How Much Should I Pledge?
By Rev. Anthony MAKAR, Senior Minister

In the movie *It’s a Wonderful Life*, little Zuzu repeats a thing she’s heard her teacher say before, that “every time a bell rings, an angel gets its wings.”

We’re having fun with that image in the Annual Pledge Drive we’re entering into, with the theme of “It’s a Wonderful Church.” Because it is wonderful. So very playfully, we will ring a bell every time someone turns in a pledge, and we will say, “Every time a bell rings, West Shore strengthens its wings!”

As a first-time pledger to West Shore, I’m pledging 5% of my income available for charitable giving. I’m doing this with joy. Church knows how to amplify the good my dollars can do. I want my church to have angel-like impact upon the world.

But let me step back a moment, because I’ve been around churches for some time now, and some things that might be clear to me may not so clear to everyone. And, even if you may have been around West Shore for many years, I invite you to join me in considering the meaning of an annual pledge as if for the first time. Especially if, for you, the annual pledge drive has always felt like a drag, and something to grit your teeth and get over as soon as possible.

So—what is a pledge? For me, it’s about wanting to feel good about how I spend my money. I spend part of my money to take care of myself. But I want to be sure that another part of my money is put in service to Lovingkindness. It feels good to know that I am part of the reason why West Shore is able to impact so many lives so positively. Just take a look at the brochure entitled, “In Service to Love and Justice: How Your Money Becomes Ministry.” You’ll come away amazed at how much West Shore actually does. I just feel good knowing that I’m part of making this possible.

But now your question may be, *But to what should I compare a church pledge? Is it like a donation to NPR or to a politician’s political campaign? Or should I compare it to the monthly dues I pay to my gym or to another organization?* This is a very important question.

In reply, one thought that comes to mind is how people’s pledges to West Shore are the main source of income for the church, and every one counts immensely. Other non-profits can rely on thousands or hundreds of thousands of gifts to support the good work they do. But West Shore’s ability to change lives is currently made possible only through 308 pledges. So, in this sense, your pledge really isn’t comparable to a gift to NPR or to a political campaign. Your pledge is, proportionally, way more impactful than that, in ways you can directly witness and be a part of.

Maybe even more important to keep in mind is how West Shore embraces all that you are—and if you are coming with a family, it embraces all of that too. It is your primary way to express commitment to your own (and/or your family’s) moral and spiritual development and growth. It may also be the primary way you are able to develop your talents for service to others and to the larger world. And you will make friendships and memories here like none others, lasting years.

Church membership is also for life, if you want that. Depending on where you are in the journey of your life, West Shore may support you in raising children, celebrate your wedding, grieve the death of a loved one, or even grieve your death. Church membership supports you throughout the entirety of your living, and remembers you in your dying.

Given this, the conclusion I arrive at is that membership in a church is a very VERY different sort of thing than membership in a gym, or other sorts of membership. It’s absolutely unique.

So, therefore, I reflect that in my giving, and I would ask you to consider doing that too. I make it my #1 priority in charitable giving.

(Continued on page 13)
Connect in Worship

We seek to be a spiritual home for people of free faith – all are welcome at worship at West Shore on Sundays. This is a diverse community, encompassing people from many different religious and spiritual backgrounds. All of us aspire to live according to Unitarian Universalist principles, which affirm and promote:

- 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.

For more information on the Unitarian Universalist tradition, visit www.uua.org.

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2020, 10:15 AM
STEWARDSHIP KICK-OFF

Pay It Forward
Rev. Anthony Makar, Worship Leader
Ryan Rosu, Worship Associate
The Free Spirit Band

“Pay It Forward” is about a way of being kind in a world that needs kindness. It’s about putting your time and energy and money in service to Love. Come and find out how you might take part in this. There will also be a surprise that you simply won’t want to miss!

SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2020, 10:15 AM
Raising Unitarian Universalists

Meghan Ross, Worship Leader
Judy Montgomery, Worship Associate

Acting Director of Religious Education Meghan Ross and Worship Associate Judy Montgomery will share their memories of growing up Unitarian Universalists and explore the future of Religious Education for children and youth at West Shore.

SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2020, 10:15 AM
The Eclectic Church of the Future

Rev. Anthony Maker, Worship Leader
Jeff Modzelewski, Worship Leader

Back in 1878, the Unitarian Lydia Marie Child once imagined “an eclectic church of the future which shall gather forms of holy aspirations from all ages and nations.” She imagined this at a time when our congregations were still very much Christian-centered. But now, all these years later, we embody Lydia Marie Child’s dream and are fully pluralistic. How did we get from there to here?

THURSDAYS @ WEST SHORE
MARCH 19, 2020, 6:00 - 8:00 PM
Let’s Talk Drumming

Join us for an evening of drumming and discussion where we examine drumming culture and the spirituality behind it. You are encouraged to bring your drums and your friends for a multi generational musical adventure. Chef Gary will provide the meal (meatballs in gravy, charro beans and rice and vegetables). You are encouraged to sign up ahead for the meal at the table in the Rotunda on Sundays or contact Barbara Walker at Momofkatbird@gmail.com for more information. Childcare available if registered ahead of time.

SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2020, 10:15 AM
Where the Wild Things Are

Rev. Anthony Makar, Worship Leader
Judy Montgomery, Worship Associate

Join us for a service for all ages where we explore JOY! Dancing in the aisles and bubble-blowing will happen. Come and be a part of...where the wild things are! Children are invited to come wearing their pajamas. This service includes an offering from our Junior Choir as well as the beautiful ritual of Child Dedication.

SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 2020, 10:15 AM
Spending Our Days

Rev. Anthony Maker, Worship Leader
Victoria Warden, Worship Associate

Many people turn to voluntary simplicity as their way of rising above America’s consumeristic culture. Today, we are introduced to the thought of one of the most influential voices of the voluntary simplicity movement, who happens to be one of our Unitarian Universalist spiritual ancestors, Henry David Thoreau.
For almost 75 years, West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church has been a vibrant part of the community. As we each consider our annual pledge commitment to supporting its vitality, it’s important that we pause for a moment and step back to consider the big picture of what we are committing our money to. It’s important to get a sense of perspective.

To do this, we can learn a lot from the movie “It’s a Wonderful Life.” What would happen if you drove up Hilliard Boulevard one day, and West Shore was nowhere to be found? Would you even be you anymore? West Shore Universalist Universalist Church was a church that never happened. It never existed. What would that mean to you, your family, Rocky River, Cleveland, and beyond Cleveland?

As we enter into our Pledge Drive for 2020-2021, we will be asking each other this question. We will learn some things about West Shore that we may have never heard before. We will see how our financial gifts to West Shore are being put in service to Love and Justice. We will be inspired by the vision of all the great things West Shore will do in the future if, together, we all step up in our giving.

Above all, we are going to have fun. Pledging shouldn’t feel like a chore or a drag. Pledge campaigns should be times when we feel more connected to the church community we love. It should be a time of celebrating our community, making warm connections with people you may never have met before, growing in your sense of gratitude and generosity, and just feeling good about knowing that your generosity is being put in service to Love and Justice.

**PLEDGE DRIVE EVENTS**

- **March 1, 2020:** Kick off of the Pledge Drive during the worship service with Rev. Anthony Makar’s message, “Pay It Forward.”
- **March 28, 2020:** “It’s A Wonderful Church Community Meal and Talent Show” which includes a segment where we have Cottage Meeting breakouts.
- **April 5, 2020** - Premiere of the “Soul Seeds” ritual during the worship service.
- **March & April 2020:** Cottage Meetings held in private homes and at church.

**BIG Thanks from Denison UUC**

By Michelle MA, Community Affiliated Minister

The work day on Saturday, February 22, was a smashing success thanks to YOU, brave partners and volunteers! A dozen folks showed up, many of whom even brought their own tools. The party was almost too efficient and hardworking—it was hard to pry everyone away for an amazing lunch supplied by the amazing cooks at Denison Ave UCC.

Before we began, Rev. Nozomi gathered everyone for a centering moment in the gym, where she explained that as a task-oriented person, getting things done at Denison can be challenging. Well-meaning volunteers will start a project and not complete it; she herself is pulled in multiple directions, meaning that the ball sometimes gets dropped; materials can go walkabout. “Welcome to our world,” she said. “Things sometimes take longer than you expect. Try not to get too frustrated.”

It’s been a learning experience for me, too. For instance, events at West Shore are usually scheduled far in advance, to give people time to get it on their calendars and to allow for proper promotion. At Denison, things can change so quickly from week to week that a volunteer crew might sign up to plaster a room on the third floor and show up the day of to learn that they’re going to paint the stairwell instead. I’ve had to learn to be flexible.

That’s why I’m so enthusiastic about this partnership. West Shore and Denison are two very different cultures, and it’s good for us to enter their world. I’ve learned from them how to relax, be present, and just go with the flow sometimes. I’ve learned to forgive myself for dropping the ball because I got distracted by something else. I’ve learned how to give and receive hospitality. Also, I’ve never had a bad meal there. Seriously; stop by for lunch sometime.
Spark: Adult Explorations
For Head, Heart and Hands
Sunday Mornings, Fireside Room, 9:30 - 10:10 a.m.

Spark is a new personal and spiritual growth opportunity for adults at West Shore. Spark is on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. so you can experience something intellectually and emotionally engaging in an adult religious education setting and then come to worship at 10:15 a.m.

One of the best things about Spark is the variety of programming it offers. It is designed to engage the whole person: head, heart, and hands.

You can find out about Spark’s offerings by reading your monthly Shorelines, the weekly E News, and the OOS insert.

SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2020, 9:30 AM
Mini Death Café
Presented by Kathy Strawser, Pastoral Care Team

It’s the one thing we all share—mortality! Please join us for a warm, open, engaging and lively conversation about what is often a taboo subject. All voices are welcome. The objective of a Death Café is to increase awareness of death to help make the most of our (finite) lives. It is not intended as a bereavement, grief counseling, or therapy group. There is no intention of leading participants toward any theology, product or conclusion. There is no agenda, but there definitely will be cake! Be prompt—doors close at 9:35 a.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2020, 9:30 AM
Are We the Creators of Our Own Reality?
Gary Nemes, Socrates Café

Socrates Cafe is a discussion group based on the book "Socrates Café" by Christopher Phillips, who developed his program by traveling around America to cafés and starting discussions with anyone who came by. For each of our sessions, we will focus on a topic from philosophy, society, psychology, ethics, life & death. The moderator will call on participants who wish to contribute their thoughts. On Sunday, March 8, we will discuss the topic, “Are we the creators of our own reality?” Please wear your name tag.

SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2020, 9:30 AM
WS-JAM Dreaming Team
Rev. Chris Long, Justice Minister

Please join your West Shore Justice Action Ministry (WS-JAM) Dreaming Team on this Sunday. This dedicated group of congregational volunteers (Phil Florian, Brian Gardner, Erin Gymbor, Cil Knutsen, Sara Massey, Jeff Modzelewski, Judy Montgomery, April Stoltz, and Marilyn Weske) have provided unwavering support in co-creating an evaluative and sustainable approach to our growing Justice Ministry at West Shore. So, please come hear more about their ongoing work including our very exciting forthcoming West Shore digital on-line justice resource library and the piloting of WS-JAM Self-Assessment Tool as we continue to grow into the mission and vision of West Shore.

