

the chalice

Published by the
Unitarian Church of Sharon
**A Welcoming Congregation
of the Unitarian
Universalist Association**
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Inside this issue

From the Minister	2
From the President	3
RE News	4
Social Justice	5

FEBRUARY WORSHIP SERVICES

THEME: WIDENING THE CIRCLE

10:00 am Family Service - February 6th, 13th & 27th
10:30 am Adult Service every Sunday

For Zoom information [click here](#)
For Order of Service available the Friday before the service [click here](#)

February 6 - "Bearing Witness" CB Beal, Guest

As we build Beloved Community, it is vital that we are able to share our stories and trust that people will be still and bear witness to us, acknowledge and accept what we share. We must be present with one another with an empathy that honors our different life experiences. CB will share about the spiritual practice of bearing witness, and trusting others to bear witness to us, with a particular focus on gender.

About CB Beal

CB Beal makes their home in a farmhouse factory library loft in western Massachusetts and consults with individuals and organizations to increase consent culture, equity, and justice in the world. You can find them online at [Justice and Peace Consulting](#).

February 13 Experiments in Utopia

UU Principles Series: Second Principle

Our second principle is, "justice, equity, and compassion in human relations." Over centuries of our history, Unitarians and Universalists have tried to bring such ideals to life in intentional religious communities. Through stories of these utopian experiments, this sermon will reflect on how we can fulfill our individual and collective responsibilities to one another.

February 20 Widening the Circle of Concern

Hosted by First Universalist Church of Stoughton. We'll be talking about what each Cluster congregation is doing to study and implement the report of that name from the UUA's Article II Study Commission, which invites us to revisit the UUA's foundational principles to make them more truly inclusive to people of all races and cultures. **There will be no worship onsite in Sharon on the 20th.**

February 27 Everyone At The Table

They say we live in an increasingly polarized America. How do we remain clear and steadfast in our commitments as individuals and as members of communities, yet not lose sight of the humanity of people we disagree with? How do we "widen the circle" to include compassion towards all, without diluting our convictions?

From the Minister



We're making an important change in our church building this month. Our restrooms will now be available for use by anyone of any gender. We have two bathrooms upstairs in the hallway next to the Sanctuary; both have two locking stalls and neither has any urinals. Downstairs we have two single-occupancy bathrooms. By the middle of February, the upstairs bathrooms will sport multi-gender restroom signs, as well as the information that single-occupancy bathrooms are available downstairs for those who need or prefer them. Our Board of Trustees voted to make this change at the October 2021 meeting and now we are preparing to act on it.

It is perhaps unusual for a minister to devote so much space to bathrooms in a monthly newsletter column. But this is a matter of faith, as it is about people's dignity. I am cis-gendered; that is, my sex determined at birth corresponds with my gender identity and expression. I don't know what it's like to walk into a bathroom and not feel welcome or safe there because of my gender expression. My experience is very different from people who transgress gender norms, who face persistent discrimination, harassment, and violence in gender segregated bathrooms. A 2013 study of transgender and gender non-conforming individuals in DC found that 68% of respondents reported at least one instance of verbal harassment in gender segregated restrooms, and almost 10% reported at least one instance of physical assault in gender segregated restrooms. Offering gender neutral bathrooms is one way we can put our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all people, regardless of gender expression, into action.

Any kind of change can present challenges. This change may feel particularly personal since it's about the bathroom, which is a rather personal space. We can take heart that we are making our upstairs bathrooms welcoming to all, something that our dearly departed friend and church member Linden Fingerson helped us understand we needed to do. UCS became a Welcoming Congregation more than 20 years ago, and we are still working to uphold that commitment to LGBTQ dignity and equality in our church and in the world beyond.

We will lift up the topic of gender identity in our worship service on February 6 with help from a guest preacher, CB Beal. CB has preached here before and we welcome them back to share a good word with us again, this time on Zoom. Hope to see you in worship that day (and every Sunday... :)) and for a discussion directly following the Feb. 6 service during virtual coffee hour.

