



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

FEBRUARY 2012

STUDENT MINISTER SNIPPET

This has been a strange winter in that it has hardly been a winter at all. I say this with some superstitious apprehension, afraid that by mentioning this I will cause a massive blizzard that will last until June. I also am remembering the old proverb, "Beware of what you wish for. It may happen." Any change can be disconcerting, even change that seems, on the face of it, to be positive. Why is our winter so uncharacteristically warm, so free of snow? Is it evidence of global warming or just a glitch? And, most importantly, what will The Groundhog have to say about it on February 2?

In addition to Groundhog Day, February also packs in a lot of other events. February means Valentine's Day and Presidents Day. For those under a certain age, Presidents Day used to be two holidays, Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays that were celebrated with cherry pie and popsicle stick log cabins. February also is African-American History Month and it contains Evolution Sunday.

If there is a theme in all these events it is the theme of change. Change that is positive for one person can spell disaster for someone else. Change implies a temporary imbalance which is usually evened out in time; time for another change. One thing that is constant is that everything is always changing. People change, places change, ideas change. Our understanding of how the world works changes, sometimes even in a few years.

In the face of whirling, confusing, sometimes frightening changes, what is the foundation we need to keep our feet under us? How can we maintain an open and responsive mind as well as a critical intelligence? It is not easy to maintain balance. Let us come together in quest of answers.

Andrea Abbott

AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP OTHERS

The next Random Acts of Kindness Sunday will be observed during the worship service on February 5.

Please have articles for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than NOON on THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23. 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.

A WARM WELCOME TO THREE NEW MEMBERS

It has been the custom in recent years to ask those who have recently signed the membership book to write a few facts about themselves to be printed in the monthly newsletter.

Barbara Kamerance and Judy and George Tennant became members of the congregation in 2011.

BARBARA KAMERANCE

This is Barbara's autobiographical sketch:

"I was born in Chicago, and I lived the first 30 years of my life in the Chicago area. I am the granddaughter of immigrants and have a strong ethnic identity to Luxembourg, from where my mother's family emigrated, and my father's family who came from Ireland. I am still a stalwart Chicago sports fan and root for the Cubs and the Bears.

"In 1977, I moved to western North Carolina where I lived on a 30-acre farm near the top of a mountain for 14 years. It was there I learned to expand my love and appreciation for nature in all of its seasonal glories. The place where the farm is located was once the home to pre-historic peoples, as artifacts were found that dated back more than 5,000 years. It was also there that I honed my organic gardening skills, having learned much from my grandparents and father.

"My education includes a bachelor's and master's degree along with added post-graduate work for teaching certifications. I was a career educator for 40 years, teaching special needs' students, social studies, and science, inclusive of 5 years in administration.

"In 1991 my husband David and I moved to South Carolina where we lived for 19 years restoring an antebellum plantation home, complete with a family of ghosts. After my living in the Southeast for 34 years, we decided it was time to relocate to where life was more friendly and familiar. We now live outside Central Square with our six dogs and two cats (all rescues from the roads or dog pounds of South Carolina).

"My hobbies and interests include reading, vegetable and flower gardening, cooking, hiking, dancing, singing, traveling, playing with my companion animals, watching classic movies and antique china collecting. I also like to write, and I plan to write two books which I intend to start this year.

"I was raised as a Roman Catholic and went to parochial schools through the ninth grade. During my undergraduate studies, I began to explore and examine other religious and spiritual paths. I became a member of the Theosophical Society and used its expansive library at the national headquarters in Wheaton, Illinois, to pursue my explorations. I returned to a Christian path while living in South Carolina but was affronted and sickened by the prejudices, hypocrisies and cultural stigmas I encountered. After returning to this region of the country, I reviewed the Web site for the UU Church and knew that this was where I could be welcomed and comfortable with my thoughts and beliefs. I consider it an honor and privilege to be among you who, like me, are searching for the Truth."

