



UU NEWS

A BIWEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
SOCIETY OF ONEONTA

November 23, 2016

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MINISTER'S MUSINGS

Practicing Gratitude

It can be difficult, when times are hard and we are feeling scared or angry or sad to count our blessings. The very suggestion can seem insensitive or even offensive. And yet, gratitude isn't a "sunny-side" spiritual practice, nor is it a seasonal one. True gratitude involves pausing in your daily activities and taking stock of all you have and all you can be thankful for. Gratitude does not negate want or need or injustice; but it does promote healing, generosity, and hope. Considering the current state of things in our country right now, gratitude might be exactly what we need more of.. as hard as that may be to imagine. Think of the gifts you have been given, the blessings you have within and around you. Think of all those who have helped you this past year, all those who treated you with kindness. Think of those who have forgiven you, whether you asked for it or not, whether you felt you deserved it or not. It's been a rough year for many of us. There have been many losses and many challenges

and much grieving. And yet, if we can muster the spiritual energy, the spiritual strength to open ourselves up, to look beyond the sorrows surrounding us; I believe we will see and feel a bounty of blessings, a vast network of love, a universe thankful for our presence within it.

I, personally, am grateful for the many teachers I have had this past year, for those who listened, for those who questioned, for those who smiled-- and yes, for those who cried. I am thankful for my ministry and for your ministries, too. Gratitude is a spiritual practice-- and right now, I'm finding it to be one needed more and more. So, I thank you. Yes, you! And also, as I've said before, You Are Welcome. Yes, you! And together, let us continue this dance of gratitude until the whole world knows what it means to be appreciated and loved.

Being Good Allies

Since the election on November 8th, there has been a tragic and disturbing rise in reports of violence, assaults, and vandalism targeting African Americans, Latino/Latina Americans, immigrants, women, Muslims, and Gay/Lesbian/Queer/Transgender citizens. It is tempting to believe these atrocious acts are something that happens somewhere else, certainly not here in our own community. But that is unfortunately not the case. I have heard numerous reports of minority college students being harassed, high school students being yelled at, and even one person trying to intimidate one of our local ministers while she was shopping. This is REAL and it is HERE and we have got to do our part to support and protect our neighbors from this harassment. Some of us have started wearing safety pins, a practice that started when the same sorts of behavior happened in England after



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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

The holidays are quickly upon us! There will be many opportunities (listed elsewhere in this newsletter) for children of all ages to come together and celebrate in community. There is so much fun ahead!

The Religious Education Committee has been planning workshops for a January Intersession about Mindfulness. We want to build on the lessons from last year's Children's Worship service on Mindfulness where we made sparkly snow globes. The worship service was based on Eline Snel and Myla Kabat-Zinn's book, Sitting Still Like a Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids (and Their Parents). We glued a little plastic frog on the bottom of each snow globe. We watched and quieted our minds as the glitter swirled around the still frog, gradually settling quietly. I highly recommend this book, if you haven't already experienced it. It is described on Amazon as "Simple mindfulness practices to help your child (ages 5-12) deal with anxiety, improve concentration, and handle difficult emotions." I think it would provide a good beginning place for any age and certainly help your children and youth get prepared to go deeper into our January Mindfulness Sessions. (The Star Wars class of 5th and 6th graders have already progressed to a deeper understanding of mindfulness in their padawan training so will find themselves already quite prepared.)



We are thinking of inviting special guests to lead yoga, zen buddhist meditation, create zen gardens and to provide lessons and experiences with a labyrinth. We have many more ideas and are excited to offer these workshops.

For now we will take deep slow breaths, settle quietly wherever we are, and notice all that is happening around us. We can be still like a frog in the middle of the pond, sitting with only her eyes and nose peeking out above the water. In doing this for even just a few minutes, we will more fully experience our moments. We may very well find ourselves thankful for them and also thankful for having each other in our lives.

May it be so.

Susan Ryder
UUSO Director of Religious Education
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UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

November 27th
"Warmth and Sincerity"
Cheryl Petersen

Although cold propaganda can be in our face,
warmth and sincerity are intact.
Let's watch it and spread it to unexpected places.

No Religious Education Classes Today
With Music provided by: Paul Carter
Worship Associate: Keith Willcox
Coffee Hour Hosts: Pam Strother & Deb Bruce
Ushers: Julian Pecenco & Leah Bridgers
Chancel Table: Vickie Andritz
Sound System: Beth Small

December 4
"Our Gifts, Our Hopes, Our Dreams"
Rev. Craig Schwalenberg

After gathering together in appreciative inquiry, what have we learned about our best gifts, and our hopes and dreams? What's on our wish list for the coming years?

