

Adult Spiritual Exploration
Winter 2009-2010
Catalog and Description of Offerings
Classes, Events, and Groups



Adult Spiritual Explorations Committee:
Dean Nielsen, Chair
Liz Irwin
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The Unitarian Church in Summit
4 Waldron Ave
Summit, NJ 07901
Rev. Vanessa Southern, Parish Minister
Rev. Emilie Boggis, Youth Minister
Julia Hamilton, Membership Coordinator
Tuli Patel, Director of Religious Education
Carlos Martinez, Seminarian
Carolyn Lockwood, Office Manager

In these pages you will find a brief description of the varied programs and classes offered at The Unitarian Church in Summit.

The programs described here are in keeping with the mission of the Adult Spiritual Exploration Committee:

To provide rich and plentiful opportunities for spiritual exploration and meaningful connection with one another and the larger community.

The programs offered are led or facilitated by a combination of lay leaders and professional staff.

The Adult Spiritual Exploration Committee is chaired by Dean Nielsen and includes committee members Liz Irwin and Cathy Bataille. The committee members work with the Director of Religious Education, Tuli Patel, to develop and implement a structured and tiered program of spiritual exploration in keeping with the mission.

If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact Tuli Patel, Director of Religious Education at tuli@ucsummit.org or 908-273-3245 x106.

All classes and programs described here fall into one of four broad categories:

- Unitarian Universalism
- Renewal and Reflection
- Spiritual Enrichment
- Outreach and Community Building

For information, or to sign-up or register, please contact Tuli Patel, Director of Religious Education at 908-273-3245 x 106 or email her at tuli@ucsummit.org

Unitarian Universalism

In general, these are programs and classes for those who are interested in becoming members of the congregation or in learning more about the Religion of Unitarian Universalism

Pathways to Membership

For newcomers to UCS who are interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation. This class is highly recommended for anyone considering becoming a member. You will meet our ministers, staff, and lay leaders and learn about our membership expectations. Lunch and childcare are provided with advanced registration.

Offered on: February 7th at noon.

Contact: Julia Hamilton

New Member Sunday

Are you interested in joining our congregation? Twice a year, our congregation welcomes our newest members and honors their decision to join us. We will welcome you, introduce you to our community, and celebrate with a piece of cake.

Offered on: New Member Sunday, March 7th at both services.

Contact: Julia Hamilton

Renewal and Reflection

A variety of worship experiences and small group ministries provide opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual renewal.

Morning Worship

We gather as a community bound by a covenant to uphold, affirm and promote our Unitarian Universalist values. Sunday morning worship brings us together to

experience that which is sacred in our community.

Offered on: Every Sunday morning until June 13th at 9:00am and at 10:45am. Usually led by our Parish Minister, Rev. Vanessa Southern. Religious Education classes for ages 2 years old to 7th grade take place at the same time as worship.

Contact: ucsummit.org or 908-273-3245 x 101 for further scheduling information

Intergenerational Service

We gather as a people of all ages, children to adults to experience that which is holy.

Offered on: Next on January 30th at 4:30 pm and the Sunday following, January 31st at both 9:00 and 10:45 am.

Contact: ucsummit.org or 908-273-3245 x 101 for further scheduling information.

Sunday Sermon Discussion Forum

For all who are interested in rich and constructive dialogue about some of life's most important questions, as raised by the day's sermon. This discussion forum will convene twice a month, initially on a 3 month trial basis. Facilitated by Dean Nielsen.

Offered on: December 6th at 12:00pm to 12:45 (following the second service) in room 006. *Subsequent dates to be announced.*

Contact: Dean Nielsen

Green Vespers

These worship services seek to deepen our connection to the earth. They are led by Helen Kaar, a long time member and lay leader in conjunction with Interweave, a center for wellness and spirituality.

Offered on: The third Saturday of every month at 6:15pm until June.

Contact: Helen Kaar

The Emerson Circle

The Emerson Circle cordially invites you to a special 4 part lecture series illuminating the lives, work, music and legacy of the 19th century Transcendentalists. The Transcendentalists formed our nation's first coherent group of movers and shakers who deeply believed the Divine is immanent in us all.

Highlights include:

A screening of a recent video biography on Emerson followed by discussion; a Lecture by a noted Yale professor on the famous Divinity Schools Address; a concert lecture on the period music of the 19th c. Transcendentalists; a presentation-lecture by a Pulitzer Prize winning author on Louisa May Alcott and her father.

Offered on: the 1st Wednesday of every month, beginning February 3rd and continuing on March 3rd, April 7th, and May 5th. First three sessions are available for \$ 15.00 at the door and the last for \$ 25.00. Feb 3rd: Screening and Discussion of film: Emerson the Ideal in America
March 3rd: Emerson's Heresy
April 7th: The Transcendentalists and their Music
May 5th: Eden's Outcasts: Louisa May Alcott and her Father

Series pricing: 4 lectures for \$50.00
Early Bird Special: Get all four sessions for \$40.00 if paid before 1/20/2010.

