



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

"Return again, return again, return
to the home of your soul."

Return again, as you have been regenerating here or away or both. Return again, in the spirit of coming home to your soul. "Soul" is the theme of our worship during the church year at hand—that is 2018-2019.

Like spirit, soul has meanings specific to each of us, yet we speak of the soul of community, of practicing loving community. Is the soul tangible, visible, or a topic for analysis? Not in my mind, not in my heart. I will not box it in any more than I will box in my notion of God, albeit the latter tends to be a more controversial notion in this faith that we share. Why, I sometimes don't understand. I do recall my late friend and mentor, Rev. Dr. Forrest Church, observing that whenever anyone told him they didn't believe in God, he would respond with: "Tell me about the God you don't believe in; I probably don't believe in that God either."

As for spiritual, I struggle with this notion to which so many of us nod instinctively, assured that we know exactly what another means by "being spiritual." The words of yet another dear mentor and friend, the late Rev. Victor Carpenter, during a conversation when I expressed my struggle with this term: "Jan, defining spiritual is like bottling fog!" Yes, Victor, yes!

Soul, God, spiritual, and yes, religious all are terms that I will not concede to any who would "bottle them." Most bottled items have expiration dates. These notions, these understandings, and these experiences have none.

In these days when so much of our energy is consumed by the social/political disarray, by the moral chaos in which we as a nation find ourselves, I recall the title as much as the contents of that book authored by my friend (fortunately without the adjective "late") Paul Loeb, *Soul of a Citizen*. What does it mean to have the soul of a citizen? To engage, to commit, to step forth even if we have no idea where it will take us, and perhaps to understand the breadth and depth of loving community joined at the soul.

With anticipation for the year ahead, and
love for each and all of you,
Jan

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

Upcoming Services

www.uucentralct.org/worship

Please arrive by 9:50 AM and be seated by 9:55 AM, so that we may worship together as the chimes ring out. Beginning September 9th, services resume their 10:30 AM start time.

Sunday September 2nd 10:00 AM

“A Labor of Love”

Worship Leader: Rev Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull
Worship Associate: Lisa Urso

On this Labor Day Sunday we'll gather in reverence for the work that we do, the work that we've done, the work that is done by others, the work that we honor, and the work that lies ahead. And we'll share stories of work that matters for us.

Sunday September 9th 10:30 AM

Intergenerational Water Communion

“The Stuff of Life”

Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull
Worship Associate: Lynne Grobsky

What is that which we cannot live without? Yes, it's water, a sign of life, the medium we use to dedicate our children, a substance sacred and precious. Let's celebrate once again our Water Communion, an intergenerational worship experience for all generations. Let's remember to bring our containers of water from the mountains, the ocean, a lake, a pond, our backyard—whatever site in our “blue boat home” holds special meaning for us. Bring also a story of why this water is meaningful for you. We'll pour our water into a common receptacle and our stories into a greater story. In conclusion, we'll head outside to our Spiral Garden and pour our gift of communal waters into the soil that nurtures this space of peace and sanctuary.

Second Sunday Potluck Dinner – Communal Dinner with our Sanctuary Guests
September 9 marks exactly 11 months since Sujitno and Dahlia have been in sanctuary here. Let's observe this in a communal dinner that honors them and complies with their culinary preferences. Please bring a VEGETARIAN appetizer, entrée, salad, or dessert to share. So that we don't all bring dessert, please use the Perfect Potluck meal planner link to indicate what you will bring:
<https://perfectpotluck.com/meals.php?t=QJBIO913&welcome=1>.

Sunday September 16th 10:30 AM

Intergenerational Worship
"Creativity"

Worship Leader: Lisa Urso
Worship Associate: John Sepples
How does creativity nurture one's soul? How have we used art, literature, and dance to help us through both good and bad times?
Throughout this service, we will hear from different members of the congregation as they share stories on how being creative has aided their self-expression, coping skills, or in their relationships. Feel free to bring something creative to work on during the service!

