



# NEWSLETTER



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the  
South Jersey Shore

Volume 21, Issue 12

December 2019

## December Services

### Theme: Awe

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><b>December 1</b></p>	<p><b>A UU Take on Faith &amp; Miracles</b> <i>Guest speaker Melanie Davis, PhD</i></p> <p>Language can trigger emotional responses related to a listener’s spiritual journey. Faith and miracles are two hot-button words relevant to the lives and beliefs of religious liberals. Anecdotes and scientific facts build appreciation of these constructs from a non-theist perspective.</p>
<p><b>December 8</b></p>	<p><b>ACE’s High – Understanding the Effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences</b> <i>Lay speaker Bud Smith</i></p> <p>Just how do the traumatic events of childhood change us? What can we do to alter the effects of toxic stress within? Is there a pathway to a healthier way to live, love &amp; learn? (spoiler: YES there is!)</p>
<p><b>December 15</b></p>	<p><b>You’ve Been Wait-Listed</b> <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>December is a season of miracles and waiting and wonder. As the nights get longer and darker and colder, our attention turns to stories of hope that we will be delivered from the dark. As Joseph and Mary sought shelter from the bitter desert cold, they found themselves waiting with urgency, hoping for relief. Join us as we consider how we wait and how the wait affects the outcome when it arrives.</p>
<p><i>Friday December 20 6 pm</i></p>	<p><b>Winter Solstice Singing Ritual</b></p> <p>We will celebrate the return of the Light which occurs after the Winter Solstice 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.</p>
<p><b>December 22</b></p>	<p><b>We Are Stardust</b></p> <p>Featuring children and volunteers from RE and some audience participation, our Holiday Pageant will bring the awe of science and the Big Bang to the Christmas story.</p>
<p><i>Tuesday December 24 Time TBA</i></p>	<p><b>Lessons &amp; Carols</b></p> <p>Join us for some Christmas readings and carols to celebrate the season!</p>
<p><b>December 29</b></p>	<p><b>NO SERVICE TODAY</b> Happy New Year to all.</p>



## Sangha in the Sanctuary

Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> 10 am to noon.

There will be a brief introduction to applying Buddhist psychology in our daily lives. A model of the mind is like a map of a city. Both are **not** reality, but can help guide us to where we'd like to go. In the city we may want to find the way to a museum. In our lives we may want to find the way out of ill-being. So we will take a first look at how Buddhist Psychology can help free us from our afflictions. Newcomers welcome.

**BOOK CLUB** will meet Friday, December 13 at 7 pm in the UU library. (This is a change from usual 3rd week Friday meeting.)

A CHRISTMAS CAROL by Charles Dickens

Written in 1843, it is a classic Christmas tale and helped to cement the celebration of Christmas which was then on a decline. A novella that can be read in about 2 hours (or a little bit longer), it is a tale of family, good will, relationships, and redemption. We do bring snacks and have a fun gift exchange at this meeting. Questions, please ask Barb Morell. All are welcome and invited to attend!

**MARGARET CIRCLE** will meet on Thursday, December 6, at 1 pm in the UU Center Library. We will begin with joys and concerns, followed by light refreshments.

Jesse Connor will lead a discussion based on an article in the *New York Times* by Dr. Mary Pipher entitled "The Joy of Being a Woman in Her 70's." While not everyone in the Margaret Circle is in her 70's, Dr. Pipher's observations on aging are likely to spark a lively discussion on our own positive experiences of aging, such as ever increasing capacities for gratitude, resilience, and authenticity.

Refreshments will be provided by Palma Merkel.

**Rev. Dawn Fortune**  
**609.289.5782**

Rev Fortune is taking some time off before the holidays get into full swing and their column will return in January 2020.



