

Published by the
Unitarian Church of Sharon
A Welcoming Congregation
of the Unitarian
Universalist Association
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JANUARY WORSHIP SERVICES

10:00 Family Service / 10:30am Adult Service

For Zoom information click here

For Order of Service click here

January 1

No worship at UCS today. All are welcome to join our friends at First Parish Stoughton at 10:30 am for Sunday FEAST: Fellowship, Eating, Art, Sharing, Together. Participants will reflect on the theme of Finding Our Center, and break bread together as well. For more information, visit: https://firstparishstoughton.org/services/2023-01-01/.

January 8

Going in Circles

We've made another trip around the sun. We live in a very progress-focused society, yet our lives also consist of cycles that can make us feel like we're back where we started. But is that such a bad thing? Today's sermon will offer us a chance to reflect on the power of circles, whether they be cycles in our lives or circles of people, to help us grow and to help us heal. Rev. Jolie preaching.

January 15

MLK Service on Nonviolence

The Sharon Interfaith Clergy Association (which Rev. Jolie is a member of) is declaring January 2023 to be Nonviolence Awareness Month in Sharon, in honor of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Today's sermon will explore the history of the concept, and will reflect on nonviolence as a tool for dismantling racism and for building a better world. Rev. Jolie preaching.

January 22

The Long View

We live in a time of deep economic inequality and political polarization. How can our faith and moral convictions help us navigate this time, as individuals and as a society? Rev. Jolie preaching.

January 29

Guest Preacher - Adam Sutton

Our UCS Worship Committee has invited Adam Sutton to be our guest preacher today. Adam Sutton is an inspirational speaker, singer, coach, and corporate trainer who has become a leader in the fields of positive psychology and practical spirituality. As an ordained interfaith minister, Adam embodies a simple, powerful message of love, hope, and limitless possibility for audiences in both sacred and secular settings across the country. Through his preaching, teaching, coaching, and singing, Adam has been helping people connect with the Divine, authentic self-love, and deep compassion for more than 20 years.

From the Minister



Dear Ones,

For my message to you in this first newsletter of 2023, I'd like to return to something I preached about last January - setting intentions from a place of self-love rather than being down on ourselves. Faced with a blank slate and a whole new calendar for the year, our thoughts often turn to the goals and resolutions we want to set for ourselves. I wonder if, like me, you have a love/hate relationship with New Year's Resolutions. On the one hand, I love the idea that I can start fresh with my goals. On the other hand, if I make a list of all the ways I'm going to fix my life, I'm setting myself up for disappointment, or worse, I'm sure to feel really bad about myself in about a

week's time, or less.

Psychologist and Buddhist meditation teacher Tara Brach points out that, when we become fixated on the idea that something is wrong with ourselves, we get caught in a loop that just confirms that negative idea. I feel bad about myself, and then I act out of that feeling - I try to prove myself, I am defensive, I pretend. Often this comes across to others as stressful or anxious, and can create an aversive response, which just makes me feel bad about myself all over again. In Theraveda Buddhism, the Pali word for this chain reaction is papancha. *Papancha* is the negative cycle that occurs when our words and actions come out of a sense of grasping or fear, causing us to create suffering for ourselves and others.

On the other hand, as Tara Brach says, the more we remember what matters, the more our life becomes organized around that and becomes an expression of that. When our words, thoughts, and actions arise out of that remembering - that what matters is love, truth, or presence - when our life is coming out of that place of power rather than a place of fear or stress, healing and freedom ripples out. She says, in the Buddhist psychology, the power of intention is at the center of the path. She goes on to joke, the path to Nirvana is paved with good intentions.

These Buddhist teachings resonate with our UU faith. When we set our intentions not around the idea that we are innately flawed but rather that we are all capable of great good, we are living into the promise of Unitarian Universalism. Our faith assures us that there is a spark of the divine in each of us, and that we all may know love, truth, and presence. So may our New Year's resolutions begin not with what is wrong with us, but rather, with the love that is abundantly available to us and in us.

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



It's probably not news to you that our congregation is pretty independent. UU churches have what's called "congregational polity", which means they're self-governing and don't answer to any bishops or other higher authorities. It also means they are free to ordain and call whomever they please to their ministries. However, all the ministers we've had since I started coming to church here have been professional ministers from the UUA.

