

Unitarian Universalist Society: East

Member of the New England Region of the
Unitarian Universalist Association



Unitarian Universalist Society: East is a welcoming, open-minded, spiritual community seeking truth and meaning in its many forms. We share responsibility for building a more equitable, peaceful, and sustainable world.

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Sunday Services Schedule

February Ministry Theme: Widening the Circle

In February we hope to return to hybrid Sunday services, with a limited number of attendees welcomed into the sanctuary for worship on Sunday mornings. However, at the time of publishing this newsletter, we do not yet know exactly when we will return to the hybrid model, or whether we will stay with one service or move back to two services. The Policy Board will be reviewing our protocols during the last week of January. Please watch our eblasts for information. And if you think you've missed some information, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 860-646-5151 or email at uuseoffice@uuse.org.

Our Zoom login and call-in information will be shared through the congregational eblasts on Wednesdays and Saturdays. To subscribe to the congregational eblast, please send a message to e-news@uuse.org or contact Annie Gentile in the UUS:E office to arrange another method of receiving relevant information.

February 6: "If I Win, Do You Lose?"

Our February ministry theme is "Widening the Circle," which is also the title of the UUA's 2020 report calling on congregations to actively address systemic oppression and create inclusive, beloved community. Through stories appropriate for all ages, this morning's service will present the concepts of racism and white privilege, and their perpetuation through the belief in the Zero-Sum Bias. Hope for overcoming these challenges lies in the power and healing of diverse communities.

Speakers and Coordinators: Stacey Musulin and Alan Ayers

February 13: "Some Things Must Change."

As we speak about "widening the circle" of all those who participate in or are otherwise connected to UUS:E, it becomes clear that some things must change. Rev. Josh offers his perspectives on necessary changes.

Coordinator: Rev. Josh Pawelek

February 20: "The Impersonal Nature of Suffering."

Our presenter this morning is UUS:E's Nancy Thompson whose insights into Buddhism will connect the topic of personal suffering to our monthly theme, Widening the Circle. Through readings and stories, Nancy will introduce us to the

Buddha's thoughtful, spiritual guidance in dealing with a topic of universal concern.

Coordinator: Sheila Foran

February 27: "Some Things Must Endure."

As we speak about "widening the circle" of all those who participate in or are otherwise connected to UUS:E, it becomes clear that some things must endure. Rev. Josh offers his perspectives on the essentials of Unitarian Universalist congregational life that ought to stay the same.

Coordinator: Rev. Josh Pawelek

March 6: "Faith in the Spirit of Life!"

All Congregation Service. This morning we launch our 2022 Annual Appeal; and Rev. Josh and Gina Campellone begin an exploration of our March ministry theme, Faith. How does your connection to UUS:E strengthen you as a person of faith?

Coordinators: Gina Campellone and Rev. Josh Pawelek

Community Outreach Ministry

Charitable Giving for February 2022

As always, thank you for your generosity.

"We do not gather our gifts only for ourselves, but to share with the larger community."

Continuing our practice of sharing our gifts with the community beyond our walls, fifty percent of our Sunday plate collections for the month of February will go to [Operation Fuel](#).

Please contact Louisa Graver at lgraver163@gmail.com, David Lacoss, or Nancy Madar at nancymadar@hotmail.com.

Checks made out to UUS:E will be treated as follows. If the memo line:

- ✓ is blank or "pledge" is written, all will go toward your pledge.
- ✓ has "COM" or the name of the charity is on the memo line, all will go to the charity.
- ✓ has "1/2 pledge, 1/2 COM," it will be divided equally.

2021-2022 Ministry Themes

<https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/themes.html>

September:	Embracing Possibility
October:	Cultivating Relationship
November:	Holding History
December:	Opening to Joy
January:	Living with Intention
February:	Widening the Circle
March:	Renewing Faith
April:	Awakening
May:	Nurturing Beauty
June:	Celebrating Blessings

Medicine Bottles for Haiti



Peggy Gagne has set up a yellow collection box for empty medicine bottles in the foyer, near the ink cartridge recycle box, to help Jean Labutis with a project. Jean has a contact in Haiti who has been receiving donations of medicines in very large batches, and they need empty pill bottles to distribute them into. So, we are recycling by collecting pill bottles of all sizes, with the labels removed or with info blacked out. Please drop them in the yellow box in the foyer. Thank you!

