



UUU NEWS

A BIWEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
SOCIETY OF ONEONTA

Week of January 24, 2018

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MINISTER'S MUSINGS

Ask The Minister

Have a question about UUSO, Unitarian Universalism, theology, history, or something else that strikes your fancy? Why not submit your question for publication (along with my best answer) on our UUSO website? If you have a question, it is likely others have the same question or something similar. Visitors to our website may find your question and the answer of interest as well. The "Ask The Minister" page can be found here: <http://uuso.org/about-us/asktheminister/> There is a link on the front page of our website -- look it for it at the bottom of the page on the right hand side. I look forward to your questions.

The Promise and the Practice of Our Faith

Our Unitarian Universalist Association, at last year's General Assembly, committed to support the Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism and their efforts to help us dismantle the elements of our institutions that contribute to white supremacy and racial bias. I'll be exploring our country's struggle with racism during the service "On Bended Knee" on February 4th. At that service, there will be a special 2nd collection for the Promise and Practice of Our Faith campaign. If we raise at least \$10 per member (~\$1,800), the UUA has a matching grant that will double our contribution. After the social hour that Sunday, I will be hosting a conversation about our congregation's efforts to combat racism and white supremacy. This conversation will take place at noon in the front

of the sanctuary. For more information about this campaign, follow this link: <https://www.uua.org/giving/areas-support/funds/promise-and-practice>

Practicing Gratitude

Our Stewardship Committee has reminded us of the power of gratitude as a spiritual practice. As Meister Eckhart said, "If the only prayer you ever say in your life is thank you, it will be enough." And so, I propose we start a new practice of gratitude. When there is room in the newsletter, let's share our thanks for one of the many people who give their time, energy, and attention to our shared ministries and mission. If you have someone you would like to hold up and give thanks to, submit their name and a small description of their contributions. Nominations can be sent to uuso@uuso.org. These gratitudes, along with the name of who submitted them, will be published in future newsletters.



Cooperatively and Thankfully,

Rev. Craig

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

We have completed the three workshops of our January Sessions. We have looked at ideas about the origins of our universe, our world with its creatures, and our church in Oneonta. Special guests from the congregation have guided us.

Mary Ruhoff led a workshop about the biblical stories about the beginning. She left us with an interesting idea that in one of the two biblical explanations God created light by separating light from the darkness. The bible doesn't mention sun at that point. Could this be related to a "Big Bang?"

Deb Bruce (who is fabulous at reading stories) presented a story about Gaia creating the world through her spinning and laughter. We (of course) practiced spinning and laughing with Justine Roefs as our guide.

The following Sunday, the group learned about the "Big Bang" from scientists, Kevin Schultz and Florian Reyda. They explored our evolutionary family tree. Among other things, the group looked at relationships between bacteria, rabbits, chimpanzees, fish, birds, each other, and Rev. Craig.

The third workshop looked at the origins of our church here in Oneonta. Church historian, Bob Brzozowski, met with me and provided much information. He also spoke with John Bagby who visited our group in the character of the highly esteemed Rev. Edwin Hubbell Chapin.

"Rev. Chapin" said we could call him Edwin. He told us that our church was one of 15 Universalist churches in Otsego County and that we are the only one left. He told us that in 1879 he dedicated our former church on Ford Avenue and had to crawl through a window because the building was too crowded with people for him to get in the door. We looked at the photo of the first church (that Bob Brzozowski put in the last newsletter) and tried to imagine how this occurred. "Edwin" told us that people would come by the thousands to hear him so we imagined he must have had a very loud voice and there must have been people all over the yard of the old church that day. "Edwin" was very glad to hear of all the great things our church has accomplished since those days. Children in the group spoke of their own social justice and community activities such as raising money to help people in Africa have access to water, making a box to recycle paper in their classroom, and picking up trash in their neighborhoods. He was proud of these things as well as how our church has spearheaded a no-fee community health clinic, organized for GLBTQ rights, helped start a school in Mali, and provided much information about social justice issues to our broader community. He was glad to see that the church named for him was a leader in these, as well as many other, social justice actions.

Now the group is working on the intergenerational service they will present on January 28th. There will be a pizza party and practice for all K-12 participants on Saturday, January 27 from 5:30 to 7pm. There will also be a brief practice at 9:30, January 28th.

