

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF ROCKLAND

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THE ROCKLAND UNITARIAN

December, 2016

Vol. 50, #4

Editor: Mary Holdampf

Dec. 4, 10:30 a.m. Rev. Dawn Sangrey

Holidays Are Holy Days

Your holidays are holy, and they belong to you. This service explores ways to shield ourselves from the ubercommercialism and bad music the popular culture would foist upon us and create, instead, a holiday that will nourish and delight. It is the second Sunday in Advent, and we will be looking for the light.

Coordinator: Dan Hanchrow

Dec. 11, 10:30 a.m. Rev. Dawn Sangrey

Humanism 101

Unitarian Universalism is a creedless religion. We do not apply any test of dogma for acceptance into this community. Article 3 of the congregation's bylaws: "In matters of religious principle and belief, the spiritual liberty of the members of this Society shall be in no way be abridged." Let's take a break from the holidays and talk about theology. Warning: you may have to ask yourself what you believe.

Coordinator: Harry Shair

Earbuds or over-the-ear headsets are available for better audio quality. Please ask greeter.

Dec. 18, 10:30 a.m.

Holiday Happening

This intergenerational service celebrates the winter holidays and features our Religious Education program. After a shortened service, we will separate into groups to take pictures, decorate the Christmas tree, help each other with crafts, and spin the dreidel. Great fun for all ages!

Coordinator: Laurie Young

Dec. 24, 6:00 p.m. Rev. Dawn Sangrey

Christmas Eve: Lessons and Carols

Join us at 6PM for our traditional Christmas Eve observance. We will sing carols and light candles and hear the ancient stories of the season.

Coordinator: Tricia Larkin



No service on Sunday, December 25.

Also, Sunday services are recorded and posted to our website, <http://uurocklandny.org/>.

THE DARKNESS AROUND US IS DEEP

BOARD OF TRUSTEES NEWS

The Sunday service on November 6 included William Safford's poem "A Ritual to Read to Each Other." The last stanza says

For it is important that awake people be awake,
or a breaking line may discourage them back to
sleep,
the signals we give -- yes or no, or maybe --
should be clear: the darkness around us is deep.

We read these words to each other two days before the Presidential election. We do not support candidates for office here at UUCR. As a nonpartisan faith community, we are called to serve and to love.

We are committed to reason, freedom, and tolerance no matter who wins. We are committed to fairness and to the work of justice. No matter who wins.

Our UU values are not reflected in the platform and speeches of our President-Elect. His campaign fostered hatred, reflected deep and troubling ignorance, and encouraged violence, fear, White supremacy, misogyny, and racism.

Today we may be afraid, and for good reason.

We are headed into the darkest days of the year, and when the Solstice comes, it will be weeks before the return of the light will be evident. We know that spring is promised, but right now the darkness is deep. We may be tempted to sleep.

Together we can resist hatred and oppression. We can bring our love into action by making room at the table for everyone. We can remain vigilant, ready to speak up and to take steps to protect those who are the victims of hateful rhetoric. We can stay awake.

Mother Teresa said, "No one can do great things, but we can do small things with great love." Keep a Guest At Your Table box on your dining table and put some money in it every time you eat dinner to support our UUSC programs for refugees. When you go shopping for holiday gifts, pick up an extra present so that a mother in prison will have something to give her child. Together we will stand on the side of love.

Blessings. *Dawn*
the Rev. Dawn Sangrey, Consulting Minister
minister@uurocklandny.org 914-666-6398

Yesterday, Saturday 12 Nov 2016, I spent the day at Defying Gravity. This is a Leadership Development Day offered by the UUA Central East Region, and takes place at the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY. I attended this last year also. It really is a wonderful program. I would like to share with you just a few tidbits that struck me. In a workshop I attended, "Faithful Connections for the Smaller Congregation", facilitated by the Rev. Megan Foley, she said: "Everyone here is a real church". By that she meant, that even at our small size, below the old 1950 version of a sustainable congregation of 125, in this 21st century we small congregations might just have ways to survive that the bigger ones will not. Let's find some creative ways to reach out to the rest of the progressives in the area. Invite them in. Perhaps not for everything, but for some things. We just might be the future in the world of the 'nones'. We need to reach out with our mission in mind -- to stand as a beacon of acceptance and generosity. Another speaker, Barry Finklestein, spoke of how UU is one of the few mainline Protestant sects that has not been in free fall in terms of numbers in the last 20 years. That using outreach, perhaps we can expand UU influence in various ways, getting people involved in racial justice, climate justice, etc. To bring in people, perhaps not as traditional members, but as supporters. "Are we ready for just such a time as this?" Now, Dawn mentioned on the 13 November service that the BOT has authorized a gift drive for incarcerated parents, especially the women in Bedford Hills. This program has begun accepting gifts as of November 1st. So we need to get our drive going and completed by mid-December. I believe that we can make a change for these families, and that it is a good thing for UUCR to do for the holidays. I hope you agree. Peace.