Any questions, please contact Jean Labutis, jeanalabutis@gmail.com, or Peggy Gagne, pgagne15@att.net.

Stop & Shop Cards

Stop & Shop cards can still be purchased despite the pandemic. Anyone who is interested in buying a card can contact Annie, our office administrator. Cards come in \$50, \$100 and \$250 amounts. The money raised from this effort goes into the general fund. And they make great holiday gifts! If you need any help with this or more information, contact Sandy Johnson at 860-888-9673.

Stewarding Opportunity!

The Stewardship Committee is planning our 2022 Annual Appeal—Moving Forward with Hope—for this spring. Because of uncertainty with the COVID virus, we will conduct the canvass like we did last year. Members and friends will receive canvass info in the mail (pledge form, giving guide, EFT form) and asked to return their pledge to Annie in the enclosed envelope. After two weeks, people who have not returned their pledge will be assigned to a steward for follow up. The steward will use email, phone calls, texts, Facebook, meet in a social distance safe way, etc. to get in touch with people to answer any questions and remind them to fill out their pledge form and return it to Annie.

The Annual Appeal is more than asking for money. It's a time for sharing our common goals and values, a time of community building. This is an opportunity to get to know new people, share your passion and commitment for UUS:E and help make our Annual Appeal a success. The time commitment is relatively short with one training session and a couple of weeks to contact a maximum of four members or friends. The stewardship conversations are a time of fellowship and sharing our dreams and aspirations. Talking about financial commitment is a small part of a much larger conversation about generosity and community. So please consider volunteering to be a steward this year. **We especially need people under the age of 60 to be stewards and parents with kids in RE.**

We will provide virtual training on Saturday, Feb. 26, 10 – 11:30 AM and Tuesday, March 1, 7 – 8:30 PM.

Please email Phil Sawyer at psawyer215@gmail.com or call 860-633-8655 if you are willing to help or have any questions.

SJAO Supports "Recovery for All"

UUS:E Social Justice / Anti-Oppression Committee Pledges Support of "Recovery for All" Tax Reform Initiatives.

The UUS:E Social Justice / Anti-Oppression committee (SJAO) has been an ongoing supporter of the Recovery for All coalition in CT. Recovery for All is a statewide coalition of labor, community, and faith organizations representing hundreds of thousands of people across, racial, ethnic and class lines. They stand united in a long-term mission to eliminate systemic inequalities and build a better Connecticut. Most recently, SJAO voted in favor of a committee resolution supporting Recovery for All's efforts to change the state's regressive tax structure, and to ensure federal and municipal funding is effectively used to help everyone in an equitable, transparent, and transformative way.

The following is the SJAO approved resolution:

Create a Recovery For All

Whereas Unitarian Universalists covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of Connecticut workers lost their jobs during the pandemic, exposing and exacerbating longstanding racial and economic injustices;

Whereas Connecticut's 14 wealthiest billionaires have collectively increased their wealth by approximately \$13 billion during the pandemic (according to a March 2021 Forbes Magazine article);

Whereas building a state where everyone can succeed, we need to devote sufficient resources to erase inequities in public education, create good jobs by investing in infrastructure, expand affordable housing, robustly fund public higher education and job training programs, and expand access to affordable healthcare;

Whereas building such a state requires revamping Connecticut's regressive tax structure so that it rewards work, not wealth, and helps generate the sustainable, lasting economic recovery we all deserve;

Therefore be it resolved that, during Connecticut's 2022 legislative session, the UUS:E Social Justice/ Anti-Oppression Committee will partner with the Recovery For All coalition to:

§ create greater transparency in our state's corporate tax structure and ensure that those who do not pay what they owe are held accountable;

§ build equity into the tax code by requiring the state to conduct annual tax incidence analyses to inform fair tax policy; and

§ ensure that federal dollars allocated to the state and municipal governments are used to fund programs and projects in transparent and transformative ways.



