

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Fork

December
2012

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

www.uucsf.org

We are a spiritual community.

Remembering Those We Love

Over the past several months, Jim Thurman has installed nearly a dozen new memorial bricks in our garden. On November 4, during our annual service of remembrance, we dedicated the memorial bricks that were installed this year in our still-new Remembrance Garden.



A Holiday Exploration for UUCSF Children of All Ages

The Children of the UUCSF Religious Exploration Class invite our congregants of all ages to be a part of their holiday program, a short play, “A Holiday Lawsuit,” by Marie Houck. Volunteer to sing or play an instrument for a variety of Christmas-time songs. We will practice during Religious Education class downstairs at the meetinghouse for the next weeks during Sunday Services, and will pre-

sent the performance array together at our Dec. 23 Sunday Service. To be part of the fun, please contact Kathleen admin@uucsf.org, Sue Penny suepenny@optonline.net, or Kent Martin, kntmrtn55@gmail.com. Join our children in offering a truly multi-generational Christmastime holiday experience.

Thoughts ... From Alison: For Once, The News Isn't All Bad



It's hard to believe that the last time I sat down to write a newsletter column was a mere month ago. Since then, Hurricane Sandy has rocketed through our region, leaving behind a changed world. A long and often ugly election season has concluded. Trees that still sported leaves just four weeks ago are bare; stark against what is already a watery pale blue winter's sky. As I age, I've become accustomed to the feeling of time flying by. But this month brings a sense of density, of fullness, that seems to spill over the edges of my calendar.

One of the effects of Hurricane Sandy was the storm's tendency to distort time. The storm itself was with us for 36 short hours. The wind picked up early Monday morning; wind, rain and floods filled the day and night. But by Tuesday afternoon the sun was out, and the hum of generators and chain saws filled the air. Yet for those faced with days and nights without electricity, heat, hot water, and telephone, the storm dragged on as if it were still in residence. For children free of school and adults unable to work, the unexpected gift of time was tempered by new chores and errands – the search for ice, gas, batteries, fresh food, and outlets to recharge phones. For families that suffered devastation, displaced or picking through the remnants of what was a home, the storm will become a dividing line in time – one way of life before Sandy, and another that has yet to be imagined.

There is a real desire to put the storm, and its effects, behind us; to “get back to normal.” I get this. Hurricane Sandy is, and continues to be, a huge rent in the fabric of life, and sewing it back together, even if the stitches show, is what humans want to do. But in the rush to fix and restore and

rebuild, we can easily lose sight of some of the good news of this time.

The good news is that there is an enormous well of caring, good will, generosity, empathy, and compassion just under the surface of vast numbers of us. My mind and heart are full of stories: shelter offered to those displaced before, during and after the storm; food shared by candlelight and on street corners; clothing drives so successful trucks are needed to haul the collections to devastated neighborhoods; donations of cash, time, a shoulder to cry on; helping hands to carefully sift through waterlogged belongings.

Oh, I know, there are also fierce stories of looting, price gouging, and incompetence. But for once, they are not all we are hearing and reading. This storm is a huge affirmation of a basic goodness in us humans. We are reminded of how we can respond to one another's needs with creativity and kindness.

Now we must figure out how to sustain that outpouring over the long haul, for this storm will be a part of our lives for a long time. And, we need to harness the goodness and willpower that has been revealed for the other challenges we face: intransigent poverty; a rapidly changing climate; systemic injustice; issues, interestingly, hardly mentioned in our just concluded election. Let us not turn away from the good news too quickly. We need every bit, as fuel for the future.

Blessings,

Alison

Open House Get-together

Alison and Pat invite all of us to an Open House at their home on Sunday, December 30, from 2–5pm. Maps to 40 Noyac Harbor Rd. will be available at the meetinghouse.

President's Letter

Last June, in my annual report to the congregation, I outlined six hopes for us in the coming year. Perhaps it will be useful now to review these hopes and let you know how far I think we've come. Quotes from the Annual Report are in italics; my comments this month are in Roman type.

