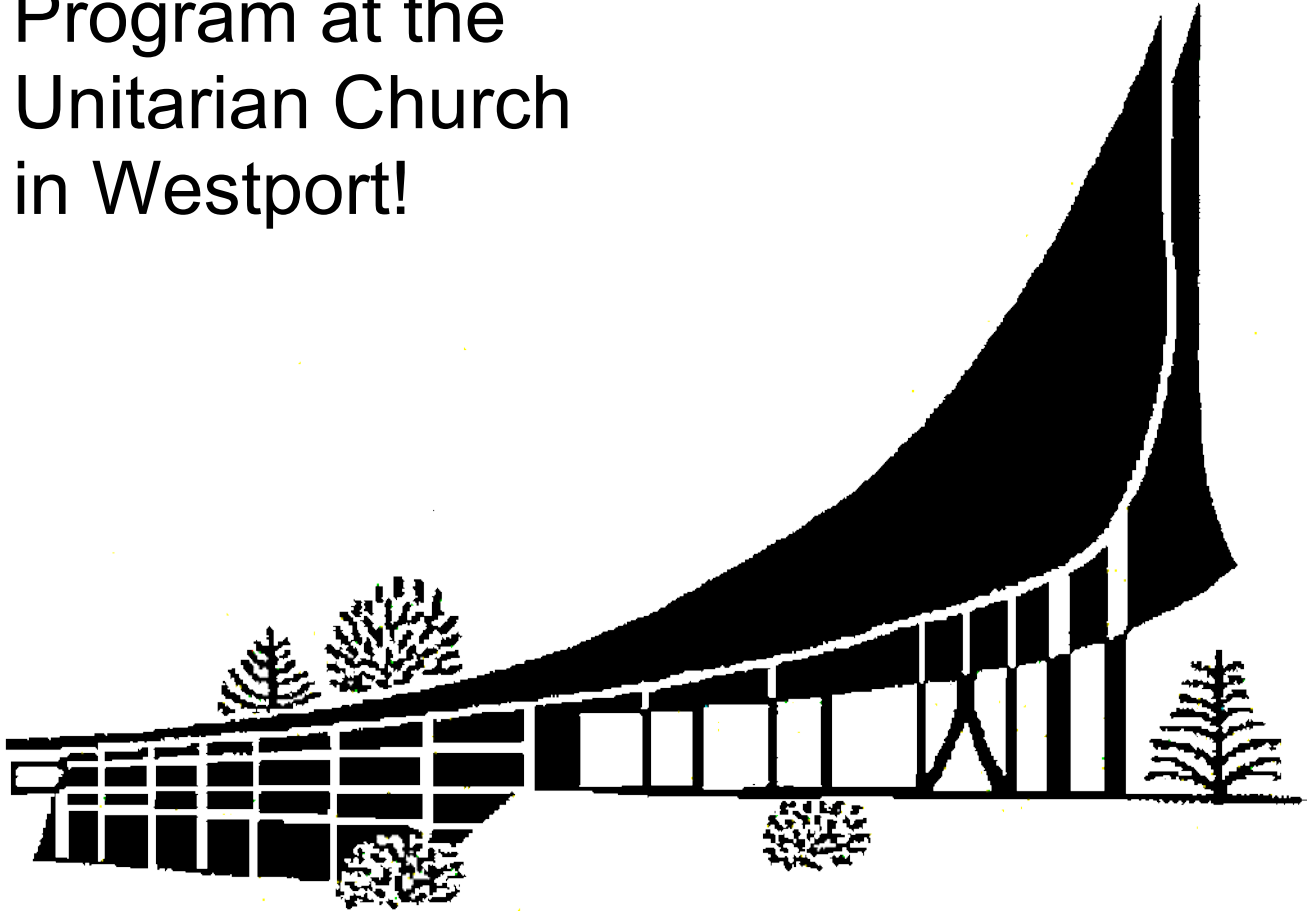


WELCOME!

