

The Unitarian Society, a Unitarian Universalist Congregation

176 Tices Lane, East Brunswick, NJ 08816
732.246.3113

www.unitariansociety.org
#ueeastbrunswick

Rev. Karen G. Johnston
Minister

Jillian Post
Director,
Religious Education

Nicholas Place
Music Coordinator

Linda Jay
President
Board of Trustees



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Sunday Services 10:30 a.m.

**December 3, 2017
Food for Thought: Hope
Rev. Karen G. Johnston**

Come a little bit hungry, as you will be fed in both body and spirit. The Sunday Services, Hospitality, and RE Committees will provide some delicious brunch food, as we divide into small groups to reflect on this month’s theme of hope. We’ll all start and end together in the sanctuary. No coffee hour afterwards, but folks are invited to stick around for fellowship.

**December 10, 2017
Philomusica**

Philomusica, a local community music group that rehearses in our building nearly every Monday evening, will be sharing Advent music with us as the heart of our Sunday service. Children still begin in the sanctuary and then go to religious education classes. Come prepared to be uplifted!

**December 17, 2017
Hope in the Dark
Rev. Karen G. Johnston**

Sometimes, we can only appreciate light when we are in the dark. This service will draw from the wisdom of solstice and Hanukkah, as well as some very fine poets, as we explore the importance of darkness in a life that is sustained by hope.

The Czirjak family will be lighting our menorah this week, as today is the only Sunday in Hanukkah this year. Stay after the service for our annual tree trimming party hosted by the Religious Education Committee.

**December 24 , 2017
Meditation Offering
Rev. Karen G. Johnston**

Since we are having our holiday service later this evening, we aren’t having a regular service in the morning. However, you are invited to take a break from the rush and hubbub of the holidays to silently meditate in a circle, led by Rev. Karen. No coffee hour afterwards. (There are no religious education classes or child care.)

**December 24, 2017
Holiday Service**

6:30 multi-generational service (followed by an abundant potluck)
A service of music, readings, and joy of the season ending with our traditional candle-lit singing of Silent Night. Bring your whole family, bring yourself – let us celebrate in the spirit of Christmas.

Child care is provided for the littlest ones who can’t quite sit through a whole service, though they are welcome, welcome, welcome.

**December 31 , 2017
Spiraling Into the New Year
Rev. Karen G. Johnston**

Using the four-point spiral of Joanna Macy’s “The Work That Reconnects,” this ritual-based circle worship will help us ground ourselves in gratitude, honor our pain & let it go, see with new eyes, and choose to move forth into the new year.

There are no religious education classes. We hope to provide child care.

Musings from Your Minister:

Each of us is such a light.

Each of us has the power to chase away the darkness

-in ourselves, and in others.

And we are strongest when we help each other.

(adapted from *Servant Candle*, Judy Bressler)



The chalice, which we light every Sunday, and which some of you, perhaps, light at the start of your evening meal, is the most widespread symbol of Unitarian Universalism.

The roots and history of Unitarianism and Universalism are deep, traceable back to the impulses of unity and of universal salvation, as far back as early Christianity before orthodoxy set in. Yet, the chalice as symbol has been with us only seventy years (unless you consider the Husites in Czech Republic in the 14th century, but that is a different story).

Chalice: beacon of hope (our theme for this month!).

Chalice: light in darkness, both literal and metaphorical.

Chalice: a vessel offering stability, that transformative power might touch our lives, spark our imaginations, and ignite our courage.

At this time of year, perhaps even this: chalice as smaller symbol of that star of wonder, star of light from the Christian tradition: the star that watched over the birth of a child with a revolutionary destiny; the star that encouraged the shepherds gather together and go seeking; the star that guided three wise ones on a long journey and inspired them to defy a corrupt king.

Throughout world traditions, there are many lights in the many darkneses that come at this time of year. Hanukkah is the story of light that should have lasted one night, but instead, and against all rational explanation, lasted eight. Solstice is a celebration of light returning, even though this is the darkest hour.

