



# The Open Line

SOUTH NASSAU

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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**December 7, 2008 10:30 am**

Rev. Catherine Torpey

HOLIDAY FAIR & LUNCHEON 12-5 Share the Light Gifts are Due Today

*SNUUC's Window: The Greek Cross*

One of an occasional series on the religious symbols on SNUUC's logo

**Coffee:** Polly Stevens

**Ushers:** Denise Metzguer & Denise Hibbert

**Lock-up:** Barbara Singer

**Welcome:** Linda Nanos

**Social Action Table:** Don Obers

**Ways & Means:** Alice Spatt

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**December 14, 2008 10:30am**

Guest Preacher Hollis Huston

*Merry Christmas -- what Christmas can teach you even if you aren't a Christian*

**Coffee:** Alice & Carl Spatt

**Ushers:** Debbie Scharf & Martha Chamberlain

**Lock-up:** Ken Lawson

**Welcome:** Betty Shelton

**Social Action Table:** Doug Breiding

**Ways & Means:** Fylice Larsen

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**December 21, 2008 10:30am**

Rev. Catherine Torpey

*Hanukkah Celebration: Enough Oil to Last?*

**Coffee:** Diane & Jim Hawkins

**Ushers:** Rita Tancredi & Robin Norris

**Lock-up:** Jean Smyth Crocetto

**Welcome:** Lori Strumeyer

**Social Action Table:** Diane Hawkins

**Ways & Means:** Rita Tancredi

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**December 25, 2008 5:30pm**

Rev. Catherine Torpey

*Christmas Eve*

**Ushers:** Jayne Davison, Lorrie & Ken Bellafiore, Andrew Spatt

**Lock-up:** Barbara Singer & Ken Lawson

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**December 28, 2008 10:30am**

Guest Preacher Greg Jude Geiger MRE

at First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn

*On Beacons and Hermits: Thoughts on Reaching Out and Pulling In*

**Coffee:** Volunteer needed

**Ushers:** Verna & Arnie Herman

**Lock-up:** George Jackson

**Welcome:**

**Social Action Table:** Hildegard Scheil Schubert **Ways & Means:**

**Rev Catherine Torpey, Minister - Office Hours**

Tues and Thurs 10-3, Wednesdays 12-6

I also welcome meeting at other times, as possible. Since I'm sometimes in meetings, or away at minister's gatherings it's always best to call before dropping in

**Director of Religious Education, Jennifer Greene** Hours by appointment

**Office Manager & Editor, Lisa Bryson-Brockmann**

Office open each 3rd Monday & every Tuesday through Friday 9-1

*The office is closed the week between Christmas & New Years*

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Community Minister,

Rev. Kelly Murphy Mason

Board President,

Robert Esformes

# Musings from the Minister

Dear friends,

We enter this holiday season in very uncertain economic conditions. A desperate appeal came from the Freeport food pantry for turkeys and hams to give away for those in need in Thanksgiving, and I fear that such needs might only grow worse between now and Hanukkah/Christmas time. I know that many of us won't be able to buy the bounty of gifts we would like, or to celebrate the holidays with the kind of care-free joy that one hopes to feel at this time of year. In November, I preached a sermon on "The Courage to Be Cheap;" for many of us, it will take courage to acknowledge our economic limits and to cut back as appropriate. For those who are blessed enough to be somewhat insulated from the lay-offs and stock tumble, you may be in a position to be one of those supporting our economy by going out and purchasing goods and services. There are many businesses really hurting for customers, and helping them out with our patronage is truly in the spirit of giving. One way or another, I believe that we'll all be a bit more mindful this season about how we spend, and greater mindfulness is always a good thing.

I am mindful of that image of a child born in a stable, with no material comforts at all except for a mother and father to hold him. The story of Christmas reminds us to be ever humble – that our material possessions do not and cannot define us. In fact, our material possessions, our success in our work or professional lives, too often distract us from the simple and more lasting gifts which are most truly ours.

May you have a season of mindful appreciation of those gifts which cannot be purchased or wrapped.

