

Circle of Fellowship

December, 2017

The First Universalist Society of
Central Square, New York
3243 Fulton Street
(Route 49, near Route 11)
Post Office Box 429
Central Square, New York 13036-0429

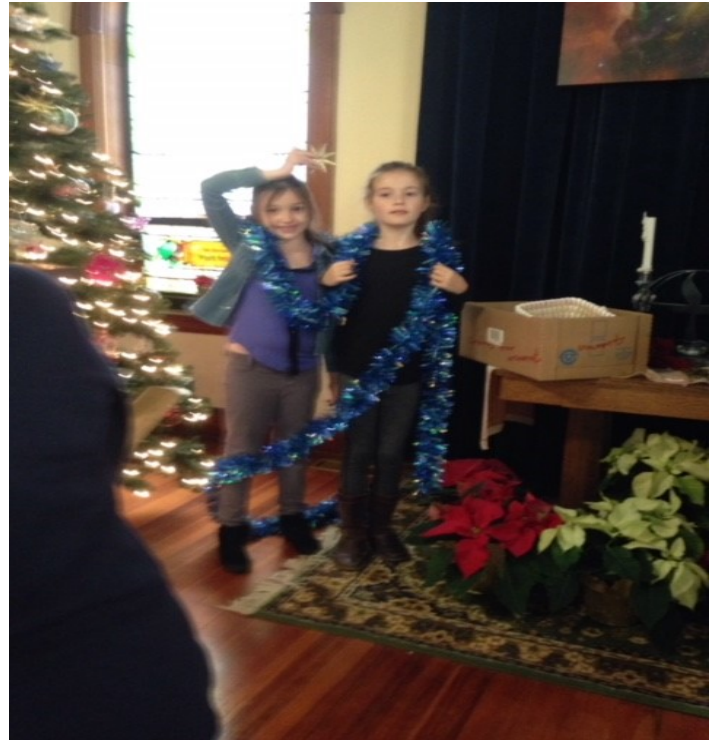
Our Church is Handicapped Accessible

Church Phone: 315-307-3400

E-Mail for Reverend Andrea Abbott: andrea279@verizon.net

Church website: centralsquareuu.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/UU-Central-Square/199139743511564



Holiday Decorators hard at their Work in our Sanctuary

This Issue

Marcia will make a name tag for anyone who needs one. You can talk to her at Sunday services or e-mail her at : marcia.burrell@oswego.edu

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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

UU Congregations covenant to affirm and promote justice , equity and compassion in human relations

Ministerial Musing

I've been seeing a sort of mashup of orange, black, brown, red and green in the stores since about mid October. I believe this is to celebrate Hallthanksmas, our longest holiday. By the time we actually get to Christmas, we run the risk of being thoroughly tired of holidaying. But perhaps this is just my inner Scrooge coming out. If my latent Ebenezer were to win out and snuff out all the holiday preparations and events, I would be a sorry person indeed. Less tired, perhaps, but sorry. At this time of year, tradition trumps rationality as well it should. We need to celebrate. We need nostalgia. We need to understand the importance of giving. And of graciously receiving. We need contact with family and friends not near us. I don't know if we would be so aware of these things if we were not reminded at this time of year. This is what Christmas has evolved to mean, even for those who do not think of it as a sacred event. We may need some reminders that the month of December does not mean these things to the whole world. We may need to be reminded that there are those for whom Christmas is a harder time than the rest of the year; those grieving, those without the means to make merry, those who are ill. But this should only encourage us to greater sensitivity to others, greater compassion. It is a time of year that calls on the depths of our feelings. If we can't always live at that pitch, it is good that we have one time of year to remind us of our capacity for kindness and good cheer. And then there's those cookies. Reverend Andrea Abbott

The Window Fund Needs Our Help

Janet Jenkins reminds us that the window fund needs all our help to reach the goal of protecting our beautiful stained glass windows with wire mesh screens. Please give whatever you can so we can achieve this goal for our church community. Thank you

Ronna Schindler Shares What the Children are Doing

This time of year becomes so busy for everyone including our children.

The first Monday of December brings Chalice.

This Unitarian Universalist holiday begins December 4th and runs for seven days. One day for each principle.

