



CIRCLE OF FELLOWSHIP

The First Universalist Church
of Central Square
A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

The Rev. Margaret Hart, Minister	668-1268
Andrea Abbott, Lay Speaker	635-7122
Janie Garlow, President	436-2238
Rita Thornton, Director of Music	699-4824

Our church building is handicapped accessible.

Routes 49 West & 11, Post Office Box 429, Central Square, New York 13036 Phone: 668-6821

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.

JUNE 2009

MINISTERIAL MUSINGS

Dear Members and Friends,

I am composing this, my last message to you as your minister, with a mixture of emotions. There is some sadness, that my ministry with you will be ending later this month. This is not the way I had envisioned it ending. I had, rather, hoped that we would continue to grow together for a few more years, and then I would retire. But things don't always work out as we hope or plan.

Speaking of hope, that is another emotion that I am experiencing – hope for the future of this congregation, and hope for me. First, I will address this congregation's hopes. I am delighted that the Board asked the Rev. Dr. Thomas Chulak (our District Executive) to assess the health and well-being of our congregation, and the congregation's relationship with me as its minister. I am also happy that so many of you have participated in the process. After all, our church operates on the basis of congregational polity, that is the seat of authority rests with the congregation. While I had been aware that there was a disconnect between parts of the congregation and myself, I didn't know, until the assessment, how widespread the feelings of disconnect were in the congregation. Now that this has become clear, I am resigning as the minister in Central Square. It is my hope that this, as well as action on other findings that were highlighted in Tom's assessment of the church, will help the congregation to move forward in new and vital ways. It is an exciting time for the church to embrace change. I hope you will all be supportive of the church community and its leadership as you adventure into new territory together.

In looking back on my time with the church, I feel that we have had many good years together. It has only been recently that I have experienced more physical challenges interfering in the work of ministry. I am glad that my mind and vision seem to be intact. Even the physical challenges have proven to be useful, in increasing my advocacy for people with disabilities. I also got feedback when I recently visited a parishioner who has Parkinson's Disease, that I am now better able to relate to her experience of loss of control of bodily functions. So, while I wouldn't have chosen to have Multiple Sclerosis, I am trying to make the best of the fact that I have it. It is my hope that in resigning from the ministry here in Central Square, I will have the time and energy to take care of my health and my family, and eventually find avenues in which I can utilize my gifts and skills to help others.

You may have heard that my resignation from ministry comes with an agreement to remain away from the

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

MINISTERIAL MUSINGS
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church for at least two years. This may seem a bit harsh to some of you, and others may interpret my absence as a disinterest on my part. So, I think it is helpful to explain that this agreement of a two year separation from the church is included in the guidelines from the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, and is based on the experience of ministers and churches in many places over many years. It is my intention to honor this agreement. It doesn't mean that we can't remain friends if we choose to. It does mean that I won't be attending events at the church, and that if we talk we won't discuss church matters. I hope you will understand and honor this as well. Thank you for all your support over the years.

I would like to leave you with a quote from my meditation teacher, Gurumayi Chidvilasananda, which helps to guide me:

The sunrise of supreme bliss shimmers in every particle of the universe.

So why not drink a fresh cup of joy every day, and become inspired with new perception? Remember, love and respect must be renewed with each dawn.

With love and respect,
Rev. Margaret A. Hart

CONGREGATION ACCEPTS LETTER OF AGREEMENT WITH THE REVEREND HART

Members of the First Universalist Society of Central Square have voted to accept the letter of agreement between the Society and the Rev. Margaret A. Hart concerning her resignation. The vote came during the annual meeting of the Society on Sunday, June 7.

The agreement reads:

"1. Having heard the feedback from the assessment of the health and well-being of the congregation, and specifically the congregation's relationship with the Reverend Hart as the minister, Margaret and the Executive Board feel it is in the best interest of Margaret and the church if she resigns from ministry at the First Universalist Society of Central Square as of June 30, 2009, due to her inability to perform the essential duties of her position.

"2. The Reverend Hart will receive a transition package from the church of 4 months' allowance at 1/4 time, which includes one month's vacation, for a total of but not to exceed (4 X \$775 =) \$3100.

"3. As of the Reverend Hart's resignation as the minister and in keeping with the guidelines of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association, she will not participate in any church functions including but not limited to meetings, activities and Sunday services for at least two years. She will work with the Executive Board president to write a covenant between herself and the congregation which will include this 2-year separation."

