



# NEWSLETTER

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the  
South Jersey Shore



Volume 21, Issue 3

March 2019

## March 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.

<b>March 3</b>	<b>Sermon on the Amount, Part 1: What it Means to Belong</b> <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i> What does it mean to belong to a community? Some we are born into, some we fall into because of our environment, and some we choose intentionally. As members of a community, what do we expect? And what is expected of us? Join us as we kick off our annual stewardship campaign and consider what it means to be a member of the UU Congregation of the South Jersey Shore.
<b>March 10</b>	<b>When We Grow Up</b> <i>Lay speakers Paul Utts and Kit Marlowe</i> The value of this congregation in our lives consists not only of who we are today, but whom we expect to become. Adults often ask young persons, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” As our community turns 20, we will try to answer this question for UUCSJS. As is true for youths, that future consists of our vision AND our willingness to invest in making it come true.
<b>March 17</b>	<b>St. Patrick and A Treatise on Time</b> <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i> Saint Patrick, like so many of the saints, has a story that is not all glory and grace. It is muddy and murky, and has some parts that are decidedly unholy.  Each of us travels this earth for a limited amount of time. How will we spend that time, and on what? Time is one of the resources we cannot stockpile, so let’s consider how will we spend it, The first of two volunteer fairs happens after worship. Join us!
<b>March 24</b>	<b>All Good Gifts Around Us</b> <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i> “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet,” wrote theologian Frederick Buechner. What is it that you are gifted with that you’d like to share with the people around you? Where does the world need what you have to offer? Let us consider how we prioritize our volunteer time.
<b>March 31</b>	<b>Why Do We Sing?</b> <i>Led by Barbara Miller, Music Director</i> Over the years, singing has been part of our Sunday services, celebrations such as memorial services and weddings, and social activism. If you think of a UUCSJS soundtrack, what music comes to mind?

**Special Congregational Meeting, Sunday, April 7 – see page 3**



**SAVE THE DATE**  
for Allies in Caring

**Latin Dance**  
**Fundraiser**  
**Fiesta!**

**May 11, 2019 6 - 9 pm**  
**At UUCSJS**

**Great food, drink, music,  
children's crafts, and  
most fun of all –  
learn to do the  
merengue, bachata, and  
salsa dancing!**

# Narenj Tree Foundation



Narenj Tree Foundation was formed in early 2015 to assist war-displaced people in Syria, and is still completely run by caring volunteers.

Using 40 foot long containers sent across the waters, this grassroots work of love and compassion is approaching nearly 80 containers delivered with donated clothing, food, medical equipment, personal hygiene products, school supplies and other essential human needs. Saturdays are the day to get to the warehouse with your kids and donate an hour or four! It's all simple work but *many* helping hands are needed to pack the donations. Please speak with Colby to learn more.

Collections of SPRING AND SUMMER clothing and items will continue from the box in the lobby for some time to come. It's not just shoes anymore!!!

Visit their Facebook page at  
[www.facebook.com/narenjtree/](http://www.facebook.com/narenjtree/).

## OPPORTUNITIES TO SING!

### *Sing Here...*

On March 31, we will have a music service entitled "Why Do We Sing?" If you would like to participate in the service, come to choir rehearsals during March at 9 am Sunday mornings.

### *Sing There...*

Our choir has been invited to sing at the commemoration of the death of Dr. Martin Luther King on Thursday, April 4 at a location in Atlantic City. We will sing a new Jason Shelton song "Will Justice Roll Down?" You can be part of this event if you come to at least 3 rehearsals in March and April 1.

## Fellowship Dinner Talent Needed!

Our Fellowship Dinner on Saturday, April 13 offers more than tasty food and good conversation. Each year, members of *all ages* entertain us while we enjoy our dessert. If you have a song, skit, or dance to share, we will be your appreciative audience.

Contact Barbara Miller.



**BOOK CLUB** will meet at 7 pm on Friday, March 15 in the UU Center library. We will be discussing **EXIT WEST** by Mohsin Hamid, profoundly intimate and powerfully inventive, an unforgettable story of love, loyalty, and courage that is both completely of our time and for all time. "Brilliant... highlights the stark reality of the refugee experience and the universal struggle of dislocation." (*Newsday*). "Urgent and much needed... An antidote of sorts (one can only hope) in this moment of xenophobic fear and mistrust." (*Mother Jones*). Judy Pereira will be leading the discussion. All are welcome to attend.

**MARGARET CIRCLE** will meet Thursday, March 7, at 1 pm in the UU Center Library. We will begin with joys and concerns, followed by light refreshments. Kathryn Kelley will lead the program on "Grace, Gratitude, and Spirituality". This topic comes from a chapter in the book *Everyday Spiritual Practice* by Rev Scott Alexander, the basis of the Everyday Spiritual Practice Group which has been meeting monthly for the past few years, and to which Kathryn has been a faithful member. Refreshments will be provided by Sue Parks and Julie Spradlin.



