

Newsletter



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the
South Jersey Shore




Volume 11, Issue 12

December 2009

December Services

We meet at our UU Center, Pomona Rd and Liebig Street, Galloway NJ (near the north entrance to Richard Stockton College).
Services are at 10:00 am unless otherwise noted.

<p>December 6</p>	<p>Unitarian Universalist History Series: Part 2 -- American Steppingstones <i>Lay speaker Jon Luoma</i> In the late 18th century through the late 19th century, uniquely American forms of Universalism and Unitarianism blossomed and, as always, continued to evolve. Even back then, two separate U and U strands showed signs of intertwining commonality. (Central theme: Dogma Aren't Us.)</p>
<p>December 13</p>	<p>Going Up! What is your Elevator Speech? <i>Lay speaker Melissa Hutchison</i> Past UUA President, William Sinkford, in a 2003 issue of the UU World magazine, famously said the following: "I always encourage people to work on their elevator speech, what you'd say when you're going from the sixth floor to the lobby and somebody asks you, 'What's a Unitarian Universalist?' You've got forty-five seconds." UU's all over the world have been working on their elevator speeches ever since. Today several of our very own UU's at UUCSJS will share their elevator speeches with the congregation, and will also share more details about their personal theological journeys.</p>
<p>December 20 4:30 pm (no service 10 am)</p>	<p>Winter Solstice Singing Ritual <i>Led by Barbara Miller</i> <i>Deep, deep, deep in the dark of the winter...</i> A celebration of the Darkness and the Light with songs and stories. The singing will include music from calypso, Western choral singing, Native American texts, Greek mythology, feminist rounds, Pagan chants, and even an old American hymn. <i>The ritual runs about 75 minutes.</i></p> 
<p>December 27</p>	<p>Book of Questions <i>Lay speaker Mariann Maene</i> Our customary informal end of year service, where we consider questions -- some light-hearted, and some reaching deep inside us -- and share our answers.</p>

Who says UUs don't celebrate Christmas?

At 7 pm on Thursday, December 24, come join us for a service that's both traditional and alternative! We'll hear traditional Christmas readings, sing traditional Christmas carols, and listen to some traditional Christmas music -- but in an alternative way. ☺



Vision, Mission, Covenant discussions

Nov 29, Dec 6, Dec 13

After services on November 29, December 6 and 13, we will be holding discussions on our Mission, Vision, and Covenant, and how talking about these can make us a better community.

Unitarian Christmas...

Charles Follen, a Unitarian minister, introduced the Christmas Tree to New England.

Unitarian minister Alfred Shurtleff, is reported to have started the practice of putting lights in our windows at this season.

Many Christmas carols were written by Unitarians. Edmund Sears wrote *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*. Unitarian Henry Wordsworth Longfellow wrote *I Heard The Bells On Christmas Day*. The son of the Unitarian Minister and abolitionist James Pierpont wrote *Jingle Bells*, originally known as *The One Horse Open Sleigh*.

Charles Dickens, who worshiped in a British Unitarian church, wrote *A Christmas Carol*.

UU NEW YEARS at Murray Grove with Rev Craig Hirshberg December 31, 2009 - January 1, 2010

A festive, fun & spiritual new years overnight retreat for UUs, families and friends.

Individuals, couples and groups are welcome!

DINNER • 1920s-theme DANCE LESSONS and DANCE PARTY (any level of inexperience OK!) • RINGING OUT the spirit of 2009 • and MANIFESTING a wonderful 2010!

\$75 per person; children under 12 \$50.

Space limited – RSVP ASAP!

609-693-5558 or murraygrove@murraygrove.org

International Gift Fair

Saturday and Sunday,
December 5-6
10 am to 4 pm

Mainland Regional High School, Linwood NJ
www.southjerseyfairtrade.com



Hand-crafted merchandise from around the world. Come by for a totally unique shopping experience!!