Yours in faith,

Rev. Jolie

p.s. You can now book appointments with me at www.calendly.com/revjolie. I look forward to meeting with you!

From the President



PROGRESS DESPITE COVID by Rory McGregor

Our church buildings find themselves in lockdown. Closure should be relatively short compared to the initial government shutdown in March 2020. Infection rates and hospitalizations in Norfolk County have peaked after a very rapid build-up. Chances are we could open before end of February. Our Task Force for Safe Reopening under Linda Godfrey-Bailey is responsible for assessing the general risk of in-person indoor gatherings and advising the Board of Trustees on what to do. Stay tuned.

Downtime due to Covid still provides opportunity to get things done. For example, the outdoor lights at the entrance to our church building had stopped working. We try to fix things ourselves to save money, but in this case did not have the expertise to identify the root cause. Jack Armstrong recommended a local electrician who came right away and diagnosed failed ballasts which power the fluorescent tubes. Upgrade to LED fixtures in the overhead ceiling was the solution. We thankfully have excellent illumination once again as you approach the church entrance after dark.

Equipment for the new children's playground at church was ordered last September from a manufacturer in New Hampshire specializing in creative designs. The original delivery date for early November passed by with no word on when our order would be ready. We just received notification to pick up the first installment. To save on transportation costs, Lindsay Drisko offered to retrieve our order when making trips to his company's office not far from the manufacturer. Sean Bisson-Donahue and his son Roux are shown in the boat, one of the play stations for the playground; the boat will be painted "blue" by youth come Springtime and we can celebrate its dedication by singing "Blue Boat Home".



Our staff continues to perform with energy and commitment to make good things happen. The quick pivot to virtual worship services is a telltale indicator. Check out the family and adult services on Sunday mornings led by DRE Christine and Rev Jolie to experience stimulating and thoughtful readings, music, sermons, and other activities. If you can't be in person in the sanctuary, this is the next best alternative. In person RE classes for youth have been on hold during January as we wait out the Omicron variant but should return sometime during February. I give our professionals full credit for keeping congregational interest alive during these challenging times.

We are now entering the planning phase for next church year. It's time to think big on what we want for programs as we return to normal events and activities in church life without further interruptions from Covid. Committees and staff take the lead in outlining initiatives and associated costs. The resulting budget gives us a target for our Stewardship campaign that begins next month. There is a growing sense that life may finally return to a familiar routine which we all want more than anything.

Rory McGregor

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

From the Ground Up

... thoughts on the state of religious education from Christine Bulman

Writing newsletters these days is a challenge! We paused our in-person religious education programs last month, so there isn't a whole lot to report. We could look at what's on tap for this month, but we don't know that either. We can put things on the calendar, but they might change. Flexibility and the adaptation have been the faith formation drivers this year!

On Zoom, family worship continues, exploring questions like "are UU principles set in stone?", "What's intention and how does it apply to my life?", and "What's this about an 8th principle?". Youth programming carries on as well. Junior youth received a fun bag of supplies so that they work on a project together while on Zoom. Senior Youth are circling up virtually as well to support one another, plan events, socialize and play games. Families with elementary aged children are doing religious education at home - circulating handmade interactive learning kits on the UU principles. We're adapting, yet again.

Religious educators this past month revisited a question that previously lurked in the background: What if religious education as we know it no longer existed? What if what we've always known as religious education is not coming back any time soon? Yet, the concept of faith formation does not cease to exist. Children seek meaning, they grow in moral character and they benefit from a grounding in values that will guide their footsteps.

