



NEWSLETTER



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the
South Jersey Shore

Volume 20, Issue 12

December 2018

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 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">A Brighter Coming Day <i>Lay speaker Stephanie Garrett</i></p> <p>Reflections on Hanukkah, the Tree of Life, and words and thoughts of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper.</p>
<p>December 9</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Waiting for the Light to Return <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>The darkest nights of the year approach, and people all across the northern hemisphere enter into a time of waiting for the light to return. Jews, Christians, and pagan and earth-centered faiths all mark in their own way the annual return of the sun. Join us as we contemplate what it means to wait with faith.</p>
<p>December 16</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Seeking Shelter in Midwinter <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>The caravan of migrants seeking shelter in the United States has been arriving in bits and pieces for weeks. What are our obligations when refugees present themselves at our door? What if things about them make us uncomfortable? And who determines whether a person is a refugee or something else?</p>
<p>December 23</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Solstice – INTERGENERATIONAL SERVICE <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>Usually held in the evening, this year we will hold this special service of music and ritual on the morning of December 23rd. This will be an intergenerational service, so children will remain with the adults upstairs for the whole worship service.</p> <p><i>NOTE: There will be no Christmas Eve service.</i></p>
<p>December 30</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NO SERVICE TODAY</p> <p>This year, in order to give our staff a well-deserved break during the holidays, the UUCSJS offices will be closed between Christmas and New Year’s Day. There will be no service on Christmas eve, and no service on Dec. 30. Worship will resume its regular Sunday morning schedule on January 6.</p>

Sangha in the Sanctuary



First Saturday of each month

Our Buddhist Sangha will not meet for the next several months while Dennis Bohn recovers from ankle surgery. If you are on the mailing list you will receive a reading or reflection each month. To be added to the mailing list, contact Dennis Bohn – his email is in the Member Directory. (his is First initial + Last name @ pipeline.com – *we do not publish private emails in the newsletter so they can't be harvested from the web.*)

Wishing an effective and comfortable recovery for you, Dennis!

Margaret Circle Our annual luncheon on Thursday, December 6 will be a celebration of both Hanukkah and Christmas. Please note our meeting will begin at **12 noon** rather than 1 pm.

The afternoon will begin with Maxine conducting a sacred Hanukkah ritual, which will also incorporate our Joys and Concerns.

If you would like to bring a food contribution, contact Mary Lou Berhang or Barbara Morell and they will give you information on what foods are most needed.

BOOK CLUB FOR DECEMBER WILL BE ONE WEEK EARLIER – Friday, December 14 and ONE HALF HOUR EARLIER – 6:30 pm. This is also our holiday meeting so please bring a snack and a small wrapped gift for a fun gift exchange! We will discuss how the story of LITTLE WOMEN relates to today. All are welcome to attend our December (or any) meeting. *Little Women*, by Louisa May Alcott, is about 4 impoverished sisters and their mother at the time of the Civil War. Their father is a preacher serving in the Union Army. Lovely Meg, talented Jo, fragile Beth, and spoiled Amy all become part of one of the most beloved stories of all time or has it not stood time's test? -Helene Gentile will facilitate the discussion. Contact Barb Morell with any questions.

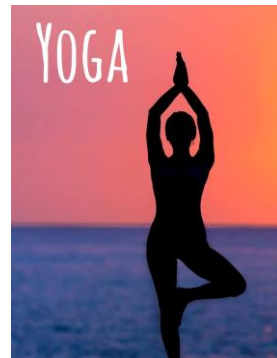
Please remember to drop off your unwanted gently worn **SHOES OF ALL TYPES** into the lime green bin under the coat rack on Sundays **any time of the year**. Less fortunate folks can sure use them!!!

Yoga in the Sanctuary

Erica Onofrio will be offering a Yoga class in the sanctuary on **Thursday mornings from 9-10:15 am** (no class December 27). This will be a slow, meditative practice and beginners are welcome.

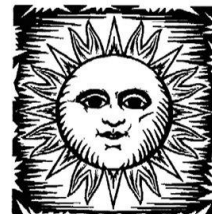
No need to sign up, simply show up! You'll need a yoga mat and bottle of water, and towel or blanket or block if you know you use those things. The cost of the class is \$10.

Erica looks forward to sharing one of her favorite passions with the UUCSJS community as well as the community at large. The class is open to anyone interested in attending. Please spread the word!



Be a Choir "Ringer" in December

On December 23 we will be presenting the *Winter Solstice Singing Ritual* for our morning worship service. Whether you have sung this work in the past or not, you are warmly invited to learn the songs and be part of the music on December 23. The only requirement is to attend at least two choir rehearsals on December 2, 9, and 16. Your whole family is welcome to be "ringers" and come to choir in December!



