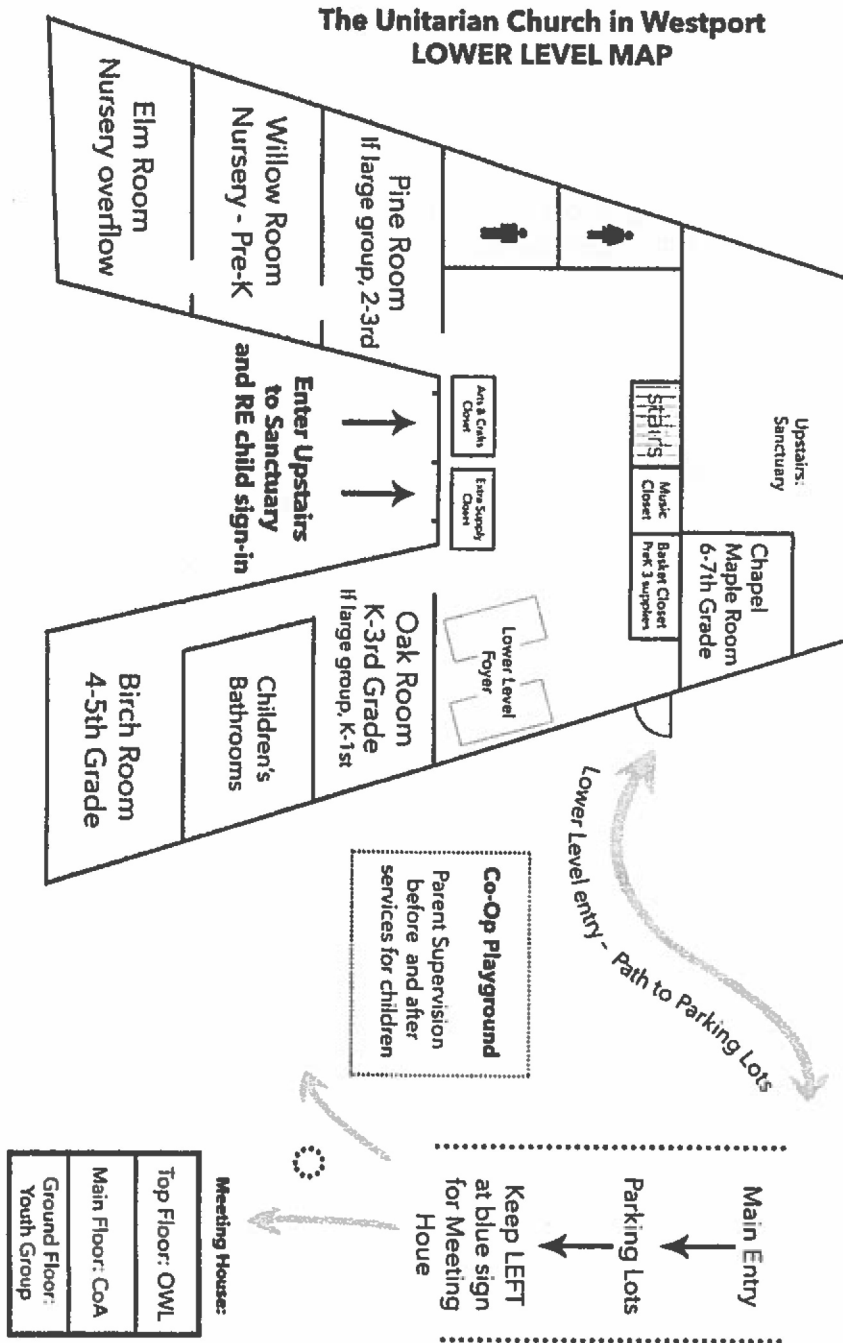


Our Lifespan Faith Development
*contemplates the wisdom and meaning of ALL religions
 in a community that respects the worth and dignity of
 every person at*

The Unitarian Church in Westport
 10 Lyons Plains Road, Westport, CT 06880
 (203) 227-7205 - www.uuwestport.org



Welcome!

We invite you and your children to visit us, without any obligation, at any time during the school year mid-September through June. During the summer, services and all-ages childcare start at 10am.