**Start Together Sunday*
With Music provided by: Tim Horne, Music Director
Worship Associate: Kevin Schultz
Coffee Hour Hosts: Laura Reyda
Ushers: Chava Granett & Dotty Hudson
Chancel Table: Chava Granett
Sound System: Julian Pecenco

This year the UUSO will again participate in the Adopt a Family project. We will provide holiday gifts and help for three families who have been chosen for us by the Family Service Association. Beginning on November 27th, there will be a tree at the back of the Sanctuary. The tree will be laden with tags listing the needs and wishes of the children and their parents. It is again time for us to show the true holiday spirit by demonstrating our generosity. Let's all take a tag or two and purchase what it lists. Thanks to all that plan to participate and make this a happy holiday season for our three grateful families.

Prue Stelling, Martha Robinson, Norma Lee Havens

Sunday Service at 10:30AM
Childcare provided.
Hearing assistance available.

Please consider volunteering to help out Sunday mornings! We ask that every member volunteer with coffee hosting and ushering duties, but we could also use volunteers in Religious Education!

There are lots of ways to get involved with our community here at UUSO. Speak with our minister, Rev. Craig, or ask a board member during coffee hour after service. They're identified by gold name buttons; they're friendly folk.

Interested in some of the wonderful holiday themed events coming up at UUSO? Please take a look on our website for the most up to date listings and schedule of building use.

Looking for space for your event? The calendar is filling up fast! Contact the UUSO office at uuso@uuso.org, or 607-432-3491 today!

UUSO NEWS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thanksgiving Dinner at UUSO

It's not too late to sign up for the UUSO Thanksgiving dinner (assuming you're reading this before Thanksgiving, of course)! In order for us to have enough place settings, however, it is important that you let us know that you plan to attend.

The annual UUSO gala Thanksgiving dinner will once again be held on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 24. 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 promptly 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 (except for turkeys,) 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 also need as many people as possible to stay after the meal to help with cleanup. If you haven't yet signed up to help with clean-up, please consider staying after the meal to ensure that the sanctuary is ready for the next event.

To sign up via e-mail (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) or Leah (LCbridgers@gmail.com).

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the Brexit vote, to let people know we are "safe" people who will stand with them if they are being harassed or attacked. Our congregation has been approached about being a safe space for those who are in trouble or seeking sanctuary. Our "Black Lives Matter" banner, the "We Support Our Muslim Neighbors" wayside pulpit sign, and the rainbow flags are all ways for us to let everyone know that UUSO is a safe and welcoming space, that we as a group are committed to standing up to these acts of terror and continuing our work to build the Beloved Community. Several picture guides and a training video from the Standing on the Side of Love campaign on how to respond and de-escalate possibly violent encounters have been posted on our UUSO Facebook page. They can also be found here:

Standing on the Side of Love - "De-escalation & Interventions: Responding to Repression & Growing Resistance" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwVN1Qw2wZA>

Responding to Islamaphobic Harassment by Maeril <http://maeril.tumblr.com/image/149669302551>

Your Board of Trustees and your UUSO staff are reaching out to others in the community and looking for the best ways for our congregation to respond and be an agent for justice and love. In the meantime, please continue your own self-care, practice your own personal ministries, and be safe. Together, we can make a difference. Together, we will continue to Stand On the Side of Love.

**With Love,
Rev. Craig**



The long anticipated annual MUFFINS FOR MALI bazaar will have its grand opening for your viewing and purchasing pleasure on Sunday, November 27, following the service. Delicious Home baked muffins will be on sale for \$1.00 each, or 6 for \$5.00. As always, original African jewelry including stunning bracelets, earrings, and necklaces will be available to give as gifts or to treat yourself! In addition, many creative gift items for the holidays will be on sale to tempt and delight you! A fun and yummy way to begin your holiday shopping! Stop by our table, and munch on a muffin while you decide on which unique item or items to purchase as you check off names on your shopping list. Join us on November 27 after the service, and every Sunday thereafter through December 18. Every dollar taken in goes to support Youchaou's school in Mali.

UUSO NEWS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

CLYNK

Have you noticed how our kitchen is no longer over-run with beer, soda and water bottles? Is it a miracle? No! It's CLYNK.

We have begun to use a recycling program called Clynk sponsored by Hannaford grocery store in Oneonta. Here's how it works.

The Endowment committee has purchased 100 special compostable bags and preprinted labels so each of us can collect our bottles and cans at home, tag the bag and bring it into Hannaford.

