



CIRCLE OF FELLOWSHIP

The First Universalist Church
of Central Square
A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

The Rev. Margaret Hart, Minister 439-8375 (cell), 668-1268 (home)
Andrea Abbott, Lay Speaker 635-7122
Janie Garlow, President 668-1631
Ronna Schindler, Religious Education Coordinator 623-7685
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.

OCTOBER 2008

MINISTERIAL MUSINGS

Dear Friends,

"From you I receive, to you I give. Together we share, and from this we live." These words are often sung as we close our worship service on a Sunday morning, and to me they capture much of what I want to talk about here.

It seems that this month there is a focus on membership. Our cluster of churches is hosting a workshop in our church on the topic of membership on October 16. There is another workshop in Barneveld on November 1 on membership and growth in small congregations. In anticipation of these workshops, I have been reflecting on the meanings of membership and growth, as they relate to this church. I'm sure I will have more to share after the workshops.

I have noticed that the membership of this church has shrunk a bit recently. We continue to have visitors. Some of them return. As one DVD from a growing congregation advised, our task is to "repel" fewer visitors, and find ways instead to welcome and incorporate them into this church community. It might help to think about how it was when we first came to this church. Did we come because someone invited us? Did our host sit with us during the service and chat with us at the coffee hour? Were we introduced to other church members and friends in a way that enabled us to make connections and start to build relationships? Or did we venture into the church on our own and sit by ourselves during the service and at coffee hour. Or perhaps we didn't even go to coffee hour, as it was too intimidating to go downstairs when we didn't know anyone.

Many people who will read this have had a positive experience in our church community. I would encourage us all to think about how we can extend that hand of fellowship, that listening ear, and that sense of welcome to others. If you would like to attend either or both of the workshops on membership, I would be glad to share that experience with you. If you would like to serve on a membership committee in the church and share your ideas, that would be great. A small commitment of time can make a huge difference to the church and to those who are searching for a spiritual home and a sense of community. See you in church.

With love and respect,
Margaret

Note: Please have items for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than NOON on SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1. Bob would be grateful if everyone would have articles to him as soon as possible and not wait until the last minute. 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

Brrrr — here comes winter. Are you getting ready? This month, let's get back to basics.

Have you checked your house for air leaks? Even if you've had new windows or doors installed or did leak-sealing last year, it's a good idea to double-check again this year. Our homes move and shift and sometimes areas that were sealed develop small cracks that weren't there last year. Don't forget to inspect cut-throughs for pipes, gaps around chimneys, unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets and the like. If you install plastic over your windows and for other drafts, double-check to see if it is really effective. Sometimes you get better results placing plastic on the outside instead of the inside or the reverse. So if you find you need to change what you've done you want to find out early while the weather is warmer.

Have you inspected your furnace or stove? Did you change the filter? Have you checked your chimney and pipes for obstructions? Any heat source that is running efficiently will create less pollution and cost less to operate. Did you change the batteries in your carbon monoxide detector and fire alarms? This time of year it is especially important to have these devices working properly. Be sure you dispose of the batteries properly; don't just put them in the trash. Many hardware stores will recycle them for you.

Have you checked the insulation in your attic? How about any insulation or any air leaks around the area where your house meets its foundation? If you are in a mobile home, have you insulated the area under the floor? These are huge energy robbers and inexpensive to fix.

Eliminate energy drains from your house by unplugging appliances when they aren't being used. Don't forget about the computer, TV or any charging devices. These all add up.

Looking to save even more money this winter? Don't forget to take part in the 1-2-3 program by setting your thermostat at least 1 degree lower; it can reduce your fuel consumption by 3 percent. Driving at least 2 miles per hour slower may reduce your fuel consumption by 1½ to 2 percent. I actually increased my mileage by 2 miles per gallon! Also replace at least 3 incandescent bulbs that get frequent use in your home with compact fluorescent bulbs (CFL). They last up to 10 times longer and use only one-fourth of the energy. All three actions could save you nearly \$100 per year!

Finally, National Grid gives you information in this month's bill on how to switch to green power. Please take some time and consider making the switch. I switched about 6 months ago to a combination of hydro and wind power, changed all of my light bulbs to CFLs and installed a new Energy Star-rated hot-water heater when mine sprang a leak. I set the new water heater at 120 degrees just as I had my old one. My electric bill is now consistently \$10 per month lower!

