

THE COMMUNITARIAN



COMMUNITY UNITARIAN CHURCH
AT WHITE PLAINS

Religious Education
10:00 am

Sunday Services
10:15 am

Accessible to Handicapped

~ GOD ~

The theme for December is "God." Among UUs, this topic can be incendiary (appropriately enough, perhaps, given the story of how Yahweh appeared to Moses). Here's a beginning of my thoughts on this big topic.

It's poetry. When we talk theology, we're not talking science. We aren't giving testimony in a court of law. We aren't talking history. Rather, we're speaking poetically. When we say "blanket of snow" we probably don't *really* think the snow is a blanket -- blankets are warm, and snow is cold. Poets might tell us, "I should have been a pair of ragged claws scuttling across the floors of silent seas" (Eliot), or that they saw "angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night" (Ginsberg). When we read a poem, most of us adopt a congenial and charitable willingness to open ourselves to the possibilities of meaning and insight. We don't fret about whether Eliot *really* should have been a pair of claws, or whether Ginsberg's hipsters *really* burned for connection. Why wouldn't we approach lines like, "In the beginning God created the heaven and earth," and, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" with the same openness? Because:

It's tribal. A lot of people are invested in a tribal identity centered in their religious language. The fans of Whitman's or Tennyson's poetry have not formed a powerful coalition justifying objectionable public policy with dubious interpretations of certain lines from their favorite poet. If they did, we might lose our ability to engage those lines with our former open, curious, and generous disposition. Frankly, the language of "God" is a central part of the rationale of people intent to limit women's reproductive freedom, deny equality to LGBT folk, challenge the teaching of evolution in our schools, and generally make the world over in their own image: mean and intolerant. Many of us have had negative experiences with one or another such tribe, and that experience, understandably, makes it difficult to regard their language as helpful, or even harmless, poetry. Moreover, we Unitarian Universalists have our own tribal identity to support, and sometimes it can seem attractive to distinguish ourselves as the people who won't use the words "those people" use. I get that.

Still, my hopes lie with the possibilities of employing overlap of meanings in order to build bridges of connection and common cause with people of good will who are Jewish, Christian, Muslim, or Hindu. I think we can use the word "God" to reference shared, poetic, and helpful meanings: community-forming power; love; the greatest source of beauty, mystery, or creativity; the widest or deepest inspiration to gratitude, humility, wonder, and awe; origin; any ultimate context and basis for meaning, value, ethics, or commitment; the widest reality to which our loyalty is owed; the cosmos -- and even, possibilities for relating to the flow of coincidences as if it represented the workings of agency.

Yours faithfully,

Meredith

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[Wwww.cucwp.org](http://www.cucwp.org)



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DECEMBER SERVICES 10:15 AM

December 1: 11th Sunday of Autumn

Rev. Meredith Garmon

Respond to WHOSE Love?

Reflections on the meaning of the fourth source of the living tradition we share: "Jewish and Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves."

December 8: 12th Sunday of Autumn

Rev. Meredith Garmon

There Is No God and She Is Always With You

Maybe every concept or idea of God is false. Maybe there's an undefinable presence beyond all concepts and ideas.

Leitmotif: 5th Source: Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;

December 15: 13th Sunday of Autumn

Rev. Deb Morra

Leitmotif: 6th Source: Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

December 22: 1st Sunday of Winter

Rev. Meredith Garmon

Our Holiday

How Unitarians invented Christmas.

Leitmotif: 1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person

December 24: Christmas Eve

5:30 PM service

December 29: 2nd Sunday of winter

Petra Thombs

Night Watch

Leitmotif: 2nd Principle: Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations

AMONG US

In Memory,

Les Brown, a long time very involved member of CUC from Larchmont, passed away on November 4th. Les was one of the first journalists to cover television comprehensively from its early days, reporting on it for The New York Times, founding and editing a groundbreaking magazine about the industry and producing an authoritative TV encyclopedia.

It's a girl,

Congratulations to Joe & Anne Majsak on becoming grandparents. Ava McConnell Eichmann arrived on November 16th at 5:30 pm weighing in at 6lbs 4oz.

Caring & Sharing...

If anyone knows of another among us who is in need of a caregiver from our Caring & Sharing Circle, throughout December contact Liz Laite at 914-366-4211 or at em.laite@verizon.net.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Official Notice!!

The Board of Trustees calls a congregational meeting for Sunday, December 8, 2013, following services, for the purpose of voting on a mission statement for CUC. There will be 2 votes – one to establish the percentage needed to approve a mission statement and a second vote on the proposed mission statement itself.

Board of Trustees Updates...

