

The Chalice Light

Vol. 48, Issue 1 January, 2019



Jan 6: Rev. Chris J. Antal
On Grace and Disgrace

We find ourselves in an age of amazing disgrace. What is grace and does it matter? And do we find it or create it ourselves or something else?

Jan. 13: Terri Pahucki
Full of Grace

How might we give and receive gifts that heal our Earth and change our lives?

Jan. 20: Michael Nichols
The Inherent Worth and Dignity of EVERY person

Jan. 27: Bruce Knotts and Rev. Chris J. Antal
Courage and Kindness in Troubled Times

But what we can do, as flawed as we are, is still see God in other people, and do our best to help them find their own grace. That's what I strive to do, that's what I pray to do every day. - Barack Obama

Message From Your Minister

Grace. Spiritual Practice. Letting Go. Salvation. Truth. These are the themes the congregation will explore together over the next five months.

These themes describe the work I do with Veterans and the larger community in Philadelphia. Jonathan and Amy visited Philadelphia last month and joined in a Community Healing Ceremony I led. Please read their reflection on the experience in this newsletter.

They also describe what we do best when we gather together on Sunday mornings in religious community. They name why belonging to religious community matters.

Our congregation is a place of grace; a place to explore and deepen spiritual practice; a place to let go; a place to experience greater human fulfillment and flourishing, whether you name that "salvation" or "enlightenment" or something else; and our congregation is a place to journey with fellow travelers on a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

See you on Sunday!
Chris

January, 2019 Calendar

All events are held at the UUCRT unless otherwise noted. Italicized events are not UU sponsored but may be of interest to congregants.

Jan. 6, Sunday -- 8:45 a.m.: Board of Trustees
11:45 a.m.: New to the UU lunch

Jan 12, Saturday – 7:30 p.m.: *Hudson Valley Folk Guild Coffeehouse*

Jan 13, Sunday – Following the service: Looking Deeply Circle with Terri
Noon: potluck luncheon.

Jan 20, Sunday – 4 p.m.: *Debra Vogel Concert*

Jan 27, Sunday – Noon: *Veterans For Peace*

Sunday Services

Our Sunday services are held at 9 Vance Rd, Rock Tavern, NY at 10:30 a.m., unless otherwise noted. *While we make every intention to publish an accurate calendar, topics may be subject to change. Please consult uucrt.org for the most up-to-date listings. We welcome all seekers regardless of age, creed, race, ability/disability, class, sexual orientation, and gender identity.*

Wisdom about a Theme-based Ministry From the UUA

Theme-based ministry, sometimes called theme-based church, helps create multigenerational connections as people of all ages explore common themes in age-appropriate ways. Theme-based ministry extends faith development beyond Sunday morning. Families can continue the conversation in the car ride home or over the dinner table; small groups that meet during the week can go deeper with the theme.

If your congregation longs to:

- Offer worship experiences with depth
- Ensure a balance of theological and religious learning
- Better integrate spiritually connected programming across the lifespan
- Weave a central thread throughout all church programming
- Build a cohesive theological understanding
- Find common language and common symbols
- Embrace a practical theology you use in everyday life
- Meet the very real challenge of today's busy families and intermittent church attendance
- Give focus to your music and arts staff

... then theme-based ministry may be for you!

This model can be used with any sized congregation. We've seen it work in congregations with a worship attendance of 35 and in congregations with a worshipping community of 900+ with a full complement of theme programs taking place throughout the week. Theme-based ministry is happening in more and more congregations throughout our movement as a powerfully engaging way of focusing the life of a congregation on monthly themes through worship, religious education, small groups and other activities.

(From the UUA website)

Getting in touch with Rev. Antal

Rev. Antal will be at the UUCRT on 1/6, 1/27, 2/3, and 2/24. He is available by appointment on those Sundays between 1-3 p.m. Contact him by email at antal@uuma.org to schedule an appointment. Rev. Antal takes sabbatical from March 1 through June 30.

Reflection from the Lay Commissioned Minister

Grace is a Christian theological concept, of which there are many interpretations. All of these center on an understanding of grace as "a free and unmerited gift of God in the world." Grace is something we receive but do not earn; and it is something that changes us.

My personal theological views see grace a little differently, as something that may be both received and given. I claim an Earth-honoring faith that both welcomes and nurtures grace as a healing presence in our lives. This grace arises through the co-creative processes of nature and human creativity. It transforms us, and we transform the world. As co-creative partners in birthing the sacred, we are both receivers and givers of grace.

