



Newsletter



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

Volume 12, Issue 12

December 2010

December Services

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>December 5</p>	<p>From Jewish to Jew-Nitarian <i>Lay speaker Maxine Blumenthal</i> Maxine, a member of UUCSJS from the very beginning, shares her journey, from joining the First UU Congregation of Plainfield in 1972, to what she views as the Miracle of Hannukah, and her belief in the need to be who we are, whether it was to be Jewish in 165 BC or JewNitarian in 1972 NJ.</p>
<p>December 12</p>	<p>Lights in the Darkness <i>Led by Heidi Jannsch and Barbara Miller</i> This theatrical all-ages service invites you to join with our UUCSJS “kids” during a religious education class as they learn about the many winter holiday traditions and discover that these different traditions share similar themes of light, warmth, wonder and community during the darkest season of the year.</p>
<p>December 19 4 pm</p>	<p>The Winter Wheel <i>Led by Melissa Hutchison and Margaret Rea</i> <i>“Surely the earth is turning from dark to light.”</i> The year wheel turns again as we celebrate the longest night with a play called The Winter Wheel. Service starts at 4 pm at the UU Center.</p>
<p>December 26</p>	<p>UU Center closed. No service, No religious education, No meetings.</p>

International Fair Trade Fair

Saturday and Sunday, December 4 and 5, 2010

10 am to 4 pm both days

Mainland Regional High School

Shop fair and shop wise!



UUSC:

At Murray Grove:

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee



Wednesday, December 8, 7 pm

The Towheads

Traditional Celtic Music

Award Winning
8- and 12-year olds

Check out their website at www.towheads.org

7pm – 9pm Live Entertainment, \$10 p/p donation
6pm Potluck dinner (optional) (BYOB)

For information and to RSVP:
609-693-5558 or murraygrove@murraygrove.org

People say that home is where the heart is. Imagine if you couldn't go home for years and years. In northern Uganda, thousands of people have been kept away from their homes for a very long time by a war. UUSC, working with Caritas Pader, a local group, has helped these refugees return home from the camps where they've been forced to live for 20 years because of the war.

Ten years ago, people living in a small town in Ecuador were told that a private company, InterAgua, was taking over their municipal water service, to "bring better water and sanitation to more city homes." BUT, promises were broken, prices went up, unclean water made people sick, residents were billed for water they didn't use, and if they couldn't pay, water was shut off completely. UUSC worked with a local coalition, and was able to deal with these unfair practices. Together they got the World Bank to help confront InterAgua, and ultimately over time, the situation was rectified, thus promoting 'water justice', so that access to safe, sufficient and affordable water became a reality.

These vignettes are a small picture of the way UUSC, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, helps people all over the world. UUSC has been a leading voice for social justice for 70 years, thanks to the generosity of people like us in this congregation.

On November 22, we began our GAYT program here in southern NJ. When you contribute and share your material blessings with UUSC through our GAYT program, either by using the little savings boxes or by envelope, you join with many other Unitarian congregations and our friends in the global movement for justice, equity, and compassion. Together we can work to carry out our 7th principle of being part of the interdependent web of all creation.

You will find boxes and envelopes in the back of the Sanctuary after each service; please help! Remember that with a contribution of \$100 or more, your donation will be matched dollar for dollar through a grant from the UU Congregation of Shelter Rock, in Manhasset, N.Y.

From Program Council:

We are looking for layleaders who might like to attend the Building Healthy Congregation Workshops, a series of 5 workshops sponsored by JPD, to be held at the UU Church of Delaware County, Media PA, 9 am to 4:30 pm on Saturdays Dec. 11, Jan. 8, Feb. 12, Mar 12, April 2. We are trying to get a team of five people to go to all 5 workshops. Barbara Miller is interested in attending. Deadline to apply is Dec. 3.

It is literally true, as the thankless say,
that they have nothing to be thankful for.
He who sits by the fire, thankless for
the fire, is just as if he had no fire.
Nothing is possessed save in appreciation,
of which thankfulness is the indispensable
ingredient.

