

# the choice

Published by the  
Unitarian Church of Sharon  
**A Welcoming Congregation  
of the Unitarian  
Universalist Association**  
4 North Main Street  
Sharon, MA 02067  
781/784-3652  
[www.uusharon.org](http://www.uusharon.org)

**President**  
Susan Drisko  
[president@uusharon.org](mailto:president@uusharon.org)

**Interim Minister**  
Rev. Wendy L. Bell  
781/784-3652 x2  
[minister@uusharon.org](mailto:minister@uusharon.org)

**Director of Religious Ed.**  
Louise Marcoux  
781/784-3652 x3  
[DRE@uusharon.org](mailto:DRE@uusharon.org)

**Office Manager &  
Newsletter Editor**  
Linda Cveckova  
781/784-3652 x1  
[admin@uusharon.org](mailto:admin@uusharon.org)

## **JANUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

**Friday, January 25**

## **Inside this issue**

[From the President](#) 2

[RE News](#) 4

[Programs](#) 6

[Social Justice](#) 8

## **JANUARY WORSHIP SERVICES**

10:00am Family Service  
10:30am Adult Service  
(while children are in their religious education classes)

### **Sunday January 6: Spiritual Goals – 2019**

Our third UU principle encourages us to grow spiritually. As we begin a new calendar year, in what ways do you want to grow this year?

### **Sunday January 13: Confession and Compassion**

We are all imperfect. That is part of the human condition. But it's not always easy to acknowledge our short-comings. On the other hand, sometimes we focus on them too much. This morning we consider some spiritual tools to help us become more compassionate toward ourselves, and, ultimately, toward others.

### **Sunday January 20: Why is it so hard to talk about racism?**

This morning we honor the life and work of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and we reflect on why it can be so difficult to talk about race and racism.

### **Sunday January 27: We, All of Us, Together**

In this service we will explore the power of the gifts of welcome, acknowledgement, and bearing witness to one another; and how bearing witness is an antidote to lies we have been told about one another and ourselves. We will reflect upon how bearing witness is one of our adult superpowers to change the world.

CB Beal, M.Div (they/them/theirs) is a consent, sexuality, and anti-oppression educator who previously served Unitarian Universalism as a congregational DRE for 16 years. They now work with individuals and groups to align their values and vision with their capacity to create equity and justice.



**December 21 - Solstice Service: lead by UCS choir**

## From the Minister



A couple of weeks ago I invited you to join me in practicing and becoming more mindful. I invited you to take some time each day – maybe 20 minutes, or 10, or even a single moment – to try to be mindful of what's happening right now...in our bodies, in

our surroundings, in our thoughts, and in our feelings.

Have you tried it? Have you tried to spend a moment or a series of moments just paying attention to what is, rather than allowing your mind to wander unfettered into either the future or the past?

Don't worry if you've tried and found it difficult. They call mindfulness a spiritual practice precisely because it takes lots and lots of practice to achieve it.

What I have found in practicing mindfulness is that my fear begins to give way to an openness of both mind and heart, which, in turn, gives way to curiosity. Instead of fearing what might happen, I begin my days more often wondering how the morning – and the afternoon and evening – might unfold. I'm curious, rather than fearful or judgmental. There is less "good" and "bad," just more "I wonder."

As we approach – and then begin – the New Year...I wonder...what will the New Year bring? How will the search process for a new minister unfold? What does the future hold?

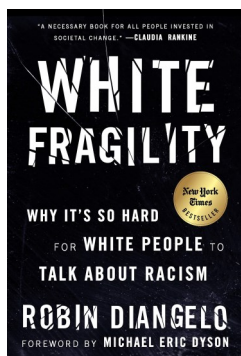
I am expectant. I am hopeful. And mostly, I am curious. How about you?

Blessings,

*Rev. Wendy*

## New Bestseller on Library Shelf:

### *White Fragility*



On the New York Times Bestsellers list for 22 weeks and counting, Robin DiAngelo's *White Fragility* looks to history and culture to explore why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism. If you're having trouble accessing this book via the public library (all available copies are on hold), consider borrowing it from the church library.

*Louise Marcoux*

## From the President



Happy New Year! 2018 has been full of strange and worrisome politics, balanced with good friendships, perseverance and hope for a better future.

I want to thank our church community for its support, social consciousness, spirit and help.

I especially want to thank the Committees and their Chairs for all the work they have done in the last year <https://www.uusharon.org/about/committees/>

The Board has been amazing to work with. Thank you to Brenda Wilbur, Vice President, Paul Tuck, Treasurer, Chuck Bordman, Clerk, and our At-Large members Janet Schmidt, Barbara Rose and Brian Cooke for your focus and good will. Along with the usual work of the Board, we are refining our Board goals and expect to finalize them at our January meeting.

### Unitarian Church of Sharon Board Goals 2018-2019

#### Unitarian Church of Sharon Mission

We gather as a liberal religious community, honoring our differences, to support one another as we grow in mind and spirit and reach out to serve the world.

#### 2018-2019 Goals

Unified by our mission, develop greater specificity and definition around the board's role as a governing body and more clearly delineate and distinguish this role from the ministry role of the minister, staff and congregation, in an open, creative and accountable atmosphere.

- The Board will set aside time to read and discuss the book "Governance and Ministry" to further clarify the role of the board and the role of ministry, beginning at the January 2019 board meeting.
- Board liaisons will enhance communication between the church committees and the board.
- Create a clear and empowering structure for staff and committees to make operational decisions.
- Encourage a strong and supportive community within the congregation by helping to connect members with each other and achieve the mission.
- Board Committee Liaisons engage in conversations with committees on how this goal can be achieved.

I look forward to working with the Board and our community to achieve great things!

