

The Quest

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
of Sussex County

PROGRAMS FOR MAY AND JUNE

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 are online at meet.google.com/kss-abvh-ipw or by phone at 478-308-5688, PIN 921 793 045#.

May 4. The Moravian Church. Rev. Josh Follweiler of the Central Moravian Church in Bethlehem, PA, will present the Moravian Church's beliefs and history, which bear striking similarities to our UU principles. To quote from their website, the Moravians seek to "grow as individuals and as a community through meaningful worship, warm friendships, inquisitive learning, and faithful service to others," and they are "committed to meeting the needs of society and nurturing individuals on their spiritual journeys." Sounds familiar! Led by Rev. Josh Follweiler.

May 11. Have I Got a Story for You. Storytelling is a powerful means of gathering and communicating information, literally helping us make sense of the world. Stories are wondrous things. However, author and lecturer Thomas King reminds us that they are also dangerous, as he warns, "Don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now." Led by Rev. Charles Loflin, Executive Director of UU FaithAction NJ.

May 18. Annual Business Meeting/Readings by the Fellowship. (See the ballot on page 6.) Our Annual Business Meeting will be followed by readings by the congregation. Members and friends are encouraged to bring a reading on any topic or in any form to this meeting. Each person will read a selection of no more than four or five minutes. It can be something original by the reader or from another author. As appropriate, discussion can follow each reading.

May 25. God Only Knows. A question which has no apparent answer. A misleading ode to a mysterious, unnamed, beloved mistress which sounds like maybe she—or he—won't feel so happy when they read it. Or hear it. A little bit of Elizabethan poetry, a little bit of 1960s rock and roll, and just a soupçon of Russian philosophy—put 'em together and whaddya got? Make sure you're at the Fellowship and you'll find out. (Surfboards not required.) Led by Richard Goffman.

Jun 1. Blessing of the Animals. Further information to come.

Jun 22. UUFSC Picnic. Hampton Township Recreational Park ("The Pit"), 11 am to 2 pm, 1 Rumsey Way, Hampton Township (Newton). Reminders will be emailed to all.

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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:



Economic Justice

There is a serious U.S. financial problem. The federal government spends more than it earns, driving up the national debt. There are three possible solutions: 1) Spend less, 2) Earn more, or 3) Do both.

Federal income comes from taxation. But Congress largely ignores the idea of raising income taxes. Politicians who talk about doing this are politicians who may not be re-elected. Instead, Congress focuses on trying to spend less.

But this almost never works. The current administration is laying off federal workers and curtailing lots of spending programs. Yet the budget passed in April by the House would still mean a future of large deficit spending. That's because the most expensive federal programs—Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and the military—are very popular and important.

President Trump's method to increase federal income is to charge the largest trade tariffs in a century. But this worsens inflation and reduces economic growth. It also is, effectively, a sales tax that hurts the poor more than anyone else.

So, how do we fix this problem, with an eye on economic justice? There is a way that would have no impact at all on 99 of every 100 taxpayers. You would simply increase the income tax rate on people earning over \$1 million per year.

You've heard before about taxing the rich, but what you seldom hear is just how much additional revenue that would generate. **It is enormous.**

In recently available IRS data, there were 873,670 individual tax returns showing annual income over \$1 million. The amount of that income was \$3.325 trillion in just one year. The average return, then, showed income of \$3.8 million.

If you made nearly \$4 million a year, you'd be doing well, no? But our top income tax rate is only 37% on regular income, and it's lower on capital gains. In actuality, in 2021, this group of rich folks paid only 26.9% of their total adjusted gross income in federal taxes.

Is this different from the past? You bet.

- From 2013 to 2017, the top tax rate was 39.6%.
- From 1982 through 1986, it was 50%.
- From 1965 through 1981, it was 70%.
- And, believe it or not, the top income tax bracket from 1944 through 1963 was 91% or 92%.

Back when politicians had courage, we did the right thing. But in recent years, we keep lowering the amount of tax payable by the wealthiest Americans. Maybe it's because the wealthiest are now the big campaign contributors.

What if this changed—a reversion to the past? What if we upped the max tax rate from 37% to 50%, including on capital gains, and applied this change only to those whose income was \$1 million or more? They are merely 0.55% of all filers.

These folks, based on average incomes of \$3.8 million, would keep \$1.9 million per year. Is that enough to pay rent and buy groceries? Probably.

Meanwhile, the impact on the U.S. federal deficit would be huge. Fifty percent of the income of those earning over \$1 million per year would be \$1.663 trillion. But in 2021, these folks only paid taxes of \$893 billion. **So, the increase to the U.S. treasury in this example would be $(1.663 - .893) = \$770$ billion of new income.**

That would completely pay for Medicaid, which cost the federal government \$606 billion in 2023. Or, it could pay for military spending. We would not need to return to the 70% or 91% maximum tax rates of the past—only to 50%, and only applied to those earning \$1 million or more per year.

