



Newsletter

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the
South Jersey Shore

Volume 14, Issue 12

December 2012

December Services “Hope”

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.

December 2	Spreading Hope: UUCSJS>AIDS <i>Reverend Charlie Dieterich</i> December 1 is World AIDS Day. Our congregation can be greater than HIV, be a force in eliminating this disease in our community and the world. How? The "WE>AIDS" Campaign says: Knowledge, Talk, Protection, Testing, and Action will eliminate AIDS. Come, build a world where we bind up the broken.
December 9	Hanukkah and Hope <i>Reverend Charlie Dieterich</i> The story of Hanukkah is one of oppression and hope, transformed into a story of pride and sharing. As people of differing faith backgrounds, what can we learn from this celebration?
December 16	The Cosmic Dance <i>Lay speaker Margaret Rea</i> Author Joyce Rupp's <i>The Cosmic Dance</i> offers poetry and musings on Hope – and Margaret will share some of that and her own rekindled hope.
Friday, December 21, 7 pm	Winter Solstice Singing Ritual <i>Led by Barbara Miller</i> Deep, deep, deep in the dark of the winter... 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>
December 23	Wrapping and Unwrapping <i>Reverend Charlie Dieterich</i> Be present for this one!
Monday, December 24, 7 pm	Christmas Eve with Readings and Carols <i>Reverend Charlie Dieterich</i> Brighten your Christmas Eve with a community celebration at the UU Center. All ages are welcome to share in the glow of the holiday. (One night only, no snow date!)
December 30	Fire Communion <i>Lay speakers Michelle Tomko and Theresa McReynolds</i> Join us for a UU fire communion. Theresa McReynolds will create a ritual in the pagan "Burning Bowl" tradition of burning the old to make room for the new. Michelle Tomko will discuss letting go of our past and our old stories. The congregation will be asked to write down something they wish to be rid of and we will burn the papers in a community bowl. This will be an inter-generational service. This is of course all based on the supposition that the Mayans are wrong.

International Gift Fair
Saturday, December 8, 10 am - 6 pm
Stockton College Campus Center

Swim against the tide of a consumerist nation and show your support for Fair Trade.
Find unique gifts for loved ones and acquaintances. Always interesting!
Visit their Facebook page at
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/South-Jersey-Fair-Trade-Alliance/23856521166>

Supporting Murray Grove

Murray Grove, a historic Universalist site in Lanoka Harbor, NJ, was in the path of Hurricane Sandy. Once their power was restored they were able to help emergency crews and displaced residents in the aftermath of Sandy, but they also need help!

While they are **grateful** that no one was hurt and they sustained less severe damage than many of their neighbors in Ocean County and elsewhere on the Jersey Shore, the damage at Murray Grove is considerable. A preliminary estimate of **\$12,000 in uninsured expenses** is anticipated. To help Murray Grove get back to normal operations, please consider donating to their **Sandy Restoration Appeal**.

Please donate whatever you can by either sending a check to the Murray Grove Retreat and Renewal Center, PO Box 246, Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734 or through their website: <http://www.murraygrove.org>

Growing our UU Faith

Rescheduled from November

On Sunday, December 2, Sue Oldenburg, a member of First Unitarian Wilmington and a professional videographer, will be recording our service for a promotional video for the JPD Chalice Lighters program. As Chalice Lighter grant recipients, we have been asked to share some of our experiences about the program.

Some members of our congregation have already agreed to be interviewed for the sound track of the video, and a few shots of our congregation "in action" will be included in the 3-4 minute show, which may be posted to the JPD web site and will be provided on DVD to all congregations holding their annual Chalice Lighter Sunday campaigns.

If you prefer NOT to be seen in the video, even at a glance, please come to the service anyway and just take a seat in one of the last two rows. Sue will be sure not to pan that area. If Sue decides to take some shots in the RE area and you prefer your children not be included, just give a note to your child's teacher that morning with his/her name and "No video".

Please know that no one will be identified by name and the video will only be used within the JPD. Thank you!

