

# the chalice

Published by the  
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**A Welcoming Congregation  
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## DECEMBER WORSHIP SERVICES

10:00am Family Service

10:30am Worship Service

For Zoom information [click here](#)

For Order of Service [click here](#)

### December 3

**10:00 AM, Family Worship: Question Box** Bring your questions - large, small, or somewhere in between. Slide them into the question box and together we will explore and discuss our curiosities - and maybe even come up with some answers!

### 10:30 AM Worship: The Gift of Presence, Rev. Jennifer Johnson (guest)

As we approach the season of giving amidst so much human division and strife, perhaps the most precious gift we can give one another is our attentive, compassionate presence. Rev. Jolie is off this week. Rev. Jennifer Johnson is the minister at our UU congregation in Bridgewater.

### December 10

#### 10:00 AM Family Worship: The Story of Hanukkah

We will tell the story of Hanukkah and reflect on the meaning of miracles together.

#### 10:30 AM Worship: Blue Christmas

Today's service will make some space for the sadness we may feel during the holidays. We will reflect together on dealing with disappointment. What spiritual resources does Unitarian Universalism offer us in the face of life's inevitable disappointments?

### December 17

#### 10:30 AM Intergenerational Worship: Revels

"Revels" is our annual holiday celebration given by the children and youth of the church. The children will share and interpret stories that celebrate **generosity**, to inspire us as we move through this season of love and giving.

### December 22

#### 7:30 PM Solstice: A Celebration in Word and Song

Join our Adult Choir for this annual tradition as we sing, share readings, and reflect on the darkness and the return of the light, together in a circle in our Sanctuary.

### December 24

#### 4:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Come sing Christmas carols, hear the nativity story, and reflect on the message of Christmas. We will have time during our service for quiet contemplation of the beauty and mystery of this special night. All ages welcome. Rev. Jolie preaching.

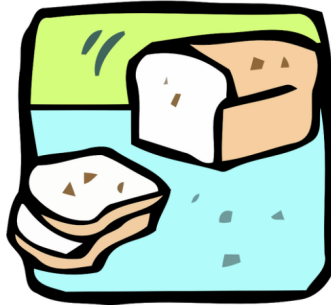
## CHURCH NEWS

### First Fridays are for Fellowship

Please join us for a potluck dinner before an evening of casual music jams

Friday December 1st @ 6PM

If you are able, please bring something to share, but it is not necessary.



### Tai Chi

Tai chi classes are continuing on the first and third Saturdays of the month from 8 am to 9, with a small monetary contribution of \$5-\$7.(or \$10) The class is good for beginners as well as those more experienced. It's fun and good for your body/mind/spirit. So come!



### Gifts for Kids article:

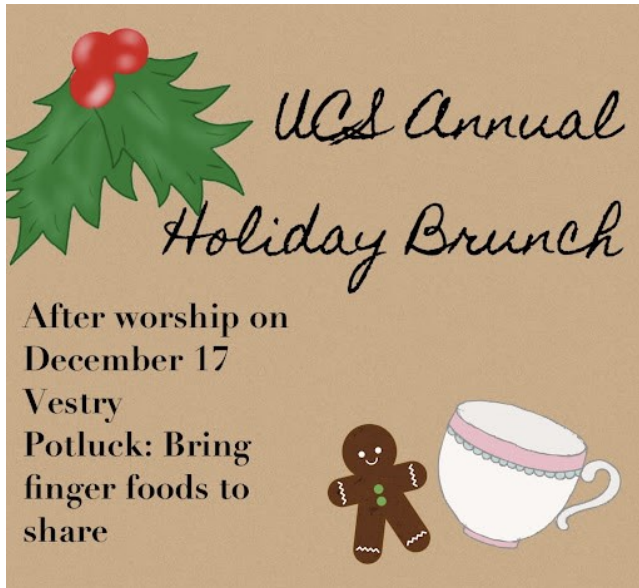
It's time again for the annual Gifts for Kids holiday drive. Established in 1990 by our own Pat McDougal, GFK ([Giftsfor KidsMA.org](https://www.GiftsforKidsMA.org)) serves over 1150 youth in our area whose holidays are made brighter thanks to your support. Things are happening a bit differently this year, as you are asked to go directly to <https://bit.ly/sponsorGFK2023> to be connected to the child of your preference (first name, age, gender, clothing sizes, wish-list, etc.). Suggested commitment is \$125/child, or you may prefer to make a monetary donation and leave the shopping to a corp of volunteers who just love that task! Stop by the Fair Trade table at Coffee Hour to see Alison Reid with your questions and ideas, or email [sponsor@GiftsForKidsMA.org](mailto:sponsor@GiftsForKidsMA.org), or call 'Kate' at 781-784-4405 for details. (Matching of kids to donors begins on 15 November.)

