

THE UNITARIAN NEWSLETTER a publication of

THE Unitarian Church of Staten Island

Founded in 1852

Rev. Susan Karlson, Minister
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Religious Education Coordinator, Megan Lloyd Joiner
Director of Music, Dr. Carolyn Clark

Church Secretary, Stella Fishman
Supervisor of Buildings & Grounds, Brian Fontana
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UPCOMING SERVICES:

Our theme for this year's worship calendar is "Deepening Roots, Spreading Branches". To use the metaphor of a tree, we have very deep taproots that continue to sustain us since the founding of the Unitarian Church of Staten Island in 1852, and the centuries-old history of Unitarianism and Universalism. Through our mission and vision, we extend ourselves beyond the roots of our family tree to the branches that spread out in all directions. These far-reaching branches call us to engage in advocacy, charitable work, education, legislative concerns, and social witness as members of one human family and part of the interdependent web of all life. Though it seems simple, our theme for the worship year gives us an opportunity to dig deep into the core of Unitarian Universalism and the experience of what it means to be justice seekers and meaning makers in the 21st century. ~ Rev. Susan Karlson

September Upcoming Services

Sunday, September 6, *Blessing of the Animals*

Rev. Susan Karlson

10:45 am



Henry Bergh, a Unitarian minister, was born around this time of year in 1811(August 21). He traveled abroad and witnessed cruel acts towards animals. Upon returning to New York, he set out to convince the New York State Legislature to create the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. And he did just that.

On September 6th, we will hold a multi-generational service of blessing and celebration for the non-human animals that grace our lives. Remembering the personal commitment of people like Henry Bergh, we will gather outside (weather permitting) or in the Parish Hall. Your beloved pets are welcome at this service but do need to be on a leash, in a carrier, terrarium or bowl (depending on their species). If you do not currently have a pet or believe that your pet would not fully appreciate this service, you can bring a photo or memento of your beloved companion. A stuffed animal might represent an animal that has special meaning for you. There will also be an opportunity to remember those animals that have died who hold a special place in our hearts and memories. Join us as we honor the interdependent web and our animal companions. We'll also look at the gifts of organizations like the Staten Island Council for Animal Welfare to understand how we can be in a closer relationship with these community organizations.

Sunday, September 13, "*We're All Swimming to the Other Side*"

Rev. Susan Karlson

Dr. Carolyn Clark, Music Director

The flowers in our sanctuary are in honor of Ruth and Randy Leason's husband and father, John Leason and son and brother, John Leason, Jr.



Over the summer, harbor seals frolicked in the New York harbor off of Staten Island's coast. On a trip to San Francisco's Pt. Reyes, my life partner, Alan and I spotted tons of elephant seals sunning on the rocks. Harbor seals also inhabit the Pacific coastal waters.

Through this multigenerational service, we'll explore through story and song, the diversity of marine and wildlife and its health and vitality given the effects of humans on our ecosystem and the interdependent web.

Everyone is invited to bring a small container of water (either virtual or real) that represents something you learned or an experience you had during your summer journeys. This Sunday marks the beginning of our church year as we gather together again for worship and fellowship. Following the service, we'll continue the celebration with our annual picnic.

Sunday, September 20, *Creating Sacred Space and Community Partnerships*

In the Pulpit: The New Dollars, New Partners training team (Rev. Susan Karlson and John Adrian, Christine Johnson, Kate Neilsen, Kathy Santo, Tom Seluga)
Guest Musician: Jenn Lindsay



Partners For Sacred Spaces was founded in 1989 by a national task force of religious, historic preservation and philanthropic leaders. Partners provides assistance to the people who care for sacred places while promoting a new understanding of how these places sustain communities.

The Unitarian Church of Staten Island is now part of Partners for Sacred Spaces and six of us are attending training modules along with other Unitarian Universalist congregations in the Metro New York area this year. This service will explore how we create sustainable partnerships in the community, using our major asset—our beautiful old buildings and grounds—to house, foster and reinforce our mission to be an integral part of the Staten Island community.

There will be a tree dedication in memory of Gloria Benbow in the Memorial Garden on Sunday, September 20th immediately after the service. Everyone is welcome.

