

The Pulse

September 2021

VIRTUAL SUNDAY SERVICES, 10:00 AM on ZOOM

The Meeting ID# 819 313 1486 Password: uuchurch

September 5 – No service

September 12 – *Ingathering/Water Communion*

September 19 - Rev. Flo Gelo – *To Be Announced*

September 26 – Rev. Larry Smith - "*The Common Enemy of the Human Race.*" Abner Kneeland was accused by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts of the crime of blasphemy. He was at different times a Universalist and then a Unitarian minister. He was the last person jailed for blasphemy in the United States. This is his story.

DDUUC has services every Sunday at 10:00 AM from the Sunday after Labor Day through the end of June. Informal Sunday services are held on selected Sundays during July and August. Sunday services are provided by guest ministers, outside speakers, or members and friends of the congregation. DDUUC has an ongoing religious education program for children. We have many activities in which to participate, and are also involved with the Greater Bordentown area through our sponsorship of an Interfaith Dialogue and many social action tasks.

List of DDUUC Officers 2020-2021

President – John DeMasi
Vice President – Mae Carter
Secretary – Jennifer Steffee
Treasurer – Christina Sturgis
Religious Education – Trish Concannon
Social Action – Kara DeRose
Sunday Service – Clarissa DeLuca

The Pulse is the newsletter of Dorothea Dix Unitarian Universalist Community.

It is published monthly, September through June. Articles are solicited from members and friends. The Pulse is edited by Pete Costanza.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you all so much for your votes, comments, and recommendations through the recent survey about our return to in-person Sunday Services. All of the received feedback has been carefully reviewed and discussed by the Board along with current CDC recommendations and New Jersey COVID-19 reports.

At their August 29th meeting, the Board voted to continue remote Sunday Services on ZOOM through the month of October. **All Sunday Services will continue remotely on ZOOM through October.**

The Board will reconvene at a later date to evaluate a possible return to in-person services in November.

Thank you all for your continued thoughts, concerns, and suggestions. Please take care and stay safe!

Jennifer Steffee, Secretary

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spirit Circle Events for September 2021

September 6 – Informal gathering of Spirit Circle 7 pm (Virtual)

Nothing is planned, it's just a time to get together

Zoom info: 865 2682 5812 code 752749

September 20 – Oracle Day 7 pm (39 Park Street)

We will gather in person to select various Oracle cards to see what is in store for us in the coming months. Masks are appreciated.

September 22 – Drumming by The Fire – Mabon 7 pm (39 Park Street)

Join us to wish the sun well as it starts to spend less time with us. Our food to share theme is apples. We have a few extra instruments so come and drum with us.

DDUUC Website Meeting

September 26 – 11 am

See Christina Sturgis's article on page 5 for more information

Murray Grove 251st Anniversary Homecoming

October 1-3 - In person and virtual. For details on this and other events at Murray Grove, go to www.murraygrove.org.

SOCIAL ACTION NEWS

School Supplies – I will be collecting school supplies to hand out to the kids that live in the local motels. If you have a key to the church, you can leave donations there. You can also drop things off at my home at 10 Landon Dr, Bordentown City. There is a donation bin on the porch. If neither of these work, let me know and I may be able to arrange a pick-up.

I'll be putting the backpacks together on September 1st, and dropping them off on September 2nd. *(This message based on an e-mail to DDUUC on August 21st is intended to report Social Action Committee activities. It may be too late to meet Kara's deadline if original e-mail was missed. ---Ed.)*

Motel Meals – I found out that another group is providing meals on Thursdays (it's that local girl named Mia) (they used to do Fridays but recently switched it). So, Motel Meals will be changed to every third Wednesday. Next month, we plan to stay on the safe side since the cases are rising and give them sealed/nonperishable microwaveable meals. We also plan on providing the kids with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to have for lunch the next day. If anybody would like to contribute, please let me know or you can just drop off at my

house. We'll need individual containers of cup of noodles, granola/cereal bars, individual cups of apple sauce, individual containers of fruit cups, and bottled water.

DDUUC Garden - I'm still tending the DDUUC garden plot. It has been thriving and we've been able to provide TASK with lots of fresh swiss chard, collard greens, and herbs!

