

Circle of Fellowship  
Monthly Newsletter of the First  
Universalist Society of Central  
Square, NY  
December, 2019

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

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

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Church website: [centralsquareuu.org](http://centralsquareuu.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pages/](http://www.facebook.com/pages/)



A Thank you From [Pure Water for the World](http://PureWaterfortheWorld.org)  
To The First Universalist Society of Central Square

In This Issue

[Page 2](#): Ministerial Musings

[Page 3](#): Ellen's Green Minute

[Page 4](#): The McCarthy Family Concert and Bake  
Sale

[Page 5](#): Sermon Calendar

[Page 5](#): Church Events Calendar

[Page 6](#): UU Universe and a History of Guest at  
your Table



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

**Ministerial Musings**

The holidays are upon us! And they are the holidays, not just a holiday. Judging by the displays in the stores, they incorporate the tradition of the two stories of the birth of Jesus with many elements from pagan mythology and a nod or two to Hanukah and maybe a few candles for Kwanza. The days from Thanksgiving to New Years are often referred to as a festival of lights or other more inclusive terms. This time has become a sort of all-embracing winter festival and, as the days become shorter, the nights longer, we do need something to help liven up our lives. I may deplore the commercialization, but I do understand why we reach out for a star to guide us through the dark night. At the intersection of all these traditions, there are stories of the triumph of the light over darkness, of love over hate, of hope over despair, of hospitality and generosity over greed and selfishness. It is easy to be cynical about the absurdities of reckless spending or the stress of trying to create the perfect Christmas cookie. However, there is something in this strange holiday that we have created that is also a tribute to the human spirit's need for joy and compassion. And so, though I may question the literal stories of its origins, I still am as glad as the giddiest child to see the lights and hear the carols once again.

-Andrea Abbott

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**Green Minute**

**Does Styrofoam Ever Go Away and an Important Bill McKibben Article**

Styrofoam, a lightweight plastic that resists moisture which is made from polystyrene beads, was invented by the Dow Chemical Company in 1941. Since then it has had many practical uses such as flotation in boats, pipe insulation or as a packing material. The most common use is in disposable cups and containers. At the bottom of these cups and containers you will usually see the number 6. This is the symbol for polystyrene based items which are un-recyclable in most countries. If recycling options do exist, they are extremely limited, as Styrofoam can only be re-purposed back into itself or a very similar material. Currently, 2.5 million Styrofoam cups are used per year in the US.

Many environmental experts believe we should stop using Styrofoam due to the fact that recycling is extremely limited so most of it ends up in landfills. To estimate how much time it will take for unrecyclable plastics such as polystyrene to break down in a landfill, scientists use a test called a respirometry test. These tests reflect highly concentrated UV rays at different items, achieving the result that the sun and atmosphere would after days, months, or even hundreds of years. They concluded that it will take at least 500 years for this type of plastic to break down in a landfill! Landfills prolong the decomposition period due to the lack of oxygen, light, and water flow. Even when the Styrofoam breaks down into smaller pieces, these pieces are so light they can be carried by wind to waterways, which pollutes potential food sources for animals as well as humans.

We can do our part in reducing the use of these containers by pledging not to purchase these products at home and also at our church. If you're stopping for coffee while you are out and about, bring your reusable travel mug and don't forget to bring your own "doggie bag" container if you are eating in a restaurant.

On a second subject, I highly encourage you to go to <https://e360.yale.edu/features/the-new-climate-math-the-numbers-keep-getting-more-frightening> and check out the article in Yale Environment 360 by Bill McKibben that discusses how scientists keep raising the alarm that we are producing more coal, oil and gas than our planet can endure but governments around the world still aren't making any efforts to change production or consumption. The article is full of fact-based information that is both educational and terrifying but is well worth the time it will take you to read it.

