



The

Beacon

*The Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Of Huntington, New York
A Liberal Religious Faith*

Rev. Jude Geiger, Minister
December 2015 Vol. LVIII, No.17

UPCOMING SUNDAY SERVICES

December Theme: Expectation

December 6: "Waiting for Peter Pan"
Sometimes expectations keep us back from living the lives right in front of us.
Rev. Jude preaching; Isabella on piano.

December 13: (Hanukkah Observed) "When Miracles Happen Anyway" We don't always find ourselves open to hope, newness, or the miraculous suddenly breaking into our routines or times of hardship. Hanukkah reminds us to always keep our eyes open for possibility.
Rev. Jude preaching; choir singing.



December 20: Annual Multigenerational Winter Festival of Peace and Lights. This family-friendly service is co-led by our **Senior High youth group**. *Rev. Jude preaching; choir singing.*

December 24: 5:00 pm Christmas Eve Family Pageant Service **5:00 pm - 6:00 pm**
Rev. Jude preaching; Intergenerational Orchestra & Mitten Tree

December 24: 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Contemplative Service. *Rev. Jude preaching; choir singing; Mitten Tree*

Mitten Tree – Both Christmas Eve Services: Remember your mittens, hats, gloves and scarves of many sizes and colors for this annual donation to the Huntington Family Service League.

December 27: "Getting Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable"

As we look toward a new year and traditionally make resolutions, we'll explore the potential value in taking the challenge of "Getting Comfortable in Being Uncomfortable" and applying it to our personal and spiritual lives in 2016. *Amy Edel Vaughn and Ken Buley-Neumar; Isabella on piano.*

FROM THE MINISTER

Expectations around the winter holidays can be high for many of us. We have magical memories from childhood, or we dread upcoming family gatherings. We've lived into or through many Decembers through our lives and know what they can be like - both in their highs and their lows. Sometimes we can let ourselves enjoy the lights and sounds, and sometimes grief can keep us from touching the wonder once more. I try to make room in my bag of expectations for something different each year; to plan to be surprised. It can sound like a silly notion, "planning to be surprised," but if we're honest with ourselves, typically we plan not to be surprised and so we often aren't. So this season, where you might be feeling low as the year comes to an end, I encourage you to make room for something completely different; to expect to not know what to expect. Imagine each day and night a new, shiny present waiting to be unwrapped. ~ **Warmly, Rev. Jude**



DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION'S MESSAGE

This month the Religious Education Council has been asked to reach out to congregants and form teams so we can more effectively do our ministry. Each team focuses on a specific area of our ministry with a council member leading the team. This allows many people to connect with their passion in an area that supports the work of religious education and faith formation within our Fellowship.



We all know the sentiment, "it takes a village to raise a child". All the members here are the village for our children and youth. We need you to really ask yourself: What is the expectation you have for this ministry? What do you feel may be expected of you as a parent, a member, an elder here? What can you give in service to the future of our Faith? There are lots of ways to get involved. Here is a list of our teams.

Social Justice: meeting monthly with Grace Dwyer to plan our monthly social justice Sunday projects and find ways to connect our families with living their Faith in the world through social justice actions.

Multigenerational Programming: meeting monthly with Michael Goldsmith to develop projects to increase connects across generational lines.

Youth Ministry: meeting monthly with Joanne Polichetti to develop our web of youth ministry both within the congregation and the district.

Events: meeting as needed with Sharon Garfinkle and Deb Cohen to plan and host quarterly events.

Adult Faith Formation: meeting monthly with me to map our faith formation programming for adults and develop new programs as needed.

