



CIRCLE OF FELLOWSHIP

The First Universalist Society of Central Square

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

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

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 Benedict, Music Coordinator	315-303-4760	Ronna Schindler, RE Chairperson	315-623-7685
Robert Haskell, President	315-635-5294	Winfield Ihlow, Vice President	315-342-5939

JANUARY 2013

STUDENT MINISTER SNIPPET

12:01 January 1st is usually remarkably like 11:59 December 31st. The natural world doesn't take much notice of our arbitrary definitions of time. After the sparkling wine has lost its fizz, we usually find that the world is spinning pretty much as it was before the holidays. New Year's resolutions have a very short shelf life. What can we do in this new year that will create the changes that are so needed, whether it's personal changes or changes to our society? How do we move forward? How do we create change? That is a question that has bedeviled some of the greatest minds throughout the ages. I'm not going to begin to second guess them! I only have a suspicion that there is no one answer. I also suspect that change is the result of a lot of little acts and a lot of little acts by many, many people. Unlike the solutions in the films we see, it is gradual and requires more than one hero. In other words, the answers lie within each of us. I would wish for us all the fortitude to create needed, relevant changes throughout this year, both in our own lives and in the wider world we all share.

Andrea Abbott

A NOVEL INSPIRES A SERMON BY THE REVEREND WEISSBARD

The Rev. David Weissbard writes concerning his sermon for the January 6 service:

"The Sandy Hook slaughter is still very much on my mind. The grief I am experiencing, as I trust many of you are also, leads me to turn to 'Excremental Theology', a sermon inspired by Milos Kundera's philosophical novel, 'The Incredible Lightness of Being'. If I could have delivered only one sermon in my entire ministry, this would be the one I would choose.

"I offer an alert – not an apology. Important to the sermon is the use of a 'vulgar' ancient term for excrement. A few people have, in the past, judged hearing that term in church unjustifiably offensive, but to use a euphemism in the sermon would violate a major point. My intent is not to shock, but to hold up an important dimension of life that we deny at our own peril. It is your choice whether or not to risk being offended."

Please have articles for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than NOON on MONDAY, JULY 30.
His e-mail address is rhaskell@twcnny.rr.com.

SOCIAL JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE, OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Hello, 2013!! The Social Justice Subcommittee will meet at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, January 13, in an attempt to reclaim our assigned schedule and be more predictable.

At our December meeting we discussed the issue of “Workers Rights,” including minimum wage, living wage, and immigrant labor. I have Tracy Kinne’s book “On Sale” for anyone to borrow. It is about her years working at Walmart. The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) has a campaign to raise awareness about the plight of restaurant workers. We will explore the work of local groups, such as the Workers’ Center of Central New York and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), on this issue to educate ourselves and hopefully partner with them on future activities. Please join us to plan options for 2013.

Nancy Hallock, chairperson

GREEN MINUTE: BORAX AND ITS MANY USES

Borax, also known as sodium borate, is a naturally occurring substance and an eco-friendly solution for many things around the house. Most commonly used as a cleaning agent, it has many other uses. Safety warning: Just because borax is natural, it doesn’t mean it’s harmless. You should always use gloves when handling it and keep it out of reach of children and pets. While safe in the diluted solutions, borax could be quite harmful to children and pets if ingested.

I admit I have not tried all of these but will try several during the coming year as I try to use fewer phosphates in 2013. If you find something works particularly well, please let me know.

Make an all-purpose cleaner by mixing 2 tablespoons borax and 2 cups hot water in a spray bottle. Make your own floor and wall cleaner by mixing 1/3 cup borax, 1 tablespoon ammonia and 1 teaspoon dish detergent into 1 gallon of water.