Winter is a-coming in! Time for homemade soup and warm baked bread.

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

Using these gift cards for groceries nets the congregation 5%.

We also have Fair Trade coffee, tea, and chocolate!

December Theme: Hope

The Worship Committee decided that Hope was a good theme for the darkest month of the year, as we approach the winter solstice and check our budgets to see what our Christmas, Yule or Hanukkah celebrations will include. As I say in my longer article, it is perfectly normal to have emotions of anger, sadness, joy and fear, and somehow, Christmas brings those out very strongly. I hope our December events at UUCSJS will give you a sense of peace, of worth, of charity and of love as we gather to celebrate, once again. - Rev. Charlie

Circle Dinners

Signups for Circle Dinners are beginning this week, and will extend through most of December. Circle dinners are a wonderful way for people in our community to get to know and enjoy each other in a relaxed way. Folks sign up for a series of 4 dinners: January 19, February 16, April 20, and May 18. From this group, Marie Taylor will construct a schedule of dinners that each includes 8 people. Each month there will be rotation of people, with the goal of having dinner with as many different folks as possible. You may sign up as a couple, or as a single, or two single people may want to sign up together as a couple. Each month each couple, or two singles, will be assigned one of the following roles:

- A: Host, who provides space, and hors d'oeuvres with accompanying wine, coffee, and tea. (If your home is too small, you can arrange to use the church, or trade assignments with one of your dinner group.)
- B: Provides main course.
- C: Provides salad, and wine for dinner.
- D: Provides bread and dessert.

If you know that you will not be present for one of the circle dinner dates, you may sign up and specify this. If you are interested in circle dinners, but not able to commit, consider signing up as a substitute to fill in for those whose plans change. This means that you may be called upon by those who are in need of finding a substitute for themselves. And each month, those who are substitutes, along with new people in our community, will be asked if they want to get together for a circle dinner.

A handout at the signup table explains this further. Please consider this wonderful program, now in its third year. Remember that the idea of the Circle Dinners is to enjoy good fellowship and food, NOT a competition for gourmet meals. Join in and have fun.

Systems on a Saturday morning

I haven't done any classes at UUCSJS yet, and as an experiment I thought I'd try teaching a workshop on Systems Thinking, a technique used by organization managers to help understand why some groups function well, and others seem stuck. Come to the UU Center at 10 am on Saturday, December 8, and spend the rest of the morning learning about Systems. There will be a signup sheet on Sundays, to help plan numbers. -Rev Charlie

Reverend Charlie's Page

December Reflections

In a sermon last month, I quoted "Emotion-ologists" saying that all feelings can be traced to four emotions: Mad, Sad, Glad and Afraid... I mean Afraid. And how at times we can feel each of those, some combination of them, or none at all. How are we at dealing with emotions in our worship? We are much more subdued than some preachers who weep, yell and sing with ecstatic joy, or congregants who confess their fears and weaknesses. But we are more emotional than some Buddhist Retreats and Friends Meetings (though the name "Quaker" refers to being seized by the Holy Spirit -- a very emotional moment!). We have, it seems, unwritten rules about how to be together. We don't applaud in the service, and, while "joy" and "sorrow" are specifically welcomed into our time together, we don't seem to acknowledge "anger" or "fear," though we may bring those emotions into the sanctuary, and may carry them home with us as well. Maybe this limits our membership. Maybe acknowledgment of these emotions represents an unmet need in our community?

Recently I've been thinking about a comment a visitor made when deciding not to join the congregation: "You Unitarians aren't as open minded as you think you are!" Of course at the time I bristled and felt defensive. But more recently I've decided he might be right. Indeed, UUs are not known for being open minded in some cases. As Dr. King once said, "There are some things concerning *which we must* always be *maladjusted* if *we* are to be people of good will." But even within the congregation we have a variety of beliefs and understandings about rituals, symbols and what is sacred. Perhaps we can think more in terms of relationship, and how we are together, rather than open-mindedness, beliefs, faith or even personal goals within our organization.