There is much to celebrate at CUC these days. Our annual auction last Saturday was one of most successful fund raisers ever, netting us \$35,000, and also a wonderfully festive evening. A heartfelt thank you to all who worked so tirelessly in making the evening a success on all fronts!

We also had a successful Start-Up workshop on October 26th with Andrea Lerner, the UUA Metro District Executive. We revisited our past, reviewed our current activities and success and developed plans for the future which will be unfolded in more detail over the coming months. Thanks to the 20 or so who attended to help make this a meaningful event.

Our mission statement is hopefully nearing fruition. Thank you to Randy Marshall, Joe Majsak, and Mary Cavallero who have worked with Meredith on organizing the house meetings, summarizing input and preparing drafts for our consideration. We will spend time next Sunday discussing the options and plan to finalize the mission statement on December 8, 2013. See the official notice above in regard to the congregational meeting planned for that day.

One thing to be aware of - the Board of Trustees recently invited a group to constitute an Aesthetics Committee. The purpose of this committee will be to review and make suggestions for revisions to our building. As you may remember, a couple of years ago we made small revisions to the lobby and main entrance hallway - There was interest at the end of last summer on the part of some congregants in revitalizing the chancellery and Meredith has also expressed interest in looking anew at this focal area in our church. A number of people have expressed interest and as the group is formed and a chair person selected, we will let you know so that you can contribute your thoughts to changes that are considered.

*Yours in community,
Ginny Strand, Chair
CUC Board of Trustees*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – SPIRITUAL STONE SOUP

By Lily Rappaport

In preparation for our *Stone Soup* Brunch, many of the classes read the old folk story in which hungry travelers persuade local people of a town to give them food. The story is told as a lesson in cooperation, especially amid scarcity. The travelers present the gift of a life lesson to the villagers: Creating the soup is at once an act of community and an act of hospitality.

Last Sunday the Coming of Age class gathered to cook our own communally-created *Stone Soup*. Thanks to all who contributed ingredients and who stayed after the service for delicious meal and good company. Together we raised \$470.

The tale of *Stone Soup* helps us to consider what it takes to open our hearts to giving and receiving freely. Our community is made up of individuals who bring their own special talents, practices and rituals that are also part of our spiritual journeys. How can we share with each other what we bring, learn and appreciate along the way, the many ingredients in the spiritual soup which nourishes this community?

Children come on Sundays with questions about life and death, their world and families, their joys and hurts. The children are celebrated as unique and marvelous individuals, and grow to accept differences in others. Each and every one of us has an obligation to these children. We are all partners in their religious growth. At CUC we have entered into a covenant to support, nurture, and educate them because they are part of our religious family and our religious culture.

The RE Council is actively committed to involving the whole community in working with the RE program. One goal is make sure there are solid teaching teams in place, i.e. that there are enough teachers so that teachers need only teach 1 or 2 times each month. Please consider being a teacher or a mentor for our children and youth. If your time is limited, we can explore a way for you to shape your experience in a way that matches your availability and interests.

Again, THANK YOU to all who contribute their time, talents and energies to helping making our R.E. *Stone Soup* experience, a hearty and enjoyable one for all.

RE In December!

Dec 1 – Special Sunday: A winter themed event, we'll make giant snowflakes to decorate the Sanctuary. We will also make several small gingerbread houses to donate to area communities who might enjoy receiving a "Winter Gift" with a joyful message from our children.

Dec 8 - Reverse Worship: 10am Children in class; at 10:55am in FH.

Dec 15 - 10am Children's Worship by Lisa Meyer & adult choir.

Dec 22 - Extended Family Christmas Service.

Dec 29 - No RE

Opportunities for Giving



THROUGH DECEMBER 8th—Philippines Donations THE PHILIPPINES NEEDS OUR HELP!

The AFYA Foundation will get supplies to those in need fast and you can help. Please bring humanitarian supplies and canned food to CUC NOW through December 8th and look for the AFYA collection box in the lobby. Visit <http://www.afyafoundation.org/news-reader/items/afya-needs-your-help-for-the-philippines.html> for a complete list of needed supplies.

AFYA is also accepting funds that will go directly to Philippines relief efforts, visit www.afyafoundation.org/donate.html to donate. Contact David Bowen at david@bowenandco.com with any questions.

DECEMBER 8th Deadline

TOYS FOR CHILDREN Of Inmates At The Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. Please buy an appropriate gift (for children of all ages) and bring it ***unwrapped*** on December 8th. 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.

DECEMBER 8th & 15th sign up, and DECEMBER 22 Deadline

GIFTS FOR CHILDREN At The Coachman Family Center in White Plains.