In which area will you serve? Please reach out to the listed lead for your area of interest or reach out to me directly. ~ **In Faith, Starr Austin** ~ *Director of Lifespan Religious Education*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I bid farewell to the large silver maple tree in front of the Fellowship. It is dying. It poses a danger of falling branches, especially as we head into winter. I am unnaturally pained by the cutting down of

trees. A long-time tree hugger, as a child I would travel to work with my father, a forester in Oregon. He would leave me sitting under a 100-year-old Douglas fir tree with a canteen of water while he hiked down into a ravine to do whatever work he needed to do. Every so often his distant voice called, "Are you okay up there?!" How bittersweet it was to know that his work would eventually involve the cutting down, although also the replacement of, the very tree I was sitting under. Those quiet moments by myself in the woods gave rise to a deep love of the forest. I cried when developers clear-cut six acres of woods behind my house; when Hurricane Sandy destroyed the biggest, leafiest trees in our yard; when new neighbors "tidy up" their yards because acorns are falling on their cars and leaves are dirtying their pool. Still, to lose even a dying tree makes me sad. One year our family holiday card was a photo taken on the bench in front of the silver maple. My kids love to hide between its multiple trunks. So I say, let's plant another one. My dad says of the silver maple, "They grow like weeds!" ~ *Jennifer Thieke*

VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It was early in the year, and especially in the spring, when last year's Board started informing us about some of the difficult conditions they were seeing in regards to our finances. It was even mentioned that the Finance Committee was "sounding the alarm." An honest look at the situation and the information provided by the Board were appreciated by many members, myself included. Since then, through summer and into fall, several actions have been taken that are making a difference. Jean Marra, Brian Cohen, and the Finance Committee were able realize some savings from projections at the end of the fiscal year and Sue McGovern and others refocused efforts in Stewardship. In addition, Ben Testa and the Development Committee concentrated their work on fundraising and hosted the "Keep Pluggin' Video Game Event," created from an idea brought to the committee by Ken and Ben Farrell, and we even saw local media coverage in the Huntington Patch and *Newsday*. Most recently we had our largest fundraiser of the year at the Services Auction with "UUFH-Opoly." Kudos to all those who participated and especially to Liza Burby, our current Past-President, for taking on the considerable effort in putting it together.

As a Board member, I've been realizing all these actions as they were especially highlighted to me during the discussions at the BOT Forum on Nov. 1. We should all feel good and proud in that so many in our congregation have stepped forward with such practical efforts that are moving us in a positive direction. ~ *Michael Amendola*

'TIS THE SEASON TO REMEMBER OUR STAFF

At this festive time of the year, it is our custom to pay tribute to our professional staff, including our Minister Jude Geiger, Director of Religious Education Starr Austin, Music Director Richard Hyman, Office Manager Susie Byrnes, Communications Specialist Bridgette Nicolini, bookkeeper Marianne Reuter and pianist Isabella Johnson. Each one of these people does so much for us all year. Please join in providing a special holiday gift to show them our appreciation. Send one check (to be divided among the staff), payable to UUFH, and denote "Holiday Gift" on the memo line. Mail your check to the Fellowship office attention Treasurer, or put it clearly marked in the collection basket on Sunday morning. Please submit your checks by **Dec. 20**. ~ *Jean Marra, Treasurer*

SEND HOLIDAY GREETINGS AND BENEFIT OTHERS

Instead of purchasing and mailing holiday greeting cards to your Fellowship friends, please consider sending your greetings to the office, with a check addressed to: UUFH (memo: Min Disc. Fund). Your greeting will be published in the Beacon on an appropriately festive page, and your donation will be added to the Minister's Discretionary Fund. A win-win opportunity!

The Minister's Discretionary Fund exists solely through individual contributions. Its purpose is to offer short-term financial assistance to those who are experiencing a difficult time in their lives. Only the

Minister has access to this account, and all disbursements are at his discretion. Donations to this Fund may be made at any time during the year in celebration or commemoration of any occasion. The major source of contributions, however, is the annual infusion of money that is given in lieu of sending commercial greeting cards every December. Your short, signed greetings will be included in the January Beacon, so please write your greeting and send it in now along with your contributions. The deadline for submission is Monday, Dec. 14. Thank You! ~ **Board of Trustees**

TOO MANY REQUESTS FOR YOUR MONEY?

