



# UUU NEWS

A BIWEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
SOCIETY OF ONEONTA

December 21, 2016

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Minister's Column</i>	1
<i>Religious Education</i>	2
<i>News &amp; Announcements</i>	3-5
<i>Anti-Racism Task Force</i>	6
<i>Worship Services</i>	7

## MINISTER'S MUSINGS

### ***UUSO Friends,***

It is natural this time of year to reflect on the past year. It seems to me that 2016 has been a most challenging year. Personally, Cheryl and I faced significant challenges related to our health and to Cheryl's transition to her full-time work as a Consulting Hypnotist. At UUSO, we faced challenges in our stewardship campaign, a significant staff transition, and serious health issues for several of our beloved members. In the wider world, we dealt with a contentious campaign season, a traumatic (for many) election, and the rise of hatred and violence across the country and around the world. Challenging almost seems an understatement. It is easy to focus on all of the difficulties we've faced this year-- but it is just as important to note the blessings and accomplishments. Cheryl and I are healthy and whole and her new hypnosis work has proven to be quite successful and spiritually rewarding. The congregation did make our stewardship goal; Evelyn has brought some great changes to her role and continues to learn and improve (she had big shoes to fill!); we have more new faces and families with children and infants in our community; and we've been more engaged in social justice and our mission than ever! In the wider world, this year saw an amazing campaign by a socialist, our local community gathering in support of our Muslim neighbors, and a historic gathering of indigenous peoples, interfaith clergy, and American veterans in support of Standing

Rock. Yes, there have been challenges and disappointments-- but there been amazing examples of people standing on the side of love and working for justice, too.

This is the season of hope, love, joy, and rebirth. Cheryl and I both hope you will find the time over the holidays to celebrate with the ones you love. And as you reflect on the year that was, remember all the good that you did--all the ways you made the world a brighter, kinder, more loving place. We thank each and every one of you for your individual ministries. For if we learned anything this past year, it is that every word and deed matters and we each make a difference. Together we can accomplish miraculous things, but it all starts with the simple acts of loving and taking care of one another. Cheryl asked me to remind you that extra stress requires extra care-- especially for ourselves. The next year will likely have its own share of challenges, but we will not face them alone. Together, let us celebrate the transforming power of love and the renewing promise of hope. Together, let us spread joy and laughter where we can. Together, let us celebrate life.

Happy Holidays!

*With Gratitude, Joy and much Love,*

*Rev. Craig and Cheryl*

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

*Solstice is a time of pause. So...pause. Breathe. Relax. Rest. Be at peace.*

*Spirit of winter rest, help us to enjoy your peace in this quiet place.*

*Remind us to pause during this season.*

*Grant us awareness, keep our gratitude fresh each day.*

*May the songs in our heart be blessings and insights to us and to others  
and may compassion always shine forth from the depths of our hearts.*

*-From Rev. Christine Robinson's "Winter Solstice Meditation"*

Religious Education Participants have been practicing mindfulness for the past two RE years together. We are reminded in this time when the sun is about to return: to be hopeful, to listen to our deepest selves, to be ready for the turning of the year by knowing our own hearts.

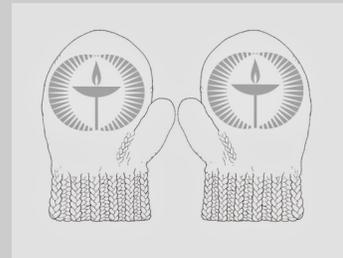
Please join us for the 6:30PM Family Service on Christmas Eve. We will have small parts for all children and youth who want to participate. We will build a gift to leave for the later, 10PM Contemplative and Traditional Service. Both services will involve the traditional passing of candlelight connecting all in the stillness of a beautiful circle. My family has always viewed this as a sacred, awe-inspiring ritual. All ages are welcome so there will be no childcare available.

January Sessions will be workshops on the theme of Mindfulness for all RE Participants. We will have experiences with Labyrinths, Ways to Meditate, and Mindfulness Games. We will learn about the benefits of these practices in our own lives as well as learn to use mindfulness as we work to bring peace to our world. Please speak with me if you are an adult who would like to participate. There will be no RE on January 1 and these sessions will begin on Sunday, January 8<sup>th</sup>.

May these winter holidays bring us peace, gratitude, and compassion.

Susan Ryder  
UUSO Director of Religious Education  
dre@uuso.org

Remember to bring a gift of warm mittens, hats, gloves or scarves to the Christmas Eve Service for donation to the Oneonta Family Service Association. Donations can be left in the "Mitten Basket" in the back of the sanctuary which will be there until after Christmas Eve Service on December 24th. All that we collect will be delivered to Family Services at the beginning of the New Year.



## NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Guest at Your Table

In this season of giving, participate in the Guest at Your Table project by giving to our own Unitarian Universalist Service Committee/UUSC which is involved in helping marginalized people all over the world. Put your donation in one of the Guest at Your table envelopes and bring it to the Social Action table on one of the next three Sundays ending on Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>. Thanks!

-Social Action Committee

### Let's Think About Our Kitchen

Mark your calendars! On Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, the Clean-Up Our Spaces committee will invite all interested persons to gather in the Chapin kitchen to begin the process of thoughtful culling and possible rearrangement of items in that space.

Since it is the most heavily used area in either of our buildings, we wish to provide lots of lead time before the work begins. Now is the time to *think* about how, when, and why we use the kitchen. We hope to make it maximally useful and hygienic for our current and future uses.

*All input is welcome!* Study the space. Discuss your ideas among yourselves and with the committee and board members. The actual clean-up and clean-out will not begin until late March. Now is the *time for ideas*.

Keep in mind; we have no money for new electrical outlets, cabinets or surfaces...unless Santa, Cupid, or the Easter Bunny delivers a surprise gift.

