



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

MAY 2012

STUDENT MINISTER SNIPPET

A friend recently e-mailed me that her e-mail had been hacked, so she was notifying her friends to be on their guard. This made me think that perhaps we should look into having a service of blessing for our electronic devices. After all, we have a blessing for our pets every year and many of us spend more time on things that blink and beep than we do with things that purr or wag. For that matter, many of us spend more time with things that blink and beep than we do with flesh and blood people. There is virtually virtual everything. This is a trend that will continue, I believe, and it will be interesting to see how (or if) it has changed or will change human relationships. A recent article suggested that more people are living alone by choice, preferring it to the give and take and misunderstandings that attend living with others. Children are increasingly able to play by themselves, electronically, and are therefore able to circumvent the messiness of human relationships. In addition to avoiding people, we are more and more insulated from the messiness of the natural world. However neat and contained the electronic world may be, on this glorious spring day, with the prospect of some time to be with real people whose company I enjoy, it seems to me that we may be losing a lot in the virtual world. Let us celebrate the unfurling of the leaves; let us celebrate the unfurling of new relationships and the deepening of old ones, the old way, by being physically with nature, by being physically with each other.

Andrea Abbott

THE REVEREND WEISSBARD TO SPEAK ABOUT 4th COMMANDMENT

The Rev. David Weissbard will focus on the 4th Commandment when he speaks at 10:30 a.m. on May 6. He writes, "Some of you know that I have an unpublished manuscript dealing with the Ten Commandments. One of the chapters that came as a surprise to me as I worked on it is my chapter on the 4th Commandment, addressing the subject of the Sabbath. It actually links with my April sermon on the 'soul'. Come see if I can surprise you."

Please have articles for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than NOON on MONDAY, MAY 28.
His e-mail address is rhaskell@twcny.rr.com.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE'S SOCIAL JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE

The Outreach Committee's Social Justice Subcommittee meets on the second Sunday of each month.

At the meeting on Sunday, April 8, we set dates for this year's next two Adopt-a-Highway pickups: June 24 and September 30.

We have a Pure Water for the World poster, including the non-profit organization's Web site, on the bulletin board in the church dining room. We will report on money collected. Our goal is TWO WELLS/year at \$150 apiece. Coins from the collection plate are adding up wonderfully. The total on April 14 was \$89.58.

Suggested reading: "Blue Revolution: Unmaking America's Water Crisis" by Cynthia Barnett. It's wonderfully written and chock-full of interesting information. Both the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) and I recommend this book. It is available from the Onondaga Library.

Recycling update: There are three receptacles in the church kitchen. They are labeled: Trash, Recyclables, Deposits. Please read the posted Oswego County regulations and use the appropriate container. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted, Nancy Hallock
"Plant Justice, Harvest Peace"

GREEN MINUTE: IS YOUR ECO-LABEL LYING?

Your favorite product proudly proclaims on its green-colored packaging that it is "Earth smart" or maybe it says it is "Green" or "Nature's friend." It may have an official-looking seal, too. All of this may mean absolutely nothing. Reassuring claims may be based on nothing more than the word of the manufacturer as it strives to sell you its latest "environmentally friendly" product.

While I'm unable to show you the seals that are associated with "green" claims that represent true established standards that assure you that the product is earth or animal friendly, you can go to www.motherjones.com/environment/2009/11/your-eco-label-lying to see what to look for. In this article I will give you examples of claims that are virtually meaningless and may surprise you.

If you are looking for food or organics, beware of:

"Natural": USDA (United States Department of Agriculture)-approved "natural" meat doesn't contain artificial flavoring, preservatives or synthetic ingredients but the steak you buy can still have antibiotics and hormones.

"No additives" implies that a product doesn't have ingredients such as Red No. 40 or MSG (monosodium glutamate). But maybe it does; the maker decides what it means.

"Hormone free": This is pure bull. Producers can call beef "hormone free" even if it contains a hormone such as testosterone. By law, pork and poultry must be hormone free anyway.

Concerned about animal cruelty? "Cruelty-free" claims have no set standards

"Free range" also has no set standards for beef, pork or eggs. The USDA lets poultry producers make this claim if chickens have "access" to the outdoors for 51 percent of their lives, not if they actually go outside.

Other buzzwords include:

"Biodegradable" products must "return to nature" when left to the elements under FTC (Federal Trade Commission) rules but no one enforces this very broad standard.

