



The Chalice

Embracing Diversity, Nurturing Spirituality, Promoting Justice in the World

20460 Gleedsville Road, Leesburg, VA 20175

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February 2017

A COMMUNITY OF OURSELVES



"We are a community of ourselves," is a sentence often used by our service hosts, particularly Ricky and myself, prior to the weekly collection. I like that sentence because it conveys how we are an independent church, free from the dictates of a higher authority. Our church is founded on covenant-how we relate to each other, not on a particular creed. In fact many of us have rejected the religions of our birth that dictated beliefs in God.

"A community of ourselves" infers additional responsibilities to each other and also conveys the message that we must rely on each other for finances and for the day to day ministry of the church-for caring, attracting new members, raising the money to pay our bills, maintaining our building, and for all our social justice activities. Without your participation either leading committees or being a committee member, UUCL would not operate as well as it does.

I have recently been reminded of the importance of expressing gratitude for all that you do. I have tried, in the monthly president's reports, newsletter articles, and at congregational meetings to tell you how much I and the entire board value your contributions. On the recommendation of committee chairs the board also sends thank you notes for service above and beyond. Please know that I value the work that everyone does.

In this newsletter, I am asking for more. In my last president's message I mentioned that regular maintenance was not completed since we lacked a coherent building and grounds committee and that we needed a co-chair to work with Tommy Chambers, who is taking on almost all the responsibilities of the committee. (I want to recognize Chris D'Arcy and The Testa's who put plastic up on our windows in response to that message.) Since writing the first draft of this article, Dave Testa has stepped forward to co-chair buildings and grounds. We have a need for additional members of that committee. In particular I am seeking a master gardener or someone interested in gardening and landscape design to take responsibility, within the buildings and grounds committee for planning and organizing activities to make our property more attractive. This will become a bigger responsibility once the parking lot is redone.

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SAVE THE DATE

April 29th

Annual Service Auction



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We also have two significant vacancies which need to be filled. Natalie Pien resigned as a board member. She has a major commitment to her aging parents and will be a full time caregiver. She will continue as Green Team chair, but felt she could not adequately carry out her board duties. Natalie's term expires June 30, 2017, so this would be a great opportunity for someone interested in board service. The board prefers to find someone interested in serving a full two year term as a member at-large after June 30.

Additionally, the Green Team is seeking additional members.

Finally, the board recognized the immense time commitment Tamar Datan has taken on in chairing both the social justice and stewardship committees. These two committees require a substantial time commitment. Tamar has resigned as chair of the social justice committee to concentrate on the important job of raising funds for our church. Her service to UUCL deserves our sincere thanks.

The social justice committee is now in need of a new chair. The board set as a goal greater participation in social justice activities. I have also received inquiries from members about involvement in social justice projects. If you are interested, one way to get your feet wet is to lead one new activity and see if a leadership position fits.

Service to our congregation, whether it is raising money, leading a social justice activity, or making sure we have coffee, contributes to the ministry and mission of UUCL. We are a community of ourselves and without your participation, vital jobs would go unfilled. If you have an interest in any of the positions discussed, or a passion or skill to help in any way, please call me or any board member.



*Jenna Korff and
Leslie Solitario*



*Rev. Dan King, Nina
King and Tamar Datan*



UUCL represented at the annual Leesburg MLK march

UUs ABOUT TOWN — NEWS ABOUT NOTEWORTHY UUCL MEMBERS

Wow!! As a group, we have many members who are active in the community. Until now, some of their efforts may have gone unnoticed. For this reason, we have decided to create a new column to report the activities of some incredible UUs. If you know a member of our church that deserves a bit of recognition, please email their name and contributions to the communications committee at communications@uuloudoun.org.

This past November, Gina Faber was recipient of the 2016 McGranahan Stewardship Award by the Nature Generation for her dedication of time, talent, and passion in enhancing the Chapman DeMary Trail environmental area. The award was presented during their clean up event called Hail to the Trail. Gina has taught students, scouts, youth groups, and other volunteers who have come to the trail for hikes and field trips. In addition, she had spent many hours helping with projects to enhance pollinator plants and remove invasive plants. In addition to being an active member of UUCL's Green Team, Gina also participates with the Loudoun Environmental Stewardship Alliance.

