



# Newsletter



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South  
Jersey Shore

Volume 13, Issue 08

August 2011

## August 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><b>August 7</b></p>	<p><b>Creating the Beloved Community</b> <i>Guest speaker Donna Renfro and Core of Fire Interfaith dancers</i></p> <p>Experience the exhilaration and the healing power of movement and music in a service full of dance, inspiration and poetry. The interfaith dance ensemble will offer some of their sacred navigations to paths of spiritual connection, both within and that which vibrates through the beloved community and throughout the world. Join us for a sacred experience of heart-opening new dances, live music and personal stories as we bring songs by Peter Mayer, "Holy Now" and Sarah McLachlan's version of "Prayer of St Francis" to life through movement and sign language. Participants in our Saturday morning workshop are welcome to join us on stage as "our spirit stops and rests on a midsummer morning."</p>
<p><b>August 14</b></p>	<p><b>Truth or Consequences</b> <i>Lay speaker Richard Grzywinski</i></p> <p>In our "free and responsible search for truth and meaning," would we Unitarian Universalists recognize "Truth" when we encounter it? Is our search for universal truth a necessary journey or a "fool's errand?" Do we mold truth to fit our own reality? How can we tell right from wrong, or good from evil, when something as seemingly concrete as the truth is yet so elusive? Perhaps reason alone is inadequate, and our search tools must include transcendence and spirituality. <i>A reprise and expansion of Richard's previous talk on Truth in September 2009.</i></p>
<p><b>August 21</b></p>	<p><b>The Journey Through Loss and Healing</b> <i>Guest speaker Penny Harter</i></p> <p>By sharing her poems, Penny will share her journey through various kinds of losses: the sorrow of divorce, the grief of losing her both parents in 2003, and most recently, the death of her husband in 2008 after thirty years together. She will talk about how writing can help one confront and transcend pain and sorrow, and move into healing and light. She feels that her losses have cracked her even more open to empathy and unconditional love, and she wants to bring you both, along with hope for healing from your losses.</p>
<p><b>August 28</b></p>	<p><b>Meet Kurt Vonnegut</b> <i>Lay speakers Pam Hendrick and Jon Luoma</i></p> <p>The novelist Kurt Vonnegut, a humanist born into a religiously liberal family, belonged to no church, but sometimes called himself a Unitarian, and once delivered a keynote speech to the UU General Assembly. Often with humor, he has much to say about peace, war, foolishness, faith, life and death. We'll spend a few moments "unstuck in time" with this American writer.</p>

*Save the Date!!*

### **3rd Annual UU Family Picnic**

September 11, 2011 following the water service

Everyone is welcome to join the FUUN committee  
for food, games and fun with our whole UUCSJS family!



## Our speakers this month:

**Donna Renfro** has spent half her professional life in some form of education, and the other half owning businesses. She is currently serving as the Director of Religious Education at the UU Fellowship of Northern Westchester in Mount Kisco, NY. She is pursuing a Masters of Divinity at New York Theological Seminary, is in 'Candidate' status for UU ministry, and is a member of Core of Fire Interfaith Dance Ministry and an Interplay leader.

Donna spent her first ten years in a Southern Baptist church, where her Sunday School lessons of Jesus exemplifying kindness, compassion, teaching and inclusion became her lifelong highest values. She returned to church in her forties, to the Unity Church of Practical Christianity in Houston, looking for a religious home that lived her Sunday School values, and was more interested like she's always been, in how Jesus lived and taught, rather than how he died. Donna eventually found she needed more inclusion, of theology and social justice in the wider world, and found herself having that 'coming home' experience in a UU congregation in the late 90's.

**Penny Harter** is published widely in journals and anthologies, and her literary autobiography appears in Contemporary Authors. Her books include *Recycling Starlight*, (2010); *The Night Marsh* (2008); *Along River Road* (2005); *Buried in the Sky* (2002); *Lizard Light: Poems from the Earth* (1998); and *Turtle Blessing* (1996). And her illustrated children's alphabestiary, *The Beastie Book*, came out in 2009.

