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 Telephone: 315-668-6821 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
Rita Thornton, Music Coordinator	315-699-4824	Ronna Schindler, RE Chairperson	315-623-7685
Robert Haskell, President	315-635-5294	Nancy Hallock, Vice President	315-675-8357

APRIL 2012

STUDENT MINISTER SNIPPET

Easter is a moveable feast in the Christian calendar, and this year it has moved itself to the beginning of April. Although UUs are not necessarily Christian, it is at Christmas and Easter that we as UUs remember the heritage from which we came and the culture in which we live. We also come from an older culture, as does Christianity itself. Passover is celebrated this year on the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter. Both occasions, with their themes of death and renewal, celebrate the season of beginnings and resurrection.

Spring itself is one long celebration of the triumph of life over death. It has been celebrated in all cultures that see as holy that which reminds us of our dependence on the Earth. We sometimes forget this dependence as we buy our food in plastic wrappings and plastic bottles, as we turn on the tap to a never ending source of clean water, as we see the turn of the seasons mostly through the decorations at the mall. We forget how deep is our need for this Earth; how fragile the skin of modern civilization. As we put up pictures of bunnies and dye Easter eggs, let us pause before the wonder of life renewed and bend our efforts to keeping holy the ground from which we grow.

Andrea Abbott

THE REVEREND WEISSBARD TO SPEAK ABOUT A UU SOUL

The Rev. David Weissbard has chosen as his sermon topic "A Unitarian Universalist Soul" for the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, April 1.

He writes, "This is NOT an April Fools sermon! My title for April 1 is 'A Unitarian Universalist Soul'. We don't talk a lot in UU churches about the 'soul' because of many of the metaphysical meanings attached to it in common conversation that many of us reject. Like many ideas which may not be central to our understanding of life, there may, in fact, be some value in it. I think so. We'll see if I can convince you."

Please have articles for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than NOON on THURSDAY, APRIL 26. His e-mail address is rhaskell@twcny.rr.com.



TREASURER REFLECTS ON STEWARDSHIP LUNCHEON, FINANCIAL PICTURE

Sunday was our annual Stewardship Luncheon. Many thanks to those who helped contribute to the lunch! Pledge cards were distributed, and are to be returned by May 1. If you have not received a pledge card but would like to, please let me know and I will get you one.

As part of the commitment, our church members are responsible for the operating expenses, which are generally covered by our pledges, as well as building usage by third parties.

In the coming fiscal year, we are also hoping to increase our commitments to the Saint Lawrence Unitarian Universalist District (SLUUD) and the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA), and hope that all members will consider making the \$75 contribution.

The last commitment item on the pledge card is for our Window Fund; in the coming year, we are looking for many sources of funding for the restoration of our beautiful stained-glass windows. Some of these options also require that the congregation raise some of its own funds as criteria for additional funding (either through loans or grants.) Please keep these windows in mind as you consider your ability to give in the coming year. As Winfield Ihlow said at the meeting, we are the stewards of these windows, and they have been entrusted to us to take care of them.

Lastly, of equal importance, on the pledge card is the ability to update (or include) your information in our church directory. If you have any updates to be made, please be sure to mark the box as such.

During the luncheon, we also discussed the current year finances, and currently we have approximately \$3,797 in our operating budget. We anticipate having a surplus of approximately \$1,500 if our income pledged comes in as anticipated, and we have no surprise expenses.

As a final note, many of you know that my family and I are in the process of relocating to Seneca Falls. Our house is on the market, and we anticipate moving sometime in the next five months. With that, our church would require a new treasurer for the coming fiscal year. If anyone has any interest, or any questions regarding the position, please feel free to contact me or Chet Perkins to discuss it further.

Regards, Cara Lajewski, treasurer clajewski@gmail.com or 315-668-1392

SOME SPLINTERS FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING OF MARCH 4

1. The Executive Board is looking into possible grants for funding the restoration of sanctuary stained-glass windows.

2. Nancy Hallock and Cara Lajewski have looked into possible financial assistance from the New York State Convention of Universalists, the Heritage Foundation, the New York Council for the Humanities, and the New York Landmarks Conservancy. They will continue to pursue more information.

