

## CIRCLE OF FELLOWSHIP

Monthly Message for All Ages – March 2024

Remind me that success is not the only  
measure of a life.

### 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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### Trustees

Erin Barry            Marcia Burrell

Janie Garlow        Nancy Hallock

Winfield Ihlow     Ellen LaPine

Ann Peterson        Ronna Schindler

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.

## SPRING – MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup> ☺



### MARCH EVENTS CALENDAR

**3rd, Sunday, 8:30 a.m. - Trustees Meeting.** In  
the Dining Room. Please join us in person or on  
[Zoom](#)

**\*ALL ARE WELCOME\***

**15<sup>th</sup>, Friday - Red Cross Blood Drive.**  
**See details on page 2**

**27<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday, 2p.m. - Book Club**  
“The Barbizon” by Pauline Bren  
(on Zoom)

### SUNDAY SERVICE CONVERSATIONS

**March 3rd – Rev Andrea Abbot**

Thinking Differently: Many families, beside my own,  
are affected by autism. This sermon considers  
some of the issues around autism as well as other  
conditions that are part of our human  
neurodiversity.

**March 10th – Rev Kurt Hohmann**

Awakening to Renewal: The Promise of Ostara.

Earth awakens from her slumber, bursting forth with  
life. Change is the very essence of existence!

**March 17th -Rev. Bud Adams**

March 24<sup>th</sup> – Chris Kubenberger

Camp Bionary and Beyond

March 31<sup>st</sup> – Music concert by Just Joe.

### 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](mailto:bud.adams.1@juno.com)

**Red Cross Blood Drive**

**Friday, March 15, 2024**  
**1:30-6:30 p.m.**  
**First Baptist Church**  
**701 N Main St.**  
**Central Square NY**  
**Sponsored by the First Universalist**  
**Society of Central Square**

March is Red Cross Month. During this month, the Red Cross honors the commitment of volunteers and blood donors to support individuals and families in need. As a way to say "thank you", all who come to give during this drive will receive a \$10 e-gift card to a pet supply merchant of their choice. Plus, they'll be automatically entered for a chance to win a \$3,000 gift card. There will be five lucky winners! Details are available at [RedCrossBlood.org/Pets](https://RedCrossBlood.org/Pets). Please tell your friends and neighbors about this drive and consider donating yourself. It is highly encouraged that you schedule an appointment but walk-ins may be welcome if all appointments do not fill. You can schedule an appointment by visiting [redcrossblood.org](https://redcrossblood.org) or calling 800-RED-CROSS. This drive is staffed by our own First Universalist Society volunteers. If you can help, please contact Ellen LaPine

#### **EDUCATION FOR YOUTH & ADULTS**



#### **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 selected a contractor to install gutters on the old Agway side of the building. If that doesn't correct the issue, we will get quotes on changing the land slope outside the kitchen wall on the east. A grant application to offset the costs has been submitted. In anticipation of the "Just Joe" concert on 3/31, we had the building inspected. A number of issues were brought to our attention. The Committee is working to rectify these areas.

**MARKETING COMMITTEE –** Susan, Paul, Katie, Amanda, Arny.

Welcome Katie and Amanda to the Committee! Always good to have new ideas and talents.

\* Reminder - wear your 1<sup>st</sup> 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 March 27th, 2024 we will discuss the book: "The Barbizon" by Paula Bren. 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.

## UUA Reading Suggestion

### Through the Lens of Whiteness

#### Challenging Racialized Imagery in Pop Culture

An essential resource for anyone who wants to enter the next stage of their antiracist journey—recognizing, analyzing, and confronting the perpetuation of racism in our visual world.

Authors: [Diane S. Grimes](#), [Liz Cooney](#)

## SOUL MATTERS

### Welcome to the Gift of Transformation

*Let mystery have its place in you; do not be always turning up your whole soil with the plowshare of self-examination, but leave a little fallow corner in your heart ready for any seed the winds may bring, and reserve a nook of shadow for the passing bird; keep a place in your heart for the unexpected guests, an altar for an unknown God.*

-Henri-Frederic Ariel

Make a bit of room. Leave a little space. That may not sound like anything radical or revolutionary. But it turns out that it is one of life's favorite ways to make us unto something new.