After the death of her husband, poet, critic, and translator William J. Higginson, in October of 2008, Penny moved in 2009 to Mays Landing in order to be near her daughter and family in Egg Harbor Township. With Bill, she co-authored *The Haiku Handbook* (25th Anniversary Edition, 2010). A Dodge Foundation poet, Harter read at the 2010 Dodge Poetry Festival. She has received three poetry fellowships from the NJ State Council on the Arts, the Mary Carolyn Davies Award from the Poetry Society of America, and a 2011 fellowship for a residency at Virginia Center for the Creative Arts.

### **Core of Fire Dance Workshop Saturday, August 6 10 am to 12 noon**

Creating the Beloved Community - Come dance, do some Interplay, learn our newest piece of choreography and "Let It Be." Anyone who comes will have the opportunity to dance with Core of Fire in our summer service at UUCSJS on August 7! Cost : Love offerings welcome!

## *Hymnal Dedications*

We are a growing congregation, so we need to order more copies of *Singing the Journey*, the teal hymnal. Have you noticed the lovely dedication plates in the Singing the Living Tradition hymnals? You may choose to donate a *Singing the Journey*, and dedicate it to someone. The requested donation for dedicating a teal hymnal is \$17. Please make checks out to UUCSJS, and put "STJ dedication" in the memo line. Place the check in an envelope marked "STJ dedication" and give it to Barbara Miller, along with the wording of your dedication. Thank you for supporting our music program!

## **Summer is almost over and you still haven't done it?**

What is "it"? Summer is perhaps the only time in the year when we are allowed (or in the old days, even expected) to get away, unplug, rejuvenate, and commune with whatever feeds us.

Scary to think of going to the beach, mountains, or forest without your smartphone, laptop, or facebook friends?

Try it. It will be worth it. You will find out your level of dependency on gadgets and communication and 24/7 connectedness. You may find you can't do it. You may find you can do it, but barely. You may find you discover other things that grow you and feed you in their absence. In any case, you will learn something.

*This message has been brought to you by your local guru.*

## **Board Visioning Session - June 14, 2011**

I. The visioning process began by brainstorming on "Where are we now?", and an opportunity to consider our **STRENGTHS to BUILD on**. We have much to celebrate.

### Community

- Caring community with vibrant energy
- Nurturing community -- circled dinners, sharing through auction events, activities
- Monthly Coffeehouses
- New and continuing social action initiatives: environmental issues, animal advocacy.

### Governance

- Establishment and effective use of program council
- Job descriptions and personnel policies documented
- Building policy tested and day to day operations running smoothly
- Web site with minutes, financial reports and sermons online improve communication
- Board talk backs provided a good structure for regular communication and became obsolete.

### Finances

- Strong financial health (in-house debt reduced from 100k to 10K) (unfortunately because no minister)
- Annual Stewardship drive raised 135,000 , a significant jump from the previous year. (the culture of generosity continues)
- Pledges/collection 27 K more than last year
- New bookkeeper and improved routine financial operations
- Committee income and expenses fully integrated into the congregational budget. (FUUN and Social Justice)

### Programs

- Ministerial search ongoing
- Excellent quality Sunday Services
- RE classes that kids enjoy at four grade levels. Approved safe congregation policy. Have trained OWL (Our Whole Lives) teacher to begin the curriculum this Fall.
- Choir and inspirational music program

*(continued)*

II. Part of “Where we are now?” includes **CHALLENGES and AREAS of CONCERN:**

Community

- The general level of participation and engagement of members. How many people are doing something other than Sunday Service?
- Coffee hour
- Participation in maintaining the building and grounds.
- The need to respect the different choices of others (ethical eating issues).
- Need for covenanting process and establishment of right relationship practices.
- Involvement in our larger our faith community at District level and beyond.
- Lack of a presence in the local interfaith groups.
- Promoting building rental?

