



Unitarian Universalist
Congregation at Montclair

THE GAZETTE

WINTER 2021-2022, VOLUME 125, ISSUE 4

ONCE AGAIN, WELCOME HOME

BY REV. ANYA SAMMLER-MICHAEL, SENIOR CO-MINISTER

Welcome back. Welcome home. Welcome to a congregation amidst a pandemic. Welcome to multi-modal everything. (Multi-modal here means the inclusion of multiple means of connection, such as in-person, streaming, Zoom, print media, etc.) Welcome to our new Gazette. Welcome to those returning. Welcome to those who never left. Welcome to those who have just arrived. Welcome to those who are drifting and yearning for a friendly shore. Welcome. Welcome Home.

“Perhaps home is not a place but simply an irrevocable condition.” - James Baldwin

Home best be, James Baldwin, home best be an irrevocable condition, because change has been hoist upon us in ways unimaginable and at times seemingly unreal. Home must be an irrevocable condition, because everything that is different hasn't hidden everything that remains.

We are worshipping now in person and online. We are meeting in person and over Zoom. We are transforming our communication materials and mechanisms because the holy knows we are all overwhelmed and we need less information and more inspiration. Still, home remains. It is in our values, in our connections, in the silent space between the sharing of remembrances and the prayer. It is in you, and you, and you, who are determined to sustain and build this home.

If you haven't yet found your comfortable place yet amidst all of this change. Please know, you are not alone. I don't think there is a soul among us who is comfortable. We have been disrupted. Still, “home is irrevocable” in the condition of community, in the condition of our historical imperative to make manifest our values, in the condition that begs us return, stay or arrive, and claim this Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair for all who would find of us a people, and of this a home.

Welcome home.

*The first installment
of our Quarterly
Congregational
Gazette*

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"One does not discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time."

ANDRÉ GIDE

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Minister Emerita: Rev. Judy Tomlinson

ON THAT NOTE...

BY MARKUS GRAE-HAUCK,
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES

I recently went hiking in the woods with a friend, and despite using the phone's navigation system and following trail markers, we went off course a few times. The maps were not very accurate, so instead of the 2½ hours we had anticipated, our hike took 4 hours. We didn't really mind - it was a beautiful autumn day, and we enjoyed the adventure, knowing that no matter how lost we felt, we would find our way back eventually.

Of course I realize that this experience cannot neatly serve as a blueprint for all situations. Uncertainty is an uncomfortable state for most of us, and we are inclined by default to do whatever we can in order to reach what we perceive as a more stable condition. As we approach the winter amidst unpredictability about the trajectory of the Covid-19 pandemic, feeling lost is a natural response.

What if we take a breath and settle into what is, right now? What if this period, this moment holds possibilities that we can only unlock if we pause and look around? What if we resist the urge to escape and realize instead that we can connect and hold each other in our uncertainty?

The Bengsons summed it up pretty well:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cs-ju_L9pEQ

Blessings to you and your families.

THE FRUITS OF YOUR GENEROSITY ARE HARD TO MISS!

BY REV. SCOTT SAMMLER-MICHAEL,
SENIOR CO-MINISTER AND DIRECTOR OF FACILITY
MANAGEMENT

During COVID-19 times, UUCM has been so well-cared for. Encountering a "Once-in-a-Century" Pandemic it would have been easy to cower in a state of fear, to retreat inward and not prepare for our future. Instead, you and the leaders of this congregation have chosen to use this time to embrace a campaign of renewal of our sacred spaces (and programming, too - Just Look at Religious Education!).

Besides installing the technology we needed throughout the facility for 'Multi-Platform' functionality, so we could serve people both who make it in person and can attend only virtually, there have been so many other improvements - painting all the wood on our exterior - around windows, eaves and doorways; a new walkway floor between the Sanctuary and Annex buildings; new lighting for the Chancel in our Sanctuary, and new speakers. We have installed new curtains in Fletcher Hall in front of our storage nook (made by Robin Matthews, mother of our beloved Stearns!). We installed new signs and banners; painted exterior walls in the back of Fletcher Hall, repaired concrete outside the Valley Road Basement door entrance (and new lighting there, too). We have also increased our thermal integrity by replacing two leaky old doors and modernizing our Hydronic boiler in the Annex.

Perhaps the longest awaited project to be completed was the installation of a new Individual Platform Lift for people in wheelchairs and with other mobility challenges. This new model, a Garaventa Xpress II, is now inspected and operational, and it's much more reliable than our old one, and is easy to use. We are finally living more deeply into our covenant to be a more accessible facility.

All of your professional and volunteer staff are grateful for your generosity. We are truly living into the challenge to build the congregation of the Next Century. Please come and check out how well you have taken care of the place!