The Unitarian Universalist Association provides services to congregations, and one of the services it provides is to credential ministers and religious educators. A minister who has been credentialed by the UUA is said to be "in fellowship" and there are two levels: preliminary fellowship and final fellowship. When we called Rev. Jolie, she was in preliminary fellowship, and that meant she needed to have a supervising committee from the church to report on her progress to the UUA. That committee was our Committee on Ministry. Rev. Jolie has achieved final fellowship now and that means that committee no longer has that job.

So the Committee has rethought its mission. Now they conceive of their mission as follows:

To support the minister and the various UCS Committees by conducting collaborative assessments of committee work and otherwise assisting UCS committees in achieving their goals. These assessments will be done in full cooperation with the committees and require their support and involvement to be successful.

The purpose of these assessments includes the following:

- ·Help committees better define their goals and objectives.
- ·Provide an outside perspective on how the committees are operating.
- ·Help committees assess how well they are achieving their goals.
- ·Identify areas where additional work may be needed.
- ·Identify barriers to achieving their goals and help develop strategies to overcome those barriers.
- ·Provide feedback to the committee based on congregational input.
- •Make recommendations concerning implementation of the 8th principle.
- ·Make recommendations to the minister for additional work.

So if your committee hears from the committee on ministry, that's what the contact is about. The board supports this new role.

Valerie White

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

December Celebrations in Religious Education

Celebrating in the Kitchen



Both Junior and Senior Youth made and decorated sugar cookies this month and the middle schoolers made Santa Lucia Buns for Revels. If anyone would like to donate a couple of mixing bowls and some cooling racks to the kitchen, our baking adventures would be assisted!

Celebrating Revels



There are more fabulous photos of Revels here: Revels 2022 Photo Album

If you have photos to add to the album send them to Christine in JPEG format and she will upload them to the album.

A heartfelt thank you.

A very special thank you to the volunteers (and staff) who made Revels possible this

year: Jenny Theiler, Sadie Dussault, Julian Hoemke, Barbara Rose, Kristen Hoemke, and Mary Baker.

Upcoming:

Religious Education will resume on Sunday, January 8. We are happy to welcome several new families with children in elementary school and are grateful not only to be back in the big double room downstairs but to have the room next door available as well. In January we will split into two age groups: grades K-2 and 3-5. Middle school Crossing Paths will resume in the library. More details in the <u>January Religious Education newsletter</u>.

The Pancake-Waffle Breakfast is Back! The annual Pancake-Waffle Breakfast (PanWaff) will be held on Sunday January 15 at 8:30am in the Vestry before services. Senior and Junior Youth will host this event to raise money towards furnishing a cool and comfy youth-oriented space. Cost for Pancake-Waffle Breakfast is \$7 per adult, \$5 per child, and maximum of \$20 per family. Please mark your calendar and join us!

PanWaf Pizza Planning Party on Friday January 6th! Come help plan for this fun breakfast on the 15th and help fundraise for our youth space! Open to all middle and high schoolers.

Cedar Hill is right around the corner!
Cedar Hill is shaping up for January 27th 29th. Junior Youth on Friday night and
Senior Youth on Saturday night, come join
us for this retreat ready with fun games,
ideas for worship, and lots of energy! Keep
an eye out for a registration form to come
soon!

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS



The Social Justice Committee encourages you to visit the UCS website (uusharon.org) for news and connections about what's happening for social justice at church. The Social Jus-

tice pages are a great source for information on events, opportunities to engage, resources, and links to partner organizations and groups that we collaborate with in our work.



Brown Envelope Collections

The November Brown E donations totaling \$903 went to support **Youth On Fire**

(aac.org/youth-on-fire/, a program of AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts), a drop-in center for homeless and street-involved youth, ages 14-24, located in Harvard Square, Cambridge, MA.

In December, Brown Envelope donations during regular services were collected for the **UU Urban Ministry** (uuum.org), a social justice organization based in Roxbury, at the First Church Roxbury Meetinghouse. The UUUM has continued its work in Boston for nearly 200 years by facing the moment we are in, summoning the resources to address it, and convening people to work together to make change. Forty-six UU churches in Eastern Massachusetts, including the UCS, support the work.