This Fair exhibits beautifully handcrafted baskets, jewelry, clothing, instruments, toys, and home decor from over 30 countries around the world. All gifts are fairly traded and the profits of this sale will benefit the most disadvantaged artisans around the world. Each shopper will receive a

free cup of fair trade coffee and enjoy music of the world.

Ensure that your holiday purchases benefit people in need both locally and abroad.

Participants include:

SERRV (www.serrv.org),
Ten Thousand Villages (www.tenthousandvillages.com),
Global Handcrafters (www.globalhandcrafters.com),
Global Mamas (www.globalmamas.org),
Handmade Expressions (www.handmadeexpressions.net),
Frum Sum Dump (The Himese Twins),
Herban Legend (www.herbanlegend.net),
Yoga Nine/Buddha Body (www.yoganine.com),
Gitas USA (www.gitasusa.com)
Project Have Hope (www.projecthavehope.org)

The gift fair is the perfect place for beautiful, handcrafted, fairly traded gifts for every budget -- but it's much more than just shopping! Learn about Fair Trade and what you can do to make a difference locally and abroad, using your power as a consumer.

At the fair you can take a chance on a raffle, enjoy Fair Trade coffee, world music, and refreshments and take care of your holiday shopping!

This year, proceeds benefit local organizations and the Central Asia Institute (www.ikat.org) in addition to supporting the work of the South Jersey Fair Trade Alliance.

See you at the Fair!!

For more information, talk to Colby Tippins, or contact 609-713-7272 or email southjerseyfairtrade@gmail.com

REFLECTIONS by President Jim Gentile

This is the season during which many traditions celebrate light's victory over darkness. It also is the season during which our calendar ends. While it may not first appear so, these events are closely related. It seems that the darkness we seek to conquer is that of our unknowable future and ultimate purpose. Thus it is on New Year's Eve we seek to "re-solve" these unknowables, promising to do things differently and to atone to ourselves for self-perceived failures.

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* speaks to the personal accountings which we undertake at this season. The story rests upon the premise that humanity and creation are universal gifts and that, in receiving these gifts, compassion is demanded of us. To this extent, the story echoes Emerson's challenge in *Self Reliance*: to accept our "transcendent destiny" and advance upon "Chaos and the Dark."

In the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, when the deceased fails to attain liberation through the recognition of the 'Mild Deities', they then are confronted by the 'Fierce Deities.' These manifest forcefully to break into the deceased's awareness so as to focus consciousness upon liberation from the cycles of karmic existence by letting go of one's ego, or self-conception.

Dickens uses a similar technique to forcefully break through our more maudlin self-conceptions of this season. Before the Spirit of Christmas Present departs from Scrooge, it brings two children from the folds of its robe. The children are "wretched, abject, frightful, hideous and miserable." They kneel at the feet of the Spirit clinging to his garment. When Scrooge asks to whom the children belong, the Spirit replies:

“ They are Man's. This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased. Deny it, slander those who tell it ye! Admit it for your factious purposes, and make it worse! And bide the end! ”

The clock then tolls twelve and the Spirit of Christmas Present departs, leaving Scrooge alone to journey into his future and to discover its purpose.

As Jethro Tull notes, "Christmas spirit is not what you drink."

Jim

Please note! Board of Trustees meetings are ALWAYS open to the public.
Any member can observe – no advance "permission" or "RSVP" needed – just SHOW UP!
Board meetings are the second Tuesday of the month, 6:30 - 8:30 pm in the downstairs lounge.

Notes from Board Meeting November 10, 2009

General building management issues were discussed, including food expiration management, signage, copier usage, lighting, building security, cleaning contract oversight, trash removal, and alarm system reliability. The Interior Committee will be conducting a special fundraiser to purchase artwork to be hung at the back of the dais. Also granted \$500 from the capital budget to purchase corelle plates for kitchen supply.

Next Board meeting – Tuesday, December 8, at 6:30 pm in the downstairs lounge.