"Hypoallergenic" was created by cosmetic advertisers in the 1950s and had no set meaning or standards.

"Fragrance free" means only that a product doesn't have a noticeable scent but can still include chemicals that cover up odors.

"Nontoxic" products probably won't kill you if you ingest them but might contain chemicals that can cause serious health problems.

The bottom line is "buyer, beware." If you have concerns about the products you might be using, go to the Web site above and see if the makers are making claims that are more than just marketing gimmicks.

Ellen LaPine
Outreach Committee's Social Justice Subcommittee

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

UU CIRCLE PROGRAM TO FEATURE GABRIEL SERENI ON MAY 12

Just what is an OBE anyway? We hope that you are curious. Gabriel Sereni will give a talk that should be of interest to the curious, the already converted and the skeptics alike. This is a free program that will be open to the public. It will be held at our church from 7 until 9 p.m. on Saturday, May 12.

OBE is an out-of-body experience, also known as astral projection or astral travel. What are the benefits of OBE? How is it different from a common dream? Learn the relationship between OBE and our non-physical bodies, our personal attributes and reincarnation.

For you skeptics, Gabriel Sereni will also take a scientific approach.

We hope that this makes you VERY curious. Save the evening of May 12 for a unique experience.

Other upcoming events:

We will soon be announcing the date for the Spring Smorgasbord fundraiser. We hope that you will be involved.

We have set an October date for a special guitar concert.

Ann Peterson
Secretary-treasurer, UU Circle

CONGRATULATIONS, JOSHUA

Joshua Cutillo has received a district scholarship for the Youth Missions Work Camp at the Southern Appalachian Folklife Center in Pipestem, West Virginia, from June 24 to 30.

Youths 14 to 18 will help with home projects for low-income families and seniors in the community.

The program is open to 27 youths and two adults in the Ohio-Meadville District and the Saint Lawrence District of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA).

The funding for the camp is being underwritten by a grant from the Fund for Unitarian Universalist Social Responsibility.

The camp has been scheduled to dovetail with "Justice GA" to spread the good work from the desert of the Southwest to the mountains of West Virginia. "Justice GA" is the UUA General Assembly scheduled in Phoenix, Arizona, from June 20 to 24.

WOMEN TO GATHER

May 10 is the last day to register for the Third Annual Saint Lawrence Unitarian Universalist District Women's Spirituality Conference.

The conference will take place at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse on May 18-19.

Melinda Morris Perrin will deliver the keynote address, "Life as a Magical Mystery Tour." She is a

poet whose words reflect the interconnected web of life and the spiritual dimensions of nature. Perrin is a member of the First Unitarian Society of Schenectady and continues to serve on the Wise Woman Council of the Central Midwest District's Women and Religion Committee.

Conference workshops include Yoga; Creating Personal Altars; Chakra Healing; Acupuncture and Spirit; Balance in Your Life; Drumming; Chanting; Breaking Past Ties; and Simple Abundance – Our Journeys to Wholeness.

Women are urged to "come for ritual, workshops, shared experiences and friendship, and feed your mind, body and spirit."

More details and registration information are available at the Web site: www.slduwr.org.

Jody Brown

MAY DRUM CIRCLE

The May Drum Circle is scheduled from 6 until 8'ish p.m. on Friday, May 11.

At our April meeting, one of our moms brought her 17-year-old son to help celebrate his birthday. He enjoyed the drumming as well as his cake, and he learned what the REAL "Happy Birthday" sounds like.

We invite you to sit in on the Drum Circle. No experience is necessary.

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.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

There is so much we can learn from the people of our world about religion and spirituality. By learning we have a better understanding of differences and similarities.

This month our children created their own Ojo de dios (God's Eye). The Huichol people of western Mexico weave these hangings to protect their young children.

The children also discussed Christian and non-Christian Easter traditions.

If you have a moment, please check out the religious education hall for the children's 7 Principle rainbow web. It was created while we were talking about our principles and how we can use them every day. By assigning a color to each principle it makes it easier to remember it.

Earth Bingo and ways to recycle and reuse rounded out our topics for the month.

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

MEN'S GATHERING AT CAMP UNIRONDAK

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.

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, May 16.

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.

UUSC EXTENDS ITS THANKS

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee has cited our congregation for "its significant support of UUSC's mission to advance human rights and social justice around the world."