Hope: We need to make social justice as big a deal as it once was with us. Over the past couple of years I sensed we were losing our energy. That's why I put much of my own energy into the LUUV Team, and why I hope to keep the momentum going in the coming year.

Comment: Now that the election is over, the Social Justice Committee is considering options. Does Water Justice have legs? Or do we need to put our emphasis elsewhere? Key to this is that our actions must well up from the passions for justice within our community, and not be imposed by the Board.

Hope: That we will move forward on a vibrant and inclusive Lifespan Religious Exploration program.

Comment: We have hired a very qualified RE Educator and our program is going forward. A continuing concern is that we don't have many children in the program. Further, we need to institute a Safe Congregation policy which includes guidelines for relationships between children and adults.

Hope: Our minister has experienced unusually heavy demands for pastoral care during the current year. Given the demographics of our congregation, it is likely that this need will remain constant or even increase. I hope we'll be able to get Pastoral Care Associates up and running, using the Worship Associates as a model.

Comment: Pastoral Care Associates is in the formative stage. In the meantime, our Neighborhood Groups are getting underway, and these can take on some of the duties normally associated with pastoral care.

Hope: We need to address the long-term upkeep of our meetinghouse. Although there may be differences of opinion on ways and means, there's little disagreement on the need for multi-year planning to be ready for inevitable major repairs.

Comment:

The recent donation of over \$14,000 from a member's coin collection can provide some much-needed seed money for long-term

building main-

tenance. It's a good start. We need to build on it.

Hope: We need to bring along new leaders who can replace the current slate of officers and committee chairs when they complete their periods of service.

Comment: The Harvest the Power leadership development series has had a great response. Cooperation with the Southold UU's is a big plus. The Nominating Committee is engaging in a thoughtful process to identify potential upcoming leaders.

Hope: Although many of us will shy away from words like "evangelism," we need to continue and expand our efforts to make ourselves known in the community.

Comment: Some of us are visiting a sister UU congregation in Connecticut this month to see what we can learn from their success in building membership. We may want to go ahead with the spring retreat that Alison and I have suggested. We do need good ideas. We also need to avoid dead ends.

Peace,

John Andrews



Please Note

Alison will be on sabbatical leave for the month of January. While she is away, the Rev. Jennifer Brower will be on call for emergency pastoral care. Should you have need for a minister's services, please contact our President, John Andrews, who will in turn contact Jennifer Brower.

During her sabbatical, Alison will audit a class at Meadville/Lombard Theological School in Chicago, and also attend a GreenFaith Fellowship retreat in Philadelphia. For the rest of the month, she hopes to spend time catching up on reading, and doing some writing.

December Service Calendar

Unless otherwise indicated, services begin at 10:30 am

December 9

Whither a Unitarian Universalist Christmas?

The Rev. Alison Cornish

Abby Fleming, Musician

Unitarian Universalists honor and cherish our heritage, which is decidedly Christian. But we also wrestle mightily with our Christian inheritance, especially when it comes to holidays such as Christmas. What meaning and interpretations have Unitarian Universalists brought to this complicated holiday?

December 16

The Best of Times, the Worst of Times

The Rev. Alison Cornish

Louise Pecoraro, Musician

The holiday season brings with it a time of contrasts and complications. How can we best navigate the emotional and spiritual rollercoaster that has us yearning, pining, complaining, wishing, running, exhausted, exhilarated?

December 23

A Holiday Exploration for Children of All Ages

Kathleen Furey, UUCSF Religious Educator

Friends and members join our children and youth in the preparation and performance of this annual intergenerational service. Highlights include the short play, "A Holiday Lawsuit," written by Marie Houck, and special music by young and old.

December 24, 4:00 pm

Christmas Eve Service

The Rev. Alison Cornish

Peter Weiss, Musician

Each year we come together in the gathering dusk of Christmas Eve to share stories, songs, meditations and candlelight. Come. Bring your friends and families, children of all ages, for this hour of worship.