The Board is sensitive to these feelings. We try to manage the number of appeals made each year. However, since we are a lively and engaged congregation with varied concerns and interests, we are bound to be involved in a multitude of worthwhile and admirable causes. We do not want to decide which ones may approach you for money. We do not want to guess which ones you might want to support. Therefore, please realize that participation in any of these appeals is strictly voluntary. We do not want to block the support of those who have the interest and the means; likewise we do not want to put pressure on those with neither the inclination nor the wherewithal to make donations. Although we bring these requests for money to you through the Beacon, we want you to freely decide what is appropriate and comfortable for you. ~ **Board of Trustees**



HOLIDAY SHOPPING TO BENEFIT THE FELLOWSHIP

As you do your on-line holiday shopping this year, you can help the fellowship by logging on to our website <http://uufh.org/community/shop> and looking at the bottom of the opening page for a link to Amazon.com or iGive.com. When you shop through these sites, the Fellowship will get a percentage of what you spend, at no cost to you. It is easy and takes very little extra effort. The dollars

do add up. Several hundreds of dollars have come in to us through the years in this way. Please help us out. Thanks! ~ **Finance Committee**

FELLOWSHIP NEWS& ANNOUNCEMENTS

UUFH-Opoly Services Auction Passes Go and Wins Big



Photo by Ken Farrell

Our Nov. 7 Services Auction was attended by about 130 people of all ages who, from my vantage point, seemed to be having a great time. And for good reason, it turns out. As you know, the 2015-'16 operating budget is relying on the event to have raised \$25,000. But as of this writing, we have raised \$29,000 and counting as additional bids come in for items that are still open! That is the result of all who contributed their time, money, and offerings.

Because after all that work it's fun to know some specifics of how much we raised, here's some 2015 Services Auction trivia: We sold 100 bidding numbers at \$10 each. The coffee can raffles raised \$2,295 and the UUEwes raffle raised \$510. The dessert table raised \$372 and the bar, \$321. The parties alone are responsible for \$12,000. And those are just some of the tallies that all led to a very successful Auction. There are numerous Second Chance Auction items, parties, services and excursions that have additional spots available. Look in upcoming issues of the Beacon and Flash for details.

If you haven't yet received your statement—which includes what you won, who won your offerings

and your invoice—you can download it from <http://www.togetherauction.com/uufh>. Feel free to contact me at lizaburby@verizon.net if you have any questions. Please pay your invoice as soon as you can, and have fun enjoying all that you won. Also, take photos of your upcoming events so that we can use them in next year's announcements and slide show, as we did this year. It's nice to have a record of all we do. ~ **Liza Burby**

Auction Thanks Due to Many

The successful Services Auction could not have happened without the work of numerous volunteers and I want to thank everyone who participated. The booklet and maintenance of the auction site is due to the hard work of Development Committee member Ralph Talierno, and we both appreciate the assistance of David Brenner and Jennifer Sappell. Susie Byrnes and the office volunteers helped collate the Auction booklet. They are: Bill Hecker,



Marilyn Kopp-Hecker, Dorothy Burns, Kim Kayal, Ben and Pat Testa, Ann Skolnick, Ginny Kushnick, Mary Jane Wochinger, Bea Coryell, Peggy Koulias, Amy Olander and Jean Marie Schmitz. Bridgette Nicolini helped with the flyers and publicity. All things financial were organized by Jean Marra, with assistance from Sue Peters and Ann Scolnick. Amy Olander and Jennifer Thieke helped make order of the coffee can raffles, with the help of Ginny and Pat, and every committee is to be thanked for their contributions.



The Development Committee helped with rounding up entries, including Ben Testa, Chris McDonald, Laura Childs, Michael Sussman, Barbara Kent, Milt Masur and Spencer Ross. Judie Gardner was responsible for all the amazing, life-sized Monopoly decorations we enjoyed, with the assistance of George Murphy and Harvey Balopole. Andy Feigin pulled together our slide show and helped with sound. Jim Monnier was our auctioneer extraordinaire, who skillfully emptied our pockets of almost

\$5,000. Jackie Krumholz and family organized our dessert table, and many people provided desserts. Ken Farrell, photographer, Jack DeMasi (Mr. Monopoly) and Ed Vigneau (the police officer) helped us raise an additional \$200. Steve Burby was our emcee and patient errand master. Michael Amendola was our wine connoisseur, naturally.