Briefly, this smooth system works like this:

1. You get special Clynk company bags and tags from Grace (soon they will be available in a dispenser in the Chapin kitchen). There are also some in my mail box slot in Chapin. Each bag comes in a paper envelope with a coded tag attached to the front of the envelope.
 2. You fill the bags at home.
 3. You attach the pre-printed, coded tag to the bag in the space indicated on the bag.
 4. You take the bag(s) to Hannaford.
 5. You scan the bag tag with the scanning "gun" which is attached to the wall in the area where they do bottle collecting.
 6. You open the small door next to the "gun" and drop the bag into the chute.
- YOU DO NOT HAVE TO STAND IN ANY LINE.

So simple! So clean! So fast. No standing in line. The income from the bottles is automatically deposited in the UUSO endowment's bank account. Voila!

For those who are not able or interested in participating in this new program, just continue to bring your bottles and cans to the kitchen. it's okay, really. Importantly, you MUST dump out the bottles out of your plastic bags into the compostable bag in the new collection bins. You may NOT just toss your bag of bottles into the Clynk bag!! They do not want your plastic bags.

The paper envelope the bags come in also provide how-to instructions. Or visit Clynk.com.

The goal is to reduce the flow of bottles through the kitchen while not reducing the income to the Endowment. Let's see if we can meet this goal. I'll provide an update in a couple months.

Grace Smith, Endowment Chair

UUSO NEWS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anti-Racism Task Force

The Anti-Racism Task Force is pleased to announce the following events planned for the next few months. We hope that you will find something that appeals to you and will help you grow in your understanding of and commitment to becoming an anti-racist congregation. Check the UUSO website for more info and updated events.

December

- Sunday, Dec 4, noon, OBH: Food for thought, an Appreciative Inquiry about the Anti-Racism ministry, with Rev. Craig. What have we done well? What do we want our Anti-Racist Congregation to look like in 5 years?"

January

- Sunday, January 8th noon, OBH: *Whistling Vivaldi* book group discussion facilitated by Donna Behrendt.
- Sunday, January 22th, 12:15pm, Sanctuary: "A Class Divided." the classic film of the 1970 third grade class divided by eye color to provide an exercise to show what discrimination feels like and what it can do to people. Fourteen years later a mini-reunion of that class is also filmed by Frontline. Discussion to follow. Facilitated by Alice Siegfried and Zanna McKay

If you are attending and need childcare, please let the facilitator of the event know at least one week prior.

January through May: we are planning monthly Food for Thoughts discussions, some videos/movies, and other events. In February, we are planning some candlelight dinners to watch and discuss a Facebook video produced by Monet's daughter.

Let us know ideas you have that will help all of us grow in our understanding and commitment. Many thanks to the active, regular members of the ARTF, who have been working and meeting regularly to plan, especially Alice Siegfried, Cindy Squires, Grace Smith, Duncan Smith, Donna Behrendt, Zanna McKay, Karen Palmer, Patricia LaFata. Submitted by Susan Turell.

UUSC--Guest at Your Table

Guest at Your Table is a project of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee/UUSC to remind us of those around the world who need our help and who benefit from our donations in the little Guest at Your Table boxes on our dining tables during this holiday season. Stop by the Social Action table in the back of the sanctuary and pick up a box and a "Stories of Hope" pamphlet and learn about several people that UUSC is helping through its partner organizations. These include Bulelwa Panda, a lesbian in South Africa, Mathurin Azma, a 13-year-old who was forcibly returned to Haiti from the Dominican Republic, and the Alamour family who are Syrian refugees. Return your donations by Sunday, Jan. 8th. Thanks for your participation! Suzanne Miller-Social Action Committee

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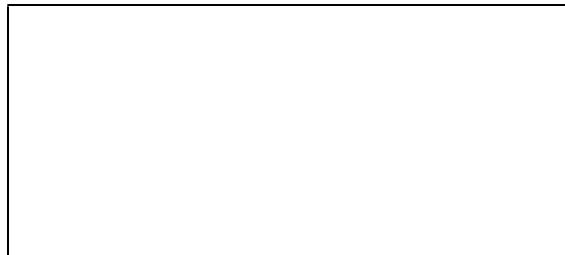
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UUSO DEADLINES:

UU News Articles: Deadline for December 7th issue is
December 5th, 9AM

Order of Service Announcements:

Wednesday a.m. before the Sunday Service

Verbal Announcements:

Contact worship associate by Friday before Service

Green Sanctuary Corner



Green Sanctuary Team's next meeting will be in the OBH living room on Sunday, Dec. 4, 12:30 to 1:30 pm, following the service. (We are skipping a November meeting.)

Anyone interested is welcome. We especially hope that people who signed up to help us work toward officially becoming a Green Sanctuary under UUA guidelines will be able to attend as we continue to discuss the process and our actions toward this goal. Questions may be directed to Karen Palmer.