SUNDAY DECEMBER 1, 10:30 AM
Sunday Service – Reverend Laurel Gray
For the Love of Advent
Advent is the season leading up to Christmas, which we UUs don’t often celebrate. It’s an important and exciting time in the Christian calendar, and today we’ll explore what wisdom it offers for Christians and non-Christians alike.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 8, 10:30 AM
Sunday Service – Lisa Brennan and Kathie Metzger
Genesis Club - Making a Difference for those in Recovery from Mental Illness
Our guest speaker, Lisa Brennan, Executive Director of Genesis Club in Worcester will speak about the challenges that many in recovery face and how the organization is able to assist them. Genesis staff work side by side Genesis members on tasks that keep the Clubhouse running such as meal preparation, cleaning, and building maintenance. In addition, there is assistance for members to find housing, employment, complete high school, vocational programs or attend college.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 15, 10:30 AM
Sunday Service – Reverend Laurel Gray
Festival of Lights
Hanukkah is often portrayed as a sort of “Jewish Christmas” because it falls in December, but it has a very different origin. Today we’ll explore the importance and history of Hanukkah as a distinctly Jewish holiday.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 22, 10:30 AM
Solstice Pageant
Come join in this all ages service, as we explore the Pagan origins of many secular Christmas traditions! From Christmas trees to wreathes, we’ll tell the story of these symbols together. There will be no Religious Education today, as we’ll all be together in the sanctuary.

TUESDAY DECEMBER 24, 5:30 PM
Christmas Eve Service
Come celebrate Christmas Eve with us!

SUNDAY DECEMBER 29, 10:30 AM
Winter Family Brunch
All are invited to attend an informal Family Brunch. Bring a dish to share and a poem or reading about winter that is appropriate for all ages. Soon, there will be an opportunity in the Weekly Update to sign up and indicate what you will bring and how many are attending with your group. We are hopeful that a few with musical talent can assist with some cheerful winter music!
Dear UUCSW,

I can’t believe I’m already writing you a letter for the December Vista! What a wonderful few months we’ve had kicking off this new church year and the start of my ministry here.

In November we brought back a few old traditions. Making our ancestors tree during the All Souls service was a beautiful moment to remember our loved ones who have gone from this world but remain in our hearts. And having a Guest at Your Table box during Thanksgiving is a tradition that Unitarian Universalists all over the country participate in every year. I’m glad we’re bringing back these traditions, because they help us connect to our roots as UUCSW and as a part of the larger Unitarian Universalist denomination.

We do also have some exciting new developments on the horizon!

One is that we’re getting the ball rolling with setting up a monthly Share the Plate program to begin in the new year. This is one way of living out our values in the world: by splitting our Sunday offering 50/50 with a different charitable organization each month. We’re going to do a pilot this spring with organizations that the board has selected, and ask you all to nominate organizations that you’d like us to share our offering with next year. Keep an eye out for more information about this.

The second is that we’ve posted sermon recordings on the website and set up a Soundcloud account, so you can listen to them as podcasts and share them with your friends and family. We’re also adding a short monthly podcast we’re calling “Reflections.” The idea is to continue the conversation about the month’s themes and give you a chance to submit questions or thoughts on the sermons that you’d like me to talk about more. This is an experiment, but we hope it’s a fruitful one!

I hope you find time for rest and quiet amidst all the busyness of the holiday season, even if it’s only on Sunday mornings! Come sing, reflect, find a moment of stillness, and be part of this loving community. New faces are always welcome, so invite a friend and enjoy the morning!

Blessings,

Sincerely,

Laurel

Laurel.Gray@uucsw.org

*Please note that my days off are typically Monday and Saturday.

I try to respond to emails within 48 hours, but that is not always possible. I appreciate your patience.
Board Matters

Community Connections:

The opening words to this month’s board meeting are by George Bernard Shaw:

“I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live.”

This month we are actively participating in strengthening our internal and external community. The UUCSW had an information table at a lovely event sponsored by “Westborough Connects” which gave us an opportunity to connect and reconnect with community members to let them know we are here for those seeking a spiritual home with a beloved community.

