



NEWSLETTER

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the
South Jersey Shore



Volume 18, Issue 12

December 2016

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.

December 4	The Battle for Christmas <i>Rev. John Marsh</i> Take Away Message: Traditions evolve over time. However, just as a small group of fashion designers decide what these year's colors will be, there have always been some to set the tone. When I served as a minister in San Francisco I married many young couples. One my pre-marital counseling questions was: "How will you spend your first Christmas?" It was really a question about "How are you going to resolve arguments?"
December 11	Nostalgia <i>Rev. John Marsh</i> Nostalgia is a powerful force in all of our lives. It has been associated with suicidal depression, as well as providing wellsprings of deep joy. Some beings seem to get along fine without it (Socrates, Dr. Spock). If you are one of them, perhaps this sermon will help you understand the rest of us. If you are one of the rest of us, perhaps this will help you follow Socrates' dictum, the unexamined life is not worth taking a champagne bath in.
December 18	Winter Solstice <i>Rev. John Marsh and others</i> A celebration of the Season with Music and Poetry.
Wednesday December 21 6:30-7:45 pm	Winter Solstice Singing Ritual We will celebrate the return of the Light which occurs after the Winter Solstice with songs and stories. The singing will include music from calypso, Western choral singing, Native American texts, Greek mythology, feminist rounds, Pagan chants, and even an old American hymn. <i>The ritual runs about 75 minutes.</i>
Saturday December 24 6 pm	Saturday, Christmas Eve 6 pm <i>All Ages Welcome!</i> We will deck the halls, light the candles, tell the story, sing the carols, offer gifts from our wealth to help those in need, hear a message of glad tidings, and offer our silent prayers.
Sunday December 25	Christmas Day No Service We wish everyone comfort and joy!

Margaret Circle... met on December 1 and will next meet in the new year, on Thursday, January 5.

Book Lovers will be meeting at 6:30 pm in the UU library on Friday, December 16. This is one half hour earlier because we will have our holiday exchange of gifts and snacks. The selection for December is **THE ALL OF IT** by Jeannette Haien and the discussion will be led by Angela Wexler. Set in a small town in Ireland this is a seemingly simple tale of a parishioner confiding in her priest. The confession provokes a moral dilemma for the clergyman as well as the reader. This is a novel seething with human emotion and human flaws. All are welcome to attend - bring a snack and small gift if you wish..

Family Promise Training

To learn more about hosting our Family Promise guests, please come to the important training that will be given by the new FPAC Executive Director, Mike Andrews.

When: Wednesday, December 14
Time: 7:00 pm
Where: UU Center, Sanctuary

Note: There will be **NO Vespers** service for December due to the Winter Solstice Singing Ritual scheduled for Wed., December 21 at 6:30 pm.



Support our congregation by doing what you already do – buy groceries!
with gift cards for your local Acme or Shoprite!

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

Chocolate is back at the Fair Trade Table!

In addition to the large bars, we are offering mini pieces for 25 cents.



WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH FAMILY PROMISE?

Santa Claus is coming to town, and so is Family Promise!

On **Sunday, January 1, 2017**, we will begin our week hosting homeless families. Several members of the UUCSJS Family Promise Team will be asking you how you'd like to help. We will have a sign-up sheet at a table in the back of the sanctuary, and a few of us will be there to answer your questions.

If you'd like to **prepare a dinner**, you will be asked to choose from 10 different meal suggestions. You will also select the evening you'd like to bring it (at about 6:00-6:30 pm). You may choose to eat with our guests, or leave if others are staying.

If you can fall asleep anywhere, please volunteer to **spend a night or two at the UU Center**. Overnight volunteers arrive at 9:00 pm, and leave early in the morning (you'll be sleeping either in the library or the sanctuary, on the same inflatable mattress/box spring that our guests will be using). We will need two overnight volunteers each night.

Maybe you just wish to **spend some time with our guests**, and will sign up to be present in the evening (either during or after dinner until the overnight crew arrives). You will follow the lead of our guests: if they want to talk, feel free to talk with them. But if they just want to be with their children, let them know you're fine with that.

Other volunteering options include bringing breakfast foods or lunch fixings. Our guests make their own breakfasts and lunches to bring with them. They will leave at 7:00 am, and return around dinnertime.

So please look for us soon at the back of the sanctuary!

In the Interim...



"Ours is the oldest religious tradition there is – making it up as we go along." -- Starhawk

One of the things Unitarian Universalists do best is December.