Yours in faith, hope and love,  
Catherine

# Community Minister's Corner

Many of us are concerned about the holidays this year; we want to give gifts to many people in our lives, yet we feel the need to be frugal and cut expenses everywhere. If you're hoping to economize, I suggest you give people the present of your presence simply by paying attention to them. Think on them and let you know how much you care for them. The great French writer and thinker Simone Weil once wrote, "Not only does the love of God have attention for its substance; the love of neighbor, which we know to be the same love, is made of this same substance." What we call "quality time" is our most precious commodity, outstripping frankincense and even gold in value. Ultimately, the holidays are holy because we have the good sense to notice their presence in our busy lives and to mark the time that passes among us as sacred. This is a season for holding our relationships in a light that allows us to see the sacred in them, as well. Such is the stuff of holiday miracles. Happy Holidays, everyone! May your heart contain all the abundance it can hold.

The Rev. Kelly Murphy Mason

The Membership Committee is once again coordinating our Christmas Eve Poinsettias. Purchase a poinsettia to decorate the chancel on Christmas Eve and then take it home with you to decorate your home. These beautiful plants cost only \$9 (this is not a fund raiser). Please speak to Betty Shelton or a membership committee member at the welcome table on Sunday to sign up.

In the rare event that weather causes Sunday worship and/or RE to be cancelled, there will be a message left on the office answering machine by 8:30am. If the message on the machine doesn't mention the snow, then there is no cancellation. You are also free to try phoning the minister, the board president or the DRE.

# Chalice Lighters

Many thanks to all who contributed to the Fall Chalice Lighters collection! We received a note from Jenny Clancy of the UU Rock Tavern Congregation. "Thank you for the warmth and fellowship you bestowed upon me when I visited for Chalice Lighters. I have found this experience so uplifting! I wish to invite all of you to please come visit us in Orange County. Remember that when we have built our new home, you and your congregants own a piece of it too!"

# OUR BOARDWALK

Hello all,

The last time I wrote in this column we were on the verge of some potential historical firsts. The Presidential election was a week away and we were looking at the possibility of the first female as a Vice President or the first African American President. We were starting to see the signs of the first economic collapse that could remind people of the great depression. Yes a lot of "firsts"! Well America spoke and voted to go in a new direction by voting in Barrack Obama as the President. The economy is not in the best of shape but, truly, this is cyclical. The economy has a great way of correcting itself when enormous greed interferes with it. We will emerge leaner, stronger and I hope wiser as the economy will flourish again.

This is a small example of our congregation. We have had some firsts as well; A few years ago we were looking for a new minister, a first in eight years, last year we were looking for a new DRE, a first in the past twelve years. In each of these cases we solved our issues met these "firsts" head on and now we are moving forward, better for the experience. I have no doubt that SNUUC will meet all our challenges in the coming years with strength, dignity and most important, together.

The board meeting in October saw some action items occur. The thrift shop asked to spread out their pledges to keep a better handle on expenses; this was passed. We also voted to fund three members of the congregation to attend the Long Island Leadership Institute; however, this program has been postponed by its organizers until Fall 2009, so we may choose to re-authorize this next fall. All in all things are good.

At the time of this writing Thanksgiving is just days away. I hope we all give thanks for what we have, the loved ones we are with and the friends that surround us. I hope you have happy holidays.

Yours, Rob

# Proposed Slate of Nominations to be voted on at our Bi-Annual Meeting on January 25 at noon

President (1 year term) & Trustee (continuing)  
Robert Esformes  
Vice President (1 Year Term) & Trustee (completing term of resigned trustee)  
Rosemary Olander-Beach  
Secretary (1 year term ) & trustee (continuing)  
Barbara Singer

Trustee (3 year term) Arlene Brown  
Trustee (3 year term) Martha Chamberlain  
Trustee (3 year term) Jayne Davison

Continuing Officer  
Treasurer (2nd year of 2 year term) & Trustee (continuing)  
Tom Weingarten

Continuing Trustees  
Anne Fleming  
Ken Lawson  
Travis Compton (Youth Trustee)

2009 Nominating Committee: Mary Brower (2nd year), Fylice Larsen, Bobby Newman, Jean Smyth Crocetto, Diane Hawkins

Submitted by the 2008 Nominating Committee: Bonny Levenson, Laura D'Angelo, Peter Larsen, Ken Bellafiore, Mary Brower

Snow date for the Annual Meeting is February 1

## Our UU Community

**You are cordially invited to a Holiday Victorian Tea** on Saturday, December 6 at the UU Fellowship of Bellport. Tea services are at 12:30 and 3:30. Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door. Call Shah for tickets, 631 286-8459.

