



**From the
Minister's Mailbox**

That old expression tells us that "April showers bring May flowers." I don't know how accurate this is (especially in light of climate change!) but the sentiment that after the rain comes something beautiful definitely rings true in my own life, as I'm sure it does for many of you. These past weeks have brought, if not significantly warmer weather, the blossoming of cherry trees and other amazing riots of color and we know they will only strengthen as the green things growing return. That word return is tricky; they were never gone. They were holing up, below the surface, waiting for their chance to come forth in glory once more.

I think sometimes that a congregation is like this. Congregations go through periods that feel more like winter; like holing up and holding close and doing the important work of caring for each other and making sure the center holds so that in time they can blossom in new and different ways. The first year of settled ministry is, in some sense, the ending of that holing up phase, and the looking once more at blooming in a riot of color. During your times of transition and during your interim, you did the hard and necessary work of staying together, supporting each other, keeping it all together; you did that beautifully. And now, your leadership in the form of your Board, your staff and all the amazing lay leaders that volunteer for all kinds of things, are thinking about all the ways that we can blossom even more fully in this world.

You have seen already we are looking at some changes to make our congregation more inviting, more transparent, more mutually accountable. As we keep thinking about those changes, I'm wondering personally about what would make you feel that we were blooming marvelously as a congregation. What do you wish we could undertake? How do you wish our presence could be known in the world?

If you have ideas, please share them. I want to hear how you're feeling as Spring has rolled in and the light is brighter and the days are longer.

Thank you for the energy, compassion, commitment and insight you bring to this beloved community.

With hope for the future,
Rev. Sarah



Reflections

May is often a time of transitions in our world and in our lives. It is a month that marks the beginning of the ending of the school year for our children and the beginning of Summer weather for all of us. The natural world begins to bloom and flower and create fruit. May is a time where the world comes alive again and blossoms.

In the time since I announced my departure from USR this June I have been floored by the kind words the community has offered me. It is clear that even in such a short time we have been able to create meaningful relationships with one another and continue to create a vibrant religious education program for all of our children and youth. There is much that is blooming from the time we have spent together this year and as I look toward my own transition I am feeling gratitude for all that we have accomplished.

May this Spring month and warmer weather bring you all that you need to sustain you during whatever transitions are occurring in your own life. May you be filled with hope and love in this time of renewal and new possibility.

In Faith,
Rev. Dylan Doyle Burke



Hello from your youth coordinator:

Congratulations to all of our youth for an excellent youth worship service! The DREs and I received enormously positive feedback from both congregations about our youth-led service titles "Commitment... I Guess?" and we're all very proud of our group. Leading service two weeks in a row can be an exhausting process and our youth did a magnificent job. It was a truly collaborative effort so I'd like to give a special thank you to all of the youth, their parents, our advisors and ministers who helped the group over the last month.



In April we sent youth to the UU-UNO's spring seminar and also 3 of our youth to the final youth con of the year in a White Plains, NY. It's always exciting to see them be a part of our wider youth community.

Coming up next month the youth group will be having an end of year overnight, parents watch your emails for final details of that. Let's get ready to wrap up the year strong. Thanks as always to our adult advisors for all of their great work!

Thanks,
James



What's next?

If you have been following the Board's work related to the USR organizational structure and how we might be able to make/create some positive change in the way we work together on a day-to-day basis, you might be wondering what is next. After holding two group meetings to share our ideas and to engage in a discussion about our organizational structure that attracted a total of about 60 of our members, we are compiling feedback and preparing for the next steps in our process of recommending to the congregation that we make some changes.

Thus far we have presented a conceptual approach to how we might operate that is less hierarchical and intended to provide more room for new ideas and participants in order to make the USR a more vibrant and inclusive community. The next step is to study the details of how to implement our ideas, ensuring that we really understand how things would work before instituting any of the changes. After the details are ironed out and the board agrees that they want to move forward, a formal proposal to make a number of By-Law changes would need to be presented to the congregation for approval. All of that certainly will not take place before this year's annual meeting in June.