Relationship gets at the principle of a "Free and Responsible search for truth and meaning." The "free" part is individual, and the "responsible" deals with relationship. Each week our services might include a speaker holding a theology you do not accept; in some cases the theology may have oppressed you in the past or might make you feel uncomfortable. Relationship determines how you respond.

In colonial Massachusetts, Universalist minister John Murray had rocks thrown at him for preaching Universalism. Earlier in 1659-1661 our Puritan forebears executed four Quakers for teaching in public. I believe civility and tolerance is more widespread these days, and we are now much more likely to thank the speaker, listening for other insights in their message. If their words are irresponsible -- racist or sexist, for example -- we might do what my gay friend, a member of Jerry Falwell's congregation did: when Rev. Falwell began an anti-gay section of the sermon, my friend and his allies simply stood in silence, to show that they existed and did not agree.

Free search leads to Ralph Waldo Emerson's advice to: "speak what you think to-day in words as hard as cannon balls, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again,

though it contradict every thing you said to-day." It is hard to find places where speech is truly free, where search is honored and cherished. Do we value our community for its freedom?

I've also been thinking about a minister friend of mine who had a man interested in attending his church. The man is a registered sex offender, and my friend followed UUA guidelines to create a Limited Access Agreement, allowing the man to participate in part of the life of the congregation while avoiding all events involving children. Our opening words say explicitly that "You are welcome here." But that does not mean that all behaviors are welcome here. Still, I agree with my friend, who saw it as his duty to find a way of serving all, including those legally limited in their participation.

But what about folks who are law abiding, but make others feel unsafe, or otherwise interfere with their worship experience? That is where a "Covenant of Right Relations" comes in. It is a way of making explicit a statement like: "we affirm your worth and dignity, but being in our community requires agreeing to interact in a particular way whenever you are here."

Consider small group ministry sessions, like the reflection sessions we held in October. These sessions with 8-10 adults are covenanted to make them safe for all participants. The covenant may include an agreement to limit crosstalk and "fixing behavior" (where, uninvited, one participant tells someone else what to do). The covenant might also include the promise to not disclose stories shared in the group without everyone's permission. Other congregations have very active "small group" programs and report enthusiastic support from participants. This sort of continuing community allows for sharing of many thoughts and emotions in a safe environment, and it might provide the missing link in creating community for us here. I hope you will be willing to take part in the small group sessions we are planning for January and February.

A trusting relationship is important for Sunday mornings too, not just to limit rock throwing! I am excited that the Board has agreed to hold a workshop to develop a Covenant of Right Relations (or Good Relations, as some congregations call it). They are planning to do this soon after Christmas; watch the midweek announcements for more information and plans.

So my monthly reflection seems to have been all about relationship, rather than about Hope, our theme for the month. Or maybe our best hope is to be explicit in how we relate to each other in our community. I believe that talking about it, and being clear in the promises we make to each other, can deepen our relationships and promote inner and community serenity.

Peace, Rev. Charlie

Pastor Charlie has regular office hours from 10 am to 2 pm Wednesdays at the UU Center.

Feel free to call the office for a half hour appointment (he has his own mailbox on the answering machine), or send him a note at minister@uucsjs.org.



The Paw Print

Your link to the doings of the South Jersey Animal Advocates

There are many UU's who don't mind paying more, often quite a bit more, for organic foods, fair trade clothes, and electric or hybrid cars. As we all make an effort to sprinkle social justice into our consumer spending, SJAA would like to remind our meat-eating members that with just a little effort they can avoid participating in the cruel circle of animal abuse in the meat industry.

We are not talking becoming a vegan here! *Although that would be nice.* But we are suggesting that you explore, get creative, learn and have a little fun with your quest for protein.

Start small. Pay that fifty cents more a pound for Readington Farms chicken at Shoprite instead of the notably inhumane Perdue. Peg Gillies has plenty of gift cards to sell you so you will be prepared for the markup. Hop online and find where to get a great steak from a small farm that lets their animals *have* a life before taking it. Make your dinner salad a lot bigger and your side dishes a little more filling with whole grains and consume less meat. Treat yourself this Christmas to a Heritage turkey. They are part of American history and if you compared them to turkeys sold in super markets, you would not believe you are even eating the same species! Ask Michelle Tomko. Or go to www.heritageturkeyfoundation.org for more information.