Annual Appeal

Our theme for this year's Annual Appeal is "Moving Forward with Hope." Rev. Josh will kick off the Annual Appeal on March 6 with a Sunday service. Each member and friend will receive a letter with information on our accomplishments from this past year and our aspirations for the next fiscal year (July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023). Our approach in 2022 is to ask each member and friend to fill out a pledge form and electronic funds transfer (EFT) form if desired and return to the church office.

This year we are also introducing a matching grant generously offered by Fred and Phil Sawyer. They will make a dollar-for-dollar match of as much as \$1,000 for each new pledge and \$500 to match any increase in an existing pledge. The Annual Appeal ends on Friday, April 8 and those who have not responded will be contacted by a steward. Similar to last year, we are not planning any potlucks or in-person meetings, however we plan to proceed with a "virtual canvassing" in order to continue supporting the diverse ministries, programs and services provided at UUS:E. This is what makes us a resilient and thriving community despite the challenges we face. This should be familiar to most of you, as this is the same approach to the annual appeal that we followed last year.

As you know UUS:E relies on the generosity and kindness from our community that allows us to continue to connect whether virtually or hopefully with more opportunities for in-person gatherings throughout 2022. We look forward to sharing our talents, time and treasure with you and this beloved community. Thank you for your contribution.

The Stewardship Committee: Jason Corsa, Louisa Graver, Larry Lunden, Stan McMillen and Phil Sawyer

Sneak Preview and Panel Discussion Stepping Into the Shade: Tobacco's Connection to Civil Rights

Feb. 6 at 1:00 PM

Join us at 1:00 on Sunday afternoon, February 6 for a sneak preview and panel discussion of footage from "Stepping Into the Shade: Tobacco's Connection to Civil Rights." This event is free and open to the public. Zoom login information will be published in our regular UUS:E eblasts or can be obtained by contacting the UUS:E office at 860-6460-5151 or uuseoffice@uuse.org. If public health conditions allow, a limited number of people will be welcomed into our sanctuary to attend the event in person.



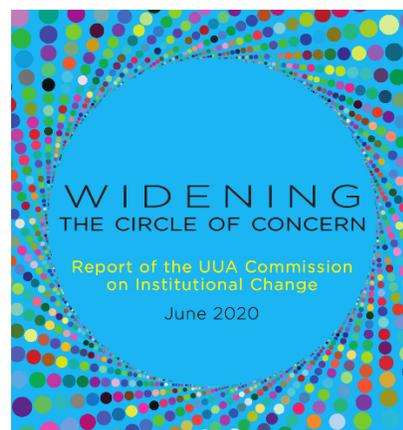
Background

A January press release from Eastern Connecticut State University announced that the school "has been awarded \$35,000 by Connecticut Humanities to produce a documentary about Connecticut's shade tobacco industry and its connection to the civil rights movement. "Stepping into the Shade: Tobacco's Connection to Civil Rights" will be a six-part mini-series hosted by Connecticut entertainment producer June Archer." And further: "Filmmakers Kristen Morgan and Brian Day, theatre professors at Eastern, are at the beginning stages of the production process and seeking information from anyone with family connections to tobacco farms in Connecticut. They are hoping to speak with migrant workers or relatives of the students from historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) who came North for summer work on the farms. The most notable such worker was Martin Luther King Jr., who spent a summer on a Simsbury farm in the 1940s through a program with Morehouse College in Georgia."

This project is exciting! UUS:E is blessed to have the opportunity not only to learn about a forgotten piece of 20th-century Connecticut history, but to get an inside look at the film as it is being made.

Widening the Circle of Concern!

A six-month adult study/action program



Widening the Circle of Concern is the title of the 2020 report from the Unitarian Universalist Association's Commission on Institutional Change. The Commission was established in 2017 with the charge of "supporting long-term cultural and institutional change that redeems the essential promise and ideals of Unitarian Universalism." The work of the commission included conducting an audit of the power structures within Unitarian Universalism in an attempt to understand how they perpetuate systemic racism and white supremacy culture. **Widening the Circle of Concern** presents the results of that work and a series of helpful recommendations. A group of committed UUS:E members and friends has been studying the report since January, however **it's not too late to join this forward-looking and sometimes provocative discussion.** Meetings currently take place in Zoom and will hopefully add an in-person option as public health conditions allow. To read and/or listen to the report, visit the UUA website at <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening>. To join the group, contact Rev. Josh Pawelek at minister@uuse.org or 860-652-8961.