Rev. Dawn's Twitter handle is  
**@queerpreacher**

You can tweet about UUCSJS  
using the hashtag **#uucsjs**



*Deep, deep, deep  
in the dark  
of the winter...*

*Winter Solstice Singing Ritual*  
*Friday, December 20, 2019*  
*6 pm*

*Come and relive the experience. For those who have never experienced this singing ritual, you will never forget it!*

***Not one of the singers but want to play a part?***

Many people contribute toward the success and power of this event. We could use help with room set-up, table set-up, and ushering (need at least 4 people comfortable with carrying lit candles and lifting trays of sand and candles). *Contact Barbara Miller for more information.*

### **Auction a Success! Thank you!**

The Service Auction Co-Chairs would like to thank everyone who worked on the auction: Terri Ballas, Katy Cardwell, Diane Dreby, Helene Gentile, Marsha Hannah, Kathleen Hartnett, TJ Jansch, Barb Morell, Sue Parks, Judy Pereira, Marty Quish, Charlie Roberts, Jerry Schoenleber, Betsy Searight, Julie Spradlin, Heather Swenson-Brilla, Colby Tippins, Paul Utts, John Walther, Sally Williams, Karen York, Tony Zitelli. Thanks, also, to everyone who donated something or bought an ad or sponsorship. And we can't forget to thank everyone who came and participated! You all made it happen!

Heidi Jansch and Deb Dagavarian

### **Planning Committee Talk-Backs**

On August 25, 2019, UUCSJS adopted a working [Strategic Plan](#). Members will continue to improve the plan at the same time as it guides our operations. To gather more information, the Strategic Planning Committee will hold member talk-back discussions at 11:30 am on the first Sunday of each month. The next session is on Sunday December 1. Please, attend these sessions to share your vision of how UUCSJS should be and what it should become.

## President's Corner

I had a lot to be thankful for this Thanksgiving.

As some of you heard, my step sister, Maya, was in a freak accident last week in downtown Chicago. She was struck by a light pole that had rusted at the bottom, and it shattered her knee cap and her lower femur. She underwent major surgery (involving plates and screws) to “put Humpty Dumpty back together again”, and is now recuperating comfortably at home. I am reminded that we often take our health and even our own existence in this world for granted. I am also reminded about the acts of kindness in this world. Immediately after Maya was struck to the ground, a Pediatric trauma doctor and an ER nurse who happened to be just steps away, came to her aid and stabilized her until the paramedics could arrive. Her co-workers who were walking with her on the sidewalk rode with her in the Ambulance and stayed with her in the ER until my mom and brother could get there. My twin brother Eric, held Maya's hand, and talked her through the second trauma of having to re-set her leg in the ER. The trauma surgeon on call, Dr Merk (who is also the Orthopedic surgeon to the Chicago Blackhawks ice hockey team), goes to the same church as my mom (she has mentored his daughters in their youth group and plays in bell choir with his wife). Dr Merk made sure Maya had the earliest available surgical time the next morning. My sister Kyra and her partner, Joan, took Maya to their house for a week to help care for her (Maya lives in a third floor walk up apartment without an elevator!). Countless people have offered to bring food, help feed Maya's kitties, or provide transportation to doctor's appointments. In a society where we often hear about the mis-deeds of others, it is nice to know that there are caring people all around us.

I am also thankful for UUCSJS, and the friendship and support that I receive from all of you.

I'm excited to report that a lot has been happening in the past month to address some needs of our congregation. The best news is that we have started to receive matching funds from Shelter Rock UU Congregation. This was made possible by a successful Wake Now Our Vision campaign, where 8 UUCSJS members pledged over \$600,000 in legacy gifts to UUCSJS. The matching gift funds (which total just over \$60,000) will be distributed evenly across 5 areas:

1. Mortgage paydown - point person John Searight
2. Upgrading our AV system - point person Jack Miller
3. Building maintenance, including upgrades to the Security system - point person Jeff Taylor
4. Gifts and Endowment - point person Karen York
5. Green Initiatives - point person Melissa Hutchison

If you have any desire to help prioritize some of the specific needs in any of these categories, please reach out to the point person listed, and they will gladly include you in their team.

The Board has already approved moving forward with the recommendations from Schuler Security systems (our current security system provider) to upgrade all of our outside cameras, and to add a camera that would be closer to our sign on Pomona Road. The AV team has already met with Martin Fiedler (one of the people who was involved in the original design of our sanctuary), and will be coming up with a recommendation for AV upgrades.

Our congregation has also started to receive funds from the Chalice Lighter's grant, which we were awarded in September. These funds are earmarked towards helping us to move Rev Dawn to full time status over the next 2-3 years, and to help move forward with some of our social justice outreach activities.

