



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

Who you are, what you are, where you are..." Such are the strands of this song we recognize as "Return Again," this song that has laced its way through the cumulative experiences of my recent pilgrimage to Viet Nam. "Return again," but to whom, to what, to where?

In Viet Nam, I returned to a place where I had never been, yet had imagined and dreamt of and reflected on for a half century. When an experience is so intense that it seems unfathomable, I ask myself: What if I dreamt it? How would that shed light on what it means? It's not original with me that the images and inhabitants of our dreams are facets of ourselves. Our dreams weave into our experiences, weave into the rest of life.

Did I dream of dinner on a balmy evening near the banks of the Mekong River with a host whose history bears the imprint of a long-ago war? Images and sounds of that night linger as I sleep: songs, smiles, laughter, stories. Did I dream of holding a basket of fish, flipping and squirming, and then releasing them into the Perfume River, a ritual of releasing troubled spirits? Somehow, I know those spirits are free, along with the fish. Did I dream of gleaning the wisdom of a 100-year-old scholar and sage in his home in Hanoi? A signed copy of his recent, and perhaps final work, on Vietnamese culture rests on a nearby table.

Did I dream of flying into Newark Airport to the warm welcome of Dan and daughter Lisa? They are witnesses. Did I dream of bundling up on this snowy day in Vermont and heading with daughter Sarah and grandson Forrest to go sledding? My gloves and scarf are soaking wet.

My dreams span time and space. So do yours. Yet we are ever returning to who we are, what we are, where we are; we are ever invited back to the home of our soul. On this threshold of Christmas, Hanukkah, the Solstice, dreams abound—dreams of holidays past, dreams of holidays hoped for, and dreams of what awaits in the holidays at hand. What will we discover about who we are, what we are, where we are as our calendar brings us back to familiar sounds, scents, songs, and silences? How might we imagine this evolving landscape and dreamscape?

In this season of lights, legends, memories and dreams, may we find silent nights, holy nights to be at home with who we are, what we are, and where we are. And may our souls awaken with wonder and gratitude that it can be so.

In the spirit of return,

Rev. 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

Minster's Schedule

Rev. Jan returns from her sabbatical on Tuesday, December 3. If you haven't yet read her blogs from Viet Nam, you can do so at pastor.uumeriden.org. Throughout December, her office hours are Tuesday through Friday 10:30 AM to 4:30 PM and by appointment. Given the reality of Rev. Jan being on two-thirds time, she will be off the last week of December, after our Christmas Eve service, and will return Wednesday, January 2

From the President

Collaboration of Connecticut Unitarian Universalist Churches

Did you know that UU Meriden is in covenant with other UU churches in Connecticut? In the spirit of covenant, we started exploring a relationship with the Mattatuck UU Society as well as with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Bridgeport. We are just at the beginning of this process. On November 9, the presidents of each congregation got together over pizza to get to know more about each other and informally explore ways that we could collaborate and partner and share resources. Our conversation was an open and honest discussion about the strengths and challenges that our respective congregations face. We found that all three churches are facing similar challenges re: how to do church in the 21st century. Here are some of the things we have in common:

- All three congregations have fewer than 100 members. (UUCM = 92), (UUCGB = 40), (MUUS = 63).
- Staffing: UUCM and MUUS have ministers. UUCGB is lay-led. MUUS's minister is a half-time contract minister.
- Religious Ed: All three congregations have religious ed programs for small children and youth. MUUS has a

Director of Religious Education (DRE) who works 10 hours a week. UUCM and UUCGB do not have a DRE.

- Two of the churches have a strong history of social justice ministry.

We discussed collaborating on resources for leadership training, sharing ideas on membership issues and stewardship practices, as well as sharing lay-led worship services. We plan to meet again and will include the vice presidents of each of the churches.

Donna Stimpson, President, UUCM

Board of Trustees Update

December 2018

Goals and Objectives: The Board of Trustees reviewed a proposed working document of Board of Directors goals and objectives and will share with the Leadership Council and the Committees and Teams for their review and comments. Once the goals and objectives have been reviewed and revised, the Board will share with the congregation.

