

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Fork

February
2014

977 Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike
PO Box 1444, Bridgehampton, NY 11932

www.uucsf.org

We are a spiritual community.

Become a New Member Today!

The UUCSF invites anyone who is not presently a member to join. Membership nurtures more meaningful participation and a deeper commitment to the values you hold sacred. We would like to encourage those congregants who frequently attend services to become members, particularly during this transition time. It is important to hear the voices of everyone in our community as we begin the process of searching for a new minister. Membership entitles you to be involved as a voting member of our congregation. While congregational meetings are open to anyone who wants to attend, only members may vote or nominate and elect officers. Member privileges may also include opportunities to serve as leaders in the congregation.

The following steps will ensure an easy passage into membership:

How to Become a Member

1. If you are interested in membership, we will help you to set up an appointment with the minister to have a talk, at a time that is convenient.
2. You will be asked to sign the membership book. A board member will be your witness. You are a member once the book is signed and a monetary pledge is made, in the amount of your choice.

The UUCSF greatly appreciates all that its members offer with their voices, votes, pledges, and in the work of this congregation, ensuring that all who enter our doors can find a sacred place to grow and thrive, now and in the future. We would not be here without our members.

Thank you,
Pam Wittenberg, Fellowship



Congregational Meeting— Next Sunday, Feb 2

Here's the agenda...

- What we learned from the Transition Committee's phone survey.
- Update on the search process.

Everyone is welcome. But only congregation members can vote, so please make it a point to attend. We need a quorum.

You'll find more information about the meeting in the President's Letter on page 3.

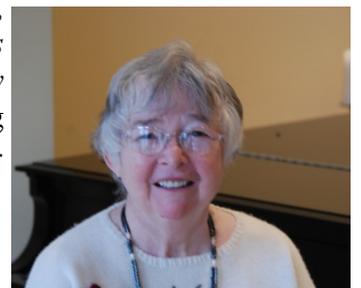
This I Believe

I believe in the truth; it's always the best. I believe in the motto I have in my kitchen, "*Bloom where you are planted.*" Only we can change our circumstances. Our parents, our mates, our siblings, our friends are not responsible.

I believe that having friends is the best thing in life. To quote Alison Cornish, "Friends are the family you choose." I believe in the importance of music, laughter, good food and our relationships with animals. I believe in the wonder of our natural world, the sounds of winds in the trees and in sails; the beauty of it all.

Finally, surprisingly, I believe what the Bible says (in this instance, only): "*By their works you shall know them.*" Without taking action, life is meaningless.

Myrna Truitt



From the Interim Minister



The Transition Team is in the midst of gathering information from members and friends about what you value most about UUCSF, and what you perceive to be the greatest challenges facing the Congregation and its future. We start with what you value most.

It is your strengths on which you want to build to ensure that the foundation for the future is solidly optimistic.

By far, the greatest strength of this congregation is its sense of community and spirit that makes people feel welcome and supported. Heading the list of challenges is the need to grow the membership and attract more families with children.

When the responses have been compiled, a process will take place to determine priorities and strategize a course of action, in consultation with the congregation. Meanwhile, I'd like you to think about the strengths and gifts of UUCSF on which you can build, as well as the strengths and gifts you contribute (or could contribute) to help UUCSF fulfill its promise.

I'd also like you to think about UUCSF in the context of the characteristics of "excellent congregations" listed below:

Traits of Excellent Congregations:

- They share a vibrancy and excitement – "church" is not a leisurely pastime, but rather a high adventure activity.
- They give away a larger than average share to outreach efforts that serve the community.
- They are not bound by tradition, but view what they are doing as part of a continuum.
- They constantly look for better ways to reach out and serve people.
- They constantly re-evaluate themselves by asking hard questions like, "Are we living our Vision and Mission in all that we do?"

- They do not try to be all things to all people.
- They don't try to do everything themselves, but willingly enter into partnerships that allow them to work more effectively.
- They are very deliberate about taking their members to new levels, in both their spiritual journeys and their effectiveness as a congregation.

...adapted from *Excellent Protestant Congregations*, by Paul Wilke

Which traits resonate with the UUCSF you know and love? Are there others that stimulate ideas for change?

To become the congregation you aspire to be, you begin with where you are, build on your strengths, and address your challenges as opportunities for growth. The path may not be direct, or even easy at times, but I encourage you to participate fully in the process. I trust that it will lead you toward greater excellence.