We are also moving forward with consideration of the bylaws change request (regarding any changes to the outside of our building) that was discussed at our October special congregational meeting. A sub-committee has been meeting regularly to come up with a proposal to address that, and their findings will be brought before the congregation in a special meeting to take place on Sunday, December 15, immediately following the service. I can tell you that the sub-committee will be proposing that the original language/bylaws proposal be changed to a policy, so that it can be more robust, and allow for changes and adaptation that will not require constant approvals that may “bog down” the process or get in the way of Board governance.

We still have a ways to come as a congregation in regards to our sensitivities around LGBTQ support which has been one of the under-current issues that may not be resolved with a by laws or policy change. Rev Dawn is working with myself and the Board to see if it is possible to have another workshop to help us become a more welcoming faith community. In the meantime, I hope everyone is recognizing the need to act in a manner that is consistent with our covenant.

Finally, I would like to apologize for “dropping the ball” on not holding Board talk backs the last two months. “Life” has gotten in the way of my schedule, but I will be sure to get back on track with that in the next 2 months.

As I mentioned, I have a lot to be thankful for, and I hope you have all had a chance to express your gratitude towards someone in your life during this Holiday Season.

Thanks,

Melissa Hutchison, President of UUCSJS Board

**NOTICE of  
SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING  
SUNDAY, December 15, 2019 at 11:15 am**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a SPECIAL MEETING of UUCSJS members will be held in the Sanctuary of the UU Center for the purposes of:

1. Hearing the recommendations of the ad-hoc by-laws committee. This committee was formed October 13, 2019 at a Special meeting of the congregation and was tasked with further consideration of the proposed amendment to Article VII, Section 7.11
2. Other business that comes before the congregation

**Proposed revision to the By-Laws:**

**Article VII, Section 7.11: Limits of Power is amended to include the following language:**

"The Center and the real property upon which the Center is located is the property of the Congregation. Neither the Board, nor any standing committee of the congregation, nor any ad-hoc committee of the congregation, nor any groups formed by members and/or friends of the Congregation, nor any group of persons or single person have the authority to place any object or thing on the outside of the Congregation's Center, or upon the real property surrounding the Congregation's Center without the calling a Congregational meeting, at which a formal request shall be made to the Congregation to place the specified object or thing on the Congregation's Center, or on the real property surrounding the Center. At such a Congregational meeting, the Congregation shall consider the request. Any such request shall indicate the length of time for which the object shall be so placed. Approval of the request to place the object or thing shall be by a simple majority of members of the Congregation present at the meeting. No absentee ballots or proxy ballots shall be permitted to vote on the request. All ballots voting on the request shall be secret ballots as provided at Article VI, Section 6.4(b)(iii)."

**Current By-Laws Language**

**Article VII. BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Section 7.11 Limits of Power**

The Board shall have no power to call, settle, or remove a called Minister. The Board shall have no power to borrow money on behalf of the Congregation in excess of three percent (3%) of the Annual Budget (with the exception of repairs not covered by insurance and necessary for the ongoing operation of the Congregation) without consent of two-thirds of those present and voting (including Absentee Ballots) at a Congregational Meeting in person or by absentee ballot.

The Board may not mortgage, buy or sell any real property without consent of two-thirds of those present and voting (including Absentee Ballots) at a Congregational Meeting in person or by absentee ballot.

*Auction Item –*

**Nature Photography Workshops**

**Mike Hannisian – Sponsor and Instructor**

Mike is an experienced and skilled nature photographer, and a teacher. He has offered a very generous and ambitious program that begins on Saturday, January 4. After this initial workshop which covers the basics, there are four additional workshops on specific topics. These can be selected on an individual basis and will continue throughout the winter.

We want to publicize these programs to the wider community. This is an opportunity for a person looking to increase their knowledge to have a small group tutorial for a very minimal cost. In addition to bringing a few more dollars into our coffers, it gives us a chance to promote our congregation. There is a flyer available that describes all of the workshops. It is posted on our web page, under "News". In addition, there is a link on it to a PDF booklet that Mike has produced on the topic of nature photography. This booklet focuses on the post-processing you can do to make your photos really shine.