Perhaps this is the opportunity, not to see how adaptable and flexible we are, but to re-imagine what it means to grow into one's UU faith in the world today. How will Unitarian Universalism help our young people navigate the world they are emerging into while also making it a better place? And how can we help children mature with an embodied faith? What if we were to suspend our notions of religious education and ask ourselves these questions in the spirit of building from the ground up? What would we build? As UU's yourselves, how would you answer these questions? If you ponder them and something rises up in your thoughts, please share them with me in an [email](#) or set up a time to talk!

In Faith,

Christine

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS



The Social Justice Committee encourages you to visit the UCS website (uusharon.org) for all the latest news and updates on what's happening for social justice at church. The Social Justice pages are a great source for the most up to date information on

events, opportunities to engage, resources, and for links to partner organizations and groups that we collaborate with in our work.

Brown Envelope Collections



The Brown Envelope recipient for December was **NeighborWorks Housing Solutions** (www.nhsmass.org), and we were able to send them our donation of \$464. Health and well-being start with having a safe and affordable

home in a stable and opportunity-rich community, and NeighborWorks promotes these conditions by developing housing, and by providing housing resources and education in collaboration with partners in the public and private sectors.

During our Christmas Eve services this year, we once again devoted the entire collection to **Father Bill's & MainSpring House** in Brockton (<https://helpfbms.org>) to support their work on behalf of the homeless population in our region. The final tally for this effort will be reported next month.

In January 2022, the Brown E recipient is the **Eastern Massachusetts Abortion Fund** (emafund.org). EMA Fund envisions a world where every person has the right to bodily self determination including the means to access an abortion or carry a pregnancy to term without social or economic barriers. They envision a world where every person has the right to determine their own future.

During February, our Brown E collections will support **Families for Justice as Healing** (justiceashealing.org), which is led by incarcerated women, formerly incarcerated women, and women with incarcerated loved ones. Their mission is to end the incarceration of women and girls. Their work includes the campaign for the **Building up People not Prisons Coalition**.

Families for Justice as Healing leads advocacy to decarcerate women and girls in Massachusetts. They organize in the most incarcerated communities in the Commonwealth to transform the way we respond to harm and develop alternatives to police, courts, and incarceration. They are leading work to shift resources away from the criminal punishment system and into Black and Brown communities so they can have housing,

healthcare, education, economic development, and community-led organizations. Your donations are greatly appreciated.

Food Pantry Donations:

Our ongoing special collection for the Sharon/Stoughton Food Pantry, and 4 other local pantries in adjacent towns, has raised over \$49,800 to date. As the Covid pandemic continues to evolve, the needs at our local food pantries continue to expand, and they are grateful for our support. Donations by check to the church are converted to Shopping for Justice grocery cards (and that means that we can increase your donation by the 5% discount that we get from the stores), which the pantries then distribute to their guests. As we approach the end of the 2nd year of the Covid pandemic, this ongoing effort by our community is making a real difference in the lives of our neighbors.

UCS Bakers support the Pantries too!

Several of our fabulous bakers have restarted an occasional offer of fine baked goods in exchange for donations to the Food Pantry Project. As a means to highlight the need, and to build connections within our own congregation, Elaine Price, Elizabeth Siftar and others are offering baked goods on a "first-to-claim-it, make-your-donation, and the-cake/bread/goodies-are-yours" basis; look for email notices in the UCS Social list and make your commitment asap. Missed out on your chance along the way? Go ahead and make a donation anyway (checks mailed to the church, online portal donation, or actual food stuffs in the outdoor collection bin at the church entrance are all easy options), and try again for fresh baked goods in the weeks to come. Not on the email list? Simply send an email to Social-subscribe@lists.uusharon.org and you will receive a confirmation e-mail and instructions for what to do.



Carrot Cake with Ginger Mascarpone Frosting - It could have been yours!

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continued

The 8th Principle - A challenge for our times- A challenge for our times

On Sunday Feb. 20, we'll join a Five Points Cluster service, **"Widening the Circle of Concern,"** hosted by First Universalist Church of Stoughton, at 10:30 AM. We'll be talking about what each Cluster congregation is doing to study and implement the report of that name from the UUA's Article II Study Commission, which invites us to revisit the UUA's foundational principles to make them more truly inclusive to people of all races and cultures. There will be no adult service onsite in Sharon on the 20th.

