



# NEWSLETTER

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the  
South Jersey Shore



Volume 15, Issue 02

February 2013

## February Services

### “Expectation”

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.

**Note: in case of inclement weather, you can call the church phone at 609-965-9400  
for a recording as to whether events or services are delayed or cancelled.**

<b>February 3</b>	<b>Mardi Gras Mindset</b> <i>Reverend Charlie Dieterich</i> What would life be like if everyone was getting ready for a party all the time? What do you spend your time preparing for?
<b>February 10</b>	<b>The Little Seed</b> <i>Reverend Charlie Dieterich</i> In his classic essay "All I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten," Robert Fulghum asked us to remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup. That seems an appropriate focus for a late winter service on Expectation, doesn't it? Put down those heirloom vegetable catalogs and come to the service!
<b>February 17</b>	<b>From Baptist to Unitarian Universalist</b> <i>Lay Speaker Stephanie Garrett</i> Stephanie will share her cultural, religious and racial journey to spiritual freedom.
<b>February 24</b>	<b>"As Time Goes By": Expectations and Insights</b> <i>Lay speaker Alan Oliver</i> Time is the ever present companion of our human existence. To paraphrase the book <i>The Hobbit</i> , it is the “one gold ring that controls us all”. We experience our versions of time, but rarely examine it mindfully and consciously seek balance within it. Let's begin to do that.

***Featuring Package Goods Orchestra!***

**Mardi Gras Dance**

**Saturday, February 9**

**7-10 pm**

**see Jeff Taylor or Tracy Longshore  
for tickets**

**\$10 in advance, \$12 at the door**

***Mark Your Calendar Now!***

**Fellowship Dinner**

**Saturday, March 16,**

**2012**

## Next 350.org Art Show and Concert Tuesday, February 12, 6 - 7:30 pm

Local artists Steve Kuzma and Meed Barnett will exhibit their wonderful art works, and original songs will be played by Victor Maene and Steve Kuzma and others. Show starts at 6 pm at the UU Center. Admission is free. There will be a 350.ORG meeting afterwards if you want to find out more about this organization dedicated to carbon-reduction and education about same. For more info contact Victor Maene or Ron Hutchison.



### Join the "Forward On Climate" Rally on Sunday, February 17!

On Sunday, February 17, thousands of Americans will head to Washington, DC to make Forward on Climate the largest climate rally in history. Join this historic event to make your voice heard and help the president start his second term with strong climate action.

For more information about the local chapter of [350.org](http://350.org) or for information about the February 17th rally contact Glenn Klotz at [glennk1949@gmail.com](mailto:glennk1949@gmail.com)

#### *Bus information:*

350.org is sponsoring a bus for transportation to the rally. Seats are \$30 and are on a first come first serve basis. The bus will be leaving from the parking lot of the UU Center at 8:30 am Sunday, February 17. The Rally in Washington ends at 4 pm, and we should be back by around 8:30 pm depending on when we leave DC. If you'd like to go, please contact our trip coordinator Victor Maene for more info on how to obtain your boarding pass.

### 2013 Worship Arts Festival - Registration Now Open!!

February 22-23, 2013

UU Church in Cherry Hill  
401 North Kings Highway  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034

This year's featured presenter is UU Growth, Outreach, RE & Media Consultant **Peter Bowden** speaking on ***Worship in an Age of Collaboration***.

### *Joys and Concerns* – A reminder from the Worship Committee and Chalice Table Crew.

You now have two ways to register a Joy or Concern. Please use whichever one suits you on any given Sunday.

As we have done for several years, we can indicate a joy or concern by dropping a smooth pebble (dark or light) into one of the two vessels near the doors on either side of the dais. The spreading ripples signify the sharing with the universe.

Or, we can transfer a smooth piece of colored glass from the surface of the Chalice table to the base of the pillar candle as it burns within the Chalice. In a sense, this echoes our earlier practice of lighting individual candles for our Joys and Concerns. The rising smoke of the candle shares the joy or concern with the universe, without increasing our Congregational carbon footprint.

One last reminder – there should be three lines moving forward... one in the center aisle and one in each side aisle. You can go to either water vessel or to the center chalice from any line when you notice that the location is open.

-- *M L Rea*

### **GO GREEN GALLOWAY Announces Sustainable Landscaping Mini-Grant Program for Galloway Residents and Small Businesses**

Are you interested in creating a more sustainable, wildlife-friendly landscape? Would you like to learn how you can reduce your carbon footprint and also meet the needs of birds and other native wildlife?