**Thank you to all who are participating in Share the Light. All gifts are due to SNUUC on Sunday, December 7.** Contact Doug Breiding or the SNUUC office if you have any questions.

The Young Adult Steering Committee of the UU Metro District invites all UU young adults, 18-35, to their **Winter Retreat at Frost Valley, February 13-16.** Their goals for the weekend are relaxation, reflection, connections & spirituality. See the flyer on the bulletin board in the hall for more information or visit their site at <http://uumetrony.org/ya/events.html>

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\* **This year's UU General Assembly is** \*  
\* **in Salt Lake City at the end of June.** \*  
\* You can attend on your own \*  
\* or as a representative from SNUUC. \*  
\* To learn more about General Assembly, visit \*  
\* [www.uua.org/events/generalassembly/](http://www.uua.org/events/generalassembly/). \*  
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# Among Ourselves

Welcome to new members Christie Allen and Emily Brodeur and their baby Sedona and also to Debbie Scharf who has been attending SNUUC for many years. Please be sure to say hello to these ladies when you see them at coffee hour.

**TURKEYS NEEDED—BADLY** *This e-mail came from the LI Council of Churches* We had hoped to begin distributing holiday baskets on November 17 in Freeport but have no turkeys or hams to put in them. Gifts of turkeys and chickens and hams and all sorts of nonperishable food are needed badly at our Freeport pantry (450 North Main Street, 516-868-4989).

SNUUC wishes all the best to Susan Okun as she moves to California. We will miss you Susan! SNUUC member Linda Halpern was her real estate agent and she and Susan gave a donation to SNUUC after the sale of Susan's house. Thank you very much Linda and Susan!

Relax on Christmas Eve and come to Super Grand Buffet, located at 1874-1878 Grand Avenue, Baldwin immediately following Christmas Eve services. Reasonably priced, all you can eat and plenty of room to bring the whole family! No reservations required, just pull up a table and enjoy the friendly conversation. For more info see Ilene Corina or JoJo Granoff.

## Ways \$ Means

This is a serious year, and the holidays may look a little different to all of us. Instead of giving and accumulating more "things," this may be a good time to change emphasis. How about making a gift to SNUUC? We have forms in the foyer, and they will be available every Sunday and at the Holiday Fair. We will send a chalice card to the recipient of your gift informing them that a contribution has been made in their name. It's easy, it's appropriate and maybe, just maybe, will mean a bit more than another possession.

**Do you buy groceries?** Then be a part of SNUUC's Grocery Store/Gift Card Program. You buy the cards at face value and use them as you would cash or give as a gift! Proceeds from the card sales help raise money for SNUUC! The cards can be purchased at the Ways and Means table on Sunday or sign up for monthly mailings with Alexis Surve. AlexisSurve@gmail.com. Please remember that all payments for the monthly grocery card mailings are now due on the 15th of each month.

## Come to Our Holiday Fair Sunday December 7!

**Our Holiday Fair & Lunch is Sunday December 7 12-5 at SNUUC.** Enjoy a delicious lunch, then let your holiday shopping begin! Lunch seats are limited! Make your reservations on Sunday at the Ways & Means table in the foyer. Lunch is only \$12 junior youth to adult; \$8 children.

This is the gift event of the year! We will have hand-made collectibles from our Unicrafters, temptations from the bake table, dazzling gemstone jewelry, grab bags, on-the-spot gift cards, Fair Trade gifts and more! Cash only.

*All SNUUC members are invited to have a table to sell their own arts, crafts or assorted treasures.* You keep 80% of the profits and 20% goes to SNUUC. It's a win, win! For further information, or to reserve a table, please see Arlene Brown or Alice Spatt.

## Committees at Work

SNUUC Committees meet regularly and most encourage attendance at their meetings even if you are not a member of the committee. Check the committee chairperson list on the bulletin board in the hall and call if you would like to learn more about a committee.