Programs

- The need for a clear articulation of our mission and vision to provide a unifying focus for programs and projects. Constructing the building was concrete achievable unifying goal. This current phase of translating our values into action is more challenging. Is a single focus possible?
- Finding a minister

Governance

- Bringing people into leadership. Our current structure doesn't naturally prepare a natural succession of leadership.
- Committee leadership challenges.
- Bylaws review. Committee on ministry issue left unresolved.
- Board Email communication and voting

III. Next we did some brainstorming on our **HOPES and DREAMS** for the future

1. Desire a minister to lead services on a somewhat regular basis moving to a fulltime minister
2. Full time Director of religious education and Choir director
3. Membership at 250
4. Stronger pastoral care
5. Significantly improved cultural diversity and age diversity.
6. Well established presence in the wider community with a branded identity. (ie “The Green Congregation”)
7. Full LEEDS certification
8. Green sanctuary

IV. **GOALS.** Finally we brainstormed on the question “How do we get there?” to identify some specific goals for the next year. This was followed by a vote of which seemed most important for the Board to focus on. Listed in order are the selected GOALS for the next year.

1. **Find a minister** high priority to retain and hire a minister and to keep the Board in the conversation with ministerial search committee. (8 votes)
2. Define/redefine **Committee on Ministry** (5 votes)
3. **By-laws review** and revision (4 votes) [related to Committee on Ministry]
4. **Engagement of members in life of church** - maintain fellowship and strengthen connections in the community (coffee houses, coffee /hospitality, auction events, adult RE, book club, circle dinners) ( 4 votes)
5. Articulate a unifying **Vision/ Mission/ focus** ( 3 votes)
6. Finished Policies and Procedure handbook (2 votes)

7. Develop mechanism for **recruiting and nurturing new leadership**-- through program council? Mentoring program? (2 votes)
8. Get **Financial protocols** documented in writing.
9. Support for **social justice**/action initiatives.
10. **Board liaisons** to committees? Board contact for committees.
11. Cultivate **Covenanting and right relationship** practices?

## Fifth Report from the Ministerial Search Committee

On December 12, 2010, the UUCSJS General Membership elected a slate of five members for the Ministerial Search Committee, namely, Marsha Hannah, Angela Wexler, Bill Felix, Jim Gentile, and Richard Grzywinski (Chair). The Committee is pleased to report that we have recommended an excellent candidate to the Board of Trustees for Contract Negotiation. Subject to successful negotiations, the approval by the Board will occur at its August 16 meeting.

September 1 is planned as the “Start Date” and a Committee on Ministry will be formed to work with the minister.

In the more than seven months since beginning our process, we prepared a comprehensive congregational survey (remember the Survey Monkey?), prepared a detailed Congregational Record describing our congregation and its goals for the minister, and sought (and received) the advice and support of the UUA Ministerial Transitions team and Rev. Richard Speck of the Joseph Priestley District. Eleven candidates were considered, five were interviewed, and our preferred candidate was invited to speak at another congregation, i.e., a neutral pulpit. The candidate then met with committee members in a full day of discussions including a tour of the UU Center.

We recently completed the necessary reference checks and the results were extraordinarily positive.

If our schedule holds, we are planning an after-service seminar for the congregation on August 28 to prepare ourselves for the new minister (patterned, somewhat, after the seminar held by Rev. Libby Smith some time ago). In addition, an informal evening gathering to meet the new minister will be held at the UU Center, tentatively over the weekend of September 2. We will be calling for volunteers to help with this. The candidate's first sermon is planned for September 4.

The UUA recommends that, in the early weeks and months of the ministry, the District Executive or his designee conduct a start-up workshop, for the purposes of ensuring 100% alignment on the ministry's goals. Rev. Richard Speck, who has met the candidate, has agreed to see that this workshop takes place and we are working on dates.

- Richard Grzywinski, Chair

Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?  
That depends a good deal on where you want to get to, said the Cat.  
I don't much care where, said Alice.  
Then it doesn't matter which way you go, said the Cat.  
~ Lewis Carroll



## The Paw Print

Your link to the doings of the South Jersey Animal Advocates

The SJAA is back on track with animal advocacy. Our monthly meetings have reconvened – still the 2nd Sunday of the month at our UU Center at 11:30 am.

The SJAA feature article in the July 20 issue of the Press of Atlantic City was a welcome public relations boon. It so favorably impressed the UUA's UU Animal Ministry (UUAM) president, that we will be featured in their quarterly newsletter. If you haven't read the piece, please check it out at <http://tinyurl.com/3k6g2oz>.