As we approach the end of the congregational year, please be advised that the Annual Meeting and the Year End Barbecue will both take place on Sunday, June 10.

We will have RE activities on that day and child-care will be available after the service to enable parents to attend the Annual Meeting, which will take place just before the barbecue. It is important that you please make an effort to participate in order that we are sure to have a quorum, which will enable us to conduct the congregation's business in accordance with our By-Laws. Please put that date on your calendar.

Thank you,
Rob

STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

Update from the Pledge Drive Committee

We are pleased to announce that the Pledge Drive has brought in over \$400,000 — thank you to all who submitted your pledges. There are still several congregants who have not provided pledges, and we ask if you haven't yet submitted, to please do so immediately so the Board can prepare a budget for our new fiscal year which begins in July. You can simply click [here](#) to enter your online pledge, or call the office and report the amount to Ann Pareti. If you will not be pledging this year, please note that on the pledge form so we will cease our efforts to contact you.

Thanks again to all,

Anita DiGiulio and Robert Markowitz
Pledge Drive Co-Chairs

STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

2018 Planned Giving Grants

I am pleased to announce that the USR Board approved the committee recommendations for the Planned Giving Grants for 2018. There were some very compelling requests this year for some very worthy causes. As a matter of fact, the committee voted to increase the amount of grant dollars from \$10,000 up to \$12,000 to accommodate the various requests. Here is a list of all grants.

Jeff Cagan, committee chair

\$2,700 To renovate 3 bathrooms at the Prospect Place SHARE. Don Campolo, applicant

\$1,700 to Zoe's Place, a resource for teenage pregnancies, teenage mothers and their children in Garfield (aligned with Children's Aid and Family Services). Funding to provide cribs, changing tables, books and educational games. Ann Pareti, applicant

\$2,600 to Citizens for swimming to help fund 25 children for 9 days of swimming plus provide easily identifiable T shirts or hats for easy identification. Dawn Walters, applicant

\$1,000 to Black Lives Matter UU. A congregation-adopted cause and sponsored by UUA and Social Justice Committee. Carolyn Musser, applicant

\$2,000 to the No. NJ Sanctuary to help sponsor a political asylum family once released from detention. Elizabeth Ames, applicant

\$2,000 to Urban Refugees to provide partial funding to train Refugee leaders in Uganda. To prepare those leaders to assist other refugees. John Citti, applicant

2018-2019 Slate for Approval

The Nominating Committee (Frank Loscalzo, Chair, Stephanie Gannon, Marilyn Maney, Helen Matusow-Ayres, Ralph Pleasic) is submitting the following 2018-19 slate for congregational approval at the Annual Meeting on June 10, 2018:

Sally Lewis President (first year of 2-year term)
 Eric Furhman Vice-President (first year of 2-year term)
 Mike Azzara Trustee (last year of 3-year term)
 Owen Uscher Trustee (first year of 3-year term)
 Dawn Walter Trustee (first year of 3-year term)

Those remaining on the Board include:

Peter Duran Treasurer (last year of second 2-year term)
 Bernie Josefsberg Secretary (first year of second 2-year term)
 Laura Krag Trustee (last year of 3-year term)
 Jackie Nadler Trustee (last year of 3-year term)

Nominating Committee for 2018-19:

Marilyn Maney Chair (second year of 2-year term)
 Stephanie Gannon (second year of 2-year term)
 Ralph Pleasic (second year of 2-year term)
 Mary McBride (first year of 2-year term)
 Judd Seals (first year of 2-year term)

MINISTRY COUNCIL



USR is looking for a few good men, women and youth to attend and be delegates to the Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly (GA). GA is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Anyone may attend; congregations must certify annually to send voting delegates. The 2018 General Assembly will be **June 20-24** in Kansas City, Missouri. Most General Assembly events will be held in the Kansas City Convention Center.

