

UCSI

NEWSLETTER

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Minister: Rev. Susan Karlson; 347-466-0864; minister@uucsi.org

Music Director: Dr. Carolyn Clark; music@uucsi.org

Religious Exploration Coordinator: Michael Porter; michael@uucsi.org

Church Secretary: Stella Fishman; 718-447-2204; office@uucsi.org

Editor: Patricia Murphy; newsletter@uucsi.org

www.unitarianchurchofstatenisland.org

153RD JOLLY HOLLY FAIR - WOW!

Saturday, December 3, 2011

The tide of enthusiasm and interest in this year's Jolly Holly Fair is rising!

Booth team leaders (Judy, Brendan, John, Virginia, and TBA) are gathering stock (think: Boutique, White Elephants, Books, Vintage collectables and crafts) for the December 3rd event.

Randy's recruiting our top cooks and servers for the Cafe. And the Claus's have booked us on their New Brighton rounds. You get the idea.

If you haven't yet found your day-of-the-fair place (think: job), we're ready to add you to the crew.

Leadership help is needed in Vintage, Crafts, and Plants.

See me before or after Sunday Services any upcoming sabbath. Help to set up on Sunday 11/27, after services as well as throughout the week before the fair.

Fair items will be accepted **any Sunday until fair day.**

Steve Nutt, Fair Chair.



Sunday, Nov. 6,
1:30 - 2:30 PM

Uriel Carazo, a former Sandinista militant and co-founder of the Promoters of Peace and Development (Red de Promotores de Paz y de Desarrollo), will present his unique perspective on the effects of US foreign policy on Nicaraguan migration in a public forum, coordinated by our Social Justice Committee and Witness for Peace. All are welcome!

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION PAGE 2

Michael's Message: *We're now a month into the RE school year and we are in full swing! I would like thank all of our volunteers for helping to make this happen, especially our RE Committee, who worked tirelessly (and continues to work) to make my transition as RE Coordinator a smooth process, and also to plan out our RE school year. I would also like to thank our congregation for welcoming me so warmly into the UUCSI family—it's great to be here! I welcome all of you to come to me with any questions or concerns you may have about the program. I'm always looking for feedback to improve the RE experience, and I can only do that with your help. Likewise, we are always looking for volunteer teachers, so please don't hesitate to speak to me if you feel you would like to participate, especially those of you who may have taken some time off from teaching. This is YOUR program, and I want to do everything I can to make it a positive and enriching experience for our entire church family, and with your help we can do it! As a final note, if you have not come down to visit during RE, I invite you to come any time to do so, especially November 6th, which is our next First Sunday children's chapel. On First Sundays I personally teach the children and lead them in activities for that day. I hope to see all of our children there, and continue to look forward to getting to know all of you better in the near future!*

NOVEMBER SCHEDULE**Early Childhood (2-6yrs)**

November 6th: First Sunday Topic TBA
 November 13th: Picture Book Bible Tales: David and Goliath
 November 20th: Thanksgiving/Age of Reason Multi-Generational Service

Explorers (7-13 yrs.)

November 6th : First Sunday Topic TBA
Age of Reason: (after service)
Exploring UU Principle 7 and interviewing board members
 November 13th: Traditions with a Wink: Topic TBA
Age of Reason: (after service) Ceremony rehearsal and interviewing Dr. Carolyn Clark
 November 20th: Thanksgiving/Age of Reason Multi-Generational Service

Youth Group (14-18 yrs.)

November 6th: First Sunday, Topic TBA
 November 13th: Youth meeting
 November 20th: Thanksgiving/Age of Reason Multi-Generational Service

November 27th: NO CLASSES,
 Thanksgiving Weekend

Religious Exploration Event!!!

For the past few weeks the Explorer Group has been interviewing adult members about their religious experience and each participant is constructing a "credo" of his or her own.

