



*The Unitarian Church of Harrisburg: an inclusive, loving community of faith committed to welcoming and nurturing all with dignity and respect*

## From the Ministers

*The Rev. Drs. Kathy Ellis and Sandra Fees are serving as UCH Ministers through July 2024.*



Our worship theme for December is Mystery, so we will sing “Where Do We Come From?” which has the line “Life is a riddle and a mystery.” Life is a mystery...Science can tell us so many amazing things such as the fact that we are made of stardust, and we are

breathing some of the same oxygen molecules that Jesus of Nazareth or the Buddha breathed. The universe is vast beyond comprehension and incredibly ancient. Scientists continue to learn more, but science can never answer the basic mystery.

Why is there anything at all? Why are we here? We have the mysterious gift of life. May we value and make the most of our lives and savor the mystery.

There is a lot happening at UCH. The Capital Campaign Task Force has been very busy and diligent. The consultant, Liz Coit, has completed the financial feasibility study, and the team is setting the priorities for the building. You will hear from them on Dec. 3.

For the past two weeks, my life has been disrupted by a good thing. Our house, built in 1940, has one full bathroom, and that bathroom needed repair and restoration. While we had no shower available, my two dogs and I stayed with my daughter, her husband and their two dogs. Jess and Matt are very hospitable and welcoming, but it wasn't home. We couldn't manage our usual routines, and I found myself forgetting things. We are now home, and the new old bathroom looks great. I'm telling you this story to remind you that there may be some disruption as things change and are improved, but we not only can survive but also thrive as we move into the future.

See you in church,

*Rev. Kathy*

## December Share the Plate: Susquehanna Harbor Safe Haven

*Each month, we share the Sunday plate with a local non-profit. This month, we share with Susquehanna Harbor Safe Haven (SHSH).*

[Susquehanna Harbor Safe Haven](#) (SHSH) is a residential facility offering support and stable housing to men who are/were chronically homeless. The program is designed to help chronically homeless men—those living on the street for a year or more, many of whom are also dealing with mental illness—to get off the street. Once in a safe, stable environment, they work on goals related to income, employment, life skills, physical and mental health, and, in many cases, addiction. New residents live in dormitory-style housing. Upon achievement of specific goals related to income and stability, they become eligible for one of ten private rooms. Over time, it is their goal to help the men, when able, to move to their own apartment or other permanent housing.

— Submitted by UCH Finance Committee

## Worship 10:30 a.m. Sundays

### December Theme: The Gift of Mystery

**Dec 3: Stardust, Mystery, and Hope. Hanging of the Greens and First Sunday in Advent,** Rev. Dr. Ellis

The Harrisburg Gay Men's Choir will perform. Our theme for December is Mystery. We celebrate the mystery of our existence, that we are made of stardust. And learn about Unitarians and Christmas trees. Finger food afterward in the Common Room.

**Dec 10: Embracing Mystery,** Rev. Dr. Fees

As winter approaches, we enter a season of waiting. We wait for the return of hope and light in the world despite uncertainty. Join us this morning as we seek ways to embrace this mystery.

**Dec 17: Winter Solstice Ritual,** multigenerational

A family-friendly service focused on the coming winter solstice, led by Yvonne DuVal and Cory Ness.

**Dec 24 (7:00): The Christmas Spirit: Ordinary Miracles,** Rev. Dr. Ellis  
Our Christmas Eve Service. Celebrating the mystery of Christmas and of Ordinary Miracles.

**Please note: no morning service on Christmas Eve**

**Dec 31: Start Close In (Multigenerational),** Rev. Dr. Ellis

Janus, the Roman god for whom January is named, looks both backward and forward at the same time. We look backward to consider what to let go and forward to our dreams and aspirations.

Sunday services normally stream on Zoom and [YouTube](#). Please contact the [church office](#) to receive the Zoom link on Sunday morning, or watch directly on YouTube.



### Note from the Board

*Ed. Note: This year, the Board of Trustees is rotating responsibilities for the monthly column. Katie Sciamanna is the wife of board member Justin Sciamanna.*



*By Katie Sciamanna*

In preparation for the holidays, we recently did a deep clean of the house from top to bottom. We swept the floors and dusted the shelves...we were on a roll. I say “we were” on a roll because that was up until I had to tidy my bookshelf. As I neatly stacked the titles that I read cover-to-cover and shamelessly patted myself on the back for reaching my reading goal this year, I began thinking about a quote from *The Little Prince*, a book that has a special spot on my shelf as well as my heart.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry wrote,

Grown-ups like numbers. When you tell them about a new friend, they never ask questions about what really matters. They never ask: “What does his voice sound like? What games does he like best? Does he collect butterflies?”

