

The Quest

DECEMBER 2024
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Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
of Sussex County

PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR DECEMBER

Sunday services are both in-person and online, and they start at 10:30. (Religious education classes are in-person only.) 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#.

Dec 1. Oh, Holy Days. Rev. Doak will consider the wonders the ancients found in the dark, cold, threatening winter season. He'll share some meanings he's found and what resources we might use for our challenges and changes. *Prior to his sermon, Rev. Doak will welcome six new members to the congregation!* Led by The Rev. Dr. Doak M. Mansfield.

Dec 8. Detachment. "In our willingness to step into the unknown, the field of all possibilities, we surrender ourselves to the creative mind that orchestrates the dance of the universe." Diana Flanagan is a metaphysician who has been a minister at the Institute for Spiritual Development in Sparta for more than 15 years. She'll explore the concept of detachment as expressed in Deepak Chopra's book *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*. Led by Diana Flanagan.

Dec 15. Ceremony of Lights. Sharon, Pin, and the RE kids, along with Rev. Doak, will show why there needs to be a celebration of the light. Led by The Rev. Dr. Doak M. Mansfield in his last service with us.

Dec 22. The Christmas Truce of 1914. Jim Kasprzak will share the amazing true story of a series of unofficial ceasefires that broke out spontaneously along the western front five months after World War I began. Led by Jim Kasprzak.

Dec 29. The Book of Job. Old Testament scholar Jerry Sattin wants us to see the shocking events depicted in the Book of Job through his eyes. What did it mean, and how does it connect to our world today? Led by Jerry Sattin.



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.



MINISTER'S MUSINGS

It's "So long," from me to y'all and northern Jersey on December 18. A friend will take me to Newark Penn Station for an AMTRAK journey to Cincinnati for the holidays with family. On December 29, I'll fly to Tampa after speaking at the Heritage UU Church. (I've been Minister Emeritus since 2010.)

I have two more services for you, December 1 and 15.

I've been lured by the beautiful autumn days the last few weeks to drive around the area. I've fallen in love with the terrain—hills, woods, lakes, farms, outcroppings, architecture—and spirit of the place. (I feel the old ones). I'm so very pleased to have been with you. I've learned, grown, reframed, and refocused my life here. And most importantly, I've been cared for and loved, and tried to love y'all. Not as well as I maybe could have....

I said last time the climate and cost are serious drawbacks. But it's my hope to be back for an autumn visit one day to speak from your pulpit and share memories with y'all.

On January 1, 2025, I begin as minister of the UU Church of Tampa (uutampa.org) at 11400 Morris Bridge Road, Tampa, FL 33637. I was their Interim Minister 2013-15.

Love,

Rev. Doak

***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



Our Job Now Is Vigilance

The presidential election of 2024 is over. The outcome was not a happy one for many of the members of Unitarian Universalist churches. We are a liberal religion, and the majority of our countrymen apparently are not in a liberal mood.

Now, I believe, we must watch for any election results that violate our UU principles. And, if we see any, we need to stand tall and say so.

The president-elect ran on a promise to round up and deport millions of undocumented migrants—possibly even including those awaiting legal asylum hearings.

It's not so easy to do this and might require use of the military. The Nazis found they needed military force to round up millions of people they didn't like, plus dozens of camps to hold them. The state of Texas has already offered land for camps.

Families are sure to be torn apart. Some may not go mildly. Unlike Germany in the 1930s, gun ownership is widespread in the U.S. It's reasonable to imagine this process devolving into violence.

We should carefully monitor this, and we should speak out if things go badly. No one is "illegal" by virtue of where they were born.

And this is just the start of long-term vigilance we must apply on multiple fronts. To wit:

- Will the new government attempt to ban abortions nationally?
- Will we see renewed price inflation resulting from a worldwide trade war due to proposed tariffs?
- Will the Justice Department start arresting or indicting the more-prominent members of the other party for no clear reason?
- Will the government punish liberal-leaning news media, seeking to control public opinion, as done in dictatorships?
- Will Ukraine cease to exist as U.S. aid disappears and Russia takes over?

Let's hope none of these things takes place. But if they do, let's be willing to do something about it.

In fellowship,

Stu

THIS MONTH IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Dear families and friends,

As we step into the month of December, the Religious Education program is filled with the spirit of the season. This month, the children will be learning about winter holidays from various traditions, such as Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and Winter Solstice. Through storytelling, crafts, and games, we'll explore the shared themes of hope, generosity, and light that connect these celebrations.

These lessons align with our Unitarian Universalist values of honoring diverse beliefs and finding meaning in the many sources of spiritual wisdom. By learning about different traditions, the children deepen their understanding of our interconnectedness and our commitment to building a world that celebrates inclusivity and love.

In addition to their holiday-themed learning, the children have taken on an important role in our congregation's tradition of giving back. They have put up the **Mitten Tree** in the fellowship sanctuary to collect warm items for those in need. Throughout December, we encourage everyone to bring donations of gloves, hats, scarves, socks, or any items that will help others stay warm this winter. This annual act of generosity is a wonderful way for all of us to live out our shared values of compassion and service.

Thank you for your support of the Religious Education program and your ongoing contributions to our community. Wishing you a joyful and peaceful holiday season!

Warm regards,

Sharon and Pin, Religious Education Teachers

Below is our RE calendar for December.

Dec 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29.

- Winter solstice story, and make a luminaria or decorate a candle
- Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*
- Ceremony of Lights intergenerational service
- Hanukkah story and alternative giving dreidel game



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Discussion Group

Join us December 20, at 10 am, for a discussion of “Free Market Economics.”

If you’re interested, join our email list (ufdiscussion@gmail.com) to get pertinent info about what we’re discussing. Anyone who wants to join the group is welcome. Not all members are UU, and we encourage people of the community to join. Our group web page URL is <https://www.wantage.us/unitarian-fellowship-discussion-group>.

Guest at Your Table

We’re celebrating Guest at Your Table’s 50th anniversary with the theme “Expanding the Welcome Table.” This year, Guest at Your Table is supporting:

- Young climate activists in the Marshall Islands helping heal from U.S. nuclear testing
- LGBTQ+ leaders in Ukraine offering resources to the queer community impacted by Russia’s invasion
- Haitian academics researching racism’s impact on the experiences of migrants of color in the U.S.
- Trans organizers forming networks of safety for trans people forced to flee unsafe communities and states.

Donations can be made online at <http://donate.uusc.org/uufsc24>. If you prefer, checks made out to **UUSC (not UUFSC)** can be given to Susan Felsen or sent to her home address. Our Fellowship has always been supportive of this program, sponsored by The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Please be as generous as you can be.

Donations can be made through January 5.

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!





RaiseRight™

Formerly ShopWithScrip

RaiseRight, formerly known as 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 that 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.



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