

# The Quest

FEBRUARY 2024  
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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](https://meet.google.com/kww-ugyh-spj) or by phone at 413-679-2794, PIN 139 523 137#.

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

**Feb 4. An Overview of Islam.** Doak says of his message, “I will cover my understanding of the major tenets of Mohamed’s teachings, theology, and ethical standards.” Led by Rev. Doak Mansfield.

**Feb 11. Mardi Gras for Beginners.** While New Orleans’ Mardi Gras is famous worldwide for wild abandonment of good sense, there are other celebrations of this most significant holy day. Doak notes, “I’ll offer its meaning and place in Christianity, and a bit more.” Led by Rev. Doak Mansfield.

**Feb 18. Mr. Lincoln’s Faith.** Doak will share thoughts on Abraham Lincoln being a truly remarkable man. His appreciation and understanding of faith were far from orthodox, but still a profound aspect of his character and morals. Led by Rev. Doak Mansfield.

**Feb 25. Paganism in America.** Sandi Liss returns to our pulpit to present an overview of America’s fastest-growing religion—Wicca, or as some like to call it, neopaganism. Sandi will demonstrate that there’s nothing “neo” about it. It’s one of the Earth’s oldest, in one form or another, continually functioning religions. After her intro, she’ll be happy to answer any questions you might have. Led by Sandi Liss.

- 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](http://www.uunewtonnj.org). Our phone number is 973-579-7210.

# MINISTER'S MUSINGS



Well, January got our attention. I'm very impressed by the road crews around Sussex County. Not happy with what salt is doing to my faithful Jeep. As a southern boy of a certain age, *pride of ride* is a thing. My first car in the mid-sixties was a 1954 Chevy four-door, six cylinder, automatic. Steel gray. It was a peerless tank. Got hot easy. Enough room to live in! So many miles...took to college. Had it for maybe eight years.

Appearances are an old-world idea. As a teenager of the sixties, looking sharp was important. "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," as it's said. I worked during college at my uncle's department store in my college town of Pulaski, TN. I was taught proper gentleman's style for the 50s-60s era. I know how to size a suit, measure trousers, select a tie, and such. The store had a top line of men's attire—Hart Schaffner Marx suits, Arrow shirts, Florsheim shoes. There were rules for the right shoes, ties, shirts, etc. Not anymore. Mix and match is the way today. Some nice looks are the results.

I wish I had lived, for fashion's sake, in the 1810-30s. Regency in England. Jeffersonian era here. Really stylish. Think Beau Brummel.

But I do like the diversity of looks we have today. I like business casual, and hope the days of the tight collars and ties are numbered. The no-tie, open-collar, white shirt with a suit coat look is a poor creation. Cowardly in-between. Go bold, guys!

One should have a wardrobe that suits them, reflecting their personality and style. And of course, always suitable, supportive shoes. Our foundation! It matters only that clothes are clean and sorta fit.

Now, a smile and twinkling eyes make everyone special and stylish, and looks good on anyone.

Off in a bit (Tuesday, Jan 23) for Cincinnati (10 hours of driving). Flying is such a hassle, and I'll need my car. Hoping to find my son, Adam, awake and recovering nicely from the severe heart attack he experienced Jan 21. Expect to be back Jan 30, but maybe sooner or later depended on how he is. He is heavily sedated now in cardiac ICU at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center (a great, great heart-care center).

We have a Legacy Program at UUFSC. It provides the opportunity to remember the Fellowship in estate planning. Please check it out at <https://www.uunewtonnj.org/legacydonations>. Supporting the sustainability of the Fellowship as part of your legacy is a wonderful, deeply appreciated gift. This is our 60th year, going for 100! Help make that possible so that future pilgrims may find us. As you did, once.

Love,

Rev. Doak

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

In February, we celebrate Valentine's Day, a dedication to romantic love.

Like some other traditions, this one is based on a real historical character. But his story actually had nothing to do with romance. In fact, Saint Valentine was an early Christian priest and probably didn't have much romance in his life.

Saint Valentine ministered to Christians persecuted by the Romans in the third century. As a result, he was martyred on February 14. One account says he was beaten with clubs and beheaded. In a not-so-sexy follow-up, his skull is still exhibited in a basilica in Rome. Other body parts and blood stains are allegedly stored in Ireland, Poland, and on one of the Greek islands.

