



NEWSLETTER



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the
South Jersey Shore

Volume 22, Issue 1

January 2020

January Services

Theme: Integrity

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>January 5</p>	<p align="center">Integrity: Beyond Wholeness <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p align="center">ALL AGES SERVICE</p> <p>We kick off 2020 with an interactive, all-ages workshop worship, where we will explore what it means to be people of integrity with exercises that stimulate our minds, bodies, and hearts. Join us!</p>
<p>January 12</p>	<p align="center">Two Truths and a Lie <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>Integrity means telling the truth. Or does it? When might telling a lie be the better choice? Life is complex, and integrity, our inner moral compass, calls us to consider carefully before we speak. Join us for this challenging exploration!</p>
<p>January 19</p>	<p align="center">“If I’m Honest…” <i>Guest speaker Christin Green</i></p> <p>One of the principles Unitarian Universalists are known for is our “free and responsible search for truth and meaning.” We are seekers and questioners and skeptics and pioneers! Yet, we often default to “someone else more qualified” to lead the charge. How do we, as people of faith, keep ourselves honest about our role as leaders in social justice work? Join guest preacher, Christin Green, to explore January’s theme of Integrity.</p>
<p>January 26</p> <p>Special Congregational Meeting</p>	<p align="center">What Would You Do? <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>Integrity is said to be what we do when nobody is watching us. Life presents us daily with situations where we must make moral choices – sometimes we choose what is right, sometimes we choose what is more comfortable. What does our Unitarian Universalist faith call us to do in complex situations?</p>



Look for our upcoming
Souper Bowl Sunday Soup Sale!
Sunday, February 2, 2020

President's Corner

"Go Gravity! Go Gravity!"

During the month of December, I had numerous reminders of why I am grateful to be a member of UUCSJS. I loved watching the RE kids praise Gravity and Oxygen and Selenium and Electrons in their service a few weeks ago. We believe in science and also in the awesome miracle of the Big Bang that started our very existence in this life. Kudos to Jessica and the RE crew for putting together that intergenerational service. I also loved being a part of the Winter Solstice Singing Ritual. Even though I have participated in that service multiple times over the years, I always learn something new, and I always feel that it helps to fill my spiritual "cup" for the year. Thanks as always to Barbara and the rest of the choir for their many hours or preparation to make this special service a reality. I also appreciate Rev. Dawn for putting on a Christmas Eve service, and for their collaboration with staff to make sure that the month of December contained both robust worship experiences, and also some time off for staff around the holidays.

I am happy to report that the Board has made a lot of progress on several areas of congregational life:

- Our security company has installed several new security cameras, and we continue to work on improvements in overall safety and security for the congregation.
- The *ad hoc* group charged with working on the by-laws proposal has come up with a recommendation for a policy to address external signs and symbols. They will be presenting this at a special congregational meeting the end of January. Look for more details to come as we get closer to that date. [Ed. Note: See page 5.]
- Allies in Caring is making excellent progress in opening their new building. Please contact Geoff Stuart if you are interested in helping out with some inside painting projects that need to happen in the next 1-2 weeks. We are confident that this will be just the start of an important social justice outreach project for years to come.
- Our financial health is in excellent shape. We are due to receive the second installment of the matching gifts from the UUA's Wake Now Our Vision campaign. Some of these funds will be used to pay down our mortgage. Another key area of financial support will be going to Audio Visual needs. Please contact Jack Miller if you are interested in helping out with this area.
- We have also started receiving monthly checks from the Chalice Lighter's guild (awarded to us after a successful grant application last summer). These funds are earmarked for helping us to move Rev. Dawn to full time ministry status, and to help us move forward with our social justice goals.
- Pat Infante (from the Central East Regional Group of the UUA) will be coming to visit us in early February to host a workshop designed to help us to re-covenant with each other.

I hope you all will come to be a part of that experience on Sunday, February 9.

▪ I am also excited to report that several members have already expressed an interest in attending the UUA's General Assembly this summer, in Providence, RI (June 24-28, 2020). Our congregation will be allowed 2-3 voting delegates, but we also hope that many members will want to go to experience this unique conference. Scholarships may be available; please see myself or Rev. Dawn if you are interested.

I'm looking forward to 2020 at UUCSJS, and I hope you are, too. Can't you just feel the gravity pulling us all in? I'll see you on Sunday! ~ Melissa Hutchison

About our guest speaker

Christin Green is a recent graduate of Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC (May 2019). She is the adopted daughter of two women who raised her in a suburb of Kansas City, Missouri. Christin transplanted to Washington, DC in 2008 to earn a Master of Arts in Women's Studies from The George Washington University. After completing her Masters, she decided to stay in the area and pursue nonprofit work. The continuing search for purpose led her to attend seminary. Christin intends to spend this first year post-graduation working toward preliminary fellowship and ordination. She looks forward to sharing her time and talent as a musician, a poet, a lifelong learner, and a UU minister in formation.



