



The Unitarian Church of Harrisburg: Building Bridges, Celebrating Community

## From the Minister

Rev. David Kohlmeier is UCH's settled minister.



*The moment comes  
when a choice arises.  
A holy moment.  
A decision must be made.  
Do I remain as I am  
or do I risk inching, leaping,  
flowing in another direction?  
Do I risk what I think  
I already know and already am?*

In a sense, every moment is like this, a moment to choose if we will stay as we are or risk the transformation that comes from embracing a possibility. But I can't help but feel like these words by Sandra Fees are especially true right now, aren't they?

The pandemic means constantly having to make choices, from the everyday (*Do I go to the grocery store or just have them delivered? Should I be double-masking?*) to the more profound (*What really is the purpose of my life? What is the future of our earth? What can I do to make things better?*). And every choice, whether we feel it is large or small, raises the possibility of unexpected change.

In an ordinary year, September is the month the church programming year formally starts, with RE classes getting underway, with the beginnings of thinking about the next stewardship drive... all of that is, once again, kind of up in the air. We once again find ourselves hanging in uncertainty. But this month, I ask us to try a shift in perspective: what new possibilities are here, waiting for us to embrace them? In these days when we can't do things the way we've always done them, what new things can we try? What new thing might we, might you, become if we take that leap of faith right now?

A Zen priest once said to me, "Never forget that you falling apart is the universe coalescing." Please, take the time you need to mourn what we've lost, what we're still losing, what isn't the way it should be. And then, consider, what new thing is "coalescing" because of all this "falling apart"? And then, consider maybe, just maybe, embracing that possibility.

Yours in the falling apart, and in the coalescing.

Rev. David

## Information for Potential New Members

The Unitarian Church of Harrisburg is a welcoming congregation, open to people from any/all (or no) religious backgrounds. If you are new to Unitarian Universalism, we encourage you to peruse [100 Questions that Non-Members Ask about Unitarian Universalism](#) for background information about our faith tradition. An overview of the "Pathways to Membership" at UCH appears on our [website](#). For further information about our congregation and the membership process, please feel free to reach out to [Bart Carpenter](#) or another member of the Membership Action Council. At present, we are conducting information sessions via Zoom, and we welcome your inquiries.

## Worship 10:30 a.m. Sundays

### September theme: Embracing Possibility

**Sept. 5: Labor Sunday: Redneck Resistance**, Rev. David  
This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Blair Mountain in West Virginia, where thousands of coal miners fought back against the bosses and even the United States military, demanding better working conditions and economic justice. On this Labor Sunday, we'll remember this anniversary, honor the legacy of all working-class fighters for freedom, and see what their legacy has to teach us as we embrace the possibility of resistance in our own time.

**Sept. 12: Ground Zero: A 9/11 Remembrance Service**, Rev. David  
It has been 20 years since the tragic day of 9/11/2001. As we look back on that day, and all the tumult since, what does it all mean? In this service, we'll draw especially from the wisdom of the religious tradition of Islam and the more secular philosophy of "tragic humanism" to help us make sense of this difficult anniversary.

**Sept. 19: Speaker, Topic TBD**

**Sept. 26: Embracing the Dark**, Rev. David  
What do we do when the future we were looking forward to doesn't happen? What might it mean to embrace the possibilities of dark times? This service will use the ancient myth of Persephone and the imagery of Autumn as we honor the Fall Equinox and lean into the possibilities that emerge when the future is unknowable.

### Logistics

At present, we are conducting services in the sanctuary each Sunday, with congregants participating remotely via Zoom. Each Sunday morning, the church will email:

- 🔗 A link to the Zoom of the service
- 🔗 A link to the Zoom session for 11:30 coffee and conversation

We also encourage members to set aside a small sacred space at home to enjoy the service. Having rituals in place at home can help us participate in services together, even though we are not able to be sharing in one another's company in person.

Finally, we will post a recording of the service on [the UCH YouTube channel](#) as soon as we can.