Sunday Worship at 9am & 11am

Religious Education Classes:
Nursery-3rd Grade at 9am & 11am
4th-12th Grade at 11am

We affirm Seven Principles:

1. **Respect** — The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. **Kindness** — Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. **Spirit** — Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. **Truth** — A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. **Voice** — The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6. **Peace** — The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. **Nature** — Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

...and draw inspiration from Six Sources:

- Direct experience of mystery and wonder,
- Humanist teaching (the use of reason & the scientific process),
- Jewish & Christian teachings (our historic roots),
- World Religions (the many paths of spiritual and ethical living),
- Earth centered traditions that call us into harmony with the rhythms of nature,
- Prophetic Women and Men who call us to work for justice with love.

From Mary B. Collins, Director of Religious Education:

Welcome to The Unitarian Church in Westport, which isn't a "church" in the usual way. Faith formation here is for the spirit, mind, and body.

NEW THIS YEAR:

- **Parents of K-5th graders please look for the SAFETY SIGN-IN TABLE in the MAIN FOYER UPSTAIRS** (teachers will use these clipboards to know who they need to bring downstairs with them or if we need to find you).



- **K-7th graders start worship in the Sanctuary every Sunday they meet on-site for group sessions.**

After the "Reflection for All Ages" part of the service, K-1st and 2-3rd graders will line up in the back of the Sanctuary before being escorted downstairs. The 4-5th and 6-7th graders will gather in the foyer before walking to the lower level rooms.

- **Check the map on the back of this pamphlet for meeting room locations for each age group.** For returning students and parents, some rooms have changed since last year!
- **Groups will run until half past the hour (10:30 am, 12:30 pm.)** Parents may enjoy refreshment in the foyer until then. *Parents are responsible for their children on the premises after these times.*
- **Adult Faith Development** — Starting in October, "Parents as Resident Theologians" classes begin meeting once a month. Planning is underway for spiritual social action and special topics sessions.



Nursery and Pre-Kindergarten Chalice Children

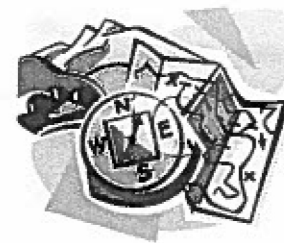
Offered at 9:00 & 11:00 am
in the lower level WILLOW Room

This program is designed to nurture children's spiritual growth, creativity, and connection to the UU community. It is a Unitarian Universalist Pre-School Curriculum by Kate Tweedie Erslev.

Activities include:

- Supervised play
- Community building
- Friendship and identifying feelings
- Connection to nature
- Experiential learning inspired by a sense of wonder
- Some Holiday celebrations
- And a "Jump for Justice" – even our littlest children can support fairness in the world!

(See website for Nusery/Pre-K calendar of sessions)



Kindergarten – 3rd Grade UU Explorers

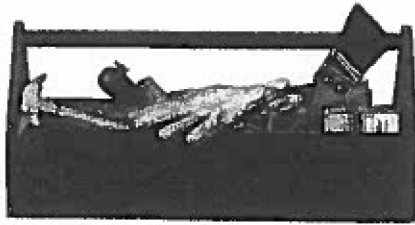
Offered at 9:00 & 11:00am
Start in Sanctuary, then go to lower level OAK Room
and/or PINE Room, depending on size attending.

UU Explorers is part of a 4-year curriculum map that invites participants to learn about our Unitarian Universalist faith as well as the stories and celebrations from our six sources where UU's draw wisdom & inspiration.

Sessions celebrate human diversity and seek to engage us in intercultural competency and respect for others. Through drama, art, music, observation & experiments, and illustrative games, children encounter:

- Experiential learning designed to meet multiple intelligences and learning styles,
- Exploration of UU identity and values,
- World religion sessions including the Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and Buddhist faiths,
- Social Justice & other "Faith In Action" opportunities,
- And encourage spiritual practice, individually and joining in on several Multi-generational services during the year.

