



NEWSLETTER



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the
South Jersey Shore

Volume 20, Issue 4

April 2018

April 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.

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| <p>April 1</p> | <p>Easter for the Imperfect <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>weekend in which Christians celebrate the divinity of Christ, we will examine the humanity of the man, and what his ministry and message means for us today.</p> <p>Jesus of Nazareth was not perfect. He struggled with the same things all humans do – family frustrations, friends who maybe weren't as smart as he thought they should be, institutions that were corrupt to the point where he lost his temper and started flipping tables. On the</p> |
| <p>April 8</p> | <p>Mary. Mary. Quite Contrary <i>Lay speaker Cynthia Grzywinski</i></p> <p>1st science fiction novel ever written. Although Mary Shelly never knew her mother, Wollstonecraft's writing, philosophy, and beliefs greatly influenced her daughter, who became a literary giant in her own right. Both were considered "outlaws," rebelling against the strict social mores of the time. How did these women's lives and work influence our current culture? And how did a Unitarian minister in Newington Green, England influence their creative and feminist oeuvre?</p> <p>Mary Wollstonecraft, considered the 1st British feminist, authored "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" in 1792. She died 10 days after giving birth to her daughter, Mary Godwin Shelly, the author of <i>Frankenstein</i>, hailed as the</p> |
| <p>April 15</p> | <p>Pay Unto Caesar <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>April 15 is America's income tax deadline. It also marks the end of our stewardship season and reveals what the coming year's budget will look like. Will we be able to do the things we want to do in our community? Will we continue our move toward full-time ministry? Will we be able to grow in spirit and in number? We pay in taxes what belongs to Caesar, and we pay into our faith community that which feeds our heart and improves our world. Let us explore what that means for the coming year for our congregation.</p> |
| <p>April 22</p> | <p>For the Beauty of the Earth <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>to change if we are to prevent global climate change. Today we will examine the ways the earth heals itself and what it means for us to act as stewards of this precious resource.</p> <p>Earth Day 2018 prompts us to look anew with wonder at the world in which we live. For centuries, humanity treated the planet as though it was a consumable product with endless supply. Scientists have long warned that human behavior needs</p> |
| <p>April 29</p> | <p>To Infinity! And Beyond! <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>how do we divine what lies in store for us? It has been said that "luck" is when opportunity meets preparation. What are we preparing for, and what opportunities do we expect to find in the years ahead of our congregation?</p> <p><i>Service Auction Winning Bidders Paul and Helen Utts have chosen the topic for this sermon.</i></p> <p>What does it mean to peer into the future? Lacking a crystal ball,</p> |

Fellowship Dinner



Saturday, April 14, 2018 - 6 pm

Newcomers to the UUCSJS

And those who may have come long ago but never really became a part of our community...

Are you ready to get to know us better, and let us get to know you? Might you like to become a member – either now or perhaps later?

On Sunday, April 23, following the service, we will have a gathering for those of you who are addressed above. Rev Dawn and the Membership committee will be conducting the event. After getting to know each other, we will share ways of participating more in our community, and some interesting things about our congregation and our denomination. We will answer your questions. There will be food served, as the meeting will run into lunchtime. Child care will be available in a room that will be near our meeting spot. Please save this date. We will appreciate hearing that you are planning to come in order to help with our planning. Phone or email Betsy Searight.

For those who want to learn more about becoming a member, there will be a second session on **Saturday, May 12**. The time will be determined by the needs of those who will be attending.

The following Sunday, **May 13**, those who are ready to sign our Membership Book will be invited to do so in the presence of our congregation.

If these events speak to you and your need to become more a part of our community, please save these dates, and plan to attend.

Margaret Circle will be held on Thursday, April 5 at 1 pm in the UU Center library. Join us for Joys and Concerns, a time to speak your heart without interruption or judgement. Enjoy refreshments and conversation as we partake in the delights provided by Judy Brown. Listen, learn and converse with us on the topic of "Exploring The Laws of Attraction." Our presenter, Julie Spradlin asks, "How are we using the Law of Attraction in our lives? How do you take care of yourself, what do you do to feel better?" Come prepared for a lively discussion!