President's Message



By David Spear, President, Board of Trustees

Ah, September. The time of year when the dog days of August are gone, vacations end, children go back to school, and churches ramp up their activities.

Well, that was our plan! And it even worked for three Sundays. But it came to a swift end when the Delta variant caused infection rates

to soar again.

It was deeply disappointing to me, even though I understand that it was the right decision. Certainly we must be cautious and protect each other from infection, but I already miss being with my friends and church family. Our community is strong, and we will reconnect when it is safe to do so. In the meantime, virtual connections will support us as they have done so well for a year and a half. Where would the world be without Zoom?

The Board has been focusing on directions for the church year and, of course, getting to know our new minister. We were delighted to chat with Rev. David at his first Board meeting on August 18. It was a good opportunity for us to get to know each other better and share our visions of ministry at this church.

The minister and the Board are responsible for different but interconnected aspects of the work of the church, and we look forward to a productive partnership. We appreciate Rev. David's cheerfulness, energy, willingness to discuss any topic, and especially his dedication to this ministry.

A small part of me is pleased to welcome another David into the congregation. There's no shortage of people with this name, but there is a bit of camaraderie among those of us who share it.

You might be wondering how to clarify which David you might be talking about. We both prefer to be called David, rather than a nickname, so that won't help. But there are plenty of other ways to differentiate.

You could use our last names. Or the one who is the minister or the one who is on the Board. Or the one who is taller or shorter. Brown hair or blue hair? Tattoo or not? Married with kids or single? Introvert or extrovert?

The biggest difference, however, is term limits. Board members are limited to serving for six years at a time, and my term will end June 30, 2022. (And what an interesting time it has been recently!) In contrast, settled ministers have no term limits. I am hopeful Rev. David will be our minister for many, many years to come.

For the three wonderful Sundays that we were able to open, I was surprised how easy it was to talk to my friends at church, after not seeing them for 17 months. It was as if the separation had not even happened, as if we had been chatting weekly through all that time. This reminds me that our church community is strongly connected, with bonds that cannot be easily broken by the quarantine.

It's not clear what the coronavirus will allow us to do in the coming months. I hope that we will be able to reopen relatively soon, although I'm not especially optimistic.

Whatever the case, I'm encouraged by the strength of our community and the energy that our new minister has brought to us. I continue to believe that our future remains very bright.

David Spear

Share the Plate: UUJusticePA Education Fund

Each month, we share half of our Sunday plate with a local non-profit organization. This month, we share the plate with Education Fund of UUJusticePA.

UUJusticePA is a UU advocacy organization in Pennsylvania, focused on the following justice issues: Criminal Justice Reform, Economic & Education Justice, Environmental Justice, Good Government, Gun Violence Prevention and Reproductive Justice. It is a 501(c)4 nonprofit organization allowed to lobby lawmakers.

The Education Fund is the 501(c)3 nonprofit organization associated with UUJusticePA. Contributions to the Education Fund support the general mission of UUJusticePA. Among other things, the organization sponsors virtual informational programs and other events to promote social justice; a video about the organization is available on YouTube.

UUJusticePA also encourages UCH members to join the organization and get involved in promoting UU values directly. Membership information is available on the UUJusticePA website.



### Children and Youth RE Starts Sept. 19



By Cory Ness, Director of Religious Exploration (DRE)

Flexibility is the key to success this year in our Children & Youth RE programming. Months ago, I was planning on the new program year to include Our Whole Lives (OWL) programming for all of our kids. However, due to Delta, a highly contagious SARS-CoV-2 virus strain, we are monitoring the safety of our programs closely.

This means that for now, we will be supporting synchronous and asynchronous activities based on the CDC's recommendations for safely gathering with our children and youth. Some weeks we may need to meet using our zoom platform. I am hopeful that our Children & Youth programming will be able to meet again in person soon. Until we can gather in person and begin our OWL programs, we will be using our Soul Matters themes as listed above. We will begin in September with the theme of **Embracing Possibility**, how appropriate while

living in these times of uncertainty.