BOOK CLUB meets in the UU library on Friday, January 17 at 7 pm. (The book is switched with the original January Selection of *There There* which will now be in February.) Jesse Connor will be leading the discussion and all are invited to attend.

ELEANOR OLIPHANT IS COMPLETELY FINE by *Gail Honeyman* is our book for January. "No one's ever told Eleanor that life should be better than fine. Meet Eleanor Oliphant. She struggles with appropriate social skills and tends to say exactly what she is thinking. Nothing is missing in her carefully timetabled life of avoiding social interactions, where weekends are punctuated by frozen pizza, vodka, and phone chats with Mummy."

MARGARET CIRCLE meets on Thursday, January 9, at 1 pm in the UU Center Library. We will begin with joys and concerns, followed by light refreshments provided by Peg Gillies. Sue Parks and Julie Spradlin will be leading the program. They plan to discuss the value of kindness in today's world.

After the holidays you might be thinking about getting into better shape. As an optional program following the Margaret Circle's ending at 3 pm, our member Ellie Gibson will conduct a light exercise program, either chair yoga, or something similar. A \$5 donation for her is expected from participants.

Rev. Dawn Fortune
609.289.5782

in-teg-ri-ty

/in'tegredē/

noun

1.
the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.

"he is known to be a man of integrity"

2.
the state of being whole and undivided.

"upholding territorial integrity and national sovereignty"

(Google Dictionary)



January is our month to focus on Integrity. In times like the ones we are now in, I find that an exploration of the concept of Integrity to be particularly timely. What does it mean to be people of Integrity? What does it mean to behave with integrity in our personal lives as well as our public ones?

Integrity means more than having moral principles: it also means to exist in a state of wholeness, of being unified, undivided. Looking at the political landscape in our country, I cannot remember a time when we have been *less* whole and undivided. How do we address that issue? We can be whole as individuals, but what about our communities? What about in our nation? We are at a point now where there are tribal factions that are almost entirely unable to communicate with one another. The two sides hold as true two entirely different sets of "facts." Some of those facts can be proven, and some cannot, but believers will not be swayed by evidence that contradicts their own deeply held beliefs. How do we bring this large community back to something that looks closer to whole? Undivided? Can it be done? And what individual or collective moral principles must be compromised to achieve wholeness for the larger community?

It is a conundrum, indeed, and I could spend a professional lifetime exploring it instead of just a month.

I find that the Soul Matters ministry packet we started using this year to be a great resource of ideas and information, bringing to my attention different elements and resources that are new to me, and encouraging me to explore the monthly themes in deeper ways. I hope that this translates into a more enriching worship experience

for you, and I hope, in the next year or two, to begin a small group ministry program that can use these same thematic resources to explore spiritual growth in intimate groups that meet outside of the regular Sunday services.

Welcome to 2020. There is much to explore, much to learn, and much to do. I look forward to sharing it with you.

Blessings,

Rev. Dawn



Rev. Dawn's Twitter handle is
@queerpreacher

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

Scam Alert

Rev. Fortune writes: I have heard from my minister colleagues that several congregations in our UU Association have been targeted by spammers and hackers of late, posing as the minister and asking people to send financial help in the form of gift cards, money orders, and bank account or credit card information.

Please know this: I WILL NEVER ASK FOR THAT INFORMATION IN AN EMAIL.

If you get an email that appears to be from me asking you to send gift cards, or to make credit card purchases or some such thing, **DO NOT DO THAT!** If I plan to make a request for money (like during pledge season) it will be a well-planned, strategic program with clearly explained reasons, limits, goals, and with the support of the Board.

In the time of widespread online fraud, please be savvy and check out any request that seems even the slightest bit off. Call my pastoral cell phone (609-289-5782) and check it out. Or call a board member or Karen York, our treasurer. I won't do anything in the way of fundraising without alerting all of those folks.

Be safe, friends, and never give out personal information to people who call or email you uninvited.

Sangha – New Meeting Time!

Saturday, January 26, 10 am



The Sangha is now meeting at a new time! Instead of the first Saturday of the month, we will now meet on the last Saturday of the month, 10 am to noon in the UU Center Sanctuary. Join us for dharma sharing and meditation. You do not have to be a “Buddhist” or even an experienced meditator to join us. Perfect for newcomers!

Flower Children Needed!

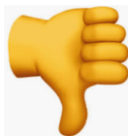
Each Sunday Service we have on the chalice table a candle, a singing bowl and flowers. If you are interested in contributing flowers to the following service, please let Colby know throughout the year. You may also consider donating a small financial contribution toward the purchase of flowers. Thank you!

WINTER CLOTHING

Still collecting new and gently used WINTER clothing for all ages as well as all types of foot wear. *Socks are always in great demand.* A large bin is in the foyer to gratefully receive. AND.... Please check around the coat rack area for lost & found items you may have forgotten!

