the fault line of this nation as we know it? And how to take a deep breath and create occasions for fun and fellowship and good humor, needed respites for catching our breath amid the soul work of community building and justice making that we're called to do?

We're days away from Easter—this year on April 1. Is the notion of resurrection—literal or metaphorical—the stuff of fools? I don't think so. Love and hope rise again and again, moving in the face of those who cry "Impossible!" As I struggle to live this faith that we share, I constantly resist the impossible—from ministering with folks (myself included) of strong wills, hefty opinions, religious scar tissue, and divergent theologies to the seemingly simple task of scheduling a meeting among those who give new meaning to "busy," I'm

challenged myself to "breathe in peace" and "breathe out love." When I find that I've placed more to-do's on my day's agenda than I can possibly complete, I'm challenged to look into an honest mirror and declare myself human. And when anger invades me over the malevolent policies and practices propagated by those now in political power in our country, I'm challenged to "take one more step" in the direction of alternatives.

Please hear me, though. I am ever graced by how again and again, we as a congregation and a faith, stumbling as we will, forge on to affirm that we are part of the amazing interdependent web of all existence—not apart from it, but a part of it. As long as we affirm this in every fiber of our being, we will not, as Dr. King warned us, "sleep through a revolution," but rise again, like the miracles of the crocus and the daffodil, and "begin again in love."

Loving you—

*Jan*

**NOTE:** Rev. Jan begins the first segment of her sabbatical on April 2. It extends through May. The second segment runs from the last week of October through November. For specifics on pastoral coverage and more, and what Jan will be doing during this time that is part of this congregation's covenant with her, see the brochure that you will receive, or perhaps have already received: "Guide to Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull's Sabbatical."

## About the Newsletter

*UU and You* is the monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden.

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[www.uumeriden.org](http://www.uumeriden.org)

[www.facebook.com/UUMeriden/](https://www.facebook.com/UUMeriden/)

Send newsletter submissions prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month to:  
[newsletter@uumeriden.org](mailto:newsletter@uumeriden.org)

## Contacts

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The Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden is a fair-share member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.  
[www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)

## President's Musings

Welcome back to UUCM's monthly newsletter after an eight-month hiatus. In the absence of the newsletter, we apologize for not keeping you fully informed via print. Beginning with this issue of *UU and You*, along with the continuing email update every Thursday, we hope to keep you in the know.

Board (BOT) discussions and actions:

- **Minister's Sabbatical:** At the June meeting, the BOT approved Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull's three-month sabbatical. Part one: April and May, part two: late October through end November 2018.
- **Security Issues and Safe Congregations:** Two Chalice Sanctuary Team members attended a workshop on active shooter situations. The BOT has also formed the Security and Safe Congregations Task Force (SSCTF) to review security issues and Safe Congregations Policy. Cori Theriault has agreed to chair the team, with representatives from the Safe Congregations Team, Membership, Children and Youth Religious Education and Property Committees, and Chalice Sanctuary Team. Thank you all for serving on this important TF. If you would like to join, please contact Cori or Donna.
- **Past Presidents' Advisory Council:** The BOT has approved creation of the Past Presidents' Advisory Council to provide seasoned wisdom, institutional memory, and support and guidance to the officers and BOT. The Council will also examine legacy planned giving to build up our endowment for the long term.
- **BOT Behavioral Covenant:** A Behavioral (Right Relations) Covenant is an agreement and understanding of support and accountability within the BOT which will be shared with the congregation. Once approved, a Congregational Behavioral Covenant will be developed.
- **Cottage Meetings:** In order to hear from the congregation, cottage meetings will be held this spring. Dates of meetings will be sent out shortly. Hope you can participate in our congregational discussions.

I will provide highlights of additional BOT activities in the next newsletter.

Donna Stimpson, President

## Upcoming Services

[www.uucentralct.org/worship](http://www.uucentralct.org/worship)

### Sunday April 8<sup>th</sup>

#### *"The Covenant of Self-Care"*

Worship Leader: Lisa Urso

Worship Associate: Jeff May

As we take pleasure in the growing daylight, how do we nurture each other without neglecting our own growth? What are you most looking forward to seeing grow in your life and possibly your garden? Let us celebrate the coming spring and all the possibilities it brings.

