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THE COMMUNITARIAN

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Meredith's Musings

The theme for December, letting go, is followed by an interesting triad of themes for the first three months of 2016: resistance, desire, and liberation.



December: Letting Go. It has the sense of release—let go of something you may be clutching more tightly than is good for you. It also has the sense of “allow to proceed”—let things go the way they want to go, rather than so willfully imposing upon them. In both cases, there is a quality of surrender, and recognizing the illusion of control. Of course, the admonition to let go sometimes meets with our resistance, which leads us to the January theme.

January: Resistance. As a people of faith, we are called to *resist* a number of the tendencies we see in wider culture: consumption and consumerism; violence, fear, and inhospitality; resource depletion and environmental degradation. This month we'll be looking at what the importance and meaning of affirming that Unitarian Universalism is *counter-cultural*. At the personal level, we'll also be reflecting on the wisdom of “no.” As crucial as it is to “say yes”—to life, to opportunities (in fact, “Say yes,” was a practice of the week just last September), it is also listening to the that inner voice that says, “no.”

February: Desire. Desire does, as Buddhism teaches, cause suffering—but that doesn't mean we should get rid of desire. First, there is some suffering that we understand we should feel. We'd count ourselves inhuman or less than fully alive if we experienced no suffering at the loss of a loved one, for instance. Second, as most Buddhists will explain, we will always have desires. We can learn to give them less control over our lives, but we will always have them, and it's a good and healthy thing that we do. Deciding which desires to indulge, and when, and which to not pursue, is better part of wisdom. Are there any guidelines that can help us with that?

March: Liberation. From what do we seek liberation? Following up on the previous theme, we may feel trapped by our own desires. Or bad habits. Or unfulfilling work. Or the frenzied pace of life. Or the overall economic system. Liberation is both a political issue and a personal issue. We'll reflect on the social structures from which we, or many of our fellow humans, need liberation, and we'll also look at factors in an individual life that stand in the way of liberation. For most of us freedom is a half-won blessing: we've been liberated from so much that held our ancestors, and still hold many people of the world, in bondage. Yet we are not fully liberated.

—Rev. Meredith Garmon

Chair's Report

So many thanks to our auction committee—each year, a dedicated group of congregants continues to outdo itself. Our sanctuary was transformed into Marrakesh's medina, with the odor of aromatic spices wafting through tents, and eclectic and interesting community and conversation for all. The fundraising also was topnotch, and helped CUUC on its way to reach our financial goals.

I can't help but think the auction is a microcosm of CUUC's finest: a dedicated group of people working together in ways large and small to achieve a common goal.

Our Bid and Bump boards for meals are like our Journey Groups, where we can bid to attend a small group dinner or event at a congregant's home. We journey to sample new foods from our auction dinners, and converse with new and old friends on matters both everyday and profound at both Journey groups and bid/bump dinners. If you haven't already, please consider joining a Journey group, which are held once a month at a range of times and locations.

Bidders, who may have stretched their wallets to bid on items for the purpose of helping our congregation, are like our Social Justice teams. They have put themselves out on the front lines searching for ways to help their community. We now have eight teams working on things such as "greening" our congregation, fostering racial justice, feeding the hungry, and fighting for women's and LGBTQ rights. Please see the information on these teams and more elsewhere in this issue.

The auction publicity committee worked hard to get out the auction message (you couldn't have missed it!), just as the Communications Committee has worked hard on choosing and fine-tuning our new name communication via our new logo. The final logo was selected by the group and took elements from various different submissions in order to reflect our new name, but also to preserve elements of our traditional name and logo.

Continued...

Chair's Report (Continued)

The auction setup crew reminds me of our Building and Grounds team: responsible for every last detail, and working hard to make ensure the infrastructure is in place (except the B&G team members don't wear fezzes!). If you are handy with household repairs, or just know how to call a contractor, consider working with our newly rejuvenated Building and Grounds committee. This group of about twelve people have divided up responsibility for different areas of the building/grounds, and assorted building tasks. Also, plans are in place to restart Days in Place, where congregants join together in a day of grounds projects. If you are interested in helping out on this committee (small roles are possible!), contact Tim Lynch at timo@tlync.com.