(See uuwestport.org website for K-3 calendar of sessions)



4th-5th Grade Toolbox of Faith

Offered at 11:00 am only

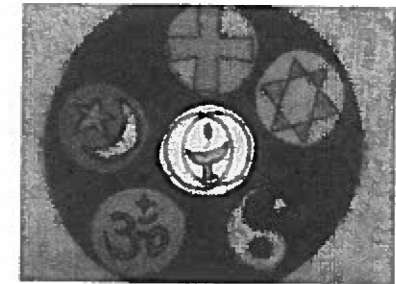
Start in Sanctuary, then go to lower level BIRCH Room

What tools does Unitarian Universalism offer for the challenges of life? Children discover what aspects of UU faith are helpful to them, developing a toolbox of faith. This is a Unitarian Universalist Tapestry of Faith Curriculum, written by Kate Tweedie Covey.

- Questioning (Magnifying glass)
- Integrity (Compass)
- Flexibility (Duct tape)
- Reflection (Mirror)
- Expression (Paintbrush)
- Democratic process (Chalk)
- Power (Hammer)
- Spirit of Life (Canteen)
- Courage and Conviction (Saddlebags)
- Listening (Stethoscope)
- Humor (Sandpaper)
- Love (Gloves)
- Justice (Flashlight)
- Atonement (Level)
- Resiliency (Hard Hat)

And Periodic FAITH IN ACTION: at home, in our faith, community, and in the community where you live.

6th-7th Grade Neighboring Faiths by C. Reed & P. Hoertdoerfer, UUA



Offered at 11:00am when on-site, Trip week times TBD!
Start in Sanctuary, then go to lower level MAPLE Room
(formerly the lower level Chapel)

Neighboring Faiths explores religious diversity in our world through visiting other faith communities and worshipping with them. For each faith tradition there is an introductory Visit or Visitor and a closing that compares basic information and the participants' take-aways. The program:

- Clarifies UU values and personal beliefs through a better understanding of the beliefs of others, from Atheist to Fundamentalist.
- Religions explored include: UU, Judaism, Islam, Christianity (including Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran), Hindu, Buddhist, and Earth-based religions.



- Parents – Make sure you are on the Family email list to receive emails about the dates and times of the Trips or Guests.



8th Grade

Our Whole Lives (OWL)

Our Whole Lives (OWL) helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. It equips participants with accurate, age-

appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, Our Whole Lives not only provides facts about anatomy and human development, but also helps participants clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality.

This program runs for 7-months beginning in the fall and running through March. It is closed after the 2nd session due to the nature of the subject matter and group dynamics. There are two (2) required parent orientations at the beginning of the year.

Important Dates for 8th Grade OWL students:

9/14 – Required 8th Gr OWL Parent-only Meeting [12:15 – 1:45 pm]

9/21 – 8th Gr OWL starts for those with permission slips

10/1 – Required 8th Grade OWL Parent-only Meeting, A/V Review

3/15 – Final 8th OWL class and Celebration

Transition to COMING OF AGE sessions following OWL and one of the highlights of this year is the Boston Heritage Trip where the youth learn more about important people and places in Unitarian Universalist history and enjoy time together strengthening bonds with one another.

3/20 – 3/21 – Boston Heritage Trip with 8th Grade CoA class

4/25 – 8th Grade CoA Overnight [Sat 10:30am – Sun 12:30pm]

9th Grade

Coming of Age (CoA)



Coming of Age is a rite of passage that acknowledges the transition from child to youth. It is preceded by a thoughtful reflection of each person's beliefs given their experiences of spirituality and religion. This is a period of integrating and articulating all that the Coming of Agers have learned to this point about their UU identity.

The CoA year culminates with a special worship ceremony that the group creates and presents to the congregation. During the ceremony they present their personal credo statements.

There is also a special Gratitude Ceremony where youth and their families - their gratitude statements are shared for all that has brought them to this moment in time. It is inspiring and very moving.

Important Dates for 9th Grade CoA students:

10/11 – 9th grade CoA Overnight [Sat 10:30am – Sun 12:30pm]

11/15 – 9th CoA Overnight [Sat 10:30am – Sun 12:30pm]

12/ 7 – Coming of Age Services – all in Sanctuary at 9am and 11am

– Family Brunch and Gratitude Ceremony following 11am service

5/10 – Camp Jewel Weekend Overnight for CoA and Youth Group



9th – 12th Grade Youth Group

Offered at 11:00am in the
Meeting House Lower Level

9th graders join Youth Group after their Coming of Age ceremony.

