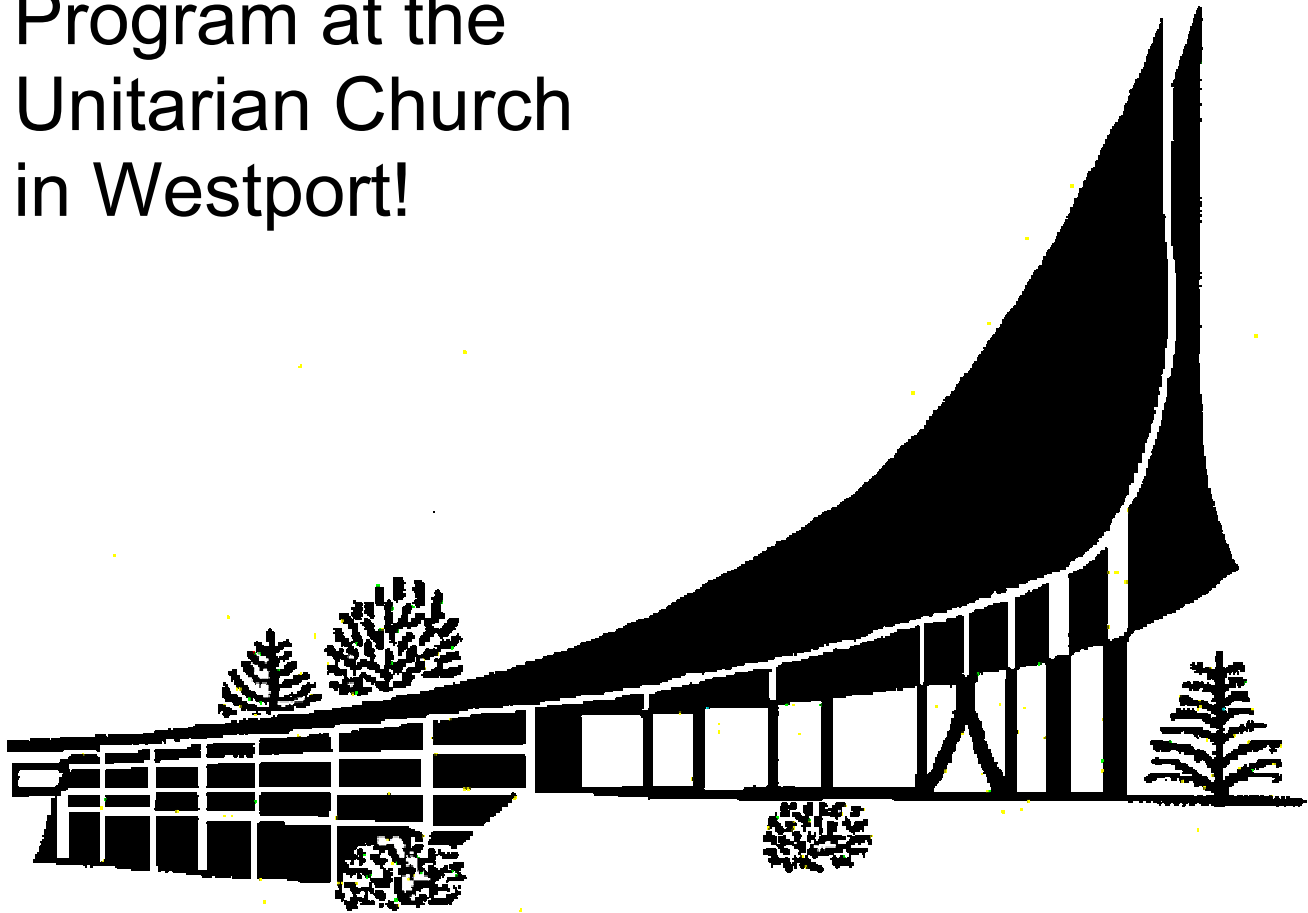


Welcome!