*Susan Olson Drisko*  
President

## Ministerial Search Committee

### Ministerial Search



On December 20<sup>th</sup>, the committee had a productive online meeting with our UUA-provided Transition Consultant, Lisa Anderson, who said we're in

great shape. In early January, we'll begin receiving names and profiles of ministers potentially interested in serving our congregation. Then the study, interviewing and mutual discernment process will begin, and continue for the next three months, until we have a candidate ready to bring before the congregation in late April. During these months, for a multitude of good reasons, we're sworn to absolute confidentiality about whom we're considering and who's considering us. But we remain willing and eager to hear your thoughts, concerns and aspirations about new ministerial leadership for our wonderful congregation.

Faithfully yours,

*The Ministerial Search Committee*

*Laurie Wallace, Beth McGregor, Linda Godfrey Bailey, Karen Zelevinsky, Valerie White, Tom D'Avanzo, and Dave Slater*

### BIC: School of Prophetic Action training

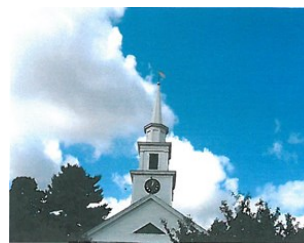
Join Brockton Interfaith Community for our School of Prophetic Action training! This training teaches the principles of community organizing through a faith based perspective, and leads participants through the community organizing cycle. Through deep intentional listening, prioritizing an issue, conducting research, building relationships, and hosting a large public action, we uncover the changes we seek to address the issues, systems, and structures that oppress our people, and invite those who have the power to make those changes to act righteously.

Week 1: 1/8 or 1/10  
Week 2: 1/15 or 1/17  
Week 3: 1/22 or 1/24  
Week 4: 1/29 or 1/31

Fill out this google form <https://goo.gl/forms/kfJLpiI9S4L5mWD33>

or email Ryan at [ryanchasey@brocktoninterfaith.org](mailto:ryanchasey@brocktoninterfaith.org) to RSVP and we'll see you in January!

*Elaine Price*



## Conversations At the Meetinghouse

## Witness at the US/ Mexican Border

LOIS CZACHOROWSKI,

PHILIP CZACHOROWSKI AND SHEILA HARBST

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 4, 2019, 7 PM**

UNITARIAN CHURCH OF SHARON

Lois, Philip and Sheila, representing United Church in Walpole joined the United Church of Christ's Faithful Witness at the US/Mexican Border in August 2018 for five days of service and study focused on immigrant justice.

In their presentation, they will describe their time of witness, meeting with migrant families and hearing many moving stories of desperation and courage. As part of their time at the border, they attended a federal court session and witnessed the human impact of the US Immigration. Crossing the US/Mexican border, they visited missions that offer meals lodging, and medical care to migrants.

Conversations at the Meetinghouse is a monthly program held on the first Friday of each month (November to June) at 7PM where members of the community share their expertise and experience about important issues of the day.

**Free and Open To Public**



## Religious Education News

### From the Director of Religious Education

## What Breaks My Heart

This image from Revels never fails to break my heart:



"The shadow puppet man stands alone outside the village, unable to find a door. But no one in the village witnesses his struggle. When the people of the village look out, they see only their lovely Sun Cow, who slowly circles the village by day and whose milky light highlights the rich colors in their intricate carvings. They have no idea of the man or his suffering. He is nothing to them."

Being seen (and appreciated) for who we really are is one of the great gifts of community.

This story reminds me that there is more going on than I can see. Cultivating an open mind helps me notice the things that don't fit into my picture of how the world works. It helps me consider the possibility that I may be doing things – not on purpose – that prevent someone from being a part of this village, the community of the Unitarian Church of Sharon.

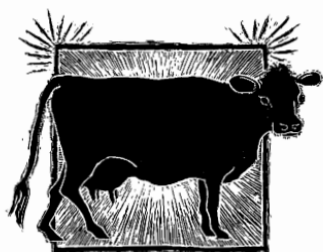
Perhaps this explains why I am so happy about this month's RE volunteer workshop on Pre-emptive Radical Inclusion. The purpose of this workshop is to help us notice those subtle ways in which some people are marginalized – and then develop the mindset and some tools to create the openings that allow everyone into the circle.

I strongly encourage all volunteers who work with children and youth to attend this workshop. It's about how to live out our chalice lighting words: Open mind. Helping hands. Loving heart.

Blessings,

*Louise*

### THE SUN COW AND THE THIEF



KUTTIA KONDH-ORISSA, INDIA

### January in RE

The **Preschool-Kindergarten** children will begin the new year participating in sessions that illustrate that every person is unique and special, that talk about gender roles, and that point out the beauty of all skin colors. They will end the month creating snow paintings and exploring the wonder and beauty of the season of winter.

The **Grade 1-2** group will learn about Universalist Minister John Murray as they talk about hospitality in both our family and faith homes. They will learn about child dedications as part of an exploration of worship. One session will use a version of the Christian story of the prodigal son to illustrate that the love of one's family is constant whether you are at home or away. The class will finish the month with an introduction to the story of Muhammed and Islam.

The **Grade 3-4** students will explore the topic of forgiveness using a story that compares writing wrongs done to you in sand versus writing them in stone. In two sessions that tie justice to the inclusion of all people the students will hear the Middle Eastern story of Nasrudin who was not welcomed at a dinner until he changed his dirty work clothes for fancy clothes. The class will create their own welcoming feast. Then they will end the month in the first of several service project planning sessions.

The **Grade 5-6** class will hear a story about Henry David Thoreau in a lesson that expresses the virtues of stillness. Another session will explain the benefits of presence and bearing witness. The power associated with silence and listening will also be explored this month. Activities will include meditation, listening exercises, and a game with non-verbal communication.