High School Students meet in a comfortable setting to explore and share together their questions about many topics such as life, relationships, spirituality, and social justice. The teens meet throughout the year with the support of adult advisors. They are encouraged to develop their own beliefs, values, and ways to celebrate them. They have several opportunities throughout the year to create and lead worship services for the larger congregation.

Bridging Ceremony – This rite of passage celebrates the transition from youth to young adulthood for our graduating high school seniors.

Important Dates for Youth Group:

- 9/21 – 6-7th and Youth Group OFF-SITE Climate March
- 10/31 – Youth Group Halloween Overnight Party [Fri 6pm – Sat 10am]
- 11/14 – 16 – YG Worship/Theology Con in Shelter Rock, NY [optional]
- 11/23 – Family Thanksgiving Service, Teen Choir performs
- 11/28 – 30 – YG Social Con in White Plains, NY [optional]
- 12/7 – COA Service at 11am. Welcome our newest members!
- 12/21 – Winter holiday festival! Bring a gift to exchange with everyone
- 2/7 – YG Service Rehearsal, Parent meeting, and Potluck at 6pm
- 2/8 – Youth Group leads Multigenerational Service - all in Sanctuary
- 2/27 – 3/1 – Youth Group Social Justice Service weekend
- 5/10 – Camp Jewel Weekend Overnight for CoA and Youth Group
- 6/7 – 10am Multigenerational service with brunch or BBQ
– Bridging Ceremony for 12th Graders [tentative date]

Religious Education Expectations of Children & Youth:

- **Show up!** The more weeks you come, the more time to make friends, learn, and have fun!
- **Dress comfortably**, ready to be active or get messy.
 - For 6-7th Neighboring Faiths trips to other houses of worship, respectful, proper attire will be outlined by your group leaders.
- **Bring an open and “ready for anything” attitude!**
- **Follow your group covenant** (your promises to each other.)
 - If you are having trouble keeping your behavior safe and supportive of the group, you will be reminded of the group Covenant. Tell a Leader or Assistant if you need something.
 - If you decide not to follow your group covenant, you will hear “That’s 1” and have a moment to consider and redirect yourself.
 - If you get to “That’s 3,” you will be invited out of the group to take a break, and may join the DRE to help you turn around a trying day (hugs optional).

Parents/Guardians please help by:

- Fill out our Religious Education Registration Form each year online.
- 1st year / Visiting Family Materials Fee: \$100 per child, \$200 max per family OR upon deciding that this is your community, make a sustaining pledge (you do not have to pay an additional RE fee.)
- **Maintaining a cheerful expectation of attendance.** Some things you might say are:

“People prepared for you. Do you know how rare that is?”

“Your presence and point of view are important to the group.”

“If you show up and make friends, friends will show up for you.”

“Today is a social justice/service day. You can make a real difference!”

- **Arrive on time and stay on-site** during the Sunday program.
- Before the Service, take time to get your children settled.
- For K-3rd grade, sign in your children upstairs in main foyer.
- After the Service, sign out your child, know where your youth are.
- You are responsible for your children/youth’s safety and respectful behavior to people and property after RE programming is over (usually 1 hour and 30 minutes after the service start time.)
- **Volunteer** – Share your talents and interests – We have options that will fit your schedule, perhaps help with social events, or with religious education groups (after 1 year old participation in the community.)
- **Grow your spirit** (the children and youth are watching your lead!)

Connecting...

- **Multigenerational Worship:** We celebrate together in ritual, story, and song at Thanksgiving, Christmas, Youth Group Led Sunday, RE Celebration Sunday, and Family Worship.
- **Family Connections:** We encourage families to meet up for potluck dinners, games, music, and holiday fun throughout the year.
- **Social Justice:** Advocate, educate, organize, serve, and witness in our many efforts that make us a beacon of social justice in Fairfield County and beyond.
- **Choir:** Everyone interested in music can find a place to get involved under the great leadership of our Minister of Music. In addition to various adult choirs we also have a teen choir and a children's choir.
- **Small Group Ministry:** Meet once a month in a small group to share journeys, listen deeply, and learn from the experiences of others in a facilitated topic conversation.
- **And many other opportunities:** Mention your interest or what you hope to find and it most likely exists, or you can help create the experience.