We recognize that there are different traditions with different celebrations. We encourage everyone to join in celebrations as they are moved to do so. We also encourage people to begin new traditions as the spirit moves them, and to leave behind traditions that dampen the spirit.

It is a good time to invite a friend who might be considering coming to our Congregation to join you at one of our services. We take pride in not being pushy or proselytizing. However, it is possible that we do a better job than necessary at keeping our light hidden under a bushel basket.

We have we have many messages the world needs to hear. One of them, especially needed in December is: loosen up a bit—relax.

Remember that St. Nicholas, the man after whom Santa Claus is modeled, was one of the first persons to be named a Christian saint who did not die the gruesome death of a martyr—he is remembered for being a nice guy—for giving one gift to one family—on one occasion—not because they were related to him, but because it seemed like a nice thing to do.

The moral for us is obvious. We shouldn't have to stress ourselves to observe the holiday season—we don't have to provide a gift for every person on the planet with whom we are related... all that is required is that we should be a nice person.

See you in church,
John Marsh

Auction Recap

The grand total raised from our annual service auction is now **\$11,947!**

Your generous donations at this event help to support our programming here at UUCSJS!

Thank you to everyone who helped make the event a success; our volunteers, those who donated, everyone who attended and those who will be hosting events throughout the year!

In gratitude,

The UUCSJS Auction Steering Committee
Debbi, Heidi, Betsy and Kathleen



MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

Ministerial Search News

You have received the Survey that your Ministerial Search Committee told you would be coming! It arrived in your email from uucsjsministersearch@gmail.com on Sunday, 11/27, at 1:15 pm and the subject line was "Your invitation to the 2016 Ministerial Search Survey."

☐ Nov 27 uucsjsministersearch@gmail.com

Your invitation to the 2016 UUCSJS Ministerial Search Survey

We have asked that you submit it no later than Sunday, December 4. This is important to our committee; we are working very hard to do the best ministerial search that we can. The survey will help us to know if some things have changed since last year, and it adds to what we have learned from you at the Roundtables. Your participation in the survey is a way to thank us, and to let us know that you are behind us. If you have already returned your survey, Thank You!

From your Ministerial Search Committee: Jess Dunn, Betsy Erbaugh, Helene Gentile, Jack Miller, Betsy Searight, Aaron Thomas, Paul Utts



*Deep, deep, deep
in the dark
of the winter...*

For those who have previously experienced WSSR, remember these amazing songs?

Kore Evohe, Keep the Fire, Benedicta Es, Though My Soul,
Imani, We've Got The Power, Carry it Home, When We Are
Gone....

Come and relive the experience. For those who have never experienced this singing ritual, you will never forget it!

Board of Trustees HIGHLIGHTS

November 2016

The **regular monthly meeting** of the **UUCSJS Board of Trustees** was held on **Wednesday, November 9, 2016** (in place of 11/8 Election Day) at 6:30.

In addition to Rev. John Marsh, *ex-officio* member of the Board, also in attendance (for the first agenda item) were Family Promise team co-leaders, Debbi Dagavarian and Barb Morell.

➤ **Agenda Items**

• **Family Promise (FP): Discussion of questions from FP about protocols.** The UUFP team leaders began by describing in some detail how the program will run when we begin hosting guests [which we now know will be January 1, 2017!]. They explained that a Hospitality Logbook is kept with daily entries and updates on the (up to) 14 guests and their needs, including dietary restrictions. **ITEM:** It was agreed that in addition to the Logbook, we at UUCSJS should develop a **"volunteer turn-over packet"** with all necessary information about rules and protocols, the keys, etc.

The two then answered assorted inquiries from Board members before discussion turned to a list of **specific questions** submitted by UUFP in advance concerning such matters as where smoking would be allowed, and which spaces will be either locked or otherwise made off-limits to guests.

The president thanked Deb and Barb for coming out this evening, and the regular order of agenda was resumed.

• **Treasurer's Report.** Treasurer Karen York distributed her written report for November showing **account balances** (10/31) as follows: TD Checking (Operating funds): \$30,400.15; TD Savings (CC3/Capital funds): \$270.01; and Fidelity/Capital Reserves: \$13,537.52 (\$10,798.49 Operating). Prepayment of mortgage principal with CC3 funds was made on 10/26 in the amount of \$2,275.01; the current principal **balance on mortgage** = \$232,010.35 (11/9).

The treasurer confirmed that three necessary **bookkeeping tasks** were duly completed by October 31: **a)** Property tax exemption *filed* with Galloway Township by November 1, next due in 2019; **b)** Workers' Compensation audit *submitted* (but follow-up will be needed); and **c)** Congregational Record financial information *updated* for the Ministerial Search committee.

