



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
Telephone: 315-668-6821

Church Web site: <http://www.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.

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

JANUARY 2012

STUDENT MINISTER SNIPPET

January is the month of Janus, that old two-headed god of gates and portals who looks both backward and forward. How appropriate, since we know that every news outlet will have both retrospective stories about the past year and predictions for the coming year. Sometimes one is as accurate as the other. What has happened in the past colors how we see our future, just as we interpret and re-interpret our pasts in light of what is going on in our lives at this moment. We also work this way when we look at the past and at the future in the public sphere as well. Of course, we know that the old year really does not stop because it is December 31st and the New Year does not make a clean break with the past because it is January 1st. For our slightly misshapen sphere of rock, soil and water spinning a little off-center through vast space, one day is rather like the day that preceded it. It is in our minds that we find meaning, both in what has gone before and in our hopes and fears for the time to come. That is what our business is, I think, at First Universalist of Central Square, the finding meaning business. Let us come together to work for a world in which each person's life has meaning.

– Andrea Abbott

THE REVEREND WEISSBARD TO SPEAK ABOUT THE 7TH COMMANDMENT

The Rev. David Weissbard has chosen as his sermon topic “The Principle of Fidelity” for the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, January 1. He writes, “Some will recall my dissatisfaction with the conclusion of my December sermon on King David. I want to go a step further in January, for those hearty enough to join us on January 1, with a sermon from my study of the Ten Commandments. My subject will be the 7th Commandment. My title is ‘The Principle of Fidelity’. What a way to start a year!”

Please have articles for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than NOON on THURSDAY, JANUARY 26. 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 OUR 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. Lucy and Arnold Stieber became members of the congregation in a ceremony during the worship service on Sunday, November 13, 2011.

LUCY STIEBER

Lucy Stieber is originally from Syracuse. She grew up on the North Side and attended Syracuse University. After graduating with a B.S. in special education, she taught in Nedrow for one year before moving to Michigan to get an M.A. from Michigan State University. She met Arny while in Michigan, and they primarily lived in Michigan until the fall of 2011 when they moved back to Lucy's family home on Pleasant Lake in Pennellville.

Lucy's passion is children, being in education for 40 years as a teacher and an administrator. As a special educator Lucy worked with students grades pre-school through 12th. Lucy's administrative career was in K-12 special education and then as an elementary administrator. She has been a member of the Kiwanis Club and several education associations.

Lucy and Arny have a son, Dave. He and his spouse are high school teachers in Chicago Public Schools. They are expecting their first child in March 2012.

Lucy enjoys traveling and has been to 49 states, Europe and the Caribbean. She takes pleasure in gardening and is an avid reader. Since retiring in June 2010, Lucy has been working with Arny to prepare their Michigan home for sale and updating the Pennellville home. Lucy's long-range goal is to move to Chicago, spend time with her soon-to-be grandchild, do volunteer work and travel to Italy and beyond.

ARNOLD STIEBER

I was born in Highland Park, Michigan, on May 30, 1946, and raised in Detroit with my older (by four years) brother. My parents both worked outside of the home at "working class" jobs. Our neighborhood had blocks and blocks of small two-bedroom homes and lots of kids. Our favorite games were "army," "war," and "guns." I attended Catholic schools through high school and was an average student.

College was never discussed in our family so my "plans" were to go to work in the factory for one of the auto companies. In my senior year of high school a friend suggested I go to college. I took the SAT in the spring of 1964 and applied to Michigan State University – where my friend was going. I didn't even know where it was. I got accepted and started classes in the fall of 1964.

I graduated from MSU in March of 1969 with a B.A. in business – the first in our extended family to earn a degree. I accepted a management intern position at GM in Flint, Michigan, and I was thrilled. Within three months I was drafted into the Army, trained in the infantry, and spent 14 months in Vietnam.

After the military I made the best decision of my life and married Lucy in August of 1971. She was teaching special education and I went back to MSU and eventually the University of Pittsburgh on the GI Bill. I got an MBA from Pitt in 1975. I took a position in public transportation in Albany, New York. After a year we moved to Lansing, Michigan, for another public transportation position. Lucy took a special education teaching position in a rural school district.

