



# NEWSLETTER



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the  
South Jersey Shore

Volume 22, Issue 4

April 2020

## April Services

### Theme: Liberation

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>April 5</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Liberation in a Time of Bondage</b> <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>As we approach the high holy seasons of both Passover and Easter, we find ourselves bound at home and threatened by a plague that spreads across the land. It is a good time to consider the messages of liberation told by the ancient Hebrews and the early followers of Jesus of Nazareth as they faced their own dark and frightening times. Join us as we explore what it means to be free people within the confines of a hostile and threatening world.</p>
<p><b>April 12</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Liberated From Death</b> <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>Easter is the time when Christians celebrate Jesus' resurrection after his crucifixion. Passover commemorates the time when the ancient Hebrews were spared from the Angel of Death by splashing lamb's blood over their doors. Death is sitting uncomfortably close these days. Let us ponder how we may be liberated from its grasp.</p>
<p><b>April 19</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Liberation and Freedom</b> <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>Liberation and freedom are two different things. One is a status and the other an achievement, or an event. Lets examine the concepts of liberation and freedom within the context of our world today.</p>
<p><b>April 26</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Bodhisattva Path to Liberation from Suffering</b> <i>Lay speaker Ivette Guillermo-McGahee</i></p> <p>The Bodhisattva path offers tools that help us respond creatively to world crises rather than feeling overwhelmed or paralyzed by distress. As when we do grief work, facing our distress doesn't make it disappear. Instead, when we do face it, we are able to place our distress within a larger landscape that gives it a different meaning. Rather than feeling afraid of our pain for the world, we learn that the world itself has a role to play in our liberation; its very pressures, pains, and risks can wake us up -- release us from the bonds of ego and guide us home to our vast, true nature.</p>

**NOW More Than Ever!**

**2020-2021 Stewardship continues into April**

## President's Corner

Greetings from Home! I hope this message finds you all well.

I have been really impressed with how well our Sunday morning Zoom services have been going, and am excited that in this time of social distancing, our virtual service has in fact allowed more people to participate, with members and friends joining in from Philadelphia, Florida, and even California (shout out to my oldest son, Colin, for that one).

I was especially taken with Rev Dawn's choice of Reading for Sunday morning [see page 7], about the person who continues to fall into a hole in the sidewalk, before finally figuring out how to go around it. A lot of times in the past few weeks I have felt the frustration of feeling like I'm continuing to fall into the same "hole" over and over again. I find it hard to concentrate on even the most simple tasks. I'm not even sure when I last washed my hair! And I consider myself lucky in that I can at least go in to work every day, which lends itself to some type of normalcy, and gives me a sense of purpose in my life. A majority of my work day is devoted to calling patients, and helping to alleviate their fears and anxieties.

As your Board President, I hope I can continue to offer that type of support to the congregation. The Board has not been very "active" this month in terms of our usual roles. We have continued to make sure that we can support the ongoing work of the church, including supporting "virtual church" platforms, staff, Reverend Dawn, the caring team, etc.

You will see in a separate section of this newsletter a piece from Karen York and Rev Dawn outlining the importance of contributing your financial pledge to UUCSJS. Most of us are or will be impacted financially to some degree over the next few months due to COVID 19, but I hope that we can find a way to continue our financial support to our beloved congregation.

After Sunday's Zoom church service, I talked to my son Colin, to see whether he enjoyed the service. He also resonated with the reading about the "hole in the sidewalk." Colin is currently living with Paul Utts and Marsha Hannah's sister, Jessica. When Colin read the poem to Jessica, she said, "I think we should add a Chapter 6: "We got the shovel out and filled in the hole." I feel that UU's are good at that. We support each other. Rev Dawn cut their hair this week and raised hundreds of dollars to go towards the Minister's Discretionary Fund. We have been calling each other to check in. There is a "maker's space" time online. The RE kids and parents are meeting up on Zoom. Life is different, but the support and love are still there. We are filling up the holes (or at least finding our way around them)!

I did want to give you just a brief update on COVID 19. As of March 30, New Jersey has reported a total of over 16,000 cases, with a majority of those in North Jersey, and with over 3,000 new cases updated today. Atlantic County only lists a total of 29 cases, and Cape May County has 15 reported cases. [Ed. note: as of April 3 - 4 days later -- Statewide it's 29,895

cases, 646 deaths; Atlantic County has 72 cases and 1 death; Cape May has 44 cases; Cumberland has 36 cases and 1 death.]