Contact: Carlos Martinez

Supper Circles

Groups of about ten individuals or four families meet monthly to share food, fun, and fellowship. Circles coordinate their own activities according to their members interests.

Contact: Julia Hamilton or Eva Lepisto

Men's Groups

An opportunity for men to meet as a group for fellowship and exploration of topics. A typical meeting involves prior preparation of issues and questions by a topic leader for that evening along with facilitation of discussions. Members lead about 2 topics during the year. There are check-ins with members updating the group on the latest important events in their lives. Three times per year there are Game Nights, three times are for golf (usually June/July meetings), and two for billiards. New members are welcome after attending some group meetings. Confidentiality of any shared personal information is a MUST.

Offered on: Monday nights, twice a month, typically the 1st and 3rd Monday, from 7pm to 9pm in the library.

Contact: Arthur Perkins (administrative leadership; there is no group leader)

Spiritual Enrichment

The classes offered as part of Spiritual Enrichment are designed to help lay people develop a spiritual practice of their own as well as go deeper with their current practice and understandings.

Spiritual Practices

Learning to Meditate

Regular meditation offers a life filled with balance and confidence. These classes are

suitable for all ranges of experience from complete beginners through to advanced practitioners. They are offered in conjunction with the Dharmachakra Buddhist Center of Maplewood (www.meditationessex.org) and the meditation is in the Kadampa tradition.

Offered on: Monday nights, at 7:30pm, currently ongoing.

Contact: Lori Petrozello,
loripk@comcast.net

Cost: \$15.00 per class. Financial constraints accommodated.

Basic Shamanism Workshop

Learn a simple technique to enable communication with your spirit, your inner self and your instinctive connection with wisdom.

Shamanism trains your imagination to be a useful tool allowing your spirit rather than your ego to advise you on life issues. Subjects accessible for such work include healing for body, mind and emotions. Shamanic technique also easily inspires creative solutions to problems of business, artistic and social nature. Drumming is used to guide the experience.

Please plan to wear comfortable clothing. Also, bring a sleeping bag or blanket, a bandana and a pad and pencil for journaling. If you happen to have a rattle, bring that along too. We believe you will find this experience fun as well as instructive. Children above 10 years are welcome to attend.

Offered on: January 23, 2010 by John Foord from 9am to 4pm. Please bring a simple bag lunch; refrigerator space is available.

Cost: \$ 25.00 payable at 8:30am on the day of the workshop

Contact: Carolyn Lockwood, 908-273-3245 x 101

Advance Registration Required

Classes and Groups

Building Your Own Theology

Building Your Own Theology is a curriculum written by the Reverend Richard Gilbert. Our version of the course takes his work and modifies it with the goal being the same: to revisit some of the foundational questions and topics in theology. The course asks us to grapple with notions like religious experience, human nature, concepts of God and commanding ethics in an attempt to articulate what it is we believe. We do this as religious progressives, building our own system of belief, one corner-stone of theology/moral philosophy at a time

Offered on: Wednesday nights, 7:00 pm
Feb 10th, 17th, 24th, March 3rd and 10th.

Contact: Rev. Vanessa Southern,
Vanessa@ucsummit.org or 908-273-3245 x
107 or Tuli Patel at tuli@ucsummit.org, x
106

Leadership Council – Harvest the Power Program

This year we invite all lay leaders, especially those involved with committees and ongoing church programs, to join us for our Leadership Council. How do you navigate the joys and challenges of leadership? How does your committee work deepen your spiritual life? What resources do we have, personally and institutionally, that will help us grow as leaders?

Leadership Council is a place to explore these questions more fully. We will be using the new UUA program "Harvest the Power," a series of workshops providing leadership skill development that goes hand-in-hand with Unitarian Universalist faith development.

Offered on: One Sunday of every other

month continuing in Jan 24th, March 28th,
and May 23rd

Contact: Julia Hamilton

World Religions

The World Religions group explores the world's religions in order to better understand our own belief systems and how they develop. The group determines what they would like to study, currently focusing on the Gnostic religions.

Offered on: Tuesdays, twice a month at 1:00 pm in the library

Contact: Glory Bowen

Great Biographies

This reading group meets to reflect upon the lives of those who have shaped our world. The group will discuss Henry Ward Beecher in December and Andrew Carnegie in January 2010. February is Albert Einstein, March it's James Joyce, April for Ernest Hemingway, May is Katherine Graham and June we stop with Noam Chomsky.

Offered on: the third of Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm in the library.

Contact: Pat Thornton

Outreach and Community Building

As we work towards intimacy through connections with one another and to ultimacy through our efforts to make meaning, we engage in social awareness building in an effort to improve the world around us.

