

FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF PLAINFIELD



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ESTABLISHED 1889 (UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST)

JUNE 2010

WORSHIP SERVICES

THE DUMBING DOWN OF AMERICA

JUNE 6 — REV. TRACY
SPOWLS-JENKS
Children will attend the Service

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TURNS THE WORLD AROUND

JUNE 13— RE COMMITTEE
This morning we thank those who have participated in our Religious Education Program. We will also have a presentation by the 7/8 graders and the 1/2 graders. There will be lots of singing and celebrating

today. Please join us!

DE COLORES

JUNE 20— REV. TRACY
SPOWLS-JENKS

Today we will have a Flower Communion and hear about this very Unitarian tradition. Please bring a flower for the vase for each member of the family. We would like as many families as possible to join us today, so please do plan to be at the service!

June 20 is the last service before the summer. Services continue through-

out the summer with lay lead and other speakers filling the pulpit. Rev. Tracy Spowls-Jenks returns to the pulpit August 8.

CAN NEW JERSEY CONNECT?

JUNE 27 - GINA GENOVESE
Gina Genovese, Executive Director of Courage To Connect NJ will share her ideas for building stronger, more affordable communities in New Jersey. When we understand that our sense of community is not tied to our government, we can begin to make NJ economically sustainable.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

BEYOND THE PULPIT

And the seasons they go 'round and 'round sings Joni Mitchell in that old song "The Circle Game." Here we are in June again but it seems just like yesterday that I was called to serve this congregation. This year has gone by quickly for me with trying to get to know you and learning about the culture of the congregation. I haven't memorized the by-laws and I still can't name all the committees and sub-committees, but I am learning!

Overall, I think we have a good year together. We have made some strides in communication and organi-

zation but in this area there is always more to do. The Board has worked to be transparent in their work. We have rejuvenated the Restoration Committee. We have expanded and strengthened the Membership Committee. We have had fun at the pancake breakfasts and spaghetti dinners. We have suffered some losses but in these we have deepened our connections as a community. There is much more to be said, but I will share all of this in my annual report at the congregational meeting on June 6. I am looking forward to a break this summer but also very ex-

cited about starting our second year together.

Just a few things I want to mention in my last newsletter column before the summer break:

On May 23rd, we had a special service where we talked about the restoration project. We mentioned several ways in which every member of the congregation could contribute to the project without digging deeper into your wallets (of course, for those who have not pledged to the campaign, please do! See Debbie

(Continued on page 2)

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

CALL FOR SUMMER 2010 SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Has the cold of winter got you imagining yourself in flip-flops in August? How about picturing yourself leading a summer service? Summer services are less formal and present an opportunity to try something new.

When people step forward on a summer Sunday to lead a service, they experience the fulfillment of leading the congregation in thoughtful contemplation of something they feel is important. Our congregation expresses the depth and breadth of its spiritual, intellectual, and social concerns through such lay led services, allowing us to benefit from many voices. Why not lend your voice?

As is our custom, we will have lay led services throughout the summer of 2010. The worship committee asks that you begin to think about whether you are able to contribute to this effort. You can lead a service on

your own or team up with one or two other people. Typically a sermon lasts 15 minutes. If you work with a group on a service, each person would have about five minutes. Many ideas for services would lend themselves to this shared format because it would allow for multiple perspectives on topics that touch our lives in rich and varied ways. If you haven't led a service before, you should know that the worship committee helps you create the order of service and provides any other guidance that leaders request. The summer is a time for us to explore, and in that spirit, we offer this list of possible ideas for services:

- The telephone: How do different generations think about this device? (A family with teens might be the perfect team for this service idea!)
- Facebooking, twittering, texting,

networking: Do these new verbs mean we are growing closer or further apart in our relationships?

- Feeling safe: When the news talks of terrorism and disasters, how do we cultivate a feeling of psychic safety?
- Prioritizing in the midst of distractions: What is important when everything is immediate?
- Job/career changes: What is it like to redefine oneself?
- Caregiving: What insights emerge when caring for children, friends, parents?
- Pace of life: Is technology really saving time?