–**Building use requests.** The treasurer stated that there were inquiries in the pipeline but no action was required.

• **Secretary's Report.** The secretary reported for the record that DRE Heidi Jannsch informed the congregation via the UU listserv on 11/9/16 that the children's "Trick or Treat" **second collection** on Sun., October 30 raised **\$1,168.85** in cash donations (*in addition to* foodstuffs), to benefit Community FoodBank of New Jersey. *Wonderful effort!*

• **Minister's Report.** Rev. Marsh began by noting that last Sunday's guest speaker, **Rev. Rebekah Montgomery** [Military Chaplain, currently Assistant Minister, UU Congregation of Rockville, MD], seemed very well received, with a record recent attendance of 84. John recalled that he and his wife, Allison, attended the Mainland/Pleasantville **NAACP awards dinner** on Saturday, October 29, at which UUCSJS was the group's 2016 honoree in the "Organization/Business" category. Rev. Cynthia Cain, our Interim Minister 2014-16, was also in attendance, along with some 20 members of the congregation.

Rev. Marsh noted that this coming Sunday we will be welcoming **three (3) new members**—*Erica Onofrio*, and *Steve & Palma Merkel*—and that he will be hosting an informal **reception for visitors** in the Library right after the service, together with representatives of the Membership committee. Planning for the **Christmas service** is now in progress, he said,

and will include a **special offering** to provide a new freezer for the soup kitchen at Asbury United Methodist Church in Atlantic City. Members of the Men's Club have been volunteering to help serve at Asbury's Saturday brunch.

Finally, Rev. Marsh observed that there seems to be a need for **improved means of communication** within our congregation; that it can be difficult to get the word out because there are multiple channels—Midweeks, UU listserv, website, Facebook, newsletter, pulpit, bulletin board, more—and no single-source way to access and coordinate these channels. It was mentioned that different people tend to look at different sites, complicating the picture. While some who are very active seem to have developed effective means to communicate among themselves, others may find this more difficult. It was noted that many including those in leadership positions are not on Facebook, further adding to the complexity. **NEXT STEPS:** No remedies were proposed at this meeting; however, it was suggested that **communications issues** might be taken up by the **long-range planning team**, or by a special group for this purpose.

• **Three-Year Strategic Plan Update—Preliminaries.**

Art Wexler, who along with Charlie Roberts volunteered to help lead the Board's effort to create a new long-range strategic plan, stated that he began work in the belief that "it's important for this process to be driven by a **needs statement**, to enable the congregation to come to terms with its identity—who we are, and how that lends itself to us in the future." Their *UUCSJS Strategic Planning Concept Document* was circulated to Board members in advance. Wexler further stated that he sees the effort informed by a **high level of dialogue** with a cross-section of the congregation, including all major stakeholders. The resulting three-year strategic plan will needs be an accurate reflection of our **renewed mission and vision** together with a set of realistic, achievable, and measurable goals. **NEXT STEPS:** In her role as head of Program Council, Melissa Hutchison will put out an open solicitation inviting those interested to come forward and become part of the long-range planning team. Depending on response, direct invitations might then be made.

• **Requested proposal from RJTF re \$8,000 UUA grant.**

The president reported that he had attended the RJTF meeting on October 20 and requested a **budget proposal** by November 15. **Straw poll results** were shared. The group is at work on a **new BLM sign** for re-dedication, among other plans.

• **Discussion of Concerns raised at October 2 session on Racial Justice/Social Justice issues.**

President Gentile said that he put this on the agenda to provide time for the Board to reflect on the **Concerns** voiced at the October 2 session (written anonymously on Post-It notes, read aloud by facilitator Rev. Libby Smith, and later transcribed by the secretary). On most of these, no action was seen to be required, but that it was important to have held a forum in which they could be heard. There were many types of concerns expressed, with some touching on **safety and security**. **NEXT STEPS:** While it was noted that several measures to improve safety and security had been enacted, including surveillance cameras, front entry monitor, and modifying sanctuary exit doors, more may be needed. A comprehensive **evacuation drill** was held last fall coordinated by Shelee McIlvaine, Heidi Jannsch, Jesse Connor, and others, and Rev. Marsh strongly recommended that another be held as soon as possible, along with other measures such as suitable attention to serious threat scenarios.