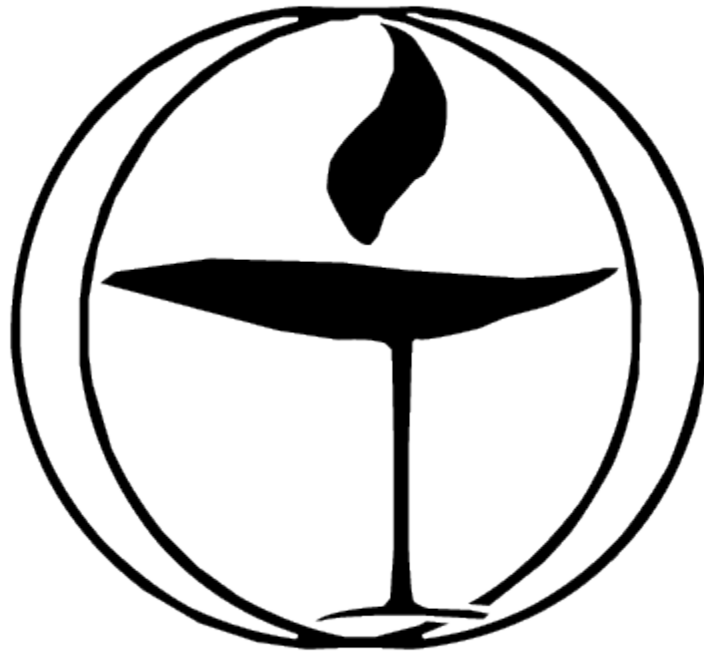
Greetings from the
Religious Education
Program at the
Unitarian Church
in Westport!



THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN WESTPORT

10 Lyons Plain Road, Westport, CT 06880 (203) 227-7205 www.uuwestport.org

***“LOVE IS THE SPIRIT
OF THIS CHURCH
AND SERVICE ITS LAW;***



***THIS IS OUR GREAT COVENANT:
TO DWELL TOGETHER IN
PEACE,
TO SEEK THE TRUTH IN LOVE,
AND TO HELP ONE ANOTHER.”***

~JAMES VILA BLAKE~

OUR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MINISTRY!

We are happy that your spiritual journey has brought you here and would like to help you explore ways to walk that path. Finding a place that nurtures your spiritual growth is an important search. We hope that our religious education ministry enhances your connections to nature, the universe, the diversity of the world and to others on the same journey. Please look over this prospectus, check out our website (www.uuwestport.org) and make an appointment to come in and talk. Our numbers are listed on the back. We look forward to meeting you!

Our Mission:

Our religious education ministry engages children, youth and adults in experiential learning that explores diverse religious beliefs, promotes a sense of community and interconnectedness and facilitates the practice of our UU values, Principles and Purposes.

OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH RE MINISTRY

RE Volunteers

Except for our nursery child care providers, all of our teachers are adult and youth volunteers. The Unitarian Church in Westport's religious education (RE) program is a cooperative. In the children's RE program, each parent is expected to contribute in some way. Children explore their own spiritual lives in meaningful ways, with the active involvement and support of caring adults who participate in a variety of roles as teachers, workshop facilitators and guides, creative arts leaders, social action leaders and more. While each parent is expected to contribute in some way, it is our hope that all congregants will also participate in our RE program in ways that will be spiritually rewarding and fun.

Volunteers do not have to have previous experience in teaching to be involved in RE Ministry. We provide curriculum, materials, and a volunteer orientation in the fall. Parents also plan special events, lead children's chapel services, review curriculum, etc. Volunteer choices are listed on our registration form.

Safe Congregation:

Our congregation takes seriously the responsibility of assuring the safety of our youth. Workshop Facilitators, Group Guides and teachers must complete Safe Congregation forms, sign and return them to our Perry Montrose, Director of Religious Education (DRE.) We also ask that adults attend for one year before volunteering in the classroom.

Registration:

Registration is online and is quick and easy. For non-pledging families, we require a per child fee of \$100 with a family cap of \$200 (checks made payable to The Unitarian Church in Westport). If you are a pledging family, there is no RE fee.

Where to go:

- Nursery through 4th grade meets in the chapel and downstairs classrooms.
- 5th/6th grade (11:00am only) meets in the Meeting House
- 7th grade Neighboring Faiths (11:00am only) meets in Rev. Frank's office unless on a visit
- 8th grade OWL (11am only) meets on the 3rd floor of the Meeting House
- COA (early 9th grade; 11am only) meets in the East Wing
- 9th-12th grade (11am only) meets in the lower level of the Meeting House

Nursery – 4th grade parents must sign their child(ren) in and out of classes. If you are new please find Perry or anyone from the RE Council in the RE foyer and we will be happy to direct you and your children to the right locations.

The first Sunday of each month children in grades K-6 begin upstairs in the Sanctuary with their families. After the story for all ages, the children are sung out of the Sanctuary to their classes.

WE'RE HAPPY THAT YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY HAS BROUGHT YOU HERE!

Our Program strives to offer children and youth the opportunity to develop their own life enhancing religious philosophy/theology.