As I mentioned on Sunday, the low number of reported cases in South Jersey is primarily due to lack of testing in our area, so therefore reflects a severe under-reporting of actual cases. Throughout the hospital system where I work, they are only running tests on the sickest hospitalized patients. There is promise of increased testing on the near horizon. Social distancing and strict hygiene measures -- primarily frequent hand washing -- remain our best hope to limit the spread and impact of this disease.

There are a lot of local resources, including New Jersey Department of Public Health:

[https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_community.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_community.shtml)

The New Jersey Coronavirus hub:

<https://covid19.nj.gov>

Local hospital hotlines:

<https://www.atlanticare.org/patients-and-visitors/emergency-alerts/coronavirus-update>

Feel free to reach out to me for any additional questions:

Stay healthy, and watch out for holes in the sidewalk!

With extra Gratitude and Love,

~ Melissa Hutchison

**BOOK CLUB** will not meet in person in April due to the COVID-19 lockdown, but perhaps we can arrange a Zoom meeting – stay tuned. April's selection is **ASK AGAIN; YES** by Mary Beth Keane. "A beautiful novel, bursting at the seams with empathy." (ELLE magazine) A profoundly moving novel about two neighboring families in a suburban town, the friendship between their children, a tragedy that reverberates over four decades, the daily intimacies of marriage, and the power of forgiveness. If we meet, Sally Williams will be leading the discussion.



**MARGARET CIRCLE** meets via email this Thursday, April 2. All are invited to share their joys and concerns with the group via emails which we will send on Thursday morning. By 12:30, which is the usual time for coffee hour where we informally chat individually or in small groups, we are encouraged to send our supportive comments to each other, either individually or to the whole group.

Debbi Dagavarian will have us explore journaling. She has a plan for us to do this using our emails, so that we will be reading rather than listening to what each person chooses to write.

Stand by for a report next month on how this adaptive approach to our usual meeting seems to work.

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

Greetings, gentle people,

This past month has been anything BUT the typical “in like a lion, out like a lamb” we expect of March. The month seemed to be behaving early on, but the global COVID-19 pandemic started to sweep through the US in measures that could not be ignored.



In the last two or three weeks of March, Americans have had to become educated about video conferencing, which jobs are considered “essential” and how to protect ourselves and those we love from infection by the deadly coronavirus.

Introverts were perhaps better prepared than extroverts for the social isolation of “stay at home” orders, but we all seem to be figuring out how to do what needs doing.

An important thing to realize in this time is that what we are experiencing is the loss of a world we understood. Our world has changed. Things we once sought for comfort (hugs, physical touch, social time) are now sources of danger, especially for those who are most vulnerable.

This loss is real, and with it, we are experiencing real grief. Grief in this time is likely to get more intense, more complex, and more heartbreaking. As people begin to get sick and die, and our friends and loved ones, including some of us, will experience this, our grief will be compounded.

Let me be clear: We will get through this.

But we will not get through this unchanged. This pandemic is going to change us as individuals, as a religious community, and as a culture.

Stephanie O’Neil of NPR filed this important story

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/03/26/820304899/coronavirus-has-upended-our-world-its-ok-to-grieve>

**Now, More Than Ever**

It seems odd to speak of our annual stewardship campaign in times like this, but this year’s theme is fortuitous. Now, more than ever, our little congregation is vital to the health and well-being of its members, friends, and neighbors. Now, more than ever, we need the connection of this community, the relationships that feed our souls and make our hearts swell. Now, more than ever, we need to take care of each other, to reach out as we are able, and ask for help when we need it, and offer help when we are able to share our own resources.

Now, more than ever, this congregation is a lifeline. Now, more than ever, this congregation needs your help. I am acutely aware of what the economy is doing to the financial situation of the people in our community. It is going to be a challenge to meet this year’s goal, I realize that. And yet, now, more than ever, the work of this congregation is so important. Now, more than ever, we need each other.

I hope you will pledge your financial support to the UUCSJS for the 2020-2021 fiscal year to the most generous level you can. The work we do is so important – now more than ever.

Blessings,

Rev. Dawn



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

**Scam Alert!**



Please remember, dear people, that I will NEVER send you an email or text or anything else **asking you to purchase online gift cards**. Lots of churches get hit with these scams, and in this time of pandemic, it might seem like a reasonable thing, but that is not how I will ask for support.

If you want to help me help those in need, please make a contribution to the Minister’s DISCRETIONARY FUND. You can do that by sending a check to our PO Box 853, Pomona NJ 08240 and writing “Discretionary fund” in the memo line, or you can make a donation via our website by clicking the “DONATE” button and specifying that your gift is to go to the discretionary fund.

