



Fall Journal

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the South Fork



We are a spiritual community.

An Interview with Kimberly Quinn Johnson By Myrna Truitt

How are you settling in?

Just great, I discovered I have only a 15-20 minute commute to the Meeting-house, and I'm exploring it and meeting members and friends.

What are your first impressions of the East End of Long Island?

Oh, I like it. It's definitely slower than NYC. There's more walking, less crowding. I'm looking forward to finding beaches.

Where did you grow up?

I spent 12-13 years in Jersey City, NJ, and then spent time in East Orange, NJ.

Were you brought up a UU?

No, not at all. My mother's parents were Southern Baptist, very religious. They were deacons in the church. A lot of it I liked, but as a teenager I felt a lot of problems.

What made you choose UU's?

In college, I stopped being a Baptist. For a lot of years, I had no religion. I was disdainful of organized religion, and felt I was forced to go. Then I read an article in *Essence* magazine by Rosemary Bray McNatt, who was intern minister at the Montclair UU's, and I checked them out. It was a good fit, and by coincidence, I eventually ended up working at Rosemary's church.

What called you to the ministry?

A couple of things. I could ask questions, use my reason and I was not bound by creed. I found a community; it was not enough just to do my own thing. The ministry filled my needs. I could have a commitment to justice and help other people to create community.



What do you like to do for fun?

Oh, that's hard. I've been so busy the last few years that I haven't had much time for fun. I like reading, watching movies, yoga and meditation. I'm looking forward to exploring nature, and I love being near the water. When I lived near the Hudson, I liked to go to the park and watch the river.

What are your favorite hymns and books?

In the teal hymnal there's one called, "Oh Ya Ya" – it goes, where are we going? I like

hymns that speak to struggle. One of my favorites is "Blue Boat Home." I love the African-American spirituals and those such as "Fire of Commitment" and "Find the Silence." I'm not sure I should admit this, but I like romance novels, their simplicity and happy endings, 90's "chick lit," and women authors. I like books that deal with people and relationships; they are easy fiction. Since I read so much heavy stuff for work, I like reading that relaxes me. I also like magazines such as *Essence* and Oprah's *O*.

What accomplishment are you proudest of?

In grad school, I formed a union at NYU. It was the first at a private university. We organized on campus, got the law changed, and got the university to comply. I worked as a labor organizer. In my work as a UU minister, I was able to represent the state's youth leaders and helped with Social Justice training.

What do you expect of our congregation?

I don't know. What I've heard about you is that you love each other, you have a desire to be en-

Kimberly, continued on page 2

Kimberly, continued from page 1

gaged in the world, and that you would like to grow. I look forward to helping you do this, and to find new ways to grow and to help each other.

Could we have a brief bio of your work and education?

I attended Georgetown University and recently had my 20th reunion. I can't believe it's been that long, but I still feel young and energetic. I went to grad school at NYU but am a Ph.D. dropout because I became engaged in union organizing. I am an adjunct professor, teaching women and gender studies, and I am still teaching two classes online. I was involved with a nonprofit teacher's network in several cities, helping with research to influence public policy.

Anything else you would like to add?

I have a partner who is a UU, a poet and a spoken word artist. We were discussing his move to NJ when this opportunity came up. So now he has moved from Illinois to Long Island. We are looking forward to his meeting the members and friends of the UUCSF.



The Rev. Jennifer Brower leading a service of music and dance.

Letter to the Congregation

Dear Friends at UUCSF,

Myriam and I sold our house on Bittersweet Lane on July 17. We put the house on the market before I was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer on January 5, 2015. Since that time I have been on chemo and weathering the side effects of that treatment. We were so happy when we got an offer on our house in the spring, at a time when my health was so precarious. That happiness does not compare, however, to the happiness we experienced when Ingrid, Grania and Tip offered to organize a garage sale of the contents of our house and garage on our behalf since I was not well enough to travel. Joris, one of my three sons, was able to go to Bittersweet for two weeks to help with the sale and do the bulk of the work of emptying the house and garage and filling up two large bins.

Myriam and I would like to make a donation from the income of the sale to UUCSF in recognition of the community contribution of Ingrid, Grania and Tip to our family at this time of need and helplessness. Their generosity is both a measure of their character and a fair representation of the generosity of spirit that I so often experienced over the years, at UUCSF.

Please accept this thousand dollar donation and please distribute \$400 to the Helping Hand Fund and the balance to the regular expenses.