Please come support our Explorer Group during the service on November 20th, as they conclude the 7-week curriculum Age of Reason with a special ceremony. The children will perform a UU principle candle lighting, share with the congregation their individual credo statements and sing a song together. This promises to be an important milestone for these children and we hope you will be there to help them celebrate!



**Yucky Zombie at the
 Zombie Fest - what a BLLLLLlast**

NOVEMBER EVENTS

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**Spiritual Cinema: Movies and Moral Issues Nov. 5,
5 pm in the Sanctuary facilitated by Harvey Rosensfit**

What Dreams May Come November's Spiritual Cinema offers a most unusual story of love. "A love that transcends heaven and hell." Chris Nielson (played by Robin Williams) attempts to save his wife from hell, and so share heaven together. An Academy Award winner for best visual effects! Come discover what heaven and hell look like, and a film depicting a deeply moving love. Co-sponsored by Arts Committee.

Chalice Lighter Sunday, Nov. 6th

Joe Jiuliano, a member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Somerset Hills will present their plan to make their building ADA compliant and easily accessible to staff, members and friends. Chosen for the UU District of Metro NY Chalice Lighter Call for this fall, *there will be a Chalice Lighter collection to help them with their project.*

**Church Council Meeting - Sat., Nov. 12,
10:00-12:00 in the Church Hall**

All committee chairs are asked to be there; all members are welcome. Please RSVP to John Adrian if you're coming so there will be enough tables & chairs. If you want refreshments, bring your own, John Adrian

**Path to Membership
Class**

**We're Building a
New Way**

**Sat. Nov. 12,
10-3 in the Library
Explore the UU Path**

**with Rev. Karlson and other
UCSI members!**

**November Services**

November 6, 10:45 a.m. *Do We "...Cheer for an invisible parade": The Spiritual Writings of Flannery O'Connor* Her characters face a moment where the opportunity for grace and redemption enter their lives

November 13, 10:45 a.m. *Seven Billion Sacred Faces: One UU's Humanist Perspective* Patricia Murphy initiates our lay sermon series presenting different perspectives on our common faith.

November 20, 10:45 a.m. *"We Give Thanks: For This Time We Share With Love and Care"*: Rev. Susan Karlson and the "Age of Reason" youth share what the youth learned and experienced in their special class.

November 27, 10:45 a.m. *Singing Out in Thanks*In the pulpit: Rona Solomon Guest Musicians: TBA A Sunday of singing together in thanks and love.

December 4, 10:45 a.m. *A Soul Filled with Light—Bodhi Day* a celebration of the days of the Buddha's enlightenment.

**Meatless Potluck Luncheon
November 20th after Services**

We gather together, as we do every Sunday-before-Thanksgiving to share food while considering how we can end world hunger.

Please bring a meatless dish to this true potluck.

This year, to raise awareness about immigration, our study action issue, if your family has immigrant roots, you are encouraged to bring a dish that reflects your culture.

If your families roots are solidly "American" please bring a dish that reflects your family tradition.

Fall is such a robust season as church activities begin and the weather stimulates a sense of “gathering in”. We started the new film series, “**Spiritual Cinema: Movies and Moral Issues**” in October. We shared diverse perspectives as you would expect from any group of Unitarian Universalists. Come see the November film (*What Dreams May Come*) which will be held on Saturday, November 5th at 5 pm this month.

One of the participants from the new Yoga class gave this unsolicited comment: “Last night **Yogic Practices with Susan** met for the first time. Since I’m a big proponent of adult religious education I can not help but pass on to the congregation what a wonderful experience it was to be part of last night’s class. I was part of a small group of the congregation that gathered for an hour of chanting, gentle stretching, breathing exercises and meditation... We were relaxed and were in tune with every part of our body. It was truly a mind, body, and spiritual experience and I recommend you come if you can and bring a friend!” The class will be held on Monday, November 7th from 7:30-8:30 pm this month.