"At the center of your being, you have
the answer; you know who you are,
and you know what you want."

LAO TZU



MILESTONES

Goodbyes



Longtime member of our congregation, **Susan Krcmar** and her husband Stan have moved to Rhode Island. We recognize the challenge of this process and to honor the many ways that they have graced our congregation with their light - over the years. Susan especially served our congregation by leading our ministry to the Interfaith Hospitality Network and by bringing Dances of Universal Peace to our activities.

New Members



Sylvia Cowan: "I have chosen to become a member of UUCM to covenant with others in the respect for the dignity of all human beings and to work hand-in-hand to create a more just and joyous world. I hope to experience Beloved Community in our spiritual journeys and growth together and comradery in service dedicated toward realizing a more just and loving world."



Maggie Wells: "As a long time UU and member of congregations in Santa Monica, San Francisco, Boston and NYC, I've been looking forward to my move to Montclair to join this congregation. I'm seeking spiritual renewal and community."

Births

Francesca Elms and Michael Drucker celebrate with Jonathan Drucker and his wife Yuki Yang. Their baby girl **Olivia** was born on October 2, 2021 in Guangzhou, China.



Maggie Well's grandbaby, **Sutton Frances Wells**, was born on November 17, 2021 at 11:10 AM.



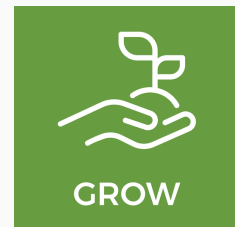
"We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think.
When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves."

BUDDHA

OPENING TO JOY

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CORNER

BY JUDITH HOGAN, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



This December, we look to Soul Matters as we explore the ways in which our times call us to "Open to Joy." When I think of all things, "JOY," I think about every aspect of my life and how I want to go about living it. I think of JOY as a verb, an action word that requires effort, engagement, and sometimes, practice. Life can sometimes be wrought with challenges that require stepping outside of comfort zones in order to grow, and in my book, the end result is always to reach a state of JOY.

Looking at JOY, as the superhero action word of my personal vocabulary, I like to think of the many ways joy comes into play in my way of life, especially during the winter months when the weather gets cold and we collectively spend more time indoors.

The end of the year is about gathering and celebrations and creating warmth for your mind body and soul. Many of us gather for feasts and heartwarming family reunions, where we reminisce about the adventures we have all lived through and grown from. It is a time of laughter and tears and lessons and wisdom, and a time to take stock of our life journey so we can anticipate the adventures to come. The holidays allow for a moment of relaxing into the vulnerability and comfort of family and community, and most importantly the season allows for joy.

So as we approach the end of a year relearning how to come back together after isolation and unprecedented changes in all aspects of our daily lives, I will ask you to Open To Joy, the joy of self, the joy of family, the joy of community, the joy of life, and the joy of potential found in opportunities that are available to us as we move forward into the new year.

May you have a wonderful holiday season, and if you would please: Jump for joy, be joyful, choose joy, live your joy, and make a joyful noise.

Have an amazing day!



YES, WE ARE UNDOING RACISM

BY SUE RAUFER, ON BEHALF OF THE UNDOING RACISM TEAM

Have you ever thought that you would like to be part of the Undoing Racism Team, but didn't know where you fit, or how you might help? Well, we are not too proud to say it: We need your help!

Within the URT, there are smaller groups, focusing on different aspects of this huge undertaking. The Congregational Focus Team is, as the name suggests, looking at the congregation itself to see how, or if we are living into our aspiration to undo racism. Among other initiatives, we are looking into putting together a survey to see how individual members of the congregation think we are progressing in this mission. We really could use the help of members of the congregation who have skills in the development and implementation of surveys, or just people who are willing to ask (and analyze) the hard questions!

If you are interested in learning more, please reach out to me via Realm or contact undoingracism@uumontclair.org.

The Undoing Racism Team's Mission is to understand, challenge, and act to dismantle systemic, cultural, and individual racism with the goal of collective liberation.

Are you a leader at UUCM?

Become familiar with our Leaders Handbook, your guide to navigating our congregation as a leader. Visit: tinyurl.com/UUCMLH



A HOLIDAY OF GIVING

GIFTS FOR OUR MESH GUESTS

In this season of gift exchange, please consider a gift of a sleeping bag to our Montclair Emergency Services for Hope (MESH) guests who have suffered immeasurably during the pandemic. The Crazy Quilters will reciprocate with a hand-crafted hat for each \$25 given. Give \$100 or more for a custom designed tote bag with UU themed embroidery.

