



NEWSLETTER



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the
South Jersey Shore

Volume 21, Issue 11

November 2019

November Services

Theme: Attention

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>November 3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">With Attention, Forward and Back <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>This is the Sunday of the year when we set our clocks back an hour and get one hour added to our day. What will you do with that hour? How will you spend it? What does it mean to have extra time? Join us as we explore the attention we give to the time we have.</p>
<p>November 10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Pay Attention! <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>The news of the day shouts at us from electronic devices and the newspaper that lands on our front step. What does it mean to pay attention to our larger world, and how do we balance that with attention to our own emotional and spiritual health? Join us for a multi-age worship service exploring time, attention, and relationship.</p>
<p>November 17</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Harvest <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>The air is crisp and cool, beach days are finally behind us for the year, and our thoughts turn toward the coming winter. As farmers harvest their fields, what is it we reap from this time of the year? What do we name as the products of our growing season? Join us for an exercise in contemplation and mindfulness as we ponder these questions.</p>
<p>November 24</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Feed My Sheep <i>Rev. Dawn Fortune</i></p> <p>The week before Thanksgiving is when many Americans think about those who do not have enough food. Studies have reported that United States residents eat more food on Thanksgiving than on any other day of the year. (The second most gluttonous day is Superbowl Sunday.) As a faith devoted to seeking and creating justice, we must focus our attention beyond holiday-inspired generosity and share what we have on a more regular basis. We must be attentive to the needs of our neighbors beyond this week and into the new year. In this way, attention becomes a spiritual practice that causes us to set aside our own needs and think of others.</p>

15th Annual Service Auction Saturday, November 16

Doors open 6:30 pm - Bidding starts at 7 pm
Bring a snack to share if you like. Come prepared to have fun!



Sangha in the Sanctuary

Buddhist Sangha meets in the Sanctuary on Saturday, November 2 at 10 am to noon. Come join us for dharma sharing, meditation, and a peaceful respite from your busy life. Newcomers welcome.

BOOK CLUB will meet **THE SECOND FRIDAY INSTEAD OF THE USUAL THIRD FRIDAY!** On Friday, **November 8** at 7 pm in the UU Center library. We'll be discussing [THE HATE U GIVE](#) by Angie Thomas, which tells the story of a young girl pulled into activism and the Black Lives Matter movement after witnessing a police shooting of an unarmed friend. Its incredible success is a testament to its currency, if you want to know what's going on outside of cable news and narrow-beam blogs. Diane Dreby will be leading the discussion and all are welcome!

MARGARET CIRCLE meets on Thursday, November 7, at 1 pm in the UU Center Library. We will begin with joys and concerns, followed by light refreshments. Arlene Yacka will lead the program. Her topic is the need for us to share stories and lessons from our lives with our children and grandchildren. How can we create the time and opportunity to do this with them? Refreshments will be provided by Sally Williams.

SEVENTH PRINCIPLE IN ACTION: LET'S USE CLOTH BAGS TO TRANSPORT GIFTS FOR THOSE IN NEED

Some years back, our congregation pledged to use cloth bags instead of plastic bags in all situations. Happily, there is now a growing body of legislation pushing to ban plastic bags.

But one place plastic bags still show up is during service each week when we collect donations for those in need. Switching from transporting our donations in plastic bags (which we have pledged not to use) to cloth bags would model our commitment to our Seventh Principle to our visitors and to our RE kids. This would also help us all to recommit ourselves to our 7th principle.

THANKSGIVING POT LUCK DINNER

AT THE UU CENTER

Thursday, November 28, 2019 at 12 noon

Bring your favorite thanksgiving dish to share (*or not!*)

Family and friends welcome.

There will be a sign up sheet at the back of the church starting in November!

President's Corner

As some of you may know, our oldest son Colin is an avid hiker/backpacker, so when we visit him in California, we usually plan a backpacking trip somewhere. In July, Ron and I did a 30 mile hike with Colin in the Mammoth Lakes National Forest, just outside of Yosemite. My 54 year old knees were feeling the effects of all the up and down hill hiking, so I found myself singing to myself while I hiked a song that our UU choir sang by Laura Sandage:

Put down your burden now, what does it take to step lightly, step lightly?
Put down your burden now, what does it take to fly free?
Put down your burden now, what does it take to step lightly, step lightly?
Put your hand on your heart, feel the pulse of the mystery.

Somehow the words and cadence of the song helped me to ignore the heaviness of the backpack on my back and the soreness in my knees. Aches and pains aside, one of the things I enjoy most about backpacking is that it is one of the only chances I get in my hectic life to be completely unplugged. There is no wi-fi or television or computer screen or email to attend to out in the wilderness, so it is one of the few times that I get to truly unwind and enjoy the beauty of nature and the companionship of my family. I also enjoy having some alone time with my thoughts without any distractions.

November's theme is "Attention," with a reminder that we need to remember to unplug from all the "noise" that enters our daily lives, and to pay attention to what really matters: ourselves, our loved ones, the beauty of nature, and the wonders of the universe.

