



NEWSLETTER



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the
South Jersey Shore

Volume 19, Issue 12

December 2017

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 3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Advent: A Time for Waiting <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>Advent is a time when Christians wait for the arrival of their savior, when Jews celebrate the miracle of lights, when earth-based faiths wait for the return of the sun. What are you waiting for during this time? Join us as we consider what it is that we wait (perhaps wish) for as we approach the end of the year.</p>
<p>December 10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Love's Only Hands <i>Guest speaker Cindy Beal</i></p> <p>Ours are the only hands that love has. If the universe truly bends toward justice it is because we bend it. And we do that in community, in congregational life, together. In this service, we will explore the how and why of congregational life bending the universe toward justice.</p>
<p>December 17</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Clear as Mud: Voices, Visions, and Liberation <i>Lay speaker Matt Honig</i></p> <p>Hearing voices is nothing new. Come join Matt in exploring just how common so-called "extreme experiences" of hearing voices and experiencing dissociation is, and learn about the Hearing Voices Network and their World Congress.</p>
<p>December 24 10 am</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Living Nativity <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>The story of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth is retold in live-action, improvisational style with audience participation! This is not a service you want to miss!</p>
<p>December 24 6 pm</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lessons & Carols By Candlelight <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A traditional Christmas Eve service of carols and readings by candlelight.</p>
<p>December 31</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Buddhism - The doctor is (with) in <i>Lay speaker Cynthia Grzywinski</i></p>

About our guest speaker....



Cindy Beal, M.Div. is a freelance consultant and educator who runs Justice and Peace Consulting. They provide education and leadership around consent and sexuality education through a social justice lens, personal and institutional change management

through an understanding of power and authority, and Preemptive Radical Inclusion which seeks to make anti-oppression work central to everything we do.

Margaret Circle... will gather on Thursday, December 7 at our regularly scheduled 1 pm time. Maxine Blumenthal will delight use with her refreshing luncheon delights as we celebrate the Season. We will have story telling and games that will help us to get to know one another just a little bit better.

BOOK CLUB In December we will meet at 6:30 pm (1/2 hour earlier) on Friday, December 15 in the UU Center library. Bring a gift to exchange and a snack to enjoy! **HOLIDAYS ON ICE** by David Sedaris is this month's selection. *Holidays on Ice* is a 1997 collection of essays about Christmas, some new and some previously published. David Sedaris is named by Time as America's Favorite Humorist and was named by The Economist as one of the funniest writers alive. Helene Gentile will lead the discussion. All are welcome to come and join the fun!

We could never learn to be brave and patient,
if there were only joy in the world. ~ Helen Keller

There is something good in all seeming failures. You are
not to see that now. Time will reveal it. Be patient.
~ Swami Sivananda

Sometimes things aren't clear right away.
That's where you need to be patient and persevere
and see where things lead. ~ Mary Pierce



**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!



WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH FAMILY PROMISE?

UUCSJS hosted our FPAC family during the week of November 19 through November 26. In spite of the fact that this was a holiday week, UUCSJS members and friends came through!

We are very grateful to all the UUCSJS volunteers who contributed in some way: bringing food, spending time with the family, staffing the Day Center, setting up and cleaning up, sleeping overnight, and even doing the laundry afterwards.

Thank you to everyone on this list!

In alphabetical order:

- ♥ Nick Bonar
- ♥ Tracey Catino
- ♥ Marylou DeMaria-Berhang
- ♥ Diane and Don Dreby
- ♥ Helene and Jim Gentile
- ♥ Kathleen Hartnett
- ♥ Pam Hendrick
- ♥ Melissa and Ron Hutchison
- ♥ Heidi and TJ Jannsch
- ♥ Mariann Maene
- ♥ Shelee McIlvaine
- ♥ Theresa McReynolds and Cassandra
- ♥ Barbara Miller
- ♥ Judy Pereira
- ♥ Betsy Searight
- ♥ Olivia and Damon Smith and children
- ♥ Stephanie Thomas and children
- ♥ Helen and Paul Utts
- ♥ David Wagstaff
- ♥ Angela Wexler
- ♥ Karen York

With deep appreciation,

Barbara Morell and Deb Dagavarian

A Season for Presence

December begins, with shopping, sales, baking, and family drama of all kinds. Americans, in particular, rush back and forth in frenzied exercises of consumerism, capitalism, and retail therapy.

