

# The Quest

APRIL 2024  
VOL. 59, NO. 8

## Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Sussex County



### PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR APRIL

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#.

**Apr 7. Rescuers.** In the dark days of World War II, when Nazis occupied most of Europe, some ordinary citizens risked immediate death to hide and protect their Jewish neighbors. They're known today as the "righteous gentiles" and are documented in the 1992 book *Rescuers*. Mike and his daughter Andia will try today to bring to life the story of just one of these rescuers, a Dutch man named Arie van Mansum. Led by Mike Bengis.

**Apr 14. Ask the Preacher.** Please give some thought to issues, ideas, and questions you'd like Dr. Doak to respond to. At the beginning of the service, slips of paper will be distributed for you to write down those issues, ideas, and questions. These will be collected and used by Dr. Doak for his message. Folks can also email him the same before the service. Led by The Rev. Dr. Doak M. Mansfield.

**Apr 21. Passover.** For Jews and Jewish-adjacent non-Jews the world over, this annual spring festival focuses on memory and human dignity. Each generation teaches and reminds the next about what happened thousands of years ago in pharaoh's Egypt. Of course, over hundreds of generations, different tribes and different families develop their own unique sub-traditions within the overall gestalt of Passover. So, welcome one and all to our uniquely UUFSC-ish Passover seder, replete with traditional foods, ancient customs, surprise guests, and non-traditional jokes. Led by Jerry Sattin.

**Apr 28. Blessing the Animals Ceremony.** Other congregations have an annual service to recognize the place of pets and animals in our lives. We'll join them this year. A caution: Please be sure your pets are properly vaccinated, etc., and in a carrier or on a leash. Pets' humans will be asked to share conversations about their special friends. (Photos may be substituted for live pets.) Led by The Rev. Dr. Doak M. Mansfield.

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

© 2024. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

# MINISTER'S MUSINGS



I return to the UK April 3-11 to attend the Annual General Assembly of the British Unitarians (maybe 400 attendees) in Daventry (a market town of 28,000 in south central England, northwest of London). I was in the beautiful Peak District near Manchester in October for a retreat with British Unitarian lay leaders sponsored by Unitarian College. My experience there proved to be a spiritual renewal sorely needed and greatly welcomed.

I returned home to my congregation gladly and vowed to take care of my people, continue to craft and refine insights into the spiritual challenges of the times, and seek to find ideas and ideals to address them.

There are major differences in how Unitarianism developed in the US versus England. Here, our religion has roots among the most powerful and richest Americans of the 1820-1880 period. Unitarians in America never experienced any real oppression or restrictions. Not so for the British Unitarians and other Protestant dissenters (Baptists, Calvinists, Methodists, Quakers, and others). Our spiritual ancestors in the UK were outlaws until 1813. They were subject to harsh judgments, even death! If there's generational inheritance present in human evolution, we American UUs bring to our religiosity, our spiritual life, an arrogance of privilege.

How different things were in England. Unitarians there suffered existential fear because of their beliefs and had hidden places of worship. There were devoted, open-minded clergy thrown out of their jobs, livelihoods, and worse. There were seasons of persecution, cruelty, and death because of beliefs and expressions of faith contrary to the establishment religious order (Catholic, then Anglican). The spiritual liberty in the UK today is blood-purchased.

In the US, Unitarian spiritual liberty is organic (established in the Constitution). As a devoted contrarian, I feel I could live with folks who know how to hide from the owners, sneak around authorities to live their truth, and survive in a hostile environment. Happily, in the US, we don't need to do such things.

I'm most grateful for the religious liberty mostly present in our American heritage. There's evidence of lapses, yet we're most fortunate to have spiritual, political liberty. It's still good to remember and honor those pilgrims of the past who gave everything to bequeath that gift to us.

Love,

*Doc Doak*

***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.**

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

My grandparents were undocumented immigrants. But back then, everyone entering the U.S. was undocumented. In today's stormy debates over immigration rules, it's easy to forget that, for most of American history, there were no rules. If you could find a way to enter the US, and if you weren't terribly sick, then you were welcomed in. There were no visas and no need to apply for asylum. Prior to World War I, the only exception was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which severely restricted immigration from China. Then, as the 1900s rolled on, we began to see legal requirements emerge for people from around the world.

We no longer discriminate so much against the Chinese. Instead, our attention is focused on the southern border, where Latino people have been entering in large numbers, often without visas, under the terms of our current law, the Immigration Act of 1990. And now we come to the heart of the matter, which is our response. Often, it is simple ethnic and racial hatred.

Leading right-wing politicians maintain that Latinos entering the US are criminals, rapists, and drug dealers. Their "proof" for such allegations is to cite a few individual criminal cases, even if those cases are statistically insignificant compared to the number of crimes committed by non-Latinos. The root of these allegations is pure and simple bigotry. A recent comment by a leader of the bigoted clique was that Latino immigrants would "poison the blood" of America. This was very near the kind of race-hatred that Adolph Hitler used against Jews.

Unitarian Universalists condemn this bigotry. When we look at the reasons so many Latinos are eager to enter the US, we see the same reasons that drove others in the past—poverty and violence in their home countries. My grandparents were exposed to both poverty and violence in Czarist Russia and Romania. Can we measure this violence? Sure. In this country, the annual homicide rate was recently 6.3 deaths per 100,000 population. In Venezuela, it was 40.4. In Honduras, it was 35.8. In Ecuador, 25.9. The numbers come from *Statista*, a respected source. Put another way, your chance of being murdered in Venezuela is over 6 times greater than in America.