BOOK CLUB will be meeting Friday, April 20 at 7 pm in the UU Center library. Our selection for April is THE SANDCASTLE GIRLS by Chris Bohjalian. It is a novel that takes place mostly in Aleppo during the Armenian Genocide (1915). There are several very disturbing scenes in it, but overall, the story is a richly descriptive slice of life among the victims/survivors of this lesser-known genocide. One of the aspects of the story is how it jumps back and forth between the present, the recent past, and the distant past (during Genocide), with different narrators. Debbi Dagavarian will be leading the discussion. Contact Barb Morell for more information.



WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH FAMILY PROMISE?

For those who like to plan ahead –

Our remaining Family Promise hosting weeks for 2018 are as follows:

- June 10-17
- September 16-23
- November 25 - December 2

Please look for opportunities to volunteer! And remember, you can ALWAYS volunteer to spend a weekend morning or afternoon at the Day Center in Egg Harbor City or drive the van ANYTIME! If you want to volunteer before our host weeks, please contact Debbi Dagavarian or Barbara Morell.

THANK YOU for pitching in!!

Thank you to everyone who volunteered and participated in our recent week of hosting Family Promise families. I realize it can take much Time, Effort, Commitment, sometimes Financial and especially Patience and Flexibility! It takes a group of caring people to get the job done. Your effort is also appreciated by the staff of FP and the families currently in the Family Promise Program.

~ Barbara Morell

Monday, April 9 6:30 pm

Absecon United Methodist Church
100 Pitney Road Absecon, NJ 08201

Tom Cioffi from the National Family Promise will be here!

Tom has been with Family Promise for over 20 years and has helped start over 100 affiliates in over 25 states! Please encourage everyone who can to come with questions and concerns. Tom will be glad to address them.

Please RSVP by Friday, April 6, to Cindy Sidrane at cindymae272@gmail.com.

Rev. Dawn Fortune
609.289.5782

**"From each according to his ability,
to each according to his needs."**



Karl Marx said those words in the 19th century as he attempted to describe how a successful version of communism would work – a utopian vision of a community where everyone had plenty and none were insecure about income or resources. In that kind of world, he argued, people would be able to contribute as much as they were able and take as much as they needed and none would go hungry. Communism got a bad rap when viewed through the mercenary lens of capitalism, and Marx was laughed off as a dreamer. His ideals were further perverted by authoritarian regimes that tried to impose his model at the point of a bayonet, to the benefit of a centralized institution that was more interested in collecting what people would give than sharing what they might need.

Generosity of resources, like generosity of the heart, cannot be enforced through threat of violence. Sharing might happen in that circumstance, but it will wither and evaporate as soon as the threat is removed.

Our congregation operates on a model not that far removed from Marx's original vision: each gives according to their ability. Each takes according to their need. A congregation, by its nature and definition, is a community connected by a shared faith. In the case of Unitarian Universalists, it is not necessarily a shared faith in a god, or the death and resurrection of Jesus, or even a shared creed of beliefs to which we all swear. We are joined by our faith in the human capacity to live in a covenanted community that encourages spiritual growth, personal integrity, and shared values, leaving room for human error, compassion, forgiveness, and commitment to the greater good. We do not impose a tax or membership fee on any who come through our doors; support for this congregation is wholly voluntary. It is not equal, because equality is not a reality in our world. Some people have more or less than their neighbors. Instead, we ask people to look into their hearts and consider what this congregation means to them, and look into their budgets and see what portion of their resources they can reasonably and sustainably pledge to support the congregation. And we ask that they do that. Those who have much are able to give more than those who have less resources. That's ok. The important thing is that everyone participates.

In any non-profit, church, or other charitable organization, fundraising typically breaks down in a predictable pattern: 80% of the money comes from about 20% of the members, and 20% of the money comes from the remaining 80% of the members. The same thing goes for volunteer hours – 80% of the volunteer time is provided by about 20% of the population.

