



# UUU NEWS

A BIWEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
SOCIETY OF ONEONTA

November 8, 2017

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## MINISTER'S MUSINGS

### Another Shooting...

After the service on Sunday about sustaining our hope and the important work we need to do, I went home to the news of another mass shooting. Another mass shooting in a church. A white man targeted the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, TX, wounding dozens and killing 25 people. And I thought-- "another one. How many is that now? I've lost count. I can't even cry anymore." I felt numb and I felt a bit helpless and hopeless. The next day, The Onion, America's most famous satirical newspaper, reprinted their article on gun violence, *"No Way To Prevent This," Says Only Nation Where This Regularly Happens*. They have posted that same story on-line after every mass shooting since the killing in Santa Barbara in 2014. They change the dates the location and numbers, but everything else remains the same. But it doesn't have to remain the same. We can't afford to be numbed. As I said on Sunday, we have to resist allowing this to become our new normal. We have to find ways to replenish our sense of outrage, our will to act. There are a number of helpful, meaningful things we can do in response to this latest mass shooting.

### Work for Change...

Call your state and federal representatives and let them know you support reasonable gun control. The last mass shooting involved the use of bump stocks, devices that allow a semi-automatic rifle to operate as an automatic weapon. After that shooting, there was talk of outlawing these devices. Even the National Rifle Association voiced support for that idea-- a first in my lifetime. But then our attention waned, and the pressure reduced, and now that legislation is stalled and all but forgotten. We've demonstrated that our

voices can make a difference if we are consistent and persistent. So, let your voice be heard. Every week. Find an organization that is working for reasonable gun control. There are several good ones out there. Send them some money. They need our support. Educate yourself and talk to people about this epidemic. If the person you are talking to doesn't want to restrict guns in any way, then ask them for their solution to the problem.

### Safety at UUSO...

Earlier this year, at the urging of the UUSO staff (both Evelyn, our Office Admin., and Susan, our Director of Religious Education, have been learning about this issue from their professional colleague groups); the Board of Trustees created a Safe Congregation sub-committee. Currently, that committee is made up of John Bagby, Evelyn, Susan, and myself. We were charged with looking into the materials from our UU Association and our insurance provider Church Mutual regarding safe congregations. Unfortunately, our sub-committee has not had a chance to meet yet. The Board will be taking another look at the charge to the sub-committee and we are scheduled to meet next week. Look for further updates as we make progress.

In my work with the UU Trauma Response Ministry team, I have been trained to do Preparedness Assessments for congregations. I've done several over the years with others on the UUTRM team. I hope to use that experience going forward here at UUSO. I can say this right now. UUSO is already doing the two most important things in being prepared for a possible violent visitor. We control access on Sunday mornings. There is only one open door to the sanctuary. We also greet all visitors. Most Sundays, I'm on the front steps greeting people as they come

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# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

*Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better. —Albert Einstein*

It seems we have had a long fall. My Minnesota family reports shoveling snow and cross country skiing! The Web of Life Explorers class (those in Kindergarten through Third Grade) have been carefully recording observations of their outdoors “special spot” in the backyard of the Olympia Brown House. They check the water gauge as well as the outdoor thermometer that Duncan Smith installed for them. Their journals record these measurements as well as sketches and observations of the plants, soil, squirrels, bugs and worms. Their “spot” has seen many changes since their first class on September 23rd. So far they have not recorded snow. They will continue their observations in any weather. Please make sure their coats, mittens, hats, boots, etc. are left on or by the hooks in the hall outside their classroom. You, too, can continue to observe how the natural world outside your house changes each day. Home journals are available by request. Members of the class asked to have these and I would be happy to give one to you. You would be amazed to see what happens in one small square of earth as you follow it over the seasons.

These children are exploring our Unitarian Universalist Seventh Principle, “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” A children’s version says this as, “We believe in caring for our planet Earth and every living thing that shares it with us.” I have had the honor of working with children for over 20 years. There are so many ways to nurture their senses of wonder, awe, and spirit but I find it is often easiest when offering them experiences that bring them closer to nature.



Rev. Forrest Gilmore writes: “Our seventh Principle may be our Unitarian Universalist way of coming to fully embrace something greater than ourselves. The interdependent web—expressed as the spirit of life, the ground of all being, the oneness of all existence, the community-forming power, the process of life, the creative force, even God—can help us develop that social understanding of ourselves that we and our culture so desperately need. It is a source of meaning to which we can dedicate our lives.”

Soon the “special spot” at the Olympia Brown House will be under a blanket of snow. I wonder what subtle and not-so-subtle changes will be observed. I have a feeling that a snowperson will be built nearby.

