



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
Robert Haskell, President	315-635-5294	Winfield Ihlow, Vice President	315-342-5939

JANUARY 2014

STUDENT MINISTER SNIPPET

The start of a new year! It seems to me that I was just writing something for the new year a few months ago, but I see that it has actually been a year. Someone is spinning the world around faster, I'm convinced. Looking back at what I had hoped to accomplish in the year just behind us, I see that some things did come to pass and others have been forwarded on to the new year, or possibly dropped altogether. The to-do list in our lives appears infinite, while time is definitely finite. Looking ahead, there are many more projects, ideas, possibilities that I hope to accomplish in the coming year. I'm sure New Year's 2015 will find me again with some done, some tabled, some abandoned. I'm sure many can identify with this problem. Still, as problems go, the desire to do more than one can is better, I think, than having endless empty hours. And so, though I will never be able to read all the books I want to read, get to as many church goals as I would like to, and probably will find that I won't get all the clutter cleaned out of my house (I think you can guess which project keeps getting dropped), I am grateful to have many reasons to meet the dawn of the new year. As a church, I think we have some ambitious goals in mind for the coming year, and I am glad to see that we are an active community with plans and hopes and dreams. Probably some will happen, others may not, but it is better to have goals and plans that exceed our grasp than to be ready to settle for less than we are capable of doing. And so, here's to the new year, to 2014, beckoning to us with promise and hope that, by our efforts, we can make at least our corner of the world a better, more welcoming and kindly place. After that, we can tackle the rest of the known universe. Happy New Year.

Andrea Abbott

THE REVEREND WEISSBARD'S SERMON TOPIC: "ON THE SAME PAGE AS THE POPE"

The Rev. David Weissbard writes concerning his sermon for the January 5 service: "Who would ever have thought that the Roman Catholic Church would have a leader who inspires so many Unitarian Universalists. There are, of course, major gaps in our beliefs but the agreements are wonderful! This Sunday we will be looking at the challenges that we and the pontiff agree lie ahead."

Please have articles for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than NOON on MONDAY, JANUARY 27. Bob would be grateful if everyone would not wait until the last minute to submit articles. 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.

VOICES FOR WORKER EQUALITY SERIES TO BEGIN JANUARY 5

Janet West Clerkin will speak in the sanctuary at noon on Sunday, January 5, as the first installment of the Social Justice Subcommittee's Voices for Worker Equality speaker and film series on issues of labor and equality. The series is being co-sponsored with the Workers' Center of Central New York.

Janet was among a group of Palladium-Times employees in Oswego who went on strike in the 1980s and formed The Oswego County Messenger, a newspaper that published for three years. She may be joined by one of her comrades, Carol (Wilczynski) Dwyer, who was the Messenger editor, and is bringing at least one prop: her old picket sign.

Janet gave us this biographical information:

"Janet West Clerkin was a founding member of The Oswego County Messenger, a daily newspaper formed in 1981 by striking employees of The Palladium-Times in Oswego. She covered the county government and environmental beats for the Messenger until the paper folded in 1984. Janet served as an officer of the Oswego News Employees Association Inc., the corporation that owned the Messenger, throughout the paper's existence.

"Janet is tourism and public information coordinator for the Oswego County Department of Community Development, Tourism and Planning. A resident of Parish, she has more than 20 years of experience managing public information and tourism marketing programs for Oswego County government.

"She has been a freelance writer for several years, contributing feature articles to The Post-Standard in Syracuse and other regional publications. She holds a bachelor of arts in English and history from the State University of New York at Oswego. She is involved in several statewide heritage tourism organizations and is vice president of the Parish Historical Society. She is a native of Chazy, New York."

So far, we have five additional speakers. Our plan is to host one program each month, probably on the first Sunday. Most programs will run about an hour and include a question-and-answer session, followed by light refreshments.

We have commitments from these people to speak:

-- Wally Reardon of Pulaski, an injured tower worker who coordinates the Workers at Heights Safety and Health Initiative, a project of the Occupational Health Clinical Center at Syracuse. Wally worked on towers for nearly 14 years. In 2010, he won one of the nation's highest occupational health and safety awards for grassroots activism.

-- Nancy Ghertner of Western New York, who will show "After I Pick the Fruit: The Lives of Migrant Women," a documentary she filmed in Western New York, Florida and Mexico. Nancy worked on the film for 10 years. This program will run a little longer than the others because of the length of the film. But Nancy Hallock and I attended a screening and talk by Nancy last spring, and it was worth every minute.