In a nation where so many people work hard and don't earn much, economic justice demands more from those who can so easily afford it. **This is something we used to do**—and should do again.

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***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,

As we move into the final weeks of our Fellowship year, the children in Religious Education will be concluding the *Powers Within You* curriculum. We'll end the year by exploring the Power of Water, which teaches us about persistence and gathering.

Just as water can gently wear down stone or rush together in powerful waves, we'll talk about how steady effort and coming together as a community can lead to meaningful change. The children will reflect on how they can keep showing up for what matters and how shared action can be stronger than any one voice alone.

These final sessions bring our year-long journey through the elements—earth, air, fire, and water—to a close. Each has offered lessons about how we, as Unitarian Universalists, use our energy, voice, presence, and passion to build a better world.

Thank you for sharing your children with us this year and for all the ways you support their spiritual growth. And a special thank you to the whole congregation for helping to nurture a community where our children feel seen, valued, and inspired.

Wishing you all a joyful start to summer!

With gratitude,

Sharon and Pin, Religious Education Teachers

Below is the RE calendar for May and June.

May 4. Power of Persistence. The children listen to a story about the power of persistence. Then, we use our water powers of patience and persistence to carve soap into unique forms.

May 11. Power Of Persistence (continued). We continue the power of persistence. The children gather together to perform a play, *The Old Alchemist*. Then, we use patience and persistence to build drip sand castles.

May 18. Water Justice. Today we listen to the story *The Water Justice Tour*. Afterward, the children investigate where their water comes from and do a water conservation brainstorm.

May 25. Water Conservation. To remind others to conserve water and care for our earth, we decorate used water bottles (collected from school recycling bins) and create “It’s the Little Things” posters.

Jun 1. Power Wrap-Up. In this final session, the Native American Hopi story of *The Four Creations* helps us reflect on the different kinds of power we’ve been exploring. Using a special ritual for each element—earth, air, fire, water—we honor the children’s journey this year and encourage them to keep using their power to create positive change.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our New Minister!

We are thrilled that Rev. Mary Tiebout has agreed to return to UUFSC as our half-time minister, beginning this July 1, 2025 (the start of our fiscal year). As many of you know, Mary was our minister for 14 years, but she left in 2022 to spend more time caring for her parents, who have now both passed on. Mary is willing to be our minister for the next 1-2 years, which will give UUFSC time to search for a new minister.

We welcome Mary back with great happiness. During her prior 14 years, she was a very important part of our Fellowship. She provided spiritual inspiration and guidance through her services. She gave consistent and compassionate support to our members/friends facing difficult times. She was fully engaged in our activities, whether it was helping at the Rummage Sale or organizing/participating in discussion groups. She was part of our celebrations, joining in laughter and happiness. And she was an exemplary representative of our Fellowship in many outside social action events. We are very fortunate that she is returning.

Discussion Group

The Discussion Group's topic for May 16th is **Current Events**.

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 web page URL is <https://www.uunewtonnj.org/index.php/discussiongroup>.

RE Easter Egg Hunt



Notice of Annual Business Meeting: May 18, 2025

Absentee Ballot

For the Fellowship Year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

VOTING INSTRUCTIONS: This is an absentee ballot. ***This absentee ballot should be used if you will not attend the business meeting at the Fellowship on May 18, including those who will be at the meeting remotely.*** You may cast your vote either by mail or by email. Please record your votes below, and either mail it to UUFSC, 1 West Nelson St., Newton NJ 07860, Attn: Board Secretary, or email it to UUFSCVote@gmail.com. Those eligible to vote are members who have signed the membership book at least thirty days before the election. The proposed budget will be sent to members separately.

The following nominations have been made by the Nominating Committee of the UUFSC:

Executive Officers

- President: Andi Randall (One 2-year term)
- Secretary: Chris Dunbar (One 2-year term)

Executive Trustees (maximum of three consecutive one-year terms)

- Stevie Fava (first term)
- Susan Felsen (first term)

Nominating Committee/Corporate Trustees (maximum one consecutive 3-year term)

- Marilyn Chapman (third year)
- Barbara Kelly (second year)
- Stu Feldstein (first year)

Votes (mail or email) must be received by Saturday, May 17, 2025

	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Vote on Slate of Officers and Trustees			
Vote on Annual Budget 2025-26			
If other issues requiring a vote of the membership are raised at the meeting, I choose to have the Board cast my vote.			

Name: _____



RaiseRight™

Formerly ShopWithScrip

RaiseRight, formerly known as ShopWithScrip, 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.

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. **Cards will be available all summer long!**



**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP
OF SUSSEX COUNTY**

President: Stu Feldstein

Vice-President: Phil Schaming

Treasurer: Ned Hamilton

Secretary: Richard Goffman

***Quest* Editors: Susan Weiner, Richard Goffman**