



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

SEPTEMBER 2013

STUDENT MINISTER SNIPPET

Can anyone think of September without thinking “back to school”? No matter how long since our own school days, which in my case were just last May, no matter that an increasing number of schools seem to start in August, for me September says back to school. I’m sure we all have varied responses to the thought of school. For some, education is their profession, their life and their calling. For some, it may be happy memories of learning and friends and activities. For others, the memories may not be so happy if school involved struggle or rejection. I have met more than one person for whom school was a refuge from a harsh home life, a place where they felt they could be appreciated and valued. And I have met others for whom school was repressive and stifling. As with any large institution, formal educational systems mean very different things to different people.

One thing I do know about Unitarian-Universalists, however, one generalization I can make with confidence is that, no matter how we experienced our encounters with the education system, we all share an interest in learning and growing. The evidence for this is that we are here, in this sort of church, a church that encourages thought and discussion and dissent, a church that encourages us to learn for ourselves. This is a place in which it is safe to explore, safe to try new things, safe to grow.

We begin the church year at about the same time of year that the yellow buses make their first rounds. This year we will have incoming Sunday on September 8. We celebrate our first Sunday with a Water Communion that symbolizes our coming together after the summer. We will bring our hopes for a church dedicated to learning and growing together in the coming year.

Andrea Abbott

INCOMING SUNDAY

Andrea Abbott will lead the congregation in a Water Communion observance during the service at 10:30 a.m. on Incoming Sunday, September 8.

Andrea has said, “Please remember to collect a sample of water that reflects any journeys made over the summer. Water from your kitchen faucet is fine as well, because many of the most important journeys are done at home.”

The congregation will also observe Membership Sunday on that day for those wishing to join the church.

THE REVEREND WEISSBARD TO SPEAK ON "RECLAIMING WHOLENESS"

The Rev. David Weissbard writes concerning his sermon for the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, September 1:

"The central function of religion is to help us gain perspective on the meaning of our lives. Many religions turn to a sacred book for those insights. I recall a Unitarian pamphlet from the '40s which suggested that we have a 'Loose-Leaf Bible', which is to say that ours is open – not sealed – it does not look only to the past for insight.

"Throughout my ministry, I have been on the lookout for new ways of understanding our ways of being in the world. One of the contributors to my loose-leaf bible is Carol Lee Flinders whose book, 'The Values of Belonging', retitled the following year 'Rebalancing the World', provided me with one of those 'Ah ha!' experiences.

"Her work provides the basis of my September sermon: 'Reclaiming Wholeness'."

GREEN MINUTE: GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD LABELING

Genetic modification (GM) shuffles the genes of unrelated species. In food this has been done mainly in crop varieties to resist herbicides or to produce insecticidal compounds so farmers might possibly use fewer chemicals. Milk from dairy cows given a GM hormone forces them to give more milk. This type of engineering has been banned in some countries and adopted in others. Those that have banned it generally have done so because the actual benefits of GM varieties remain unclear, especially as pests adapt to the new traits.

In 1992 the United States Food and Drug Administration ruled that GM foods are "substantially equivalent" to their non-GM counterparts but that ruling has met with substantial controversy as many say it was made on very limited data and the government has failed to require new safety testing. Studies have linked genetically modified organisms (GMOs) to cancer, deterioration of liver and kidney function, stomach inflammation, and impaired embryonic development.

In the United States, we have come to expect that our food is labeled so that we know what is in it. We require labels to tell us if sugar, salt, MSG, artificial flavors or colors, or other ingredients have been added. We require meat labels to tell us if the meat has been pumped up with a saltwater "flavor solution." We require milk to tell us whether it is skim, whole, 1 or 2 percent fat. Why then are we not told if we are eating GM food.

Many surveys have shown that the overwhelming majority of Americans want GM foods to be labeled. Until that happens, there is a chart at <http://goo.gl/fPFmw> provided by Mother Earth News that will help you learn how to avoid GM foods.

