



NEWSLETTER

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the
South Jersey Shore



Volume 17, Issue 03

March 2015

March Services

“We Promise... to provide SUPPORT”

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.

March 1	<p>Suffering, Compassion, and Support <i>Lay speaker Jack Miller</i></p> <p>As we come to understand our own suffering, we come to understand the suffering of others. To understand the suffering of others is to be filled with loving kindness.</p>
March 8	<p>Selma Sunday: Unitarians at Pettus Bridge <i>Lay speaker Bill Felix</i></p> <p>Selma was a watershed event in our nation’s history. Violence and bloodshed horrified the country. At long last however, through the efforts of some courageous and unselfish people, justice won out over oppression. Unitarians played a key role in this event.</p>
March 15	<p>ISIS, Selma, and the Person Next Door (or in the next Pew): A Consideration of Evil <i>Rev. Cynthia Cain</i></p> <p>Yes, I am going to go there. Reinhold Niebuhr wrote one of the most compelling books on the theology of evil in which he asserts that liberal people are good, but not wise, because over and over again they fail to recognize evil even when it is in their midst. What do we do with the problem of evil and the affirmation of inherent worth and dignity? How do we recognize and deal with our own shadow, and set boundaries in our communities of faith?</p>
March 22	<p>What Would Lady Grantham Pledge? <i>Rev. Cynthia Cain and Paul Utts</i></p> <p>Rev. Cain & Paul Utts are going to do/say something that will be creative, new and altogether interesting, and we PROMISE not to make you feel guilty, badger you, or lock the doors until you make a pledge. However, we might talk about everyone who doesn’t show up. <i>Just sayin’</i>. Seriously: this is the annual Canvass Sunday. We do it in a lovely and loving way.</p>
March 29	<p>FAMILY SYSTEMS: PART TWO <i>Rev. Cynthia Cain</i></p> <p>We will look at Family Systems by looking at the family of one famous person who was also Unitarian: Frank Lloyd Wright. This will provide a lens to understand such concepts as <i>triangulation</i>, <i>cutoff</i>, <i>sibling position</i>, and <i>generation transference</i>... and how these dynamics may play out in congregational and other institutional settings.</p>



16th ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP DINNER
Saturday, March 14, 2015

6:00 - Social Time with Hors d'oeuvres
6:45 - Dinner
8:00 - Entertainment !

“Support”

We continue our 2014-15 Worship theme, in which we focus on the UUCSJS Covenant of Right Relations – its purpose and its 7 promises.

For March we consider this promise: **“To provide SUPPORT for each other by being present and engaged through times of joy and sorrow, harmony and conflict; by relating to each other with compassion and gratitude; and by cultivating a sense of fun and adventure in our spiritual quest.”** *How can you live out this promise in your relationships with others in UUCSJS? How do you show your support for others?*

Book Lovers Group will gather on **Friday, March 20** in the UU Center library at 7 pm for a discussion led by Barbara Morell on *The Interestings* by Meg Wolitzer. “The summer that Nixon resigns, six teenagers at a summer camp for the arts become inseparable. Decades later the bond remains powerful, but so much else has changed.” – *Amazon.com*. New participants are always welcome. If you have questions contact Angela Wexler.

Margaret Circle will meet on **Thursday, March 5** at 1 pm. Arlene Yacka will serve refreshments after a short meeting, and Sheila Stoner has agreed to share with us “Growing up Trans.” Margaret Circle is an open group that welcomes all to attend. Contact Shelee McIlvaine if you have any questions.

