The Unicorn

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Stony Brook

Dec. 2026, Vol. 64, Issue 6

BULLETINS FROM THE BOARD

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It has been an exciting and productive few months for our Fellowship! Since welcoming **Reverend James,** we have seen a number of positive changes and new initiatives take shape. As your Board of Trustees, we are pleased to share some of the accomplishments we have made and a glimpse of what lies ahead.

After spending August observing our Sunday services and getting a feel for our congregation, Reverend James has introduced several changes designed to streamline our Sunday worship experience and encourage greater participation. One of these changes is our chalice lighting. The person leading the service now invites the congregation to recite words together as the chalice is lit. These words serve as a reminder of who we are, what we believe, and the purpose that brings us together as a community.

We have also made an effort to help everyone, especially those who are new to our Fellowship, become more familiar with the members of the Board. Each week, a different Board member delivers the Offertory message and invites congregants to join them during coffee hour. This is an opportunity to put faces to names, ask questions about the Board's responsibilities, and learn more about the work being done on behalf of our Fellowship. We hope these conversations will help strengthen the connection between the Board and the congregation.

Another important area of focus for the Board has been maintenance and improvement of our building and grounds. Our Fellowship home is an important part of the vibrant community we have built together and maintaining it is essential to ensuring that it continues to serve us well for years to come.

In October, we held our first Town Hall meeting, where we presented several building and grounds projects to the congregation. More importantly, we asked for your input on which projects should receive priority as we move forward. We believe these decisions should reflect the needs and wishes of the people who make this Fellowship what it is. Your participation and feedback are an important part of that process.

The Board is now reviewing the results of the Town Hall discussion and working toward establishing priorities. Our goal is to use your feedback to guide our decisions, develop a plan of action, and move forward on projects that matter most to the congregation. We hope to share the results of this process and announce our decisions at our next Town Hall meeting.

Looking Ahead: As we move ahead, we have much to look forward to. We will continue working closely with Reverend James as he helps us build on the strengths of our congregation and brings new energy and ideas to our Fellowship.

We will also focus on addressing our building and grounds needs, strengthening communication between the Board and congregation, and finding new ways to encourage participation in the life of our community. There is much to accomplish, but we are encouraged by the progress we have already made. Most importantly, we recognize that the strength of our Fellowship comes from all of us working together. Your ideas, involvement, and continued support make a difference.

Thank you for being part of this wonderful community and for helping us build a Fellowship that we can all be proud to call home. We look forward to what we can accomplish together in the months ahead!

In fellowship,
Charles Posey, Board President

UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

This Sunday's Service – Nov. 29, 10:30 a.m.

Services are being held in-person in the sanctuary and simultaneously livestreamed on YouTube. Please visit our website for further details and the livestream links.

"Hymn Sing": Rev. Dr. James Kubal-Komoto - Come join us to experience the joy of singing together and hearing your favorite hymns (and maybe learn some new ones too).

Winter Solstice Service – Fri., Dec. 18, 7:00 p.m.

Are the longer dark days already getting to you? Join us on Fri., Dec. 18th, to celebrate the longest night of the year. We are recognizing it a bit early with this special evening vespers service at 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will be celebrating rebirth, renewal and the return of light with quiet meditation and the lighting of candles. We look forward to having you join us.

Gretta Johnson-Sally and Judd Kramarcik

STEWARDSHIP

Coffee Hour Thank Yous



Thanks to everyone who helped out with coffee hour on November 22, including **Joanne Hammer** who did the setup, the many of you who helped with setting up the tables and chairs - the **Johnstons**, and **Jim Calkins**, to name a few - and those who brought goodies, including **Joanne**, **Tina Good**, **Karen Posey** and to Tina, Karen, **Claudia Jacobs** and **Maureen Keelty** who helped with the cleanup. We all appreciate and benefit by everyone's help and we thank you.

Joanne Hammer
for the Hospitality Team

Food Pantry Collections Are Ongoing

Collections of non-perishable food items continue. Please leave the items in the bins in the foyer. Click here to see the list of items most appreciated by Island Heart food pantry clients.

Food donations can't be accepted if they have already been opened, or **if they are expired**, dirty, dented or otherwise damaged. Thank you!

