



CIRCLE OF FELLOWSHIP

The First Universalist Society of Central Square

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

3243 Fulton Street (Route 49, near Route 11)
Post Office Box 429, Central Square, New York 13036-0429
Our church building is handicapped accessible.
Phone: 315-668-6821 E-mail: uucentralsquare@gmail.com
Church Web site: <http://www.centralsquareuu.com>

Photo courtesy of Village of Central Square

Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/UU-Central-Square/199139743511564>

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the First Universalist Society of Central Square is to be a welcoming, diverse congregation, which values spiritual growth and service to the local and world community.

Andrea Abbott, Student Minister	315-635-7122	The Rev. Libbie Stoddard, Minister Emerita	315-343-4352
Leigh Parry-Benedict, Music Coordinator	315-657-5904	Ronna Schindler, RE Chairperson	315-623-7685
Winfield Ihlow, President	315-342-5939	Janie Garlow, Vice President	315-436-2238

DECEMBER 2014

STUDENT MINISTER SNIPPET

Here we all are smack dab in the heart of the Christmas season which I believe started at around Halloween. If we are not ready, we are becoming frantic to get those chestnuts roasted, bells jingled, puddings figged and halls decked. Right about now we can be feeling jangled, jingled, roasted and toasted, not to mention decked. We hope we have chosen gifts wisely. We hope we have not forgotten anyone. We hope the dinner will be perfect. But what does this season mean to us? Do we want to boycott it or do we enjoy every moment of the hustle and bustle? This time of year embraces many traditions, so many indeed that they have been combined into one huge celebration of presents, cooking, decorating, and partying. In the midst of all the activity, let us take some time to think about those things that the season, in any religion, calls to us to contemplate. Let us recognize the need for peace, a real and lasting peace, peace within ourselves and between ourselves. Let us pause in all our preparations and hear the angels sing.

Andrea Abbott

A SERMON BY THE REVEREND WEISSBARD

The Rev. David Weissbard writes concerning his sermon for the December 7 service:

“Having been away for a week, I have not pinned down my sermon for next Sunday. I’m going to call it ‘Surprise!’ for the moment, because it is going to be a surprise for you -- and for me.”

Please have articles for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than NOON on MONDAY, DECEMBER 29. Bob would be grateful if everyone would not wait until the last minute to submit articles. He prefers to receive articles via e-mail. His e-mail address is rhaskell@twcny.rr.com. His postal address is 29 Grove Street, Baldwinsville, NY 13027-2332. His telephone number is 315-635-5294.

UU congregations covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

TROUBADOURS' GUILD TO PERFORM

The Troubadours' Guild of the local Renaissance group will present Christmas carols of the 1600 era at our church on Sunday, December 7.

Some carols will be familiar, some will have a twist and others will be new to us. There will be small harp music, duets and sing-along carols.

Please help sing in the Christmas season on Sunday, December 7.

Ann Peterson

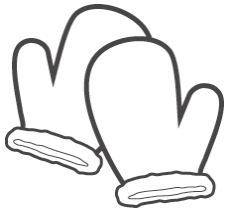
CHRISTMAS DINNER



We will have our annual Christmas dinner for the community on Thursday, December 25.

Your help is needed. We are in need of desserts, cooking help, cleanup help and people who enjoy spending time with other people. It is our turn to give back to the community.

Please contact Kurt Schindler at 315-623-7685 to volunteer your time or services.



GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS

Our church is collecting non-perishable food items for the Central Square Lions Club Christmas baskets.

Also, we are collecting mittens, hats and scarfs for the Central Square Lioness Club. The deadline to bring these items to church is Sunday, December. 14.

WINTER CLOTHING WANTED



We are collecting gently used, clean winter clothing, especially coats, to donate to Ngoc Huynh.

Ngoc, who spoke at our church on Sunday, November 2, works at Catholic Charities in Syracuse where she is a job development manager in the Refugee Resettlement Services program. The program helps about 600 refugees in Onondaga County each year.

Please look for a collection box in the dining room.

A NOTE FROM OUR TREASURER

Dear Church Friends,

I have had the pleasure of serving as the treasurer for the past two years. It is hard and rewarding work, but the reason I actually enjoy it is because there are others who step up to the plate and help with the complicated financial decisions we have to make to keep our community going. I have been floored by the generous donations people make. I know it is very hard out there, financially, but we all meet our pledges, but most of us exceed our pledges. I cannot thank you enough for your commitment and dedication to our community.