So, how did the notion of romance emerge? Reportedly, Valentine had miraculously cured a girl of blindness to convince her father, a jailer, to free Christian captives. In his last act before death, Valentine wrote this girl a note—and he signed it “your Valentine.”

That did it. By 1382, the signature was enough for Chaucer to write about Valentine's Day in a poem celebrating the wedding of his king. Now, the basic idea was on paper for others to pick up. William Shakespeare, John Donne, and Edmund Spenser followed with comments about a romantic Valentine's Day. By 1784, the English publisher Joseph Johnson published a nursery rhyme that began:

The rose is red, the violet's blue.  
The honey's sweet, and so are you.

So, the English took a history of grisly martyrdom and, over centuries, converted it into a story about romantic love. How come? Could it be that humanity wanted, even needed, some way to celebrate love? Did we use Saint Valentine's signature as an excuse to express something that just had to be expressed? I think so.

Valentine's Day exists because we want it to exist. What could be better than to celebrate love and romance, even if we do tie this day to a piece of unrelated history? Love will win out.

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



Hello Friends,

Since we began the unit Moral Tales, we're happy to report that we've added 10 directions to our Moral Compass poster. Every couple of weeks, we hear a tale that teaches us an important lesson—a direction we can take in life. Each direction leads us to taking actions that reflect our UU values of goodness and justice.

Last month we added the Golden Rule and Balance to our Moral Compass poster. This month, we'll be adding Non-Violence and Responsibility.

With loving hearts ,

Sharon and Pin

Below is our RE calendar for February.

**Feb 4. Do No Harm.** We will begin this month by reading a story from India called *The Answer Is in Your Hands*, about a young boy who has a bird's destiny in his hands. If time allows, we'll play a game in which we pass around a bird as we brainstorm non-violent ways to solve conflicts that may come up in our own lives.

**Feb 11. Do No Harm (continued).** If we didn't get to play the bird game last week, we'll play it today. Afterward, we'll make door hangers we can bring home for our front doors that will remind us to stop and think, "What would a Unitarian Universalist do?"

**Feb 18. Making a Difference.** This week's story is a folk tale from Burma and Thailand about responsibility. The story, called *Not My Problem*, is about a queen who's asked to take action on a problem she believes to be too small for her trouble. The problem eventually grows so large that it destroys her entire queendom. Afterward, we'll role-play positive responses to some common challenges in the children's lives.

**Feb 25. Making a Difference (continued).** Today, the children will name some problems locally or in the world that actually concern them or that they are passionate about, and then use a magic wand to pretend to make the concerns magically go away. Next, we'll create a grid outlining solutions we can actually take to tackle the problems we identified earlier, but in small steps that each of us can realistically accomplish so that we feel we are making a difference. Finally, each child will get to sign a commitment to take one small step, the completion of which we'll recognize at a later date.

# ANNOUNCEMENT

## Discussion Group

As our January discussion was canceled due to snow, we'll carry our topic "What are the pros and cons of banning books" forward to the February meeting, and add "What is free speech," which is closely related to book banning.

Are there any suggestions for discussion topics as we go forward into 2024? Please get in touch with Phil Schaming or Susanna Lee to recommend subject matter that could be of interest to the group.

We meet at the Fellowship at 10:00 am for an hour or so on the third Friday of each month, and we hope you'll join us on February 16th. Bring a friend!

Anyone who wants to join the UUFSC Discussion Group is welcome to just show up at a meeting or to email [ufdiscussion@gmail.com](mailto:ufdiscussion@gmail.com) for more info. Not all members are UU, and we encourage people of the community to join.

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# COMMITTEE REPORT

## Social Action



This was rescheduled due to a Covid outbreak. Amy Torres, NJ Alliance for Immigrant Justice, is the keynote speaker for the luncheon. Chris Dunbar would like some company and can carpool, if interested. Attending the Gala is a good way to learn about the UU FaithAction NJ task forces. For tickets and detailed information, go to <https://www.uufaithaction.org/2023/12/18/gala-rescheduled/>.

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## 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 14% 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](http://www.raiseright.com). Please contact Sue Weiner or Hal Cohen if you have any questions about this program.



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OF SUSSEX COUNTY**

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