As a laundry detergent, add one cup of borax to each load to boost your cleaning power. Remove mildew and mustiness from linens by soaking them in 2 cups of borax mixed with 2 quarts of water. Let the linens sit for a few hours, then rinse them clean. Scrub dirty pots and pans with a mixture of 1 teaspoon of borax and 1 teaspoon of warm water. Borax is non-abrasive; it will work on the grime without damaging the surface material. Make your own dishwasher detergent by mixing 1 tablespoon borax and 1 tablespoon baking soda.

Remove stains from stainless steel or porcelain sinks by making a paste with 1 cup borax and 1/4 cup lemon juice. Using a sponge or cloth, rub the stain with the paste. Rinse with warm water.

For your toilet, dissolve 1/2 cup of borax with 1 gallon of water. Scrub the toilet with a strong brush, let it sit and flush to rinse. Since it is non-abrasive, borax can also be used in the bathtub and on counters.

Clean mold, mildew and grime from outdoor furniture mixing 1 teaspoon dish detergent, 1 teaspoon borax and 1 quart warm water in a spray bottle. Spray, let sit, scrub with a brush, rinse.

Kill weeds by sprinkling borax where you’ve seen weeds previously appear. This is useful for weeds that surface in concrete cracks and on walkways, but shouldn’t be used in the garden because it will also kill your plants. Sprinkle some borax around the perimeter of the house to control ants and other intruding insects. Keep roaches, waterbugs, and ants away by sprinkling a combination of equal parts all-natural borax and sugar. Keep the mice out by sprinkling borax on the floor along the wall.

Remove a stubborn stain by mixing 1 cup of borax with 2 cups of warm water and apply the paste directly to the stain. Let it sit, and then launder as usual. Remove carpet stains by dampening the stain thoroughly and rubbing some borax on it. Vacuum it, then finish it off with a vinegar and water solution. Let it dry, and repeat if necessary. Use this same method on soiled mattresses. It will get rid of both the odor and stain. Remove rust by mixing the above solution with a tablespoon of lemon juice.

Ellen LaPine
Outreach Committee

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

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE BOXES DUE BACK

Guest at Your Table boxes are to be returned to me by Sunday, January 6.

It is recommended that you convert your change into a check. The money is mailed with a list of contributors together in one envelope. If you have already sent in a check or PayPal donation, please let me know. We are saving the boxes to reuse in 2013.

Guest at Your Table is an annual tradition of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). The money raised through this program supports UUSC human-rights work in the United States and around the world.

UUSC is an independent membership-based human-rights organization and receives no money from any government or the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA).

Guest at Your Table has been a part of UUSC and UU culture since it began in 1975. Today, more than 530 UU congregations in the United States, and some around the world, participate in this annual tradition.

Thanks very much.

Nancy Hallock

BOOK CLUB

“The Life of Pi,” written by Yann Martel, will be discussed at noon on Sunday, January 27.

You need to get your own copy of the book: buy or borrow it from a friend or a library.

Our next selection is “Team of Rivals,” which I look forward to reading, but think the size of this book may scare off our regular group. I would like suggestions for a different non-fiction book for all to consider in January. Let me know your thoughts.

Nancy Hallock (njhallock@gmail.com)

VIDEO DISCUSSION GROUP

The Video Discussion Group will view “What We Can Learn from Lincoln” when it meets in the Goettel Room at 7 p.m. on Friday, January 4.

In this program from the PBS “Moyers & Company” series, Pulitzer Prize winner Tony Kushner, who wrote the screenplay for the film “Lincoln,” joins Bill Moyers to talk about finding the man inside the monument, and what Abraham Lincoln — 147 years after his death — can still teach us all about politics, compromise, and the survival of American democracy.

Moyers also urges everyone to remember the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre by name. He also rejects the notion of doubling down on guns and body armor as a response, and encourages everyone to work hard on realistic and moral solutions.

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 3, 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 16.

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 Nancy Haskell or Chet Perkins. Everyone is invited to attend.

A REMINDER TO ALL

All or parts of our church building can be rented by non-members and organizations.