### Second Sunday Potluck

Come enjoy this time of food and fellowship directly after the service. So that we don't all bring dessert, please use this Perfect Potluck meal planner link to let people know what you plan to bring:

<https://perfectpotluck.com/meals.php?t=VQMI7597&welcome=1>

Once you take an item, everyone else who opens the link will see that others have signed up for food contributions.

### Sunday April 15<sup>th</sup>

#### **(intergenerational service)**

#### *"The Joys of Connecting to Your Inner Child"*

Worship Leader: Lynne Grobsky

Worship Associate: Lisa Urso

As Jesus said, "Except you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Remembering the innocence and spirit of adventure we had as children truly helps us to experience Heaven on Earth. When we become more childlike in everything we do, we feel the pure divine love and acceptance that is the ticket to the kingdom of Heaven.

### Sunday April 22<sup>nd</sup>

#### *"The Way of the World"*

Worship Leader: Rev. Megan Lloyd Joiner

Worship Associate: John Sepples

As out of balance as human beings can be, nature has a way of balancing things out. On this Earth Day, what wisdom does Mother Earth hold for us as we seek balance in our own lives?

**Rev. Megan Lloyd Joiner** is minister at the Unitarian Society of New Haven in Hamden, CT. A life-long Unitarian Universalist, Rev. Megan was raised at First Unitarian Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, majored in Religious Studies at Wesleyan University, and studied systematic theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She lives in North Haven with her husband, Anthony, and daughter, Arden.

### Sunday April 29<sup>th</sup>

#### *"On Being Church"*

Worship Leader: Rev. Josh Pawalek

Worship Associate: Jeff May

Across the United States and elsewhere, congregations of all denominations are experiencing strong headwinds. Many seem to have stopped growing. Some experience themselves as declining. But the reasons why people join together in churches are as important as ever. When we remember what those reasons are, the prospects for growing, thriving congregations appear limitless!

**Rev. Josh Pawalek** has served as minister at the Unitarian Universalist Society: East in Manchester, CT since 2003. He also recently served for four years on the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association Board of Trustees. He is currently taking a leadership role in building a new faith-based community organization for Greater Hartford. Josh lives in Glastonbury with his wife, two sons, and three cats.

## Calendar of Events

[www.uucentralct.org/calendar](http://www.uucentralct.org/calendar)

**Wednesday, April 11<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM**

*TED Talk:*

*How Trees Talk to Each Other*

We will watch Suzanne Simard's TED Talk, "How Trees Talk to Each Other," followed by facilitated discussion led by **Trish Schneider**.

Note our new TED Talk night – the second Wednesday of each month.

**Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM**

*Blues Concert:*

*The Coffee Grinders & Rocky Lawrence*



A Concert with the Coffee Grinders and Rocky Lawrence will be held on Saturday, April 14, 2018. The Coffee Grinders, a Roots/Traditional Blues three-piece band (wash board, guitar and harmonica), played at our church in 2015 and 2017. This acoustic blues trio plays acoustic Country Delta Blues in the style of Robert Johnson, Charlie Patten, Muddy Waters, as well as acoustic style blues of the Rolling Stones, Beatles and others. It is time to bring them back for another great time!! Rocky Lawrence is a seasoned bluesman playing a Gibson guitar in

the Robert Johnson style with dedication and musical intensity. Rocky has perfected his craft of playing the blues throughout clubs in Connecticut, as well as in Brazil and Italy. Come listen to the magic!!

Snacks and drinks (non-alcoholic) will be available for sale.

**We need help selling tickets, setup and breakdown of sanctuary room, advertising and making finger food for the event.**

Tickets: \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. Tickets can also be purchased at church during business hours.

For more info contact the church office at 203-237-9297.

**Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup> 2:00 PM**

*Buddhanature Gathering Group*

A monthly gathering to share our journey on the spiritual path. One does not need to identify as Buddhist to join us; we welcome anyone who has an interest in learning about the beliefs and practices of Buddhism. We are an eclectic and open-minded group that respects each other's beliefs, practices, and traditions. Gatherings may include: guided meditation, discussion of an article or short passage we read together during group, watching and discussing videos, chanting and prayers (only if one feels comfortable to join in), and art and creativity to help generate reflection on Buddhist beliefs. We always include time in our gatherings to discuss how members are incorporating their beliefs into daily living. We are a heart-centered group and enjoy laughing and learning together.

**Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, All Day**

*Daffodil Festival*

Need help with setup and breakdown, including bringing refrigerators, griddle, propane, tables, key lime equipment, grilled cheese and tomato soup equipment, washing station, food, etc.

Volunteers needed for all shifts both days.

**Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup> 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM**

*Tag Sale*

Preparation and setup: Friday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 PM to 7:00 PM and Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 AM to 1:30 PM.

No clothing, tires, chemicals, magazines, books (they don't sell well, and they take valuable space), no electronics older than five years.

Help is needed during setup on Friday and Saturday. Use the signup sheet after Sunday service, or email **Janet Hiller** at [janethiller@outlook.com](mailto:janethiller@outlook.com).

## Ongoing Meetings/Activities

### Wednesday Worship

First and Third Wednesday, 7:00 - 7:45 PM

This twice-a-month gathering brings different lay leaders to share some of their spiritual practices in an informal, small-group setting. Sit in our circle and enjoy readings, chants, music, and meditations, ending with a topical conversation.

For more info, contact **Trish Schneider** at [arechair@uumeriden.org](mailto:arechair@uumeriden.org)

### Buddhanature Gathering Group

Third Sunday of each month, 2:00 - 3:30 PM

For more information, contact **Pam Mulready** at [buddhanature@uumeriden.org](mailto:buddhanature@uumeriden.org)

### Hands-On Saturday

First Saturday of each month, 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Bring your scrapbooks, journals, knitting, a new project or whatever you've been working on; we'll supply the tables and fellowship! All ages and creations are welcome – invite a friend! For more, contact Trish at [are-chair@uumeriden.org](mailto:are-chair@uumeriden.org)

### TED Talk Viewing & Discussion

Second Wednesday of each month, 7:00 – 8:30 PM

We watch a selected TED Talk, followed by facilitated discussion led by **Trish Schneider**.

See the Calendar of Events for next month's topic.

## Small Group Ministry

We still have a few openings!

Small Group Ministry happens in groups of 8 to 10 individuals, meeting twice monthly with trained facilitators to build closer connections, experience enhanced spiritual growth, strengthen the fabric of this faith community, and explore the path you are on. There are two groups this year. The Saturday group has ONE opening; the Monday group has 4 openings. All groups gather in the Meeting house.

Options are:

**2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays, 9:00 – 11:00 AM**

Facilitators (interchanging): **Steve Volpini**,  
Donna Byrne

**2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays, 6:30- 8:30 PM**

Facilitator: **Molly Nolan**

## Refreshments & Fellowship

**In the spirit of hospitable community, Brava and bravo to all who have signed on to host refreshments and fellowship.** We still have some open Sundays. Please sign up on the chart that is on the buffet in the foyer OR phone **Maureen Leahy**, our Office Administrator, at 203-237-9297, and let her know we can count on you for whenever.

## Stewardship

Thank you to everyone who has submitted a pledge for the 2019 fiscal year.

UUCM has received \$50,000 in pledges as of March 18th. Through our collective talent, time, and treasure, the garden that is UU Meriden can grow and flourish. With your help we can bring a little more justice and love to our people and to Central Connecticut. If you have not yet had a chance to send in your pledge of support, won't you please do so today? You can fill out a pledge form online at

[http://www.uumeriden.org/pledge\\_form.php](http://www.uumeriden.org/pledge_form.php) or pick one up at church from the buffet in the foyer. Drop your pledge form into the Stewardship box in the copy room, just outside the Nursery.

One more thing, Pizza Palooza was great fun. Our numbers were small, but we shared great conversation and a variety of pizzas. The favorite pizza was SPINACH & ARTICHOKE from Illiano's restaurant.

Contact **Trish Schneider** at [trishs@cox.net](mailto:trishs@cox.net) for more information or questions.

## Property Committee

Property is pleased to announce that we successfully passed our recent kitchen inspection by the Health Department. Leading up to this inspection the kitchen received a professional cleaning, and I have to say it hasn't looked this good in some time. Please help us keep it so!

Volunteers needed! The Property Committee is always looking for extra hands – we've got a number of indoor and outdoor projects coming up this year. If you can swing a hammer, operate a chainsaw, help push a piano, or just help carry some sticks, we would love to have your help.