I do not know what the future holds for me. In February we learned that the cancer had spread to my liver. But from a June 12 CT scan we learned that the cancer had not spread further. After many minor setbacks (a TURP procedure, the insertion of a bile duct stent and then a duodenal stent), I am managing to stay on the course of chemotherapy. Since January I have been keenly aware of the limits of key statistical terms, and I have been placing my hope and energy on life, friendships, love and affection. I hope the chemo will help and I will have some stable time with a relatively reliable body to be present to my friends, family and loved ones. Consequently I do not know when or if I will be able to return to the Hamptons to see you all again. Please accept this note as a wave of farewell.

Over the years I made a number of close friends at UUCSF. I am grateful for those friendships and the community that fostered them.

In solidarity and with affection,
Walter Jarsky

Green Sanctuary Team Charter

The activity of the Green Sanctuary Team (GST) is divided into two phases, the first leading up to an application to the UUA for Candidate status, and the second to the implementation of the program following UUA approval.

Phase 1. Preparation for Candidate Status

- The team will conduct a congregational environmental assessment
- Organize the project planning process
- Identify leaders for each project
- Communicate with UUCSF members and friends
- Communicate with the UUA Green Sanctuary program to assure that we are preparing a plan that is likely to be approved
- Prepare the application to UUA for candidate status
- Work with the UUA to revise the plan as necessary.

Phase 2. Program Implementation

Following acceptance of UUCSF into candidate status, the GST will:

- Launch the program to garner maximum enthusiasm and participation
- Monitor progress of each project on a continuing basis
- Confer with the program coach assigned to us by the UUA
- Cheerlead the program
- Reach out to the wider community for shared participation and publicity
- Quantify results
- As projects are completed, prepare the application to the UUA for Green Sanctuary certification
- Plan ongoing activities to follow certification

Phase 1 GST Activities

Congregational Assessment

- Professional energy audit of the meetinghouse
- Gather information about the congregation's current programs and practices. This will include a survey of our members and friends to determine what we are doing now and what we would like to do that we need help with. Such help would include community encouragement and support and providing reliable information.
- Seek project ideas from the congregation (much already done here.)

Organize Project Planning Process

The UUA has defined four specific project areas that need to be covered. The following are current ideas for projects in each area, subject to revision:

1. Environmental Justice (1 project)

Identify a joint project with a neighboring community that has been marginalized in some way that has environmental aspects.

Possibilities: Hispanic immigrants, Shinnecock Nation, African-American neighbors.

2. Worship and Celebration (2 projects)

For one project, the GST will work with the minister and Worship Associates to develop a project centered on worship. The second project will celebrate UUCSF's commitment to the environment in art and music outside Sunday services. Our Winter Solstice Celebration in December will highlight environmental themes and inspire action.

3. Religious Education (2 projects)

A children's project will incorporate small lessons in home ecology into the RE curriculum. A project for adults will conduct education/discussion sessions on two important questions:

- What is environmental justice?
- How can you tell good science from voodoo science?

The objective will be to gain an understanding of how world-embracing justice and good science can move us to succeed in the here-and-now world.

4. Sustainable Living (6 projects including 2 "wild cards" which could be in other areas). Suggestions for such projects, offered in last spring's brainstorming sessions, include:

Energy and Climate

- Lower meetinghouse carbon footprint
- Home energy
- Participation in the Citizens Climate Lobby
- Carpooling and bicycling

Food, Water, Land Ecology

- Ethical and healthy eating
- Water quality on the East End of Long Island
- Gardening and composting
- Recycling the hard-to-recycle
- Climate-friendly agricultural practices--study and activism

Other Project Ideas

- Green grants, good news, dark skies, 4th of July parade, community conservation projects.

John Andrews

Ours is a shared ministry



It probably goes without saying—but I will say it anyway: I am delighted to be here with you. I have been taking these weeks to get to know this congregation and larger community, and I have been warmed by your

enthusiastic welcome. I look forward to creating a covenant with you on Sunday, September 27. We'll explore what it means to be a covenantal faith and conclude by creating a covenant for our emerging ministry together.

One of my favorite parts of our worship service is when we note that *ours is a shared ministry*. It is a goal of congregational life to deepen relationships and to create opportunities to participate more fully in community. We all have gifts and talents, and it's a blessing to discover how we are most called to serve.