But a thankful heart hath a continual feast.

-W.J. Cameron

Year End Update on UUCSJS Finances

by John Searight, Chair, Finance Committee

We have been in our beautiful green UU Center for just over two years. At our building dedication in February, 2009, I offered the following words about how our congregation had done it:

“As a Unitarian Universalist congregation we are an open and free community and we are responsible ourselves for providing the financial support for our building and for our ministries. This wonderful, beautiful, green building did not just suddenly rise up out of the mists one fall evening in the Pine Barrens. Years of yearning, of dreaming, of planning, and of contributing, made it possible:

A Few Details: First and foremost: the generosity of our members and friends: Two capital campaigns in four years, with \$500,000 in pledges; in-house loans from 7 members totaling \$554,000 (subsequently retired by our mortgage and gifts); and donated expertise and sweat equity of incalculable value.

From our denomination, The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations and the Veatch Program at Shelter Rock: in the beginning, \$52,000 of support from the Fast Start Program, more recently, two First Home Grants totaling \$50,000, and a \$500,000 mortgage.

From the Chalice Lighter’s Program of our District, the Joseph Priestley District: \$108,000 in grants over the past 11 years.

From Main Line Unitarian Church in Pennsylvania: 3 grants in our first 3 years.

From First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, and from the Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek: regular, sustained, grants and gifts, mentoring, and support.

This is how it has happened, and it speaks volumes to the fact that Unitarian Universalists are generous and supportive of their denomination and its programs, and in giving to growth so that there might be more places such as this for those who seek a liberal, free, and theologically diverse spiritual home.”

As 2010 draws to a close, I believe it is prudent to reflect on the financial health of UUCSJS.

The good news:

Our annual budget drive resulted in pledges of \$118,000 (exceeding our goal by \$8,000), we have reduced our in-house debt by \$40,000, our building (capital) fund has \$3,883 remaining, our budget is balanced, and we have built a modest reserve fund of \$17,000.

The sobering news:

We have loans totaling \$60,000 from two members of our congregation that are due March 1, 2012, monthly mortgage payments of \$2,709 (remaining principal of \$480,000) and monthly facilities and equipment costs of \$1,500, and we are committed to begin a formal search for a half-time minister.

We are “making it” financially because of the culture of generosity that has taken hold in our congregation. We are one of the few congregations in the Joseph Priestly District that made its goal for the annual budget drive, and this in spite of the fact that were in the last year of our second capital campaign. Old and new members alike have made this possible.

But we need to remain cognizant of the responsibility we have assumed as stewards of our building and our faith in southern New Jersey. Like many families who make it by living from paycheck to paycheck, we are making it by living from Sunday Offering to Sunday Offering. We do not yet have an endowment or legacy funds, and our reserve is committed mostly to retiring our remaining in-house congregational loans. I am confident that our financial success will continue. If this congregation is consistent about one issue, it is that when the need arises for us to support our building and our mission, we come through. We pledge and we give generously of our time, talents, and money. We always find a way to get it done!

Notes from Board Meeting Nov 9, 2010

The Board scheduled a Congregational meeting for December 12 after the service to elect a Ministerial Search Committee (see more details in Midweek Announcements), and Social Justice will do a brief informational piece on the proposed PurGen coal-fired power plant in Linden, NJ.

The Board also worked on the Personnel Policy manual.

Finance report: another payment was made on our internal loans reducing that debt to \$60,000, due to be paid off by March 2012. The Letter of Credit being held by Galloway (\$28,000) is scheduled to be released to the congregation 1/11/2011.

Next Board meeting – Tuesday, December 14, at 6:30 pm in the downstairs lounge.

UU Book Lovers Celebrates the Season on Friday, December 10

The Book Club will meet one week early in December, when we plan to illuminate the season with a round of shared readings, followed by a “white elephant” gifts exchange. The meeting will take place on Friday evening, December 10 at **6:30 pm, at the home of Judy Pereira in Absecon**. Directions will be forthcoming, and please note that it has become customary for this holiday occasion to bring hors d’oeuvres or sweets for the refreshments table.