For more information, contact the Property Chair, **Randy Heath** at [randyheath@cox.net](mailto:randyheath@cox.net)

## Leadership Development

The Leadership Development Team (**LDT**) grew out of our need to assist current leaders and to identify and train new leaders. The team consists of **Trish Schneider**, **Donna Stimpson**, **Molly Nolan**, **Pamela Mulready**, and **Rev. Jan Carlsson-Bull**. We've been meeting regularly for close to two years. Our first project was to design and implement a retreat for our Board of Trustees. This annual event recognizes that each year we have a new board with returning



and newly elected members. The retreat helps build trust among the members of the new board.

Our second project is the revision of Chair Handbooks begun several years ago by Adult Religious Exploration. We owe a huge debt to **Connie Welton** for getting this project off the ground. LDT is expanding the handbooks to be a resource encompassing all the “how to do it,” “where to find it,” and “when to do it” details that get lost in the course of the year and changes in leadership. The handbooks will be transferred to the incoming chairs at the beginning of the church year, on July 1.

In conjunction with the expansion of the Chair Handbooks, the Leadership Development Team is working on a Leadership Workshop for current leaders and potential new leaders. We want to help make our already vibrant congregational life more inclusive and more able to fulfill our mission of practicing loving community, advancing justice, and nurturing spiritual growth.

## Adult Religious Exploration

*Did you know ...*

Here are three things you should know about the Adult RE committee.

**One**, Adult RE works with members of the congregation and committees to provide workshops and gatherings for adults. Have an idea for a workshop or social gathering but not sure whom to contact? Come talk with us, we can help. We work with the Women’s Singing Circle, and the Buddhanature Gathering Group.

**Two**, we are starting a collaboration with **Karen Silva** and **Shrine of the Universal Dance**. Karen is interested in bringing pagan celebrations and pagan education to UU Meriden. All are welcome to join them.

**Three**, there have been some program changes:

- Buddhanature Book Group has changed their name to **Buddhanature Gathering Group**, reflecting their change of focus to being a spiritual sharing group. See the description in the Calendar of Events.
- **TED Talk Thursday** is moving to the **2nd Wednesday** of the month, starting April 11th.

There are opportunities to get involved with the Adult RE committee. We are looking for people to join the ARE committee and help select, schedule, and publicize programs. If you would like to volunteer, contact **Trish Schneider** at [arechair@uumeriden.org](mailto:arechair@uumeriden.org)

## FUNdraising Committee

### *Team Report for April 2018*

The goal of the FUNdraising Team is to raise \$12,000 to supplement congregational pledges to meet basic church expenses this fiscal year. So far, we’ve raised \$9,235.95. Fundraising efforts have raised the following in events:

- \$ 5,080.00 from the Auction
- \$ 3,850.95 (includes \$3,655.95 from Holiday Fair, plus another \$195 which we think is Holiday Fair funds)
- \$ 220.00 from Stop and Shop Cash for Causes (7/1/17-2/28/18). We raise 5% for the church on card sales. Contact Donna Stimpson for cards.
- \$ 85.00 from sale of pink and brown pussy hats

We hope to raise the difference of \$2,764.05 through upcoming Fundraising events.

## Kudos and Thank You to:

**Sandy Duffy** and **Jeff May** for updating our ServantKeeper software, making it possible for Maureen, our office administrator to benefit from all the tracking this software enables us to do.

Our Worship Associates—**Barbara Kline** (co-coordinator with Rev. Jan), **Lynne Grobsky**, **Jeff May**, **John Sepples**, and **Lisa Urso**, who have worked diligently with Jan over the past several months to plan worship services during Jan's sabbatical. Most of these services will be led by our Worship Associates; on those Sundays when Jan or a pulpit guest leads worship, one of our Worship Associates actively participates as a thoughtful lay voice in the spirit of shared ministry.

Our Board of Trustees, ably led by **Donna Stimpson** as President, **Trish Schneider** as Vice President and Leadership Council Chair, **Tracy Smith** as clerk, **Cori Theriault** as Treasurer, **Sandy Duffy** as Finance Chair, **Randy Heath** as Property Chair, and **Jane Dioguardi**, **Michael Milardo**, and **Ann Smith** as Members-at-Large. They have all presided over a challenging and promising time in the unfolding history of this congregation.

