



NEWSLETTER



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the
South Jersey Shore

Volume 22, Issue 2

February 2020

February Services

Theme: Resilience

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>February 2</p>	<p align="center">The Physics and Spirituality of Resilience <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>Resilience is defined by physicists as the ability of matter to absorb outside energy or pressure and return to its original state. Personal and spiritual resilience can be quite different. Join us as we explore our resilient spirits in a challenging world.</p>
<p>February 9 Covenant Workshop</p>	<p align="center">Together We Promise <i>Guest speaker Pat Infante</i></p> <p>Covenant is a spiritual discipline which asks us to take part in an ongoing, intentional commitment. The work of creating a covenant is just a first step; living into it, sustaining it, restoring and renewing it when it is broken takes commitment and a willingness to be vulnerable. Patricia Infante from the Central East Region of the UUA will invite us into a time of reflection about the covenants we hold with one another and why they matter. After worship, we'll gather to consider our existing covenant and engage in a process of recommitting to the work of building a strong, covenantal community here at UUCSJS.</p>
<p>February 16</p>	<p align="center">Your Purpose is Bigger Than You Realize <i>Guest speaker Rev. Dr. John E. Gray</i></p> <p>Using the life of Moses as an example of faith and resilience, we can never allow our past mistakes and failures to derail our God given purpose.</p>
<p>February 23 UUCSJS 20th Birthday Party</p>	<p align="center">Intentional Resilience <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>Matter tends to be either resilient (rubber) or not (concrete). Matter can be adapted to increase its resilience to make it stronger and more durable. Is that something we can do to ourselves? Beyond going to the gym and building muscles, what is it we can do our spirits to make ourselves resilient? Join us as we explore.</p>

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, UUCSJS !!!!!

UUCSJS will turn TWENTY years old on February 13, 2020.
We will be holding a birthday celebration on Sunday, February 23. We will recognize our Charter Members, there will be an all Congregational Photo Op, and of course there will be a POTLUCK (...and cake)!

Look for sign ups over the next few weeks for ways that you can help, and plan to attend on this special date!

President's Corner

"WHAT WOULD YOU DO"?

The title and theme of Reverend Dawn's sermon this week really resonated with me this week. I tried to imagine myself with the sign declaring "LOVE" hanging around my neck (note to reader - check the website if you missed their sermon), and I have to admit, even just trying to picture that felt like a heavy burden. I have had a cough and cold all week, and half of my patients are coming in sick with cold and flu symptoms, so I haven't been able to be the best doctor to my patients (other than being able to commiserate with them). I had originally planned to join in on the counter protests in Wildwood, and also to help make tamales for the fundraiser this week, but neither of those things happened. All of us have times where we get sick or something comes up or we just don't have the gumption to show up where we think we may be needed. But I don't think we need to beat ourselves up over it. I think the point is to try to remember that "Love" sign hanging around your neck and just try to be the best person that you can be.

Our congregation will have an opportunity to remind ourselves how to be the best people that we can be in covenant with each other on Sunday February 9. Following services, Pat Infante, our regional UUA director, will be leading a workshop to help us to rekindle our flame of love for our UUCSJS family, and to update our covenant and its promises. Lunch and childcare will be provided, so I hope everyone will be able to come and participate.*

We have another very exciting event happening this month that will make it easy for all of us to show our love for one another. February 13 marks the founding of our congregation, and on Sunday, February 23, we will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of UUCSJS. Several charter members will be on hand to mark the festivities, and we will be taking an all congregation photograph to update our website. There will be a potluck lunch (and birthday cake) after the Sunday morning service, so be sure to attend.* Look for announcements and food sign ups in the next few weeks to see how you can contribute to the birthday party.