And, in addition to the names above, here are others who helped with set-up and at the Auction itself: Christine Pisani, Teresa Karp, Harriet and Jim McKenna, Christina Swenson, Beth Feldman, Liz Koehn, Kim Schultze, Milt Masur, Renee Velkoff, Gerald Moss, Peter Montemurro, Peggy Koulias, Patrick, Renee and Samantha McGloin, Susan Kenler, Annabel Caner, Joanne Polichetti, Carlene Tochman, Barbara Johnson, Marie Duryea, Jackie Agdern, Bea Coryell, Lisa Moskowitz, Melissa Wettengel, Stephanie Sakson, Judy Greene, the Testas and Carol and Frank Towne.

The danger of listing individuals is that I'm sure I've missed someone, but know that your work is appreciated. I was just running around too much to catch everyone. Please email me so I can include you next time. Everyone's efforts matter in this annual community event. It could not have happened without you. Thank you, everyone! ~ **Liza Burby**



All Member Gallery Art Show – December - January 31

All Member Artists Welcome to Exhibit

Deadline to submit work, Friday, December 11

UUFH Gallery

All UUFH Member Artists are invited to show their work in the Fellowship Gallery for a SPECIAL HOLIDAY EXHIBIT December through January 2016.

Please contact Connie Wain Schwartz (Curator) at conwain@verizon.net

ASAP if you are interested. Information should include title, size (no larger than 24"), media and price if for sale. The Fellowship asks for a 25 percent commission if sold. Hanging will take place Friday, Dec.11 at 1pm. If work is small, two pieces can be submitted for consideration. Connie **MUST** have your response by Dec. 10 in order to be included. **Reception date to be announced.**

~ Connie Wain Schwartz



Star Child - Annual Holiday Toy Drive - Thru December 13

Social Hall Gift Bin

Our Annual Holiday Toy Drive is back! The middle and high school youth of our Fellowship are busy coordinating our toy drive for families in need in our community. They have made a large poster in the Social Hall announcing the drive and included recommended suggestions for toy/gift card donation.

Please select a "star Post-it", a toy or gift card suggestion, and return your donation by **Dec. 13**. All donations are going to Family Service Leagues - Project T.O.Y. **~ Lisa Lo Piano Moskowitz**

Our Annual Christmas Eve Pageant Is Right Around the Corner

Here are some important dates and information about participating. Please, mark your calendars!

If you are participating in the pageant, meet with Amy upstairs in RE8 during the times below.

If you are participating in the orchestra portion of the Christmas Eve service, meet with Michael downstairs in RE2. If you are not coming for Christmas Eve, you can join Starr in the social hall for an alternate RE activity.

Sunday, Dec. 6 (during RE) Rehearsal time! Bring instruments if you are in the orchestra.

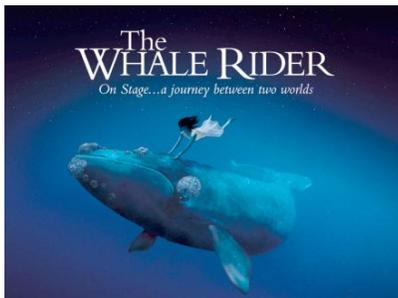
Sunday, Dec. 13 (during RE) Rehearsal!

Sunday, Dec. 20 – AFTER SERVICE IN THE MAIN HALL Bring instruments, costumes, etc. and plan to stay after the youth worship service to run through the pageant in its entirety.

THE BIG DAY! Dec. 24! Christmas Eve! Arrive at 3:30pm for a run-through before the family service and pageant begin. The service and pageant will be at 5pm. Invite your family and friends!

If you are looking to get involved in some way, Amy needs someone to launder costumes and we are also looking for people who want to create props and backgrounds. Contact Amy Edel Vaughn.

~ Starr Austin



Whale Rider-Movie Night Film - December 11 - 7:30 pm-10:00 pm

UUFH Main Hall

Join us for the screening of Whale Rider, the breathtaking coming-of-age film from New Zealand. This family drama tells the tale of a young Maori girl, Kahu, who wants to become the chief of her tribe, but is thwarted at every turn. While this film is family-friendly, it is an important and thought-provoking movie for audiences of all ages.

