



CIRCLE OF FELLOWSHIP

The First Universalist Church of Central Square

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Andrea Abbott, Student Minister

635-7122

Janie Garlow, President

436-2238

Rita Thornton, Music Coordinator

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 website: <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.

NOVEMBER 2009

DIVINITY STUDENT DIGRESSIONS

Just mention November and see how many people can avoid thinking of turkey. As we dig out favorite recipes, iron the tablecloth and get the extra leaves out for the dining room table, we also notice the appeals for food pantry and Rescue Mission donations. We often feel uneasy. What is the relationship between gratitude and compassion? How can we feel thankful for what we have and still be compassionate toward those who do not have even the basics? For some, the guilt or anger at the conditions which create the imbalances between people can mar their ability to be grateful for what they themselves have. It can impair their enjoyment of life. For others, gratitude can blunt their ability to feel compassion for others who have less. People can be both grateful and compassionate. Gratitude reminds us that others have helped us achieve the good things that we have in life. It helps us remember that we are involved in a complicated web of both circumstance and effort in our achievements. In short, it keeps us a little humble. It can also be an emotion that exalts. It teaches us to slow down a little, to appreciate, to enjoy those good things that have come our way. We live in a beautiful world. There is much good that happens to us each day that we often overlook. Therefore, this is a good time to be both compassionate and thankful. Unless, perhaps, you are a turkey.

– Andrea Abbott, student minister

THE DOWNSTAIRS SCOTTY

Each month as I drop off donations to the folks at the Downstairs Scotty at St. Michael's Church in Central Square, they always say "thank you" and express their appreciation for what our church gives to their effort.

Last Friday the Scotty served 110 individuals, or 75 families. The changes in the economy have truly increased the number of people who depend on the Scotty.

If you wish to donate, but just don't know what to give, there are some items that are always needed. Macaroni and cheese, or any type of pasta, is always appreciated. Also, food stamps do not cover toilet paper or soap, so those items go quickly. Thanks again for your donations. You are helping people who are in need in our community.

– Ann Peterson, Social Justice Committee

Note: Please have items for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than NOON on SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5. 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

GREEN MINUTE: WELCOME, BIGGER BETTER BOTTLE BILL – FINALLY!!!

Starting November 8th, bottled water drinks will be subject to a nickel deposit – and the New York State government will be able to collect millions from the unclaimed deposits. Governor Paterson has said, “The expansion of this legislation not only provides our state with much needed revenue, but will also help us to keep our neighborhoods and parks clean.” The update expands New York’s bottle return law to include water bottles, which make up nearly a quarter of all beverages sold in New York.

The law was supposed to go into effect in June, but some bottlers had argued that it was going into effect too soon. They wanted the law’s implementation pushed back to November 30 because New York State requires bottles sold here to have a special UPC (Universal Product Code). It boiled down to distributors complaining that they couldn’t simply restock New York shelves with products from New Jersey or another state warehouse unless they bore the unique code. United States District Judge Deborah Batts rejected those pleas and issued a terse, two-page order that simply allowed the water-bottle provisions of the law to take effect after 11:59 p.m. Friday, October 30. However, bowing to pressure from bottlers and the Food Industry Alliance who claimed that New York State’s 21,000 food stores needed time to reprogram cash registers and bottle return machines, enforcement of the law has been pushed back until November 8th.

For consumers, the change is simple enough. You will pay a nickel deposit on bottles of water, just as you do for soda and beer. You will get the deposit money back when you return the bottles to the store or to a redemption center. Deposits will not be required on water that has sugar added, or on containers of one gallon or more. Don’t want to pay the nickel or deal with returning those bottles? Do the most environmentally friendly thing; carry your own water with you. There are many kinds of bottles and containers that you can purchase to carry your water.

If you buy bottled water because of the taste, buy a filter and filter your home water before you drink it. That is pretty much what the bottlers do and you might be very surprised how good the taste is after all. If you figure out what bottled water costs you, you will see that the cost of a filter can be quickly recouped when you stop spending your hard-earned money on bottled water.