The **Grade 7-8** group will continue their OWL curriculum through January. Topics of discussion will include, healthy relationships, relationship skills, and sexuality, social media and the internet.

*By Karen MacKinnon, Administrative Assistant*

### Our Whole Lives in January

OWL for **Grades 7-8** meets every Sunday from 10 am to 11:30 am. Please note that on Sunday, January 10, the group will meet in Program C rather than the Library.

OWL for **Grades 5-6** meets on the following Sundays: January 6, January 13, and January 27; all from 4:30 to 6 pm. This group will not meet on the MLK holiday weekend.

## Religious Education News, continued

### A Very Special Workshop for all RE Volunteers: Preemptive Radical Inclusion

For some children and youth, it's easy to jump right into what the group is doing. For others, there are invisible obstacles to be overcome in order to enter in.

How do we create spaces where everyone is truly welcome? We're very lucky to have one of the leading voices in UU religious education, CB Beal, to help us explore what gets in the way of inclusion and develop practices as teachers and youth advisors and mentors that consciously welcome all.



Please save the date: Sunday, January 27, from noon to 3 pm. Lunch and fun-care for your children are included at no cost. In order to include those allergic to scents, please refrain from wearing scent at this workshop.

Curious about what CB means by "Preemptive Radical Inclusion"? Find out more at: <https://justiceandpeaceconsulting.com/preemptive-radical-inclusion/>

### Cooks/Shoppers needed:

Would you be interested in making a pot of soup or shopping for bread and beverages for the January 27 Teacher/Advisor Workshop? Please contact Louise Marcoux or Rumni Saha or reply to the survey (below).

### Small jobs that make a big difference

Looking for a small, time-limited way to support the RE program? Please take a few minutes with the RE Team survey. You'll find a long list of jobs – a few of which might be fun or meaningful for you AND work within your busy schedule. Your responses indicate you may be interested. RE Committee members will follow up with you with the specifics. You decide from there whether to sign on.

Click here to go to the survey: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeNOQzsf093q5fhU-TWsc\\_nwKU0RCuugmb1BGn2-3k42PNN\\_A/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeNOQzsf093q5fhU-TWsc_nwKU0RCuugmb1BGn2-3k42PNN_A/viewform?usp=sf_link)

## YOUTH GROUPS

### Senior Youth Group

Meets on Sundays from 5-7pm in the Observatory (new youth-selected name for the nursery). Senior Youth Group is open to any and all individuals in grades 9 - 12 and folks are encouraged to bring friends! December's big highlight was once again sponsoring a teen-aged youth through the Gifts for Kids program. Youth worked together to gather holiday presents for a sponsored individual based on their supplied wish list. Many of our senior youth also participated in the Revels Service celebration taking on leadership, organization, and technical roles to help everything run smoothly. We watched Monty Python and the Holy Grail for a movie night and are looking forward to our annual SYG Dinner Out at Stone L'Oven Pizza in the new year!



### Junior Youth Fellowship Group

Had a great time at our December event: a Game Night with board games and pizza held in the vestry at church. We played old favorites and discovered some great new games and, of course, had a round of One Night Werewolf. Our planned January event will also be at church, a Mystery Dinner from 6-9pm on Saturday, January 12th. JYFG meets once a month and is open to all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders in our congregation.

Have questions about our Senior and Junior youth programs? Interested in volunteering to help with the groups or have a student who might be interested in joining? Email our Youth Coordinator Chelsea Gould at [yc@uusharon.org](mailto:yc@uusharon.org)

### Job opening: Assistant Nursery Provider

The Unitarian Church of Sharon seeks an Assistant Nursery Provider to care for little ones on Sunday mornings from 9:45 to 11:45 am. If you know someone who enjoys working with young children, please share this job announcement: <https://bit.ly/2SkiTNW>

## January Programs

### Music and Arts

#### Not Just Another Coffee House

**Lara Herscovitch**

**Saturday, January 19**

7pm, doors open 6:30pm



Lara is a northeast-based touring artist / singer-songwriter and former State Troubadour of Connecticut.

"She possesses not only a huge reservoir of musical talent and a voice with a bell-like clarity, but a keen sense of global concern and a fierce intellect... It might seem too good to be true, but true it is... a rising talent who is truly someone to watch for."

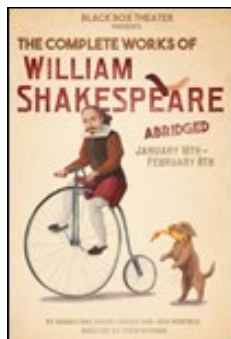
-Acoustic Live in New York City

<https://www.laraherscovitch.com/>

During intermission enjoy our home made desserts and fair trade beverages.

**Change of venue** - the March 16 Coffeehouse will be at the First Congregational Church at 29 North Main St. across the street. The Beantown Buckaroos are going to teach the 2-step and there will be lots of fun dancing!

#### **The 2019 UU Theater Nights**



The next UU Theatre night at Mass Music Arts Society is on Saturday, January 26 for **The Complete Works of William Shakespeare - Abridged!** This play hilariously summarizes all of Shakespeare's plays, using reenactments and audience participation. Famous for holding the record for the shortest production of Hamlet at 43 seconds, the play entertains and teaches facts about Shakespeare

while ensuring you a rocking good time!

If we have enough people our make-our-own-pot-luck reception will start at 7:00pm and the show starts at 8:00pm. Tickets are \$28.00pp. If interested please email me at [mcdougal.pat@gmail.com](mailto:mcdougal.pat@gmail.com).

Please note that the date of the Odd Couple in March has been changed to March 23 so we can all attend the UU Coffeehouse featuring the Beantown Buckaroos which will be relocated to the Congregational Church. There will be 2-step dancing instruction and then fun music to kick up your heels to!