Smaller gifts are, of course, also welcome as is volunteering with crafting, distribution and inventory management. Donations may be made using Realm by visiting: onrealm.org/uumontclair/-/form/give/Sunday using the drop-down list to find Crazy QUilters Donations. Contact Arlene Marin at crazyquilters@uumontclair.org for more information.

Have a bit of time to spare?

Volunteer to Serve as a Sunday Morning Greeter
greeters@uumontclair.org

Volunteer for Connection Cafe
connectioncafe@uumontclair.org

Volunteer to Mentor New Members
membership@uumontclair.org

MANTEL OF GIVING

Each year we partner with a school in downtown Newark to bring some holiday cheer. This year we're again working with the Dr. William H. Horton School, which serves 700 kids. Of those 700 we're hoping to sponsor 200. Last year we donated virtually; this year we're asking you to do the same.

We've created a general wish list (tinyurl.com/UUCMMOGWL) and book list (tinyurl.com/UUCMMOGBL). We ask that you be as generous as you feel able by sending at least one gift and one book. If you'd rather not use Amazon, please feel free to use another vendor. The mailing address is: Mrs. Isaacs, Horton School, 291 N. 7th Street, Newark, NJ 07107. There are some kids in this group who will not have a Christmas or a holiday at all, except for the one we give them. Gifts can be sent throughout the entire month of December.

If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to Kate Conroy via Realm or by emailing: mantelofgiving@uumontclair.org.



CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

We have a brand new group serving our congregation, the Mental Health Task Force (MHTF) and it is ready to serve you. Reaching out to groups, starting with our MESH Cafe, we will soon provide a course on Mental Health First Aid. This Zoom based training will later be offered in a more widespread manner.

We are also advocating here in our congregation and beyond for the use of the new 988 number. When a disturbance is a mental health one and police are not the best choice to help in the situation, plan to use 988. This new option will be implemented, federally, and funded in a state by state manner, in the summer of 2022. Governor Murphy and NJ Legislature do plan to fund it in NJ, and some cell phone carriers are starting to work on how those calls would be routed now.

As we near the end of 2021, people are struggling with the impact, mental health wise, of COVID. UUCM members may be interested to know that the main headquarters of the Mental Health Association of Essex and Morris is 33 South Fullerton Ave., and is providing support.

To learn more about us, please visit:
www.uumontclair.org/ministries/mental-health-task-force/

Care Team Ministry

The clocks have turned back, the temperature is dropping, and the holidays are upon us. For many of us, the approach of winter can be a stressful time, triggering seasonal affective disorder, feelings of loneliness, and isolation.

To help our membership get through the season, the UUCM Care Team Ministry would like to offer help. If you need direct help, such as a call, visit, or meal, please do not hesitate to contact Arlene Marin at careteam@uumontclair.org.

MOMENTS AT UUCM



The congregation covenanted with the new chairs of the Social Justice Coordinating Team on October 24, 2021



Setting up for those joining Connection Cafe virtually on Sunday.



Children participating in our Religious Education Creative Edge class.



We welcomed UU leader and advocate for Mental Health awareness Mark Williams to our pulpit on October 3, 2021.



Dr. Elias Ortega, President of our UU seminary, Meadville Lombard Theological School, shared worship with us on October 31, 2021.



Some of our newest congregation members joining in-person on September 19, 2021.



Rev. Anya being presented with bread during our Heritage Bread Communion.



Students participating in our Religious Education program on October 3, 2021.



UUCM-ers at the Women's March in Montclair in October.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday Services are at 10:00 AM

In-person and live-streamed on our Facebook page.

Our upcoming themes will be:

December

Opening to Joy

January

Living with Intention

February

Widening the Circle

December 3, 2021

UU RevUUe - Joy!

A Collective UUCM Virtual Live Event inspired by our December Monthly Theme of Joy. Hosted by Juliana and Paul Lombardo, of the Special Events Team.

Contact specialevents@uumontclair.org

**December 24, 2021, 6 & 8pm
Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**

Our Annual Candlelight Christmas Eve: Two services, to allow social distancing, replete with moments of quiet awe and bold beauty. We celebrate the season in high style; we honor the tradition of this silent night.

Register for 6PM:

tinyurl.com/UUCM1224216

Register for 8PM:

tinyurl.com/UUCM1224218

January 20, 2021

**Monthly on the 3rd Thursday
Growing a Spiritual Practice**

Join with Rev. Anya and other local spiritual leaders for rich and reflective conversations about spiritual practices. We will practice and we will discern: What is a spiritual practice? What is the purpose of a spiritual practice? What kind of spiritual practice will suit me? Contact revanya@uumontclair.org.