The congregation also approved a budget totaling \$30,000 for the 2009-2010 church year. Treasurer Chester Perkins reported that the church had received 25 pledges totaling \$20,399 in the recent pledge drive, a reduction of about \$6,000 from the total amount pledged during the past year. He added that the past year had been a good one financially for the church, that income had been about \$5,000 above budget at about \$40,000, and that expenses had been on target.

A request by the Executive Board that the congregation approve an expenditure of up to \$5,000 to repair the big stained-glass window on the west side of the church sanctuary won approval.

The congregation elected as officers for the 2009-2010 church year Janie Garlow, president; Robert Haskell, vice president; Nancy Haskell, recording secretary; Ellen LaPine, corresponding secretary; Chester Perkins, treasurer; Betty Figie, registrar; and Christy Salas, trustee for three years. Arnold Hook has a year to serve on his three-year term as trustee, and Ann Peterson has two more years to serve on her three-year term as trustee. The congregation also elected as members of the Nominating Committee Winfield Ihlow, two-year term, and Marcia Burrell-Ihlow, three-year term. Mary Perkins has a year to serve on her three-year term.

Church members authorized the Executive Board, if it so desires, to reduce the number of its standing and temporary committees during the 2009-2010 church year in an effort to expedite the operation of the church. If the Executive Board wished to continue a reduction in the number of its committees beyond the 2009-2010 church year, the motion added, it would be required to present any proposed changes relating to committees in the church bylaws at the annual congregational meeting in 2010.

PRESIDENTIAL PONDERINGS

My Dear Friends,

As most of you already know, it has been a trying and busy month. The Rev. Dr. Tom Chulak was with us to evaluate the health and well-being of our church early in the month. He interviewed 32 congregants over a period of two days and reported his findings at a special congregational meeting on May 5. On May 17 the Rev. Margaret Hart reported to the Executive Board and the Reverend Chulak that she felt it was in her best interest and the best interest of the church that she resign as our minister as of June 30. I want to thank all of you for your participation in the process. I feel you handled a difficult situation with love and compassion.

On a lighter note, Libbie suggested that I check the lower right hand column of page 8 in my summer 2009 UU World magazine. It is the issue with "Unitarian Universalism in Africa" on the cover. Our own Pat Cerro-Reehil is quoted: "I am transfixed and inspired," wrote Pat. She was referring to the cover of the spring 2009 issue of the magazine with illustrated symmetries of protozoan. If you don't have this copy of the UU World, you can read one at church. If you are a member and are not receiving the UU World, please let me know.

Thank you for your goodness,
Janie

A NOTE FROM SHEILA AND BOB EMBORSKI

Hi Bob!

We have finally been able to navigate the pathways through the boxes and open enough of them to set up the computer again. I honestly felt naked without it. I hadn't realized just how ingrained it had become in my life.

New address:
455 Hunt Hill Road
Ithaca, NY 14850
New e-mail:
remborsk@frontiernet.net
New Phone:
House: 1-607-539-6796
Bob's cell: 1-315-427-2214
Sheila's cell: 1-315-427-4589

The cell phones don't work at the house. We're in a Verizon dead zone. Have to drive about 4 miles up over the hill to get to a spot where we can use them again.

Please let people know our contact information and tell them we miss them all very much. Please tell them to write, e-mail or phone us whenever. We'd love to hear from them. We really treasure the e-newsletter and announcements. Hope to see everyone soon.

– Bob and Sheila Emborski

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, June 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 information about the women's group, you may contact Nancy Haskell. For information about the men's group, you may contact Chet Perkins.

VIDEO DISCUSSION GROUP

The Video Discussion Group will meet in the Goettel Room at church at 7p.m. on Friday, June 12. The group is scheduled to view two segments from the PBS series "Bill Moyers Journal." In one segment, Moyers sits down with renowned poet Nikki Giovanni, whose 27 books have spanned the themes of race, politics, sex and violence. In another segment, Moyers talks with actor and writer John Lithgow, about the power of poetry and the infinite gift of the spoken word.

Anyone who is interested in attending supper at the Akropolis restaurant on Route 11 just north of Central Square at 5:30 p.m. on the same day is asked to notify Janie Garlow at mjgarlow@aol.com or at 436-2238 by noon on Friday so that she may make reservations.