A special note of thanks to Kathy Little, Co-Chair of the Queer and Allies Task Force (Q&A), who has deftly led the SPARK Justice Sundays in this growing ministry at West Shore. We look forward to seeing you there.

SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2020, 9:30 AM
A Cool Kid Driving a Hot Car
Warren Campbell-Gaston, West Shore’s Poetry Ministry

Before it is a form of literature, poetry is a way of thinking. We can think in a literal way to produce a practical result or think in a metaphoric and meditative way evoking deep emotions and imaginative thoughts. Everyone is capable of thinking poetically.

SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 2020, 9:30 A.M.
NEW Outreach Speakers Program
Suzanne Rusnak, West Shore Member

We will introduce to the congregation the new Outreach Speakers Program. Materials will be shared with the audience introducing the congregants and the topics that they are willing to share with the greater community. A short sample program will be presented on the importance of our tree canopy to wildlife.
Whether you are a **NEW VISITOR**, seeking more information on West Shore and Unitarian Universalism or a **SEASONED MEMBER** looking for a refresher course and/or current information on church happenings, the Membership Team has a meeting that’s right for you! Almost every Sunday, after the worship service, we hold conversational get-togethers on various topics. You’ll hear from newcomers, seasoned churchgoers, and members of various active groups here at the church, and more! The goal is to achieve our mission of helping to **CONNECT** you with your highest values and to others who share them; to help you **GROW** in wisdom and compassion; and to provide opportunities for you to **SERVE** needs greater than your own. How do you do that? Come to church. Meet people. Talk to them. Take a class. Hang out and drink coffee, tea or...grow and serve by getting involved in something that is meaningful to you. Here’s March’s membership class line-up:

**Step 1: Coffee & Conversation**
Sunday, March 8, 11:30 a.m.

Held the second Sunday monthly, visitors and friends meet after the worship service for an informal conversation that gives us a chance to get to know you and find out a little bit about your spiritual/religious journey. We’ll also talk about and answer your questions regarding Unitarian Universalism and West Shore Church. Visitors and friends who are questioning and exploring new options for a spiritual home are invited to attend. **Childcare always provided.**

**Step 2 & 3 Combined:**
**Learn More about UU & Become a Member!**
Sunday, March 15, 11:30 a.m.

We’ve combined two classes into one for an in-depth conversation on UU History and Our Faith Tradition, West Shore’s History, Our Mission and Our Congregational Style. What does it mean to be a member of a UU Church and West Shore in particular. We’ll discuss member rights and responsibilities. If you’re ready, you’ll be invited to sign the Membership Book and make West Shore your spiritual home and community.

**Step 4: What’s Next?**
**Your Path at West Shore!**
Sunday, March 29, 11:30 a.m.

**Pop Quiz Time!**
- Are you a newer member who’s come to plenty of Sunday services but are now asking yourself, “What’s next?” or perhaps “Wow, there’s so much happening here, how can I possibly know what is even available, let alone keep up with any of the groups?”
- Are you a long-time member who has been working and participating in one area of our beloved community so long that you are feeling a bit disconnected from some of the other projects, changes or new developments that have come along?
- Are you still a little confused about what “Realm” (OnRealm.org) is, why it’s important, or how it can help bolster your engagement with the church?
- Or perhaps you’d just like a chance to get to know some new people, reflect on your Path To Membership and envision where your path may take you this church year?

If you said yes to any of those questions, then we’d like to invite you to participate in a new post Path To Membership class titled, “**Step Four: What’s Next?**” on Sunday, March 29, from 11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. This class will help you to understand how West Shore can be your spiritual home, social community, and help you to lead a full life of meaning and purpose. You’ll learn more about the many groups and activities that take place here, get to know Realm more so you can harness its full potential, and connect through sharing of your personal spiritual path to our church. Lunch will be provided. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to Margaret Gardner by Friday, March 27. If you’ll need childcare, please request contact Megan Ross at mross@wsuuc.org by Monday, March 23. The earlier childcare requests will make it easier to make sure we have adequate coverage. Hope to see you then!

**New Member Sunday**
Sunday, April 5, 10:15 a.m.

During the worship service, we will welcome and introduce new members who have joined since December 2019. Both the Congregation and New Members will covenant to support each other during our spiritual journey and to help one another.
As it is March, how might you celebrate Women’s History Month? Do any of the following names ring a bell for you? Fannie Barrier Williams, Olympia Brown, Sophia Lyons Fahs, Francis Ellen Watkins Harper, Cecilia Payne Gaposchkin and Margaret Moseley. I know for me, many of them I had not known of before starting to pull my Shorelines offering for this month into focus. These are Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist women who have contributed much to the ever evolving, collective history of this faith movement over the centuries. From leaders in the Women’s Suffrage Movement, which we are now celebrating the 100th Anniversary for, to well documented writers, poets and to an astronomer who was one of the first professors at Harvard University, these women have and continue to anchor the very core of this living faith tradition through the work of their lives and legacies. With this in mind, I wanted to offer the following link from the Unitarian Universalist Association’s (UUA) webpage for you to explore at your leisure or even to do an individual or family study of any or all of these powerful women. Click here.