Service Date	Set Up/ Greeters	Hospitality
Dec 9	Wittenbergs	Holsteins
Dec 16	T. Brolin	Wittenbergs
Dec 23	Jackson	Liso/Andrews
Dec 24	Truitt	
Dec 30	Krinke	Tusa/Littman
Jan 6	Mason	Potters
Should you need to arrange a substitute, please notify Kathleen Furey, administrator, of the change you have made. 631-537-0132		

December 30

Making and Keeping Promises

The Rev. Alison Cornish

George Cork Maul, Musician

What better way to celebrate the cusp of the New Year than by taking a good look at the spiritual practice of promising? The last installment in our monthly series is drawn from Christine Pohl's book, *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices That Sustain Us*.

Sunday, January 6, 2013

What Time Is It Now?

The Rev. Jennifer Brower and

Worship Associate Sue Penny

Flashes of insight come without warning, and often through an unexpected source - a casual conversation, a glimpse of some fleeting phenomenon of nature, or the words tucked into a Chinese fortune cookie. No matter how they come - if we are fortunate - moments of insight enhance our thinking about life and prompt our spiritual growth.

The Rev. Jennifer Brower serves as the Minister for Pastoral Care at UU Shelter Rock. She will be our minister on call for emergency pastoral care while Alison is on sabbatical leave during the month of January.

Upcoming Events: All events, unless otherwise noted, are free, open to all, and held at the meeting-house.

Saturday, Dec. 8, 9 am

Caregivers' Circle for congregants and the larger community who care for aging family members

Sunday, Dec. 9, early morning

Exploratory visit to the fast-growing All Souls UU Congregation, New London, CT. Contact Mark Potter for details.

Sunday, Dec. 9, noon

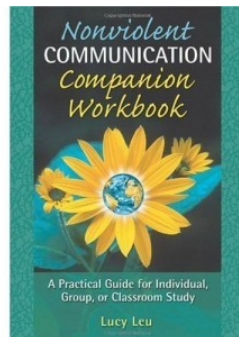
Qi Gong in Winter. Learn to love your body. Build strength and reserves with the warmth and balance of these ancient Chinese exercises, walks, and self-massages, practicing the art of breathing our movement. Free, and all are welcome.

Thursday, Dec. 13, 7 pm

Board meeting

**Friday, Dec. 14,
10 - 11 am**

Nonviolent Communication Practice Group. We are using Marshall Rosenberg's *Nonviolent Communication*



Friday, Dec. 14, 5:15 pm

Worship Associates meet

Friday, Dec. 21, 7 pm

Winter Solstice Celebration (see next column)

Sunday, December 30, 2- 5 pm

Open House at Alison and Pat's (see box page 2)

Note: on Sunday, Dec. 30, there will be no Children's Religious Exploration program.



Winter Solstice Celebration

Friday, December 21 at 7 pm

Every year this celebration attracts more and more people from all over our wider community; newcomers as well as frequent flyers.

- A Potluck Supper kicks off the fun. Please bring a generous dish for 6 people.
- A candlelight ceremony honoring Winter Solstice will be led by the Rev. Alison Cornish.
- Drumming and dancing.

All are Welcome! Especially families and children! Bring a drum or instrument, if possible.

Suggested adult donation: \$8 for the benefit of the Food Pantry and UUCSF. Children enter free.



For more info call 631-0132 or

www.uucsf.org



Board Meeting Highlights, Nov. 8

John Andrews reported a need to review our social justice efforts.

Alison reported the success of the fall book group. She has experienced unusual levels of need for pastoral care, and this calls for launching Pastoral Care Associates. While she takes her last Sabbatical month, a UU minister will be on call.

Imke Littman reported that the coin collection donation was put into savings - \$14,000. Mark Potter will write a resolution about the purpose of this money. Pledging is ahead of schedule, but contributions are behind. Events show a \$1,000 profit.