During our Christmas Eve service this year, all donations were given to support the work of **Father Bills & MainSpring House**, offering shelter and resources to the homeless communities of Brockton and Quincy.

For the January 2023 Brown Envelope collection, the SJC has chosen to support World Central Kitchen (www.wck.org), with a focus on their efforts to feel those suffering in Ukraine. Established in 2010 by Jose Andres, WCK is first to the frontlines, providing meals in response to humanitarian, climate, and community crises. They build resilient food systems with locally led solutions.

"...It is why we have been in Ukraine since the very beginning. We know we cannot solve every problem, but the very least WCK can do is make sure that food and water is not another issue people living under attack have to be worried about. We promised the people of Ukraine that as cities become liberated we would be there.

So in Kherson, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with WCK teams as they got food and water so fast to families in need, was one of the proudest moments of my life. It is because of WCK Food Fighters and supporters around the world that we are the only large-scale food aid in the city. Together, we will all help Kherson, and other regions around Ukraine, get through the long, hard winter. Thank you for your support and for continuing to believe in our mission."



WCK founder Jose Andres helps distribute supplies to Ukrainian families in distress.

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continued

Food Pantry Donations:

Our ongoing special collection for the Sharon/Stoughton Food Pantry plus 5 other local pantries in adjacent towns has raised over \$57,775 in the several years since the economic impact of Covid began to take hold. As the pandemic evolves, the needs at our local food pantries continue, 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, equaling more than a \$2,680 boost to date), which the pantries then distribute to their guests. Thank you for your generosity! Here's an on-the-ground update from our delivery coordinator, Ellen Schoenfeld-Beeks:

I hopped out of my warm car at the Sharon-Stoughton Food Pantry, opened my trunk, and a volunteer from the pantry whisked away boxes and bags of your cereals, soups and other ready-to-make packages and canned donations. It was 8:07 and 25 degrees, and already a line of bundled people had formed at the entrance, waiting for a seat inside. Bags of items would be filled for their 2 week shopping trip—that's how long these items must last. Sometimes, thanks to your extra monetary donations to the pantry, we have raised enough money to also provide shopping cards, redeemable at their local grocery stores. Still, I wonder how many actually feel hunger. As I am driving out, an elderly man drove in and parked unusually near the line of people, not in a parking spot. I surmised he must be delivering also. Stooped and fragile, he opened his trunk, got out 2

plastic bags and started for the door to make his delivery. Immediately, a woman who had done her shopping and was on her way home, offered to help. He gave his two little bundles to her. Funny, in a tiny little fraction of time, I saw the food pantry community at work. Or as the poet Rumi wrote:

"When you look for God, God is in the look of your eyes."

We are part of this circle of caring. Thanks for your donations. Keep them coming. Here's what's needed most: Boxed Cereals, Oatmeal of any kind (although the instant can be full of sugar), canned soups, snacks for kids. At times, although not essential, coffee is appreciated. We get that! Not to be outdone, however, maybe tea as well:)

I wonder, though, how can we channel this caring to become a country without hunger?



The humble Sharon/Stoughton Food Pantry the serves so may families in need.

SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continued

MainSpring House lunch making: join in for an intergenerational project on Sunday, 8 January during Coffee Hour as we assemble 90 brown bag lunches for the guests of MainSpring House in Brockton. Each month we send lunches to the shelter, and we need your help to put them together. Want to help more? Contact Gare Reid (agreed@rcn.com) if you want to be a shopper, or to deliver the boxes of lunches. Do you and your household eat food too? We fundraise to do this with our **Shopping for Justice** program (S4J), where we ask you to purchase grocery cards from local chain stores for you personal shopping needs. We buy the cards in bulk, and get a 5% discount, which funds the lunch program (your grocery purchases are one-to-one, dollar for dollar, since the 5% donation comes from the stores). Stop by the Social Justice Table in the Vestry during Coffee Hours to learn more about this user-friendly program. And then wash your hands, grab a mask, and find your spot in the assembly line on the 8th

Thank you to everyone who supported the 2022 **Gifts for Kids Program**. Either through direct gift shopping for a specific child, or by donations which allowed for gifts and gift cards to be purchased on their behalf, over 1200 children and youth in our region had happier holidays thanks in part to your efforts. The GFK Program was founded over 30 years ago by our own Pat McDougal to provide gifts for children in need, as identified by social service agencies in the 14 surrounding towns, including Sharon.





