



NEWSLETTER



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the
South Jersey Shore

Volume 21, Issue 8

August 2019

August 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.

August 4	<p style="text-align: center;">Singing the Journey <i>Guest minister Rev. Maddie Sifantus</i></p> <p>How do we sing our journey as Unitarian Universalists? How does the path of our journey change what we sing and how does what we sing change the journey? Join Rev. Maddie Sifantus, minister of the Universalist Unitarian Church of Santa Paula, California and professional singer, as she explores our journey in song and reflection.</p>
August 11	<p style="text-align: center;">The Iowa Sisterhood <i>Led by UUCSJS Margaret Circle</i></p> <p>In the late 19th century, two dozen female Unitarian ministers served congregations on the western frontier, with a different style of ministry than their male counterparts in the staid churches of New England. In this service, you will meet several of these pioneering women who called themselves the “Iowa Sisterhood.”</p>
August 18	<p style="text-align: center;">Finding Center <i>Guest speaker Robin Renée</i></p> <p>Words and music have the power to help us declare personal truths, to evoke inner stillness, and to draw us into deeper connection with one another. Join writer and performer Robin Renée for an experience of Finding Center through original songs, spoken word, and the call-and-response chanting practice from the Indian tradition called kirtan.</p>
August 25	<p style="text-align: center;">Mindfulness: The Path to Free Will <i>Lay speaker Dennis Bohn</i></p> <p>Much of the time we go through life as automatons: our responses based on our our ingrained conditioning. We act out of our evolutionary, cultural, ancestral, familial and childhood programming instead of what we would like to do. Mindfulness is one element of the Buddha's path. We'll explore using appropriate mindfulness to gain some spaciousness and freedom in our lives.</p>

Save the Date!

15th Annual Service Auction
Saturday, November 16

Rev Dawn's Summer schedule:

August 1 - return to the office
September - return to the pulpit

President's Corner

This month's quote comes from Senator Kirsten Gillebrand during a recent Presidential candidate debate: "The first thing I'm going to do as president is I am going to Clorox the Oval Office".

As President of the Board at UUCSJS, I'm not feeling the need for bleach or harsh chemical products (I prefer *7th Generation* natural cleaners), but I do understand the need for some serious "house cleaning," including throwing out those things we no longer need and cleaning up some items that have gathered dust. On the board we are working on cleaning up the processes that affect how decisions are made and how things are communicated to the congregation.

To that end, I'm excited to report that the Board and the Committee on Ministry recently held a joint meeting together with David Pyle, representing the CERG/UUA. David helped us to identify four main areas for congregational discussion, including:

1. Safety/Security needs, including the need to communicate steps/process for evaluating and augmenting our current safety and security plan
2. How we present ourselves to the outside community, and the process for how those decisions get made
3. Pastoral issues, including how emotions are handled, especially in more emotionally charged situations
4. Coming up with an intentional process to transform our support for the GLBTQ community

David is going to help us with a facilitated congregational workshop to address the above issues, that will be taking place after services on **Sunday, September 8.**

Please save the date on your calendar, as we want to involve as many congregants as possible.

Last Sunday, members of the board hosted another monthly "Board talk back" session after services, and several congregants attended. We had discussions that primarily centered around the four topics above, but also included other items of concern to members. This direct feedback is of vital importance to the work of the board, and will be taken back to the board for further consideration.

I'm also happy to be able to let you know that we have submitted an application for a Chalice Lighter's Grant to the UUA Chalice lighters group to request funds to help move Rev. Dawn to full time ministry (special thanks to Karen York and Betsy Erbaugh for their valuable contributions to making this happen). Part of the process of the chalice lighter grant request includes an update on our Long Range Plan, which has been spearheaded by board member Kit Marlowe and his team. The board has reviewed the Long Range Plan, and has approved the plan as a working document at its last board meeting. On **Sunday, August 25**, we will have a special congregational meeting to ask for the congregation to consider approving the aforementioned Long Range Plan as a working document. We will also ask for a congregational vote on the person that has been put forth by the nominating committee to replace Damon Smith's At-Large position on the board. I'm sad to report that Damon Smith has asked to step down. I'm grateful for his contributions and input to board matters.

Thanks again to everyone for your ongoing patience in the process of improving our congregation. As always, I appreciate your honesty and your communication.

Melissa Hutchison, Board President

About our guest speakers

Rev. Maddie Sifantus is a nearly life-long New Englander who moved to California to serve a formerly Universalist congregation five years ago in Santa Paula, an agricultural city which is nearly 80% Mexican. Ministry is her second career after music, but she brings her music into her ministry. She is former adjunct faculty at Andover Newton Theological School where she met Rev. Dawn and currently serves on the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA. She has one son and two grandchildren who live in Los Angeles.

BOOK CLUB and **MARGARET CIRCLE** will not meet during July and August. See you in September!

Robin Renée In the biracial, multicultural family in which she grew up, the blended experience extended easily to music, with her favorites crossing many genres.

From her website at www.robinrenee.com: "It was seeing the "vision" of David Bowie in a dress on Saturday Night Live that led the young Robin to realize that she could be anyone and all she is meant to be. ...