Our community seeks to have caring adults support and encourage the growth of trusting, challenging, honest, caring, curious, joyful and justice-seeking children and youth.

Our curricula are rooted in the UU Principles and Purposes.

OUR UU PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES (CHILDREN'S VERSION)

1. We believe that each and every person is important.
2. We believe that all people should be treated fairly.
3. We believe that our church is a places where all people are accepted and where we keep learning together
4. We believe that each person must be free to search for what is right and true in life.
5. We believe that everyone should have a vote about things that concern them.
6. We believe in working for a peaceful, fair and free world.
7. We believe in caring for our planet Earth.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HOURS

9:00am – 10:20am for the 9:00am service (Nursery through 4th grade)
11:00am -12:20pm for the 11:00am service (Nursery through 12th grade)

CURRICULUM

THE NURSERY

The youngest children are warmly welcomed by paid childcare providers in our bright cheerful classroom. Childcare and supervised play is offered in a secure atmosphere. Parents are encouraged to remain with their children until they are comfortable.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Lessons on Community and UU Identity drawn from multiple curricula

Our Pre-K class focuses on getting to know one another and our church. In addition to community building, the children explore concepts such as friendship, how we treat one another and their connection to nature. There is an emphasis on experiential learning inspired by a sense of wonder.

KINDERGARTEN – 4TH GRADE

Workshop Rotation

Using our Seven Principles as pillars for Religious Education, our children will explore their UU identity, values, heritage and faith traditions through many different modalities (see previous page for Principles and Purposes.)

Workshop Rotation is a multidimensional approach to religious education based on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. Each lesson is presented in several workshop forms, allowing children to experience and interact with the topic in a variety of ways. A workshop might consist of art, music, games, drama, nature, movement, etc... This experiential learning creates a greater degree of understanding and retention.

Students are grouped by grade level and rotate through 4 different workshops over a 5 week period. This creates multiple opportunities for adult volunteer participation in short-term commitments.

A typical Sunday consists of children coming together in the downstairs Chapel for worship and rituals. Following, each grade attends a separate workshop where they have sharing time and workshop activity. The groups return to the Chapel for recap and closing circle.

FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

Bibleodeon and Amazing Grace (alternating years)

Bibleodeon introduces Hebrew and Christian scriptures by presenting the best-known Hebrew and Christian stories with such props as the *Bibleodeon* microphone and such interactive challenges as the Cain-Abel crime scene. The children will act in 11 amusing playlets with characters like the Fatted Calf, illustrate a time line, keep doodle books, give awards to outstanding biblical women and more. They explore connections between biblical events and Unitarian Universalist principles, between biblical ideas and their own lives. They experience the Bible as one of the many wonderful UU sources.

In a dynamic fun way, *Amazing Grace* intends to help sixth graders understand right and wrong and act on their new understanding. Its purpose is to equip them for moving safely and productively through the middle- and high school years, when they will be continually tugged toward both ends of the ethics continuum. Through their involvement in *Amazing Grace*, youth will come to recognize and depend on their Unitarian Universalist identity and resources as essential to their movement toward understanding, independence, and fulfillment of personal promise.

SEVENTH GRADE

Neighboring Faiths

This curriculum explores the diversity of religions in our world. Children, advisors and parents visit other faith communities and worship with them. They experience other traditions as they are practiced in our surrounding communities. The children clarify their values and beliefs in the context of Unitarian Universalism and an increased familiarity with the world's religions.

EIGHTH GRADE – NINTH GRADE (FALL)

Our Whole Lives (OWL) / Coming of Age (COA)

A special commitment is required of both parents and youth for the success of these programs.

Our Whole Lives (OWL) is a comprehensive human sexuality curriculum. OWL is led by trained volunteers from our church community. These adults help our youth make informed responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. OWL equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health and society/culture. In addition to providing facts about anatomy and human development, OWL helps participants to clarify their values and build interpersonal skills. They gain an understanding of the spiritual, emotional and social aspects of sexuality.

Upon completion of the OWL program, usually in mid-spring, the Coming of Age (COA) program commences. This marks the next important step along their spiritual journey. COA extends from spring of 8th grade through the fall of 9th grade. During COA, each youth will intentionally reflect upon his/her personal religious beliefs and their sources. They will learn about Unitarian Universalism and visit its historic sites in Boston with our senior minister. Other highlights of this important program are an adventure program held during our all-church spring weekend at Camp Jewell, as well as a District Junior High Conference in April. In early fall (9th gr.) the group will engage in a service project as part of the requirement for COA. The Coming of Age Ceremony is held in November.

