



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS of the CHESTER RIVER

December 2023

Dear Families,

Our congregation, the Unitarian Universalists of the Chester River (UUCR), was founded over 30 years ago in large part to offer value-centered education for children and youth. Some years our Religious Exploration program has been large, and others small.

Several have recently asked: Is UUCR still offering programs for children? What programs are for children on Sunday morning? How might I learn more?

The answer is yes! We are offering programs and activities for children of all ages every Sunday. This year we're using a program called Soul Matters which offers a variety of interactive lessons around broad themes. For example, in October we explored the theme of Heritage from many directions. In November we explored Generosity, and we are now, in December, considering Mystery. In addition, we have our special intergenerational Eve of the Eve service held on December 23rd. Everyone is welcome to join us at 7p.m. for a joyous celebration of the season.

We have a dedicated team of adults who invest their time on Sunday mornings with children who come through our doors, both by practicing and teaching the values of Unitarian Universalism. Beyond the class, we are set up to provide childcare and a simple 'circle time' for our youngest learners.

We know families today have competing Sunday morning priorities and commitments and we are very aware of the interruption of Covid to our programming for children. We know it has been hard, and it is in these confusing times that we especially see value in being part of a religious education program which:

- offers opportunities for children to ask life's big questions, to have their questions heard, and to explore moral, ethical, and spiritual topics from many perspectives.
- fosters formation of peer groups which help children feel supported as they develop; and
- creates opportunities for children to have trusted adults in their lives beyond their parents.

We understand from conversations with some parents that they want some kind of Religious Exploration for their children, but for some Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. may not be the best time for their families. We'd like to explore with interested parents what Religious Exploration might look like for them--what would best suit their schedules, what would meet the parents' and children's needs. Would you be interested in having this conversation with us?

On any Sunday our program can have from zero to five children. We are looking to grow the program and hope that you will consider bringing your children to UUCR for quality time with dedicated adults, and to help us shape and imagine the program going forward.

We are happy to answer your questions and would love to hear your ideas.

Everyone welcome. Come, check us out!

In connection,

The Religious Exploration Team

***Rev. Sue Browning, Kim Agee, Linda Dutton, Jackie Mathwich, Kimberly Shannon-Kehm,
Marti Stuedle, Amy Warner, and M.Q. Riding***

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