This is normal. Not everybody has the time or financial resources to devote the same amount of either of those things as their

neighbor. Some have more time than money, and some have more money than time. It's ok.

We set ourselves up for failure when we look at a pledge goal of \$180,000 and divide it by simple math (100 members) to arrive at a per-person obligation of \$1,800 annually. It's simply unrealistic. There are lots of folks for whom that figure is well out of reach. And there are others who can do many times that figure.

The point of the 80/20 rule is that every pledge matters. Without everyone's participation, we won't fulfill our goal. Now is the time when every dollar counts. Having about \$40,000 left in pledges to secure means that the 80 percent of our members and friends are right now the most needed folks in the room. We need those pledges. If we want to fulfill our goal, be able to provide the ministry and public witness we offer, and continue making progress toward achieving full time ministry, those remaining pledges are absolutely necessary.

Each according to their ability, and each according to their need. Our 2018 campaign wraps up with the stewardship dinner on April 14. We have just two weeks to fill in the remaining pledge totals to bring us to our goal. I know we can do it. Each pledge counts. Each person counts. No matter how humble the gift, it matters. This is your congregation, a resource shared in community, without question. I ask you to please support it to the level that you are able. Thank you.

Blessings,

Rev. Dawn

\$30,000?
Seriously?



The UUA has launched a **Wake Now Our Vision Collaborative Campaign Legacy Challenge** to encourage planned giving to support the future of Unitarian Universalism. This **time-limited** opportunity qualifies **UUCSJS** (and other UU entities) to benefit **NOW AND** in the future from your planned gifts. This grant is money that we are eligible for from the UUA/Shelter Rock UU congregation by documenting new or existing legacy gifts.

So far **five members have documented legacy gifts exceeding \$300,000, which makes the congregation eligible to receive \$30,000 in 2019.** This is "free money for the congregation and you don't have to die". If you have considered arranging a legacy gift, please talk to John Searight or Karen York about this program. It is a time limited opportunity that can really impact the future of our congregation both through the legacy gift and the matching funds. ~Karen York

Our Spiritual Journeys: Many Paths Up Many Mountains

Our congregation continues to have opportunities for Lay Speakers for our “Summer Worship Series.” Because our minister, Rev. Dawn Fortune, currently serves us on a part-time basis, our pulpit will be shared with other speakers on eleven consecutive Sundays from June 17 to August 26. We will try to use the theme “Many Paths up Many Mountains”. We’d like to get members to talk about their spiritual journeys and how those journeys have been affected by their time and participation in our faith.

Ideally, speakers would present a sermon anchored in one of our current ministries or volunteer activities such as Music, Choir, Men’s Group, Book Club, Children’s Religious Education, Adult RE, Margaret Circle, Family Promise, Circle Dinners, Racial Justice Task Force, LGBTQ Support Group, Caring, Social Justice, Greeters, Congregational Leadership, Membership, Kitchen, Road Clean-Up, Building and Grounds, Chalice Table, Sound Crew, Worship Team, Finance, Stewardship, Garden, etc. Inspiration comes from many sources if you take a moment to recognize it. Life in all its facets is a constant teacher. You can even draw from your own experiences outside of the congregation. Last summer, Margaret Circle produced an excellent service based upon Jane Addams. Before the Summer Worship Series begins, this spring, Cynthia Grzywinski, Geri McCluskey, and Matt Honig will each be presenting a sermon. Interweave has already offered to do a service on June 24 -- we still have ten openings.

So ask yourself what profound truth and lessons have been revealed to you by your participation in our ministries, volunteer work, or personal life. How can you share that with our congregation in a meaningful and inspirational 20-minute sermon? Are you ready to deepen your own spiritual life in that act of sharing?

If you need some help, or would like to “bounce” an idea off someone, contact Rev. Fortune, our Worship Team Leader, Richard Grzywinski, or any member of our UUCSJS Worship Team.