Sunday, September 27, *This Moment Called Now with Gini Courter*

In the pulpit: Unitarian Universalist Association Moderator, Gini Courter
Music: Dr. Carolyn Clark



We are delighted to welcome the moderator of the Unitarian Universalist Association, Gini Courter, to our pulpit. Gini's message will be fueled by the time she spends with us on Saturday during a morning and afternoon session at the Unitarian Church of Staten Island (please see Upcoming Events section elsewhere in this newsletter.) Gini brings heaping doses of compassion, dedication, passion, insight, experience, wisdom and wit. Don't miss this service. It will enliven your spirits and engage your body, mind and spirit.

Simply Susan

At our congregational meeting last June, we passed a vision and mission statement. It represents our best efforts to get at what drives the programs, projects and sense of purpose at the heart of this community. Sometimes, Vision and Mission Statements are passed and they get put on a shelf or in a closet, and no one really knows where they live or when we reviewed them. I hope that isn't the case now. Here are the Statements we passed in June:

Vision

We are an inviting spiritual community guided by our principles in all that we do.

Mission

The mission of the UCSI is to:

- open our hearts and home in order to enrich our community;
- extend ourselves to help make the world a better place;
- support and nurture people as they search for their own truth; and,
- share the responsibility for sustaining our cherished home.

This year, the Worship Arts Committee, the Church Council and I have proposed a theme for the Church year—"Deepening roots, extending branches". I heard from a number of you last year about your concern that we have been too internally focused as we searched for a minister and began the transition to a new settled minister. People want the Unitarian Church of Staten Island to extend into the community, to do more than house the Homeless (as important as that is) and rent or provide space to non-profit organization and groups. I believe this theme and our Mission and Vision Statements are interwoven and can guide us in setting our priorities this year and for years to come.

Our new Religious Education Coordinator, Megan Lloyd Joiner, and Religious Education chair, Simone Andrews, have been working together to envision this coming year for our youth and families. And their plans include extending ourselves beyond our nuclear church family, supporting and nurturing our youth as they search for their own spiritual roots and branches. I am eager for them to share their planning with all of you.

Our worship services will explore deepening and extending ourselves through the intermingling of our individual spiritual journeys that also inform and propel our actions as a church. Please give me your feedback about particular themes and topics you would like us to focus on this year. I am eager for your participation in helping this year to be meaningful, and motivate us to play a part in blessing the world, individually and collectively. We will embark on an interim music year. Our beloved Music Director, Dr. Carolyn Clark, will continue as music director on half the Sundays. On the other Sundays, we will have guest musicians and explore spreading our musical branches out in many directions.

I also plan to rename the new member orientation classes to Roots and Branches. These classes are open to people who are considering membership in the Unitarian Church of Staten Island and who want to explore what it might mean to be a part of exploring our deep roots and how to be part of deciding how we want to extend our branches and partner with others in the community. I am planning to take another look at the Small Group Ministry program put in place two years ago and determine how we can invigorate that program and help it spread out to many more members and friends.

I started my summer by tackling some leftover issues from the spring. By mid-summer, I participated in a wonderful yoga workshop and headed out for a vacation to San Francisco. Just last week, I attended an intensive workshop on Adaptive Leadership in Boston. I return to this church year, rested and looking forward to seeing familiar faces and hearing your voices again. I anticipate meeting and welcoming some people I have been talking to over the summer. I am writing a story for the Water Ceremony that will use some puppets my daughter and I got on the West Coast. I am excited about Gini Courter's visit and many of you getting the opportunity to meet a Unitarian Universalist lay leader who is an inspiration and model for so many Unitarian Universalists.

How will you deepen the roots that have nourished and sustained you throughout your life? In what ways will you extend the branches of peace, justice and compassion beyond your solitary life into the great forest of our communities and the world? These are the questions that will shape our growth this year.

See you in September,
Susan

Greetings from Religious Education!

Welcome back to a new year of community, growth, visioning, reflection, and spirit building! As *new* Religious Education Chair, I join Megan Joiner, our *new* Religious Education Coordinator, in a shared sense of enthusiasm for what the year has in store for our burgeoning program. We are inspired by the work of our predecessors, Patricia Murphy and Sara Dolinar, who have been unwavering in their support of the program. As we move forward, our hope is to draw from their insight and the support of Reverend Susan Karlson in exploring the vision of religious education at the Unitarian Church of Staten Island. This process of exploration has involved redefining our roles (Religious Education Coordinator, Chair, and Committee), identifying the needs of the religious education program, and realizing a vision of collaboration that draws from the strengths within our multigenerational, eclectic, community. We are boldly "going there" – thinking inside and outside of the box. We invite you to join us in this exciting journey!

