

CIRCLE OF FELLOWSHIP

Monthly Message for All Ages –February 2024

May we know ourselves as vessels of infinite possibility

OUR MISSION

To be a welcoming diverse congregation that values spiritual growth and service to the local and world community.

The First Universalist Society of Central Square, New York.

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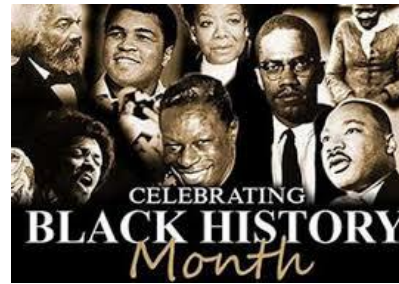
Arny Stieber Lucy Stieber

Paul Wenham Susan Woods

We are more than a “church”. We are a community that believes in the **Seven Principles** which are grounded in the humanistic teachings of the world’s religions.

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregation.
4. A free and responsible search for meaning and truth.
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large.
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Equity & Equality for All



FEBRUARY EVENTS CALENDAR

Feb. 4th, Sunday, 8:30 a.m. Trustees Meeting.

In the Dining Room and on Zoom

ALL ARE WELCOME

Please join us in person or on [Zoom](#)

Feb.28th, Wednesday, 2p.m.: Book Club

“The Paris Seamstress” by Natasha Lester

(on Zoom)

SUNDAY SERVICE CONVERSATIONS

February 4th – Rev Tanya Atwood Adams

February 11th – Rev Kurt Hohmann

Bridging Darkness and Light: Embracing

Imbolc's Renewal. As we leave behind the

darkest days of winter and prepare to welcome the coming spring, it is also time to consider which seeds of change we might choose to plant and nourish.

February 18th - Rev. Bud Adams

February 25th– Rev. David Weissbard

"Church Going"

When I announced the first Sunday in January would be my last day in your pulpit, I said to myself, "We'll be snowed out." I did not knock on wood! In the sixteen years I have been preaching for you, I think there have been only one or two Sundays on which snow closed the church. So, we will tempt the fates and plan on 2/25 as my farewell Sunday.

We are told that Hippocrates, the philosopher/physician of the fifth century before the common era, said, ""That which is used - develops. That which is not used wastes away." In modern language that translates to "Use It or Lose It." That proverb has a number of applications. For my 176th and final sermon in your pulpit, we'll be considering some of the applications of that proverb. Pray for clear skies!

Pastoral Care

Rev. Bud Adams is the minister to call if someone needs pastoral care. If you or someone else you know needs to speak with a minister please contact Bud at (315) 395-1926 or (315) 637-0468. His email is bud.adams.1@juno.com

EDUCATION FOR YOUTH & ADULTS



Our second principle deals with justice and equality. What we do does make a difference in others lives. We have the responsibility to treat all people with respect, dignity and kindness. Compassion can be difficult when you don't know a person's backstory, but we need to be open and kind.

Learning the consequences of our actions can help us to be more compassionate.

Take the story of the child who wanted to pop a balloon. By popping the balloon, it would have scared a cat who was curled up in another child's arms. The cat would have scratched the child as it jumped out of the child's arms.

So, the child with the balloon chose not to pop it out of compassion for both the cat and the child. By putting our second principle into action we will be exploring how singularly and collectively our actions can make a difference. Ronna

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE -

No recent meeting. But most of the members of SJC/ UUC are on the board or are involved in some way with upcoming happenings. This means finding ways to keep the church relevant in our community. We will support new endeavors, including working with the Girl Scouts and their plan for a safe after school program. The entire congregation will need to help.

In the meantime, we encourage everyone to continue to donate to the "Scotty" at Divine Mercy and collect coins for PW4W and winter accessories for school children. Bye 4 now, Nancy

MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE.