In either case, we do encourage all families, to [register](#) your children and youth for the 2021-2022 RE year as soon as possible, so we can plan for volunteer needs and UU activities. If you cannot access the web link to register, please [contact me](#) directly.

### RE for PreK – 6<sup>th</sup> Grades begins September 19 at 9 a.m.

We are following a theme-based curriculum this year, with the September theme Embracing Possibility, discussed below. Our September sessions have the following specific themes:

- 🕯 Sunday, September 19: The Possibilities Discovered with an Open Mind and Heart
- 🕯 Sunday, September 26: The Possibility of Forgiveness - for Yom Kippur

Please join us at 9:00 a.m. on September 19 and 26 as we explore these topics. Zoom links will be sent out in our Children & Youth RE Newsletters. The year's components include:

- 🕯 Light It! - Chalice Lighting
- 🕯 Check In!
- 🕯 Introduce It! - Wonder Box
- 🕯 Tell It and Talk About It! - Story
- 🕯 Explore It! - Digging Deeper with Activities

### RE for 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> begins September 19 at noon at Clover Lane

A special in-person youth gathering is planned for **Sunday, September 19 at noon**. All youth in 7<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grades are invited to participate in a special gathering as we determine safe ways in which we can gather. Considerations for future gatherings/meetings may include outdoor activities such as bonfires, hiking, etc. as well as Zoom meetings.

Flexibility will be the key to this year's success as we sit in the middle of pandemic time. We know it's not easy to be optimistic. The Delta strain of Covid reminds us that the pandemic is far from over; the U.S. is failing to step up adequately to our time of racial reckoning; climate change is increasing at an even more alarming rate than we imagined. And the list goes on.

Bottom line: it's easy for **a person** to worry that maybe the world is fallen and broken beyond repair. But maybe that's why we need each other. Alone, it's hard to see a bright future. But, **together**, something magic begins to occur. Keeping with our theme for the month of September.... when **we all** focus our gaze on the horizon **together**, possibility surprisingly appears. So friends, maybe this isn't simply the month of embracing possibility; maybe it is the month of embracing possibility **together!**

Stay tuned for more information through our church e-news and our Children & Youth RE Newsletters.

### Adult Religious Exploration

Last year at this time, I enthusiastically offered a whole list of adult programming opportunities. This year we have experienced so many transitions at UCH and in the larger world that I have had little time or inspiration as to what to offer this year. So, I am sending an invitation. I invite you to share with me your ideas for Adult RE programming. What do you want to explore/learn together? What do you need to nourish your spirit during these challenging times? What might you like to offer to our Adult RE programming? I would love to hear from you, so please reach out and contact me.

### **Introducing Theme-Based Ministry**

Theme-based ministry 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; our covenant groups are given resources so they can go deeper with the theme. This model can be used with any sized congregation.

You will hear about our themes in our worship services, e-news, covenant groups, Children & Youth RE Programming and our C&YRE newsletters. Let us now begin the month of September with “Embracing Possibility!”

### **Embracing Possibility**

~From Soul Matters Sharing Circle LLC

Of all our themes this year, *Embracing Possibility* is arguably most central to our faith. It has distinguished Unitarian Universalists from the start. Historically, when others saw depravity and sin at the core of human identity, we saw potential. When many were preaching that this world was fallen, we fell in love with the possibility of heaven on earth. Theologically, you might say we were the people who believed that God hadn't given up on us and so we shouldn't give up on each other or this world. Psychologically, it's led to us being a people of “why not?” Why not give people another chance? Why not fight what seems a losing battle? Why not risk a little failure?

So that's our religion. But what about us personally? How open have you been recently to “Why not?” How's your faith in possibility doing? As we honor our religion's faith in what's possible, we need to allow space for the reality that trusting possibility isn't so easy for many of us. Here's how one Soul Matters member puts the challenge:

When I think of possibility, I think of all the people and opportunities we close the door on. Such as: ‘I will never see eye to eye with my sister.’ ‘I couldn't possibly leave this job to start my own business’ ‘I will never have close friends like I had where I used to live.’ ‘I will never really make a difference, so why bother?’