GA Theme: "All Are Called"

Grounded in a deep belief that we are all prophets, Unitarian Universalists ask, "How can we faithfully meet the demands of our time?" The call to witness and act for justice in our society and in the world is clear. So, too, is the call to examine our structures and practices, dismantling and transforming those which fail to recognize the full humanity of all people and to honor the interdependent web of life. Join us in Kansas City as we dive deeply into questions of mission for our Unitarian Universalist Association, for our congregations and communities, and for each of us as individuals.

Kansas City

The City of Fountains is practically overflowing with adventure. Whether it's the scent of smoldering BBQ luring you to a plate of ribs, the sweet echo of jazz welcoming an evening of entertainment or the spray of fountains inviting you to kick off your shoes and make a splash, you'll sense inspiration in the air – and find it along every boulevard.

Excellent Programming

GA will offer more than 175 programming selections over the course of five days. Major worships this year will be led by UUA President Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray and Rev. Sofia Betancourt. More programming details are available at www.uua.org/ga.

Financial Aid Available

The UUA is committed to the goal of making GA accessible to as many attendees as possible. Go to uua.org/ga to learn about scholarships to support delegates - particularly those from marginalized groups - and volunteer opportunities (work in exchange for registration). GA is a great place to connect with other Unitarian Universalists from all over the country! For web information about GA, search "UUA General Assembly 2018" or you can contact Martin Lavanhar (our denomination representative). The Unitarian Society of Ridgewood will reimburse our five delegates for the registration fee for General Assembly. Delegates will be responsible for travel, room and food expenses. Contact board member Laura Krag to apply for delegate status.

MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL

First Wednesday Brown-Bag Luncheon

Please join us for the next First Wednesday Brown-bag Luncheon on **May 2, 2018** hosted by Mary Alice Cesard at 1 p.m. at her home. The hostess will provide dessert and drinks. Please call her to let her know that you are coming and to give you directions if necessary. Some of us are newcomers, some are old timers. Hope to see you there! All are welcome.

MINISTRY COUNCIL

Upcoming Services

May 6th	"Music Service" - Rev. Dr. Sarah Lenzi Musician: Ron Levy, piano
May 13th	"God" - Rev. Dr. Sarah Lenzi Musician: Ron Levy, piano
May 20th	"Worship/Prayer" - Rev. Dr. Sarah Lenzi Musician: Ron Levy, piano
May 27th	This will be a Lay-Led Service Musician: Ron Levy, piano

CIRCLE OF LIFE

We offer our condolences to members, Judy and Ed Silver, for the passing of Judy's father, Scott Westerman. Mr. Westerman passed away peacefully this week at the age of 92.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES COUNCIL

Thank You for Your Generosity

I so appreciated the chance to speak to the congregation about Citizens for Swimming during the service on April 8th. I thank you all for your attention and for your generosity. Citizens received just over \$2000 from the plate collection for our 2018 swim program. Thank you all! If you would like more information on the program, or if you did not get a chance to donate on the 8th, please contact me or check out our website: <http://www.uuridgewood.org/citizens-for-swimming-c4s/>

Warmly,
Dawn Walter

Thank You from the Northern NJ Sanctuary Coalition

On behalf of the Northern New Jersey Sanctuary Coalition, Elizabeth Ames would like to thank Deb and Doug Goodell for the wonderful at-home chamber music concert held for our benefit in their home. Deb's Brookside Trio played beautifully, followed by an informal reception, and the Sanctuary Coalition was the beneficiary of \$795 in donations!

Elizabeth Ames and the entire board of the Northern New Jersey Sanctuary Coalition are extremely grateful to the Planned Giving Committee's \$2,000 grant to our cause this year. Our two clients have recently moved into their own apartments and are simultaneously without jobs, which we hope is a very temporary situation. However, this grant will enable us to support these people financially for the next few months as they test their "independent legs."