3. Ellen LaPine wrote Right Relations/Disruptive Behavior policies, which will be presented to the congregation for approval.

4. There will be a Maundy Thursday service on April 5 conducted by Andrea Abbott.

5. There will be a canvass "stewardship" luncheon on March 25, when there will be a program which will include the church finances.

6. The next Book Club discussion, on "The Book Thief," will be after the service on March 18.

7. All members who have a Facebook page should check out the page under the name of our church. We hope that others will see the page, too, and that this will stimulate their interest in our church.

The Executive Board will conduct its next regular monthly meeting in the church dining room at 9 a.m. on Sunday, April 1.

Winfield Ihlow, recording secretary

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

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Social Justice subcommittee met March 11 and is scheduled to meet next on April 8. This is Easter Sunday, and we may decide on another date. Everyone is invited to attend.

Our spring Adopt-a-Highway pickup was completed early Sunday morning, March 18. Thank you to the following volunteers: Ann, Janet, Janie, Arne, Andrea, Ellen, Chet and myself.

The plan is to meet at 8 a.m. on Saturday, March 31, for our community service spring tree work. This is part of the Central Square Project Bloom.

I will continue to encourage donations to "Pure Water for the World." Please visit its Web site to learn more about the importance of clean, accessible water (something we take for granted). You can help stop the suffering and death.

In February, we sent a letter to the village churches and service organizations to request a meeting. Here we could get acquainted, share event schedules, and exchange contact information. Sadly, no one replied. We will send out a follow-up note in the fall.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Hallock, committee chairperson

GREEN MINUTE: THE HISTORY OF EARTH DAY

Earth Day founder Gaylord Nelson, then a United States senator from Wisconsin, got the idea after witnessing the ravages of the 1969 massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California. Inspired by the student anti-war movement, he realized that if he could infuse that energy with an emerging public consciousness about air and water pollution, it would force environmental protection onto the national political agenda. Senator Nelson had the help of Congressman Pete McCloskey and organizer Denis Hayes. As a result, on the 22nd of April, 20 million Americans took to the streets, parks and auditoriums to demonstrate in massive coast-to-coast rallies. Earth Day 1970 achieved a rare political alignment, enlisting support from Republicans and Democrats, rich and poor, city dwellers and farmers, tycoons and labor leaders. The first Earth Day led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts. "It was a gamble," Nelson recalled, "but it worked."

As 1990 approached, Earth Day went global. Some 200 million people in 141 countries were mobilized. Earth Day 1990 gave a huge boost to recycling efforts worldwide and helped pave the way for the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit. It also prompted President Bill Clinton to award Senator Nelson the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1995) for his role as Earth Day founder.

As the millennium approached, organizer Hayes agreed to spearhead another campaign, this time focused on global warming and a push for clean energy. Some 5,000 environmental groups in a record 184 countries reached out to hundreds of millions of people. They used the Internet to organize activists, but also featured a talking drum chain that traveled from village to village in Gabon, Africa. Hundreds of thousands of people gathered on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Earth Day 2000 sent world leaders the clear message that citizens around the world wanted quick and decisive action on clean energy.

Earth Day 2010 came at a time of great challenge for the environmental community that continues today. Despite the challenge, for its 40th anniversary, Earth Day Network (www.earthday.org) reestablished Earth Day as a powerful focal point around which people could demonstrate their commitment. Earth Day Network brought 225,000 people to the National Mall for a Climate Rally, amassed 40 million environmental service actions, launched an international, 1-million tree planting initiative and tripled its online base to more than 900,000 community members.

As April 22, 2012, approaches, we continue to have climate change deniers, well-funded oil lobbyists, reticent politicians, a disinterested public, and a divided environmental community, all contributing to a strong narrative that overshadows the cause of progress and change. With a struggling U.S. economy, these voices seem louder than ever but the fight for a clean environment is as determined as ever. As the ravages of climate change become more manifest every day, consider being a part of Earth Day 2012. Check with your local community or go online to see what events are planned in your area. If nothing is planned near you, gather some friends and do a cleanup day, get involved in a national or international action, write a letter to your representative or make a donation. Take whatever action you feel you can do to help build a clean, healthy, diverse world for generations to come.