We tell ourselves so many small stories about who we and others are. So many tiny tales of what the world could be. Part of it has to do with real life defeats. But often a bigger part of it is about imagined fear and protecting ourselves. There's comfort in convincing yourself that the effort is hopeless; that way you don't have to try and risk failure, hurt or disappointment, yet again.

All of which is to say that maybe *Embracing Possibility* has more to do with being a people of vulnerability and courage than we've thought. The work isn't just about *believing* in possibility. It's about being willing to endure a few wounds along the way. It can hurt to be hopeful.

So maybe the question this month isn't, “Are you ready to lean into possibility?” but “Who's beside you and who are you bringing along?” “Who have you gathered to patch and pick you up when the path gets bumpy?” Whose faith can you lean on when yours grows dim? After all, no one makes it down the road of possibility alone.

And perhaps that's the real secret: remembering that “Why not?” is something we all have to say and sing together. It's not a solo act. For it to sink in - and better yet take flight - it needs to be at least a duet. Of course, a quartet is even better. And just imagine what we might pull off if we can gather a choir, all singing the tune of “Why not?!” at the top of our lungs!

### **What Does it Mean to be a Family Embracing Possibility?**

When our children first come to us, we do nothing but embrace possibility. It seems as if our futures together can hold anything! After a little while, as we get to know our children, and get to know ourselves a bit better, and as our circumstances begin to unfold, we move from the possible to the probable. There's still so much that might happen, but we begin to tell ourselves stories about what is more and less likely to occur. And sometimes, a while after we shift from possible to probable, we land on a version of “This is how it is. This is reality.”

There is great value in acceptance as a parent: “I accept my child for exactly the person they are in this moment.” That is a beautiful sentiment. But this month, we're going to challenge ourselves to go further: “I accept my child for exactly the person they are in this moment, AND I embrace the possibilities of who they are still discovering themselves to be!” It's about reaching back to our earlier potential-filled days as parents, back to that magical space of expectant surprise, back to that almost electric time of constantly wondering, “What might they become?!”

## Church Councils to Meet in September

The Church Councils provide an opportunity for leaders of our church community to hear what other committees and teams are doing, along with how we can work together to implement the mission of the church. The two councils are the Committee Coordination Council and the Lay Ministry Council. They are independent groups and do not report directly to the minister or to the Board of Trustees. As such, the councils may make suggestions to the minister, staff, or Board of Trustees, but they have no authority to create policy, nor may they make assignments or requests to staff without the permission of the minister.

### Committee Coordination Council: 7:00 p.m. Sept. 14

The Committee Coordination Council will meet at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 14. The groups are listed below. If you are a new leader of one of these this church year, please let me know.

- 🕊 Religious Exploration
- 🕊 Finance Committee
- 🕊 Planned Giving
- 🕊 Choir
- 🕊 Membership Action Council
- 🕊 Lay Pastoral Care Associates
- 🕊 Worship Team
- 🕊 Beautify UCH Building & Grounds
- 🕊 Communications
- 🕊 Stewardship Team
- 🕊 Leadership Development
- 🕊 Technology

### Lay Ministry Council: 7:00 p.m. Sept. 21

The Lay Ministry Council will meet at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 21. The groups are listed below. If you are a new leader of one of these this church year, please let me know.

- 🕊 Adopt A Highway
- 🕊 Yoga
- 🕊 Oliver LaGrone Scholarship
- 🕊 UU Christian Fellowship
- 🕊 Humanist Group
- 🕊 Philosophy & Literature
- 🕊 Reproductive Justice
- 🕊 Climate Action Team
- 🕊 Power to the Hill Women's Night Out
- 🕊 QueenSpirit
- 🕊 UU JusticePa
- 🕊 Helping People in Prison & Their Families
- 🕊 CroneSpirit
- 🕊 Covenant Group

The week before each meeting, I will send invitations and an agenda with the Zoom link.

