



CIRCLE OF FELLOWSHIP

The First Universalist Society of Central Square

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Andrea Abbott, Student Minister	315-635-7122
Janie Garlow, President	315-436-2238
Rita Thornton, Music Coordinator	315-699-4824

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://centralsquareuu.com>

Our church building is handicapped accessible.

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.

FEBRUARY 2011

STUDENT MINISTER SNIPPET

Ask anyone where I work how things are going and the standard answer is, "Same old, same old." I've just heard the weather report, which is identical for the next three days. Talk about "same old, same old." February often seems like this. Despite the fact that it includes Groundhog Day (about a warm and fuzzy rodent meteorologist) and Valentine's Day (simply warm and fuzzy all over), February has always been a hard month to get through. Green grass and blue skies are a fading memory and certainly not right around the corner. February is a learning experience. It's probably a necessary one. Sometimes life is indeed "same old, same old," and we don't see a change around the corner.

We often need all the fortitude that surviving February gives us. February is also Black History Month. That certainly provides lessons in fortitude. I wish for us all fortitude and love and warmth this February and every month.

– Andrea Abbott

FRONT DOORS BEING REPAIRED

Kevin Ridgeway is repairing the front doors of the church. The work is expected to take two to three weeks. During this time, everyone entering or leaving the church is requested to use the side entrances. Thank you for your cooperation.

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE DONATIONS DUE

Don't forget to turn in your Guest at Your Table donations. There are envelopes available in the dining room to use when you convert your coins into a check. Please make your check out to "Unitarian Universalist Service Committee" or "UUSC" and give it to Nancy Hallock, chairperson, Outreach Committee.

If you have a Guest at Your Table box, please save it for next year's campaign.

Note: Please have items for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than NOON on SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26. His address is 29 Grove Street, Baldwinsville, NY 13027-2332; his telephone number is 635-5294; his e-mail address is rhaskell@twcny.rr.com

PRESIDENTIAL REFLECTIONS

My Dear Friends,

Winter is gnashing its teeth here in Upstate New York. We are breaking records with the cold and snow. The local school was closed today because of frigid temperatures. A couple of weeks ago, we canceled the Sunday service. The Rev. Libbie Stoddard could not make it to church from Oswego because of the lake-effect snow. Libbie was to fill in for the Rev. Tanya Atwood-Adams who has been ill and who continues to be in our prayers. Then Rita Thornton called in sick. With a new foot and a half of snow in our driveway that Sunday morning and no one in the pulpit or at the piano, the decision to cancel services was simple.

It is easy to complain about the weather; we often do, but winter has its beauty. There is a privacy about winter that no other season gives us. It is a time for comfort, for good food, for warmth and for home. This evening, as I sit at my computer looking out at the cold, the snow is beautiful. It rests on the tall pine trees behind our house with a red and orange winter sunset as a backdrop. It is in these moments in our everyday lives that we experience beauty and inner peace. Such moments elevate the ordinary to the extraordinary. We experience pleasure whenever we behold beauty. When I am in need of more beauty, I am instinctively drawn to nature. What is more beautiful than a crisp, clear winter sky to give us a sense of awe? I do love the changing seasons; each gives me an appreciation and an anticipation for the next season. No matter how long the winter, spring will always follow.

With warm appreciation and love,
Janie

UU CIRCLE NEWS

On Sunday, January 9, the UU Circle had a potluck luncheon and a brief business meeting. After Andrea Abbott led us in grace, we had a wonderful meal with everything from soup to dessert and all things in between. Members of the Executive Board sang a parody of "Give Me That Old Time Religion."

For the past year the UU Circle has been working with a coordinator and a secretary-treasurer rather than a full slate of officers. There was a vote to determine whether to continue with this arrangement for another year. The proposal was approved.

The UU Circle includes everyone. There is no membership requirement. It includes every person who sits in a pew at our church. The Circle organizes fundraisers as well as social activities. Recent fundraisers have been the smorgasbord and the program that was put on by Mary Grace. Both were well attended and raised some income to support our church. We do socialize at coffee hour, but having a potluck or a picnic gives us more time to relax and chat with one another. Thanks to everyone who has supported our fundraisers and church activities. We look forward to your continued involvement in the coming year.

Ann Peterson, secretary-treasurer, UU Circle

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, February 16.

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

DRUM CIRCLE

Our Drum Circle is growing and attracting new drummers and dancers every week. Drum enthusiasts gathered on January 14 despite the weather. We added the new sound of a didgeridoo as well as other new instruments that people brought to share. Belly dancers performed in winter attire, jeans and sweat shirts.

Our Drum Circle is held on the second Friday of each month. The next session will be on Friday, February 11, from 6 until 8'ish. It is open to everyone, and there are always extra instruments to share.

– Ann Peterson, Adult Programs,
Religious Education Committee

SENIOR NUTRITION PROGRAM

There is a local Senior Nutrition Program for people 60 years of age and older in Oswego County. It is held at Saint Bernadette's Church in Constantia at noon on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. It is a hot meal. A donation of \$3 is requested, but nobody will be turned away. Transportation is available on Thursdays.

The program will also offer free tax advice during February. A knit and crochet group meets after the meal on Wednesdays.

Call Saint Bernadette's Church at least a day ahead to make a reservation.