Ellen LaPine, Social Justice Subcommittee, Outreach Committee

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

PRESIDENTIAL REFLECTIONS

Dear Friends,

I asked Executive Board members to spend quite a bit of time recently considering policies, several of which were proposed several years ago but which were never approved.

Board members realized a few months ago that the fairly long-standing policy for the Random Acts of Kindness program, which I believed was originally proposed by the Rev. Libbie D. Stoddard, needed to be revised. Cara Lajewski wrote a revised policy based on ideas presented during discussions at several recent Board meetings, and the Board adopted the revised policy at its February 5 meeting. The revised policy was reprinted in the March newsletter.

The second policy taken up by the Board was a church safety policy. A policy was proposed by the Reverend Stoddard a number of years ago but the Board never approved it. The proposal has been resurrected, and Winfield Ihlow, along with the Reverend Stoddard, has taken the lead in presenting it for the Board's consideration. I believe there is a chance the Board may approve the policy at its April 1 meeting.

A third policy taken up by the Board is one dealing with disruptive behavior. Mary Perkins of the Board's Organizational Task Force presented policies from her sister's church in Auburn, Maine, for the Board's consideration three or four years ago but the Board did not act on either one. A committee composed of Ellen LaPine, Andrea Abbott and Arne Hook was appointed several months ago to review these policies. Ellen was able to write a proposed policy for our church which I expect the Board will approve soon. Plans call for the presentation of this policy to the congregation at its annual meeting on June 3.

About the same time that a policy dealing with disruptive behavior was first discussed years ago, there was some talk of the need for a covenant of right relations. So, several months ago I found a covenant used by the Westside Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Seattle, Washington. The committee composed of Ellen, Andrea and Arne was also asked to review this covenant, and Ellen was able to write a proposed covenant for our congregation. Again, I expect the Board will approve the proposal soon, and plans call for the presentation of this covenant to the congregation at its annual meeting on June 3.

I respectfully ask you to take the time to read the proposed policy for disruptive behavior and the proposed covenant of right relations printed on other pages in this newsletter.

Bob

DRUM CIRCLE

The monthly Drum Circle will be held from 6 until 8'ish p.m. on Friday, April 13. We have a very good group, and consistently there are from 15 to 25 drummers. Whether beginner or advanced, all are welcome. We have a few people who don't drum at all, but they just enjoy the rhythm and how it makes them feel. There are always extra drums, rattles, rhythm sticks and other instruments available to use.

Ann Peterson

SAVE THIS DATE

Gabriel Sereni will speak at our church from 7 until 9 p.m. on Saturday, May 12. His topics promise to be interesting, and the program is free. This is your chance to learn more about out-ofbody experiences, how to enhance your cognitive abilities, and other related subjects.

This program is open to the public, so plan to bring your friends.

Ann Peterson

LATEST BOOK CLUB SELECTION AVAILABLE

"The Book Thief" was discussed March 25. Our next selection, "The Help," is available in the church dining room. It will be reviewed at noon on Sunday, April 29. I will be out of town, so someone will need to facilitate the discussion, and to return the book kit by Wednesday, May 2. Please call me if you can help.

Nancy Hallock

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

FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF CENTRAL SQUARE PROPOSED COVENANT OF RIGHT RELATIONS

As members of the First Universalist Society of Central Square, the following guidelines are in place in order 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.

Members will strive to do the following as they participate in the life of the congregation:

Welcome and engage members and visitors alike, encouraging them to join in congregation activities.

Value and express our own emotions and differences in a way that respects the worth and dignity of each person.

Express gratitude for the efforts of others.

Listen attentively to appreciate fully one another's point of view, valuing the perspective of others.

Support and encourage the personal and spiritual growth of others, acknowledging that each person has a unique path and truth.

Support and respect the contracts and/or agreements with the minister, staff, board and congregational committees.

Value confidentiality.

Ask for help, support and collaboration when needed and encourage others to do the same.

Build courage and commitment to voice our values in the world, and work toward positive relationships with other faith communities.

Provide opportunities to share diverse ideas in a safe place.

Approach disagreements and conflicts constructively, communicating with others in a direct, caring and responsible manner.