One of the fruits of our exploration has involved re-conceptualizing leadership and involvement in our Religious Education program. The spirit of UCSI, has always been one of collaboration, drawing from each individuals ideas in order to realize a goal. Megan's new role as Religious Education *Coordinator* expresses the spirit of collaboration that we are working towards. We extend to all members opportunities to lead and contribute in a variety of capacities. Join us on September 20th at 10am or talk to Megan or Simone to learn more about RE and how you can be involved.

In considering congregational support of the religious education program, we have identified "people needs" and "material needs." Enclosed in this issue is a "wish list" for our downstairs classroom space and youth loft. Throughout the year, we will invite you to join the fun of bringing more multigenerational events to UCSI! We are in the process of reflecting upon how children and youth are integrated into programming and planning here at UCSI. For instance, we would like a child or youth represented in each religious education event committees because their voices and vision are critical parts of the process. Finally, I would like to close with the theme for this year Reverend Susan Karlson introduced at a recent council meeting: "Deepening roots and spreading branches." This image truly captures the driving force in RE. We seek to strengthen the core of religious education, while we extend our branches to the congregation at large.

Best Regards,

Simone Andrews,
Religious Education Chair

Children's Corner

We want to hear about your summer! Please draw a description of your most favorite summer time moment, write a description of your favorite summer moment or do both!



Tell us about yourself

What is your favorite color?

What is your favorite book?

What is your favorite movie?

What do you like the most about yourself?

We invite you to support our children and youth in the following ways:

People Power!

Adult Mentors for Coming of Age Youth (middle school and high school)

Volunteer Assistant Teachers for Coming of Age and Early Childhood Room

Contributions – Clean out those closets!

Vacuum cleaner or sweeper
Portable crib
Early childhood/infant toys, board books
Rugs and wall decorations (hangings, posters, etc)
CD Player

Materials!

Card board
Paints (Poster Paint, Water Colors)
Paintbrushes
Newspaper

UPCOMING EVENTS:

The will be interior and exterior clean-up parties at the church on **Saturday, September 12th and Saturday, September 19th, from 9 to 3** in preparation for the visit on September 26th and 27th of UUA Moderator Gini Courter as well as the dedication of the newest floral addition to our Memorial Garden on Sunday, September 20th.
Just as we put forth a special effort to spruce-up our buildings and grounds for Susan Karlson's Installation in April, so we are going to put forth a special effort to clean-up for Gini Courter's visit and the Memorial Garden tree dedication.
Mark your calendars and gather your vacuums, dusters, &c. for both of these Saturday work parties.
John Adrian, Buildings & Grounds Chair

RE Upcoming Events

August 29th 9:30am – 12pm

RE Committee and Teacher Gathering: “Vision, Collaboration, Community”

September 13th

Homecoming Picnic

RE Children’s Book Swap

September 20th 10 am (before service)

Introduction to Religious Education 2009-2010

BUILDING BRIDGES - CONNECTING ALL OF HUMANITY

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

An Interfaith Gathering for Reflection & Hope

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13th, 2009

2PM – 5PM

Our Journey Will Begin at
Mount Sinai United Christian Church
15 Pike Street & 199 Victory Boulevard 10301

On Foot We Will Journey to
Trinity Lutheran Church
309 Saint Paul’s Avenue 10301
Then Return to St. Philip’s and

Then Return to Mount Sinai and
Travel to the Buddhist Temple
115 – John Street 10302



For more Information call 718/447-8583

Roots and Branches

Discover the rich taproots and the spreading branches making up the Unitarian Church of Staten Island



Two Sundays, September 20, 2009 and October 4th From 1-4 p.m.

In the library at the Unitarian Church of Staten Island

Join members of the Membership Committee and Rev. Susan Karlson for the spirited *Root and Branches* workshops. Learn about the history of Unitarian Universalism through a wonderful DVD, *Our American Roots*. Share with others about your journey to find the Unitarian Church of Staten Island. Hear about this church and its many programs and its place on Staten Island. Tell us about your needs for a religious community. Find out how to become a member or simply how to get more involved in this 156-year-old church that continues to be a beacon of liberty, justice and spiritual nurture right here in Staten Island.