Information indicating age, gender and choice of gift for each child will be available December 8 and 15. Please sign up for a family group, buy appropriate gifts and bring the ***wrapped*** gifts to the church by December 22. Mark gifts clearly with room number and child's name. ***This year the focus is school age children.***

ALL THROUGH DECEMBER

PHILIPPINES DONATIONS through the UUSC. See page 8 for details on funds sent to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

THE FOOD PANTRY distributes special food for Christmas dinners. Cash donations are especially needed at this time. 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](tel:914-363-9108).

TOILETRIES, SOCKS, MEN'S UNDERWEAR (large and x-large), will be collected all through December. These items are collected for residents of local shelters. The 3rd grade will be helping with this project.

THE MITTEN TREE is for distribution at various shelters.

New mittens, gloves, hats and scarves for all ages and all sizes will be collected until New Year's.



Give Poinsettias —
December 8th



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 (plants are \$12 each), send your check to the church by **December 12**. Checks should be made out to the church with the memo “poinsettia.” Checks can be left Sundays with the offertory, labeled “poinsettia” on the envelope.

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

**Annual
Arts & Crafts Fundraiser Sale**

**December
8 & 15**

Following service.

Gifts for
Family, teachers and friends.
CRAFTERS NEEDED

If Interested please contact
Barbara Youngman 914-948-2973.

**Proceeds go to the Minister's
Discretionary Fund.**



DECK THE HALLS

**Sunday Dec 8
following the service**

The holidays are fast approaching!
Join us after the service and help
decorate our Sanctuary for the season.
We'll make decorations and take them
to the Sanctuary.

**Cookies & Coffee
Sunday, December 22nd**

Share the Love

Please bring a batch of your favorite holiday
cookies and you'll get to try someone else's favorite
cookies after worship!





How do we look?

An initial organizational meeting of the
Aesthetics Committee

will be held on Sunday, December 15 at 11:30.
Please join us as we start to explore various aspects of the
sanctuary aesthetic. See page 3, board article, for details.

Please contact Nicky Klemens
at nsklemens@optonline.net or 967-4419 with questions.

"BEHIND THE KITCHEN DOOR" CUC WILL PARTICIPATE IN 2013-2014 UUA COMMON READ

Reverend Meredith along with some members of the congregation will lead a discussion on this year's book, Behind the Kitchen Door.

How do restaurant workers live on some of the lowest wages in America? And how do poor working conditions—discriminatory labor practices, exploitation, and unsanitary kitchens—affect the meals that arrive at our restaurant tables?

"Blending personal narrative and investigative journalism, Jayaraman shows us that the quality of the food that arrives at our restaurant tables depends not only on the sourcing of the ingredients. Our meals benefit from the attention and skill of the people who chop, grill, sauté, and serve. *Behind the Kitchen Door* is a groundbreaking exploration of the political, economic, and moral implications of dining out. Jayaraman focuses on the stories of individuals, like Daniel, who grew up on a farm in Ecuador and sought to improve the conditions for employees at Del Posto; the treatment of workers behind the scenes belied the high-toned Slow Food ethic on display in the front of the house.

Increasingly, Americans are choosing to dine at restaurants that offer organic, fair-trade, and free-range ingredients for reasons of both health and ethics. Yet few of these diners are aware of the working conditions at the restaurants themselves. But whether you eat haute cuisine or fast food, the well-being of restaurant workers is a pressing concern, affecting our health and safety, local economies, and the life of our communities. Highlighting the roles of the 10 million people, many immigrants, many people of color, who bring their passion, tenacity, and vision to the American dining experience, Jayaraman sets out a bold agenda to raise the living standards of the nation's second-largest private sector workforce—and ensure that dining out is a positive experience on both sides of the kitchen door." (From Amazon description)

Copies will be on sale starting in December (it is also available on Kindle).

You'll have plenty of time to get the reading done, as the discussion won't take place until later in the winter or early spring. Please plan on joining us for this congregational event.



NEW

Need a member's phone number but can't find your directory?

Can't place that name with a face?

Your Member Directory is now online!

You can now go online to CUC's website for all that and more. Since our online member directory is private, for member/friend use only, you must first obtain a password to use the system. Please e-mail Karen Schmitt at schmitt8@verizon.net for your personal login information. After you have received this, go to CUC's website, and on the right hand side of the homepage, under "News and Events", you will see a link to the "Online Member Directory". Click on that link, and you are ready to go. (Thanks to Margaret Gold for taking us electronic!)

online directory!