Just as we have upgraded our auction technology over the years (no more long lines to check out!), our office is in the process of upgrading its database, due to the current one being old and no longer supported by the maker. A team of CUUC'ers researched eight database programs over a number of months, and collectively chose one. This transition will be happening over the next month or so, so please be patient if you have trouble getting member information from our administrator. Hopefully once done, we will have a system that can take us into the future.

At the end of each auction, the committee meets to dissect the event. What worked right, and what needed improvement are the topics of discussion. The Board of Trustees is doing the same thing right now with respect to our organizational structure and our infrastructure. On our organizational structure, we are considering recommendations from both our Committee on Ministry as well as outside consultant Mark Ewert who spent the weekend of Oct. 16 with us interviewing various committee members. One example of the suggested recommendations we are trying to put into place is the formation of a Membership Committee, whose function would be to regularly check in with members on their spiritual and community connections with CUUC.

On the infrastructure front, we have an engineering firm chosen to perform a full analysis of our building envelope and systems, to help us plan for the future well-being of the building. We hope to have this assessment completed by December 31.

I look forward to the upcoming winter months and wonderful events you will read about in this issue (and other interesting possibilities they will bring for future metaphors....)

In faith,

Karen Schmitt, Board Chair

Merry Madrigal feast, Sun. Dec. 13!

fun for the Whole family

Following the 10:00am service, stroll into Fellowship Hall to begin our **Merry Madrigal Feast** with a carnival of games, face painting, prizes, and hors d'ouvres for all, while the sanctuary is transformed for a memorable holiday event that all ages will enjoy.

Director Lisa Meyer and the CUUC Choir, in collaboration with the Brunch Committee and children in the R.E. program, will entertain along with guest musicians Harris Becker on Lute and the LIU Post Merriweather Consort performing on replicas of instruments from the 1500s. Enjoy an afternoon of Renaissance food, music, and other entertainment and experience a unique holiday event with friends and family. Attending in costume is not mandatory, but is encouraged!

Suggested donations are \$20, \$10 for Seniors and Students, \$5 for children under 13, and \$45 maximum per family. You can save 10% by purchasing your tickets in advance! Tickets will be available for purchase during Coffee Hour each week or from any Choir member. Bring a friend—it's a special and fun way to share the holiday season!

While preparations are moving along, we are still in need of assistance for set-up, box office, decorators and ushers. If you have a talent that you wish to share (magic, juggling, story-telling, etc.), there is still time to be involved.

Please contact Lisa Meyer, Choir Director at choir@cucwp.org or 516.299.2475 (daytime) or 347-278-3187 (nighttime) for more information and to sign up to participate. We hope you will join us!



MUSIC AT CUUC PRESENTS

Enrique Granados Commemorative Concert Sunday, January 31, 2016, at 1 PM

A program of solo piano, piano duo and chamber music by Spanish composer Enrique Granados, marking the centenary of the composer's fateful visit to NYC in 1916. Featuring CUUC Music Director Adam Kent, pianist Jason Cutmore, and violinist Airi Yoshioka and cellist Sibylle Johner of the Damocles Trio. The concert begins with a family-friendly Music For All Ages presentation, followed by the main performance with onsite childcare available (with advance reservation).



Unitarian Universalist Choir Festival Saturday, April 2, 2016, at 7 PM

Westchester Unitarian Universalist Choirs come together to sing a variety of music from all genres. Hosted by the CUUC Choir, directed by Lisa N. Meyer and accompanied by Georgianna Pappas, this exciting event will conclude with all voices joining together to perform several resounding selections.

Jazz Fest! Saturday, May 14, 2016, at 8 PM

Jazz legend Valerie Capers returns to CUUC with her wonderful trio for an evening of jazz standards all transformed by Ms. Caper's inimitable touch and style.



