

The Quest

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
of Sussex County

FEBRUARY 2023
VOL. 58, NO. 6



FEBRUARY PROGRAM INFORMATION

Hybrid Sunday services start at 10:30. (Religious education classes are in-person only.) If you attend in person, **masks are optional (no longer required)**. Google Meet codes/phone numbers and PINs, which are the same every week, are online at meet.google.com/kww-ugyh-spj or by phone at 413-679-2794, PIN 139 523 137#.

Feb 5. What's Your Frame? There seems to be little interest in finding common ground in American politics these days. The work of the cognitive linguist George Lakoff can help us understand the cognitive frames behind our beliefs, and how they can expand or limit our perceptions. We'll explore the contrast between the political left and right in America. Led by Rev. Don Garrett.

Feb 12. Twelve Truths I Learned from Life and Writing. A few days before she turned 61, writer Anne Lamott decided to write down everything she knew for sure. In this TED talk, Lamott dives into the nuances of being a human who lives in a confusing, beautiful, emotional world. She offers her characteristic life-affirming wisdom and humor on family, writing, the meaning of God, death, and more. What life lessons have you learned in your life's journey? Join the discussion. Led by Jeff Wallis.

Feb 19. Plant Consciousness. Modern research is verifying what indigenous people have known all along—that plants are conscious beings. Trees can communicate and feel, and live in social networks. In fact, trees are like human families (or, perhaps, human families are like trees) in that tree parents live with their children, communicate with them, support them as they grow, share nutrients with those who are sick or struggling, and even warn each other of impending dangers. Plants are social beings that are aware of their surroundings and what happens to their neighbors. Join Jennifer as she shares some scientific discoveries, as well as some ancient traditional wisdom, on the consciousness of plants. Led by Jen O'Hagan.

Feb 26. Behind the Scenes: The Life of Bayard Rustin. As Black History Month draws to a close, we will explore the life of a man who was very influential during the civil rights movement, and provided great support to Dr. Martin Luther King and others. He eventually became an activist for LGBTQ rights. Led by Hal Cohen.

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person.*
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.*
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.*
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.*
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.*
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.*
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.*

The Quest is the monthly newsletter of the UUFSC. For the most up-to-date information, go to our website, www.uunewtonnj.org. Our phone number is 973-579-7210.

© 2023. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

MINISTER'S MUSINGS



In six weeks or so I'll be with you. My plan is to have movers transport my small one-bedroom fixtures by March 7-8 to my home at The Aberlour at 1 Trinity Street in Newton. I'll be settled in no later than March 9.

This is a “restart” for me. Dealing with my wife’s death three years ago, after a very difficult several years of her diminishing health, was very hard. This was in the midst of the COVID pandemic with all its disorientation. I “retired” in the summer of 2020. After my troubles and a couple years of inactivity, I was determined to return to ministry. Vitality returned.

In the late fall of last year, I began my search for a compatible congregation seeking a less than full-time minister. I considered six UU congregations. Three became interested, including UUFSC. I came for a weekend meet-and-engagement adventure. I greatly enjoyed the Sunday service I led, and your gratifying response to me and my words and ideas. You chose me and I chose you. I’m very happy about that.

My first service as your minister will be March 19. I’ll share more about my schedule, availability, etc., in the next issue of *The Quest*.

Here is my message currently on our website:

The times are so very troubled. Where can one find a safe and welcoming community that respects and honors the individual, encouraging a principled search for inspiring truth?

We aspire to be that community. We are related in a covenant—promises exchanged and kept as a beloved community, informed by respect, encouragement, and efforts to build a just and peaceful world. We stress spiritual freedom and intellectual vigor. We are radically inclusive. Love guides us, and goodness inspires us.

We hope you will check us out and learn what we have found—love, ideas, and ideals that bless.

Warmly,

Rev. Doak.

I’m honored to be engaged and committed to our Fellowship—our aspirations, our ministry, and our lives. Let us be bold, loving, and wise.

In the Spirit,

Rev. Doak

doakmansf@gmail.com

***Mission Statement of the
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Sussex County***

**We seek to nourish the spirit;
to foster peace, justice, diversity and understanding in our
community and the world;
and to cherish and sustain the earth and the web of life.**

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

As we begin February, we have reason to celebrate several events.

The first, of course, is that Rev. Doak Mansfield has accepted our offer as half-time minister and will begin in March. Personally, I am very excited that he decided to join us, despite being considered by several other UU congregations across the country. His many years of experience, his ability to express spiritual concepts in practical, relatable language, and his engaging, warm personality will all enrich our Fellowship.

A special thank you to Jeff Wallis for organizing the Minister Search process and chairing the Committee last spring, as well as for his work in scheduling all our lay-led services since September. These tasks involved a huge amount of work!

The second reason to celebrate is that UUFSC has received a grant from the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security that will pay for several key items we need to improve the safety of our building, such as security cameras in the parking lot, and a new emergency exit door and stairs at the rear of the sanctuary. The Board had been considering making these improvements, but they would have cost approximately \$13,500 or more than 10% of our financial reserves. Receiving this grant is a reason for celebration, as it will improve our building's safety without drawing down our financial reserves.

A special thank you to Jim Kasprzak for volunteering to be the Project Manager for this major, two-year grant program and to Mike Busch for calling the grant opportunity to the Board's attention.

Finally, an ongoing cause for celebration, in my opinion, is that we are part of UUFSC. Our Fellowship is truly a caring community. When we gather at Sunday services, I feel a special bond that links us. I find spiritual inspiration, not only in the service topics, but also in the example of so many of our members who volunteer within our Fellowship and the broader community to make the world a better place. And I find intellectual stimulation in our services and discussions.