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION(UUA) ~ DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

Denominational Affairs – What's happening in the greater UU World

CUC attended Defying Gravity!! Rev. Meredith Garmon, Nicky Klemens, Al Rocchi and Jeff Tomlinson attended Defying Gravity, which is a full day of workshops and services for UUs in the district. A youth from CUC and Denice Tomlinson attended Worship and Theology for youth and advisors on the same weekend at UU Congregation at Shelter Rock. What a wonderful opportunity for all of us. Thanks Shelter Rock.



Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
Advancing human rights is the work of many joining hands

UUSC – all through November adults and children set aside coins every day – we don't have a total amount raised yet but there is still time to donate to UUSC. UUSC supports those in need around the world 365 days a year. The UUSC and UUA quickly created the **UUSC-UUA Philippines Typhoon Haiyan Relief Fund** in response to the immediate need in the Philippines. You can donate directly to that fund. For more information and to join visit: www.uusc.org

Don't forget to put this year's UUA **Common Read** *Behind the Kitchen Door* by Saru Jayaraman on your holiday list. The book reveals how restaurant workers live on some of the lowest wages in America and how poor working conditions – discriminatory labor practices, exploitation, and unsanitary conditions affect the meals that arrive at our restaurant tables. Start reading- book discussion will be scheduled after the new year.

Upcoming CERG webinars for everyone: <http://www.cerguua.org/events/cergwebinars.html>

December 12: Ministry to Families: Managing Learning Differences in an RE Program

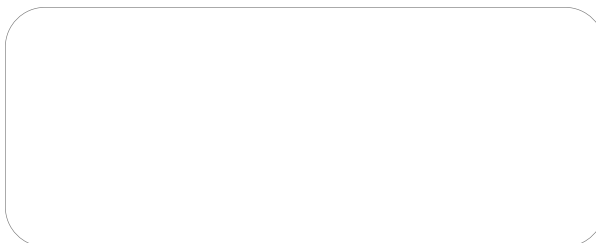
December 18: When in Doubt, Retreat: Fun and Effective Team Building Activities for Your Board, Committees and Congregation

Respectfully submitted by Denice Tomlinson and Mary Cavallero

~ December 2013 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9a-11:30a Nursery Care (32) 10a-11:30a RE Classes (FH & classrooms) 10:15a-11:30a Worship/Coffee (SANC) 11:45a-1:15p In the Spirit of Truth (FH)	2 6:30p-7:30p Tai Chi (FH)	3 7:30p-9:15p Choir Rehearsal (Sanc)	4 7:30p-9:30p Program Council (R41)	5	6	7
8 8:45a-10a Choir (Sanc) 9a-9:50a COA P/T Meeting (41) 9a-11:30a Nursery Care (32) 10a-11:30a RE Classes (FH & classrooms) 10:15a-11:30a Worship/Coffee (SANC) 11:30 Congregational Meeting 11:30a-1p Craft Fair (Sanc) 12p-1p Deck the Halls (Sanc\, FH\,)	9 6:30p-7:30p Tai Chi (FH)	10 7:30p-9:15p Choir Rehearsal (Sanc)	11 7:30p-9:30p Board of Trustees (41)	12 11:30a-1p Science and Spirituality (R24)	13	14
15 Communitarian Deadline 8a-9a P/T 3rd Grade meeting (R41) 8:45a-10a Choir (Sanc) 9a-11:30a Nursery Care (32) 10a-11:30a RE Classes (FH & classrooms) 10:15a-11:30a Worship/Coffee (SANC) 11:30a-1p Craft Fair (Sanc)	16 6:30p-7:30p Tai Chi (FH) 8p-9:30p Finance Committee (41)	17 7:30p-9:15p Choir Rehearsal (Sanc)	18	19	20	21
22 8:45a-10a Choir (Sanc) 9a-11:30a Nursery Care (32) 10a-11:30a RE Classes (FH & classrooms) 10:15a-11:30a Worship/Coffee (SANC)	23 6:30p-7:30p Tai Chi (FH)	24 4p-5p Choir (Sanc) Christmas Eve Service 5:30 pm	25 Christmas 9:30a-10:30a OFFICE CLOSED	26 10a-11a COMMUNITARIAN mailing (FA)	27	28
29 9a-11:30a Nursery Care (32) 10a-11:30a RE Classes (FH & classrooms) 10:15a-11:30a Worship/Coffee (SANC)	30 6:30p-7:30p Tai Chi (FH)	31				

COMMUNITY UNITARIAN CHURCH
468 Rosedale Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605



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Founded 1909

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Communitarian Deadline for the next edition:

Sunday, December 15

Submit information to
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