**UU the Vote in 2020**

As we all know, voting is critical. However, this year’s elections feel categorically different at many levels. With this in mind, at last year’s General Assembly, the UUA President, Reverend Susan Frederick Gray, announced a year-long initiative that would take place to galvanize our 2020 election efforts as a faith community. The effort is now called “UU the Vote in 2020.” This is a non-partisan faith initiative that is providing a dedicated team of organizers, activists and UU Ministers from the denominational level that are offering extensive resources and ongoing support to congregations and their community partners for this initiative. Here at West Shore, Gloria Bemer, members of the Social Action Committee, and other members and friends of the congregation are already working hard to organize our efforts. WE STILL NEED YOU! Many extra hands and hearts are needed to ensure we are doing our part to live out our UU values in the electoral process, especially now. Contact Gloria Bemer through her email over Realm for ways you and your family may get involved.

**Esperanza Volunteers Needed**

In the “What’s the WSJAM Buzz” section of the February Shorelines, our very own Victor Ruiz, the Executive Director of Esperanza Inc., invited us all to consider volunteering for their Youth Mentoring Program. Esperanza Inc. “was founded in 1983 as a community project to improve the educational opportunities for Hispanics by motivating and recognizing academic achievement through scholarships.”

At press time, they are still in need of 24 male volunteers to mentor with young men in the program. The time commitment for this new initiative is one hour of communication per month, and four in person meetings from January through May 2020. If your are interested in becoming a mentor, please sign up here. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Ameena Igram at 216-651-7178 or ameena@esperanzainc.org.

As always, members and friends of this dynamic, growing and justice centered congregation, thank you for all of your attention to the work of West Shore both within and beyond our walls. ☺️
Throughout my professional music career here in the Cleveland area, I have had the great pleasure of working with some of the most incredible musicians. Our **B. Neil Davis Artist Series** has allowed us to bring in some of these great musicians on many occasions. What makes it even more special is that so many of them I have the pleasure of calling them my friend. Andrew Pongracz is one of these people. We have worked together since the ‘90s at Riverside Academy of Music until now where he routinely performs in concerts and most of you probably know him as our percussionist for the Free Spirit Band. It wasn’t till recently that I realized the incredible talent of his wife, Brenda. Yes I’ve known she was a singer and she recently asked me to be her pianist for some events. She is one incredible singer.

**Duo Kettő** is the combination of soprano **Dr. Brenda Pongracz** and percussionist **Andrew Pongracz**. Both active performers in their own right, Brenda and Andrew joined to create a duo in 2019. They focus on finding contemporary music as well as commissioning new works from local composers. **Duo Kettő** will be the next concert as part of our **B. Neil Davis Artist Series** here at West Shore on **Sunday afternoon, March 29, at 4:00 p.m.**

Andrew Pongracz is the timpanist with the Cleveland Pops Orchestra and principal percussionist with both the Cleveland Chamber Symphony and Youngstown Symphony. He can be heard on the 2007 Grammy-winning recording of Olivier Messiaen’s “Oiseaux Exotiques” with the Cleveland Chamber Symphony. He has performed at the Odenwald Festspiele in Germany, the Cayman Arts Festival in the Cayman Islands and at the Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival in Incline Village, NV. In addition to orchestral work Andrew plays regularly for Great Lakes Theatre at Playhouse Square and has played with Aretha Franklin, Charo, Frankie Valli, Yes, and Kansas. Andrew has a Bachelor of Arts degree in music from Hiram College and completed the Master of Music degree at Cleveland State University where he studied with Cleveland Orchestra percussionist Don Miller and legendary drum set artist Bob McKee. He has also studied with Cleveland Orchestra principal timpanist Paul Yancich, Tom Fries and George Kiteley. Andrew lives in Lakewood with his wife Brenda and their two sons Alexander and Christopher.

Dr. Brenda Pongracz is the Dean of Arts & Humanities at Lorain County Community College. She has performed locally with Cleveland Opera on Tour, Cleveland Opera, Hiram College Opera Theater, the Cleveland Composer’s Guild, Northcoast Men’s Chorus, Cleveland’s Music and Drama Club and the American Association of University Women. She has also performed for graduation ceremonies at both LCCC and Tri-C, as well as for the Inauguration of Dr. Alex Johnson at Tri-C. Dr. Pongracz is currently a soprano soloist and section leader at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Lakewood. She has also been a soloist and section leader with Old Stone Church, Trinity Cathedral, Church of the Covenant, St. James Anglican Church in Cleveland and St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. Beyond a soloist, Dr. Pongracz is an active ensemble singer, performing with both Good Company and NEOVoce. She also served as a former chorister for Opera Cleveland and as a former member of the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Hiram College, a Master’s of Music History from Cleveland State, and a Master’s in Vocal Performance from Temple University, as well as an Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership from Walden University. She also studied at the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria and was a competition finalist and grant recipient from the Gerda Lissner Foundation in New York City.

On a side note of humor—Andy and I both teach at LCCC where Brenda is the Dean of Arts & Humanities—which makes her our boss! Please join us for this free concert.
Urban Plunge & Homeless on Hilliard
**Saturday, March 7**

West Shore and South West UU church have teamed up to create a day of bonding, service, and learning for local UU youth. On **Saturday, March 7**, youth are invited to participate in any or all of the following opportunities to learn about homelessness in our community.

- **Urban Plunge** - An Urban Plunge is an experiential opportunity for youth to learn firsthand about injustices that affect our homeless community and hear from folks providing the social services and those experiencing homelessness.

- **Homeless on Hilliard** - This annual event at West Shore has youth sleep outside on a winter night to raise awareness for homelessness, build community, and to raise either money or donation items for a charity.

You can help support our youth by donating menstrual products (tampons or pads) at the Homeless on Hilliard table in the Rotunda beginning **Sunday, March 1**. You can also stop by the church during **Homeless on Hilliard on Saturday, March 7, between 6:00 - 11:00 p.m.** to donate items or just show your support for our youth. Cash donations are also gratefully accepted.