Another community-focused event we will participate in is the annual “Guest at your Table” initiative sponsored by the UU Service Committee. This month you may take colorful boxes home to collect coins at home during two weeks around the Thanksgiving holiday. These will be distributed November 17 to each family who would like to take one. The website describes this program as part of the UU community culture since 1975 to strengthen UU connections to our shared principles and help to challenge injustice throughout the world. It is a tradition for coming together to learn about human rights work and raise funds to advance justice in communities near and far. This year’s theme is: Women Leaders, Strong Communities. The funds will go to the uu service committee in honor of women leaders from partner organizations that have taken on some of today’s greatest human rights challenges. To learn more, visit the UUSC.org website. I remember fondly how much my now young-adult children enjoyed this.

Finally, we are rolling out a new way of sharing Reverend Laurel Gray’s sermons with our smaller and our larger community on the UUCSW website. Sermons will be published along with monthly reflections in a podcast format. We hope that this will be new way to engage and connect with members and friends. Check out the church website for the link under the new logo for “Reflections.” Enjoy!

Thanks,

Kim Hall

Money Matters – December 2019

Please contact Lisa Shumway at treasurer@uucsw.org with any questions about the content below or about UUCSW finances in general.

Pledge Progress

The end of the calendar year is the perfect time to review your progress towards paying your UUCSW pledge for the year. You can check your progress in Realm, using the "giving" menu button and reviewing "current pledges". Or, you can contact our collector, Susie Wells, at susie48winnip@gmail.com. As always, if you are able to give more than your pledge, we are most appreciative. Thank you all for your continued support of our congregation.
UUCSW Ongoing Fundraisers

As you start your holiday shopping, please keep in mind these ongoing UUCSW fundraisers: ShopWithScrip, Amazon Smile, and Stop & Shop cards.

Get a head start on your holiday shopping with ShopWithScrip physical gift cards!!

When you purchase a gift card through ShopWithScrip, a percentage of the face value of the card goes to UUCSW. These small but significant rebates really add up - we are hoping to raise $1000 through the holidays with this program.

If you’ve set up a Scrip account, you can continue to place your order online as usual. If you don’t have an account, we have created a paper order form you can use to purchase physical gift cards by check through the holiday season. Order forms are available in the Chapel. We will place orders weekly starting Monday December 4th, and continue through December 9th. Expect a one-week turnaround on all orders.

As you start planning for the holidays, please consider this program. We expect many of the tags on the Annual Giving Tree to be requests for gift cards. Scrip cards make great gifts for teachers, sports coaches, teens, parents, grandparents, and just about everyone else you can think of! You can also buy gift cards to shop for those gifts that require a more personal touch or for your everyday shopping and dining needs.

Contact Lisa Shumway to get an order form via email.

Shopping through AmazonSmile is a effortless way to raise funds for the UUCSW.

- Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.
- AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.
- Support the UUCSW by starting your shopping at smile.amazon.com.

This link takes you to the UUCSW AmazonSmile page so you can register to donate to UUCSW:

[UUCSW at AmazonSmile](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/04-3030641)

Please note that Amazon will recommend that if you are using Chrome, you should add the Amazon Shopping Assistant to Chrome. This is not a requirement for using AmazonSmile and our resident software security expert recommends against installing the shopping assistant.

Stop & Shop Cards

Each Sunday, Ken Young (or his designee) is available at coffee hour selling Stop and Shop Cards. Cards are available at a variety of dollar values. UUCSW earns 5% of the face value of the cards you purchase. If you are a regular shopper at Stop & Shop, this is an easy way to help us raise money over the course of the year. Payment by check or cash is accepted.

Thank you – Lisa Shumway (LSS0907@gmail.com), Treasurer
Book Group – December 13th

For DECEMBER, we are reading The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison Please join us. The group is open to all. We usually meet in members’ homes and enjoy small groups of seven to ten people. We enjoy some light refreshments, lively discussion, and wonderful company. You are welcome to attend.

If you are planning to attend for the first time, please email: Judithteacake@gmail.com.

UU Knits

Do you enjoy any type of needle or yarn craft? Then bring your WIP (Work in Progress) to sit and gab with other crafters while you make some progress! We provide a zero-pressure setting, and we have a great time. We welcome all skill levels. Join us in the parlor on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month at 6:30 pm.

