



# 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 2010

### STUDENT MINISTER SNIPPETS

As the days begin to lengthen, the cold begins to strengthen. That's the old adage, anyway. And how true that has been! Nine below and counting this morning as Arn and I shivered our way out to church for a Social Justice Committee meeting. So, with that old adage in mind, there are plans afoot to lengthen and strengthen your church experience. We plan to initiate a Congregational Talkback after church on February 28<sup>th</sup>. This can take many forms, such as a response to the sermon and discussions on faith, beliefs or experiences. The content is up to you, since you will determine the content. Come with your hopes, dreams, memories, doubts and convictions. Let us warm ourselves by the hearth fires of each other.

– Andrea Abbott

### “HOWARD ZINN: UU SAINT”

The Rev. David Weissbard has chosen “Howard Zinn: UU Saint” as the title for his sermon in our church on Sunday, February 7. David writes, “Being pressed by time to come up with a title, I resort to one that communicates what I am working on, but with little poetic grace. So be it. I believe that Howard Zinn, who died last week, qualifies for sainthood in our context. I am, at the moment, immersed in his writing and we’ll see what comes out of it at week’s end.”

### A PLEA FROM THE TREASURER

During the last eight months our income has been \$18,548 with expenses of \$18,933, leaving a negative balance of \$385. Several pledges were paid in full at the beginning of the church year and that has carried us until now. If you are behind in your pledge we hope you can get caught up. Any extra donations would be greatly appreciated. We rely on the UU Circle to help our budget balance and they will be working to raise money. They welcome suggestions for fundraisers. If you have any ideas or would like to help, please contact Marilyn Nye or Ann Peterson.

– Chet Perkins

Note: Please have items for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than NOON on SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27. 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](mailto:rhaskell@twcny.rr.com)

## UU CIRCLE: UPDATE FOR THE NEW YEAR

The UU Circle held a potluck luncheon and an election of officers for the new year on Sunday, January 10. After a great meal consisting of a variety of homemade foods, President Rita Thornton opened the meeting. Rita noted that the UU Circle had held some rather large fundraisers as well as social events this past year. Rita thanked all of those who had supported the UU Circle and worked at these events. She noted that the Circle had not had all of the officers that are called for in the by-laws.

We discussed taking on different types of fundraisers that will suit us better as a small congregation. Chet Perkins also noted that the church budget should not rely so much on fundraising. We agreed that the UU Circle's role will change somewhat at this time.

Marilyn Nye was willing to take on leadership of the UU Circle with the title of coordinator, and will work with Ann Peterson as secretary-treasurer. The UU Circle by-laws will be changed to reflect that the Circle will be working with fewer officers.

Ann Peterson reported that the UU Circle bank balance was \$308.92.

Janie Garlow thanked Rita for all of her hard work and creativity in the past year.

– Ann Peterson, UU Circle secretary-treasurer

### YOU MAY STILL DONATE TO THE HAITI RELIEF FUND

If you were not able to participate in the special collection undertaken during our worship service on Sunday, January 17, to benefit relief programs in Haiti, you may still donate.

If you would like to donate by check, please make it payable to "UUSC/UUA Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund." You may place your check in a collection plate during a regular offering at church and we will forward it, or you may mail it directly to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, Post Office Box 844001, Boston, MA 02284-4001.

You may also donate online at [https://secure2.convio.net/uusc/site/Donation2?df\\_id=1720&1720.donation=form1](https://secure2.convio.net/uusc/site/Donation2?df_id=1720&1720.donation=form1).

Thank you.

– Janie Garlow

### BOOK CLUB

These blustery winter days are the perfect time to settle in with a good book. What more perfect book than one that deals with another culture, peace and education. For those who want to know more, there will be a book reading and discussion group.

We will be reading the book "Three Cups of Tea" by Greg Mortenson. Nancy Hallock has reserved several copies of the book, and they will be available on about February 17th. More specific information will be coming soon.

– Ann Peterson,  
Religious Education Committee member

### DRUM CIRCLE

The monthly drum circles are going really well. The next one is scheduled from 6 p.m. until 8 o'clock or so on Friday, February 12. We usually stop drumming shortly after 8.

We know that many people are working or have other obligations that keep them from being able to be at the drum circle by 6 p.m. Come when you can. It is fine. Drum circles are flexible. You will hear the drums from the parking lot; just come in and join in. There will be a chair waiting for you.

Drum circles are meant for people of all ages. That means that kids are welcome. Most kids love it. They will fit in just fine. We welcome dancers and chanters as well as drummers, or come in and listen to the wonderful rhythms. There are extra drums and rattles for you to use.