Afghan Refugees Relief - DDUUC is collecting items for the Afghan refugees that have arrived at Maguire Fort Dix Lakehurst base near us. The following items needed are...

sanitary pads, long shirts, long skirts, new packets of mens/women undergarments, new toys for kids, diapers, hygiene items: soap, toothbrush, shampoo

Please drop items off on Kara's porch, 10 Landon Dr. Bordentown OR Raquel's porch, 1 Ratigan Ave. Bordentown, **by September 6th**. Another option would be shipping the items to us through Amazon, Target or Walmart, etc. Or if needed, I can come pick them up from you. If you have a key to the church, you can leave items there but just let me or Raquel know so we can go there and grab them. Any questions, please contact me or Raquel. Thank you!

Kara DeRose 609-977-8012

Raquel Parker 609-933-3673

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Message From Betsy Young

Due to wildfires, the Elders from Soaring Eagle Heritage Living Center had to be evacuated over 100 miles to hotel rooms in Billings, Montana. Two wild fires are involved, Richard Spring and Lame Deer. As of August 18, both had regained strength overnight, keeping the area unsafe for the Elders' return. Because HLC has a diesel generator and a functioning kitchen, it has become a fully-involved canteen for firefighters, law enforcement and medical personnel and for stranded families. Director Mike Skaggs asks us at DDUUC to keep them all in our thoughts.

Tangled up (in the) Web

By Christina Sturgis, Treasurer of the Board of Trustees

Our website, DDUUC.org has recently become more useful because of a wonderful new calendar from Teamup.com selected by Jen Steffee, secretary of the board, and because of a link to our Survey Monkey about returning to in-person church.

The new calendar enables leaders of various activities to update their plans for their people and pours them into a color-coded format that is very easy to read. This calendar and the survey have greatly increased visits to the website so it is that much more useful.

I am so happy about this! I want to follow up on this wonderful, collaborative experience by holding a first-ever meeting about the website and its infinite possibilities at 11 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 26, on Zoom. Why not? If we get tangled, maybe someone can fix it!

So why did I say I am “tangled” in the title? It’s because I bought a Bob Dylan CD and now his classic, “Tangled Up in Blue,” is playing over and over again in my head. I know people say this phenomenon, known as an ear worm, is annoying, but I kind of like it. The meandering ballad about a lost love is a good metaphor for how the meaning of events changes as time passes.

I have always wanted the website to have a calendar. When I attempted to add a Google calendar, I would check my work by phoning a friend and asking them if they could get to it from the website. The answer was always no and I got frustrated and gave up. Could I leave that experience in the past?

Then, Jen emailed me about the “Teamup.com” calendar and said it could be embedded into the website. Referring back to the Dylan metaphor, I feared I would fail to “embed” the calendar and would somehow become “tangled up” in its color-coded glory. Would I be able to live up to what Jen thought I could do? Would I ever get this Dylan song out of my head?

I pushed those thoughts aside and focused on the embedding only to learn that our website platform, Wordpress, once facilitated embedding this calendar, meaning it would pop up with some of its identifying graphics, as do the Youtube videos. I wanted the embedding to work so much that I spent \$275 of my own money on an upgrade. The upgrade did not solve the

problem. I was frustrated. I was tangled up in whatever color represents frustration.

Then, I tried making a link and a button, something I already knew how to do. It works. What to do about the \$275? I requested a refund, which granted promptly with only one strange side effect. The website menu became tangled and efforts to fix it only made it worse. So I deleted the menu and have started to rebuild.

It's time for a new song: "Blue Skies from Now On."

The website meeting is scheduled for 11 a.m. Sept. 26. If you wish to email me ideas or images ahead of time, send them to my alternate email, cls120e@verizon.net, and put "Tangled" in the guide line.



I just got an estimate to clean-up the parking lot from Marvin's Landscaping. The Board will make the final decision on his estimate.

p.s. Marvin is from Guatemala, so he would be familiar with "tropical jungles."

Roger Long

Letting Go

Now is the time to start 'Letting Go'. The kids are back in school (of course that depends on the Delta Variant), vacations are over, and the highlights of summer are memories. It is time to let go and welcome the quiet and darkness.