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**Pay It Forward**

All children in Grades 1 and up are invited to learn about how we can make a difference when we pool our resources and “pay it forward” on **Sunday, March 1, at 11:40 a.m. in the Chapel**. Rev. Makar will join us to share a special surprise! Parent helpers are needed for this event. If you are able to help, please contact Meghan at 440-333-2255 Ext. 103 or **mross@wsuuc.org**.

**Junior Choir**

Our Junior Choir, led by Joe Schafer, will sing during the worship service on Sunday, March 8. Choir members should plan to attend church that day. Children in Grades Kindergarten and up are welcome to join Junior Choir at any time. New singers are always welcome! Junior Choir practices on **Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in the Chapel**.

**Art Contest**

All children and youth are invited to submit artwork (drawing, painting, collage, etc.) to be used on this year’s Stewardship Campaign Thank You cards. One piece will be selected from each class from Pre-K through High School. The theme for this year’s Stewardship Campaign is “It’s a Wonderful Church.” All art should reflect this theme and show the child’s vision of what makes West Shore wonderful. **Submissions are due by Sunday, March 29.** Art work should be submitted on white, 8.5” x 11” cardstock available at the RE table.

**Mystery Friends**

Thank you to the 40 children and adults who participated in Mystery Friends! Lots of new friendships were formed and much fun was had by all.

**Crossing Paths Field Trip To Cloud Water Zendo**

Our 7th and 8th Graders will spend the month of March learning about Buddhism. The class and their teachers will have an opportunity to visit the Cloud Water Zendo on **Sunday, March 15**. One of the main purposes of the class is to help the students develop interfaith learning and relationships. Trips to other churches, temples, and mosques provide a rich, experiential learning opportunity for our students.
Wait! Paris is coming to West Shore? So the City of Light and Love is happening on Hilliard Boulevard? *UU Lá Lá*

Believe it! On **Saturday, May 9**, West Shore UU Church will be holding its annual Service Auction and Fundraiser. This year’s theme, **UU Lá Lá - An Evening in Paris**, promises a host of parties, events, services, artisan crafts, raffles, catered hor d’oeuvres, beverages including fine French wines, soft drinks, water... and just plain excitement!

Our goal is to raise $45,000 for the Church’s General Fund, a resource for staffing, programming, services and much of the important work that supports our Seven Principles and our mission to “inspire people to lead lives of meaning and purpose.”

But oh, *mes ahmies*, none of this can happen without **YOU**! The dynamic and powerful help of church members and friends and the local businesses you frequent are the keys to this event’s success.

“**Moi, you ask?**” Exactly! **How can you help?** Host a party, sponsor an event or tour, donate a handmade item, offer a service, purchase tickets for museums or shows, bake treats or casseroles or offer lessons. You could even buy a gift card/certificate for donation in the Silent Auction. And remember, you don’t have to go it alone! Join with a friend or friends to host a party, event or tickets to a show or concert.

More donation suggestions can be found under the Service Auction tab on our website. Remember, all of the expenses toward your donation are tax deductible!

**Magnifique!** In addition, while you’re about town, you might want to ask a business you frequent (restaurant, hairdresser, nail salon, dentist, bakery, veterinarian, pet groomer, grocery store, service provider, etc.) for a donation. To help you, we’ve provided a Letter to Community Businesses under the Service Auction tab of West Shore’s website. Have this letter handy when you’re out and about. All businesses will receive a written letter of appreciation and acknowledgement in the program booklet.

**And don’t forget to purchase tickets!** They go on sale **Sunday, March 1.** Look for the Service Auction table in the Rotunda after the service. Early Bird tickets are $35, **March 8th through April 5th**, a savings of $10 over later purchases. All Early Bird purchasers will be entered in a drawing for a fabulous gift basket, including champagne! Also note, if your resources prevent you from participating, please contact Rev. Makar for assistance. In addition, if you are able, you may want to donate a ticket so that everyone can participate in this terrific effort!

Questions? Feel free to contact any one of the Service Auction Chairs: **Chris Baumhauer** *(chrisb7302@gmail.com)*, **Kelly Pinkas** *(kelly.pinkas@gmail.com)*, or **Jerry Knasel** *(jerryknase@aol.com)*. **Merci beaucoup!**
Queer & Allies
Monday, March 9, 7:00 p.m.

The Queer & Allies (Q&A) Task Force encourages networking among LGBTQ+ folks as well as those who support them at West Shore in our witnessing to the larger community. The topic for our meeting this month will be the LGBTQ+ community and the 2020 election. For more information, contact Kathy Little (216-570-8097; drkdliittle@aol.com) or Jerry Knasel (216-536-3073; jerryknase@aol.com). All are welcome!

Humanists, Atheists, Freethinkers & Agnostics (Hafa)
Sunday, March 15, 7:00 p.m.

In “A Thousand Small Sanities,” author Adam Gopnik, staff writer for the New Yorker, offers a learned defense of liberalism as a temperament and a way of living, “an attempt to realize liberty, not merely to invoke it or make it the subject of an incantation.” Liberalism remains an object of scorn, detested by right-wing polemics and left wing radicals in this tribal era of Trumpism. Why is liberalism in need of defending? How can liberalism be understood as a way of managing the world? What are the ramifications of Gopnik’s liberal lessons for HAFAs and UUs? Let’s discuss and reason together in the Fireside Room at 7:00 p.m.

Upcoming Spring Art Exhibit
Art Work by Children & Youth of West Shore
Beginning Sunday, March 22, 11:30 a.m.

