



# UUU NEWS

A BIWEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF  
THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
SOCIETY OF ONEONTA

Week of June 26, 2019

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Minister's Article	1
Society News	2
Worship Services	3

## MINISTER'S MUSINGS

### Reflections from General Assembly

- There were somewhere around 2,500 Unitarian Universalists at our General Assembly this year. A little lighter than usual, but that happens when it's on one coast or the other, I suspect.
- Our General Assembly always seems more diverse than our individual congregations. More people of color, more transgender and non-binary folks, more youth and young adults-- though it is still mostly white and mostly older people in attendance.
- There is always a controversy or conflict at General Assembly. It seems to be an unwritten rule about people gathering or maybe an unspoken tenant of our faith.
- This year, the conflict at Ministry Days related to proposed changes to our (the UU Ministers' Association's) covenant and guidelines. There was a move to change the guidelines to help change abuses of power among colleagues and add additional means of accountability among our ministers. The conflict had to do with who gets to call whom into accountability, I think. That and people worried the guidelines will become a cudgel used to silence different opinions. It's a constant struggle with being covenantal, respecting the individual, AND wanting to hold people to a standard of behavior. There is a terrible tendency, when people object to proposed changes, to question their motives rather than discuss their objections. On the other hand, in the struggle to dismantle processes and institutions of white supremacy (and patriarchy), it's hard to know when our objections are actually reasonable or just a reaction to losing our power and privilege.
- At the annual 25/50 worship service at ministry days, the Rev. Joan Montagnes used her 25 year reflection to remind us that the center of our faith is Love and Community and Relationship. She went on to say that anti-racism and anti-colonialism and all the work we are doing to change our culture and our institutions comes out of that core faith in Love and Community. The message was not received as well as I thought it would be... some people thought she was trying to decenter the current anti-white supremacy (anti-patriarchy) efforts. And I suppose, in a

way she was... by calling us to still do our shared ministry with a center of Love. I don't know who is right in this... but I know it's important for me to listen.

- Spokane is beautiful. Often at the General Assemblies, the Convention Center is in a dead part of town or a place that shuts down after 5 on weekdays. Spokane's is downtown, built along a river, next to a sprawling park. There was art everywhere. And public electric bikes and scooters all over to help people get around without cars. It was delightful.
- The conflict at General Assembly was a bit more of the same. Another reaction and resistance to the work we are doing collectively to change our culture and our institutions. A minister wrote and published several essays attacking the new "identity politics" of Unitarian Universalism and attacking those (sometimes by name) who were working hard to move us to a more shared leadership model and more egalitarian leadership. The essays longed for a return to our faiths focus on "reason and rationality". Many who read the essays or hear about them were deeply hurt and offended. DRUMM (Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multi-cultural Ministries) issued a letter condemning the essays. The Women's Federation crafted letter in response to the essays, rejecting the premises of them and reaffirming our call to be a diverse faith where all are welcome and we all share responsibility for ending white supremacy (and patriarchy.) And finally, the white male ministers were called to respond... lest we be considered supportive or complicity in this breaking of covenant. And at the same time, some of us were asked to speak to the minister in question and try and find a way back into right relationship. And the struggle was real and ongoing. I don't know how it ended, as I had to leave before the end of General Assembly. I suspect it hasn't ended. I suspect the struggle continues.
- Changing culture is hard. Dismantling processes and institutions built over hundreds of years is not going to happen over-night. The system always fights against change. And people, even good people, resist giving up power and privilege. Scarcity is model woven into our

(Continued on page 2)

collective spirits. Covenants are hard, too. They are, by design, a collection of shared ideals. Ideals we know we aren't going to live up to most of the time. And yet, we create the covenant anyway. And when we fall short, we call each other back to it... or try to. We can't force anyone to do or be anything. It's always a question of choice. And faith.

The struggle continues. But that's why we're here, I suspect. Wonder who we'll be at next year's General Assembly.