**If cost is an issue, limited complimentary tickets for this performance may be available through the Caring Committee. If interested, contact Evelynne Swagerty, Caring Committee member.**

The dates for the upcoming shows are:

**Mar 23 (change of date!)**

Odd Couple Female Version

**May 4**

Evita

**Children's Choir** meets regularly on Tuesdays from 5:30 to 6:30pm in the vestry. Pizza included. Performing in church twice a month. The choir does not meet when the school is out. Questions? Contact Forbesy at [forbesyrussell@hotmail.com](mailto:forbesyrussell@hotmail.com) or 781-201-9533.

### **Support Groups**

**Al-Anon Meeting** - An 11th step Al-Anon group meets at UCS each Sunday evening at 7:15pm. It is an open meeting.

**Men's Group** - The Men's Group is a group for men who are members and friends of UCS. We gather on the first and third Monday of each month at 8 pm to talk about our lives and topics of mutual interest. We are open to new members. If you're curious please feel free to drop in on one of our meetings. For more information you can ask Jon Slavin ([jslavin37@gmail.com](mailto:jslavin37@gmail.com)) or any other group member.

**Women's Support Group II.** - Meets on second and fourth Thursdays of the month at 7:30pm. New women are always welcome to join.



## January Programs, continued

### Interest and Discussion Groups

**Book Group** – We are going to take a post-holiday break, so our next book group meeting will be in the Church library at 7:30 on Wednesday, February 6.

We will be discussing *White Chrysanthemum* by Mary Lynn Bracht. It's the story of a (female) Korean sea diver captured during the Japanese occupation of Korea in World.



Everyone is invited to come, whether or not you have finished the book.

**Let's Laugh Today**— You can add more laughter to your life in 2019! Get your giggle on and attend a FREE Laughter Yoga session in Program Rooms A/B from 11am to noon on Saturday, January 12th (and every second Saturday of the month). Any age and any level of physical ability can participate in this uplifting experience! Enjoy this unique exercise of simulated laughter combined with gentle breathing that brings more oxygen to the body's cells. This oxygen boost gives enhanced vitality, energy and a feeling of real well-being. Please bring your water bottle because laughing is dehydrating. Led by Certified Laughter Yoga Teachers, Linda and Bill Hamaker. If you have any questions, just call them at 508-660-2223 or e-mail [billandlinda@letslaughtoday.com](mailto:billandlinda@letslaughtoday.com). PLEASE BRING AT LEAST ONE CANNED GOOD FOR THE SHARON/STOUGHTON FOOD PANTRY. New laughers are always welcomed! See more information and more opportunities to laugh at [www.letslaughtoday.com](http://www.letslaughtoday.com).



**Meditation Group** meets weekly. It is an open group, available to anyone who cares to give it a try. We meet Tuesdays at 7pm for one hour of silent meditation. The one-hour period is divided into two sitting periods with an optional period of walking meditation in the middle. This division also allows participants to join us for just 30 minutes of meditation and then leave, without any disruption, instead of (or after) the walking medita-

tion. Please call Susan Allison or Ray Wallace with any questions.

**Movie Group** - Due to a holiday event conflict, the December 14 movie "Their Eyes Were Watching God" will be postponed until February 8. The January 11 movie will be "The March of the Penguins" which will be an InterGenerational movie evening. See the poster below for more details.



Movie Group meets the second Friday of the month at 7PM.

**Seeing White** The Seeing White discussion groups will consider the podcast "On Crazy We Built a Nation," Part 4 of the Seeing White series produced by Scene on Radio: <http://www.sceneonradio.org/episode-34-on-crazy-we-built-a-nation-seeing-white-part-4/>.

These discussion groups focus on the origins and functions of whiteness in America – and the implications of this history in our everyday lives. We seek to understand how racism operates in our society and how we can become better allies to people of color in the struggle against racism. There is limited space available in these discussion groups. If you are interested in joining, please check in – in advance – with Louise Marcoux.

Sunday group meets on January 27, 7:30 pm.

Tuesday group meets on January 22, 7:30 pm.

**Writer's Group** – Meets on second Sunday of the month, at noon to 1pm, in the church library. Come share a poem or prose piece you have written with a supportive and interesting group. Or just come along to enjoy to writings and the conversations.

### Intergenerational Movie Night 2019

Friday, January 11

7:00-9:00 -Movie

5:30-7:00 - Activities/Pizza Party

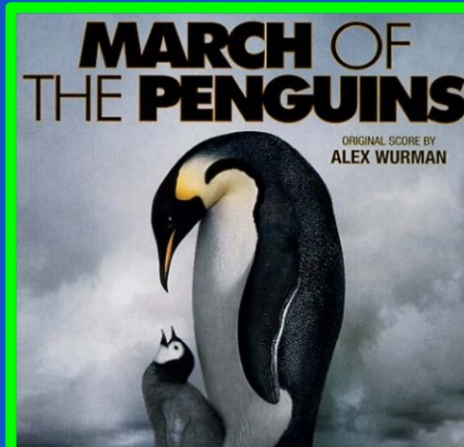
Special Attraction: Airbrush tattoo. Also fun raffles to win.

Suggested donation: \$5.00 covers food, drinks & tattoo.

Wear your fav pjs, bring your cuddly stuffies and your blankets.

RSVP Rumni [rumni.saha@gmail.com](mailto:rumni.saha@gmail.com)

(Poster by Gabby and Shayak)



## SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS



Here are updates and news from the Social Justice Committee. Learn more about how we work together to help make the world a better place – your passion and support are needed!