**Tickets: suggested donation of \$20, \$10 for seniors/students, \$5 for kids 13 & under —
Maximum family price of \$45.**

**Tickets can be purchased at the door or reserved by phone.
Subscriptions are available for all 5 concerts for \$80, \$40 seniors/students.**

On **Sunday January 31, 2016 at 1pm**, Music at CUUC presents a concert commemorating the centenary of **Spanish composer Enrique Granados**'s sole journey to the U.S. Granados was one of Spain's great composers and pianists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was especially influenced by the art work of Francisco Goya and by the folk music of his native land. Granados and his wife arrived in NYC in December, 1915 in order to attend the premiere of his opera Goyescas at the Metropolitan. Just prior to his scheduled return to Spain, the composer received an invitation from Woodrow Wilson to perform at the White House. Granados and his wife returned to Europe in March 1916, and, while crossing the English Channel, their boat was torpedoed by a German U-Boat. The couple perished at sea. Granados's richly evocative romantic music will always be associated with his one fateful journey to the U.S.

CUUC Music Director Adam Kent teams up with pianist Jason Cutmore, and violinist Airi Yoshioka and cellist Sibylle Johner of the Damocles Trio in solo piano, duo-piano, and chamber works by Granados.

The event begins with a special family-friendly Music for All Ages at 1pm, followed by the performance. Childcare is available by advance reservation.

Religious Education

Perry's Ponderings

Growing up Jewish, Christmas was not something my family celebrated and Jesus was simply a false prophet who had no place in our lives. We did not "believe" in Jesus and there was a negative connotation to the mention of that name. Of course, I was surrounded by Christmas and there was something nice about the feeling of the season, but it didn't directly affect me. Sometimes Christmas was the stereotypical Chinese food and a movie; other years it was like any other vacation day. The experiential meaning of it all was understandably absent.

When I was eighteen a friend's family invited me to attend a Christmas Eve service at their congregational church. It was my first real experience with the meaning of Christmas. I was an observer drawn into the experience. As we sat in the dimly lit sanctuary, I pulled out the New Testament from the back of the pew and began to read some of Jesus's words. "This stuff isn't bad," I thought. I could see the idealism and compassionate values in the messages. In that moment, I recognized the importance of Jesus the exemplary man, not the messiah.

A short time later in the service, the mesmerizing melody of the bell choir resounded in the candlelit historical church. The magic of Christmas was in those bells and it wasn't magic at all, but rather the cadence of spirituality touching a community gathered to pause in their lives and receive the blessing of the moment. I allowed myself to take it in with them and have what I would describe as a Unitarian Universalist feeling about Christmas where the ritual connects you with your own being and others in a moment of soulful reflection. The true religious experience is not about rhetoric, but coming back to your essence in relation to the world around you.

This is what we do in Unitarian Universalist faith community. At CUUC, worship services, religious education classes, Journey Groups, and social justice gatherings help us to better know ourselves and our connection to the people around us, in the next chair, the neighboring house, and beyond. We grow our understanding so we are opened up to deeper experiences, rather than closed off by a restricted viewpoint.

The holiday season can bring resonating bells that call us to be our best selves and challenging moments when beliefs or expectations get in the way. We can gather with family and friends who we hold close in our hearts, or be surrounded by family members or others who spark the drama of frustration within us. We see the beauty of the decorations that lighten these dark days and the commercialism that overwhelms our senses. Somewhere in the midst of it all, there are instances when your inner beacon is rekindled. I wish for each of you moments that draw you nearer to your core self so that you may navigate the path ahead from that place, both during the holidays and in the coming days in the New Year.

—Perry Montrose, Director of Lifespan Religious Education and Faith Development

Religious Education

CUUC Lifespan Religious Education Calendar

December (monthly theme is *letting go*)

<u>When</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>What</u>
6 Sun	10 a.m.	Sanc
	10:30 a.m.	Class
	11:30 a.m.	Sanc
13 Sun	10 a.m.	FH
	10:30 a.m.	Class
	11:30 a.m.	FH & Sanc
20 Sun	10 a.m.	Sanc
27 Sun	10 a.m.	R32

Music for All Ages & Wonder Box Story
Crafts for Deck the Halls & Madrigal Feast
Deck the Halls & Craft Fair
Children's Worship
Religious Education Classes
Madrigal Feast
Multigen Christmas Pageant
Childcare during service – No RE

January (monthly theme is *resistance*)