I want to again thank all the members of UUCSJS who served on the ad hoc sign committee: Michael Cluff (chair), Jack Miller, Diane Dreby, Tony Zitelli, Judy Pereira, and Jeff Taylor. As I mentioned at the special congregational meeting last week, this group was extremely thoughtful and hard working (and loving) in helping to draft a policy about signage that will be of use to the Board and to the entire congregation moving forward. The congregation has unanimously approved to institute this proposal as a policy instead of a By Laws change. The next step is that the Board will consider the current version of policy, and will make recommendations to adopt it as is, or with changes as we see appropriate. Someone asked me and the other Board members whether we planned to support the policy as written. I wasn't quick on my feet to answer, but now that I have had more time to reflect on it some more, my answer is that I am going to put my LOVE sign

around my neck and ask myself, my fellow Board members, and anyone else who is invested in this issue, "What would YOU do"?

Happy Valentines Day, with LOVE,
~ Melissa Hutchison

* If you have cold or flu symptoms or have recently traveled to China, please stay home :))

This newsletter article was written under the influence of NyQuil and herbal tea; however, the author takes full responsibility for its contents

About our guest speaker



Reverend Dr. John E. Gray, the youngest of nine children, was born in Newark, New Jersey on October 31, 1968 and graduated from Weequahic High School in 1986. He earned a certification in African-American Studies and a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the Stockton University in Galloway, New Jersey in 1992. Dr. Gray earned his Masters of Education degree from Grand Canyon

University in Phoenix, Arizona in 2006 and his Doctorate of Education Degree from Walden University in 2012. He has also taken courses at the Lutheran Theological Seminary and Palmer Theological Seminary, and is a few courses shy of the Master of Divinity Degree.

Having accepted the call to preach the gospel in 1995, Dr. Gray preached his trial sermon in August of 1997 at Asbury United Methodist Church in Atlantic City, New Jersey. In 1998 he was called by Bishop Phillip Cousin to be the Senior Pastor of St. Stephen AME Church in Whitesboro, New Jersey. He was ordained by Bishop Cousin in 1999 and was sent to Pastor the St. James AME Church in Mays Landing, New Jersey. After serving there for two years, Dr. Gray was led to begin a new church. He was ordained by Reverend James Washington of the Shiloh Baptist Church of Atlantic City, New Jersey for the work of the new ministry, which was founded as the Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in 2001.

Dr. Gray relocated to the Philadelphia area to attend seminary. He joined the Zion Baptist Church in Ardmore, and became part of the ministerial staff in 2004. Under the direction of Reverend James A. Pollard Sr. PhD, Reverend Gray was directed to the Goodwill Tabernacle Baptist Church, as the Interim Pastor in July 2007. Within six months, January 2008, by the grace of God, he was installed as Senior Pastor of Goodwill Tabernacle Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where he still proudly serves to this day. Dr. Gray is also employed with Stockton University as Visiting Professor of Organizational Leadership.

Dr. Gray is married to Goodwill Tabernacle's wonderful First Lady, Antoinette, and they have four beautiful girls: Alexis, Alize, Ally, and Ajohne'.

Rev. Dawn Fortune
609.289.5782

View from the minister's study

After what to some felt like the longest January on record, February dawned with gray skies and fog. Observing the national and international news of the past month, it feels like a most appropriate tie to visit the topic of "Resilience."



Resilience is used in both physical and metaphorical ways to describe a thing or a person's ability to bounce back from some kind of adversity. A rubber ball returns to its round shape after being squeezed in the hand, the human heart is able to love again after being broken.

For people focused on social justice, it can be a real challenge to stay hopeful. So much of our time and energy is poured into fighting the human-made forces of greed and cruelty, of hate and fear. It feels like our work will never be done, and there is some truth to that statement. The fact is, we will always be seeking to improve the world: to make it more accessible, more fair, more kind, more free. It is the reality of life that things (and people) are imperfect. That does not mean we give up, and it does not mean that we despair that we will never accomplish our goal. It means that we will always have something to learn, a new thing to practice, a new truth to learn and then share.

This gets to the heart of our Unitarian heritage. Coming to form during the Age of Enlightenment, scholars and philosophers were buoyed by the near-constant discoveries of science and reason, and predicted that humanity's potential for growth and development was limitless.