Thank You Planned Giving Committee

On behalf of Zoe's Place and the Children's Aid and Family Services, Ann Pareti would like to thank the Planned Giving Committee and the Unitarian Society of Ridgewood for their very generous grant of \$1,700. Zoe's Place provides housing and supportive services for teen mothers and their babies who would otherwise be homeless. Funding will be used to provide cribs, changing tables, books and educational games.

Cheers for the Fundraising Committee

Fundraising is a fact of life for our Society. Thank you to the Human Rights Film Festival committee, the people who showed up for planning sessions, advertised for submissions, juried films, planned the program, handled publicity, gathered sponsors, created DVDs for the program, corresponded with filmmakers, created tickets, sold tickets, planned refreshments...Kristen Plumley, Marilyn Maney, Marshall Katzman, Carolyn Musser, Jackie Nadler, Carol Wolf, Ed Wardell, Kathryn Citti, Rob Willis, Bob Shoemaker, Phread Ayres, Mark Meding and Claude Cesard.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES COUNCIL

May 20th Plate Collection

Our May 20 Plate Collection will go to support the work of the Bergen County chapter of Moms Demand Action.

Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America (MDA) arose in response to the 2012 massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School. MDA includes 'Mothers and Others' committed to common sense gun legislation. MDA is an enthusiastic supporter of **Students Demand Action** (SDA), the youth movement that emerged after the Parkland shootings.

The **Bergen County chapter of Moms Demand Action** (BC-MDA) was founded in 2017 and has experienced a surge of interest in the wake of Parkland. BC-MDA actively works to educate Bergen County residents about gun violence in Northern New Jersey and to legislate for change at the state and local levels.

Most recently, BC-MDA has held a **series of forums** about gun violence prevention and has vigorously supported the work of the Bergen County chapter of SDA. BC-MDA also helped ensure the passage in more than twenty towns of resolutions condemning the Concealed Carry Reciprocity bill currently before the U.S. Congress.

BC-MDA also continues to offer its **BeSMART program**, which ensures the safe storage of guns in homes. It has administered this program to community groups throughout Bergen County, in hopes of reducing the incidence of suicide and unintentional shootings by children and youth.

Most recently, BC-MDA has begun to roll out its **Gun Sense Candidate Program**. Candidates for positions in the U.S. Congress and New Jersey Legislature will receive this designation if they support common sense gun violence prevention and gun safety legislation. Look for this designation in the 2018 election cycle.

This plate collection will support the work of BC-MDA, which is run entirely by volunteers. Contributions will be used to pay for meeting space rentals, table rentals at local events, printing and copying costs, and other office needs.

THE \$1000.00 CHALLENGE!!!

Did you know?

1. Approximately 500,000 NJ children live in food insecurity. 5000 in Bergen County.
2. Of the approximately 500,000 children eligible for free or reduced price school lunches only half receive food.
3. During school holidays or the summer, there are no state programs helping these children.
4. Bergen County has approximately 500 homeless families. This does not include those living with friends or relatives.
5. From 2010 to 2016 the numbers of children and families in need has risen over 20%.
6. Food and housing insecurity is the single most important factor in children not performing well in school. No one can learn when their stomach is rumbling.
7. Center for food Action, Family Promise Shelter, and numerous other aid organizations provide some help in Bergen County but are overwhelmed by the need. Check out the Social Responsibilities bulletin board (in the hallway just outside the Fellowship Room door) for more information about the organizations working on these problems.

What would you do if someone gave you \$1000 to help relieve childhood hunger? Give your ideas to Ira Mendelsberg in person or by email.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES COUNCIL

Update on Gun Violence Prevention at the USR

The months since Parkland, gun violence prevention activists have been very busy, here in New Jersey and across the United States.