UUCSJS Board of Trustees 2009-2010	
Officers	Members At Large
Jim Gentile 10 <i>President</i>	Ruth Eaves 10
Debbi Dagavarian 10 <i>Vice President</i>	John Searight 11
Karen Zindell 11 <i>Secretary</i>	Karen York 11
Primrose Reeves 10 <i>Treasurer</i>	* year given is end of term, e.g. 11 means thru 6/30/2011

Default Committee Meeting schedule

1st Sunday Adult RE
 2nd Sunday Children's RE
 3rd Sunday Sunday Services
 4th Sunday Membership, Social Justice
 5th Sunday Potluck! *Please, no committee meetings.*

UU Book Lovers

“MARLEY WAS DEAD TO BEGIN WITH...”
 The book group will be holding its annual holiday reading on Friday, December 11 at 7 pm in the UU Center. An adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* (written by our very own Tom Celandine) will be read by book group members and, usually, anyone else present. Coffee, tea or water will be provided. It is asked that individuals bring something to share -- a dessert, chips, etc. If there are any questions, please contact Helene Gentile.

Beware of the altered constant of gravity over the next few weeks.

Buy **Gift Cards** any Sunday for **Acme & Shoprite**.

Don't you have to buy groceries anyway??!



Using these gift cards for groceries nets the congregation 5%.
We also have Fair Trade coffee and tea!

MARGARET CIRCLE

Since December 3 will be our last meeting in 2009, and to herald in the spirit that prevades this time of year, the Margaret Circle will join together in a luncheon on that day. Regardless of your belief, we can all take a special time to reinforce the spirit of love, kindness, sharing, giving and receiving. A time to reflect on how our attitudes can positively affect our friends, families and the world.

A space is reserved for 1:00 pm at the Italian Gourmet Restaurant at the corner of Jimmie Leeds Road and Pitney Road in Galloway .

I'm counting on you all joining us for the opportunity to start the season with high thoughts and shared good will. Please let me know if you plan on attending so I can confirm the count with the restaurant. Email Arlene Yacka with your RSVP. I'd like to see a big turn out as each of you have so much to contribute to the group.

Fund Raising for the Sanctuary Wall Hanging

Many UUs have approached members of the Interior Committee expressing the need for a piece of artwork to hang behind the pulpit. We held a brief meeting after service on November 15 to view and discuss the concept of a mixed media wall hanging that Erin Endicott has designed for UUCSJS. The proposed artwork would be the first of several pieces we might purchase over time.

Erin, a local artist and friend of UU, would hand paint a 6' x 8' canvas using water color techniques in earth tones of cranberry, greens, blues, and yellows. The painting would be embellished with stitching in yarn and fibers that would add texture and interest. **Please check out the bulletin board in the vestibule for an idea what the wall hanging might look like** (although it lacks the stitching and details of the proposed piece). Erin's design also meets the practical need of being able to be easily taken down when a service or an event calls for something different, and rolled and stored.

The Board, at the November 10th meeting, approved the solicitation of donations from the congregation. We will need to raise \$1200 (\$350 for materials and \$850 for the artwork and installation.) We anticipate that the wall hanging will be ready for unveiling at our 11th Anniversary in February 2010. Fundraising will take place on Sunday, December 6 and Sunday, December 13.

Inclement Weather?

UUCSJS has in place a phone tree for emergency notifications. Services will be cancelled **only** in case of SEVERE weather situations. You can see a copy of the phone tree on our Members-Only webspace. Go to uucsjs.org and click on Members Only, log in, then click on Miscellaneous Documents.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MISSION: Broadening Religious Imaginations

The adult RE committee's most recent chairperson, Barbara Clark, has stepped down from the position. She will be sorely missed by all members of the committee. Vice chair Marsha Hannah has taken over as Committee Chair.