Many thanks to those who helped with these workshops. Special thanks to our workshop presenters: Mary Ruhoff, Deb Bruce, Justine Roefs, Kevin Schultz, Florian Reyda, and John Bagby. Bob Brzozowski helped by providing us with much information. We are thankful to the Rev. Edwin Hubbell Chapin who did much to inspire Universalists of our area and left us his legacy.

To Beginnings Old and New,

Susan Ryder
UUSO Director of Religious Education



The RE program thanks all of those who donated hats, mittens and gloves to give to Oneonta Family Services. They are especially beautiful this year, crafted with love and imagination. I know that whoever receives them will be delighted.

SAWDUST FROM THE BOARD

The Board of Trustees met for our regular meeting on January 17, 2018. Special guest, Kari Reynolds, provided information about this year's stewardship committee and offered her perspective as a professional fundraiser. She discussed the sensitive issue of privacy matters around pledging balanced with the need to understand and accommodate our congregation's giving trends. The Board voted to allow two people from the stewardship committee chosen by the chair and the Treasurer to be able to review the names and amounts of their pledges. Currently the Bookkeeper and Office Administrator have been able to see this information. All will be bound by a confidentiality agreement. This is consistent with advice from a recent seminar offered by the Stewardship for Us team from which we contracted the services of Liz Coit. The Board will be happy to speak with anyone who has concerns about this and we will do our best to honor your wishes around your privacy.

After reviewing minutes and reports, we viewed the power point presented by President Karen Palmer and Rev. Craig on January 14 regarding the Mission-Based Governance model experiment the board is engaged in with several ministry oriented teams. The feedback from the teams currently involved in the experiment is generally positive with some concerns expressed, primarily around process and decision making authority. The Board voted to continue the experiment as it is now with no changes and obtain feedback again in March.

We regretfully accepted the resignation of Stan Maricle as Board Trustee, Clerk, and Policy Sub-Committee member. John Bagby was appointed Clerk. We will look for an at large member of the congregation to be on the Policy Sub-Committee and discussed who we will ask to fill the temporary Trustee appointment until June 2018. We thank Stan for his dedication and hard work as Trustee in service of the congregation's mission.

The Board discussed the fine work of the Covenant Sub-Committee led by Trustee Nathan Elsener which has developed a draft of a UUSO Covenant of Right Relations from the input of those who attended the workshop facilitated by Rev. Evin Carvill Ziemer this past September. This has been shared in the newsletter and is available for all to read on a poster hanging by the bulletin board in the Sanctuary. All who wish to offer additional input are encouraged to write a comment on a sticky note to attach near the poster or contact any member of the Board or core staff.

The Safety Sub-Committee also presented a thoughtful and thorough report of recommendations for priorities which fall into the categories of 1) The safety of the Physical plant. 2) Emergency Preparedness 3) Ensuring Sexually Safe Congregation Practices of the UUA. The Board voted to constitute an ongoing Safety Committee with the charge to further develop and plan for the implementation of recommendations toward reasonable proactive measures for the safety of our congregation. The members will consist of the minister, DRE, another professional staff member, a member of the properties committee, and a board liaison. We thank John Bagby, Rev. Craig, Evelyn Warren, and Susan Ryder for their diligent work on the safety sub-committee.

Finally, Adrienne Martini will be the new Sounding Board coordinator giving Jeane Bennett-O'Dea more time to focus on her new duties as our congregation's Treasurer. The Board also met in executive session to review the expertly researched report and recommendations of the personnel committee.

Our next Board meeting is Wednesday, February 21 at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary. Members and friends of UUSO are invited to observe. Board members are always happy to listen to your concerns or suggestions at the "Sounding Board" after the February 18 service.

Karen Palmer, President
UUSO Board of Trustees
607-267-4793
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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

2017 Year End Appeal: From Dreams to Reality!

Our End of Year Appeal was very successful this year due to generous gifts from members and friends of the congregation for three worthy projects. Here are the results so far:

- New Carpet and Floor repair for the Sanctuary - \$6,334
- Anti-Drone Workshop with Rev. Chris Antal - \$553
- Building up Funds for the Endowment - \$2,818
- Unspecified - \$2,000 (the Board will determine how this will be distributed among the projects in collaboration with the Finance Committee)

TOTAL: \$11,705 WoooooHooooooo!!!!!!! Thank you all!

We are also very grateful to the Lane Foundation which awarded a grant of close to \$3000 toward the carpet and floor repair project. The Finance Committee will be applying for a 0% interest NYSCU loan of up to \$5000 to cover any additional expenses that might be incurred for this project.