The idea for shared readings originated with Helene Gentile, and as imagined, each member will bring *an individual short reading* about the holiday season or the time of year – prose or poetry – treating of past, present or future. We anticipate offerings both amusing and thought-provoking, some nostalgic and personal, others brainy and reflective.

The “*white elephant*” gift exchange proposed by Betsy Searight should induce merriment as we draw lots for prettily wrapped presents with items inside that “only a mother could love.” Re-gifting encouraged, or simply wrap up whatever you most want to get rid of or have laughed at for too long. RSVP by Wednesday, December 8 to Judy Pereira.

Turning the corner into 2011: In January we will visit the English island of Guernsey during the German occupation of the Channel Islands in WWII. The idea of our UU Book Club in 2010 reading the remarkable story of *another* book club meeting so long ago amidst such difficult circumstances may well intrigue you. If so, enjoy reading (or perhaps re-reading), *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann

Shaffer and Annie Barrows. We will get together on Friday, January 21 at 7 pm in the UU Center Library, back on our regular schedule. (The selection for February is *Shanghai Girls* by Lisa See.) Contact Judy Pereira if you would like to get reminders and/or other literary-related notices.

UUCSJS Women's Association Meetings

Margaret Fuller Circle - Thursday, Dec 2, 1 pm

Please mark your calendars:

The Margaret Circle will get together for a Holiday Luncheon on Thursday, December 2 at 1 pm at the Italian Gourmet Restaurant. Please let Arlene Yacka know if you plan to attend either by email or phone, as we need 15 people to reserve the private room. Luncheon will be your choice from the menu.

The Gourmet Restaurant is located on the northeast corner of Pitney and Jimmie Leeds Road in Galloway.

Looking forward to seeing you all for another enjoyable Holiday party.

All the women of the congregation are cordially invited to join us and that guests are always welcome at all our functions! If you are interested or have any questions about this group, please contact Arlene Yacka, Circle leader.

Olympia Brown Circle – Thursday, Dec 9, 7 pm

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 9 at 7 pm at the Center's Library. We will be having a “fun night”. Take a break from your holiday shopping and baking and come and join us for a night of fun and games. If you have any questions about this group please contact Marsha Hannah, Circle Leader.

Women's Spirituality Circle – No meeting in December

This group will not meet in December due to the closing of the Center for the holidays. We read & discuss a chapter or two each month of a book pertaining to spirituality. We are presently using *A Seeker's Guide* by Elizabeth Lesser. At our next meeting in January we will be discussing *A Heartfulness Toolbox*, Chapter 10, pages 194 - 238. If you are interested in attending this group please contact Kathryn Kelley, Circle Leader.

All women of the congregation are welcome at these meetings. It's a good way to get to know other women in our congregation better and gives us a chance to get to know you. Please consider attending.

Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry (UUAM) Announcement

"The animals of the world exist for their own reasons. They were not made for humans anymore than black people were made for whites, or women for men." ~ *Alice Walker*

The first meeting of the UUCSJS Animal Ministry (official name to follow) took place on Monday, November 22. Eight congregants were in attendance for this kick-off event, with several others indicating their willingness to participate. One of our first actions was to solicit congregational support for an animal shelter charity event on December 5, 2010. Please stay tuned for more details. The next meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2011, after services.

Background:

In keeping with our Seventh Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part", the object of this ministry will be to raise awareness of animal issues and welfare; support local animal welfare institutions and animal rights advocates; take action on animal abuse issues; and serve as a focal point for all animal compassionate people within and without the UUCSJS community.

Animal ministries have become a growing force within the UUA with 19 UUAM chapters already established across the country. As part of the UUA's Congregational Study/Action Issue for 2008-2012, Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice, animal welfare is strongly advocated under "Animal Rights and Human Responsibilities".