Ellen LaPine  
Social Justice Committee

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

### McCarthy Family Holiday Concert at First Universalist

**What:** McCarthy Family holiday concert

**When:** December 15, 2 p.m.

**Where:** First Universalist church, 3243 Fulton Ave. (Rt. 49), Central Square, NY ([www.centalsquareuu.org](http://www.centalsquareuu.org))

**Cost:** Suggested donation \$5

The First Universalist Society of Central Square is delighted to host the McCarthy Family once again in a holiday concert on December 15<sup>th</sup>. The concert will start at 2 p.m. and feature holiday songs and Christmas carols. The church will also be holding its annual holiday bake sale on this day, featuring a wide variety of home-made treats and desserts just in time for seasonal entertaining or gift giving.

The McCarthy Family is a local favorite and has been performing since 2005 at numerous venues including the New York State fair, county fairs, town festivals and concert series, libraries, recreation programs and more. No matter where they play, they bring their special brand of warmth, joy and fun. The concert will be held in the church sanctuary, which has been praised by numerous performers for its balance of acoustical intimacy, mellowness and clarity.

This event is open to everyone with a suggested donation of \$5 from those who are able. Don't miss the opportunity to share heart-warming music with friendly company!

The First Universalist Society of Central Square is the only Unitarian-Universalist church in Oswego County welcomes people of all ethnicities, backgrounds, and beliefs, united in the causes of justice, peace and love.



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### Sermon Calendar

**December 1st: Rev. David Weissbard: "Footprints of Windigo"**

**December 8th: Rev. Andrea Abbott -"Authentic"**

**December 15th: Rev. Bud Adams**

**December 22nd:Rev. Andrea Abbott-"A Good Receiver"**

**December 29th: Rev. Libbie Stoddard**

### Church Events Calendar

**December 1st:Executive Board Meeting at 9:00 am in the dining room.**

**December 2nd: The Reverend Andrea Abbott will hold office hours from 5:00-7:00 pmat the church. Please send her an email if you wish to meet individually with her. The sanctuary will be open to anyone for meditation.**

### Christmas at First Universalist

**December 15th: McCarthy Family Concert and Bake Sale, 2:00 pm at the church**

**December 24th: Christmas Eve Service at 4:30 pm Come join us on Christmas Eve at 4:30 for a candlelight service of hymns and readings to reflect on peace in our world, in our homes and in ourselves. Let peace begin with us.**

**December 25th: Christmas Dinner Free and Open to the Public, 12:00 pm in the Church Dining Room**

### Refreshment Schedule

**12/1 Janet  
12/8 volunteer needed  
12/15 Bake sale  
12/23 MaryFran**

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**UU Universe**

The UUA is mounting a campaign to promote voter registration in the upcoming 2020 elections. You can find information at this link,: <https://www.uua.org/justice/vote2020>.

**Guest at Your Table**

(A brief history from the UU Church of Utica newsletter-ajh)

Many people have asked, what does the UUSC do and what are the Guest at Your Table boxes and envelopes for? Last Sunday, we handed out the boxes and have left boxes and envelopes on the card table at the back of the Sanctuary. The boxes will be collected on Jan. 12th and the proceeds sent to UUSC. If you set these boxes on your table for spare change, you will be surprised how this adds up! Contributions using envelopes can be sent in any time.

UUSC's work began in 1939 when Rev. Waitstill and Martha Sharp helped refugees escape Nazi persecution in Europe. They were in Czechoslovakia when Hitler's troops marched into Prague. Inspired by the many risks they took, the Unitarian Services Committee was formed in 1940. This was the precursor to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) which for 75 years has maintained a steadfast presence on the frontlines of social justice movements around the globe.

The vision of a world free of injustice where all can realize their full human rights remains their fundamental aim. This year the Guest at Your Table campaign honors four women who have been fighting for Justice in four different parts of the world:

Pelenise Alofa, organizing to help people on a small Pacific Island cope with the climate crisis

Marta Velasquez, who works to empower women and eradicate gender-based violence in Honduras

Wai Wai Nu, who was imprisoned unjustly in Burma and now fights to end discrimination toward minority religions and to promote the stories of Rohingya women

Monica Curca, who founded Activate Labs, a DC -based organization that brings art , music, and storytelling to migrants on route from Central America.