New Member Biographies



Laurel Hennebury

Laurel Hennebury grew up on the South Shore of Boston but has made her home in Connecticut for the last 30 years. She currently lives on Amston Lake in Lebanon, CT with her wife Barbara and their two rescue dogs, Mystic and Angus. Their daughter Emma, her husband Tom, and their two grandchildren, William, five, and Charlotte, almost two, recently moved back to Connecticut and live in Mansfield.

Laurel has a master's degree in Counseling and a PhD in Education. She is currently the director of an education and organizational psychology department, a job she loves. However, she is also looking forward to retiring in August, so that she will have more free time to devote to other interests.

She enjoys the outdoors and spending time hiking, biking, and kayaking. She is also an avid wildlife photographer and, pre-COVID, she traveled extensively to be in the presence of some magnificent creatures. She also has a woodworking shop and, as the daughter of a carpenter, from an early age she has loved to tinker with building and repairing things.

Laurel says that her journey to the Unitarian Universalist Society was guided by her mother, a poet who passed away last year. She says, "As a child I was raised Catholic, but my mother who was very active in a variety of social justice causes, became a Unitarian when I was in my early teens. I am sure she is smiling down on me now knowing I finally took her advice and became a UU."



Sue and Jerry Myers

Sue and Jerry Myers grew up in the small midwestern town of Vandalia, Ohio. In high school, they both were in the youth group at a small Congregational Christian church and were "just friends," until they were both home for holiday vacation from separate colleges and began dating. Jerry transferred to Ohio State and they eventually got married. Sue graduated before Jerry and began teaching at a junior high school in Columbus. Jerry graduated and went to U.S. Navy Officer Candidate School. Eventually, they wound up in San Diego where Jerry reported aboard his ship for a three-year tour of duty. He wasn't always at sea, however, since they had their first daughter, Carla, while in San Diego.

After discharge from the Navy, they relocated back to Columbus, Ohio and subsequently had their second daughter, Kelly. They bought their first house and settled in domestic tranquility: Sue as a homemaker and Jerry in a business career.

Advances in Jerry's career soon took the family "on their march to the sea," with a short stop in New Jersey and then to Connecticut where their daughters graduated from high school. During their 11 years in Connecticut, family activities consisted of sailing in Long Island Sound and cheering their daughters on the Middletown YMCA swim team. Sue revived her teaching endeavors by working in the library at Haddam-Killingworth High School and then working on staff at Wesleyan Press.

Then came their move to Maine with many big changes, especially for Sue who began working for legal services. "We arrived as empty nesters and knew no one," she says, "so we decided to go church shopping. Based on the recommendation from a friend, we decided to try the First Unitarian Church first. It was our last stop; we soon signed the book and became active members. During our

34 years in Maine, the church had become the nucleus of our spiritual and social activity.”

As much as they loved Yarmouth and their many UU friends, Sue and Jerry recognized that age-related problems might be on the horizon and it would be better if they were closer to family. They are now back in Connecticut, close to their daughter Carla and her two adult children. They currently live in Mansfield.



Victoria Bassett

Victoria Bassett is a Connecticut native, having been born in Rockville and raised in Mansfield.

She now resides in Manchester with her fiancé Cameron, and her 15-year-old brother Kedar.

Victoria is a 22-year-old college student majoring in Criminal Justice. Her career aspiration is to be an attorney. She specifically wants to focus on social justice work and advocating for foster children, as she feels that she would have a unique helpful perspective having been in foster care herself.

Currently, she works in produce at the Willimantic Food Co-op, where she has been for three years. Her hobbies include writing poetry, yoga, hiking, watching horror movies, and singing. She grew up with her major influences being her then Wiccan mother and her Christian grandmother, both of whom helped to spark her curiosity about spirituality and the world around her.

Victoria now identifies as a spiritual pagan, with no strict path. She found UUS:E through her mother's friend Priscilla, who has been a member for years. After attending the service based on Forgiveness, she immediately felt connected to the messages shared and took an interest in not only attending the services, but also becoming an active member. She looks forward to getting to know everyone and participating in our community.