To reserve one of these topics or suggest others, please contact Ralph Braskett, Bettina Caluori, Debbie Gordon, Kathy Roberson or Sally Young.

BEYOND THE PULPIT — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Gordan for a pledge form). One way to contribute is to do some research on former ministers or large donors from the past. Please talk to Guy or me to see how you could help us.

Our theme this year has been about belonging. We have heard some very moving stories this year about when or how people felt like they belonged to our community. I hope

this has inspired you to consider when you knew you belonged here. I hope these stories also serve to motivate you to connect in some way to the church other than on Sunday morning. There are many opportunities in our congregation to engage your spirit or your intellect, your desire to serve or your need to be nurtured. I hope and encourage you to join a Small Group Ministry or a

committee or attend an Adult Religious Education class or teach in the RE program. Opportunity abounds!

Finally, next year awaits us. What would you like to see happen next year? What do you think our focus should be? What are your dreams, hopes and desires? I will be around most of the summer and would love to visit and hear your stories.

REV. TRACY'S OFFICE HOURS

Usual office hours for Rev. Tracy are Tuesdays & Wednesdays from 10AM until 3:30 PM. but it is best to call for an appointment. Thursdays

she works from home. Fridays she writes her sermons. Monday is her day off. Feel free to call Rev. Tracy at the office or to e-mail her at

revtsj@fusp.org. In an emergency, the office administrator (M-Th, 9AM-3PM) will be able to reach her.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 2009-2010

This year we have had a big serving of grief and sorrow along with joy and celebration. Three members of our R.E. family have died this year leaving us to find ways to remember their contributions and their loved ones. We have also welcomed two new babies that have helped to revive our senses and reconnect us to the cycle of life.

In looking back over the year we have much to be thankful for. This year the Religious Education Program included; the children and youth, the Religious Education Committee, the volunteer teachers/leaders, the Secret Pal sponsors, the mentors, the classroom assistants, the snack helpers, the special guests, myself and Rev. Tracy; we have all put forth

a great effort to create a program that is intentional, welcoming, and spiritual in nature. In the Sanctuary we have had a variety of activities both during the "story for all ages" and the multigenerational services which included; voting for the best apple, a quiz about famous U.U.'s and a Blessing of the Animals service. We had a dynamic Coming of Age service and Bridging Ceremony celebrating milestone events in the lives of our youth. We laughed and cheered at the instillation of our settled minister, Rev. Tracy Sprowls-Jenks. We cried at the passing of our dear friends; Joan, Heather and Allan. A year to remember the gifts we all bring to the table.

It has been a privilege and joy to

work with the Religious Education Committee this year. Denise, Chris, Susan, Jim, Kit, Kate, Yvonne, and Amy have all given their time and talents to make this program successful. Rev. Tracy has established herself as the spiritual to our children and youth in very positive and measurable ways. We are truly blessed for all the ways we are joined together in community.

On June 13th we will celebrate the end of our R.E. program with class presentations, singing, and a personal testimonial followed by "Super Sundaes". Please join us for this festive occasion.

Peace and Love,
Sue Fertig,
Director of Religious Education

CALLING ALL PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, AUNTS, UNCLES, AND TEACHERS

How do you handle BGLT (Bisexual/Gay/Lesbian/Transgender) issues when children experience intolerance towards gays and lesbians. How can you make the children in your life feel safe, confident, and good about themselves whether they are gay or straight? We plan to offer a Welcoming Congregation Workshop in the fall of 2010 called "Working with Children and BGLT Issues." This work-

shop helps adults explore some of their anxieties around BGLT issues through group discussion, role play and review of children's books.

Stop by our information table in June during coffee hour to learn more about this workshop. For more information, contact Denise Soppas.

Did you know? Article also appear on the back page of this newsletter.