Sunday September 23rd 10:30 am

Small Group Ministry Sunday
"How We Are Named"

Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull
With Kathy Lindberg and Steve Volpini, Small Group Ministry Facilitators
Worship Associate: Barbara Kline
What's in a name? So much, so very much.
"How We Are Named" describes the Small Group Ministry session that always opens a new season of this ministry, now in its fourth year in our congregation. Come prepared to learn more

about this distinctive form of ministry and to experience the flow of Small Group Ministry, but with the gathered congregation as "the group." Then sign up during coffee hour for a group that works for you. Groups begin in October.

Sunday September 30th 10:30 AM

Intergenerational Worship
"In the Spirit of 76!"

Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull
with Worship Associates
Turning, cycling, recycling, whirling, dancing - all is the stuff of revolution. Come gather across generations for this worship experience of raising up revolution with a seasonal twist.

Calendar of Events

www.uucentralct.org/calendar

Friday September 14th 6:30 PM

Women's Sacred Singing Circle
Workshop with Shelley Graff!

Shelley Graff is coming to our Meriden Women's Singing Circle to share her extensive expertise. She is a singer/songwriter who has helped many singing circles reach their highest potential. We will learn different ways of bringing new songs into our circle and grow our spirit voice. A sliding scale love offering of \$15-\$25 is requested, with no woman turned away.

Sunday September 23rd 12:00 PM

Getting to Know U

Who are you? Who are we? Why are we here?

Are you new here? We would like to get to know you better. If you feel the same, please plan to join us for this introductory workshop in which Rev. Jan and a few other congregational leaders welcome you for a getting acquainted gathering. Who are you? What is your spiritual

journey? What brought you here? Who are we and what are we about? Count on a light lunch and activity packets for children. To learn more and/or to register, please contact Membership Chair Molly Nolan at mollybnolan@gmail.com or Rev. Jan at revjcarlssonbull@gmail.com.

Happenings

www.uucentralct.org/calendar

Sunday September 9th 10:30 AM

Intergenerational Water Communion!

Please remember to gather a portion of water for this Intergenerational Ingathering/Water Communion Service. Our streams will merge through the water we bring from the mountains, the ocean, a lake, a pond, our backyard—whatever site in our “blue boat home” holds special meaning. Whether you are brand new to this tradition or well-seasoned, join in the joy of this summer ritual and September ingathering!

Beginning September 9, Sunday morning worship begins at 10:30 AM. Come, bring family, bring friends, and invite strangers. “Come, yet again come!” Let’s commit to arriving by 10:20, so that we might worship together in the fullness of gathered community.

In the spirit of hospitable community, thanks to all who have hosted refreshments and fellowship this summer. We have many open Sundays for doing so throughout September on into autumn. Please sign up on the chart that is on the buffet in the foyer OR phone Maureen, our Office Administrator at (203) 237-9297 and let her know we can count on you for whenever.

Minster’s Schedule

Rev. Jan resumes her regular office hours on Tuesday, September 4. She will be here Tuesday through Friday 10:30 AM to 4:30 PM and by appointment. Given the reality of her being on

two-thirds time, she tries to take off one week a month. For September, she will take a few days off mid-month. For a pastoral emergency, you can reach Jan at 781-733-0355. You can access her Chalice Light blog at

<https://pastor.uumeriden.org/>.

Phase 2 of Rev. Jan’s sabbatical extends from October 23 through December 2. She leaves for Vietnam October 29 and returns November 15. Stay tuned for her Phase 2 sabbatical brochure.

Ongoing thanks to our Committee on Shared Ministry and our Worship Associates and the entire congregation for your support.

Ongoing Meetings/Activities

Wednesday Worship

September 5th & 19th, 7-7:45 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

Buddhanature Book Group

September 16th, 2-3:30 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

Hands-On Saturday

September 1st, 11 AM – 2 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

Communications

Do you enjoy writing or taking photos? Is Social Media your thing, but you're not into lots of meetings? Then the Communications Committee is for you. The Communications Committee is looking for people to take photos, create brochures, and work with social media and/or the UUCM website. Talk to Trish at coffee hour or email her at trishs@cox.net.

Social Justice Committee

We have changed the date that Social Justice Council will meet for the coming year. It will be the 4th Sunday of each month at 9am. Everyone is welcome!

