

The Quest

FEBRUARY 2025
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Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
of Sussex County

PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR FEBRUARY



Sunday services are both in-person and online, and they start at 10:30. (Religious education classes are in-person only.) Google Meet codes/phone numbers and PINs, which are the same every week, are online at meet.google.com/kww-ugyh-spj or by phone at 413-679-2794, PIN 139 523 137#.

Feb 2. You CAN Teach an Old Dog New Tricks. This is the story of change. We're never too old to grow into something new, even at a mature age and even though it can be scary. Visiting minister Laura Kushner taught pre-school for years and found herself moved to metamorphose into something new. So, she enrolled in seminary and graduated from the Drew University Theological School in 2023. She currently works as a chaplain at Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital. Led by Rev. Laura Kushner.

Feb 9. The *Bhagavad Gita*: The Content and The Back Story. The *Bhagavad Gita* is Hinduism's most famous scripture, but the story behind it is less well-known. The *Gita* is a small section inside the world's largest epic poem, the *Mahabharata*. That work, more than ten times the length of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* combined, is focused on a huge and deadly ancient war—a battle planned and promoted by the gods. Led by Stu Feldstein.

Feb 16. Listening As an Act of Love. What does it feel like when someone makes the time to listen to us so that we feel heard? How often do we make the time in our lives to do the same, to truly listen to a loved one? A friend? A stranger? How does listening look (or sound), and how can it be considered an act of love? Pauline E. Nijander, today's guest minister, completed her Master of Divinity program at the Drew University Theological School. Led by Rev. Pauline E. Nijander.

Feb 23. Shout! *Shout!* is a collection of original poetry and dramatic dialogs Susanna Rich wrote from the points of view of core suffragist figures ranging from the 1848 Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention to 2020 women "getting the vote," in another sense. Specializing in writing historical poetry, Susanna transforms carefully researched material into four-dimensional, you-are-here experiences for readers and audiences. Led by Susanna Rich.

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person.*
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.*
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.*
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.*
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.*
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.*
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.*

The Quest is the monthly newsletter of the UUFSC. For the most up-to-date information, go to our website, www.uunewtonnj.org. Our phone number is 973-579-7210.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:



Valentine's Day: Invented, Thank Goodness

The great thing about February is Valentine's Day. And the great thing about that is how it celebrates romantic love. In a world marked by war and bigotry, we need love to balance humanity's scorecard.

But a bit of casual research tells us that the real Saint Valentine had nothing to do with romance. He was a Catholic clergyman, for starters. He also bugged the Romans, so he was martyred during the third century—beaten with clubs and beheaded.

In fact, the poor guy's skull is still on display behind glass in a church in Rome. Not really a sexy story, eh?

Then along came Geoffrey Chaucer, the English poet, author, and civil servant best known for *The Canterbury Tales*. In his poem *The Parlement of Foules*, written in the late 14th century, Chaucer connected Valentine with romance—for no clear reason beyond poetic license.

And that's all the encouragement people needed. Today, the holiday is celebrated all over the world. Americans give each other cards, flowers, and candy. In South Africa, women pin the names of love interests on their shirt sleeves. In the Philippines, there are mass weddings. In South Korea, they celebrate three times (February 14, March 14, and April 14).

I think Chaucer just gave us an excuse to express ourselves (one way or another) about the complex emotion that we value so much—our love of another person.

Roses are red,
Violets are blues,
We know all about love,
Because we're UUs!

Happy February! It will soon warm up.

Stu

***Mission Statement of the
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Sussex County***

**We seek to nourish the spirit;
to foster peace, justice, diversity and understanding
in our community and the world;
and to cherish and sustain the earth and the web of life.**

THIS MONTH IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Dear families and friends,

This month, we move from the more passive, yet powerful, powers of earth and air to the more active power of fire. This shift feels especially fitting during February, when we celebrate love and passion for life on Valentine's Day. Fire, with its warmth and intensity, energizes us to take action and engage with the world around us.

Inspired by the element of air, we finish *The Power of Silence* and begin *The Power of Listening* lesson. Here, the children will discover how truly listening—paying attention not only to words, but also to feelings and intentions—can strengthen relationships and build understanding.

Fire will be the central metaphor in *The Power to Shine* lesson, representing the power of direct action to make a positive difference. Continuing this power next month, the children will reflect on how they can use their light to inspire and support others.

These lessons connect deeply to our Unitarian Universalist values of compassion, respect, and the belief in the worth and dignity of every person. Thank you for supporting our children's spiritual growth as they explore these meaningful themes.

(See page 4 for pictures of the children playing dreidel and the blanket they helped make for a congregant in need this winter.)

Warm regards,

Sharon and Pin, Religious Education Teachers

Below is a preview of our RE classes for February.

Feb 2. The children will learn to appreciate nature's sounds, reminding us that we share this world with many other beings and that we need to make sure there's a place for each one. Afterward, we'll participate in a silent meditation.

Feb 9. We'll share a story about listening to what people truly need before offering help. Afterward, the children will be challenged to pay extremely close attention to the rest of the group—the completion of a counting task relies on not interrupting each other.

Feb 16. Inspired by the Complaints Choir project, the children will take turns “ranting” about what's bothering them, while their partners practice listening empathetically. Then, we'll make I'm All Ears hats to wear as a reminder to listen more than we speak.

Feb 23. We'll add fire symbols and the action words Shine, Passion, Action, and Reaching Out to the Elements Mural.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Discussion Group

The Discussion Group's topic for February 21 is *Surveillance in Society*: How will society change to accommodate the increase in public and private surveillance?

If you're interested, join our email list (ufdiscussion@gmail.com) to get pertinent info about what we're discussing. Anyone who wants to join the group is welcome. Not all members are UU, and we encourage people of the community to join. Our group web page URL is <https://www.wantage.us/unitarian-fellowship-discussion-group>.

Herb Tobias Honored by ASLNY

Several artworks by Herb Tobias submitted for consideration to the Art Students League of New York (ASLNY) for their permanent collection were unanimously approved by their curatorial and other relevant staff. The ASLNY, which Herb frequented over 25+ years as a life member, is a venerable institution celebrating its 150th anniversary this year. Over that time, it has built its collection to about 2700 works.

Most of you will remember that Carol Vermilyea and Roger Cherney, her husband, generously organized a fundraiser of Herb's works at the Fellowship after Herb's death, which brought in quite a bit of money for UUFSC. We're very fortunate to have one of Herb's original paintings hanging in our downstairs community room (the large painting of the New York City skyline).

Thanks to Roger Cherney for sharing this with us.



UUFSC SUPERMARKET GIFT CARD PROGRAM

Please call or email Hal Cohen for your \$100 supermarket gift cards each month. Help the Fellowship earn 5% of each card purchased directly from the store, at no cost to you. Thanks!



RaiseRight™

Formerly ShopWithScrip

ShopWithScrip is now called RaiseRight and continues to offer the Fellowship a wonderful way to raise needed funds as you shop. UUFSC gets rebates of up to 13% on gift cards that you purchase from among more than 750 well-known merchants. You can buy gift cards by going to www.raiseright.com. Please contact Sue Weiner or Hal Cohen if you have any questions about this program.



**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP
OF SUSSEX COUNTY**

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