

The Quest

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
of Sussex County

PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR JANUARY

NOTICE: All services in January will be virtual. Given the rise in COVID cases, there will be no in-person services at the Fellowship building until further notice. You can attend the same way you've been doing all along. Go to meet.google.com/kww-ugyh-spj. Or join by phone, 413-679-2794, PIN 139 523 137#.

Jan 2. Embryology and Gender Inclusivity. This presentation will begin with information on what factors determine the formation of genitalia, and some of the beautiful and natural variations in reproductive anatomy that Mother Nature graces us with. The information shared is helpful in realizing that male/female is not a binary system, but a spectrum of wonderful possibilities and variations. We will then morph into a discussion on gender inclusiveness and language to support that. Led by Jen O'Hagan.

Jan 9. Lessons from Robert Bly A Year after The Capitol. About an expressive, proud, non-violent masculinity, about the soul and finding a way to be truly, proudly, humbly human in this world. Led by Mary Tiebout.

Jan 16. Leaving Utopia. How do we keep the perfect from becoming the enemy of the good? Over the past two years, calls for radical, sweeping change have gotten more traction than ever before, but an unwillingness to compromise may still result in even less progress being made. By exploring questions around the concept of a "perfect world" in philosophy, literature and film, we can rethink what it means to pursue a just society. Led by Johanna Evans.

Jan 23. Where I'm From. It would be difficult for us to know, as children, which elements of our daily lives and which events might steer us toward particular values or political positions, or shape how we will interact with others, or in what directions we'll look for fulfillment. Susanna Lee's response to the writing prompt, "Where I'm From" will prompt us to write down and perhaps share some of those things. Led by Susanna Lee and Mary Tiebout.

Jan 30. Building a Diverse Multicultural Community. Hear some thoughts on building a diverse multicultural community and dismantling racism and oppression. Led Tony Balzano.

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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.

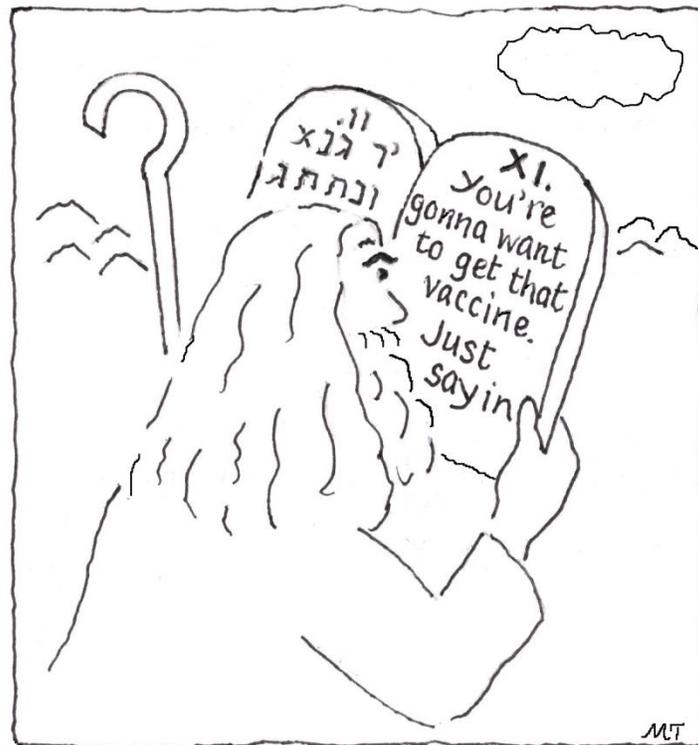
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ALONG THE PATH

Dear Friends,

With poems and music still filling my ears from our Candle lighting service, and with the aroma of cookies, sweet oranges and spices filling the air, I have few words but to wish you all the most joyful holidays as we turn toward a new and hopefully much brighter year. As so much of this past year has been determined by the ups and downs on the pandemic charts, I send wishes of good health for you, your families and friends, and a little cartoon that I made for people who are still deciding whose opinions and advice are worth following. With love and endless thanks...

Mary



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

As we start a new year, I find it is a time for reflection, looking back on 2021 and forward to 2022.

Clearly, the COVID pandemic has been a key issue in our lives during 2021, with many ups and downs. The widespread availability of vaccines starting at the beginning of the year (and later, boosters) gave us the hope of returning to a more normal lifestyle. Our picnic in early June was a joyous opportunity to finally be together again after over a year of virtual services. Beginning hybrid services in November was a milestone, resuming services in our Fellowship building while continuing to offer the option of virtual attendance. Our congregation has remained strong through these times, with consistent attendance (virtual and in-person) at services and pledge levels above our goal!

But 2021 had its “downs” in addition to these “ups.” The rapid spread of the Omicron variant in this past month has necessitated suspending in-person services for at least the month of January, which is a disappointing development. Religious Education will also continue to be on hold until we resume in-person services. We will reassess the COVID risk monthly so as to resume in-person services and RE as soon as it is prudent. And Reverend Mary’s decision to retire at the end of this service year, after so many years of dedicated ministry, has, naturally, saddened us. We will miss her greatly, but we understand her decision and wish her the best in her retirement.