### Brown Envelope donations:

Our Brown Envelope collection in November was focused on the Guest at Your Table program from the UUSC, in support of their immigration programs. In addition to passing the collection plate at Sunday services, we offered families a chance to take the topic home for follow up discussions and giving via GAYT donation boxes. When we combined the funds, we raised \$1,282.09. However, because we were able to donate a major portion of this amount on Giving Tuesday in November, a matching \$1,100 was added to our contribution, for a total of \$2,382.09.



**Guest At Your Table** boxes and contributions

During December, we are again supporting the 5 local food pantries in our surrounding communities of Foxboro, Walpole, Norwood, Canton and Stoughton/Sharon through the Brown Envelope program. And as has been our tradition for many years, the entire collection from our Christmas Eve services will be donated to the Father Bill's & MainSpring House program for the homeless in our area.

In January we will ask for your support for the Brockton Interfaith Community (BIC). Here are some thoughts about the importance of their work from Ellen Schoenfeld-Beeks, who is a Sharon Interfaith Action (SIA) member working in collaboration with our neighbors in Brockton:

Dear Everyone,

The author of *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander, was herself dismayed at not knowing the prevalence of racism in the country, and specifically in the prison system about which she writes. Slavery did not end, it morphed, she concluded. That she is Black and had not noticed, says volumes about how we live in our culture. That I am White, and waking to this same knowledge, as are many others, we ask: What can I do? How can I help overcome the roots of injustice? One way is to give generously to BIC in the January Brown Envelopes. Help us give voice to the voiceless by supporting trainings for community organizing. Another pathway is to join Sharon Interfaith Action. We partner with Brockton Interfaith Action, an organization whose mission is to talk sense to Power. Of course, Power does not easily Listen, that's why we learn community organizing. We then become Powerful ourselves. Most importantly, we listen... to understand... to learn and to be transformed. The next round of trainings are in January. See me or call Ryan.

([RyanChasey@brocktoninterfaith.org](mailto:RyanChasey@brocktoninterfaith.org)) Or talk to any of the folks who went through the training: Beth Hoke, Linda Fingerson, Ellen Bordman, Jenna Koinen, Janet Schmidt, Elaine Price, Ellen Schoenfeld-Beeks. We thank everyone who joined us at the Soups On Dinner-Fundraiser in December. I am so encouraged that a wealthy suburb like Sharon is working with a Gateway City such as Brockton to address issues of inequity. The current one: Passing the Educational Reform Bill.

*Ellen Schoenfeld-Beeks*



**BIC Annual Fundraiser**



**BIC Annual Fundraiser Dinner**



## SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continues

### Blankets and Supplies for Merrimack Valley Victims of Columbia Gas Explosion

Thank you to all who donated blankets, personal supplies, underwear, towels and money for the victims of the gas explosions in the Merrimack Valley in September. We delivered all the items to the Lawrence



**Merrimack Valley Donations** - The two co-chairs of SJC with donations of blankets and other items to the victims of the gas explosions

Senior Center on November 29. At the center, we were greeted warmly by Director Martha Velez and were introduced to Raphael, who helped us get our donations into the building. Raphael posed for a photo with us, then invited us to tour the center. As we moved from room to room, we were welcomed with smiles, nods, "thank-you's" and "gracias". The majority of the center's members are Spanish-speaking. In the Main Room, we passed tables of ladies knitting, sewing, doing art, playing cards and games, visiting, and everyone appeared to be happy and having a very good time. Members were in the big kitchen cooking, chatting, smiling and waved to us as we passed by. In the next several rooms, men were enthusiastically engaged in various board games and we saw smiles, laughter, even joy as we passed. When asked, "Who is winning?", we got bursts of responses in Spanish while the winner received pats on the back from his competitors. All in all, every room was filled with seniors who were engaged, involved and enjoying themselves. And yet, these people had experienced serious loss in the fires and explosions in their homes and we thought of them as "displaced". Raphael ex-



**Merrimack Valley Donations** - The two co-chairs of SJC with Raphael at Lawrence Senior Center

plained that, while many of the people there were victims, they had refused to move to hotels or trailers, even for a few weeks. Instead, they chose to stay in their homes in their community, in the larger sense, but particularly, in the close-knit, warm, enduring community of the senior center. Their joy and connection to each other and their community was in every corner of this busy, important foundation of community life in Lawrence.

### Gifts for Kids 2018

A warm thank you to everyone who contributed to this year's Gifts for Kids program. The UCS helped to sponsor over 1,200 youth in our region whose holidays were brightened thanks to your generosity.



**Gifts for Kids** collection center in Sharon.

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continues**

### **For Senior Center Director, Relief Came First**

*The Eagle Tribune*

**In response to the Sept. 13 gas disaster, Lawrence Senior Center Director, Martha Velez helped establish a shelter at Lawrence's Parthum School for residents ordered to evacuate during the first few days of the disaster, then set up a relief center at the Senior Center to collect and distribute donations of clothing, food and household supplies.**

LAWRENCE — “Mom, there's fire everywhere,” Martha Velez remembers her daughter telling her over the phone as she was driving back to Lawrence from her job at Raytheon just after 4 p.m. on Sept. 13.

“There are police and firemen everywhere.”

“I said, 'What do you mean?' ” Velez recalls.

“Yeah, there's firemen everywhere,” her daughter told her.

Velez, director of the Lawrence Senior Center, hung up and called her boss, Mayor Daniel Rivera. He told her there were random gas explosions and fires across South Lawrence, Andover and North Andover. He asked her to go to the Parthum School in North Lawrence to help manage a shelter that was opening for people who were evacuating.

Velez called her daughter back and told her that whenever she saw emergency crews headed, she should head the other way. Then she changed from her business shoes into sneakers to prepare for the long night she knew was ahead.