Among the provisions in the update of the 1982 bottle bill is the requirement that the beverage companies return 80 per cent of unclaimed deposits, worth about \$115 million a year, to the state for its general fund. Previously, distributors and bottlers had kept all of the money from unclaimed deposits. The bill also includes changes to the infrastructure for collecting and recycling bottles and cans. The law includes measures intended to improve opportunities for New Yorkers to return their empty bottles and cans, including incentives for small business and non-profit redemption centers and requirements for large stores to maintain dedicated areas for bottle and can returns. These provisions, plus the expansion and an increased handling fee, are intended to lead to the creation of thousands of new jobs across the state.

Although the law does not include the 5-cent deposit on all soft drinks as we had hoped, its implementation is cause for celebration. Finally our state is addressing the environmental problem of water bottle litter and pollution by making the proven incentive of bottle deposits a law. Thank you to everyone who wrote letters, signed petitions and generally supported this bill. Many voices speaking as one can still move mountains.

– Social Justice Committee’s Green Team

UU CIRCLE NEWS

I would like to thank all who worked with the Rummage Sale. This actually means everyone, whether you donated or bought items, moved tables, sorted, priced or cleaned items, organized, set up, moved things to and from the shed, baked desserts or helped in the kitchen, handled cash, greeted, answered questions, and many more things I failed to mention. Thank you, EVERYONE. I don’t have a final profit figure, but it is about \$500. I also want to thank the Constantia Women’s Fire Auxiliary for donating a lot of nice items. What did not sell at the Rummage Sale was picked up by the Rescue Mission.

The Smorgasbord Dinner that was planned for November 14th has been postponed. A new date has not been set.

The next UU Circle meeting is scheduled for 11:45 a.m. on Sunday, November 8, in the Community Room. All are welcome.

– Rita Thornton, UU Circle president

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

“NOW IS OUR TIME TO SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS OF OUR FAITH”

My Dear Friends,

By the time you read this the 50th Anniversary Conference Celebrating the Birth and Growth of Unitarian Universalism at Hotel Syracuse will be history. It was the culmination of months of planning which brought this spectacular event to fruition. Because I was a member of the planning committee, this celebration has been my focus for a long time. With this celebration as a backdrop, now is our time to spread the good news of our faith, Unitarian Universalism, to our family, our friends, our community and beyond. I am still amazed that people have never heard of Unitarian Universalism. Why is our religion with its long history of acceptance and doctrine of love so invisible? It is our responsibility to evangelize, to shout it out. Share our good news; invite a friend to church for starters. We have a great lineup in the pulpit, wonderful people in the pews, and coffee, coffee, coffee.

On another subject, check out our new memorial garden behind the church. It is the creation of Eagle Scout candidate Austin Mead. Austin is a very capable and dedicated young man. I know this because he is my grandson. The garden is there for your enjoyment. Take a seat ... reflect and commune with nature. A plaque will be placed on the bench commemorating the garden. As is true for all gardens, it is a work in progress so feel comfortable offering your suggestions. Austin planted more than 60 bulbs so we can expect a flourish of color in the spring.

With warm appreciation and peace,
Janie Garlow

A BRIEF NOTE FROM THE SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

We completed our final highway pickup for 2009 on Sunday, October 25. Thank you to Ann Peterson, Janie Garlow, Ellen LaPine and Chet Perkins. (Editor's note: Nancy Hallock participated in the pickup, too.) We also pruned suckers from the Project Bloom village trees last week. Thank you to Steve Hallock.

Our main issue this year will be to STOP TORTURE. We will continue to meet with the Rev. Bud Adams from the Central Square Baptist Church to plan events that can educate both congregations and hopefully the community. The date for our next meeting is November 14 at 10 a.m. All are encouraged to attend.

I want to remind everyone that in an effort to become a Green Sanctuary, we are not going to purchase any more styrofoam. We will use up any in our cupboard and then return to church china and, if necessary, use only recycled paper products.

