

THE UNITARIAN NEWSLETTER a publication of

# THE Unitarian Church of Staten Island

Founded in 1852

Rev. Susan Karlson, Minister  
Parsonage: 718-442-1012  
Cell phone: 347-466-0864  
E-mail: PSKARL3@gmail.com  
Rev. Benjamin D. Bortin, Minister Emeritus  
312 Fillmore St., Staten Island, NY 10301  
Church Phone & Fax: 718-447-2204  
Office Email: uucsi.org@verizon.net  
Website: www.uucsi.org

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**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.

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Director of Religious Education Coordinator, Megan Lloyd Joiner  
Director of Music, Dr. Carolyn Clark

Church Secretary, Stella Fishman  
Supervisor of Buildings & Grounds, Brian Fontana  
Building Attendant, Frank Caterina

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## UPCOMING SERVICES:

**This month we focus on The Path of Heart, widening our heart, embracing and accepting ourselves and others.**

**February 7, 10:45 a.m.**

*“Putting Youth First—What We’d Do For Our Youth and What That Will Do For All Of Us”*

*In the pulpit:* Rev. Susan Karlson

Guest Musician: Kiya Heartwood

Songwriter/ Composer Kiya Heartwood is half of the folk and roll duo, *Wishing Chair* ([www.wishingchair.com](http://www.wishingchair.com)) Kiya's larger works are performed in many

diverse areas; song cycles for women's choruses, operettas for young people, and The Gaia Psalms , an earth-based mass for UU congregations, with narration by Rev. Meg Barnhouse. Kiya is currently a Music Composition graduate student at Westminster Choir College in Princeton. ([www.kiyaheartwood.com](http://www.kiyaheartwood.com)).



How do we create a vibrant, vital youth program, building on the youth program we already have? How do we understand what youth want and what our whole community needs? Opening our hearts to youth in our midst is a ministry in itself. This service explores what if we put our youth first—how would that change their lives **and** all of us.

[http://ts3.mm.bing.net/images/thumbnail.aspx?q=1438255945454&id=570cba795db80abc636a87884b76f7c4&url=http%3a%2f%2fwww.srichinmoypoetry.com%2faphorisms%2fimagelib%2fed%2fstanding\\_hearts](http://ts3.mm.bing.net/images/thumbnail.aspx?q=1438255945454&id=570cba795db80abc636a87884b76f7c4&url=http%3a%2f%2fwww.srichinmoypoetry.com%2faphorisms%2fimagelib%2fed%2fstanding_hearts)

**February 14, 10:45 a.m.**

*“Re-Imagining Valentine’s Day –It Takes All Kinds of Love”*

*In the pulpit:* Rev. Susan Karlson and the

Welcoming Congregation Committee

Music: Dr. Carolyn Clark



This morning’s service is about opening our hearts to wider circles of inclusion and hospitality. Come and renew your commitment to “all kinds of love” in our month-long theme on The Path of Heart.



**February 21, 10:45 a.m.**

*“Beyond Sisyphus—Don’t Roll That Stone Alone”*

*In the pulpit:* Rev. Susan Karlson

The Greek mythical character Sisyphus has to roll a giant boulder up a hill. By the time, he gets to the top, he has to start all over again. We, in our lives, also have certain habits and patterns akin to rolling a stone uphill. How can we

awaken the spirit of community and enlarge our hearts to at least roll the stone together or get a new vision of stone rolling?