-Clean Spaces Committee: Donna Behrendt, Grace & Duncan Smith, Sandy Smith.

*From the UUSO Properties Committee..*

### Parking Restriction

The Butterman family, who live in the white house between Chapin and OBH, are wonderful neighbors who have been most helpful in cooperating with us to clear the snow in front of our three buildings. As recently as this past Sunday, people have parked in their driveway preventing access in and out of their home. Please, do not park in their driveway for ANY REASON. Do not park there to let someone off, to unload church materials, to just run in on a quick errand, or to avoid the rain to mention a few reasons we see people park in their driveway. Please honor the fact that this is their home and they have a right to their privacy. Thank you.

# NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS



*Thank you for being a part  
of our family this year.*

**WISHING YOU**  
*&  
your family*

**\* A VERY HAPPY HOLIDAY \***

*With love and joy,  
Rev. Craig, Susan, Tim, Evelyn,  
Lynn, Michael, & Dave*



# NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Winter Worship Calendar

The Winter Worship Calendar is included with this issue of the newsletter (*Editor's Note: calendar is attached in the printed version & online is separate*) and is now available on the website. Once again, we have some fun and exciting services planned for your enjoyment and spiritual/intellectual edification. We'll be exploring the appreciative inquiry model and what we've learned, focusing on themes of Faith, Hope, and Intention, and learning to be more mindful in our daily lives.



Our January Intersession topic will be Mindfulness, so while our children and youth explore that topic, we'll be focusing on it in the sanctuary. Starting with the first two Sundays of the year, our guests Ani Samten will help train our minds and Chris Rosenthal will share the secrets of the labyrinth. I'll finish off the month with reflections on acting prayerfully from my time at Standing Rock and on living with intention. As always the R.E. program participants will close the month with a service sharing what they've learned.

We have two special musical worship services this quarter. Our annual Music Sunday on February 26th will focus on the theme of "Hope". And the, on March 19th, courtesy of Mary Ruhoff, we'll be holding a Unitarian Universalist Taize service. Taize services come out of the Catholic tradition and usually involve music, meditation, and times of silence. It will be a new worship experience for us at UUSO with the possibility of deep reflection and renewal.



My annual geek service will be on March 5th-- the topic and timing nicely coinciding with both my birthday and International Women's Day. The week after that, on March 12th, I'll be revisiting my experience at Standing Rock and exploring the legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery. Our focus on space and place will continue with our own Jim Mill's service on the idea pilgrimage for our faith tradition and my final service of the quarter on April 9th, "Building a Brave Space."



It's going to be a great quarter with lots of ideas to explore and delve deep into. I hope to see you there-- and if you can't make it, remember the services are always available via podcast after a short delay.

*Cooperatively,  
Rev. Craig*

# 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. Please check the UUSO website for more info and updated events.

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

## January

- January 8th, noon: Whistling Vivaldi book group discussion facilitated by Donna Behrendt. (Contact Donna B. for more info at [oneontadonna@gmail.com](mailto:oneontadonna@gmail.com))
- January 15th – **Sermon**: Prayerfully Present: Selma and Standing Rock
- January 22th, noon: “**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. Presented by Alice Siegfried and Zanna McKay

## February

- Feb 5th - **Sermon** - "Our Gifts, Our Hopes, Our Dreams"
- Feb 5, noon: **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?"

## March

- March 12th - **Sermon** - "This Land is Whose land?"
- March 12th, noon: **Food for Thought**—“White Privilege and Me”, facilitated by Duncan Smith. Bring your stories about the ways you have, or have not, experienced White privilege.

## April:

- April 9th: **Sermon** – "Building a Brave Space"
- Week of April 9th: circle candlelight dinners to further explore the sermon on April 9th. Details to follow.

Let us know ideas you have that will help all of us grow in our understanding and commitment to anti-racism and its many intersections.

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.

**UUSO UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES**  
SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30AM



DECEMBER 24TH

*CHRISTMAS EVE  
SERVICES*

Join us for one of our candlelight services  
celebrating the birth of Jesus  
and his message of hope.



**Family Service**  
6:30pm  
*Music and stories  
for all ages*

**Meditative Service**  
10:00pm  
*Contemplative  
and traditional*

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF  
ONEONTA**

*12 Ford Ave., Oneonta, NY*



Sunday, December 25th—Service at 10:30am  
“A Family Christmas Morning”  
*with Rev. Craig and his wife, Cheryl DeDecker.*

Join us for a Christmas morning tradition: a holiday celebration with family. Come in your best pajamas and slippers. Sing songs, share stories, and enjoy a Christmas morning feast. Please RSVP to Rev. Craig if you’d like to attend.

**THE UNITARIAN  
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## UUSO DEADLINES:

**UU News Articles:** Deadline for January 4th issue is Jan. 2nd.

**Order of Service Announcements:**

Wednesday a.m. before the Sunday Service

**Verbal Announcements:**

Contact Worship Associate by Friday before Service

## Green Sanctuary Corner



### Tips to stay green over the holidays:

**Recycle wrapping paper** — or better yet, forgo it altogether. Try making your own wrapping paper and trimmings from newspapers, paper bags, art projects, clothes, dish towels, etc. And if you do buy new wrapping paper, go for the kind without glossy metallic coating, which makes it harder to recycle.

**Stay home.** Much of the worst impact to the environment comes from all the carbon dioxide emitted by the transportation we use to get around during the holidays. Consider limiting your plane travel (the worst offender) and long car rides. If you must drive, carpool, and try to schedule around traffic, to reduce the amount of time you idle and waste fuel.

**Lower the thermostat.** If you're cooking and having company over, chances are you can get away with lowering the heat in your house, because the body warmth and heat from the oven should help compensate.

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