You may have noticed that a garden plot is being constructed in the back yard of the church. Austin Mead, an Eagle Scout candidate, is working on this project. He is hoping to wrap up the garden soon. He has even built a bench, and is trying to come up with a method to secure it!

Please note a sign-up sheet in the Dining Room for a group trip to a Syracuse Stage musical production of "Little Women." I am suggesting two dates, Sunday, December 6, or Sunday, December 13. The show will be at 2 p.m. We could have lunch at church and carpool to the theater. Prices will follow. More about the performance can be found at www.syracusestage.org.

– Nancy Hallock, chair, Social Justice Committee

A DATE TO DECORATE THE CHURCH

Please save the date of Sunday, November 22, to help decorate the church for the holiday season.

Bring your lunch and family to share in the fun after the worship service.

If you have any questions or ideas, please contact Rita Thornton.

MUSIC, SWEET MUSIC

I know it's out there. Let's get together to sing in the choir for the holiday season. I'm sure you already know the songs. Sing for the joy of it, even if it's only for a short time.

If anyone would like to play an instrument during our services this season, it would also be a joy to add it to the services. Please contact me if you are interested.

– Rita Thornton

UU congregations covenant to affirm and promote a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

WITH SINCERE GRATITUDE

The Executive Board would like to extend its sincere gratitude to the UU Circle for conducting the rummage sale on Saturday, October 17th. The sale resulted in more than \$500 raised by the UU Circle, the fund-raising committee for our church. The current UU Circle members have been working at different events for quite some time, and we want to give our thanks for all of their hard work. The UU Circle members tell us that they really need additional people to be part of their committee. If you have fund-raising ideas and are willing to help with the events, please attend the next UU Circle meeting.

Have you noticed how well our sound system is working now? We have Arne Hook and Andrea Abbott to thank for this improvement. They purchased and installed the new microphone, making our services so much easier to hear for all. Thank you so much for your generous gift that is a benefit to all.

We would also like to thank Janie Garlow for all of the extra work she has been putting in lately. She has been working very hard at various projects going on within our church, and also helped with the 50th anniversary celebration and conference as our church's representative. On October 30 and 31, 1959, the Unitarians and Universalists came together and voted to become one. The celebration commemorating this meeting was held at the Hotel Syracuse on October 30 and 31, 2009, the very place this event happened 50 years ago. The 50th anniversary conference was attended by more than 160 Unitarian Universalists. Janie did a wonderful job representing our church, and we thank her for her wonderful work.

The Rev. David Bumbaugh was at the original meeting of the Unitarians and Universalists 50 years ago, and was in town as part of the 50th year celebration. He remarked that it had been many years since he had been the speaker at our church, as he gave the service here for us on November 1. The Executive Board wants to extend its sincere thanks for his agreeing to return to visit us and for giving a wonderful sermon.

– The Executive Board

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, November 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.

VIDEO DISCUSSION GROUP

The Video Discussion Group will view the film, "Rethink Afghanistan," when it meets in the Goettel Room at 7 p.m. on Friday, November 6.

The film directed by documentarian-activist Robert Greenwald of Brave New Films questions the American presence in Afghanistan as President Obama considers sending additional U.S. forces to that country next year. The film portrays Afghanistan as a nation -- or, more accurately, as a collection of tribal affiliations -- that has never been pacified by force in its long history.

Again, we plan to have supper before the

discussion group at the Akropolis Restaurant on Route 11 in Central Square. Please let Janie Garlow know at mjgarlow@aol.com or at 436-2238 if you are planning to attend so that she may make a reservation by Friday noon.

All are invited to attend.

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
Chet Perkins at 668-6719.

The decision will be made by 8:30 a.m.

Ann Peterson is making arrangements for cancellations to be broadcast over WSYR television and WSYR radio.

RAKE THE LEAVES

Because the season of snow is fast approaching, the Executive Board asks anyone who can help rake up the many leaves on the church lawn to gather at the church for a leaf-raking party at 11 a.m. on Saturday, November 7. Please bring a rake with you if you have one.