They ask: “How old is he? How many brothers does he have? How much does he weigh? How much money does his father make?” Only then do they think they know him.

If you tell grown-ups, “I saw a beautiful red brick house, with geraniums at the windows and doves on the roof,” they won’t be able to imagine such a house. You have to tell them, “I saw a house worth a hundred thousand francs.” Then they exclaim, “What a pretty house!”

So, while I’m still proud about hitting my number-of-books goal for the year, I can’t help but wonder if I traded quality for quantity. Did I choose the shorter books and easier reads just to hit that goal? Did I pass on books that would have been funnier, deeper, or more eloquently written? Do I even remember all of the books that I read?

So as I shirked all responsibility and curled up on the couch with *The Little Prince* to reread it for the umpteenth time, I decided that next year I want to set more qualitative goals rather than quantitative. I want to find a book that makes me laugh. A book that has a beautiful cover. A book that has the best plot twist...books that revert me to the child I once was that got in trouble for reading well beyond bedtime.

As you reflect on the past 12 months, be kind to yourself when measuring your year against the plans you made for yourself in January and try to gauge your successes in quality, not quantity. And as we move forward into the new year, I encourage you to set goals that can only be measured with your heart and not your fingers.

As de Saint-Exupéry put it best: “Those of us who understand life couldn’t care less about numbers!”

*Katie*

### Board of Trustees’ December Report

*This is a synopsis of activity from last month’s Board meeting. We plan to publish this type of synopsis on a monthly basis.*

During its November meetings, the Board of Trustees:

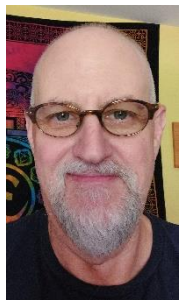
- 🕒 Approved a motion to designate and celebrate Jim Cavanaugh as a Commissioned Lay Chaplain of the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg. Jim will be presented to the congregation at a later date for recognition of his work.
- 🕒 Directed the formation of a task force to explore the development of UCH’s northern property for a solar installation or other purpose.
- 🕒 Determined that a conflict-of-interest policy shall be developed to guide trustees, ministers, and staff when questions about conflicts of interest arise.
- 🕒 Considered a proposal from the Capital Campaign Task Force regarding plans for a town hall scheduled for Dec. 3, which will inform and prepare the congregation for the Dec. 10 congregational meeting, where the congregation will vote upon important capital campaign matters.
- 🕒 Received the report of the ministerial search team, which by Dec. 1 will publish on the UUA portal our request for applications from ministers seeking a contract ministry.
- 🕒 Reviewed revisions to UCH’s new organizational chart, which were made in response to comments received from the congregation.

— Submitted by Chris Dutton, President, UCH Board of Trustees

### Capital Campaign

*Ed. Note: Trustee Brad Byers gave this member reflection at services on Nov. 11.*

*By Brad Byers*



In September, I went back to Utah to visit my alma mater, Utah State University (USU), and see my old college friends. Utah State and the town of Logan, Utah, have held a sacred and almost mythical place in my heart and mind for all these years. In my four years there, being 2,000 miles from home, I learned to be strongly independent, I had a great educational

experience, I matured, and I even fell in love and proposed to my girlfriend. As some of you know, I'm a lifelong bachelor. So, I guess you know how that turned out.

It had been 28 years since I was at USU. In visiting again, I had no idea how I'd react to being back to such a special place. Alumni Relations arranged a 3-hour campus tour. But the campus had changed so much since I graduated in 1982. It had twice as many buildings and parking garages. The student population more than doubled from 10,000 to 23,000. Frankly, I felt like a stranger.

It was like a quote I saw just weeks after my return home which said: "But the thing is, even if I could go back, I wouldn't belong there anymore."

It was a day after the tour, while golfing with college friends, some I hadn't seen in 41 years, that I had an epiphany. When first seeing each other, we hugged each other. In pictures taken together, we had our arms around one other. You see, it wasn't the campus. It wasn't the majestic Wasatch mountains, it wasn't the allure of Logan Canyon, it wasn't the beauty of Cache Valley or the view of the snow-capped Wellsville mountains. It wasn't the open space of the Quad or seeing Old Main on the plateau at the base of the mountain. It was not the place; it was the people. I had been mistaken all those years thinking it was about a place. What made it so special was the people.

That very significant realization, that new truth, changed me in ways I never expected. And since that revelation, I have come to realize that it's the same with the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg.