Cooperatively,  
Rev. Craig

### Summer Worship Schedule

The Summer Worship Schedule is now available on-line! We have sermons and reflections from Joe Stillman, Bob Brzozowski, Sam Goodyear, and Paul Carter on poverty, history, identity, and music. (Maybe all at once; you never know.) Rev. Craig will be reflecting and sermonating on the American experiment that is democracy, the difficulty of kindness in community, and the power of diving deep with small groups. Rev. Craig will also be celebrating his 10 years of ministry with the congregation with a sermon series Looking Back and Looking Forward. While there will be no Religious Education classes on Sunday mornings, children and youth are welcome to attend the services. As always, childcare will be available during services for our younger attendees and visitors (Age 10 and below). See you Sunday mornings this summer!

### Newsletter Upgrade in Progress

Changes to the UUSO newsletter are afoot! You may have already noticed a small change in how the newsletter is delivered. The email link to the newsletter takes you directly to the current newsletter rather than to the page with all of the newsletters. We made this change based on requests and complaints from folks who didn't like having to click twice to get to the newsletter. (The 2-click process allowed us to see how many people were clicking through to the newsletter-- but since the number was so low, we thought it ease of use was more important than tracking the usage.) Based on more feedback and requests, we are going to be switching to an email-based bulletin-style newsletter. This style is popular with many non-profit organizations and UU congregations. Instead of a link in an email, everyone will receive an email with graphics, article titles, and short article blurbs. Once you click on an article title, it will open a page with the whole article ready for you to read. We hope this change will make it easier for people to use and read the newsletter. Look for the changes to roll out in the next month or so. We'd like to try it out and work out any bugs before the start of the new church year in September.

### SAVE TIME SAVE TREES. MAKE YOUR PLEDGE PAYMENTS ONLINE

Thank you to all who support the mission of the UUSO through your generous annual pledge. Did you know there is an easy way to make pledge payments weekly or monthly through our website with your credit or debit card?

What are the benefits of setting up a recurring donation?

- Reduces check writing for frequent donors
- Allows donations to continue uninterrupted during absences
- Allows donations to be spread out over time
- Reduces administrative time for the UUSO
- Consumes fewer resources than paper check processing

Any questions? Contact Kari Reynolds at  
917.545.2350 reynoldskari@gmail.com

Thank you for your stewardship of our beloved community.

*Just grab your card and go to [uusoo.org/donate](http://uusoo.org/donate) and select **Online Donation***

1. Enter the amount you would like to give weekly or monthly
2. Scroll down below **Total**
3. Select your **Donation Frequency**
4. Select your **Donation Start Date**
5. Select **Continue**
6. Enter your credit or debit card information
7. Enter a **Password**—this will allow you to log in to add new transactions, edit or stop existing transactions or view a complete history of your online donations and payments.
8. Check the **Summary** at the right and make any needed edit
9. Select **Process** at the bottom left side
10. Sit back and relax when the collection plate is passed.

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



Once a year, Unitarian Universalists across our country gather together to worship, study, debate, vote, and explore our way forward. This year we focused on, "The Power of We".

*\*No Religious Education—Summer Break*  
With music by Michael & Dorothy Frye-Hunt.  
Worship Associate: Rosemary Summers

Coffee Hour Host: Beth Small  
Ushers: Che Baysinger & Arlana Young  
Chancel Table: Julia Gregory  
Sound System: Julian Pecenco

JULY 7  
**THE AMERICAN  
EXPERIMENT**

**REV. CRAIG SCHWALENBERG**

Our country has often been called an experiment-- an experiment in liberty, in truth, in democracy.  
After 200+ years,  
how's the experiment going?

*\*No Religious Education—Summer Break*  
With music by Music Director Tim Horne.  
Worship Associate: Keith Willcox  
Coffee Hour Host: Beth Small  
Usher: Sue Troost & Ben Friedell  
Chancel Table: Suzanne Miller  
Sound System: Scott Segar

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**BRING YOUR LUNCH AND  
HAVE A FAITHFUL  
CONVERSATION.  
TUESDAYS, AT OBH  
@ 11:30AM.**

**UUSO DEADLINES:**

**UU News Articles:** Deadline for the week of July 10  
issue is July 8th at 9AM,  
sent to [newsletter@uuso.org](mailto:newsletter@uuso.org).

**Order of Service Announcements:**  
Wednesday a.m. before the Sunday Service  
(Please send to [OOS@uuso.org](mailto:OOS@uuso.org))

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