In the words of our UUA president, Peter Morales ".....The realization that how we treat animals is an ethical issue grows out of this spirituality of compassion and awareness of connection. There is no reason compassion should stop at human beings. Our sense of connection must go beyond the human as well. Of course we should be concerned with the treatment of animals. This is a spiritual and religious issue."

If you are interested in putting into action your compassion for animals by participating in and supporting the UUAM of the UUCSJS, please contact Cynthia Grzywinski and/or sign up on the sheet located at the Social Justice table.

UUAM's PURPOSE/GOALS: To move from the mere celebration of the "interdependent web of existence" into practices that affirm species interdependence in our everyday personal, social, economic and political lives.



"Humans are part of the web of life. What we do to the planet, what we do to other species, and what we do to other people, we end up doing to ourselves." ~ John Robbins

Getting to the Meet of the Matter

By Mark Bernstein, Regional Growth Development Consultant for CERG (Central East Regional Group)

Someone once said, "We spend 99% of our time in meetings and 1% getting things done." Those of you who invest your time and effort in your congregations have probably felt the same thing from time to time. Meetings have gotten a bad reputation in our spiritual community to the point where I advise leaders in our congregations to avoid using the word "committee" for fear of chasing away potential volunteers, much as garlic wards off vampires.

The fact of the matter, though, is that meetings can provide spiritual opportunities for members of the congregation to come together in loving community and to live out our principles in action that benefits others, both within and outside the walls of the congregation.

Based on the books *Serving With Grace: Lay Leadership as a Spiritual Practice* by Erik Walker Wikstrom and *Community: The Structure of Belonging* by Peter Block, here are just a few suggestions for turning meetings into spiritual experiences:

1. *Begin with a ritual that speaks to those who are gathered.* Lighting the chalice and offering opening words creates a reflective mood and reminds members that the work they are about to perform is in the service of our faith.

2. *If you have a meeting covenant, read it together* out loud before beginning the work of the meeting. If you don't have a meeting covenant, create one... or read your congregation's mission or vision statement.

3. *Be clear on the purpose of your meeting.* Is it simply to transact business? Or is it to strengthen your relationships with each other? To learn something new about your fellow members or about Unitarian Universalism? To build a stronger community and a greater sense of belonging?

4. *Create greater accountability among meeting members.* The more accountable people feel, the more committed they will be to create a positive future for the congregation. We create accountability by making sure that everyone in the group knows that they belong there, by listening and valuing everyone's opinion, and by sharing the tasks of the meetings, including facilitation, time keeping, hosting, and minute taking.

5. *Embrace conflict when it occurs.* Acknowledge it and take "breath breaks" when things get a bit heated. Recognize that dissent is an essential part of being in community and that we have a responsibility to listen patiently and to understand other points of view as best we can.

6. *Create sacred space.* Move the tables to the side of the room and sit in a circle of chairs. Hold your meetings in rooms that have windows so that you can look out at the world you are striving to improve. Leave the door to the meeting room open to symbolize your transparency and connection to the wider world.

7. *Debrief the meeting* by not only reviewing what was accomplished, but by assessing whether the group lived out their covenant, represented the congregation as faithfully and lovingly as they could, and adhered to our principles in their interactions with one another.

Henry David Thoreau wrote, "If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them." When we come together in community through meetings, we are working on those foundations. The more those meetings represent our spiritual teachings, the firmer the foundation we construct.