Did you know we have a star in our midst, a library star to be exact. Chang Liu, the Library Director from Loudoun County Public Library was thrilled with the announcement from Library Journal recognizing our public library system as one of the best in the United States in its 2016 survey. Only 3.5% public libraries measure up well enough to earn the America's Star Library designation. In addition, of the 260 out of 7,350 libraries named nationwide, only three are in our state of Virginia. Chang notes this rating is made possible by the hard work of all the library staff members as well as the Board of Trustees. She also contributes this ranking to the support from Loudoun County Government, the Loudoun Library Foundation, and the Library branch friends' groups.

Last but not least, during January a bipartisan initiative was announced by the Coalition for Community Success and our own UUCL member Leigh Ann Macklin. Efforts will support Crossroads Jobs Inc., which assists job seekers by providing orientations and workshops to assist with resume preparation and interviews. Job seekers are prescreened by Crossroad counselors and connected with employers throughout Loudoun County. Many community leaders are involved in this effort to improve unemployment rates. Leigh Ann has worked to help organize this initiative through her role with Coalition for Community Success. Way to go Leigh Ann!!

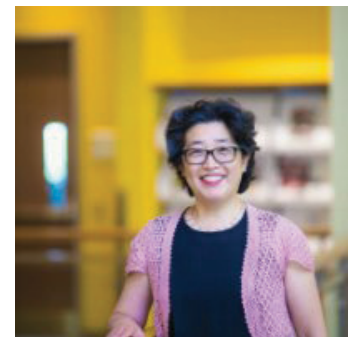


Gina Faber (right) receives 2016 McGranahan Stewardship Award by the Nature Generation's president and founder, Amy Morasco Newton.



The Coalition for Community Success participated in Crossroads Jobs, Inc.'s 2017 Kickoff Celebration.

Photo courtesy of Rider Photography — with (l-r) Leigh Ann Macklin, Carol Smith and Todd Sheller at Shoes Cup and Cork.



Chang Liu, Director of Loudoun County Public Libraries

REFLECTIONS FROM REV. DAN, UUCL DEVELOPMENTAL MINISTER- “30 DAYS OF LOVE?”



One recent morning we woke in even deeper darkness than usual because of a power outage. Our granddaughter was anxious about missing her school bus because her electric clock was not working, so she called out for her mother, who came to her room to reassure her and sleep with her until dawn.

It occurred to me that this might be a metaphor for what many of us could be feeling this past month. There is a sense that “there’s a disturbance in the Force”, a definite change in the “power grid” most of us have become accustomed to. For many, that may seem like the darkness of the unknown, of coming changes in society and our own lives that are unpredictable. Because we don’t know how long that darkness may last, or what is hidden in that darkness, it can be demoralizing, or even frightening.

As I write, I look back over a recent week, from the Leesburg MLK march on Monday through the official inaugural events of Friday to the incredible local, national, and international demonstrations associated with what was called the Women’s March for Justice on Saturday. Those events provided hints of what could be extended darkness, but also sparks of hopeful light.

Not discounting any of the powerful speakers, one of those sparks of light came from Rabbi Amy Sapowith, an interfaith clergy colleague, when she offered a meaningful invocation for the MLK observance by sharing her thoughts on the motto adopted by this Commonwealth in 1969: “We are the lovers of people of all races and walks of life. Virginia is for Lovers, not bullies, not demagogues, not false prophets. We are the lovers, people committed to bringing healing to a broken world.”

Rabbi Amy and I followed up on our participation in the MLK march and ceremonies to join with two dozen other local clergy and faith communities in signing a shared letter which was published in both the Loudoun Now and the Times-Mirror newspapers. In that letter, we all pledged our commitment to reaffirm bridges of trust and respect across differences, to work together for the common good, to attend to the needs of the vulnerable, and to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of all our neighbors.

In a similar vein, this week I was one of 100 clergy signers of a petition to the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates asking them to act in accordance with the highest values of tolerance and inclusion, rather than discrimination against individuals on the basis of their sexual identity, ethnicity, or religion.

I am very much aware that some of us who are not clergy may also wish to join in some kind of collective action through our affiliation as Unitarian Universalists. In this vein, for the past several years, our Unitarian Universalist Association (the UUA) has organized a broad-form interfaith social justice focus called Standing on the Side of Love, and has designated the month between the MLK holiday and Valentine’s Day as an opportunity for “30 Days of Love”, elevating our collective consciousness.