Among the first evacuees to arrive at the school was a woman carrying her four-day-old baby. She sat holding her newborn on the gymnasium's wooden floor until Velez arranged for an air mattress.

“I've given birth,” Velez said. “It's painful. You don't want to be sitting on a piece of wood.”

More long days followed.

On Friday, the day after the explosions when the shelter was turned over to the Red Cross, Rivera asked Velez to take on another task: convert the Senior Center on Haverhill Street into a center of the relief effort where donations could be collected and distributed.

Word spread quickly. Hundreds of people showed up to help the first morning, including from Groundwork Lawrence, an environmental nonprofit that canceled its annual clean-up of the Spicket River and directed the staff and volunteers who normally participate in the event to instead give Velez a hand.

Even with the aid, Velez worked until 11:30 that night to get the effort up and organized. She was back the next morning before 6.

“Looking at everything, I was taken aback,” she said, referring to the donations that filled two rooms after just one day. “I thought, 'My God, how am I going to deal with all this? How am I going to organize it?' It was floor-to-ceiling.” Donations of fresh food also flowed in, much of it given by local businesses. It went to the kitchen at the Senior Center, where volunteers made sandwiches to distribute to victims showing up at the center and the shelters.

**Among the first evacuees  
to arrive at the school was  
a woman carrying her  
four-day-old baby.**

On Saturday, with more than enough donated food to feed victims at the center and shelters, Velez organized another effort to deliver meals to the senior housing complexes in South Lawrence — including on Salem, Blanchard and Auburn streets — where some residents had disregarded the evacuation order and stayed home, even without gas for heat, hot water or cooking.

The meals were prepared at the Senior Center, delivered by trucks provided by the Lawrence Housing Authority and waved through the barricades police had set up to block access to the evacuation zone in South Lawrence.

In all, Velez estimates the center fed up to 4,000 people before the evacuation order was lifted Sunday.

Like many of the volunteers, emergency crews and city employees who joined the relief effort, Velez was managing her own crisis at home at the same time. In the uncertain first day of the disaster, before it was learned for sure that North Lawrence would not be affected, she turned off the gas to the home she shares with her daughter, her 88-year-old dad — who is on oxygen — and her 74-year-old mom. It remained off until Columbia Gas turned it on five days later.

“There was no question,” Velez said about why she took on so many leading roles through the first days of a disaster that also was striking home. “The mayor asked me. I didn't second guess.”

*“We lift people, especially when they're broken,” she said. “But it's tiring. We're human. It's been a long road.”*

*Elizabeth Sifter, Co-Chair of SJC*



## SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continues

**UUA/UUSC Call UU's to Action -**

### **Tornillo Detention Center for Children**

**Do It Now - Sunday, January 6 at Coffee Hour**

**Tornillo, Texas: There is a lot of energy building around shutting down the Tornillo child tent detention center in rural Texas. There are now over 15,000 immigrant kids in detention and shelters. At Tornillo alone there are 2,800, and over half of them (1,300) are ready to be released to sponsors but the extended vetting process is keeping them detained. UUSC is encouraging UUs to contact Congress to shut down Tornillo Center or end its contract.**

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- There is no need to detain the children at Tornillo. Other more appropriate housing is available. Prior to Tornillo, children in similar circumstances were placed with family members and sponsors pending determination of their immigration status. Placement with family and sponsors is still an option for almost all of the children now at Tornillo. Other community-based housing that is not imprisonment is available for the few for whom a sponsor has not been located.
- Detention at Tornillo is far more costly to the U.S. Government than other available options. The cost of housing one child at Tornillo is \$1,200 per day, which is nearly ten times the cost of housing them at permanent facilities, and 70 times more costly than simply monitoring them (\$17 per day).
- The children who are imprisoned at Tornillo are separated from their families and have almost no contact with the outside world. They are concentrated in a small tent city in the desert - surrounded by fences and barbed wire. This facility is now housing thousands of children, under constant guard. This isolation and deprivation is harmful to children and can have lasting effects on them.
- Nearly all of the children remain imprisoned indefinitely at Tornillo because the Administration has slowed down the process of reuniting them with their families. Families and sponsors are reluctant to claim their children because they are required to undergo

fingerprinting and background checks that are shared with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), putting them in imminent jeopardy of immigration detention and deportation. This policy of sharing information between the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) and ICE for enforcement purposes was not previously allowed.

- The Tornillo prison was erected with the express purpose of deterring people from trying to enter the U.S. by threatening that their children would be taken away. This practice is inhumane, immoral, and contrary to the historical attitude the United States has taken with regard to refugees, people claiming asylum, and others seeking to immigrate. None of the children imprisoned at Tornillo have been accused of or charged with committing any crimes.
- The Tornillo prison is shrouded in secrecy. It is operated by a private company. The workers are mostly temporary employees and contractors, not government employees. The media and human rights organizations have been given extremely limited access to the facility.
- Workers at the Tornillo prison have not been subject to full background checks including fingerprinting, which the HHS Office of Inspector General's report of November 27 concludes "could significantly compromise the safety and well-being" of the children imprisoned there.



**Do It Now - Sunday, January 6 at Coffee Hour—**  
Please join us at the DIN table in the Vestry for information on how to contact Congress to shut down Tornillo or end its contract and return the children to their parents.



## Nicaragua Update

As reported previously, our planned trip to Nicaragua in July 2018 was postponed due to the unstable situation in the country at that time. The good news is that we raised enough money (Brown Envelopes, donations from our group of 6 and people in NY who we planned to meet there) to build a house for a family and, through an extra appeal, we raised enough to pay each of 11 cooks a week's salary of \$70, since they depend on volunteer groups for their occasional income. Thanks to all who donated and showed support in other ways. It's currently calm there and we are hoping to plan another trip, dates TBD. If you are interested in being in the loop, please contact Janet Schmidt at [jcscoch@gmail.com](mailto:jcscoch@gmail.com).