UU and Secular Buddhism: A Match Made in Heaven

Well, maybe not Heaven, but it’s on the agenda at the next UU Buddhist Fellowship Convocation held at Garrison Institute on the weekend of March 20-22. The featured teacher this year will be Stephen Batchelor, the leading scholar of a new approach called Secular Buddhism. This approach has much in common with Unitarian/Universalist principles and having him teach at a UU gathering is a perfect match, and it is very auspicious that Spring begins that weekend! The attendees, mostly from UU Buddhist groups from around the country, will have an opportunity to explore the connections that emerge from these two spiritual traditions. This will also allow us to further develop the UU Buddhist groups in UU congregations. The Garrison Institute is just south of Newburgh, NY on the Hudson River (about 2.5 hours from UUCSJS). To learn more, visit the UU Buddhist Fellowship at <http://uubf.org/wp/> and to register, visit <http://capitalregionuu.org/welcome/uubf/>



Next Road Cleanup: March 14

Help keep our stretch of Pomona Road clean and presentable. *Plus:* UUCCSJS earns a stipend from the Atlantic County Utilities Authority for this task.

Support our congregation by doing what you already do – buy groceries! with gift cards for your local Acme or Shoprite!

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!

Capital Campaign 3 – A Report and a Big Thank-you

Capital Campaign 3, *Moving Forward*, has received 53 pledges totaling \$130,700. We have made extra payments on our mortgage totaling \$69,000. Our mortgage principal at the end of February is \$312,000. When we apply for the renewal of our mortgage this November, the principal will likely be \$290,000, a remarkable amount when you consider it was \$390,000 at the beginning of October, 2014.

This puts us in a much stronger position to negotiate our new mortgage and to increase the percentage of our annual budget that directly supports our growth in ministry and outreach.

This would not be possible without the continued generosity of UUCCSJS members and friends. CC 3 pledge payments will continue to come in over the next two years, and we will continue to grow in members and in mission. Your generosity does make a difference!

In Fellowship and Gratitude,

Capital Campaign 3 Team:

John Searight, Jeff Taylor, Kathleen Hartnett, Doug Dickinson

Humanists Movie Night – “Letting Go of God” Thursday, March 5, 6:30 pm



The South Jersey Humanists will host a free showing of “Letting Go of God,” an autobiographical monologue by Saturday Night Live alum Julia Sweeney, exploring Sweeney’s journey from Catholicism to atheism, on Thursday, March 5 at 6:30 pm at the UU Center. There will be a brief discussion after the film. Light refreshments will be served.

Before coming, check your closets! Donations of gently-used and new clothing will be collected for Kathleen’s Closet.

More info at www.southjerseyhumanists.com or ask Michael Cluff.

First Friday Film Night - Friday, March 6, 7 - 8:30 pm

This is the last film in the series Long Strange Trip about Unitarian Universalist history. With Selma Sunday approaching, it is appropriate that the film will cover the UU response to Dr. King’s invitation to Selma. Other parts describe our approach to liberal religious education and how humanism figured in the merger of Unitarianism and Universalism in 1963. Our discussion will also consider the role of music in contemporary UUism. Contact Barbara Miller to RSVP.



11th Host Congregation!

Family Promise of Atlantic County welcomes on board **Abundant Living Church** as our 11th host congregation. They are an evangelical church on Route 54 in Williamstown, NJ. Only two more host congregations are needed to begin our work (and also various needs such as van, day center and so on).

UUCCSJS Shoe Drive

Can you imagine going barefoot in this weather? Do you know that many children in Atlantic County don’t have appropriate shoes for winter?

UUCCSJS is doing something about it! All year long, we will be collecting gently-loved shoes to help those in need. All kinds and sizes of shoes are needed, for adults and children. We will see that the shoes are *distributed directly to people who can use them*.

Please bring your gently-loved shoes to the UU Center. We will have a bin near the coat rack in the foyer, which will be emptied each week.



HOW ABOUT A SWEET SIXTEEN?

Now you enter you sixteenth year of fellowship as UUCSJ. Of course, you are actually a few years older, since meetings and events were already happening before you chartered. But it's clear from all of the research I did to prepare for the Celebration of the Charter Sunday on February 22, that the overwhelming spirit of this group have been "we can do it," "we will do it," and "we have done it!"

What is "it?"

Is it building a permanent home in a lovely setting, a home that is inviting, environmentally sound, and set to serve religious liberals for decades to come?

Is it creating a community of seekers who, while they may not agree in beliefs, agree to walk together in Covenant and fellowship?