<http://z.about.com/d/ancienthistory/1/G/p/H/Sisyphus.jpg>

**February 28, 10:45 a.m.**

***“Children of Immigrants”***

*In the pulpit:* Rev. Susan Karlson

Music: Dr. Carolyn Clark

## ***The Path of Heart In Winter***

***Simply Susan***

February, 2010



The snow blanketed the earth as it fell. Have you ever heard the sound of snow falling? It almost whispers. Outside, I walked around the small circular path outside the meditation center, round and round. Each time I got to the wooden post I paused, reoriented myself, gave thanks and began again. I opened my mouth to capture the snowflakes just as I did when I was a child. As I walked, I began to reflect on my relationship with snow—when had snow become something scary? When was it something I wanted to avoid at all costs? I asked myself these questions, not seeking an answer or an exact time frame. I wanted to know how I could move so far from the child in photographs with my cousin and the little red sled savoring the snow. I wanted to know how my mind turned snow into a kind of aversion. And then I stopped. I knelt down on the ground and I looked at the snow falling. I mean I really looked at the snow falling—right then and there. I began to weep and then alternately, I began to laugh. I thought this might appear crazy to some folks but all of a sudden, I feel more whole, more peaceful, more alive than I have in years. I began to feel the wonder of winter as a child takes in each snowflake tasting it on the tongue, making snow angels and building snow forts. And I felt the peace and tenderness of that moment—the exquisite presence of winter. It filled my heart and it remains with me as I tell this story to you.

We grow up and we take on the busy minds of adults—so much to do, so many places to be, so much to accomplish. We talk about the weather—too hot in summer, too cold in winter. Sometimes, we sound a little like that story of the three bears. We wish this moment away. We want time to fly. Somehow in growing up, we lose the wonder of winter, the quiet beauty of the snow falling on frozen ground, the fragile ice that covers the ponds, the thicket of a beaver’s den when all the water in their world is frozen, the frantic activity of the squirrels, the snow laden belly of a chickadee. Those experiences didn’t go anywhere; we just seldom take them in, notice that they are there—gifts given without asking.

We in this church community also have been given gifts. The gifts of our ancestors who built this church, who cared about it and stashed away old photos and archives of their contributions, of what this place meant to them. How often do we just sit in the church pews and enjoy the craft of those who designed our rose window or reach out and touch of the old wood in the pews? What would it take for us to be present to this moment, to what is offered to us this very second as I write and you read this sentence?

We are in a time of transition. A colleague of mine, John Gibb Millspaugh, differentiates between change and transition. This church is going through a time of change as a community, looking at how we define this moment in time, how to move towards our vision of what this church can be. But each of us is also going through a transition, grieving in a way as this moment changes to the next, as we leave behind what we have known and experience the next instant. Some of us experience the transition with eager anticipation. Others of us feel sad or concerned about what lies ahead. No one’s feelings are right or wrong. They just are. In order to build a community of enlarged heart and vision, we need to be present to one another, right now. We need to stop and feel the winter season in its totality, care for one another wherever we are in that transition cycle. This brings peace and serenity—although not always right away.

May you experience this holy moment that is yours right now. May you find the Path of Heart this winter.

Be well,  
Susan

<http://ts2.mm.bing.net/images/thumbnail.aspx?q=1604475816945&id=90d2a3915fcbe8900c994e60c0217b03&url=http%3a%2f%2fi33.photobucket.com%2falbuns%2fd61%2fiiirednecrebel06%2ficons%2520pixels%2520photos%2fhearts.jpg>

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### **RE News:**

The new year began with the UCSI tradition of the Religious Exploration Fundraiser, coordinated by our resident chefs, Susan Flynn, Sarah Dolinar and Linda Santlofer! The fundraiser has a rich history with the church, beginning 19 years ago, when Susan Flynn’s children and many other now-grown “alums” attended RE. Today, the tradition continues with preparation that Sarah shares takes place over the course of 20 hours, spanning 3 days! Many thanks are extended to all who worked the Spaghetti Dinner, contributing time to setting up, clean up, food preparation, raffle donations, entertainment, kitchen help and donations of refreshments (which were plentiful). We would like to take time to especially acknowledge the following individuals who contributed to a fun evening!

Rona Solomon (veggie lasagna/entertainment)  
Stan, Mark and Ray Vassar Semanchik (Table and chair set up, food service)  
Megan Joiner (kids craft table and decorating)  
Tom Seluga, Delia Vassar-Semanchik, Susannah Dolinar (food service)  
Maureen and Mike Curan (kitchen help and clean up)  
Morna and Ralph Martel (cashier/door keeper)  
Many thanks to all those in attendance and all of you who continue to support the Religious Exploration program throughout the year.