**The next Congregational Council meeting** is Wednesday, December 10 at 7pm. *Everyone is encouraged to attend to discuss how you can make your SNUUC dreams come true!*

**Social Action and Environmental** Committees meeting on Sundays, November 30 and December 28 at noon in room 1.

**Membership** Committee meeting Tuesday, December 9 at 7:30pm in the foyer.

**Finance** Committee meeting Wednesday, December 10 at 6pm in room 1.

**RE** Committee meeting Sunday December 14 at 9am in room 1.

**Thrift Shop** Committee meeting Sunday, December 14 at noon in room 1.

**Board** meeting on Wednesday, December 17 at 7pm in the foyer.

# SNUUC Happenings

See the Social Action column on page 6 to learn more about attending a viewing of the movie *Color of Freedom* at SNUUC on Saturday, December 6 at 7:30.

**Come join us for Christmas Caroling** at South Shore Healthcare at 275 Merrick Road, Freeport on Thursday, December 11. We are resuming the yearly activity for the elderly residents who look forward to the SNUUC Carolers. We will meet in the lobby at 6:00pm. The caroling will last about an hour and is followed by a trip to Friendly's, if you choose. Please come and enjoy this rewarding experience in giving to others less fortunate and surround them with holiday cheer. Any questions please contact JoAnn Fassman. The phone number for the South Shore Healthcare facility is 516-623-4000.

**LIAC, UU Connect NY City Trip** on Saturday December 13. Travel to NYC and visit a museum, gather for ethnic food and meet with a group of NYC youth for a dialogue with Rev. Gordon Bailey. Meet at Penn Station at 11:00 am at the Information Board. All youth must attend with a responsible adult, you must RSVP to Ilene Corina.

**The Poetry Circle** will meet at 12 on Sunday, December 14. All poets and fans of poetry are encouraged to attend and participate. You may read your own, or those of a chosen poet. Please join us for this interesting and exciting opportunity. Questions? Contact Doug Breiding.

**Youth Night! All Junior and Senior Youth are invited to the next game night**, Friday December 19. Drop off 7:00 pick up 10:00. Organizers are needed, chaperones are needed. See or call Ilene Corina .

**I M P R O V!** Days are falling away from 2008 like points off of bank stocks. The very good news is: Improv is back!!! The talented, funny, energetic and enthusiastic Michael Rock - a professional actor, acting teacher and improv guru - returns in 2009 with another series of fun and creative improvisational acting classes. Improvisation is GREAT for anybody who occasionally communicates with other human beings! No acting experience is necessary. Classes will be on four Sundays evenings, starting January 11. Check out Michael Rock's website: <http://homepage.mac.com/xmrock/classes.html> for more information about these classes. Tuition is \$100 for the series (returning class members receive a \$20 discount). For more info contact Brian Larkin ([bolarkin@optonline.net](mailto:bolarkin@optonline.net)).

**Drumming** Thursdays from 6 – 7:30pm, a small but dedicated group learns Afro-Caribbean drumming. You are always welcome to join us. \$25 a session for non-members or \$20 for members. There is usually a drum available if you can't bring your own.

**Monday Night Pilates** - 8-9pm, only \$12 per class - no contracts to sign, no commitment, just come and stretch! Contact Bonny Levenson for information.

## Winter Solstice

Come join us for our  
Winter Solstice Drum Circle  
Sunday, December 21 from 7 to 9pm  
Bring a drum or a bell  
or contact Laura D'Angelo to reserve one  
at [ldangelo@optonline.net](mailto:ldangelo@optonline.net).

## January Pot Luck

The Gay Straight Dialogue Group  
& Membership Committee are organizing a  
mid-winter Pot Luck with music and more!  
Saturday, January 31 at SNUUC.  
Save the date on your new 2009 calendars!

**Your Pledge Statement was mailed last week.**  
If you would rather that future Pledge Statements  
are e-mailed to you, please let Lisa know at  
[office@snuuc.org](mailto:office@snuuc.org)

## more SNUUC Happenings!

**Gentle Yoga for Health, Well Being, and Balance.**  
Interested in gentle yoga with a focus on spirit? Join us in the SNUUC foyer on Tuesdays evenings (5:30-6:30) or Thursday afternoons (4:30-5:30). We will be starting our first 6-week series of the new year on January 6th and 8th. The fee for each 6-week series is \$75, payable at the first class. The classes are taught by Ivy Greenburg, a licensed yoga instructor who has worked with classes in independent living situations as well as in studio yoga classes. Class size is limited and pre-registration is requested. Contact Anne Fleming to sign up [afleming528@gmail.com](mailto:afleming528@gmail.com).