- On March 12, the USR hosted the **Bergen County Forum on Gun Violence Prevention**. More than a hundred activists attended, among these, from the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, Everytown for Gun Safety, Bergen County Moms Demand Action, Bergen County Students Demand Action, Ridgewood JOLT, and Women for Progress.
- We sponsored the March 24 **March for Our Lives** at the Hackensack Courthouse. Thousands of activists participated in this march and others across Northern New Jersey.
- On April 7, the USR hosted the **Students Demand Action Town Hall for Our Lives**. The students spoke with U.S. Senator Bob Menendez and Congressman Bill Pascrell before a standing-room only audience in Anderson.
- On April 20, the Social Responsibilities Council was one of only five groups invited to have a table at the **Bergen County Students Demand Action Day of Action** at George Washington Middle School in Ridgewood.

USR Congregants interested in Gun Violence Prevention are engaged with the UU FaithAction NJ Gun Violence Prevention Task Force. We participated in the UU FaithAction NJ Plenary on April 21.

We are energized and plan to participate in National Gun Violence Awareness Day on June 1. Please listen for announcements about this event or see our updates on www.uuridgewood.org/2018/02/27/gun-violence-prevention. If you're interested in participating or want to be a part of planning, please contact Suzanne Samuels.

Film at Central Unitarian Church

Please join us on Friday, **May 18th**, 7:00 p.m. at CUC, located at 156 Forest Avenue, Paramus, to watch the film entitled "Preying on Puerto Rico". This is part of the county UU film series.

Three films, one 28 minutes (Colonial Bondage and Resistance), two others less than 5 minutes each (Hedgefunds vs. Healthcare, Closing Schools for Profit) - gives us an understanding of the colonial history of the island and a look at its current fiscal crisis on the 100th anniversary of the imposition of US American citizenship on the residents of Puerto Rico.

Film starts at 7:30 p.m. Please join us!

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES COUNCIL



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Hats off and many thanks to all who helped with our recent movie showing of ***An Inconvenient Sequel, Truth to Power*** and our ***Earth Day coffee hour*** - a true team effort - from advertising to producing information pamphlets, from baking to cake cutting, from picture taking to ticket taking, from washing mugs to forming paper flowers- our committee did an outstanding job.

But we did it all for **YOU** - so thanks to everyone who viewed the movie, made the flowers and ate the cake! Information on the environment will be on the SRC table every Sunday and the movie is available to borrow. Ask any committee member sporting a green dot on their name tag how to see the film. And we have more of those nifty reusable grocery bags to give away as well, so stop by the table and grab one.



A special thanks to **Wegmans** for donating our give away bags and to Pam Hahn for making that happen!

GREEN IDEAS

It's that time of year - the time to wonder just how your neighbor cultivated that green, green lawn. Rather than be jealous, be a little wary. That perfect lawn comes with toxic pesticides (carcinogens) and fertilizers that will go directly into our groundwater. This year make a pledge to eliminate pesticides from your lawn care, use organic fertilizers and water less. Wouldn't that be a lawn we would want our kids and pets to frolic on?

Save the Date from UU Faith Action NJ

Sunday, May 20th

South New Jersey Congregations Conference at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Cherry Hill. Visit uufaithaction.org for more information.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES COUNCIL

Report from UUFANJ Immigration Task Force

Regarding the USR, I am not sure that we are doing more, but I feel certain that we are continuing with the work that we have been doing and would be ready to support a "sanctuary" congregation if one would/should develop in our area. Although individual members of our Peace and Justice Committee do most of the actions, all of our activities have been approved by our Social Responsibilities Council, and by our minister.

We continue to work with the Northern New Jersey Sanctuary Coalition. We were members of the Board from its establishment in 2002 as the Bergen County Sanctuary Committee. Today it has grown into the NNJSC, and one of our members is the current president. Another one of our members is currently housing one of their clients, and we have several other members who have in the past offered homes to clients, some for as long as two years.

We continue to support First Friends with several of our members currently visiting detainees at Hudson County jail and the Elizabeth Detention Center. The congregation takes up a collection of materials and money for First Friends annually. Our Social Responsibilities Council is a member of NJ Alliance for Immigrant Justice. Members have attended their workshops. As a consequence, this fall we passed out and explained their Know Your Rights information at our in restaurants and hair salons in downtown Ridgewood, as well as leaving them at the town Library.