Weekly collections for local animal shelters and rescues are ongoing. Our deepest thanks to all who have contributed and continue to contribute to these worthy and needy animal organizations. In August we'll highlight collections for Kibble Cupboard, a non-profit volunteer organization whose goal is "to help keep South Jersey pets with their owners," which they do by providing free pet food, litter and other basic necessities. The faltering economy over the past few years has forced more and more pet owners to surrender their animals due to the associated costs of caring for them. Kibble Cupboard aims to alleviate this heart-breaking necessity by keeping pets and their families intact. They are located at the Shore Mall in Egg Harbor Township, NJ. For more information, please visit their website at [www.kibblecupboard.com](http://www.kibblecupboard.com).

The SJAA Atlantic City Rodeo protest last April was a resounding success in terms of media coverage (shown on local and Philadelphia news stations) and bringing together animal rights groups throughout the state, including the Animal Rights Advocates of NJ; Showing Animals Respect and Kindness (SHARK); and the NJ Animal Protection League. Unfortunately, the rodeo will return to Atlantic City in April 2012. SJAA will continue their rodeo education campaign of letter writing, calls for anti-rodeo legislation, and action.

Stay tuned for the unveiling of our own SJAA website, where we'll host upcoming events, actions, meetings, and animal friendly resources and links.

Finally, please remember to be extra vigilant with your pets during these hot summer days. Too much sun and heat may result in dehydration, heat stroke (which can be fatal), and sunburn. And, it is vitally important to never leave your pet inside your parked car, even for a few minutes. Heat can rise dangerously high in a very short time. For more tips on summer pet care, please go to: [www.aspc.org/pet-care/pet-care-tips/hot-weather-tips.aspx](http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/pet-care-tips/hot-weather-tips.aspx).

Cynthia Grzywinski, Chapter Coordinator

The human spirit is not dead. It lives on in secret... It has come to believe that compassion, in which all ethics must take root, can only attain its full breadth and depth if it embraces all living creatures and does not limit itself to mankind.

~Albert Schweitzer, Nobel Peace Prize address, "The Problem of Peace in the World Today"

## Energy Master Plan Hearing Planning Meeting

Thursday, August 4, 6 pm

Join the Social Justice Committee and the Sierra Club for pizza and clean energy activism on August 4 at 6 pm in the UU Center Sanctuary.

New Jersey's last of three state-wide Energy Master Plan hearings is at Stockton College just one week later. We'll prepare for the hearing by seeing a short film on renewable energy. Learn about clean energy in New Jersey. We'll be talking about making statements at the hearing and coordinating our efforts. Get help with your hearing statement and help out with outreach.

Let's make Stockton the biggest and best hearing in the state. Show Governor Christie that South Jersey is serious about clean energy.

## Book Club Regroups in September for What the Dog Saw and Other Adventures

August means the days of summer begin to run away, but there's still plenty of time to recline under that beach umbrella and read the Book Club selection for September, *What the Dog Saw and Other Adventures* by Malcolm Gladwell. First up on our new list of ten for the coming year, this is the Canadian author's fourth book, after *The Tipping Point*, *Blink*, and *Outliers*.

Book Club resumes September 16. *Customarily, we meet (for about two hours) on the third Friday evening of each month at 7 pm in the UU Center Library.* If you would like to join other book lovers for lively talk with light refreshments, plan to attend any or all book group meetings. To get email reminders and other literary-related notices, contact Judy Pereira.

## UUCSJS Women's Association Meetings

All Women's Association groups are on hiatus for the summer. Margaret Circle, Olympia Brown Circle, and the Women's Spirituality group will resume in September.

**Summer is here!**

**Try some new items on your grill:  
fish instead of burgers; veggies like corn,  
zucchini, peppers, portabella mushrooms.  
Get creative!**

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

Using these gift cards for groceries nets the congregation 5%.

We also have Fair Trade coffee, tea, and chocolate!



## UUCSJS Board of Trustees 2011-2012

Jim Gentile (12), President  
Debbi Dagavarian (12), Vice President  
Judy Pereira (13), Secretary  
Primrose Reeves (12), Treasurer  
John Searight (13), Member at Large  
Joe Terrazzini (12), Member at Large  
Art Wexler (13), Member at Large

*year given is end of term, e.g. (12) means thru 6/30/2012*

### Board of Trustees HIGHLIGHTS July 2011

The Board of Trustees held a **Special Organizational meeting on July 3, 2011**, for the sole purpose of electing a Board president and vice president for the new 2011-2012 fiscal year. Elected were Jim Gentile as President and Debbi Dagavarian as Vice President. The action was taken to assure there were duly-elected officers in place between July 1 and the next scheduled Board meeting on Thursday, July 21.