And if you do only one thing, boycott and help spread the word about Walmart's pork supplier Christensen Farms. This undercover video, which is very hard to watch due to the graphic images, is narrated by Bob Barker at <http://tinyurl.com/arzx2x4>. If you choose not to watch it, take our word for it. Don't buy meat from Walmart!

SJAA wishes everyone a happy holiday season. We hope your new year's resolution is to join our wonderful efforts to help the animals of South Jersey in 2013! Also don't forget that Hurricane Sandy made many pets homeless and this might be the time for you to take the plunge into pet fostering or ownership.

In December, we'll continue our collection for Kibble Cupboard of South Jersey, an all-volunteer organization that provides seniors, low income families, people with disabilities, and those who are homeless with pet food, litter, and other pet care necessities. As our area continues to recover from Hurricane Sandy, Kibble Cupboard is reaching out to the most vulnerable in our community to ensure that their companion animals stay out of shelters and in the loving arms of their owners.

Kibble Cupboard needs pet food, particularly dry cat food, scoopable cat litter, and gift cards (PetSmart, Target, etc.). Kibble Cupboard's founders have expressed their great appreciation for the contributions provided by UUCSJS over the years and are especially grateful for any extra help that can be offered now. "Like" Kibble Cupboard on Facebook or visit www.kibblecupboard.com.

SJAA is also looking for a Havahart cat trap for friend of the congregation with a colony if you have one to lend out or donate.

As we talked of freedom and justice one day for all, we sat down to steaks. I am eating misery, I thought, as I took the first bite. And spit it out. ~ Alice Walker



"HOLIDAY EDITION"

UU Book Lovers Group!

Friday, December 14, 7 pm

UU Center Lounge

Come for convivial conversation, scrumptious sweet & savory snacks, and lighthearted laughter—culminating in a White Elephant Gift Exchange!

*Our suitable selection for December is **WINTER SOLSTICE** by Rosamunde Pilcher. "...warms the heart like a good cup of tea." (Booklist). Marsha Hannah will lead the discussion of this favorite British author, well-known to many of our regular UU book lovers.*

JANUARY'S BOOK: *The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton
Friday, January 18, 2013 (led by Ellie Gibson).

UUCSJS Women's Association Meetings

Margaret Circle will have their Holiday luncheon on Thursday, December 6, 1 pm at the Gourmet Italian Restaurant at the corner of Pitney and Jimmie Leeds Roads in Galloway. Please let Judy know if you plan to attend. The good food and fellowship is guaranteed to get you into the holiday spirit.

Judy Brown, Circle Leader

Hurricane Sandy Recovery Assistance

New Jersey's Clean Energy Program is here to help New Jersey residents and businesses in recovery efforts after Hurricane Sandy. We connect you to programs that provide financial assistance and environmental savings to get your home or business back up and running.

If you are purchasing (or already purchased) new appliances that are energy efficient, you may be eligible for a rebate!

Appliance Rebates

- Furnace or Boiler - up to \$400
- Heat Pump - \$500
- Central Air Conditioner - \$500
- Water Heater- \$300
- Clothes Washer - \$50

For more info call 866-NJSMART or visit <http://www.njcleanenergy.com/residential/programs/warmadvantage>

Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.

~ Vaclav Havel

There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in.

~ Leonard Cohen

Message from UUCSJS President Karen York

Gratitude and Hope

I want to thank members of the UUCSJS community for the wonderful support to me and my family in dealing with my mother's death, and hosting the lovely memorial service celebrating her life -- all of this happening in the wake of the devastating Hurricane Sandy, which affected several of our members, Murray Grove, and so many people in our region. I had dozens of students in my classes, and some faculty colleagues that were displaced by Sandy and others who lost their homes, so I am well aware of the many deep needs in our region and that the recovery efforts will continue for some time. I hope our congregation can play some role in these recovery efforts.