We have begun the process of securing the Black Lives Matter sign/banner, which was selected by the Anti-Racism Discussion Group (meets first Tuesday of each month at 6pm at UUCM). It will be installed on the front of the building in time for the dedication service on Sunday, October 14th. In preparation we will hold two informational sessions, when questions can be asked/answered. These 2-hour sessions will also include a showing of the General Assembly, 2018 Ware Lecture by Brittany Packnett, who challenged listeners, "It is not enough just to 'not be a racist.' We must expect ourselves to be actively anti-racist....." Discussion as to how we can meet this challenge will follow. These informational/discussion sessions will be held on Sunday, Sept. 23 after the service, with an alternate date of Friday, Oct. 12th at 6pm. If you are interested but unable to attend, feel free to watch the YouTube video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkV2fNuN1C4&feature=youtu.be&t=11m30s> or by accessing it through the UUA website.

Saturday, September 8th will be a full day of Social Justice activities beginning with Thousand Doors of Justice. (sponsored by D.U.E. Justice, CCAG, MMct) It will take place at seven

alternate meeting sites. The two sites closest to us are: Middlesex Community College, 100 Training Hill Road, Middletown, and Capitol Community College Auditorium, 950 Main Street, Hartford. (If you are planning to attend PrideFest at noon on the same day, the Hartford location would be better.) Voter Registration training, including a keynote speaker. Actions: tables for voter registration at various sites, as well as door-to-door. This is an excellent way to become involved for the coming mid-term election. To quote Rev. Jan, "No reason to throw up our hands at the inequity of income, the lame health care system, the rising poverty level, the increasing fiscal challenges faced by our public school teachers and students, the threatened and implemented deportation of those among us who are immigrants lacking documentation, the callous system of incarceration, and more. You and I can each and all do something! Why not begin here!"

Another activity on September 8th noon to 6pm. will be the LGBT Pride Festival on Pratt Street in Hartford. We will be participating with three other UU congregations at a space where we will be offering information and a chance for folks to register to vote. Please contact activejustice@uumeriden.org to sign up to help for a specific time slot.

And yet another activity on September 8th 1-3pm Stand Up 4 Human Rights CT Rally. At the State Capitol in Hartford on the north steps.

For those who have been or intend to begin reading Small Great Things by Jodi Piccoult, the discussion on this book will be held after the Sunday service on Oct. 28. For more information, please contact activejustice@uumeriden.org

Adult Religious Education

There are important new changes to the Adult RE committee! First, Lynne Grobsky is now committee chair, with Trish Schneider stepping down into a supportive role. Second, Paula Snedeker, a new member, has joined and taken on the role of secretary.

For the coming fall, there will be changes in two programs offered in the past. Trish is stepping down as the facilitator for TED Talks. As a result, a facilitator is needed in order for this program to continue. Please contact Lynne Grobsky if you are interested. Hands-on Saturday will now be offered twice in the fall and twice in the spring. The date for the next Hands-on Saturday will be announced in September.

In July, Adult RE sponsored a combined Women's Sacred Singing Circle/Potluck with the Manchester Women's Sacred Singing Circle. Twenty-eight women attended; a healing, rejuvenating, joyful time was had by all!

Ongoing ARE groups: Buddhanature Gathering Group, Wednesday Worship, and Women's Sacred Singing Circle will meet in September. Please see the calendar at uumeriden.org for dates and times.

New fall 2018 programs: Adult RE is planning the following workshops: Sacred Space: Creating a Personal Altar; Interactive UU History Timeline, plus the ongoing workshops and gatherings.

Lynne Grobsky, ARE chair
lynnegrobsky@gmail.com, 203-213-6011

Chalice Sanctuary Team

The Chalice Sanctuary Team has continued to be active. In July, the CST held a pizza lunch for the congregation to update members and friends on where we stood in our sanctuary journey, listen to any comments and concerns,

and answer any questions. The mood of the meeting was positive and supportive, and it was good to have time to review things with everyone.