Is it sorting out the kinks and kerfluffles of community life so that committees and events run smoothly?

Or will there always be more of "it" to do?

I would answer an enthusiastic "yes" to all of the above, and an "I hope so" to the last question. Don't fall into the trap of feeling that there IS a Camelot somewhere, some point at which this community rests upon its laurels and all is beatific and worry-free. That would not be a community. A cult, perhaps, but not a true community. I once read, and have often quoted, that community is the place where the one person you least want to be in community with will be found. Why? Because for me, the religious community is a laboratory where we rub up against all of our projections and come face-to-face with all of our mirror images, and have a chance to do so safely, with boundaries, with respect, and with love.

To that end, I'll be speaking from the pulpit at more length about these issues on 3 consecutive Sundays in March. We'll also be asking you to make a thoughtful commitment to the Stewardship campaign. Please do so with as much generosity and alacrity as you can. These folks in leadership are working hard to provide this place and all it offers for you and your family. Give back, as best you can. Be very generous.

Now, allow me to endeavor to thank as many folks as I can for their help on Sunday 2/22. If I neglect to mention you, I ask forgiveness in advance: Betsy Searight: organizing oodles of historical documents, a huge task; Colby Tippins, first to volunteer for set-up; everyone who brought refreshments; Helen Utts, Marsha Hannah, and Diane Dreby, who volunteered in the kitchen when Richard was not well; Heidi Jansch for enormous help with the script and all of the costuming and props and management of the youth, who included Brian York, Julia Utts, Raya Slotoff, Carly Jansch, Grace Cluff, and Quinlan Dunn; Mariann Maene, for bringing a camera and taking great candid shots. Stephanie Garrett, for coming all the way from Florida, and inviting Eric Avedissian; Jon Luoma, Betsy Searight, Debbi Dagavarian, Mother Theresa McReynolds and Penny Harter, for doing readings and walk-ons in the skit; Steve Fiedler and Doug Dickinson for their parts in the play; Barbara Miller and the UUCSJS choir for providing exceptional music; Sue Parks and Julie Spradlin for jumping in as ushers when weather kept the scheduled ushers away; TJ Jansch for helping out with the youth; Melissa Cain for help with shopping and making ribbons for badges; and last but not least, Margaret Rea, who provided the most priceless support to me, by giving feedback on the skit, both in-person and by email, traveled numerous times to the UU Center from Hammonton to make sure things were just right, did all of the decorating of the sanctuary, and served as Lay Leader, functioning with great aplomb even when I skipped around a bit in the Order of Service!

Finally, I hope you will take a moment to read the letter from the District Executive (below) and posted at the church. I think it will underscore how very impressed he is with you and all you have accomplished (and are poised to accomplish.)

Rev. Cynthia

Rev. Cain's Office Hours
Wednesdays 10-2 and by appointment
Read more of Rev Cynthia's reflections at
www.ajerseygirlkentucky.blogspot.com



**A letter from Rev David Pyle,
after his visit to us on January 25:**

February 21, 2015

Members and Friends of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore:

I send to you my heartfelt congratulations, as you celebrate fifteen years since your Charter Sunday as a Unitarian Universalist congregation. I regret that other commitments in serving our congregations keep me from being with you today. I know from my experience of you that it will be a wonderful celebration and that you will engage it with enthusiasm and joy!

When I was honored to preach for you last month, I said what a rare and wonderful thing it is when a people of shared values, ideals, and principles come together to form a congregation. Fifteen years ago, with the support of the Joseph Priestley District and the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, a small group of faithful Unitarian Universalists culminated what had been a dream for some time, the formation of a new congregation in Southern New Jersey. It is a dream we see come true all too rarely.

Since that time, you have traveled further faster than almost any other congregation I have heard of. You have partnered with professional ministry and with a professional religious educator. You have built a building. You have become a presence of liberal religion that is felt throughout Southern New Jersey. You have helped youth find their faith through your Religious Education Program. You have become a leader on issues of Environmental Justice. Most importantly, you have built a caring, sustaining community that nurtures each other and grows together. And you have fun!

