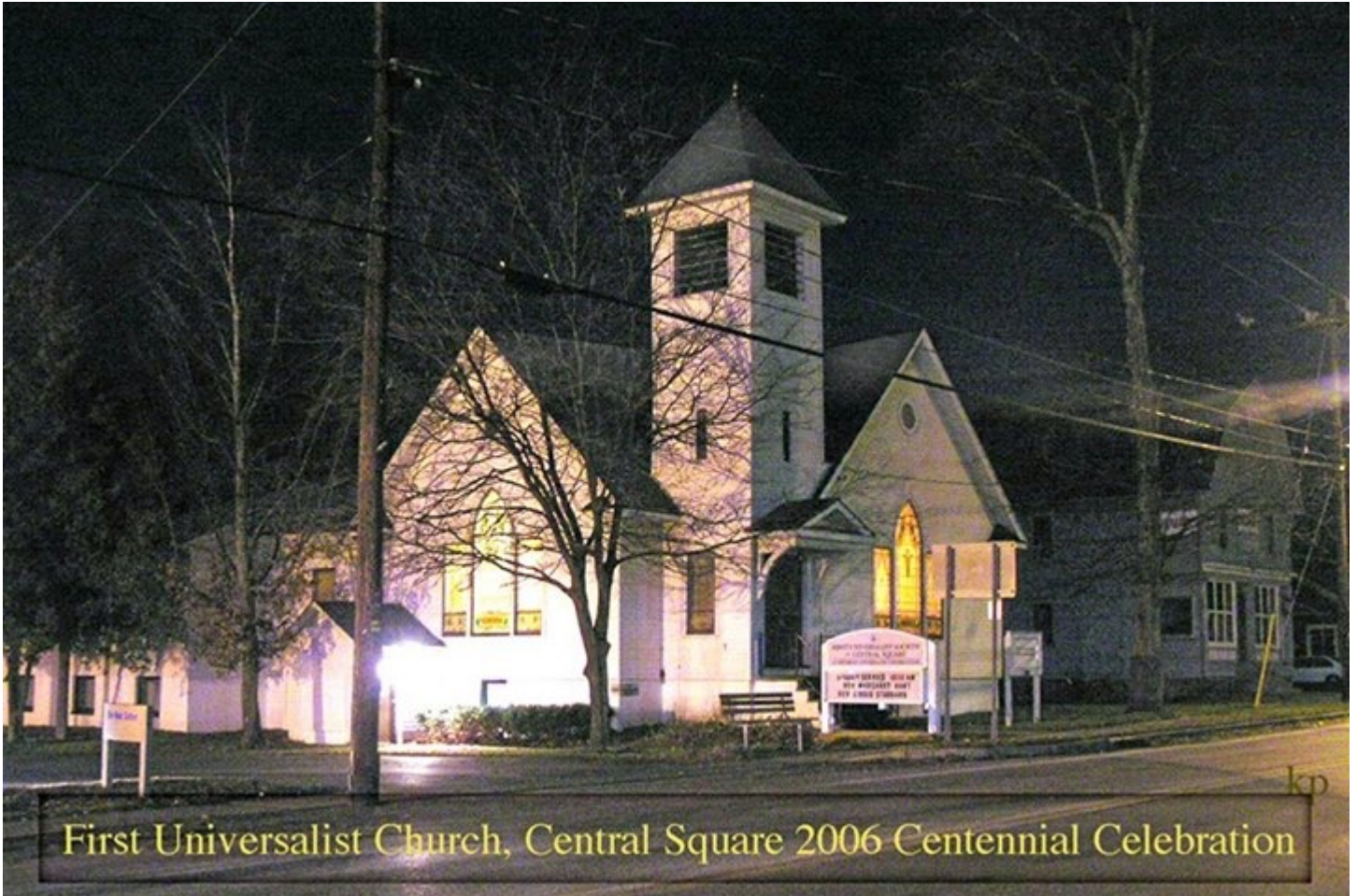


CIRCLE OF FELLOWSHIP



First Universalist Church, Central Square 2006 Centennial Celebration

**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.

Telephone: 315-668-6821

E-mail: ucentralsquare@gmail.com

Church website:
[http://www.
centralsquareuu.com](http://www.centralsquareuu.com)

Please have articles for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than 5 p.m.
on SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27. He prefers to receive articles via e-mail at rhaskell@twcny.rr.com.