Unitarian Universalists in Connecticut are doing their part to support the sanctuary movement. Nine houses of worship in Connecticut have signed on to be sanctuary congregations. Three of these actually have someone living in sanctuary, with UUCM having the longest-term guest in residence. Four of the nine houses of worship are UU congregations. The CST at UUCM have become leaders in the field, and representatives of our team have spoken at several other congregations considering sanctuary. Our ability to offer concrete, practical advice has been well received.

The CST has been looking at ways to sustain our efforts over this long term. At our last meeting, we decided to stop the overnight stays at the end of August. The general feeling is that Sujitno and Dahlia are well acquainted now with our building and that an external threat is unlikely after all this time. However, it remains important that we find ways to try to minimize, as much as possible, the social isolation of our guests. We hope to redirect the energy that has gone into providing overnight stays into other ways to increase social interaction with the couple. We will be thinking of ways to do this and would like the congregation's support in these efforts. To kick off this new phase, we plan to have the second Sunday potluck on September 9 be centered on our guests as part of our community. We hope many of you will join in celebrating this relationship and the important work our congregation is doing. It's one more chance to make our guests feel welcome and connected to all of us. I hope you will join us and, if you are able, bring some food to share.

CST meetings are posted on the church calendar and are open to any member or friend of

UUCM. We do not have a set cycle for meetings. We determine at each meeting when we will meet again. The cycle varies according to the need for action and the availability of team members. Feel free to join us. Becoming a member of the team is also open. Just show up and say you want to be part of it, or contact the Nancy Burton, team coordinator at nburtoncm@gmail.com or 203-671-4482.

Kudos and Thank You to:

All who have led our summer worship services:

July 1 – Steve Volpini with Worship Associate Lisa Urso and participants Michael Milardo, Diane Szymaszek, Angie Swanger, and Janet Hiller– “Our Official Poets: Recent Poet Laureates”

July 8 – Lynne Grobsky – “Drumming the Heartbeat of Community”

July 15 – Jeff May with Worship Associate Lynne Grobsky – “Polar Opposites”

July 22 – Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull with Worship Associate Barbara Kline – “Season of Wonder”

July 29 – John Sepples with Worship Associate Lynne Grobsky and Musician Jennifer Richard

August 5 – Deirdre and Cori Theriault with Youth Group members Samira Mayers, Dani Gomez, Cache Anderson, and Asher Fritz – “Balance”

August 12 – Barbara Kline and Lynne Grobsky – “No as an Affirmation”

August 19 – Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull with Worship Associate Lisa Urso – “Salt Air, Mountain Air, Fresh Air”

August 26 – Lisa Urso – “Recommencement”

September 2 – Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull with Worship Associate Lisa Urso – “A Labor of Love”

Our Board of Trustees, ably led by Donna Stimpson as President for the second year, Jane Dioguardi as newly elected Vice President and Leadership Council Chair, Tracy Smith as clerk, Trish Schneider as Treasurer, Sandy Duffy as Finance Chair, Randy Heath as Property Chair, Ann Smith, and Tina Caplan (newly elected) and Kathy Lindberg (newly elected) as Members-at-Large. They have met and led and planned all summer long!

Tina Caplan and James Dawson, who have served as point people for our Children & Youth Religious Education program this summer.

Megumi Yamamoto, who continues as chair of our Children & Youth Religious Education Committee.

Lynne Grobsky, who continues to lead and inspire our Women’s Sacred Singing Circle, which now meets weekly.

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 and Penny Barsch, who have 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 sustaining this ministry on behalf of our guests, Sujitno and Dahlia Sajuti.

Diane Szymaszek, who with periodic assistant gardeners, has tended our Spiral Garden, which is in glorious bloom.

Angie Swanger, who continues to lead and inspire our Anti-Racism Task Force, both discussions and actions.

Trish Schneider and Jeff May, who continue to manage our website.

Maureen Leahy, our warm and welcoming and highly competent Office Administrator.

For all who should have been cited and were overlooked.

Loving Wishes...

Nancy Burton, who had successful eye surgery this summer.

Richard Gault, who also had successful eye surgery this summer.

Michael Milardo, who also had successful eye surgery this summer.

Donna Stimpson, who is recovering from a broken foot.

Maureen Leahy, who had foot surgery this summer.

Scott Barnard, who continues to receive treatment for lung cancer and cope with ALS.