In Peace,

Susan Ryder  
UUSO Director of Religious Education

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in. There is an R.E. greeter and two ushers in the entrance way. This, more than anything else, decreases the likelihood of danger during the service. After the service starts, the two ushers stay by the back door to greet any late-comers. If I were doing an assessment of UUSO, I'd be giving high marks for all of these practices.

That being said, there are many areas where we need to improve. One of the reasons I wanted to move to a ushering team is so that the ushers could receive training in what to do in an emergency or threatening situation. Training the whole congregation when everyone volunteers to usher twice a year is much less effective. We also need to do fire drills-- both for our children and youth AND for our adults in the sanctuary. These are simple basics that we can address to increase our preparedness for potential dangers. As the Safety Sub-committee moves forward, there will be other proposals and ideas brought back to the Board and the congregation. Being prepared is a good thing. So is being a welcoming congregation. We can do both.

Cooperatively,

Rev. Craig



### **COAST CHILDCARE FUNDRAISER**

How would you like some time to yourself on December 2, 2017?

Then Come to Parents' Half Day - Finally the adults get a turn!

If you have kids ages 2-9 then come drop them off at The Olympia Brown House (16 Ford St) to support COAST. There will be snacks and activities (crafts, games, cookie decorating, and coloring). You can pay by donation. Just show up at 12 o'clock and you can pick your kids up between 12 and 4.

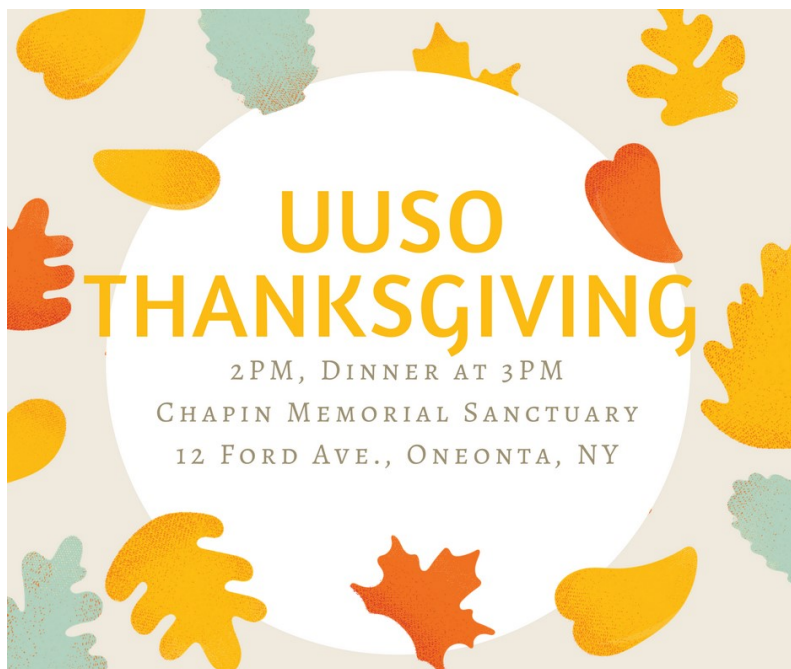
Hope you enjoy some time off! —by Caitlin Wiltsey

# NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

## THANKSGIVING DINNER AT UUSO

The annual UUSO gala Thanksgiving dinner will once again be held on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 23. Leah Bridgers and Julian Pecenco will once again be coordinating the event. This annual tradition is a wonderful way to spend the Thanksgiving holiday. You'll get a sumptuous meal without having to cook it all yourself, and you'll get to spend the afternoon in the company of UUSO family and friends.

We'll gather in the sanctuary at Chapin Memorial at 2 p.m., starting with appetizers and beverages, followed by a full sit-down dinner buffet at 3 pm. Feel free to invite your friends, neighbors, and relatives. All who wish to attend are welcome at the feast.



We need all parts of the meal, from beverages and appetizers to desserts. Bring a family favorite, or try something new. (If at all possible, try making your dish gluten free, vegetarian, vegan, and/or nut free, so that guests of all dietary needs will be able to enjoy the bounty.) We're also looking several people able to cook turkey(s) for the dinner.

The sign-up sheet for attendance at the dinner will be on the bulletin board in the Sanctuary following the service on Sunday, November 5. Sign up as early as possible so we can plan for enough tables, chairs, and food. We'll need people to help with set-up (at 12:15 p.m.) and as many as possible to stay after the meal to help with cleanup.