December's theme of expectation will be explored in a post-film multigenerational discussion. **\$5. Donation requested** - Open to the public. **Future Dates in the Series:** Second Fridays through June 2016: Jan. 8, Feb. 12, March 11, April 8, May 13 and June 10.

~ Susie Byrnes



The Journey led by the Membership Committee - December 13 - 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

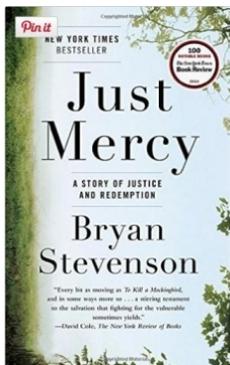
UUFH Main Hall

Session 2: The Journey led by the Membership Committee
Join us as we explore the individual spiritual journeys that have brought each of us here today and take a look at the principles and sources which form the foundation of our faith. We will take a look at the various programs offered in our Fellowship and talk about what it means to be a member of

our religious community.

Please **RSVP** to Kristina Heinemann at krheinemann@gmail.com or 631-385-3121

~ **Kristina Heinemann**



Just Mercy- Starts Sunday, December 20 –Noon - 1:30 pm

Board Room

Join us for a series of discussions on our UUFH and UUA Read of *Just Mercy*, a riveting book that explores a variety of actual cases in our prison system today. See details on page 9 in **THE GREATER COMMUNITY**.

Session 1 - Judie Delano

Session 1 - Make-up—Sunday, Jan. 10, noon-1:30, Diana Weaving

Session 2—Monday, Jan. 18 (MLK Day), 7-8:30 pm, Diana Weaving

Session 3—Sunday, Jan. 24, noon-1:30, Christine Pisani ~ **Helen Boxwill**



Call for Charity of the Month/Split Plate Applications: Deadline Jan. 15, 2016

Do you have a charitable organization or nonprofit that is dear to your heart? Every Sunday, the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Huntington proudly gives away one half of all anonymous cash donations plus checks or cash specified to a Charity of the Month through its split plate collection. Prior beneficiaries have included Save the Rain, Holiday House, the NAACP Scholarship Fund and Smile in a Bag. While we have been accepting applications on a rolling basis, we're attempting to institute

a two-times-a-year call for applications for better planning. Please go <http://uufh.org/faith-in-action/living-our-values/> and click through to the "Split Plate" application drop down to download an easy application. Then email it to BOW@uufh.org. Any questions may be directed there as well. Looking forward to your great ideas! ~ **Karen Mazzotta**



SPLIT THE PLATE CHARITY FOR DECEMBER IS:

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee - Transforming Human Rights Into Realities

In more than a dozen countries throughout the world, UUSC fosters social justice and works toward a world free from oppression. Through grassroots collaborations that achieve systemic change, UUSC stands behind workers' rights, defending living wages, fair trade and workers' right to organize; every human's right to water (almost three-quarters of a

billion people worldwide still lack drinking water); and a long-term commitment to sustainable recovery in Haiti that addresses the needs of people in rural and disadvantaged neighborhoods, as well as women, children and survivors of gender-based violence. UUSC's innovative approaches and measurable impact — in promoting economic justice, bolstering environmental justice, and protecting

rights at risk — are grounded in the belief that all people have inherent power, dignity and rights. Please give as generously as you are able. ~ **Karen Mazzotta**



Saturday, December 5 at 8pm & Sunday, December 6 at 2 pm
It's a Wonderful Life, presented at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Huntington.

Come enjoy a classic holiday play for the whole family right here in the Fellowship's Main Hall as the Township Theatre Group presents a radio adaptation of the stage play *It's a Wonderful Life*. This holiday classic comes to life as a live broadcast of the 1940s for the "The Lux Radio Theatre." This production is complete with sound effects, commercials and songs of the '40s musical interludes. Come step back in time to the fateful Christmas night when idealistic George Bailey meets his guardian angel. There will be only two performances of the show: Saturday, Dec. 5 at 8pm and Sunday, Dec. 6 at 2pm. Tickets are \$25; senior/student \$20. Call 630-213-9832 or www.townshiptheatregroup.org ~ **Susie Byrnes**