The Adult RE committee recently sponsored a very successful program called **InterPlay**. The one-day workshop was led by our own **Pam Altaffer**, with about 20 people attending. Pam was pleased to watch everyone relax into their creativity and to connect with one another and with themselves; she marveled in the way that everyone bonded with one another and how the care, love, fun, sense of play and authenticity filled the room as they all moved, told their stories, made tones and discussed creating more "physicality of grace" in their lives. Participants commented that they "would do it again in a heartbeat" and that they loved the interaction and positive energy.

In addition to all the fun people had, the program also raised almost \$300 for UUCSJS.

We are pleased to announce that beginning Sunday, January 10, 2010 at 11:30 am we will begin a presentation/discussion program that will explore evolutionary spirituality based on **Buddhism and Consciousness** studies. It will include practice in meditation and applications to current problems and personal concerns. The program will be held the second Sunday of every month, and will be facilitated by **Alan Oliver**.

The **Spirituality Discussion Group** will next meet on Sunday, December 13. That will be the last meeting of that group during the year. The group will begin to meet in the evenings beginning in January, beginning on Tuesday, January 26, 2010. At that meeting the group will decide what day of the month is best to set up as a regularly scheduled meeting date.

The Adult RE committee will be exploring the UUA series of programs called **Tapestry of Faith**. *Tapestry* is a series of programs and resources for all ages that nurture our UU identity, spiritual growth and our community of justice and love. The UUA has developed these programs to offer a variety of resources that will foster religious growth and learning for the 21st century.

The next meeting of the Adult RE committee is Sunday December 6 at 11:30 am. We look forward to seeing those new members who signed up to join the committee, but all are welcome. Anyone who has an idea for an adult RE program is welcome to attend the meeting and present their idea.

-- Marsha Hannah, Chair, Adult RE



WSSR rehearsals are:

Saturday December 12, 9:30 am-11:30am
Tuesday, December 15, 6:30pm-8:00pm
Sunday, December 20, 1 pm

Holy Stuff

Father, Mother God, here we are together -- rich and poor; educated and not so well educated; gay and straight; democrats and republicans; some of us with light skin, some of us with darker; some of us walking, some of us unable to walk: none of us as whole as we would like to be -- help us to know that we are all your children and we are all holy stuff. May we be a blessing to the life of anyone who enters this sanctuary -- and may this church be a true sanctuary -- and may those who come as strangers in turn help us grow in wisdom, in compassion, and in joy of living. Amen.

-- By Marilyn J. Sewell

The Flaming Chalice Symbol of Unitarian Universalism

The flaming chalice in a circle is the symbol of Unitarian Universalism. The flaming chalice is a flame burning the holy oil of helpfulness and sacrifice -- spreading warmth and light and hope. The circles in which it is contained represents the Unitarian and Universalist heritages with its concept of worldwide community.

The chalice has been a symbol of liberal religion since the fifteenth century, dating to John Hus in Transylvania. The flaming chalice was adopted by the Unitarian Service Committee in 1941.



Value the dark

Meditation for the longest night.

On Solstice Eve, value the dark. On this longest night of the year, before the light overcomes the dark, sit in the dark (alone or with others) and think about the importance of darkness. Bless mushrooms that grow in the dark and honeysuckle that sends its luscious scents into the night. Be grateful for the darkness that soothes us to sleep, the darkness that animals require for hibernation. Give thanks for sheltering dark places: the rich earth where seeds germinate, the caves that harbored our ancient ancestors (and where some of our sun gods were born), the cellars that keep us safe from tornadoes, the wombs that provide our first nourishment. Acknowledge the darkness of suffering, which can deepen our appreciation of life and strengthen our connection to one another.

from *In Nature's Honor: Myths and Rituals Celebrating the Earth*, by Patricia Montley, 2005 as excerpted on uuworld.org.