-- Dick and Vic DeGraff of Pulaski, who founded Grindstone Farm, an organic Community Supported Agriculture operation south of Pulaski.

-- Our very own Rebecca Fuentes, who recently was promoted from part-time to full-time organizer for the Workers' Center of Central New York. Rebecca will discuss her efforts helping dairy farm workers.

-- Yours truly. Naturally, I will talk about "On Sale: Employers Get Good Workers Dirt Cheap." Enough said.

Nancy Hallock is exploring the possibility of a seventh segment involving "The Hunger Games" and how "real" they perhaps are.

Tracy Kinne

A THANK YOU NOTE

The church was beautifully decorated and the Christmas tree was put up in the East Room where we could see all of the beautiful ornaments. We have to thank our special elves who took their time to make everything shiny and seasonal. Thanks to Arne, Andrea, Janie, Steve, Alec, Barbara, Susan Woods and Priscilla Sparks. Nancy Hallock and Barbara donated garland and greens to add to the festive look that we have all enjoyed.

Thanks to Kurt and all who gave of their time to provide a traditional Christmas dinner for anyone in the community who wished to come. It has been a wonderful tradition.

Thanks to all who have given their time and energy during this busy season and to anyone whom I may have forgotten to mention. It makes a wonderful difference and is appreciated so much by so many.

Ann Peterson, corresponding secretary

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

UU CIRCLE TO CONDUCT ANNUAL MEETING

The UU Circle will make its annual report to the congregation along with a potluck luncheon immediately after the Sunday, January 19, service. The UU Circle will also be asking for volunteers to help with the Cabaret Night fundraiser to be held on Saturday, February 8.

Barbara Kamerance

GREEN MINUTE: GARDEN DREAMS

We are now in the cold, dark days of winter that make many of us dream of sunshine and digging in the dirt. If you garden, you know that this is the time of year that seed catalogs start to show up in your mail. As you flip through the pages you will probably see the next miracle veggie or flower that could be the centerpiece of your garden. However, if you're like me, you have been taken in by a pretty green face more than once only to be left wondering if it was the heat, cold, sun, soil, bugs, etc. that caused your baby not to grow.

Vowing not to be duped by shiny leaves and another perfect produce model again, I searched around the Web and found a site called Smartgardner.com. It's got some good tools to help you decide just what will work for your garden this year. You start by giving the site your ZIP code and number of people in your household. You give the site the size of your garden and select plants that you might want in the garden. The site will give you suggestions about the types of plants that would work for your location. Once you have selected your plants, the site will give you a layout based on your growing conditions. It will then set you up with weekly to-dos to get your garden going and to keep it going during the growing season.

The site also sets you up with a garden journal so you can keep track of what you did from year to year. There are growing tips and you can see other people's posts about what worked and what didn't work for them.

Like many free Web sites there are ways to buy seeds and other things within the site, but you don't have to buy anything to use it.

If you are thinking about growing more of your own food this year, the Web site could be a handy tool to make changes. If you haven't gardened before but want to get started growing some of your own food or some flowers, the information will be very helpful.

So gardeners, don't despair, the warmer weather will be back and as you dream about good, green things from the earth, you can have a little help making those dreams become reality.

Ellen LaPine, Outreach Committee



SUMMER CAMP FOR UU YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Registration for UU summer camp experiences for our youth and families is under way. Sessions fill quickly at many of the UU Camp and Conference Centers and now is the time to register to avoid waiting lists.

Many youth from the region attend Unirondack, a UU Camp and Conference Center in the forever-wild Adirondacks in Upstate New York. The camp provides an opportunity for children and families to live our UU values in a creative, accepting and nurturing community outside the doors of our congregations. For more information about Unirondack, and to register for summer camp or weekend programs, visit its Web site at <http://www.unirondack.org/>

Other Camp and Conference Centers in the region include Rowe, Ferry Beach, Star Island, and Murray Grove. In addition, for folks looking for experiences farther from home, there is DeBenneville Pines in California, U-Bar-U in Texas, Unistar in Minnesota, and The Mountain in North Carolina.

Many of the centers have year-round programs. All provide an opportunity for personal growth, fellowship and community.