<u>When</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>What</u>
3 Sun	10 a.m.	Sanc
	10:30 a.m.	Class
10 Sun	10 a.m.	Sanc
	10:30 a.m.	Class
17 Sun	10 a.m.	FH
	10:30 a.m.	Class
24 Sun	10 a.m.	FH
	10:30 a.m.	Class
31 Sun	10 a.m.	Sanc
	10:30 a.m.	Class
	11:30 a.m.	FH
	1 p.m.	Sanc
	1:30 p.m.	Sanc

Music for All Ages & Wonder Box Story
Religious Education Classes
Children's Worship
Religious Education Classes
MLK Justice Sunday
Children's Worship
Religious Education Classes
Music for All Ages & Wonder Box Story
Religious Education Classes
Chili Brunch
Pre-concert Children's Program
CUUC Concert

February (monthly theme is *desire*)

<u>When</u>	<u>Where</u>	<u>What</u>
7 Sun	10 a.m.	FH
	10:30 a.m.	Class
14 Sun	10 a.m.	FH
21 Sun	10 a.m.	FH
28 Sun	9 a.m.	R41
	10 a.m.	FH
	10:30 a.m.	Class

Children's Worship
Religious Education Classes
Fun Sunday
Alvin Ailey Dance Sunday
Building Your Own Theology (Adult RE with Perry Montrose)
Children's Worship
Religious Education Classes

Religious Education

Deck the Halls on December 6 after RE

Children will make holiday crafts and decorate the sanctuary. Fun for all ages. Join us in the back of the sanctuary.



Sunday, December 20 at 10am, everyone is in...

The No-Rehearsal Christmas Pageant!

As the story unfolds, you become Mary, Joseph, goats, sheep, cows, horses, angels, shepherds, and wise folk.

Costumes provided; just bring a joyful spirit.

Chili Brunch

Sunday, January 31 after the service

The heat of chili and the warmth of community.
Hosted by the Coming of Age class to support their social justice projects.

Cost: \$5 per Adult, \$3 per child, \$20 per family



Tag Sale

The CUUC **Tag Sale** will take place on Saturday, April 30, 2016. Please start thinking about what items you have that can be donated. We will be collecting clothes, books, kitchen items, jewelry, etc. We will also need volunteers to work on that day and to help put the sale together. Contact Paula Meighan at paula@changingplaces.info or Johanna Bauer at johbauer@msn.com for more information and/or if you would like to help.

Did you know...

You can always find CUUC's calendar of events on our website. The link is on the top right-hand side of our home page.



THANKSGIVING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HOSTING

This year nine CUUC families hosted international students for Thanksgiving. The students were from all over the world and enjoyed both traditional and non-traditional fare. This is the second year CUUC has participated in this event with One to World and once again the experience was inspiring for both the families and the students.

CUUC REACHES OUT and INVITES IN

It is hard to believe that it is almost three years since Superstorm Sandy. Those of us who lived in the area then remember how many people were left without power and/or water, which eventually meant without heat and food.

Late in the game, CUUC reached out to families who still had power to help those who didn't. We gathered a list of people who were able to offer beds, meals, showers, and laundry facilities.



This year we are gathering that information ahead of time. **Please let us know if/how you are willing to help a fellow congregant in their time of need. Go to:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PM3J7TZ>

We Met! In Morocco!

Thank You!

The annual goods and services auction, held on November 14th, was one of our most successful ever. Thank you to the dozens of volunteers who gave tremendously towards the three Ts—Time, Talent, and Treasure. The auction committee is comprised of a number of subcommittees where much time and talent are spent to create a beautiful, engaging, delicious, and smooth-running event. And of course special thanks to all who donated goods and services, and spent a fun evening bidding on hundreds of choices.

Although loose ends are being tied up, as of this writing it appears we will net \$42,000. All funds go towards the CUUC operating budget.

Watch for next year's date and theme!