UU’s at Lunch, Wednesday, December 11th

We will gather once again to celebrate the holidays on Wednesday, December 11th at 11:30 at the Olde Post Office Pub in North Grafton. All are welcome, and I hope many of you will join us. To reach the restaurant, take Route 30 to 140, turn left on 140 and left again on Ray Street.

If you’d like to join us please notify Mary Tribe (marytribe5@gmail.com) by Friday, December 6th, so we can make our reservations.

Week Day Discussion Group

Earlier this year, we started a daytime Adult Religious Education program called “Happiness as a Spiritual Practice.” We decided to change the name to “Week Day Discussion Group.” It will be like a Covenant Group where we discuss different topics every week. All UUCSW members and friends are invited to participate. Meetings are held in the Chapel on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm. Please join us.

Membership News from the Pews

Greetings from John Metzger and Lisa Shumway, leaders of the membership engagement team. We are off to a good start for the year with a returning core team from the last year and some new team members. Our mission is to coordinate hospitality (greeting and coffee hour) each Sunday, help welcome visitors and retain members and friends, and provide caring for those in need, in coordination with our minister. Thank you to everyone who has helped support the mission by signing up for greeting and coffee hour. We are in good shape through December but have opportunities for January forward. You can sign up here: Sunday Hospitality SignupGenius link.
You may have noticed some new faces around on Sundays as we have had quite a few visitors. Please help us welcome newcomers by wearing your name tags and introducing yourselves to our new friends. One final request to help Laurel get to know us is to add a photo to your profile in Realm. It is pretty straightforward: go into your Realm account, click on your name to edit your profile and then click on the circle where your image should be to add a photo. Other options are to email your preferred photo to Membership@uucsw.org and we can add your photo for you, or see Lisa Shumway during coffee hour and she will take a photo for you.

If you are interested in joining this team, please reach out to John or Lisa or email us at membership@uucsw.org.

**Important Dates for your calendars:**

February 8th - Birthday Bash, A fun, multi-generational social event to celebrate all of our birthdays

February 9th - Membership Sunday, Celebrating our members and friends, new and old

March 14th - Auction of Goods and Services, our major fundraiser for the year, returning after a two year hiatus, you won’t want to miss it

May 3rd - Concert Fundraiser featuring our own Kala Farnham and a special guest.

The Membership Engagement Team and Rev. Laurel are always here to support you. We are working on setting up new ways of caring for each other as a community and welcome anyone who would like to participate. Membership Team meetings are at 7pm on the third Tuesday of the month.

Rev. Laurel is typically in the office on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays.

If you’d like to make an appointment for pastoral care, or have a joy or sorrow that you’d like included on Sunday when you’re away, please email her at: laurel.gray@uucsw.org.

If there is a death or emergency, she can be reached on her cell phone at 401-932-7855.

This June, we’ll gather in Providence, RI for General Assembly, where we’ll elect the UUA Moderator, reconnect through worship, workshops and small group discussions, and bring our unique faith voice to important local and national issues moving in this moment.

The theme for General Assembly in June 2020 is Rooted, Inspired & Ready! We are in touch with our theological roots, we are engaged in transforming our faith and we are fired up to take action in the wider world. Learn more about GA 2020 and start your registration today!
Called by our faith to support democracy, Unitarian Universalists have engaged in voter rights activism for decades. At General Assembly this year and through the November 2020 elections, the UUA is focusing its organizing support to help Unitarian Universalists hone their skills and focus voting rights activism to make a powerful impact in local and national elections. For more information and to register go to: https://www.uua.org/ga/registration

Children and Youth Religious Education Program

Hello Friends and Families, both returning and new, for another RE Program year!

Sunday Morning Programming for December:

December 1st - This is a sanctuary start for RE students with normal RE class.

December 8th - This is a sanctuary start for RE students with normal RE class.

December 15th - This is a sanctuary start for RE students. We will join the younger classes to focus on our Holiday Pageant for the 22nd.

December 22nd - RE students will stay in the sanctuary to sing with the choir and to be a part of this Multigenerational, Family-Friendly, Holiday Pageant. Come support them!

December 29th - RE for this day is cancelled as we will join the congregation in celebrating the holiday season and the upcoming new year.