Vacancies: Tracy Smith resigned as the Clerk of the Board of Trustees in October due to out-of-state work commitments. At the November Board meeting, Tina Caplan was appointed as the new Clerk per the Bylaws.

With Tina moving from an at-large position on the Board to the Clerk position, this leaves an opportunity for an at-large position to be filled for the remainder of her term. Anyone who is interested in learning more about the at-large position, please contact Donna Stimpson, President, by phone at 203-237-1323 or by email at president@uumeriden.org.

The Chair of the Stewardship Committee is still vacant. If anyone is interested in learning more about a Chair or a Co-Chair role, please contact Donna Stimpson, President, by phone at 203-

237-1323 or by email at president@uumeriden.org.

Surplus Operating Funds: After reviewing the FY 2017-18 budget, the Treasurer has determined that there is approximately \$6,000 surplus as a result of higher rental revenue and successful fundraising and reduced spending from church accounts. The Board of Trustees decided that 80 percent of the funds would be set aside for capital improvements. The remaining 20 percent would be set aside for the Ministerial Search Committee budget.

Upcoming Services

www.uucentralct.org/worship

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

Sunday, December 2nd 10:30 AM

“Grant Me Patience!”

Worship Leader: Lynne Grobsky

Worship Associate: Lisa Urso

When we are on the hamster wheel of trying to cross as many items off our to-do list as possible, our resulting impatience may breed stress, discouragement, and fear. When we are patient, we are confident, decisive, and peacefully satisfied. When we are patient, our loved ones benefit greatly, and we are able to shine our light more brightly. How can we grow in our ability to be patient?

Sunday December 9th 10:30 AM

“Return Again”

Intergenerational

Worship Leader: Rev. DR. Jan Carlsson-Bull

Worship Associate: Barbara Kline

Amid Hanukkah and Advent, we light candles. In caring community, we light candles. We return to this season of light and hope, and Rev. Jan returns to us after her sabbatical pilgrimage.

How is this season upon us like a pilgrimage of return? What does it mean for Jan to “return again” after her pilgrimage of heart and soul? In this intergenerational worship experience, we’ll explore how pilgrimage is always an option, whatever our circumstances and whatever age we are.

Second Sunday Potluck Dinner – Come enjoy this post-service time of food and fellowship directly after the service. Please use this Perfect Potluck meal planner link to let people know what you plan to bring: [Perfect Potluck](#). Once you take an item, everyone else who opens the link will see that others have signed up for food contributions.

Sunday December 16h 10:30 AM

“Carols and Cacophony”

Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull

Worship Associate: Jeff May

Carols and cacophony: Has it always been so, or are these especially “interesting times”? Do the songs and sounds of these holidays/holy days clash with or balance the state of our souls and the state of our larger world? How to find peace even while not denying the dissonance that is? Let’s worshipfully explore this challenge.

Sunday December 23rd 10:30 AM

Intergenerational Holiday Service

“What’s Your Favorite?”

Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-OBull

Worship Associate: Lynne Grobsky

What’s your favorite story of Christmas, of the Solstice, of winter? And what are your favorite songs? There are so many to choose from. Before this Sunday, we’ll invite you to submit them to Rev. Jan and our Worship Associates (worship@uumeriden.org) and as you are willing, to share them personally as we worship together. Let’s give voice to our seasonal soul.

Monday December 24th 6:30 PM

“O Holy Night”

An Intergenerational Candlelight Service

Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-OBull

“Every night a child is born is a holy night” echoes the wisdom from the iconic voice of Sophia Lyon Fahs. So it is that on this silent night, holy night, we invite you to come, bring your children, your grandchildren, your neighbors, your friends, and yourself. Whatever the cares of your lives, whatever the burdens and challenges you are facing, join us in a time out of time as we celebrate a long-ago birth and as we honor the birth of every child. Let the peace of Christmas fill you in song, silence, story, and the traditional lighting of candles to the strains of “Silent Night.”