—Emily Economou, Julie Gans, Bevin Maguire



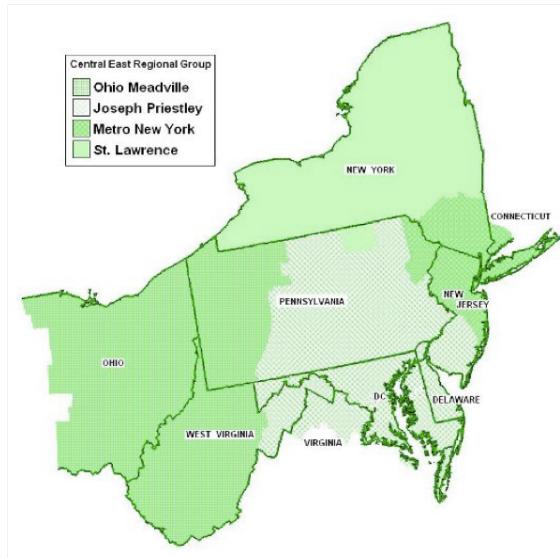
UU Happenings Beyond CUUC

The annual Intergenerational UU-UNO seminar will be April 7-9, 2016 in New York City. The seminar will focus on Income Inequality around the world. Registration will open January 1.

This is a picture from the 2015 seminar on International Criminal Justice. The seminar is truly intergenerational and inspirational. For more information, visit www.uua.org/international/events/seminar



The UUA has been working on a reorganization plan—lowering costs, increasing efficiency, and sharing more staff. The UUA is in the process of moving from 19 districts to 5 regions. CUUC is part of the Metro NY District that will soon be merging into the Central East Region. As Rev. Scott Walker, who is leading this process, says, “We are shifting from independent congregations to radically interdependent congregations.” To watch a short video on reorganization, visit <https://smallscreen.uua.org/videos/scott-taylor-on-regionalization>



At General Assembly in June, one of the Actions of Immediate Witness that was voted on was supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement. Read the UUA statement at <http://www.uua.org/statements/support-black-lives-matter-movement>

Annual Holiday Arts & Crafts Fundraiser

Dec 6 & 20 following service

Gifts for family, friends & teachers

If interested in selling your crafts

please contact

Barbara Youngman

914-948-2973

bvy1948@yahoo.com



Religious Education Council—Right Relations Covenant

The Committee on Ministry has recommended that each CUUC committee develop a right relations covenant to outline expected behavior and foster good interpersonal relationships. On November 15, 2015, the Religious Education Council adopted the following covenant:

"As members of the CUUC Religious Education Council, we affirm the mission of the RE ministry and the mission of the RE Council. We acknowledge our shared ministry and promise to treat each other, and the entire CUUC community, with respect. We view our differences as strengths and will work to meld disagreements into harmony by listening with open minds and open hearts. We agree to act with honesty, compassion, love, and respect. With this covenant, we strive to deepen our interconnections within the REC as well as our connections to the entire CUUC community, and add joy and meaning to our RE ministry and to our lives."

Opportunities for Giving

TOYS FOR CHILDREN of inmates at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. **Please buy a gift and bring it unwrapped on December 6.** The children's wish list includes:

Elementary games/toys—dolls (dolls of color appreciated), trucks, action figures (male & female); Infant & Toddler Toys and Clothing—size newborn and up; Board Games—for all ages; Teenage Items—photo album, journals, bath & body gift set, make-up kits, watches, scarves, footballs, basketballs, baseball gloves, etc.; Arts & Crafts—kits & supplies. We may not accept: clothing in blue, black, orange or gray; toy guns, knives, or any other items that promote violence.

GIFTS FOR CHILDREN at the Coachman Family Center in White Plains.

Information indicating age, gender, and choice of gift card for each child will be available December 6 and 13. **Please sign up for a family group, buy appropriate gift cards, and bring the wrapped gift cards to CUUC by December 20.** Mark gifts clearly with room number and child's name. This year the focus is school-age children.

THE FOOD PANTRY distributes special food for holiday dinners. **Cash donations are especially needed.** Checks may be sent to the Ecumenical Food Pantry, P.O. Box 2037, White Plains, NY 10602. We always have a bin in our lobby for donations of non-perishable food items. Or contact Vicky Van Wert at 914-363-9108.

All through December, **toiletries, socks, men's underwear (L and XL), mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves** for all ages/sizes will be collected. These items are for men, women, and children of local shelters: The Coachman Family Center, Open Arms, and Samaritan House.

For more information contact Ray Messing, raymessing@gmail.com, 914-592-4497.