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

A MINISTERIAL MINUTE

The dark, long nights are upon us for sure. By 6 o'clock I feel as though it must be about midnight. This is not my best time of year, although I try to find reasons to like it because it is going to be a while before I can see the days getting longer. I try to be inspired by "All Beautiful the March of Days," hymn #57 in our grey hymnal, and I sing to myself "love deepens round the hearth" and "a silent loveliness on hill and wood and field." I try to recapture the wonder at the beauty of winter that I had when I was a child but, faced with icy streets and frosted windshields, I often am less than grateful. On the other hand, I live here and would actually miss the seasons if I were anywhere else, the sense that we travel the arc of life, from infancy to death, with the turning of the Earth each year. Our lives proceed in one direction while beneath our feet the Earth itself enacts the stages of our lives in the course of a year, a play that never fails to inspire and awe us. It is no coincidence that this drama begins with the birth of a child as the old year dies, a story to remind us of the sacred nature of each child, for each child arrives to give us hope for a tomorrow of peace and joy. Let every heart prepare room to welcome in that hope.



The Rev. Andrea Abbott



A SERMON BY THE REVEREND WEISSBARD

The Rev. David Weissbard writes concerning his sermon for the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, December 6:

"Last December, I addressed the theme of 'Us and Them'. At that time, my focus, as America's, was on Black Lives Mattering. Now we are facing some of the same issues in another context. What kind of nation is this? Who are we as a people? I thought I knew. But now I am not so sure. My title is 'Huddled Masses'."

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT GROUP, MEDITATION

Anyone who is interested in the Spiritual Development Group or in 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 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

The Social Justice Committee met on Sunday morning, November 15.

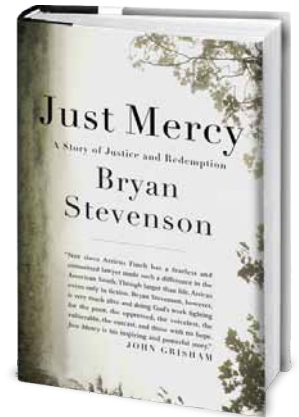
We are reading "Just Mercy" by Bryan Stevenson, and, as we finish, we'll pass books on to everyone interested. The discussion date will depend on the number of readers.

Tracy Kinne reported on the film, "The Hand That Feeds." This is a story about how low wage workers successfully stand up to abusive conditions. We have access to this DVD and may choose to show it here. We are investigating the cost of purchasing a DVD projector.

We plan to increase our publicity sites to include local colleges.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday morning, December 13. All are welcome to attend.

Nancy Hallock, committee chairperson



COAT DRIVE WILL GIVE REFUGEES A WARM WELCOME

The Social Justice Committee is beginning a winter coat drive to help refugees arriving in Central New York. We will donate the coats to the Refugee Resettlement Services Program at Catholic Charities of Onondaga County.



Ngoc Huynh, who was a Vietnamese refugee who came to the United States as a child with her family, works as job development manager in the program. She spoke about her experiences and those of the people with whom she works during a presentation at our church last fall. We collected winter coats for distribution through her program last year, and Ngoc said she would be glad for us to do the same again.

May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society and First Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse are conducting coat drives for refugees early in December, and we think by conducting ours throughout the winter, the three churches' efforts can complement each other.

Many of the people arriving in Central New York are from Africa or other areas that don't get as harsh winters as we do, so the coats will be welcomed.

For more information or to donate an item, contact Nancy Hallock via phone at 675-8357 or via e-mail at njhallock@gmail.com.

Thank you.

Social Justice Committee

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.