Contact Rev. Susan Karlson at (347) 466-0864, PSKARL3@gmail.com for more information or to register and insure we have enough handouts .

Saturday Workshops with Gini Courter, Moderator of the Unitarian Universalist Association

On **Saturday morning, September 26th**, Gini Courter, will facilitate a 3 hour workshop, for the Unitarian Church of Staten Island entitled "**Strategies for Tough Times**". Given the tough economic times we face in this country, how do we strategize so that our church is a vital, healthy, welcoming and financially sound spiritual center in Staten Island and beyond? Please RSVP to the minister by e mailing her at PSKARL3@gmail.com or calling (347) 466-0864. We will have light refreshments before the program begins at 8:30 am and begin the workshop at 9 am.

Saturday Afternoon at the Sacred Cow Barbeque (a non-contemplative workshop experience) takes place on **Saturday, September 26th, from 1–4 pm**, at the Unitarian Church of Staten Island. This workshop is open to the member congregations in the New York Metro District. "We live in a country in desperate need of Unitarian Universalist values, lived large. If we want our communities to become more just, more equitable, more compassionate, we must focus our congregations to serve the change we want to see. This afternoon will talk about: welcoming and hospitality, Unitarian Universalist identity, governance (yes, governance – and why we should even care, shared ministry, and doing church, doing justice." – Gini Courter

****Note:** There is no literal barbeque, but light refreshments will be served. There is no cost to attend.

Register on line at: <https://www.formdesk.com/uufirms/SacredCow>

Questions? Contact Susan Karlson at PSKARL3@gmail.com or calling (347) 466-0864.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES, SATURDAY JUNE 20, 2009

PRESENT – 38 members in attendance
Meeting called to order at 11:05 A.M.

Previous Annual Meeting minutes accepted as presented.

Minister's Report

A copy of Rev. Susan Karlson's full report was presented prior to the meeting. Rev. Karlson highlighted:

- The work of the Membership Committee including establishing a full Caring Team and active Sunshine Committee. She thanked Carol Lodato for her wonderful service as Membership Chair.
- The various committees for the collaborative services conducted throughout the church year.
- Peter Yourke's resignation as Co-Music Director and thanked him for his long-standing service.
- The work of the expanded Church Council
- The work of the interim Committee on the Ministry (COM)
- The work of Patricia Murphy as Religious Education Director and her service; she noted that an offer has been extended to Megan Joiner for Religious Education Coordinator.

President's Report

A copy of Kathy Santo's full report was presented prior to the meeting. Kathy stated that, "this past year has been a real learning experience." She thanked everyone for everything they do for the church: "it makes my job so much easier."

Treasurer's Report

Harry Hicks presented the Supplement to the Annual Report displaying the value of existing church assets. It was confirmed that the church does not presently have an investment adviser but the Finance Committee will look into securing this type of service in the upcoming church year.

Standing Committee Reports

Copies of all Committee Reports were submitted prior to the meeting. Kathy Santo commended Stella, Church Secretary, for getting the reports out on time and for converting them to pdf formats. Some committees offered corrections or highlights:

Memorial Garden Committee – Ben Jacobs' burial did not take place in Brooklyn; that reference was in regards to Del Eberhardt's service.

Arts/Welcoming Congregation Committee – Larry Schwabacher mentioned the recent staging of a Playwrights Forum raising a total of \$627 of which \$313 was donated to the church. Larry also noted the successful June 14 Pride Service with Claudette Duff and noted the committee's work this year despite the presence of a committee chair.

Social Concerns – Mary Campbell mentioned the upcoming Cindy Sheehan event to be held on June 24.

Special Committee/Task Force Reports

No additional information provided.

Nominations

Proposed slate of officers read by Carol Lodato, Chair of the Nominating Committee.

Request for nominations of officers from the floor. (None). **Motion to accept the slate as presented. Motion seconded.**

The Officer Slate:

President: Kathy Santo
VP: Rona Solomon
Secretary: Ruth Benson
Treasurer: Harry Hicks

Three new Trustees:

Susan Flynn (3-year term)
Joan Pipkins (3-year term)
Janet Wassmuth (3-year term)

Steve Nutt (1-year term)
Nominating Committee:
Christine Johnson
Patricia Murphy

Motion to have Secretary cast one ballot for the slate. Accepted by Secretary.