All Galloway residents and small business property owners are eligible to apply for one of thirty \$125 mini-grants to help residents begin transitioning their yards into more sustainable landscapes.

Participation begins with two workshops at UUCSJS in March and April that will cover native shrubs, trees and perennials; wise water use; eliminating chemical pesticides; and controlling invasive species. Participants will be instructed in proven landscaping techniques and practices to meet the basic requirements of the program.

If interested, please contact Barbara Fiedler or Jesse Connor for an application and further information.

**The deadline for applications is February 18, 2013.**

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**Winter is here!  
Time for homemade soup and  
warm baked bread.**

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!

# Reverend Charlie's Page

## Expectations

February's theme for worship services is "Expectation," chosen, in part because February 2nd is Imbolc, the Celtic-Irish celebration of the middle of winter, when farm communities could see that their sheep were pregnant with spring lambs. This holiday has come to the USA in the form of Groundhog Day, when fat furry groundhogs might make their first foray out into the world after the dark of winter. And a layer of mystery is put on it... will he see his shadow? How much more winter can we expect?

The month also has other celebrations, from the Superbowl to Mardi Gras to St. Valentine's Day. Each of those has their own feelings of expectation... will I get a kiss? Will my team win. (you may match those up to the holidays any way you want!) Students even start thinking about summer jobs or what to do next year... the bees in the hive hum louder now.

But the theme of expectations has other sides. We hold each other to expected roles and behaviors, and are disappointed when those expectations are not met. So too, visitors to the UU Center come with expectations -- those with physical disabilities are met with special parking spaces and an elevator, for example. Spend a moment and think about what you expect from the UUCSJS, and what our community can expect from you. Are we being welcoming?

Recognizing that first time visitors may not know what to expect, they can be as nervous as a groundhog, and may disappear for reasons we take in stride... a long line to get coffee or cream, someone who tries to "sell" them an idea rather than welcoming them into our community, or even confusing signs to find the bathrooms. Does our center truly say "Come, Come, whoever you are!"?

The final angle of expectation I want to bring up is the expectation of magic, or grace, or good fortune in some way. Suddenly finding another Mah Jongg player, or someone who is delighted to help you with your taxes, or genealogy or even a drive to the airport. How do you say thank you to a universe of people who constantly amaze? Each of us has the ability to make other people's lives unexpectedly wonderful, don't we?

See you in February, I can't wait! Rev Charlie

**Reverend Charlie has regular office hours from 10 am to 2 pm Wednesdays at the UU Center.**

Feel free to call the office for a half hour appointment (he has his own mailbox on the answering machine), or send him a note at [minister@uucsjs.org](mailto:minister@uucsjs.org).

## Memorial Service for Edward Zindell

A Memorial Service will be held for Edward Zindell, Karen Zindell's father, at our UU Center on Saturday, February 2, at 11 am. The congregation is invited. He died on January 4, and you can find his obituary at [www.boakesfuneralhome.com](http://www.boakesfuneralhome.com).

As Karen's father traveled widely through his career in the Merchant Marines, and especially loved the cuisines from other cultures, Karen suggests that those who want to make a tribute to him could provide a sampling of food from different corners of the world for the reception. The family is providing a catered lunch, which will not include dessert. So, if you want to contribute to this celebration of his life, bringing a food -- especially a dessert -- representing another country or continent will be very much appreciated.



"That was the thing about the world: it wasn't that things were harder than you thought they were going to be, it was that they were hard in ways that you didn't expect."

– Lev Grossman, *The Magician King*

"Expectations were like fine pottery. The harder you held them, the more likely they were to crack."

– Brandon Sanderson, *The Way of Kings*

"I can't imagine going on when there are no more expectations."

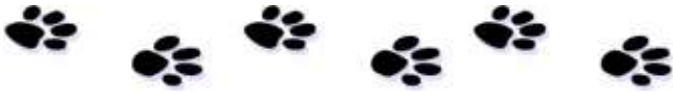
– Dame Edith Evans

"Most people are not really free. They are confined by the niche in the world that they carve out for themselves. They limit themselves to fewer possibilities by the narrowness of their vision."

– V.S. Naipaul

"Peace begins  
When expectation ends."

