

UCSI

NEWSLETTER

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www.unitarianchurchofstateniland.org

Minister: Rev. Susan Karlson; 347-446-0864; minister@uucsi.org
 Music Director: Dr. Carolyn Clark; music@uucsi.org
 Church Secretary: Stella Fishman; 718-447-2204; office@uucsi.org
 Editor: Patricia Murphy; newsletter@uucsi.org

Expressing Our Faith - in Deeds!

The three pictures below describe, left to right, the UCSI through the work of our membership in serving our local Staten Island community: in concert with our partner El Centro del inmigrante, in reflecting life through Steve Nutt's "Other Media" exhibit in the Sanctuary, and through extending the concept of community to New Orleans where our youth worked to repair the damage still evident after Hurricane Katrina. All this just in April!

These events, reported on more fully on pages 2 & 6, did not happen by accident or flabby "good will". All were substantially promoted by Rev. Karlson's continued focus as Sally Jones, Raffaella Iosue and Gonzalo Mercado coordinated the clean-up; Simone Andrews supported by the R.E. Committee and all church members spearheaded the NOLA trip; and the small Arts Program Committee sponsored a rich Spring Arts Festival.



Brother Sun Concert
 Sunday, May 22nd
 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary



"Brother Sun" the trio made up of Greg Greenaway, Joe Jencks, and Pat Wictor perform blues, folk, and gospel music. Their harmonies have been described as "warm as a campfire, stirring as a gospel church, rousing as a call to arms." Tickets are \$20.00.

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

PAGE 2

Staten Island Archaeology Fair

On April 3rd our Explorer Group (and Susannah Dolinar from our Youth Group) attended the first ever Staten Island Archaeology Fair at Wagner College. We were treated to many different exhibitions that included: learning about the dead sea scrolls, examining fossils and human bones, making cave paintings and Tibetan ceremonial masks, looking at tools from the Lenape Indians, and digging in the dirt during a mock excavation! It was truly a celebration of global cultures and the many wonders from our past.

Nola!

Pictures speak far louder than prose - most show work from floor to ceiling - or ceiling to floor? But a teen has to eat.....



Baking banana bread ... working on the ceiling, then floors ..

**May Religious Exploration Schedule**Early Childhood Room (Ages 2-5)

May 1: " My World Has Air" A spring walk through Snug Harbor

May 8: Multi-Generational Mother's Day Service

May 15: "My World Has Trees"

May 22: "My World Has Darkness"

May 29: NO RE CLASS (Memorial Day Weekend)

Explorer Group (Ages 7-12)

May 1: Spring Walk through Snug Harbor

May 8: Multi-Generational Mother's Day Service

May 15: Toolbox of Faith curriculum

May 22: Toolbox of Faith curriculum

May 29: NO RE CLASS (Memorial Day Weekend)

Youth Group: TBA

SAVE THE DATE! Our Annual Religious Exploration Service will be on Sunday, June 12th

Each class will present meaningful excerpts from the year, we will have a Bridging Ceremony for our two graduates: Louis Vassar-Semanchik and Megan Lee, and finally we will honor the many RE Heroes at UUCSI who have helped us along the way!

MAY WORSHIP SERVICES

PAGE 3

May 8, 10:45 a.m. *Mother As Compassion*

Our worship celebration sings the praises of the image of the Divine in most religions as Compassionate Mother. We celebrate Mother's Day and the Flower Festival with worship for all ages. Please bring a single flower to share as part of our Community Bouquet. You will be invited to take home a different flower, a symbol of the beauty and cross pollination in our communities.

May 15, 10:45 a.m. *Is Coffee Enough?****Expressing a Welcoming Spirit***

Speaker: Kathy Santo, Past President 2007-2010

Reflections on recent visits to other UU churches.

**May 1, 10:45 a.m. *May Day***

Rev. Jude Geiger, Minister of Religious Education at First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn, will be preaching a sermon entitled **This Side of Paradise**. As we move into Spring, and find the world erupt with life, it's often easier to appreciate the beauty of the world. How can we find this Spring-like joy in every moment? How can we come to live life abundantly – through our celebrations and our pains?