Perhaps you have experienced this grace in your life: in the healing presence of still pond waters; in the astonishing birth of a new baby or the experience of being forgiven and loved. There is also grace in the experience of offering forgiveness and love to another and in the work of community in building a new way together.

As the winter snows call us to contemplation, may we reflect on the meaning of grace in our lives. I look forward to sharing thoughts and reflections with all of you on Sunday, January 13th. Join me for a "Looking Deeply" circle in the sanctuary from 12-1 PM, following the service.

Blessings,
Terri

Rev. Antal Helps Lead VA Community Healing Ceremonies

(Editor's Note: The following information is from the Moral Injury Group, which is co-facilitated by Rev. Chris J. Antal in his role as a Veterans Administration chaplain)

The Community Healing Ceremony is a service of reconciliation for Veterans and non-Veterans led by VA chaplains, community clergy, and Veterans. The Ceremony provides a space to celebrate Veterans' moral sensitivity and moral seriousness, share the truth of their military experience, and initiate them in a process of transformation we call "patient to prophet."

During the Ceremony, Veterans bear witness to the human cost of war and military service while the

community listens to, and wrestles with, moral responsibility and civic duty. Sharing painful truths is difficult but necessary to authentically honor Veterans, relieve them of the moral burden many too often carry in isolation, and reconcile Veterans both with the society, on whose behalf they were willing to kill and die, and with the people who died in war.

The Ceremony shifts the focus of the work away from individual therapy or treatment of the Veteran and gives the work of deep remembering and moral reckoning back to the community. The presence of non-Veterans and Veterans together is necessary to advance the work of reconciliation.

The next Community Healing Ceremony is May 6, 2019, at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center and online Registration starts in January here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/community-healing-ceremony-tickets-53871960484>

UUCRT Members Participate in VA Healing Ceremony

By Jonathan Beckenstein

Amy and I had the good fortune to attend the Community Healing Ceremony, A Service of Reconciliation for Veterans and Civilians on December 3rd. The ceremony was a function of the Moral Injury Group that is facilitated by Reverend Chris and psychologist Peter Yeomans at The Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center in Philadelphia. I cannot overstate what a moving, and deeply healing experience it was.

Briefly, The Moral Injury Group offers an experience to veterans aimed at healing the feelings of shame, guilt and betrayal that accompany moral injury. Rev. Chris and Dr. Yeomans work from a spiritual/clinical model that, among other things, de-pathologizes the post combat experience and builds on the innate human and spiritual strength of veterans, not only healing, but also empowering veterans by re-connecting them with their own morality and wisdom.

But none of that describes the intense and intimate experience of the Ceremony itself. I will try to describe some of it. The attendees on the evening we were there were a mix of veterans and of civilians who had never served. We all participated together in a number of rituals, but at the core of the Ceremony were two particular ones. First, three veterans, two of whom

were participants in the Moral Injury Group who had almost completed the program, spoke, sharing the burden of their military experience with the community. Each was plainspoken and courageously open in their sharing of tremendously difficult experiences.

This was followed by what was for me the unforgettable core of the ceremony, the Reconciliation Circle. The Circle is a voluntary, participatory ritual during which civilians and veterans, by dint of eye contact, physical motion, touch and language begin to renew their bonds of community and of shared citizenship, and begin to repair the rupture of trust that is at the core of moral injury, with the civilians taking responsibility for their complicity in sending the veterans to war.

The Reconciliation Circle fosters an in-the-moment intimate exchange of heart and spirit, of intention and commitment. All around me in the circle that day were tears, shudders, and sighs of acknowledgement and of relief. I could hardly speak the required words through my own tears. The Ceremony was a deep and mutually healing experience that will stay with me forever.

Our UUCRT community has struggled of late to determine what actions are worth taking, and what we ought to do that makes a difference. Anyone who attends a Community Healing Ceremony will know that on that evening, right then, they made a difference, and that they too were changed.

I believe there should be such a ceremony in every town. Until there is, the next one in Philadelphia is on May 6th, 2019. I recommend, even urge, anyone who can make it to go. You won't forget it if you do.

By Amy Kaufman

First, Jonathan and I would like to thank Reverend Chris for providing us the opportunity to attend the moral healing ceremony in Philadelphia Dec. 3.