My career switched to telecommunications in the late 1970s, and Lucy took an administrative position in rural Stockbridge, Michigan. We bought a very old, run-down farm home on 17 acres. Our son Dave was born on June 11, 1981. We restored the old home over the years. Lucy took a position in Chelsea, Michigan, (about 15 miles away) and they required administrators to live in the district. So, in 1991 we moved to another old, run-down farm home on 12 acres and started the renovation.

I retired (actually phased out) from telecommunications over several years beginning in 2003. Lucy retired from education in 2010. Our son is now married, and he and his wife are expecting their first child in March. He and his spouse both teach high school in Chicago.

Life gets more interesting with each passing year!

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

UU CIRCLE POTLUCK AND MEETING, FOLLOWED BY FUN

There will be a potluck luncheon and business meeting to discuss the UU Circle after the worship service on Sunday, January 15.

Two years ago, the UU Circle bylaws were amended to allow the Circle to operate with a coordinator and a secretary-treasurer. Previously, the Circle had a slate of officers that included a president, a secretary-treasurer, a committee chair for fellowship, a committee chair for fundraising and a committee chair for outreach.

The purpose of the January 15 meeting is to discuss if the Circle should continue with a coordinator and a secretary-treasurer and to discuss officers for the Circle.

After the business aspect of the potluck luncheon is finished, there will be time for some fun. It seems that everyone has a story. Do you have a story to share, a family story, a legend, a cultural story or a tale that is just plain amusing? We would like to hear it. Bring props, background music, costuming or anything that will lend to you tale.

If you are not a storyteller, but would like to read a poem or a story or would like to sing or perform in some other way, please add your name to the sign-up list.

– Ann Peterson, UU Circle secretary-treasurer

BOOK CLUB TO BE DISCUSSED

The Book Club will be part of a discussion at the UU Circle potluck luncheon.

– Nancy Hallock

PLEASE RETURN YOUR GUEST AT YOUR TABLE BOXES

Everyone is asked to return Guest at Your Table boxes by Sunday, January 8. The boxes were distributed beginning on Sunday, November 20.

The Guest at Your Table program is sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) as it works throughout the United States and around the world to advance human rights. UUSC is an independent membership-based human-rights organization and receives no money from any government or the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.

You can learn more about UUSC's work to protect workers' rights online at www.uusc.org/economic_justice.

If you did not take home a box, you may give a check to Nancy Hallock, our congregation's Gift at Your Table program coordinator, or support UUSC directly online at www.uusc.org/givetoguest. Donations received online will be automatically credited to our congregation.

Your Guest at Your Table generosity is tax deductible! Be sure to complete the form on your box.

You are also asked to consider taking an additional step, and become a UUSC member, or renew your membership, at this time.

Gifts of \$100 are eligible to be matched by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, New York, to double the impact of your support.

DRUM CIRCLE

The next session of the Drum Circle will be held from 6 until 8'ish p.m. on the second Friday of the month, January 13. There are always drums and rattles to share.

If your New Year's resolution is to take more time to enjoy yourself, this could be the thing for you.

– Ann Peterson

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.

DISCOVERING YOUR SPIRITUALITY

The Adult Religious Education Program for 2011-12 will offer one more workshop in its three-part series on "Discovering Your Spirituality."

Arnold Hook will lead the workshop, "Dreamwork and Spirituality," in the church dining room from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 7.

There is a sign-up sheet. If you have any questions, please contact Arnold Hook by e-mail at ahook@twcny.rr.com or by telephone at 315-635-7122.

A HUGE SUCCESS

The Christmas Day dinner was a huge success. "Thank you" to the many hands who helped make the dinner possible. In total, we served 54 people.

Next year: LIVE entertainment!

– Kurt and Ronna Schindler

VIDEO DISCUSSION GROUP

The Video Discussion Group will view the conclusion of "The Mormons" when it meets in the Goettel Room at 7 p.m. on Friday, January 6.

Again, the 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, January 5, if you plan to attend the supper.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE TO MEET

The Membership Committee will meet at the Perkins home in Mallory at 10 a.m. on Monday, January 16. The purpose of the meeting is to develop a program to increase membership.

– Chet Perkins

COFFEE AND CHAT

Women and men of the church will gather for Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread on Route 31 in Clay at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, January 18.

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

The women's and men's groups meet separately.

For more information about the women's group, you may contact Nancy Haskell.