— Submitted by Guy Dannelley

## Guest Column

By Jim Cavanaugh, Lay Community Minister

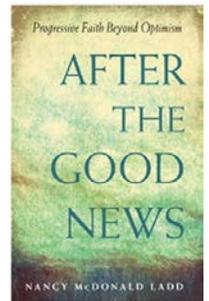
### Are We Ready for Diversity?



I meet people of color every time I visit the Women’s Work Release Center, and I frequently wonder what UCH would be like with more diversity. Reading a book quoted by Rev. David in one of his first sermons, *After the Good News*, by Nancy McDonald Ladd, I came across a comment that made me wonder:

Within our own Unitarian Universalist tradition, our prevailing white, middle-class culture has long related to the voices of people of color, queer theorists, liberationists, and feminist/womanist theologians as people from the outside.[...]

We attend to them when it is easy, lift them up when their witness fits within our larger project of reform, and are convicted by them only when they take the time and expend the energy to stare into the tired eyes of mostly white institutions and keep staring until those institutions are the first to blink.



What will it mean to UCH when our diversity brings the voices of people of color, liberationists, and feminist/womanist UUs who think differently into our midst? Will they have the staying power to stare into UCH until we blink? Is UCH ready to change? I look forward to the change, but I am not holding my breath. You?

I will be at the Pennsylvania Prison Chaplain’s Association annual training conference Aug 31 – Sept. 2. The conference will focus on “Cross-Cultural Competency in Correctional Chaplaincy.” I hope to return from the conference more competent at working with people “from various cultural backgrounds,” as the conference brochure states



Roof replacement under way

## Improvements Under Way

*Compiled from reports by Cordell Affeldt and Kel Kyle*

Work is under way to complete much-needed repairs and redecoration around the Clover Lane campus. Roof work began Aug. 23. At press time, the shingled roof is being completed, with the rubber roof to follow. These changes are our first efforts in sprucing up our building and grounds in anticipation of in-person gatherings in the future.

The Building Improvement Task Force is continuing to investigate and help prioritize a list of other improvements for the campus. The task force is also leading an effort to unify improvements consistent with the Midcentury Modern architecture of the building.<sup>1</sup> After Rev. David selected Spring Green as the paint color for his new office, the task force proceeded with a four-color Midcentury Modern palette. The colors throughout the church are Spring Green, orange (Common Room), blue (sanctuary chairs) and fuchsia. They will use these four colors in a hanging for the wall above Rev. David's new IKEA credenza that will pull the décor together.

Also note that George Washington Carver (plaster bust created by Oliver LaGrone) is following church policy for indoor masking...



George Washington Carver, plaster bust masqué

### Task Force Seeks Task Support

Are you interested in helping with a short-term task? The Task Force seeks investigative assistance mostly doable via phone or Internet.

- Acoustic consultation source
- Cleaning sanctuary chair upholstery
- Solar energy applications
- Durable exterior benches
- Exterior painting

Please contact [Cordell Affeldt](#) to assist.



Mulching the MK Doyle memorial garden



Pastor's office, newly painted in Midcentury Modern palette

<sup>1</sup> The original facility was built in 1963.