Drop-off of gifts will be the same as in past years: unwrapped gifts, in bags with ID tags inside and out, wrapping paper and tape appreciated, two sessions:

**Walpole on 12 December, 4-6pm**, VFW Post #1588, 33 Robbins Road, and **Sharon on 14 December, 4-6pm**, O'Connell Hall next to Our Lady of Sorrows Church, 59 Cottage St

Thanks for your generous commitment to help make the holidays brighter for youth and kids in our region!

## CHURCH NEWS



**Save the Date for an Informal Open House at the Schoenfeld's on Tuesday December 19, 4-8pm.** We are hosting the Sharon Garden Club Holiday Party the night before which means that the house and grounds will shine with their creativity. Come and enjoy the scene, the food and the company. Families welcome. If you want to bring food, then desserts or hors d'oeuvres are welcome but not not not necessary!!

Location: 41 Brook Rd. Sharon

RSVP: [ellen@schoenfeld.com](mailto:ellen@schoenfeld.com). But not necessary.

Ellen Schoenfeld-Beeks



### Upcoming Performance

January 20, 2024

Steve Tapper & Shira Moss (flute and percussion duo) & Obscure Notation (jazz fusion)

An evening of World Music and jazz fusion

Doors open at 6:30 and concert starts at 7:00.

Suggested donation \$20



## CHURCH NEWS

### Bake Off Save the Date

We are excited to announce the Great Sharon Bake Off on February 10, 2024 (snow date Feb. 11) at the Unitarian Church of Sharon from 3:00-7:00pm. This is a fundraiser for the church and the event is open to the public. The 32 Adult Division Bakers will compete in the categories of Cakes, Pies, Pastries and Cookies/bars. (Bakers can only compete in one category and the number of entries in each are limited.) Ten Bakers, ages 12-17, will compete in the Junior Division. Judges are community leaders and professional chefs and bakers and prizes will be awarded. The event details and registration form will be posted the first week of December on [uusharon.org/happenings](https://uusharon.org/happenings) so don't wait to sign up if you want to participate.

We are looking for a Volunteer Coordinator as well as volunteers for that day. Please contact Pat McDougal at [mcdougal.pat@gmail.com](mailto:mcdougal.pat@gmail.com) if interested.

Committee members include: Pat McDougal, Rebecca Kinraide, Lindsay Drisko, Elaine Price, Lauren Grasso and Sarah Langmead.



## CHURCH NEWS



### Stewardship Corner

***Please join the Stewardship & Finance Committees on December 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 am, in the Church Library or on Zoom.***

A few years after Chris and I started coming to the Unitarian Church of Sharon, sometime around 1990, a much younger Rory McGregor asked a much younger Peter Raskin if I would be willing to serve as the Church's Treasurer, taking over for George Bailey. We all know Rory, but newer members might not know of George Bailey; he and his family were important stewards of our UCS community, the Sharon community and beyond. I remember the little box of files Rory gave me and working with George over a couple of months as he brought me up to speed. Before these meetings, I knew nothing about church finances. I wasn't even a member of our Church and before I could be voted in as Treasurer, I needed to join the Church. Since I had never belonged to a religious community, the Church's financial affairs were of little interest to me. Just like I assumed that Mel would play the piano every Sunday, and there would be some sort of inspirational message spoken from the pulpit, I just figured that someone was taking care of the bills.

I was naïve. It didn't take me long to figure out that there was a defined process and a tradition of well intentioned and reasonable financial management at the UCS, even back in 1990 when we didn't use accounting software to balance the books. I can tell you that over the years, each subsequent Treasurer and Finance Committee has improved these processes. Our Board of Trustees takes their financial oversight responsibilities seriously. I'm proud that our annual budget process is thoughtful, conservatively crafted, and transparent to all.