On September 11, 2001, after the planes slammed into the World Trade towers, the Pentagon, and finally into the ground in Shanksville, the leaders of this church decided to hold an ad

hoc service that very evening. On Tuesdays the Mindfulness Meditation Group (MMG) met here in this sanctuary. We came in and George Hellmann, the MMG facilitator, told us we would shorten the meditation because a service was going to be held at 7:00 p.m.

In meditation we sat on cushions, benches and chairs in a circle right here. At about 10 to 7:00, people started coming into the sanctuary and taking their seats, staying quiet, not saying a word. Close to 7:00, George rang the bell, and we moved back to the chairs for the hastily scheduled service.

Rev. Howard Dana later told me that the service was held because members said that there was a need for us to gather, as a community, to sit with the awful events of the day. I do not remember a single thing said during the service. I don't remember a specific song or responsive reading. But I remember being together.

We are about to decide if we are going to take on a capital campaign, which upon first appearance seems to be a focus on the repair and much needed maintenance of the building and grounds. But it's not really about the place.

The investment in the physical structures and property is necessary so that the people, of this and future generations, have a safe place to gather to express ideas, to talk about and take action on troubling societal problems, and to provide sanctuary for ourselves and other free-thinking people. This is a place to share joys and sorrows, victories and defeats, worries and promises. You see at this church; we don't save souls. Instead, we comfort, encourage, empower, and enlighten.

So, when making your decision about whether to support the capital campaign, remember it's not a place you are supporting, but rather it's people you are supporting. Remember that this community provides a welcoming place for the awkward, the different, the alone, the truth seeker, the disenfranchised, the fringes, the artistic, the wanderers, the questioning, and the compassionate people we find here. This community provides us with the best opportunity to find our True Selves on this life's journey.

Please support this blessed community by supporting the capital campaign.

### Upcoming Capital Campaign Events

- 🕒 **Noon Dec. 3: Town Hall Meeting:** The Capital Campaign Task Force will present updated information about our possible capital campaign. They will discuss what will be voted on at the congregational meeting the following week and answer any of your questions. Information about the motion to be put forward will be communicated prior to the event.
- 🕒 **Noon Dec. 10: Congregational Meeting:** A congregational meeting will be held to vote on whether UCH should proceed with a capital campaign. This will not be a vote on specific renovations to be done, but a vote to authorize a capital campaign. See the [Capital Campaign](#) page on the church website information. Updates are made weekly.

## Opportunities for Lifespan Faith Development

By Cory Ness, Director of Lifespan Faith Development

We have many opportunities this month for children, youth, and adults! All are welcome.



### Children and Youth December Calendar

- 🕒 **Dec 3:** Hanging of the Greens, multi-generational service
- 🕒 **Dec 10:** Faith development for all children/youth
- 🕒 **Dec 17:** Winter Solstice, multi-generational service
- 🕒 **Dec 24:** Christmas Eve, multi-generational service (7:00 p.m.)
- 🕒 **Dec 31:** New Year's Eve, multi-generational service

We are offering three programs this year:

- 🕒 **Nursery:** 6 mo. – Kindergarten
- 🕒 **Elementary:** 1st – 5th grade
- 🕒 **Youth:** 6th – 12<sup>th</sup> grade

Our classes will be learning from our Soul Matters themes in age-appropriate experiences. This year's overarching frame is *The Gifts of Our Faith*, where we will focus on ten beloved UU values and explore their potential to shape us and in turn shape the world.

Monthly themes are summarized in the accompanying matrix. Please also see [the Children & Youth Faith Development Newsletter](#) for information including stories about our December theme, Mystery, and a solstice performance opportunity.

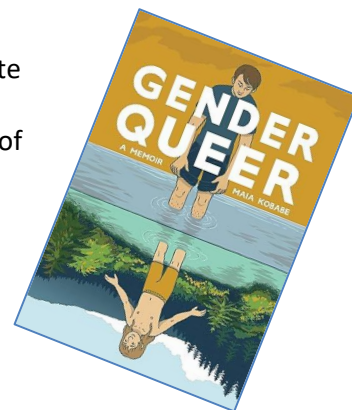
### Monthly Themes - The Gift of ...

Month	Theme	Month	Theme
September	Welcome	February	Justice & Equity
October	Heritage	March	Transformation
November	Generosity	April	Interdependence
December	Mystery	May	Pluralism
January	Liberating Love	June	Renewal

### Banned Book Club: January 25

The discussion group meets via Zoom at 6:30 p.m. on the last Thursday of the month on alternate months. Our next meeting is Jan. 25, when we will discuss *Gender Queer: A Memoir*, by Maia Kobabe. The book is about coming out as nonbinary. The book landed the author at the center of a battle over which books belong in schools, and who gets to make that decision. The debate, raging in school board meetings and town halls, is dividing communities around the country and pushing libraries to the front lines of a simmering culture war. In 2021, when book banning efforts soared, this book became the most challenged book in the US, according to the American Library Association and the free speech organization PEN.

