

CrossCurrents

✦ CREATING COMMUNITY BY KEEPING YOU INFORMED ✦

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH AT WASHINGTON CROSSING

OCTOBER 2025



Two Things...

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

The first thing is a big one; this is the first issue of *CrossCurrents*, published in Constant Contact. The big difference is that all articles will be visible here in the newsletter--no need to click on a link to finish an article. This format may mean you'll be doing more scrolling in some months, but I promise you, you'll get used to it.

The second thing is that I'm starting to prepare for the 10th Annual Generations Service, scheduled for December 28 this year. It's always a popular and inspiring service and a great way to get to know members of the congregation, whether they're new members or have been here for decades.

The theme for this year's Generations Service is *If It Makes You Happy*. During this special service, I will invite several members from our congregation, representing different generations, to share something in their lives that brings them joy—whether simple or profound, ordinary or extraordinary.

I'm seeking participants who are willing to speak briefly (2–3 minutes) about what sparks joy in their own lives. Your story may be just what someone else needs to hear.

I'll be reaching out to some of you whom Rev. Kim and Robin have recommended in the coming weeks to see if you would like to participate. Of course, if you've attended one of these services in the past and wished you were asked to participate, send me an email at scullen@uucwc.org.



Making Space for All: Sanctuary Enhancements Support Music, Worship, and Inclusion

By Bob Alt, Co-President, UUCWC Board of Trustees

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor and the long-term vision of many members, we have an opportunity to improve the chancel (i.e., the dais) and enhance accessibility in our sanctuary. We are very grateful!

The improvements include enlarging the chancel to create more space for the choir and adding two ADA-compliant ramps, one on each side of the chancel.

The ramp on the left will lead to the first tier of the chancel, while the one on the right will lead to the second tier. We are excited about the chance to keep removing barriers that enable full participation in our services and activities. These plans were developed with Holly Bussey, Sandy Muccioli, and Farzad Shadzik. We thank Sandy and Holly for leading accessibility improvements over the years, and Farzad for his ongoing dedication to guiding these projects.

The work will start this fall and is expected to be finished in several weeks. Services will continue during this period, and if there are any concerns about dust or debris, they will be communicated promptly for optional online participation.



CONGREGATIONAL ENGAGEMENT SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight on Worship Associates

By Martha Bell, Congregational Engagement

UUCWC worship associates help us live our core value of shared ministry. Representing diverse ages and voices, they serve as lay speakers from the pulpit, allowing the congregation to hear from fellow members as well as from our ministers and staff.

Why Participate as a Worship Associate?

As a worship associate, you'll work directly with the minister, music director, and others to help shape a meaningful service. This valuable one-on-one time with the worship leaders can lead to a deeper understanding of the worship experience and real opportunities for personal and spiritual growth. Serving as a worship associate also offers the opportunity to become more comfortable with public speaking and storytelling in a supportive environment.

More About the Worship Associate Experience

Most worship associates have been members of the congregation for at least a year; however, the minister can invite anyone, whether a friend or a member, to serve in

this role. Worship associates serve a two-year term and can re-up for a second term. Worship Associates choose their Sundays and how often they want to serve. For each Sunday, worship participants share service notes through a Google Doc, starting on the Wednesday before the service. Based on the theme of the service, the worship associate writes a financial affirmation, shares it with the minister by the Friday before the service, and delivers it from the pulpit on Sunday.

A worship associate doesn't need to be an experienced public speaker or have extensive knowledge of Unitarian Universalism. As long as someone understands the importance of the Sunday service, wants to help communicate that importance, and wishes to share a bit of their personal experience with the congregation, they can be an effective worship associate.

Interested? Like to learn more? Speak to Rev. Kim or email her at minister@uucwc.org.

Spotlight on Worship Tech Ministry

By Martha Bell, Congregational Engagement

We thank our Worship Tech Team during every Sunday service, but in truth, they serve our online members by making them feel included and connected, not just on Sundays, but at other community gatherings such as congregational meetings, leadership retreats, climate dialogs, and similar events. They also work with our part-time tech staff person, Ariel Schwartz, to support Sunday service.

Why Participate in Worship Tech?

The worship tech group provides a crucial link that allows UUCWC to extend its welcome and include online participants as genuine members of our beloved community. We welcome many members and friends who cannot attend in person due to distance — with members living as far away as New York, Ohio, Minnesota, and Maryland — limited mobility, or other reasons. Beyond our in-person membership, many people join events and services online before deciding to attend in person.

Besides providing essential support to the church and its mission, members of the tech team have numerous opportunities to acquire new computer skills and applications, and learn how to operate the sound system in the sanctuary.

More About the Worship Tech Experience

You don't need to be a tech guru or a computer wiz to participate in this important ministry; someone will be there to help you every step of the way. Experienced tech leaders provide training on how to run presentations, use computer applications such as Google Docs, edit videos and slides, support Zoom meetings, and operate the OWL online meeting system.

There are many ways to get involved, from short-term projects to joining the core team, which meets monthly. Volunteers for the Sunday service group commit to participating once every six weeks. Every Sunday, the tech team members assigned to the service meet with the worship team to rehearse. Similarly, tech members

check in with leaders of any online event they support.

If you're curious, dependable, and eager to learn new skills, consider joining this amazing group of people.



Past, Present, and Future Activities

By Christine Piatek, for the Food Ministry

The September food drive to support El Centro in Trenton collected \$811 worth of food. The donation was warmly received, with thanks from El Centro's Executive Director Robert Hernandez to everyone at UUCWC. Roberto shared that the food bags, made with our donations, will enable families to buy milk and other essentials they might not otherwise afford.