Jenny Purcell

(Jenny's bio is pending.)

Save the Date!



The Annual Goods & Services Auction is set for the afternoon of Saturday, May 14, 2022.

We are planning an outdoor event at the meetinghouse with fun for all ages featuring a **COOKIE COMPETITION**. Do you have a winning recipe? Enter the competition!



So start thinking about what you would like to donate! We'll have raffle baskets again, the ever-popular dinners, group activities, lessons, services and select items that need a new home.

Want to join the committee? We could use new ideas and volunteers to help ask for donations. Contact us at auction@uuse.org.

Your Friendly Auction Committee,

Susan Gabriele, Jennifer Klee, Chris Larson, Stan McMillen & Nancy Papas

Green Sanctuary News

The following letter was written by Janet Heller and was published in the Journal Inquirer. As many of you know, our UUS:E congregation has supported this legislation in the past. Please contact your congress persons about our climate emergency. You can use this link from Citizens Climate Lobby, or simply call or write to your legislators.

CCL link: <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/write-your-representative/#/74/>

A plea to our members of congress:

It is high time to double down on the need to create BIG ACTION on the CLIMATE EMERGENCY that all of humanity is facing. So many things in our world, our nation and our state need to be repaired, but the ever-growing threat to all of our stability and hopes for greater justice and fairness among us...is the climate emergency. We cannot let the loss of the Build Back Better bill stop us from finding and working together to pass legislation that can be the overall framework for all the other actions we need to take in the face of this growing climate catastrophe.

The BIG ACTION I believe can work as that essential framework and can be agreed to by concerned progressives and conservatives, is the bill we have supported and is endorsed by Citizens Climate Lobby. The great need is for carbon pricing. We must put a price on carbon. The Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act HR 2307 is the best well-studied and carefully designed bill that can do that. Will you please endorse and fight for this bill in the House and support such legislation in the Senate?

I have been trying for a long, long time to get the people of our state and nation to see that all is lost if we let the climate crisis grow out of hand. We are almost there now! at the tipping point! We also know so many ways to limit the crisis but need the political will to make a huge nation-wide effort to do it!

How many more powerful hurricanes, 100-year floods twice in ten days, horrendous tornadoes and terrifying fires have to happen before we as a nation do the BIG thing that must be done?

A huge thanks to Janet for taking action!

The Carbon Fee and Dividend Plan is a far better option than the current laws which allow fossil fuel companies to receive payment for ill-conceived carbon capture plans.

Did you know there are currently two proposals for Interstate Carbon Pipelines across Nebraska and neighboring mid-western states? These Carbon Capture and Storage pipelines would pipe toxic

carbon dioxide and other chemical pollutants from fossil fuel smokestacks to areas in North Dakota where they can be "safely" buried underground.

As many of you know, Bold Nebraska (now part of a larger Bold Alliance organization) has finally successfully stopped the Keystone XL pipeline. Now they're taking on the Carbon Capture pipelines, which most farmers and ranchers don't want crossing their property. Click here for more information:

[Bold Nebraska | We mobilize unlikely alliances to protect the land and water.](#)

There's further information at Common Dreams website. [Opinion | The Future of Fossil Fuels Hinges on Two Huge Midwestern Pipeline Fights | Peter Montague \(commondreams.org\)](#)

Here's an excerpt from this informative article by Peter Montague dated 12/9/21:

The future of the fossil fuel industry depends on an expensive Rube Goldberg technology called carbon capture and storage (CCS), intended to capture billions of tons of hazardous waste carbon dioxide (CO2) from smokestacks and bury it deep underground where optimistic experts say it will remain forever. Pessimistic experts say it won't work.

And now for those of us who love books...

The Sustainable Living Committee has previously announced several book discussions we were interested in holding. We do still plan at least two discussions. Contact Janet Heller for the Zoom links.

The Book of Hope, A Survival Guide for Trying Times, by Jane Goodall and Douglas Abrams. Discussion on Sunday, February 27, 1:00 PM.

Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World, by Katharine Hayhoe. Discussion on Sunday, March 27, 1:00 PM..

