

The Quest

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
of Sussex County**

1 West Nelson St., Newton, NJ 07860

Programs for February 2026

Sunday services are both in-person and online, and they start at 10:30.

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#.

February 1 "The Wild World of Sports"

Just days before the Winter Olympics begin in Milan and the Super Bowl is played in Santa Clara, we'll talk about the history of sports, where sport appears in the Bible, the benefits of athleticism and team play, the spiritual side of sports, the issues that are prominent today, and of course, gambling.

Led by Mary Tiebout.

February 8 "More Good Habits for Your Brain: An Update"

Science has identified optimal lifestyle activities for brain health. Learn about evidence-based habits that are easy to put into practice, as well as some surprising new recommendations for life-long brain health. Gabriela Höhn is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Neuropsychologist in private practice. She enjoys talking about brain-behavior relationships to improve cognitive functioning. Since her last talk here, she is still practicing Tai Chi, and added Aikido and Kali for brain-friendly activity in her spare time.

February 15 "Longing for the Wild"

In his book, "Against the Machine," Paul Kingsnorth begins by writing about boyhood thoughts of retreating to the pine woods in the English countryside. And then he talks about the world we live in now and how we are consumers of and consumed by The Machine. What places do we go to in our minds when we think about the wild, and how do we reserve a place in our lives for contact with the natural world? Led by Mary Tiebout.

February 22 "Stealth, Wealth & the Dismantling of Our Liberty"

This talk gives an overview of how the super-rich fuel extremism, make us poorer, undermine civil liberties, and weaken democracy by using secretive offshore financial institutions, domestic tax havens, and supporting kleptocratic systems. Professor Balzano brings his long history of activism and academia to bear on the forces that bear down on all of us today.

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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.



Watters Road, Port Murray

Dear Fellowship Friends,

One of the many blessings of serving as minister at UUFSC is that on the days when I drive to the Newton area, I get to see landscapes such as the one above. And if there's nobody else on the road, I can stop and take a photo. This was taken on Wednesday the 21st. It was a cold morning, and I was heading north to visit two of our members and to have a lunch at Jade's with the Lunch Bunch.

Today, I'm getting ready for the big storm that will give us our second week in a row for online services. I went out to buy a stack of wood for the wood stove, I have two extra bags of bird food, I'm making yogurt, I made bread, applesauce and granola earlier in the week and I feel like a squirrel gathering nuts and seeds in preparation for the cold. If we lose electricity and the pump doesn't work, I can melt snow on the wood stove. There's something about the possibility of roughing it just a bit that pleases me. This month, we're going to have a conversation about the Machine and the longing that some of us have for a few moments of outdoor and even indoor unplugged peace. Some of us experience nostalgia for the wild and some encourage our representatives to protect forests, fields, our waters, and the animals who reside in those places.

During the last couple of months, UU Faith Action NJ organized people from our UU congregations to urge legislators to sponsor and move bills related to the environment, immigrant justice, criminal justice, reproductive and gender affirming care, voter empowerment, and other pressing issues. Only one of the three immigrant justice bills, the Safe Communities Act, was signed by Governor Murphy in the last hours of his term, and now that Mikie Sherrill has been sworn in and a new legislative session is beginning, the work continues. The many hours that I've spent in the hallways and in the hearing rooms at the State House have taught me a lot, and even when facing difficult odds, it has been uplifting to get to know other UUs and coalition partners from across the state. Great thanks to UU Faith Action Executive Director, Rev. Charles Loflin, and Administrator, Marlene Miller, for their skillful leadership. We don't have to go to Trenton to participate. Friday Action Hour sessions provide updates and information on what messages to give when you call your legislators. It's easy effective work!

I wish you all warmth during the wintry wonder days ahead.

With great thanks and love,
Mary T.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:



Hello from Michigan!

Hopefully you're staying warm and cozy in the snow and bitter cold. It's the same here unusually so, even for Michigan. The weather has kept me close to the fire, reflecting on the unexpected gifts that life's challenges can bring.

In the quiet moments of life's most profound transitions, when things are uncertain, plans derailed, and the path ahead is shrouded in mist, even in the midst of change, blessings are at work. Life's most transformative moments loss, illness, whatever struggles we endure-often carry a hidden grace. They may not come in the form we expect, but they are there, like seeds buried beneath the soil, waiting for the right season to sprout.

I believe the universe, in its quiet wisdom, often sends upheaval to clear space for deeper growth, stronger faith, and more meaningful connections. That certainly is true for me right now. I have a whole list of blessings that have come out of my recent diagnosis. This must be what is meant by a silver lining, to receive gifts of light and love, born of fear and despair.

After being wheeled into the hospital in 2025, I walked out on January 1, 2026 an auspicious beginning to the new year, and this road I'm traveling. The first of many blessings I've received, and I bet there's more to come.

Miss you all and hope to see you in person soon.

Andi

***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.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Discussion Group

Our topic for February 20th has not been selected yet. The group is currently voting on their choices of topics. Contenders are "Media Then and Now: From Walter Cronkite to Social Media" and "Technology in Daily Life: Helpful, Harmful, or Both?" among others. As we get closer to the date the topic for the next meeting will be listed on our website and sent to members via email.

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.uunewtonnj.org/index.php/discussion-group>.

Fellowship Space Available

If you or a group is looking for a space to meet, please consider the availability of the Fellowship building, which can be reserved for a donation. Please contact Phil Schaming to inquire about available dates.



UU FaithAction NJ - Join Us

We invite UU FaithAction NJ supporters and friends to gather for just one hour on the first and third Fridays of each month to take action and experience the joy and power of community.

Charles Loflin will prime us on the issues of the moment, and then we will make our calls at this critical time.

Join us on Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/94313960594?pwd=OTFDdUdocmY1ckZNZFRyemp6V2NiZz09>

For more information about UU FaithAction NJ, visit our website: uufaithaction.org

Contact Chris Dunbar for further insights into 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.



RaiseRight™

RaiseRight 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.

Act Now! Currently, the RaiseRight Gift Card purchase program is not being used by members of the Fellowship and may be discontinued due to a lack of interest.

12 people braved the cold weather on January 21st to have lunch with the "Lunch Bunch" at Jade's in Ogdensburg. They had various selections of Southern and Caribbean comfort food.



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF SUSSEX COUNTY

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