SPLINTERS FROM THE BOARD

The Executive Board, conducting its regular monthly meeting in the church dining room on Sunday morning, November 1, voted to designate Andrea Abbott as “student minister” rather than “divinity student” because the latter title has proved to be unpopular among members and friends.

The Board also voted to grant Andrea Abbott the right to conduct marriages, subject to meeting any state legal requirements.

The Board also agreed to renew the church insurance policy with Church Mutual Insurance Company for the coming year.

It was pointed out that fire extinguishers and emergency lighting needed to be evaluated and possibly replaced.

Treasurer Chester Perkins announced that the loan for the furnaces had been repaid in full. He also reported that the Random Acts of Kindness account was \$325.56 in the red.

Mr. Perkins agreed to prepare a form to be used by people (and organizations) who are not church members but who want to use the church for meetings, weddings and other affairs. It was pointed out that the fee for using the sanctuary was \$100 and that the fee for using the downstairs rooms was \$50.

Ann Peterson announced that the UU Circle had raised \$510.60 from the rummage sale conducted at the church on Saturday, October 17. Chester Perkins reported that the Rescue Mission had taken most of the items that had not been sold during the sale.

It was agreed to place a basket in the sanctuary to receive new gloves, mittens, hats and scarves to be given to the Central Square Lioness organization for Christmas baskets.

The Executive Board will conduct its next regular meeting at 9 a.m. on Sunday, December 6.

SERMON TOPIC

The Rev. David Weissbard has chosen as the topic for his sermon when he preaches in our pulpit at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, November 8, “Not Written in Stone.”

The Reverend Weissbard writes, “I have a manuscript on the Ten Commandments that I am still fantasizing that I will get published. After doing 23 sermons on the subject, I collected them into a 90,000-word manuscript that I have run by a couple of publishers with no bite as yet. I am going to offer an overview this month, and come back to it from time to time to share more in-depth explorations of each of them.”

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE BOXES

Andrea Abbott, student minister, will distribute Guest at Your Table boxes to those attending the worship service on Sunday morning, November 15.

The boxes are part of a program of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee to help raise funds and memberships. The program has helped Unitarian Universalists build lasting connections to UU principles and support the movement for universal human rights.

Guest at Your Table has been a part of UUSC and

UU culture since 1975. The program made its UUSC debut after a trip made by Warren Salinger, then UUSC institutional advancement director, to The Netherlands. While there, he was inspired by an organization's program Gast aan Tafel, which educated supporters about the organization's work, while raising vital funds. The program used colorful boxes that the whole family could enjoy. Salinger immediately began working with UUSC staff to adapt the idea for use in UU homes nationwide – and even worldwide!

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

The Wednesday evening group is now called Spiritual Development and Empowerment.

We meet Wednesdays 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 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

November

- 6 – 7 p.m., Video Discussion Group meets to view the film, “Rethink Afghanistan.”
- 7 – 11 a.m., Rake-the-leaves party on the church lawn.
- 8 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. David Weissbard. 11 a.m., Religious education. 11:45 a.m., UU Circle meeting. This is the once-a-month Sunday on which everyone is asked to donate food items for the Downstairs Scotty, which later will be taken to the Food Bank at St. Michael’s Church.
- 12 – 8:30 a.m., Worship Committee meeting.
- 14 – 10 a.m., Social Justice Committee meeting.
- 15 – 9 a.m., Religious Education Committee. 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, student minister. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 18 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat, Panera Bread, Route 31, town of Clay.
- 22 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. Tanya Atwood-Adams. 11 a.m., Religious education. After the worship service, decorating the church for the holiday season.
- 29 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, student minister. 11 a.m., Religious education.

December

- 6 – 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.
- 13 – 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 to donate food items for the Downstairs Scotty, which later will be taken to the Food Bank at St. Michael’s Church.
- 16 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat, Panera Bread, Route 31, town of Clay.
- 20 – 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. 11 a.m., Religious education. Cookie sale.
- 27 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, student minister. 11 a.m., Religious education.

Regular meetings

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

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.