All are welcome! Please [sign up](#) for email reminders and the Zoom link.



### Adult Education: Article II (Zoom) ~ Four Tuesdays in Feb/March

Article II of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Bylaws, Principles and Purposes, is the foundation for all the work of our UUA and its member congregations and covenanted communities. It is the covenant to which UU congregations and covenanted communities pledge themselves when they become members of our UUA.

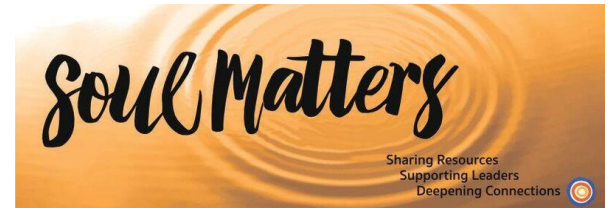
Please join Rev. Dr. Ellis and Rev. Dr. Fees for a 4-session spiritual reflection on Article II. The reflection is from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on alternate Tuesdays in February and March. Schedule:

Date	Topic	Description
2/13	1: Covenant	Use the covenant section from the Proposed Article II to explore and live into.
2/27	2: Purpose, Inspirations, Inclusion and Freedom of Belief	Focus on the sections before and after the values and covenant.
3/12	3: Love	Explore the centering value in the proposed Article II.
3/26	4. Six Values: Interdependence, Justice, Equity, Generosity, Pluralism, and Transformation	Connect with the values and their meaning in our lives and communities.



### Theme-Based Ministry

We have chosen to work again this year with [Soul Matters Sharing Circle](#), a resource-sharing UU collaborative involving hundreds of UU churches. Our theme for December is “The Gift of Mystery.”



### *The Gift of Mystery*

We live in a culture that loves to conquer mysteries. For us modern folks, the unexplainable is simply a lock to be picked, a code to be cracked, a puzzle to be figured out. But what if mystery isn't just something to solve? What if it's also something to be listened to?

This is the less-recognized call of our faith. “Yes,” it says, “Stay skeptical, continue to question and seek answers. But at the same time, leave space for life to speak!” One of the most elegant articulations of this comes from the poet Mary Oliver. In her beloved poem, [Wild Geese](#), she writes,

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—  
over and over announcing your place in the family of things.

Oliver's call to listen for life's mysterious announcements implies a letting go. Mystery is funny this way. You can't make it speak. Indeed, often the more you pursue the meaning of life's mysteries, the more distant it becomes. If we want mystery to speak, it seems we have to be willing to put down the pursuit and open ourselves to being caught off guard. UU humanist minister and poet, David Breeden, captures this beautifully when he writes,

I dug and dug  
Deeper into the earth  
Looking for blue heaven  
Choking always  
On piles of dust rising  
Then once  
At midnight  
I slipped  
And fell into the sky

Slipping, and then falling into the sky. Is there a better way to describe our dance with mystery? Isn't this what all the great mystics have been trying to tell us from the start? That sitting at the heart of mystery is not the unknown, but unity. We fall into the mysterious oneness of life and then it falls into us. Its voice whispers, “I am you and you are me.” Simply put, mystery doesn't put up barriers; it dissolves them. Haven't all of us faced the wonder and mystery of a sunset, the stars, a baby's first cry or a lover's wet kiss and thought to ourselves, “My God, who I am does not end at the barrier of my skin!”

And it's not just words of connectedness, but comfort too. We find ourselves crushed by the weight of the world, so we take a walk in the woods, watch the waves kindly caress the shore, stare into the night sky or stumble on the smile of a stranger. And often, but not always, we hear the world gently sing, “It will be ok. In fact, it is all already ok!” UU minister, [Angela Herrera](#), puts it this way,

You bring yourself before the sacred, before the holy,  
before what is ultimate and bigger than your lone life...  
You stand at the edge of mystery...  
Meanwhile, the armful of worries you brought to the edge of mystery  
have fluttered to your feet.


So friends, this month, let's let mystery work its magic. Let's allow ourselves to fall in and be opened up. Let's slip into the sky and let it slip into us. Let's set the sleuthing down, for just a moment, and simply listen.

We can't wait to hear what the world whispers back.