Take this example from the Unitarian Universalist Association *Tapestry of Faith* religious education resource:

Transcendentalist James Freeman Clarke (1810-1888) summarized unitarian optimism when he revised the five points of Calvinism in an 1886 book of essays, *Vexed Questions in*

Theology. Clarke's "Five Points of the New Theology" became belief in:

- the fatherhood of God
- the brotherhood of man
- the leadership of Jesus
- salvation by character
- the progress of mankind onward and upward forever.

Clarke's writings were the next generation of idealism proposed by William Ellery Channing, who described both human nature and the nature of God as limitless in their capacity for love and for progress.

I confess that sometimes I am more impressed with humanity's capacity for pettiness and cruelty than with its capacity for virtue. In times like ours, it can be easy to get discouraged. And yet... and yet, humans are the most amazing creatures. In the midst of a hostile world, in the face of hate and nastiness, humans show up and do good things.

There is something to this notion of resilience. The resilience of the human spirit has been a topic of study and discussion by theologians and philosophers for eons, and that fact alone gives me hope. No matter how grim things get, there are people who will love, people who will give, people who will show up to help, no matter what.

And on a gray and damp morning in February, that is a ray of sunshine we can all rely on.

Blessings,

Rev. Dawn



Rev. Dawn's Twitter handle is @queerpreacher
You can tweet about UUCSJS

Strategic Plan Progress

UUCSJS continues to improve the new strategic plan, even as it guides our operations. An up-to-date edition is at <http://members.uucsjs.org/grantslong-range-plan/>.

To further refine our vision, the Strategic Planning Committee holds member talk-back discussions at 11:30 am on the first Sunday of each month. There is a session on Sunday, February 2.

Looking to the Future: Annual Stewardship Campaign 2020-2021

March 15 to April 12, 2020

The programs and services we are able to provide each year are made possible through the generous financial support of our members and friends. So each year we have a season of stewardship. The goal of the Stewardship campaign is to receive pledges of support from every member to help us to plan our programming budget in advance (planning for July 2020 to June 2021).

Our stewardship campaign this year will run from **March 15 to April 12**. On **Saturday, April 11**, we will hold a **Fellowship dinner** at the UU Center. This shared meal is a fun community event to celebrate the completion of our annual Stewardship campaign. The collective generosity from everyone is what created an impact, so please plan to join us in these events as we look forward to the year ahead at UUCSJS.

~ Karen York, Treasurer UUCSJS

BOOK CLUB will meet Friday, February 21 at 7 pm in the UU Center library. Our selection is *THERE THERE* by Tommy Orange. Fierce, angry, funny, heartbreaking – Orange's first novel is a wondrous and shattering portrait of an America few of us have ever seen. *There There* is a relentlessly paced multigenerational story about violence and recovery, memory and identity, and the beauty and despair woven into the history of a nation and its people. It tells the story of 12 characters, each of whom have private reasons for traveling to the Big Oakland *Powwow*. Betsy Searight will be leading the discussion. Book club meeting is open to all.

MARGARET CIRCLE will meet on Thursday, February 6, at 1 pm in the UU Center library. We begin with joys and concerns, followed by light refreshments. Sally Williams will present the program, which is about Valentine's Day, its signs, signals, and legends. The program will be interactive, and there might be a quiz. Judy Pereira will be providing the refreshments. Following the program there will be an optional Chair yoga session led by Ellie Gibson. A \$5 donation for her is expected from participants.

Auction Events for Sale

The social life of many in our community revolves around events and dinners that are sold at our Auction last Fall. When these events do not sell out on the night of the auction, we offer them again closer to the time that they are being held. There are three super events coming up within the next five weeks.

Make Your Own Pizza Dinner

The Millers provide the dough and the toppings, you assemble the pizza. The group gets to sample each creation and enjoy the results with Jack's homemade wine! After a delicious homemade dessert, the group will enjoy a fun and challenging game.

Date: Saturday, February 29, 2020 at 5pm

Place: Miller home in Petersburg

Price: \$35 per person

Spots remaining - 3

A Tai Chi and Chai Tea Evening

Treat yourself to a relaxing evening as Denise welcomes you for a Tai Chi and singing bowl meditation experience at the UU Center followed by dessert, tea, and maybe even a little wine, too. A chair massage therapist will also be in attendance, and Harold is available to provide transportation for those wishing to attend, but uncomfortable driving at night.