JUDY AND GEORGE TENNANT

These are Judy's and George's autobiographical sketches:

"Judy grew up on the South Side of Syracuse and attended Valley High School where she was president of her sorority. George grew up in the Syracuse University area and spent four years at Hamburg High School in Hamburg south of Buffalo.

"Judy started her work career as a secretary with Carrier Corporation on Geddes Street in Syracuse. While there, she met and married George. She later stayed home to take care of their three children. When the kids were young, Judy continued her career working at night as a keyboard operator at Marine Midland Computer Center. Her next 26 years were spent at Automatic Data Processing as a keyboard operator and a switchboard/receptionist until her retirement.

"George went on to Syracuse University where he majored in industrial design. He started his business

(Continued on Page 3)

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

UU CIRCLE ELECTS OFFICERS AT ANNUAL MEETING

The UU Circle's annual meeting was held on Sunday, January 15. If you happened to miss it, you missed some great food and some wonderful stories from all of our story tellers. The Social Justice subcommittee also sang.

There was a discussion of how the UU Circle should be run for the coming year. For the past two years, the Circle has operated with a coordinator and a secretary-treasurer as officers rather than the previous slate of a president, a secretary-treasurer, a committee chair for fellowship, a committee chair for fundraising and a committee chair for outreach.

Barbara Kamerance, Ellen LaPine and Janie Garlow volunteered to serve as coordinator, and Ann Peterson volunteered to remain as secretary-treasurer. Bob Haskell made three motions: that the Circle operate with a Coordinating Committee of Three, that Barbara Kamerance, Ellen LaPine and Janie Garlow be elected to that committee, and that Ann Peterson be re-elected as secretary-treasurer. The first two motions were seconded by Steve Garlow, the third was seconded by Chet Perkins, and all three were voted on and passed.

The UU Circle does fundraising for the church and holds social activities, such as potluck luncheons and the annual picnic. Everyone is a member of the UU Circle and all are always welcome at UU Circle activities.

Ann Peterson, UU Circle secretary-treasurer

TREASURER'S REPORT

Our Operating Account currently has a balance of approximately \$3,494 in it. Many thanks for those who have paid their pledges in full, for those who contribute steadily and regularly, and for those who continue to give, in some cases above and beyond their pledges.

Our congregation has made its first payments to the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) and the Saint Lawrence Unitarian Universalist District (SLUUD) for our "Fair Share." If you have not yet paid your "Fair Share," I would encourage you to do so.

I will have 2011 tax forms available starting on the last Sunday of January.

Regards,
Cara Lajewski, treasurer

DRUM CIRCLE

The February Drum Circle will be held from 6 until 8'ish on Friday, February 10.

If the Drum Circle is to be canceled because of bad weather, the cancellation will be announced on Channel 10 or Channel 9 television as well as on WSYR radio. If you are on the Drum Circle mailing list, you will also receive an e-mail regarding the cancellation.

Ann Peterson

CHANTING AND MEDITATION

Anyone who is interested in chanting and meditation is invited to contact Tim Hart at timhart@a-znet.com or at 315-439-2541.

A WARM WELCOME TO THREE NEW MEMBERS

(Continued from Page 2)

career at General Electric where he graduated from its manufacturing management training program. George spent time at GE, General Motors and Carrier Corporation. He did consulting work with the Central New York Technology Developing Organization until retirement.

"George is a lifetime UU and Judy joined him when they were married. They have been members of the First Universalist/ Unitarian church in Syracuse. They spent many years camping on Raquette Lake in the Adirondacks, They enjoy golf and hiking at Beaver Lake and where they live in Radisson near Baldwinsville."

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.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE/SOCIAL JUSTICE

At the January 8 meeting, we decided to reach out to our local churches. We want to arrange a meeting where we can put faces to names. We want to exchange contact information so we can share fliers for public events, concerts, dinners, etc. We can support each other. We can possibly share common concerns and plan a joint event, such as a Central New York Food Bank fundraiser. It would be beneficial to have a quick way to communicate if there were a local disaster, such as a house fire. I will mail out letters soon and will share the response with you.