**NVC Empathy Sessions** are held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month from 7:30-9 pm in the foyer. Everyone who has participated in a 13 week Compassionate Communication Series is invited to join us to practice empathy skills. Speak to Anne Fleming or Barbara Singer.

**Reiki Circle - Enjoy the Universal Life Force energy called Reiki.** Reiki can restore inner peace, reduce stress, and support the body's ability to heal itself. Classes will be starting at SNUUC, every other Wednesday at 6pm beginning in January, cost is \$18. Speak to Brian Larkin or call Maryann at 516-546-

Continued —>

# In the RE Wing

Last month in this space, I wrote about worship in a theologically diverse, multigenerational UU community--and how one can stretch to embrace aspects of worship that may have been not so comfortable in the past.

I described how an "Aha!" moment occurred for me. It was thanks to a few words in an order of service, words which asked congregants to show a generosity of spirit in worshipping together, a simple reminder that "that which does not feed one, may well nourish another."

It was a revelatory moment. It happened all of a sudden. But there has been another component to my own attitude shift that's been much more gradual.

The other realization helping me to grow a more generous spirit about common worship has been this: coming to understand that the word "God" doesn't have to mean \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank).

A heavenly father who made man first, and woman second?

An entity in the sky who smote masses of people in various parts of the Bible?

Theologians such as Rita Nakashima Brock and the Rev. Rebecca Ann Parker have made a strong case that belief in a patriarchal and/or vengeful deity is damaging to us. The bearded guy who inflicts harm or demands sacrifice--he was typical of the God-concept I knew about, growing up. But people define "God" in other ways, too.

Thus I've learned that different theists have different God-concepts, and I'm free to choose what "God" means to me.

God as Nature—I enjoy that thought. I love the idea of God as Eternal Love. The Rev. Forrest Church says God is the name for that which is greater than all, and present in each.

Hallelujah! Can I get an Amen?

Mind you, I've shared only my own story here, and I recognize that some of us—perhaps many of us—may still feel bruised or hurt by the theologies of our childhood.

I give a lot of credit to the UU upbringing I was fortunate to have. I arrived at adulthood with what seems, from listening to others' stories, a relatively light set of religion-related baggage, and plenty of the positive gifts that religion offers.

That's the promise of UU Religious Exploration. RE, at its best, gives children the room to grow roots and wings. RE should give children the message that they are lovable beings of inherent worth and dignity. RE is about gratitude for blessings, the renewal of hope, service on behalf of justice, and loving one another—the best fruits of religious faith.

Continued —►

# SOCIAL ACTION NEWS

*Social Action Committee meetings are held on the last Sunday of the month.* Everyone is invited to meet with the committee on November 30 and December 28 at noon in room 1.

## **JOIN US FOR DECEMBER'S SNUUC MOVIE NIGHT ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6 AT 7:30pm**

Based on the memoirs of Nelson Mandela's prison guard, the *Color of Freedom* depicts the incredible true story of the deep bond that developed between political prisoner Nelson Mandela and James Gregory, the racist white South African who was Mandela's prison guard for more than twenty years. The *Color of Freedom* also powerfully chronicles the life-changing journey both men experience during Mandela's imprisonment, as James Gregory confronts the racism he has always known, while Nelson Mandela's struggle for freedom makes him a worldwide symbol of the struggle for equal rights and democracy. **Especially at this crossroad of possible racial reconciliation in the United States with the election of Barack Obama to the presidency, the social action committee highly recommends this profound movie that chronicles the relationship between two men who bridge the enormous racial divide of South Africa's system of apartheid.**

### **Environmental Committee Info**

**Bring your own SNUUC bag when you go grocery shopping!** If you would like to order a SNUUC canvas shopping bag, stop by the Social Action table to sign up. Once we accumulate 20 orders, we will order more bags. They cost \$15 each.