In the next fifteen years, I see you growing into calling a full time settled minister. I see you continuing your environmental justice leadership in Southern New Jersey, and expanding that to be a force for the 7th Principle within the Unitarian Universalist movement, calling us all to live the values we claim in a more full way. I see you building closer partnerships with the other UU congregations of Southern New Jersey and Greater Philadelphia. But more importantly, I see you continuing to build upon the foundation of the caring, welcoming community I already know you to be.

On behalf of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Central East Regional Group, and the Joseph Priestley District, we celebrate with you this 15th Charter Sunday, and we look forward to walking with you through all the years that are to come!

Yours in Faith,
Rev. David G. Pyle
District Executive
Joseph Priestley District of the UUA



WITH GRATITUDE TO ALL

by Karen York, Treasurer

"Every night before I go to sleep I say out loud three things that I am grateful for, all the significant, insignificant, extraordinary, ordinary stuff of my life. It is a small practice and humble, and yet, I find I sleep better holding what lightens and softens my life ever so briefly at the end of the day."

— Carrie Newcomer, *A Permeable Life: Poems & Essays*

This month our gratitude column highlights those who have contributed their time, energy and talent to helping the congregation with fundraising, the annual stewardship campaign, capital campaign, donation deposits and finance committee.

Fundraising

Fourteen percent of our budget is raised through three major fundraising initiatives. They are the annual service auction, the plant sale, and the grocery cards sales. Behind each of these initiatives are some dedicated members.

The **Auction Steering Committee** plans this event for several months leading up to the auction, and they do an incredible job in inviting participation in the event, with many members offering unique events, goods and services. They handle the production of the auction booklet, the set-up the week before and keep things running smoothly the night of the event. We are extremely grateful to **Heidi Jansch, Debbi Dagavarian, Prim Reeves, and Betsy Searight** for their coordination of this important fundraiser and community event. They are supported by twenty-four additional volunteers, who have important responsibility especially the night of the auction. The event would not be the successful event that it is without this generous gift of time and energy from so many. This year's auction has added **\$13,265** to our treasury exceeding our budgeted expectations. The auction initiative not only raises funds for the congregation, but has the added benefit of providing fun, community building events throughout the year.

In the department of members whose individual efforts have contributed to our fundraising efforts there is a tie between Peg Gillies, who single-handedly manages the sale of grocery cards and Jesse Connor who coordinates the native plant sale and swap.

Native Plant Sale: **Jesse Connor** shares her expertise and passion by coordinating the native plant sale in May each year. **Judy Pereira** and **Barbara Fiedler** put in a significant effort with the planning, and many others help on the days of the sale. This event raised **\$4,243** last year. Added benefits are that the native plant sale brings us publicity from a growing number of people who are plant enthusiasts, educates people about the importance of native plants, and provides important habitat, food and resources for birds, insects and wildlife to thrive. If you want to learn more about the plants that are available this year, the order form is already available on the web site for this year's sale which will be on May 9, 2015.

Grocery Cards allow UUCSJS to earn \$5 on every \$100 of groceries that our members buy using the gift cards purchased from the congregation. **Peg Gillies**, has for years faithfully coordinated this effort by obtaining the cards and making them available for sale to members each and every Sunday. This effort brings about **\$2,600** into our treasury each year. *You are going to buy groceries anyway, why not give to the church at the same time, by purchasing grocery cards?*

Stewardship

About **80% of our budget** comes from donations from our members. In order to help us with planning the budget each year we ask members to pledge in advance to indicate their intended level of support. This is done through the **Annual Stewardship Campaign** (see more information on this elsewhere in this newsletter). The Campaign kicks off with a shared community meal called the **Fellowship Dinner**, followed by a stewardship message on a Sunday, a sharing of what we value about the congregation, and an opportunity to pledge. Many thanks to **Betsy Searight, Paul Utts, Kathleen Harnett, and Karen York** who have had leading roles in aspects of the Stewardship Campaign each year. Gratitude to **Betsy Searight, Jesse Connor, Charlie Roberts, Kiara Geraldine, and Barbara Miller**, who are busy organizing our dinner this year. There is also a crew of members who serve as facilitators at our sharing circles or stewardship visitors to ensure that all members have an opportunity to pledge. We could not be successful without your help as well.