Recently more of you have been asking for an accounting of your pledges. The reports of your donations for 2014 are at church on the East Room table in alphabetical order. This accounting only goes up to November 15. Please keep a record of the rest of the year for yourself.

Thank you again for your dedication to our community, our church, our society, and keep up the good work.

Respectfully, and humbly,
Your treasurer
Marcia

UU congregations covenant to affirm and promote justice, equity and compassion in human relations.

UU congregations covenant to affirm and promote acceptance of one another
and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Our apron and T-shirt sale was a success. We sold 37 aprons and 36 shirts. There are 13 more aprons that will be available for purchase. The order should be in next Sunday.

The Social Justice Committee took the lead in the "Guest at Your Table" campaign this year with a dinner and film. We collected \$161, and I got \$195 more in personal checks since then. The money is being mailed to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC).

Please read the newsletter piece about our next speaker, this time from Oswego County Opportunities on January 4.

We had three volunteers participate in a protest at the Oswego Walmart on Friday, November 28. This was part of a nationwide Black Friday event to support the efforts for a living wage.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for 9 a.m. on Sunday, December 14. Please join us.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Hallock, chairperson

GREEN MINUTE: REPURPOSED GIFT IDEAS

The Internet is a wonderful place to get ideas for gifts that you can make out of things that you already have but that you don't use any more. These are some of the gifts that caught my eye that are easy to make and tell the recipients that you care about them and the planet.

Take an old piece of clothing, cut off the legs or arms, sew up one end and use them as gift bags for wine or home-canned goods or maybe as goodie bags full of your own dried herbs or homemade candy. If you have used a shirt or sweatshirt, repurpose the body by using it as a child's bib or play smock.

Take old keys, bend them with pliers and a vice to make hooks and then attach them to a piece of old barn board. Use the tabs from soda cans to make wall hooks that you will attach on either end of the back of the board, and you have a gift that can be hung on the wall to be used as a place to hang keys or clothes or other light weight items.

Have some old floppy disks you won't use? Take four disks, drill small holes on either end of the bottom of the disks and on the sides near the bottom and top. Be sure to line the side holes up with the side holes on the other disks. Take a fifth disk and drill holes on all sides that match with the holes you drilled in the bottom of the other four disks. Run small wire ties through the holes to attach the disks together to make an open topped box. You have now made a pencil holder for someone's desk.

Take the spine cover from an old hard-cover book that can't be repaired, glue some cardboard on the back, glue on some cloth binding to finish the edges and you have a bookmark. I'd like to suggest "Hundred Dollar Holiday" by Bill McKibben to give with your bookmark inside.

Cut old wine corks to the same height, glue the sides together, paint or decoupage if you like and you have coasters. You can go bigger and make a bulletin board or leave the corks at their original length to make a decorative wall hanging.

Wrap old coffee cans with rope, put soil in the cans, plant herbs in them, make a little sign that you attach to the cans naming the herb, and give a living gift.

Cut 2" strips from old T-shirts or sweat shirts, braid them together and make pull toys for your canine friends. For the felines, show them that you love them by taking catnip and maybe an optional jingle bell sewn into part of an old sock to make a ball or a "mouse." Be sure to put the jingle bell inside so they don't tear it off.

I scratched only the surface of ideas I found that cost little or no money. Half the fun was getting the ideas. Have a wonderful holiday and maybe you'll be lucky enough to get a repurposed gift this year.

Ellen LaPine
Outreach Committee

CHANTING AND MEDITATION

Anyone who is interested in chanting and meditation is invited to contact Tim Hart via e-mail at timhart@a-znet.com or via telephone at 315-439-2541.

UU congregations covenant to affirm and promote a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

UU congregations covenant to affirm and promote the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CHILDREN TO FOCUS ON BELIEFS



Beliefs.

What do we as individuals believe? What as UUs do we believe?

At this time of year our religion can become very confusing. We will explore December celebrations, what they mean, how we celebrate them and how they began.

Ronna Schindler, Religious Education Committee chairperson and older children's teacher

OCO LEADER TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES FACED BY LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS

Diane Cooper-Currier, executive director of Oswego County Opportunities, will speak in our sanctuary at noon on Sunday, January 4. Her talk will be about the challenges faced by low-income residents.