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

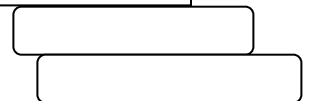
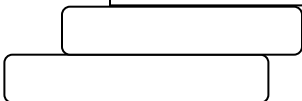
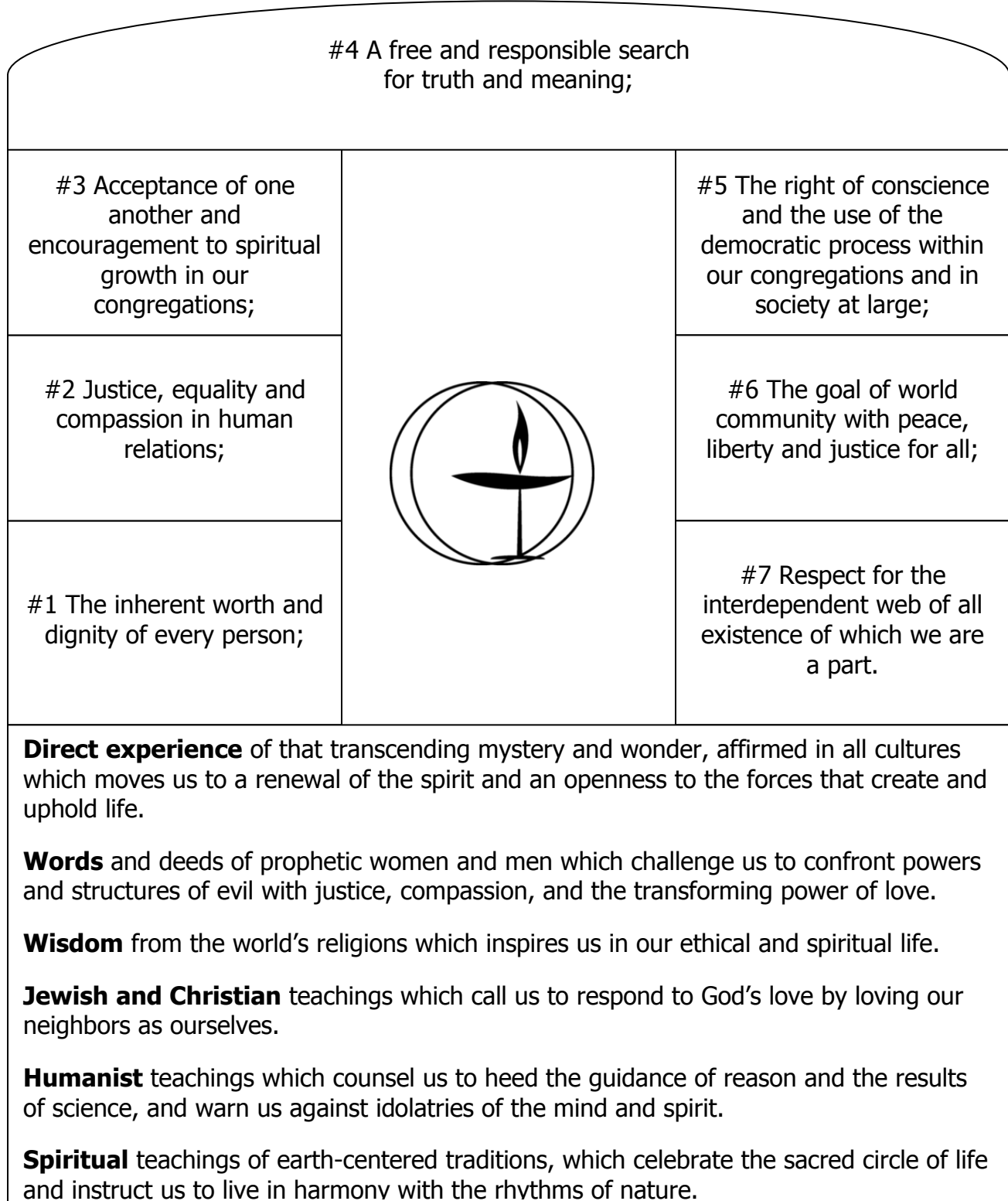


The Unitarian Church in Westport

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

Our Sources are the **foundation** for our Principles and Purposes

Our first and seventh UU Principles are statements of **what** we affirm about life. They are the pillars that hold up the other five, which are more about **how** we agree to be together and the actions we take. (Articulating My UU Faith)



Our Religious Education Ministry!