*~Rev. Scott Tayler, Soul Matters Team Lead*

Finding the Sacred in Music: The Gift of Mystery

Soul Matters has created two different playlists for each of our monthly themes: one in Spotify and another in YouTube. They are organized as a journey of sorts, so consider listening from beginning to end and using the playlists as musical meditations.

	Mystery	Soul Matters (General)
	Spotify playlist <a href="#">here</a> YouTube playlist <a href="#">here</a>	Spotify playlist <a href="#">here</a> YouTube playlist <a href="#">here</a>

Our Families Are Exploring the Gifts of Mystery

Most of the mysteries we encounter as parents are exquisitely humble: how old is that half-eaten pastry in the nine-year old’s room? Will this 1/16 tank of gas get me through my errands and back again in time to pick up my child? How many gray hairs on one’s head or face before one is considered “graying”? The gift of those grounding mysteries is they remind us that this moment in time is passing, that nothing we are experiencing now won’t change, and one day soon, we’ll wake up to notice that we and our children have moved on entirely in the conditions of self and family.

Other mysteries, however, only deepen as we proceed in age. The divine calculations that allowed us and our loved ones to cross paths; the microscopic chaos that is gene mutation and variation, which determine how we experience our brains and bodies; what is intrinsic to and what is conditional in human nature; whether and how our species will rise to the momentous occasion before us and work together to love one another and our shared planet: these were wonderments when we, ourselves, joined life on earth, and they will be, too, when we’re gone. This month, we’ll explore both the comfort and the frustration of these perpetual unknowns.

To whatever forces brought our Soulful Homes together in the Soul Matters Sharing Circle this year, we are grateful. Your energy, ideas, and examples uplift and inspire us! Raising families on this whirling planet full of unknowns is a journey best undertaken with friends and family, so thank you for accompanying us into the mystic.

— Soul Matters team

Membership

Please welcome these new members into our congregation!

Peter and Paula Francese

Peter and Paula Francese moved to Carlisle from New Hampshire in 2021. They moved to be closer to their son, Christopher Francese, who is a Classical Studies professor at Dickinson College. In the meantime, their daughter, Heather Kazemi, and her family also recently decided to move to Carlisle from France. Their third child, Justin, lives with his family in Eugene, OR. Peter and Paula have five grandchildren.



They have been associated with several UU churches since 1975, including Ithaca, NY, Princeton, NJ, and Newburyport, MA. Peter is a retired demographic consultant, and Paula is a retired professor of hospitality management.

Janice Myers

Janice Myers first visited the UCH campus in 1979, when her supervisor at Keystone Residential Mental Health Services got married here. Over the years, she performed in concert with the Central Pennsylvania Womyn’s Chorus in our sanctuary many times. She moved away and attended UU services in Buffalo and Kingston, NY. During the 1990s, she managed the Cokesbury academic bookstore in Lancaster. During this time, she became friends with several UU students enrolled in the Master of Divinity program at Lancaster Theological Seminary. Since returning to Harrisburg, she started attending services at UCH after hearing her best friend, Karen Baker, talk about her experiences at our church.



Janice reports: “Being a “preacher’s kid” and a child of the ’60s and ’70s, I’ve been quite cynical and haven’t expected much from organized religion, so it has taken me a while to make a commitment. I am so glad that I have finally joined UCH at this time and look forward to making new friends, sharing love, and contributing to this congregation.”

### ***Aesthetic Integrity Team: New Bulletin Board***

Next time you're getting coffee and/or snacks at coffee hour, check out the Aesthetic Integrity Team's bulletin board, near the tree mural on the western wall. It features segments on the purpose of the team, protocols we all follow, and a reminder about our Mid-Century Modern (MCM) church. The four sections showcase the colors we're working with and include several samples of each color. The center panel (not shown) features photos of examples of the MCM style in the church: angular structure; clean simple lines; generous windows and open space; strong colors and use of neutrals; and minimal decorative embellishments, along with descriptive text.



We'd like your input about anything to do with our building's aesthetics. What about our appearance is working? What's not? We really want to hear from you, so please tell us your thoughts! It's an especially good time to share your ideas, in conjunction with the anticipated Capital Campaign. The Capital Campaign Task Force is working with architects to guide us in refurbishing the church, so this is a chance for you to help make our aspirations for our church look like US! Thank you!

The Aesthetic Integrity Team comprises Cordell Affeldt, Carol Buskirk, Kate Carpenter, Marsha Dulaney, Kevin Geist, and Tony Morgan.