How you can help:

- Visit the signup table and see the flyer. Take one if you are possibly interested or have a friend who might be.
- Take one of these flyers to post on a library, or other community bulletin board.
- If you are in a Facebook or other social media group where there might be some interested folks, post the flyer on it. You can get it electronically through Betsy or Mike or download it from our website at [http://uucsjs.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Nature Photo\\_graphy Worksh ops\\_2020-01.pdf](http://uucsjs.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Nature_Photo_graphy_Worksh ops_2020-01.pdf)

There will be a sign up for the first workshop, and a sheet to express interest in the remaining four workshops on the signup table.



## CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### RE Learning Lab

I would like to share with you some questions I have been wondering lately:

- *How can we support multiple learning styles and gain greater flexibility in Children's Religious Education?*
- *How can we build a strong multigenerational community here at UUCSJS?*
- *What would Religious Education look like if we offered multiple experiential choices to engage with the monthly worship theme?*

Those of you present at our multigenerational service on November 10, 2019, were able to experience some of my experimentation with the answers to these questions. This service, on the theme of attention, included a number of “worship stations” where participants could choose how to engage with the theme of attention. Participants could contemplate and discuss, move their bodies, make some noise, or create something. Rev. Fortune hinted that some changes were coming to RE and this is the official announcement. Beginning January 12, 2020 Children's Religious Education will transform into the RE Learning Lab!

Each Sunday we will begin together as one community, experiencing worship together. Children, youth, and their families will then be welcomed downstairs to participate in one of our multi-age experiential workshops. Downstairs in the RE space, things will look physically familiar. There will still be three learning spaces but they will be used as “workshops” not “classrooms.” Children and youth will be able to choose the workshop they would like to participate in and parents/caregivers are welcome to stay and participate with their children as well. The workshops will include:

**Spark** – A think workshop, where children and youth can engage in quieter spiritual practices and/or contemplation. Participants may hear a story or watch a video, participate in a group discussion, follow a guided meditation, or maybe engage in a problem-solving exercise.

**Ignite** – A move workshop, where children and youth can use their bodies in pursuit of learning. Here participants may play games, sing songs, or maybe create and act out dramas.

**Burn** – A make workshop dedicated to creative pursuits. Here children and youth will be guided to create something and will use arts and crafts supplies to engage with the spiritual theme.

**Kindle** – A resource area for families interested in continuing faith development at home. Families will have access to Soulful Home materials and resources to help them engage with the monthly worship theme and extend their learning and faith development together.

**RE Learning Lab needs you!** This wonderful picture of flexible, multi-age, experiential learning needs volunteers. Whether you are a RE volunteer veteran or have never set foot downstairs, we need you! Do you love to create art? Maybe you love books or music? Do you like playing games? Writing poetry? Talking with others? Maybe you feel called to learn more about your chosen faith or want to inspire the next generation of UU's? Maybe you are unsure about this RE volunteer thing but you think this workshop idea sounds cool and you want to come downstairs and check it out? RE Learning Lab needs you!

**Volunteer Workshop Leaders** are needed for each workshop and will volunteer three consecutive Sundays a month. A minimum one-month commitment is required but leaders can sign up for multiple months if desired. **Volunteer Assistants** are also needed to help out in each workshop. Assistants do not need to commit to the entire month but can choose the dates that fit their schedule best. To volunteer please visit: <http://bit.ly/JanuaryRE> or see Jess Dunn Safonof for more details. I am excited to experiment with this new model of faith development and I look forward to learning and growing with you all.

In Fellowship,

Jessica Dunn Safonof  
Director of Religious Education

# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

## Staff

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### Minister

Rev. Dawn Fortune (pronoun *they*)  
minister@uucsjs.org

### Music Director

Barbara Miller  
uucsjsmusic@gmail.com

### Director of Religious Education

Jessica Dunn Safonof  
uucsjsdre@gmail.com

### Office Assistant

Matthew Honig  
[uucsjsadmin@gmail.com](mailto:uucsjsadmin@gmail.com)

### Bookkeeper

Kathleen Hartnett  
uucsjs.bookkeeper@gmail.com



**P.O. Box 853  
Pomona, NJ 08240  
(609) 965-9400**

## Board of Trustees 2019-2020

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Betsy Erbaugh, Melissa Hutchison, Kit Marlowe,  
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Newsletter – Mariann Maene – [newsletter@uucsjs.org](mailto:newsletter@uucsjs.org)

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**December 2019**

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