– Sri Chinmoy, *Perfection and Transcendence*



## The Paw Print

Your link to the doings of the South Jersey Animal Advocates

### Show some love!

According to the NJ Department of Health, Office of Animal Welfare, approximately 61 percent of dogs and 75 percent of cats entering shelters across the country will be euthanized. You can help change these heartbreaking statistics by supporting spay/neuter programs, adopting your next pet, and taking part in February's SJAA collection to benefit Beacon Animal Rescue in Ocean View. A small non-profit organization, Beacon Animal Rescue is dedicated to saving unwanted and unclaimed cats and dogs destined for euthanasia in the municipal shelters of southern New Jersey. Each animal is spayed or neutered, provided vaccines and veterinary care, and is lovingly socialized and tended to by a team of dedicated volunteers while Beacon works to find the animal a forever home. Beacon Animal Rescue would appreciate donations of pet food and treats, towels, bedding, blankets, copy paper, HE (High Efficiency) laundry detergent, Mr. Clean, Dawn dish detergent, postage stamps, paper towels, bleach, and trash bags. Learn more about Beacon, including how to volunteer or donate financially, at [www.beaconanimalrescue.org](http://www.beaconanimalrescue.org). On behalf of the many animal welfare organizations that have benefited from your compassion and generosity, thank you!

It's winter weather time again. A gentle reminder that if you are cold, so is your pet. People leave animals that are not bred to be outside all too often. You have read it in this column already: *If you see something, say something!* It is an uncomfortable conversation to have with neighbors. But it is nothing next to the restless night you will have listening to a freezing dog howl!

Once again keep in your heart all the displaced Hurricane Sandy pets that are coming up for adoption. If you have been on the fence about taking in an animal, now is the time.

### **Before Humans die**

Before Humans die, they write their last Will and Testament, give their home and all they have, to those they leave behind. If, with my paws, I could do the same, this is what I'd ask...

To a poor and lonely stray I'd give:  
My happy home.  
My bowl and cozy bed, soft pillows and all my toys.  
The lap which I loved so much.  
The hand that stroked my fur and the sweet voice which spoke my name.

I'd will to the sad and scared shelter dog, the place I had in my human's loving heart, of which there seemed no bounds.  
So my humans, when I die, please do not say, "I will never have a pet again, for the loss and pain is more than I can stand."

Instead go find an unloved dog, one whose life has had no joy or hope and give MY place to HIM.

This is the only thing I can give... The love I left behind with you.

-- Author unknown

*"Brings to life a hardscrabble community on the coast of Maine ..."*

— The NYT Sunday Book Review

## Book Group Dips into Cold Maine Waters with *Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Strout

Our selection for February, winner of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize, *Olive Kitteridge*, is a "novel in stories" comprised of 13 tales linked by its main character, a retired junior high school math teacher, and her pharmacist husband, Henry, who live on the coast in Crosby, Maine. Most of the stories in Elizabeth Strout's work turn on some kind of betrayal; a few document fragile, improbable romances. Together they encompass a wide range of experience.<sup>1</sup>

Join us on **Friday, February 15 at 7 pm** in the UU Center Library to talk about this unusual book. Patti Kenney will lead the discussion of our second-in-a-row Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by a woman, this time of contemporary origin. Bring a light snack to share if you wish.

One reviewer describes reacting to the book as follows: "These stories of small town life in Maine linked through one woman, Olive Kitteridge are so emotionally honest and resonated so deeply, I felt literally fragile after I finished. ... Strout is an exceptional writer who mines human emotion for literary gold. Highly, highly recommended."<sup>2</sup>

On Strout's website we read that Olive (described by turns as stern, patient, perceptive, or in sad denial) deplores the changes in her little town and in the world at large, but doesn't always recognize the changes in those around her. The townspeople grapple with their problems, and Olive is brought to a deeper understanding of herself and her life – sometimes painfully, but always with ruthless honesty. "She isn't a nice person,"<sup>3</sup> asserts *NY Times* reviewer Louisa Thomas. Come along and contribute *your* opinion!

We have a challenging book in store for March: *We Need to Talk About Kevin* by Lionel Shriver, a 2003 novel about a fictional school massacre told from the perspective of the killer's mother in her attempt to come to terms with her son's actions. Shriver's seventh, the novel won the UK's 2005 Orange Prize and was made into a "superb"<sup>4</sup> British-American film drama in 2011 starring Tilda Swinton and John C. Reilly. This is an extremely difficult topic that we may elect to postpone.

*Everybody is welcome at book group, no sign-up necessary.* Plan to attend as often as you can on every third Friday, September through June. For more information and to receive reminders, contact Judy Pereira. Hope to see you there Friday, February 15.