I know a lot of members in the congregation are still feeling a lot of tension and stress around decisions that we are trying to make around safety and security, and around our rainbow flag and how we express ourselves. I hope that this month's theme will help serve as reminder that it is more important for us to figure out how to be with each other, and how to continue loving relationships that are meaningful, while ignoring outside distractions.

The Board is moving forward with a new security system, and an ad hoc committee will be looking at possible by laws changes and/or policy development to help shape our decision making processes. That is work that needs to be done, but I know that there is also work that needs to be done around repairing some of our relationships with each other; that the stress around the rainbow flag has bruised some hearts and souls. I'm planning to pay better attention to how I treat other people in my life, including my fellow congregants at UUCSJS. I hope you will, too.

With Gratitude,
Melissa Hutchison

The UUCSJS Service Auction is on Saturday, November 16. Doors open at 6:30 pm, and bidding starts at 7. This is sure to be a fun event for everyone, of all ages. If you like, bring some finger- food snacks to share! Admission is free.

Rev. Dawn Fortune
609.289.5782



How to decide, and who gets to do it?

A group of volunteer leaders is going to be spending some time in the next couple months examining a proposal to change the way decisions are made about the forward-facing presentation of the congregation, particularly at our roadside signage area.

The issue at hand goes beyond the discussion about the rainbow flag, which has been the flash point, to a systemic examination of how this congregation makes decisions. Congregational Polity means that each congregation gets to make its own rules for how it will govern itself, and can change those rules as it chooses.

The kind of pure Democracy I grew up with in small town Maine life meant that the entire town's voting population would gather on a Saturday in February or March to decide on the annual budget, elect officers, and debate and pass whatever changes to municipal ordinances were important. During the rest of the year, the board of selectmen would be responsible for the regular running of the town's business. They would authorize the bills to be paid, direct the road commissioner to prioritize road maintenance and culvert repair in the most reasonable way, and in general, keep things ship-shape. If something came up that require expenditures beyond a certain amount, a special town meeting would be called where voters would decide yea or nay whether to fund the project. Boards of selectmen rarely made any controversial decisions, but that's to be expected, as a municipality is not generally seen as a prophetic voice in the community.

In Unitarian Universalist congregations, the leadership is arranged in a similar structure. Members of the governing board are elected to manage the affairs of the congregation, including managing the budget, working in conjunction with the minister to support lay leadership, and further the mission of the congregation.

Prophetic speech is not always easy. In fact, if it's easy, it's probably not prophetic speech.

Congregations such as the UU Congregation of the South Jersey Shore must balance the tension between

the principle that upholds our democratic process and our call to be leaders in the field of social justice. It is traumatizing for members of marginalized groups to hear others who do not carry those identities debating whether and how to take a stand supporting the humanity of the marginalized. Please hear that: *It is traumatizing to people who hold marginalized identities when their support must be put to a vote of their neighbors before it is offered.*

Part of the covenant of this congregation calls on its members to be willing to lead and to be willing to be led. Sometimes leadership will not move as quickly as you'd like, and sometimes it will move more quickly than makes you comfortable. I am not suggesting blind faith, because that flies in the face of our commitment to reason; but I ask that you be willing to offer a level of trust in their humanity, their efforts to do the right thing, and their willingness to serve.

This congregation elects leaders each year to do the work of running the congregation and supporting its mission, which includes being a prophetic voice for social justice in South Jersey. The details of how that mission is carried out can be debated, but I ask you to remember that this is a key part of this congregation's identity; at the same time I ask you to remember that the leaders – in this case, members of the Board – are volunteers who were asked, and who agreed, to serve the congregation with their whole hearts and best intentions. The membership elected them by overwhelming vote to lead the congregation for this year. Without the trust and support of the membership, their ability to lead is undercut in a serious way, and that hurts not just the Board, but the system that is the congregation and its ability to carry out its social justice mission.

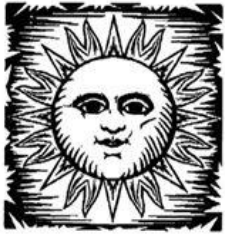
The theme for November is Attention. Let us be attentive in this process of discussion and decision-making. Let us be attentive of our neighbors. Of what they are feeling, what they fear, and the trust we put in our elected leaders, who are human as well. Let us always look to the covenant of right relations to guide how we interact with one another, in our congregation and in our broader world.

In shared ministry,
Rev. Dawn



Rev. Dawn's Twitter handle is
@queerpreacher

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



*Deep, deep, deep
in the dark
of the winter...*

For those who have previously experienced WSSR, remember these amazing songs?

Kore Evohe, Keep the Fire, Benedicta Es, Though My Soul, Imani, We've Got The Power, Carry it Home, When We Are Gone...

Come and relive the experience. For those who have never experienced this singing ritual, you will never forget it!

What is the Winter Solstice Singing Ritual?