The Cluster will also follow up with a workshop on [Saturday, March 5th](#), led by Meck Groot of the UUA, focused on the report and a proposed 8th Principle of UUism to be considered by the UUA General Assembly. We encourage all members and friends of the church to make time for this important event, as it will help us to frame our examination of the work of anti-racism in our world, our nation, our communities, our churches and ourselves.



What do you know about the 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism?

JOIN THE 5 POINTS CLUSTER CONGREGATIONS FOR AN ONLINE WORKSHOP TO LEARN MORE.

Saturday March 5, 2022

9:00am to 10:15am:

- WHAT IS THE 8TH PRINCIPLE?
- WHO HAS BEEN WORKING ON IT?
- HOW DID THOSE OTHER 7 PRINCIPLES COME TO BE?

10:30am to Noon:

- WHAT COMES NEXT?
- MAKING PLANS FOR MORE CONVERSATIONS
- PREPARING FOR CONGREGATIONAL VOTES
- PREPARING FOR A UU GENERAL ASSEMBLY VOTE

Save the date. Registration Coming Soon!

on 6 February when Rev. Jolie and C.B. Beal will explore with us this and other topics on our path to becoming a truly Welcoming Community.

Currently, there are two identical but separated 2-stall restrooms upstairs, one labeled for 'women', the other for 'men', along with two single stalls restrooms for anyone to use at the lower level. The proposed plan is to designate all restrooms for "all genders." The 2 bathrooms downstairs can also be used for people who prefer a private space or aren't ready yet for sharing facilities.

We understand that this change may be challenging for many of us, as it raises some issues and concerns. We hope to hear from congregants about their reactions, both pro and con, as we move toward this next phase of inclusivity. Our proposed changes will challenge the binary gender assumptions that so many of us have grown up with and assert the respect for each individual to use our facilities equally.

FT Marketplace – Wednesday, 16 February, 3-5pm

Until Covid allows us to return to the Vestry for after-service Coffee Hour on a regular basis, the SJC will continue to offer our monthly Fair Trade Marketplace for pre-ordered coffee, chocolates, other special food items, as well as Shopping for Justice (S4J) grocery cards. Look for an email to the congregation in early February for details about what, when and how to order, and then stop by the church on 16 February between 3 & 5pm to gather your goods. Thanks for your patronage – all profits support various Social Justice projects and programs, and our S4J program funds the 120 bag lunches that we assemble and send to the MainSpring House homeless shelter in Brockton each month.

Proposed UCS Restroom label changes:

ALL USE MULTI-STALL RESTROOM



THIS RESTROOM HAS MULTIPLE STALLS, AND IS FOR EVERYONE

Trans and gender non-conforming people often face discrimination, harassment, arrest, and violence in restrooms. Everyone should get to do their make-up, change clothes, change their babies, and use the restroom in peace. Everyone who needs physical assistance should be able to use the restroom with their family members, friends, and/or attendants.

IN THIS RESTROOM, WE ASK THAT NO ONE BE STARED AT, QUESTIONED, OR ASKED TO LEAVE

Sharing a restroom could feel new and different.

The SJC continues to solicit your reactions to the plan to relabel the restroom facilities at our church to be more inclusive and welcoming. A recent unanimous vote by the Board of Trustees has approved the changes, and we have scheduled the new gender-neutral signage for all of our restroom facilities in February. Be sure to join the service on "Bearing Witness"

MainSpring House Lunch Making

Do you want to help assemble the 120 monthly lunches for the homeless shelter in Brockton? Until we can do it as an intergenerational project in the Vestry during Coffee Hour once again someday (soon?), look to this link (<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0d49aaae2da3fe3-bagged>) to sign up for a kit to make lunch bags at home and/or help deliver them to the facilities in Brockton. The weekend of 11-13 February will be our target for this month, and bringing this social justice project to your kitchen is a great way to stay connected. Many hands (gloved, of course!) make for a quick outcome. Thanks!