Consistent with both of those emphases, and in response to a recent joint request from my longtime friend and colleague Rev. Peter Morales, the UUA President, with Tom Andrews, the new President of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), I am offering to our members

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their proposed “Declaration of Conscience” which offers an affirmative response to current events which I believe is clearly consistent with our UUA principles. You may or may not agree, but I invite you to consider it.

I hope you will feel welcome to discussing your sense of these reflections with me and with others in the coming days and weeks as you consider your personal responses- not only in words, but also in faithful action- in what will surely be a time of change. May there be an early dawning.

Your Minister, Rev. Dan

(Declaration of Conscience can be viewed on the final page of the newsletter)



SPOTLIGHT JESSE AARON & LEAH COOPER

Jesse Aaron and Leah Cooper are fairly new to Leesburg having lived here for 2 1/2 years. Both are originally from Albuquerque and moved from Salt Lake City to Leesburg when Jesse accepted a job at the Janelia Research Center. They feel they have found a permanent place to live here in Leesburg especially due to several prior moves whereby Jesse, being a scientist, followed grant funding for work. Jesse designs and builds microscopes and is part of the team that runs the Advanced Imaging Center (AIC) at Janelia. AIC makes imaging technologies, such as microscopes, available to the scientific community around the world before the instruments can be purchased commercially which typically takes five years. This gives scientists who apply to the program an opportunity to test out their novel ideas with the support of Janelia’s in-house imaging experts and research infrastructure.

Leah, having volunteered prior to moving to Leesburg, volunteered as an instructor teaching English at the Loudoun Literacy Council (LLC), a non-profit dedicated to the cause of literacy. She holds a degree in Spanish and Latin American studies. When a job opened up at LLC, she decided to take the position and now works as the Program Coordinator. LLC has two core programs: Adult Literacy and Family Literacy. The Adult programs offer formal education classes and the Family programs help children to read along with supplying free books. LLC also works in conjunction with All Ages Read Together, UUCL’s signature initiative.

In addition to LLC, Leah has a side Millinery business where she makes hats and accessories, which she learned to do while living in Utah. Her shop is called “Haberdashery & Togs” and can be found on Etsy.

Leah grew up in the UU faith and when she and Jesse moved here, it was only natural they would seek out a UU church. Currently Leah is on the Fellowship Committee. Leah and Jesse welcomed their first baby, Elliot Robert Aaron, on January 11 and are over the moon!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS AND VIEWS

by Kate Savidan



The Religious Education Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in our Dia de los Muertos Intergenerational service on October 30, 2016. It was a very beautiful and moving experience enjoyed by members of all ages.

This year, the theme for UUCL's Religious Education is "Our Hebrew and Christian Traditions." This unit is part of a four year rotation; the other themes are World Religions, Unitarian Universalism, and Peace, Justice and the Interdependent Web. The children have been learning about the Old Testament stories, while also celebrating a few traditional Hebrew holidays. Soon we will transition to the New Testament stories as the focus shifts to learning about our Christian traditions.

Whether or not a Unitarian Universalist family's belief system leans towards the Jewish or Christian faith, the stories from both the Hebrew and Christian Bible are an integral part of our society, literature and our heritage.

I believe that children who are familiar with the stories from the past are better equipped to understand elements of our culture. We believe that the stories from the two faiths are about human issues that are ageless. As UUs these stories and customs can help us understand our neighbors, as well as ourselves. When learned in a UU context, our children can be helped to understand the universal core of the story.

This year we introduced some exciting changes to the RE program. On the second Sunday of every month, we now host Children's Chapel in the RE space. It is open to any and all who want to attend, even our teens and adults! We hand out OOS, have readings, sing hymns, extinguish the chalice... everything the adults do upstairs (but as the kids tell me, we have more fun!). Afterwards we enjoy "Coffee" and conversation, with some snacks on the side.

Also, we have been enjoying Singing Sundays every few months. Hosted by one of our Children's Choir leaders, Carol Hardraker-Pine and Elizabeth Scheib, the children spend the morning singing easy hymns and children's songs. Furthermore, they are encouraged to bring instruments or play with the ones provided. We also invite special musically inclined guests from our congregation to join in on the fun!

This spring we will be teaming up with Green Team to take the children on nature walks that coincide with the Spring Equinox. We will continue this tradition throughout the year with walks for the Summer Solstice, Autumn Equinox and Winter Solstice. We look forward to encouraging our 7th Principle with the support and guidance of the Green Team.