One thoughtful deed is to be done each day to honor that days principle.

We will be making polar fleece scarves to be donated to the Lioness.

Winter bird feeders for our feathered friends will be made and hung.

We will be packing up and sending our donated eyeglasses to the Gift of sight.

To close the month we will write and discuss our resolutions for a peaceful world.

whatever your religious beliefs and traditions that you may celebrate.

May they be filled with love and laughter. Happy Holidays

Guest At Your Table: A Letter to Nancy Hallock from Cassandra Ryan

Dear Nancy,

From refugee checkpoints in Serbia, to coffee farms in Nicaragua, to the coasts of Louisiana, UUSC's grassroots partners are working around the globe to advance economic and climate justice, and respond to natural and human-made disasters.

Our partners are leveraging limited resources and small staff sizes to support communities facing persecution in Burma (Myanmar), encroaching erosion in the South Pacific, harsh immigration detention in the United States, and so much more.

This outsized impact is why we chose **Small Change is Big Change** as the theme for this year's [Guest at Your Table program](#) – UUSC's annual program for all ages to learn more about current human rights issues through stories from our partners.

Whether you participate in Guest at Your Table with your congregation or within your own household; whether you participate in the fall, winter, or spring; and whether it is your first time or your 30th...we hope that this year's [Stories](#) will help you connect more deeply with UUSC's human rights partners, and bring you hope.

In fellowship,

Cassandra Ryan
Vice President and Chief Development Officer

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News of holiday celebrations:

Save the date for our annual Christmas Cookie sale on December 17th following the Sunday Service. Please donate a couple dozen of your favorite baked cookies packaged for sale. It's a great time to stock up on a variety of Christmas Cookies.

The Uthellingu Kindred, an Earth centered group who use our church every third Wednesday, are always open to everyone who would like to come and know more about Norse rituals. We might be particularly interested in attending this month's meeting, on Wednesday, December 20th, since it will be concerned with Yule. Though the real celebration of Yule will be on the next day, the 21st, the gathering on the 20th will discuss Yule and the preparations for the Solstice.

This year, Christmas Eve is on Sunday. We will have only one service that day, at the usual time of 10:30. However, this service will involve everyone. Come with a poem or short piece relating to Christmas that you would like to share. It can be one you have written or something written by someone else. This is an opportunity to discover what each of us finds closest to our hearts about this holiday.

We will host our annual Christmas Day dinner from noon to 4pm as usual. We are often told how some look forward to this event all year. We hope to see as many as possible that day to share the food and company.

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December schedule:

December 3rd Rev.David Weissbard. *Wisdom*

December 10th Rev.Andrea Abbott *As Good As a Feast*

December 17th Rev.Bud Adams

December 24th Entire Congregation celebrates Christmas Eve.

See our website for upcoming services and downloadable versions of many

sermons: [FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF CENTRAL SQUARE, A UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION. Website design by Terri Snowball. Site powered by WordPress – Central Square UU's Website](#)

UU Universe

Here are some recent writings available on the web from UU people:

Check out the letter by Army Steiber on Veterans Day and its meaning , Army and his wife , Lucy , spend part of the year in Chicago and part with us in the Central New York area :

Click this link: [Nov. 11 will always be Armistice Day to this veteran \(Your letters\) | syracuse.com](#)

Here's the link to the UUA Website for anyone interested in looking at resources and current events through the UUA: [Unitarian Universalist Association | UUA.org](#)

UU Talking Points

From time to time I would like to share links for articles and other materials that aid discussion of issues affecting our lives and hopefully stimulate our UU conversations.