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

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE PROGRAM WINDING DOWN

It is requested that boxes for the annual Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's Guest at Your Table program be returned to the church by no later than Sunday, January 5.

If you would prefer, you may give a check to Nancy Hallock, our congregation's Gift at Your Table program coordinator, or support UUSC directly online at www.uusc.org/givetoguest. Donations received online will be automatically credited to our congregation.

Guest at Your Table is an annual tradition in which congregation members learn about several people with whom UUSC is working. This year, UUSC is featuring people who have empowered others to realize their human rights. These people are your "guests," and the UUSC asks you to share your blessings with them to support our shared mission.

One "Story of Hope" focuses on Nelson Escobar:

"Workers' rights are human rights. When workers are paid unfairly or treated poorly because of their race, language, or gender, it is important to stand up for the rights of those people. Nelson Escobar, the chairperson of the Worker Action Committee at the Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center (NNAWJC), has been the target of unfair treatment by employers himself and is now working to protect workers around Arkansas.



"Northwest Arkansas is home to many industries that too often mistreat their workers. There are many poultry processing plants, hatcheries, and factory farms, and many people have jobs in construction, service, and agriculture. The state is also home to the fastest growing Latino and Marshallese population in the country. Poverty, immigration status, and language barriers make it easier for employers to treat their workers badly. Nelson and NNAWJC give workers the information and help they need to

make sure their human rights and dignity are not ignored.

"Nelson has a long history of witnessing injustice. He was born in El Salvador and lived there through the 12-year Salvadoran Civil War, which left almost 75,000 people dead and an additional 20,000 in tent camps with no food, water, medical care, or money. Nelson came to the United States seeking asylum, hoping to find justice and dignity after living through such a horrific experience.

"He began working at a cleaning company in Arkansas but soon felt taken advantage of by his bosses. He approached NNAWJC to ask for help writing a letter in English demanding that he be treated fairly. The letter worked, and Nelson stayed involved with NNAWJC to help others seek justice. After spending time as a volunteer, he began working full-time to restore his community's dignity as he was able to restore his own.

"Workers in northwest Arkansas are often bullied by their employers into staying silent when they're treated poorly. Many have families to support and cannot afford to lose their jobs, despite how low their wages are. People with undocumented immigration status are threatened with deportation unless they cooperate with their company's unjust practices. Employers also take advantage of workers who don't speak English by coercing them to sign their rights away. This allows companies to continue underpaying workers (a practice called wage theft), ignoring safety rules, refusing to pay people when they get hurt at work, and overlooking sexual harassment and even worse treatment within factories.

"Nelson is teaching workers to demand the wages and the rights they deserve. NNAWJC offers training for workers to learn English, computer skills, workplace health and safety information, and more. Although he has struggled with English himself, he leads by example and does not let language barriers stop him from standing up for himself and his community. With UUSC's help, Nelson is empowering workers around Arkansas to speak up, regain control of their lives, and work together for justice."

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 respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

CURTAIN TO RISE SOON ON CABARET NIGHT

The first annual Cabaret Night will take place at our church at 7 p.m. on Saturday, February 8. Students from Central Square's Paul V. Moore High School as well as from the Oswego County Youth Orchestra will perform.

I am also looking for church members who would like to perform as well. If you would like to perform a solo or participate as part of a small group, please let me know as soon as possible.

This event will also include light refreshments and dessert items. If you aren't a performer but would like to help, contributing such items would be a great way to participate.

This is a community outreach event as well as a fundraising event for the church. The church will donate 40 percent of the proceeds to the Paul V. Moore High School music program.

If you have any questions or would like to perform, you can contact me either by e-mail at leighpbmusic@gmail.com or by phone at 657-5904.

Leigh Parry-Benedict, music coordinator

BOOK CLUB

To anyone interested in joining the Book Club: We have not made a definite selection for our next read. We will start one after the holidays.

Barbara Kamerance has suggested "Zealot." There is a two page write up on this book in the winter issue of the UU World to help you decide.

The CNY Reads One Book has chosen as its 2014 selection "The Namesake." You can find out more about the book on the onlib.org Web site. This book is available in a book club kit.

Also on this library home page you can search book club kits to find 185 selections available. Take some time to check out these ideas and feel free to offer your own choices. We will make a pick soon. Reply to me or Barbara.

