



# 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

From here to there is rarely a straight line. Starting point and destination shift. Dots are there for the connecting. We don't visit all of them, for they are infinite in number, each an option, a possibility. So it has been with the here to there of my sabbatical—a time of rest and renewal, reconnection with family and friends, reading and reflection, and anticipation for phase two that includes my November pilgrimage to Vietnam.

While I have read some of the basics, such as Ken Burns and Geoffrey Ward's *The War in Vietnam: An Intimate History*, and have viewed in corresponding mode each episode of Ken Burns and Lynn Novick's ten-part series on that war that hasn't ended for so many of us, and have immersed myself in a span of media on that war, on trauma and healing, and on restorative justice, I have also joined Dan in connecting with family. Just yesterday we returned from a visit to Vermont to celebrate grandson Forrest's 8th Happy Birthday and a birthday party with his friends at a water park (indoors, thank you, we're not completely crazy!). After a FULL day of wáter

park fun, what was Forrest's next move on arriving home: "Let's go play soccer in the backyard, Gram Jan!"

What a gift that all three daughters wished me a Happy Mother's Day, along with Dan who presented me with a recently published novel whose story-line is the jarring aftermath of a U.S. POW returned from Vietnam. As Dan was at the wheel en route home from Vermont, I was ensconced in the Alaskan venue of *The Great Alone*.

As for our larger world, hope and outrage meld as we hear of the scores of Palestinians killed and hundreds wounded in Gaza as they protested the provocative move of the US Embassy to Jerusalem. How many more families on "the home front" will be torn apart by the immorality of this ICE age? How many more of our teachers and children will continue to be disrespected through school budgets voted down and public education undermined by the powers that be? Yet hope is alive in the launching of the new Poor People's Campaign. Yes, to all of you who marched this Monday (May 14) in Hartford. Yes, to all who marched in over 30 capital cities across the country. And Amen, to the words of Rev. Dr. William Barber, who has taken the torch from 50 years ago and stands at the helm of this campaign: "We cannot continue to have a democracy that engages in the kind of policy violence that we see happening every day." And Amen to our faith's fifth principle, which bids us to affirm and promote "the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large."

One can never take a sabbatical from "all that is our life," from the reality that we are all connected. Yet this time out is affording fuel for my soul, for the struggle in which we are all engaged and the journey we are on.

## Masthead

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

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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)

I think of you every day. I think of our sanctuary guests, Sujitno and Dahlia, and the hope we hold for their freedom and safety. I think of the shared ministry demonstrated by a congregation with the minister in sabbatical mode. And I anticipate the second Sunday of June, when I will return to the pulpit of the congregation that I love.

Rev. Jan

## From the President

Good News!! The Board of Trustees (BOT), Finance Committee and Treasurer have balanced the budget for the 2018-19 fiscal year! In order to balance the budget, cuts had to be made in the following areas:

- Eliminate funds for a Choir Director
- Eliminate pulpit guest speakers
- Eliminate child care for discussion after the service
- Reduce most of the Adult Religious Exploration budget
- Reduce Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) dues

Approximately \$10,000 was cut to balance the budget. The Board of Trustees has decided not to hold multiple special congregational meetings to approve the budget this year. Because the church will have a balanced budget, we will only have the budget reviewed and approved at the Annual Meeting (June 10). The Treasurer, Finance Committee, and the Board of Trustees agree that

**“The church does not have an expense problem, it has an income problem.”**

As a small church, we need to find ways to address this income problem through pledges and fundraising events. In an effort to be transparent, the BOT hopes to send out the Annual Report ahead of the Annual Meeting. The budget and Treasurer’s report will be posted at the church for your review.

In addition to the budget, we will nominate and elect people to the Board of Trustees positions that are open, namely Treasurer, Vice President, and one At-Large member. We will also discuss and make decisions on signs on the church building. We hope you will attend and participate in the Annual Meeting. We look forward to seeing you on June 10th!!

Donna Stimpson

## Upcoming Services

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

*Please arrive by 10:20 and be seated by 10:25, so that we may worship together as the chimes ring out.*

### **Sunday June 3<sup>rd</sup> 10:30 AM**

#### *"In Our Tribe"*

Worship Leader: Lisa Urso

Worship Associate: John Sepples

We have a strong instinct to belong to small groups defined by a clear purpose and understanding--"tribes." This tribal connection has been largely lost in modern society, but regaining it may be the key to our psychological survival." This is part of the summary from author Sebastian Junger's latest book, *Tribes*. But is this really a good thing? In recent years, finding your small group and purpose has led to detrimental effects. How do we re-capture the essence of "out of many, one" while still maintaining our belief systems? How do we fit our puzzle pieces into larger society without losing individual or small-group identity? We'll explore Junger's text, as well as count some real-life examples, during this service.