Our children in the **Age of Reason** class are learning about this church, its members, Board members, Minister, Religious Exploration Coordinator and Music Director through a series of interviews. The children are working with one of the Small Group Ministry groups and they will share some of their credos and gleanings during the Thanksgiving service on Sunday, November 20th.

Membership is sponsoring a “**Path To Membership**” class for people who are interested in this church and may be considering membership. The class is scheduled for Saturday, November 12th from 10 am to 3 pm in the library. A light lunch will be served plus a chance to meet with the minister and members of the Membership committee and to understand more about this church and the meaning of membership here. We’ll hold “Continuing on the Path” on January 14th from 10 am to 3 pm as a follow up for all members and friends of the congregation.

We just held the **Anniversary Dinner** for the 159th year since this congregation was established. The **Jolly Holly Fair** promises to be more fun and festive than ever. We are working on the dates for the **Greening of the Church** and my husband, Alan and I are planning an **Open House at the Parsonage** around that same time.

One of the minister’s roles is to be the public face of the congregation in the community. Since Marriage Equality passed, I am asked to speak on LGBT issues in Staten Island and beyond. I will serve on a panel of clergy members at the College of Staten Island hosted by the Gay Straight Alliance on November 17th. I am doing a Community Tea at Community Church in Manhattan on my experience with the women and young girls at SEWA Bharat in Delhi last year (an international women’s empowerment movement that partners with the Unitarian Universalist Association). I hope you’ll join me for a similar tea at UCSI on Sunday, December 11th from 1-2 pm in the library.

This is the season to realize how this church community feeds and nurtures our spiritual growth and how we in turn sustain each other and the wider world. May we share many opportunities to gather together and enjoy this season of “thanksgiving” even as the temperatures plummet and the trees begin their annual “fall” from the trees. Namaste (the divine in me greets the divine in you),

Susan

ETC. PAGE 5

The **Busy Common Reader's Book Club** will start on Friday, Nov 4th. This book club will read before the end of 2011: *They Take Our Jobs and 20 Other Myths About Immigration* by Aviva Chomsky and *The Death of Josseline: Immigration Stories From The Arizona Borderlands* by Margaret Regan. There are two ways we will do this book club:

1. Everyone gives their input via email and we will make a synthesis of the comments to all the book club members. This is really for the very busy people who want to be a part of the book club but have no time at all.
2. Meeting somewhere to discuss the book in person. Please email me, William Taylor-Suderman, at socialjustice@uucsi.org which of the two options or both you want to be a part of for this book club: Please send your email address for email sharing of the books and if you want to meet up once a week, please tell me what days and times would work for you. If there are fewer than 5 people who are willing to meet up, this option will get cancelled and we will do all the readings and comment via email. If you wish to keep your anonymity, please give me a screen name to use when talking about your comments, ideas or feedback. If you are ok in using your real name, please indicate that to me as well.

Your first homework assignment is to get both books, either through Amazon or Powell Books new or used from a bookstore or a friend's copy. While getting your books, please sign up as soon as possible so we have an idea of how many want to participate. We look forward to a lively debate, and being busy is no longer an excuse!

Sincerely, William Taylor-Suderman

UCSI COMMUNITY FOOD BASKET

Please remember to help keep our Community Food Basket full.

Bring your food donations and place in the can next to the fireplace in the Church Library. Regular donations of canned and dry goods are given to various food pantries on Staten Island.

November's donations will go to Community Health Action.

Adult Religious Exploration

***Yogic Practices: Mon., 11/7,
7:30 - 8:30 PM, Library***

Review: ...” wonderful experience... an hour of chanting, gentle stretching, breathing exercises and meditation. Susan took the time to consider people’s physical limitations and reminded us the class was intended to be a relaxing experience and not a strain on the body.