Giving Tree

Starting Sunday, November 17th, we will be joining our fellow churches in this wonderful outreach to our community! We will have our tree filled with tags this Sunday for you to take off of it if you are able and to buy a gift for a family in need. We truly appreciate all your support as we work to make this Christmas special for everyone. These gifts should come back to UUCSW WRAPPED and with the TAG ATTACHED on December 8th by 10:30am so we can walk all the donations over to St Luke’s church. Thank you!

Children’s Choir and Pageant!

This December we will be bringing back our children’s choir! If your children like to sing, invite them out on Sunday mornings during December at 9:50am to practice some holiday songs with our choir. We will also be practicing for our Family Friendly Christmas Pageant on December 15th during RE time. We will perform these songs and the pageant on December 22nd. For more information please see Cassie Lengel or Kala Farnham.

Youth Group Meeting

Due to the difficulty of meeting with so few numbers and such busy schedules, we are going to postpone the December Youth Group Meeting. As we look ahead and plan for the rest of the year, we will have several events planned to invite all our 7th-12th graders to in order to foster better relationships and build us up once again! If you are interested in joining us keep an eye out for announcements about events coming in January!
Westborough Community Chorus

~Presents~

Holly Days At Home

Friday, December 6, 2019 - 8 PM
Saturday, December 7, 2019 - 8 PM
Sunday, December 8, 2019 - 2 PM

Sarah Gibbons Middle School
20 Fisher Street

Tickets Adult: $12
Seniors/Children: $10

For ticket information & group sales, call Ellen Kluge 508-485-4469

www.westborochorus.com
# December Calendar of Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 AM – Sunday Service</td>
<td>6:30 PM – UU Knits</td>
<td>6:30 PM – UU Knits</td>
<td>6:30 PM – UU Knits</td>
<td>11:00 AM – Week Day Discussion Group</td>
<td>11:00 AM – Week Day Discussion Group</td>
<td>11:00 AM – Week Day Discussion Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 AM – Sunday Service</td>
<td>10:30 AM – Sunday Service</td>
<td>11:30 AM – UU’s at Lunch</td>
<td>10:30 AM – Sunday Service</td>
<td>6:30 PM – Board Meeting</td>
<td>11:00 AM – Week Day Discussion Group</td>
<td>7:00 PM – Book Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 AM – Sunday Service</td>
<td>10:30 AM – Sunday Service</td>
<td>10:30 AM – Sunday Service</td>
<td>12 Noon – Vista Articles due</td>
<td>10:30 AM – Sunday Service</td>
<td>6:30 PM – UU Knits</td>
<td>11:00 AM – Week Day Discussion Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 AM – Christmas Pageant</td>
<td>10:30 AM – Christmas Pageant</td>
<td>10:30 AM – Christmas Pageant</td>
<td>10:30 AM – Christmas Pageant</td>
<td>5:30 PM – Christmas Eve Service</td>
<td>5:30 PM – Christmas Eve Service</td>
<td>5:30 PM – Christmas Eve Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Rev. Laurel in the office*
THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY OF
WESTBOROUGH
P.O. Box 544
64 W. Main Street
Westborough, MA 01581

Minister........................................ The Reverend Laurel Gray
Laurel.Gray@uucsw.org
Minister Emerita ....................... The Reverend Cindy Frado
Director of Religious Education.................. Cassie Lengel
Music Director........................................ Kala Farnham
Office Assistant.......................... Elisa Scully

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
John Metzger  Janet Purney-Balabanis
Kim Hall  David King
Judith Nicholson

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES
Treasurer................................. Lisa Shumway
Collector....................................... Susie Wells
Clerk.................................................. Robin Fleming
Moderator................................. Andy Koenigsberg
Historian....................................... Stacy Spies
Membership .............................. John Metzger, Lisa Shumway

DUE DATES
FOR VISTA NEWSLETTER ARTICLES
Announcements, suggestions, or questions?
The VISTA is published monthly and submissions are welcome. Please email submissions to:
Andy Koenigsberg at Vista@uucsw.org.
Please put “VISTA” in the subject line.

January Vista articles due by
Noon, Tuesday, December 17th.

For updates visit uucsw.org