Date: Sunday, February 23, 2020 at 6 pm

Place: UU Center Sanctuary

Price: \$40 per person

Donated by: Denise O'Meara and Harold Williams

Spots remaining - 11

Vegan-Cooking Workshop

Have you ever attended one of Melissa and Ron's vegan dinners and wondered, How did they make that? Do you lose sleep at night wondering how the heck to cook with Tofu? Are you interested in finding out how you can reduce your carbon footprint by moving towards a plant-based diet? Answers to these pressing questions and more will be provided in this special cooking vegan workshop offered by Ron and Melissa Hutchison. Bring your own apron, your questions, and your appetite (we will be eating the food that we prepare); recipes (and any leftovers) will be distributed to the participants at the end of the workshop.

Date: Saturday, March 7, 2020

Place: UU Center

Price: \$35 per person

Donated by: Ron and Melissa Hutchison

Spots remaining – 5

You can purchase any of these events by visiting the signup table in the sanctuary. Write your name on the guest list, and put your check or cash in an envelope on the table provided for the event. Put this envelop in the collection plate, or give it to Betsy Searight or an auction or financial representative.

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Happy Birthday!

We have a tradition in our family that I would like to share with you. Each year, in honor of your birthday, you get to go to the bookstore and pick out any new book you want. There is no price limit, there is no parental recommendation or judgment. Just you and the wide-open expanse that is Barnes and Noble. In this world of ebooks and two-day Amazon shipping, this tradition probably doesn't seem like a big deal. So let me tell you a little more about it.

Our family is a library family. We go to the public library at least every two weeks. We bring tote bags to carry our books home. The librarians know us by name and ask about my kids when they aren't with me. When we buy books, we usually buy them used from the local used bookstore/coffee shop and we have earned numerous free books from Thriftbooks.com through their loyalty shopping program. But here's the thing about new books. They feel different than used books – smooth, clean, crisp. They smell different, like fresh paper and ink. They have this sense of belonging only to you.

But new books can be expensive. Not pre-industrial, mass-printed book expensive but still more than our monthly budget allows. Enter: The Birthday Book. The birthdays in our family all fall within 20 calendar days, so each May/June we find a day during that 20 day period to go to the Barnes and Noble store together. We get coffee and snacks at the cafe then we spread out like a pack of wolves preparing to take down its prey. We literally spend hours making our selections because picking just one book (or maybe two if they are inexpensive mass-marketed paperbacks) is no easy feat. There is so much to choose from!

The excitement! The indecision! The drama! The joy! I would like to share these birthday book feelings with you. You see, this year for my birthday, I didn't choose a book for me. I chose a book to share with the kids at UUCSJS. I read my book to my children, then I logged it into UUCSJS's Libib database (<https://jessdunnsaf.libib.com>) and added it to the RE Lending Library shelves. Like most books I've enjoyed, it was too good not to share.

Then I thought, maybe other members and friends of UUCSJS would like to get in on this birthday book thing. So I give you: **The Birthday Book Donation Program!**

Here's how you can create a birthday book tradition for yourself that also gives back. I have curated a wishlist of books I think would be a great fit for our RE Lending Library. You can purchase books from this list or scour new and used bookstores or websites for other books you would like to share with the children and families at UUCSJS.

When you donate a book, that book will get an inscription label on the front flyleaf with your name and date of donation, letting the reader know who shared this book for their birthday. Your donation will also be recognized in my monthly newsletter article. My hope is that together we can build a library that will inspire and inform our youngest members as they practice living our principles and growing our faith. Won't you help?