**Go on a Low Carb(on) Diet!** Going on a low-carbon diet can be a lot of fun and yields results!!! Just contact Diane Hawkins at [parkviewdesign@verizon.net](mailto:parkviewdesign@verizon.net) to receive a link into SNUUC's team on the Long Island Climate Action Network website. Or, if you wish, you can register as an individual at [www.renewableenergylongisland.org](http://www.renewableenergylongisland.org). Also, we are offering a book (*Low Carb(on) Diet*) for \$10 at the Social Action table that describes this program.

So...who wants to sing some Christmas songs? Count me in—I have fond memories of these songs from my childhood, and now that I'm an activist, the songs sing to me of love & justice. The materialism of the secular holiday doesn't thrill me, but I'm definitely down with celebrating the birthlegend of the Prince of Peace, and the miracle of every birth. And the hope at the heart of Hanukkah. And the wonder of the returning sun.

SNUUC children and youth, if you'd like to come caroling, on December 11 you'll have the opportunity to share the gift of song with the staff and patients at South Shore Healthcare. Thanks to JoAnn Fassman this year for organizing this traditional SNUUC outing!

Wishing us all peace, hope, healing and joy,  
Jennifer

# SNUUC Calendar December 2008

Meeting places: S-Sanctuary F-Foyer RE-RE Wing M-Minister's Office

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>November 30</i> Social Action & Environ 12 rm 1	<i>December 1</i> Girl Scouts 7-8:30 RE Pilates 8pm F	2 PULSE 10am-12 F Yoga 5:30-6:30 Empathy Circle 7:30-9 F	3	4 Unicrafters 1:00 F Yoga 4:30 F Drumming Wkshp 6pm RE Choir Practice 7:30 S	5	6 NVC 9:30-12 F Holiday Fair Set-up <b>Social Action movie</b> <i>The Color of Freedom</i> 7:30
7 <b>Holiday Fair and Lunch</b> 12-5 Bio Spiritual Focusing 4-6	8 Pilates 8pm F	9 Yoga 5:30-6:30 F Membership 7:30pm F	10 LaLeche 9-12 RE PULSE 6:30-9 F Finance Comm 6 RE	11 <b>Caroling</b> at Southshore Healthcare 6pm Unicrafters 1:00 F Yoga 4:30 F Drumming Wkshp 6pm RE	12	13 NVC 9:30-12 F LIAC UU Connect NYC Trip
14 RE Committee 9am rm1 Thrft Shop Comm 12 rm1 Poetry Circle 12 s Bio Spiritual Focusing 4-6	15 Girl Scouts 7-8:30 RE Pilates 8pm F	16 Yoga 5:30-6:30 F Empathy Circle 7:30 F	17 La Leche 9am RE Board Meeting 7pm F	18 Unicrafters 1:00 F Yoga 4:30 F Drumming Wkshp 6pm RE Choir Practice 7:30 S	19 <b>Youth Night</b> 6:30-9 RE	20 NVC 9:30-12 F -
21 <b>Hanukkah</b>	22 Pilates 8pm F	23 Yoga 5:30-6:30 F	24 Christmas Eve 5:30	25 <b>Christmas</b>	26 <i>Kwanzaa</i>	27
28 Social Action & Environ 12 rm 1	29 Pilates 8pm F	30	31	<i>January 1</i>	2	3 Social Action Movie

**Holiday Fair and Lunch**  
Sunday December 7, 12-5 Invite your family & friends!

**Congregational Council meeting**  
Wednesday December 10, 7pm  
*Everyone is encouraged to attend to discuss how you can  
make your SNUUC dreams come true!*

**Christmas Caroling** at South Shore Healthcare  
Thursday, December 11, 6pm

**The mission of the South Nassau Unitarian Universalist Congregation** is to provide a sanctuary of beauty and harmony where: We search in freedom for meaning and truth; we draw inspiration from many religious and philosophical sources while acknowledging the Judeo-Christian heritage of Unitarian Universalism; we embrace diversity and welcome people of all ages, races, and orientations; we affirm that our children and youth are an integral and important part of our religious family; we strive toward a social awareness that leads to transformative action in our community and to living in balance with the environment. Ours is a nurturing congregation where children and adults find acceptance and fellowship, feel empowered and grow spiritually.



SNUUC South Nassau  
Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
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