For more information about the men's group, you may contact Chet Perkins.

A LETTER OF APPRECIATION

Laurel Amabile and Jim Sanders of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations state in a recent letter:

"We are writing to offer a warm and heartfelt message of appreciation and gratitude for your congregation's financial support of our Unitarian Universalist faith through your contributions to the UUA Annual Program in 2010-2011."

Laurel Amabile is director of the Annual Program Fund Stewardship and Development; Jim Sanders is chair, Annual Program Fund Committee.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious education classes may have been a little sparse, but we created a big splash!

All the kids decorated the downstairs for our Christmas Day dinner. What a great time they had.

We have sent in the donated ink cartridges and are just waiting to hear back how much we made toward the Heifer Project.

Keep collecting those eye glasses. We donated six pairs this month toward "The Gift of Sight" project.

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

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.

OUTREACH (SOCIAL JUSTICE) COMMITTEE

The December 11 meeting was well attended. Yea!!!

We identified a charity, "Pure Water for the World," to support in its efforts to provide safe water in Haiti and Latin America.

We will present some educational programs, including films, as a way to increase everyone's awareness of this global problem.

You can learn more at www.UUSC.org and its "Got Water" project that defends the human right to safe and accessible water. The Web site www.purewaterfortheworld.org has all the facts on its specific ways of helping.

I have some information from the Web site in the dining room.

We have three painless ideas to start fundraising:

1. I will have a "Change for Change" jar by the coffee pot on Sunday mornings.
2. We would like everyone to contribute his or her can and bottle returns to our fund.
3. Your extra change can be added to the collection plate to go toward this project.

Later in January, Melanie Cutillo will give a presentation about her experience in Ecuador and the needs she has identified there. We will try to include the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse and May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse in this program. We are working to establish contacts with their social justice committees.

If we can engage the congregation, we can make a difference!

The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 8, and all are invited.

That's all for now.

Respectfully,

– Nancy Hallock, Outreach Committee chairperson

GREEN MINUTE: THE HIDING OF A RARE METAL

Get a new cell phone for Christmas? Hidden deep inside all cell phones is the rare metal tantalum. It's valued for its ability to resist corrosion and extreme heat. Unfortunately, it is directly linked to child labor and the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where millions of civilians have been killed or raped.

Tantalum is derived from an ore that can be found in major quantities in the eastern areas of the DRC, and both the Congolese military and militarized rebel groups control mining operations. Many children toil for long hours in deep mine pits, often staying in these foul-smelling holes for days, according to Annie Dunnebacke of Global Witness. She says, "Competition over control of the mineral trade is not necessarily the primary reason the conflict started, but in recent years it's become a primary reason warring parties are continuing to fight."

The good news is that a United States law enacted in July 2011 may be of some help by encouraging companies to avoid financing violence in the DRC. The law requires publicly traded United States companies to disclose steps they are taking to ensure that any coltan, tin and tungsten sourced from the DRC and neighboring countries are "conflict-free." The new law also mandates independent chain-of-custody audits for these minerals.

What can you do? Recycle your cell phones to help lessen the need for coltan, tin and tungsten. You can send your cell phones to an "E-Steward" recycler certified by Basel Action Network (E-Stewards.org). Also, most Best Buy retailers partner with responsible e-waste recyclers such as Electronic Recyclers International. Be sure to "scrub" your phone or be sure that it will be scrubbed by the recycler so that your personal information is protected.

– Ellen LaPine, Social Justice, Outreach Committee

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.

BOARD SPLINTERS

Hello all,

The following are some of the highlights of the Executive Board meeting on Sunday, December 4.

We had a successful potluck luncheon and Renaissance enactment on December 4.

Cara is looking into a possible source of funds to help us repair our stained glass windows. She attended an informational meeting on grants for historical preservation conducted by Senator Gillibrand. Cara will investigate this further to see if it is possible.

The Board discussed some clarifications of the Random Acts of Kindness policy.

Winfield and Libbie will look into possible church safety policies. A report will follow. Also, Bob will consult with Ellen as to any institution of disruptive behavior policies.

We will again sponsor a Christmas Day dinner for the wider community, under the direction of Kurt and Ronna. (It was successful as usual. Many thanks to Kurt and Ronna for the hard work on the organization and preparations!)

