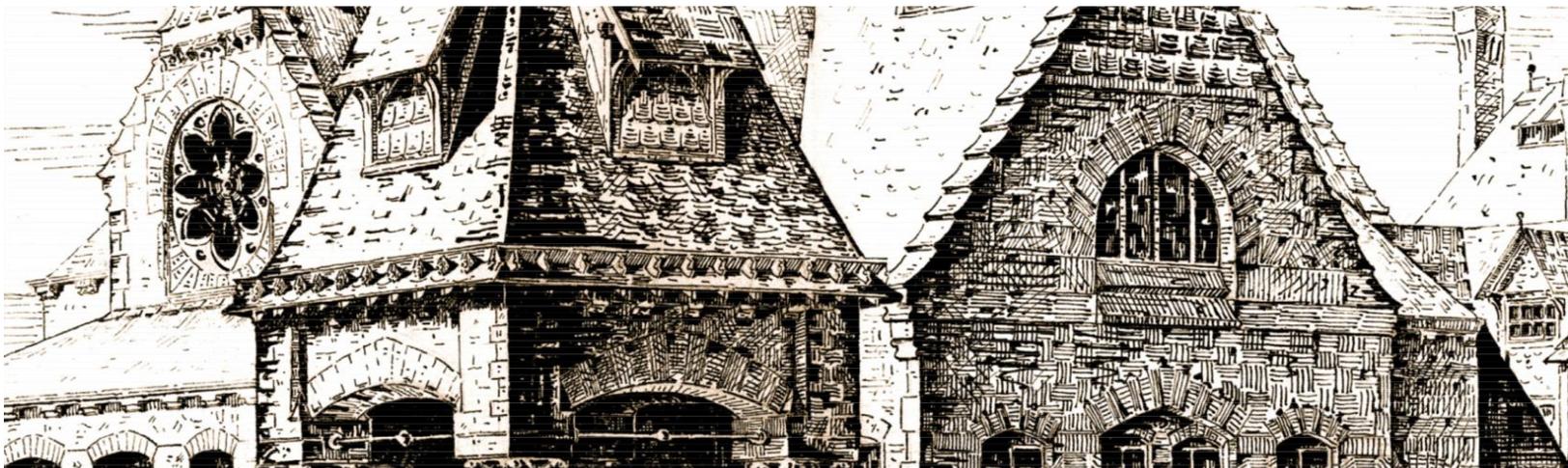


The Beacon

The Monthly Newsletter of the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia

February 2017



February Worship Services

Evening Vespers

Wednesday, February 1, 7:00 PM, Sanctuary

Led by: Reverend Abbey Tennis

Join us for our monthly contemplative evening worship services, a time to rest from the demands of the world and immerse ourselves in the beauty of singing meditation and a candlelit Sanctuary. Feel free to join us at 6:00 PM with your voice or an instrument for a drop-in musical rehearsal prior to the service. Volunteers are needed to help set up, usher and clean up, and to help vision and build this new ministry of the church. Interested? Email minister@philauu.org.

The Living Resistance

Sunday, February 5, 11:00 AM, Sanctuary

Worship Leaders: Amanda Weatherspoon, Nadya Tannous, and Rev. Abbey Tennis

Join us and we explore Collective Liberation and the vital role of resistance and resilience. How do we approach liberation from a basis of faith? How do our UU principles call us and guide as we seek liberation for all peoples?

Amanda Weatherspoon and Nadya Tannous are with us today as a part of the "No Child Behind Bars: Living Resistance from the US to Palestine" national speaking tour. They are thrilled to be in Philadelphia and welcomed in this congregation.

After the Fire, the Still Small Voice

Sunday, February 12, 11:00 AM, Sanctuary

Led by: Reverend Abbey Tennis

When life feels chaotic, it can be hard to discern the right course of action. What can we learn from times of bewilderment about listening to the voice of our true calling? As we begin our monthly theme of "vocation" we will explore how we discover and turn our lives towards our unique purpose.