For many years we have collected non-perishable food items for Island Heart Food Pantry in Middle Island. They will serve people for the last time on December 16 due to the non-renewal of their lease on the property of Habitat for Humanity. Until they have a new location, I will go

back to bringing the donations to Faith Baptist Church in Coram. Feel free to continue your generosity in reaching out to those in need. Thank you all for your dedication to helping others.

Shelly Psaris
Food Pantry Donations Coordinator

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Calling All Crafters! Join Us on 2nd Saturdays

BYOC (Bring Your Own Craft) to the Drop-in Crafting Group on the second Saturday of the month, any time between 11:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. in the sanctuary (Dec. 12, and Jan. 9). Contact **Denise Stevenson** (denisemstevenson@gmail.com) or **Maria Kata** (mstrika13@gmail.com) for more information.

Living with a Spouse or Partner with a Serious Illness (LSPSI)

LSPSI is the Fellowship's caregivers support group. We meet on the second and fourth Sundays of the month, from 12:15-1:15 p.m. We seek to provide a space where we all might share the journey of caregiving, including our joys, struggles, even our surprises, as we navigate through this life passage. Please contact **Joanne Hammer** if you have any questions and might consider joining us (joanne.hammer@gmail.com).

UUFSB First Friday Book Group Discussion – Dec. 4, 7:30 p.m.



On Fri., Dec. 4, we'll discuss ***The Correspondent*** by Virginia Evans. Click here for The Guardian review.

Click here to join via Zoom. **Meeting ID**: 990 9326 6193 **Passcode**: 222829

Newcomers are always very welcome! The books we select are available in both print and audio formats. For more information about the book group, you can contact bookgroup@uufsb.org.

WoW Group at UUFSB

WoW is a group for widows and widowers of UUFSB folks who meet twice a month after the Sunday morning service for one hour. We share our journeys of loss with like-minded people in a safe and trusting environment. Grief and renewal are central themes that we explore together. We also create opportunities to socialize outside the Fellowship. If you would like more information please contact **Kay Aparo** at kayelenteny@yahoo.com or **Sara Lutterbie** at sara.lutterbie@gmail.com.

UUFSB Political Discussion Group



Due to the upcoming holidays, the group has decided to have a single meeting on **Thurs., Dec. 3** at 7:30 p.m. for November-December.

We will resume meeting on the last Thursday of the month starting in January. Thanks to those who participated in October's interesting discussion of Artificial Intelligence. On Dec. 3, we will share our thoughts on the midterm election results. To add your name to our distribution list, please contact **Larry Mazza** at larrymazza@gmail.com. To join the meeting on Dec. 3, click here.

Larry Mazza and Colleen Rudman

UUFSB NEWS & EVENTS

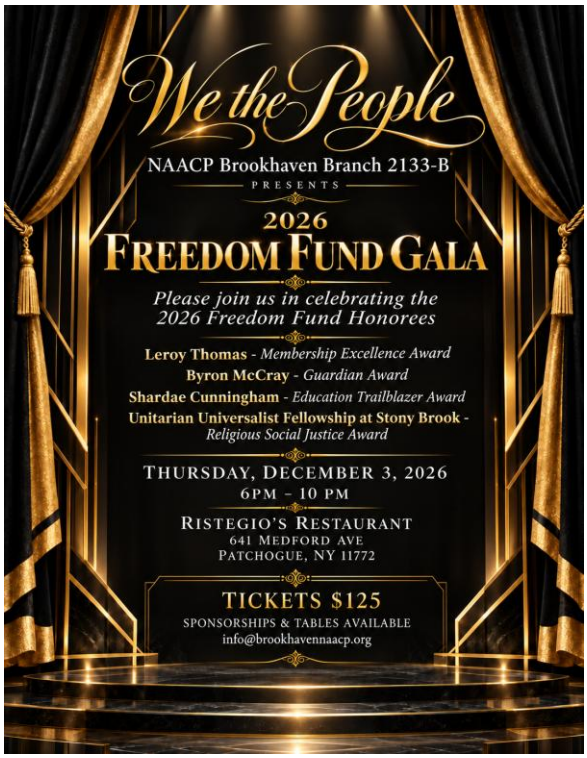
RE Mitten Tree – Dec. 20

Are you already getting a jump on your holiday shopping? The UUFSB Religious Education program will be having a Mitten Tree again this year. Our emphasis is on children and youth. Please add new unopened packaged children's pajamas, underwear, socks, scarves, mittens, hats, and winter wear for children and youth to your shopping basket. Additionally, we will be adding books for children and youth to our collection. Please consider adding a children's book to your shopping list as well. Donations will be collected for the Ronald McDonald House at Stony Brook University Hospital and Book Fairies, a nonprofit organized to bring books to under-resourced communities on Long Island. Bring them to The Mitten Tree holiday service on Sunday, December 20. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to either one of us or someone else on the RE committee.