The UUSC's Lauralyn Smith, senior associate, member development, and Kate Wallace, program assistant, member development, wrote in a recent letter: "UUSC is pleased to recognize First Universalist Society of Central Square with the Creating Justice Banner Society award. Your achievement will be celebrated with special acknowledgements in UUSC's annual report and the Winter issue of UUWorld, as well as online at uus.org." The Creating Justice Banner Society consists of congregations with 25-49 percent membership.

The letter's writers added: "We are looking ahead to continuing our work in the world through advocacy, activism, and grassroots partnerships. Advocating for the human right to water, protecting civil liberties, upholding the rights of workers, and providing aid with dignity are key ways that you and UUSC continue to make a difference. Thank you for your past support; please continue joining hands with us in this mission."

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.

TREASURER THANKS ALL WHO HAVE PLEDGED

Thank you to the many members who have submitted their pledge cards for the coming fiscal year. If you are in need of a pledge card, there are some located on the East Room table, or I can send you one directly. If you have not yet returned your pledge card, I ask that you do it as soon as you can, so that we can finalize our budget for the coming year. Our current year is in good standing, with approximately \$3,368 in our Operating Budget. We anticipate that we will finish our current fiscal year "in the black."

I still have not heard from anyone about taking over the treasurer duties for the coming fiscal year. If you think you might have any interest at all, I encourage you to come and ask me questions about what it entails. It doesn't hurt to ask! In fact, being treasurer is rather painless in its entirety!

Regards,
Cara Lajewski

PRESIDENTIAL REFLECTIONS

Dear Friends,

The last day of May marks the end of the 2011-2012 church year. As a result, it is not too far ahead to think about and to make plans for the annual congregational meeting. The society's bylaws specify that there shall be such a meeting on the first Sunday in June of each year. This year that day is June 3.

Once again, the agenda for the meeting will include:

- Receipt of annual reports from incumbent officers and committee chairpersons.
- Consideration and adoption of the budget for the next church year.
- Election of officers.

This year's agenda is to include consideration of a Covenant of Right Relations and a Policy on Disruptive Behavior. The two proposals were printed in the April newsletter.

The agenda may also include a proposal on the financing of stained-glass window repairs.

It is the task of the Nominating Committee to propose a slate of officers for consideration by the congregation at the annual meeting. Officers include president, vice president, treasurer, recording secretary, corresponding secretary and registrar, each elected for a one-year term, and three trustees, one elected each year for a three-year term. The congregation also elects a member of the Nominating Committee for a three-year term each year. This year's committee of three members consists of Marcia Burrell-Ihlow, Steven Garlow and Ellen LaPine. The Nominating Committee must have the permission of a person it is nominating for office to do so. A person not picked by the Nominating Committee may nominate himself or herself -- or any other voting member provided that person grants permission -- for office at the annual meeting.

The bylaws provide that active members of the church 18 years or older shall have the power to vote. Any member of the society under 18 years shall have the right of voice, but not the power of voting or eligibility to hold office in the church.

It is expected that child care will be available upon request.

The Executive Board is expected to focus on plans for the annual meeting when its members meet on Sundays, May 6 and 27. Committee chairpersons are asked to prepare their written yearly reports so that they may read them at the annual meeting. Anyone who has not returned a completed pledge card is asked to do so as soon as possible so that work can be wrapped up on a proposed budget for the new church year.

The bylaws state that the prime authority of the society rests with the congregation of active members. So, please mark your calendar and plan to attend this important meeting.

Bob

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.

SPLINTERS FROM THE BOARD MEETING OF APRIL 1

The pledge forms for the next fiscal year were placed on the East Room table.

Cara Lajewski and Nancy Hallock are still investigating possibilities in restoring the stained-glass windows.

A Covenant of Right Relations and a Policy on Disruptive Behavior will be presented at the annual congregation meeting on June 3.

There will be a District Assembly in Rochester on April 27 and 28. We are entitled to two delegates. Arne Hook and Janie Garlow will be attending as delegates, with Andrea Abbott going as a student observer.

The Maundy Thursday service went well. Also, there will be a Flower Communion service.

There will be a program on May 12 by Gabriel Sereni from the International Academy of Consciousness.

Members of the Outreach Committee did some work on Project Bloom and mulching trees in the village. The Adopt-a-Highway cleanup went well.

There will be a conversation about our church and its history for possible new members on April 22.

The book discussion on "The Help" will be on April 29. Winfield Ihlow will facilitate the discussion.