I've come to realize we are all responsible for Church finances. We are all stewards of this community we love. I'm not just talking about your financial responsibilities. I'm talking about taking ownership and appreciating how we spend our resources. How we spend our resources tells you a lot about what we value as a community. The first step in becoming a responsible steward, is to have a basic understanding of our income, expenses, and assets. This information may help you decide how you want to support our community with your time, talent, or treasure. With that in mind, **please join the Stewardship Committee and the Finance Committee for a hybrid meeting in the Church Library on December 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 am.** I'll review Church savings and investments, income, and expenses with you. You may not be ready to be the Church's next Treasurer after this meeting, but you will become knowledgeable how the Unitarian Church of Sharon manages its resources. Please join us!

Peter Raskin

Stewardship Chairperson

## CHURCH NEWS

### Art Wall

Currently on display are paintings by Jean Fox. Jean is nurtured by her love of nature; her paintings manifest this and are a conduit for us to share in her inspiration. They are exquisite; they are small; so step up close and have a good look.

There is room on this wall and future walls for more art; if you have some art work to share, please do speak with Dinah.

If you've done any renderings of our church, we're thinking of that for a theme going into January, but I'd be glad to hear about any art you've done and could hang.

Art is a way for us, as artists and viewers, to nurture our interconnectedness.

### Endowment Committee News

Dear members and friends of the Unitarian Church of Sharon,

The endowment committee is putting up a plaque that will list the names of people who have generously included the church in their estate plans. They have done this as a bequest in their will, making the church a beneficiary of their retirement fund or life insurance policy, or they've established a trust, with the church as a beneficiary.

In addition, the plaque will recognize people who have made gifts to the endowment fund. It will be a framed document that will be reprinted whenever additional people wish to add their names.

The purpose of this letter is to confirm whether or not you wish your name to be included on this plaque.

Thank you very much for your consideration. - The Endowment Committee

### Worship Committee Update

The November 26th service was unexpectedly well attended, with about 60 children, youth and adults. Thanks to Barbara Nelkin-Rose and Gary Webber for putting together such a thoughtful service.

Holiday decorating began last weekend with many hands involved.

We have **Revels on Sunday, Dec. 17**, and the **Solstice Service coming up on Friday, Dec. 22nd at 7:30pm** in the sanctuary. For Christmas: we will have **one service on Sunday, December 24th at 4:00pm**. *There will be no morning service.* There will be **no service on Sunday, Dec. 31st**.

If you have any questions or comments about worship services, please reach out to one of us: Ellen Bordman, Tom D'Avanzo, Gary Webber, Peter Raskin, Valerie Vigoda, Beth Hoke, Hema Sarang- Sieminski, Ashley Tsongas.

## From the Minister



Dear Ones,

I'm writing this column during this last week of November, when the penultimate full moon of the year has shown us her beautiful face. The full moon shines through my window just as it does halfway across the world, over a temporary truce between Israel and Hamas, as they exchange hostages and prisoners. We don't know how long the truce will last. Perhaps by the time this newsletter is sent around, it will be over and the fighting will have resumed. Or maybe the peace will continue. It is a brief relief to read about families being united with their loved ones, rather than airstrikes and death tolls. I join with those who pray for a lasting peace and who call for a ceasefire, a group which includes our own Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations in this [statement](#) from October 17.

I often speak about how part of being a Unitarian Universalist is to contend with the coexistence of multiple truths, while also seeking clarity on what is true for us in our own lives. Never before have I felt such an intensity of coexisting-yet-opposing truths as I have felt over the past six weeks, almost two months, since Hamas' horrific attacks on October 7. There are people who believe that 1948, the founding of the State of Israel, was a catastrophe, not out of anti-semitism but out of concern for the lives of Palestinians which have been endangered and brutalized ever since. There are others who cherish 1948 as their year of independence, not out of Islamophobia or hatred of Arabs, but out of their desire for a Jewish state, especially in the aftermath of the Holocaust. According to the people who hold these positions, each of their positions is the truth, rooted in their experiences and their ancestors' experiences, including experiences of trauma.

Emotions run high when we try to talk about what is going on for the people of Israel and Palestine, to say the least. As Dr. Gabor Maté, Hungarian/Canadian Holocaust survivor, physician, and specialist in trauma and addiction, said, we need to address the issue of Israel and Palestine from a space of regulation, rather than from a state of heightened emotion. He explained in an October 28 [online conversation](#) with his daughter Hannah:

We're entitled to our emotions but when we're emotional and only emotional, our perspective narrows. It becomes defensive and we get consumed by self-defense: understandable but it doesn't lead to peace. What leads to peace is a willingness to understand the experience of the other. And for us to be guided by the parts of our brain that are adult: the mid-frontal cortex where empathy, insight, compassion, and self-awareness are modulated. We need to deal with our emotions not to repress them, not to reject them, but also not to let them be the guides of our actions. Especially when our emotions are conditioned by a view of history that for the most part excludes the experience of the other.