Gretta Johnson-Sally (631-387-5270) and Wendy Engelhardt (516-982-9551)
RE Committee

UUFSB to receive Social Justice Award

The Town of Brookhaven NAACP is awarding the UUFSB with the Religious Social Justice Award at their Gala on December 3rd at Ristegio's restaurant in Patchogue. **Rev. James** is attending as are three members of the Racial Concerns Committee. It would be wonderful if we could fill a table of 10. Tickets are $125.00 per person. Register directly and indicate you would like to sit at the UUFSB TABLE. Let Marian Russo know you have registered at marianrussouu@gmail.com. Marian will be collecting checks from those who wish to attend at our Sunday service on November 29.



MUUvie Group Discussion – Sun., Dec. 6, 12:30 p.m.



Our next MUUvie Group discussion will be on Sun., Dec.6, 12:30 p.m. in the Yellow Room (please note the later start time). The movie selected is ***To Kill a Mockingbird*** (1962), starring Gregory Peck. The Suffolk Library system may have copies available on DVD; it is also available for rental on Amazon Prime video, Apple TV and other streaming services. Contact moviegroup@uufsb.org if you have any questions or want to suggest titles for future discussion.

East Coast Swing Dance Lesson! Thursdays, 7:00 p.m.

Member **Shah Zebardjadi** is leading beginner-to-intermediate level lessons on Thursdays at UUFSB. He is currently teaching swing and bolero. All are welcome — singles as well as couples! Donations for the lesson (optional) will be gratefully received and fully allocated to UUFSB. Questions? Call Shah at 631-260-2270.

Evening Labyrinth Walk – Tues., Dec. 8, 8:00 p.m.



Harriet McKenna will be playing the harp as we walk the candlelit labyrinth. Come for peace, gratitude, de-stressing, clarity, problem solving and community.

We also walk EVERY Thursday afternoon at 2:00 p.m. in our sanctuary. ALL are welcome. Call or email **Linda Mikell** if you have questions or want to reserve a space: edlinmik9@gmail.com or 631-796-1862.

Grounds & Sounds Welcomes Josette and Mark Mancini - Fri., Dec. 11, 7:30 P.M.



JAMM is where love, music, and storytelling come together. Husband-and-wife musical duo **Josette** and **Mark Mancini** are the creative hearts behind JAMM, a Long Island-based original music project born from their shared passion for songwriting, storytelling, and the extraordinary connection that music creates.

Blending Josette's soulful, expressive vocals and heartfelt lyrics with Mark's masterful piano artistry and sophisticated arrangements, JAMM delivers a captivating musical experience that moves effortlessly between intimate ballads, melodic pop, blues, and uplifting, rhythm-driven originals.

Joining Josette and Mark onstage for this show are: **Mike Nugent** – guitar, **Thierry Arpino** – drums, **Mike Nunno** – bass, and special guest **Charlie Kulis**.

Join us as we welcome JAMM to our stage for an evening of original music, heartfelt stories, and the unmistakable chemistry of two artists who found both love and inspiration through music.

The show begins with an Open Mic at 7:30 (signup at 7:00); the main act goes on at about 8:15. Refreshments available: Coffee, tea, cold beverages, desserts, cheese and crackers; remember to bring your own wine (small corking fee). Tickets are only $20 and you can purchase them at the Grounds & Sounds website (or you can just show up on the night of the show). We hope to see you there!

RECENT EVENTS

Live Your Dash Plaque Installed

A few years ago, I requested permission from the board and the poet to mount the shortened version of the poem ***The Dash*** on a bronze plaque in our Memorial Garden. This was an endless process that included the plaque being delivered twice with damage. Finally, this poem is permanently installed thanks to **Shah Zebardjadi**. This poem had a great deal of meaning to my husband, Ed Mikell, who was in charge of the building committee for our sanctuary and expanded classrooms. At our service on November 1st the poem was read by Worship Associate Ellen Bartley. I took that opportunity to hand out blue and white rubber bracelets with the words "Live Your Dash". For those of you who would like to revisit the poem, the full-length version appears on the author's website. Also, I have more bracelets, so please find me at coffee hour and ask for one. I'm happy to spread the words of this poem.