— Submitted Marsha Dulaney

### ***Auction Committee***

Together we blazed a new trail to this year's auction, raising \$14,017, exceeding our goal of \$10,000 by more than 40 percent! Many thanks to the auction team, who bushwhacked and maintained our route to this year's success, and especially our amazing guide, Patti Hazell, and auctioneer extraordinaire, Bart Carpenter. Thanks to all who donated and attended — we had a fun and fund-raising time!

Of course, we're on a never-ending trail, with new challenges and innovations ahead. To quote Louis L'Amour, "The trail is the thing, not the end of the trail. Travel too fast, and you miss all you are traveling for."<sup>1</sup> And so our journey continues, with the Capital Campaign and search for a contract minister.

Invoices were emailed shortly after the auction. If you have questions about your invoices, please contact [Bart Carpenter](#). Please remit payment (1) via check, with "auction" in the memo line or (2) electronically on our website. When paying electronically, if possible, please pay the 3% transaction fee :)

If you have ideas for next year, please contact the [Auction Committee](#). And/or blaze a new trail by joining the Auction Committee to help the 2024 auction climb to new heights! Our next meeting is at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 23, 2024, via Zoom.

— Submitted by Patti Hazell

<sup>1</sup> Louis L'Amour, *Ride the Dark Trail* (1972)

### ***Oliver LaGrone Scholarship Committee***

What is the strongest social justice initiative that the UCH has funded and directed for nearly 30 years? The Oliver LaGrone Scholarship Fund! Because of the generosity of many over the years, we now have a scholarship fund that has grown and become a healthy, thriving resource to many young people in the city of Harrisburg. All of these students have been and are trying to break free from the cycle of poverty.

Harrisburg City Schools are some of the least funded schools in our state. School taxes are based on real estate, and because there are so many state-owned buildings and devalued properties, the schools have very little money to work with. This translates into very few opportunities to help enhance the education of the 97.6% minorities that make up the schools' student population. Many of these students are experiencing homelessness and have at least one parent incarcerated.

Is there any light at the end of this tunnel of hopelessness and despair?

The Oliver LaGrone Scholarship fund and committee has made an impact in many of these lives over the years. The choice of a scholarship recipient is a careful process. It includes talking with the high school counselors at the school. The counselors help to identify motivated and talented students. The application form must then be filled out, which not only includes good grades, but a testimony of the person's resilience to overcome life's challenges. Certain ones are then chosen to be interviewed. The scholarship recipient is chosen in the month of May, and we have a celebration at church, usually in June to celebrate the new scholar for the year.

At this time, we will give \$12,500 over a 4-year period to the chosen 2023 scholar to help them go to college. At the same time, we are giving to 4-5 other on-going scholars per year. Many are dealing with extenuating circumstances (like a need for childcare), which can slow down their education. So we don't put limits on how they spend the money. We also give them a mentor from the congregation as an ongoing personal encouraging contact!

Over the years, these scholars have succeeded and given back to the community and city of Harrisburg. For example, [Dr. Sieta Achampang](#) (1997), went on to get her doctorate degree and is now the principal of the Sci-Tech Harrisburg High campus! Others have gone on to start businesses, become members of the school board and city council. They are making substantial changes in people's lives! Margaret Carrow, a long-time member of the Oliver LaGrone scholarship Committee, recently spoke with [Sara Farheen](#) (2022), who is currently enrolled at Penn States/Harrisburg. She told Margaret, "Nothing will keep me from finishing my college education!"

Our goal as a committee is to raise at least \$2,000 a year to keep this fund thriving and on-going for many years to come. We would love to eventually be able to fund two new scholars per year instead of just one.

Please consider contributing to this wonderful effort and making a difference with your monetary gifts or volunteering as a mentor.

— Submitted by *Deb Haken, Chair*



### ***Safer Congregations***

Our team has a leadership change. Patti Hazell has resigned from this team to take on the nursery position for our Children & Youth Faith Development program on Sunday mornings as the childcare provider. Our team works under the guidance of our minister, but with that said, we are in the market for a new chairperson! At our upcoming meeting Dec. 5, we will discuss options for the new leader of this very important group. Our team has accomplished a lot in a very short period of time.

- 🕒 We inspected the building, adding additional emergency exit signs.
- 🕒 All of the first aid kits are now fully stocked, and expirations are up to date.
- 🕒 A first aid station is now in place on the upper level just across from the office. It includes a large first aid kit, Narcan, a manual wheelchair, an automated external defibrillator (AED) device, as well as posters listing basic first aid and choking guidelines.
- 🕒 The UCH Safety Policy has been updated and presented to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- 🕒 Training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and AED is scheduled for eight people on Jan. 27, 2204, at UCH.
- 🕒 A timeline of tasks is already on the church's Google shared drive, ready to be implemented.

