

# 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**

Soul—What is it? Where is it? Is it?



Such are my reflections on a zero-degree mid-January day. Not coincidentally, for "Soul" is the worship theme of this year at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden. I find that in response to the word "spiritual," we tend to nod knowingly as if we understand exactly what it means. My guess is that we respond similarly to the word "soul." They are both amorphous terms and, like the remarkable butterfly (of which there are thousands of varieties), they are harvested in the fluidity of metamorphosistransformation, change, even transfiguration. We try to pin down these terms at risk of losing the many-splendored texture of community that is at the heart of this faith that we share. I wonder if we perhaps need to loosen up on how we "claim" such notions, as we indeed do through our own tinted lenses.

Throughout the month that is about to be, I invite us to approach these matters through every Sunday worship experience, each along a distinct path. From "The Spirit of Tet: A Renewal of Communal Soul" and the workshop that follows in the afternoon, through our Stone Stoup Celebration in which we rediscover the soul of community through the not so ordinary process of "making soup from a stone," on into a worshipful invitation to "Really See Me!" to "Connecting in a Disconnected Time," we are exploring soulful wholeness. Each worshipful exploration is laced also with stories of transformation.

Behold the butterfly. It embodies the remarkable process of transformation known as metamorphosis, from larva to the multi-hued marvel that captures our awe on a summer day. What is soul and what is spiritual and who we are in this life of mystery and miracle emerge from the restive nature of life itself. So too are we restive creatures, embedded in transformations which we try with futility to control.

Not once again, but evermore are we as a congregation embedded in the transformation that is communal flow, renewal, evolution, and on into mysteries that transcend our imagination. "For all that is our life," might we "sing our thanks and praise; for all life is a gift which we are called to use to build the common good, [which] makes our own days glad." Such is the gift that we never cease to unwrap.

So may it be as we move with the flow of this still infant year.

Love, amazement, and all possible grace— *Rev. Jan* 

#### **About the Newsletter**

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

328 Paddock Avenue Meriden, CT 06450-6985 203-237-9297 www.uumeriden.org www.facebook.com/UUMeriden/

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

#### Contacts

Our Minister Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull 781-733-0355 Revjcarlssonbull@uumeriden.org

President Donna Stimpson president@uumeriden.org

Vice President Jane Dioguardi vp@uumeriden.org

*Office Administrator* Office Hours M 12-2, W 10-3, F 11-2 Office@uumeriden.org

#### Minister Hours

Rev. Jan holds office hours Tuesday through Friday, 10:30 am to 4:30 pm and by appointment. She is available for pastoral emergencies at 781-733-0355. Her day off is Monday. Since she is on two-thirds time, she generally takes a week off per month. In February, she will be off the latter half of the week that begins February 11. Be sure to check out her recent blog, posted on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, at pastor@uumeriden.org

### **Board of Trustees**

On January 7<sup>th</sup> the Board of Trustees (BOT) held a special meeting devoted to only two agenda items: 1) reviewing and adopting its goals and objectives for the next six months and longer and 2) learning about transitional ministry options.

**Goals and Objectives:** The BOT reviewed the goals and objectives. In the interest of transparency, we will share them with the congregation through the website, display them on the bulletin board in the main hall, and include them in worship announcements in the order of service. All input is welcome. As a reminder, members can attend Board of Trustees meetings, which are held on the third Thursday of the month from 7 to 9 PM in the lavender/Pete Seeger/east room downstairs.

**Transitional Ministry**: The Board of Trustees discussed best practices, which recommends a transitional minister between settled ministers. We discussed settled/called minister versus a transitional minister. The Board voted unanimously to follow the transitional minister process.

The BOT reviewed a summary of the Transitional Ministry Handbook and discussed the differences between an interim and consultant minister. Since our church can afford a halftime minister and we would like an interim trained minister, which cannot be less than ¾ time, we discussed a shared (yoked) interim minister with the Mattatuck UU Society (MUUS). A motion was approved to pursue a yoked interim ministry with MUUS.

If anyone would like to read the eight-page summary of the Transitional Ministry Handbook or the twenty-two page full document with additional appendices, please contact me and I will make it available. At the regular January 17<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, we connected by internet Zoom with Christine Purcell, Transitional Program Manager, New England Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). She was able to answer a number of our questions.

The Boards of UUCM and MUUS plan to hold a join dinner and connect again with Christine Purcell, Transitional Program Manager, to further discuss yoked interim ministry.