Have fun with this, see just how many inexpensive changes you can make and just how much you'll save while protecting our environment. When you have to make the big purchase, always look for the most energy efficient. You'll almost look forward to your energy bill to check your savings.

— Ellen LaPine
Social Justice Committee's Green Team

A NOTE FROM A FORMER MINISTER

Dear Bob Haskell, May your one time Minister, Bob MacPherson, applaud your Circle of Fellowship news? The years that Ann and our family and I spent in service to First Universalist are a warm memory. We got back on your mailing list when I heard about the Battle of Signs and was so proud of your stand against a church that preaches hate that I wrote to the Rev. Margaret Hart. Her insightful messages are read eagerly. We hope she is enjoying some rest. Please tell Rita Thornton that she appears to have a temporary lock, maybe, on creative church programming! The idea of "dressing" as your favorite hymn will be passed on to the Music Director at the UU Church of Asheville, NC. I would like to have seen folks "making ice cream in a can!" Hope you had lots of ice cream mavens today! Very best wishes!

**Robert H. (Bob) MacPherson
Minister 1963-1966
Choir Director 1963-1967**

P.S.: Ann and I enjoyed a reunion at lunch with Jane and Hartley Martin in Feb. '07, at Fort Myers, FL. We heard that Jane had suffered multiple bone injuries recently. Hope she is doing better.

REFLECTIONS BY OUR PRESIDENT

My Dear Friends,

My friend was lamenting the fact that she had way too much unread email. She has been saving it in a folder for months, maybe even years, planning to read it at a later date when she has more time. She is not alone. I do this, too. I think many of us do – something waiting for down the road when we have more leisure time. It could be newspapers, magazines, catalogs, or just plain stuff, but getting back to it never happens and it starts to accumulate at warp speed. Then it weighs on our subconscious in subtle ways, we feel stuck. The Japanese have a term for this. *Mottainai* (もったいない, 勿体無い): a term meaning a sense of regret concerning waste when the intrinsic value of an object or resource is not properly utilized. (*Mottainai* – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). Another way of defining this concept is that it is a shame for something to go to waste. This lends itself to many facets of our lives. It could even be food left on our plates. When I was young Mom told me that people in other countries were starving, hence I usually clean my plate. I am still trying to curb this habit, which leads to the problem of weight control – body clutter. It could be recycled as compost or feed.

Like many consumer-based societies, we have a massive problem of waste management. I believe it is unnatural for us to hold on to things. Our ancestors did not have this privilege - problem. We can save ourselves this problem, in our consumer-based society, by adopting some principles: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Repair; think twice before we buy or save and, yes, ingest. Decide why and where we are going to keep it and what we are going to use or save it for. If your answer to any of these questions is vague, then you are about to purchase or save clutter. When we first start clearing out our clutter, we often worry that we will really miss it but this is because we do not realize that holding on can hold us back and make us feel congested in life. Stagnant energies build up around us and stop us moving forward in our lives. When we arrange our homes and computers, everything flows freely, everything works better. We are healthier and happier in so many ways.

Now is a great time to declutter and recycle. On Saturday, October 18, the UU Circle is having a fund-raiser Rummage Sale at church. Get busy and start to clean out your garage, attic, whatever. There is not too much time to take advantage of this great opportunity, and it is a great time to purchase items without spending much money. We all know “One man’s trash is another man’s treasure.” Let go of the old to make room for the new, and then recycle it again.

In Peace,
Janie

TREASURER’S REPORT

During the first four months of the church year, June through September, we had an income of \$11,463 with \$9,737 from pledges. The expenses were \$10,808, leaving a balance of \$655. Several members paid their yearly pledges in full that helped during the summer months.

Meeting our yearly budget depends greatly on the pledge that we receive from the UU Circle. We are budgeted to receive at least \$4,500 from the Circle this year. The Circle’s income this fall will depend on the success of the Community Rummage Sale October 18 and the auction on November 9 . Everyone’s help is needed at these events. A lot of help is needed setting up for the rummage sale and at the day of the sale. There is a sign-up sheet in the East Room. The auction is a lot of fun. Donations that have been very popular at past auctions are food items (meals, breads, cookies and desserts), services such as home repair, computer

assistance, window washing and art and craft items. Hopefully everyone will have some thing to donate. Forms are available in the East Room.

— Chet Perkins

WEDDING BELLS RING OUT

Congratulations to Leslie Rupracht and Will Weaver who were married by the Reverend Hart on June 27 at Bayshore Grove in Scriba. The couple is from Charlotte, North Carolina, but her family is from this area.