The free presentation will be part of the Voices for Worker Equality series sponsored by the Social Justice Committee. As always, the program is open to the public.

OCO is the community action and anti-poverty agency serving the county. It administers a myriad of programs, including the Head Start preschool program; Women, Infants and Children nutrition program; Literacy Volunteers of Oswego County; Services to Aid Families, which is a domestic violence prevention and rape crisis center; homes for people with developmental disabilities; family planning; public transportation; housing services; and senior centers. Its mission is to help people reach and maintain self-sufficiency.

In recent years, the agency has seen need grow. For instance, its homeless prevention services have seen many working people in danger of becoming homeless because their wages are too low.

Diane worked in OCO's programs for many years before becoming executive director. She earned a bachelor of arts in criminology from the University of Maryland and went on to earn a master's degree in social work from Syracuse University. She has worked in human services for more than 30 years.

This year she received the Amelia Earhart Woman of Achievement Award from the Zonta Club of Oswego. Diane and her husband, Dale Currier, live in Scriba.

Tracy Kinne

SIX MARCH IN SUPPORT OF WALMART WORKERS

Six hardy souls braved the wind and subfreezing temperatures to march for about two hours outside the Oswego Walmart Supercenter on Route 104 East on Black Friday morning.

Nancy Hallock, Winfield Ihlow and I were joined by my friend Nancy Lichtenstein of Pulaski, who is a retired special education teacher and a member of the teachers union, and two people we met that day: Mike, a union roofer from Fulton, and Rita, who heard about the action from Move On, an organization that advocates for the rights of people versus corporations.

We joined thousands at Walmart stores across the country in expressing our desire that Walmart increase pay and provide consistent, full-time hours for its employees. Actions were planned at more than half of Walmart stores nationwide. Some Walmart workers went on strike.

While the retailer takes in \$16 billion a year in profit, thanks in large part to its dedicated employees, many of its workers are forced to rely on public programs such as food stamps and Medicaid.

When employees speak out, many of them face retaliation, including being fired. But when workers are backed by public support, Walmart has listened. This year, the retailer changed its policy on pregnant women after workers submitted a resolution to the company, and it created a system that gives workers better access to hours by allowing them to sign up for open shifts online.

Locally, the nearest Black Friday action besides ours was in Ithaca.

Thank you to everyone who marched and to those who kept us supporters, as well as all low-wage workers, in their thoughts. As a Walmart worker for four years, I especially appreciate these efforts.

Tracy Kinne
Social Justice Committee

UU congregations covenant to affirm and promote the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.

UU congregations covenant to affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

A NOTE OF THANKS

Thanks to these people for volunteering to serve as greeters on Sunday mornings: Marcia Burrell-Ihlow and Winfield Ihlow, November 30, and Priscilla Sparks and Susan Woods, December 7.

Thanks to these people for volunteering to host the social times on Sunday mornings: Marcia Burrell-Ihlow and Winfield Ihlow, November 30, and potluck luncheon contributors, December 7.

Thanks to these people for volunteering to place flowers near the pulpit for the services: Tim Hart on November 23, and Priscilla Sparks and Susan Woods, November 26.

COFFEE AND CHAT

Women and men of the church will gather for Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread on Route 31 in Clay at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, December 18.

All are welcome to join in casual conversation and to enjoy coffee or tea and other goodies.

For more information about the group, interested persons are invited to contact Mary or Chet Perkins via e-mail at cperkins9@twcny.rr.com or via telephone at 315-668-6719.

DON'T FORGET THAT MEMO LINE!

When you are writing a check for the church, please write on the memo line the purpose for which the check is being written. For example: Pledge, Fair Share, Random Acts of Kindness, Window Fund.

Such action makes it easier to record the check in its proper place.

Thank you.

A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are needed to serve as greeters on Sunday mornings. Anyone with any questions is invited to speak with Chet Perkins.

Volunteers are also needed to host the social time on Sunday mornings. Anyone with any questions is invited to speak with Judy Tennant.

The Spiritual Committee invites anyone who wishes to place flowers near the pulpit for the morning service on Sundays to do so.

There is a sign-up sheet for volunteers in the dining room.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

Random Acts of Kindness is the congregation's program to financially assist those in need, whether

church members/friends or people in the wider community.

Finances are provided by the congregation through a special once-a-month offering, normally on the first Sunday of each month.

Random Acts of Kindness envelopes are found on the back of the pews.