Capital Campaign 3: Moving Ahead

This fall we had a special effort to raise funds to help pay down the mortgage before we refinance our loan in Feb. 2016. Deep gratitude to **John Searight** for his leadership in this successful effort, which resulted in commitments from 53 households for pledges totaling **\$130,513**. Fifty-two percent of that amount has already been received reducing our current mortgage principal to \$312,300. Thanks to **Kathleen Hartnett, Jeff Taylor, Doug Dickinson** for coordinating and communicating about this important and successful effort, and to **David Hess** for his assistance with graphic designs for campaign materials.

Donation deposit team

Each week a dedicated team of volunteers makes sure that the funds from the weekly offering are gathered, recorded, and deposited in the bank. This team is led by **Marie Taylor**, who is supported by **Marsha Hannah** and **Kim Trotto**. We thank you so much for your care and attention to detail in performing these important weekly duties.

Finance Committee

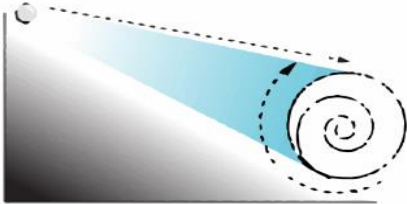
All the financial matters of the congregation are overseen by a dedicated group of volunteers and incredible service of **Kathleen Hartnett**, our bookkeeper. Special gratitude needs to go to **Jeff Taylor** who chairs the committee, **John Searight**, who keeps a steadfast eye on all account balances, and **Ruth Eaves**, who has provided regular reminders of the need to pay down the mortgage for the long term financial gains to the congregation. **Bill Felix, Richard Brail, Carl Benner, Doug Dickinson** and **Paul Utts** also lend their wisdom and perspective to the Finance committee decisions and efforts. To all of you, I extend my gratitude.

As the Treasurer of the congregation, I am sincerely grateful for the assistance of all these volunteers and their dedication to keeping the finances of the congregation in good order, and to the voluntary generosity of all members who contribute to funding the programs of our congregation. If you have an interest in getting involved with any of these financial initiatives, do not hesitate to contact me.

And Karen, we have much gratitude for all your contributions and serving as our very capable and conscientious Treasurer.

Leveraging Love

I often hear in financial planning circles that investments are like a snowball rolling down a hill. That the *secret* to financial success is to start early and build a little at a time. *Time* is a key factor here, because if you are disciplined, and with the power of compounding, small investments build into something substantial. This of course may or may not take into account tech bubbles and great recessions, but for the most part, the theory works.



The same can be said for education: we know that if we start early with children, reading to them, sending them to preschool, starting that snowball rolling down the hill a little earlier pays off in later years in a big way. Sometimes it could be the difference between a child graduating college, or going to jail.

Can the same be said of a spiritual community? Can a small investment in time, treasure, and talent, grow into something that makes a difference in people's lives, in a child's sense of self, or a community's well-being?

Last week, we celebrated the 15th anniversary of our Charter Sunday. Charter Sunday was the official welcoming into the community of UU congregations, even though we had been holding services for a year. It was a wonderful celebration and especially meaningful for the handful of people involved since the beginning. It was a nice reminder, looking backwards, at how far we had come. So What? Now What?

So What, Now What?

I attended a self-awareness training many years ago where the above statement was prominently featured. It's not meant in a flippant or negative way, it just means: learn from what was. Don't live there -- move forward: "now what?" And while our 15th anniversary reminded us of all that we have accomplished in the past 15 years... So What... Now What?

Well that's up to all of us. We have a great foundation, a beautiful building, we've paid down our mortgage, and we have a wonderful, professional staff and a dedicated group of members. We are starting to do more for our community, Family Promise being a way to not only do good, meaningful work, but a way to connect with other faith communities.