I have printed some handouts about the Pure Water for the World organization. I hope you will read them, check out its Web site and support this project. Pure Water, a non profit organization, helps the underserved in developing countries by providing safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene education.

A component of the Outreach Committee is the Membership subcommittee. It was scheduled to meet on Thursday, January 26, to discuss ways to grow the congregation. Chet Perkins, the chairperson, gathered information to facilitate a brainstorming session. We will also report on that meeting.

Everyone is welcome to attend our next meeting, scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, February 12.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hallock, Outreach Committee chairperson

GREEN MINUTE: BAT HOUSE

You may have noticed as I did this past summer that there weren't as many bats eating bugs in the back yard. Unfortunately, you may not have seen any bats at all. Bats get a bad reputation that they don't deserve, and most people don't find them cute or cuddly. The old wives' tale that they will get into your hair is just plain false. Do you know any one to whom this ever happened? Bats do sometimes carry rabies, as do many other wild mammals, but no more frequently than others. So why should we care about an animal with such a scary or icky reputation? Because bats are essential for maintaining healthy ecosystems. In short, they are bug-eating machines. As the world's only flying mammals, they devour as many as 1,200 mosquito-sized insects in an hour as well as moths, beetles and other night-flying insects.

You may already know that North American bats have been under attack since 2006 from what is called "white-nose syndrome." It is a fungal disease that is believed to have been introduced to the United States in a cave near Cobleskill and is named for the growth that occurs on the muzzles, wings and ears of infected bats. Since its discovery, the disease has killed 80 percent of the bat population in the eastern United States and Canada. Unfortunately, bat behavior during hibernation only enhances this fungal growth. While hibernating, bats cluster together and seek out humid areas such as those found in caves and abandoned mines. The moist environment and close quarters encourage the growth of the fungus.

So what can you do about this potentially devastating problem? One of the ways you can help is by building a bat house. A good Web site is www.batcon.org. It has lots of information about bats and bat houses. If you're looking for a winter project, why not get the plans from this Web site and make your own bat house that you can put up in the spring. An important note, the key to a successful bat house in the Northeast's cooler climate is to keep the house hot. Be sure to seal the upper portions so that warm air cannot escape, paint the house a dark color, and place it in the sunniest location you have that is near cover and not far from water.

As of yet, there is no cure for white nose syndrome. The best we can do right now is to give the remaining bats a warm home until a cure is discovered or bats hopefully build up an immunity to the syndrome as the bats in Europe have apparently done. If we take care of them as best we can, they'll reward us by eating huge amounts of bugs and by putting on wonderful aerial displays on summer evenings.

Ellen LaPine, Social Justice subcommittee, Outreach Committee

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.

SPLINTERS FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The last meeting of the Executive Board was conducted on December 31, 2011.

At this meeting, there were discussions about new Random Acts of Kindness policies, the possibility of securing grant money to help in the repair of sanctuary windows, and a new safety policy. No decisions were made at the meeting, and discussions will continue at future meetings.

The Board approved an amended list of active members compiled by Bob Haskell, president, to be used for a certification report to the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA). The total count is used to determine our church's "Fair Share" of support to the UUA and its Saint Lawrence Unitarian Universalist District (SLUDD).

Ann Peterson, corresponding secretary and UU Circle secretary-treasurer, reported that the Renaissance performance went well. She also said that the Circle's in-house bake sale went well. The sale netted approximately \$120.

Bob Haskell reported that he had been told by Rita Thornton, music coordinator, that the piano had been tuned.

Nancy Hallock, vice president, reported that a Unitarian Universalist group meets in Camden. The group meets twice a month and appears to be interested in concerns similar to ours. It was suggested that someone from our society contact the Camden group to let it know about our existence. It was pointed out that maybe both groups could meet and carry out some activities together.