GREEN MINUTE: 'TIS THE SEASON FOR GIVING

Many people give to charities at this time of year. There are many organizations who need our help, but before you give them your hard-earned money you may want to check to see just how much of your dollar goes to their work and how much goes to administrative costs. Three of the major charity watchdogs are Charity Navigator (charitynavigator.org), Charity Watch (charitywatch.org) and Wise Giving Alliance (give.org). You won't find all charities on these websites, but the sites are good places to start.

For example, as a test, I looked up the charity Pure Water for the World to which our church has donated our loose change for a few years now. I found that Pure Water for the World is not yet rated on any of the sites. That does not mean that it's a "bad" charity. It means that you might need to do more research. I found that Charity Navigator looks at many small and local organizations and that Pure Water for the World is being considered for review for a rating. In the meantime, the website provides information you can use to review Pure Water's finances for yourself. If your charity is not listed, the website gives you information about what to look for, so you can do some research into the charity for yourself. Then I decided to look for a well known national charity, so I went to Wise Giving Alliance and found that the Sierra Club is accredited. I went to Charity Watch, which appears to have the largest list of charities, and found that the American Red Cross had an "A-" rating. I want to point out that I am by no means advocating for any of these charities; I use them only as examples of information you will find at each site.



I also want to mention an important and life-saving donation you can potentially make for which I am a personal advocate. It costs you nothing to sign up to donate, but it may be priceless to someone else. You may want to consider signing up as an organ donor when you renew your motor vehicle license or go to www.healthny.gov to sign up on the organ donor registry. This site gives you information about organ donation in New York state so you can make an informed decision before you decide to be a donor. It also provides you with the form so you can sign up if it is not time to renew your license.

Last, but no less important, there are so many people in our small church that give of themselves in countless ways throughout the year. We are a better and more welcoming place because of you. Thank you, and happy holidays.

Ellen LaPine
Outreach 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.



UU CIRCLE TO CONDUCT COOKIE SALE AGAIN

The UU Circle will hold its Annual Cookie Sale after the Sunday Service on December 20. This is a good time to stock up on a variety of treats for your holidays.

If possible, please bring homemade cookies, fudge or other goodies to sell at the sale. Please bring your bake goods in packages to sell.

You will get the chance to purchase cookies for home entertaining.

Thank you!

BOARD SPLINTERS

The Executive Board met on Sunday, November 8.

President Winfield Ihlow said that he had received a note from Trustee Susan Jennings stating that she was resigning from the Board. The Board wishes her well and wants her to know that her insight will be missed. The Trustee position she vacates will be filled during the regular election of officers at the annual congregational meeting in June.

Treasurer Marcia Burrell-Ihlow noted that the Operating Account was down a bit but pointed to large expenditures such as the insurance payment as the reason.

The Rev. Andrea Abbott thanked all for their efforts in making her ordination a big success. She said that she had received many compliments on the music.

Arne Hook reported that he is working on several projects around the church. The biggest one is fixing the hole in the roof on the back side of the east entrance. If anyone can help Arne as he makes repairs, please contact him.

Regarding Adult Religious Education, several members are reading “Just Mercy” by Bryan Stevenson. It was decided to open up the group read and discussion to the public as well.

The next Board meeting will be at 9 a.m. on Sunday, December 6.

Ellen LaPine, Recording Secretary



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.

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.

BLACK FRIDAY MARCHERS SUPPORT WALMART WORKERS

Six people marched back and forth on the sidewalk along US Route 104 in front of the Oswego Walmart for two hours on Black Friday morning, November 27, in support of Walmart workers seeking better pay and consistent schedules.

This was the second year our Social Justice Committee has sponsored the peaceful action. In New York state, actions were planned in Albany and New York City. In Oswego, those marching were the Rev. Andrea Abbott; Nancy Hallock; Barbara Kamerance of May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society in Syracuse; Tracy Kinne, a former Walmart worker; Jerry Lotierzo, who chairs Central New York Fight for \$15; and the Rev. Libbie Stoddard.