Children's Religious Education

Last month, our students participated in our congregation's first Eco Fair by performing a song during the "Full Green Ahead" service and presenting live demonstrations during the educational portion of the festivities. Jack Welch, Carly Jansch, Mia Terrazzini, Katherine Altaffer, and Elena St. Amour presented stations geared at teaching folks how to save water while washing dishes, brushing teeth and washing hands, and Colin Hutchison and Emma Holaday brought attention to the subject of the overuse of plastic water bottles. These kids are setting a great green example for the next generation to follow!

Our December lessons will include discussions about the festivals of Christmas and Hanukkah. There will be no morning service -- and so, **no Religious Education classes -- on December 20**, as we will be celebrating the Winter Solstice Singing Ritual at 4:30 pm. Families with young children are encouraged to enjoy this special service together, and our teens will be participating in the ritual as acolytes.

In January, two of our teachers will take a much deserved break from Religious Education. Thanks go to Brenda Yunker and Michael Cluff for leading our elementary and middle school classes for the past several months...don't be strangers you two!! Jim Gentile will be picking up where Michael left off with the Bibleodeon class and Paul Utts returns from his Children's RE "sabbatical" to lead our Grade 3-4 group in their Spirit of Adventure lessons this winter (sorry, choir, you'll have to share!). Joe Terrazzini and Karen York will continue to lead their classes, and their dedication is a blessing for the program.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who have signed up to assist in our Religious Education classes this year! You are all appreciated!

-- Heidi Jansch, Director of Religious Education

Donating your extra turkey to the FoodBank?



The Community FoodBank continues to accept frozen turkeys beyond Thanksgiving.

OUR 2009 SERVICE AUCTION

- Thank you to Debbi Dagavarian, chair.
- Thank you to the whole committee.
- Thank you to all the workers.
- Thank you to all those who donated so many things and services!
- Thank you to all who bought and bought and bought!



Go out on a limb. That's where the fruit is.

-- Anonymous

**The FUUN Committee
is at it again!**

**NEW YEAR'S EVE
FAMILY GAME NIGHT
8 PM - ?**

**SLEEPOVER
MIDNIGHT TILL MORNING**

**NEW YEAR'S DAY
BRUNCH
9 AM TO 12 NOON**

The FUUN Committee is sponsoring a New Year's Eve Family Game Night, overnight sleepover, and New Year's Day Brunch at the UU Center.

Come to one part, two parts, or all three!

Stay tuned for more info!!!

Revisiting Joys & Sorrows

SHARED PAIN IS LESSENERED, SHARED JOY IS INCREASED. THUS WE REFUTE ENTROPY.
-- SPIDER ROBINSON

I have written four pieces that focused, or touched on, Joy and Sorrows over the six years that I have been a member of the Sunday Services Committee and coordinator for the Chalice Table crew. As we have grown, moving from rented space to rented space, and finally to our own home, new friends and members have had questions, and programmatic changes have been instituted. We are still growing and changing, and it has been a year since Joys and Sorrows have been addressed "in print". So, here I am again.

In the beginning (of our Congregational life), Joys and Sorrows were shared every week. They were spoken aloud as a candle was lighted and placed in a sand-filled vessel to burn for the remainder of the service; or J&S were signaled silently as a candle was lighted during the offertory. We were a small group and were just getting to know one another.

Among the critical things we learned in the early years was that we need to emphasize that the Joys and Sorrows are *personal*. That is, we express Sorrow that a dear friend or relative has just been diagnosed with breast cancer and needs our support (and prayers); but J&S is *not* the venue for a polemic on the dangers of hormone replacement therapy. This is the time for sharing Joys and Sorrows that touch us personally, not a time for political proselytizing. Keeping this in mind is consistent with our 4th and 5th principles. We each should feel free to express Joys, both great and small, when they arise. At the same time, we can consider the fact that our joys *may* touch sensitive spots in the hearts of others. Expressing the Joy as an occasion for gratitude, rather than seeming to "brag", is a way of acting in concert with our 1st and 2nd principles.