Whichever of these stories resonates with you, or a wholly other one (please tell me; I'd like to know!), may we be lights for each other when we most need it. May we be lights in the world, chasing away darkness that seeks to envelop others. May we invite in the light of others, when darkness comes to call in our own lives. May we remember we are strongest when we help each other.

I am blessed to be on this journey with you,

Rev. Karen





RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS



FROM YOUR DRE, JILLIAN POST

OWL Classes – An Update

This year, TUS joined the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Somerset Hills to offer the Our Whole Lives curriculum to our 7th – 9th grade youth. The first five classes were held at TUS, with 14 kids in attendance. Parents and a congregant have graciously served as building hosts, helping with set up and problem solving. The youth are becoming better prepared and more knowledgeable about their reproductive rights, healthy sexual relationships, the physiology of their own bodies, gender roles and sexual orientation identities, and how to recognize sexual abuse and harassment. We are so grateful to the facilitators of this course, including TUS's Dan Strombom.



Tea Party Fun in the Rainbow Connection Class

The youngest TUSians recently practiced their manners, as part of the lessons on the 1st UU principle. As a result, they had a lovely Tea Party, complete with table service. They also had a guest story teller (thanks to Tony Razzano). It was truly a grand day!!



TUS Director of Religious Education Visiting with RE Families

In connection with a 5-part webinar she is taking on the changing dynamics of the traditional Sunday School Model, Director of Religious Educator, Jillian Post has begun carving out time to meet with TUS families. Here is the question we will be examining, "What would you want RE classes to look like if we segued away from age-segregated Sunday morning classes?" Additionally, "What motivates your children to come to TUS?" These are important questions that may take a long while to explore. Personal invitations to families are going out now – please note, this will be a month-long endeavor!



Save the Date!!

January 21st – The Harry and UU R.E. class (3rd through 6th) will be having a Book Drive / Hot Chocolate Sale. We will need the congregation's support. Look for details to come in the January newsletter!!



Food for Thought: A Sunday Service

Come to TUS a little bit hungry.
We'll all start & end in the sanctuary
Inbetween, you'll be fed
in body & spirit
in small groups reflecting
on this month's theme of

HOPE

Sunday, Dec. 3 10:30
East Brunswick



Weather Preparations

If there is a state of emergency, automatically the service will be cancelled.

At other times, Rev. Karen and the Board chair, will consult about the weather.

Otherwise, keep a look out on our **web site**, our **Facebook page**, on the **Magic 98.3 radio web site**, and for an **email** to everyone currently on our email list -- if we are closing or cancelling service, we will announce it in all those places, aiming to have the word out no later than 9am.

If we do cancel the Sunday service, a link will be sent out that day on Facebook and in the email to the congregation, if you would like to join the virtual service on Zoom.

Spiritual Nourishment for Leaders December 5, 6:15pm-7:45pm

Would you like to take part in this engaging discussion?

Rev. Karen has one more copy of the book, *Almost Church Revitalized*, by Mike Durrall.

It's in her mailbox. First come, first served. Or order it used online. We'll be reading the whole book this year.

SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT FOR LEADERS B.Y.O.DINNER & DISCUSSION

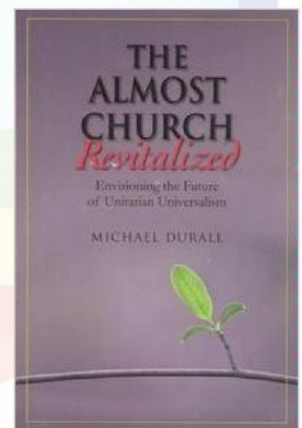
FIRST TUESDAYS 6:15 -7:45

next: Dec. 5

REV. KAREN'S OFFICE

WE COMMIT TO READ AHEAD OF
TIME, HIGHLIGHT, GATHER &
REFLECT

**DECEMBER IS CHAPTER 2:
WHY UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALISM HAS NOT GROWN
& HOW TO TURN IT AROUND**





Tree Trimming on December 17th

Immediately following services, RE will host an abbreviated Tree Trimming Party. Due to a previously booked renter, we will need to be out of the sanctuary by 1 pm. Nonetheless, there will be refreshments and cookies and all the treasured ornaments from our past to hang on the tree. Come join in the fun and make our tree look festive!