Congratulations to another couple who came back to their childhood homes to get married: Stacy Scheiterle and Adam Roberts were married by the Reverend Hart on September 20 at Borio’s in Cicero, after surviving the hurricane at their home in Houston, Texas.

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.

UU CIRCLE AUCTION NOVEMBER 9

The auction will be held on November 9 after the Sunday service. Kurt Schindler and Rita Thornton will serve as the auctioneers, and snacks will be provided. It is a lot of fun! We will start the advance bidding on November 2. Please get your donation forms in by October 19. If you would like suggestions on what you might donate, contact Kurt, Rita, Ann or Larry. Donations that have been popular in the past were food items (prepared meals, breads, desserts), handyman or home repair labor, services such as computer work, car detailing and window washing, musical performances, outings (bird watching, rock hounding), gift baskets and hand-crafted items. Other items that might be of great interest are computer instruction/help, rental of sporting equipment, boat rides, fishing trips, specialty dinners, lawn mowing, yard work, child care, garage and basement cleaning, gardening help, have truck -- will haul, nature walks, etc. Most local businesses will donate gift certificates. Please ask your local businesses if they would like to donate.

UU CIRCLE AUCTION DONATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

I/We would like to offer the following services/items:

Suggested minimum bid (optional) _____

____ Check if you want your service/item offered only to the immediate church family.

Thank you for your contribution!

Please return by October 19 to the Auction Box at the church or to Rita Thornton, 8043 Trina Circle, Clay, NY 13041.

A FREE PRESENTATION ON CHURCH MEMBERSHIP DRAWS NEAR

A free presentation of the St. Lawrence UU District Growth Committee will be offered from 7 to 9 p.m. on Thursday, October 16, at our church. Groups of Membership Committee folks are encouraged to attend together.

Once a person signs the Membership Book, our task is to connect that person to our congregation in meaningful ways. How do we "set a welcoming table" for these new members? How can we facilitate their becoming integrated into the fabric of our church life? How can we affirm them as people and welcome them to the mix of UU activities as we and they move forward? What is our spiritual work as we welcome, affirm, and connect new people, becoming a new congregation by their inclusion as well?

We'll consider these and other questions as we work together in same-congregation and cross-congregation groups during the time together. A workbook of ideas will be shared and given to each participant to help start conversations within the Membership Committees of each church/society/fellowship attending. No cost to the participants, this workshop is presented by the District Growth Committee reaching out to its congregations.

Chuck and Karen West are members of the All Souls UU Church in Watertown and also the UU Church of Las Cruces, NM. They bring their love of Unitarian Universalism and ideas from several congregations with them as they present this workshop. Growing UU churches is their passion.

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

GOETTEL ROOM DEDICATION

You are warmly invited
To the dedication
Of the Goettel Room
On Sunday, November 2, 2008
At 11:45 following the 10:30 Sunday Service.
All are welcome.

SPLINTERS FROM THE BOARD

Conducting their regular monthly meeting on Sunday morning, October 5, members of the Executive Board discussed plans for the dedication of the Goettel Room. The ceremony will take place at 11:45 a.m. after the 10:30 a.m. Sunday service on November 2.

Board members authorized Treasurer Chet Perkins to spend up to \$1,000 as the church's share of the cost of cleanup and repair of the back roof damaged when it was struck by a tree during a recent wind storm. The initial cost is expected to be covered under the church's insurance policy.

President Janie Garlow announced that the church's application to the St. Lawrence Unitarian Universalist District Chalice Lighter program for money to replace the church sound system had been rejected.

Treasurer Perkins told Board members that the church had managed to remain in the black financially during the first four months of the church year, helped in part by the fact that some church members had already paid their pledges in full for the year. He said that the church had a balance of \$654.45 in its operating account as of October 1.

The Rev. Margaret Hart expressed her concern both for the church and for herself about the fact that she was working as the minister on a quarter-time basis. She had previously worked on a half-time basis.

Kurt Schindler, president of the UU Circle, said that all was going well on preparations for the church rummage sale October 18 and for the Service and Merchandise Auction on November 9.

Winfield Ihlow, chair of the Religious Education Committee, reported on the resumption of classes. He said that Ronna Schindler, religious education coordinator, had chosen a theme for the year and that children would help the church in various efforts, including the rummage sale.