Caring & Sharing

The Caring & Sharing Circle works with our congregation and the minister to support and care for members and friends of our community.

We provide the following services as needed:

- Putting out get well or sympathy cards for congregants to sign on Sunday mornings
- Making hospital or home visits, and delivering flowers
- Calling sick congregants and asking if they need any help
- Delivering meals to homebound
- Shopping for food or other essentials
- Providing transportation to local medical appointments and Sunday services
- Providing babysitting in the event of a medical emergency
- Providing holiday baskets to shut-ins
- Providing other appropriate emergency assistance to be assessed by the monthly caregiver
- Assisting at memorial services



We provide these services on a temporary basis until a permanent or long-term solution can be found. We also call upon circle members and volunteers to perform various services.

We invite you to become a Caring and Sharing Circle member or volunteer. For more information, please contact Astrid Rogers at 914-949-0294 or astridrogers@aol.com.

Give Poinsettias – Donate Now

In December the focal area of our Sanctuary will again be decorated with poinsettias given in gratitude for happy occasions in our lives and in memory of loved ones.

If you would like to contribute toward this beautiful display, send your check to CUUC by **December 20**. Plants are \$15 each. Checks should be made out to CUUC with the memo "poinsettia."



Please add a note indicating the person or occasion you want to honor or remember. For more information, contact Liliana Keith, Administrator, at admin@cucwp.org or 914-946-1660 ext 2.

Our Social Justice Teams—How will you engage in service?

The third part of our mission statement is to “engage in service to transform ourselves and our world.” In order to help us make this a reality, eight Social Justice Teams (SJT) were started last spring. Most teams are just getting started; other teams have identified issues where they want to direct their focus. **All teams welcome new attendees at their meetings.** We invite you to attend a meeting and find out if that team is right for you.

A reminder: the teams are structured with at least five core members. When an action is called for, we are all expected to participate, as we are able.

Here is a brief report of what’s been happening with each team along with a contact person for each one.

Economic—This team plans to investigate the local impact in Westchester of the "Fight for 15" movement to find where we can be useful as a group to help workers outside of the fast food industry make similar gains. We will also run a forum for the congregation in February or March about how income inequality affects our society locally and globally, based on the book, *The Spirit Level*, by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett. Finally, we will speak to Perry about running a similar forum for RE, perhaps having them examine how wealth disparity impacts the social fabric in their schools. Our next meeting will most likely be January 10 or 17, 2016, at 9 a.m. Contact: Randy Marshall rmarshra@gmail.com.

Education—CUUC’s Education Social Justice Team is excited about its initiatives. Member Barbara Lowney is tutoring a 9th grade girl who lives with her mom in a Westchester family protective shelter. Other areas we’re exploring include adopting and supporting a classroom we can follow through its school years, story time with our dogs and kids at shelters, and having CUUC kids write a note about a book they like to pass along to a child in need. Next meeting: Nov. 22 at 9 a.m. Contact: Irene Cox irene.cox@gmail.com.

Environment—This team is exploring accrediting CUUC as a Green Sanctuary (see next article). Next meeting: Dec. 6 at 9 a.m. Contact: Janet Bear jsbear1@gmail.com or Charlie McNally mcnally@pobox.com.

Hungry and Homeless—This is a team with over 15 members. It has met 4 times. Several of Westchester's most respected organizations in the field gave presentations about their missions and needs: SHORE, Furniture Share House, and Lifting Up Westchester (formerly Grace Church Community Services). The team will sponsor the annual Holiday Giving Opportunities, as before, but is currently looking for new projects for the winter and spring. Next Meeting: Jan 24 at 9 a.m. Contact: Jane Dixon lilrhodie@gmail.com.

Interfaith Collaboration—This team has not yet met. If you are interested please contact Meredith Garmon minister@cucwp.org.

LGBT —This team has met once to discuss Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender issues. If you are interested please contact: Mary Cavallero marycava4@gmail.com. Next meeting: TBA

Racism—This team merged with In the Spirit of Truth, which has been meeting for more than 20 years at CUUC. The beginning of each meeting focuses on actions our team can take to combat racism and to support the Black Lives Matter movement. Various team members have participated in meetings and protests in the NY area and reported back to the team. The remainder of the meeting is devoted to In the Spirit of Truth, a process that allows participants to be introspective and to talk frankly and confidentially with each other about race, racism, and other forms of bigotry, toward a better understanding of their own and others' attitudes and reactions, and toward a more loving daily interaction with their fellow human beings. Next meeting: Dec. 6 at 11:40. Contact: Jeff Tomlinson jefftomlinson8@gmail.com.