Ultimately, Robin Renée's work emerges from the in-betweens. She lives and writes at the crossroads, in the fusion of sexuality, spirituality, and sound. So far, this is her everyday mantra: Live for your truth, keep it real, and make music that matters."

Rev. Dawn Fortune
609.289.5782



Returning

Greetings, gentle people.

As I prepared to return to work this week, I marveled at how quickly the time has passed since we committed to grow in ministry together. It seems incredible to me that we are embarking on year three of this shared ministry already. It is one of those odd feelings that doesn't entirely make sense – it feels like I just got here at the same time that it feels like I've always been here because it feels right. It is a blessed thing, to be sure.

I did not travel during my time off this summer, instead staying home and working on some projects around the house. My backyard forge and workshop is coming together nicely, and I am having solar panels installed on my garage and house to reduce my carbon footprint. I did manage to get some reading done, and it seems that the more I read, the more I find other books that are significant that I should read as well. I feel I will never have a small stack of books next to my living room chair, merely a rotating series of books in various stages of completion. Such is the life of a minister, I fear. It's not a bad thing at all.

I am looking forward to being in attendance at worship as often as I can this month. I also hope to get some time downstairs with the children as well. The Religious Education program we have is rich and I yearn to see it in action on Sundays, but I am always upstairs.

On Sunday the 11th, I will be leading a maker's space time after worship in the lounge downstairs, teaching people about mosaics. I'll have supplies for all who want to participate. I encourage you to join me!

I will return to the pulpit on September 8, for the Ingathering and water ceremony service, but will be available to see people for pastoral concerns or other business each week on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. I can meet in my office or at some other place that is more convenient for you. Please drop me a line at minister@uucsjs.org or call or text me at 609-289-5782.

It's good to be back!

Rev. Dawn Fortune



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

Can you support UU growth initiatives in the Central East Region?

As a part of our Chalice Lighter grant application, our congregation needs to demonstrate our support to the Chalice Lighter program. We currently have 19 Chalice Lighter contributors in our congregation, but we'd like to show our strong support by recruiting a few more.

The Chalice Lighters Grant program supports Unitarian Universalist growth initiatives in the Central East Region (including Southern New Jersey). **Over the years our own congregation has been a recipient of six grants totaling over \$100,000 in funding, including \$60,000 toward the construction of our UU Center.** The funds for the Chalice Lighter grant program come from supporters throughout the Region who contribute as little as \$20 three times a year. By joining thousands of other UUs in the Region, this small contribution makes a significant difference to UU growth initiatives in congregations.

Enroll to become a contributor online at www.uua.org/central-east/programs/chalicalighter/cercls/signup or look for a brochure at church with enrollment information. Add your spark to brighten the flame!

Don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions. It will be helpful to me if you let me know if you do enroll.

Karen York



Unsold Auction Events available in September

To register and pay, visit the signup table in the sanctuary where you will find instructions.

Thin Place Farm Tour

Join Meredith and Jason at Thin Place Farm for an educational agricultural experience. They will go over the workings of their permaculture farm through the use of demonstrations. These include, but are not limited to, pasture livestock management, Permaculture orchard set up, and apiary management. The tour will conclude with a fresh egg and honey tasting. *Though there will be no separate activities for children, they are welcome to attend provided they are supervised by a parent/guardian at all times.*

Date: Saturday, September 14, 2019
(Rain date: September 28)

Place: Thin Place Farm in Hammonton
Price: \$15 per person: 5 offers remaining

Backyard Brews

Brew some beer with brew master Kevin Feeley and enjoy vegetarian chili and other fine foods from TJ's backyard smoker and grill. *After the beer is aged and bottled, you will receive some to take home and enjoy.*

Date: Saturday, September 21, 2019
Place: Janschland – New Gretna
Price: \$40 per person 2 offers remaining

Wild Edibles Walks

Join Damon Smith in the fall as he leads a mushroom and wild edible walk around the Stockton University grounds.

Date: Sunday, September 22, 2019 at noon
Place: Stockton University
Price: \$15 per person: 10 offers remaining

UU Community Weekend

Aug 31 - Sept 2, 2019
Camp Candadensis in the Poconos

This weekend getaway is a unique opportunity to play, exercise, and relax together with old and new friends. It is a time of real vacation without having to cook, set the table, make the coffee, wash the dishes or hover over the kids.

For more info and to register, visit:

www.mluc.org/community/community-weekend

Money Matters

End of Fiscal Year Reckoning!

We completed the congregation's 2018-2019 Fiscal year on June 30th, 2019 receiving **97%** of the financial pledge commitments for the year. The total pledge payments for 2018-19 was \$180,432 (of 185,765 pledged). The total income for the year (\$212,527) **exceeded the expenses** (\$205,592) by about \$7,000 and was under the total budgeted amount of \$222,000. There were concerns raised at the annual meeting, so I wanted to let folks know we had a positive finish to the fiscal year. As always, thank you for your consistent support of the congregation.

Become a Chalice Lighter!