Social Justice Awareness

Race, Unitarian Universalism and Ritual

Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed joins us for an entire weekend to explore issues in race and religion, ritual and UUism. Raised Unitarian Universalist (UU), Mark Morrison-Reed was ordained as a UU minister in 1979. For 26 years, he and his wife, Donna, served as co-ministers—first in Rochester, NY, then in Toronto, ON, Canada.

Now retired from full-time ministry, Morrison-Reed divides his time between writing and other interests. Most recently, he has been working with Meadville Lombard Theological School to organize and build the library's archive of materials relating to African American involvement in Universalism, Unitarianism and Unitarian Universalism.

Join us for a lecture, a workshop, and a worship service on the weekend of March 5th-7th.

Offered on: March 5th, 6th and 7th, stay tuned for timings.

Contact: Tuli Patel at tuli@ucsummit.org or Vanessa Southern at Vanessa@ucsummit.org

Movie: For the Bible Tells Me So

Through the experiences of five American families, we discover how insightful people of faith handle the realization of having a gay child. Informed by such respected voices as Bishop Desmond Tutu, Harvard's Peter Gomes, Orthodox Rabbi Steve Greenberg and Rev. Jimmy Creech, the movie offers healing, clarity and understanding to anyone caught in the cross-hairs of scripture and sexual identity. Offered in partnership with Interweave, a center for wellness and spirituality.

Offered on: February 28th at 6:30pm

Contact: Tuli Patel, tuli@ucsummit.org
Cost: Free for members of the Church, \$10.00 for non-members

Social Outreach Programs

As a creedless faith, we are more dedicated to deeds, and direct action that is predicated on making the world we live in a better place. We offer many opportunities to get involved in outreach programs.

Housing the Homeless

Our congregation is an active participant in the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Homefirst, a non-profit dedicated to improving the quality of life for the homeless. Our congregation hosts homeless families during the week of Christmas. There are many opportunities during this time to volunteer for meals, games and set-up and clean-up.

Offered on: December 20th through December 27th

Contact: Julia Hamilton

Racial Justice Task Force

The Racial Justice Task Force of Summit has launched a number of exciting initiatives in our quest to raise awareness and engage our congregation on issues of racial inequities. Among these are an enthusiastic Affordable Housing Subcommittee, educational initiatives which include film presentations, a special celebration of Martin Luther King Day in concert with the City of Summit, and an Evening of Conversation with members of an African-American church, the first of many such evenings we hope to sponsor.

In the Words of Martin Luther King, Jr., 11am to 12pm, a reading of his speech "Don't Sleep Through the Revolution," which was given as the May 18, 1966 Ware Lecture at the Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly. Many of Dr. King's most cherished concepts can be heard in this 35 minute speech followed by discussion.

Help Fill Ed Huberman's Box

Ed Huberman, a long-time member of The Unitarian Church in Summit, started a tradition by making a food pantry run whenever a box named for him filled up. Church members were encouraged to donate non-perishable food items, like canned vegetables, canned fruit, canned soup, boxes of pasta, salt, ground pepper, etc. In keeping with the spirit of Ed Huberman, we ask that you celebrate Martin Luther King Day by dropping off non-perishable food items between 10 am - 4 pm to the lobby of The Unitarian Church in Summit. We will deliver it to the East Orange/Orange Community Development Corp.

In addition to the program here at UCS, there are activities from 9am to 5pm in Summit on January 18, 2010, mostly hosted by other Summit churches. There will be a wide range of interesting things to learn or do that day.

The RJTF meets on the 1st Wednesday of every month at 7pm. The Affordable Housing Subcommittee meets on the 3rd Thursday of every month. We welcome individuals who want to see what we're doing and maybe contribute to it.

Contact: Mel Polatchek or Art Perkins

Chancellor Avenue School

As a community we work with the Chancellor Avenue School in the neighboring town of Irvington. This is part of our effort to put children's education in communities that do not have the same resources as others at the forefront of our outreach efforts. Each year we go to the school as tutors for "family night" - these evenings last 90 minutes and we work with children at stations on reading and math.

Offered on: Wednesday nights from 6:30pm to 8pm; on January 13th, 20th, 27th and March 31st.

Starting dates for Spring Classes and Events:

January 18th: MLK Day
January 23rd: Shamanism Workshop
Feb 3rd: Emerson Circle
February 10th: Building Your Own Theology
January 24th: Leadership Council
February 7th: Pathways to Membership
February 28th: Movie showing of For the Bible Tells Me So
March 5th -7th: Rev. Mark Morrison Reed

Ongoing Classes and Services

Great Biographies
Green Vespers
Housing the Homeless
Intergenerational Services
Meditation
Men's Groups
Sunday Morning Worship
Racial Justice Task Force
World Religions

Classes and Programs in the Winter of 2010

January:

MLK Day
Shamanism Workshop
Outreach: Chancellor Avenue School

February:

Emerson Circle
Building Your Own Theology
Movie: For the Bible Tells Me So

March:

Building Your Own Theology
Emerson Circle
Mark Morrison-Reed: Race, Ritual...