Donna Stimpson, President

# **Upcoming Services**

www.uucentralct.org/worship

### Sunday February 3rd "The Spirit of Tet: A Renewal of Communal Soul"

Worship Leaders: Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull with Dr. Edward Tick, Kate Dahlstedt, and Rev. Dr. Sebastian Perumbilly

Worship Associate: Lisa Urso

Tet is a Vietnamese celebration geared to the Lunar New Year, occurring this year from February 4-8. It is marked by a renewal of soul in families, villages, and throughout the country. While a time of spiritual celebration in Viet Nam, it holds guite different associations for many Americans; for it was the 1968 Tet Offensive during the American War that marked the death of thousands of Americans and many more Vietnamese. How to reconcile these two vastly different associations with the Vietnamese New Year? What does it mean to renew the soul of an entire country, and how might we at this point in US history, learn from the practices and rituals of renewing our communal soul?

Dr. Edward Tick, Kate Dahlstedt, and Rev. Dr. Sebastian Perumbilly will join Rev. Jan in leading this service. Dr. Tick and Ms. Dahlstedt are cofounders of Soldiers Heart, the non-profit under whose aegis Ed, Rev. Dr. Perumbilly, and Rev. Jan partook of the November 2018 pilgrimage to Viet Nam. Dr. Tick is the author of several works on healing the soul in the aftermath of war. Ms. Dahlstedt has long been a key leader in Soldiers Heart retreats and pilgrimages. Rev. Dr. Perumbilly is a leading expert in researching the impact of war on families.

#### Afternoon workshop/retreat – 2-4 pm – "Healing Wounded Souls in the Aftermath of War" – Led by Dr. Tick, Ms. Dahlsted, Rev. Dr. Perumbilly, and Rev. Dr. Jan

What does it take and what does it mean to heal wounded souls, especially those of military veterans and their families, from injury sustained in military service on behalf of an invading country? In interactive mode, we will address this, and learn and experience what such healing looks like. We especially seek to heal from the raw judgment visited upon veterans returning from Viet Nam and other wars that many of us protested, and reunite us as one people.

#### Sunday February 10<sup>th</sup>

### Guest at Your Table/Stone Soup Sunday "It's not just soup, but soup that is just!" An Intergenerational Service

Worship Leaders: Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull with Jennifer Hadley, James Dawson, Richard Gault, Jeannie Jalbert, Angelique Metivier, and children and teachers of the congregation Worship Associate: John Sepples

Why does our country sometimes turn its back on people from other countries in need? How can we change that attitude? As part of the service today, our church school students and some talented adults will present an updated version of the Stone Soup drama, under the guidance of our talented teachers. The Stone Soup worship and ensuing potluck is one of this church's most beloved annual traditions. Making stone soup is a metaphor for how a change of heart in the direction of justice can happen. It is a preface to our "Stone Soup" lunch (aka Second Sunday Dinner). This is the culmination of our Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's (UUSC) Guest at Your Table Campaign, begun in November with the distribution of boxes to fill with funds for the ongoing work of our UUSC. Please remember to bring the cash that you have collected, converted to a **check payable to UUSC**, with Guest at Your Table in the memo. We'll collect our contributions during worship, then send the outcome of our generosity to our UUSC for continuing to advance justice worldwide. So too will we honor our congregational mission.

Join us in celebrating community with a "Stone Soup" lunch as our Second Sunday Dinner directly after our worship service. Please bring veggies cleaned and cut and ready for the broth! Salads and desserts are also welcome.

#### Sunday February 17<sup>th</sup>

"Really See Me!"

Worship Leader: Donna Stimpson and Anita Sanders

Worship Associate: Lynne Grobsky There are so many ways of acting out the dynamic of "the other"—racism, classism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia, and Islamophobia, to name a few. There is also "ableism," which undermines the dignity of those among us with physical and mental disabilities. Donna Stimpson, President of UU Meriden, and Anita Sanders, President of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Bridgeport, will offer their unique perspectives on both temporary and long-lasting disabilities and how we as Unitarian Universalists can better address these issues and become more welcoming congregations.

### Sunday February 24th

#### "Connecting in a Disconnected Time"

Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull with Randy Heath Worship Associate: Jeff May How do we get along with family, friends, coworkers or on-line acquaintances when we disagree with their current social outlook? This is a dilemma many of us face in this age of ICE, government shutdown, and the highly controversial behavior of the current administration of our nation. What can we discover by plumbing deeply into the principles and historic practices (and malpractice!) of what we understand as Unitarian Universalism? What might we learn from the inevitable stumbling blocks? There are ever options for connecting in the deepest thickets of disconnection.