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Many good wishes for a very happy birthday to:

Christianna Dobrowski

Amy E.A. Haase

Rowan Hinds-Brown

Aidan McGrory Nora Patton

Sofia Murillo Raya Slotoroff

Valerie Neuhaus



LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

SOMETHING IN THE AIR

So how was that FREE BBQ anyway, I was away that weekend and missed the Restoration Service/Media presentation/Workshop. Come to think of it, I was gone May 5-15 too and was absent for much of the swirl of activity that goes into planning the Annual Meeting. Deep down I was a bit concerned that I'd be unavailable to help pull together these very vital events and functions of our Society, but my woes were all unfounded. Strong and decisive leadership from the whole of our church leadership, and extraordinary commitment from committee and congregational members as well, all pulled together to start wrapping up a year's work on the Board, and to re-ignite the capital campaign for the Building Restoration.

The Restoration Committee is expanding the capital campaign in a manner that seeks new partnerships and connections beyond our immediate membership. It will help us not only identify and access financial resources, but also promises to develop relationships to help grow our congregation in numbers and in meaningful and effective outreach.

A similar strategy could also be adopted to help supplement the Income column of our yearly op-

erating budget. At the close of each year that I have served on the Board we have been faced with shortfalls because we never reach the lofty Pledge goals set in the Annual Canvass. The Board is obligated to present a balanced budget to the congregation at the Annual Meeting and past budgets have typically included cutting committee spending, and inflating both Pledge and Fundraising income in the HOPE that we will have a strong canvass or a stellar service auction.

These well intentioned dreams and schemes typically leave us short of our goals despite the generosity of our membership and now the time has come to put in place strategies that look beyond our member's checkbooks. We need to begin to institutionalize the mindset of seeking money through various external sources including; grants, organizational partnerships, legacies etc., and we need your help to identify and connect us with these sources of supplemental incomes. I look forward to coordinating some workshops next year that will bring into focus more acutely this new thinking and I hope you will all find time to participate.

FUSP leadership has a strong commitment toward capitalizing

on one of our greatest assets, our facilities. While the Building Restoration addresses exterior needs, this past year we have initiated various organized efforts to transform our Parish Hall and kitchen into highly functional and rentable commodities for parties, affairs, and banquets. While our work is not complete; there is already a renewed sense of energy and organization that our shared space conveys in ways that have been dormant for as long as I can recall. We are seeking additional rental income through sharing the worship space with another congregation similar to the way we do with Mission Torre Fuerte; and in a manner that minimizes the effect and impact of their presence on our own congregation.

We're trying to think outside the box to find ways to seek new partners and dollars and ultimately provide an enhanced sense of financial stability and connectivity to the community. I look forward to walking these unexplored trails with my fellow Board members and with each of you as we pursue our coming year with vigor, confidence and enthusiasm; knowing that a strong course of intentional and purposeful action today will help insure our presence tomorrow and for the rest of the tomorrows beyond.

CALENDARING MEETING

Attention Committee Chairs and event-planners:

If you have events planned for next year, or if you think you will, please

come to the annual calendaring meeting **Saturday June 12 from 11 AM to 12 PM** to reserve dates for the 2010-2011 church year. Fund raisers, rehearsals, special meetings

and other events will be added to the calendar that day. The earlier you book, the better your chances of getting the dates you want! Thank you, Paul Caluori

FINANCE COMMITTEE

AUCTION!

Come One, Come All to FUSP's Annual Service Auction!

After the Canvass, this is FUSP's largest fundraiser, and it's also a great night! This year's auctioneer will be Guy Mastroianni. **Join us on Saturday, June 12th, 2010 in the Parish Hall. Doors open at 6:30, bidding starts at 7:00.**

Tickets are \$4, which includes appetizers and non-alcoholic beverages. Childcare will be available.

What is the Service Auction?

Members and friends donate ser-

vices to the auction. This year's donations include a week at a member's beach house, dinners at the member's home, a kayaking excursion, babysitting, minor home repairs, and organic vegetables. At the auction, people bid on these services, and the proceeds go to FUSP. You can share your talents with your friends and benefit the church as well!

How will I know what is being offered?

The auction catalogue will be mailed out to members and

friends in early June. The catalogue will also be available at the Welcome Table.

How do I donate a service?

This is the perfect opportunity to share your talents, skills or time with your friends at FUSP. We will publish an addendum to the catalogue so if you haven't submitted an item yet...there is still time! Contact Julie Walsh or Melissa Logan, Service Auction co-chairpersons, or email us at serviceauction@fusp.org.