Luckily at our UU Center, just a few trees were down. Personally, I lost electricity for only a short while, during Sandy, but I lost power again a few days later during the early November snowstorm. I found it reassuring that the congregation maintained a healthy stability and momentum during these various unexpected events. All in all, November was a good month for the congregation with a successful volunteer recruiting effort, and a successful service auction event. Thanks to all the members of the congregation that worked to make these events successful.

On the horizon in the coming months are several educational workshops that provide opportunities for leadership development and personal growth. On December 8, Rev. Charlie will offer a Saturday workshop on "**Systems Thinking**." Systems thinking focuses not on individual pieces, parts, or people in a group, but on relationships between individuals. This is a different and useful perspective, which will give participants the opportunity to explore and cultivate an awareness of our interdependence, and how we function together as a group.

In January, we will continue the theme of interdependent relationships and offer a Saturday "**Covenanting**" workshop. Covenanting refers to the promises we make to each other about how to be together in community. Unitarian Universalists are a covenantal faith community. We are held together by our relationships and the promises we make to one another. Taking the time to articulate those promises, can improve communication, understanding, and the way we work together. We can learn to listen to each other, accepting that there may be different perspectives or differences of opinion. We can learn to keep our individual needs in balance with the health and vitality of the congregation as a whole. *We are each responsible for our presence in this world and the effect that it has on others.* This is an important area for the congregation to explore as we continue to grow, evolve, and mature as a congregation.

Karen York

"Unitarian Universalism is a discipline that teaches us to explore the depth of our personal spirituality. It teaches us not only responsibility for ourselves and for our path but for the healthy path of others. Even when that path leads away from us. Once on our path, we know that it is ever evolving. Our personal truth will change and grow and become. Unitarian Universalism is a living thing and part of our lives, like our heartbeat, or our breath, and just as vital. On the surface it seems to be simple and to demand very little of any of its devotees. This is deceptive to the newcomer. Unitarian Universalism is far from a simple faith that demands little from devotees. It demands responsibility, understanding, patience, respect, right relationship and diligence. It demands we keep searching for the truth and real truth is elusive and evolving, therefore we can't stop and say we are finished, because we are never finished. We Unitarian Universalists are works in progress."

-- Connie Goodbread, Mid-South District Executive

Board of Trustees
HIGHLIGHTS
November 2012

The **regular monthly meeting** of the **Board of Trustees** was held on Wednesday, November 14, 2012, at 6:30 pm in the UU Center, President Karen York presiding. Chalice lighting words from the *I Ching* were read by Reverend Charlie, words affirming our shared principles were read in unison, and joys and concerns were shared.

• **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

President York announced that: **1)** The next Board **"Talk Back"** takes place Sunday, November 18 at 11:30 am, Lauren Porr and Art Wexler in attendance. **2)** Sue Oldenburg's visit to UUCSJS to record interviews and shoot video for her 3-5 minute promotional DVD on **JPD's Chalice Lighters program** (O.K. Video; postponed in the wake of Hurricane Sandy), **has been rescheduled for December 2**. Arrangements will be made for those not wishing to be on videotape. A "Chalice Lighter" is one who pledges to respond to a request or "Call" from the JPD three times each year, in the fall, winter, and spring. Individual contributions may be only \$20 per Call, but when thousands contribute the total is significant. The Chalice Lighters program supports growth initiatives in the 70 UU member congregations of the Joseph Priestley District (JPD). **Chalice Lighters are Going Green!** Log onto www.jpduua.org, click the top link labeled "Programs," then click on **JPD Chalice Lighters** and follow instructions for enrolling online.

• **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS**

1) Building rental request from SCA. The Board unanimously approved a request from "The Shire of the Barren Sands" of the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA), Inc., a 501(3)(c) corporation, for one-time rental of the UU Center with the possibility of an ongoing relationship into 2013. UUCSJS members Colleen and Ian Johnston are part of the group and suggested the possible rental.

