

UUC QUARTERLY REVIEW, April 2022

MINISTER'S MUSINGS

Dear Friends,

The past few months since our last UBLast have been a time of great adaptation and resilience. We have moved from Zoom in January to Community Room Worship in February to a full Sanctuary return in March. Our Sanctuary looks different now- our beautiful flags temporarily replaced with a safety net covering our ceiling, the peace pole moved from corner to altar, and our Zoom screen featuring prominently on most Sundays as we expand our multi-platform worship.

These physical signs point to the fact that we are both impacted by change and creators of change. We have felt the impacts of our uncertain world- a global pandemic, war in Ukraine, climate change, the threats to LGBTQ and women's rights here in the United States. We have felt the need to gather in beloved community stronger than ever- making a commitment to preserve our sacred space and declaring a theology of radical, inclusive love for this and future generations.

These are challenging times to say the least; and yet, I continue to feel pride in the work of this community to plant seeds of joy and beauty in the midst of change. Our multigenerational services have been a highlight of our worship- bringing us together to explore racial justice, celebrate our UU SUUper Heroes, and plant seeds for peace with poetry, art, and sunflower planting. Music has filled all our sacred spaces- thanks to the talent of Paul Mariconda, newcomer Chaz Baldwin, and our wonderful singers. A recent chamber music benefit concert for the Ukraine crisis fund organized by Elizabeth Jenkins-Sahlin raised over \$700! Groups have gathered to take on the shared ministries of Worship, Social Justice, Pastoral Care, Stewardship, and Religious Education. We have learned and grown together through religious education and small group ministry- including ongoing Soul Matters groups, UU 101 and 102 Classes exploring



UU101 / 102: informal chats after service

UU theology and history, and spiritual practice workshops in mandala-making and mindful photography. Social events such as hikes at Mianus River Park and coffee shop conversations, and a new UU Social Souls google group have helped people to form new connections.



Sunday hike at Mianus River Park, Stamford

As we enter the Spring, I look forward to seeing the seeds we have planted bloom and grow. We have much to look forward to: welcoming new members on April 17th; performances by our emerging choir, led by Norris Wakefield; a return to coffee hour; more Social Souls events; deeper exploration of the 8th Principle; visiting UU congregations and interfaith partnerships; connections with groups serving the community and working for justice beyond our doors; caretaking and blessings on our front lawn. The Stewardship Campaign of *Building Our Future* continues through April too- calling everyone to take part and will culminate in celebration.

These times are hard, but our work to create connection and beauty matters more than ever. Let us continue to plant seeds of peace and to grow our mission of radical, inclusive love in the season ahead.

In peace,
Rev. Terri

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

April has long been my favorite month—shaking off the dregs of winter and experiencing the promise of renewal. And yet the poet, Emily Dickenson, writes:

“To what purpose, April, do you return again?
Beauty is not enough,
You can no longer quiet me with redness
Of little leaves opening stickily
I know what I know.”

And here's what I know. As a congregation, we are back in person. Reverend Terri has given us vibrant sermons. Together with the newly formed worship team, we have been provided with meaningful worship experiences. The Board has tackled issues on a monthly basis from opening procedures to ceiling repair. We have a few dedicated RE teachers. The stewardship team is working hard and planning for an event on April 30th to celebrate our accomplishments.

But our congregation needs all of you. In reviewing our congregational covenant, I noted the following. "We will strive to give all we can give joyfully and acknowledge the giving of others."

So this month, I have an "ask" of each of you. "What can you give joyfully to this UUC community?" The Board and I will be asking each of you----**what do you see yourself doing for our UUC Community in the following year?** Please be thinking of the gifts of time and talent you have to offer.

Sincerely,

Lynne



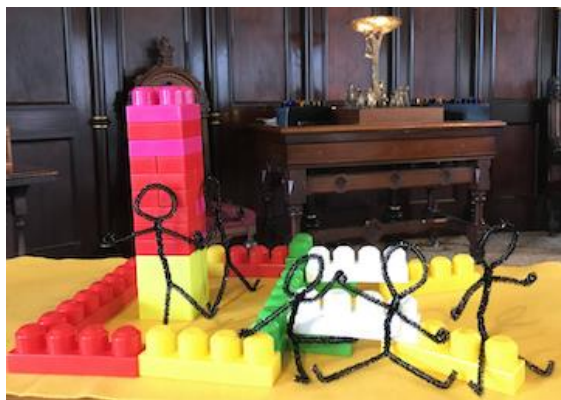
On March 20, we gathered as a multigenerational to pay our respects to the people of Ukraine through art, music, and poetry. Our featured poet was young peace activist Mattie J. T. Stepanek who, in his 13 years, inspired many through his messages of hope and love. Read more about Mattie here (<https://mattieonline.com/>). If you are looking for a vetted way to support the people of Ukraine, you can find information on the UUA website (<https://www.uua.org/pressroom/press-releases/supporting-ukraine.>)



RE FRIDAY NIGHT FUN & GAMES

Pizza is generally the go-to dinner fare for AroUUnd the Friday Night RE Table. After we had our dinner and chat, we enjoyed a walk to the playground behind our Dorothy Scanley Religious Education Building. As darkness fell, the glow sticks came out of Darlene's magic RE bag. Everyone tried to make something creative or useful. Darlene made right (write)-on cookies in the shape of chalices!

Building Blocks for the Future



The Stewardship Drive was launched on March 13th with a rousing sermon from Rev. Terri, a passionate testimonial from Elizabeth Jenkins-Sahlin and a Time for All Ages led by Bobbie Rich, asking the question of the children, What Is Stewardship? Stewardship Sunday, March 27th, led by the Stewardship Team featured a reprise of the excellent video created from our Archives by Pam Cunconan and Rebecca Shannonhouse showcasing our history in the larger context of what was going on in the world at the time. Save the date, April 30th, for a reception to celebrate together what we have accomplished.

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Music Music Music!

Paul Mariconda and Chas Baldwin have enhanced our Sunday morning experience with their multitude of talents! We are treated to jazz, classical and popular music that runs the gamut from breath-takingly beautiful cello and piano to toe-tapping tunes that get the children out to classes or races us through a walking labyrinth when the service is running late! We are so grateful for their efforts and we are looking forward to a choir under the auspices of Norris Wakefield.



Social Souls

Elizabeth Jenkins-Sahlin has initiated a group called Social Souls and they are doing interesting things, like mindful photography and mandala-making. It is a way for people to meet and mingle, and it is

open not only to congregants, but is a way to attract newcomers to get to know us without actually coming to a Sunday service. Thank you, Elizabeth!



Restoration Progress Report – After the slate roof was repaired, investigation of the open hole in the Sanctuary ceiling had to be dealt with. After many long hours of consultation with a forensic engineer, other engineers and construction experts, we have an estimate of what the repair work will entail. The first step was to install safety netting to protect anyone in the Sanctuary from falling debris during any construction. A congregational meeting was held on March 13th to vote on approval of a construction loan in the amount of \$100,000 to be rolled over into a 15 year mortgage. The motion to approve was made and passed with only two abstentions, no nays. We are waiting for final approval of the loan and then the bids have to be finalized and at last this portion of the long-term restoration work can begin.

Foundation - A task force has been assembled to explore the advantage of a separate Foundation, independent of UUC, but governed by UUC members with some representation from the community. With separate 501(c)(3) status, the Foundation would be eligible for grants for which a religious organization would not qualify. It would also enable us to reach out into the community and target those who support historic restoration, but again, don't want to fund a religious organization. We hope to gain this status through the legal services of the Pro Bono partnership. Stay tuned....