

# Welcome to Mystery Pen Pals 2023!

You are about to start a special relationship with a new friend from The Unitarian Church in Westport (TUCW) that you will learn more about over time. Here is what to do:

## What is Mystery Pen Pals?

One child and one adult (identities kept secret) will be paired to write to each other once per week for several weeks using the special “mailboxes” at church. Parents of very young children will need to help write the letters.

## How do we address our letters if we don't know each other?

Each pair has been assigned a symbol, (i.e., heart). \*Feel free to be artistic with your symbol

## When does Mystery Pen Pals start?

January 29, 2023

## What do we write about?

Be creative! You can tell your pen pal things about yourself, such as your age or grade in school. You can also reveal if you are a girl or boy (or non-binary!). You can ask/talk about:

Pets, favorite places, movies, hobbies, favorite games, jokes, embarrassing moments, seasonal activities, sports, favorite cereal, outdoor activities, friends, family, ice cream, describe your bedroom, your home, a favorite family story, anything that you are thinking about, and of course the weather!

## Can we give gifts?

No. Please no gifts. Only letters. Feel free to send cards or drawings, but no gifts.

## What is the schedule?

### January

8 Sign Up  
15 Sign Up  
22 Sign Up  
29 Letter Exchange #1

### February

5 Letter Exchange #2  
12 Letter Exchange #3  
19 \*President's Day Weekend (no Letter Exchange)  
26 Letter Exchange #4

### March

5 Letter Exchange #5  
12 Letter Exchange #6  
17 Identity Reveal Dinner (5:30-7:30pm)

## How do we find out who our pen pal is?

There will be a big identity-revealing ZOOM Gathering on **Friday, March 17 (5:30-7:30pm)**. We will all gather at the Meetinghouse and find out who our pen pals are. Then, each pair will eat dinner together. \*The adult will bring the child's favorite dinner food; the child will bring the adult's favorite dessert. \*\*Pen pals will have to find out these important facts in their letter exchanges.

**What if I forget to write a letter or I don't come to church one Sunday?**

Not a problem. Simply take a picture of the letter (if you have a smartphone) and email me (Nate) the letter ([natepawelek@gmail.com](mailto:natepawelek@gmail.com)). I will email it or mail it in turn to your pen pal.

**Why don't we just do this by email?** Because some of the children do not have email addresses, and while their parents do, those email addresses often reveal identities. Also, won't it be fun to get actual letters in the mail?!!!!

**There are several online platforms for sending messages anonymously. Why not use one of those?**

Because.

**What else?**

It is super important that if you sign up, you commit to the schedule. Pen pals can get pretty crushed if they don't get a weekly letter. So, if you know you are going on vacation and won't be at church, don't sign up.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 860.304.2860, or by e-mail at [natepawelek@gmail.com](mailto:natepawelek@gmail.com)

Have fun!

Sincerely,  
Nate