The next Random Acts of Kindness will be observed on Sunday, December 7.

The fund is administered by Andrea Abbott and Executive Board members.

RETURN THOSE BOTTLES

You may continue to help the environment and make money for the Outreach Committee by leaving your returnable bottles at the church.

A barrel into which to place your bottles stands near the entrance to the church kitchen.

Nancy Hallock, committee chairperson, is returning deposit bottles and cans for the committee treasury.

DOWNSTAIRS SCOTTY

The Executive Board has designated the second Sunday of each month as the date for the collection of food for our Downstairs Scotty.

The Outreach Committee will later take the contributions of food to Downstairs Scotty thrift shop and food pantry at Divine Mercy Parish Center, 592 South Main Street, Central Square.

The committee will continue to accept non-food items for the Downstairs Scotty on the second Sunday of each month and at all other times. Such non-food items include soap, detergent, bathroom and facial tissues, toothpaste, and the like.

Our collection box is in the church dining room.

The living tradition which Unitarian Universalists share draws from many sources, including direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.

The living tradition which Unitarian Universalists share draws from many sources, including words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love.

DECEMBER 2014 CALENDAR

4 – 5 to 7 p.m., Andrea Abbott will hold office hours at the church.

7 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:25 a.m., Announcements. 10:30 a.m., the Rev. David Weissbard leads the worship service. Random Acts of Kindness. 10:50 a.m., Religious education program. 11:45 a.m., Social time. The Troubadours' Guild of the local Renaissance group will present Christmas carols of the 1600 era. This is also the once-a-month Sunday on which the Social Justice Committee asks everyone to bring magazines to the church dining room to exchange them for others. The committee will continue the recycling process by passing on any magazines that are left to the Public Safety Building Jail in Syracuse every two or three months.

11 – 5 to 7 p.m., Andrea Abbott will hold office hours at the church.

14 – 9 a.m., Social Justice Committee. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:25 a.m., Announcements. 10:30 a.m., Andrea Abbott leads the worship service. 10:50 a.m., Religious education program. 11:45 a.m., Social time. The choir will have its regular once-a-month rehearsal in the sanctuary right after the service This Sunday is the deadline to bring non-perishable food items for the Central Square Lions Club Christmas baskets, and mittens, hats and scarfs for the Central Square Lioness Club. This is also the once-a-month Sunday on which the Social Justice Committee asks everyone to donate food items for our Downstairs Scotty, which later will be taken to the Downstairs Scotty thrift shop and food pantry at Divine Mercy Parish Center, 592 South Main Street, Central Square.

18 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread, Route 31, Clay. 5 to 7 p.m., Andrea Abbott will hold office hours at the church.

21 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:25 a.m., Announcements. 10:30 a.m., the Rev. Tanya Atwood-Adams leads the worship service. 10:50 a.m., Religious education program. 11:45 a.m., Social time.

24 – Christmas Eve candlelight service.

25 – 12 noon to 4 p.m., annual Christmas Day dinner for the community.

28 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:25 a.m., Announcements. 10:30 a.m., Andrea Abbott leads the worship service. 10:50 a.m., Religious education program. 11:45 a.m., Social time.

JANUARY 2015 CALENDAR

4 – Noon, Diane Cooper-Currier, executive director of Oswego County Opportunities, will speak about the challenges faced by low-income residents.

FAIR SHARE APPEAL

The Fair Share is the amount of the contribution our congregation is asked to give each fiscal year to the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) and its St. Lawrence District (SLD).

These contributions finance programs, services and resources that directly benefit and strengthen our congregation and the Unitarian Universalist movement as a whole.

Fair Share is based upon the number of members a congregation certified for the UUA General Assembly the previous February. This year's combined Fair Share contribution is expected to be about \$75 per member.

Our congregation has a line item in our budget, which covers \$2,500 of our contribution. Each year we try to pay our Fair Share in full. We are asking members if they are able to do so to write a check for \$75 payable to the church and to designate "Fair Share" in the memo. This would help us reach our goal. For more information, you may contact Marcia Burrell-Ihlow, treasurer.

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

If you have an announcement you would like to be included in the church's weekly e-mail announcements, please send it to Bob Haskell at rhaskell@twcny.rr.com by 1 p.m. on Sundays. Earlier submissions would be appreciated.

The living tradition which Unitarian Universalists share draws from many sources, including wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life.