

# The Quest

NOVEMBER 2023  
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Unitarian Universalist Fellowship  
of Sussex County

## PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR NOVEMBER



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:

**Nov 5. The Downside of Kindness.** Kindness is a universally accepted concept that lifts the human spirit. Or is it? This exploration of kindness will examine its many qualities and try to answer some questions. What is kindness? How do we show kindness to others? And why is kindness often thought of as a sign of weakness? This service is in recognition of World Kindness Day on November 13. Led by Jeff Wallis.

- 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.*

**Nov 12. Monarch Butterflies.** Wendell Berry observed, “We have lived our lives by the assumption that what was good for us would be good for the world. We have been wrong. We must change our lives so that it will be possible to live by the contrary assumption, that what is good for the world will be good for us. And that requires that we make the effort to know the world and learn what is good for it.” This presentation will help us learn about monarch butterflies and why their health is directly related to humanity’s survival. Hosted by Sharon Pontier. Led by Glenn Pontier. Music by Greg Pontier.

**Nov 19. Thanksgiving.** Learn why Doak feels that Thanksgiving is the most sacred of American “holy” days. He will consider its place in history, both ancient and recent. Led by Rev. Doak Mansfield.

**Nov 26. Oscar Monet–Better Known as Claude.** Painter, gardener, soldier, suicide survivor, neighbor of Karl Marx, and friend to the French prime minister, Monet led a life both wild and interesting. He made the woman who modeled for him his mistress, had a child with her out of wedlock, and eventually married her. They were terribly poor. He had an affair with his friend’s wife while his own was desperately ill. And this is only the beginning of his story (which gets juicier), long before he moved to Giverny and built his famous garden. Join us to hear the rest of the tale. Led by Stevie Fava.

**DON'T FORGET TO FALL BACK! Set your clocks back an hour before bed on Saturday, November 4.**

*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



Off to Minneapolis for a speaking gig November 4-6. Short and sweet.

I truly enjoyed my long holiday to the UK. It turned out to be a journey of discovery and transformation. I had to do excessive walking. Really hurt. My legs have weakened, and I suffer from some arthritis in my ankles and knees. But I had to walk, and I did. Suffered through, but now feel more vigorous and am committed to joining a gym for thrice-weekly workouts. Also, I learned I don't need glasses for distance vision, only reading. So thrilled!

I was deeply touched and profoundly inspired by what occurred in the workshop on Worship Works, led by staff from Unitarian College (a British Unitarian Seminary for minister training) at a beautiful, circa 1920 stone building known as the Nightingale Centre. It's in the small village of Great Hucklow, near Buxton, in the Peak District of England. Six women lay leaders from British congregations and I made up the group that spent 15 hours of intense engagement on the personal abilities needed for Unitarian spiritual leadership. I was honored to be warmly welcomed and affirmed. Turns out I am working with them on the possibility of participating in the April 5-7 General Assembly and leading a session (90-minute presentation/discussion) called "Introduction to Interim Ministry." I'm also exploring the possibility of a minister-on-loan gig with one of their congregations in July-August, 2024. There's a great shortage of ministers there.

(Trivial item: Most pre-1813 British Unitarian congregations are known as "chapels" and aren't prominently located. They were illegal as churches until 1813.)

I'm loving the opening days of fall. Driving around, one sees nature truly showing off its colors, in the woods and the sky. Grandeur up close.

The tragedy in Israel-Gaza is heartbreaking and soul-abusing. If you feel helpless, consider a donation to Doctors Without Borders, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/our-response-israel-gaza-war>. If this organization aligns with your passions and values, you can give with confidence.

Be careful, take care, and smile and speak to people...improves the social environment. Call me if you need me or to feed me.

Love,

Rev 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,

Don't forget to mark your calendars for Sunday, December 10, when we'll induct new members. We'll make a party of it with refreshments. And we'll also be honoring various others, including two UUFSC presidents and one vice president who (coincidentally) all retired from their jobs at about the same time, after many decades of hard work. It should be fun.

On a less happy note, I feel compelled to comment on the war going on in the Middle East. By the time you read this letter, the nature of the war may have changed, but here's the story as of this writing—in my opinion only.

It's a story about the slaughter of innocents. It's abhorrent. Babies, children, and innocent civilians have been killed by the thousands, often brutally. By whom? By both sides. Some by hand, some by bombs or rockets.

It strikes me as insane that so many people around the world are rallying behind one side or the other. What they should rally around is an end to violence, now and forever. Do Palestinians have legitimate gripes? Yes. Do Israelis have a right to live? Yes. Does it make things better to kill each other? No.

In recent years, regional progress had been made. Israel and several surrounding Muslim nations had made peace. A relationship between Israel and Saudi Arabia looked likely. We came close.

Both Judaism and Islam follow the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." Ironically, it often seems that self-styled fundamentalist religious leaders on both sides, and in nearby Iran, appear most eager to violate that rule.

Unitarians believe all individuals deserve respect and have inherent worth. We believe in fairness. We value diversity, not bigotry. I wish that all the world followed the tenets of our Fellowship, in which case a tragic article like this one would never be written.

Stu

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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!



# THIS MONTH IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Hello Friends,

In October, we learned the importance of seeing the divinity that's in each of us. This realization naturally reminds us to follow the Golden Rule (Do unto others...).

This month we'll put our Faith in Action by showing generosity to each other and our community. Hopefully, it will inspire generosity in us all! Also, the children will act out how we are all part of an interdependent web that affects, and also needs, each other.

For pictures of the children during litter cleanup day, see page 7.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Sharon and Pin



Below is our RE calendar for November.