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continued**Martin Luther King Day:**

If you missed this year's MLK Jr. Day presentation by the Anti-Racism Working Group, you can watch it here: <https://1drv.ms/u/s!Aiflynhl7mk8zDisuginVGg8rXzM?e=eIAFqx>

You will find a time for honoring MLK's message of love and his call for action to abolishing racism and all forms of oppression in order to create genuine equality for ALL. This was a program designed to engage and inspire you where we:

Read some excerpts from MLK Jr.'s Ware Lecture at the 1966 UUA General Assembly entitled "Don't Sleep Through the Revolution"

[To read the entire lecture go to: <https://www.uua.org/ga/past/1966/ware>]

- Watched a few clips of some of MLK Jr.'s speeches
- Listened to some songs associated with the Black Freedom Movement

Examined our calling, as UUs, to consider adopting the new proposed 8th Principle

Stoughton hosts a Common Read Series on 'Defunding Fear'; all 5 Point Cluster Church members are welcome to register and participate.

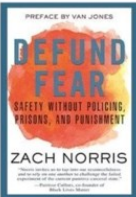
CHURCH NEWS**In Memoriam: Beverly Wilkins**

We join in mourning the loss of Beverly Wilkins, long-time and beloved UCS member, who died in January.

May her memory be a blessing.

2022 Common Read Discussions

Defund Fear: Safety without Policing, Prisons, and Punishment - by Zach Norris



Community Conversations Open to All


Hosted by First Parish Stoughton

Online

all at 7:00pm

- Sat. March 12: Part 1 -- The Unsafe World
- Sat. April 9: Part 2 -- A Vision of Safety
- Sat. May 7: Part 3 -- Reimagined Realities

Register at: www.FirstParishStoughton.org/Common-Read



SJC Meeting for February: the monthly SJC meeting will move to Sunday, February 13th at 1pm to avoid conflicts with other important UCS events on the 6th and earlier on the 13th.

CHURCH NEWS, continued

UCS Room Reservation Procedure for Events and Meetings

Submit room reservation request on the church calendar. Person who submits the request will be responsible for compliance with the following guidelines.

Occupancy limits for rooms are listed here and posted outside the entrance to each room. At the time of your event, you will pick up a form to track event attendees and contact info.

Program Room A – 14

Program Room B – 12

Program Room A & B – 22

Program Room C – 12

Vestry – 30

Nursery - 9

Library – 10

Sanctuary – 50

Masks are required.

Social distancing at 6 feet is required.

Window (s) open at least half-way. This is still under review by Buildings & Grounds.

No food or drink allowed, except bottled water.

Turn on air purifier. Set temperature for room thermostat. Turn off both before leaving.

Church Buildings Closed Until Monday February 14th

The Board of Trustees has approved the recommendation of our Task Force for Safe Reopening to temporarily close church buildings for in-person services, meetings, RE programs and other events. The rapid spread of Covid reflected in current health data for our region is the reason for caution at this time. To protect staff and congregation, this is the appropriate short-term measure to keep everyone safe and healthy. The Board at its next meeting on February 9th will review this decision and decide whether it is safe to reopen our buildings.

Staff, volunteers and contractors will continue to enter the building during this time to fulfill job responsibilities.

The Board has approved another recommendation from our Task Force on use of only surgical or N-95 type masks when in church buildings. Cloth masks are not as effective based on recent CDC assessment. Therefore, please upgrade your masks to the recommended types when at church. A box of surgical masks is on the table in the foyer at the entrance to the building. If you are wearing a cloth mask, please cover it with a surgical mask.