### **Calendar of Events**

www.uucentralct.org/calendar Saturday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> 10:00 AM Creating Home Altar Workshop

Sunday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2:00 PM

Healing Wounded Souls in the Aftermath of War

Wednesday, February 13<sup>th</sup> 7:00 PM

TED Talk"Why it's worth listening to people you disagree with"

### Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> 5:30 PM

UU Goods and Services Auction Sunday, February 24<sup>th</sup> 2:00 PM Getting To Know U Workshop

### **Ongoing Meetings/Activities**

Anti-Racism Discussion February 5th 6:00 to 8:00 PM

**Buddhanature Gathering Group** Sunday, February 17<sup>th</sup> 2:00 PM

Mid-week Meditation First Wednesday, 7:00 – 7:45 PM

Women's Scared Singing Circle Tuesdays 7:00 – 8:30 PM

### The Goods and Services Auction

The Goods and Services Auction, one of UUCM's major fundraisers, is coming right up! It netted over \$5,000 last year! This year's Auction is set for Saturday Feb. 23 and will kick off with a potluck dinner at 5:30pm.

Here's how the Auction works: You offer a particular service, and the winning bidder pays the church. As the donor, you can claim as a charitable contribution the amount paid for your donation.

The Auction is not a tag sale, but we do accept a limited number of physical objects of high quality. Speak to Janet Hiller re: suitability of a particular item.

#### What do we need you to do?

Tell us what you'd like to donate...tickets to a sports or cultural event, pet sitting, childcare for an evening, handyman services, a day trip, dinner at your place or the buyer's, kid's birthday party, lawn cleanup, painting, astrological readings, transportation to an airport or elsewhere, handmade crafts or jewelry or textile items, baked goods to win that night or to order for later delivery, therapeutic massage, knife sharpening...

Complete a paper donation form that you'll find at the church each Sunday through February 17...

- Or email your donation information to janethiller@outlook.com. Include a description of your donation, its value, desired starting bid, and your phone number.
- Please use the signup sheet at the church to indicate what you'll provide for dinner and how many people we should plan for.

- Is there a service you'd like to buy if a particular congregant offered it? Let Janet know, and she'll ask for the donation.
- Note that we expect payment that night—cash, check, or credit card.

This event is always a lot of fun: bidding can be brisk; Jeff May is a masterly auctioneer; the fellowship is warm, and the food is delicious.

Questions? Speak to Janet at church or email her at janethiller@outlook.com.

Janet Hiller for the Finance Committee

#### THANKING MAUREEN LEAHY AND SEEKING A NEW OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Just recently Maureen gave two weeks' notice, given her studies and her other job, which is close to full-time. She has served us with high competence, warmth, resilience, and caring. I know she would appreciate a note of thanks from you. If you address it to her at our church, Rev. Jan will pass it on to Maureen. In the meantime, we are seeking a new office administrator. As you read this, a job posting will have been circulated. If you have someone to recommend, please contact ASAP Rev. Jan or Donna Stimpson, congregational president, at feministangler@aol.com, or Jane Dioguardi, congregational vice-president, at house of hane@snet.net. In the meantime, contact Rev. Jan with any administrative matters.

# Update on Collaboration of Three UU Congregations

The Presidents and Vice Presidents of three UU churches (UU Church of Greater Bridgeport, Mattatuck UU Society, and UU Church in Meriden) met on January 16 to discuss how we could collaborate. Several ideas were suggested: pulpit exchanges, shared Director of Religious Education (DRE), music and song, inviting each other to church events. Each of the churches discussed their strengths and how we could share our expertise. The three churches discussed a picnic inviting all three congregations to a state park to share and get to know each other. Also discussed was having a retreat of the leadership of all three churches.

Donna Stimpson, President

# Social Justice Council

#### Guest at Your Table (GAYT) 2018-19

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) Raising support for and awareness about key Human Rights issues

#### Justice across Borders

From the Northern Triangle of Central America, to deserts of Mexico and Arizona, to detention centers in the United States, the road away from danger is paved with injustices. Partnering with grassroots allies along the Central American migration trail, the UUSC addresses root causes, supports migrants in transit, and protects the right to seek asylum. This year we will be supporting our courageous Migrant Justice partners.