These past few weeks, I have been having lots of conversations with you about what you treasure in this community. And I have been talking with committees and leaders— identifying more ways for people to serve. Here are a few examples:

Our **Communications** team is looking for folks who can help to update our look and extend our reach. Are you interested in writing for this journal? Do you have an eye for design? We're looking to give our website and weekly News Bulletin a "makeover." Contact me, or Martha Potter <mtpotter@optonline.net> if you are interested.

Our **Religious Education** program has two new teachers, Tina Curran and Christine Giordano. But there is a role for all of us in the lives of this congregation's youth. You can support this program and our youth by volunteering one week as a classroom helper. Let me know if you are interested in being involved in our children's program. Perhaps you are better with adolescents. Or perhaps you know some teens who would benefit from continued religious community. There are plans afoot.

Give me a call, or email or text about that.

Our **Fellowship** team is doing a great job coordinating Hospitality and Greeting. To strengthen our connections with visitors each week, we are looking for a few volunteers to serve at our **Welcome Table** on Sunday mornings. Contact Pam Wittenberg <pawittenberg@optonline.net> if you are interested.

That's just a beginning. There are plenty of ways to be involved. If we haven't talked yet, I look forward to hearing from you, and what *you* treasure about this community. And be sure to check the weekly News Bulletin for announcements about upcoming events and opportunities.

Finally, here is an opportunity that I'd like to highlight:

The Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed will give the keynote address at the **2015 Annual Meeting of the New York State Convention of Universalists** at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Oneonta, NY (October 23–24). In addition to the keynote address, there are two workshops that I thought might be of particular interest to this congregation:

"Eight Keys to Attracting People of Color"
"Social Justice Projects that Work"

As we begin to think about ways to reach out into the larger community, this event might give us some valuable tools for moving forward. Can we organize a small group? If you are interested in participating in this workshop, please let me know.

I am so looking forward to our journey together!

Yours in spirit,
Kimberly

The Cruellest Season

T.S. Eliot was no farmer. Had he been a farmer he would not have fretted that April is “mixing memory and desire...breeding lilacs out of a dead land.” He would have been planting his peas, beans, beets, carrots and corn.

To farmers, spring is the season of hope, when they lay out their dreams for the summer in tidy rows: strings stretched above, supporting thin air, a future harvest; lattice work for the tomatoes; and a generous dollop of manure beside each squash. With the gentle rains of the season, each fragile sprout becomes a promise, which for that moment no mildew, insect or blazing sun can blight.

As a child I saw my father return exhausted at night from the fields with this promise simmering under streaks of sweat and soil, returning to the seed drill after milking his cows, continuing by headlight long after I went to bed, and beaming over his coffee in the dark kitchen a few hours later, not for the taste of his coffee but for the promise of another 20 acres germinating in the North Corner.

How could he know that a wet spring would stunt a third of the crop, a hot summer would dry more of it and rain in September would keep his tractors out of the field until frost time?

Another year I saw him put up 300 bales of alfalfa, a month’s worth of fodder lying in the field, and helped him struggle to gather it as two days of rain ruined half the crop.

If any season is cruel it would be the harvest season. Somehow the pleasant surprises of the season, a bumper crop of beach plums, or the sweet pungence of this year’s cherry tomatoes, do little to the disappointment of a drought, the pain of lost crops, ethereal plans in tatters.

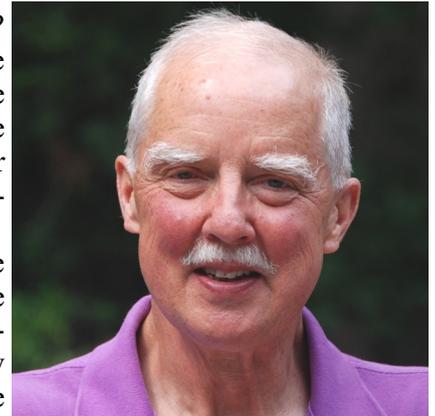
With enough years like this one, it would seem logical that as we aged we would begin to take Eliot’s view of hope as the charming deceiver. But when I consider my withered dahlias, which these days are my only effort at farming and a sore thumb in my wife’s bountiful garden, I am already plotting a device to protect their tubers from voles, and another to improve the irrigation, so that next year they may grow into a kaleidoscope of colors equal to that catalog I receive each fall.

Only we humans seem to speculate on the nature of hope: Does it “spring eternal in the human breast?” Is it midwife to pain? Does it light the

way to success? Or was Nietzsche correct when he said, “Hope is the worst of evils, for it prolongs the torment of man.”