CHILDREN’S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

We will begin the month of April with a celebration as we welcome the Spring with our annual egg hunt and party. Thanks go to the Children's RE Committee for planning and hosting the party and especially Colby Tippins, who always creates a festive party space for the celebration!



More gratitude is due to all those who put together the Volunteer Fair in March, and to the many people who have signed up to serve one Sunday as an assistant to our Religious Education class teachers! We are looking forward to welcoming several new class assistants this month. Seeing adults participating in RE sets an example for our youth; showing them the dedication that our members feel toward our community and our future.

If you didn't have a chance to sign up as a class assistant and would like to be one, feel free to contact me at sjsdre@gmail.com. In addition, Jess Dunn is seeking volunteers who are willing to make themselves available for occasional childcare duty when our committees request childcare for their meetings and events. By adding your name to Jess' list you are simply letting her know that she may contact you to ask if you are available when a committee calls her to request childcare. If you are interested in being on this call list, talk to Jess one Sunday.

Finally, we are looking forward to spending community time together at the Annual Fellowship Dinner on April 14. It has become a tradition for our older children and youth to help clear tables at this event, and they are invited to help with this again this year, as well as sharing a talent during the entertainment portion of the evening (to be part of the entertainment, contact Barbara Miller).

In fellowship,
Heidi J Jansch
UUCSJS Director of Religious Education

Interested in attending **General Assembly** in Kansas City this year (June 20-24, 2018)?

Registration, housing requests and financial aid applications opened on March 1.



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

General Assembly is an opportunity to network with others, learn about new projects or ways of doing things, participate in the governance of our faith and meet a wide variety of UUs from around the globe. The opportunities are endless.

Deadline for Financial Aid Application is March 31, and early bird registration ends April 30. Off-site delegate options are also available to those who are unable to travel to Kansas City. Learn all the details at www.uua.org/ga.

More than the Sum of our Parts

2018-2019 Annual Stewardship campaign

Karen York, Treasurer UUCSJS



UPDATE!

We have held three stewardship “cottage meetings,” and at each one enjoyed some fellowship and an opportunity for conversation and to get to know one another better. Sincere gratitude to Paul and Helen Utts, Melissa and Ron Hutchison, and Barbara and Jack Miller, who hosted these events and created a relaxed supportive atmosphere for these conversations. Part of the conversation is about money and we do understand that many people have a discomfort with that topic.

However, the fact is that about 85% of the funding to support our congregation and its programs comes from our members. We do this only once a year so that we can plan a responsible realistic budget based on the anticipated level of support. We do it in advance, so for the next year which begins July 1, 2018.

Our goal this year is \$ 180,000 in pledges. This is based on a proposed draft budget that would increase Rev. Dawn’s time from 75% to 80%, with a goal of continuing to increase each year for the next couple of years until we can sustain a full time minister’s salary. Also there are some facilities improvements that are needed and an anticipated decline in some other sources of income. As of Sunday March 25 we are making excellent progress in the campaign and together we have raised **\$141,305** (78.5%) with 62 % of our members pledging and 55% of those families have increased their pledge over last year. To all of you who have made your financial commitment *we thank you!*

For those of you who have not yet made your financial commitment, you may get a pledge card from Karen York or Kathleen Hartnett to record your pledge, or a member of the finance committee or stewardship committee will contact you.

The wrap up for the stewardship campaign will be the **Fellowship Dinner**, a community shared meal, to be held on **Saturday April 14, 2018** starting at **6 pm**. Everyone is invited. We look forward to celebrating the end of the campaign with you.



The date for our **Annual Congregational Meeting** will be **May 20, 2018**, which is earlier than previous years. A congregational mailing should go out April 20 which includes the agenda, draft budget, and nominations.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

Staff

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Board of Trustees 2017-18

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Charlie Roberts, Jessica Dunn Safonof,
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Newsletter – Mariann Maene – newsletter@uucsjs.org

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