### Cooks' Thank You Letter

September 13th, 2018  
Leon, Nicaragua

Dear FNEI Friends, we hope you are in good health with all your loved ones. Also, receive a warm greeting from our group of cooks. The reason for this present is, to tell you infinitely thank you for this great help you have given us, that will support us much in this time that we are going through in our country because since April we have not had work and you have blessed us with this money that you have given us that will be of great use to our families.

We are very happy, excited, grateful, surprised, admired to receive the news

Without more than to refer, we trust in God to continue supporting you. May God bless you always.

Sincerely,

1. Vanesa Caballero 2. Estela Castillo 3. Leonor Castillo 4. Teresa Romero 5. Ana Jiménez 6. Melania Ojeda 7. Celia Calderón 8. Estela Romero 9. Gloria Carvajal 10. Luisa Amanda Méndez 11. Julia Urbina

Para: F.N.E.I.  
De: Grupo de Cocina

Leon, Nicaragua 13-09-2018

Estimados Amigo FNEI esperamos que se encuentren bien de salud con todos sus seres queridos reciban un caluroso Saludo de nuestro grupo de cocina.

El motivo de este presente es para decirle infinitamente gracias por esta gran ayuda que nos han dado que nos servirá mucho este tiempo que estamos pasando en nuestro país, ya que desde en Abril no hemos tenido trabajo ya que ustedes nos han bendecido con este dinero que nos han dado que nos servirá de mucho con nuestras familias.

Nos sentimos muy felices, contentas, emocionadas, agradecidas, sorprendidas, admiradas al recibir la noticia.

Sin más a que referirnos, esperamos en Dios que los sigan apoyando a ustedes que Dios los bendiga Siempre.

1. Vanessa Caballero.  
2. Estela Castillo.  
3. Leonor Castillo.  
4. Teresa Romero.  
5. Ana Jiménez.  
6. Melania Ojeda.  
7. Celia Calderón.  
8. Estela Romero.  
9. Gloria Carvajal.  
10. Luisa Amanda Méndez.  
11. Julia Urbina.

M. Julia Urbina

LA M

### Bricklayers' Thank You Letter

September 13th, 2018  
Chacraseca - León

The group of bricklayers of FNEI by this present thank you for this great help you have given us, we thank God and you for taking us into account and for the economic blessing with which you are supporting us because our country is passing a sociopolitical crisis for some time, since then we are stuck because we have not had work, this not only support us but also our families who are totally dependent on us, this also commits us to put more effort and compromise to our job.

We thank God and all the people who made this blessing possible, God bless you and your families.

Our prayers for you.

Sincerely,

Group of Bricklayers.

1. Cristian Castellón 2. Silvio Gutiérrez 3. Jacinto Olivas 4. Marvin Briceño 5. Pedro Munguía 6. Juan Antonio Arauz 7. Medardo Osejo

Chacraseca-León 09/13/2018

Nosotros el grupo de albañiles de FNEI-Internacional, por este medio le agradecemos por la ayuda que nos han brindado agradecemos a Dios y a ustedes por tomarnos en cuenta y por la bendición económica con la cual ustedes nos están apoyando debido a que en nuestro país está pasando una crisis sociopolítica desde hace algún tiempo.

Desde entonces estamos entorpecidos porque no hemos tenido trabajo, con esto nos apoyan a nosotros si no también a nuestras familias que dependen totalmente de nosotros, esto nos compromete también a esforzarnos más y poner más entrega a nuestro trabajo.

Agradecemos a Dios y a todas las personas que hicieron posible esta bendición. Dios les bendiga a ustedes y sus familias.

Nuestras oraciones por ustedes

Atte:

1. Cristian Adolfo Castellón  
2. Silvio Gutiérrez  
3. Jacinto Olivas  
4. Marvin Briceño  
5. Pedro Munguía  
6. Juan Antonio Arauz  
7. Medardo Osejo

## SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continues

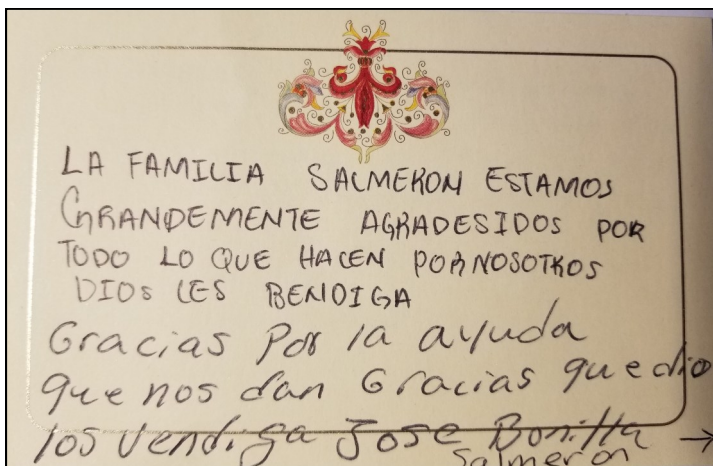
### Migrant Justice - Our Faith in Action

#### Helping a Salvadorian Family Seeking Asylum

Thank you to all who have donated grocery cards for the Salmeron family. This family of 6, two adults and four children, the youngest is two years old, escaped from the violence and threats to their lives in El Salvador to seek safety and asylum in the United States. The family is headed by the oldest son, and his wife, both in their early 30's. The parents were murdered in El Salvador before the family could escape. They are living near Sharon and working through a formal asylum process. The Salmeron family is being helped by the interfaith community, with Unitarian Church of Sharon providing a base of financial support monthly for groceries. We have committed to do this for fourteen months. So, come to the Shopping for Justice table in the Vestry at Coffee Hour to purchase a grocery card for the family. Here is a thank you note from the Salmeron family.



