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Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10:00 to 3:00
or call for appointment /Closed on Thanksgiving

USH-E-Brief ~ November 23, 2016
Worshipping Together Since 1830
Sunday Service 10:30 AM
Revs. Cathy & Heather Rion Starr



Dear all--

This holiday week is often a time of transition -- when we begin to say goodbye to the fall and hello to winter (we can't quite believe that Christmas is but a few weeks away!). It's often a time of great joy and great stress for many of us -- the delight of family gathered close, the joy and the stress of cooking or hosting, the relaxation of some days off, the anticipation of tense family gatherings, and so much more.

As RevHeather talked about this past Sunday, Thanksgiving is a tradition built on little myths (there was no turkey, cranberry sauce or pie at the first Thanksgiving meals!), and bigger myths that ignore and dismiss the oppression and genocide of Native Americans on the land we now call home. This feels particularly important this week, as we've watched with horror the images of the Standing Rock Sioux and their allies being sprayed with water canons in freezing temperatures while peacefully protesting the building of the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota.

We are living in tumultuous times. President-elect Trump continues to put together a leadership team of people with clear records of virulent racism, Islamophobia, homophobia, and more. I fear that the respect of law, institutions, and ideals of this country are at risk -- these are not normal times.

Indeed, in the two Sundays since the election, we've had record high attendance, as other Unitarian Universalist congregations are also experiencing around the country, because these are times when we need community -- authentic, deep, real, in-person community. These are times when we need to recommit to spiritual practices. These are times when we must each ask "What can I do?" And do it -- perhaps that's calling our Congresspeople to thank them for being vocal opponents of Steve Bannon's appointment, perhaps it's attending the Waking Up White dialogues here, taking the risk of talking about politics with those who you don't agree with at your Thanksgiving table, getting trained and prepared to do civil disobedience. Perhaps you, like Heather and I did last week, will meet with your kid's Principal to ensure they are teaching critical thinking skills to combat racism, homophobia, xenophobia, and hatred, or send a donation to groups that are fighting oppression. Check out <http://whatcanido.io/> for other ideas....but please do SOMETHING, and then tell us about it!

In these times, we especially need one another and need food for our souls. This is not a full E-News because of the holiday week, so we'll simply highlight 3 community-building, soul-nourishing events in the coming week or so:

1) *Join the Revs for Thanksgiving at the Universalist Church of West Hartford at 1pm.* Please don't be alone on Thanksgiving - join us if you'd like a place to be. If you are able, please bring a dish to share. Please RSVP if you plan to attend by emailing Donna Leibin doleibin57@gmail.com or by calling Rev. Cathy (541-390-7553).

2) *Sunday Worship, November 27 at 10:30am: "One Love," with Mixashawn as our pulpit guest.*

A compassionate look at our creativity's power as being both light and dark. Lee Mixashawn Rozie has been a multi disciplinary artist for the past three decades. Beginning from the point of Jazz artist, using Indigenous cultural principles, maritime arts and historical data both written and oral, he has developed a system of "Hemispheric Principles" to inform and guide his art form, more directly referred to as "Wave Art", sonic, aquatic percussive and harmonic. Please join us for this special service!

Also on Sunday: Please be reminded that we will have delicious soup to sell this Sunday to support Church St Eats.

And...From Sunday, 11/27 through Jan 1, 2017:

The Youth Group will be collecting for Hands on Hartford toiletries like tooth brushes and toothpaste, brand new socks for all genders, and feminine products. Please deposit in boxes under the Christmas tree in the front foyer. -Submitted by Nina Elgo

3) *Festival of the Season is just a week from Saturday - on December 3rd, from 3:30-7:30.*

Join us for USH's annual holiday festival to kick off the holiday season with the warmth and fellowship of this community. Beloved crafts for all generations, Gingerbread House making, Wreath decorating, Cookie decorating, Holiday Boutique with proceeds to USH, Dreidel games and prizes, Coffee House music in chapel, Visits and selfies with Santa, Delicious potluck dinner and the traditional, 12 Days of Christmas zany sing-a-long! [Read the full details and RSVP here.](#)

*****We need 25 more volunteers to ensure a fabulous event! Please sign up for a shift here ******

We hope you'll connect in community in ways that nourish your spirit this week. Do take some time to count your blessings - there is much to be grateful for even when the going is rough. Eat some good food, laugh 'til your belly hurts, connect with those you love, curl up with a good book, enjoy the last of the fall leaves (perhaps as you rake them up!), and know that we are here if you need us - Sunday after Sunday, week after week, we gather to nourish spirits, build community, and work for justice.

Sending you all much love,
Revs. Cathy & Heather