Sharing Joys and Sorrows opens a window or door, through which any of us may step during coffee hour -- taking an opportunity to congratulate, or commiserate with, those who have spoken. With this action, those in the congregation embody still others of the seven principles.

The first major change in the *process* of sharing Joys and Sorrows came in 2004 when we faced the fact that the burning of dozens of candles each Sunday wasn't very "green". We introduced the use of pebbles dropped into a single large clear bowl, filled with water. The spreading of the ripples in the basin of water was a visual reminder of the spreading of Joy and the sharing of Sorrow. Additionally, after the service, the water was poured on the Earth to be shared with the entire interconnected web of life -- allowing the 7th principle to be kinesthetically observed on behalf of the Congregation each week.

About a year ago, two vessels replaced the single vessel to take into account the changes in furniture in our permanent sanctuary. The frequency of spoken Joys and Sorrows has decreased noticeably and some weeks even silent Joys and Sorrows are not included in the service. The motivations for these changes are many and relate to the size of the congregation, the desire to maintain a specific mood and focus

through the whole service, the felt need on the part of some to end the service not later than 11:00 am, as well as other issues. The Sunday Services Coordinator, in consultation with the featured speaker, decides what happens on any given Sunday.

If you have a question or concern about the general "shape" of UUCSJS services or about any specific aspect, email me, or speak with me after a service.

-- Margaret Rea

FULL GREEN AHEAD

ECO FAIR a SUCCESS

The purpose of our recent Eco Service Fair was to inspire everyone to commit to taking action to help slow global climate change, and it was a huge success! Spearheaded by the Social Justice Committee, members of our congregation pulled together information, materials, handouts, and items for sale that tied into our mission; they created posters, sign-up forms, handouts and displays, including a costume created out of 500 single-use plastic bags; and finally, they pulled in community volunteers and invited family and friends to attend. The music was just wonderful and Barbara's guidance with the service helped transform our off-the-wall idea into a very meaningful service. Heartfelt thanks goes out to all who helped, and to everyone who takes the message to heart.

If you weren't present on "Community" Sunday on November 8, it is not too late to sign up to volunteer on the Social Justice Committee. We will establish our priorities and elect new officers at our January meeting, so now is the perfect time to join. We also have a sub-committee on Global Climate Change.

-- Jesse Connor, Chair, Social Justice Committee

From uuworld:

Ten-year-old refuses to stand for Pledge of Allegiance

Boy who attends Arkansas UU church protests unequal treatment of GLBT people.

When ten-year-old Will Phillips, of West Fork, Ark., found a principle he couldn't stand up for -- he sat down. And the repercussions from that action have spread across the country.

On Monday, October 5, Will, whose family attends the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fayetteville, Arkansas, refused to stand up for the Pledge of Allegiance in his fifth-grade classroom at school. That action stemmed from a conversation he'd had with his parents, Laura and Jay Phillips, about equal rights.

In Will's own words: "At the end of the Pledge it says 'liberty and justice for all.' But there isn't justice for people who are gay. And there's a lot of racism and sexism still, and there are lots of people who can't get health care."

So Will, after thoughtful consideration, decided he wasn't going to stand up any longer for the Pledge until it represented everyone. And since October 5, he hasn't.

For the rest of the story,

see <http://www.uuworld.org/news/articles/153346.shtml>

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

Minister
vacant

**Music Director &
Sunday Service Coordinator**
Barbara Miller
music@uucsjs.org

**Director of Religious Education
& Staff Coordinator**
Heidi Jansch
dre@uucsjs.org

Church Administrator
Tricia Berko
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Newsletter
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Board of Trustees 2009-10
Debbi Dagavarian, Ruth Eaves,
Jim Gentile, Primrose Reeves,
John Searight, Karen York, Karen Zindell

Visit us on the Web: www.uucsjs.org



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(609) 965-9400**

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