In gratitude and fellowship,

Barbara Kelly

UUs IN HISTORY

Stu Feldstein presented a very informative and entertaining service *UUs in History*, on January 8. He told us all about famous UU scientists, U.S. presidents, lawyers, architects, newspaper editors, artists, entertainers, authors, and social activists, especially in the areas of abolition, civil rights, and women's rights. To sum up, UUs have helped to change the world and we can be proud of our heritage.

To see the full text of Stu's talk, go to the "Resources" tab of our website, at <https://www.uunewtonnj.org>.

THIS MONTH IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Dear Friends,

The beginning of 2023 in the RE program has been very special so far. To start, we had a visitor, Sharon Pontier, teach us the art of origami as we learned about Japanese culture and Buddhism. We also started our Gems of Goodness project.

For this project, the children decorated a special notebook to bring home and, with the help of an adult, are writing down their own acts of goodness and justice. Families are encouraged to think of these qualities in a broad sense—these can include acts of helpfulness, persistence, courage, generosity, kindness, determination, patience, thoughtfulness, respect, creativity, honesty, forgiveness, conflict resolution, and fairness. These qualities also include acts involving care of oneself, care of others, or care of the earth.

When we meet each week, the children will get to put a gem in a vase for each act of goodness they share with the group. Our goal is to fill the vase and, when we do, we'll have a special celebration!

Peace, love, joy,

Sharon and Pin

Below is a preview of the RE calendar for the month of February.

Feb 5. Faith, Hope, and Prayer. In this session, the children will hear a story in which a Jewish man's faith is tested and in how he uses prayer to overcome his dilemmas. Afterward, we will all take turns reenacting the story by trying out different roles. The children will also continue to share their acts of goodness and justice for our Gems of Goodness project.

Feb 12. Celebration Day. As a way to celebrate reaching their goal with the Gems of Goodness Project, the children will get to spend this session playing games and doing activities they choose together. The games will be fun and educational, practicing mindfulness and using the directions we've learned so far this year on our Moral Compass—interdependence, conscience/inner voice, faith, prayer, and gratitude.

Feb 19. Faith, Hope, and Prayer (continued). To understand the ways in which the major world religions use prayer as a spiritual practice, we will enact prayer for the world. We will add "faith" to our Moral Compass, make prayer bead necklaces, and perform an exercise sharing expressions of faith.

Feb 26. In Another's Shoes. In this session, the children will learn the word "empathy" and will listen to the story *The Wounded Seal*. Afterward, we will all role-play the story together, taking turns playing each character. If there's time, we'll start an empathetic listening activity, working in pairs.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Discussion Group

The next meeting of the Discussion Group will be on Friday, February 17, 10 am at the Fellowship. The topic is "The Future of Energy."

NPR's *On the Media* did an interesting presentation on just that subject

(<https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/otm/segments/flareup-over-gas-stoves-has-long-history-on-the-media>).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

SAVE THE DATE

**The Return of the Spring Fling...
Luncheon on Saturday, May 6**

(See the Stewardship Committee Report.)

Stewardship

The Stewardship Committee is pleased to announce the Spring Fling! This year's Fling will be a luncheon on Saturday, May 6. Details to follow. All those interested in serving on the Spring Fling Committee are invited to meet with the Stewardship Committee on Sunday, March 5, at 12:30. (The Stewardship Committee consists of Hal Cohen, Laura Dempsey, Stevie Fava, Marcia Smith, and Phil and Sue Weiner.)

Social Action

Environmental Justice Task Force: A thank-you postcard will be available for members to send to our District 24 Legislators, who voted to establish an organic advisory board. Additionally, we can thank the Assembly person who brought it to a vote. The postcard-signing event will take place during coffee hour on January 26, and February 5 and 12 (if needed). Donations for stamps are appreciated. The other focus for the EJTF is to get the NJ Green Amendment passed, and all are welcomed to join this effort. A previous email provided extensive information.

Gun Violence Prevention Task Force: Susan Felsen reported that the concealed carry issue is on the front burner, with safe storage placed on the back burner for the time being. The group is looking for a Chair. (Rev. Charles Loflin is now the Interim Chair.)

Reparations Task Force: Unofficially, the RTF will be sponsoring a Common Read, through UU FaithAction, which will consist of five chapters from *The 1619 Project*, a New York Times publication. Go to The New York Times website or your favorite bookseller to purchase it. (Also note that Hulu is currently running a six-part series "The 1619 Project," an expansion of the Project.) UU FaithAction will announce the Common Read shortly, and UUs statewide will have an opportunity to sign up. All meetings will be virtual. Groups will be limited to around 10 participants. The first meetings, as of now, are scheduled to start on February 22. Each meeting will be about an hour.

Always check the UU FaithAction NJ website, at <https://www.uufaithaction.org/events>, for its calendar.



RaiseRight™

Formerly ShopWithScrip

RaiseRight, formerly ShopWithScrip, continues to offer the Fellowship a wonderful way to raise needed funds as you shop. UUFSC gets rebates of up to 13% on gift cards you purchase from among more than 750 well-known merchants. You can buy gift cards by going to www.raiseright.com. Please contact Sue Weiner or Hal Cohen if you have any questions about this program.

UUFSC SUPERMARKET GIFT CARD PROGRAM

Please call or email Hal Cohen for your \$100 supermarket gift cards each month. Help the Fellowship earn 5% of each card purchased directly from the store, at no cost to you. Thanks!



LAST CALL FOR. . .



Unfortunately, the Amazon Smile Initiative is ending on February 20, 2023. So, get those orders in now!



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF SUSSEX COUNTY

President: Barbara Kelly

Vice-President: Hal Cohen

Treasurer: Jerry Sattin

Secretary: Stevie Fava

Quest Editors: Susan Weiner, Richard Goffman