The holidays can be a challenge to negotiate in families that are not made in the Norman Rockwell model. We do too much, buy too much, eat too much, drink too much, and often come out the other side sometime in January with a complex hangover that leaves us tired, sick, broke, and empty.

As we head into this month of holidays and holy days, I want to encourage you to give yourself permission to check out of the madness when you need to. Shift your focus from the presents being bought and sold and given and received, and instead concentrate on *being present*.

Being present when the world swirls around us at a frenzied pace can be a real challenge. I find it sometimes help to look for things I can see or touch or hear or smell to remind me to settle into my body where it is in the moment. What can I see from where I sit? I can see bookshelves, the couch, the TV, my little dog Quinn. I can see the tree limbs moving around in the wind. I can hear the wind whistle around the windows of my house, and in the oak leaves that linger on mostly bare branches. I can hear the furnace kick on and the radiators creak and tick as warm water moves through them.

Practicing this kind of mindfulness brings me out of the hubbub and madness to a place more quiet, settled, less stressful, where I can breathe more deeply and let go of some of that holiday stress.

At night, I sometimes look up at the stars and contemplate the vastness of the universe as it stretches, ever-expanding, beyond my ability to see it. It's that kind of thinking that brings me back to being "right-sized." In the face of all that vastness, my need for a bread machine or an instant pot is really not much to get worked up over.

So, in this month that can be so difficult, I encourage you to find a way to ground yourself and to be present, rather than fuss about presents. Remember that you



are made of star stuff, as Carl Sagan tells us, and that you are every bit as noble and miraculous as a mountain or a blade of grass. We need not participate in the chaos that swirls around us. We can be present.

May you enjoy the gift of presence this holiday season.

Blessed be,
Dawn

Putting the "Be" and "Love" in Beloved Community

For many of us, the Sunday Service begins when we first enter the Sanctuary. For the choir and musicians, it is practice and preparation time. For the Speaker, Lay Leader, Chalice Table Person, Sound Crew, Kitchen Crew and Ushers, it is a time for preparation. For others, it may be a time for quiet contemplation and centeredness.

To that end, the Worship Team and the Choir have requested that once entering the doors of the Sanctuary after 9 am, we keep conversation quiet and to a minimum. The lobby is the best place for catching up and conversation! Thank you for understanding.

Joys & Sorrows

The ritual around shared joys and sorrows during worship varies across UU congregations. This is a time for people to let others know what is on their mind, and *we have a new approach*.



The worship team will provide a book in which people may write whatever joys and sorrows they have that they would like to have read aloud by the worship leader during the introduction of Joys & Sorrows. After those items have been read, people will then be invited to come forward and silently place stones in either water by the windows or the sand around our chalice as is our custom.

Please avail yourself of this opportunity to connect.



Count down the days til Christmas UU style!

- * December 3 – The earmuff is invented (1873)
- * December 8 – 1st Christmas Tree in the White House (1912)
- * December 13 – First Department Store Santa (1890)

I was wandering the virtual aisles of UUA Worship looking for inspiration for our Advent service and came upon a little gem:

www.uua.org/worship/words/image/uu-advent-calendar

Rev. Ralph Roberts has created a free (except for the color ink!) Unitarian Universalist Advent Calendar that you can print yourself. Parents or partners or singles could tape a treat to each page, adding an element of fun. It is available in either a page a day or booklet format. I like the Americana images. I will print one out - ask me if you would like to see it on Sunday, December 3.

- Barbara Miller



This year our RE Teen group is spearheading this UU Service Committee program. Guest at Your Table (GAYT) is UUSC's annual intergenerational program to raise support for and awareness about our work to advance human rights.