We are, however, more than our building, our staff, or even our good deeds. We are a community that supports each other, our children, and ourselves. Together we carry forward a shared vision that by working together we can have a positive effect on our world. Our "snowball" is a nice size and we are ready to roll! A majority of us were not here when the building was built, but sense the energy and focus it took and now want to see "what a small group of thoughtful people..." can do. Where do we go from here?

The story told during our celebration, of one man, the victim of a terrible crime, who put his hate behind him to help influence the tie-breaking vote to abolish the death penalty in New Jersey, is just one example of what can happen. When I am down in RE classes hearing the young minds' view of the natural world and social justice concepts, I see a better, more hopeful world starting to roll downhill, making headway. When I attend New Member orientation meetings, and I hear each person's faith journey that brought them to this place, I hear weight lifted and new hopes born. When I gather for coffee hour and hear the kernels of social justice sprouting, I feel hopeful and renewed. Eddie, Heidi, Betsy, and Richard have all leveraged their love to make the above happen. We are inspired and the love we feel grows.

We have some history now; our journey together is underway, inertia overcome, momentum building. As we enter our 16th year, where will our journey take us? Capital Campaign 3 has been successful and we have lightened our load. Funding our annual budget is a necessary task that allows us to leverage our passion and compassion, our love for this world and each other, to fund what comes next. Small investments from each of us not only fund that momentum, it starts a snowball of generosity inside us rolling. Generosity is like that: it not only strengthens our inner light, but inspires others. In this place, this community, you can leverage your love and do more than if you stand alone.

In the weeks to follow, you will get a copy of our budget and a case for how you can help us all move forward together. Soon, you will be offered an opportunity to support our momentum. If you agree that this place, our congregation in the pines, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore, has something to offer children, adults, our community, and you, please, demonstrate generosity. Leverage your love with regular investments, and watch both your generosity and your love grow.



-- Paul Utts

Board of Trustees
HIGHLIGHTS
February 2015

The **regular monthly meeting** of the **UUCSJS Board of Trustees** was held on Wednesday, February 25, 2015 at 6:30 pm in the Lounge at the UU Center—one week later than usual—President Art Wexler presiding.

• **Special Report**

—The Board welcomed “**Tech Team**” member Mariann Maene, who reported that for the past two months, an ad-hoc group has been “meeting informally after services as occasion allows” in order to begin work on the following tasks: 1) Website redesign, 2) Social media, and 3) Communications. With Michael Cluff, Betsy Erbaugh, Elizabeth Hall, and Jon Luoma, Maene and this core group has also been communicating via email; Charlie Roberts, Geoff Stuart, and John Walther have attended Sunday “stand-up” sessions. This important effort is ongoing, so stay tuned!

• **Announcements**

—The next **Board Talk-Back** will be held Sunday, March 8 at 11:15 am in a lower level classroom.

—**JPD (Joseph Priestley District) District Assembly.** The next District Assembly, “Weaving the Fabric of Our Faith,” will be held April 10-11, 2015 at the ACE Conference Center, 800 Ridge Pike, Lafayette, PA. Keynote speakers will be **Mark Bernstein**, Central East Regional Group (CERG) Regional Growth Development Consultant (and UUCSJS Primary Contact), and **Patricia Infante**, CERG Faith Development Consultant. See www.cerquua.org and/or www.jpduua.org for complete information.

—“**H-UULTI**” courses from **CERG**. This spring CERG’s UU Leadership Training Institute (UULTI) will offer courses through “H-UULTI: The Hybrid / Online Team-Based Leadership School.” See www.cerquua.org for information and course listings.

• **Reports**

1) **Treasurer’s Report.** Treasurer Karen York distributed her written report showing figures for **January 2015**, as follows: **Income, \$12,822** (*year to date:* \$114,254), and **Expenses, \$13,685** (*year to date:* \$101,923). “For January expenses exceeded income by \$863, but for the year to date income is ahead of expenses by \$12,331. Most budget areas are on track,” the treasurer stated.