## FLOWER CHILDREN

Looking to increase our pool of volunteers to bring a flower arrangement for our services each Sunday of the year! Please consider donating one or two or three times a year. See Colby to "pick" a Sunday or three!

## ***Rev. Dawn Fortune*** **609.289.5782**

### **Mission, Ministry, and Meaning**

Being a part of a religious community is different from belonging to any other kind of group. Here, we focus on justice work as part of our mission, we work to heal the world's broken places as our mission of compassion associated with justice, and we search, individually, and together, for things that give meaning to our lives. Spiritual transformation of souls is not a thing one can easily measure to judge the effectiveness of a congregation's shared ministry. There is no numerical rubrick through which we can assess the efficiency of congregational process. We must look into our own hearts to see how we have grown. We must look at our own lives and consider what kind of a difference our involvement in this congregation has made in our lives. Have we met new people? Have we learned a new spiritual practice? Have we been encouraged to re-think things we had previously considered to be solid truths? Does being a member or friend of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore deepen your spiritual life? Do the conversations and gatherings and people you experience here bring a deeper meaning to your life? Then we are doing our jobs as active members of a spiritual community.

Members and friends of congregations like ours are the sole supporters of the work we do and the spiritual care we provide. We don't get annual disbursements of funds from a regional or national body. Our congregations are autonomous in the way they govern themselves, and they are autonomous in the way they support themselves. While autonomy gives us great freedom, it also brings with it great responsibility. If we want the Mission, Ministry, and Meaning-making work of this congregation to continue to grow and flourish, it is up to us to raise the money to make that happen.

This week, we are kicking off the season of our annual stewardship drive. We are going to need to raise a bit more than last year's \$180,000 goal. The numbers are being crunched right up to the very last moment, so I don't have the precise number before this newsletter goes to the printer, but I am going to guess we need to raise in the neighborhood of \$200,000. This budget will include increases in the professional development budgets for some of our staff, and it will increase my hours from



80% of full time to 90% of full time. The congregation will maintain its fair share status with the Unitarian Universalist Association, which serves our denomination with programming, education, leadership development, and with support for congregations through regional field staff like Pat Infante, who came to help us talk about long term planning last weekend. The UUA also manages the annual ministerial search process and it supports the formation and fellowship of clergy to one of the highest standards of education, training, and professionalism in any mainstream denomination in the US. The UUA represents our shared values to the world, and supports us as we work to improve our little corner of the world.

I am excited for this year's stewardship season, and looking forward to another successful campaign. I know that there is a great deal of enthusiasm and love for this congregation, its people, and the good that it does. This is our opportunity to support that work in the most practical, useful kind of way. I plan to increase my pledge this year, and hope you will, too.

Blessings,

Rev. Dawn Fortune



Rev. Dawn's Twitter handle is  
**@queerpreacher**

You can tweet about UUCSJS  
using the hashtag **#uucsjs**

### **NOTICE of SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SUNDAY, April 7, 2019 at 11:15 am**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that a **SPECIAL MEETING of UUCSJS members will be held in the UU Center Sanctuary on SUNDAY, April 7, 2019 at 11:15 am** (immediately following the Sunday service) for the purposes of:

1. considering a Resolution to implement a Gift and Endowment fund at UUCSJS. The policies and procedures for the Administration and Operation of the Gift and Endowment Fund require an amendment to the UUCSJS by-laws.  
(additional written materials will be circulated in advance of the meeting.)
2. Other business that comes before the congregation

### Art as a Spiritual Practice

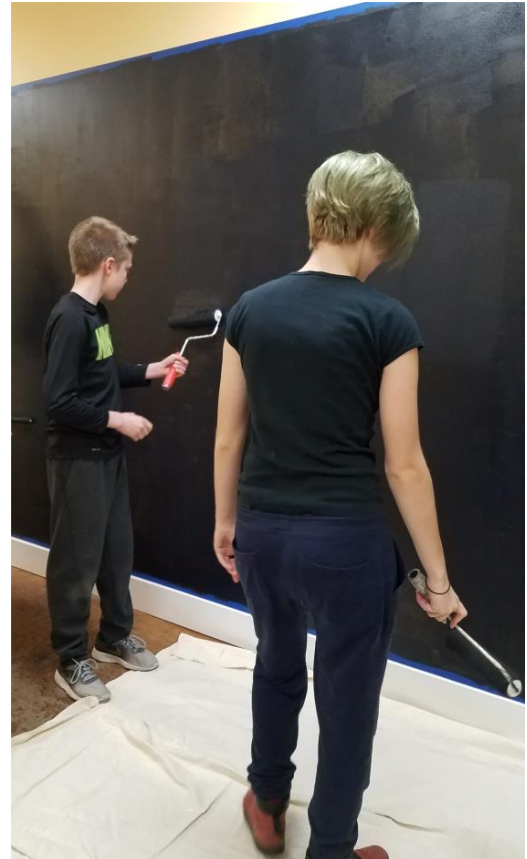
"Art washes away from the soul  
the dust of everyday life."