I was expecting a very moving ceremony, but could not anticipate the feelings it would bring up. Being a child in the Vietnam War era, I was influenced by popular culture that not only was the war wrong, but those who served were wrong, bad, and amoral as well. My views have been tempered over time; however, this ceremony brought to the fore just how judgmental I was.

I can't really explain the feeling of sitting in the room with so many Vets and so much pain, and then so much

love as the ceremony progressed. It was very moving and heart wrenching to listen to the stories of the brave souls who spoke of their moral injury as well as to know that we were in a room full of such stories that we were not to hear on that day. To learn and understand the role that betrayal plays in moral injury was profound.

The respect in the room for those sharing could be felt. The ceremony progressed to a healing circle that will stay with me for the rest of my life. First, the civilians were surrounded by the Veterans. The feelings that came from looking into the eyes of those who served are not really possible for me to describe.

Then we switched roles and the civilians took responsibility for their part in moral injury with words that were so carefully planned and powerful. We civilians spoke and touched the Veterans as we encircled them and they listened to us take responsibility for our part in their moral injury. We all then had a symbolic cleansing hand wash. As I write this I realize that there are no words to really describe the experience.

I will never forget it nor the eyes of those I looked into and the realization of all of our vulnerability and the stripping down of placing the blame elsewhere. If any of you can make the trip I cannot encourage you enough.

Learn about the UUCRT!

Informational sessions will be offered to visitors at about 11:45 a.m. on Jan. 6 and Feb. 3, directly following our 10:30 a.m. service. This is an opportunity to meet our minister, Rev. Chris Antal, and to learn more about our congregation at Rock Tavern. Come and enjoy some light fare, hear about Unitarian Universalism, and get your questions answered. Hope to see you there!

From our Ministries

Stewardship and Finance

Happy New Year to all! Watch the mail for your year-end tax notices. Please also check on your pledge and make sure that you are up to date. Thanks very much! The day-to-day running of the Congregation’s business is dependent on financial stability — and you and your pledge are the biggest, strongest link in that chain!

Do you support our Congregation when you shop? IGive continues to send us small checks when members

click on their icon before placing an online order. Did you know that you can name the UUCRT as your recipient on the ubiquitous Amazon.com? AmazonSmile sends portions of each order to the charity chosen. So please choose UUCRT! It is easy and costs nothing! Also, consider using the auto pay feature on our website and have your pledge kept up to date automatically and effortlessly.

For Questions about any of these—contact Alan, our Treasurer, at uucrt.Treasurer@gmail.com .

Thanks. Here’s to a peaceful, prosperous 2019!

Stewardship & Finance Ministry: Alan Horne, Rebecca Jones, Jackie Jordan, Linda Mangelsdorf

Social Action Ministry

Fifth Sunday Collections for 2019: Have you a favorite local organization doing good work that could use a little extra money? If so, please let someone on the SAM know. We welcome your ideas, as we will be sending our collection money to a different group on each 5th Sunday. Some suggestions are: Riverkeeper, Vet to Vet, and SPARC.

Write Here! Write Now! (WHWN) continues as we join with other UU congregations in making our voices heard in Congress and corporations on issues selected monthly by the UU for Social Justice. We are getting in the habit of using our pens to express ourselves to those in power. Onwards!

NEWS

Debra Vogel to Present Fundraising Concert Jan. 20 at UUCRT



ROCK TAVERN – Debra Vogel will highlight a 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 20 concert at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Rock Tavern. The noted singer/actress will be accompanied by Darryl Curry, a musical director, arranger and accompanist.

This is a free-will

donation fund raiser that supports the good work of the congregation.

Debra has performed solo shows *Is It Now Yet?*, *Life, Love, & All That Jazz*, and most recently *Life is Just a Bowl of Cherries* in New York City. She has also appeared with Brian Tom O'Connor in their two-person musical revues, *O'Connor & Vogel: Guy and Doll*, *O'Connor & Vogel: How to be Perfect*, and *O'Connor & Vogel: Found and Lost*, all with Darryl Curry as musical director and Elfin Vogel as director. Theatre credits include *George M.*, *My Fair Lady*, *Rose Marie*, *The Vagabond King*, Villa Lobos' opera *The Girl from the Clouds*, *The Snow Queen*, *Dorian Gray: A Musical Fable*, and *You Can't Take It With You*. She is very happy to be performing again today at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Rock Tavern.

Darryl is a member of the Dramatists Guild, the Episcopal Actors' Guild and the Woodstock Fringe Playwrights Unit in New York City. A composer - playwright, he has had several of his musicals performed: *The Elephant Piece*, *Quitters*, *Dorian Gray*, *George Q*, *Mesmerized* and most recently, *Buzz...Son of a Bee*.