—**Annual Stewardship Campaign.** The **Fellowship Dinner** will take place Saturday, March 14; sign-ups are underway. The **Stewardship “case statement”** will be prepared by York, Paul Utts, and Kathleen Hartnett, and delivered electronically and through the USPS between March 14 and **Stewardship Sunday** on March 22. Small group “sharing circles” for appreciative inquiry and pledging will take place following the Sunday service with Paul Utts and Rev. Cynthia Cain, with follow-up circles on the two subsequent Sundays.

—**CC3 update.** Treasurer York has reported that the general canvass phase of Capital Campaign 3 [CC3] has been completed, with **53 pledges totaling \$130,513**. Special payments to reduce mortgage principal have reached **\$68,684**, with \$200 more pending. After the regular February payment, our remaining mortgage principal will be **\$312,300**.

• **Discussion/Action Items**

1) “**Interim Progress Appraisal.**” The Board dedicated most of the balance of the meeting to assessing our interim ministry experience to date, in order to submit the requested 4-page form—Appendix G of the *Transitional Ministry Handbook*.

• **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 PM.

The next meeting of the Board is March 18 at 6:30 pm.

16th ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP DINNER
Saturday, March 14, 2015

6:00 - Social Time with Hors d’oeuvres

6:45 - Dinner

8:00 – Entertainment!

Over the years, attendance at our annual Fellowship dinners has grown: last year **over a hundred** members and friends of UUCSJS attended our dinner and gathering. Growing our fellowship is a good thing, but such large numbers make a traditional potluck meal unwieldy. This year we are trying something new: a planned menu with different types of lasagna, a green salad, Italian bread, and cake. Why do this?

- Assurance that we have the right amounts of the right foods to meet everyone’s special dietary needs.
- It will be easier to serve, and faster to clean up
- All tables will have the same choices of food.
- And, it will be delicious – who doesn’t like lasagna?

To help insure the success of this year’s dinner, we’ll need everyone to RSVP and indicate what you would like to contribute. When you RSVP, you’ll have a choice of what to bring as well as an opportunity to sign up for your party’s choice of lasagna. As to what to bring? There will be lots of different possible food and beverage contributions to select from, including: appetizer, wine, beer, non-alcoholic beverage, lasagna, (meat, vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free), large green salad, Italian bread, and cake. If you haven’t already signed up, sign-up after service on March 1 or March 8 at the sign-up tables at the rear of the Sanctuary. You may also RSVP to Charlie Roberts .

Annual Native Plant Sale Fundraiser

Promoting Backyard Habitat & Sustainable Landscaping

This year marks the 7th anniversary of our Annual Native Plant Sale and we have amassed a terrific collection of container-grown nursery plants for pre-order! We’ve selected hard-to-find shrubs, trees, and perennials and those not likely to be donated as part of our annual plant swap. It is our most ambitious sale with 24 shrubs, 8 trees, and 30 perennials to select from. We have plants for sun, part shade, shade, and coastal conditions. This year we’re offering 4 different species of native milkweeds to help provide host plants for migrant monarch butterflies. All native plants are genetically adapted to our area and provide food in the form of nuts, seeds, berries, fruits, leaves, pollen, and nectar that best meet the need of butterflies and other pollinators as well as birds and other wildlife.

Can you help us publicize the sale? We are not advertising. Instead we’re relying on UU members and avid gardeners and environmentalists to spread the word. Please pass on info about our sale to friends, neighbors, and relatives. This sale is a win-win. We’ll raise funds for UUCSJS (last year we raised \$4,000+!) while also spreading the message of the importance of sustainable landscaping to folks in southern NJ.

Considering ordering for the first time? Great! You might be surprised to learn that 75% of our orders come from non-UUs. While it is wonderful to have such a positive public response to our sale, it would great if we could also increase the number of UUs who participate. So, be sure to take a look at this year’s order form. There is a plant or plant collection for everyone. For an online order form, sale details, and other info on growing natives go to www.uucsjs.org. You can also get a hard copy at the Fair Trade Table.