Board members are currently working on preparing a Chalice Lighter grant request (August 1st deadline). This will include a recruitment of Chalice Lighters, a consideration of our strategic plan, and writing the narrative of the grant. Some of this will come before the congregation at a special meeting in late August or early September. Stay tuned for more about that. **MORE DETAILS ON PAGE 3** of this newsletter.

We have Endowments!

Our Gift and Endowment Committee is up and running. We currently have over \$7,000 in our endowment fund. Thank you, John Searight for your leadership on the Gift and Endowment- Committee.

From your Treasurer, Karen York



Now Collecting Fall and Winter Clothing for Syria

We are externally grateful for everyone who makes our mission of humanitarian relief possible, from those who donate money and items, to those who contribute their time. We especially send our gratitude and love to those who are in Syria, witnessing the devastation but continuing to fight to change the world. The volunteers who continue to help us sort, distribute and deliver donations are beyond brave and are incredibly caring. We pray that all of Syria finds peace.

Questions? Ask Colby Tippins.

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Last month, I told you how much I love summer learning and offered you my summer reading list and some other fun summer learning ideas. This month, I would like to tell you about the wonderful learning opportunity I was able to participate in this summer.

The week of July 7-12 I attended Religious Educators Week at The Mountain. This week-long series of workshops and seminars was held at the Unitarian Universalist Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, North Carolina. The Mountain, as it is called, is nestled in the Nantahala National Forest, perched atop Little Scaly Mountain, 4,200 feet up on granite cliffs with spectacular views, and just past the center's Many Hands Peace Farm, an educational farm dedicated to regenerative agriculture. The Mountain offers mountain and farm camps for children and youth and hosts many UU gatherings and retreats throughout the year as well as individuals interested in relaxation and contemplation.

The main focus of the Religious Educators Week was on the 5-day Multicultural Religious Education Renaissance Module and the 4-day Dismantling White Supremacy in Religious Education workshop. I was fortunate to participate in both of these workshops as well as a workshop on incorporating music in religious education and another on storytelling.

This past program year, Barbara Miller and I began the Family Song Circle. The purpose of this once a month, multiage gathering is to engage children and families in deepening their faith and UU identity through music. I am excited to bring some new ideas and tips to this gathering and to incorporate more music into our RE program. (This is your official warning that strange sounds and noises that may or may not be called music will most likely be coming from downstairs during worship. Do not be alarmed, or distracted – we are just putting our love and faith into sound!). I am also excited to use some of my newly acquired storytelling skills in the Time for All Ages for this year's new schedule of bimonthly multigenerational worship services.

In the Multicultural Religious Education workshops, I learned how to incorporate a more multicultural lens to our religious education program. I discovered that the UUA is focusing on editing its Tapestry of Faith curriculum to be more inclusive and to de-center whiteness and lift up the stories of people of color in our denomination and the wider world. The Dismantling White Supremacy in Religious Education

workshops further opened my eyes to the white supremacy culture that surrounds me and provided concrete ways to begin fighting it in myself, our religious education programming, our congregation, and our world.



I will be implementing some new ideas in the religious education program that align with the ideas of Beloved Community and sharing some new ideas with the congregation as a whole in my monthly newsletter. During the retreat, I worked with a group of religious educators to design a tool for congregations to engage more fully in social justice action with marginalized communities. I will present this tool at the August meeting of the Board of Trustees. I am grateful for the opportunity for continuing education and I look forward to using this knowledge in our religious education program and in our congregation.

Other RE News - Fall Religious Education classes start on September 15, 2019. We are still looking for volunteer teachers. If you feel called by our principles, and would like to encourage the spiritual growth of our youth and guide them in their search for truth and meaning, let's talk! If you would like to learn more about our faith and develop relationships with some of the coolest kids you will ever meet, let's talk! If you are slightly interested but feel unprepared or not knowledgeable enough, let's talk! Teachers generally commit to teaching for one semester (fall or spring) which is 12-13 Sundays over a 4 month period. All lesson plans, materials, and supplies are provided for you as well as a teacher orientation, a classroom assistant, and ongoing support. Help keep our program strong and volunteer "downstairs." You won't regret it!

Jessica Dunn Safonof
Director of Religious Education

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

Staff

Minister

Rev. Dawn Fortune (pronoun *they*)
minister@uucsjs.org

Music Director

Barbara Miller
uucsjsmusic@gmail.com

Director of Religious Education

Jessica Dunn Safonof
uucsjsdre@gmail.com

Office Assistant

Matthew Honig
uucsjsadmin@gmail.com

Bookkeeper

Kathleen Hartnett
uucsjs.bookkeeper@gmail.com



**P.O. Box 853
Pomona, NJ 08240
(609) 965-9400**

Board of Trustees 2019-2020

Betsy Erbaugh, Melissa Hutchison, Kit Marlowe,
Damon Smith, Geoff Stuart, Angela Wexler, Karen York

Newsletter – Mariann Maene – newsletter@uucsjs.org

Visit us on the Web: www.uucsjs.org

August 2019

**Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of the South Jersey Shore
P.O. Box 853
Pomona, NJ 08240**