If you are concerned about GM foods, Assembly member Linda B. Rosenthal, D-Manhattan, is the primary sponsor of New York State Assembly bill A.3525-A, and has the backing of prominent GMO opponents such as the Center for Food Safety, Consumers Union, Food and Water Watch, GMO Free NY, Good Boy Organics, Natural Resources Defense Council, New York Public Interest Research Group, and the North East Organic Farming Association. She says, "The vast majority of New Yorkers, and all Americans for that matter, would like to know whether the food they eat contains GMOs." Rosenthal told the Daily News in an e-mail, "I am confident that after a comprehensive public airing, where both sides have an opportunity to provide testimony, the case for labeling of GMO-containing food products will be categorically made."

If you are concerned about GMOs in your food, check this bill out and contact your local Assembly member to tell him or her that you want New York State to require that our foods are labeled when they are produced using GMOs.

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 acceptance of one another
and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.

SOCIAL JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE, OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Social Justice Subcommittee met on Sunday, August 18. Our next Adopt-a-Highway pickup will be at 8 a.m. on Sunday, September 29. We made a \$300 contribution to Pure Water for the World this month. This amount pays for six sand filters. Rebecca Fuentes and Tracy Kinne reported on some of the latest efforts of the Workers' Center of Central New York.

Several of us were to show our support for the Dairy Workers as part of a rally at the State Fair on Monday, August 26.

Ginny Glahn has agreed to organize a spring tree planting at the church around Earth Day. Please contact her with suggestions and offers to help. Don't delay. We may be able to take advantage of fall nursery sales and heel in some over the winter.

Nancy Hallock, chairperson

BOOK CLUB

I have had eight responses with interest to continue the club. Please contact me with suggestions of possible selections. The Onondaga library has more than 100 book club totes. Maybe one of those can be our first read. We should meet soon, but we might start one before that.

Nancy Hallock at njhallock@gmail.com

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, September 18.

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.

VIDEO DISCUSSION GROUP

The Video Discussion Group will view "The Faces of America's Hungry" when it meets in the Goettel Room at 7 p.m. on Friday, September 6.

According to the segment of "Moyers & Company," "Here in the richest country on Earth, 50 million – one in six Americans – go hungry. More than a third of them are children. And yet Congress can't pass a Farm Bill because representatives continue to fight over how many billions to slash from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, better known as food stamps. The debate is filled with clichés about freeloaders undeserving of government help, living large at the expense of honest, hardworking taxpayers. But a new documentary, 'A Place at the Table', paints a truer picture of America's poor. 'The cost of food insecurity, obesity and

malnutrition is way larger than it is to feed kids nutritious food', Kristi Jacobson, one of the film's directors and producers, tells Bill Moyers. She and Mariana Chilton, director of the Center for Hunger-Free Communities, explain to Moyers how hunger hits hard at people from every walk of life. Later, Greg Kaufmann, poverty correspondent for 'The Nation', talks about how the poor have been stereotyped and demonized in an effort to justify huge cuts in food stamps and other crucial programs for low-income Americans."

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 Bob Haskell know via e-mail at rhaskell@twcny.rr.com or via telephone at 315-635-5294 by Thursday, September 5, if you plan to attend the supper so that he may make a reservation.

Everyone is invited to attend.

2013 HUMANITARIAN AWARD

Pullman Memorial Universalist Church of Albion, New York, will present Planned Parenthood of Albion in the Rochester Syracuse Region its 2013 Humanitarian Award for 40 years of providing rape crisis services to the community.

Jeff Pier, regional manager of Rape Crisis Service for Genesee, Livingston, Orleans, and Wyoming counties, will accept the award for his organization at Pullman Memorial, 10 East Park Street, Albion, at 11 a.m. on Sunday, October 13. He will speak at the ceremony about 40 years of caring for rape survivors.

After the ceremony, the church will hold a reception for Planned Parenthood employees, volunteers, trustees, and members of the community who support and care about the services which Planned Parenthood provides. All are welcome to attend.

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 PROGRAM TO BEGIN NEW YEAR

September is back! Children's religious education will be in full swing starting on September 8.

There are summer stories to share and new things to learn.

The children will be learning partly from the "Tapestry of Faith" series that the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) offers called "Faithful Journey."