Due to occasional water in the kitchen after heavy rains, we have received quotes on internal drainage systems and gutters. We are now getting quotes on changing the land slope

outside the kitchen wall on the east. We will evaluate the quotes and decide on the best option. We are preparing a grant application focused on offsetting the costs.

MARKETING COMMITTEE - Susan, Paul, Erin, Arny
* Reminder - wear your 1st U hoodies and T's, not just to Service but everywhere! The community doesn't know we exist. Hoodies and T's are one way to spread the word and get noticed. If there is enough interest (need an order of at least 12 pieces) we may have more printed with a different saying on the back. Perhaps "WE ARE ALL RELATED". Let one of the Committee members know if you are interested.

If you have ideas on how we can let others know about our open approach and acceptance to all beliefs, please let a committee member know. *Our message is greatly needed in this time of division, distrust and fear.*

UU BOOK CLUB

The UU Club typically meets on the last Wednesday of each month at 2PM. Zoom only. On Wednesday, February 28th, 2024 we will discuss the book: "The Paris Seamstress" by Natasha Lester.

It is not necessary to be member of the congregation to participate. Most books are readily available through the library or on-line, or discount books. Please contact Nancy Hallock (315) 533-7067 if you are interested in participating.

Rev. David Weissbard's Last Sermon Scheduled for February 25th^{SEP}

As you probably know, Rev. David Weissbard has resigned. His last sermon was to be in January but the weather was bad so we needed to cancel service that day. David's last sermon is now scheduled for Sunday, February 25th at 10:30 a.m. David has admirably served us for many years with thoughtful and thought provoking sermons while driving many miles from Canton in sometimes bad weather. We want to recognize his many years of friendship with a recognition following the service.

We have decided to recognize him with things that have meaning to him. So first, we ask that you put Sunday, February 25th on you schedule to join us for his last service and then afterwards a pot luck luncheon. Nancy Hallock will bring a ham. Please bring a dish to pass. He has always enjoyed our pot lucks. The church will provide a

recognition/best wishes cake.

Second, we also want to honor David with a short paragraph from each of us telling him what you appreciate about him and what you'll miss about him. Jody Brown has hooked us up with a person who has made a scrapbook and Susan Woods has graciously agreed to compile these paragraphs. If you haven't sent one already, please send yours to her at lotus5@twcnj.rr.com as soon as you can so she has some time to compile them.

Third, we agreed to give him a gift from each of us individually containing things that we know are important to him. Do you remember a conversation where he shared with you his likes, what he enjoys doing or loves? These are the things we want to include in the gift. As ideas, people have mentioned his family, his dog, local shopping and dining, books and social causes close to his heart.

Let's make this a wonderful celebration of all he is and has given to this congregation. If you have any questions please Ellen LaPine or Lucy Stieber.

SEP SEP SEP SEP

UUA Reading Suggestion

"All Labor Has Dignity"

Covering many civil rights movement highlights, award-winning historian Michael K. Honey introduces and traces Dr. King's dream of economic equality.

Author: [Martin Luther King Jr.](#)

SOUL MATTERS
Justice & Equity
Equity is giving everyone what they
need to be on the same
playing field

Here we go again.
Another injustice.
Even more inequity exposed.
So much pain.
So many issues.
So little equality.
And so, so many people with certainty.
I wish I had it. Don't you?
The crystal-clear clarity
Of who's right and who's wrong.
Every aspect of their argument

neatly lined up.

Nothing at all left to doubt.

But when I wake,

so much ambivalence shares my bed.

So weary am I of having to announce

my position right away.

So worried about my limited view.

So concerned that my people

will no longer consider me one of their own

if I express my doubts.

But answer I must. Isn't that true?

What does justice look like in this case?

What is the next right step?

What is the correct point of view?

Just put my mind to it.

Reason will guide me and show me the way.

But what if we've got the starting point all wrong?

What if my mind - and yours - is not enough?

What if the place to begin is not

"How do I answer these questions?"