Looking forward to 2022, I see both certainty and uncertainty. In terms of certainty, I have no doubt that our Fellowship will continue to be a strong and vibrant community. In terms of uncertainty, who knows what the Omicron variant will bring our way, but we will be flexible and adjust as needed. Regarding our search for a new minister, please see page 5 for a letter from Jeff Wallis, the chairperson of our New Minister Search Committee, outlining our plans.

As we begin 2022, let us symbolically join hands (as we traditionally do in our closing circle) and reinforce our connections to each other and our UU principles.

In fellowship and with all best wishes for health and happiness in 2022,

Barbara

UUFSC SUPERMARKET GIFT CARD PROGRAM

Please call or email Hal Cohen for your \$50 or \$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!



DISCUSSION GROUP

The first meeting of the Discussion Group in 2022 is scheduled for Friday, January 21, at 10 am at the Fellowship. The topic will be *Is Participatory Democracy Meeting the Challenge of a Growing Trend toward the Acceptance of Autocracy?*

The major takeaway from December's discussion on journalism is that the availability of reliable sources of local news has become scant, indeed.

If you have any questions, contact Mike Busch.

HOW MANY UUs DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE A LIGHT BULB?

We choose not to make a statement either in favor of or against the need for a light bulb. However, if in your own journey, you have found that light bulbs work for you, that is fine. You are invited to write a poem or compose a modern dance about your personal relationship with your light bulb. Present it next month at our annual Light Bulb Sunday Service, in which we will explore a number of light bulb traditions, including incandescent, fluorescent, 3-way, long-life, and tinted, all of which are equally valid paths to luminescence.

THANK YOU FOR CONTRIBUTING TO UUSC'S GUEST AT YOUR TABLE COLLECTION!

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

Thank you to everyone who has already contributed to our annual collection for UUSC's Guest at Your Table campaign. The "official" end of our collection will be Sunday, Jan. 2. Our Guest at Your Table Coordinator Jeri Doherty will be happy to accept your checks made out to UUSC by that Sunday. (See UUFSC Contact List for Jeri's address.)

UUSC has set up a special donation webpage specifically for our Fellowship. Go to <https://donate.uusc.org/UUFSC2021> to donate online using a credit or debit card, or PayPal. Just click the DONATE button. (Don't choose JOIN TEAM.) Online donations can be submitted until January 16.

Contributions of any amount qualify for membership in UUSC. Gifts of \$150 or more from a family or individual will be doubled through a matching grant from the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, N.Y.



Don't forget our SHOPWITHSCRIP gift card program. UUFSC gets rebates of up to 13% on gift cards from more than 750 well-known merchants. If you have questions, please contact Sue Weiner, or Hal Cohen if Sue isn't available.

A LETTER FROM THE MINISTER SEARCH COMMITTEE

Dear UUFSC members and friends,

The news of Mary's much deserved retirement was a jolt to all of us. Her warm, thoughtful, and embracing ministry will be deeply missed by the members and friends of UUFSC. However, this type of transition is part of life and, as such, the Board has appointed a Minister Search Committee to lead our Fellowship through the process of finding a new part-time minister. The committee members are Susan Felsen, Barbara Kelly, and Sally Sattin. It is my pleasure and honor to serve as chairperson of the committee. We will keep everyone informed and engaged in the search process through monthly updates in *The Quest* as well as announcements at Sunday services. I want to let you know what has happened to date and give you a general timeline of the search process.

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has an office, Ministerial Transitions, dedicated to working with congregations that are seeking a new minister. We have registered with them and will work closely to avail ourselves of their resources and services. One of those services is a website where congregations post openings and ministers looking for positions post resumes. The committee has completed the application and our position is now posted.

The brief timeline for the search process is as follows:

- January-February—The Search Committee reviews resumes, identifies potential candidates, and conducts online interviews.
- March-April—Appropriate candidates are invited to give a guest sermon at UUFSC, followed by time for members and friends to meet candidates during coffee hour. The Search Committee will provide members and friends with an opportunity to fill out a feedback survey about each candidate.
- May-June—The search is finalized, and the Board offers a contract to the new minister.

I must point out that this is a best-case scenario. It may not go as planned. Based on information from UUA that there are many ministers who are retiring and the pool of eligible candidates to fill those positions is smaller than usual, we must be prepared to accept that the search process may take longer. But that remains to be seen and, as I stated, the Search Committee will keep everyone informed as to what is happening and will be asking for your input throughout the process. Please feel free to contact me or any member of the Minister Search Committee if you have any questions.

In fellowship,

Jeff Wallis
Chair



**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP
OF SUSSEX COUNTY**

Minister: Rev. Mary Tiebout

President: Barbara Kelly

Vice-President: Marilyn Chapman

Treasurer: Hal Cohen

Secretary: Stevie Fava

***Quest* Editors: Susan Weiner, Richard Goffman**