Our effort to acquire consultant agreements is pretty much completed, and new light bulbs are here. We need to develop a Safe Congregation Policy. Sue Penny, Kent Martin, and Alison will prepare a presentation to the congregation.

The Board will call a meeting Jan. 6 to review bylaws changes and discuss name changes.

We approved George Cork Maul as music coordinator through June 30.

Myrna Truitt, Secretary

The Green Corner

Editor's note: Since the holiday season is so much about family, I'm offering this from my young niece's blog, <http://newyorkcliche.com>. For several years now, she's lived in Manhattan in high style, at stunningly low cost to both her wallet and the environment.

Oh, Christmas Tree

The trees appear in Manhattan suddenly. You never see them arriving, but the morning after Thanksgiving there they are, all over the city streets. With nowhere to lock them up at night, their sellers prop up little tents of tarp and camp out for the whole month. No one complains about the obstacles this makes. We love walking through an evergreen forest that masks ugly city smells and makes us think warm fuzzy thoughts despite the winter winds.

The first year I wasn't going home for Christmas, I knew I'd have to put some effort into generating my own Christmas cheer. It's easy to leave that to your parents, who created Christmas magic for you in the first place. Though I was ready to have my first Christmas away from home, I was not ready for my first Christmas without a tree. Midway through December, cruising trees in my Upper West Side neighborhood, I discovered to my horror that nothing cost less than \$30. That's enough to suck the Christmas spirit right out you, so my roommates and I did what we always do when something is too expensive in our neighborhood: we went to Harlem.

There we found a little beauty of a \$10 Christmas tree that smelled just like a \$30 one. We strung it with a fake pearl necklace and some holly berries. For ornaments we used earrings. It was nothing like the Christmas trees of my youth, but it perfectly suited us and our cozy, Craigslist-furnished

apartment.

I think even my mother would have approved, though she hadn't exactly set a tradition of togetherness around our family's Christmas tree. I know other families who select their tree together, bring it home together, and then each person hangs his or her favorite ornaments. None of this have I ever experienced.

The fact is, my mother is extremely particular about her Christmas tree. It must be just the right species of fir, the proper width and height, with precise distances between tiers of branches. The lights are colored, with the colors limited to red, green, yellow, and blue. No pink, no orange. I remember attempting to hang

ornaments as a child, perhaps one I had made that day in class. But every ornament I ever hung would be moved to a different place on the tree, to a branch that supported its weight and size just so. Soon I'd say, "Here Mom, you hang this." She's the queen of our family Christmas tree, no doubt about that.

Back in those days, I used to wonder if I'd ever know how to decorate a tree of my own once I was old enough to have one. Would it be a mass of sagging branches of pathetically placed ornaments? I'm happy to have practiced on our \$10 Harlem find, and I'm happy to report that I did very well hanging earring ornaments. The thing that's harder to report? I moved several of the items my roommates placed on the tree...that branch wasn't the perfect place for that one; this one would be better suited to a branch higher up....

Your mid-twenties: is that too soon to realize you're turning into your mother?

newyorkcliche



Readers' Forum

One reader responded to last month's Forum about the findings of a recent poll from the Pew Research Center that showed sharp declines in the numbers of American Protestants. Currently, large numbers of Americans consider themselves atheistic, agnostic, or "nothing in particular" - Nones. What intrigued this reader was the relationship of that demographic shift to UUCSF's hopes of congregational growth:

"As a None, my suggestion would be to get out the message about the UU mission and belief structure. Before I met Alison, I assumed UU was another Christian denomination and that Christ and/or God would have an important place in the service and belief structure. I've mentioned my attendance at UU services to a few people and they all assumed the same thing.

I'm not sure how best to get the message out, but I think that UUCSF would be appealing to more people--as it is to me--if they properly understood what it is really about."

For this month, a brief line from the philosopher Voltaire. Written in the 18th century, it might take you to new territories in the 21st.