RE Staff Contact

Mary B. Collins, Director of Religious Education
mary.dre@uuwestport.org, ext. 15

Cal Wacker, Youth Program Director – cal@uuwestport.org, ext. 17
Hayden Parker, RE Assistant – REAssist@uuwestport.org, ext. 17

RE Leadership Council Contact:

Co-Chairs:

Scott Bryce - macbryce@aol.com
Jerusha Vogel - jerushav@gmail.com

Elementary Circle: Dan Marcus – dan@marcuscomm.com

Youth Circle: Felicia Keeton - feliciakeeton@sbcglobal.net

Teacher Support: Mary Ellen Keenan - mek1297park@optonline.net

Connections Circle: Nancy Seligson nancy@nancyseligson.com

Volunteering and Safe Congregations

Our program is a cooperative and is facilitated by caring volunteers who receive as much spiritual growth and learning as they enable for the children and youth.

We take seriously the responsibility of assuring the safety of our children and youth. We encourage your involvement but ask that you experience our congregation for one year before applying to teach. Teachers and advisors must fill out and sign Safe Congregation forms. We have two unrelated teens or adults in the classroom at all times. Our full Safe Congregations Policy can be found at:
http://uuwestport.org/images/stories/docs/SafeCongregation_3_2013.pdf

Our Affirmations

Children's Affirmation:

*We are Unitarian Universalists. We believe in
open minds, loving hearts and helping hands.*

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.*

Our 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.

2014-2015 Religious Education Save-the-Dates

Acronyms: OWL – Our Whole Lives, CoA – Coming of Age, YG – Youth Group

September

Sun 7 – 10am Homecoming service, BBQ, and Safety Training

Sun 14 – 9 & 11am services start, "Blessing of the Backpacks"

- RE groups meet (except 8th)

- Parent Orientations after both services for ½ hour

October

Sun 5 – Bring-a-Friend Sunday, YG Harvest Fun after services

November

Sun 2 – Daylight Savings – Clocks fall back

Sun 23 – Thanksgiving Multigenerational Services – all in Sanctuary

Sun 30 – Vacation Weekend, nursery childcare only, YG wreath sales

December

Sat 6 – Holiday party starts at 5pm, Potluck 6pm, Caroling 7-8pm

Sun 7 – Coming of Age Services – all in Sanctuary

Fri 12 & 19 – Christmas Eve Pageant Rehearsals at 4:30pm

Wed 24 – Christmas Eve Pageant at 4pm, rehearsal at 2pm

Sun 28 – Vacation Weekend, nursery childcare only

January 2015

Sun 11 – Teacher transition meetings for spring semester

Sun 18 – Spring semester teachers begin

February

Sun 8 – Youth Group leads Multigenerational Service - all in Sanctuary

Sun 15 – Holiday Weekend, nursery childcare only

April

Sun 5 – Easter Sunday, K-5th Grade leave for activities after ½ hour

Sun 12 – Holiday Weekend, nursery childcare only

April 25 – May 3 – Candidating Week, vote for new minister

2014-2015 Religious Education Save-the-Dates

May

Sun 10 – Flower Communion [TBD]

Sun 24 – 10am summer services begin, nursery childcare only

- Memorial Day weekend

Sun 31 – All teachers prep for RE Sunday and Closing Celebrations

- Pre-K – 12th Grade RE groups meet

June

Sun 7 – 10am Multigenerational service with brunch or BBQ

- Bridging Ceremony for 12th Graders [tentative date]

Sun 14, 21, 28 – Summer childcare for 10am services through Labor Day weekend

Wed 24 – 28 – 2015 UU General Assembly in Portland, Oregon

TUCW Parent Resources:

uuwestport.org — The Unitarian Church in Westport (TUCW) website – Sermons and newsletter of events.

uua.org/re/families — The Unitarian Universalist Association website

FAITH DEVELOPMENT FOR FAMILIES — Resources on Family life, like pages in the UU World, a magazine of the association. This website contains resources for raising children dealing with death, addictions, trauma, adoption, or LGBTQ questions from the Unitarian Universalist Association.

uumetronny.org/events/events.htm — Metro NY District resource page

Youth Conferences listed here, district gatherings and learning opportunities.