Link to my wishlist for some ideas:

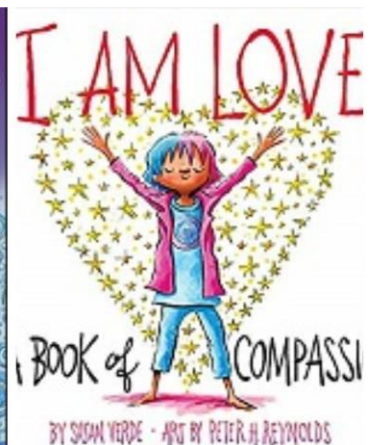
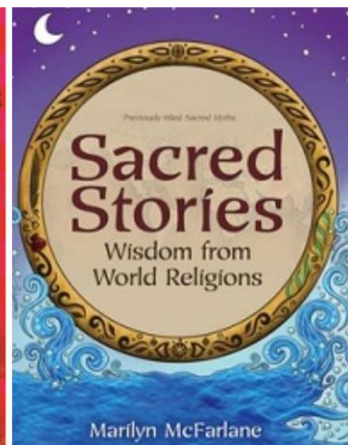
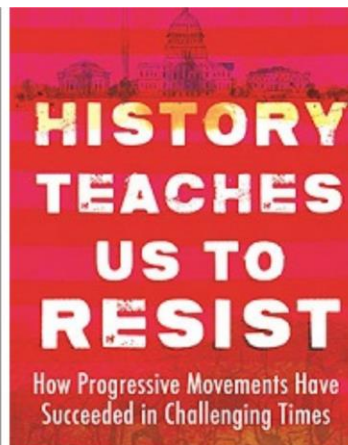
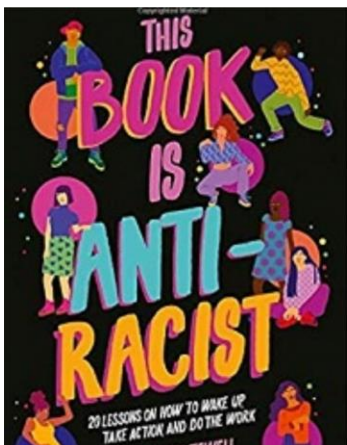
<https://pin.it/i6qddsbw4lutwr>.

Happy hunting! And Happy Birthday!

In Fellowship,

Jessica Dunn Safonof

Director of Religious Education



Circle Dinner, Saturday, February 22

Sign up is open until Sunday, Feb. 9

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.

You may sign up at the signup table at the back of the sanctuary, or by contacting Marie Taylor. If you email Marie, be sure to include your name, email, address, and phone number. Also, indicate if you can host.

The following Circle Dinner will be on Saturday, March 28. There will not be a Circle Dinner in April, as our all congregation Fellowship Dinner is on Saturday, April 11. However, there will be a last one in May.

There is a handout on the signup table that describes more fully how these dinners work

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

UUCSJS MEMORIAL WOODLAND PATH

Richard Grzywinski's Memorial Stone now joins that of our beloved former member, Bob Gillies, along the Woodland Memorial Path. Richard's memorial will give all of us who knew and loved Richard an opportunity to remember him in a peaceful and meditative setting.

Two other memorial stones honoring Marsha Hannah and Paul Utts's parents were also installed along our sacred walkway in our beautiful pine-oak woodlands. Some of you have fond memories of Patricia Utts who helped inspire the founding of our congregation and sadly passed away just days after our February 13, 2000 Charter Sunday Service when UUCSJS became an official congregation with the UUA.

If you are new to our congregation and would like to learn more about our path and memorials, you can find a handout about our Memorial Woodland Path in the rack in vestibule. You will also find a more detailed information sheet on page 7 of this newsletter.



Gerrymandering and Prisons in NJ

[Take action NOW!](#)

The New Jersey Senate passed a bill to end statewide prison gerrymandering in February 2019. Almost a full year later, the General Assembly has yet to pass this crucial bill, but they may vote as soon as this week. Please take 1 minute to ask your assemblyperson to vote YES ON A1987 by clicking on the blue link above, filling in your zip code, personalizing the pre-written action letter if you so choose -- and sending it on.

The racist impacts of prison gerrymandering are incontrovertible.

Population counts for municipalities with prisons – usually majority white communities – are inflated without providing any benefit to the incarcerated individuals used to do so. This diverts vital resources away from incarcerated people's hometowns.

This critical piece of legislation, A1987, would require the state to count incarcerated NJ residents based on their last permanent address rather than the address of their correctional facility for legislative redistricting purposes.