As you can see, we have laid a lot of the groundwork. At this point, it is really just a matter of maintaining safety for all!

Please consider leading our team!

— Submitted by *Patti Hazell*



## Lay Community Minister's Report



*Ed. Note: Jim Cavanaugh is UCH's Lay Community Minister who works for Reproductive Justice and serves as a volunteer Chaplain.*

A number of sick days got in the way of my visits to Work Release Center (WRC) in the past month, but when I made it the visit was worthwhile for all concerned.

The 2023 calendars people have donated in the past have been given out since last December, and I recently started distributing the more recently donated 2024 calendars, which makes for a lot to see.

I recently met my first Muslim resident in a while, and when she told me of her faith and I said *اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ* (*Assalamu alaikum*, "peace be upon you"), she smiled and responded with *وَعَلَيْكُمْ اَلْسَّلَامُ* (*Wa alaikum salaam*, "and unto you, peace.") Learning how to greet people of other faiths has helped me establish a relationship of trust, and I expect to say more about that relationship when I speak in February on Community Ministry Sunday. We spoke of her interest in getting a hijab, and I offered to reach out to Muslim friends to see if someone has a spare.

My reproductive justice ministry has featured:

- Finding a first-ever logo for the PA Religious Coalition for Reproductive Justice, with help from a friend at the national Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice who has talents as a graphic artist. She offered a number of designs, and the accompanying image is the finalist.
- Wrapping up the bumper stickers from the recent election, and thinking about a future year-round version.



## UUJusticePA Report

*Ed. Note: UUJusticePA is a non-profit advocacy group that promotes UU values across the state. As chair of the UCH Social Justice Roundtable, Rachel Mark coordinates UCH support for UUJusticePA's initiatives.*

UUJusticePA organized two separate events last month, led by supported by UUs from across the state. Events were coordinated by UUJusticePA's director, the Rev. Joan Sabatino.



### Nov. 15 – Helping Stop Gun Violence

More than 30 UUs attended the Interfaith Day of Action in Harrisburg with [CeaseFirePA](#), a non-profit organization advocating for an end to gun violence. Stakeholders are petitioning Sen. Lisa Baker to release her hold on the Background Check and Red Flag bills that passed in the PA House and are now stuck in the Senate Judiciary Committee, of which she is chair. Please considering signing the petition [online](#), or sign the petition after church in the UCH lobby.

### Nov. 14 - Education Day

Five UCH members and other UUs (photo) attended the November Education Voters rally to urge Gov. Josh Shapiro to provide funding to alleviate the \$6 billion gap in our state education budget. After the rally, Rev. Sabatino was able to schedule an in-person meeting with Kristin Paradise, Gov. Shapiro's Central Region Director and the UUs who attended the rally. We were able to share our thoughts about the importance of fully funding public education, holding charter schools financially and academically accountable, and the problems created by vouchers for private and religious schools.



Karen Sykes, Rachel Mark, Rev. Sabatino, Steve Snell (UU/York), Anita Mentzer, Josh Cysyk

