



CIRCLE OF FELLOWSHIP

The First Universalist Church
of Central Square

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Andrea Abbott, Divinity Student

635-7122

Janie Garlow, President

436-2238

Rita Thornton, Director of Music

699-4824

3243 Fulton Street (Route 49), near Route 11, Post Office Box 429, Central Square, New York 13036-0429
Telephone: 315 668-6821; Church website: <http://www.geocities.com/centralsquareuu/>

Our church building is handicapped accessible.

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.

AUGUST 2009

DIVINITY STUDENT'S DIGRESSIONS

I'm glad to report that we all survived the Blessing of the Animals. Everyone was blessed, down to the last pinfeather of the goslings. I hope every beast enjoyed it as much as those of us who were doing the blessings.

This is the summer that it might have been a good idea to start measuring 40 cubits by 40 cubits. Perhaps we should have been arking the beasts, two by two, instead of blessing them. I can't remember when I've seen so much rain. In the spirit of arks and beasts, this may be a good time to reflect on our love of the planet we share with other living creatures. Perhaps the word "share" is a relatively new concept for many people, since, as a species, we have been accustomed to seeing ourselves as the owners of the planet. We are now seeing where this mode of thought leads. Rejiggering our way of thinking will not be easy. As we discover more about how the world really works, however, we are finding out how truly interdependent we all are. Dependency implies lack of mastery. Are we prepared to give up our history of mastery and find a different way to exist in the world?

Wishing everyone a wonderful rest of the summer.

– Andrea Abbott

COME AROUND WITH UU CIRCLE

Mark on your calendars these upcoming events. The first is on August 9th at 1 p.m. after church, a Family Excursion at Amboy Center led by Chris Lajewski. Please bring a bag lunch. You will be hiking and taking a tour of the new Environmental Education Center Facility.

On August 16th the UU Circle meets at 11:45. Please join us to continue to fill in our calendar and discuss upcoming events.

On September 13th, the Annual Church Picnic is to be held after church at Betty Figie's home. It will be a potluck picnic with the UU Circle furnishing a meat tray. October 17th will be a Rummage Sale. Start saving things to be included for it. Don't bring things to church yet. You will receive more information on when and where to bring the items. I hope everyone is enjoying the summer, and I look forward to seeing you around with the UU Circle.

– Rita Thornton, UU Circle president

Note: Please have items for the next newsletter to Bob Haskell by no later than NOON on SATURDAY, AUGUST 29. 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: USES FOR WHITE DISTILLED VINEGAR

Sometimes the best solutions are right in your cupboard. I was surfing the web for green cleaning ideas and ran across www.vinegartips.com. It has what they claim are 1001 tips for using white distilled vinegar for cleaning, in your garden, laundry, for your health, even automotive tips. Here are just a few.

Bring out bright colors in your laundry by adding ½ cup of vinegar to the rinse cycle. Remove musky smells from cottons by sprinkling with vinegar and then pressing. Get water and salt stains off of boots and shoes by wiping them down with equal parts of vinegar and water.

Keep chemicals and pesticides out of your garden by pouring straight vinegar on areas that you want to keep clear, such as the cracks in your sidewalk. Kill ants by pouring directly on an ant hill. Discourage cats from using the children's sand box by pouring around the area. Preserve cut flowers and liven droopy ones by adding 2 tablespoons vinegar and 1 teaspoon sugar to a quart-sized vase.

Cut the grime on the top of the refrigerator with a cloth and full strength vinegar. Clean the wheel of your can opener with vinegar and a toothbrush. Clean up pet accidents by blotting the area, then adding a vinegar and water solution (my veterinarian recommends 1 part vinegar to 10 parts water). Blot until almost dry, then sprinkle baking soda over the area. Vacuum up the residue the next day.

Stop insect stings and bites from itching by dabbing with full strength vinegar. Make nail polish last longer by wiping the nail with vinegar before applying polish. If commercial aftershaves cause burning and itching, try white vinegar.

When doing car maintenance, soak rusty bolts and screws in vinegar to make them easier to remove. Rid the windshield wipers of grime by wiping them with vinegar. Keep windows frost-free overnight in the winter by coating them with 3 parts vinegar and 1 part water.

Cats hate the smell of vinegar. If you have a cat that is marking his or her territory, spray the area with vinegar and then wash with a hose. Remove skunk odors by wiping down the pet with a 50/50 solution of vinegar and water.

When poaching eggs, add a little vinegar to the water. The whites stay better formed. Make onion odors disappear from your hands by rubbing them with vinegar. Freshen wilted vegetables by soaking in cold water with a spoonful or two of vinegar.