Personally, I am letting go of the responsibilities that go along with serving as Sunday Service Chairperson. The past 16+ months were very difficult for me for various reasons and now it is time to let someone else handle all the victories and responsibilities that go with that position. It is bittersweet for me. On the one hand I am relieved that I am no longer responsible for worship services. On the other hand, I feel like I have abandoned my duties and with it some of my feelings of self-worth. But I will take my own advice and let go.

This time of year is a quiet time. We are done with the frenetic activities of summer, and we have not started the madness that precedes the holidays. The darkness comes earlier and with it a sense of peace.

Too many people equate darkness with evil. But our food starts out in darkness. Seeds spend time in the earth waiting for the right time to seek the light of spring. Babies are in darkness until it is time for them to reach the light of living. And this darkness can be a time of preparation.

So let us prepare for the holidays ahead with some quiet time in dark stillness. Who knows what dreams may come our way if we let them?

Science and Nature Don't Care What You Believe

Recently on NPR the subject was why so many people refused to get vaccinated. On that program a reporter was interviewing a southern fundamentalist preacher who would not allow his parishioners to enter his church wearing a mask -- as if it were an insult to God, God being the provider of The Flood, The Plagues of Egypt, the tormentor of Job, the jealous, vindictive, and irrational tribal god. It probably never occurred to that fundamentalist preacher that his God gave humanity COVID-19 to punish us for our many sins, like Global Warming, overpopulation, woman's suffrage, equal rights...His God then, surely gave us the Black Plague, the flu and smallpox. His way of "thinning the herd." His God, then, does not like Science, which fights Him every which way, like finding cures for what plagues us.

But if we spell God N-a-t-u-r-e, as Unitarian Frank Lloyd Wright did, then, to me anyway, everything becomes more understandable. Viruses are just as natural as the Seasons. Birth, death, childbirth, reaping and sowing, celebrating and mourning are just natural, and as such, impersonal. I think that it is a good thing. The preacher would disagree, but then, I always had a problem with preachers and other ecclesiastics who freely tell us what God wants*, that God loves Us. (If God loves us, He has a funny way of showing it.)

And that is why I am sticking to Unitarianism, the creedless religion, the religion that features a "Building Your Own Theology," a religion that cares more about people than any of mankind's gods. That fundamentalist preacher I mentioned said he only pays attention to the facts, then he goes spouting about conspiracies and how the election was stolen. So, if you grew up fearing God, it would be more natural to fear him and the millions who think like him. And that is pretty damned scary.

**At the Classics Bookstore the other day, I saw a book titled "What God Wants." Naturally, I thought, "How does the author know?" And I didn't bother to find out.*

Supernova

Over the summer I watched the motion picture, “Supernova” (2020), which depicts two major UU principles, although it has nothing to do with UUism as such. The movie is about a middle-aged gay male couple, starring Stanley Tucci as Tusker, an American who now lives in England, and Colin Firth as his English partner, Sam. They have been in a relationship for twenty years. They are seen venturing on an auto tour of the English countryside, as they travel to visit Sam’s family in the lake region. It becomes evident that Tusker has early onset dementia, and Sam is trying to adjust to his role in caring for Tusker. At Sam’s family’s home in the country, it is evident that his sister and brother-in-law, and their ten-year-old daughter, love Tusker, and totally accept him as a member of the family. It is refreshing to see that the plot suggests no signs of homophobia whatsoever. A classic example of the first principle without being hit over the head to get the point.

One evening Tusker and the ten-year-old niece are lying on the lawn looking up at the stars. Tusker asks her to focus on a small section of the sky. He points out that in any section, there were many supernovas, explosions of very large stars when they died out billions of years ago, and that the matter and atoms from those supernovas are what he and she are made of. Once again, the plot did not try to get detailed beyond this statement, which is scientifically accurate, and which made it more awesome to think about. It’s a perfect example of the seventh principle, relating to the interconnectedness of everything in the universe.

The story shifts thereafter to the love between Tusker and Sam, with Tusker even suggesting that he commit suicide rather than have Sam deal with his mental deterioration. But Sam will hear nothing of that and pledges in the last scene that he will always be there for him.

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