You may find drum circles relaxing, energizing or spiritual.

– Ann Peterson,  
Religious Education Committee member

### 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 17.

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.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Hello All,

I am placing an order for Fair Trade coffee from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee Coffee Project. If you would like to order coffee, tea, nuts, chocolate, or dried fruit, please check the product price list in the dining room and notify me the first week in February.

You are invited to the Vegetarian Valentine Potluck Lunch on Sunday, February 14. I suggest that you “google” vegetarian recipes and you will find a huge selection. The Vegnews.com Web site offers mostly vegan dishes. A vegan diet is more strict than the vegetarian. It consumes no animal food or dairy products. Eating less meat is a good thing to do. It’s good for your health and good for the environment. Even one meatless meal a week is a step in the right direction. Meatoutmondays.org sends a weekly newsletter and recipe to encourage this life style.

If you want to show your support for the Unitarian Universalist Association campaign, “Standing on the Side of Love” (SSL), you will have that chance after the service on Sunday, February 7. We will provide valentines, stamps and your New York State representative addresses. You can include a brief note expressing your belief in gender equality and ask their support for same-sex marriage.

(Editor’s note: “Standing on the Side of Love (SSL, pronounced ‘Sizzle’) is a public advocacy campaign, sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), promoting respect for the inherent worth and dignity of every person.)

I am on a Syracuse Peace Council committee promoting the Strike-for-Peace Bowl-a-thon. I hope that we will have at least one team and many sponsors. I even have a costume idea. It is so much fun. Please sign up now!

Our committee is making progress on our effort to involve local churches in a group discussion to stop torture forever. We are using resources from the National Religious Campaign Against Torture. [NRCAT.org](http://NRCAT.org) can help educate us all. Check it out.

– Nancy Hallock, Social Justice Committee chair

## GREEN MINUTE: DRIVING GREEN

We’re a commuter congregation. We live in the suburbs and the country for the most part, and in our current society it requires most of us to have a car or a truck. Here are some tips to help increase your fuel efficiency:

When you need a new vehicle, consider a hybrid that uses less gas and creates less pollution as well as getting better gas mileage.

Avoid idling for more than 30 seconds. Save gas by turning off your engine. Is it really so cold that you need to warm your vehicle up before you leave for work?

Eliminate excess weight from your trunk, luggage rack and/or truck bed.

Use air conditioning conservatively to consume less fuel and decrease emissions.

Avoid “jackrabbit” stops and starts that dramatically reduce mileage. Accelerate smoothly.

Keeping up with your vehicle’s maintenance will also help you reduce emissions and increase gas mileage.

Follow a preventative maintenance schedule according to your vehicle’s guidelines. This will enhance your engine’s performance.

Keep your tires properly inflated to save 2 to 3 percent in fuel economy. Tires can lose one pound of pressure per month so check them regularly.

Follow the recommendations for fuel octane in your manual and use only higher octane gas if it’s recommended.

Share a ride with a friend. Combine trips.

Slow down.

Got an idea that you don’t see here? Let one of us know and we’ll post it on the bulletin board.

Happy trails!

– Social Justice Committee’s Green Team

## NEW POSTING ON OUR WEB SITE

Marcia Burrell-Ihlow has posted three recent sermons by the Rev. David Weissbard and the January newsletter on our church Web site. They may be found

at <http://www.centralsquareuu.com/> or <http://centralsquareuu.com/>

If you have difficulty reaching the site, please let Marcia know at [burrell@oswego.edu](mailto:burrell@oswego.edu).

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.

## LEARNING THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF CENTRAL SQUARE

This is a very exciting time for Religious Education in our congregation! I have recently been appointed Chair of our Religious Education Committee. Pat Hellinger is doing a great job working with our youngsters as our Religious Educator. And there are a lot of great ideas floating around the committee for exploring religious truth, meaning and experiences in the Unitarian Universalist faith. If you haven't had a chance to participate in our Religious Education activities, we will offer opportunities in February for you and your family to get involved!

Our children will be learning about African American history and culture in February, which is Black History Month. Love is also in the air this month, so Pat will lead the youngsters in a discussion and activities about Valentine's Day. These and all of Pat's educational sessions are interactive, educational, and fun for the children. Pre-K through elementary children will find this Religious Education program a delight and will keep coming back for more.

For the youngsters and the young at heart, Ann Peterson has arranged to have another spiritual Drum Circle event at the church. Everyone is invited to come feel the rhythm, move to the beat, and add to the pulse on February 12 from 6 to 8 p.m. You can bring your own drum or borrow one of the drums at the musical event.