You can read more of Mark Bernstein at <http://cerguaa.org/blogs/>

Children's Religious Education

As the winter holidays approach, Children's Religious Education will be having a light December RE schedule because of a few special services and alternate service times. After our regularly scheduled classes on December 5, there will be three Sundays without Children's Religious Education:

- On December 12 at the 10 am service, we will celebrate an intergenerational Sunday service titled "*Lights in the Darkness*" that focuses on the winter holidays. This service was created expressly for UUCSJS and invites everyone to experience one of our Children's RE classes (sort of!) as our "children" learn about the similarities between the many winter holiday traditions, including the Unitarian Universalist holiday of Chalica.
- **On December 19, there is no morning service** (and therefore no Children's RE classes). The Winter Solstice Service will be held **at 4 pm** and families are welcomed and encouraged to attend. If you feel your children will not enjoy sitting through this service, there will be activities downstairs that they are welcome to participate in instead.
- **On December 26, UUCSJS will be closed. There will be no service, no classes, and no meetings.**

The RE Moms will be holding their Third Annual Cookie Swap on Saturday, December 18. All mothers of RE students will be invited to participate, and enjoy a child-free evening of food, fun and music...and cookies! Traditionally a plate of these goodies is donated to the Winter Solstice Service refreshments, so don't miss the Solstice Service on the 19th!

Wishing you a peaceful holiday season!

-- Heidi Jansch, Director of Religious Education

Sugar plums and Turkish delights!

Buy **Gift Cards** any Sunday for
Acme & Shoprite.



Don't you have to buy groceries anyway??!

Using these gift cards for groceries nets the congregation 5%.
We also have Fair Trade coffee and tea!

Welcome Chalica, which starts on the first Monday of December.

What??? Another December holiday?

If you've never heard of Chalica, you are not alone. It first emerged in 2005, from conversations that Daylene Marshall had with other young adults when she was a student at the Vancouver School of Theology in Vancouver, British Columbia.

And what is Chalica exactly? It's an invitation to spend a day with each of the Principles, reflecting on their meaning and doing a good deed focused on each one.

Monday: We light our chalice for the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

- Give gift(s) to honor those you do not understand/agree with/like. Examples: a thank-you card celebrating differences; words of forgiveness/apology; a peace offering such as inviting someone to dinner

Tuesday: We light our chalice for justice, equity and compassion in human relations.

- Give gift(s) to honor those in your local community that are less fortunate. Examples: spend time in a soup kitchen; donate clothes to a worthy organization; display kindness and care to those around you

Wednesday: We light our chalice for acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.

- Give gift(s) to honor fellow Unitarians and their spiritual journey. Examples: a chalice/book/hymnal; offer/take part in an event with your congregation

Thursday: We light our chalice for a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

- Give gift(s) to honor another tradition, to honor education. Examples: take part in an event that celebrates another religion/tradition; teach someone something you know and love; learn something new from someone else

Friday: We light our chalice for the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.

- Give gift(s) to honor democracy. Examples: help a political party; write your government or a letter to the editor; host a dinner/party to celebrate democracy

Saturday: We light our chalice for the goal of world peace, liberty and justice for all.

- Give gift(s) to honor our global community. Examples: volunteer with an organization that has global influence; write a letter for amnesty international; support your social justice committee in an upcoming event; donate to a cause such as UUSC, UNICEF, Doctors without Borders, etc.

Sunday: We light our chalice for respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

- Give gift(s) to our earth and/or its creatures. Examples: start composting; remember to use your reusable bag at stores; go meatless one day a week; reduce your water consumption or turn down your thermostat; rescue an animal from a shelter

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN SOCIAL JUSTICE?

Thank you for tuning in to the Social Justice Committee once again!

This past month, we had a visit from Christine Guhl from the Sierra Club who showed us the movie *Coal Country*. Her presentation emphatically stressed the need to move away from fossil fuels and take a lead in renewable, safe energy sources. We have a unique opportunity here in Atlantic Country to take a stand for wind, solar, and geothermal energy and oppose the PurGen coal plant proposed for Linden, NJ. The Atlantic City Council has just passed a resolution in opposition to the plant and the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of NJ has also decided to oppose the plant. With that in mind, there is still much work to do!

This month we also had a presentation by Dennis Konzulman who spoke about **Viridian Energy** which is “green” and more affordable than traditional electricity. Many have asked how and when they can sign up and all I can say is: stay tuned! The Social Justice Committee is considering offering Viridian energy to our congregants as a fundraiser but have yet to iron out the details. More info will be forthcoming.