Examples include non-member weddings, community activities, fundraisers, etc.

We have a building use policy and fee schedule that is available from Bob Haskell.

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 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.

UU CIRCLE TO SPONSOR WORKSHOP

The UU Circle will be holding a Saturday workshop on “Ethical Living” from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on January 19. Topics will include information and discussions on cooking and diet, environmental issues and conservation, physical and mental health, and economics.

Barbara Kamerance

RAMSEY LUDINGTON WRITES FROM FLORIDA

Thursday, December 13th, 2012

Dear Fellow Church Members,

Greetings from Key Largo, Florida. I arrived here in my ketch Ramsey’s Dream two weeks ago today.

The trip lasted 68 days, nearly 10 weeks. I had to stop several times for repairs.

Ramsey’s Dream came through fairly well. I lost 20 pounds but I feel great.

I am presently living in my brother’s home which is located on a canal that leads to the Atlantic Ocean. Ramsey’s Dream is berthed just outside my window.

The weather is very pleasant with brilliant sunshine and breezes.

Other than being on the New York Barge Canal and the Hudson River I was on the Intercoastal Waterway (ICW). The ICW extends from Maine along the East Coast, around Florida, the Gulf of Mexico to the Texas/Mexico border. There were many other boats on the ICW presumably on their way to Florida.

I hope to return home starting around April 1st, 2013.

Sincerely,
Ramsey

CUUPS CORNER

The Central New York Chapter of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) continues to hold rituals on the sabbats of the Wheel of the Year.

If you’re not a Pagan you may not know what the Wheel of the Year or those sabbats are. The Pagan tradition comes from an agrarian time when one’s survival was dependent on a good planting season and a good harvest. The Wheel of the Year goes around in those cycles with no beginning and no end. The sabbats include three planting celebrations: Imbolc on or around February 1; Ostara on the Vernal Equinox; and Beltane on May 1. They are followed by a “wait for the harvest” celebration, called Litha, on the Summer Solstice. We then have our three harvest sabbats: Lammas or Lughnasadh on or about August 1; Mabon on the Autumnal Equinox; and Samhain on October 31. Then comes Yule, where we celebrate on the Winter Solstice that the harvest is in and the Wheel keeps on turning.

In addition to celebrating the sabbats, our CUUPS chapter will sponsor some other events this spring.

The first will be a “Dessert & Divination” Fundraiser to benefit members of SPIRAL, the Syracuse University’s student Pagan organization, who are raising money for a trip to England for an interfaith field journey. This is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Saturday, February 9.

The second is a 5-class series to be led by Kurt Hohmann on the Runes, a Norse alphabet that is used for divination. These classes are tentatively scheduled for Thursday evenings in March, times to be announced later.

For more information about CUUPS and our activities, please contact Laura Hudson at 315-391-9949 or hudlakat@yahoo.com.

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, reports Nancy Hallock, committee chairperson.

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.

PRESIDENTIAL REFLECTIONS

Dear Friends,

As the new year begins, I am reminded of a recent episode, “The Patriot in Purgatory,” of the television program “Bones.” Dr. Temperance “Bones” Brennan, speaking with her “mate,” FBI Special Agent Seeley Booth, after attending a basketball game the previous evening, cites what she says is the teamwork philosophy of Phil Jackson. Jackson is the former coach of the Chicago Bulls and the Los Angeles Lakers, National Basketball Association teams. Brennan, a highly skilled forensic anthropologist who works at the Jeffersonian Institute in Washington, D.C., and who writes novels on the side, says that Jackson writes in one of his books that basketball teams are “like organisms that can only survive through interdependence.” Brennan also says that Jackson writes that “our real legacy is not what we accomplish individually but what we do for others and how we motivate them to work together for a common goal.”