Ad Sternberg, who turned 93 in May and is in residence at Kensington Village in Meriden, yet comes regularly to Sunday services.

Dorothy Farkas, who turned 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 Maureen Leahy know at office@uumeriden.org.

Leadership Updates

The Leadership Development team is presently working on two projects: the Get Connected Fair and Board of Trustees training. We are working with the Leadership Council on the Get

Connected Fair, which will be held on September 16 directly after the worship service.

The Get Connected Fair will help congregants learn more about church committees and councils. We recognize that it is important for us to be able to talk with a committee's representative as well as read about their activities in the newsletter or the email updates.

The second project is a test run of online Board training. The UUA has developed online resources for leadership development. One of the resources is a 12-part Board of Trustees Training. The Board of Trustees has agreed to participate in the online training. Leadership Development will work closely with the Board of Trustees to assess whether this program will work for UU Meriden.

The Leadership Development Team is open to your ideas on the best ways to provide leadership development opportunities to our members. Please feel free to email Trish at trishs@cox.net with suggestions or to learn more about the Leadership Development Team.

Trish Schneider

Our Larger UU World

In the Spirit of Loving Community

Penny Barsch has agreed to share this message of frustration and hope that she sent to Rev. Jan in early August. Might we all take to heart this offering of truth in love? Penny is one of our newest members, joining this congregation this past June. She is already an active member. Perhaps I am too sensitive, but I need to express some thoughts. This Unitarian Universalist congregation is composed of a group of diverse and hard-working people, trying to send a message of acceptance and love. Many speak up for different cultures and races and try to be accepting of others' beliefs.

Yet, I hear at almost every gathering a remark that is often conveyed in a joke-like manner in reference to organized religion, especially the customs of Christianity. I realize that many who join this Unitarian Universalist congregation have had negative experiences with religion or with God. The Catholic Church was hurtful to me personally, but I do not make jokes about the rituals or judgment of friends who go to mass, if kneeling or praying to a saint is what they choose to do. God is a very important part of my life. At times, it is challenging to feel the need to defend my relationship with God. At this point in my life I am not sure what I believe regarding the trinity, but I have a loving and healthy relationship with God and respect the needs of others to practice fully or partially what matters to them in organized religion. All I ask is that they not tell me their way is the right way or that other practices are wrong. My friends include Jews, people who go to weekly Bible study and family members who are atheist. I accept their love and leave to them what they need or do for spiritual guidance. What matters to me is their morality and kindness. Sadly, there have always been people who use their religion as a vehicle for hurting or putting down those with whom they don't agree. But there is likely a majority of people across religions that practice their faith in love. The social justice and moral responsibility within Unitarian Universalism inspired me to become a member. I will continue to be a member, but I would hope that others here might understand that some members do have discussions with the God they grew up with and that we actually hold onto some of the rituals in order to make it through the day. I may not have made it through some years in my life had it not been for a priest who guided me as a young mother in a hurtful marriage with a disabled child.

If this is truly an accepting community, then the joking comments regarding specific religious practices should be taboo across the board. To be loving and welcoming means being mindful of comments which may be hurtful to someone who practices a religion with which we do not agree. I hope my thoughts encourage us all to think about remarks we may make about other religions, even if the comments are made in a light and joking manner.

Peace, Penny

[USNH IRIS Fundraiser](#)

Saturday September 22nd, 6:00 PM

Join us for an evening of film, Persian cuisine and discussion at the Unitarian Society of New Haven \$25 which includes light Persian Fare, Film Screening of SOUFRA and post-performance talkback with IRIS Exec. Director Chris George & Sam Rose, Owner Greenleaf Catering. All proceeds to benefit Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS) in New Haven. The film, Soufra, follows the unlikely and wildly inspirational story of intrepid social entrepreneur, Mariam Shaar – a generational refugee who has spent her entire life in the Burj El Barajneh refugee camp just south of Beirut, Lebanon.

Purchase tickets at...

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/usnh-social-justice-cinema-presents-soufra-persian-cuisine-a-fundraiser-for-iris-tickets-48500831292>

Facebook Event...

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2113690362036684/>

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