**Nov 5. Do unto Others (continued).** In the last class of October, the children were introduced to the moral lesson "Do unto Others." This week, we'll ask the children to express how they would like to be treated by others. Afterward, we'll play a game of "Help Your Neighbor," in which we try to balance an item on our head and help unfreeze our neighbors who lose their balance.

**Nov 12. Generosity: Give and Ye Shall Receive.** The moral tale this week is called "The Better Offer." It's a true story from the Arab lands that happened nearly 1,400 years ago. The story is about a wealthy man who was as generous as he was prosperous. Afterward, we'll put our Faith in Action by making plans for how we can be generous in our community this holiday season.

**Nov 19. Generosity (continued).** As a way to practice generosity within our very own congregation and in the spirit of Thanksgiving, the children will prepare a tasty dish for all to enjoy during coffee hour. This multigenerational activity will surely warm the hearts of all! If time permits, we'll read two picture books that will demonstrate visually the large discrepancy in what people in different parts of the world own and eat.

**Nov 26. Footprints: Treading Softly on Earth.** This week's tale is another true story, this time from the island of Borneo in Southeast Asia. It is about how sometimes, when we try to solve problems by hurting living beings, it often ends up hurting more than we ever imagined or intended. Afterward, we'll try a challenging and cooperative activity called the "Lap-sit Balance Game" to illustrate the interdependent web of life of which we're a part.

## NEW LANDSCAPING FOR FELLOWSHIP ENTRANCE



The Fellowship entrance has had a “facelift” with new landscaping! Gone are the overgrown shrubs. In their place, we now have evergreen shrubs along the building, with flowering shrubs in the foreground to provide color. (They’re relatively small now, but will grow!) The big yew tree by the parking lot has been cleared of dead branches and vines, and trimmed up to provide a better view of the building. Plus, improved grading will reduce the rain puddles on the walkway.

Barbara Kelly and Stevie Fava, co-chairs, would like to thank all who helped make this possible.

First, thanks to all the UUFSC members who voted unanimously at the September 10th special meeting to approve the cost of this project. This investment will give us pleasure for years to come, plus it will provide a more attractive and welcoming entrance for visitors who may be interested in attending UUFSC. Thanks too to our members/friends who worked early in the summer to do preliminary clearing and cleanup of the old plantings—Laura and Kevin Dempsey, and Phil and Ann Schaming. Stu Feldstein and Dave Miller have assembled the lovely metal privacy screen that will be installed shortly to hide the electric meter on the front of the building. Laura Dempsey is working on sourcing the bench that will be installed between the door and the parking lot.

We were very fortunate that Barbara Abita, a talented and experienced landscape designer, drew up a complete landscape design (layout, plant selection, drainage) for us, *pro bono!* We would never have been able to do such a beautiful design on our own! If any of you or your friends are ever in need of a landscape designer, please contact Barbara and let her know that you admired her UUFSC work ([horthead@gmail.com](mailto:horthead@gmail.com)).

Finally, Bret Jennings at Pop’s Property Maintenance (Newton) did an excellent job of implementing the landscape plan. He was an absolute pleasure to work with—patient, thorough, and flexible when we wanted to make changes. We would recommend him highly if you or friends need his services ([bretjennings519@yahoo.com](mailto:bretjennings519@yahoo.com)).

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Discussion Group

We had a great turnout and a terrific discussion last month about artificial intelligence. The topic for our next discussion is "What constitutes the good life?" We'll be continuing to meet at the Fellowship at 10:00 am on the third Friday of each month. We hope you'll join us on the 17th!

Anyone who wants to join the UUFSC Discussion Group is welcome to just show up at a meeting or to email for more info. We encourage people to email the moderator within a few days following each meeting after researching the next topic, to share with the group any links they've found interesting or that might help in preparing for the next discussion.

## Food Pantry



This November, the Fellowship will once again be collecting food items to support the efforts of the Sparta Community Food Pantry ([www.thespartacommunityfoodpantry.com](http://www.thespartacommunityfoodpantry.com)). In case you're looking for ideas, the pantry is specifically requesting cereal (hot and cold), pasta and pasta sauce, meals in a can (ravioli, spaghetti, etc.), juice, boxed milk, coffee and tea, boxed mac and cheese, crackers, peanut butter, jelly, canned vegetables, canned protein (tuna, chicken, etc.), toilet paper, and paper towels.

Please leave your donations in the bins provided downstairs. Contact Hal Cohen with any questions. We appreciate your support of this very important community program.

## Head and Heart Workshops

Beginning Saturday November 18 at 10 am, and continuing each Saturday before Rev. Doak leads our Sunday service (Nov 18, Dec 2, Dec 9, Jan 6, Jan 20, Feb 3, Feb 17, March 2, March 16, March 30, April 13, April 27, and May 11), a new adult/teen engagement adventure will be hosted by Doak. Called "Head and Heart" workshops, their aim is to share ideas and feelings that matter to us. It's not therapy, but an encounter group that will respect and honor confidences and encourage honest sharing about issues that plague and/or excite us. Rev. Doak will lead from the position that spirituality is about one's sense of compelling connections with things real, internal and external. Opening with a chalice lighting and guided meditation, it will be structured casually and emphasize courtesy. We're a thinking and feeling people. Being together can support us in our journeys.

## New Member Recognition and Party

We'll welcome new members in a brief ceremony during our December 10 service. If you'd like to make it official and become a full-fledged member of this small yet wondrous band of truth seekers, truth tellers, and radical lovers of justice, that would be great! If you're interested, talk to Rev. Doak, Stu Feldstein, or any Board member.

## Doak's New Book

Rev. Doak has a newly published book, *Kin-Ship Spirituality!*

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Cleanup Day!



# 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.raiserright.com](http://www.raiserright.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**