Church spring cleaning is scheduled for May 10. Rain date will be May 11.

The Unitarian Universalist Association's annual General Assembly will be in June in Arizona. Is anyone interested?

The Nominating Committee is working on recruiting a slate of officers for the church. The list will be needed by the time of the congregational meeting on June 3. Winfield will serve as moderator for the congregational meeting.

Cara is working on streamlined language about marriage for our church policies.

Winfield Ihlow, recording secretary

LET YOUR VOICES BLOOM

Spring has sprung as you see flowers blooming. Choir seems to be springing up also. Always room for more blooms. Join us for rehearsal at 9:30 a.m. on Sundays. Everyone has a voice ready to bloom for everyone to enjoy.

Rita Thornton, music coordinator

VIDEO DISCUSSION GROUP

The Video Discussion Group will view several short videos on various subjects when it meets in the Goettel Room at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 4.

The subjects are expected to include the collapse of the financial giant Lehman Brothers, the growing exodus of Palestinian Christians from the Middle East, and the child abuse scandal in Ireland.

Again, the group plans to have supper at the Akropolis Restaurant on Route 11 just north of 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, May 3, if you plan to attend the supper so that she may make a reservation. All are invited.

The group will also have supper at 5:30 p.m. and then meet in the Goettel Room at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 18.

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.

RECYCLE YOUR MAGAZINES

The Outreach 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.

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.

MAY 6 TO MARK CHALICE LIGHTER SUNDAY

Our congregation will join with others in the Saint Lawrence District of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations in observing Chalice Lighter Sunday during the worship service on May 6.

Ellen LaPine is our Chalice Lighter Ambassador.

The purpose of the Chalice Lighter Program is to extend Unitarian Universalist principles and faith by promoting the growth of congregations within the district.

Chalice Lighter funds can be used for projects that:

- Enable the initiation of major programs for growth and renewal, including individual congregation projects or multiple congregations working together;
- Assist in building, including securing a building site for new congregations and major renovation necessary for growth in established congregations;
- Assist in securing professional religious leadership. This Chalice Lighter Program may be the factor that makes the possibility the reality; or
- Initiate a new congregation. Often, new congregations need help in meeting start-up expenses.

So, what is a Chalice Lighter? A Chalice Lighter is a person or couple who pledges to respond with a specific contribution when the "Call" comes to light a chalice in the district.

When should one contribute? A "Call" is made twice a year, spring and fall. The "Call" letter will tell you all about the church or churches and the projects being funded.

Our society received Chalice Lighter money from the district in November 2003 to finance the purchase of our elevator.

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.

DOWNSTAIRS SCOTTY

The Executive Board has designated the second Sunday of each month as the date for the collection of food for the Downstairs Scotty. The Outreach 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 Scotty 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 Scotty 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.

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.

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, May 6.

A GENTLE REMINDER

We have noticed an absence of name tags in the congregation. Most of our visitors wear them. I am sure it would be helpful to everyone if we all wore name tags.

Chet Perkins, Outreach Committee's Membership Subcommittee

MAY CALENDAR

4 – 5:30 p.m., Supper at the Akropolis restaurant. 7 p.m., Video Discussion Group meets in the Goettel Room.
6 – 9 a.m., Executive Board. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. David Weissbard. Chalice Lighter Sunday. 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's Social Justice Subcommittee 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.

11 – 6 until 8'ish p.m., Drum Circle.

13 – 9 a.m., Spiritual Committee. 9 a.m., Outreach Committee's Social Justice Subcommittee. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott. Membership Sunday. 10:50 a.m., Religious education. This is the once-a-month Sunday on which everyone is asked by the Outreach Committee's Social Justice Subcommittee to donate food items for the Downstairs Scotty, which later will be taken by Ann Peterson to the Food Bank at Saint Michael's Church.

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

18 – 5:30 p.m., Supper at the Akropolis restaurant. 7 p.m., Video Discussion Group meets in the Goettel Room.

20 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. Tanya Atwood-Adams. 10:50 a.m., Religious education.

27 – 9 a.m., Executive Board plans for the annual congregational meeting. 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott. Memorial Day weekend. 10:50 a.m., Religious education.

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

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

We have updated the church Web site so that it is easier to read the sermons. Just go to the Web site and click on "sermons" and a list of ministers will appear. Then just click on the name of the person whose sermons you wish to read and a list of sermons will appear. Then click on the sermon you wish to read.

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