SJC Meeting for January 2023: the monthly SJC meeting will be on Sunday, January 8th at 12:30pm. Look for the link in the UCS Calendar. We will continue to offer zoom participation, while some folx may be ready to resume gathering in the physical Library for face-to-face conversation. Please join us as we look to the New Year for opportunities and challenges to make a difference in the world.

One of two collection & distribution sites for this year's GFK effort – there are lots of smiles lurking in those bags, waiting to be released!

ANTI-RACISM WORKING GROUP (ARWG) formerly 8th Principle



NAME CHANGE: As you can see, this section has a new heading. which we believe more

fitting for where the ARWG now has its focus. While much of our energy for the last few years had been on introducing the congregation to the messages within the 8th Principle and encouraging its adoption here at UCS, now that we have adopted the 8th Principle, we want to make sure that those messages not be seen as separate from other goals and activities within our congregation but that they extend to all that we do. This means taking full accountability for our part in eradicating racism and other forms of oppression both within and without our own walls AND creating a connection between this work and our own spirituality as we continually practice what it means to be a Beloved Community.

The main goal of the ARWG is now to support the congregation in our endeavor to bring life to the messages within the 8th Principle and help us constantly evolve into an intentionally and proactively anti-racist faith community through reflection, action, listening and learning.

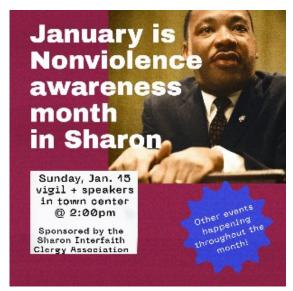
Further, looking ahead, it is possible that, based on the recently released revision proposals to Article II of the UUA Bylaws, the newly revised Article II will no longer list specific principles but will embed the messages of those principles within the entire Article II (this includes both our current 7 Principles as well as the recommended 8th Principle). Of course, once decisions are made at General Assembly over the next 2 years regarding the actual language to be used in Article II, we will have to decide what it means for us as an individual congregation and the language and structure we decide to incorporate here at

UCS. We anticipate having some interesting and deep conversations around this, as we determine how we wish to express our values and who we are.

JANUARY --- MLK-RELATED EVENTS:

JANUARY 15, 2023 – Morning Worship Service: Rev. Jolie has indicated that she plans to base her sermon that day around the messages MLK consistently shared.

JANUARY 15, 2023 - Afternoon: While plans are still being finalized, the Sharon Interfaith Clergy Association will be hosting an event this day focusing on the theme of peace and non-violence, that will include a vigil and guest speakers. Stay tuned for details.



JANUARY 16, 2023 – MLK DAY, the only federal holiday designated as a National Day of Service. While Dr. King believed in the idea of the Beloved Community, he knew it needed action to bring it to fruition. We encourage you to take some time to reflect on how the system of white supremacy has negatively impacted all of our lives and consider how you might take action to end racism within our own community and on a wider scale.

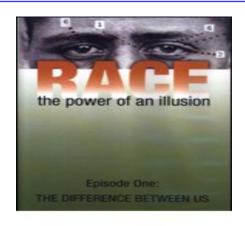
ANTI-RACISM WORKING GROUP (ARWG) formerly 8th Principle, continued

JANUARY 20, 2023 at 7:30pm: In honor of MLK Day, the ARWG will be hosting a VIR-TUAL event on Friday, January 20, 2023 via ZOOM at 7:30. This VIRTUAL evening session will consist of a viewing of a Ted Talk focused on the subject of racism, which we will view together and then reflect on, as we share our thoughts and feelings in a follow-up discussion. Currently, we are planning on watching a 2019, 17-minute video by Baratunde Thurston on How to Deconstruct Racism, One Headline at a Time. The Zoom Link to join the session will be provided on the UCS Calendar. Even if you can't join us on the 20th, we encourage you to watch this powerful video when you have some free time.