Melissa Schroeter, Chair BOT

*Your editor wishes all a very
Merry Christmas - Happy Hanukkah
and a peace-filled holiday season*

RE NEWS

In December, our children and youth will be moving into classes, celebration, and service focused on the Winter Holidays. We remember that in the darkest time of year, people of many cultures and religions light candles as a sign of hope, joy, and peace. At UUCR, our children and youth will continue to shine their lights of kindness and love, through learning, celebration, and outreach in community.



On December 10th, we will hold a youth group gingerbread house-making night and sleepover, a favorite tradition for our teens. Those gingerbread houses will be auctioned in the congregation, and money donated to a cause in the larger community.

We also continue to support the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee in their commitment to human rights, through our annual Guest at Your Table collection. This year, the collection is focused on defying hate by protecting the lives and rights of refugees, asylum seekers, and other marginalized groups, both here in the United States and throughout the world. Boxes and envelopes were distributed at the Agape service in November, and will be collected back on Christmas Eve and January 8th. Let us open our hearts wide to welcome and support those in need.

All ages are invited to join us for our Holiday Happenings Worship Service on December 18th. In this service, we celebrate the winter holidays through song, skit, readings, ritual, craft-making, and games. We will be preparing for this service in RE classes on December 11th.

There will be no service or Religious Education classes on December 25th (Christmas Day), but families are encouraged to attend the service on Christmas Eve.

May your holiday season be filled with kindness and blessing. In faith, Terri

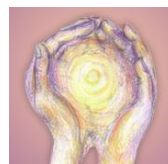
December RE Calendar

December 4	CWS- RE Classes
11	RE classes
18	All Ages Service <i>Holiday Happening</i>
25	No service or religious education classes

Terri Pahucki, Director of Religious Education
dre@uurocklandny.org

WHO IS THAT IN THE PULPIT?

You may have noticed that from time to time someone who is not on the Board of Worship may coordinate a Sunday service. BOW is extremely grateful to these former BOW All-Stars who have volunteered to guest coordinate during the year.



HELPING HANDS

Thank you to all who have participated in hosting our guests from Helping Hands in November. The executive director, Ya'el Williams gave a very informative talk for us Nov. 13. It was heartening that many new friends have also participated. For all of you who missed out on assisting, you are in luck! Helping Hands will be with us for two nights in January. That will be Sun. Jan. 15 and Mon., Jan. 16.

Mark your calendars.

Barbara Francis

TREASURER'S NEWS

December 31 will be the half-way point of our UU fiscal year. Early in January, I will be mailing out statements to all, for tax purposes and an additional statement that will show your outstanding pledge. If you wish to have your pledge for the 2016 tax year, please submit it before the end of December. A special 'thank you' to Diane Bennett for her fund-raising effort through Equal Exchange. This has been a very successful fund raiser.

Barbara Francis

**Deadline for January, 2017 newsletter
Dec. 18, 2016, 6 pm**

What Can a Woman in Prison Give Her Kids for Christmas?

This Christmas you have a chance to **help a mother in prison** give a Christmas gift to her child. Many women who are incarcerated cannot afford to buy presents for their kids. You can help.

This year UUCR will be part of a program to purchase and donate gifts for the children so that their mothers will be able to give them a Christmas present. **A list of suggested gifts** will be available on Sundays from now until **December 18**, the deadline.

You take the list, go shopping, and bring your gift, **unwrapped** to UUCR. We deliver the gifts to the prison. Then the mothers get to select a gift and wrap it to give to their child. **Please read the restrictions** on the gift list carefully. Certain colors and certain items are forbidden.

Our presents will be delivered to the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, a maximum security prison, where many inmates are mothers of young and teenage children. Some of these children were even born in the prison. It's heartbreaking for both the mothers and their kids to be separated from each other, with contact only by telephone and on visiting day.

This Christmas **give a gift of hope and love** for an incarcerated woman and her child. Join us in our first Christmas Gift Drive for Women in Prison.

A complete list of recommended gifts is on the table in rear of Worship Room. If you need to take a copy, please do so or email me and I will send you a copy. Please note also that there are a number of items that will not be permitted.

MEMBERSHIP

December Greeters

12/4/2016

Susan Brunelli

Alex Finger

12/11/2016

Denise Waithe

Hillary Torres

12/18/2016

Roberta Chang

Emily Kratzer

12/24/16

Geraldine Shaw

Seamus Gallagher

December Coffee Guru

Seamus Gallagher



BOARD OF TRUSTEES NEWS

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Melissa Schroeter, Chair BOT

DECEMBER CALENDAR

- Al-anon: Mondays at 9:30am and Thursdays at 7:30 pm
- Yoga with Jane: Sundays at 8 am, Tuesdays at 10 am and Thursdays at 10 am
- Membership: 12/4 at noon
- Youth Group: 12/10 at 6 pm (overnight)
- BOT will meet on 12/11 at noon