– Ann Peterson, Adult Programs,
Religious Education Committee

GREEN MINUTE: LOCAL WEB SURFING

While surfing the Web I ran across some local sites that might be of interest. I've mentioned some of them before but I think they are worth mentioning again. Here are some Web addresses, and how each describes its mission:

NYfoodtrader.org lets you find locally produced food or donate food to those in need. It's like a local, online farmers' market and food-bank rolled into one.

Slowfoodcny.org says, "At Slow Food Central New York, we intend to rediscover the rich and diverse food traditions of our region and ensure that everyone has access to quality and affordable food. We support local growers, food artisans, and purveyors, and empower individuals to become involved in their food from seed to fruit. Understanding that we are all interdependent, we strive to work with sister organizations and cultivate future food leaders whenever possible."

Cornucopia.org works toward economic justice for the family-scale farming community through research, advocacy, and economic development. Its goal is to empower farmers – partnered with consumers – in support of ecologically produced local, organic and authentic food.

SyracuseFirst.org is a nonprofit network of local businesses, organizations and citizens dedicated to buying local and focused on building a sustainable community. It educates the community about cultural and environmental benefits of buying local.

Happy surfing!

– Ellen LaPine, Outreach Committee

BOARD SPLINTERS

The Executive Board voted at its regular meeting on Sunday, January 2, to express its gratitude to Andrea Abbott and Rita Thornton for leading the Christmas Eve candle-lighting service on Friday, December 24; to Kurt and Ronna Schindler for hosting the ninth annual Christmas Day dinner at the church on Saturday, December 25; and to Nancy Hallock for insulating the church's basement windows.

Treasurer Chester Perkins said that the church had paid the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations and its Saint Lawrence District \$500 each as part of the church's "Fair Share" contribution.

The Board decided to conduct a "heart to heart" luncheon on Saturday, February 12.

The Board also agreed to hold the annual church Stewardship Luncheon on Sunday, March 27.

The Board will conduct its next regular meeting in the church dining room at 9 a.m. on February 6.

BOOK CLUB

The Book Club will meet at the church at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, February 4, to discuss the book, "Nickel and Dime."

Nancy Hallock, chairperson of the Outreach Committee, will bring dessert.

"Nickel and Dime," written by Barbara Ehrenreich, is a short book. There is plenty of time left to read it.

There are copies available in the dining room.

If you have signed out a book but cannot attend the discussion, please return the book to Nancy by Sunday, February 6.

VALENTINE'S DAY CHOCOLATE

If you are planning to give chocolates for Valentine's Day, the Outreach Committee urges you to buy "fair trade" chocolate.

The Equal Exchange Coffee Project of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) has delicious organic "fair trade" chocolate bars. The Outreach Committee has two cases. The price is \$2.50 per bar, which is the committee's cost.

Please support UUSC and buy a bar for your Valentine or yourself.

– Nancy Hallock, chairperson, Outreach Committee

BOWL-A-THON

We are forming one or two bowling teams to participate in the Syracuse Peace Council's Bowl-a-thon at the Flamingo Lanes in Liverpool on Sunday, February 27. You do not have to be a good bowler to have fun.

If you do not want to bowl, you could support the team with a donation; any amount is gratefully accepted.

For more information please contact Nancy Hallock, chairperson, Outreach Committee, at 675-8357.

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.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

Random Acts of Kindness is our congregation's program to financially assist those in need, whether church members/friends or people in the wider community.

Funding is 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, February 6.

The fund is administered by the student minister and two appointed lay persons.

IF IT'S SNOWING ...

To find out if church services will be held on a Sunday morning when winter weather is raging, you may call Janie Garlow at 436-2238 or Chester Perkins at 668-6719.

Ann Peterson, a member of the Outreach Committee, has also made arrangements with Channel 10 television, Channel 9 television and WSYR radio to broadcast a notice of any cancellations of worship services.

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

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

4 – 6:30 p.m., The Book Club will meet at the church to discuss the book, "Nickel and Dime."

6 – 9 a.m., Executive Board meets in the church dining room. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. David Weissbard. Random Acts of Kindness Sunday.

10 – 8:30 a.m., Spiritual Committee meets in the church dining room.

11 – 6 p.m. until 8'ish p.m., Monthly Drum Circle.

12 – The Executive Board sponsors a "heart to heart" luncheon.

13 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, student minister. This is the once-a-month Sunday on which everyone is asked by the Outreach Committee to donate food items for the Downstairs Scottie, which later will be taken to the Food Bank at Saint Michael's Church.

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

20 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. Libbie Stoddard, minister emerita.

27 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, student minister. Afternoon, Syracuse Peace Council's Bowl-a-thon at the Flamingo Lanes in Liverpool.

Chanting and meditation

People who are interested may call Tim Hart at 439-2541.

REMINDERS

If you have an announcement you would like to be included in the church's weekly e-mail announcements, please send it to Janie Garlow at mjgarlow@aol.com by 5 p.m. on Sundays. Earlier submissions would be appreciated.

Don't forget to send your articles for the February newsletter to Bob Haskell at rhaskell@twcny.rr.com by noon on Saturday, February 26. Earlier submissions would be appreciated.

We have audio CDs of most of the current Sunday sermons. These may be borrowed for your listening enjoyment.

Please help spread the word to anyone without e-mail. Thank you!

We respect your privacy and if you prefer not to receive future announcements, just hit Reply and put the word REMOVE on the subject line.

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