Brennan then tells Booth that she has summoned five of her interns, who normally work individually with her, to come to work together at the Institute to achieve a common goal. “Bones” says that she will serve as their coach. She assigns the interns to identify long-unidentified remains, and the five begin to work individually with success. But they soon discover that only if they work together will they have a chance to solve one difficult assignment. And, as one might expect in a television show, they succeed within the hour.

Of course, many other people have cited the same or similar philosophy credited by “Bones” to Jackson. But after viewing this television show I began to think of our First Universalist Society as a community, some might say a “blessed community,” that can survive only if some of Jackson’s teamwork philosophy, as cited by “Bones,” is followed.

And why do we want the Society to survive? The Covenant of Right Relations adopted by the congregation at its annual meeting in June 2012 offers one answer:

“... to create our own welcoming, respectful, safe and vibrant spiritual community where each person can search for truth and meaning in an environment that builds connections, renews spirit, and inspires action. While realizing that we do not always live up to our ideals, we know we can choose to grow in a manner that promotes a religious community grounded in love and justice. In pledging to follow these guidelines, we will serve our own spiritual development, one another, our religious home, our local community, our larger faith, and our world.”

Our society’s survival does not depend on the individual efforts of the clergy, the music coordinator, the religious education leader or the various officers and committees of the congregation. Such efforts are vital, but the society’s survival depends on the cooperation of everyone. Everyone, including those who sit in the pews, has a vital role to play – and must play it – if success is to be achieved. No one person “owns” the church. It is the church of everyone who attends it and participates in its activities. Of course, there are and will be differences of opinions about a number of things. These differences should not be downplayed but neither should they keep the congregation from achieving its common goal.

Let it be so during the new year.

Bob

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, January 6.

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 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.

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.

JANUARY 2013 CALENDAR

1 – New Year’s Day.

4 – 5:30 p.m., Supper at the Akropolis restaurant. 7 p.m., Video Discussion Group meets in the Goettel Room to see “What We Can Learn from Lincoln.”

6 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. David Weissbard. Sermon topic: “Excremental Theology.” Random Acts of Kindness. 10:50 a.m., Religious education. Deadline to return Guest at Your Table boxes to Nancy Hallock. This is the once-a-month Sunday on which you are asked by the Outreach Committee’s Social Justice Subcommittee to bring magazines to the church dining room so that you may exchange them for others. Nancy Hallock, committee chairperson, 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.

12 – 9:30 to 11 a.m., Choir rehearsal.

13 – 9 a.m., Spiritual Committee. 9:30 a.m., Social Justice Subcommittee. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott. 10:50 a.m., Religious education. This is the once-a-month Sunday on which everyone is asked by the Outreach Committee’s Social Justice Subcommittee to donate food items for the Downstairs Scotty, which later will be taken to the Food Bank at St. Michael’s Church.

16 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread, Route 31, Clay.

18 – 5:30 p.m., Supper at the Akropolis restaurant. 7 p.m., Video Discussion Group meets in the Goettel Room.

19 – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., UU Circle workshop on “Ethical Living.”

20 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. Tanya Atwood-Adams. 10:50 a.m., Religious education.

21 – Martin Luther King Jr. birthday.

27 – 9 a.m., Executive Board. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott. 10:50 a.m., Religious education. Noon, Book Club to discuss “The Life of Pi,” written by Yann Martel.

WINDOW RESTORATION

The Executive Board is asking members and friends of the congregation to contribute financially so that the restoration of the large stained-glass windows on the west and north sides of the sanctuary can be completed.

Work has begun on the restoration of the large stained-glass window on the west side of the sanctuary. It is the intention of the Executive Board to have work on the restoration of the large stained-glass window on the sanctuary’s north side begun once the large stained-glass window on the sanctuary’s west side has been restored.

Any checks made out to the church for this purpose should include the words “Window Fund” on the memo line. Checks may be deposited in the regular collection plates on Sunday mornings or mailed to Marcia Burrell-Ihlow, treasurer.

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 collection box is in the church dining room.