**Upcoming RE Events****RE Advance: Building Foundations for the Future****Saturday, February 13, 2010, 9 am – 3 pm****Led by Andrea Learner, UUA Metro New York District Executive**

This day-long workshop is not a "retreat." It is an "RE Advance!" If the Unitarian Church of Staten Island is committed to a thriving Religious Exploration program, then we need to work together as an entire congregation to identify concrete steps for building support for and participation in the program as we *advance* into 2010 and beyond. Together, we will explore the congregation's history and its relationship to RE, its current functioning and "culture", and mutual hopes for the future. Through this process of sharing and familiarization, a set of goals and action steps can be identified for the RE program and congregation as a whole.

The clarification of expectations, goals, and ways of relating within the congregation with regards to Religious Exploration help establish a stable and healthy environment in which the RE Program can grow and flourish.

Representation from Board or Council leaders as well as RE parents, youth, and congregation members is necessary as we move forward! We look forward to seeing you there and will share details very soon.

*Andrea has a distinguished career of service to*

*the UUA including work as a Director of Religious Education for many years. The District Executive is responsible for consulting with congregations throughout the district and providing resources, support and programming. It is an honor to have Andrea join us!*

**SPRING IS COMING!**

*Do you have a programming idea you would like to help organize for a particular age group? April is Earth Month and a wonderful opportunity for those interested in introducing a special topic to the children in the RE space. Multigenerational project ideas are always a welcomed consideration!*

**In inclement weather, please call the church office (718) 447-2204, or the parsonage, at (718) 442-1012 to find out if services or a particular program will be canceled.**

**Sunday Service Reminder:**

Please note the following times for Sunday services:

Musical Prelude: 10:45 am

Worship Service: 11:00 am

***The deadline for Announcements or Inserts for the Order of Service is 9 a.m. each Tuesday***

**JUST A REMINDER:** Please update change in address, phone number or new e-mail addresses by informing the church secretary, Stella Fishman, at 718-447-2204, or, e-mailing her at [uucsi.org@verizon.net](mailto:uucsi.org@verizon.net). Thank you.

**Greeters are still needed**, people should e-mail me at [Oltari67@gmail.com](mailto:Oltari67@gmail.com) to sign up, speak with me at church or call the church office to leave me a message. – Maureen Curran, Greeter's Chair

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**February 5- 7:30pm: FRIDAY FILM Screening** with discussion following of "Capitalism Hits the Fan"

University of Massachusetts Economics Professor Richard Wolff breaks down the root causes of today's economic crisis, showing how it was decades in the making and in fact reflects seismic failures within the structures of American-style capitalism itself.

Wolff traces the source of the economic crisis to the 1970s, when wages began to stagnate and American workers were forced into a dysfunctional spiral of borrowing and debt that ultimately exploded in the mortgage meltdown.

By placing the crisis within this larger historical and systemic frame, Wolff argues convincingly that the proposed government "bailouts," stimulus packages, and calls for increased market regulation will not be enough to address the real causes of the crisis - in the end

suggesting that far more fundamental change will be necessary to avoid future catastrophes.

Richly illustrated with motion graphics and charts, this is a superb introduction designed to help ordinary citizens understand, and react to, the unraveling economic crisis. 57 minutes  
<http://www.capitalismhitsthefan.com/>

Part of the "Friday Film" series, sponsored by the Unitarian Church of Staten Island and Peace Action of Staten Island. The church is located at 312 Fillmore Street near Snug Harbor. There is a \$5 suggested donation (\$2 students), free refreshments

**Membership:** We are planning another Unitarian Church of Staten Island Roots and Branches class in the next month or two. Please sign up if you are interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism, this church and are considering membership. Please call Rev. Susan Karlson at (347) 466-0864 or e mail her at [PSKARL3@gmail.com](mailto:PSKARL3@gmail.com). There will be a sign up sheet on the bulletin board of the Parish Hall. Let Susan know what days of the week and times are good for you and whether or not you might need childcare in order to attend.

**From the President.....**

Thank you all for participating in our Winter Solstice Celebration, Sunday evening, Dec. 20. Despite the weather, performers arrived in good spirits as did the the audience. Thanks to the Korten Spillane family, Brendan, Jennifer, Caitroina and Aidan and to Patricia Murphy, Rev. Karlson, John Adrian, Steve Nutt, Jill Hueckel, and Mary Campbell. A special thanks to the Halve Maen for coming from the other boroughs to bring us their great dancing on such a cold eve.