AMAZON.COM

SALES GIVE US 5%

Do you use Amazon.com? If so, click on the Amazon.com icon to the right and the church will receive an award of 5% of sales that come directly from clicking on our link. If you leave the Amazon web site, be sure to click on FUSP's link to get back into it. This is a Real Easy way to grow funds for the church!

RECYCLING



On Saturday, July 17th and also July 31st we will be at the Fanwood Recycling Center

from 8:45 AM to 1:00 PM. We unload cars with recyclable items and sort the material into bins.

GROCERY CERTIFICATES

Spring has sprung into action. Almost time for outdoor grilling & parties. Consuming more juice, soda, snacks? You can give FUSP 5% of your supermarket bills at NO additional cost to YOU! How? Pay for whatever you buy with Supermarket Cards, which YOU can get every Sunday after services to use at: Kings, Pathmark, Shoprite, Stop&Shop.

It is so easy: Buy Cards with check or cash at our table in the Parish Hall next to the office after services every Sunday. Think of them as store money useable for all goods sold by the store.

We have cards in varying denominations, like a debit card with a cap. Any questions: See us at our table, or call Pat Heath or Ralph Braskett.

CHURCHYARD

BARBECUE

It's back and better than ever! Churchyard Barbecue, **Sunday, June 27th**, following the service. Enjoy hot dogs, hamburgers, veggie burgers, and all the trimmings on our beautiful patio. \$10 per person, \$25 per family.

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

WHERE IS THE BEST PLACE YOU HAVE EVER BEEN?

Where have you been? What do you remember of it? **On Saturday, June 12th, will be our next Men's Breakfast, at 9 AM in the Stevens Room** (the Service Auction is that evening). Our topic is, "Where is the best place you have ever been?" It could have been at the ends of the earth or around the corner. What made it memorable? Bring pictures if you have any. Fred Lange will lead the discussion.

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE BOOK GROUP

The Women's Alliance Book Group will meet on **Thursday, June 10th at 7:00**. We are reading "Island Beneath the Sea" by Isabel Allende. Please come with suggestions for our September Book. — Kathy Weldy

CONTACTING US

Do not send emails to personal accounts. Emails sent to "**newsletter-website@fusp.org**" are sent to both the newsletter and the website editors, directly. If you send emails to one of our personal accounts, the editor of the other publication will not receive it. Did you know? We, editors, sometimes travel without access to our email accounts. If you sent an email, it could be sitting in someone's email box unread!

CARING COMMITTEE

- Our deepest and sincere condolences to the **Reading family** on Allan's tragic death. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him, and that is many.
- Our supportive thoughts go out to **Patrick McGrory** and his friend from college who is failing from ALS.
- We were glad to hear that **Kate Riegel's** daughter, Pauline's health condition is in remission.
- Wishing complete and speedy healing to **Pat Garly & Pat Dougherty** who both had hip replacement surgery recently.
- Congratulations to **Kathy Cravatts & Marion Gasperski** who celebrated their commitment ceremony here at FUSP.
- We wish speedy and complete healing to **Gail Sweeney** who underwent surgery the first week in May.
- We were sorry to hear of **Tony Toscano's** heart attack but are pleased to report that it was considered a minor one and he has been cleared to go back to regular activities. We offer continued support to the **Toscano family** in their ongoing struggle with **Jessica's** ill health.
- We were pleased to see **Meredith Slotoroff** back in church with her new daughter, Ember Quinn.
- Congratulations to **Paul & Bettina Caluori** who signed the FUSP membership book 10 years ago in May.

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

Saturday, June 19th in the Stevens Room from 10 am to noon.

It's June again, time for our annual planning meeting. Come with your ideas for future discussions and programs. We'll look back at some of the things that were set in motion this past year and think about our direction for

next year, as well as choosing some topics for next year's meetings. We welcome new people and new suggestions.

Reserve the date: Our annual summer picnic will be on **Saturday, July 17th**. Let's celebrate! Watch for more details in the next newsletter.