Again, I will NEVER ask you to purchase online gift cards in order to help folks.

Peace, Dawn

# NOW More than Ever

## UUCSJS 2020-2021 Annual Stewardship Campaign

**Current pledges from 26 households  
total \$99,610 towards our \$188,000 Goal**

For those of you who have not yet submitted your  
pledges,  
please try to do so before April 18

**Thank you all so much for your voluntary  
generosity supporting  
the future of our community.**



The goal of the Stewardship campaign is to receive written commitments of financial support (pledges) from every member to help us determine our programming budget for **NEXT year (July 2020 to June 2021)**. The “**Now More than Ever**” theme focuses on how important our **connections and community in this time of social distancing**. How **our UU values are needed in the world now more than ever**, in our local communities, in our country, and on behalf of the warming planet. At the same time, our congregation has a Strategic Planning **goal to move from part-time (90%) to full-time ministry (100%)**. This is an aspirational goal, and one we have dreamt of for twenty years. We received a CER UUA Chalice Lighter grant for \$20,000 that will be paid over the next three years to assist us in bridging the gap between our aspirations and what we can more easily afford. We anticipate that the grant will enable us to transition to an expanded budget that we can sustain on our own within the next four years. We hope you also see the importance of **our congregation taking this bold step forward NOW More than Ever**.

**We currently have \$99,610 in pledges (53% of the total) toward our \$188,000 goal, from 26 pledging households.** For those of you who have completed your pledge, I thank you. For those of you who have not, there is still time. If you have considered this request, and you feel you simply cannot submit a pledge right now, it is helpful for me to know that also.

**There are two ways to submit your pledge:**

- 1) Fill out the pledge card that was sent to you in the mail and return it to our **mailing** address:  
PO Box 853, Pomona, NJ 08240.
- 2) You can **email** the amount of your financial commitment for next year to Karen York and I will fill out a pledge card for our records.

Take care of yourself and your neighbors.

*~ Karen York, Treasurer UUCSJS*



## Resilience and Wisdom

As I was thinking about what I wanted to write about in my column this month, I kept coming back to our most recent worship themes. What a blessing it is that we just spend a month focusing on resilience! Do you remember that Time For All Ages when I demonstrated the bouncy egg and the oobleck? If you were not at church that morning, here is what happened: I dropped a raw egg and an egg that had been soaking in vinegar for a week. One splatted, one bounced. We are all experiencing so much right now but we can still decide which egg we are going to be. We can let this experience be the vinegar that helps make us more resilient. We can look to the oobleck for inspiration in how to be both fluid and solid, to feel messy and still be able to pull ourselves back together. (If you don't know what oobleck is, you should Google it and try to make some for yourself. You will not regret it.) Articles abound on the internet for tips on self-care, for scheduling your time, getting a new hobby, parenting, homeschooling, working from home, cooking from scratch. Lots of people seem to be experts on something we have never experienced before. I will not add one more thing to your probably already overwhelming sense of urgency to do all the things.

What I will say is this. I enjoy writing in a journal and one question I asked myself this month was "What wisdom does this hold for me?" Here is what I found: I am enough. I am doing enough and friends so are you. I have found more time in my day since we have all been forced to stay home but I have found wisdom in not filling it. In leaving blank spaces I am allowing time to feel all the feels, to connect with myself and with others (virtually of course), and to be of service to people in my community. I have had time to ask myself what is really important. I have found that comfort, ritual, community, family,

gratitude, nature, and personal growth are my core values and I am making sure to leave space for them. What are you allowing to be most important in your life right now? What wisdom is there to be gained from this?

Friends, please take care of your yourselves. You can do this. We can get through this together. Remember to eat, take a shower, get some fresh air. Your community is here for you and you are an important part of what makes our community so great.

Parents, if you feel like you might need a little help in talking with your kids about current events please visit these websites for some awesome tips from the Unitarian Universalist Association:

- Tips for Talking with Children About the Pandemic <https://tinyurl.com/yx6j96sp>
- Parenting During a Time of Physical Distancing <https://tinyurl.com/vbze8wc>
- Resources for Talking With Children About COVID-19 <https://tinyurl.com/rtgeq2c>

And remember, UUCSJS is offering many ways to connect to each other and to our UU faith during our time of physical distancing. From Sunday service to Children's RE, pastoral chats and parent support groups, Friday night FUUN and open makers space we want to connect with you! Hope to see you all soon.

*In Fellowship,  
Jessica Dunn Safonof  
Director of Religious Education*

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## Casual Makers Space!