The children will be exploring how Unitarian Universalism translates into life choices and how we work these choices into our everyday life.

We will have as our base the seven UU principles. Classes will include protecting the Earth and honoring life, respect of all people, building a world community, finding balance in our beliefs and other hands-on lessons.

Please join us for a full year of creativity, learning and sharing.

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

PRESIDENTIAL REFLECTIONS

Dear Friends,

It is my impression that our congregation has enjoyed a successful summer of Sunday morning services. Attendance at such services has been consistently and pleasantly good, far greater than the attendance was when the congregation conducted informal services during the summer months in past years. I believe that 45 people attended one service this summer, more than generally attend most services during other seasons of the year. And we were honored on Sunday, August 18, when the Rev. Christina M. Neilson, the congregational life consultant for the St. Lawrence District, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, visited our congregation at the invitation of the Executive Board. I understand that she was quite impressed when she sat in on a meeting of the Social Justice Subcommittee in the church dining room early that morning. And I believe the conversation between Chris and the congregation in the sanctuary after the social time was quite frank.

There have been gains in maintaining the church building as well this summer. Mesh covering has been installed over the recently restored three large stained-glass windows in the sanctuary to protect them from the weather elements. Lucy and Arny Stieber have beautified two entrances to the church. And four trees posing a danger to the religious education wing have been neatly removed. Of course, there is more to be done to keep the building in good shape.

If I had only one wish for the new church year it would be that more children participate in the religious education program on a regular basis. Ronna Schindler, our Religious Education Committee chairperson and older children's teacher, is prepared every Sunday to provide the children with a rewarding experience. Although it may appear that there are no children who have any connection to our congregation because there have been no children in our religious education program on most Sundays during the past year, just the opposite is true. Such children exist. Some way must be found for them to be in church on most Sundays. It is my impression that such children enjoy their times in church when they are here. And in many ways, they represent the future of the church.

I would also wish that our congregation can continue to foster a sense of community. For I feel that if there is anything that will continue to hold us together, it is that, what some have called "the beloved community."

It is in this spirit that I say that I hope to see everyone in church on this coming Sunday, and on each Sunday to follow.

Bob

THE NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please have articles for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than NOON on MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30. 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.

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.

BOARD SPLINTERS

Andrea Abbott spoke about emergency preparedness for churches when the Executive Board met in the church's community room on Friday morning, August 2. She had attended an Emergency Preparedness Training for Congregations workshop conducted in Worcester, Massachusetts, on November 22, 2008.

Board members approved the designation of Jody Brown as the congregation's representative for denominational affairs. She had volunteered to serve in that position. Denominational affairs falls within the responsibilities of the Outreach Committee headed by Nancy Hallock.

Arnold Hook, Administration Committee chairperson, updated the Board on the removal of four trees surrounding the religious education wing.

Steve Garlow of the Administration Committee updated the Board on the installation of protective mesh covering for the three large stained-glass windows in the sanctuary.

Board members approved \$2,000 as the first partial repayment of the \$5,000 loan from the New York State Convention of Universalists. Bob Haskell said he hopes that the congregation is able to repay \$1,000 more by May 31, 2014, or when this year's Window Fund pledges are paid in full. This will leave \$2,000 more to be raised to repay the loan. The money was borrowed to carry out the restoration of the large stained-glass windows on the west and north sides of the sanctuary and the installation of protective mesh covering for all three large stained-glass windows in the sanctuary.

Board members also approved the allocation of Fair Share contributions for the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) and its St. Lawrence District (SLD). The 2013-2014 budget, approved by the congregation in June, provides for \$2,000 in contributions. It is the plan to pay the St. Lawrence District its full Fair Share of \$566 and the UUA \$1,434 of its Full Share of \$2,280. It may be possible to contribute more money to the UUA if the congregation contributes more money for such purpose.

Arnold Hook led Board members in a discussion of the status of the kitchen stove, the refrigerator and the dehumidifier for the dining room and kitchen.

The possibility of applying for a grant from the St. Lawrence District's Chalice Lighter program so that enhanced listening devices might be installed in the sanctuary was discussed.