ELEMENTARY OUR WHOLE LIVES

Offered for 1st and 6th graders, Our Whole Lives is a positive, comprehensive and age appropriate educational program that promotes sexual health. The curriculum helps children gain the knowledge, life principles, and skills they need to express their sexuality in life-enhancing ways. It also helps create a meaningful partnership with parents to provide positive and responsible sexuality education.

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Our church has a vibrant and active youth program under combined youth/adult leadership. We meet in the lower level of the Meeting House on Sundays at 11 a.m. and at other times to be determined for special events and workshops. We endeavor to provide as diverse a program as that which reflects our high school youth.

We strive to create a safe place where youth can learn about themselves on their journey toward adulthood. The youth program attempts to achieve a balance between community building, leadership, worship, learning, social action and integration with the larger congregation. Our youth are active in offsite events such as district leadership, campout retreats, community service and conferences with other UU youth throughout the Metro New York District.

CHILDREN'S RE SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

There are several special events and specific holidays that are celebrated throughout the RE year such as:

- Halloween Haunted House
- Thanksgiving Family Service
- Christmas Pageant
- Festivals of Light
- Diwali Celebration
- Special Friends Program
- Easter Sunday egg hunt
- Intergenerational Seder
- RE Sunday Service and Cook-out

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ODYSSEY

The term "odyssey" refers to the concept of a long quest marked by many changes. Spiritual exploration is a lifelong process. We are all on our individual odysseys.

Odyssey is our adult education program. The mission of Odyssey is to provide learning opportunities for mind, body and spirit. We offer programs to nurture intellectual, emotional, creative and spiritual growth. These are presented in a climate of trust that brings us together and enhances our sense of community.

We invite those who have a skill or knowledge they would like to share to submit a proposal for a class or workshop. We also invite those who would like to facilitate a book or study group to submit their ideas. Programs go from one to six sessions. The Odyssey Committee provides the publicity, the sign up of participants and the meeting room.

We are grateful to those members of our community who lead these programs and give so generously of their talents. In addition, we are grateful to those from the outside community who often contribute from their areas of expertise. These programs are provided at no charge to the church community.

RELATED PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Social Justice Council (SJC), working with the Social Justice Director, initiates, coordinates and supports the congregation's efforts to advocate, educate, organize, serve and witness for social justice. The goal of the SJC is to establish The Unitarian Church in Westport as a beacon of social justice in our community. The Director of Youth Outreach coordinates social justice opportunities and programs for our youth. In addition, the younger children are involved in various social justice activities.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

In 2002, the Small Group Ministry program began at the church as a way to help build and nurture personal connections and foster shared spiritual exploration. The vision is to deepen and enlarge our shared ministry—to ourselves, to each other, and to our community. Groups of 8-10 people meet once a month with a trained facilitator to discuss spiritual topics. Group members share their journeys, listen deeply and learn from experiences of others. There is a special small group ministry for families with children.

CAMP JEWELL (ANNUAL CHURCH RETREAT)

This is an annual intergenerational "Get Away" weekend usually held in May, in the Berkshires, which offers activities, workshops and social opportunities for all congregants. The magnificent woods offer the ultimate setting for reconnection with friends, making new acquaintances and for physical and spiritual renewal.

CHURCH CHOIRS

Anyone interested in music, from professional singers to those who just love music will find a place to get involved in Westport. Choir rehearsals for youth, teens and adults are held most Thursday evenings from September through June in the sanctuary.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!

We'd like to support your needs in our Ministry.

Please feel free to call any of the names listed below or come in to talk!

Religious Education Staff:

Perry Montrose
Director of Religious Education
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Director of Youth Outreach
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Religious Education Council:

Jerusha Vogel – Curriculum Chair; jj@k2sw.com, (203) 761-8587
Tom Croarkin – Family Outreach Chair; croark@optonline.net, (203) 374-8046
Cindy Potter – Social Justice Chair; potter.cynthia@gmail.com, (203) 831-9876
Sarah Bell – Special Events Chair; sarahjanebell@yahoo.com, (203) 332-1531
Jennifer Butler – Volunteer Outreach; butlerfoley@sbcglobal.net, (203) 256-9531
Lisa Reynolds – Volunteer Support Chair; lisarey1@yahoo.com, (203) 967-7274
Aimee O'Brien – Worship Chair; dancinaimeeg@yahoo.com, (203) 373-1545

Our Ministers:

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