ANNUAL ORNAMENT EXCHANGE - December 16, 2015 - 7:30 pm

I love holiday traditions, and I've been hosting this one for over 20 years: our annual ornament exchange. Please join me for holiday cheer, snacks and great conversation on Wednesday, Dec. 16 at 7:30. Bring a wrapped ornament for \$12 or less, as well as a holiday snack or wine to share. This began as a mothers' group event, but for the past several years it has been for UUFH women of all ages. We meet at my house, **at 152 West 19th Street in Huntington Station**, so please RSVP to lizaburby@verizon.net or 631-549-4483. Feel free to ask me for more details and ask around for "guest reviews." I can guarantee you'll leave with a gorgeous ornament and experience lots of laughter. ~ **Liza Burby**

UUFH FUNDRAISING EVENTS



LAST LICKS CAFE
presents OOMPA
Sat., December 26- 7:30 pm
(Open mic starts 7:30 followed by main acts.)



Come down for another showcase of performers from the Organization of **Open Mic Performing Artists (OOMPA)**, a Long Island group that hosts open mics and musical events for worthy causes.

Admission \$15 (\$10Seniors/Students)

The true measure of our character is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned.

We are all implicated when we allow other people to be mistreated.

Bryan Stevenson
Just Mercy



UUFH COMMON READ 2015-2016

LOCATION: RE 7

Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*

Selected as this year's UUA common read, this multiple-award winner, "[e]very bit as moving as *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and in some ways more so...[is] a stirring testament to the salvation that fighting for the vulnerable sometimes yields." The New York Review of Books

In *Just Mercy*, Stevenson writes about his personal experiences representing poor people, those of color, women and children incarcerated on death row or sentenced to die in prison. He makes a powerful case that the opposite of poverty is not wealth, but justice. In line with his grandmother's advice that you have to get close to understand, he reveals truths about the U.S. criminal justice system by sharing individual stories, taking the reader up close to see the results of unjust, life- and soul-destroying policies and practices.

We'll debrief *Just Mercy* over three, different 90-minute chats using the UUA discussion guide covering underlying themes of justice, mercy, compassion, hope and forgiveness. These sessions will invite us to examine our own assumptions and biases while leading not only to a new intellectual understanding of the U.S. criminal punishment system, but also to a new spiritual stance regarding those who are incarcerated.

Copies of *Just Mercy* are available after service from the book stall in the Social Hall. See dates above (**FELLOWSHIP NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**) for group discussion at UUFH in room RE7:

~ **Diana Weaving**



WHAT IS GUEST AT YOUR TABLE?

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has been advancing human rights for 75 years. Fair wage advocacy, supporting torture survivors, and defending the human right to water, are just a few of the subjects recently addressed by the UUSC. Our Fellowship has always contributed and this year, with the crisis of displaced people assistance is even more necessary.

Boxes were distributed on Nov. 22nd. If you did not receive a box and would like one please let us know. It is suggested you place the Guest at Your Table box where you have your meals. At meal times you can reflect on how our faith

compels us to act and create a more just world and contributed coins or bills. Our Director of Religious Education, Starr, especially recommends families pick up the box as it can be a focus point for conversations about how we put our UU faith into action. You may alternatively choose to write a check to the UUSC.

We will collect checks and boxes on Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday in January and send it to the UUSC from our Fellowship. ~ Bea Coryell

The Beacon

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
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**Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Huntington**

109 Brown's Road
Huntington, NY 11743

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday,
9:00 AM - 2:00PM
Fridays, 11:30AM - 1:30 PM
Tel.: 631-427-9547

Email: office@uufh.org
Website: www.uufh.org

For more

Rev. Jude Geiger, Minister
Starr Austin, Director of Religious Education
Richard Hyman, Music Director
Susie Byrnes, Administrator
Jennifer Thieke, President

Today's Editor: Bridgette Nicolini

**Next Beacon:
The first week of January**

**Beacon Deadline:
Monday, December 14, 2015**

**For Beacon submissions go to:
[www.uufh.org/e-publication-
posting-request](http://www.uufh.org/e-publication-posting-request)**