Wanted: Church Maintenance person

Seeking a person to do light maintenance at the UU Center, part-time, year-round, approximately 10 hours per week (\$13-\$15/hr). Necessary skills include: painting, carpentry, basic plumbing and electric, some janitorial work and outside lawn and grounds work included. Must be able to lift 50 pounds, work on tall ladders, have own tools and reliable transportation. Hours may flex according to season and needs. If you are interested please send a letter of interest and resume of relevant experience to yorkbk (at) comcast.net

Syrian refugee supplies are collected in the lobby next to the happy green shoe bin.

Looking for (second hand) warm gear for all ages/shapes, warm bedding, medical supplies, personal hygiene products. For further info, ask Colby.

Rev. Dawn Fortune
609.289.5782



Holiday Complications

Greetings, gentle people,

As the winter holiday season approaches, many of us look forward to gathering with family and friends to celebrate the end of the year and enjoy the traditional feasts and gifts associated with those events. Not everybody finds the holidays a time of easy cheer and good will, however. The holidays can be an emotional minefield for those who have survived dysfunctional family situations, or who have experienced a significant loss. Sometimes the holidays can be a poignant reminder of the joyful memories shared with someone who is gone, and sometimes it leaves an ache in the heart.

Also during this time is the secular erasing of non Christian holiday celebrations that occur around the solstice of the lunar calendar: Hanukkah is often added strictly as an afterthought, and Solstice, Yule, and Kwanzaa are typically ignored completely. As Unitarian Universalists, we try to include all these holidays in our pluralist way of being, but often we fall short as well. In our enthusiasm for our own favorite pieces of this season, we sometimes forget that others can feel excluded when we chatter on about our upcoming parties or celebrations. I encourage you to be aware of others who might be struggling during this time of the year and reach out to invite them into your celebration if you are able. This season can be a real challenge for a lot of folks. I know our instincts toward kindness are able to alleviate some of that pain. Blessings to you on those celebrations.

Holiday Worship and Office Schedule

As you may already be aware, we will not be holding a service on Christmas Eve this year. Attendance at last year's service was quite thin, and it is a service that requires an extraordinary amount of preparation and work to pull together. With that in mind, I checked in with the Board of Trustees and we all agreed to suspend that service this year and see how

it goes. If there is significant demand for a Christmas Eve service and people want to coordinate a lay-led service, that is entirely an option. I have given our Music Director Barbara Miller the evening off, and I will be away that evening.

Also, there will be no worship service on Sunday, December 30. The Sunday service between Christmas and New Year is historically light in attendance and suspending that service for this year to give all of the staff a week off seemed both timely and kind. This is an experiment. If there is a significant demand for worship during that week next year, we can reinstate it.

The church offices will be closed during the week between Christmas and New Year's. This means there will be no midweek announcements, and none of the typical church functions happening. This decision was approved by the Board at my request in order to give our staff a little time off. Our hourly part-time staff do not get any vacation time as part of their employment, and so I requested that we give them this one week off, with pay, in order to allow them the time to travel or sleep in, as befits their midwinter traditions, and to not lose any income in doing so. The board voted unanimously to support this measure, and I am glad that the staff who work so hard all year will get a little gift of time for rest at the end of the calendar year. After the New Year, all will be back up and running again like normal.

December can be a really hectic time of the year. If I do not see you personally during this month, please know that I wish you the very best for whatever way you mark the end of the year. I wish you rest and health and comfort over the winter holiday season. I hope that your days are filled with peace, and that everyone returns safely to us in January.

Blessings of the season to all!

Rev. Dawn Fortune



Rev. Dawn's Twitter handle is
@queerpreacher
You can tweet about UUCSJS
using the hashtag **#uucsjs**

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Finding and Giving Joy

We have so much to be grateful for. The Gratitude Tree in the lounge is overflowing with those things our congregation is thankful for. As we enter the winter holiday season, I hope that you will remember to come to the lounge, to add more leaves to the tree, to remember all those things for which we are grateful.

If your family celebrates Hanukkah, Winter Solstice, Yule, Christmas, Kwanzaa, or even if you celebrate none of these holidays, in America, November and December can be busy and stressful. There are presents to buy, decorations to put up, traditions to continue, cleaning to be done, food to be cooked, treats to be baked, memories to be made. It can all feel like too much. It can all start to feel meaningless. I challenge you to have a more intentional winter holiday this year. Ask yourself what is really important about the holiday you celebrate this time of year? What rituals or traditions are important to you and your family? What brings you joy? How can

you focus more on what you want and less on what is expected? We are surrounded by a culture that may seem inauthentic to us, but we can make other choices. How do your holiday activities align to our UU Principles? To your family's values? It is alright to say no, to slow down, to find joy in this winter season.