If you'd like to sign up via e-mail ([jp.pecenco@gmail.com](mailto:jp.pecenco@gmail.com)), please provide the following information:

Name(s)

Number of People Attending

Any dietary restrictions

Your contribution(s) to the meal

If you are able to help with either set-up and/or clean-up.

If you have any questions or you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Julian ([jp.pecenco@gmail.com](mailto:jp.pecenco@gmail.com)) or Leah ([LCbridgers@gmail.com](mailto:LCbridgers@gmail.com)).

## INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE

This year's Oneonta Community Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be held at the First United Presbyterian Church ("Red Door"), at Main Street and Walling Avenue, on Tuesday, November 21. The service will begin at 7:30, with the interfaith choir rehearsal at 6:30. All are welcome to sing in the choir under the direction of organist/choirmaster Mike Jones. The choir will sing "Beloved, Let Us Love One Another" (text from the Bible; music by Pepper Choplin) and "Thanks Be to God" (text by F. Pratt Green; music by Judy Hunnicutt). Choir robes will not be worn.

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Walton-Leavitt of the First United Presbyterian Church will host the service. President Danny Noorlander of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will deliver the message. Other participants will include clarinetist Robin Seletsky, Hollie Jaffe, Michael O'Sullivan, and representatives from the Muslim and Baha'i communities.

Donations of money and non-perishable food are requested. Donated food and money will be distributed to the Oneonta food pantries: St. James, St. Mary's, and the Salvation Army. A reception with refreshments will follow the service.

Contact: Ric Chrislip  
Day 431-4189  
Cell 434-5463  
[Frederic.Chrislip@gmail.com](mailto:Frederic.Chrislip@gmail.com)

*Choir music is available in the UUSO Office.*

## PLEASE PLAN TO ATTEND THE NEXT LAST WEDNESDAYS FILM SERIES ON PEACE AND JUSTICE FOR ALL.

On Wednesday, NOVEMBER 29 "The Economics of Happiness" (2011) explores 2 familiar buzzwords: Environmental sustainability, and Localization. We've heard these words What do they mean? What do they look like in practice? A prelude to an exciting guest speaker coming soon to UUSO--you won't want to miss this uplifting film! As always, doors open at Chapin at 5:30. Vegetarian meal at 6, screening at 7:00, followed by discussion. Childcare available by contacting the church office by Monday, Nov. 27.

-Lisa Barr



## SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars---the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Cookies & Crafts is scheduled for Saturday December 2! We'll have wonderful crafts from both familiar and new vendors and—with your help—plates and plates of beautiful holiday cookies!

Jane Bachman

Cookies & Crafts Committee

## FROM THE OFFICE: DEADLINE CHANGES

Deadline for submissions for the November 22nd Newsletter has been changed to Wednesday, November 15th, because of the holiday. Announcements for the November 26th Order of Service will also be on November 15th .



## COMING UP AT UUSO: THE NEXT STEPS WEEKEND, NOVEMBER 17 – 19.

We are looking forward to a special weekend with Stewardship for Us, a UU-affiliated consulting team, to work with us to advance our goals and aspirations through a strong stewardship effort. At the request of UUSO's Board of Directors, SforUs team member Liz Coit will be joining us for an examination of our Society's strengths, challenges, untapped talents, and opportunities so that we may ensure the continuing health and sustainability of our stewardship program.

Many of us will be involved! Liz is in the process of learning about us through documents and a few advance phone calls. During the weekend of November 17-19, she will meet with Reverend Craig, a wide range of committees, individual members of the Society, staff members, and the Board. Liz will share findings, recommendations, and ideas for a pathway to an empowered UUSO stewardship program on Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup>.

If you are on Stewardship, Finance, Fundraising, Membership, Endowment, Religious Education, or Social Justice Committees, please plan on participating in 50-minute meetings at different times of the day on Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. On Saturday afternoon, time is also set aside for a special workshop for the Stewardship Committee. Karen or Amy will be in touch with you soon with an invitation to join us. Thank you all for sharing your insights, perspectives, and ideas!

### IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO TALK ABOUT FRUITCAKE.

Since it has worked so well for the last few years, I will be taking orders for fruitcakes ahead of time again this year so everyone can buy as many as they want.

The fruitcakes come in two varieties, Light Honey Rum and Dark Brandy Molasses. Each weighs about a pound. The price this year is the same as it has been for the past several years-- \$15.00 each. 100% donation to UUSO.