These are chosen to facilitate dialog and not take any side. I am sharing this one on guns and domestic violence. If you want to share a response, please write to me at cssuuneslettereditor@gmail.com. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not express positions of the First Universalist Society or the UUA

So to start out, here is a link to an interview with researcher Robert Spitzer at SUNY Cortland:[The link between domestic violence and mass shootings, explained by a gun policy expert - Vox](#)

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Social Justice Committee Lunch and a Movie Events

The Social Justice Committee and UU Circle invite everyone to participate in two potluck lunches with movies in the New Year. Events will begin immediately following the service on second Sundays in January and February and will focus on the Social Justice Committee's current theme of racial inequality. The movie on January 14th will be "The Memphis 13," a thought-provoking documentary about school desegregation in Memphis, Tennessee when thirteen African-American first graders were transferred to formerly white schools in 1961. The movie on February 11th will be "When Heritage Equals Hate," an eye-opening review of original sources that reveal some of the roots and history of white supremacy in the U.S. Please plan to bring a dish, watch the movie

First Universalist Society Welcomes The Church of the Greenwood

First Universalist Society of Central Square shares its church space with several organizations. Most recently, we welcome the Church of the Greenwood with this announcement.

This is the first gathering sponsored by the Church of the Greenwood to bring together those who follow, or are interested in, a Celtic or Druidic path. We recognize that not all individuals that follow a Celtic path also follow a Druid's path but have made this space available for both to come together with the mutual goal of learning from one another about the myths, culture, and spirituality that is uniquely Celtic paganism.

Please come and join us as we begin to form this group. Truly all that is needed is a willingness to participate. The meeting will be hosted by two of the Church's clergy who follow two different Druidic traditions - Mary Hudson (Apple Branch Druidry) and James Delles (Order of Bards and Druids - OBAD). All are welcome to join.

Date: December 13, 2017

Time: 6:30-9:00 pm

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Green Minute Green Holiday Ideas

I went back to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s website this month, typed in “sustainable holidays”, and found several good green ideas for the holidays. Here are a few.

Take a family nature hike and bring along a bag to pick up any litter you find along the way.

Turn down the thermostat at your holiday gathering and let your guests be the heaters.

Use recyclable foil instead of plastic wrap to store leftovers.

- Gather a basket of evergreen branches, berries, flowers, fresh fruit, etc. and arrange as you desire, or make ornaments from twigs, bark, flowers, herbs, etc.
- Make the wrapping part of a gift. Gardening pots are easy to fill with gardening supplies. A mixing bowl or stockpot makes an excellent package for your favorite cook.
- Soft wrapping items like handmade bags, scarves, blankets, or towels are a great alternative to traditional wrapping paper.
- Make your own cards from paper embedded with wildflower seeds.
- Avoid buying metallic and plastic wrapping paper, it is not recyclable.
- Plan a "re-gift" swap with your like-minded friends and family.
- Consider giving vintage and used clothing, books, DVDs, CDs, sports equipment, tools, cameras, children's toys, musical instruments, etc.
- Give the gift of apps to kids with smartphones.

Make a donation to a non-profit organization in the name of your loved one.

Wishing everyone a happy, healthy holiday season and peace for the new year.

Ellen LaPine
Social Justice Committee

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Chalice Lighter Call

The Central East Region (CER) has announced a new unified Chalice Lighter Program. Formally this program in our area was overseen by the Saint Lawrence District which of course was one of the districts that was subsumed into CER. The unified program still has the same mission of growing Unitarian Universalism in healthy, sustainable congregations. Their hope is that by joining all Chalice Lighters regionally, the CER Chalice Lighter Program will be able to expand grant making to help more congregations grow and thrive. We received a grant through this program in 2003 to help with the installation of our elevator.

The fall 2017 Chalice Lighter Call is for the Unitarian Church of West Chester PA who is undertaking extensive renovation of their church. They are active in Black Lives Matter and other social justice efforts and will welcome members and visitors alike with improved meeting and office space as well as a more accessible, comfortable and safe building. Chalice Lighter gifts for this Call will help them fund major renovations to build membership and social justice work at their church.

A Chalice Lighter is a special person or couple who pledges to respond with a specific contribution when the Call comes to light a chalice in the CER. A Call is made twice a year, spring and fall. The “Call” letter will tell you all about the church or churches and the projects being funded. Although your individual contribution may be small, for example \$20 per Call, when all the Region’s Chalice Lighters gifts are added up, the total is significant.

If you are a Chalice Lighter, you should have received this Call by mail. If you did not, please contact Cristina Sanchis at csanchis@uua.org or at (302) 377-8971. If you are interested in becoming a Chalice Lighter you can contact Cristina or Ellen LaPine, our church’s liaison, for more information.