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.

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.

Religious Education Classes during both services:

9:00am – 10:15am for the 9:00am service (Nursery through 6th grade)

11:00am -12:15pm for the 11:00am service (Nursery through 12th grade)

Where to go:

- Nursery through 4th grade meets in the chapel and downstairs classrooms.
- 5th/6th grade meets in the Meeting House
- 7th grade Neighboring Faiths (11:00am only) meets in the library 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 a greeter 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.

Registration:

Registration is online and is quick and easy: http://www.uuwestport.org/RE_Reg/registration.php. 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.

Curriculum

The Nursery & Pre-kindergarten

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.

Our Pre-K curriculum 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.

A typical Sunday consists of children coming together in the downstairs Chapel for worship and rituals. Following, children attend separate workshops in small groups. The groups return to the Chapel for recap and closing circle. The last Sunday of each rotation engages the children in a related social justice activity.

Elementary Our Whole Lives (elective outside of regular classes)

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.

Fifth and Sixth Grades

Bibleodeon or Love Connects Us 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.

Love Connects Us celebrates important ways Unitarian Universalists live our faith in covenanted community. Moved by love and gathered in spirit, we embrace our responsibility toward one another and the world at large. We encourage one another's search for truth and meaning. We strive to be active in peace-making and other efforts to improve our world.

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

High School Youth Programming

Our church has a vibrant and active youth program under combined youth/adult leadership. 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.

Youth Group

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.

Youth Outreach/Social Justice

We create social justice opportunities for high school youth. In the past, high school youth have traveled to New Orleans to help in the rebuilding efforts, helped to clean the shores of the Saugatuck River, worked with the Westbridge Coalition on home repairs for neighbors in need, participated in a program for the homeless in NYC, and participated in the UU-UNO intergenerational seminar. For information contact Dir. of Youth Outreach Jamie Forbes.

Our youth are active in offsite events such as district leadership, campout retreats, and conferences with other UU youth throughout the Metro New York District.

Children's RE Special Programming

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

Halloween Fun House

Thanksgiving Family Service

Christmas Pageant

Diwali Celebration

Easter Sunday egg hunt

Intergenerational Seder

RE Sunday Service and Cook-out

Special Friends Program

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 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.

Your Involvement

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, 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. You may join one of our RE Leadership Circles in the following areas - curriculum, engagement, family care, social justice, special events, volunteer support, or worship.

Volunteer choices are listed on our registration form and website at http://uuwestport.org/Docs/RE_Volunteer_Opportunities.pdf.

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 Perry Montrose, Director of Religious Education (DRE). We also ask that adults attend for one year before volunteering in the classroom. We always have two unrelated adults in the classroom at all times. Our full Safe Congregations policy can be found at <http://uuwestport.org/RE.html#safe>.

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
Perry@uuwestport.org
(203) 227-7205 ext. 15

Jamie Forbes
Director of Youth Outreach
Jamie@uuwestport.org
(203) 227-7205 ext. 22

Lily Rappaport
Youth Program Director
Lily@uuwestport.org
(203) 227-7205 ext. 17

Our Ministers:

Frank Hall
Senior Minister
(203) 227-7205 ext. 12
frank@uuwestport.org

Ed Thompson
Minister of Music
(203) 227-7205 ext. 18
ed@uuwestport.org

Our Affirmations & Mission Statement

Children's Affirmation: *We are Unitarian Universalists. We believe in open minds, helping hands, and loving hearts.*

Adult Affirmation: *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~

Mission Statement

The Unitarian Church in Westport is a diverse and welcoming religious community, free of creed and dogma, and open to people of all backgrounds and beliefs.

WE INSPIRE and support individual spiritual growth.

WE CONNECT through worship, music, learning, and caring ministries.

WE ACT in the service of peace and justice.

Our congregation affirms the Seven Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.