On November 17, Christine Scalfio-Glover conducted a fantastic cooking demonstration showing how easy it is to have an ethical and vegetarian meal during the holidays. She was also very knowledgeable about nutrition facts and was able to answer our many questions. She offers personal chef services, health food store tours, cooking classes, workshop/lectures and more. Visit her on the web at www.foodforliving.net or call 856-696-4234 for more information.

Please save the date for the following events:

- **Sat, Jan 22** - 9:00 am - 4:30 pm - Workshop presented by Alan Oliver entitled: **Discover the Foundation Stone of Environmental Consciousness**. The one-day workshop will begin with Spirituality, move on to Deep Ecology, and finish with Integral Evolution and personal and collective Action. The fee will be \$25/per adult and \$15 for seniors and students. You will be able to register soon at the SJ Table or online by emailing social.justice.uucsjs@gmail.com. A catered lunch will be provided.

- **Sun, Jan 26** - 7 pm – a free presentation by the **Pinelands Preservation Alliance** entitled, **“Building Sustainable Communities.”** The 90 minute presentation is to provide the community with a comprehensive overview of sound community design techniques. The presentation will cover: mixed-use centers, walkable/bikeable neighborhoods, energy conservation measure and alternative energy solutions, green building, protecting open space and natural resources, the Sustainable Jersey program, and more. Light refreshments will be served.

Event fliers can be picked up at the SJ table, please post in your community if possible.

Angela Jones, Social Justice Chair

International Gift Fair December 4-5

We are pleased to participate for the 5th year in a row in the **International Gift Fair** to be held at Mainland High School in Linwood* on Saturday, December 4 and Sunday, December 5 from 10 am to 4 pm. Once again, members of our Social Justice Committee will be offering free samples of Equal Exchange Coffee and we'll be selling the Fair Trade products we sell at the SJ table each week: coffee, tea, chocolate bars, cocoa, and hot chocolate mix. Our participation at the Fair helps educate interested shoppers about the economic justice reasons for purchasing Fair Trade products. At UUCSJS, we made the decision to serve Fair Trade coffee for our coffee hour six years ago. A couple of months later, we decided to increase our support for Fair Trade products by offering them for sale. We've been happily enjoying coffee and tea after service and the addictive (but healthful!) dark chocolate bars after dinner, all the while supporting economic justice in Africa, Central America, and South America.

Here's a reminder of why UUCSJS supports Fair Trade. Fair Trade Certification specifically guarantees:

- A fair and above market price is paid directly to farmer cooperatives.
- Growers are free to organize democratically. Co-op members elect co-op management and decide on how FT earnings are used.
- Farmers minimize chemical use and avoid the most harmful pesticides altogether. (e.g. “dirty dozen” pesticides are prohibited under FTC terms.)
- International labor standards covering child and forced labor, freedom of association, collective bargaining, and anti-discrimination are met.

The International Gift Fair offers handcrafted merchandise from around the world. You'll find unique baskets, ornaments, clothing, toys, musical instruments, stationary, jewelry, and much more! And best of all, your purchases help benefit people in need, both locally and abroad. We hope to see you there!

* across from the old Prudential building, now Cornerstone Commerce Center, on New Rd.

The Social Justice Committee will be Sunday, December 5 promptly at 11:30 in the library. Please bring your coffee and cake and be ready to start on time. We will be reflecting on our accomplishments over the past year and discussing logistics for upcoming events. Those curious about our committee always welcome to attend.

Newsletter submission deadline: always the Friday before the last Sunday of the month.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

Minister
vacant

**Music Director &
Sunday Service Coordinator**
Barbara Miller
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Director of Religious Education
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Operations Manager
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Board of Trustees 2010-11
Debbi Dagavarian, Jim Gentile, Primrose Reeves,
John Searight, Joe Terrazzini, Karen York, Karen Zindell



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December 2010

Visit us on the Web: www.uucsjs.org

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Congregation of the South Jersey Shore
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