Envelopes for Sunday contributions to the church have been distributed to the pews in the church. This will enable us to make our Sunday contributions in cash and then they can be attributed to the appropriate members.

On Sunday, December 18, there will be an in-house bake sale.

There will be a UU Circle luncheon on January 15, 2012.

– Winfield Ihlow, recording secretary

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.

NEW YEAR'S EVE VIGIL FOR PEACE

The Syracuse Peace Council will mark the end of its 75th anniversary year and recommit itself to many more years of working to create a peaceful and just community, nation and world during a New Year's Eve Vigil at Clinton Square, South Salina Street, downtown

Syracuse, from 5 to 6 p.m. on Friday, December 31, 2011.

After the Vigil, all are invited for some hot soup and bread at the home of SPC activists, 340 Midland Avenue.

– Nancy Hallock

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.

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.

THE REVEREND STODDARD TO SPEAK

The Rev. Libbie D. Stoddard, minister emerita, will speak at the worship service at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, January 29.

She has chosen as her sermon topic "Roselee's Coffee Cup."

Of course, she says, her appearance depends on the weather.

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.

Finances are provided by the congregation through a special once-a-month offering, normally on the first Sunday of each month. Random Acts of Kindness envelopes are found on the back of the pews.

The next Random Acts of Kindness will be observed on Sunday, January 1.

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

RECYCLE YOUR MAGAZINES

The Outreach (Social Justice) Committee is asking you to bring magazines to the church dining room on the first Sunday of each month 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.

RETURN THOSE BOTTLES

You may continue to help the environment and make money for the Outreach (Social Justice) Committee by leaving your returnable bottles at the church.

Nancy Hallock, committee chairperson, is returning deposit bottles and cans for the committee treasury.

Please remember to participate in this ongoing fundraiser.

DOWNSTAIRS SCOTTIE

The Executive Board has designated the second Sunday of each month as the date for the collection of food for the Downstairs Scottie. The Outreach (Social Justice) Committee will later take the contributions of food to the Food Bank at Saint Michael's Church.

The committee will continue to accept non-food items for the Downstairs Scottie on the second Sunday of each month and at all other times. Such non-food items include soap, detergent, bathroom and facial tissues, toothpaste, and the like.

The collection box is in the church dining room.

Remember the Downstairs Scottie as you shop.

"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.

From 1958 to 1992 Max Coots delivered more than 1,400 sermons as minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton. In 1991 a group of UU church members selected 59 of those sermons that they agreed were some of Max's best. First published in 1992, "Leaning Against the Wind" was re-printed twice, but for the last several years the book has been out of print. The recent fourth printing means that "Leaning Against the Wind" is once again available.

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

CHANTING AND MEDITATION

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

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.

WE HAVE ADDED A FACEBOOK PAGE AND ARE UPDATING OUR WEB SITE

The church has just 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 are in the process of updating 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

JANUARY CALENDAR

1 – New Year’s Day. 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. David Weissbard. Sermon topic: “The Principle of Fidelity.” Random Acts of Kindness Sunday. 10:50 a.m., Religious education. 11:30 a.m., All are asked to help take down the Christmas decorations. 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. 6 – 5:30 p.m., Supper at the Akropolis restaurant. 7 p.m., Video Discussion Group will meet in the Goettel Room to view the conclusion of “The Mormons.”

7 – 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., “Dreamwork and Spirituality” workshop led by Arnold Hook in the church dining room. 8 – 9 a.m., Spiritual Committee. 9 a.m., Outreach (Social Justice) Committee. 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott. 10:50 a.m., Religious education. This is the once-a-month Sunday on which everyone is asked by the Outreach Committee to donate food items for the Downstairs Scottie, 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., 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. 11:45 a.m., UU Circle potluck luncheon and annual business meeting.

16 – 10 a.m., The Membership Committee will meet at the Perkins home in Mallory.

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

20 – 5:30 p.m., Supper at Akropolis. 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 Stoddard. Sermon topic: “Roselee’s Coffee Cup.” 10:50 a.m., Religious education.

TIME TO TAKE DOWN THE DECORATIONS

Rita Thornton points out that it is time to take down the Christmas decorations in the church. She is asking everyone who is able to help take down the decorations beginning at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, January 1.
In Rita’s words: “Many hands make light work.”

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