The Aesthetics Committee is looking for all of our “budding” children and youth artists to submit art work for its “Spring Art Show.” Please encourage your children/youth to bring a work of art they have created for this upcoming art show. Drawings, Cut Paper, Collage, Paintings, Photographs, Mixed Media are all types of works accepted. Include first and last name on the back of each submission. Works must be dropped off in the RE office by Sunday, March 15. The exhibit will combine art work from the Child Care Center and West Shore Children and youth. A reception for the artists, families and the church will be Sunday, March 22, after the Service in the Fireside Room. The exhibit will run through early May and pieces will be returned. What a great way to begin Spring!

Volunteer at the Cleveland Food Bank
Thursday, March 19, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Wednesday, March 25, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Betsy Hutcheson at 440-331-3027 ahead of time so names can be given to the Food Bank to facilitate the login process. Carpool from the church parking lot at 9:25 a.m.

Rocky River Chamber Music Society Concert
Piano & Baritone
Spencer Myer and Mario Diaz-Moresco
Monday, March 9, 7:30 p.m.

Spencer Myer, piano, and Mario Diaz-Moresco, baritone, will charm us with a collection of art songs and solo piano works in the splendid acoustical environment of West Shore on Monday, March 9, at 7:30 p.m. Spencer Myer has many ties with Northeast Ohio having studied and taught at Oberlin College Conservatory and Baldwin Wallace University. Four years ago, he and Mario Diaz-Moresco thrilled the Rocky River Chamber Music Society audience, and this year they will do so again with a program of works by Beethoven, Debussy, Barber, and Bolcom. Early arrival at this concert is highly recommended. There is no admission charge for any of the Society’s concerts, and all are welcome. For further information, visit www.rrcms.org.

Calling all West Shore Members
Join a Connection Circles

Our Connection Circles at West Shore are groups of six to ten members who meet monthly with a facilitator to nourish our spiritual growth. A number of our members would love to join a new circle so in order to keep growing our Circles we need more facilitators! We are here to help, train, support and provide what you need. In addition to meeting once a month with your group, our facilitators meet with Rev. Makar to discuss the circle scripts and review how we are doing. We are having great support from our new minister! We have lots of wonderful, talented people at West Shore that have been involved in Connection Circles in the past. We are calling all those people and anyone who wants to come help grow our Connection Circles. We need facilitators to head up our new groups, as well as people to join our Connection Circles. Please contact Nancy Juergens at nananancyjij@gmail.com or Lois Riemer at lois.riemer@riemer.com.
In its 59th year, General Assembly (GA) is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists. Over a 5-day immersive experience, attendees enjoy worship, workshops, lectures, business sessions, and more. Experience the energy of thousands of UU’s gathered together and be even more inspired to live a Unitarian Universalist life.

Some additional information:

- Registration is now open at uua.org/ga. Adult full-time registration is $400 through March 15. (It then jumps to $500.)
- Registration for housing opens March 2, at 9:00 a.m. EST, and fills up quickly!
- The prestigious Ware lecturer is Naomi Klein, climate activist, award-winning journalist, and best-selling author.
- The Service of the Living Tradition honors ministers who have received fellowship status during the past year, and our recent intern Michelle Ma will be one of those welcomed into preliminary fellowship.

For more information, pick up a brochure in the pamphlet rack by the church office or see uua.org/ga. Interested in going to GA? Talk to a member of the Denominational Connections Committee: Soren Hansen, Jerry Knasel, Irene Morley, Cynthia White or Anne Osborne.
For the last six years, each time I drive into the church parking lot I see a bold statement in black and white that says “Black Lives Matter to West Shore UU Church.” After our February 9th Informational Meeting about the meaning of that statement and that banner, I see so much more.

I see more clearly what Ijeoma Oluo meant in our All Church Book read “So You Want to Talk About Race” when she sounded the alarm regarding the limits to empathy. Our banner is not only a statement of conscience. To some of us, it is assurance of safety. How could I not see that before? I can try to walk in another’s shoes, but this banner now challenges me to try to walk in another’s skin.

I see more clearly the implication in the phrase “all lives matter.” As Bill Maher has noted, this suggests that all lives are equally at risk, and they are not.

I see more clearly a faith community that is ready to “answer the call of love” in overcoming the racism that pervades our nation and our own souls.

I see more clearly why we must work for justice.

Your Board of Trustees has been taking a deep dive into the world of policy development this year. The new bylaws adopted a year ago by our congregation established a foundation for a collaborative, mission-based form of church governance. Bylaws are analogous to a constitution. Policies are analogous to legislation. We are developing new policies that align with our new bylaws.

The new policies we have adopted are posted on our website in the Board section under Leadership. Many more are on the way. While the Board is responsible for policy development, we also welcome your comments and questions that might suggest needed changes.

Please note that our Policy on Rules of Procedure for Congregational Meetings invites any church member to request a motion, presentation, or discussion to be on our Annual Meeting agenda. This year’s Annual Meeting will take place immediately after the worship service on Sunday, April 26.

By policy, the agenda for the Annual Meeting will be established at the March 26th Board Meeting. Please let me know by then if you have an agenda item request.

An installation ceremony is the recognition that a minister is settled into a particular society. The ceremony is a wonderful way to reflect upon, affirm and celebrate the bond between the minister and the congregation.

Please help us celebrate the shared ministry between Rev. Anthony Makar and our West Shore Community at Rev. Makar’s Installation Service, on Sunday, May 31, at 4:00 p.m. followed by a special community meal. The President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, The Reverend Susan Frederick-Gray, will be preaching.

For those who wish to participate, there will be many opportunities to lend a helping hand. There will be some out-of-town guests who will prefer to stay with UU members in their homes instead of in hotels. The Sanctuary and Baker Hall will need to be decorated and the grounds outside tidied and freshly planted with spring flowers.