Quiet Meditation Circle

December 24, 2017

Since we're gathering for our traditional Christmas Eve service at 6:30,

instead of a regular Sunday morning service,

you are invited to rest at home or take a break from the rush and hubbub of the holiday and sit in (mostly) quiet meditation together.

Rev. Karen will lead
10:30 -11:15ish.

The
Unitarian Society
176 Tices Lane
East Brunswick



Christmas Eve service Our Angels' Reflections

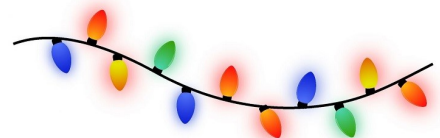
The Unitarian Society
176 Tices Lane
East Brunswick

6:30

ABUNDANT
POTLUCK
FOLLOWING THE
SERVICE

Help Needed to Purchase, Deliver, and String Lights on the Sanctuary Tree

On December 16th, Lynn Mayfryer needs a partner to shop for, pick up, and deliver the Christmas tree for the sanctuary. We now have a fortified/new tree stand provided by Peter Kahn (thank you!), so that our 10' to 12' tree sits straight and tall. Additionally, that day, we need someone to take the lead on stringing the lights. If you would like to be a part of this tradition, please reach out to Lynn at nursielynnie@hotmail.com or Jillian at tusdrejillian@gmail.com, so we can coordinate this effort.



**Religious Education Giving Tree Project
November 26th through December 17th**



Again this holiday season, the RE classes will be making ornaments with labels on the back describing the wished-for gifts of families in need in our area. The Ozanam Family shelter is in great need this year, so we will be asking the congregation to buy gifts for 24 individuals (6 families). Starting November 26th, just take a tagged ornament, buy and wrap the gift and bring it, along with the tag, back to TUS by December 17th. The gifts will be delivered the following week. Last year, we had all the gift requests filled within the first week and a half, so we are extending our reach a bit more.

Please keep your gift under \$25.00, and thank you in advance for making a few familys' holidays a bit brighter!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

- 1/21 & 28 Aging with Grace workshop
- 2/18 Congregational Meeting
-- Presentation of Budget
- 2/25 Mystery Pals Luncheon
- 3/4 Canvass Breakfast (morning)
- 3/4 Death Cafe (late afternoon)
- 3/17 St. Patrick's Day Fellowship Fest
- 3/25 Town Hall: Death of Sunday School

BUDDHIST INSIGHT MEDITATION MINI-RETREAT

Sat. Jan. 6, 2018 9 a.m – 5:00 p.m.
at The Unitarian Society
176 Tices Lane, East Brunswick, NJ

Led by The Reverend Allen Wells

This is an opportunity for beginners to learn insight meditation in an intensive setting and for experienced meditators to deepen their practice. We will explore three forms of meditation: concentration (shamatha), spacious awareness (vipassana), and loving-kindness (metta). This will be a silent retreat, including lunch period (please bring your own), but there will be instruction and an opportunity for questions and answers (called "Inquiry"). Please bring along a sturdy cushion if you would like sit on one (we have some extras). Sitting in a chair is also fine. There will also be short periods of walking meditation.



Allen has been practicing insight meditation for over 25 years. Two years ago, he participated in a six week silent retreat at The Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA. He is a graduate of the Integrated Study/Practice Program of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. He has also traveled to India to walk in the footsteps of The Buddha.

There is no fee, but there will be an opportunity for a free-will offering (dana) for support of the teaching.

Pre-registration is necessary by December 21.

To register, or ask any questions, please send an Email to:
Jackie Held-Rubin at jacalyn21@aol.com or phone: 908-881-4553
or Allen Wells at awells11@optimum.net or phone: 973 539-0301.

Safety on Our Minds

Safety. And Wholeness. And a deep yearning for it.