Other recommended reading:

Diet for a Small Planet (Revised and Updated), by Francis Moore Lappé

The Story of More: How We Got to Climate Change and Where to Go From Here, by Hope Jahren

Animal, Vegetable, Junk: A History of Food, from Sustainable to Suicidal, by Mark Bittman

The Minister's Column: Hallelujah!

Dear Ones:

Our ministry theme for February is "Widening the Circle." This language comes explicitly from the 2020 report from the Unitarian Universalist Association's Commission on Institutional Change (COIC), entitled **Widening the Circle of Concern**. COIC, which convened in 2017, was charged with "supporting long-term cultural and institutional change that redeems the essential promise and ideals of Unitarian Universalism." The work of the commission included conducting an audit of the power structures within Unitarian Universalism in an attempt to understand how they perpetuate systemic racism and white supremacy culture. A group of about 15 UUS:E members and friends is studying the COIC report during the first half of 2022. If you would like to join that group, the invitation is open. (See the announcement in this newsletter.)

I know it sometimes feels like all we talk about is racism and white supremacy culture. We spent a year educating ourselves in advance of passing a resolution in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. We spent a year educating ourselves to become a Sanctuary congregation. We promote antiracism workshops and build partnerships with antiracist organizations such as Power Up, Moral Monday CT, the Domestic Worker Justice Campaign and Recovery for All. We are beginning to build relationships with indigenous groups in CT, such as UConn's Native American student organization. Soon we will be exploring whether or not to adopt the proposed 8th UU principle, which asserts that we will conduct the life of our congregation in antiracist, anti-oppressive ways. That's a lot! Trust me, I know people don't necessarily come to church to have this conversation. I know it is sometimes a very uncomfortable conversation. I know the conversation can grow tiring, not only for White people but for People of Color as well.

There is an existential reason the Unitarian Universalist Association is focusing so much time and energy on antiracist and anti-oppressive transformation in our congregations. The writing is on the wall, so to speak. Racial demographics are changing rapidly in the United States. If our congregations don't figure out how to move beyond a White, European-centered culture, we won't stay relevant. In fact, we won't survive. I

don't say that to be dramatic. I say it because it's true. We owe it to future generations of Unitarian Universalists to engage in antiracism work now.

There's also a spiritual reason for this focus. When we consider our current racial demographics, it becomes obvious that Unitarian Universalism is failing to extend its good news, its free faith, its liberating message to all but a handful of Black, Indigenous and People of Color. Somehow we aren't advancing the promise of our principles. The truth is, we do have good news! We do have a free faith! We do have a liberating message. We owe it to the world to figure out how to extend that message in culturally relevant ways. I don't claim to have the answers. But I know we have to be in the conversation—in multiple ways, often, even when it is tiring, even when we'd rather just sink into the comfort of our community as it currently is. Widening the circle is a spiritual imperative. So we continue, as best we can, in faith and with love.

If you have thoughts or instincts about ways in which you'd like to participate in the work of widening the circle at UUS:E, please do not hesitate to contact me at minister@uuse.org or 860-652-8961.

With love,
Rev. Josh



February, My Least Favorite Month

A Religious Education Message from Tammy Stolzman

"February is my least favorite month of the year." This is the first thing that comes to mind every time I think of February. And not too long after that first thought is "Aw come on, it's not so bad. Maybe I should cut it a little slack." And so it went when I started thinking about this newsletter article. Then, having tasked myself with digging deep for things that I like about February, I found it wasn't that hard. Bright sunny winter days are fantastic! They are brisk, fresh, exhilarating and on top of that you can enjoy them knowing that Spring is coming soon(ish). So why not appreciate winter while it lasts? And so I will.

Also, kicking off the month is Groundhog Day and what's not to like about that? (Well except the prospect of the groundhog seeing his shadow and ushering in 6 more weeks of winter.) I've always liked Groundhog Day. When I was a kid we paid attention to whether Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow even though, growing up in Wisconsin, it seemed sort of pointless because six more weeks of winter was pretty much a given. At some point we added exchanging silly gifts and cards too. I now realize that this goofy holiday coincides with the Pagan holiday Imbolc marking the halfway point between winter solstice and the spring equinox and the Christian holiday of Candlemass. Of course, this is no coincidence as Groundhog Day is largely thought to be an offshoot of a German Candlemass tradition and likewise aspects of Candlemass come from the more ancient Imbolc holiday.