SOLSTICE RITUAL

The Central New York chapter of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) will hold a Solstice Ritual at May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society, 3800 East Genesee Street, Syracuse, at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, June 21st. We will do the "Chocolate Ritual," which is traditionally done at Ostara, but we'll have fun with it for Litha this year.

If you want to know more about it, come to the ritual! Or you can call me at 476-0447 or e-mail me at jfb523@gmail.com.

– Jody Brown

GREEN MINUTE: USED ITEMS ONLINE, THE INTERNET HAS IT ALL

You probably already know that you can take advantage of web sites for buying, selling, swapping, borrowing, or giving away second-hand items. In these tough economic times it's a great way to save money by buying used or swapping, and easily "re-purposing" unwanted items. It's also the "green thing" to do because it helps save precious resources, cuts down on global warming emissions related to making new items, and helps catalyze a nationwide "shift to thrift." Here are some web sites you might want to explore:

Looking for "freebies?" Thegreenumbrella.org provides a comprehensive list of independent "free-sharing" sites across the United States. Freecycle.org is one of the most popular "free-sharing" sites and is broken down by city. You join the listserv for your community at the main site, keeping all exchanges locally based. Members post unwanted items to the listserv, and responses asking for these items go directly to the e-mail box of the person making the offer, so pick-up arrangements are kept private. You can also request specific items you need. Freesharing.org and reusitnetworking.org operate in a manner similar to freecycle, and craigslist.org has a "free" section for giveaways.

Throwplace.com allows individuals and businesses to list goods they wish to give away to United States and international charities and non-profits, which will pick them up or pay for shipping.

Got something you'd like to trade, rather than sell? Craigslist.org has a bartering section through which community members can contact one another directly about trading items, from household goods to cleaning products to car parts. Dignswap.com allows members to post pictures of used clothing and accessories they no longer want, and then "dig" through photos of other items posted and make even trades with other members. You pay only for shipping.

A growing number of sites can help you adhere to your book budget while keeping old books out of landfills. Betterworldbooks.com collects and sells used books online to finance literacy initiatives worldwide. Shipping is free to any location within the United States and it's also carbon-neutral, thanks to offsets from carbonfund.org. You can post the books you are willing to trade on paperbackswap.com and when someone requests one, you mail it out to him or her to earn one credit in exchange for paying the shipping costs. With every credit you earn, you can request any of the 3 million books available nationwide. Bookmooch.com functions similarly to paperbackswap.com, along with a feature that allows users to give credits to charities.

You can trade entertainment media, such as books, music, movies and video games, with others around the country via swaptree.com. Members create a "have" list of things they have to trade and a "want" list of things they want. Swaptree will search through the lists of other members and will match you up with willing swappers. Users pay for the price of shipping, and the site makes it easy to mail your items by calculating postage and by generating printable mailing labels. Swapadvd.com helps you share DVDs of all varieties with people across the country. You sign up for free, and offer 10 DVDs on the site. This will earn you one gift credit that you can exchange for one DVD offered by someone else. Swapacd.com allows you to do the same with CDs.

Do-it-yourself types can buy reused or reclaimed building materials online through planetreuse.com, an eBay-style auction marketplace for floors, doors, fixtures and more.

Buying used or getting what you need for free can help you stick to your budget and weather today's volatile economy while you keep unwanted items from heading for landfills. It's also fun to see what you can find. Happy web-surfing!

– Social Justice Committee's Green Team

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

The Wednesday evening group is now called Spiritual Development and Empowerment. We meet Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the church. This is now a co-ed group.

We share personal spiritual experiences and take part in different personal empowerment programs as

they are presented by our members and invited guests.

All are welcome, and we promote a safe environment with no proselytizing. We are high energy, and welcome your input and experiences.

If you have questions, please call Chet Perkins at 668-6719 or Kurt Schindler at 247-0432.

– Kurt Schindler

THE LATEST FROM THE UU CIRCLE

The UU Circle will have a potluck luncheon and a quick meeting on Sunday, June 14th. The potluck is open to everyone. We hope that you have already signed up, but if you have not, it is not too late. Just bring a dish to pass and a smiling face. It is a great way to catch up with everyone and to find out what activities we want to plan for summer and fall. We want your ideas and input to help us with these plans.