This is what I preached on at our multi-generational service the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Nearly every week there is a mass shooting, but just the week before, there had been the one at the church in Texas. This shook all people who attend religious services to the core, bringing fear that much closer to home.

After the TUS staff met that week, I announced in the weekly eblast a shift in the protocol for staff answering the door; now, when someone is buzzing at the front door, we will pick up the phone to ascertain who is there, rather than coming to the door to do so. This is a small step towards increasing staff safety in these times that stoke all our fears and give all of us reasonable cause to doubt our safety.

And so arise the questions in many of our minds: what about the congregation's safety? What about on Sunday mornings when we are gathered together? These are important questions and ones we need to answer together, though I am sorry that we live in such times that questions of this ilk must be spoken and answered.

Behind the scenes, for the past year, a few of us have been working to increase the congregation's safety. As you might remember, at the congregational meeting in May, we learned how to use the defibrillator (AED) – thank you, Jordan Sanders! At the end of November, staff inventoried the first aid kits on site and purchased new ones (with medicines that aren't a decade out of date!). Each of the RE classrooms will have their own; there will be a small kit in the kitchen and a larger one in the office. This was an important act of increasing our safety, though likely not what you were thinking of when mass shootings happen in this country.

When it comes to overall security, there are several necessary approaches: equipping the building differently, updating policies and practices (or developing new ones), and educating the congregation on how to respond in emergency situations. All this takes time, effort, leadership, and in some cases, significant money.

We are fortunate because there are resources already out there – we can look to what other congregations have learned and implemented, we can use educational resources from our insurance company to bring ourselves up to speed. It is no small amount of work and will get done faster, and likely better, if we have more folks who are willing to lend a hand.

If you can help, please reach out to either myself or Russ Gale.

~ Rev. Karen



TREASURERS TIDBITS

Bob Munson

You May Have Wondered: When is the last day to donate in 2017 to deduct it on my taxes? Collections will be deposited on Dec. 26th and Jan 2nd, but donations during the service are recorded Dec. 24th and 31st. Mailing it in? It's the date on the check that governs charitable donations with the IRS, so you may want to include a last-minute check for your 2017 return.

Scrip

Grocery store card (aka "scrip") purchases by credit/debit card (Visa, MC, Discover or AmEx) are now available. We offer \$50 and \$100 cards for Stop and Shop and Shop-Rite. Of course cash and checks are still accepted (and preferred, since we don't share the 5% profit with credit/debit card companies).



See Lynne, Judy, or Harriet in the lobby before or after the service to purchase cards
—and remember, they make great holiday gifts!

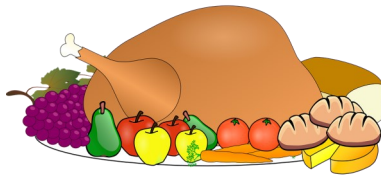
Cash In Basket for December

Dec 3 & 10 - Trenton Music Makers
<http://trentonmusicmakers.org/>

Dec 17 - UU Faith Action NJ
www.uulmnj.org

Dec 24 - Minister's Discretionary Fund

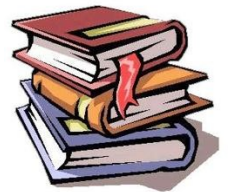
Dec 31 - Friends of the Earth
<https://foe.org/>



Through your donations of food and money, we were able to provide five local families in need with food for a Thanksgiving dinner. A special thanks for the donations of three frozen turkeys. Much appreciated!

~ Coleen Tyler

Thanks to all for participating in the book offering on Sunday. Rev. Paul Mueller, whose library once contained many of the books, would have been happy with how thoughtfully people perused the different categories and took books (totaling 4 boxes in all) which caught their fancy. We received \$48 in donations, which will go toward the library renovations.



Paula Lieb and Barbara Kubey

TUS now has a YouTube Channel

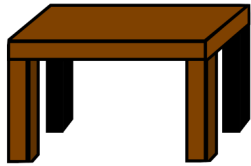


Did you miss last week's sermon? Not to worry, you can now watch the sermon on our very own YouTube Channel. Go to the website (www.unitariansociety.org) and click on YouTube Channel on the top menu.