Thanks,

Kathy

The Bylaws Revision Committee will have a copy of the revised bylaws available for the congregation in the next week or two. The committee will conduct an informational meeting about the revisions in the Sanctuary on Sunday, February 21 from one to three pm. A congregational meeting has been tentatively scheduled for Sunday, February 28 in the sanctuary. from one to three pm. at which time the congregation will have the opportunity to vote on the revised bylaws.

**CIRCLE SUPPERS:** Please sign up with Sarah Dolinar and Susan Flynn, membership co-chairs, to participate in circle suppers – groups of eight members/newcomers that will meet once a month for potlucks in each others homes (or alternate locations) to get to know each other better. The groups will be reorganized after four months or so. We need a few more participants to move forward. Expected start date for the program – January 2010.

### ARTS PROGRAM COMMITTEE NEWS!

Exploring our feminist roots and in preparation for our Goddess Reclamation Project Workshop on February 6, 2010, nine UCSI members gathered at the Brooklyn Museum to spend time with Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party". Risa Anderson is leading this project and was joined by Athena Huckaby, Carol Lodato, Patricia Murphy, Larry Schwabacher, Diane Sorowitz, Mike Anderson and Loretta Choquet. The exhibit is beautiful and brilliantly displayed with rich material support describing the significance, iconography, and its creative process with posters, banners and a video. Catch the flavor of the exhibit by going to [Brooklynmuseum.org](http://Brooklynmuseum.org) and click on the exhibit.

### Ministerial Relations Committee

The MRC was appointed by the Board of Trustees to serve as a liaison between the congregation and the minister. Members are Linda Santlofer, Claudette Duff, and Jill Hueckel, chair. Rev. Karlson serves as a member ex-officio. It is our purpose to listen to the concerns of the congregation as they relate to the church and minister, as well as the concerns of the minister, and to provide feedback. Our main goal is to strengthen the means of communication in order to support the mission of the church. We believe this will enrich our community and help sustain our cherished home. Members are available during coffee hour (look for the name tags with blue doves coming soon) or may be contacted at the following numbers:  
 Jill Hueckel 718-448-1431 [hueckel@si.rr.com](mailto:hueckel@si.rr.com)  
 Susan Karlson 347-466-0864 [pskarl3@gmail.com](mailto:pskarl3@gmail.com)  
 Linda Santlofer 718-447-5736 [lsantlofer@aol.com](mailto:lsantlofer@aol.com)  
 Claudette Duff 917-699-1259  
[directo@integrityseniors.com](mailto:directo@integrityseniors.com)

### Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes December 9, 2009

#### Called to order at 8:10 PM

**Present:** Kathy Santo (presiding), Harry Hicks, Rona Solomon, Kevin Clark, Stephen Nutt, Susan Flynn, Brendan Spillane, Maureen Curran, Ann Kalil, Joan Pipkins, Rev. Susan Karlson and Ruth Benson

**Absent:** Janet Wassmuth

#### Chalice Lighting:

Board Covenant led by Kathy Santo:  
*"Mindful of the search for truth and the spirit of love, I, as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Church of Staten Island, will be prepared, arrive on time, listen respectfully and contribute to problem solving to accomplish the goals we set. I will partake in the fellowship of this small group that affirms my values in its mission within the meetings and throughout other church activities."*

**Minutes Nov 11, 2009 Board meeting:**  
 Copies distributed prior to meeting. Minutes accepted with one abstention.

#### President's Report:

Kathy Santo reported that she did not attend the Jolly Holly Fair for the first time, due to a conflicting family wedding. She reported that she had a productive meeting with the Bylaws Committee and is looking forward to a completed revision ready for review very soon. She also reports that she plans to donate the brass quintet recital she bid on and won at the Church Auction as a fundraiser for the Church.

#### Minister's Report:

Rev. Karlson distributed her report prior to the meeting.

#### Treasurer's Report – May 31 through Nov 30, 2009:

Total Income YTD	\$48,096.73
Total Expense	\$73,709.39
Deficit	(\$25,612.66)

Harry Hicks reports additional funds, in the amount of \$797.00, were raised in three additional fundraisers during the fall.

Board suggested a budget line modification to "Directors of Music" with a line to reflect "Guest Musician" retroactive to September.