We have set a date for the annual picnic. It is Sunday, September 13th. Expect some changes in the picnic this year. You will want to brush up on your throwing, balancing and pulling skills. Please mark your calendars. We hope to see you there.

The UU Circle is new to many of you. There is no special membership requirements. The Circle is our church organization that holds social events and fund-raisers. We know that we never are able to catch up with everyone during coffee hour. So we hope to provide lots of fun ways for everyone to know each other better.

Meetings are held on the third Sunday of the month and are open to everyone. We welcome your input, ideas and energy. Why not come to the next meeting and see what the UU Circle is all about.

We will be making announcements for other coming activities.

– Ann Peterson, UU Circle secretary-treasurer

YOU ARE INVITED TO DONATE FOOD

The Social Justice Committee encourages everyone in the congregation to bring food items for the Downstairs Scottie at the church on the second Sunday of each month. This month's date is Sunday, June 14. The food will be transported to the Food Bank at St. Michael's Church the next day. The committee will continue to accept non-food items for the Downstairs Scottie at this and all other times.

THE REV. DAVID WEISSBARD BACK IN THE PULPIT

The Rev. David Weissbard, who will return to preach at the worship service at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, June 28, served as a parish minister for 41 years.

He attended St. Lawrence University in Canton, where he earned a bachelor's degree. He then entered the theological school at St. Lawrence where he earned a master's degree in theology in 1965.

Dave served as minister of the First Parish in Bedford, Massachusetts, for 9 years and as minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax in Oakton, Virginia. He became minister of the Unitarian Church in Rockford, Illinois, in August 1979 and served that congregation for 27 years, until his retirement in 2006.

He now lives in Canton where he works for the St. Lawrence County Housing Council. He preaches monthly at All Souls UU Church in Watertown, as well as making occasional pulpit appearances at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton, the Adirondack UU Community in Saranac Lake, and

annually at the UU Fellowship in Chautauqua and in his home church, the First UU Society in Albany. This is his fourth trip to our church as a guest minister.

WANTED: A DESK FOR THE CHURCH OFFICE

The Rev. Margaret A. Hart has taken the desk in the church office back to her home. The desk was her father's desk. Anyone who has a desk that he or she would be willing to donate, or to sell, to the church is asked to contact Janie Garlow at 436-2238 or at mjgarlow@aol.com

ESCAPE TO VERMONT

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Rutland, Vermont, is offering its 15th annual B&B Weekend on October 9-11.

Participants have a chance to enjoy the beauty of Vermont and UU hospitality, and have a choice of guided activities: hiking, nature walk, kayaking, bicycling, antiques/arts, cider making historic tour, soaring tour, touring historic sites and quaint towns, and more.

The prices if you register by August 15 are \$275 (single bed) and \$475 (double bed). After August 15, the prices are \$325 (single bed) and \$525 (double bed).

For more information, e-mail uufoliagevermont@yahoo.com or telephone the Registrar for Weekend at 802 353-7969.

Fall Escape Committee
UU Church of Rutland, Vermont

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.

CALENDAR

June

11 – 8:30 a.m., Worship Committee meeting.

12 – 5:30 p.m., Supper at the Akropolis restaurant. 7 p.m., Video Discussion Group meets in the Goettel Room.

14 – 9:30 a.m., Social Justice Committee. Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service. The Rev. Margaret A.

Hart and Winfield Ihlow will share the pulpit. 11 a.m., Religious education. 11:45 a.m., UU Circle potluck luncheon and meeting. This is also the once-a-month Sunday on which everyone is asked to donate food items for the Downstairs Scottie, which will later be transported to the Food Bank at St. Michael's Church.

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

18 – 7 p.m., Central New York Cluster, Saint Lawrence Unitarian Universalist District, meets at our church.

21 – 9:30 a.m., Spiritual Dance Group. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, lay speaker. Father's Day. 11 a.m., Religious education.

28 – 9:30 a.m., Choir practice. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by guest speaker, the Rev. David Weissbard.

July

5 – 10:30 a.m., Worship service. Audio sermon by the Rev. Max Coots.

Regular meetings

Tuesdays – 7 p.m., Chanting and meditation. People who are interested should call Tim Hart at 439-2541.

Wednesdays – 7 p.m., Spiritual Development and Empowerment group meets at the church.

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.