Thank you to the Teen CRE Group for their leadership in this important work. The campaign will be running through December and if you are in need of an envelope, please check with the Teens or Heidi Jannsch. Envelopes are also available in the church office.

Happy and Helpful Holidays in Children's RE

During the holiday season our teen class will be overseeing the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's Guest at Your Table Program. The program raises money to support UUs working for social justice all over the world, and the teens have been charged with introducing the program to the congregation and managing the donations raised this year. On November 19, the teens presented a Time For All Ages during the Sunday service which focused on the work being done by RAICES, a UUSC migrant justice partner based in San Antonio, Texas. RAICES provides free legal help and translation services to the women and children held in Karnes County Residential Center, one of three for-profit detention centers in the U.S. that detains families, including very young children. This is just one of the many worthy efforts supported by the UUSC and funded by the Guest at Your Table Program. See one of our teens for a donation envelope if you are willing to donate to this cause.

We will continue with regularly scheduled children's religious education classes throughout December, with the exception of December 24th. The Christmas Eve morning service (at the usual 10am time slot) will be an intergenerational participatory service - where volunteers will be invited to play a part in a living nativity. Children are especially welcome to play a part in this interactive service. There is no preparation needed; simply show up and you can be a star... literally: we will need six people to be stars! You could be one of them!

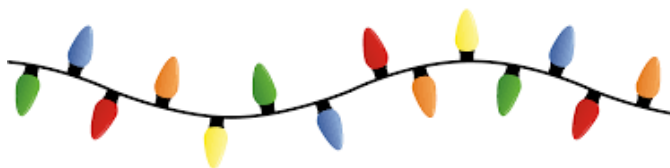
Happy Holidays!

Heidi Jannsch

UUCSJS Director of Religious Education

Decorations Wanted!

Have you decide to get rid of some of your old holiday decorations? *Don't trash 'em, donate 'em.* Eagle Academy, an alternative High School in EHT, will gladly receive your unwanted bulbs, lights and decor. They'll be used to bring a bit of joy to the students! Box or bag the items, marked "Decorations" and leave them by the coat rack. See Bud Smith for details.



Stay tuned for our annual UUCSJS SOUPER BOWL Sunday!!



Once again this February we will be making and selling soup to benefit Family Promise of Atlantic County.

Start thinking about what kinds of soup you'd like to make!



Children's RE Holiday Sock Collection

The Children's Religious Education (RE) Committee is seeking contributions of pairs of socks to adorn our Giving Tree in the vestibule.

We have just two more Sundays – December 10 and December 17 -- to collect socks and hang them from the tree. These can be for adults or children. Extra socks may be placed in the basket below the tree. After that, the socks will be donated to the Eastern Service Workers Association for distribution to less fortunate people. Please contribute if you can.

CISCO SYSTEMS



Networking
Academy

Help Prepare Area Students for Careers in the Digital Economy

UUCSJS has a unique opportunity to support Asbury United Methodist Church in bringing leading-edge technology education to students in the Atlantic County area. We are looking for donations of up-to-date computer components and other equipment and furnishings.

As a Cisco Networking Academy site, Asbury United Methodist is the only non-for-profit in the county using Cisco's curriculum to prepare students for entry-level information technology jobs and a career in the digital economy. Cisco provides the curriculum, the online learning platform, and support resources. Local organizations like Asbury United Methodist Church hire instructors, provide equipment, and enroll students.

The Racial Justice Task Force of UUCSJS has committed to assisting Asbury United Methodist in gathering needed equipment and furniture for an 18-student class. At this time, we're asking our members and friends, particularly those who have access (directly or through connections) to up-to-date computer components and technology, for equipment and furnishings that will fit the needs of this program. To find out more about the specifications and to make arrangement for donation of items, please contact Michael Cluff or Ronda Cluff. More information on the program can be found at www.asburyumcac.org/cisco.

Please do not bring equipment to the UU Center without having cleared it with a member of the Task Force first. Thank you in advance for supporting this initiative!

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

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