Marchers carried signs admonishing Walmart to listen to its workers; to respect its workers by providing a living wage and welcoming union representation; and calling for the minimum wage to become a living wage. Some wore red T-shirts calling for \$15 an hour for all workers.

A few people gave marchers a thumbs down, but many more honked their horns, presumably in support, and one man stopped to say he hoped the group won its goals.

This year, 1,400 people, including hundreds of Walmart employees, went on a 15-day fast leading up to Black Friday, according to Organization United for Respect, or OUR Walmart. The fast was designed to point out that many Walmart workers must rely on food stamps or food pantries to supplement their meals because they cannot afford nutritious food.

In Chicago, protesters outside Walmart combined their message with the Black Lives Matter movement. Actions also were planned in Tampa; Washington, D.C.; Miami; Minneapolis; Los Angeles; Oakland, California; Sacramento, California; Seattle; Portland, Oregon; and Detroit, according to OUR Walmart.

This was the fourth year of actions on behalf of Walmart workers. At least one church member has taken part in an action each year.

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

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.

The living tradition which Unitarian Universalists share draws from many sources, including Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

There will be a Christmas Eve service, "The Dove Visits," in our sanctuary at 6 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

Anyone interested in helping with the service is encouraged to see the Rev. Andrea Abbott. She says that one or two different readers would enhance this service.

GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS

Our church is collecting non-perishable food items for the Central Square Lions Club's 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 13.



DECORATING THE SANCTUARY WITH POINSETTIAS

We have many ornaments for the Christmas tree, so this year, on Sunday, December 13, instead of bringing an ornament for the tree, each person or family is encouraged to bring a poinsettia to decorate the sanctuary.

The Rev. Andrea Abbott asks that a tag be attached to each poinsettia naming someone to be remembered or a cause to be supported. Hint: The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's (UUSC) Guest at Your Table is one such cause as is our church!

Andrea plans to bring extra poinsettias for those unable to bring any.

This replaces an earlier idea of hang tags on the Christmas tree with the names of causes to which people give throughout the year.

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.



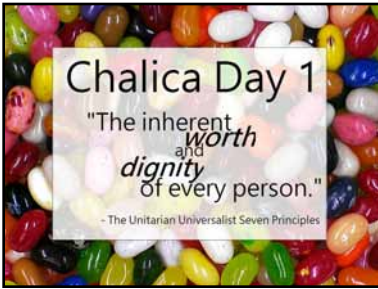
The living tradition which Unitarian Universalists share draws from many sources, including humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against the idolatries of the mind and spirit.

The living tradition which Unitarian Universalists share draws from many sources, including spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

CHILDREN TO STUDY VARIOUS TRADITIONS DURING DECEMBER

Holy cow! Where did the year go?

December is going to be a month of learning the traditions and religious practices from many cultures. We will start with our very own celebration: Creating Our Chalice for Chalica. This celebration starts on the first day of December and continues for seven days to include the seven Unitarian Universalist principles. Each day, a chalice is lit and the day is spent reflecting on the meaning of that day's principle and doing a good deed that honors that principle. The holiday first emerged in 2005 out of a wish to have a holiday organized around Unitarian Universalist values.



We will be sharing the true story of the dreidel and other traditions that we cherish and share with our ancestors.

We will end the month with the question: What can we do to help both at our church home and in the community to make a difference and act on it.

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

CHRISTMAS DINNER

We will have our annual Christmas dinner for the community on Friday, 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.



A NOTE OF THANKS

Thanks to these people for volunteering to serve as greeters on Sunday mornings: Priscilla Sparks, Susan Woods and Chet Perkins, November 29, and Priscilla Sparks and Susan Woods, December 6.

Thanks to these people for volunteering to host the social times on Sunday mornings: Kurt and Ronna Schindler, November 29; Susan Woods and Priscilla Sparks, December 6; Tracy Kinne, December 13; and Mary Fran Yafchak, December 27.



In Unitarian Universalism, you can bring your whole self: your full identity, your questioning mind, your expansive heart.