January 26-27, 2021

Pathways to Membership

Are you new to The U? Now is the time to consider deepening in your understanding of the intricacies of the Unitarian Universalist tradition as well as the complexity of our congregational life. Bring your questions and your hopes. Building community takes intention. This is one important step on that intentional path. Contact membership@uumontclair.org

February 17, 2021

**Weekly on Thursday
Engaged Theology Series
Spring 2022: Reading the Women of the Bible**

Reclaiming The Power of Women in the Biblical Tradition - based on the text by Tikva Frymer-Kensky. Co-Taught by Johanna Foster, Rev Anya and Rev Scott. Contact revscott@uumontclair.org

Sacred Wheel CUUPs Events

Shielding and Warding
Workshop

Monday, December 6, 7:30 PM
tinyurl.com/UUCMSWC120621

Winter Solstice Ritual

Sunday, December 19, 7:30 PM
tinyurl.com/UUCMSWC121921

Open Healing Circle

Sunday, January 9, 7:30 PM
tinyurl.com/UUCMSWC010922

Imbolc Ritual

Sunday, January 30, 7:30 PM
tinyurl.com/UUCMSWC013022



Religious Education Activity Groups are Sundays at 10:00 AM

To register your child visit
tinyurl.com/2021UUCMRE

Interested in teaching?

Contact Judith Hogan
jhogan@uumontclair.org

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Connection Groups

Art & Soul
Third Thursdays 7pm
artandsoul@uumontclair.org

Connection Cafe
Weekly on Sundays at 11am
connectioncafe@uumontclair.org

Covenant Group Leaders
1st Thursdays at 7pm
covenantgroups@uumontclair.org

Crazy Quilters
3rd Saturday 10:00 - 2:00
crazyquilters@uumontclair.org

Dream Group
1st Wednesdays at 7:30pm
dream@uumontclair.org

Drop in Covenant Group
Weekly on Wednesday 4pm
covenantgroups@uumontclair.org

Food Diplomacy
Second Sundays 6pm
covenantgroups@uumontclair.org

Grief Support Group
3rd Mondays 6:30-8pm
griefsupport@uumontclair.org

Men's Group
2nd Saturday 9-10:30am
mensgroup@uumontclair.org

Monday Night Soul Matters
Fourth Mondays 4pm
covenantgroups@uumontclair.org

Newcomer Connections
1st Sundays at 11am
membership@uumontclair.org

Our Positive Place
First Sundays at 1pm
covenantgroups@uumontclair.org

Poetry Covenant Group
Third Sundays at 7pm
covenantgroups@uumontclair.org

Senior Lunch Bunch
Second and Fourth
Wednesdays at Noon
seniorlunchbunch@uumontclair.org

Theater Group
4th Tuesdays at 7:30pm
theater@uumontclair.org

UU for Jewish Awareness
Third Monday 7:30pm
jewishawareness@uumontclair.org

Wednesday Night Soul Matters
Third Wednesdays 7:30pm
covenantgroups@uumontclair.org

Women's Group
Second Fridays at 7pm
womensgroup@uumontclair.org

Governance Groups

Board of Trustees
3rd Tuesday 7pm
board@uumontclair.org

Council on Ministries
Second Tuesdays at 7:30pm
councilonministry@uumontclair.org

Executive Team
1st Thurs at 8:30am
board@uumontclair.org

Finance Committee
7pm 2nd Thursday
finance@uumontclair.org

NJ Cluster of UU Ministers
Second Thursdays at 9am
revanya@uumontclair.org

Reopening Implementation Task
Force (RO-IT)
First Wednesdays at 7pm
reopening@uumontclair.org

Ministry Groups

Allies for Racial Equity
Second Tuesdays at 7:30pm
are@uumontclair.org

BLUU Montclair
Third Fridays 6pm
bluum@uumontclair.org

Care Team Leaders
1st Tuesday 6:00pm
careteam@uumontclair.org

Membership Committee
2nd Thursday 7pm
membership@uumontclair.org

Mental Health Task Force
3rd Wednesday at 7pm
mentalhealth@uumontclair.org

Pastoral Care Team
Second Tuesdays 6-7:30pm
pastoralcare@uumontclair.org

Religious Education Team
1st Tuesdays at 7:30pm
reTeam@uumontclair.org

Social Justice Coordinating Team
socialjustice@uumontclair.org

Undoing Racism Team
Third Sundays at 12:30pm
undoingracism@uumontclair.org



Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair

67 Church Street, Montclair, NJ 07042

DATED MATERIAL - PLEASE EXPEDITE

**WE COME
TOGETHER TO
NURTURE
THE SOUL
INSPIRE
HOPE
AND BRING INTO
BEING A MORE
JUST AND
LOVING
WORLD**

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Connect with Our Congregation

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Twitter: @uumontclair

Instagram & Pinterest: uu_montclair

YouTube: The Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair

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