2) November Special Collection. Noting that no special collection was held in October, the Board voted to collect for our local food bank on Sunday, November 18 and then explore more local options for December and beyond.

2) Covenant of Right Relations. The Board determined to seek an outside facilitator for the process of creating a "covenant of right relations" as early as December. According to the UUA, this is an "important step in clarifying expectations and creating a safe environment for congregations; 'covenant' is Latin for 'come together' and means a 'solemn agreement' or 'promise from the heart' regarding a course of action between parties ... the process of creating a covenant is unique for each group." (uua.org/safe/covenant/24968.shtml)

• **REPORTS**

1) Minister's Report. Expanding on his monthly report to the Board, Rev. Charlie reflected on Hurricane Sandy and our UUCSJS response to the catastrophe. He observed there seemed to be "no self-empowered urge to help in an organized way," no sense of people "springing into action." On the flip side, he recalled vividly one congregant's energetic and willing response to the call for an "incident command system" for the ordination, thereby helping to assure the safety of members and guests by monitoring the UU Center windows, entrances and exits.

Rev. Charlie said recently he's been preaching two Sundays each month, and been present and assisting on a third. Interweave will need to be rearranged because of the resignation from the congregation of its chairman, he said. A Skype meeting

is planned by one committee, and he applauded the use of virtual communications, both in the interests of our becoming greener and of accommodating the widely-dispersed membership of UUCSJS.

2) Treasurer's Report. After he presented "UUCSJS Budget Report for October 2012," John Searight told the Board that: 1) although October was an "even month," we are not gaining overall; 2) we don't anticipate a source of increase in our Reserve Funds and in fact, have been drawing from them in recent months to balance the budget (only \$267 in October, however); 3) we'll have a better handle on where things stand at the end of December after pledge payments for tax purposes are in; and 4) we may be looking at a looming income deficit by the last quarter of the fiscal year, in part because of generous advance payments already received.

Other highlights: As already noted, in October total income improved over September, the lag being only \$267. Total Expenses increased, but were 7.8% of annual, slightly under the 8.3% monthly of annual. Total Income increased to 7.7% of annual, but remained under the 8.3% monthly of annual.

Pledge payments are ahead of budget, but our plate collection and fund raising are both under budget, he said. The Service Auction on November 17 will improve the fund raising figure.

We await final figures for Charlie's ordination, but it looks like we will be close to covering the entire cost from member donations alone, which were \$2,595. As of this date the cost for the ordination was \$2,774, leaving only \$179 needed from the operational budget.

Treasurer Searight and President York discontinued the \$300 extra monthly payment against our mortgage principal in October due to the tight financial situation, but this was reversed by the Finance Committee, when they met and generously decided to find the money themselves to cover these extra payments, which will now continue up to the end of the 2012-13 fiscal year.

Finally, concluding his report, Treasurer Searight reminded us all, once again:

**"We continue to need more communication
with our members and friends about
the fiscal challenges we face
in the year ahead."**

• **Adjournment** – The next meeting of the Board of Trustees was set for Wednesday, December 12 at 6:30 pm; the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

– Judy Pereira, *Secretary*

The **NEXT REGULAR MEETING** of
the UUCSJS Board of Trustees will be held on
Wednesday, December 12, 2012 at
6:30 pm at the UU Center,
75 S. Pomona Rd.

Staff as of July 1, 2012

Office Administrator, Michelle Tomko
Director of Religious Education (DRE), Heidi Jansch
Music Director, Worship Coordinator, Barbara Miller
Bookkeeper, Kathleen Hartznett

The very least you can do in your life is to figure out what you hope for.

And the most you can do is live inside that hope.

Not admire it from a distance but live right in it, under its roof.

– Barbara Kingsolver

TREASURY NOTES

Year End Contributions and Outlook for the 3rd and 4th Quarters (January-June 2013)

If you are planning to make extra pledge payments in December in order to have them credited in 2012 for tax purposes, we need them no later than the December 30 Sunday Service Offering. As we approach the possible fiscal cliff (or slope) nationally, it's hard to make any recommendations. What I can say, is that any extra pledge payments in December will be very welcomed by the UUCSJS Treasurer, as our financial margins continue to be of concern, especially our diminished Reserve Funds.