RECYCLING MINDFULNESS

Up your reusable bag game! That means avoiding single-use bags to bring in items to the UU Center such as food donations and other things.



Be aware of what is NOT recyclable. For example, **plastic utensils, paper coffee cups and plates, and bottle caps are not recyclable.** They are TRASH. ☹

Richard works very hard on keeping things separated in the kitchen and has multiple bins for recycling purposes. We should all be mindful of **PROPER RECYCLING PRACTICES!**

Weather Warning

In case of inclement weather, call the UU Center office (609-965-9400) after 8 am on Sunday morning. There will be a recording if the Sunday service has been cancelled.



Hooray! 2020 Circle Dinners begin.

The first one is Saturday, January 25

Circle dinners are an important way that we build community. New folks in our congregation and those who have been around for years are able to get to know each other in the relaxed setting of a shared meal. We meet in groups of eight. One couple or person who is able to offer their home for the occasion is appointed as the host. They provide the appetizer, and all others are assigned a course to bring. The format is so simple, and it works well in providing an interesting and fun social occasion.

Advance signup is needed so that Marie Taylor, our coordinator, can arrange the assignments, and give them out in time for the hosts to make contact with those who will be attending their meal. This is the time when all can share information about eating needs and preferences, and folks have a chance to plan what they will bring accordingly.

The deadline for signing up is Sunday, January 12

You may sign up by contacting Marie Taylor or by adding your name to the signup sheet on Sunday Jan 5 or Jan 12. If you email Marie, be sure to include your name, email, address, and phone number. Also, indicate if you can host.

There is a handout on the signup table that describes more fully how these dinners work. Besides the host providing appetizers and coffee, another couple or two single guests provide bread and salad, another two the main course, and another brings dessert. Participants are expected to bring their own beverage. There are four dinners scheduled for the season, and Marie will attempt to rotate people's assignments so that you will be dining with people whom you have not been with before, and will give you a different course to bring. The first signup is for January 25 only.

Do yourself a favor and come to this most enjoyable event.

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Who We Are, New Year Goals

If you look around on the Unitarian Universalist Association website (www.uua.org) for even a few minutes, you will find plenty of webpages trying to answer the question “Who are we?”

“We are brave, curious, and compassionate thinkers and doers,” says one page. “Unitarian Universalists are people of many religious backgrounds, people of many racial and cultural backgrounds, people of many life experiences and identities,” says another. “We have no shared creed. Our shared covenant (our seven Principles) supports the free and responsible search for truth and meaning,” another page declares. And: “We are a multigenerational faith. From infancy to old age, Unitarian Universalism supports us in living with integrity, compassion, commitment, and joy.”

That last one is my favorite. I love the goal of Unitarian Universalism as that of a multigenerational community coming together to support each other, to live out their values together, to welcome and celebrate their diversity, and to learn and grow together. Beautiful, right? But how do I do that? How does Unitarian Universalism do that?

No worries, there are plenty of webpages on the UUA website describing how to work toward these goals. But I'm not going to write about those here. I want to tell you about a Twitter thread I recently stumbled upon.

I waste a fair amount of my time clicking around on social media, mostly Facebook. A few weeks ago I read a post that someone in a UU educators group shared that was a share of a share of a share from Twitter. I have no idea who the original poster is or where you can find the thread. But the thought behind the post got me thinking about UU faith development and asking myself about my UU identity.

The post states there are only two kinds of Jews – serious Jews and non-serious Jews. The question that separates the serious from the non-serious Jew being “How would your life be different, in day-to-day terms, if you were not Jewish?” This idea comes from Rabbi Harold Kushner, who writes about

Jewish identity not being centered in belief but in community and history. For some people being Jewish affects the clothes they wear, what they eat, the books they read, the organizations they give money to, the activities they participate in. According to Rabbi Kushner, being a serious or non-serious Jew is not equal to religiousness but answers the questions “how does being Jewish fill your life, how does it describe who you are, how do you pass that identity on to your children?”

These questions are so similar to those we ask about our Unitarian Universalist identity. I believe that faith is developmental and that identity encompasses a wide spectrum not a binary “serious or non-serious” but this question is huge: “How would your life be different, in day-to-day terms, if you were not a Unitarian Universalist?”

Reflection and goal setting is a January tradition so in this new year why not ask yourself “How would my life be different if I weren't Unitarian Universalist?” No judgments, no wishful thinking. Does being UU fill your life? How are you living our UU values and principles? How are you passing on your UU identity to the next generation? Why not find some areas of your life that need a little more UU in them and set a goal or two for growth.

In Fellowship,

Jessica Dunn Safonof
Director of Religious Education

NOTICE of SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

SUNDAY, January 26, 2020 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

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

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Visit us on the Web: www.uucsjs.org

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Congregation of the South Jersey Shore
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