Please bring cookies to share for a post-service time of sweet refreshments, hot chocolate, and fellowship.

Sunday December 30th 10:30 AM

““Auld Lang Syne”

Worship Leader: Lynne Grobsky

Worship Associate: John Sepples

Auld Lang Syne - ‘For the sake of old times’ is a Scots poem written by Robert Burns in 1788 and is traditionally a call to remember long-standing friendships. This is the time of year when we reflect on the old year and celebrate the new beginnings of the coming year. We see how far we have come and how all our experiences have brought us to where we are today. We experience the wondrous ways in which the Universe supports us and helps us grow. What adventures await us in the coming year?

Calendar of Events

www.uucentralct.org/calendar

UUCM Holiday Fair

Friday, December 7th 4:00 – 8:00 PM

Saturday, December 8th 9:00 – 3:00 PM

Ongoing Meetings/Activities

Anti-Racism Discussion

Tuesday, December 4th 6:00 PM

Next groups meet on Dec.4 and Jan.8 (note Jan.8 is the 2nd Tuesday because the first Tuesday is on Jan 1, a holiday).

Women Singing Circle

Tuesday, December 4th 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Come experience the joy of singing with women! We will sing songs written and sung by women, with the intention of empowering women to reach their highest potential. We are not a chorus or choir. We are women who want to sing/chant with other women. No singing experience necessary. The songs are easy to learn, and instruments will be provided. All women are welcome. Bring your friends. You don't have to be a member of UUCM to join us.

Wednesday Worship

December 5th & 19th, 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 trishs@cox.net.

Buddhanature Gathering Group

December 16st, 2-3:30 PM

A once a month gathering where we come together 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.

Small Group Ministry

1st & 3rd Saturdays, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

In Small Group Ministry, groups of 8-10 individuals led by trained facilitators meet twice monthly to foster friendship and caring, enhance spiritual growth, strengthen the fabric of this faith community, and provide avenues for service. In this intimate setting, we share, listen, and deepen our spiritual understanding and explore the paths we are on. What a splendid way for newcomers, especially, to build meaningful and lasting connections and for folks who are well seasoned in congregational life to forge new ties with all who participate. Thus far this year we have one group, co-facilitated by Steve Volpini and Kathy Lindberg, and meeting on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays from 10 am to noon. To register, contact Steve at stevevolpini2@gmail.com. It's not too late to partake of this enriching experience!

Social Justice Committee

Next meeting: Sunday, Nov. 25th, 9am

Guest at Your Table: It is once again time for the annual intergenerational program to raise support for and awareness about key human rights issues through the UU Service Committee. This year the focus is on the issue of migrant justice, with the theme Justice across Borders. UUSC partners with grassroots allies along the Central American migration trail, addressing root causes, supports migrants in transit, and protects the right to seek asylum. By now you have received the special Guest at Your Table box or envelope handed out at the November 25th service. We hope you are regularly filling them with coins and currency. If you missed this service, boxes or envelopes can

be found in the foyer. More information about the Stone Soup service and luncheon will be available as we near the conclusion of this program in February or March, 2019.

Common Read for 2019: A book concerning the environment as it intersects with race and class. Please contact Angie 860 888 3293 or angmart1@comcast.net for a copy of this book at a reduced price. We will be conducting discussions of this book after the first of the year.

LGBTQ Adult Gathering Group: We are exploring reinstituting this group. Please contact Angie at 860 888 3293 or angmart1@comcast.net

Membership Committee

How would you like to be welcomed to the Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden? Not just your first time at UUCM, but each week? And how do you like to share refreshments after worship?

The Membership Committee is in charge of organizing the welcome and hospitality parts of everyone's Sunday experience. But we cannot do it alone. Greeters, Ushers, Coffee and Refreshment Hosts make the magic happen. The tasks are easy, done once a month through the year, teamed with more experienced hands, with a team of people to call on if your schedule or availability changes.