FEBRUARY --- BLACK HISTORY MONTH:

In honor of Black History Month, Rev. Jolie, along with members of the ARWG, hope to offer an opportunity to view and discuss the documentary series Race: The power of an Illusion. This 3-part documentary examines the origins, beliefs and consequences of what we call "race," and debunks the assumption that, as Larry Adelman, the Executive Producer of the series writes: "the world's peoples can be divided biologically along racial lines." Given that there are 3 parts to the series, 3 separate sessions will be offered and will include the viewing of one part of the documentary (around 1 hour) followed by discussion. Friday February 17, 7=9 pm, Friday February 24, 7-9 pm & Friday March 3, 7-9 pm..



COFFEE HOUR OPPORTUNITIES:

ALCO CONVOS: Otherwise known as Alcove Conversations, these conversations are opportunities for interested folks to meet either one-on-one or in small groups with a member or members of the ARWG and engage in conversations about how we can dismantle racism and other forms of oppression and practice Beloved Community. While we don't have our next date yet determined, we are hoping to offer this opportunity at least one Sunday a month and encourage you to look for us outside the vestry in the alcove near the exit to the Memorial Garden. When we're there, we hope you will grab a cup of coffee or tea and come share your thoughts, questions and suggestions with us.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: We also hope to provide a thought-provoking question around the issue of racism every Sunday at Coffee Hour. Similar to Alco Convos, these questions will encourage you to focus on your own individual experiences around race and racism, how we are all impacted by the systemic culture of white supremacy and how we can move forward in dismantling racism and create a truly diverse, equitable and inclusive community.

UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2023

UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2023 – Submitted by Barbara Nelkin-Rose



"General Assembly is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles." (UUA Website) The theme for General Assembly 2023 is "Faithfully Becoming," and promises to be an important and exciting event as UUs choose next steps forward, elect a new President to lead the Association and consider changes to Article II recently proposed by the Article II Study Commission. For more information about Article II and the proposed revisions click here.



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging: Inclusivity at GA: The General Assemblv and Conference Services Team will be leading the initiative once again this year to ensure that diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) are woven throughout all of GA 2023, from planning to fruition. As part of this initiative, they will be highlighting a different aspect of DEIB each month. December focuses on INCLUSIVITY. To learn more about this, CLICK HERE to play the above video. It offers some great suggestions, which we can use right here at UCS and in our own lives.

CHURCH NEWS

Remembering Jim Mullin

We are saddened by the loss of Jim Mullin, long-time member and friend of UCS, as well as a former President of our congregation. Jim died in the early morning hours of Christmas Day. Our hearts are with his wife Wendy and his grown children Rachel and Paul during this time. His memorial will be on Friday, January 6, 11 AM at church.

All are welcome.

To read Obituary, click here

Donations in memory of Jim can be made to the American Humanist Association: americanhumanist.org

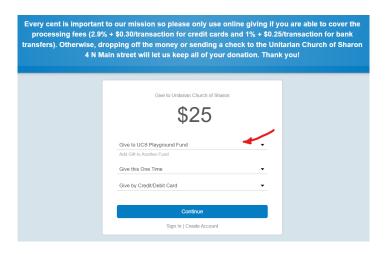
For our next art wall, please contribute drawings, paintings or photographs that convey a feeling or idea of yours. The depiction can be of a recognizable object or more abstract. The title you give it will help the viewer receive the underlying emotion or thought.

Any questions please contact Dinah Altman at drpa18@gmail.com or text 781-956-0238 or see me in person.

Playground Fund

Do you like the sound of children playing? Do you like knowing that the children of this church have a safe and fun playground? Of course you do! Help us finish creating our new playground by contributing to the Playground Fund. Funds will go toward paying for the new equipment already installed as well as the very special two-story tower that will be the centerpiece of the playground. You can contribute through Breeze, or by sending a check to the church directly with Playground in the memo line.

Art Wall



The Not Boring Book Group

The Not Boring Book Group has run its course and will not resume in the new year.