Our Unitarian Universalist faith calls us to consider the experience of the "other," which can be hard to do when we feel defensive or angry. I love Dr. Maté's message because I am always interested in how we make space for difficult emotions while contending with our complicated and hurting world. Just as he and his daughter do in the middle of this video, it helps me to take a deep breath when I am feeling intense emotions. How do you deal with difficult emotions? How has this conflict continued to impact you over the past couple of months? What actions have you felt inspired to take?

Yours in faith,  
Rev. Jolie



## From the President



Did you know that UCS is an “Honor Congregation”? Do you even know what that means?

All congregations which are members of the Unitarian Universalist Association are assessed UUA dues based on 6.75% of their operating expenditures. An honor congregation is one which has paid their full share. And UCS is one of only 7 congregations in the New England Region which has done so for more than 25 consecutive years!

I cherish several “Honor Congregation” pins which I've proudly worn to services and at General Assembly.

Among the many efforts the UUA engages in are support of new congregations, credentialing of religious educators and ministers, expert consultation about capital campaigns, OWL, the UN office, financial aid to seminarians, religious educators, and retired ministers, Side with Love, worship materials, and Beacon Press and Skinner House books. Look at <https://www.uua.org/finance/apf/why-we-give> to find out more about how the money is used.

We're moving into a busy time: Revels. The Solstice Service. Christmas Eve Service. But take just a minute to think that we have an important role to play in a vital national movement, and we've been doing just that for more than 25 years.

I'm so proud that this congregation is an Honor Congregation. You should be too.



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### THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

Extends our appreciation to the

**Unitarian Church of Sharon**

In  
Sharon, Massachusetts  
WITH RECOGNITION AS A

**2024**

**25+ Honor Congregation**

For Participation in the Annual Program Fund

*Sofia Belancourt*  
Rev. Sofia Belancourt, Ph.D.  
President  
Unitarian Universalist Association

*Norrie Gail*  
Norrie Gail  
Congregational Giving Administrative Director  
Unitarian Universalist Association

Valerie White



## FAITH DEVELOPMENT



### From the Director of Faith Development

Every year, as we enter the holiday season, I find myself reflecting on the true essence of this time of year - the “season of light”. I sometimes feel that our culture interprets this as a cue to illuminate everything in sight! It’s the season of hustle and bustle, late-night shopping and cramming our schedules with events. While I love this beautiful time of year, I often feel that it has the tendency to pull me away from my natural rhythms.

Amid the excitement, are we missing an opportunity to embrace the darkness, to heed the natural call to slow down, and to find solace in the quiet moments? What if we allowed ourselves to resist the cultural tide and to align with our natural mammalian instincts that yearn for rest and a time of stillness? Before the onset of commercialism, our ancestors used this time to do handwork or tool repair - tasks that were put off during the active season, done instead in winter by gentle lamplight in the quiet company of family or friends. My challenge this time of year is finding ways to infuse the season with practices that align with nature and that nourish me and my family and I encourage you to do the same.

As I sat down to write this I wondered “what does this have to do with Unitarian Universalism?” so I took a dive into the [UUA’s proposed new statements of values and covenants](#) to see if anything of what I hold in my heart this month is to be found there. While whole statements did not mirror my thoughts, there are snippets among each where I found resonance and came to see that in these moments, we’re not just slowing down; we’re tapping into some core Unitarian Universalist values:

**Cherishing Earth and all beings:** By slowing down, we create space to cherish our planet and the diverse beings that inhabit it. Maybe it’s choosing mindful, eco-friendly gifts or spending time outdoors, enjoying the beauty of the season.

**Celebrating sacred diversity:** The holidays can be a time to celebrate our diverse cultures, experiences, and theologies. Slowing down allows us to see and savor these unique aspects of our lives and traditions.

**Adapting to change:** In resisting the frantic pace, we embrace the natural changes happening in the world around us. And wouldn’t you know, this type of adaptation allows us to find joy in the simplicity of quiet moments.

**Cultivating gratitude and hope:** Slowing down fosters a spirit of gratitude and hope. It’s in the hushed moments that we often find the most profound reasons for gratitude.

**Compassionate sharing:** Pushing back against consumerism means we’re consciously choosing what, how, and why we share. We extend our generosity and compassion not just through material gifts but through our time, presence, and shared experiences.