SOCIAL ACTION & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

PSE&G'S RESIDENTIAL WHOLE HOUSE ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

Sign up on June 20, 2010 for PSE&G's Residential Whole House Energy Efficiency Program

GreenFaith is partnering with PSE&G to offer eligible Plainfield, Paterson, Passaic and New Brunswick residents

- A FREE home energy audit
- Up to 10 FREE energy efficient

light bulbs

- A FREE programmable thermostat
- Up to 8 hours of FREE air sealing

These FREE services - worth over \$1,300 – can help households cut their energy costs and protect the environment.

Participants will also receive a no-obligation proposal to replace

furnaces, windows, or doors, with PSE&G paying 50-80% of the cost and the participant's portion added to their monthly PSE&G bill in equal monthly installments with no interest over 5 years.

To sign up, see the GreenFaith representative on June 20, 2010 after worship service during the coffee hour or call 866-620-4322 x 306.

SEVENTH ANNUAL CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNEY

You are invited to join us on the seventh annual **UUSC Civil Rights Journey, July 10–17**. Retrace the steps of the U.S. civil-rights movement through Atlanta, Tuskegee, Montgomery, Selma and Birmingham.

Meet & hear directly from some of the courageous people who worked to desegregate schools, register new voters, and bring an end to racial discrimination in the US. This is one week that could

change your whole life!

The cost for this intergenerational trip — for everyone age 14 and older — is \$800, which includes hotel, meals, museum admissions, workshops, and local transportation. Participants are responsible for providing their own transportation to and from Atlanta, GA.

Do you know anyone who might be interested? Please help us spread the word about this opportunity within your community!

For more information, including a flier and application that you can download, please visit our website (www.uusc.org/content/freedom_summer_civil_rights_journey_2010). Please do not hesitate to contact the Experiential Learning team with any questions you may have by calling Kara Smith at 617-301-4392.

Sincerely,
UUSC's Experiential Learning Team

CALLING ALL GARDNERS OR WOULD BE GARDENERS!

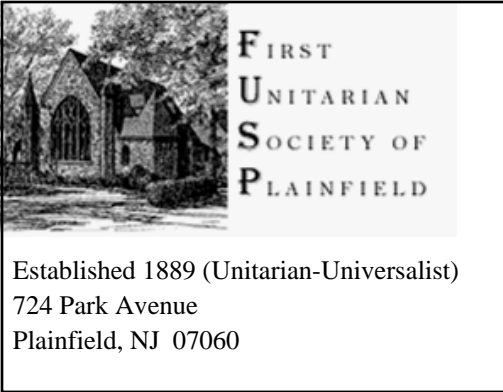
We are planning to plant a fall and spring vegetable garden in Plainfield. This project will be done in conjunction with other Plainfield churches and coordinated by Gail Jones. If you are interested in gardening, sign up so we can get an idea how many

people will be contributing to this project. All produce will be donated back to the community. More details will follow.

Sign up by contacting Theresa Jefferson. Contact information can be found in the directory.



More information on next page



FUSP Email Addresses:
info@fusp.org
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website@fusp.org
membership@fusp.org
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DATED MATERIAL – PLEASE RUSH

SOCIAL ACTION & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

COMMUNITY ACTION TO ADDRESS YOUTH VIOLENCE IN PLAINFIELD

We occasionally hear something about "Gang" violence in Plainfield, but little about action to do something about it. Our Racial Justice Committee has decided that the time has come. We have been working with five other Plainfield churches, Angels in Action and the "People's Organization for Progress" to sponsor a community forum to address the problem. The mission of our group, "Project Hope", is "Engaging together as a community to build a positive, safe, nurturing environment so our youth

of today can be our leaders of tomorrow."

The forum panel, consisting of local government and educational officials, including the Mayor, a victim's family member, a reformed ex-offender turned community organizer, and young people, will explore the issues and potential solutions with an audience of families, youth, and concerned citizens in our Parish Hall in June 3rd 6:30 - 9:00 pm. There will be light refreshments and entertainment.

FUSpers who are eager to do something about the systemic racism which underlies youth problems in our Plainfield community should contact Carl Heath.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Advertising or Print: June 14
Electronic submissions: June 21
Assembling & Mailing: June 29

Submit to newsletter-website@fusp.org, not to personal email accounts.