Advocate for resolution processes agreeable to all parties, when conflicts and misunderstandings arise within the Congregation.

Acknowledge that everyone makes mistakes. Seek and offer forgiveness.

This covenant is a living document. It can be reviewed by the congregation at any time in the future and adapted to fit changing needs and circumstances. It represents a commitment to thoughtful, active participation in the life of this religious community; caring and respectful relationships with one another and with visitors; cooperative support for the minister, staff and volunteers; and individual and collective contributions to the wider community.

First Universalist Society of Central Square March 2012

COFFEE AND CHAT	For more information about the women's group, you may contact Nancy Haskell. For more information
Women and men of the church will gather for	about the men's group, you may contact Chet Perkins.
Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread on Route 31 in Clay	
at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 18.	CHANTING AND MEDITATION
All are welcome to join in casual conversation and	
to enjoy coffee or tea and other goodies.	Anyone who is interested in chanting and
The women's and men's groups meet separately.	meditation is invited to contact Tim Hart at timhart@a-
	znet.com or at 315-439-2541.

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.

FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF CENTRAL SQUARE PROPOSED POLICY REGARDING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

While openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in our denomination's purposes and principles, we affirm the belief that our congregation must maintain a secure atmosphere where such openness can exist. When any person's physical and/or emotional well-being or freedom to safely express his or her beliefs or opinions is threatened, the source of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly, even if this ultimately requires the expulsion of the offending person or persons.

If there are times when disruptive behavior of an individual in the church building or on the church grounds leads members to voice their concerns about one or more of the following:

Perceived threats to the safety of any adult or child,

The disruption of church activities,

Diminishing appeal of the congregation to its potential and existing membership,

The following shall be the policy of the First Universalist Society of Central Square with these issues: If an immediate response is required, this will be undertaken by the minister, president of the Executive Board or the leader of the group involved. This may include asking the offending person or persons to leave, or suspending the meeting or activity until such time that it may be safely resumed. If further assistance is required, the Police Department may be called. Anytime any of these actions are undertaken a follow-up letter detailing the offense and the actions taken because of the offense will be written within 24 hours. This letter will be distributed to the minister and the Executive Board president, even if the minister or the Executive Board

president handled the situation, to provide a recorded statement of events for possible further action.

Situations not requiring immediate response will be referred to an ad hoc committee of no less than three people appointed by the Executive Board. No one who is a voting member of the Executive Board may serve on the ad hoc committee. Factors the Executive Board may consider when selecting the three committee members include their professional experience, familiarity with members and friends of the congregation, past leadership roles, ability to keep information confidential, temperament, and ability to be impartial, fair and objective. Another important consideration is whether prospective team members can make themselves available on an "as-needed" basis to address conflicts. It is impossible to predict how much time will be required, but team members should generally be available evenings and/or weekends to meet.

The ad hoc committee will respond in terms of its own judgment observing the following:

The committee will respond to problems as they arise. There will be no attempt to define "acceptable" behavior in advance.

Persons identified as disruptive will be dealt with as individuals. Stereotypes will be avoided.

The committee will collect all necessary information.

To aid in evaluating the problem, these points will be considered:

Dangerousness – Is the individual the source of a threat or perceived threat to persons or property? Disruptiveness – How much interference with church functions is going on?

Offensiveness - How likely is it that prospective or existing members will be driven away?

To determine the necessary response, these points will be considered:

Causes – Why is the disruption occurring? Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the church? Is it due to a professionally diagnosed condition?

History – What is the extent, if any, of disruption caused in the past?

Probability of Change – How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?

The ad hoc committee will decide on the necessary response on a case-by-case basis.

(Concluded on Page 7)

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.

FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF CENTRAL SQUARE PROPOSED POLICY REGARDING DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

(Continued from Page 6)

Three levels of action/response are recommended:

Level One – The committee shall inform the minister of the problem and the minister and/or a member of the committee shall meet with the offending person or persons to communicate the concern.

Level Two – The offending individual(s) is excluded from specific church activities for a limited period of time, with reasons and conditions of return written and made clear (with a copy going to the offender and one going into a confidential congregational file accessible only to the minister and president of the Executive Board).