#### Stone Soup Service and Luncheon February 10

During the Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> service, while Religious Education classes present the story of Stone Soup, we will collect your contributions, which are tax deductible. A contribution of \$40 will provide one annual adult membership in the UUSC, including regular mailings, action alerts, and the newsletter, "Rights Now." Please convert the money you have collected since November into a check payable to UUSC.

For the luncheon after that day's service, please bring fresh vegetables washed and cut up, ready for the pot, or frozen/canned vegetables. Take them to the kitchen before going into the service, so they can be added with the "stones" for a delicious Stone Soup!

#### The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr/Dr. Albert Owens Breakfast

On a cold and icy Monday morning, January 21, seven members and friends from UUCM attended this annual breakfast, contributing to the Scholarship Fund which benefits Meriden high school students.

#### Anti-Racism Discussion Group

We meet on the first Tuesday of each month, 6pm-8pm. In February we will start discussing the book *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo. The discussion of this book will continue through April. For more information, contact <u>activejustice@uumeriden.org</u>. If you would like a preview of the ideas in this book, go to this sixminute video link:

https://www.facebook.com/BigThinkScience/vid eos/272757440243386/

### **Membership**

*Getting To Know U Workshop* Sunday, February 24, Noon to 1:30 PM

Are you new here? We would like to get to know you better. If you feel the same, please plan to join us for one of these introductory workshops in which Rev. Jan and representatives of our Membership Committee 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.

The Membership Committee meets the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm. Chaired by Molly Nolan, we would be delighted to have you come join us! To learn more and/or to register for a workshop, please contact Membership Chair Molly Nolan at

<u>mollybnolan@gmail.com</u> or Rev. Jan at <u>revjcarlssonbull@gmail.com</u> or in person.

# **Adult Religious Exploration**

TED Talks are back! Expand your horizons and engage in intelligent, dynamic discussion. Join us on the second Wednesday of each month. The next one, on February 13th at 7pm, is "Why it's worth listening to people you disagree with" given by Zachary R. Wood. Lynne Grobsky facilitates the discussion—come join us, it's free!

We are always looking for new ideas for workshops or activities. We want to offer programs that nurture, teach, and enrich the lives of our community. We welcome any input or suggestions. Please contact Lynne Grobsky, Chairperson, at lynnegrobsky@gmail.com

# **Small Group Ministry**

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. This year we have one group, co-facilitated by Steve Volpini and Kathy Lindberg and meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays from 10am to 12pm. To register, contact Steve at stevevolpini2@gmail.com. It's not too late to partake of this enriching experience.

### Leadership Development Team

How do you want to share your gifts and talents with UUCM?

At the Holiday Fair, I was delighted to work with some of UUCM's members and friends. They were very generous with their time and talents. From that experience, it occurred to me that it isn't always clear to our members and friends especially those who have recently joined us-how they can share their time and talents.

The Leadership Development Team is working with other committees of the church to create a program for congregants to learn about volunteer positions available at UUCM. It will be modeled after the Growth through Service program which was developed by the UU Congregation of Delaware County, PA.

The Growth through Service program has two parts: job descriptions of volunteer opportunities, and a gifts and talents database. UUCM's program will be similar, with job descriptions for volunteer opportunities plus a gifts and talents database. I know our members and friends are willing to share their time and talents, but first, they want to know what is involved with volunteering. Will it be a good fit for me? It is the Leadership Development Team's hope that by providing job descriptions, your questions will be answered.

Therefore, you will be able to make an informed decision about how you share your talents and time. To find out more about leadership development, or to join the Leadership Development Team, contact Trish Schneider at trishs@cox.net. Trish Schneider

# **Finance Committee**

As we enter the second half of the '18-'19 fiscal year, the Finance Committee has one foot in the current fiscal year and the other in fiscal year '19-'20. We continue to monitor the current year's finances as we plan for next fiscal year.

We worked with Maureen Leahy, our office administrator, to prepare the end of the calendar year pledge statements for tax purposes. They were sent out in late January.

We began planning for FY 2019-20. In January, the committees submitted their budget requests, which we will use to start drafting the '19-'20 budget. Once the pledge drive/canvass has been completed, we will be able to project the total income for FY '19-'20. Then the Finance Committee will be able to present a balanced budget at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

Volunteer opportunity: The Finance Committee is looking for a bookkeeper for FY '19-'20. Ann Dougherty, our current bookkeeper, plans to step down at the end of the fiscal year. For more about what is involved in being the church bookkeeper, talk with Trish Schneider or Sandy Duffy.