A special collection will be taken up in the month of April to pay for the community meal and other elements of this special celebration. If you would like to donate, please make your check payable to West Shore UU Church and write “Installation Fund” in the memo section or text a donation to WSUUC.

We will also need many hands to make light work of the preparation. Please add your name to the list with your contact information, and we will reach out to you with the different volunteer offerings as they become available. Please send your offers of help or questions to wsuucinstallation@gmail.com or call Michelle Nochta at 216-337-4109.
How Much Should I Pledge? (Continued from front page)
By Rev. Anthony Makar, Senior Minister

But there is one more thing I would say about pledging. It addresses the issue of fairness. Not everyone can give $10,000 per year, or $5,000, or $2,000. Many of us honestly can—and perhaps are capable of increasing what they are currently giving. But some just can’t.

So let’s talk about this. Here, my mind goes straight to a Bible story, called “The Widow’s Mite” in Mark Ch. 12. Jesus is in the Temple and he’s watching people turn in their pledges (so to speak). He sees many people turning in big dollar pledges. But then a poor widow comes, and the pledge she turns in represents a genuine stretch for her, given how little money she actually has available to give away. But she gives because (1) she bases her sense of safety and self-esteem on something far healthier than how much money she has, and (2) she is committed to doing her part to build up her Beloved Community.

How much does she actually give? Just two small coins, called “mites.” That’s all. But Jesus sees into her heart. He says, “Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood.”

If you are just like the widow in this story, in your stretch giving, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. You are the most generous among us, and the most spiritually mature.

Our denomination, the Unitarian Universalist Association, has provided a resource that helps people wrap their minds around the issue of fairness. It’s called the “Fair Share Giving Guide.” It’s “fair” because it recognizes that each person’s financial circumstances are different and we all can’t give the same dollar amount. It’s also “fair” because it grounds our annual giving on “adjusted” income, which is income minus large medical expenses, paying college tuition, or other sizeable expenses that take away from discretionary income.

Fairness adds up to this: No one is being asked to give beyond their means. And no matter what our income level, we can know how our contribution joins with others in terms of what % of adjusted income we are giving. Here is the Fair Share Giving Guide, provided by the UUA. Use the chart to best determine your level of giving. The UUA likes to use words like “supporter,” or “sustainer,” or “visionary,” or “transformer.”

But as for me, every gift matters. Every gift strengthens West Shore’s angel wings.

Ultimately, no one can tell anyone what is a fair amount to give—that is between you and your heart.

Because of your giving, West Shore does amazing things. The more you give, the more amazing things West Shore will do. It’s because of you. Thank you! ☀️

Membership: Why Join West Shore?

Being a member of West Shore is unlike belonging to any other outside group or committee that we might support. Although groups like the Sierra Club or League of Women Voters also work to meet the greater needs of our community, West Shore connects us to those opportunities to serve, while at the same time providing a safe supportive and non-judgmental space to nurture our personal and spiritual selves. This community celebrates our life transitions and accomplishments, and mourns with us our losses. We are encouraged to grow and always forgiven our stumbles and mistakes along the way.

One of our newer members, Steven Smith, shared his, “Surprise at finding a white church in Rocky River that displayed “A Black Lives Matter” banner and just had to find out what we were all about.” He is beginning to experience relationships with people he never expected and is connecting deeply to the beloved community that we are growing together. Our lives are enriched by his presence.

Another newer member, Rob Pacanosky, joined on his second visit to West Shore after hearing the Grateful Dead played during the service! He knew he was in the right place! He is now going through the classes and sharing his deepening relationship with West Shore.

I wish everyone could participate in our Path To Membership “Steps” classes and listen to the reactions of people experiencing Unitarian Universalism and West Shore for the first time. They are the best expression of what we have to offer each other and the world, and why people join West Shore. ☀️
The unfortunate reality of life in America today is that people who choose to gather together must prepare themselves for armed assault. I will not even try to plumb the depths of the myriad aspects of this reality. I won’t even offer up my opinions about those aspects. Instead I will focus on the practical question: What should we do about it?

Our congregation’s leadership has responsibly chosen to utilize selected resources available to us to address the issue. Specifically, I refer to Active Shooter Training offered by the Rocky River Police Department. On Saturday, February 22, volunteer greeters and ushers, along with concerned others from our church community, met with Officer Mike Bernhardt, Rocky River Police Department’s trained ALICE/Defense to Active Shooters instructor.

As a career public school administrator, I was first made painfully aware of the vulnerability of our populations after the Columbine tragedy in the Spring of ‘99. Like many school districts, mine took steps to control access to buildings. But the attacks continued. School and community leaders began to realize that strengthening perimeters was not sufficient and that we needed to prepare for an active shooter in our midst.

I first participated in active shooter training in 2001. The lessons learned from post-Columbine education resulted in partnerships between school districts and local police departments. By studying the all-to-frequent school attacks, police experts began to develop best practices and training for educators. That training consisted almost exclusively on concealment; lock doors, hide, and be quiet!

At the time my city’s police department came back to the school district in response to Sandy Hook in 2012, the protocol had changed. Certainly, strong perimeters and lockdown procedures remained important. But types of active avoidance and resistance were also incorporated. School Resource Officers were in almost every school. Knowledge of human traffic flow, applied to extensive study of building maps, helped police departments and school leaders develop escape plans by identifying likely patterns of student and invader movement. Interruption and distraction plans were developed to confuse invaders. It was certainly different from our training a decade earlier!

Officer Bernhardt’s presentation emphasized many of the same points from my last training. However, he urged us to consider that the targets of armed assaults are now more varied, and that each institution needs to consider the specifics of their environment and develop a safety plan that fits their needs.