ORDER DEADLINE IS APRIL 1. Plants are available on a first-come first-served basis. Plant sale pick-up hours are Friday, May 8, 4 - 6 pm and Saturday, May 9, 9 am – 2 pm.

What Ever Happened To Our Social Justice Committee?

What have we done in the past?

As many of you are aware, Unitarians are extremely passionate about social justice and being active in supporting projects and endeavors that are in line with our principles. Our recent involvement in Family Promise would be an excellent example of one such project.

For many years, UUCSJS, like most Unitarian Universalist congregations, had an active Social Justice Committee that led and organized all such activities. Unfortunately there was a high turnover in the leadership of this committee, resulting in long periods of time in being without a chair or committee members.

That is not to say that we haven't done any social justice within the community; quite the contrary. We have and will always have members who take it upon themselves to organize fellow members to support causes that they feel passionate about.

What's new?

What has been missing is a central hub to which all of these different groups of passionate people can be supported and assisted when needed. The Board has been thinking about this for some time and has responded with a new model for our Social Justice undertakings that has been drawn from the UUA handbook on social justice*. It is a melding of several different models into one that we believe will best suit our needs for UUCSJS. We are in the process of initiating this now, the first step of which would be informing the congregants of our intentions.

The following are the key features of this new structure.

- Essentially, the Social Justice Committee (SJC) is turned into an administrative body of 5 members that help to oversee, support and in some cases fund the Social Justice projects of UUCSJS.
- Action Groups (AG) is the name given to the various projects the committee oversees. Based on a formula from the UUA handbook, our current membership can effectively accommodate a maximum of 4 to 5 Action Groups at any time.
- To avoid the bias which we often encountered from past experiences, the Chair and Vice Chair are not permitted to actively serve on any Action Group during their term.
- If any member would like to start an Action Group, they will need to identify 5 members who are committing their efforts to the group, as well as an additional 5 members who have agreed to support the idea, but may not have the ability to lend their time towards the cause.
- Once interested members are identified, a formal proposal is prepared for the SJC at their monthly

meeting for review. An objective "grading" system pulled straight from the UUA handbook is used to evaluate each proposal.

- If approved, the AG will immediately fall under the umbrella of the SJC, and will then have access to all of the support, resources and funding of the SJC.
- Due to the limited human and financial resources of any organization, there is a limit to how many AGs we can support at any given time. If we are maxed out at the time of a proposed AG's review, the project will be placed in a queue until one of the active AG's mission is completed, and a new AG can be initiated.
Please note that we would never discourage a passionate member of our congregation from engaging in any social justice work. There may be causes that are simply not reasonable, feasible, or realistic for the congregation as a whole to support. Members are always free to do as they wish on their own.
- There will be two types of AGs:
 - Continuing AGs, like Family Promise, which are in constant motion;
 - Ad hoc or start-and-stop AGs, like a letter-writing campaign.
- "Burn out" has always been an issue with the Chairperson of this committee, as well as finding a suitable successor. In response, we have created the following structure: Vice Chair will be a two year commitment with one year as Vice, and one year as Chair. In doing so, there will always be a trained person moving into the vacant Chair position when that person's term is up.
- In addition there will be 3 other members of the Committee. Secretary, Treasurer, and an at large member.

What happens now?

Members of the Board have reached out to Jim Gentile and Ron Hutchison, two members who are passionate about social justice work and skilled in administration, to be the first core members of this committee. With their efforts and the support of the Board, we will be initiating this new model over the next few months. We are considering centering a Sunday service and/or an open forum to explain further the details of and answer questions about this new model.

We are very excited about the potential as well as the effectiveness of our new Social Justice Committee and we hope you will be also. Please feel free to approach any Board member with questions you may have about this new addition to our community structure.

-- Joe Terrazzini

* **UUA Social Justice Empowerment Program Handbook:** see http://www.uua.org/documents/aw/sje_handbook.pdf

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