The Board elected Nancy Haskell as recording secretary. She replaces Kim Shuler-Teachout, who resigned at the Board meeting in September.

President Garlow again expressed the need for the chair of the Membership Committee and for publicity.

Mary Perkins of the Organizational Task Force discussed the status of various projects on which she is working.

The Board approved a contract with Tim Miller for snow removal this winter at a cost of \$860.

The Board expressed its gratitude to the Rev. Margaret Hart for her work with the Central New York Cluster, to Kurt Schindler for arranging the church picnic, to Steve Garlow, Betty Figie and Bruce Meldrim for their help after part of a tree fell on the church roof, and to Grace Bristow for keeping the church building looking spotless. Last month the Board agreed to thank Patricia Cerro-Reehil and the Worship Committee for arranging the summer services, Ellen LaPine for handling publicity in connection with the summer service by Jim Scott, John Landers for work at the church during his vacation, and Nancy Hallock and the Social Justice Committee for highway cleanup.

HOMES NEEDED

Adults and children with disabilities need loving home environments on a full-time and part-time (respite) basis. Interested persons are asked to call David Shipe, Central New York Developmental Services Office Family Care Program, at 473-6919 for more information.

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

October

- 9 – 8:30 a.m., Worship Committee meeting.
- 10-11 – New York State Convention of Universalists annual conference in Poughkeepsie.
- 11 – 10 a.m. to 12 noon, Choir practice.
- 12 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service. Randy Steele and David Carter, guest speakers, will share their spiritual journeys. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 15 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread, Route 31, Clay.
- 16 – 7 to 9 p.m., Membership 2 Conversations Workshop, free, dining room.
Set-up for rummage sale in the community room.
- 17 – Set-up for rummage sale in the community room.
- 18 – Fun Day sponsored by the UU Circle.
- 19 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. Margaret Hart. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 24 – 7 p.m., Video Discussion Group.
- 26 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service. Kathryn Ryan Warwick, guest speaker. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 27-29 – Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association Retreat; the Rev. Margaret Hart away.

November

- 1 – 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Big Ideas for Small Congregations, Barneveld
- 2 – 9 a.m., Executive Board. Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, lay speaker. Random Acts of Kindness Sunday. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 6 – 7 to 9 p.m., Central New York Cluster meets in our church.
- 8 – 10 a.m. to 12 noon, Choir practice.
- 9 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service. The Rev. David Weisbard, guest speaker. 11 a.m., Religious education. Service and Merchandise Auction after the church service.
- 16 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, lay speaker. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 19 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread, Route 31, Clay.
- 23 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. Margaret Hart. Guest at Your Table. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 30 – 9:30 a.m., Choir rehearsal. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, lay speaker. 11 a.m., Religious education.

Regular meetings

- Tuesdays – 7 p.m., Chanting and meditation. People who are interested should call Tim Hart at 439-2541.
- Wednesdays – 7:07 p.m., Men's Group.

WORKSHOPS FOR SMALL CONGREGATIONS

The St. Lawrence District Growth Committee is offering small congregations the opportunity to attend a day-long training session led by UUA consultant Ellen Germann-Melosh, a specialist in small congregations. This is meant for those who are truly interested in promoting change in their congregations and in nurturing congregational growth.

The workshops have two purposes. First, they will offer stimulating possibilities to be taken back and practiced immediately in your congregations. They also serve as invitations to engage in a discernment process for those who might be interested in participating in a three-year pilot project sponsored by the UUA. The pilot project is designed to grow a few committed small congregations within the St. Lawrence District and the Ohio Meadville District.

As many as six congregations from each district will be selected to participate in the three-year pilot program. Each participating congregation will commit to having a team of 4-6 congregants who will lead the process in their congregation while working with the UUA consultant. Applications will be available at the workshops for those congregations wishing to apply. Selection of participants for the SLD will be made by the SLD Growth Committee. This application process is open to all congregations who have fewer than 100 members.

For the convenience of SLD participants there will be two choices for the introductory workshop: Saturday, October 18, in Ohio Meadville District at Wooster, Ohio, and Saturday, November 1, in St. Lawrence District at Barneveld, NY. Cost will be \$25 per participant (early registration) with discount for groups. For more information contact: The Rev. Dr. Lynn Ashley. Home: 518.475.0104. Cell: 315.525.1477. Email: lynnashley@uuma.org

(Note: Central Square plans to send delegates to the Barneveld workshop.)

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.