Troubling the Waters

Sunday, February 19, 11:00 AM, Sanctuary

Led by: Reverend Abbey Tennis

For millennia, pilgrims have traveled to visit healing waters, hoping to find miraculous healing in their depths. A new baby, job, lover, or medical treatment can often feel like a miracle in our lives. But what about the yearned-for miracle that is always just out of reach? Is there meaning in the search for an unlikely and transformative gift?

Attention: Our True Wealth

Sunday, February 26, 11:00 AM, Sanctuary

Led by: Reverend Abbey Tennis

They say you can tell what a person cares about by looking at their calendar and their checkbook. What does it mean when the way we spend our time and the way we spend our money don't reflect our values? How do we bring our lives in alignment with what really matters?

Welcome Newcomers!

Welcome to the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia! We are an intentionally diverse religious community inspired by our historic urban ministry: we seek to be guided by the wisdom and experience of people of all genders, theologies, ages, abilities, colors, classes, and sexual orientations. We aim “to lead meaningful lives, to love one another without prejudice, and to build a just and sustainable world.” If this congregation has become a religious home for you, we encourage you to become a member. We invite you to join us as we move into our third century as a center of liberal religious thought and action in Philadelphia.

Let's Be in Touch!

Following each Sunday Service, we invite newcomers to join us during the Coffee Hour in our Parish Room for refreshments and conversation. While there, please fill out a Visitors' Form so we can keep in touch.

Membership

Have you been attending Services regularly and find yourself in sympathy with the Principles of Unitarian Universalism and the goals of this congregation?

- Do you feel "at home" here with this group of people and wish to deepen your connections to them?
- Do you want to keep growing spiritually and intellectually—expanding your heart and mind?
- Would you like to find ways to offer service to the larger community and work to make the world a better place?

If you respond positively to these questions, we invite you to consider joining as a Member! First Unitarian Universalist Church is happy to have visitors and friends as part of our community, but our congregation really comes alive through the commitment of our Members.

Please contact the Membership Ministry Team membership@philauu.org for more information!

Membership

To become a member of the First Unitarian Church, you must be 18 years of age and have attended one of our UU & You orientation sessions (see below), or met with the minister in a scheduled appointment or belonged to a UU church elsewhere. Members are expected to take part in our congregational activities and to make a financial contribution according to their means. If you wish to join, contact membership@philauu.org.

UU & You

Sunday, February 5, following the worship service, Sanctuary

Sunday, March 5, following the worship service, Sanctuary

Come to an informal informational gathering - UU & You - especially designed for those who want to know more about us and our liberal religious movement! This roughly hour-long get-together offers attendees an opportunity to get to know one another and this congregation better, and includes a quick tour of Unitarian Universalist history and the story of this congregation. Contact the Membership Ministry Team (membership@philauu.org) for more information.

Pathways to Membership at First Unitarian Church

Wednesday, March 8 6:00-8:00 PM

Have you attended a UU & You meeting and are considering joining First Unitarian Church? Come join us for a more in-depth "Pathways" class! We will get to know other newcomers, discuss our spiritual paths and the meaning of membership, and learn more about the history and vision of this congregation and faith. Contact Rev. Abbey with any questions (minister@philauu.org).

New Member Welcoming Ceremony

Sunday, March 19, during the worship service

Have you been considering membership at First Unitarian Church? If you have attended a UU & You and Pathways to Membership meeting, and have made your intention known to Rev. Abbey, you can be formally recognized as a new member of our congregation during this ceremony. More information is available through our Membership Ministry Team and Rev. Abbey.

Ministerial Musings

February's
theme:
Vocation



When the Boston Marathon bombing happened several years ago, I couldn't tear myself away from the news. I had lived just five blocks from the site of the bombing at one point, had worked in offices within a 15 minute walk of the bombing site for the first decade of my professional life, had grown up in Boston and knew people who ran the marathon every year. I watched the news obsessively; listened to a broadcast of the police radio feed, watched on social media as friends posted pictures of SWAT teams on their porches during the ensuing manhunt. I was terrified for my hometown, though I no longer lived there, and my fear turned into a compulsive addiction to each new frightening piece of news. Even after I knew my loved ones were safe, my obsession with the news didn't let up – by then it had taken on a life of its own; keeping my body locked in a state of fear that disconnected me from my reality.