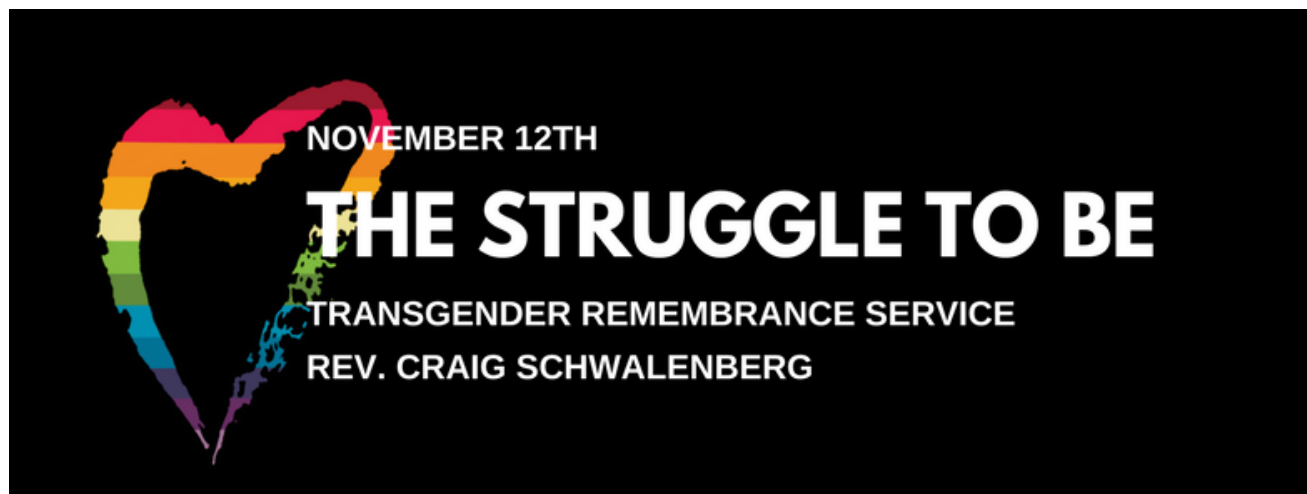
The **deadline for ordering is Friday, November 10th** because the fruitcakes have to be started at least two weeks before Thanksgiving in order to have time to ripen and mellow for the Christmas season. Please either call (267-4280) or email me [pstrother@stny.rr.com](mailto:pstrother@stny.rr.com) if you want to place an order. The fruitcakes will be available for pickup at Cookies and Crafts on December 2nd or by special arrangement if you cannot pick them up at Cookies and Crafts.  
—Pam Strother

### ANTI-RACISM AND UUSO

There will be an open discussion about UUSO and our Anti-Racism stance on Tuesday at 2:30 p.m. and again at 6:30 p.m. What have we done? What are we currently doing? What is the future of anti-racism work at UUSO? Everyone is welcome. The meeting will take place in the sanctuary and is being hosted by Rev. Craig Schwalenberg.

## UUSO UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30AM



How dangerous it can be to just be who we are.  
How courageous it can be to be who we are.  
How amazing and healing it could be,  
if we are all who we were meant to be.

*\*Children to Classrooms at 10:30*  
With Music provided by Music Director Tim Horne  
Worship Associate: Rich Stelling

Coffee Hour Hosts: Beth Small  
Ushers: Kim Elsener & Kay Stuligross  
Chancel Table: Normal Lee Havens  
Sound System: Patrick Rost



What have we done to give others reasons to  
be thankful?

What reasons do we have for giving thanks?

*\*Stay Together Sunday*  
With Music provided by Music Director Tim Horne  
Worship Associate: Alex Schultz

Coffee Hour Hosts: Patricia Engel Lafata & Jesse  
Schwabe  
Ushers: Need Volunteers!  
Chancel Table: Pam Strother  
Sound System: Julian Pecenco

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## **UUSO DEADLINES:**

**UU News Articles:** Deadline for November 22nd issue  
is November 15th, by 9AM

**Order of Service Announcements:**  
Wednesday a.m. before the Sunday Service

**Verbal Announcements:**  
Contact Worship Associate by Friday before Service

## **Green Sanctuary Corner**



### **Talking Turkey**

If your holiday preference is to cook a plump juicy turkey, take this tip from [EarthShare.org](http://EarthShare.org):

### **Get an Organic Turkey.**

Sadly, almost all turkeys in America are raised on factory farms under crowded conditions that involve overfeeding with the aim of producing larger birds, faster. By contrast, an organic turkey is one that is raised humanely without antibiotics.

Check out [LocalHarvest.org](http://LocalHarvest.org) to find an organic turkey farm near you or consider purchasing a heritage breed.

### **UUSO Board of Trustees**

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