Susan MacDonnell (UU Princeton) and Anne Houle (UU Lincroft), Chair and Vice Chair, Criminal Justice Reform Task Force

Rev. Rob Gregson, Exec. Director, UU FaithAction NJ

Sangha – February meeting will be rescheduled to early March



The planned February sangha date of the 22nd will be changed to an evening session at the UU Center in early March, probably Tuesday, March 3 or Wednesday March 4 from 6-8 pm. Please contact Cynthia Grzywinski or Dennis Bohn for more details.

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.



UUCSJS Memorial Woodland Path

~Mission Statement~

The UUCSJS Memorial Woodland Path and Garden provides UUCSJS families and friends with a peaceful setting where they may memorialize their loved ones and where all may seek solitude and quiet to reflect and meditate.

The Memorial Woodland Path blends in with the landscape and affords a simple, natural, peaceful, and inspirational venue for those seeking comfort, solace, fellowship, or inspiration.

Our **Woodland Memorial Path** consists of a looping path that begins beyond the children's play area, opens up to a meditation circle with benches, continues on through the pine-oak woodlands, and ends in front of the back deck near back doors to the Sanctuary. These guidelines for the **Woodland Memorial Path** were approved by the UUCSJS Board of Trustees in July 2017.

► Overview

- Memorial stones with plaques should represent connections to our congregation, paying tribute to either a past member of the congregation or some person important in the lives of a member of our congregation.
- Individual stone memorials will be placed at intervals along the path at distances that will allow for quiet meditation.
- Some family members might want to have multiple stone memorials in close proximity to each other.
- The path will allow for both individual memorials and family gatherings of memorials.

► Memorials

- The stones are colonial bluestone and are approximately 11" x 14" and 2" thick. Congregation members may choose to purchase and reserve a stone or stones.
- The \$50 purchase price of the stone(s) will help to defray the initial expenses of the Memorial Woodland Path.
- If a member purchases a stone prior to needing to sign an agreement form, the cost will be deducted from the price of a future Memorial Agreement and the stone(s) may be placed along the path in collaboration with a member of the Memorial Garden Committee, or the stone(s) may be labeled and stored until needed.
- Matching stones will be available as requested for many years to come.
- Our Memorial Woodland Path will also accommodate individual stones and memorials that differ from our standard plaque and stone. These memorials will need to meet the approval of the Memorial Garden Committee and will be placed along the loop of the Memorial Woodland Path leading directly from the back deck.
- The Memorial Garden Committee will oversee mapping the locations of the memorial stones and reserve stones using GPS. The committee will insure that GPS locations for all new memorials are added to the master Memorial Woodland Path Map.

► Plaques

- The engraved plaques will be 10" wide by 7" high.
- Families will have a choice of either a bronze or aluminum plaque. The background color in both of the plaques will be darkened to allow the engraving to stand out.
- Families may choose what they would like to have engraved on the memorial plaque in a maximum of four (4) lines, including the line for the name. A limit of four lines has been set to insure that the memorials be simple and egalitarian.
- Our Memorial Woodland Path will also accommodate standard Veterans' plaques which might be larger and different from those specified above.

► Memorial Agreements

- Members who want to have a stone and plaque placed along the Memorial Woodland Path will be asked to sign a Memorial Agreement.
- The cost of the Memorial Agreement will include the stone, a concrete mounting for the stone, an engraved bronze or aluminum plaque, installation of the stone and plaque, and future upkeep of the Memorial Woodland Path.
- The cost for the Memorial Agreement is \$700 for the bronze plaque and package or \$550 for the aluminum plaque and package.
- The price may go up over time as the cost of metal increases.
- A separate UUCSJS account will keep track of the monies collected for Memorial Agreements and for the reserve stones, as well as for expenditures over time.

If you have any questions, we'd be happy to answer them. Please see me or another member of the Memorial Garden Committee: Marsha Hannah, Betsy Searight, Helen Utts, Paul Utts, and Angela Wexler.

~Jesse Connor, Chair

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Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

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Visit us on the Web: www.uucsjs.org

February 2020

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Congregation of the South Jersey Shore
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