Barbara Kamerance reported that a new folding sign to advertise church events and small cards with information about the church to be given to interested persons had been purchased.

Arnold Hook informed Board members about the condition of the Wayside Pulpit after Spiritual Committee Chair Patricia Cerro-Reehil had expressed concern.

Bob Haskell informed Board members of his recent e-mail correspondence with Jeff Donahue, president, St. Lawrence District, and the Rev. Christina M. Neilson, congregational life consultant for the St. Lawrence District, regarding the Central East Regional Group (CERG) of the UUA. The correspondence followed a meeting of four UUA District Boards (St. Lawrence, Joseph Priestley, Metro New York and Ohio-Meadville), along with each of their respective executive directors and CERG staff, at which consensus was reached to move from four districts toward forming a unified region. The meeting took place at the UU Fellowship of Centre County in State College, Pennsylvania, on May 17 and 18.

Bob Haskell reported that the Oswego County Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) would use the church for its General Educational Development (GED) class for 10 weeks during the summer at a fee of \$25 per week, for a total of \$250.

A report from Ellen LaPine, Chalice Lighter Ambassador, stated that "we currently have 16 Chalice Lighter families in our congregation. Proudly, more than half of our members are Chalice Lighters, a very good percentage compared with other congregations. ... There were no new Chalice Lighters during the past year. Currently, our members have been Chalice Lighters from 2 to 21 years. If interested in knowing more about being a Chalice Lighter please see the information on the East Room table or contact me."

Board members also discussed the upkeep of the Memorial Garden, the New York State requirement for disability insurance, the church calendar for 2013-2014 and the dates for Ronna Schindler's attendance at a religious education program at Star Island.

The Executive Board will meet in the church dining room at 9 a.m. on Sunday, September 1.

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.

OFFICE HOURS

Andrea Abbott will hold office hours at the church from 5 to 7 p.m. on Tuesdays. If you need to speak to her at other times, please call to make an appointment.

SEPTEMBER 2013 CALENDAR

1 – 9 a.m., Executive Board meets. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., the Rev. David Weissbard leads the worship service. Sermon title: “Reclaiming Wholeness.” Random Acts of Kindness Sunday. 11:45 a.m., Social time. This is 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.

6 – 5:30 p.m., Supper at the Akropolis restaurant. 7 p.m., Video Discussion Group meets in the Goettel Room.

8 – 9 a.m., Spiritual Committee. 9 a.m., Social Justice Subcommittee. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Andrea Abbott leads the worship service. Incoming Sunday with observance of Water Communion. Membership Sunday for those wishing to join the church. 10:50 a.m., Religious education resumes. 11:45 a.m., Social time. 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.

14 – 9:30 to 11 a.m., Choir practices in the sanctuary.

15 – 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., Social time.

18 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread, Route 31, Clay.

20 – 5:30 p.m., Supper at the Akropolis restaurant. 7 p.m., Video Discussion Group meets in the Goettel Room.

22 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Andrea Abbott leads the worship service. 10:50 a.m., Religious education. 11:45 a.m., Social time.

29 – 8 a.m., Adopt-a-Highway pickup. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., the Rev. Libbie D. Stoddard leads the worship service. 10:50 a.m., Religious education. 11:45 a.m., Social time.

CHURCH WEB SITE/FACEBOOK PAGE

Please remember the church Web site at <http://www.centralsquareuu.com/> and the church Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/UU-Central-Square/199139743511564>. You can also reach the Facebook page by clicking on the Facebook link at the Web site. To see the posts on the Facebook page, you have to click on “Most Recent Posts By Others” and “See All.” To view the church’s electronic calendar, just click on “Calendar” at the church Web site or click on “About” and then on “Products” on the Facebook page.

We have updated the church Web site so that it is easier to read the sermons. Just go to the Web site and click on “sermons” and a list of ministers will appear. Then just click on the name of the person whose sermons you wish to read and a list of sermons will appear. Then click on the sermon you wish to read. A shortcut: to go directly to the list of ministers, click http://www.centralsquareuu.com/selected_sermons.html

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.

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.