Rory McGregor

President, UCS Board of Trustees

DID YOU KNOW?

There are TWO church email notification systems you can sign up for? The first is for official business and is only used by church administrators for important announcements, snow days, etc.

The OTHER is the Social List, where you get notified - or can notify others - of opportunities and fun events coming up sooner than you might have thought, so they don't pass you by in the crazy hubbub of life!

It's easy to join! Check it out here!

How do I sign up for the Social Discussion list?

Simply send an email to Social-subscribe@lists.uusharon.org or [click this link](#). You will receive a confirmation e-mail and instructions for what to do.

Why would I want to do this?

Share party invitations, recipes, news of social justice events, personal or family crises, requests for information, offers of zucchini, carpooling ... anything in short which might be of interest to the beloved community which is not "official" enough to go out on the congregation announcement list.

CHURCH NEWS, continued

The Not Boring Book Group

“The Not Boring Book Group will skip our February meeting and next convene via zoom on Wednesday, 2 March, at 7pm in the Virtual Library. We are pleased to co-host this meeting with the Social Justice Committee, and look forward to a robust discussion.”

Our read will be *All That She Carried*, by Tya Miles. In this National Book Award winner, a renowned historian traces the life of a single object handed down through three generations of Black women to craft an extraordinary testament to people who are left out of the archives.

As always, you're welcome to join us even if you haven't finished or even read the book; the themes will provoke lively discussion

The link to the virtual library session is <https://zoom.us/j/6525468701?pwd=b2JuMlI5TVJzWTNHZ2ZyUzVYcFh1dz09>

Conversations at the Meetinghouse

Friday February 4th, 2022, 7PM

How to Intentionally Connect to Nature in Your Daily Life

Shawn Moriarty, Education Coordinator

Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary

Hosted by: Unitarian Church of Sharon

Zoom Meeting: [https://zoom.us/j/6525468701?](https://zoom.us/j/6525468701?pwd=b2JuMlI5TVJzWTNHZ2ZyUzVYcFh1dz09)

[pwd=b2JuMlI5TVJzWTNHZ2ZyUzVYcFh1dz09](https://zoom.us/j/6525468701?pwd=b2JuMlI5TVJzWTNHZ2ZyUzVYcFh1dz09)

Meeting ID: 652 546 8701

Password: 3652

The talk will look at 10 ways that people can weave intentional connection to nature into their daily life. These will be simple activities that people can do with no special tools can be done as an individual, family, or meeting group. And these activities will also focus on creating connection to our own local place. Shawn Moriarty has worked in summer camps and outdoor education centers for 35 years. Shawn, a resident of Sharon, is the education coordinator and camp director at Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary.

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

Monthly Stewardship Meeting

Sunday February 13, 2022 @ 12:00-12:45 pm

Imagining Our Future with Abundant Resources

Please join the Stewardship Committee for a 45-minute panel discussion with representatives from the Social Justice, Religious Education and Worship Committees. We'll explore their vision for the future from the perspective of abundance. Dreaming is fun and hearing about these Committees' future can be inspirational for everyone.

We'll focus on the following question:

Let's assume our church won the "lottery" and our budget allows for a significant increase in committee expenditures, what would your committee want to do with these extra funds? What is your vision for the Church? What is your dream project or projects? How would you staff-up? What would this look like three or five years from now?

The Stewardship Committee hopes this inspirational conversation will excite and empower attendees to dream about what they want for our community. We are a generous community in an abundant world. Together we can do so much for so many..

[https://zoom.us/j/8492141385?](https://zoom.us/j/8492141385?pwd=c051YkIVUGtOOFN1V21MVXFBRXplQT09)
[pwd=c051YkIVUGtOOFN1V21MVXFBRXplQT09](https://zoom.us/j/8492141385?pwd=c051YkIVUGtOOFN1V21MVXFBRXplQT09)

Meeting ID: 849-214-1385 Password: 3652