Nancy Hallock

VIDEO DISCUSSION GROUP

The Video Discussion Group will view "Wendell Berry, Poet & Prophet" when it meets in the Goettel Room at 7 p.m. on Friday, January 3.

In a rare television interview, Bill Moyers talks to visionary, author and farmer Wendell Berry about a sensible, but no-compromise plan to save the Earth.

The "Moyers & Company" program also examines the critical role of honey bees in the food supply and the threats they face in "The Dance of the Honey Bee."

And Moyers shares his views on the recent government shutdown.

The video group plans to have supper at the Akropolis Restaurant on Route 11 just north of Central Square at 5:30 p.m. on the same day. Please let Janie

Garlow know via e-mail at mjgarlow@aol.com or via telephone at 315-436-2238 by Thursday, January 2, if you plan to attend the supper so that she may make a reservation.

Everyone is invited to attend.

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 Wednesday, January 15.

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

For more information about the group, you may contact Mary or Chet Perkins. Everyone is invited to attend.

IF A WORSHIP SERVICE IS IN DOUBT

There are various ways to find out if a worship service will be held on a Sunday morning when winter weather is raging.

1. You may call Janie Garlow at 315-436-2238 or Chester Perkins at 315-668-6719.

2. You may turn to Channel 10 television, Channel 9 television and WSYR radio.

Ann Peterson, corresponding secretary and an Outreach Committee member, has made arrangements with those media outlets to broadcast a notice of any cancellation.

3. You may check your e-mail for a message from Bob Haskell.

The decision as to whether a worship service will be conducted will be made by 8:30 a.m.

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.

BOARD SPLINTERS

Andrea Abbott, student minister, informed Executive Board members at their regular monthly meeting on Sunday morning, December 1, that she had performed the dedication ceremony for Kelsey Mae Wells.

Barbara Kamerance noted that she will do only historical appraisals, not value assessments or appraisals, at the UU Circle antique china program on March 16.

Nancy Hallock, Outreach Committee chairperson, reported that the Social Justice Subcommittee, in collaboration with the UU Circle, is planning a Red Cross blood drive.

Board members voted to contribute \$75 to Camp Unirondack.

Arnold Hook, Administration Committee chairperson, recommended that the church continue its policy with the Church Mutual Insurance Company.

Nancy Hallock reported that the Social Justice Subcommittee's Voices for Worker Equality speaker and film series on issues of labor and equality would begin on Sunday, January 5. The series is being co-sponsored with the Workers' Center of Central New York.

JANUARY 2014 CALENDAR

3 – 5:30 p.m., Supper at the Akropolis restaurant. 7 p.m., Video Discussion Group meets in the Goettel Room.

5 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., the Rev. David Weissbard leads the worship service. Random Acts of Kindness. 10:50 a.m., Religious education. Noon, Janet West Clerkin, one of several newspaper employees who went on strike from The Palladium-Times in Oswego in the 1980s and formed a newspaper that published for three years, will speak in the sanctuary as the first installment of the Social Justice Subcommittee's Voices for Worker Equality speaker and film series on issues of labor and equality. This is also the once-a-month Sunday on which the Outreach Committee's Social Justice Subcommittee asks everyone to bring magazines to the church dining room to exchange them for others. The subcommittee 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 – 9:30 to 11 a.m., Choir practices in the sanctuary. All are welcome to add their voices to the group.

12 – 9 a.m., Social Justice Subcommittee. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Andrea Abbott leads the worship service. 10:50 a.m., Religious education. This is the once-a-month Sunday on which the Outreach Committee's Social Justice Subcommittee 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 St. Michael's Church Parish Center, 592 South Main Street, Central Square.

15 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread, Route 31, Clay.

17 – 5:30 p.m., Supper at the Akropolis restaurant. 7 p.m., Video Discussion Group meets in the Goettel Room.

19 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., the Rev. Tanya Atwood Adams leads the worship service. 10:50 a.m., Religious education. 11:45 a.m., Annual UU Circle soup and salad potluck luncheon, meeting and election of officers.

26 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Andrea Abbott leads the worship service. 10:50 a.m., Religious education.

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 ACCEPTS NON-FOOD ITEMS

The Outreach Committee will accept non-food items for the Downstairs Scotty every Sunday.

Such non-food items include soap, detergent, bathroom and facial tissues, toothpaste, and the like.

The Outreach Committee asks everyone to donate food items on the second Sunday of each month.

The collection box is in the church dining room.

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.