How about poverty? The CIA's *The World Factbook* states that in Honduras, 60% of the entire population lives in poverty. In Venezuela, the economy is in collapse. Wikipedia reports that 50% of Venezuelans are living in poverty, with a rate of inflation that reached a mind-numbing 80,000% in 2018 (making the currency worthless).

You would imagine that troubles like these would engender sympathy. But they don't for a large number of Americans. Apparently, the problem is that the migrants often have brown skin and speak a different language. Ironically, the unemployment rate in the United States is historically low. Millions of jobs are available with no takers. This is precisely when we should be seeking out immigrants, not trying to exclude and punish them.

Why do so many of us feel hatred and revulsion toward such impoverished people? Why can't we, instead, give them some help? As our nation considers changes to immigration rules, the process should be governed by charity, as well as by the likelihood that immigration will result in American economic growth.

Stu

# THIS MONTH IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Hello Friends,

We're so happy that we have a couple of new students who have joined our RE program! Each student brings a new perspective on the moral tales and something unique to share with the group.

Thanks to a string of warm days last month, we were able to enjoy some RE lessons outside on the beautiful property of our Fellowship building. One morning we sat outside together on a picnic blanket in the sun, doing the brainstorming activity "The Answer is in Your Hands" to come up with non-violent solutions to some common childhood dilemmas. Another morning, we played "Help Your Neighbor" on the lawn to practice helping others even though it's not always easy.

Looking forward to more sunny days together! ☀️

Sharon and Pin

Below is the RE calendar for April.

**April 7. Making a Difference (continued).** Today, children will name some problems locally or in the world that concern them or that they are passionate about, and then use a "magic wand" to pretend to make them go away. Next, we'll create a grid outlining solutions we can take to tackle these problems, in small steps each of us can realistically accomplish so that we feel we're making a difference. Finally, each child will get to sign a commitment to take one small step, and we'll recognize the completion at a later date.

**Apr 14. Justice for All.** This week's story is *The Dog and the Heartless King*, about a kingdom in which many people don't have enough food. A dog comes to the palace and refuses to stop barking until the king has redistributed the wealth and everyone in the land has been fed. Through an "unfair snack" activity, the children will experience injustice firsthand and have the opportunity to turn that into justice.

**Apr 21. Courage.** An African folktale with dancing, singing, and a musical instrument introduces the children to a young woman who finds the courage to stand up to a hungry lion to save her cousin. The children will then be guided to remember times when they've found the courage to do something risky. Through a kinesthetic game, the children will be introduced to assertiveness techniques to feel more empowered to express themselves when conscience calls.

**Apr 28. Courage and Perseverance.** In this session, the children will hear stories about everyday people, children and adults, who have persisted against great odds for what they believed. Afterward, they'll help each other create a challenging homemade treat inspired by the perseverance of the people in these stories.

**SAVE THE DATES FOR THE 2024 RUMMAGE SALE...  
Friday and Saturday, June 21 and 22.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Discussion Group

At our March meeting, a group of 11 discussed immigration. Our next topics/meeting dates are “End of Life” on April 19 and “Diversity in Education” on May 17. 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 April 19th. 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.

### End-of-Life Planning

Planning your last party? Meet with Dr. Doak and others Saturday, April 27, 10 am, for a conversation on end-of-life planning. Topics will be health directives, memorial services, organ donations, research donations, and legacy/estate/will provisions.

## THE SPRING FLING IS ALMOST HERE...

This is turning out to be a great year at our Fellowship. Our new minister, Dr. Doak Mansfield, has emerged as a real leader for our small but growing group. Our new president, Stu Feldstein, has instituted innovations, modernized parts of our building, and kept everything chugging along without a hitch, while juggling many balls in the air. Our new landscape project by the entrance is a major aesthetic improvement, making a welcome appearance to people who may cruise by with curiosity. But the biggest new thing is the many beautiful new faces we’ve seen on Sundays.

The congregation has grown with new members, old and young, and regular visitors who we hope will soon sign the membership book too. New members and friends have connected with old timers. They’ve even begun getting very active very quickly, with one joining the Board as Treasurer, another who is heading up the Spring Fling, and more. We really couldn’t ask for much more. But we do, anyway.

***The Fling, which is happening April 13, is our most important fundraiser of the year.*** It’s also our most fun annual event and a great way to get to know each other in an entirely different setting (even though it’s in our own building). Don’t miss the chance to be a part of the Spring Fling.

“But how can I do that?” you say? Here are some of the many ways.

- Make sure you’ve signed up to attend. A signup sheet is located downstairs in the Fellowship. If you haven’t signed it, email Andi Randall, the Fling chairperson. Or contact Hal Cohen or Sue Weiner.
- While it’s a few days past the deadline, you might still be able to contribute auction items, such as events, meals, excursions... or actual *things*. Contact Sue Weiner to do so.
- ***Join us at noon on April 13!***

# 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.



**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP  
OF SUSSEX COUNTY**

**President: Stu Feldstein**  
**Vice-President: Phil Schaming**  
**Treasurer: Jerry Sattin**  
**Secretary: Richard Goffman**  
**Quest Editors: Susan Weiner, Richard Goffman**