Yours in faith,

Nancy

minister@uucsf.org

****Please note new e-mail address****

Adjusting the Search Process

As Unitarian Universalists we take pride in thinking for ourselves, but you may know that we have a parent organization in Boston, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), which is available to us for guidance. Recently the Board learned of a variation on the search process which is often used by smaller congregations and will do a better job in meeting our needs. To best understand it, let's re-view where we are now.

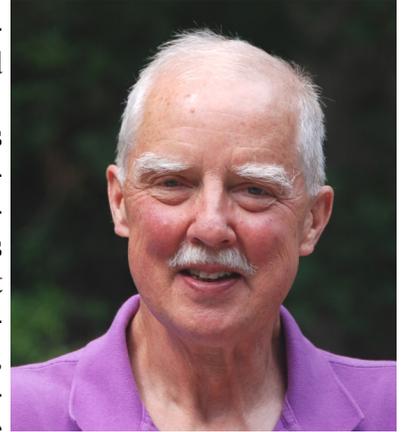
In mid-December our local district of the UUA, the Metro District, assigned the Rev. Craig Hirshberg to help us with the process of searching for a called minister to take over early in 2015, when our interim minister, Nancy Arnold, leaves us. A snow storm kept Craig in New Jersey on December 19. But speaking for her during that service, I described the classic search process we had begun.

In that classic process our search committee opens a line of communication to any and all Unitarian Universalist Ministers who might want to serve our congregation. The committee performs a survey of the congregation, writes a paper describing us, makes our offer to prospective ministers, evaluates responses, visits selected candidates to hear their sermons at a neutral pulpit, and then brings the single candidate they choose to meet the congregation: all within a narrow eight-to-ten months window. Our congregation then hears the candidate preach two sermons on successive Sundays. After the second sermon we vote to call the minister, or not. A 90% vote to call gives us our new settled minister.

During the Board's meeting by Skype with Rev. Hirshberg after the December service, she called our attention to the concept of the Developmental Minister, a variation on the classic search process. Following this model, the Transitions Office within the UUA acts like an executive search firm, a head-hunter, to match our unique needs and promises with the specific talents of ministers in search of a congregation. The minister selected is hired for a period of three to five years as a Developmental Minister. At the end of this period, it will be possible for us to call this person as a settled minister or

we could then engage in a standard search.

The Board has decided that the concept of the Developmental Minister suits our needs somewhat better than the classic search process, and it is far less demanding on the search committee. The committee begins work with a candidate or candidates whom the Transitions Office has already identified as likely to meet our needs, thus eliminating the time consuming pre-candidate visits to congregations around the country, while increasing the likelihood of a successful match. It also reduces the time and deadline constraints of the classic search process.



Our special needs are easy to understand. Although our East End community has many liberal interests and over 8,000 children enrolled in our local school systems, we have only 48 members, roughly half of whom are over 65. The people in larger our community simply don't know what they are missing, and we need a minister who can help us to reach out to them.

We proposed this concept in our January Board/Council Meeting and the council agreed it was a good direction for us. Although it may be a decision the Board could make on its own, we would like a vote of confidence from the congregation in our general meeting scheduled for February 2.

Mark Potter, President
Board of trustees














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February Service Calendar

We honor every individual's search for truth and meaning...

**February 2
A Midwinter Tale**

Jaki Jackson with Worship Associate Sue Penny
Our own Jaki Jackson brings us her book written about Groundhog Day. Reflecting upon the metaphor of whether the groundhog sees his shadow or not, she will evoke our own stirrings underneath and the promise of renewal. Her main message is about the importance of understanding our worth in the cycles of life and nature.

**February 9
Our Search for Truth and Meaning
Rev. Nancy O. Arnold**

Unitarian Universalists are notable for their spiritual quest for truth and meaning. The UUSSF Statement of Vision and Mission calls us to “honor every individual’s search for truth and meaning,” which affirms our fourth Unitarian Universalist principle for “a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.” How does our often individualistic search for truth and meaning also encourage spiritual growth in our congregations?

Musician: Abby Fleming

**February 16
Our Legacy of Love
Stephen Flores and Patricia Gorman**

Saint Valentine honored love and intimacy, and is remembered for it. The gods Venus and Eros sired son Cupid to seed the passions and emotions. But what is the state of Love today?

What love and passions are we passing to our younger generations? Are the social media helping intimacy, passion and love? In this interactive service, we look at our loves and passions and ask how we can share these joys and inspirations. Let us inspire our children, friends and grandchildren to take a chance on love, and follow their passions.