Women's Issues—This team is having discussions about ways we can partner with Planned Parenthood of the Hudson Peconic, and had their chair Reina Schiffrin meet with the committee in October. We are excited about the possibility of joining PPHP on a bus trip to Albany on Jan. 25 for the start of the state legislative session, where we would lobby for passage of legislation affecting women's rights. Anyone interested in attending with the group please contact Julie Gans or Lori Saccardi at JulieAGans@aol.com and lorisaccardi87@gmail.com. Next meeting: TBA. Contact: Deb Morra getreal714@verizon.net.

For **general questions** contact the Social Justice Coordinating Committee (SJCC):

Barry Litcofsky, barry_litcofsky@ml.com
Jeff Tomlinson, jefftomlinson8@gmail.com
Mary Cavallero, marycava4@gmail.com
Meredith Garmon, minister@cucwp.org

Watch your weekly e-mail blast and inserts in the Order of Service for updated information.

Environmental Social Justice

Over the course of several meetings, the Environmental Social Justice Team (ESJT) has discussed a variety of environmental issues as we decided where we would initially focus. Over the summer we purchased additional recycling bins for use throughout the building. We have also prepared a list of actions that each of us can undertake to help our environment, which will be available to all members of the congregation on the cucwp.org website via a link from the social justice team page.

ESJT learned that the UUA has a Green Sanctuary Program, which provides for congregational study, reflection and action in response to environmental issues. It is a multi-year congregational undertaking, which aims to align the congregational culture with long-term environmentally aware faith practices. The Program requires that we complete projects in the following areas—Worship & Celebration, Religious Education, Environmental Justice and Sustainable Living. The ESJT is just beginning to map out the initial steps to be taken on the path to CUUC receiving accreditation as a Green Sanctuary.

We would love to have your input in the planning process. Generally, the ESJT meets on the first Sunday of the month. Our next meeting is Sunday, December 6 at 9 am. Please join us!

Making CUUC Windows Safe for Birds

An important question has come before us here at CUUC, “How shall we minimize the birds that are injured or killed when they fly into our windows?” Over the last two years we have found several dead birds that died upon impact on our windows. Just in October, two injured birds were seen—one hit the front window by the door, and another the sanctuary window near the piano. Both were cared for by members of CUUC (thanks!). We are not alone in having wonderful windows with a view, for scientists estimate that up to 1 billion birds die each year from hitting windows in the USA.

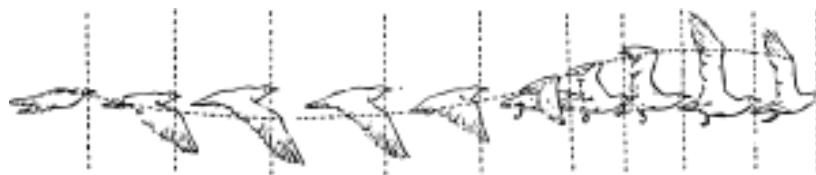
Several concerned individuals, including the 4th/5th and 6th/7th grade Religious Education classes, desire to reduce the harm caused to birds on our grounds. Birds hit windows that are highly reflective, and also when they can see through to windows across the room, causing birds to think they have a clear flight to trees. To keep birds safe, we have been putting small leaf-shaped stickers on the windows, however, they need to be placed about an inch apart to be effective. That's a lot of stickers. There are many other methods for making bird-safe windows, and they all require a balance of a clear view for people, finances, beauty, and bird safety.

Several of us met in early November with the Building and Grounds Committee to discuss the “bird plan,” which involves testing various kinds of visual barriers on our windows. You may have noticed some very experimental films placed on some of the sanctuary windows as we test what might work best for our community. These films have also been placed on the Parsonage windows, as birds have been hitting there rather frequently. We will be placing more films in the coming weeks to further advance our experiment and we welcome any and all feedback. These films are temporary and can be easily removed, and may not be what we eventually use. In the meantime, we are making our windows safer. Thanks for your willingness and patience to engage in this trial run.