We also sponsor events with community partners working for immigrant justice. For example this March we co-sponsored with Ridgewood JOLT a postcard event for DACA with speakers including a dreamer.

Our congregation has signed numerous letters at our Action Table after Sunday Services, and many of them have been related to immigration, calling on our congressmen to pass legislation giving permanent protection for Dreamers and to pass overall immigration reform. As members of UUFANJ and NJAIJ we will continue notify our congregation of immigration issues at the state level, such as the current bill to support driver's licenses (A1738), and will have letters written in support, plus calls to the appropriate legislators.

Deb Goodell, liaison to UUFANJ immigration task force

Save the Date!

The Social Responsibilities Council is among 40 community organizations who are partnering with the National Council of Jewish Women, Bergen Section for an event entitled **"Diversity! Expanding Awareness and Appreciation of Our Unique Bergen County Community"** Please join us on Tuesday, May 15, 2018 at 12:30 p.m., Temple Emeth, 1666 Windsor Road, Teaneck. The program is free and open to the public. Click [here](#) to view the flyer.

Our Values in Action

Click [here](#) to read the current issue of UUSC's E-Newsletter.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6 10:00 Service - Rev. Sarah Lenzi 11:30 Adult RE/Anderson	7 12:30 Monday Lecture Series/Fellowship Rm 7:00 Board of Trustees/Conf. Rm 7:45 Zen Meditation/Fellowship	8	9 7:30 One Book USR/Conf. Rm	10 7:30 Adult Choir Practice/Fellowship	11	12
13 10:00 Service - Rev. Sarah Lenzi 11:30 Adult RE/Anderson	14 12:30 Monday Lecture Series/Fellowship Rm 7:45 Zen Meditation/Fellowship	15	16	17 7:30 Adult Choir Practice/Anderson 7:00 SRC Mtg/Conf. Rm	18	19
20 10:00 Service - Rev. Sarah Lenzi 11:30 Adult RE/Fellowship Rm 11:30 P&J Mtg./Conf. Rm.	21 12:30 Monday Lecture Series/Fellowship Rm 7:45 Zen Meditation/Fellowship	22	23 6:30 Faith Talks at the Steel Wheel, off premise	24 7:30 Adult Choir/Fellowship	25	26
27 10:00 Service - Lay-Led Service	28 12:30 Monday Lecture Series/Fellowship Rm 7:45 Zen Meditation/Fellowship	29	30	31 7:30 Adult Choir/Fellowship		

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Unitarian Society of Ridgewood

Mission Statement

Growing in mind and spirit,
We act together as a beacon for justice and love,
Transforming self and world. Adopted May 17, 2009

Invitation to Participate

Welcome! For over a hundred years this Society has been a place where free-thinking, broad-minded persons have come to participate in a vibrant, liberal religious community. In fulfillment of our current congregational mission we create a safe and loving environment that supports personal growth and provides ways for each individual to make a difference in the larger community.

We offer a stimulating Sunday service, an excellent religious education program for children and youth, and many educational, spiritual and social activities for adults. Every Sunday our Social Responsibilities Council has a table set up during Social Hour with information about social justice and charitable opportunities.

Anti-Racist Congregation

This Society is an [anti-racist congregation](#) committed to reflecting this commitment in the life and culture of the entire organization. Adopted May, 2002.

Living the Welcoming

We have been a Welcoming Congregation since 1998, supporting the rights of bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender people.

Safe Congregation

This Society is a Safe Congregation where practices and procedures serve to ensure all members, friends, adults, children and youth are treated with respect and protected from harassment and abuse.



the
**UNITARIAN
SOCIETY of
RIDGEWOOD**

113 Cottage Place, Ridgewood, NJ 07450



NOW accepting articles for May 24th deadline
@ usr.membership1@gmail.com