Most sermons will be posted here along with videos from other TUS activities. Check back often!

TUS Office Hours for 2017-2018 are:

Monday—Friday, 10am-4:30pm



Old Conference Table—Yours for the taking!

The large, heavy table in the meeting room opposite the TUS office is being replaced in January with a lovely, more functional oval conference table with plenty of leg room. If anyone would like the old table (63" X 48") it is yours for free as long as you take it away. Please contact Cindy Mussman (cindymussman@gmail.com) if interested.

Minutes of the Congregational Meeting-November 19, 2017

A congregational meeting was called to review the current gender specific bathroom signage and the necessity to address the inconsistency with our commitment as a Welcoming Congregation. The members present approved gender neutral signs be posted for each bathroom with identification of the equipment located in each room. A task force is being formed to create the signage to be posted for each bathroom. The task force will review possible modifications to be made for the rooms in order to assist with the transition.

As a related issue, the group also discussed and recommended a change to the Bond of Union to replace gender specific pronouns in the statement. Rev. Karen Johnston suggested that the congregation might benefit from a more comprehensive review of the Bond of Union, rather than a quick revision of the pronouns. After discussion, there was general support for such a process that will entail reviewing the entire document in discussions with the congregational community as a whole. The Board will discuss and determine the next steps for the review process.

Thank You From Past Recipients of Our Cash-In-Baskets Efforts

On behalf of everyone here at ProPublica, we want to thank you for your congregation for the generous contribution. Our mission to shine a light on corruption and spur reform is more relevant—and more urgent—than ever.

-ProPublica, 9/27/17

Please convey our thanks to the members of your congregation for supporting the work of the UUSC with the special congregational collection gift. Together, with more than fifty grassroots partners in twenty countries and the US, you and UUSC are building a world free from oppression.

- Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, 9/29/17

Tremendous thanks to you for giving the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership a forum for outreach about watershed health, at the July 17 service.

- The Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership, September 2017

We would like to thank you for your gift. AFAR is dedicated to translating biomedical research to viable clinical and translational approaches to predict, prevent and treat the diseases of aging in order to achieve a healthier life.

- American Federation for Aging Research, 10/30/17

Thank you for supporting the UUA-UUSC Hurricane Harvey Recovery Fund. Your faith and commitment are an inspiration to us all.

- UUSC, 11/7/17



TUS Happenings



Buddhist Meditation Group

The next meeting of the Buddhist Meditation Group will take place on **Sunday, December 3 at 12:15 pm**. Rev Allen Wells will teach about the Buddhist concept of dependent origination, and guide us in meditation. All adults are welcome to join us, we are a friendly group! No prior experience or knowledge is required.

Our annual day-long silent meditation retreat will take place on Saturday, Jan 6th, 2018. More info on page 6!

Any questions? Contact Jackie at Jacalyn21@aol.com

Socrates Café®



Come and join our exploration of life's most profound and universal questions. More than just a conversation, we use Socrates' questioning approach to explore and challenge our assumptions, broaden our understanding, and consider different viewpoints relating to an infinite number of philosophical questions.

It's a great time for mental stimulation and fellowship. A rare chance to exercise your mind and challenge your thinking – just for the fun of it.

Socrates Café® takes place the second Sunday of every month

Next Meeting: **Sunday, Dec. 10**

Bagels & Coffee at 8:30 AM

Discussion Starts at 9:00AM - Ends at 10:00AM

Questions: Contact Doug at:

dougliebau@gmail.org



TUS Spanish Class

Learn or practice your conversational Spanish with congregant Carmen Heredia.

Aprenda o practique su conversación!

We will be meeting **Fridays at 11 am** at TUS.

All are welcome to drop in! Bienvenido!



Art Exploration Group

Meets Wednesdays

at 7pm in classroom 8

December 6, 13, 20, and 27



Shakespeare Reading Group

The Shakespeare Reading Group will meet once during December, on **Tuesday, December 12, at 7:30 PM** at The Unitarian Society. We will be reading "Othello." Please bring a copy of the play. For more info, or if attending for the first time, please contact Harriet Lindblom



Women's Group

Meeting on **December 29th**

"We wish everyone a very happy holiday" and plans for 2018.