But "Who do I need to help me think them

through?"

This is the plea of that lawyer serving those on death row. "Get proximate!" he pleads."

To change the world,

We must get close to those on the margins.

We must hear what they have to say.

We must see the world with their weary eyes.

Amen, cry those Latin American priests

who placed the word liberation

in front of their theology.

Blessed are the poor, they teach,

not just because they will inherit the earth,

but because they view our earthly woes

most clearly. Their gift to me, to you, to us

is to remember that the answers to injustice

arise from relationship,

as much as, if not more than, from reason.

Who, not how.

What if that is the place to begin?

What if this is the way we change the world?

It's one thing to analyze a theme; it's quite another to experience it. By pulling us out of the space of *thinking* and into the space of *doing*, this invites us to figure out not just what we have to say about life, but also what life has to say *to us!*

"To understand the causes of poverty, we must look beyond the poor. Those of us living lives of privilege and plenty must examine ourselves. Most

government aid goes to families that need it the least. If you add up amount that the government is dedicating to tax breaks — mortgage interest deduction, wealth transfer tax breaks, tax breaks we get on our retirement accounts, our health insurance, our college savings accounts — you learn that we are doing so much more to subsidize affluence than to alleviate poverty. And this is the way we designed it.” *Matthew Desmond (Book – “Poverty, by America”*

As the above quote suggests, it is a book that challenges those of us in the middle and moderately affluent classes to look at the ways we knowingly and unknowingly keep poor people poor. This is not a role we are used to. When it comes to economic injustice, we privileged liberals are much more comfortable naming the problems than being named as the problem. But alongside that discomfort lies a feeling of being liberated. Desmond is not out to guilt his reader. Rather, his aim is empowerment and understanding. You will leave this book with more compassion, more commitment and a clearer path forward.

SPECIAL – PALESTINE

Compiled by Arny Stieber

We are experiencing the elimination of the Palestinian people. U.S. media and our politicians support this. Our Seven Principals guide us in our relations. The first Principal is: The inherent worth and dignity of every person. Our fourth Principal is: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning. If you have an interest in Palestine and Israel, you may want to review this information.

Suggested background information:

- * [Life in Occupied Palestine](#) by Anna Baltzer.
- * [Israel Lobby and Settler Colonialism](#) by history professor Walter Hixson (10/10/23)
- * [The 100 Year War on Palestine](#) w/Rashid Khalidi. (12/1/23)
- * [Israel's Attack on U.S. Military](#) June 8th, 1967, Israel attacks the USS Liberty killing 34 and wounding 171 U.S. military.
- * [Genocide in Gaza](#) Chris Hedges (12/6/23)
- * [Eight Israel Myths and FAQs](#)
- * Book: “The Hidden History of Zionism” by Ralph Schoenman.

* Web site: <https://ifamericansknew.org/>

If you're interested in doing something, here are some suggestions.

1. Familiarize yourself with Palestine. What is typically presented by U.S. corporate media is Israel's version of history and current events. Go beyond that.

2. Become familiar with the BDS movement.

<https://youtu.be/1dQIFgMhxcI?si=teSKIZsaCTVC1OSH>

3. Contact your federal politicians (President, Senators, Representative) by email and/or phone – as often as you can. Their contact information is on their web sites. Once you fill out their email form, it's saved, so repeated contacts are easy. The people of Palestine are being brutalized **every day** and our politicians need to be reminded that our tax dollars (\$4 billion/year and billions more in weapons) are the major funding source for the death and destruction.

4. Attend seminars and actions in support of Palestine. U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights: <https://uscpr.org>

5. Support individuals and groups that speak up for Palestine.

https://www.democracynow.org/2023/12/27/campus_palestine_exception

NEWSLETTER ITEMS

The Newsletter comes out at the beginning of each month. It is assembled by Lucy Stieber based on your input. If you have items, please email to Lucy at LASTIEBER@aol.com