This month, our congregation reflects on the spiritual theme of “vocation.” Our vocation can be our profession, our passion, our purpose, our personal mission; we might be called to be a teacher, a parent, a caregiver, a painter. Some of us have a clear sense of vocation from an early age that lasts throughout our lives, some find many vocations over our lifetimes, and some of us never feel particularly called to an overarching vocation – choosing instead to seek purpose in each small moment that comes our way.

The theologian and educator Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman once said *“Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”*

As so much frightening political news is unfolding every day, I find myself back in the habit of compulsively checking the news and social media. There long stretches of hours when I get sucked back into the spiral of fear and despair while the new presidential administration seeks to dismantle the rights, protections, and policies that I care about so deeply. “Staying woke” - staying alert to what is happening in the world and who is affected, staying engaged and politically active – is essential as our leaders attempt to gaslight the American people. Yet, as I try to stay current on the news, I often find myself feeling less woke and more zombie-like; less alive and more numb.

So this month, as I reflect on what gives me purpose and how to live out my purpose in the world, I remind myself of Dr. Thurman's words. *“Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”* Staying alert, engaged, active – staying woke – is not synonymous with staying news-obsessed. My vocation – ministry – calls me to seek hope deep within when the world outside is bleak, calls me to be proactive rather than reactive, calls me to care for myself so I can better care for the world, calls me to put love at the center of my life.

What the world needs of us is not for us to be news-obsessed zombies; it needs us to come alive. If you find yourself spiraling into despair this month, take a deep breath and feel for your pulse. Think about something you love. And do something that brings you back to life.

-Rev. Abbey

Board Meeting Schedule - In all cases, meetings will begin at 6:30 PM at the Church

- Wednesday, February 15
- Wednesday, March 15
- Wednesday, April 12
- Wednesday, May 10
- Wednesday, June 21

Caring Ministry

A member of our Congregation is experiencing a serious health issue and would greatly appreciate a weekly meal delivery and a weekly fruit delivery for her family of five. A group of congregants and friends is being formed to make this wish possible. If you are interested and would like more information regarding this congregational act of caring and generosity, please contact Cameron at cameron23joel@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events & Programs

100 Days of Action: Send a Postcard to your Senators

Sunday, February 5, Parish Room, following services

The organizers of the Women's March have launched a new initiative to support action on the issues that we all care about. The first action is a letter-writing campaign. Join us this Sunday to write a letter to your senators explaining which issues matter to you, and how you plan to fight. We'll provide letter-writing materials and contact information for local senators. We hope to see you there! More info about the 100 Days of Action initiative can be found online.

Property Working Group Meeting

Monday, February 6, 8:30 AM, Church Offices

The PWG assists the Board in matters pertaining to our historic Frank Furness building and its contents. We meet monthly to collaborate with the Building Superintendent and the Building Administrator in the care of our beautiful church home. Meetings are usually the first Monday of the month and alternate between morning and evening. We are always looking for additional group members and volunteers. For last minute meeting changes/announcements, visit us on facebook at <http://tinyurl.com/philauupwg> and click on Events.

We will rendezvous outside the Business Administrator's (Norman Fouhy's) office on the stairs leading up to the second floor, and most likely will settle in in his office for our meeting. Items on the agenda will include:

- Monthly building report by Matt Miceli, Building Superintendent
- recent collection of ADA related building docs
- moisture/condensation/spalling interior porch masonry
- successful completion of first event in our speaker series & plans for future events

Small Group Ministry at First Church

Sunday, February 12, 9:00 AM, Parish Room

Small group ministries are now up and running. We have two groups meeting on Sundays after church, one that meets before church and a fourth group that meets on Wednesday afternoons. In these facilitated groups, participants agree to engage with support rather than debate, to speak from the heart as well as the intellect, and to care for each other by keeping personal matters confidential and following up in ways that are comfortable. Groups gather to build trust, not to carry out tasks.

If you are curious about small group ministry, consider attending a drop-in session that will meet on the second Sunday of each month. We will meet for about 1½ hours, and the topic for February will be Vocation. If you have any questions, contact Nancy Pasquier at ndpasquier@verizon.net.