## Calendar of Recurring Events

December 2023

Date	Time	Group	Location
<b>Fri 1</b>	<b>Various</b>	<b>Heart Rhythm Meditation</b>	<b>Zoom</b>
<p>Heart Rhythm Meditation is a type of meditation that involves conscious breathing, in which the individual controls their breathing in order to influence their mental, emotional, and physical state. Join Libby Tisdell and Jim Handshaw in twice-weekly sessions, via Zoom.</p> <p>🕒 Monday afternoons from 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. via <a href="#">Zoom</a></p> <p>🕒 Friday mornings from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. via <a href="#">Zoom</a></p> <p>People can drop in or out as they want. Please contact <a href="#">Jim Handshaw</a> for the Zoom link.</p>			
			<b>Heart Rhythm Meditation</b>
<b>Mon 4</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Amrit Yoga (Weekly)</b>	<b>Clover Lane</b>
<p>Amrit yoga is a form of hatha yoga developed by Yogi Amrit Desai. The entire process moves and stretches every part of your body for an energetic workout and includes a calming, meditative relaxation at the end.</p> <p>No experience necessary! Contact <a href="#">John Hargreaves</a>. Repeats every Monday.</p>			
			<b>Amrit Yoga</b>
<b>Tue 5</b>	<b>6:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Mindfulness Meditation Group (MMG)</b>	<b>Clover Lane</b>
<p>Mindfulness is an acquired skill, practiced while meditating but vital in our everyday lives. Mindfulness helps in reducing stress, managing pain, focusing attention, and overcoming habitual negative behavior. Mindfulness can also point the way to spiritual practice, calming the mind, developing awareness and insight, and bringing us into the present moment. The ability to be mindful is strengthened through consistent practice. MMG provides a space for us to practice together in support of one another.</p> <p>Please join MMG each Tuesday evening for meditation, readings, discussion, and/or dharma talks led by Rebecca Waldemar and the Rev. Lileigh “Keva” Brown. Please contact <a href="#">Rebecca Waldemar</a> or <a href="#">Keva Brown</a> for additional information. Repeats weekly.</p>			
			<b>Mindfulness Meditation</b>
<b>Tue 5</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Safer Congregation Team</b>	<b>Zoom</b>
<p>The goal of the Safer Congregation Team (page 8) is to help members of the congregation care for themselves and the building during both routine events and in case of an emergency. The team meets the first Tuesday of each month via Zoom. Please contact <a href="#">Patti Hazell</a> for the Zoom link or additional information on the team.</p>			
			<b>Safer Congregation</b>
<b>Wed 6</b>	<b>5:30 p.m.</b>	<b>QueenSpirit (Monthly)</b>	<b>Clover Lane</b>
<p>QueenSpirit is a co-created women’s spirituality circle that meets on the first Wednesday of the month. Although QueenSpirit circles are usually for women, the Winter Solstice is an all-church event, and everyone is welcome to participate in the winter solstice and in the planning meetings. If you would like to be a part of the winter solstice, you are welcome and wanted! The first part of our time together will be a planning session for the winter solstice. All are welcome to be a part of the winter solstice planning. This will be followed by a ritual to connect with the feminine divine through Mother Nature.</p> <p>Our gathering begins at 5:30 p.m. with a potluck in the Common Room. Please bring a dish to share and your own place setting. The circle begins at 6:30 and ends no later than 8:30. All who identify as women are welcome in a co-creating sacred space. Contact <a href="#">Rebecca Waldemar</a> (717-364-2029) for further information.</p>			
			<b>QueenSpirit Solstice Planning</b>
<b>Sun 10</b>	<b>6:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Philosophy and Literature Group (Monthly)</b>	<b>Off site</b>
<p>The Philosophy &amp; Literature Group meets on the second Sunday of each month. This month, the group meets at <a href="#">Fiesta Mexico Restaurant</a>, 3957 Paxton Street, to develop a reading list for 2024! Please be prepared to discuss your nomination(s). Contact <a href="#">Don Brown</a> for information.</p>			
			<b>Philosophy &amp; Literature</b>

Date	Time	Group	Location
<b>Tue 12</b>	<b>5:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Women's Night Out</b>	<b>Off site</b>
<p>Women's Night Out is a lay-led ministry that focuses on the friendship and support of its members and giving back to our local community. We normally meet on the second Tuesday of the month at a local restaurant, alternating locations between the East and West Shores. Each month at dinner, participants take a collection. Proceeds are divided between the Harrisburg Areas Food Pantry and UCH. This month, we meet at <a href="#">Café Magnolia</a>, 4700 Gettysburg Rd., Mechanicsburg.</p> <p>Please contact <a href="#">Ann Sitrin</a> (717-766-4767 or text 717-439-6090) for additional information.</p>			
<b>Wed 20</b>	<b>6:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Clover Grove</b>	<b>Clover Lane</b>
<p>Clover Grove is a group of earth-centered and pagan spiritualists that meets on the third Wednesday, with a program that varies based on the cycle of seasons and forces of nature. This month, it's Yule cards. Just in time for the holidays, we are hosting an arts and crafts evening making cards! All materials are provided.</p> <p>Please contact <a href="#">Wayne Minich</a> for further information and/or join the Clover Grover <a href="#">Facebook Group</a>.</p>			

Women's Night Out  
Café Magnolia

Clover Grove  
Yule Cards

## Solstice Celebration: Dec. 16

Please join QueenSpirit for a family-friendly winter solstice celebration filled with forest animals and an enchanting mother deer story at 5:00 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 16 in the sanctuary. Learn some of the Old World origins of our "American" holiday traditions. This short service will be followed by hot cider and snacks.

If you have a child, are a child, or are a child at heart, we are looking for people to play forest animals. RSVPs for children helpful but not necessary to [Rebecca Waldemar](#).

Bring a snack to share if you would like, to help celebrate this darkest time of the year!

— Submitted by Ann Stillwater



## New Member Orientation

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 Team. We have scheduled a Zoom orientation session on Dec. 2, with another planned for Dec. 13. We will be happy to sign you up!

— Submitted by Bart Carpenter