Be cautious with those cultural messages about aggressively tilling and turning up your whole soil. Watch out for all the heroic talk about striving and perfecting, struggle and control. Much of the time transformation is a much subtler art. It's about stillness, listening and waiting to be led, not fighting with yourself and others to make sure you are in the lead.

In short, when it comes to transformation, the message of spirituality is, "Be careful with what you've been taught and told about transformation because much of it takes us in exactly the wrong direction". Our challenge as communities of transformation is to remind each other to take those different tacks. Such as:

It's about breathing rather than becoming better.

It's about patience not perfection

It's about depth not dominance

It's about attention not improvement

That part about attention instead of improvement is especially important. It's so easy to get transformation mixed up with fixing. And fixing is transformation's biggest foe. Trying to purify or perfect ourselves is the surest way to stay stuck. The

pursuit of purity and perfection focuses us on our inadequacy and inferiority, causing us to overlook those unexpected guests that Henri-Frederic speaks of.

And friends, we don't want to miss those unexpected guests! Those seeds brought by the wind and those passing birds are the partners that make transformation possible. They help us notice new paths. They invite us to walk with a new step. They awaken in us new songs. They remind us that transformation is not something we do alone. They assure us that transformation doesn't have to be a long and lonely struggle, but instead can be more like learning a new dance with a new friend. All we have to do is trust, take the hand of that "unknown God" and follow its lead.

So, friends, this month, leave some room on that dance floor of yours. Keep your eyes peeled. See attention and attending as your greatest assets and tools. And when that unexpected guest reaches out its hand don't be afraid.

### Ask Them About Aging

Aging is arguably the most common and complex transformation we face. Regardless of what age we are. It simply never gets easier to move through the stages of our lives. But we all know that two things in particular help: Stepping back to notice/name what is happening inside us and drawing wisdom from others who have already navigated the stage we are facing. Providing these two sources of support is exactly what author Sari Botton offers through her online magazine, *Oldster*. Using a set of carefully thought out and compelling questions, she interviews 30 100-year-old adults and explores "what it means to travel through time in a human body, at every phase of life. So, your assignment this month is to work through that set of questions yourself! Well, actually not just by yourself, but with a trusted friend or family member. **Here's what we suggest: First, go through her questions yourself and write out the answers (or jot notes and talking points)** Then meet up with a friend or family member and go through each of your answers to the questions, pausing along the way to share reactions and notice where your answers echo and differ.

Below is the list of questions and a handful of the *Oldster* interviews to get you thinking as you get ready to answer for yourself.

### The Oldster Questions

Is there another age you associate with yourself in your mind? If so, what is it? And why, do you think that?

Do you feel old for your age? Young for your age? Just

right? Are you in step with your peers?

What do you like about being your age?

What is difficult about being your age?

*What is surprising about being your age, or different from what you expected, based on what you were told?*

What has aging given you? Taken away from you?

How has getting older affected your sense of yourself, or your identity?

*What are some age-related milestones you are looking forward to? Or ones you "missed" and might try to reach later off-schedule according to our culture and its expectations?*

What has been your favorite age so far, age so far and why? Would you go back to this age if you could?

*Is there someone who is older than you, who makes growing older inspiring to you? Who is your aging idol and why?*

*What aging-related adjustments have you recently made, style-wise, beauty-wise, health-wise?*

*What's an aging-related adjustment you refuse to make, and why?*

What's your philosophy on celebrating birthdays as an adult? How do you celebrate yours?

### **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 and additional information contained in the February Newsletter.

Suggested background information:

\* [The Myth of Israel's Democracy](#) with Ilan Pappé, an Israeli historian.

\* [Palestine in Israeli School Books](#). The Israeli author of a book on this subject is interviewed. She gives significant background on Israel and Jewish history.

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/1dQIFgMhxcl?si=teSKlZsaCTVC1OSH>

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](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