It is important that we don't forget about the older children of our congregation, middle and high school students. Right now we haven't identified an educator for this part of our program, so if you are interested in engaging this segment of our youth, please don't hesitate to talk with me. I'm all ears!

Finally, one of the ways to grow a congregation is through an excellent Religious Education program. We have a good foundation and we should let everyone know about it. Therefore, I suggest we highlight our program more than we have been, and there are many ways to do this. Talk with your neighbors, your friends and family about our program and the wonderful opportunities that exist to learn about the UU faith throughout their lives. I will also write an article in the monthly newsletter to keep you informed of upcoming Religious Education activities at our church. Finally, I think that promoting the program on our Web site and on the sign in front of the church will get people thinking about our church as an opportunity for spiritual growth. I will reach out to the appropriate church members to see about making this happen. Again, I welcome any other ideas for increasing participation in our program.

Yours in nature,  
Chris Lajewski

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### BOARD SPLINTERS

Members of the Executive Board, who gathered in the church dining room for their regular monthly meeting on Sunday morning, January 31, agreed to hold a Stewardship Luncheon after the worship service on Sunday, March 14. Trustee Arnold Hook volunteered to prepare food for the occasion. President Janie Garlow and Treasurer Chester Perkins volunteered to present the program focusing on the financial picture for the church for the coming fiscal year.

Treasurer Perkins announced that the church had thus far received \$127 for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee/Unitarian Universalist Association Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund. He said he expected additional contributions.

The Executive Board also approved the appointment by President Garlow of Chris Lajewski as chair of the Religious Education Committee. He succeeds Winfield Ihlow.

President Garlow and Andrea Abbott, student minister, announced that they had appointed Marilyn Nye and Cheryl Perkins-Di Giovanni as the two lay persons to serve with the student minister to disburse money under the Random Acts of Kindness program. The Executive Board approved Random Acts of Kindness guidelines at its monthly meeting on November 29. Random Acts of Kindness is the 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.

The Executive Board approved a procedure proposed by Treasurer Perkins for people (and organizations) who are not church members but who want to use the church for meetings, weddings and other activities. The treasurer also said that he had received a request by Catholic Charities for permission to use our church for a youth group meeting once every other month.

Members of the Executive Board voted to express their gratitude to Kurt and Ronna Schindler for sponsoring the Christmas breakfast on December 20 and the Christmas Day dinner on December 25; Andrea Abbott and Rita Thornton for conducting the Christmas Eve candlelight service on December 24; Betty Figie, for purchasing and placing the wreaths on the front door; and Arnold Hook, for leading the Dream Workshop on three Saturdays during January.

President Garlow announced that she had certified with the Unitarian Universalist Association that the church had 34 active members. The certified membership number is the basis for calculating the number of delegates our congregation can send to the UUA General Assembly in 2010, and also the requested Fair Share contribution for the UUA's Annual Program Fund.

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

## ON THE VALUE OF LAUGHTER

My Dear Friends,

Today I received a 4 x 6 advertisement card in the mail. I was struck by the picture and instead of recycling it, as I usually do, I stole it away on my desk. It was very similar to a picture I cut from a magazine a few years ago that I have on my refrigerator. Both pictures are in black and white of a simpler time. Both pictures are of an elderly peasant couple sitting on a bench together. Their hands are calloused with deep crevices from years of hard work. Their clothing is simple and stained. What draws me to these pictures is that both couples are laughing with each other. The caption on one of the pictures reads: "Among those I like or admire, I can find no common denominator, but among those whom I love, I can: all of them make me laugh." There are many reasons to love but this statement strikes a chord within me.

We all know the feeling of a good laugh. It is like an internal massage. An anonymous author said, "It manipulates and revitalizes corners and unexplored crannies of the system that are unresponsive to most other exercise methods." My husband makes me laugh; my kids do, too. I laugh until my sides hurt, unrestrained and hearty. When I am with my brothers, we are always laughing at things that only we see the humor in. There is a certain comfort level; of course, it is not just a family thing. There is that same comfort level at church, a commonality of like-minded friends, new and old. Many a good laugh can always be heard. It could be at Coffee and Chat at Panera Bakery, at supper at the Akropolis restaurant before our discussion group or at the coffee hour following the Sunday service. Arne Hook's wonderful three-day dream workshop drew many a laugh. I am not saying we should always be laughing, but laughter can ease tension. It is well documented that laughter is good for our health. It eases stress, lowers your blood pressure, promotes social bonding and may even boost our immune systems. Think of it as a tranquilizer with no side-effects. Laughter is also good for the soul. A Yiddish proverb says: "What soap is to the body, laughter is to the soul." Think of this, does a dog laugh with his tail?