The UUCRT is located at 9 Vance Road in the New Windsor hamlet of Rock Tavern.

UUA Intergenerational Spring Seminar is April in NYC

With a deep passion for and commitment to international human rights, youth and adults from all over North America gather annually for the UUA three-day seminar to dig deeply into issues with global impact.

The intergenerational seminar is an opportunity to collaborate with others while learning how to be a global activist. Through workshops, peer and expert-led panel discussions, community building activities, and worship services, participants undergo a transformative process of learning, reflection, and growth as we explore some of the most challenging issues facing humanity today.

Registration for the 2019 Seminar is now open. Register here.



<https://www.uua.org/international-justice/un/spring-seminar>

2019 Intergenerational Spring Seminar:

Our 2019 Seminar will be April 11-13, in New York City. (Youth and sponsors will arrive April 10th for orientation.) Addressing the 2019 theme of Equity in Action: Gender in an Intersecting World, participants will consider both local and global engagement with issues such as:

- Understanding the reality of the non-binary nature of gender and the conditioned performance of gender within cultural context.
- Confronting internal biases, and finding opportunities for growth in mistakes.
- Working for gender equity at the intersection of dismantling systems of white supremacy, patriarchy, heteronormativity, and other forms of oppressions.
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" - and all its associated targets.
- The #MeToo movement which calls the world to believe and support survivors of sexual violence.

The Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO) is excited to be partnering with the UU College of Social Justice on this event! Programming during the Intergenerational Spring Seminar is interactive, encouraging participants to reflect on how the topics addressed affect them in their lives, their spirituality, and how they are called to respond.

Moving from ideas to concrete action, participants will learn tools and skills to help them with future collaboration and activism. Each person will participate in an intergenerational Collaboration Group, touching base periodically throughout the seminar to reflect on and process the issues discussed.

Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature, is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace.

-May Sarton

Hand-Knit Sweaters – and books – For Sale

Look for Pasha on Sundays after service selling hand-knit sweaters by Sarah Moffett depicting various Irish scenery and also colorful graphics. The late Sarah

Moffett, Pasha's mother, had won various awards in N.Y. State for her intricate handiwork.

Pasha also has a book for sale: *Becca and the Magic Opera Glasses* is a book that colorfully explores a little girl's innocence and wonderment as she ventures to her first trip to the opera as seen through the glasses. A really fun and interactive read for parents and teachers alike.

UUA Common Read Book Study Group Starts in January

In January and February Rev. Antal will lead a book study of the UUA Common Read for 2018-19, which is *Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Environment* edited by Manish Mishra-Marzetti and Jennifer Nordstrom (Skinner House Books, 2018). We will meet 4th Sundays in January and February from 1-2 p.m.



Here is a link to information about the Common Read:

<https://www.uua.org/books/read/justice-on-earth>

At a time when racial justice, environmental justice, and economic justice are seen as issues competing for time, attention, and resources, *Justice on Earth* explores the ways in which the three are intertwined. Those on the margins are invariably those most affected by climate disaster and environmental toxins.

The book asks us to recognize that our faith calls us to long-haul work for justice for our human kin, for the Earth and for all life. It invites us to look at our current challenges through a variety of different perspectives, offers tools to equip us for sustained engagement, and proposes multiple pathways for follow-up action. *Justice on Earth* is available at *inSpirit: UU Book and Gift Shop*.



Alice in Concert

Alice Nielsen Shane performs in a fundraising concert before an appreciative audience Dec. 1 at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Rock Tavern. Alice used guitar, piano and her wonderful voice to bring a broad repertoire of songs and poetry to those in attendance.

The Chalice Light is the official newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Rock Tavern. Mailing address: PO Box 502, Washingtonville, NY 10992-0502. Phone: (845) 496-9696.

Our minister, the Rev. Chris J. Antal, serves us part time and is available two Sundays a month. He is available by appointment on those Sundays between 1-3pm. Contact him by email at antal@uuma.org to schedule an appointment.

Editors: John P. Kinney, Mike Landrum and Nan Dempster

Copy editor: Keith Jordan

Print distribution: Kris McGrath

Webmaster: Jay Beaumont – jaybeaumont49@gmail.com

Website: www.uucrt.org

Please send news to johnpkinney@hotmail.com by the 15th of the month.