Do you have a tried and true use for vinegar or some other common household item? Write it down and give it to any Social Justice Committee member or send it to Ellen LaPine via e-mail at dartfrog7777@aol.com and we will post it on our bulletin board. We would like to compile a list of helpful hints for using common items in green ways.

– Social Justice Committee's Green Team

WATER COMMUNION

Once again, our congregation will observe Water Communion on Sunday, September 13.

As the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations reports, "There are two holidays that many Unitarian Universalist congregations celebrate that are unique to our faith: the Water Communion and the Flower Communion. Both holidays are ceremonies that celebrate our Unitarian Universalist community and the importance of each individual's unique contributions to that community.

"The Water Communion, also sometimes called Water Ceremony, was first used at a Unitarian Universalist worship service in the 1980s. Many UU congregations now hold a Water Communion once a year, often at the beginning of the new church year (September).

"Members bring to the service a small amount of water from a place that is special to them. During the appointed time in the service, people one by one pour their water together into a large bowl. As the water is added, the person who brought it tells why this water is special to them. The combined water is symbolic of our shared faith coming from many different sources. It is often then blessed by the congregation, and sometimes is later boiled and used as the congregation's 'holy water' in child dedication ceremonies and similar events."

Thus, each person in our congregation is asked to collect a small vial of water (a film canister is a good size) during the summer, and to pour the water into a common vessel, while speaking briefly about the water's significance, during the Water Ceremony on Sunday, September 13.

PRESIDENTIAL THOUGHTS

My Dear Friends,

After some challenging months at church, events and services are taking shape and the energy is good. As you all know, we do not have a settled minister since the Rev. Margaret Hart resigned in June. At first it seemed a little scary. To use an analogy: a ship without a captain, but we are doing fine on auto-pilot. Events are being planned by the UU Circle, the Board is in full swing after its retreat, and our pulpit is supplied with new and interesting guest ministers and speakers and, of course, Andrea Abbott is wonderful. Last week's service of the "Blessing of the Beasts" was a huge success thanks to Andrea, Rita Thornton and Pat Hellinger. We had several visitors, both two- and four-legged and even feathered.

This week Betty Figie and I visited Janice Ludington. Janice's body is severely disabled with Parkinson's disease, but her face is beautiful and her smile and eyes are vibrant. Her mind is phenomenal. She delighted us with her stories and keen sense of humor. I love being with those gals. We can talk about almost anything; after all, we are like-minded UUs!

How about some food for thought? Luscious tomatoes fresh from the garden, ripened by the summer sun, watered by the frequent rains and tendered by caring hands. It is a great joy of mine to take a ripe tomato from the vine and eat it with just the right amount of sea salt crystals. Another perfect summer joy is plucking blueberries from the vine. Succulent and juicy blueberries that roll between your teeth with the juice playing on your tongue. Then there is corn on the cob ... that first local corn of the season, the kernels just popping into your mouth. Often I have the wonderful experience of going to the farmers' market on Saturday mornings with my sons. The stands are full of fresh spinach and lettuces, fragrant basil, deep red and purple heirloom tomatoes, sweet melons, juicy peaches, fresh breads and aged cheeses ... the list is endless. Paying attention to the luscious scents, textures and vibrant colors nourishes my soul. In a normal week, I go about my grocery shopping mindlessly filling my cart with items, whether they are up to my standards for quality or not. In this era of sloppy dining, we forget that food not only fuels us, it should feed our senses. It is so easy to eat unconsciously, unable to delight in each mouthful because our focus is somewhere else. The local fresh foods of summer and farm markets are plentiful; let's make mealtimes and shopping for meals a ritual, a vital part of our day and week. Enjoy the freshness of the season, tap into the wonder of all our senses.

See you at the market!

– Janie

DID YOU KNOW?

Maria Cook was the first woman Universalist preacher in the United States. Born in Geneva, New York, she toured Universalist pulpits throughout New York state and Pennsylvania. She soon gathered large crowds and became the highest paid itinerant preacher in the state. Later she was presented with a letter of fellowship by the Universalists.

However, she was not supported by all Universalist clergy or women of her time. At that time in history, slavery was being debated, and public hanging was a form of capital punishment. The women's suffrage movement did not begin until 1848. She began to devote many of her sermons to defending her right to be able to preach. Because of opposition and waning popularity, she returned to her home and family in Geneva. She also spent time with the Shakers, and served time in jail for vagrancy. In time, she returned to

the pulpit prior to her death in 1835.