### **Sunday June 10<sup>th</sup> 10:30 AM**

#### *"Seeds in Bloom"*

Worship Leader: Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull

Worship Associate: Jeff May

We will celebrate our Annual Flower Communion, hear the stories of all who received the "Gifted Promises" challenge on March 4, and hear a reflection by Rev. Jan on this, her first Sunday back after the first segment of her sabbatical.

Our ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING will directly follow the worship service!

This is an intergenerational service.

### **Sunday June 17<sup>th</sup> 10:30 AM**

#### *"Hop on Pop or Nop"*

Worship Leader: Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull

Worship Associate: Lynne Grobsky

As we honor our fathers, stepfathers, and grandfathers on this Father's Day, so will we honor and welcome new members into fellowship. With a tad of whimsy, we'll celebrate, reflect, and anticipate.

Followed by:

Annual Pool Party & Picnic – right after the worship service! – Come join us for our annual "welcome to summer" social get-together. All are invited to Jeff May and Sandy Duffy's home at 333 Brownstone Ridge, Meriden. The pool is warm, so pack bathing attire. Please bring picnic fare to share. Count on grilled hotdogs, hamburgers, and veggie burgers. Sign up during coffee hour! To assist in setup or other ways, please contact Jeff May at [jeffmay@jeffmay.net](mailto:jeffmay@jeffmay.net) or (860-919-6025 or 203-639-0090).

### **Sunday June 24<sup>th</sup> 10:00 AM**

#### *"Live From GA – It's Sunday Morning!"*

Worship Leader: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

Worship Associate: John Sepples

While Rev. Jan and Donna Stimpson and a few others will be present at our Annual Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly in Kansas City, we can be there via live-streaming and participate in Sunday Morning service with thousands of other UUs! Come and join us!

## Calendar of Events

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

### **Wednesday, June 13<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM**

#### *TED Talk*

We will watch Shonda Rhimes's TED Talk, "My year of saying yes to everything", followed by facilitated discussion led by Trish Schneider

**Sunday June 17<sup>th</sup> 12:00 PM**

### *Annual Picnic*

*Come join us for our annual “welcome to summer” social get-together. All are invited to Jeff May and Sandy Duffy’s home at 333 Brownstone Ridge, Meriden. The pool is warm, so pack bathing attire. Please bring picnic fare to share. Count on grilled hotdogs, hamburgers, and veggie burgers. Sign up during coffee hour! To assist in setup or other ways, please contact Jeff May at [jeffmay@jeffmay.net](mailto:jeffmay@jeffmay.net) or (860-919-6025 or 203-639-0090).*

## Ongoing Meetings/Activities

### Wednesday Worship

Wednesdays, June 6<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 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 at [arechair@uumeriden.org](mailto:arechair@uumeriden.org)

### Buddhanature Book Group

June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2:00-3:30 PM

All are welcome to share in monthly reflections and ruminations on the writings of contemporary Buddhist practitioners. Led by Pam Mulready, the group spends two months on each book studied. To find out the current reads, talk to Pam at [buddhanature@uumeriden.org](mailto:buddhanature@uumeriden.org)

### Hands-On Saturday

June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 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)

## Small Group Ministry

We have ended both sessions for this church year. If you are interested, new groups will be starting up in the fall.

## Social Justice Committee

**Next meeting 06/10/18 – all welcome!**

## Finance Committee

**Next meeting 06/14/18 – all welcome!**

## Property Committee

### *Got Dirt?*

Don’t get the wrong idea! I mean soil and rocks, not the gossip definition.

Why does the UU Church in Meriden need dirt and rocks, you ask?

Background: On our 6 ½ acres, the groundhogs have chosen to set up housekeeping on the grassy area between the vegetable and Spiral gardens. Last year the Property Committee filled the holes with rocks and soil. We still have depressions in the ground this year, though we haven’t seen any recent excavation by the critters. The lawn service folks asked that the holes be filled to avoid damage to the lawn mowers. All the readily available rocks and dirt were used last year.

Request: If you have clean dirt and rocks (measuring one to 10 inches) that you want to get rid of, or if you are willing to HELP dig dirt and rocks on the church property, please contact Donna Stimpson at (H) 203-237-1323 or phone/text (C) 860-919-3620 or email [feministangler@aol.com](mailto:feministangler@aol.com) or Randy Heath at (H) 860-628-9597, or text (C) 860-424-2255.