**Shopping for Justice Table** - UCS members donating grocery cards to Salmeron family



**Thank you note from the Salmeron family** - Translation: "The Salmeron family thanks you so much for all that you are doing for us. God bless you. Thank you for the help and may God send you many blessings."

And, a message from Our Lady of Sorrows, Sharon Interfaith Action: "Thank you so very much for standing up for and with immigrants, especially at this time in our country. Your generosity is far reaching and will not be forgotten." Sincerely, Paddy Favazza

### Vigil at the Suffolk County House of Corrections

The Paulist Center Immigrant Advocacy Group will lead a prayer vigil at the Suffolk County House of Corrections on Sunday, January 20th, from 2-3pm. These monthly prayer vigils provide an important opportunity to join with immigrants detained at the House of Corrections in prayer and in expression of immigrants' rights. The prayer vigils are conducted by interfaith communities. The immigrants held at the House of Corrections are waiting for court dates related to immigration. We will be carpooling from UCS.



**Suffolk County House of Corrections**

### Join UU Facebook Group

A Facebook group called "Unitarian Universalist Special Events of SE Massachusetts" has been setup for UU members, friends and congregations. The purpose of the group is to provide a place where information about UU special events can be shared with UU's within reasonable traveling distance. Of course, this will only work, if significant numbers eventually join the group.



All of our congregations have events such as fairs, musical and theater offerings, movies, lectures etc. that might be of interest to other UU's, but the congregations have no easy way to spread the word. Unitarian Universalist Special Events of SE Massachusetts Facebook group could be one way to provide that publicity.

Join the FB page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2153243041597199/>

If you have any questions, you can contact David Tadesco at [edescot@comcast.net](mailto:edescot@comcast.net).

## January 2019 Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Meditation Group 7pm (LIB)	2 Book Group 7pm (LIB) Adult Choir 7:30pm (VES)	3 ESL 6pm (LIB) Personnel Committee 7pm (MIN) Grades 5-6 Team Meeting 7pm (AB) Ministerial Search 7:30pm (LIB) Ukulele Group 7:30pm (VES)	4 Potluck Supper 6pm (VES) Conversations 7pm (AB)	5 Committee Chairs 9am (VES) Armed intruder task force 10:45am (AB)
6 Family Service 10:00 a.m. Adult Service 10:30am SJC monthly meeting 12pm (LIB) OWL Gr. 5-6 4:30-6pm (AB) Senior Youth Group 5-7pm (NUR) Covenant Group I. 7:15pm (VES)	7 Women's Group I. (Closed) 7pm (LIB) Men's Group 8pm (A)	8 Children's Choir 5:30pm (VES) Meditation Group 7pm (LIB) Membership Meeting 7pm (MIN)	9 Board of Trustees 7:15pm (LIB) Adult Choir 7:30pm (VES)	10 ESL 6pm (LIB) Ministerial Search 7:30pm (LIB) Women's Group II. 7:30pm (A/B)	11 Movie Night 7pm (A/B)	12 Let's Laugh Today 11am – noon (A/B) JYFG Mystery Dinner 6-9pm (VES) Circle Supper (OFF)
13 Family Service 10:00 a.m. Adult Service 10:30am Writer's Group 12pm (LIB) OWL Gr. 5-6 4:30-6pm (AB) Senior Youth Group 5-7pm (NUR) Covenant Group II. 7pm (VES)	14 RE Committee 7pm (LIB)	15 Children's Choir 5:30pm (VES) Meditation Group 7pm (LIB)	16 Caring Committee (Closed) 7pm (MIN) Adult Choir 7:30pm (VES)	17 ESL 6pm (LIB) Ministerial Search 7:30pm (LIB) Ukulele Group 7:30pm (VES)	18	19 Not Just Another Coffee House 7pm (VES)
20 Family Service 10:00 a.m. Adult Service 10:30am Reiki Support group 3pm (VES) Senior Youth Group 5-7pm (NUR) Covenant Group I. 7:15pm (VES)	21 Women's Group I. (Closed) 7pm (LIB) Men's Group 8pm (A)	22 Children's Choir 5:30pm (VES) Meditation Group 7pm (LIB) Seeing White II. 7:30pm (NUR)	23 Endowment Committee 7pm (LIB) Adult Choir 7:30pm (VES)	24 ESL 6pm (LIB) Ministerial Search 7:30pm (LIB) Women's Group II. 7:30pm (A/B)	25	26 Theater Outing 7pm (OFF)
27 Family Service 10:00 a.m. Adult Service 10:30am Teacher Workshop: Preemptive Radical Inclusion 12-3pm (AB, NUR) OWL Gr. 5-6 4:30-6pm (AB) Senior Youth Group 5-7pm (NUR) Covenant Group II. 7pm (VES) Seeing White I. 7:30pm (NUR)	28	29 Children's Choir 5:30pm (VES) Meditation Group 7pm (LIB)	30 Adult Choir 7:30pm (VES)	31 ESL 6pm (LIB) Ministerial Search 7:30pm (LIB)		

To view up to date  
calendar of events go to

<http://www.uusharon.org/calendars/2019-01/>





RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

UNITARIAN CHURCH  
OF SHARON  
4 NORTH MAIN STREET  
SHARON, MA 02067



*A Welcoming  
Congregation of  
the UUA*

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT  
WORSHIP AND ACTIVITIES  
CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE AT  
**781/784-3652**

SEND AN EMAIL TO  
**ADMIN@UUSHARON.ORG**  
OR VISIT US ON THE WEB AT  
**[www.uusharon.org](http://www.uusharon.org)**