... truly a mind, body, and spiritual experience ... come if you can.” ***This is a drop-in class, dress in loose clothing, bring a mat and blanket.***

Twelve Steps To A Compassionate Life Book Study Group--Please contact Rev. Susan to express interest in this Study Group or sign up on the Bulletin Board. We will use the Study Guide on the Charter of Compassion website as a model. Each group session will focus on a different Step to lead a more compassionate life. This is not just a book reading group but a systematic way to commit ourselves to being more compassionate with ourselves and others on a regular basis.

Weaving The Fabric of Diversity-- Larry Schwabacher and Rev. Susan need just a few more people interested in this class to find a time to reschedule it. This class is aimed at understanding racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, ableism and other "ism's" on a personal and systemic basis so that we can help heal ourselves and the world. Please sign up on the bulletin board or contact Rev. Susan if you would like more information or are interested in beginning this course.

THE LAST WORD

"If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them." - Henry David Thoreau

One of my goals is to establish policies about how the Church operates that explain why we do things the way we do. So why?

Ours is a shared ministry moving together toward our vision and to fulfill our mission. Our vision is to be a welcoming spiritual community guided by the principles of Unitarian Universalism in all we do. And our mission is to enrich our community; make world a better place; and nurture one another in our search for truth while sharing the responsibility for sustaining our cherished church home.

Members and Gifts: Two years ago, after much input from the congregation and the committees, the Trustees established and accepted a gift acceptance policy. Now, you may think that is a little not-for-profit-wonky and have nothing to do with you, but the way we accept gifts is key to both the survival of our Church and to keeping faith with you the donor.

Financially, the Church is always in the position of asking members and friends to share responsibility for sustaining both its physical plant and the programs that make this Church our spiritual home. Although it may be more attractive to you as a donor to give the Church a gift that is permanently or temporarily earmarked, what we always need are general operating funds - the kinds of general gifts that keep the lights on and the roof repaired. Over the past two years, Kate Nielsen - our very able Steward, has worked with the office to clarify the purposes of each gift. Is your gift going to establish the Ben Jacobs Performing Arts Center? Did you help teens go to New Orleans? Are you purchasing a right of interment in the Memorial Garden? Or is your gift a fulfillment of your pledge for general operating expenses of the Church?

Under this policy, if a gift is too heavily restricted or restricted for a purpose not approved by the Trustees as your representatives, if it is a non-cash gift that cannot be exchanged for cash or serve the Church's mission, the Trustees are charged not to accept it.

Members and Our Building: Last year many members voiced concern that our buildings, the Church's biggest assets, were not serving them. Our big community involvement - opening our doors for a seven-day a week men's shelter and hosting Alcoholics Anonymous - seemed to block members' individual and committee-activity use.

When the Trustees looked for a building use policy to change, all we found were rental procedures and rates. We wanted to draft a policy that put the members first in terms of building use, and that is what the new policy does.

There is a hierarchy of building use needs that puts Church functions front and center. Worship services, religious education activities, social and fund-raising events, Board and Committee meetings and similar activities have the top priority. These activities and special activities sponsored by Church committees, like forums, are planned and put on the calendar at Church Council meetings. The Council is made up of Committee Chairs and is open to all Church members. The next Council meeting is November 12.

The next priority is for individual member use. Members may use the buildings free of charge for memorial services, funerals and child dedications, or as renters for other uses. We encourage the use of our facilities by charitable and community service organizations and then by non-member individuals, to the extent that these activities don't conflict with Church functions or with Church group activities.

This year we raised our rents to match the rents of other similar facilities in the area. We thought the rent increases were fair and, after all, one of the ways the buildings serve our mission is to raise the cash for us to continue to operate. The feedback we have received from renters hasn't been great. There has been a lot of sticker shock and some long time users have voted with their pocket books to look for space elsewhere, so we are re-examining our rental rates.

Ours is an evolving organization. If our true vision is to be guided by our principles and to welcome all, and if our true mission is to reach out and make the world better, our policies are a way the "put the foundations under them."

Rona

Don't Forget The FAIR

The Jolly Holly Fair

December 3, 2011