"What is a circle of trust? It is the kind of carefully created space that invites the soul to make itself known. This kind of space where we can practice the paradox of 'being alone together,' a space that welcomes our inwardness even as it connects us to the gifts and challenges of community, and to the larger world." - Parker J. Palmer from A Hidden Wholeness.

Architectural Tours of First Church

Fourth Sundays of the Month

Sunday, February 26, following services, Sanctuary

Sunday, March 26, following services, Sanctuary

Are you curious about the history of our First Unitarian Church Building? Join an informal tour designed to give you an understanding of the architecture and decoration of the church, designed in 1883 by Frank Furness. This 30-45 minute guided tour (which usually happens on the fourth Sunday of

the month) takes you to all parts of our great historic building. All are welcome. Meet tour guide Richard Frey or Dane Wells after the Sunday service, at the bust of Joseph Priestley, on the west wall near the organ.

Social Justice Ministry Team

Social Justice Film Night: "13th"

Wednesday, February 8, 7:00 PM, Sanctuary

The Social Justice Ministry Team will be co-sponsoring a screening of "13th," a powerful documentary from Ava Duvernay (director of "Selma") about the 13th amendment which outlawed slavery except for criminals. The film is described as "an in depth look at the prison system in the U.S. and how it reveals the nation's history of racial inequality." We hope you'll join us for this important screening and programming.

Letter Writing with DecarceratePA

Fourth Saturdays, Saturday, February 25, 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM, ICJ Office 1207 Chestnut St., Phila, PA

Every month DecarceratePA receives hundreds of letters from prisoners across the state with requests for information, submissions to the newsletter and website, and contributions to developing our organizing strategies. This is a great opportunity for people who are interested in Decarcerate PA's work to learn more about their campaigns, as well as help do the powerful movement building work of connecting with our comrades on the inside.

UUA Common Read: The Third Reconstruction

Sunday, February 26, following services, 12:30-1:30 PM Sanctuary

Join Mary Kirk and the SJMT for a facilitated discussion of Rev. William J. Barber's "The Third Reconstruction" - the UUA's 2016 Common Read. Many of us have been stunned by the forces of hate

and violence unleashed by the recent presidential election. We ask ourselves "What response can we make to threats and lies used to win and consolidate power? What response can we make to the multi-pronged attacks on our ideals of justice and equality? Answers to these difficult questions may be found in *The Third Reconstruction*, by the Reverend Dr. William J. Barber, II, founder of the "Moral Monday's" movement. "Moral Monday's" refers to a series of mass protests held at North Carolina's state capitol. Following these well publicized and successful protests, "Moral Monday's" sparked similar movements in other states. In his book, Rev. Barber offers not just a call for justice but practical—step by step—strategies on how to "mobilize in the streets, at the polls, and in the courtroom." By reading and discussing this powerful book, we can learn how our faith can guide us in our response to attacks on our ideals of justice and equality.

2016-2017 Winter Shelter Season!

Through April, Once a month

First Unitarian is committed to cooking for and serving the 22 men who come to the Winter Shelter (located in the basement of Trinity Memorial Episcopal Church located at 22nd and Spruce Sts.) once a month on the 3rd Friday of the month from November until April. Ideally, a team approach of cooking of a main dish, vegetables, and dessert is best. We strive to match culinary and financial strengths to form a team to present a home cooked meal for the men. There is a sign-up sheet in the back of the Sanctuary to let the coordinator know of your interest and availability. Please sign up and send your questions to Ginny Beier, coordinator of the project at vhbeier@hep.upenn.edu or 215-545-7831 *Update*: all volunteers working with on this project are required to have a criminal Background check. This is available for free from the state of PA. Nancy Delaura, the coordinator at Episcopal Community Services is more than happy to help you with any problems or to get you started. Call her at 215-851-1436 or email Nancyd@ECS1870.org

Membership Ministry Team

Ushers & Greeters Needed

Have you ever wondered how to give service to First Unitarian Church, but didn't know to start? Consider signing up to be an usher or greeter!