Surely, hope lies somewhere deeper than consciousness. How else to explain the seed which germinates in a dry soil, or the squirrel chewing the metal grill over a bird feeder, or the forgotten dahlia tuber sprouting a single green tendril into a dark basement?

Mark Potter



A warm thank you to Nancy Arnold and a welcome to Kimberly Quinn Johnson.

Elizabeth Cecile Tener

Elizabeth was born in Vienna on February 15, 1938, a most difficult time and place to come into this world. This fact alone tells us what a survivor she had been.

She was 11 when she contracted polio, and was in long-term hospitalization for one year, being totally paralyzed except for the tips of her fingers. She eventually survived two cancers and raised three children with her husband of 59 years, Marty Tener. Marty loves to tell the story of how they met: "It was like *"Some Enchanted Evening"*. . . I saw her across a crowded room and instantly fell in love. I proposed on our first date. She was 17, and I was 20. Everything important in life I learned from Elizabeth."

Elizabeth studied at the Parsons School of Design, and spent years designing top-selling art needlework. For more than thirty years she and Marty spent summers in Albert County, New Brunswick, Canada, and it is here she felt inspired to begin painting seriously. She wanted to put the excitement she felt for nature into her artwork; flowers, wooded scenes and falling snow her specialty. Her book, "The Gardens of Albert County", printed in July, 2008 is available for viewing on the coffee table in the Fellowship Room. She sold some of her paintings at cost to make them affordable to those of little means, and always gave painting lessons for free, enjoying the company, and sharing her knowledge freely and willingly. Every year she donated a painting to the Women's Wellness Center in New Brunswick to be auctioned for necessary purchases. One donated painting was moved around, depending on who might benefit most from being able to have her beautiful painting grace their room, and bring them comfort.

Elizabeth's son, Alan, remembers his mother:

"She taught me the most essential skills for life, the secret to happiness. She taught me perspective: when life gives you lemons, lemonade is good, but why not make lemon meringue pie? She taught me resiliency, to find the good in every situation that life throws at us. She taught me that relationships are everything, and thrived through her connections with people. Our house was always alive with friends. My daughter, Lily, summed it up, "I wish that there was a girl my age just like Oma. She



would make such an incredible friend."

We will miss you, Elizabeth. . . your gentle ways and bright, happy smile. Your words were kind, and you were always a true friend. As your son Alan said, "The essence of Elizabeth is in everyone who met her, who knew her and who loved her. And that is a life well lived."

Carol Mason

****Editor's note:*

Elizabeth passed away on June 8, 2015. She became a member of the UUSCF on December 9, 2007.

Carol Mason and Hilary Helfant are planning an exhibit of her watercolors in the Sanctuary.

Green Corner

Taking a Ride on the Gulf Stream

Most people don't associate tropical fish with our Long Island waters. In fact, I was one of those "most people" until just a few years ago when students of mine pulled a seine net through the waters of Accabonac Harbor in mid-September. All the usual suspects, silversides, killifish, mummichogs, sheepshead minnows, were present, but an unfamiliar fish was there too. My colleagues and I scoured through ID books, but we couldn't figure out what it was. So we took a photo, released the



Blue-spotted Coronetfish



Boxfish

Leopard-spotted Grouper



Spotted Butterflyfish

fish, and sent the photo to our go-to-guy on fish identification, Howard Reisman, Professor of Biology and Ichthyology at Long Island University.

Howard identified the fish as a juvenile black-striped Crevalle

Jack, a tropical fish. *What was it doing here?*

In short, some of the eggs and even the planktonic and larval stages of many species of tropical fish are swept up in the Gulfstream and carried north. By the time they reach within 200 miles south of Long Island, they have grown large enough to swim on their own, and move into cur-

rents called warm-core rings. These currents bring them closer to shore, and then tidal surges and wind-driven currents bring them into our south shore bays. The tropical fish usually arrive in the spring and feed in eelgrass beds, alongside the common fish we catch in our seine net. But come late fall, these tropical fish are doomed. As the waters turn colder, they will die or become weakened by the falling water temperatures and be eaten by a predator.

In mid-September, my colleagues and I took a day to seek out some of these accidental Gulf Stream hitchhikers that were among the eelgrass beds of Shinnecock Bay. I cannot guarantee our identification is 100% correct, as we are awaiting word from our expert, but I hope you enjoy their beauty.

Anita Wright

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