Motion to accept Treasurer's Report was passed with one abstention.

#### Committee Reports:

##### 1) By-Laws Committee:

Kathy Santo will meet with Lillian Orrok to type up the changes to the bylaws for presentation to the Board and then to the congregation.

##### 2) Membership:

Part II of a membership workshop "Close the Revolving Door" focused on how to keep newcomers and members, based on a DVD full of successful and proven strategies developed by the UUA congregation of Golden, Colorado, will be held in January on a date to be determined.

##### 3) Religious Exploration:

Traditional RE Spaghetti Dinner will be held on January 10 in the Parish Hall.

##### 4) Church Council meeting:

The next Church Council meeting will be held on Saturday, Jan 30 in the Parish Hall at 10:00 a.m.

#### Old Business:

##### 1) Certificate of Occupancy:

The engineer has been asked to redo some drawings; changes to conform to what is there. No further funds to be paid until this work is completed.

##### 2) Gift Policy:

Review of two gift acceptance policies and guidelines, which encourage gifts that will provide permanent funding to help the Church fulfill its mission. The proposals will be directed to the Finance Committee for their review and recommendations.

#### New Business:

##### 1) Buildings & Grounds:

John Adrian, chair of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, reported that the work on the parsonage roof has been satisfactorily completed and that leaks in the parish hall roof have been repaired at additional expense of \$2,000. There was another additional expense of \$950 for new gutters. The church has an outstanding balance on the bill of \$6,900.

Steve Nutt made a motion to immediately pay the outstanding balance on the completed work. Kevin Clark seconded the motion. Motion passed: 8 yes, 2 abstentions

**2) Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Team**

Rev. Karlson reported that she has been honored with an invitation to join The UU Trauma Response Board. She states that the requirements of her dual role as an active member of the Trauma Response Team and a member of the UU Trauma Response Board will not conflict with her role as minister of the UCSI; there is no obligation to assist at any specific disaster or traumatic event. Additionally, her service on this team and on its Board will reflect on our congregation's ability to participate in the wider Unitarian Universalist Association.

Rona Solomon moved to support Rev. Karlson's participation with the UU Trauma Response Team and her position on their Board with a letter from the UCSI Board confirming her qualifications. Joan Pipkins seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Ruth Benson, Board Secretary, will draft the letter.

**3) Small Group Ministry:**

The Board agreed to a reinvigoration of the Small Group Ministry, which was begun during Rev. Edmund Robinson's tenure as interim minister. Judy Davison and Jill Hueckel, current members of the one remaining Small Group, have agreed to coordinate this effort with Rev. Karlson.

**4) Concrete Goals for Board/Church/Top Priority:**

The Board agreed that the most pressing goal for the UCSI is the development of a capital campaign. The first steps include the formation of an ad hoc capital campaign planning committee, a feasibility study, and determination of the goals of such a campaign.

Suggestions include: determine mission-driven improvements to the church. Improved accessibility: change the seating in the sanctuary by removing the pews and opening up the space for

multiple uses; incorporate Brad Greene's plan for new handicapped entrance to the parish hall; dialogue with the congregation/survey their ideas and priorities for improvements to the physical plant.

**5) Cuba/NYC School Supplies Project:**

Maureen Curran reported that her son Daniel Stein, who is also a member of the UCSI, has initiated a project to promote friendship between school children in Cuba and the United States, through a program in which children in the NYC area would send school supplies to children in Cuba. He would like to come to the UCSI to promote the program and solicit donations for the work during Hospitality hour on an upcoming Sunday. Board agreed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Ruth Benson, Board Secretary

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**February, 2010 Volunteer Schedule:**

**Greeters:** February greeters are:  
Richard and Margaret Currie  
Cynthia Wong and Megan Lee

**Hospitality:** 2/07/10: Ruth & Randy Leason  
14: Virginia Allen & Steve Nutt  
21: Cynthia Wong  
28: Rona Solomon & John Bostrom

**Flowers:** 2/07/10: Loretta Choquet/  
Diane Sorowitz  
14: Virginia Allen  
21: Marilyn Brook  
28: Viola Proeller

**UCSI SUPER BOWL PARTY  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2010**



**5 PM - PARISH HALL  
\$10 p/p - \$25/per family**

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