Service Date	Greeters	Hospitality
Feb 2	Myrna Truitt & Jim Thurman	Tina Guglielmo & Anita Baskind
Feb 9	Arden Edwards	Tom Murphy & Eileen McCabe
Feb 16	Mark & Martha Potter	John Tusa & Kent Martin
Feb 23	Myrna Truitt	Mark & Martha Potter
Mar 2	Pam & Carl Wittenberg	Don Schmitz & Sue Penny

Should you need to arrange a substitute, please notify Kat Gioia, our administrator, of the change you have made. 631-537-0132

**February 23
But the Words Get in the Way
Rev. Nancy O. Arnold**

Each of us has a religious past that we bring with us into the present. Often we speak different faith “languages” that may interfere with our desire to be open and accepting of each other’s spiritual growth. How can we learn to understand another’s language in order to be a congregation which truly accepts and encourages one another in our spiritual growth?



Edna Trunzo served a holiday luncheon during her December 29th service.

Upcoming Events



Sunday, February 2, Noon at the Meetinghouse **Congregational Meeting** about our search for a new minister.



Sunday, February 9, Noon at the Meetinghouse **Free Qigong Class.** Build internal strength and will. Winter is our time to replenish and refill our internal Sea of Chi. Join us for these ancient Chinese movements and self-massages. **All Are Welcome.**

Sunday, February 9, 12:15 pm at the Meetinghouse **Transition Team meeting.**



Thursday, February 13, 7 pm at the Meetinghouse **UUCSF Board Meeting.** Board meetings are open to all members and friends of our congregation.

Sunday, February 16, Noon at the Meetinghouse **Dress Down Sunday.** Winter dress down Sundays will be for indoor clean-up.



Highlights of the Board

The Board reviewed a proposal by the Rainbow School to extend their hours, offer summer camp and add a program for 2-year-olds. This would involve using a third room downstairs, but would not conflict with our needs and would bring in added revenue. The Board approved.

Mark described information from UUA regarding a developmental minister rather than a called minister. This type of minister would be a contract minister, would serve a term of 3-5 years and could then be called as a permanent minister. This type of minister would serve to develop a particular need specified by the congregation. UUA would be involved in the search, and would simplify the search process somewhat. The Board felt that the concept should be considered by the Council and the Congregation.

Committee Reports: The Nominating Committee needs more time to name a slate, and also to select Committee Chairs. The Treasurer reports that finances are in decent shape, but will need extra money for the Search Committee, as well as an additional office for the Administrator. The Rainbow School may provide additional revenue. Communications has a good team and their goal is to keep the congregation informed. Fellowship reports that they will emphasize the ease of becoming a member, with an article insert in newsletter and announcements during service. Rentals are easy to administer and are proceeding smoothly. The Worship Associates will hold a retreat this weekend. Nancy's input was excellent. Social Justice is exploring a joint initiative with Helping Hand, which donated \$2,000 to a group providing summer camp for young Hispanics. The Art Committee would like more people involved, more photos, and a display on immigration. RE set March 15 as Kids'/Fun Day, with Alternatives.

What's Happening

Helping Hands, funded by weekly contributions at the UUCSF, has recently donated \$2,000 to the North Fork Spanish Apostolate. These funds will be put toward a new initiative for summer 2014, providing summer recreational opportunities to children of needy immigrant families in the Riverhead and Flanders area. The sleep away camps, day camps and additional planned activities are all part of established local programs. In addition to fees, the funds will be used to assist families with the purchase of basic camp necessities.

This is the first donation of Helping Hands for the year, and we plan to continue to spread our funds into the East End community, especially where we see that our monies can make a real difference. Thank you for your weekly contributions!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Helping Hand fund on Christmas Eve. We received more than \$200 because of your generosity.

Gala donations: The UUCSF donated money to three food pantries from the Gala profits: \$212.81 to The Sag Harbor Food Pantry, \$212.81 to the East Hampton Food Pantry and \$212.81 to the Bridgehampton Food Pantry.

The Search Process ---On December 15 Mark Potter read the following words by Craig Hirschberg on the search process. She referred to William Bridge's book, *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*, to explain the three phases of this process. *"The first is the ending, losing and letting go phase: the second is the neutral phase and the third is the new beginning phase."* We are now in the neutral phase and are establishing the ground rules for our search. We are fortunate to have the Rev. Nancy Arnold to help guide us through this transition. *"Your interim will guide your ministerial, pastoral and worship life during this rather anxiety-provoking period and help you through the transition, one step at a time. Having new temporary ministerial leadership allows an opportunity to ask new questions, challenge old ways, investigate yourselves with a critical eye, and create a better understanding of who you are,*

and where you want to go as a congregation, in future years..." This will be a challenging and exciting process leading to a new beginning.