Finally, we are continuing our "Fifth Sunday Funday!" On those occasional fifth Sundays, all children, youth and fun loving adults are invited to join us downstairs in the RE space for fun and games! Every "Fifth Sunday Funday" is different, but good times and laughter are always involved. As usual, if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions regarding our Religious Education program, please do not hesitate to contact me:

Kate Savidan, Director of Religious Education
dre@uuloudoun.org, (240) 285-8745

Available Tuesdays-Fridays and the second and fourth Sundays

Off Mondays and Saturdays

GREEN TEAM UPDATE

by Natalie Pien

Nationally, the UUCL Green Team sent a letter to Pres. Obama requesting that Offshore Drilling for fossil fuels be permanently banned from the Atlantic coast. On December 20, 2016, President Obama used his authority under Section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) to permanently withdraw large portions of the Outer Continental Shelf from future consideration for mineral leasing. In addition to large areas in the Arctic, he protected a total of 3.8 million acres of area in the Atlantic, specifically 31 offshore canyons spanning from the Heezen Canyon offshore New England through the Norfolk Canyon offshore Virginia.

In December, the Green Team initiated several local social justice events. Members of the Green Team and KD Kidder collaborated in the first Music, Massage, and Art Benefit held at Kidder's PhotoWorks studio in Leesburg. Music was provided by UUCL's very own Gina Faber playing old time music with Loudoun native Ben Walters. The Green Team and PhotoWorks selected the Water Protectors at Standing Rock fighting the Dakota Access Pipeline as the first recipient of funds raised through free will donations and sale of artwork by local artists. The second event was held on Saturday, January 28. Based on recent actions on the Keystone XL Pipeline and the North Dakota Access Pipeline, the Water Protectors will be the recipients for funds raised in January. This will be a monthly event in which we build coalitions with other Loudoun grassroots groups to support other social justice. Please feel free to reach out to Natalie or KD to become involved.

The Green Team chair Natalie Pien and UUCL member Maria Bergheim participated in the 12th CCAN Annual Polar Bear Plunge into the Potomac River at National Harbor on January 28. This is the annual fundraising event for the Chesapeake Climate Action Network. Natalie and Maria plunged with Team 350 Loudoun, completing the team's 4th year as a plunge sponsor. Interested UUCL members are welcome to join Team 350 Loudoun, or even form a UUCL Plunge Team! Isn't doing a polar bear plunge on your bucket list? If not, it should be!

Finally, the Green Team responded to calls from Interfaith Power and Light, Green Faith, Franciscan Action Network to hold a Vigil for Earth During the Presidential Inauguration. On Friday evening, January 20, the Interfaith Vigil for Earth program of music and prayer was held at the Loudoun County Courthouse. Collaborating with the local climate change activist group 350 Loudoun, the Green Team will begin monthly candle light vigils to stand in solidarity with Standing Rock Water Protectors. The monthly vigil is held on First Fridays in Leesburg at the Loudoun County Courthouse, 5:00 p.m..

Please join this very active committee, dedicated to putting the UUA 7th Principle into action.



DECLARATION OF CONSCIENCE



Proposed by the leaders of The Unitarian Universalist Association and The UU Service Committee for endorsement by UU faith leaders, members, and congregations (January, 2017).

At this extraordinary time in our nation's history, we are called to affirm our profound commitment to the fundamental principles of justice, equity and compassion, to truth and core values of American society.

In the face of looming threats to immigrants, Muslims, people of color, and the LGBTQ community and the rise of hate speech, harassment and hate crimes, we

affirm our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

In opposition to any steps to undermine the right of every citizen to vote or to turn back advances in access to health care and reproductive rights, we affirm our commitment to justice and compassion in human relations.

And against actions to weaken or eliminate initiatives to address the threat of climate change – actions that would threaten not only our country but the entire planet – we affirm our unyielding commitment to protect the interdependent web of all existence.

We will oppose any and all unjust government actions to deport, register, discriminate, or despoil.

As people of conscience, we declare our commitment to translate our values into action as we stand on the side of love with the most vulnerable among us.

We welcome and invite all to join in this commitment for justice.

The time is now.



/s/ Rev. Dan King
UUCL Minister



/s/ Rev. Peter Morales
UUA President



/s/ Tom Andrews
UUSC President

Thank you to this Chalice's Reporters: Carrie Nowell and Nancy Verhovek,
and Graphics Designer: Christopher D'Arcy.

If you would like to join this team, please contact communications@uuloudoun.org.