I am grateful that the Rocky River Police Department offers this help. I am also grateful to Head Usher Len Abrams for arranging the training. It raised several questions for us to consider. The specifics of our congregation’s response to the training has not yet been determined. Watch Shorelines for further information.

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Adult Tutors Needed

In 2018, the Refugee Response Organization in Cleveland expanded their services to include in-home tutoring for Afghan women who have resettled in Cleveland, particularly in the West Park area. They are part of a very large group whose husbands were interpreters for our U.S. military. The organization is looking for female tutors who are willing to help these women with their language skills. More information about this organization, including this and other volunteer opportunities there, can be found on their website, www.refugeeresponse.org or contact Sydney Kornegay, Director of Adult Programming, at 803-376-7009 or sydney@refugeeresponse.org.

Thank you West Shore!

We asked for underwear, hats, gloves, and towels for Urban Hope and your response was amazing! Your generosity will make a difference in the lives of all the people who visit Urban Hope on Sunday afternoons. If you would like to take your support of Urban Hope to the next level, volunteers are needed on the third Sunday of each month to help with meal preparation and serving, as well as conversation. Maybe you have a skill you could share—playing an instrument, cutting hair, playing cards? Please contact Jean Kosmac at kosmac.jean@gmail.com or Jillian Cook at jillian-cook55@gmail.com if you would like more information and to find out how you can become more involved in Urban Hope, our UU presence on Cleveland’s near Westside.

Active Shooter Training at West Shore

By Jeff MARTIN, West Shore Member

The unfortunate reality of life in America today is that people who choose to gather together must prepare themselves for armed assault. I will not even try to plumb the depths of the myriad aspects of this reality. I won’t even offer up my opinions about those aspects. Instead I will focus on the practical question: What should we do about it?

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I am grateful that the Rocky River Police Department offers this help. I am also grateful to Head Usher Len Abrams for arranging the training. It raised several questions for us to consider. The specifics of our congregation’s response to the training has not yet been determined. Watch Shorelines for further information.
March is Reading and Youth Art Month, and we are so lucky to be able to host an art show with the Aesthetics Committee. Jerry Devis and I will be working together with the children to create a Handprints Spring Themed Show. We will be exhibiting this precious artwork in the Fireside Room beginning March 22. Our classes will be combining the two themes using a favorite book of the classroom to make art using their handprints.

Our second Annual Happy Pancake event will be held on Saturday, March 21, from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. Tickets are $10 for three pancakes and two sausage links along with juices and coffee. We will have several baskets to raffle off in Baker Hall. This will be a fundraising event for the Child Care Center—we hope you will support us.

We are looking forward to our new Parent Advisory Committee. We have two family members, one church member (needing two), and a trustee. Would you like to join us? The following gives a little more information:

- **Mission**: To have a strong partnership between the Church and Child Care Center to help with financial growth, promote marketing strategies, develop a positive reputation in the community and collaborate with the Child Care Center Administration in any area of need.

- **Committee**: The Advisory Committee will be made up of five (5) committee members: two center parents, two church members, and a BOT liaison. The Executive Staff includes the Director, Finance Manager, Office Manager and Senior Minister.

We have an open door policy. Please stop in and visit. Thank you for your continued support of the West Shore Child Care Center.

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**Deadlier Than the Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)**

By Martie TRAVIS, Parish Nurse

There is a deadly virus spreading across the country, preying on the sick and the elderly without mercy. In the past few months, it has also claimed the lives of at least 39 children. The virus is influenza, which is a far greater threat to Americans than the coronavirus from China.

To be sure the coronavirus should be taken seriously, but compared to influenza, it's risk and impact will be trivial. Influenza rarely gets this sort of attention, even though it kills more Americans each year than any other virus. It has already sickened at least 13 million people this winter, hospitalizing 120,000 and killing 6,600, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and it hasn't even peaked. In a bad year, the flu kills up to 61,000 Americans. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 650,000 are killed worldwide. Yet, Americans are not particularly concerned. Fewer than half of adults in this country get the flu shot. We are inured with the yearly warnings, it's "old news." Newer viruses like Ebola, Zika and Corona inspire terror. Maybe flu needs to be re-branded, and given a new exotic name, like XZ-47 virus or something even scarier.

Because the 2019-nCoV is new, humans have no antibodies against it. Vaccines and treatments are not yet developed, so the only way to protect ourselves is through knowledge of preventative measures, which are good practices like:

- Hand-washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (sing the ABC song to yourself). Failing that, a hand sanitizer should be used.
- Individuals should avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Individuals should avoid close contact with sick people.
- Sick people should stay at home from work, school, or church etc.
- Coughs and sneezes should be covered with a tissue, which should then be disposed of in the trash.
- Frequently touched objects and surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected regularly—phones, remotes, steering wheels, grocery carts, door handles etc.

There is testing available for the coronavirus if needed. The incubation period is 2 days to 2 weeks, and the most common symptom is fever, although cough, muscle aches and fatigue do also occur. Meanwhile, if you have not had your flu shot this year, it is still a very good idea to do so. You will be doing us all a favor (google "herd immunity").
Through the riveting stories of five American communities, “Right to Harm” exposes the devastating public health impact that factory farming has on many of our country's most disadvantaged citizens. Known formally as Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations or CAFOs, these facilities produce millions of gallons of untreated waste that destroys the quality of life for nearby neighbors. Fed up with the lack of regulation, these citizens turned activists band together from across the country to demand justice. (Film length: 75 minutes)

Hosted by the West Shore Social Action Committee and Co-sponsored by West Shore FaCT, Faith Communities Together for a Sustainable Future.