A Fun Day for Families will be held on March 15, 2014. This event is sponsored by Alternatives Counseling Services, Inc. and the UUCSF

Dress down Sundays We will continue dress down Sundays throughout the winter. Sunday, February 16 will be an inside clean-up day.

Summer Camp for UU Youth and Families – Unirondack, Unitarian Universalist Camp & Conference Center: Registration for UU summer camp experiences for our youth and families is under way. The camp provides an opportunity for children and families to live our UU values in a creative, accepting and nurturing community outside the doors of our congregation. For more information about Unirondack, and to register for summer camp or weekend programs, visit their website at <http://www.unirondack.org/>

From the Transition Team

The Transition Team met on Sunday, January 5 after service. The primary focus was to review the congregation's response to the recent questionnaire. Each UUCSF member and friend was asked, 1) What do you value most in the UUCSF? and 2) What are the challenges that face our congregation?

Some common themes emerged including a love of the warm fellowship within the UUCSF, and the need to grow our congregation. All responses are confidential. Reverend Nancy will be collating and digesting all the responses, and will bring her findings to the congregation as a whole at some point in the future.

The Transition Team will reconvene on Sunday, February 9 after the service.

Kent Martin

The Green Corner... Baffled by a Squirrel

When an eastern gray squirrel trumped the homemade baffle on our bird feeder, my husband Craig and I found ourselves torn between feeling triumphant for the squirrel, and feeling personally defeated.

For the past several weeks, the squirrels have been feasting on an easy meal of black sunflower seeds from the feeder in our yard. Our whole family enjoys watching their antics, and our dog Mobley loves barking at them from the window. But I became

tired of the squirrels emptying the feeder on a daily basis, and wanted the birds to be able to eat their fair share of seeds.

So, Craig and I got creative. We took a vinyl record that was in too poor condition to sell in his store and attached it to the pole that the feeder was mounted on. A squirrel would try to grab onto the record to get to the feeder, the record would flip, and the squirrel would fall a short distance to the ground. Genius! Or so we thought.



For about two weeks, we watched as they schemed and attempted to climb over the record to get to those rich, black seeds they had had easy access to all winter. Mind you, there were seeds to be had on the ground, but perhaps the squirrels were not fond of sharing them with the dark-eyed juncos.

Then one day, after countless, amazing acrobatic attempts, a very persistent and agile squirrel made it over the record baffle to the tasty and nutritious prize in the feeder! I have shared the photos as evidence.

So, though we might feel a certain admiration for the creature, at the end of the day, a squirrel outsmarted us. Again, there is that age-old lesson at work here: if at first you don't succeed, try and try again.

Anita Wright



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Deadline is the 10th of each month. E-mail copy, photos and events to Martha Potter mtpotter@optonline.net Please start subject line with "UU newsletter".
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Notes from RE

When talking about New Year's resolutions, reactions can run from "Sounds interesting," "A lot of fun," to "I swear by them," or "They never work!" So no surprise that when talking about this subject with UUCSF youth, the reactions were generally the same - except for the kid who groaned, "You're not gonna make us do that, are you?"

Well...not exactly. I have found New Year's resolutions to be all of the above, but why wait for the New Year, or set yourself up with unrealistic expectations. What if we set little goals and made wishes (or intentions) all year long?

What about a wish box? A Prayer Box? A Me Box? I have kept one for SO many years, and enjoy making them for other people. What I like even more is setting out all the materials for people to make their own; after all, it really is all about them. You decorate a box or container and then every time you want something, write it on a piece of paper and put it in the box. Sometimes, it can be really fun (and eye-opening) to sift through the box after a time to see which wishes came true, which didn't (yet) and which ones you don't need anymore.

So, on a very cold Sunday in January, the kids made and decorated their very own wish boxes. And made wishes. And commented on those wishes. And commented on other people's boxes and wishes. But in the end, they all put a wish in

that box. UUCSF RE activities are designed to prompt discussion, free-form conversation, a place to share without judgment, and maybe help us all think about something we want; whether that be a bicycle, a home for the stray cat down the street, to stop fighting with our parents...or a wish for three more wishes!

Won't you please come and visit us sometime? Adults of all ages are always welcome.

Valerie DiLorenzo



Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of the South Fork

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