A woman ahead of her time, she was the first of many Unitarian and Universalist women to be in the pulpit. To learn more about Maria Cook and other Unitarian Universalist women, go to UUA.org.

– Ann Peterson, adult religious education

COFFEE AND CHAT

Women and men of the church will gather for Coffee and Chat at Panera Bread on Route 31 in Clay at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, August 19.

All are welcome to join in casual conversation and to enjoy coffee or tea and other goodies.

The women's and men's groups meet separately. For more information about the women's group, you may contact Nancy Haskell. For more information about the men's group, you may contact Chet Perkins.

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.

BOARD SPLINTERS

The Executive Board, at its regular monthly meeting on Sunday morning, August 2, approved a new Letter of Agreement with Andrea Abbott as divinity student.

Andrea Abbott, as divinity student, said that all was going well. She said that she planned to conduct a memorial service for Hartley Martin as part of the regular worship service on Sunday, August 23.

Ann Peterson, secretary-treasurer of the UU Circle, said that Circle meetings were going well, and that the next meeting would be held on Sunday, August 16. She said that Circle events were listed on the calendar.

Ellen LaPine, a member of the Social Justice Committee, said that the Adopt-a-Highway pickup in July had gone well.

The Executive Board agreed to express its gratitude to the Rev. Dr. Thomas Chulak, district executive of the Saint Lawrence Unitarian Universalist District, for conducting an evaluation of the health and well-being of the church; Arnold Hook and Ann Peterson, for completing the church database; Janie and Steven Garlow, for hosting the annual retreat of the Executive Board on Saturday, June 27; the Rev. Dr. Robert Cleveland, for preaching at our church on Sunday, July 12; and Janie Garlow, Ann Peterson, Ellen LaPine, Chester Perkins and Marilyn Nye for the Adopt-a-Highway cleanup in July.

It was reported that Arnold Hook, chairperson of the Building and Grounds Committee, had purchased a new lawn mower for the church. Ellen LaPine said that she was working on the repair of the broken stained-glass window in the church belfry.

Ann Peterson provided an outline of links to the local tv stations and other resources for publicity.

It was announced that our church would provide lunch for the meeting of the Saint Lawrence Unitarian Universalist District presidents and vice presidents at our church on September 26.

President Janie Garlow announced that the Rev. Peter Morales had been elected president of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. Elected at this year's General Assembly, he succeeds the Rev. William G. Sinkford.

Chester Perkins, former Membership Committee chairperson, will prepare an outline of what the committee does.

The Executive Board will conduct its next monthly meeting at 9 a.m. on Sunday, August 30.

SAINT LAWRENCE DISTRICT SCHEDULE

The Saint Lawrence District, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, has scheduled the following events:

August 13-15 – SLD Board Retreat, Christ the King Retreat & Conference Center, Syracuse.

September 25 – “Pilgrimage: A UU Approach to Religion - An Evening with Tom Chulak,” May Memorial UU Society of Syracuse. 6 p.m. – Potluck and talk. Please RSVP to Alexa Carter at garlex@aol.com if possible. All are welcome! Our district executive, Tom Chulak, recently returned from a personal pilgrimage through Jerusalem, Cairo and the Nile, Tanzania, South Africa and Morocco. He will share insights from his trip.

September 26 – Presidents' Conference, First Universalist Church of Central Square.

September 26 – RE Ingathering, First UU Society of Syracuse. “Homegrown UUs - Dreaming the Possible Dream?”

October 2-3 – 2009 Small Congregation Growth Project, Watson Homestead Conference & Retreat Center.

October 4 – Third Annual Association Sunday.

October 16-17 – New York State Convention of Universalists Annual Meeting, First Universalist Church of Rochester.

October 16-18 – UU Weekend at Silver Bay, Silver Bay Resort & Conference Center, Lake George.

October 26-28 – Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association Iroquois Chapter Fall Retreat, White Eagle Conference Center, Hamilton.

October 30 - November 1 – District Conference to Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Birth of Unitarian Universalism.

November 7 – “Doing Justice in an Economic Tsunami,” UU Church of Amherst.

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

It happened at Syracuse

A 50th Anniversary Conference:

Celebrating the Birth and Growth of Unitarian Universalism

October 30-31, 2009, Syracuse, NY

<http://www.sld.uua.org/50thAnniversary/50thanniversary.html>

A significant anniversary for Unitarian Universalists will be celebrated on October 31, 2009. This day marks exactly fifty years since negotiations were completed and a plan was adopted for consolidating the American Unitarian Association (AUA) and the Universalist Church of America (UCA) to create the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). To commemorate this event the St. Lawrence District of the UUA is sponsoring a conference on Friday and Saturday, October 30 & 31, 2009.