The contribution of gloves, mittens, hats, scarves, food and Random Acts of Kindness money was made to the Lioness Club for the Lions Club Christmas baskets.

The Executive Board voted to express its gratitude to Nancy Hallock and others, for insulating church windows; Chet Perkins, for purchasing a shop vacuum; Rita Thornton and others, for decorating the church; Arnold Hook, for replacing the church CD recorder; Rita Thornton and Andrea Abbott, for conducting the Christmas Eve service; Kurt and Ronna Schindler and others, including Arne Hook, Andrea Abbott and Betty Figie, for putting on the Christmas Day dinner; Steven Garlow, for setting up a church Facebook page; Marcia Burrell-Ihow, for updating the church Web site; and Marcia Burrell-Ihow and Winfield Ihow, for hosting the Web site/Facebook meeting at their home on December 27.

Finally, the date for a "Heart-to-Heart" luncheon, to be organized by the UU Circle, was changed from Saturday, February 11, to Sunday, February 12.

The next meeting of the Executive Board is scheduled for the church dining room at 9 a.m. on Sunday, February 5.

Winfield Ihow, recording secretary

BOOK CLUB UPDATE

I am Number 2 on the hold list for the Book Club kit, "The Book Thief."

It's hard to say when the kit will be delivered. I suggest that any one interested in reading this book to try to get a copy and to start reading. I am borrowing one from a friend. "The Book Thief" is quite popular and has been read by many groups, so a copy might not be too hard to find.

I will be at church on January 29 to poll folks on this subject and maybe set a date to meet.

Nancy Hallock

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 15.

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

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.

CAMDEN AREA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS

On January 22nd Nancy Hallock and I had the pleasure of attending the service held by the Camden Area Unitarian Universalists (CAUUs). We were welcomed into the cozy home of one of their members where we enjoyed a service that was both thought provoking and inclusive. We also sang a hymn that was accompanied by accordion music. It was wonderful to be part of such an intimate service.

The CAUUs are a small group of people who shared their diverse beliefs and open spirits with us in true Unitarian Universalist fellowship. They are just exploring the beginnings of what it is like to become a UU congregation. They meet on the second and fourth Sundays of the month at members' homes in the area.

Many of the members make a point of traveling to other area congregations on the other Sundays that they don't meet. They had questions about us here in Central Square and our origins. They will visit us in the near future. If you are interested in attending one of their services, contact Ian at www.camden.uu@wildblue.net for the location of the service.

Ellen LaPine, Outreach Committee

JOIN IN THE SINGING

Come sing a song with me,
Join choir for all to see,
Sing and rejoice,
Let's hear your voice.

Rehearse Sunday mornings in the sanctuary at
9:30 a.m.

Sing and rejoice!

Rita Thornton, music coordinator

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 436-2238 or Chester Perkins at 668-6719.

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

HOSPICE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Friends of Oswego County Hospice point out that volunteers play a vital role in the Hospice program by providing many services in a patient's home. These

include emotional support and companionship, running errands and offering respite for care givers.

In addition to working with patients, Friends of Oswego County Hospice state that Hospice volunteers can also help with clerical duties in the Hospice and Friends of Hospice offices and assist with fundraising events.

For more information on becoming a Hospice volunteer and to request an application, interested persons may contact Dawn or Vera at Oswego County Hospice. Their telephone numbers are 349-8259 and 343-5223.

VIDEO DISCUSSION GROUP

The Video Discussion Group will view "Life in Occupied Palestine" when it meets in the Goettel Room at 7 p.m. on Friday, February 3.

"Life in Occupied Palestine" offers eyewitness stories and photographs of a perspective of how life is in occupied Palestine as told by Anna Baltzer, a member of the organization called the International Women's Peace Service (IWPS).