**Affirming inherent worth:** In choosing to align with our natural rhythms, we affirm the inherent dignity and worthiness of every person, including ourselves. Self-care is not just a buzzword but a necessity.

So, dear families, let’s take a collective deep breath. My wish and blessing for you this month is that you find the true light of the season—the light that comes from within, from your cherished connections, and from aligning with the values that make our UU community so special.

Wishing you a season of rest, joy, and the discovery of light in unexpected places.

Warmly,

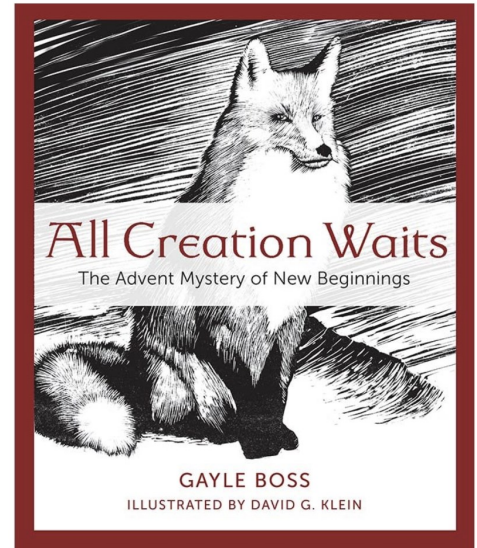
Christine

## FAITH DEVELOPMENT, continued

### Book Recommendation

Gayle Boss's [All Creation Waits](#)

In the spirit of slowing down and aligning with the natural world, reading an entry from this book each day from Dec. 1-24 has become a peaceful tradition that helps me cherish all beings.



### Youth News

#### Youth Service Trip Opportunities

UCS has a long tradition of serving others and extending those experiences to people of all ages. However, one that many teens have come to look forward to is a service trip! This was unable to occur during the last few years but this year we are getting back to it! One of the opportunities we were looking into, Living Legacy, does not seem to be a viable option due to cost and timing,

However, we are hoping to do both of the following if there is enough interest:

1. February vacation at [Big Creek People in Action](#)
2. One night trip to Boston in either March or April at [City Reach in Boston](#)

More details are available in the google docs linked above.

If your youth is interested in either of these opportunities, reach out to Caroline by Sunday December 12th so we can keep moving forward.

Also be sure to reach out if you have any questions or concerns. One note to parents with younger youth-- these are for 8th through 12th grade due to the policies these programs have.

### UCS Youth and Gifts for Kids



Our youth in grades 6-12 are sponsoring two teens through the Gifts for Kids program this year. **Youth will meet on December 3 from 9:30 - 10:30 am not only to help with Revels prep but to have some donuts and plan the gift shopping.** Parents, be on the lookout for permission forms and possible transportation needs for this shopping outing which will occur sometime before December 14, which is when the gifts will be delivered to the drop-off location.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS



The Social Justice Committee encourages you to visit the UCS website ([uusharon.org](http://uusharon.org)) for information about the social justice programs at church. The Social Justice pages are a great source for

information about opportunities to engage, resources, and links to partner organizations and groups that we collaborate with in our work.



### Brown Envelope Collections

Our Brown Envelope collection in September of \$1,870.59 is being sent to our **Partner**

**Church in Gyulakuta, Transylvania.** (This figure includes both the BE donations, plus the \$700 of support found in our annual UCS budget). For many years, our congregation has supported fellow UUs in Romania. They are enormously grateful for this showing of good will.

In October, the Brown E collections of \$2,299.08 supported a local immigrant family in transition, currently living with Janet Limke and Rob Scott in Norwood. Their goal to achieve independent housing is about to come to fruition, and our support has been put toward that end via the **Minister's Discretionary Fund**. There may be additional practical opportunities to help them get set up in their new quarters in the coming weeks – stay tuned for details. Thank you for your generous donations and support.

The Brown E donations in November will go to **City School Inc** ([thecityschool.org](http://thecityschool.org)), a non-profit which works with a diverse group of youth, ages 14-19, and whose mission is to help them to become effective leaders in addressing social justice issues, incorporating a strong focus on racial justice. Their work intentionally crosses lines of race, class, gender and neighborhoods. Thank you for your generous donations.