Many Thanks, UUCM Property Committee

## Religious Education

As we come to the end of the church year, please consider being a part of CYRE in the fall. We need committee members, teachers, assistants, and volunteers for special programs or days. We would love to have you share a special skill, tradition, or interest with us. This was our first year without the support of an RE professional (we miss you, Molly!). This is important work that benefits not only our youngest community members, but also the life of this church. There's a lot of good energy downstairs, but we need your support. Please consider getting in touch with me, even if you're not sure what you'd like to do. It would be wonderful to start the year with more involvement from the whole congregation.

Please join us on RE Sunday to thank our teachers, volunteers, and helpers for all they've done this year. We are so lucky to have them! Our children bring so much energy and creativity to the congregation, and we've been glad to welcome new families as well as "old" this year.

A final SOS! We need someone who will organize church school this summer if we are going to have it. It's not as difficult as it sounds, as we already have the curriculum and volunteer teachers. It does not mean you have to be at church every Sunday! I'm honored to do this sacred work alongside some of the best people I know.  
Love, Megumi

## Adult Religious Education

We had a special Hands-on Saturday: Cooking together, facilitated by Sumala McKeown. We enjoyed cooking and eating a Cinco de Mayo Luncheon. Thank you, Sumala, for facilitating Cooking Together.

TED Talks, Women's Sacred Singing Circle, and Buddhanature Gathering Group were well attended. Wednesday Worship has a small, dedicated group of attendees.

### *Upcoming Adult RE programs*

Saturday, June 2nd 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM  
Hands-On Saturday Special: Marmalade-Making Workshop.

Marmalade is a suspension of fruit peel and pulp in a tart yet sweet jelly. Besides topping toast for a traditional breakfast treat, marmalade also makes a fantastic glaze for sweet and savory foods. Come learn the basics by making lime marmalade, and then use your new skills to craft your own creations for yourself or for gifts.

Buddhanature Gathering Group and Women's Sacred Singing Circle will meet during the summer.

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).

## From the Chalice Sanctuary Team

I should probably start with an apology. It is my job to communicate with the congregation on the work of this committee, and I have fallen down on that part of my role. I hope the congregation can excuse me to some degree. I

will get back in the saddle as soon as possible after my knee replacement surgery on May 14.

A lot has happened for our guest recently, some of which has been disheartening. Sujitno's legal team has been working hard for him and trying different paths to gain him his freedom. There have been a couple setbacks. A motion for a stay of deportation was denied. Following this, a motion to re-open his case was also denied. These things were a real blow to Sujitno and Dahlia, who were hoping to be able to go home. Their hopes have been raised and dashed more than once. It was also a blow to the team of people working on their behalf, and it took us all a bit of pulling ourselves up by the boot straps to keep on going. But we have done that. There are still several avenues for the legal team to pursue, and there are reasons to be hopeful. It will most likely take some time to pursue all these avenues, and the members of the CST have had to remind ourselves that we are in this for the long haul and to attempt not to focus on an end date.

Ramadan is starting May 15 and continues for a month. During this time, Sujitno and Dahlia will be fasting and praying from sun up to sun down. It is a time when they are supposed to focus on matters of faith. They may be less communicative with the congregation during this time and we ask that you respect their need for calm and introspection. Members of the Muslim community may be joining them for prayers at times during this month. The support of their community is very important to them.

There are many pluses to our work. The biggest is living our faith—walking the talk. As I have said before, for me, this is what being a Unitarian Universalist is all about. The other is that it has connected us with a large network of justice-oriented activists who are doing great work. Members of our congregation have become founding members of a Meriden-based group, Meriden Standing Up for Neighbors

(Meriden SUN). We have been recognized in many places for putting our faith to work. We have also received a good deal of support from the surrounding community and interfaith community for our work.

This effort certainly has cost us in time and energy, but we have received all the financial support we have needed; it has not cost the congregation anything financially. We have received enough donations to cover any expenses and provide a cushion for our continued work.

A member or friend of this congregation or the supporting community stays overnight each night in the church. Sujitno and Dahlia have told us they feel very comforted by this presence. If anyone would like to help with this effort, we could use the help. Please contact Diane Szymaszek at [deesmaz@gmail.com](mailto:deesmaz@gmail.com), 203-237-0047, or Maureen Muir at [MLTSherman@gmail.com](mailto:MLTSherman@gmail.com), 203-980-4087, if you feel you can stay a night here or there. We have a comfortable trundle bed now to sleep in, and since it is a trundle, a couple of people can be accommodated.

Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. If it is close to my surgery, please give some extra time for a response.

Nancy Burton, Chalice Sanctuary Team

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!

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