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, February 2, if you plan to attend the supper so that she may make a reservation.

The group will have supper at 5:30 p.m. and then meet in the Goettel Room at 7 p.m. on Friday, February 17.

Everyone is invited to attend.

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.

The living tradition which Unitarian Universalists share draws from many sources, including Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.

PRESIDENTIAL REFLECTIONS

Dear Friends,

I hope you read about the January 11 ruling by the United States Supreme Court that Adam Liptak of The New York Times said may be the court's "most significant religious liberty decision in two decades."

In the case, Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Liptak reported, the justices "recognized a 'ministerial exception' to employment discrimination laws."

According to Liptak, the justices said "that churches and other religious groups must be free to choose and dismiss their leaders without government interference."

Cheryl Perich, who had been a teacher at a school in Redford, Michigan, had said that she was fired for pursuing an employment-discrimination claim based on a disability, narcolepsy.

Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. wrote, "The interest of society in the enforcement of employment discrimination statutes is undoubtedly important. But so, too, is the interest of religious groups in choosing who will preach their beliefs, teach their faith and carry out their mission. When a minister who has been fired sues her church alleging that her termination was discriminatory, the First Amendment has struck the balance for us. The church must be free to choose those who will guide it on its way."

According to Liptak, "The decision gave only limited guidance about how courts should decide who counts as a minister, saying the court was 'reluctant to adopt a rigid formula'. Two concurring opinions offered contrasting proposals."

Liptak added, "In a concurrence, Justice Clarence Thomas wrote that the courts should get out of the business of trying to decide who qualifies for the ministerial exception, leaving the determination to religious groups. ...

"In a second concurrence, Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr., joined by Justice Elena Kagan, wrote that it would be a mistake to focus on ministers, a title he said was generally used by Protestant denominations and 'rarely if ever' by Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists. Nor, Justice Alito added, should the concept of ordination be at the center of the analysis.

"Rather, he wrote, the exception 'should apply to any 'employee' who leads a religious organization, conducts worship services or important religious ceremonies or rituals, or serves as a messenger or teacher of its faith'."

The Rev. Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said in a statement, "Blatant discrimination is a social evil we have worked hard to eradicate in the United States. I'm afraid the court's ruling today will make it harder to combat."

Bishop William E. Lori, chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' ad hoc committee for religious liberty, called the ruling "a great day for the First Amendment."

Well, I agree with Liptak. The court's ruling is a major decision in more ways than one.

Bob

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.

Please remember to participate in this ongoing fundraiser.

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

January was busy. The kids had a great time. They created Prayer Flags and learned a little about Tibet. They learned the origin of our chalice and made their own to wear.

We continue to add our handprints to our rainbow wall.

February looks to be just as busy.

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

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

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

5 – 9 a.m., Executive Board. 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. David Weissbard. Random Acts of Kindness 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. 10 – 6 until 8'ish p.m., Drum Circle.

12 – 9 a.m., Spiritual Committee. 9:30 a.m., Social Justice subcommittee, Outreach Committee. 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott. 10:50 a.m., Religious education. 11:45 a.m., Heart-to-Heart luncheon. 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.

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

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

19 – 9 a.m., Religious Education 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.

26 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott. 10:50 a.m., Religious education.

WE HAVE ADDED A FACEBOOK PAGE AND UPDATED OUR WEB SITE

The church has recently created a Facebook page. Just click <http://www.facebook.com/pages/UU-Central-Square/199139743511564>. We will add more information, and we hope you will respond. There may be a few kinks to work out so we ask for your patience.

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.centalsquareuu.com/selected_sermons.html

“LEANING AGAINST THE WIND”

Our church has copies of the Rev. Max Coots's book, “Leaning Against the Wind,” for sale. All you have to do is give Cara Lajewski or Bob Haskell a check or cash totaling \$13.

Max preached at our church for years after his retirement at Canton.

Visit our church Web site at <http://www.centalsquareuu.com>