Here is a snapshot of UUCM finances for the first half of FY '18-'19. We brought in \$61,080.84 in total income (47.7% of projected income). Income during the first half of the fiscal year runs low for two reasons. Current FY Pledges are at 47.5% of budget. Second, our major fundraisers are late in the fiscal year. Below are highlights of income:

- Pledges (current year and prior year): \$26,586.15
- Collection Plate \$2,343.39 (25% of the \$2,343.39 goes to the Social Justice Council)
- Fundraising: \$3,376.30. Our second major fundraising event, the Goods and

Services Auction, is set for February 23rd. See article elsewhere in this issue.

• Rentals: \$2,810

Our expenses ran a little under 50% in the first half of the fiscal year, at 46.4% of budget. Total Expenses were \$58,530.13. We have a couple of major expenses that will be paid in January, such as UUA dues and dishwasher repairs; therefore, expenses could rise to 60 % of budget for January.

All are welcome to attend Finance Committee meetings. Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 14th at 7 pm.

Trish Schneider, Treasurer

### Kudos and Thank You to:

#### All who led January's worship services:

January 6 – "Here Comes the Sun" – Thanks to Rev. Jan and Worship Associate Jeff May for this worship experience on living into the promise of the growing light.

January 13 – "Old Souls and New" – New Member Sunday, led by Rev. Jan and Worship Associate Lynne Grobsky. Welcome to our new members, Angelique Metivier (with daughter, Marielle), and Candace Dunn. BRAVA to Jane Dioguardi for another amazing cake celebrating our new members!

January 20 – "Was it only a dream?" Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday – to have been led by Rev. Jan and Angie Swanger, with John Sepples as Worship Associate. Ice and sleet and our belief that no one should risk their life getting to church, this service was cancelled.

January 27 – "What relationship do you have with yourself?" – led by Worship Associate Lynne Grobsky assisted by Worship Associate, Lisa Urso. How to get in touch with our real selves was the grounding for this meaningful and memorable worship experience.

Property Committee—specifically: Randy Heath, who responds again and again to facility needs,

including emergencies that call for immediate attention; and Donna Stimpson, who continues to collect and dispose of trash and recycling.

Committee on Shared Ministry, with Tim O'Brien as the stellar chair, and members Bob Reutenauer and Pat Stark. They and Rev. Jan have met almost every month for the past

several years. With the imminent transition in our professional ministry, this committee met for the last time on January 16.

Chalice Sanctuary Team, whose participants continue to address the needs of our sanctuary guests, Sujitno Sajuti and his wife, Dahlia. Ongoing brava to Nancy Burton, who continues as Coordinator, and Alok Bhatt, our liaison with CIRA (Connecticut Immigration Rights Alliance), who is our liaison on multiple matters of sanctuary and the legal process, which we are ever hopeful will culminate in legal recognition of Sujitno's right to stay in this country.

For all nine women who participated in the Women's March/Rally in Hartford on Saturday, January 19—Sandi Cohn, Elaine Donovan, Mary Beth Eckert, Liz Hall, Terry Kababik, Peg Kirkpatrick, Angie Swanger, Diane Szymaszek, and Rev. Jan.

For all the committee chairs who have submitted your budget requests for 2019-20!

For all who should have been cited and were overlooked.

# Loving Wishes to:

**Connie Florio Welton,** who continues to recuperate from hip surgery and a long stay in rehab, now at home. Why not send her a note at 9 North Road, Southington, CT 06489?

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

**Sujitno and Dahlia Sajuti,** who hold hope every day that they might gain their freedom to

remain in this country. It is not easy to be in sanctuary for such a prolonged period. As of February 1, it will be 479 days.

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 so that we might extend Kudos, Thank You, Congratulations, or Loving Wishes in our next newsletter!

# Our Larger UU World

Thinking about GA – the General Assembly of our Unitarian Universalist Association?



# UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

It's not too early to do so!

Registration opens March 1 for this year's GA in Spokane, WA, June 19-23.

To learn more, visit www.uua.org/ga and contact Donna Stimpson at feministangler@aol.com

or Rev. Jan at revjcarlssonbull@gmail.com or either Donna or Jan in person.

The Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden

328 Paddock Avenue Meriden, CT 06450