As Unitarian Universalists, we do not have to check our personal background and beliefs at the door: we join together on a journey that honors everywhere we've been before.

WELCOME A "GUEST AT YOUR TABLE"

Once again our congregation is participating in the annual Guest at Your Table program of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC).

Guest at Your Table is a fundraising and education program that supports the UUSC's human rights work. The committee invites everyone to take part: individuals, families, small groups, congregations, and community organizations. Over the decades, Guest at Your Table has raised millions of dollars for human rights projects that have made a real difference in people's lives.



This year Guest at Your Table highlights the empowerment of refugees and displaced people. One of UUSC's major focuses is serving the people who are most overlooked or discriminated against in the midst of humanitarian crises such as forced migration, large-scale conflicts, genocide, and natural disasters.

As UUSC celebrates its 75th anniversary this year, it looks back to its origin: Martha and the Rev. Waitstill Sharp helping European refugees escape persecution during World War II.

In recognition of the 75th anniversary, the top 75 congregations (either with top fundraising totals or having more than 75 percent member participation) will be included in the UUSC 75th anniversary time capsule. The capsule will be marked for opening in 2040 for

UUSC's 100th anniversary.

UUSC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, that advances human rights in more than a dozen countries around the world through grassroots collaboration. While grounded in Unitarian Universalist values, UUSC is nonsectarian and open to all. All donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Nancy Hallock, who is coordinating our congregation's participation in the program, points out that rather than individuals and families taking home "Guest at Your Table" boxes this year, they are asked to deposit contributions into a large box in the sanctuary. Donations by check can also be mailed to UUSC, PO Box 808, Newark, NJ 07101-0808.

Gifts of \$125 or more are eligible to be matched dollar for dollar by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, N.Y.

Unitarian Universalists are united in shared experience: our open worship services, religious education, and rites of passage; our work for social justice; our quest to include the marginalized; and our expressions of love.

Unitarian Universalists believe more than one thing. We think for ourselves, and reflect together, about important questions.

DECEMBER 2015 CALENDAR

6 – 9 a.m., Executive Board. 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 Sunday. 10:50 a.m., Religious education program. 11:45 a.m., Social time. This is 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.

7 – 5 to 7 p.m., The Rev. Andrea Abbott will hold office hours at the church. The sanctuary will also be open for anyone who wishes to use it for a time of reflection, prayer or meditation.

13 – 9:30 a.m., Social Justice Committee and choir practice. 10:25 a.m., Announcements. 10:30 a.m., The Rev. Andrea Abbott leads the worship service. Poinsettia decorations. 10:50 a.m., Religious education program. 11:45 a.m., Social

time. Noon, The choir will conduct its monthly rehearsal in the sanctuary. This is the deadline to bring non-perishable food items for the Central Square Lions Club’s Christmas baskets and mittens, hats and scarfs for the Central Square Lioness Club to church.

14 – 5 to 7 p.m., The Rev. Andrea Abbott will hold office hours at the church. The sanctuary will also be open for anyone who wishes to use it for a time of reflection, prayer or meditation.

17 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread, Route 31, Clay.

20 – 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. UU Circle Annual Cookie Sale.

21 – 5 to 7 p.m., The Rev. Andrea Abbott will hold office hours at the church. The sanctuary will also be open for anyone who wishes to use it for a time of reflection, prayer or meditation.

24 – 6 p.m., Christmas Eve service, “The Dove Visits.”

25 – 12 noon to 4 p.m., Christmas Day dinner.

27 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:25 a.m., Announcements. 10:30 a.m., The Rev. Andrea Abbott leads the worship service. 10:50 a.m., Religious education program. 11:45 a.m., Social time.

28 – 5 to 7 p.m., The Rev. Andrea Abbott will hold office hours at the church. The sanctuary will also be open for anyone who wishes to use it for a time of reflection, prayer or meditation.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 2015						
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	Notes	

December 2015 Calendar Template - editable form www.quickcalendarapp.com

Unitarian Universalists are diverse in faith, ethnicity, history and spirituality, but aligned in our desire to make a difference for the good.