Date	Time	Group	Location
<b>Wed 1</b>	<b>6:00</b>	<b>QueenSpirit (Monthly)</b>	<b>Offsite</b>
<p>QueenSpirit is a co-created women's spirituality circle that meets on the first Wednesday of the month. This month, Randa Todd will help the QueenSpirit Circle explore the concept: "Have nothing in your house that you don't know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful (William Morris)."</p> <p>All who identify as women are welcome in a co-creating sacred space. This will be a Zoom meeting, and a link will be sent a day or so prior to the meeting time. Check-in starts at 6:30 p.m., the circle begins at 7:00 p.m., ending by 8:30 p.m. Contact <a href="mailto:Rebecca.Waldemar@uch.org">Rebecca Waldemar</a> (717-364-2029) for further information.</p>			
<b>Fri 3</b>	<b>Various</b>	<b>Heart Rhythm Meditation</b>	<b>Zoom</b>
<p>Heart Rhythm Meditation (HRM) is a type of meditation that involves conscious breathing, in which the individual consciously controls their breathing in order to influence their mental, emotional, and physical state. Join Libby Tisdell in twice-weekly sessions, via Zoom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🕒 Friday mornings from 9:00-10:00 a.m. (<a href="#">Friday Zoom link</a>)</li> <li>🕒 Monday afternoons from 4:30-5:30 p.m. (<a href="#">Monday link</a>) <b>No session on Labor Day.</b></li> </ul> <p>People can drop in or out as they want. Please contact <a href="mailto:Libby.Tisdell@uch.org">Libby Tisdell</a> for additional information.</p>			
<b>Sun 12</b>	<b>7:00</b>	<b>Philosophy and Literature Group (Monthly)</b>	<b>Zoom</b>
<p>The Philosophy &amp; Literature Group meets on the second Sunday of each month, normally at 7:00 p.m. and (historically) at the church. During the current pandemic, the session is a virtual meeting via Zoom. This month, the group meets to discuss <i>The Reactionary Mind</i> by Cory Robin. From Amazon.com:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><i>In <a href="#">The Reactionary Mind</a>, Robin traces conservatism back to its roots in the reaction against the French Revolution. He argues that the right was inspired, and is still united, by its hostility to emancipating the lower orders. Some conservatives endorse the free market; others oppose it. Some criticize the state; others celebrate it. Underlying these differences is the impulse to defend power and privilege against movements demanding freedom and equality - while simultaneously making populist appeals to the masses..</i></p> <p>Please contact <a href="mailto:Don.Brown@uch.org">Don Brown</a> for information.</p>			
<b>Tue 28</b>	<b>6:30</b>	<b>Auction Planning Committee</b>	<b>Zoom</b>
<p><b>Theme:</b> Made in PA <b>Date:</b> Saturday, November 13, 2021 <b>Place:</b> UCH Clover Lane</p> <p>The Auction Planning Committee meets the fourth Tuesday of each month. This month, the meeting is again via Zoom. Start thinking now about auction ideas and donations for 2021! Come brainstorm ideas, themes, and be a part of the fun, food, and fabulous Auction Committee. Your talent and help planning the 2021 Church Auction is always welcome. We are looking for ideas to make this year's auction a huge success.</p> <p>Please contact <a href="mailto:Patti.Hazell@uch.org">Patti Hazell</a> (717-576-9848) for additional information. A Zoom link will be sent to Auction Committee members a few days prior to the meeting.</p>			

## Auction News

On Labor Day weekend Harrisburg's free Kipona Festival celebrates the end of summer at Riverfront Park and City Island. Enjoy a Festival of India, Native American Pow-Wow, canoe races, an arts and crafts show, live music, food, and fireworks.

The name "Kipona" was derived from Native American words for "Sparkling Waters." The inaugural event dates to 1916, and, after several breaks, it was revived in 1936. The city had experienced a devastating flood in March of that year, and folks needed a morale builder.

So here we are emerging from the strict isolation of pandemic life to carefully create some fun at the 2021 "Made in PA" annual auction. Check now to be sure Saturday, November 13, is marked on your calendar-- you don't want to miss this! For the auction to be a great time, we need your help in raising the spirits of fellow UCH'ers through your presence at the auction and with your donations.



Can you offer entertainment or a musical event? Are you crafty and can make beautiful UU themed masks? Perhaps you have a fascinating item from another culture that is looking for a new home. Do you have a canoe or kayak to paddle the "sparkling waters" nearby? Please submit your auction donations before October 1 to [uchauction@gmail.com](mailto:uchauction@gmail.com) and see you at the auction on November 13!

— Submitted by Ann Stillwater