Stay tuned for further developments, and if you have any ideas or suggestions, do not hesitate to contact us.

—The Bird Team

Rev. LoraKim Joyner and Ben Unger—co-flock leaders
amoloros@gmail.com, benjamin.d.unger@gmail.com



UPCOMING SERMONS

DECEMBER THEME: LETTING GO

Sun Dec 6: *Letting Go*, Rev. Meredith Garmon

What to let go, when to let go, how to let go—and why to let go.

Sun Dec 13: *The Hanukkah of Letting Go*, Rev. Meredith Garmon

Lessons about letting go—and not letting go—from the Hanukkah story.

Sun Dec 20: *Multigenerational Service/Christmas Pageant*, Rev. Meredith Garmon & Perry

Montrose

Thu Dec 24: *Christmas Eve Service* at 5:30 p.m.

Sun Dec 27: TBA

JANUARY THEME: RESISTANCE

Sun Jan 3: *Resistance*, Rev. Meredith Garmon

Among the hardest questions we face, in a world filled with people who don't see things our way, is when to "go along to get along," and when to stand on principle—when to collaborate and when to resist.

Sun Jan 10: *Resisting in Fear, Resisting in Love*, Rev. Meredith Garmon

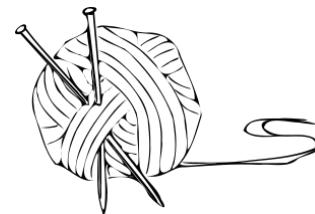
Examining the groundings of our resistances.

Sun Jan 17: *Just Mercy*, Rev. Meredith Garmon

UUA's Common Read for 2015-16 is Bryan Stephenson's *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. We'll look at the effects of our capital punishment system, and reflect on what justice requires of us.

Stitching in Spirit

Stitching in Spirit is a monthly crafting circle that welcomes any fiber crafts—knitting, needlepoint, embroidery, crochet, sewing, quilting, weaving, etc. We pursue our projects while exploring the spiritual and contemplative aspects of stitching and what it means for those in our particular faith community to be "stitching in the spirit."



Please feel free to bring needlework projects to work on or for "show and tell." We have extra yarn and supplies if you need them, too. All are welcome, with or without a project. We meet on the last Sunday of each month (December 27, January 31, February 28, March 27, April 24, May 29, and June 26).

January Plate Share

The Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) is our Plate Share recipient this January, and will receive 50% of the non-pledge plate collection. LREDA has a matching grant through January that will make your donation worth double.



At CUUC we have a proud heritage of leadership in religious education. Reverend Elizabeth Holden Baker (Betty Baker) was a pioneer in modern religious education and one of the early leaders of LREDA while she served our congregation for 25 years as Minister of Religious Education. She served as LREDA President in 1959-1961. Over the years we have been fortunate to have other dynamic religious educators, like Lara Campbell and Perry Montrose. CUUC has a tradition of strong support for and volunteer participation in its RE program and encouragement for their leadership development. In recent years, CUUC has generated three DRE's for other congregations to help promote our UU faith from the ranks of our teachers and RE Council leadership.

Any of the religious educators who have served here, or in other UU congregations, can tell you of the invaluable support that we received from LREDA. Most of us would not have made it in the profession without LREDA, and LREDA cannot raise from dues alone the funds it requires to support members in all the ways they need.

Congregations around the continent are contributing to the current LREDA campaign to increase its Endowment Fund, thereby increasing the services it can provide to UU religious educators and religious education. Such services include more direct support to religious educators and chapters (like our Metro NY Chapter), programming for their professional development, and scholarship support to attend trainings and conferences.

—Denice Tomlinson and John Cavallero

Sunday Services

Musical Prelude, 10:00 a.m.

Service Begins, 10:10 a.m.

Religious Education, 10:00 a.m.

**The Communitarian is now quarterly.
Look for the next issue in March!**

NURTURE SPIRITUALITY

FOSTER COMPASSION

ENGAGE IN SERVICE