"To learn who rules over you, simply find out whom you are not allowed to criticize."

This part of the newsletter works best when people respond, so we'd love to hear from you. Please send comments to marlogan@optonline.net.

Congregational Business Meeting January 6

The Board is calling a special business meeting of the congregation for Sunday, January 6, at noon following the service. The primary purpose of the meeting will be to consider a change in the bylaws under which all the members of the Finance Committee, not just the Chair, would be recommended by the Nominating Committee and elected by the congregation. This change would take place as of the annual meeting next June.

In the meantime, the Finance Committee would be disbanded and its functions would be exercised directly by the Board. Direct election of the Finance Committee was recommended by last year's Nominating Committee, followed by extensive discussions involving the Finance Committee, the UUCSF Council, and the Board.

We all owe a hearty "thank you" to the members of the current Finance Committee: Tip Brolin, Charlie Coulter, Chris Epifania, Bob Hoenig, Ingrid Krinke, and Imke Littman. They worked hard to keep our congregation on a sound financial basis, and most of them participated in the discussions leading up to this proposed change.

A second agenda item will be a conversation on the recent suggestion to change the name of our congregation. Those who initiated the suggestion will be on hand to explain their rationale, and all will be able to respond with comments, questions, and opinions. The purpose of the conversation is informational only. No vote will be taken at this time.

John Andrews



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Vice President: Mark Potter
Secretary: Myrna Truitt
Treasurer: Imke Littman
Sue Penny
Margaret Pulkingham

Newsletter Information:
Deadline is the 15th of each month. E-mail copy, photos and events to Margaret Logan marlogan@optonline.net
Please start your subject line with "UU newsletter".

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District News

Yes, storm victims still need our help and here's what we can do: The CERG (Central East Regional Group) UU Disaster Relief Fund @ <http://www.cerguua.org/> will collect your donations to assist fellow UUs with the basics needed. Any and all monies left over will be maintained for future CERG regional relief efforts. Contributions can be sent to: CERG- UUA, 100 W. 10th St., Ste. 1008, Wilmington, DE, 19801. You can also go online (above) with PayPal. Other UU-related organizations are the UU Trauma Response Ministry (<http://www.traumaministry.org/>) and the Disaster Chaplaincy Services (<http://www.disasterchaplaincy.org/>).

The 2013 District Annual Meeting will be held May 3-4 and is requesting proposals, if you would like to teach a workshop. Just download the form at <https://fd7.formdesk.com/uiforms/WorkshopProposal>.

Wouldn't it be great to get involved in a UUA "Common Read" program with congregations around here? It's happening in Westchester County as they embark on the reading of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, by Michelle Alexander. Contact person: mtino@uuma.org. But, first check with our Rev. Alison Cornish about future shared book readings in our own area..

For a list of CERG webinars, see <http://www.cerguua.org/calendars/cergwebinars.html> for all of your insatiable learning needs.

UUA President Peter Morales wrote a fine article applauding the Nov.6 marriage equality ballot initiatives. To read more, see <https://www.uua.org/news/pressroom/pressreleases/280924.shtml>

Musicians, listen up! There's a call for YOU to contribute to the worship experience at the General Assembly 2013 in Louisville, KY. Download <http://davidmglasgow.com/ga/callformusicians.pdf> if you'd like to apply.

Did you know that our UU youth have their own UUA Young Adult Ministry Associate? His name is Shane Montoya. See what he has to say at <http://blueboat.blogs.uua.org/young-adults/you-have-me-at-hello/>

Want to do something special for the troops still in Afghanistan? The UU Congregation at Rock Tavern, NY, is collecting donations for purchasing special etched inspirational stones. For further info, contact Athena Drewes at adrewes@hvc.rr.com.

Long Island Leadership Institutes 1, 2, and 3 are being held on Long Island beginning in January. If you are interested in attending, contact cmorris37@optonline.net.

Pam Wittenberg



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