We have a responsibility to the future so that UUCM is there with open arms for the next person looking for us, as we were all welcomed when we were seeking a spiritual home. The next seeker could be showing up almost every week, so it is our responsibility to be spiritual hosts of a sort.

When members of the Greeting and Hospitality Teams reach out to you, please sign on to

extend your welcome to UUCM members and guests on behalf of all of us.

Molly Nolan for the Membership Committee

Adult Religious Education

New offerings for the New Year! Ring in 2019 with POSITIVITY! Start with an offering that will help YOU! Make this a better year - let's join TOGETHER- we're better TOGETHER!

January 9th: TED TALKS are BACK! Let's expand our minds together! (To be held on the second Wednesday of each month.) Lynne Grobsky will facilitate a discussion of a TED Talk (talk to be determined). Open to the public and free of charge. For more information, email Lynne at lynnegrobsky@gmail.com.

February 2nd: How to Create a Home Altar. Want to feel more peace and joy? Let's learn together how a home altar can deepen your connection to spirit. Create a sanctuary in your home! Facilitated by Barbara Kline. For more information, email Lynne Grobsky at lynnegrobsky@gmail.com

Megumi Yamamoto Memorial Fund

December 2018 Update

For many of us, it is still hard to believe that Megumi is no longer with us. Our hearts are just starting to begin the healing process. We send out heartfelt thoughts and blessings to her family. In a recent article in the Record-Journal, the medical examiner's office ruled her death in early October as an accident. As of Nov. 11, the Megumi Yamamoto Memorial Fund has raised \$415. Since children were so important to Megumi, the Board of Trustees plans to ask the Children and Youth Religious Education (CYRE) Committee for ideas on how to honor Megumi and the children in our church with the memorial fund. It is not too late to donate money to this dedicated fund. Make

your check payable to Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden with “Megumi Memorial Fund” in the memo line. Thank you.

Kudos and Thank You to:

All who have led our November worship services:

November 4 – “Turning Back” – Led by Jeff May and John Sepples, with Lisa Urso serving as Worship Associate. Thanks to all three of these Worship Associates!

November 11 – “Penitents, Patients, Prophets” led by Rev. Dr. Chris Antal, with Worship Associate Lisa Urso. As a parish minister, staff chaplain at a VA Center in Philadelphia, and veteran of the U.S. war in Afghanistan, Chris was a distinctive gift to our pulpit on this Sunday when Rev. Jan was marking Veterans Day in its original form, Armistice Day, in Viet Nam.

November 18 – “Love Beyond Gender” for this Transgender Sunday of Remembrance, worship was led by Angie Swanger, with Jeff May serving as Worship Associate.

November 25 – “An Attitude of Gratitude”, intergenerational worship led by John Sepples and Jennifer Richard, with Lynne Grobsky serving as Worship Associate.

Our Shared Ministry Committee, which has served also as Rev. Jan’s sabbatical committee—chaired by Tim O’Brien, with Bob Reutenauer and Pat Stark. Special thanks to Tim O’Brien and congregational President Donna Stimpson, for screening pastoral care needs during Jan’s absence.

Colleagues Rev. Linda Hoddy, Rev. Megan Lloyd Joiner, Rev. Dr. Adam Robersmith and Rev. Joy Christi for being on call for pastoral needs during Jan’s absence.

All who have supplemented our pastoral care by sending notes, calling, and calling on members and friends moving through difficult times.

For all of you who are engaged in the shared ministry of this congregation.

For all of you who should have been cited but were overlooked.

Loving Wishes to:

Barbara Kline, who continues to recover at home from heart surgery at Hartford Hospital

Connie Florio Welton, who is recuperating from hip surgery and is moving through additional health challenges. Connie welcomes cards, messages, and visits at Coccoma/Apple Rehab Center at 33 Cone Avenue, Meriden 06450. For Connie’s cell phone number, please call or message Jane Dioguardi at 203-213-1228. Connie’s cell phone number, please call or message Jane Dioguardi at (203) 213-1228.

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.

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