May we always enjoy a good laugh,  
Janie

"At the height of laughter, the universe is flung into a kaleidoscope of new possibilities." – Jean Houston

### AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE

Saint Lawrence District,  
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations  
695 Elmwood Avenue, Buffalo, New York 14222-1697  
January 7, 2010

Dear Saint Lawrence District Leaders,

I am writing to let you know that I have decided that this will be my last year as SLD District Executive.

During these last nine years, I have loved working with you as together we have built Unitarian Universalism and our congregations through the District. This has been one of the most fulfilling ministries of my life, but personal and professional changes have led me to the conclusion, after months of exploration, that this summer is the time to end my work with you. The exact date of my ending is still to be decided. However, it is my intent to take part two of my sabbatical from May 17 to July 19 and to co-lead a Leadership Development Retreat the end of July.

Informed by a new Futures Team Report and blessed with excellent leadership, I am confident that the future of the Saint Lawrence District is solid.

As we all know, any change brings with it uncertainty and sadness. I feel both of these as I prepare to open myself to the next stage of life. In September, I will turn 62. In October, I

will be married and move into a new house. It is my expectation that after I leave this position that I will continue my commitment to Unitarian Universalism by consulting with congregations and other UU institutions.

It has been one of the great joys of my life to serve you. Together we have done good work. For this I am grateful.

We still have several more months together and I look forward to connecting with many of you.

Faithfully Yours,  
Rev. Tom Chulak  
SLD District Executive

Dear Saint Lawrence District friends,

On behalf of the SLD Board of Trustees, let me be the first to thank and honor Tom for his 9 years of outstanding leadership and ministry as our District Executive. While we will miss him greatly, we are excited for him as he plans his new future. Tom's hard work has left the District in a very strong position, and we are also excited about the District's future. We have started to work with the national office of the UUA to define the next steps. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions, comments, or concerns.

(hallel@nycap.rr.com)

In fellowship,  
Ernie Hall  
President, SLD Board

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.

#### FAIR SHARE APPEAL

The Fair Share is the amount of the contribution our congregation is asked to give each fiscal year to the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) and its Saint Lawrence District (SLD). These contributions finance programs, services and resources that directly benefit and strengthen our congregation and the Unitarian Universalist movement as a whole. Fair Share is based upon the number of members a congregation certified for the UUA General Assembly the previous February.

This year's combined Fair Share contribution is approximately \$74 per member (\$56 for the UUA, and \$18 for the SLD). Our congregation has a line item in our budget, which covers \$1,000 of our contribution. Each year we try to pay our Fair Share in full. We made part of our contribution during December. We are asking members if they are able to do so to write a check for \$74 payable to the church and to designate "Fair Share" in the memo. This would help us reach our goal. For more information, you may call Chet Perkins at 668-6719.

#### 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. The decision as to whether services will be conducted will be made by 8:30 a.m. Ann Peterson has made arrangements for any cancellations to be broadcast over WSYR television, News 10 Now television and WSYR radio.

#### CALENDAR

##### February

7 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. David Weissbard. Sermon: "Howard Zinn: UU Saint." Random Acts of Kindness Sunday. 11 a.m., Religious education.

12 – 6 to 8 p.m., Drum Circle.

14 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, student minister. 11 a.m., Religious education. This is the once-a-month Sunday on which everyone is asked by the Social Justice Committee to donate food items for the Downstairs Scotty, which later will be taken to the Food Bank at St. Michael's Church.

17 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat, Panera Bread, Route 31, town of Clay.

19 – 7 p.m., Video Discussion Group.

20 – 10 a.m., Social Justice Committee meeting with the Rev. Bud Adams.

21 – 9:30 a.m., Religious Education Committee. 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. Tanya Atwood-Adams. 11 a.m., Religious education.

28 – 9 a.m., Executive Board. 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, student minister. 11 a.m., Religious education. Noon, Congregational Talkback.

##### March

7 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. David Weissbard. Random Acts of Kindness Sunday. 11 a.m., Religious education.

14 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, student minister. 11 a.m., Religious education. Noon, Stewardship Luncheon. This is the once-a-month Sunday on which everyone is asked by the Social Justice Committee to donate food items for the Downstairs Scotty, which later will be taken to the Food Bank at St. Michael's Church.

17 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat, Panera Bread, Route 31, town of Clay.

21 – 9:30 a.m., Religious Education Committee. 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. Tanya Atwood-Adams. 11 a.m., Religious education.

28 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, student minister. 11 a.m., Religious education.

##### Chanting and meditation

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

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.