Connecting with each other can be challenging when we are all confined to our homes. Sometimes what we miss is simply enjoying each other's company without some kind of formal meeting, project, or agenda. To that end, Rev. Dawn and DRE Jess Dunn Safonof will begin hosting weekly "Makers' Space Hangouts" on ZOOM.

Thursday nights, 7 PM: A relaxed and casual space to get together and work on whatever crafting/knitting/drawing/carving/jewelry-making/etc project you're currently doing at home right now. Bring a glass of wine, beer, or your favorite beverage of choice, and settle in to simply share space and make art.

There will be no assignments given by the hosts of these sessions, it is strictly BYOA (bring your own art). The goal is to provide a relatively unstructured, social time to hang out and visit.

Either or both Rev. Dawn and Jess will be in the room to host the sessions. So bring your yarn, paints, wood, or sparkly bits to the table, log onto ZOOM, and share time with your friends from the UUCSJS.

Link to the craft room Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/174146077>

Ask Jess for the Password to get into the zoom.



# UUCSJS

Stay connected to our community!

## Sunday

### **Worship on Zoom at 10 a.m.**

<https://zoom.us/j/2246776604?pwd=cEQ3YTRBOU9hTTIYTTFab0RkQ0dRUT09>  
(Meeting ID: 224 677 6604, password 306591 )

BY PHONE, Dial: 1-929-436-2866 and wait for the prompt. then enter:  
224-677-6604# and password 306591

## Tuesday

### **Calling all kids! Join Ms. Jess for RE Lab at 3 pm**

For privacy and safety reasons, please email [uucsjsdre@gmail.com](mailto:uucsjsdre@gmail.com) for an invitation to this Zoom Meeting.

## Wednesday

### **Pastoral Chat with Rev. Dawn 7 pm**

Log on at Zoom worship link above to video chat with Rev. Dawn and others in our community.

## Thursday

### **Common Arts for DIY Hearts 7 pm**

Join us in this open makers space to work on your current project with company. **All makers and all ages welcome.**

<https://zoom.us/j/774193628?pwd=MXM2eHBaZTVGekIDVEZCdm9nVGhxZz09>

## Friday

### **Pastoral Chat with Rev. Dawn 1 pm**

Log on at Zoom worship link above to video chat with Rev. Dawn and others in our community.

### **Calling all kids for Friday Night Fun 7 pm**

Spend some time just hanging out having fun together in this open zoom room for kids. Bring your current art projects, your legos, whatever. We will talk, play games, hang out. For privacy and safety, please email [uucsjsdre@gmail.com](mailto:uucsjsdre@gmail.com) for an invitation to this Zoom meeting.

## Saturday

### **Parents/Caregivers Happy Hour 7 pm**

Join <https://zoom.us/j/190774348?pwd=SmJlY0pTQVZJekhUV1lqMjJPSStqdz09> to video chat with other parents and caregivers in our community.

## THERE'S A HOLE IN MY SIDEWALK

~a poem by [Portia Nelson](#)

### Chapter 1

I walk down the street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I fall in.  
I am lost... I am helpless.  
It isn't my fault.  
It takes forever to find a way out.

### Chapter 2

I walk down the street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I pretend that I don't see it.  
I fall in again.  
I can't believe I am in this same place.  
But, it isn't my fault.  
It still takes a long time to get out.

### Chapter 3

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I see it is there.  
I still fall in ... it's a habit ... but, my eyes  
are open.  
I know where I am.  
It is my fault.  
I get out immediately.

### Chapter 4

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I walk around it.

### Chapter 5

I walk down another street.

## Poem: Pandemic

By [Lynn Ungar](#)

March 18, 2020

What if you thought of it  
as the Jews consider the Sabbath —  
the most sacred of times?

Cease from travel.  
Cease from buying and selling.

Give up, just for now,  
on trying to make the world  
different than it is.

Sing. Pray. Touch only those  
to whom you commit your life.  
Center down.

And when your body has become still,  
reach out with your heart.

Know that we are connected  
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.  
(You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives  
are in one another's hands.  
(Surely, that has come clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.  
Reach out your heart.  
Reach out your words.

Reach out all the tendrils  
of compassion that move, invisibly,  
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love —  
for better or for worse,  
in sickness and in health,  
so long as we all shall live.



# 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,  
Martin Quish, Geoff Stuart, Angela Wexler, Karen York

Newsletter – Mariann Maene – [newsletter@uucsjs.org](mailto:newsletter@uucsjs.org)

**Visit us on the Web: [www.uucsjs.org](http://www.uucsjs.org)**

**April 2020**

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