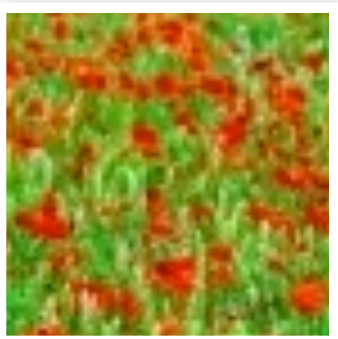
**May 22, *May Peace Prevail on Earth***

Guest Musicians: Brother Sun (see cover pagere. the evening concert at 7 pm)

We are facing an age where the politics of the world must be carried out by each individual who repeats these words becomes a force for peace. The Peace Pole Project was started in Japan by Masahisa Goi (1916 – 1980), who dedicated his life to spreading the message, “MayPeace Prevail on Earth”. The UCSI as a member of the Building Bridges Coalition, participates in the traveling Peace Pole project as we install the Peace Pole during our Worship celebration. The Peace Pole will stay at the church until June 4th.

May 29, 10:45 a.m. *“We Remember Them...”*

Archibald MacLeish wrote about the young dead soldiers, as if speaking for those who died: “Whether our lives and our deaths were for peace and a new hope or for nothing we cannot say; it is you who must say this.” On this Memorial Day, we honor those who served in the military and died in the steady stream of wars over the centuries. What meaning will we make of their deaths and our yearnings for peace and justice in the face of what seems like ceaseless war and violence?



“It takes two to speak the truth...one to speak and another to hear.”, H.D. Thoreau

I took a course on pastors working with couples recently called “Prepare Enrich”. It includes taking a survey about your partner and yourself and then working with the profile that emerges. I realize over the past ten years how much my personal and spiritual growth has occurred because of my deepening relationship with my life partner, Alan.

I am the one with the Masters in Social Work and the one who has taken an International Intensive on Non Violent Communication and I’ve brought some of these tools home to Alan. We have developed a mutual ability to lift one another when the other is low and to commit to struggling with life issues that come up—adjustments when we moved, my long absences when I commuted back and forth to Gulfport, Mississippi, our children growing up and creating lives and relationships of their own. I know what a rare gift it is to have a partner that voluntarily contributes his labor and skill to redo the parsonage bathroom and build cabinets for the new sound equipment in the sanctuary (after the youth construction trip to New

Orleans, I appreciate his efforts even more).

This workshop, our tenth anniversary and his support of my ministry and growth remind me how often we forget to count our blessings, to feel gratitude for one another and our many kinds of relationships. I am thankful for relationships in this church as well and for the trust people have showered on me by being frank, caring and earnest. It helps me to admit my challenges and be honest with myself.

So my column this month is about doing a bit of spring cleaning of the soul—acknowledging what a rare present we give to each other by showing up, working together as a community, bringing our creative ideas, encouraging one another to fix what seems broken, and through everything, inspiring one another to spiritual growth and renewal. It’s not always easy to see yourself as others see you. It’s not even easy to admit when you fall short of the bar you’ve set for yourself. Yet, it’s the work of a religious community to help one another through the passages and the stumbling blocks of our personal and collective lives.

This is the work of community: building and nurturing each other. This is soul work.

As the leaves unfurl and the flowers blossom, through all the busyness and warming effects of spring, let us also recommit ourselves to being kind and loving with ourselves and with each other. Let us feel how truly blessed we are to have this loving community that feeds the love in our hearts, that opens our minds and that cultivates the spirit of a genuine caring, serving community.

With gratitude and love,

Susan



MAY EVENTS

PAGE 5

Fire Drills!!

Fire drills will be held during church services on May 15th and June 5th. The time will not be announced in advance. **Key Personnel:** Religious Exploration: RE Committee members/teachers/guides whether teaching that day or not; **Worship Service:** the Minister and worship associates whether or not assigned that day will act as fire wardens. Please follow their instruction to exit the building as quickly as possible. Those who are **mobility impaired** will be expected to exit with the rest of the congregation. Please be aware of the special needs of those who are mobility impaired and that we have only **one** ramped entrance.