Thinking of how these three holidays are connected led me to consider our ministry theme for February, "Widening the Circle." To me, the way the traditions and rituals of the ancient Imbolc holiday, Christian Candlemass, and the much younger Groundhog Day intertwine and overlap seems to be an example of how beliefs are borrowed, stretched and eventually evolve. It is not unique. It happens all the time. By adopting and tweaking customs to include more people, organizations and communities seek to widen their circle.

The Religious Education program at UUS:E is no different. We are constantly looking for new ways to connect with RE families and their children and

reevaluating how we do Sunday mornings—especially these last few years!

When I try to get my head around what "Widening the Circle" really means to me, it is difficult to pinpoint any one idea. It is about inclusion. It is about opening up our community and ourselves to more diversity. It is about combating systemic racism and white supremacy culture. It is about being curious and willing to learn about other people and what their life looks like from day to day. It is about making the effort to try, and to keep trying, to be better. And, it is very much about our first Unitarian Universalist principle, the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Or, as we like to say in RE, "One—each person is important."

As we continue with another crazy COVID year in RE all we can do is take life as it comes and remember to enjoy what is happening now (even if it is six more weeks of winter). I am grateful for everyone who works hard to keep us going - I'm looking at you Gina, Heather, my fellow committee members, and all of the wonderful RE volunteers.

Thank You,
Tammy Stolzman

The President's Column

Greetings UUS:E Members and Friends,
My UUS:E presidency technically began on July 1, 2021, and since that time I've been working to learn my job under the tutelage of Rob, Josh and others. Now more settled in my position, here is my first newsletter column.

February is a unique month, still at the dawn of a new year, yet after the partying has ended; a good time for sober reflection and planning for the year. This February is the month that I will turn 70 years old—which is shocking since baby boomers were never supposed to get old! I know there are also others at UUS:E who share this birthday month with Washington, Lincoln and the noble Greek mythological figure, Aquarius, who served water and wine to the Gods.

As some of you know, I grew up tormented with religious dogma that felt like a vice on my mind. What a wave of warmth and hope came my way when I found that a "free and responsible search for truth" was embraced by UUs. The assertion that UUs "can believe anything" is not correct. The seven principles are ambitious theological tenets. Likewise, what could be more challenging than truly living in accord with the beatitudes from the New Testament, the one part of my early religious training that spoke to me, and that I still hold as core to my religious beliefs.

As for less esthetic, more technical aspirations in my role as President, one of my goals is to get the colon officially removed from between the "S" and the "E" (East) in our name. My understanding is that the original purpose of the colon rested in the dreams of our founders that one day there would be a UUS:W (West), but that remains a dream. (Of course, the legal change would be made to our full name, not just the abbreviation.) If anyone has a strong affinity to leaving the colon in place, feel free to contact me.

Each of us has wisdom, and I would like to share advice from one of our members. Although brief and frequently heard in recent times, this message is profound and worthy of daily thought: "Stay positive."

Sincerely,

Peggy Webbe

Wanted: Archivist/Historian

For UUS:E

For many years, we were fortunate to have Lynn Chirico as our historian and archivist, but now we are looking for someone who can take over this responsibility.

Most of our historical documents and photos, many in binders, are housed in the new credenza as well as filing cabinets in the back room. However, since Lynn's passing we need someone who is willing to be in charge of 50 years' worth of our historical memorabilia. Unfortunately, over the years much has been lost because members had significant items in their homes and were unaware of who was keeping track of our history, so things were thrown out. Lynn did a great job, but there is much more to do.

If you would like to be considered for this responsibility, please contact Rev. Josh or our President, Peggy Webbe.



UU SpiritLife

Announcing UU SpiritLife Conversations

Our spring program, **UU SpiritLife Conversations**, is a series of facilitated Zoom conversations on spiritual topics, offered on the fourth Saturday mornings, January through May, 9:00 – 10:30 AM. **SpiritLife Conversations** is open to all members of the three Hartford area UU churches on a drop-in basis—you don't need to register or commit to the whole series. The topic for January 29 will be **Finding Balance In An Unstable World**. Please go to <http://uuspiritlife.org> and click the **Programs** tab for complete information. Questions can be directed to Judy Robbins at judyrobb2@gmail.com.