At its **Regular monthly meeting on July 21, 2011**, the Board considered the following reports and items of business:

- **Finance Committee Report**, including distribution of monthly report on UUCSJS Fund Balances; announcement of successful completion of roadside sign project except for unresolved issue of halogen lighting glare; intention of the committee to develop a planned giving program and to consider ways to reduce mortgage interest costs; and announcement that staff members are considering retirement programs offered by TIAA-CREF through the UUA.

**Treasurer's Report**, including announce-ment of more than \$2,200 from First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, DE, a sponsoring congregation; acknowledgement of recent \$500 donation to Chalice Keepers Endowment Fund of Joseph Priestley District; *motion passed* to add Treasurer Primrose Reeves as an official UUCSJS check signator; *motion passed* to approve Kim Trotto as UUCSJS "Designated Depositor"; the treasurer's introduction of her new *Financial Policies and Procedures Manual* for Board review and later approval; and Board appreciation for the level of detail presented in current financial reports.

- **Conflict of Interest**: The Board accepted by acclamation the IRS document, *Appendix A: Sample Recommended Conflict of Interest Policy* for official use by the UUCSJS Board of Trustees.

- **Review of By-Laws**: A subcommittee of the Board will undertake review of the By-Laws in order to make recommendations for needed changes at the June, 2012 Annual Congregational Meeting.

- **Committee Issues**: a) **Liaisons** – It was agreed that the liaison function now is largely superseded by new Program Council. For the record, *motion passed* to confirm Debbi Dagavarian as Chair of the Program Council for 2011-2012 fiscal year; b) **Social Justice** – Resignation of Social Justice Committee chair since

last regular meeting was noted; there is no vice-chair and no replacement has yet emerged; and c) **Creation of Committee on Ministry** – A Board subcommittee will explore calling a Special Congregational Meeting in September and constituting a Committee on Ministry.

- It was decided that hereafter, *regular monthly meetings of the Board of Trustees will be held on the third Tuesday of the month* (rather than the second Tuesday), after which the meeting was adjourned.

— Judy Pereira, Secretary

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING of  
the Board of Trustees will be held on  
Tuesday, August 16, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.  
at the UU Center, 75 S. Pomona Rd.**

### Children's Religious Education

#### Summer continues!

Many thanks to all the folks who have shared a Sunday with our youth this summer! The kids have enjoyed a variety of activities and crafts, and August will provide even more adventures:

August 7 - Sea Shell Wind Chimes with Katy Cardwell

August 14 - Tie Dying with Colby Tippins and Doug Dickinson

August 21 - Decoupage Craft with Angela Jones

August 28 - Jewelry with Debbi Dagavarian

Sept 4 - Nature Activity with Jesse Connor

During the summer our Children's Religious Education Committee focuses on the fall class planning. This year, the committee is hard at work planning not only our Sunday classes, but scheduling our very first offering of the Our Whole Lives program, which we will be offering for our 4th and 5th graders. The OWL program has some specific requirements and needs parental permission and involvement, so we will not be offering it during Sunday class time, instead we will be holding OWL classes on weeknights beginning this fall. More information on the OWL program will be sent to 4th and 5th grade parents when our meeting schedule is confirmed. See me or Kyle Jones if you have any questions concerning OWL.

On Sunday, September 11, there will be an Intergenerational Water Service, and then our RE school year will begin on September 18.

See you in September!

-- Heidi Jansch, Director of Religious Education

### Adult Religious Education

There will be no Adult RE classes during the summer.

But you can always share your ideas for new religious exploration with Chair Marsha Hannah, anytime!

# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

**Minister**  
vacant

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Sunday Service Coordinator**  
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**Board of Trustees 2011-12**  
Debbi Dagavarian, Jim Gentile, Judy Pereira, Primrose Reeves,  
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**August 2011**

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

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Congregation of the South Jersey Shore  
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