**Nancy Burton**, Coordinator of our Chalice Sanctuary Team, and all who serve on and contribute to our ministry of sanctuary: **Diane Szymaszek** and **Maureen Muir**, who oversee overnight volunteers; **Richard Gault**, who has done umpteen laundries; **Steve Volpini**, who manages food shopping; **Sandy Duffy**, who handles finances; and **Jane Dioguardi**, **Peg Kirkpatrick**, **Michael Milardo**, **Karen Nangle**, **Chaucey Perreault**, **Bob Reutenauer**, **Alice Sherard**, **Donna Stimpson**, **Deirdre Theriault**, and **Rev. Jan** who have contributed in countless ways toward launching and sustaining this ministry on behalf of our guests, Sujitno and Dahlia Sajuti.

Special thanks to **Alok Bhatt**, from CIRA (Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance); **Rev. Paul Fleck**, Pastor of Hamden Plains United Methodist Church and activist; and **Rabbi Herb Brockman**, Rabbi of Congregation Mishkan Israel, both with New Sanctuary CT; **Imam Kashif Abdul-Karim** and **Chaplain Khaliah Abdul-Karim** of the Muhammad Islamic Center of Greater Hartford; **Leanne Gale**, **Diana Blank**, and **Ben Haldeman** of the New Haven Legal Assistance Team.

And lastly, our enduring thanks to all who should have been cited and were overlooked.

## Congratulations to:

**Kayla Parker**, our former intern. Kayla will be ordained on Saturday, April 14, in Charleston, West Virginia, at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Charleston, West Virginia, which she has been serving as a contract minister. You can send notes of congratulation to Kayla, soon to be Rev. Parker, at [kaylapark@gmail.com](mailto:kaylapark@gmail.com) or at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Charleston, 520 Kanawha Blvd W, Charleston, WV 25302. Brava, Kayla!!

## Loving Wishes to:

- **Pat Stark**, on the recent passing of her father.
- **Scott Barnard**, who continues to receive treatment for lung cancer and struggles with ALS.
- **Ad Sternberg**, who soon turns 93 and is in residence at Kensington Village in Meriden, yet comes regularly to Sunday services.
- **Dorothy Farkas**, who turns 96 on July 7, and welcomes visitors. Dorothy is completely blind. You can reach her directly at 203-265-1405.
- All who are moving through difficult times.



If you know someone who has contributed to this church in a distinctive way in the recent past or someone whose life happenings call for special wishes, please let Rev. Jan know at [revjcarlssonbull@uumeriden.org](mailto:revjcarlssonbull@uumeriden.org) so that we might extend Kudos, Thank You, Congratulations or Loving Wishes in our next newsletter!

## Membership Committee

The Membership Team is busy taking care of our enhanced role in welcoming new members during Rev. Jan's sabbatical. The committee will be making follow-up calls and writing follow-up notes to visitors to UUCM. We will hold at least one Getting to Know U session. When Jan returns we will hold a Next Steps workshop. The next New Member Sunday will be June 8.

This past fall we had a very successful dinner with newer members of the congregation giving their feedback on their "becoming a member" experience. The Membership Committee is incorporating that information into future plans, programs, and scheduling. We are planning another dinner with another group of newer members this spring.

Our ongoing task is to track who is attending which events and programs, as well as worship, to assist those devising programs and events to put together meaningful and successful efforts.

The Membership Committee is working on one more way to help visitors learn more about Unitarian Universalism and life at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden. We are looking to pair current members with new and prospective members to help them find their way at UUCM. Thus far this program does not have a name. If you have any ideas on that score, please send them to [membership@uumeriden.org](mailto:membership@uumeriden.org). We hope to roll out this as-yet-unnamed program in the spring.

## Our Larger UU World



## UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**June 20-24, 2018**

Visit [www.uua.org/ga](http://www.uua.org/ga)

*Registration & Housing are open NOW*

UU Meriden is entitled to two delegates plus our minister. Rev. Jan will attend UUMA Ministry Days June 19-20 and all of GA. Thus far **Donna Stimpson**, UUCM President, will be a delegate. If you are interested in being the second delegate or simply attending, please contact Donna at [feministangler@aol.com](mailto:feministangler@aol.com) or in person.

The Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden

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