- It's Short! You only have to serve for one Sunday service at a time.
- It's Fun! You get to meet and greet many friendly and interesting visitors and members.
- It's Supported! You will always have help from other, more experienced usher or greeters.
- It's Important! Ushers and greeters play an essential role in welcoming members and visitors. They "set the tone" in greeting visitors, especially, to our historic church and are normally the first congregational members that new people will meet.
- It's Appreciated! People are always grateful for your service.

It's also easy to sign up. Sign-up sheets are available in the back of the sanctuary after every Sunday service.

Hospitality & Light Treats Needed!

Please bring cookies or some other light dessert for our Coffee Hour. Good coffee and something sweet encourages friendly conversation--and provides a special welcome for visitors. Please contact the Membership Ministry with any questions.

News & Notes

Volunteers Needed for Children's Religious Education Program

Children's Religious Education is looking for volunteers to work with our Sunday School program! The time commitment is one Sunday per month, approximately 10:45 am – 12:30 pm.

We are looking for volunteers for the following positions:

- Nursery Care Provider to work with children under five years old.
- CRE Lead Teacher: to assist in Children's Chapel and lead a K-2nd grade or 3rd-5th grade CRE class. Lessons will be provided in advance from the Unitarian Universalist Tapestry of Faith Curricula. Grades K-2nd will receive lessons from the Signs of Our Faith: Being UU Everyday curriculum, while grades 3rd-5th will receive lessons from the Toolbox of Faith curriculum.

We ask that volunteers have been official members of the congregation for at least one year, and pass background checks and clearances, which will be paid for by the church. If you are able to volunteer, please contact our Director of Religious Education, Shantala Thompson at dre@philauu.org or in the CRE classroom after church service.

Diane Frey would like to give a big thank you to all those who donated books to the Andrew Jackson School library this holiday season. We collected 62 books, all of which have been bar-coded and shelved by Debby Schultz and her volunteers. The students have already begun reading them, especially those with the very strange titles. We hope that you had fun!

Craig Freden and the Property Working Group thanks and offers congratulations to **Dane Wells** for his hard work this season.

"Unifying Our Communities: Responding to Hate" With Rev. Abbey's urging, three congregants (**Zemoria Branden, Martha Cophorne** and **Luana Goodwin**) attended this program at the Constitution Center on January 18, as did more than 200 others from over 170 communities of faith, ethnic or cultural

identity. The program was initiated and led by the US Attorney's Office and brought together an array of federal, state and local law enforcement and interfaith bodies which are poised to react to any rise in racial, ethnic or religious intolerance, including hate crimes. The demonstration of solidarity, communication and good will existing between these various entities was most encouraging. Any of us who attended will be glad to share more, if asked.

Thanks to Keepers of the Vigil - throughout the day on January 21, a stalwart group maintained a Vigil in support of the Women's March on Washington, especially our busload of participants in our Chapel. The chalice was lighted, a prayer was offered by Rev. Abbey, marchers who wished were anointed and songs were sung as the group departed. Those who tended the Vigil and maintained contact with our marchers throughout the day were (in order of their appearance) **Luana Goodwin, Bob Strahorn, Anne Slater, Richard Frey, Lynn Rubin, Carl Denlinger, Arcenia Rosal, George Girman, Debby Schultz, Arthur Salter and Anne Marie Cordetti.** A few other church member and community participants also stopped by.

Looking to March

Submit January *Beacon* submissions to Julia at communications@philauu.org by **February 15**. Please send e-Beacon & printed announcement information by 9:00 AM on Wednesdays.

Word count guidelines for *Beacon* articles:

- announcements: 25
- church events: 50
- longer columns: 350

Flowers

Celebrate, Honor and Beautify

www.philauu.org/flowers

Donating flowers is a great way to honor a loved one or celebrate a momentous occasion while simultaneously adding the beauty and color of flowers to our church services. When the service is finished, take the flowers home with you to enjoy. You may also include a special message about the person you're honoring or event you're celebrating which will be printed in the order of service and read during the sharing of joys and concerns. We're accepting flower reservations for the 2016-2017 church year. The donation is \$30.00. **If interested, please visit www.philauu.org/flowers**



THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA
A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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Rev. Abbey Tennis Minister

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Shantala Thompson Director of Religious Education
John B Hedges Music Director

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