Social Justice Committee Events

Jim Clune, President of Broome County Peace Action, has just returned from a two-week journey as part of an Interfaith Peace Builders Delegation to Israel and Palestine. He will share his experiences and photos with us on Sunday, May 15th at 1:00 pm in the R.E. area. May's food donations will go to Our Lady of Good Counsel Church Food Pantry.

The Odyssey of Lillian Orrok

The Memorial Committee will sponsor Lillian's presentation on Sunday, May 22nd at 1:00 pm in the Church Library. Light refreshments will be served.

Membership

The Membership Committee is working hard to produce a picture directory of all church members as well as planning fun and recreation for summer programs. Ideas and help are wanted; please contact Steve Nutt at membership@uucsi.org. New members are welcome on the Committee call Sarah Dolinar for address or a ride or email her at membership@uucsi.org.

Editor's note: Can't get rid of placeholder note below, "sorry!"

*Adiam condimentum Purus, in Proin
in sapien. Fusce urna,neque lacus.*

Calendar

**Sunday, May 1st., 4-7:00pm *May Day Auction!*
10:00 - *Choir Rehearsal***
**Mon., May 2nd., 7:30pm - Arts Program. Com.
church hall**
**Tues., May 3rd. - 7:30pm - Membership Com.
Ann Kalil's house**
Sun. May 8th 10:00am - *Choir Rehearsal*
**Wed., May 11th. 8:00pm -Board of Trustees
church library**
**Fri., May 13th - 7:30pm - *For Our Daughters*
church hall**
**Sat. May 14th - 9:30am -Social Justice Com.
church library
9:30am - Church Council**
**Sun. May 15th - 10:00am -*Choir Rehearsal*
12:30-2:00pm -Jim Clune talk
& Slideshow, R.E. Level**
**Sun., May 22nd - 1:00pm - Lillian Orrok
Odyssey, Church Library
7:00pm - Brother Sun Concert
Sanctuary**
Sun., May 29th - 10:00am - *Choir Rehearsal*

APRIL EVENTS

PAGE 6

The Community Cleanup day in West Brighton with El Centro del inmigrantes

A fine combined group picked up debris along Broadway and enjoyed the day, each other and the results of their efforts.

The Community Peace Pole will be installed at the Unitarian Church of Staten Island on May 22nd where it will remain for a few weeks. This is an interfaith project which we are thrilled to take part in.



Pictured left to right are: Gonzalo Mercado, Executive Director of El Centro del Inmigrante; Gilberto Gonzales (El Centro); behind him, Alan Kindler (UCSI); Edgardo Cazles, El Centro; Jose Cedillo (El Centro); Sally Jones, UCSI Social Justice Committee Co-chair; Bill Johnson, friend of the UCSI; Sebastian Cabrera, El Centro; Rev. Susan Karlson, Minister, UCSI; Sarah Dolinar, UCSI, and Mary Hernandez Ceribello., UCSI



David Jones play beneath a display of Steve Nutt's handcrafted rugs.

Spring Arts Festival 2011 Opens

The Arts Program Committee opened the Festival with "Other Media", Steve Nutt's splendidly versatile exhibit in the Sanctuary, the Saturday opening accompanied by David Jones' jazz and blues music and refreshments.

Church members, neighbors, and art aficionados stopped by, chatted with the artist, listened to the music and had a little nosh., a fine antidote for the spring rain.

NEWS, VIEWS, REVIEWS

PAGE 7

Staten Island Philharmonic

presents "Italianissimo!" Saturday, May 7, 2011, 5 pm, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 225 St. Paul's Ave. Tickets \$25, Senior and student discounts available. Call 718-273-3250 or email SIPhilharmonic@aol.com for more information.