The dramatic events of the "1959 Conference at Syracuse" occurred in downtown Syracuse, New York. In celebrating this pivotal moment in the history of Unitarian Universalism we will return to the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Syracuse, the central site of the conference where general sessions were held. The 2009 conference will be a celebration of our history and a quest to advance our future by exploring the meaning of "What Happened at Syracuse?", examining the development of Unitarian Universalism in the past fifty years, and addressing the challenges that face us.

The conference will:

- Relive the music, liturgy, faith practices and actions of that historic period.
- Revisit significant events leading up to the Conference at Syracuse.
- Explore the growth of the movement in the past 50 years.
- Consider the nature of our faith and the threads that weave our theological diversity into a common identity.
- Help us embrace the challenges we face in working to advance our future as a unique religious people with something to offer the world.

Four prominent UU scholars will be on hand to provide their insights and perspectives about the meaning of "What Happened at Syracuse?" David Bumbaugh, David Parke, Richard Gilbert and Elizabeth Strong have each played important leadership roles in the growth of the Unitarian Universalist movement. They will bring a considerable body of experience and great insight to share in advancing our quest.

Don't miss the Party

Join fellow UUs at the Hotel Syracuse

October 30 and 31, 2009

To download the registration brochure and read more about
"What Happened at Syracuse" go to:

<http://www.sld.uua.org/50thAnniversary/50thanniversary.html>

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

August

- 9 – 10:30 a.m., Worship service. Sermon by Chris Squires. “The Book of Ruth.” 11 a.m., Religious education. This is also the once-a-month Sunday on which everyone is asked to donate food items for the Downstairs Scottie, which later will be taken to the Food Bank at St. Michael’s Church. 1 p.m., Family Excursion at Amboy Center.
- 16 – 10:30 a.m., Worship service. Sermon by Chris Lajewski. 11 a.m., Religious education. 11:45 a.m., UU Circle meeting.
- 19 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat, Panera Bread, Route 31, town of Clay.
- 23 – 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, divinity student. Service will include Memorial Service for Hartley Martin. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 30 – 9 a.m., Executive Board meeting. 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by the Rev. David Weissbard. 11 a.m., Religious education.

September

- 6 – 10:30 a.m., Worship service. Audio sermon by the Rev. Max Coots. Random Acts of Kindness Sunday.
- 13 – 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Andrea Abbott, divinity student. Water Communion. 11 a.m., Religious education. Immediately after the worship service, church family potluck picnic at Betty Figie’s home. If it rains, the picnic will be moved to Goettel Park. This is also the once-a-month Sunday on which everyone is asked to donate food items for the Downstairs Scottie, which later will be transported to the Food Bank at St. Michael’s Church.
- 16 – 9:30 a.m., Coffee and Chat, Panera Bread, Route 31, town of Clay.
- 20 – 10:30 a.m., Worship service led by Chester Freeman. 11 a.m., Religious education.
- 26 – Presidents’ Conference, Saint Lawrence District, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, at our church.
- 27 – 10:30 a.m., Worship service. 11 a.m., Religious education.

October

- 17 – Church rummage sale.
- 30-31 – A 50th Anniversary Conference Celebrating the Birth & Growth of Unitarian Universalism, Grand Ballroom, Hotel Syracuse, Syracuse.

November

- 14 – Smorgasbord dinner.

December

- 20 – Cookie sale.

Regular meetings

Wednesdays – 7 p.m., Spiritual Development and Empowerment group meets at the church.

Chanting and meditation

People who are interested should call Tim Hart at 439-2541.

“MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS”

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Saratoga Springs will hold The Fab-UU-lous Fair on Friday, August 14, from 3 to 8 p.m., and on Saturday, August 15, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

It’s your chance to buy fine arts from area artists, plants and gardening accessories, hundreds of used books and unique hand-crafted items. Kids will be entertained with activities including Mr. Twisty. The country store will offer preserves and other homey items. Massages will be offered at the relaxation station. There will be music by local musicians, and food at a snack bar. Dinner on Friday, from 5 to 8 p.m., will feature fried chicken from Hattie’s. For dinner tickets, contact Linda Wilkes at lwilkes@neami.com.

All proceeds will help support the church, located at 624 N. Broadway. The phone is 518 584-1555; the website www.Saratoga-uu.org.

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.