Meeting in **January** with a new topic tba.

TUS CALENDAR

For The Fridge



DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31 10:30 am Sunday Service					1 10:00 am Spanish Class	2
3 2:00 pm OWL 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service 12:15 pm Buddhist Meditation Group	4 7:00 pm UUFaithActionNJ 7:30 pm Philomusica	5	6 7:00 pm Art Experience Lab	7	8 10:00 am Spanish Class	9
10 8:30 am Socrates Cafe 10:30 am Sunday Service 12:00 pm Souper Sunday 12:15 pm RE Committee	11 7:00 pm LDC	12 7:00 pm UMS Board 7:30 pm Shakespeare  Hanukkah	13 7:00 pm Art Experience Lab 7:15 pm Sunday Service Committee	14 4:30 pm Elijah's Promise	15 10:00 am Spanish Class	16 Christmas Tree Set Up
17 10:30 am Sunday Service 12:00-12:45 Christmas Tree Trimming Party	18	19 7:30 pm TUS Board Meeting	20 Newsletter Due 7:00 pm Art Experience Lab	21	22 10:00 am Spanish Class	23
24 10:30 am Meditation Circle Christmas Eve Service And Potluck 6:30pm	25  Christmas	26 7:30 pm Shakespeare Reading Group	27 7:00 pm Art Experience Lab 7:00 pm Committee On Ministries	28	29 10:00 am Spanish Class 1:00 pm Women's Group	30 

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Welcome All Into Our House

NEWSLETTER FACTS: The deadline for the January 2018 newsletter is **Wednesday, December 20th.**

Leave a submission in the newsletter box in the TUS office or send by email to uutus@comcast.net.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS: Announcements are sent out on Wednesday afternoon. Please submit your information to uutus@comcast.net no later than Tuesday.

UU WORLD MAGAZINE: If any TUS member is not receiving their free copy of UU World, or if you have a change of address, please contact Office Administrator, Megan, at uutus@comcast.net.

SOCIAL JUSTICE WEEKLY: The list is sent typically on Tuesday. Please send suggested events or meetings to sj.ueeastbrunswick@gmail.com no later than Monday evening.

THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY

President	Linda Jay
Vice President	Kathy Scarbrough
Treasurer	Bob Munson
Secretary	Barbara Kubey
Trustee	Clif Ashcraft
Trustee	Doug Liebau
Trustee	Rich Phelan
Trustee	Eldridge Dunn
Youth Representative	Vacant
Montessori School Board Chair	Marty Mussman

UNITARIAN MONTESSORI SCHOOL BOARD

Marty Mussman, Chair
Paula Lieb, Vice Chair
Joyce Browning
Eileen Chant
Kathy Huston
Rose Vydellingum
Joy Ward
Himanshu Pandit
(former UMS parent)

TUS STAFF EMAIL ADDRESSES

Rev. Karen G. Johnston, Minister—revkarentus@gmail.com

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Jillian Post, Director of Religious Education—tusdrejillian@gmail.com

Nick Place, Music Coordinator— NickPlaceTUS@gmail.com

Susanne Biancamano, UMS Director—sbiancamano@comcast.net



If you're not receiving your Wednesday weekly emails or newsletter by email, check your secondary email boxes, such as junk, promotions, social, to make sure the emails aren't going there. If you're still not receiving emails, and should, or want to, please reach out to Megan, the Office Administrator, at uutus@comcast.net to add you to the email list.

Rev. Karen is available for Pastoral Care at (732) 649-8110 (voice message or text is fine). Mondays are Rev. Karen's day of rest and Thursdays are her day for writing sermons/focusing on worship. She limits responses to email and phone calls on these days and does not attend TUS meetings. If you would like to see her, it is best to email her to set up a time. Please go to this link to make an appointment: calendly.com/revkarentus For emergencies call or text.