I'll tell you a little secret about joy – the more you give away, the more you have. So this December give joy away freely. You can start with this Random Acts of Kindness calendar. You don't have to do all of these things, you don't have to do them on the days listed. This is not one more thing to add to your to-do list. These are ideas to get you started. And trust me, once you get started it is hard to stop. You will find yourself throwing out joy everywhere you go, all year long. Making room for the activities on this calendar can be your first step to celebrating your winter holiday with joy and intention.

In Fellowship,
Jessica Dunn Safonof



2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY		
25	Random Acts of Kindness for the Winter Holidays					1	Do a chore for someone in your family	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Bring a favorite recipe to UUCSJS and share it with another family Make a holiday bucket list of things to do with family and friends Bake cookies for a neighbor Write a thank you note to your teacher Listen to holiday music and dance Tape change to a vending machine Candycane bomb a parking lot	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Bring in food for the food collection Start a new family tradition (keep it simple) Give a compliment to a friend Donate a toy to a toy drive Drive around your town to see holiday decorations, then post on your town website how much you enjoyed seeing them Make cards for nursing home residents (Bring in to UUCSJS on Sunday and we can give them all together) Write a nice sidewalk message with chalk	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	Light some candles and reminisce over favorite family memories Leave quarters at the laundromat Let someone go ahead of you in line Double your recipe for dinner and share with a family in need of a break Compliment 3 strangers Leave a positive comment for a local business Invite a friend to watch a holiday movie and have snacks	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	Leave a generous tip Pick up litter Start a piggy bank for a cause Tell a joke to make someone smile Donate old towels and blankets to the animal shelter Donate used books to the library Surprise a friend with hot chocolate	
30	31							Feed the birds Make a new friend

PAUL WINTER'S
**MISSA
GAIA**

Join us for a choral performance of the Missa Gaia (Mass for the Earth) to celebrate community, the earth and winter solstice. The Missa Gaia is performed every year on the Winter Solstice, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Manhattan. This year you do not have to travel to New York! The "Mass for the Earth" by Paul Winter will be presented Friday, December 21 at 8 pm in the beautiful [First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia](#). Missa Gaia is only about 35 minutes, the concert will include a few related winter solstice pieces that will make the whole concert about an hour long.

In these uncertain times, it is a consoling work with sounds of Nature embedded into the choral texture of each section of the Mass (Kyrie, Gloria, etc)... its peace is easy to absorb. We hope that this piece will provide solace in the wake of recent political and national events, along with a disregard for nature and the earth. Our goal is to use music to stand for what we believe and build community in the city that we love.

Jack Miller, Barbara Miller and Michael Hozik (Margaret Rea's husband) will be singing in the UU Philly Cluster Choir. Street parking is available, though limited, and you are encouraged to carpool or use public transportation. There are also a number of parking garages within close proximity.

Caroling at Seashore Gardens

Following our December 23 service, we will caravan or carpool to Seashore Gardens on Jimmie Leeds Road to share holiday cheer with the residents. They really enjoy it! Stay tuned for more details.

Interfaith Holiday Tree Lighting

The holidays can be a real challenge for people who have experienced grief and loss during the year. The funeral home of Jeffries & Keates in Northfield will hold an interfaith holiday tree lighting, open to all, on Thursday, December 6. Rev. Dawn Fortune will officiate at the ceremony. One does not have to have lost a loved one in the past year to attend. The intent is to honor those who have died, and those who remain, during the tender time of the holiday season. Jeffries & Keates is at the intersection of Infield Avenue and Tilton Road in Northfield (228 Infield Avenue, Northfield, NJ 08225). Doors open at 6:30 and the service begins at 7 pm. There is no charge for this event.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Deadline for submitting ideas for the Winter session, which covers Jan/Feb/March, is Sunday, December 9.

Have something special you'd like to share with your fellow UUs?

The Adult Religious Education committee is looking for people who have an interest in sharing their knowledge, talents, or skills with the UUCSJS community.

Classes, workshops or offerings are needed for the following time frames throughout the year:

Winter (Jan/Feb/Mar)

Spring (April/May/June)

Fall (Sept/Oct/Nov)

Offerings can be as simple as a two (or more) hour one-time offering (think: winter stew cooking class) or as lengthy as a once a week multi-week offering (think: diving into Shakespeare), as well as any length of time in between.

Adult religious education does not have to be religious in nature! The only real necessity is a desire by the offerer to share their gifts and a desire of some members of the community to enjoy partaking in that sharing process.

Drop an email to Erica Onofrio or catch her after service and request an application and get the ball rolling towards sharing your uniqueness with the crew.

Mittens, scarves, socks, and hats, oh my!

Alert! UUCSJS launches its gift collection for the holidays later this month.

We will be gifting the less fortunate with warm weather gear, so be ready, stock up, give!

Keep your ears and hearts open for further information. Enjoy the season!!



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

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Visit us on the Web: www.uucsjs.org

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