Books, Classes, and Discussions

Adult Religious Education



Book Lovers

The Book Lovers meets second Tuesdays at 3:30 on Zoom. Ask Martha Larson (marlar@wordshard.com) for the Zoom sign in.

Goodreads descriptions:

https://www.goodreads.com/review/list/130686405-paul-cocuzzo?ref=nav_mybooks&shelf=uuse-book-lovers

- February 8: **The Lincoln Highway**, Amor Towles
- March 8: **The Warmth of Other Suns**, Isabel Wilkerson
- April 12: **The Parable of the Sower**, Octavia Butler
- May 10: **Clock Dance**, Ann Tyler



Buddhist Group

The Buddhist Group meets via Zoom at 7 PM on the first Tuesday of each month, for meditation and discussion. All are welcome, no meditation experience necessary. Contact Nancy Thompson at nancythompson123@yahoo.com for the Zoom info.

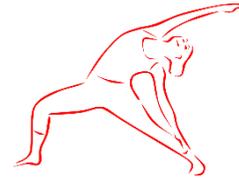


Community Drum Circle

First and Third Mondays
in the Sanctuary
(depending on COVID restrictions)
7:00 – 8:30 PM

Open to all levels of ability and experience. Facilitator Mary Ertel provides djembe drums and other hand instruments, and you may bring your own.

Contact Paul Cocuzzo at pcocuzzo@gmail.com or 978-270-2056 with questions or to reserve a drum. Or even better, check out our [Meetup](#).



Yoga at the Meetinghouse!

All welcome to these gentle-to-moderate yoga classes in the UUS:E Meetinghouse, Wednesdays at 10:00 AM with Susan Barlow. \$5 drop-in fee. Bring a yoga mat or towel and wear comfortable clothes. All welcome, including beginners! Bring a friend or neighbor; you do not have to be a UUS:E member to come to the classes. Yoga provides an opportunity to quiet the mind as well as strengthen and relax the body. Direct questions to: Susan at SBarlow627@aol.com. Yoga is one of the UUS:E adult education offerings. For the time being, masks are required inside the building.

Humanist Group

This ongoing group explores Religious Humanism and its applications to life, both historically and today. All welcome. Contact Rev. Josh at mininster@uuse.org for the Zoom link. We meet on 3rd Tuesdays at 4:30 PM.

"God Talk"

A discussion group for UU theists

This ongoing group explores how UUs can name and experience God in meaningful, useful ways. All are welcome. Contact Rev. Josh at mininster@uuse.org for the Zoom link. We meet on 4th Tuesdays at 4:30 PM.

Science and Religion Discussion Group

How does science inform our beliefs? Where do science and religion meet? Where are they in opposition? Members of this ongoing group will select and discuss readings covering myriad topics such as evolutionary biology, artificial intelligence, climate change, the brain, genetics...and the way we look at the Big Questions. Contact Linda Duncan at lindakduncan@gmail.com or Annie Gentile at uuseoffice@uuse.org or 860-646-5151 for more information. January – October meets fourth Thursday at 4:30 PM.

UUS:E GENERAL INFORMATION

UUS:E Office Schedule: Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Meetinghouse Office: 860-646-5151

Office Administrator: Annie Gentile email: uuseoffice@uuse.org

Minister: Rev. Joshua Pawelek 860-652-8961, minister@uuse.org

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday 10 AM to 7 PM and Thursday 10 AM to 4 PM

President: Peggy Webbe, 860-871-8035, peggywebbe@gmail.com

Director of Religious Education:

Gina Campellone, 860-875-8468, redirector@uuse.org

Newsletter Editor: Paul Cocuzzo, 978-270-2056, newsletter@uuse.org

Website Coordinator: Carol Marion 860-643-8765, uuse.web@uuse.org

World Wide Web address: <http://uuse.org>

Newsletter Deadline:
The 20th of Each Month

Unitarian Universalist Society: East
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