The December Brown E donations during regular services will be directed to the **Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's Emergency Response Fund** ([uusc.org](http://uusc.org)). The Fund provides vital assistance to people impacted by natural or human-made disasters yet whose access to aid is most limited. Their use of these funds is based off of a **Disaster Justice** framework, which UUSC developed in collaboration with partners and allies. Like mainstream humanitarian aid agencies, they respond to immediate needs in the wake of a crisis; yet, unlike those organizations, UUSC also focuses on removing barriers that prevent equal access to resources. **Currently, UUSC is using resources from our Emergency Response Fund to support people facing extreme violence and threats to their safety in Haiti and Ukraine, following intense political and humanitarian crises happening in those countries.** The response evolves to meet essential needs on the ground as they change, including access to clean water, food, shelter, and other aid, as well as strengthening protections for women and girls at risk for gender-based violence and combating the displacement of Black, People of Color, and LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees. Thank you for your support.

[Note: a generous one-to-one match for donations to UUSC in December means that our support will be doubled, so generosity = X2!]

Donations during the Christmas Eve service/s at UCS this year will once again be given to **Father Bill's & MainSpring** ([helpfbms.org](http://helpfbms.org)) in Brockton, whose guests are experiencing homelessness. (We continue to provide bag lunches each month to help feed individuals and families facing housing crises.) Please give generously to support their vital work.



## SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS, continued

The annual **Interfaith Thanksgiving Service** was hosted at UCS this year on November 19th, and participants were asked to bring canned goods for two local food pantries as well as to make donations to support the work of a total of 6 food pantries in our region. A cartful of staples was sent to both the Sharon/Stoughton pantry and the First Congregational Church of Sharon's pantry across the street from UCS, while 6 pantries shared donations totaling \$2,856 in the form of our Shopping for Justice grocery card program (by adding our 5% discount since we purchase the cards in bulk, that figure includes an additional \$136 boost).

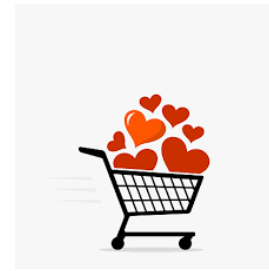
This figure, when added to our ongoing food pantry support since Covid began, comes to an astounding \$66,000 in donations to local food pantries in less than 4 years.

A nice bonus happened when the dessert potluck following the service ended, and many untouched platters of cookies and treats were sent to the kitchen at MainSpring House in Brockton where the goodies were shared with the guests of their programs.

**MainSpring House** lunch making: Our team of youth managing the bag lunch assembly this year are taking a break for Revels in December, so we will revert to our 'all hands – intergenerational' team effort during Coffee Hour on Sunday, 10 December. Grab a cup of coffee, wash your hands, glove-up and help us help our neighbors in need as we assemble 75 bag lunches for the homeless.



*Thanks to folks donating their excess Halloween hoards of candy, we have been able to top off our MSH bag lunches recently with some sweet treats. That's a win-win all around!*



**Do you and your household members eat food?** If so, you can help make the MSH lunch program a success when you shop for your own groceries. We fund-raise to purchase supplies for this effort with our **Shopping for Justice** program (S4J), where we ask you to purchase grocery cards from local chain stores for your personal shopping needs. We buy the cards in bulk, and get a 5% discount, which funds the lunch program (your grocery purchases are one-to-one, dollar for dollar, since the 5% donation comes from the stores). Stop by the Social Justice Table in the Vestry during Coffee Hour to learn more about this user-friendly program. The more of us who make this commitment to 'Shopping for Justice', the more hunger and homelessness programs we can engage with during these troubled times. And besides, **soups, salads and all the rest** are reported to be healthier and taste better when you purchase them with a S4J grocery card! Try one and see if your taste buds don't confirm this gastronomical miracle....

**SJC Meeting for December:** the monthly SJC meeting will be on Sunday, December 3rd, starting at approximately noon. We will continue to offer hybrid-zoom participation, with some gathering in the physical Library for face-to-face conversation, and others on the small screen. Look for the zoom link in the UCS Calendar. All are welcome; please join us as we look for opportunities and challenges to work together as we make a difference in the world.

**Fair Trade Table prices** are up this fall. Effective since November, we have raised the prices of some of our fair trade products in step with price hikes from our providers. We will keep things as reasonable as possible, and take advantage of occasional discounted purchasing opportunities when they arise, but in order to keep this fundraising effort viable, and to keep the high quality, fairly traded goods at your fingertips, prices will rise. And of course we are never disappointed when we hear "Keep the change!" as all profits go to support the social justice work of the congregation. Thanks for your understanding.