Thanks to everyone who had a role in it through the years.

Men's Discussion Group

Purpose:

Topical discussion group for men. Group is currently open.

When: 7:30pm 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month

Where: UUC Sharon Library

Questions? Contact Gary Webber @ gwebbaker@comcast.net

CHURCH NEWS

Help spread the word about the new sign up page for Greeters, Flowers and Coffee Hour at church. Ask a friend to be a greeter with you, or to make the coffee, new link!

https://www.signupgenius.com/ go/60b0d4daba92ea2f49coffeegreeterflo

We need your help! Point your phone's camera at this QR code to sign up to be a greeter, bring flowers, or make coffee.



Music Director Mel Springer received a commemorative plaque from the Worship Committee on Sunday, December 18th. Mel recorded 17 songs in our sanctuary earlier this year, and we're delighted to make them available! Mel Springer at the Piano is now available and will be sold during coffee hour in the upcoming weeks. (Cost: \$10.00)



While we will not hold services in Sharon on January 1st, we're invited to join with First Parish UU in Stoughton at 10:30 AM for its First Sunday FEAST, an informal gathering to break bread together, hold simple worship, and join in small-group reflection on the theme of "Finding Our Center." The Stoughton congregation, an active member of the Five Points Cluster, holds these FEASTs (short for Fellowship, Eating, Art, and Spirituality Together) on the first Sunday of every month, followed by a Fair Trade Marketplace and Community Cafe, in the fellowship hall of their meetinghouse at 790 Washington Street in Stoughton center. . The gathering is open to all and a thoughtful way to start the New Year in good company. To learn more, you're welcome to visit firstparishstoughton.org.

Information as it appears in the Five Points Cluster shared worship calendar:

January 1st: New Year's Day

10:30 AM Stoughton First Parish UU Stoughton's First Sunday FEAST: Fellowship, Eating, Art, Spirituality Together Theme: Finding Our Center

Noon -2 - in person Fair Trade Market and Community Cafe



CHURCH NEWS



Are you interested in learning how to meditate? Or hoping to improve your practice?

Did you know that with a commitment of just 15 minutes per day, you can improve the quality of your life through meditation? The investment of time is small, but the benefits are enormous.

Emotional benefits of meditation can include:

- Gaining new perspective on stressful situations
- Building skills to manage your stress
- Increasing self-awareness
- Focusing on the present
- · Reducing negative emotions
- · Increasing imagination and creativity
- · Increasing patience and tolerance

The physical benefits are impressive as well. According to the Mayo Clinic, research suggests that meditation may help people manage symptoms of conditions such as:

- Anxiety
- Asthma
- · Chronic pain, depression
- · Heart disease and high blood pressure
- · Sleep problems
- · Tension headaches and more

I'm Carol Abram, a Meditation Instructor and I will be offering FREE one hour group meditation and mindfulness discussion at your church on Thursdays from 7:00-8:00PM. This session is open to meditators at all levels including beginners. Please subscribe to my blog at: https://www.wavesofcontentment.com/home to be notified weekly about dates we will be meeting.

If you have any questions, please email me at: carol@abramdesign.com

New meditation group meets at UCS on Thursdays from 7 - 8 pm. Meeting in Program A

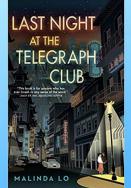
If you're interested, please get on Carol Abram's mailing list to stay abreast of any changes to the schedule. Any questions, you can email her: carol@abramdesign.com

UU Theater Night at Mass Arts Center

Our next Theater Night gathering is for *Forbidden Broadway* at Mass Arts Center on Friday, January 27 at 7:30pm. Purchase your own tickets here.

Please let Pat McDougal (mcdougal.pat@gmail.com) know if you will be joining. If we have enough people we will have a pre show pot-luck reception.

PARENTS - NEIGHBORS - FRIENDS



Book Club

Wednesday, January 18 7-8:30 pm

Finally, the intersectional, lesbian, historical teen novel so many readers have been waiting for. ~Kirkus Reviews

Register via this QR code



Sponsored by the Sharon Pride Steering Committee

Use this link to register: https://forms.gle/a7etgTut8RhQcYjh8