Rossini Italian in Algiers Overture
Vivaldi Spring and Summer from "The Seasons"
Mendelssohn Italian Symphony

Jose Alejandro Guzman, conductor
Christine Kwak, violin

Robert Pipkins Inducted into Port Richmond High School Hall of Fame

On April 29th, Robert Pipkins, son of Bob and Joan Pipkins was inducted into his high school alma mater's hall of fame. Robert was selected for his outstanding accomplishments and personal honor.

District Conference, May 6th and 7th in Morristown now limited to registering at the door. Scholarships may be available, see Rona, president@ucsi.org

For Our Daughters

Friday, May 13, 2011
7:30 PM

IlluminArt Productions presents **For Our Daughters**, a multi-media play with music that is entertaining and informative, about a family celebrating hope and survival in the face of breast cancer. It is a theatrical blending of several mediums: moving scenes performed by actors that tell the story of a woman and her family; powerfully personal filmed interviews of breast cancer survivors; and inspirational songs that convey courage, persistence and hope. It can save your life!

Refreshments will be served following a talk-back with the cast.

Tickets: \$12 general admission/\$10 students and seniors/\$25 preferred seating available at www.illuminart.org, \$15 cash or check at the door.

News

Many folks this month could use a little extra friendly attention. **Larry Schwabacher's** mother passed away April 22nd; Larry is grateful to those who reached out to him.

Ruth Leason has been in the hospital, but is now home and would appreciate cards, calls, and visits.

Risa Anderson's dad is recovering well from surgery at the Cleveland Clinic, but she is still in Ohio.

William Taylor is in the hospital but is expected to move to St. Elizabeth's rehab facility early in May.

Our office secretary, **Stella Fishman**, will be out for some time as she recovers from stent procedures.

*Adiam condimentum Purus, in Proin
in sapien. Fusce urna, neque lacus.*

THE LAST WORD



In a diet book by Deepak Chopra what stuck with me was that our bodies always change as our cells constantly reproduce. Although cells follow the same genetic blueprint, they are not the same as the cells they replace. After years of living on my plateau of middle aged weight, learning that my body was brand new at any given moment knocked my socks off.

I've been thinking about renewal and change here at the UCSI: new members join, longer term members leave; new programs start, former programs end; and I mistake following the same genetic blueprint for a lack of change. We cannot help but change – that is the nature of being alive for organizations as well as people.

It is spring - the third "new year" of our church year. In September we return after a summer of relaxation, in January we celebrate the New Year, and when it's warm enough to go outside and the trees bloom, we really celebrate.

In April I was privileged to celebrate our fellowship at a delicious stewardship campaign kick-off dinner, to eat and to read about freedom at our pot luck Seder and to sing about renewal on Easter. At the Easter sunrise service – which I hope will become a well attended tradition – I was delighted as the sky lightened and the birds began to sing "halleluiah."

Our first celebration in May will be our May Day Auction. Like most of our activities, the auction is volunteer-led and staffed. This year's committee was very small and the individuals had to shoulder more of the burden. I hope that on May 1 you will all support the church and the auction as customers and PR people. There will be Maypole dancing and great food. There will be a coffee can raffle for smaller items, a silent auction for medium sized items, a "bid and bump" booth for gourmet dinner and a live auction for huge-valued items. The auction has the potential to make twice as much money if each of us brings

a friend. Not only will your friend have the opportunity to bid on great items – like (plug plug) three sets (Thanksgiving, Christmas and Valentine's Day) of four dozen cookies, but the opportunity to learn about the Unitarian Church of Staten Island and perhaps return on a Sunday.

Now is the time for the committees to take stock and begin to prepare their annual reports for the congregational meeting next month. I will try to schedule another budget meeting before the congregational meeting to answer questions and make changes. Please remember to pledge your support for the UCSI. After all, those are the funds we budget.

Finally, May is the last month of my first one-year term as president. You cannot believe how many lessons I have learned – usually in hindsight! I urge you to become involved in the leadership of our small spiritual community. You will never be bored – and – many hands will make lighter work.

Don't forget the MAY DAY

**AUCTION!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
!!**

Sunday, May 1st