-- Pablo Picasso

There is something new downstairs. Have you seen it? That large black wall stretching down the hallway near the elevator? No, it's not a new interior design element. It's an artist's blank canvas! Art, that ancient and universal language, has been a part of being human since being human was a thing. We have always had the creative impulse for ritual, music, dance, and visual arts. Anyone who studies art know the range of human expression that stretches from cave paintings to modern performance art and everything in between. But why do we create? And can art be a spiritual practice?

An internet search of "art as a spiritual practice" returns 164,000,000 results so I guess there is a bit to learn. There are books, videos, Ted Talks, psychology articles, religious articles, scientific journals, panel discussions, workshops, artist blogs, and so much more. If we think of spirituality as getting to know yourself so you can connect with something bigger than yourself, we see how art can be a spiritual practice. Art provides us a vehicle for contemplation and self reflection. It can heal the wounded spirit, allow us a deep engagement with mystery, and help us in the search for meaning. When we create art for the *process* and not the *product*, we are free to express ourselves without judgment. We can create for the sheer joy of creating – no artistic talent necessary.

When I was in first grade, my art teacher commented that I was coloring my picture wrong. That you are supposed to color in only one direction. I needed to choose either side to side or up and down but not both. She explained how that would make my art better. She was probably right, it would most likely have made my picture look better. But it didn't feel better. As a matter of fact, it felt terrible. I have carried that one simple comment into adulthood as a judgment on my artistic ability and creativity. Doing it wrong or not having the skills or talent to do something often stops us from trying something new. I challenge you release that inner critic. Art as a spiritual practice is not about the product. It is about the process. I challenge you to try art as a spiritual practice and see where the process takes you.



The Chalk Wall is available to everyone to begin your art as a spiritual practice. Beginning in March, the Art Cart will be stocked with art supplies to continue your journey. *All are welcome to come downstairs to create art!* Bring your coffee, bring your friends. Parents, bring your children and create something together. Each month will be a different theme and different supplies. The Art Cart will be available in the downstairs lounge every Sunday following service and will be "open" until 12:30 pm.

But don't wait, come downstairs this Sunday, grab some chalk and start doodling. You can't do it wrong.

#### RE News and Notes

- Families - don't forget to stay and sing with Barbara Miller on March 3, 2019 for our Family Song Circle – a great way to celebrate our UU faith and culture, all are welcome!
- The Adult RE committee is searching for new workshop offerings for the spring and fall. What can you share with our community?

In Fellowship,  
Jessica Dunn Safonof  
Director of Religious Education



# Mission, Ministry, Meaning

## 2019-2020 Annual Stewardship campaign

*Karen York, Treasurer UUCSJS*



The month of March marks the beginning of our Stewardship Campaign as we look ahead to plan our budget for the next programming year which begins in **July 2019**. This is a process of financial planning for the year ahead.

The theme this year is connected to our work around strategic planning, and our goal to continue to increase Rev. Dawn's time as we move closer to full time ministry. In this process, we begin with a proposed budget that allows us to expand our programs and services, set a stewardship goal to support that budget and then seek stewardship commitments (pledges) from members and friends to determine if we have sufficient commitments to support the proposed budget.

What we are asking from our members and friends at this time is a projection of what your anticipated contribution will be in the year ahead to support NEXT programming year (July 2019 to June 2020). Of course, we always want to expand our services and programs, but we also work with the reality of what our combined resources actually are, and what we can realistically afford. The outcomes of the stewardship drive and other financial projections are used to prepare a detailed budget that is presented to the congregation for approval at our annual meeting. Please know that a pledge of any amount is gratefully accepted. It is our combined resources that provide the majority of the funding for our programs and services each year.

In our "**Mission, Ministry, Meaning**" stewardship campaign, the opportunity to pledge will be provided during some small group gatherings. This also provides an opportunity for some social time and time for conversations your hopes and dreams for the congregation. **Each member should choose one small group event to attend**. Sign-up sheets will be available after services, or you can email or call the office to add your name to the guest list for any event. More information about stewardship and supporting the congregation with your time, talent and treasure will be provided during the month of March through the beginning of April. **On April 13** the whole congregation will be invited to celebrate our progress at the **Fellowship Dinner** with a planned community meal.

- **Saturday, March 9** - 6:30 pm wine and cheese hosted by Helen & Paul Utts in their Northfield home (10 guests)
- **Sunday March 17** - lunch after services at the UU Center, hosted by Melissa Hutchison.
- **Saturday, March 23** - hosted by Barbara and Jack Miller in their Petersburg home.

Please make plans to attend one of the small **group gatherings in March** and the **Fellowship Dinner on Saturday April 13**. We look forward to some social time and having conversations about your hopes and dreams for the year ahead.



# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

## Staff

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## Board of Trustees 2018-19

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Betsy Erbaugh, Marsha Hannah, Melissa Hutchison,  
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Newsletter – Mariann Maene – newsletter@uucsjs.org

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

**March 2019**

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Congregation of the South Jersey Shore  
P.O. Box 853  
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