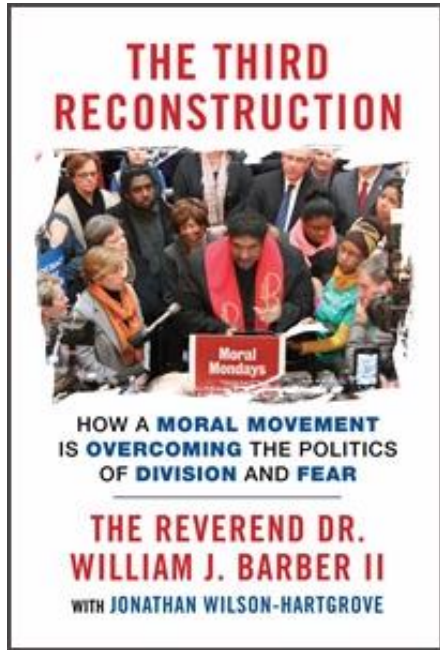
➤ **Adjournment**

After extinguishing the chalice, the meeting adjourned at 8:16.
— Judy Pereira, *Secretary*

The **NEXT REGULAR MEETING** of the UUCSJS Board of Trustees will be held on **Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at 6:30 pm** in the Lounge at the UU Center, 75 S. Pomona Rd., Galloway, New Jersey

UUA Common Read

The UUCSJS Racial Justice Task Force invites you to participate in the UUA Common Read, *The Third Reconstruction: How a Moral Movement Is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear*, by Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II. President of the North Carolina chapter of the NAACP and pastor at Greenleaf Christian Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina, Rev. Barber is the architect of the Forward Together Moral Movement that gained national acclaim with its Moral Monday protests. We will facilitate a 90-minute discussion of *The Third Reconstruction* on Friday, January 27 at 6:30 pm at the UU Center. Copies of the book can be obtained through the UUCSJS Book Fair on December 4 and extra copies will be made available through UUCSJS. It is also sold by major booksellers and at the UUA online bookstore. For more information, contact Betsy Erbaugh or visit www.uua.org/re/adults/read.



From uuabookstore.org: Over the summer of 2013, the Reverend Dr. William J. Barber II led more than a hundred thousand people at rallies across North Carolina to protest restrictions to voting access and an extreme makeover of state government. These protests-the largest state government-focused civil disobedience campaign in American history-came to be known as Moral Mondays and have since blossomed in states as diverse as Florida, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Ohio, and New York.

At a time when divide-and-conquer politics are exacerbating racial strife and economic inequality, Rev. Barber offers an impassioned, historically grounded argument that Moral Mondays are hard evidence of an embryonic Third Reconstruction in America.

The first Reconstruction briefly flourished after Emancipation, and the second Reconstruction ushered in meaningful progress in the civil rights era. But both were met by ferocious reactionary measures that severely curtailed, and in many cases rolled back, racial and economic progress. This Third Reconstruction is a profoundly moral awakening of justice-loving people united in a fusion coalition powerful enough to reclaim the possibility of democracy-even in the face of corporate-financed extremism.

In this memoir of how Rev. Barber and allies as diverse as progressive Christians, union members, and immigration-rights activists came together to build a coalition, he offers a trenchant analysis of race-based inequality and a hopeful message for a nation grappling with persistent racial and economic injustice. Rev. Barber writes movingly-and pragmatically-about how he laid the groundwork for a state-by-state movement that unites black, white, and brown, rich and poor, employed and unemployed, gay and straight, documented and undocumented, religious and secular. Only such a diverse fusion movement, Rev. Barber argues, can heal our nation's wounds and produce public policy that is morally defensible, constitutionally consistent, and economically sane. The Third Reconstruction is both a blueprint for movement building and an inspiring call to action from the twenty-first century's most effective grassroots organizer.

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Winter in Children's Religious Education

Our Children's Religious Education program is preparing to share our space with the Family Promise program which is scheduled to begin in January. As part of their lessons focusing on literacy, our Gr 2-6 grade group decided to provide a mini library comprised of their own donated books to share with the families. This library will be located on the new shelves in the downstairs lounge and our guest families will be welcomed to access it.

Classes will continue on their regular Sunday schedule this month, except on December 25, when there will be no Sunday Service or RE classes. Families are welcome to attend the Christmas Eve service, being held on the evening of December 24.

Note: The children's "Trick or Treat" second collection on Sunday, October 30 raised \$1,168.85 in cash donations (in addition to foodstuffs), to benefit Community FoodBank of New Jersey! *Great effort to help our community!*

Enjoy your holidays!

Heidi Jannsch, UUCSJS Director of Religious Education

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

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Board of Trustees 2016-17

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Visit us on the Web: www.uucsjs.org

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