We continue to participate in several community service activities, including preparing a meal once a month for the Monday night HomeFront Tutoring Program, preparing supper sandwich bags once a month for the Tuesday night HomeFront program at the Lawrence Community Center, and preparing and delivering a hot meal to Luther Arms Senior Housing in Trenton on the last Thursday of each month.

In November, we will share a pizza dinner with Pastora Karen Hernandez-Granden and an equal number of representatives of the Westminster Presbyterian Church on Greenwood Avenue in Trenton. This will be the first gathering in what we hope will be an ongoing partnership with Westminster Presbyterian and its local community to find ways to support the community. In December, on the day of the Christmas Pageant, children from our Children and Youth Family Ministry program will help to prepare shelf-stable snack bags that we will donate to Westminster Presbyterian for their Three Kings service on January 4th.

On December 14th, we will host the third annual chili fundraiser after the Sunday service and before the LOVE Jazz Orchestra concert.

We'll follow these projects with our second food drive in January. Interested in the work of the Food Ministry? Contact us at foodministry@uucwc.org.



Fall Planting Saturday, November 8 at 9 a.m.

By Barbara Drew, Earth & Climate Ministry

Green thumbs, other thumbs, and muscles are welcome to help with autumn planting and enhance UUCWC grounds. Come with gloves, shovels, and your enthusiasm as we plant native perennials to add to our existing pollinator garden on the large berm by the street-side parking area.

Native plantings are important and offer benefits, whereas non-native plants can become invasive and provide no value. These plantings create wildlife habitats, supply food, shelter, and nesting sites, prevent runoff, reduce mowed lawns, which have no environmental benefits, and save us money, and help lower our carbon footprint. This is all part of climate action and our sound, eco-friendly land stewardship commitment, which contributed to earning Gold Status as a River-Friendly organization by [The Watershed Institute](#) in Pennington, New Jersey, and as our UUA Green Sanctuary 2030 application.

The main effort will be to plant over 40 native shrubs and trees, all beneficial to wildlife habitat, on the other berms near the church sign. These trees are being donated to UUCWC. They will be protected with tubes and stakes, providing shade and a natural screen for the street. We will also add some white-blossoming, shade-loving perennials to our Memorial Garden.

Help be a part of an autumn "Earth Day" and help our own green space and a piece of the Earth. Contact Earthministry@uucwc.org for more information.



UUCWC Meet & Greet: Karen Kent

By Scott Cullen, CrossCurrents Editor

If you've spent any time at UUCWC over the past decade, chances are you've crossed paths with Karen Kent. Since walking through our doors in 2012, she's become deeply involved in all aspects of church life, from teaching classes and greeting newcomers to serving as Vice President of the Board.

Karen describes her faith journey as "revolutionary" and appreciates how members of our community genuinely care for each other. In this month's Meet & Greet, she shares how she originally found UUCWC, the memories that make her smile, and the small joys—family, friends, and even dreams of picking up the flute again—that keep her grounded.

How long have you been attending UUCWC?

Karen: Since May 2012.

What inspired you to visit for the first time?

Karen: I had always been curious about the unusual-looking building that I drove past many days of my life but didn't seriously consider going in until a friend and I were reeling from the death by suicide of a mutual friend. We had both been raised Catholic and didn't get what we needed spiritually from that faith. I hadn't stepped into a church, other than weddings or funerals, in decades. My friend mentioned thinking she wanted to visit UUCWC, and I said I would be interested in joining her. I fell in love from the moment I walked in the door, and I never left.

If you had to describe your faith journey in one word, what would it be?

Karen: Revolutionary.

What committees/ministries at UUCWC have you participated in during your time here?

Karen: I am currently a VP on the Board of Trustees. I taught RE when it was called that, and now I will be teaching Neighboring Faiths for CFE. My daughter participated in RIL/RILA, which is essentially a faith-based version of Girl Scouts, and I assisted with that. I belong to the Earth Ministry. I was a greeter/usher and am now a host. I recently finished Coming into Connections, which I highly recommend if you haven't participated. I will be a connector, pairing longer-standing members with those who have recently joined to ensure they find the programs or fellowship they want or need.

What do you like best about being a member of UUCWC?

Karen: The friendships I have made and the way our community puts action to words.

What's one thing about our church community that makes you feel at home?

Karen: We care about each other.

What's a favorite hymn or worship song that brings you comfort?

Karen: I hate having to choose, but one is "Love Will Guide Us".

Do you have a favorite church memory?

Karen: I don't have one favorite, there are many; but one that is popping in my head right now is Charlie Groth, Michele Downie, and I hiding behind the piano that used to sit on the back wall in the Crossings Room playing a game called Sardines during the RIL/A sleepover.

What do you do for fun when you're not at UUCWC or participating in an online service or UUCWC-related meeting?

Karen: I don't have much downtime these days, but when I do, I enjoy spending time with family, fur babies, and friends. One day when things settle down, I'd like to re-learn how to play the flute.

What's one piece of advice that has stuck with you throughout your life?

Karen: Be kind.

What's a tradition in your family that you cherish?

Karen: We celebrate Christmas Eve and Christmas with each other, as well as most birthdays. We also go to the beach together for a week every August. I genuinely love being with my family, and the meals we prepare together hold a special significance because I associate home cooking with love.

If you could learn a new language overnight, which would you choose?

Karen: For practicality, Spanish and sign language. To feel more connected to my heritage, Italian.

What was the last book you read that you enjoyed?

Karen: I don't get much time to read, which is sad. One of the last books I read was "Black AF History: The Un-White Washed Story of America" by Michael Harriot.

If you could only listen to one song for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Karen: Nope, can't pick just one.

What's one thing you're grateful for this week?

Karen: Getting my Anchor Benefit because we needed it.



Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing | 268 Washington Crossing Pe Rd |
Titusville, NJ 08560 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email & social marketing for free!