Installation of Officers and Trustees

Susan had all read aloud a pact between trustees and congregation. Kathy Santo and Rev. Karlson presented flowers and pins, as tokens of appreciation, to departing Board members, new Board members and Committee Chairs.

New Business

Vision/Mission Statement. Motion to accept the Vision/Mission Statement as presented. **MOTION CARRIED. (29 yea, 3 nay, 3 abstentions).** Discussion around why not split the vision and mission statement and what would happen if the vision/mission statement was not approved. Kathy Santo that she would prefer not to split the two statements because there were numerous cottage meetings where opinions and feedback were already given and that the vision and mission statements were changed accordingly. If the vision/mission statement is not passed, then the church leaders would do this work all over again. A question arose about whether the church has had one in the past. The answer was, yes, but that not always necessarily used in a broad way. A recommendation for voting for the vision/mission statement was made by Christine Johnson as an aid to securing grant monies.

Advisory Vote on Committee on the Ministry Model and Slate. Motion to enact the COM model and the suggested committee members (Claudette Duff, Jill Hueckel and Linda Santlofer). **MOTION NOT CARRIED. (14 yea, 16 nay, 2 abstentions).** Discussion around the purpose of the new COM model and that there has been confusion about the purpose of this group. Does it only act as intermediary between those in conflict or is there a larger purpose with regards to advising on other church matters. Questions around whether the role of the COM was active or passive? How does it serve in an advisory and educational manner? Another concern was raised about the lack of diversity on the COM (older females) and about the perceived lack of professional mediation skills (Rev. Karlson affirmed that two out of the three members are in social work and that a third performs similar work; she affirmed that professional considerations were taken into account in the three people nominated for the COM.) A suggestion was made that COM members be asked to sign confidentiality statements. Some members of the interim COM group apologized for the lack of clarity and appearance of lack of transparency. Kathy Santo said she would take the vote under advisement and bring it back to the Board.

Adoption of the Budget. Motion to approve the budget as presented. **MOTION CARRIED. (27 yea, 3 nay, 2 abstentions).** Discussion centered around which lay positions are paid and which are unpaid (“accustomed to seeing some of the paid positions in other churches be done by volunteers”) and how the church determines wages. Question regarding the use of the term “endowment”. Janet Wassmuth insisted that Ilse Gillam did indeed bequeath money to the church. Susanne O’Callaghan will follow up on the paperwork. Concerns from some members that part time staff do not qualify for benefits. Kathy Santo suggested bringing this issue up with the Personnel Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 12:45 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Marjorie Ramos, Acting Secretary

Summary: Board of Trustees Meetings, 7/8/09 and 8/209

Treasurer’s Report – May 31 through July 31, 2009:

Total Income YTD	\$12,991.53
Total Expense	\$16,055.55
Deficit	(\$3,064.02)

New Youth RE Coordinator:

Megan Lloyd Joiner, MDiv, UCSI Youth Religious Education Coordinator, assumed her position during the month of August. (More information about Megan in this newsletter.)

Free Will Donations:

Board approved free will donations for Summer Forum presentations, and for Fair Trade coffee at Hospitality Hour on Sundays, beginning in September.

Board of Trustees Retreat:

September 19, from 1:00 to 4:00 in the Parish Hall: The Board will hold a retreat to brief new trustees on recent issues and policy.

Committee Reports:

1) Arts Committee:

- Crafts Workshop, October 3rd, in preparation for the Jolly Holly Fair.
- Field Trip to Brooklyn Museum on Nov. 7th to view Judy Chicago’s “Dinner Party” now permanently installed in the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art.

2) Memorial Garden Committee:

The annual Memorial Garden service in October will be followed by an Interfaith Forum on commemorations for the dead in diverse faith traditions.

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Benson, Board Secretary

*****THE DEADLINE FOR ALL NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS WILL BE THE 15TH OF EVERY MONTH. PLEASE SEND TO STELLA FISHMAN, OFFICE SECRETARY AT: UUCSI.org@verizon.net

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