Level One or Level Two action taken may be appealed to the Executive Board and/or the minister.

Level Three – The offending individual(s) is permanently excluded from church premises and all church activities. Before this is carried out, the committee will consult with the Executive Board and the minister. If it is agreed that the expulsion take place, a letter will be written and sent by the minister or president of the Executive Board to the individual outlining the expulsion, the individual's rights, and any possible recourse.

The First Universalist Society of Central Square strives to be an inclusive community, affirming our differences in beliefs, opinions and life experiences. However, concern for the safety and well-being of the congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of the individual. To the degree the disruptive behavior compromises the health of this congregation, our actions as people of faith must reflect this emphasis on security.

First Universalist Society of Central Square March 2012

MEN'S GATHERING AT CAMP UNIRONDACK

Unirondack, the Unitarian Universalist Camp and Conference Center near Lowville, will host its annual Men's Gathering beginning after 6 p.m. on Friday, June 8, to after breakfast on Sunday, June 10.

According to a camp Web site, "In a rare opportunity, men of all ages, colors, creeds, and sexual orientations gather each year to share our experiences as men and explore what it means to be a man. We find ourselves renewed and reinvigorated as we talk openly about our lives and hopes. There are workshops to partake in and hiking or canoe trips to join. In all of our activities, from preparing meals together to sharing at the campfire, we enjoy the fellowship of other men."

The weekend is for adults 18 years and older. The fee is \$100 per person.

Anyone wishing further information may speak to Winfield Ihlow.

Anyone wishing to register online may do so at http://www.formstack.com/forms/Unirondack-Mens_Gathering_Registration.

VIDEO DISCUSSION GROUP

The Video Discussion Group will view another segment from "Moyers & Company" when it meets in the Goettel Room at 7 p.m. on Friday, April 6.

In this presentation, Bill Moyers investigates with political scientists Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, authors of "Winner-Take-All Politics," America's economic disparity – how it happened and who's to blame.

Again, the Video Discussion Group plans to have supper at the Akropolis Restaurant on Route 11 in Central Square at 5:30 p.m. the same day. Please let Janie Garlow know at mjgarlow@aol.com or at 315-436-2238 by Thursday, April 5, if you plan to attend the supper so that she may make a reservation.

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.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CHILDREN KEEPING BUSY

It is amazing how intertwined religions are. The children continue to explore prayer and the sacred. They created a large chalk labyrinth in the church parking lot which they walked and meditated within.

The children traced, decorated and framed their handprints, creating a lasting impression of their sacredness.

A life collage is being jointly worked on by the children after reading "The Great Kapok Tree."

The little ones have been busy with Easter, learning about Good Friday and Easter Sunday. They have also created their eggs, tulips and chick foamies.

Life in our classrooms is always full and fun. Thank you for sharing your children.

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

APRIL CALENDAR

1 – 9 a.m., Executive Board. 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. David Weissbard. Palm Sunday. 10:50 a.m., Religious education. This is the once-a-month Sunday on which you are asked by the Outreach Committee 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.

5 – 7 p.m., Maundy Thursday service led by Andrea Abbott and Rita Thornton.

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

13 – 6 until 8'ish p.m., Drum Circle.

15 – 9 a.m., Spiritual Committee. 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. Tanya Atwood-Adams. 10:50 a.m., Religious education.

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 rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott. 10:50 a.m., Religious education.

29 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. Libbie D. Stoddard. 10:50 a.m., Religious education. Noon, "A Conversation About Our Church" for prospective new members. Noon, The Book Club will discuss "The Help."

A REMINDER: WE HAVE ADDED A FACEBOOK PAGE AND UPDATED OUR WEB SITE

The church has recently created a Facebook page. You can reach the Facebook page via the link in the Web site or via <u>http://www.facebook.com/pages/UU-Central-Square/199139743511564</u>. To see the latest notices on the Facebook page's Wall, you have to click on "Everyone Most Recent." To view the church's electronic calendar, just click on "Calendar" at the Web site or click on "Products" in the "Info" section of 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 <u>http://www.centralsquareuu.com/selected_sermons.html</u>

Visit our church Web site at http://www.centralsquareuu.com