There is good news and troubling news for the remainder of our fiscal year. Our recently completed Service Auction continued our record of successes for the event, bringing in slightly more than \$10,000. This has given much needed relief to our Operating Funds Balance. However, because of the difficulties we had with cash flow in the first two quarters of the fiscal year we asked our lead donors to make early pledge payments if possible, and many were able to respond affirmatively. This enabled us to ease the strain on our operating funds, but as we get into the next fiscal quarter (January–March), the early pledge payments mean that significant payments will not be coming in and we are likely to again face a shortfall in our funding. I am fearful that this shortfall might amount to as much as \$12,000.

Our plan to address this is twofold: (1) review of our budgeted expenditures line by line and identify excess amounts and any amounts that might be cut; (2) and increase our fundraising. We have a newly formed committee to address the latter and we will be hearing from them in the months ahead. I plan to have the line by line analysis of expenditures presented to the Finance Committee in December and have recommendations to the Board in January. We are planning to have a congregational conversation about the Budget and what we are facing after a Sunday service in January or February. In the meantime, stay tuned. Monthly financial reports to the Board may be found on the Members Only portion of our website, and I am available for questions and suggestions from any member of the congregation.

As we enter the New Year I am hopeful that we will find a pathway through our financial concerns. Our history strongly suggests that when asked, our membership responds.

John Searight, UUCSJS Treasurer

Anyone who receives the Midweek Announcements may access the Members Only webpage. If you need the login and password, contact the Administrator, Michelle Tomko.

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Holiday (Family) Time in Children's RE

The wheel of the year has turned (ever more quickly, it seems!) and the winter holiday season is upon us once again!

This time of year is often thought of as "family time" and our schedule this month includes several opportunities for our families to learn and share together. Throughout December our Children's Religious Education classes on Sunday mornings will incorporate lessons about the winter celebrations of Hanukkah and Christmas. Our families are encouraged to learn more about these and the earth-centered winter holidays by attending the Winter Solstice Singing Ritual on Friday, December 21. The children will be working with members of the choir during class time this month to learn some of the songs that will be sung at the WSSR, and the kids are welcome to add their voices during the ritual. Teens are also welcome to serve as acolytes during this evening service -- if your teen is interested in participating, please contact Barbara Miller or Michelle Tomko.

There will also be an evening service on Christmas Eve that is "family friendly" as well as an intergenerational Fire Communion service on Sunday, December 30. (For newcomers: "Intergenerational" indicates that there are no separate children's religious education classes or childcare on this Sunday, but that our entire UUCSJS family shares in a service together. These services are structured slightly differently in order to engage congregants of all ages.)

May you and your family enjoy a peaceful holiday season!

Heidi Jansch, Director of Religious Education

A FEW BUDGET FACTS

Total: \$201,000

Pledge Goal/ Amount Pledged: \$158,000/ \$153,000
Fundraising Goal/ Potential Shortfall: \$29,600/ \$7,000
Monthly Operating Fixed Costs: \$13,000
Mortgage Balance: \$434,000
Monthly Payment: \$3,008 (\$300 extra per month)
Checking (Operating Funds) Account Balance: \$10,900

What is 350 parts per million?

That is the target amount of carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere that will allow for life to remain healthy. 350.org is an international organization dedicated to bringing current CO₂ levels down from the current 402 ppm to a sustainable and healthy 350 ppm. Come out **Tuesday, November 27 at 7 pm** at the UU Center to find out more.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

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Reverend Charlie Dieterich

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Board of Trustees 2012-13

Debbi Dagavarian, Judy Pereira, Lauren Porr,
John Searight, Joe Terrazzini, Art Wexler, Karen York

Newsletter – Mariann Maene – newsletter@uucsjs.org

Visit us on the Web: www.uucsjs.org

December 2012

**Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of the South Jersey Shore
P.O. Box 853
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