<sup>1,3</sup>*The NY Times Sunday Book Review*, "The Locals,"  
Louisa Thomas, April 30, 2008

<sup>2</sup>Brett Benner, *amazon.com*, April 30, 2008

<sup>4</sup>*guardian.co.uk*

## Message from UUCSJS President Karen York

### Reflection on Community - UU style

Thirty-one members and friends of the congregation came out on January 12 for the Covenanting Workshop led by Rev. Libby Smith. The workshop process resulted in an outline of some key ideas to incorporate into a covenant by and for this congregation. A covenant is a statement of how we want to be together in community. This draft material will be assembled into one uniform document by a smaller Covenant Team. That document will be circulated to the congregation for additional input in the future. Our goal is to create a living document that we can agree to abide by to help strengthen the culture of good relations in our congregation.

I appreciated the mention Don Miguel Ruiz's "Four Agreements" in a service this month, but I have also been inspired by Parker J Palmer's "Five habits of the heart that help make democracy possible" (see below and [www.couragerenewal.org/images/stories/pdfs/5habits.pdf](http://www.couragerenewal.org/images/stories/pdfs/5habits.pdf) for more information).

Personally, I have always thought that the test of a good relationship is not how you get along when things are going well, but how you resolve differences, so I find myself thinking about how to "hold tension in life-giving ways" in our congregation as that is a natural part of being in a community that values differences.

Meanwhile, even as I am reflecting on these areas of growth for our community, the ethos of our community is as warm, lively and energized, as always. There are programs, activities, events, and many opportunities for connection and action. I hope that everyone finds a way to take advantages of some of these opportunities to expand your experience of the congregation as so much more than what happens on Sunday morning.

In January, I attended an evening art show/concert/meeting of 350.org in our building. It was an interesting and informative event and I was pleased that our congregation was able to host this event for a fledgling local chapter of an organization that is consistent with our seventh principle and seems to resonate with many in our membership.

As far as I can tell our congregation is an "organic community" that allows people to connect naturally in all kinds of ways around their passions. Our tendency is to foster a spirit of collaboration, which has been a strength in the formation of our relatively young congregation. There seems to be a common sense of shared purpose, and in most cases a willingness to set aside individual concerns for the greater good of the community. I am so thankful for that.

As we look to the future, March will bring our annual stewardship campaign, which supports our UUCSJS aspirations, priorities and programs for next year. Our stewardship campaign led by Paul Utts will kick-off with a **Fellowship dinner March 16** as we gather in community for a pot-luck dinner and talent show. We will use the small group, appreciative inquiry process similar to last year with a **Commitment Sunday on March 24**. Please make a note of those dates, and watch for more communication about these events and how to participate as they draw nearer.

-- Karen York, President UUCSJS



5. A capacity to create community

### Five Habits of the Heart That Help Make Democracy Possible

1. An understanding that we are all in this together.
2. An appreciation of the value of "otherness."
3. An ability to hold tension in life-giving ways.
4. A sense of personal voice and agency.

# Board of Trustees HIGHLIGHTS January 2013

The **regular monthly meeting** of the **Board of Trustees** was held on Wednesday, January 16, 2013 at 6:30 PM at the UU Center, President Karen York presiding. Chalice lighting words affirming our shared principles were read in unison, and joys and concerns were shared.

• **ANNOUNCEMENTS** President York announced that: **1)** The next **"Board Talk Back"** will take place Sunday, January 20 at 11:30 am, Debbi Dagavarian and Judy Pereira attending; the schedule is posted in the UU Center office. **2)** The **Committee on Ministry (COM)** vacancy has been filled in accordance with our bylaws; new member Susan Polk will be voted on at the next Congregational meeting. **3)** **UU Center rental** by the Shire of the Barren Sands of the Society for Creative Anachronism is confirmed for Saturday, February 9. **4)** This year's **Stewardship campaign** begins soon, with the congregation-wide *Fellowship Dinner* on Saturday, March 16 and *Commitment Sunday* and "Appreciative Inquiry" small group pledging on March 24. Paul Utts, chair, assisted by Karen York and Betsy and John Searight. **5)** The **2013 JPD Worship Arts Festival** will be held at UU Church in Cherry Hill on February 22-23. Featured presenter is Peter Bowden, *UU Consultant*, speaking on "Worship and Social Media in the New Age of Collaboration." UUCSJS Music Director Barbara Miller is also presenting. If five participants register from the same congregation, the sixth attends free. Saturday-only registration is \$50 (includes lunch and resource materials); after January 31 there is a \$15 late registration fee. For more information, go to [jpd.uaa.org](http://jpd.uaa.org) or [uucch.org](http://uucch.org).

## • DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

**1) UUA Certification and Optional Vote on Draft Statement of Conscience.** All UUA congregations must file for certification by 5 pm PST on February 1, 2013; this is required to determine how many delegates we can send to this year's General Assembly (GA) in Louisville, KY. Representing UUCSJS, the Board voted unanimously that the Draft Statement of Conscience (SOC) on "Immigration as a Moral Issue" should be placed on the Final Agenda for this year's GA. In order to appear on the agenda, a minimum of 25% of certified congregations must vote in the affirmative. To read the SOC, go to [uaa.org](http://uaa.org).

**2) First UU of Wilmington – Growth Grant renewal and invitation to visit.** First UU's "Grants for Growth" Collection Plate will be held Sunday, February 10, and we have been invited to send members to be recognized that day as grant recipients and to participate in a lunch discussion on "the next Grants for Growth application from UUCSJS." Wilmington's mentoring growth grants may be the subject of a forthcoming article in *UU World*, and they have been significant in the growth of our congregation. The grants are usually around \$2,000/year for five years. Further discussions will be held as to what our new proposal should be and who will be visiting on the 10th.

**3) Committee Leadership/Structure/Support.** We have observed that every month there are committees that do not submit Board reports; some are active, others neither meeting nor reporting. The list of committees was briefly reviewed (Congregational, Standing, and Ad hoc). While it was acknowledged reports may not be necessary or even possible for every committee (for example, COM), those with annual budgets should expect to report monthly. Reports don't have to be lengthy; one paragraph may well suffice. Many questions were raised, among them: Do we have too many committees for a congregation of our size? Are any doing similar work and could join forces? Are Board reports important? [*Hint: Yes!*] How can we better foster mentoring and introduce training for prospective committee leaders and others?

Secretary Pereira was asked to offer a template for reports, with a request to cover: a) any meetings held; b) any events sponsored or activities planned; and c) requests for Board action or feedback, if any.

**4) Follow-up from Covenanting Workshop.** The Board voted unanimously to appoint the team to write a draft "Covenant of Right Relations" based on ideas developed at the January 12 congregational workshop with Rev. Libby Smith; they are Debbi Dagavarian, Dina DeSalvo, Heidi Janssch, Jack Miller, and Judy Pereira. The draft covenant will be presented to the congregation in due course.

**5) Information Technology (IT) Policies.** New internal and external IT policies have been written by our own techies, Michael Cluff and Lauren Porr, soon to be reviewed by the Board and implemented thereafter.

**6) Outreach Report.** The first half of the fiscal year saw generous special collections: *Peace Pilgrim*, \$423; *Murray Grove*, \$622; *The Ordination*, \$2,615; *UUA Living Tradition*, \$2,161; *Community FoodBank of NJ*, \$981; *Friends of Sister Jean Webster Kitchen*, \$554.

## • REPORTS

**1) Minister's Report.** Among many other entries in his written report, Rev. Charlie told us this past month his spine suffered some damage and he may be having out-patient surgery soon. Meanwhile, he reminded us he still plans to attend the UUMA Center Institute for Excellence in Ministry from 1/28 to 2/01 in St. Pete Beach, FL, visiting New Orleans en route, and hopes for a Florida break 2/21-27 (depending on back surgery). In closing, Rev. Charlie observed that the status of two of our committees, Interweave and Social Justice, will be evolving going forward and he would like to be part of the process.

**2) Treasurer's Report.** The "UUCSJS Budget Report for December 2012" covers the first six months of the fiscal year and is not condensed, Treasurer Searight explained, in order to provide a full picture of income and expenditures at the half-way point of our FY 2012-13 budget. He also submitted a budget forecast for the remainder of the year, showing where possible reductions and savings can be found to offset a potential shortfall in the spring. It's unclear at this time how large any shortfall may be.

The treasurer said that in his Finance committee report he stated, "We have been meeting our monthly expenses, but are dependent on weekly contributions and pledge payments." He continued: "Like many families who live paycheck to paycheck, we are 'living' from Sunday Offering to Sunday Offering." He also expressed concern about our inability to build our Reserve Funds, which continue at a minimum. The new Fundraising committee may be providing some fresh money-making ideas.

In closing, Searight reviewed important dates in March at the start of our Annual Budget Drive, and said the campaign will be making the case that in order to move forward toward our shared vision, we will have to have the resources to do so.

• **Adjournment** – The next meeting of the Board was set for *Wednesday, February 12 at 6:30 pm*; the meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm and reconvened immediately in Executive Session until 9:10 pm.