Written by Julie Forrest Middleton and Stasa Morgan Appel, the WSSR is a deep and dark Solstice ritual which leads participants into awareness of their own inner light. It makes a wonderful bridge for those who've not been exposed to Earth-based spirituality, and encourages even deeper participation for those who have. It includes many styles: calypso, choral singing, Native American, Greek mythology, feminist rounds, Pagan chants, hymns. This is *participatory* ritual: the audience sings along on many songs and meditates on the darkness of their past year and the light each carries within.



CHALICE LIGHTERS

Visit the newsletter of the Central East Region (CER) Chalice Lighters program at <https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/20191014spark.pdf>

Here's your opportunity for deepening your holiday season spirituality!

On **Friday, December 20** at 6 pm we will be presenting the Winter Solstice Singing Ritual for a special evening service. Whether you have sung this work in the past or not, you are warmly invited to learn some of the songs and to be part of the music.

The only requirement is to attend **at least 3 rehearsals** in November and December. We rehearse at 9 am before the service most Sundays. All ages are welcome. Please contact Barbara Miller at uucsjsmusic@gmail.com for more information.

More singing opportunities...

"Fa La La La La!"

We will once again be bringing Christmas carols to local assisted living centers. The date is still to be determined. If you are interested and want some say in when we go caroling, please contact Barbara Miller at uucsjsmusic@gmail.com.



All ages are welcome! The younger folk are a special joy to the residents we will be singing for.

UUCSJS awarded Chalice Lighters Grant!

The Central East Region Chalice Lighters Program Committee has granted us this year's Chalice Lighters Grant of \$20,000 to UUCSJS. This grant will help us realize our goal to move Rev. Fortune to full-time status within the next two years.

Visit the CER Chalice Lighter page at

<https://www.uua.org/central-east/programs/chalicelighter/cerclcurrentcall>

You can also donate to Chalice Lighters by visiting this page

CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Eat, Read, Learn

It is always sad to see summer go. But with that change comes all those delicious fall foods that are my all-time favorites. Yes, I am one of those pumpkin spice people, though I do wait until after Mabon to indulge. Come fall equinox and it's pumpkin spice lattes and muffins, spiced apple cider, roasted beets and Brussels sprouts, and of course butternut squash. Thanksgiving for me is food and gratitude. What's not to love about that?

Well...

There is of course that whole Thanksgiving mythology thing. The year 2020 will mark the 400th anniversary of that much told story of the encounters between colonists and Native Peoples in Plymouth. As Unitarian Universalists, our faith calls us to search for truth and meaning and to work for justice and equity for all people. Delegates at the 2012 UUA General Assembly passed a resolution calling upon Unitarian Universalists to find out more about Indigenous history in the United States and how this history has led to injustices that continue in the present. Every year the Unitarian Universalist Association chooses one book that it encourages all congregations to read and discuss in community. This year that book is *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, an Indigenous scholar and activist. The narrative of this book centers the story, experiences, and perspectives of Indigenous peoples in U.S. history. In a book review published in Counterpunch, Ron Jacobs writes:

"Some stories cry out to be told. Often, the reason they have not been told is because those in power fear the particular truths of the tale. The story told by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz in *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* is one such story. It has been too long in telling. Dunbar-Ortiz writes her narrative with a measured rage that enlivens the history being told, challenging the reader to reconsider every other history ever written about the United States."

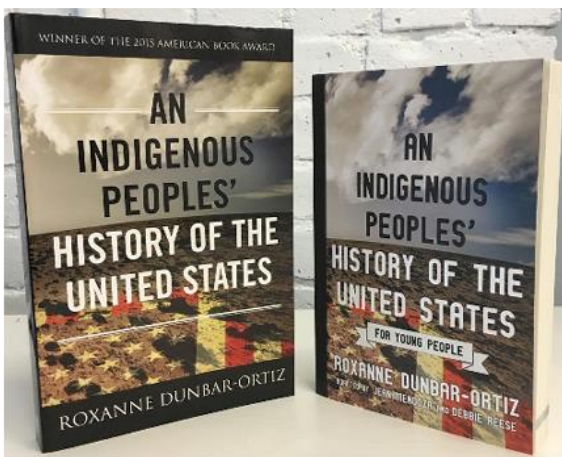
There is an adapted version for younger readers (*An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People* adapted by Jean Mendoza and Debbie Reese) that is recommended for youth 12 and older and an audio book version is also available. In March, UUCSJS will host a multigenerational book discussion to talk about what we have learned and how we can put our faith into action. I encourage you all to "learn the story of trauma and resilience that is the Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States." There will be a few books (adult and young reader editions) available to borrow or to purchase through the RE Lending Library. Your local public library may have a copy as well. More details on the book discussion group will follow. I look forward to reading along with you.

RE News and Notes

- Children's RE committee meeting is Nov. 3
- November 10 is a multigenerational service; nursery/toddler care will be available
- Children's RE is always looking for new volunteers! Want to see what we do "downstairs?"

In Fellowship,

Jessica Dunn Safonof
Director of Religious Education



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Jersey Shore

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Visit us on the Web: www.uucsjs.org

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