In fellowship,
Linda Mikell

RE Corner

Recent Religious Education guests included **Wendy Engelhardt** in October and **Maria Kata** in November. Each guest read stories to the children and led them in activities such as mask-making, creative movement, and crafting "shine your light" lanterns out of mason jars. Will you be our next guest???



Warmly, Michele & Susan
Co-Directors of Religious Education

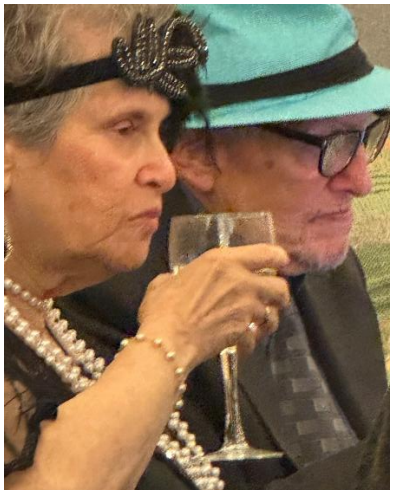
Goods & Services Auction

A great time was had by all at our November 2026 Goods & Service Auction. It was the cat's pajamas!








1810


1560


2070


0916






Women's Potluck

We gathered together for the latest installment of the UUFSB Women's Potluck Dinner on Friday evening, November 20th. Forty five women joined us to share in fun, food, and friendship. We schmoozed, we socialized, we ate and we raised $211 for the ICUUW (International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women), an organization that gives a global voice to empower and enable women and girls worldwide accelerating progress toward women's equality. Thanks to everyone who participated, came early to set up, and stayed late to clean up. This truly could not have been done without everyone's help. Join us at our next UUFSB Women's Potluck coming up in the winter.

Shelly Psaris, Michele Maggio, and Gretta Johnson-Sally, Organizers



REMINDERS

Shawl Ministry Gathering - Second Thursdays, 7:00-8:30 p.m.



All knitters and crocheters from beginner to advanced are welcome to join us on the 2nd Thursday of the month in the Blue Room. We gather in fellowship for conversation and support as we work on our shawls to be given in times of joy or need. For further info, click here or contact **Shelly** at shelly.psaris@gmail.com.

Sharing Circles

If you would like to explore interesting topics, develop friendships, practice open, honest sharing and active listening all within a safe space, where confidentiality is paramount, Sharing Circles might be for you. Members meet once a month, led by a trained facilitator, to share thoughts and experiences about a variety of subjects. Two of our groups have space available to welcome new members, both held via Zoom. For more information, or to join a group, contact **Ellen Bartley** at edbartley04@gmail.com or visit our web page.

Memorial Services Committee Available for Help

If you need assistance with a Memorial Service, please contact **Sharena Sacher** in the UUFSB Office at (631) 751-0297 or **Linda Kirk**, our Pastoral Associates Chair, at (631) 356-5980. They will help connect you with our Memorial Services Committee.

UUFSB Writers Group – Fourth Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.



The **new meeting day** for the Writers Group is on the fourth Thursday of the month from 7:30-9:00 p.m. in the Yellow Room. HOWEVER: Given that Thanksgiving falls on the fourth Thursday in November this year, our next meeting is scheduled for **Dec. 3**.

Morning Meditation on Zoom - Weekdays at 7:30 a.m.

On Mondays through Fridays, the Stony Brook Sangha gathers to meditate from 7:30-8:00 a.m. We start with a guided meditation and then finish in silence. If you are interested in joining, please contact **Denise Stevenson** at: denisemstevenson@gmail.com.

Weekly Sangha – Saturdays, 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. on Zoom and in the Blue Room



Stony Brook Sangha is a Buddhist community in the tradition of Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh. We meet online and in the Blue Room at the Fellowship at 9:00 a.m. on Saturdays. For the Zoom link, contact **Denise** (denisemstevenson@gmail.com)**.** All are welcome.

Need A Helping Hand?

Do you require temporary assistance such as a ride to the doctor or service, meals or help with small chores? UUFSB Helping Hands volunteers can help with one-time needs or for a short period of time while you recover, regain independence, or find a more permanent arrangement. Please reach out to helpinghands@uufsb.org.