– Judy Pereira, *Secretary*

The **NEXT REGULAR MEETING** of the UUCSJS Board of Trustees will be held on **Wednesday, February 12, 2013 at 6:30 pm** at the UU Center, 75 S. Pomona Rd.

## ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### “If Winter Comes Can Spring Be Far Behind?”

The first two programs of 2013, “**What Floor, Please?**” and our “**Covenanting Workshop**” with Rev. Libby Smith are now complete. The Board will do some follow up for the Covenanting Workshop.

The third, *Small Group Ministry for Adults*, has completed, session one of four. There is still an opportunity for those of you who would like to join in. Each 90 minute session is an opportunity to share perspectives on a selected topic. This sort of continuing community allows for sharing of many thoughts and emotions in a safe environment, and you may find it helps you feel a part of our community. Couples may attend a group together or be in different groups as they choose.

Participation requires agreement to a covenant of confidentiality and interaction to make sharing safe for all. We now have two groups: Tuesday evening in Cape May Court House and the other, Thursday evening in Mays Landing. When signing up, please give your preference for location/evening.

We now offer a **new and easy method to register** for any Adult RE course. Send an e-mail to [AdultRE.uucsjs@gmail.com](mailto:AdultRE.uucsjs@gmail.com), telling us your name, and which evening you wish to attend.

Other programs that we are planning for the Spring include:

- “*The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*” by Michelle Alexander, has been selected as the 2012-13 Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Common Read. A Common Read invites participants to read and discuss the same book in a given period of time. It can build community in our congregations and our movement by giving diverse people a shared experience, shared language, and a basis for deep meaningful conversations. If you would like to help organize this, please contact Prim Reeves.
- The Adult Religious Ed committee will work with the Children’s Religious Ed committee to develop and present “**Being a UU Parent**” sometime in the spring. If you would like to be a part of this send an email to [AdultRE.uucsjs@gmail.com](mailto:AdultRE.uucsjs@gmail.com). Be sure to mention “Being a UU Parent.”
- “**Harvest the Power: Developing Lay Leadership**” is a program developed in response to the needs of UU lay leaders for leadership skill development that goes hand-in-hand with faith development. Keep an eye and an ear open as we put together this program for the spring and fall.

-- Prim Reeves, Chair, Adult RE

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**Margaret Circle** will meet Thursday, February 7 at 1 pm in the UU Center library. Music Director Barbara Miller will share reflections on “Why Do We Sing? How does singing together affect us individually and as a community?” Please come for an inspiring program, refreshments, and warm fellowship. -- *Judy Brown, Circle Leader*

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### It’s Never Too Late to Learn to Covenant

Last month at the Covenanting Workshop I was honored to be nominated to serve on the Covenant Writing Committee. This group was charged with taking the material collected during the January 12<sup>th</sup> session and forming it into a legible and flowing congregational covenant. We have a great team working on this and the result of our efforts will soon be presented to the congregation for feedback.

Covenants are common in UU circles. Several years ago the UUCSJS staff attended a workshop where we created a staff covenant together and these types of agreements are often collaborated upon at the beginning of the DRE trainings I attend. Our small group ministries are sometimes called “covenant groups” and often operate under a series of guidelines stating how members of the group will relate to each other.

Covenanting is also present in our children’s religious education program: in the past, curricula we have used began the school year with a class covenant exercise. The children were asked to compile the “rules of behavior” themselves, and these were then posted in the classroom for the rest of the year.

The collaborative effort in covenanting ensures that the promises made are from the group itself, not a list of rules handed down from “on high.” When members of the group make the promises, they are inclined to hold themselves accountable to these guidelines. When there is a disruption or disagreement, the covenant can be used as a reference and reminder of how the students agreed to be with one another. Hopefully, our soon-to-be Covenant of Right Relations will serve a similar purpose for our entire congregation as we “walk together toward a vision of beloved community.”

Heidi J Jansch

Director of Religious Education

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The **UUCSJS Men's Group** meets on the third Tuesday of each month. If you would like to attend or want more information please contact Dave King (he’s in the Member Directory).

# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

## Staff

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## Board of Trustees 2012-13

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Debbi Dagavarian, Judy Pereira, Lauren Porr,  
John Searight, Joe Terrazzini, Art Wexler, Karen York

Newsletter – Mariann Maene – newsletter@uucsjs.org

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

**February 2013**

**Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of the South Jersey Shore  
P.O. Box 853  
Pomona, NJ 08240**