A MESSAGE FROM THE UUA

SIDE WITH LOVE

The 2026 midterm elections are historic. Voters resoundingly rejected an agenda of authoritarianism fueled by hate, fear, and violence. This rejection comes after years of organizing to build trust, deepen care, and cultivate the collective power to turn toward a world where all people belong and thrive. The 2026 midterms mark a turning point in our ongoing struggle for a multiracial democracy.

This election is historic, but it is not over. Democracy requires all of us, and we must continue our work until every vote is counted and every election is certified.

In our faith, democracy is sacred. It commits us to a faithful practice of covenant, in which we recognize one another as sacred. Sacred, in the sense that we are too important to be treated lightly. Beloved, our lives, our dignity, our material and spiritual needs, and our struggles are not to be treated lightly. This is central to our covenantal practice as a faith tradition: a commitment to one another and to the promise to put love at the center.

This election has shifted our political landscape in consequential ways. In the face of a decades-long campaign to dismantle Black political power, Black voters across the South turned out in record numbers. Amid the rollback of abortion rights, voters in states like Virginia and Missouri continued the movement to secure abortion protections. Despite threats of violence, the frustration of disenfranchisement, and the exhaustion of years of struggle, communities and voters came together to reach toward a new day.

This year, UU the Vote was grounded in a call to ignite solidarity and reimagine democracy. Together, we took up the work of supporting voters at the polls, reaching voters by phone and at their doors, creating spiritual gatherings to sustain us, and convening Solidarity Summits to build the power and infrastructure behind our commitments. We harnessed our collective power to ensure that voters had the final say in these elections, so that we could continue building a democracy in which all of us can thrive. But, Beloveds, we are not there yet.

In several states, voters approved measures targeting trans young people and denying them the care they need. Others passed measures that infringe upon religious freedom. And our nation still reckons with an election season rife with Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, racism and cruelty. Our work is not done. We remain steadfast in our belief that every body is sacred and that trans, nonbinary, and intersex people have a fundamental right to live with dignity, safety, and equality.

We are unwavering in our Universalist call to abolish every hell on earth:

The hell of economic systems that sacrifice people and the earth at the altar of greed.

The hell of an American legacy of family separation and human trafficking.

The hell of apartheid states that worship supremacy and rejoice in violence.

And the hell of the greatest lie of all: that we are alone and do not belong to one another.

Unitarian Universalists stand in a radical tradition of choosing love, not because victory is guaranteed, but because our faith calls us to work toward it. And no movement can sustain that work without a North Star toward which we collectively reach.

This election is not our North Star, but it is a critical stop along our journey toward the justice that now feels closer. Keep reaching.

The justice we seek is closer not because of any political party, but because people came together to make their voices heard and speak the truth about the conditions under which we are living. As Ida B. Wells reminds us, "The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them."

We are here, in this moment, because people refused the lies and turned the light of truth upon them. Let this truth carry us through this turning.

As we reach together toward a new day, let us remember that democracy is not a one-time action. It is a continuous practice, one that cannot be sustained alone. In this moment, let us reach toward our migrating and trans siblings and every neighbor this election has left more vulnerable. Let us reach toward communities whose rights and voices continue to be silenced under our current laws. And let us reach toward ourselves, knowing that we all deserve care, joy, rest, and the space to discern our roles in what comes next.

Thank you for all your faithful work and for the many ways this community has shown up and continues to show up.

Turning toward one another was the choice we made.

Reaching together toward love is the choice we keep making, together.

In faith and solidarity,
The Side With Love Team

JANUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE – DEC. 26

Please submit newsletter items via email to uufsbnews@uufsb.org by **Sat., Dec. 26**.

Unitarian Universalist
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ONGOING CONTACT INFO

- **Shawl Ministry:** Shelly Psaris shelly.psaris@gmail.com
- **Tai Chi, Yoga, Qigong, & Essentrics Classes:** medarts.uufsb@gmail.com
- **Labyrinth:** Thursdays 1:00 p.m. Evenings as scheduled. Linda Mikell edlinmik9@gmail.com
- **Sangha (Buddhist meditation):** Mon.-Fri., 7:30-8:00 a.m. and Sat. 9:00-10:30 a.m., online via Zoom. Denise Stevenson denisemstevenson@gmail.com
- **Sharing Circles:** On the web at http://uufsb.org/ministries/small-group-ministry
- **Our Calendar** can be found at uufsb.org/events-2/calendar