UUSO is an amazing congregation that is actively Sharing our Faith and Shaping our Dreams!

Karen Palmer
President, Board of Trustees

PLEDGE CELEBRATION SUNDAY POTLUCK, FEBRUARY 18, 2018

The Stewardship Committee cordially invites you to join us and your fellow congregants for a celebratory potluck luncheon at 12 noon, in the sanctuary, on Sunday, February 18th.

Please bring a dish to pass. Table settings and beverages will be provided.



It is our hope that most of the pledges will have been turned in during the service on that day and we can celebrate together the life of our church and each of us having made a monetary gift of personal significance.

There will be no lengthy speeches. The idea is to gather together so that we can all enjoy each other's company and have a good time. —Pam Strother for the Stewardship Committee

THANKS TO ALL WHO DONATED TO UUSC AND GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

Thanks to all who contributed to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee/UUSC through the Guest at Your table program. Envelopes were sent to UUSC last week from 20 UUSO households supporting UUSC projects around the world. UUSC not only provides direct service to those in need through its partners in other countries, but also engages in strong advocacy on a variety of issues such as LGBTQ rights and clean water. Your donations are very much appreciated.

—Social Action Team

COME SEE "I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO"

Remember when we voted to be a Black Lives Matter banner church, a member of "...beloved community..." as the beautiful language says outside our Chapin Memorial Chapel? That and Rev. Craig's 2 dedications of that banner et al was one of the proudest moments of my 18 years in Oneonta.

The local NAACP took note and when their film series had trouble securing "I Am Not Your Negro", asked me whether I could include the film in our upcoming 2nd year "Last Wednesdays Film Series."

The film finishes Baldwin's writings about his best friends, assassinated leaders Martin Luther King, Medgar Evers, and Malcolm X. Baldwin's voice is evident in this work and helps explain a lot about current events. See the link to a PDF about Baldwin for more information.

Worried about time leaving work and a meal? We have you covered! Don't know if the kids wanna see it? Again--we have you covered -- with free childcare. Please put that poster for the film elsewhere in this newsletter up on your fridge! Thank you for committing to attend. Please try to RSVP at the Social Action table during coffee hour.

<https://www.loc.gov/rr/record/pressclub/pdf/JamesBaldwin.pdf>

—Lisa Barr

UUSO COFFEE HOST BRIGADE

We are once again going to try a new way to get coffee hosts for Sundays at UUSO. We have formed the Coffee Host Brigade. So far seven people have signed up.

This entails doing coffee hour about three times per quarter. That works out to about once a month. You can choose to do coffee hour by yourself or with a partner. Some people partner by dividing the tasks so that one person brings all the food and the other person does all the work. And some people partner by each person bringing some of the food and doing some of the work. Coffee hours don't have to be elaborate—something sweet (cookies or cake, etc.), something not sweet (bagels or cheese and crackers, etc.), some fruit and/or vegetables, milk, half and half, and juice. Reimbursement is available.

Please let me know if you want to join this brigade of fearless sociability warriors. I am really trying to create a renewed sense of hospitality and generosity in the congregation.

—Pam Strother

607.267.4280/pstrother@stny.rr.com

NO-COST STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is part of a ministry of gratitude and appreciation celebrating the generosity of the members and friends of our church. How often do we thank others for the time and effort they have put into making our church run smoothly and efficiently? Many people have the impression that stewardship is just asking people for money. Financial support is, of course, an integral necessity for our UUSO, but so is our support for each other. Thanking an usher, coffee hour host, snow shoveler, choir member, gardener, RE teacher or the many others who do dozens of tasks is just as important. Sending a card, making a phone call or speaking to someone at coffee hour doesn't cost a penny and could mean a lot to the person giving their time. You might describe this act of kindness as "no-cost stewardship".

Have you ever wanted to be involved in some of the tasks mentioned above and not known how to go about it? Why not speak to Reverend Craig, office admin, Evelyn, a board member with an orange button (they are friendly folk) or anyone at coffee hour and we'll all help to get you in contact with someone who can make it possible. We are called to take care of our church, it's members and friends and to spread the message of Unitarian Universalism to the greater community. It's the privilege of all of us to live as best we can by the 7 Principles, share our time, talents and gifts and to be grateful to others who do the same.

2017-2018 Last Wednesdays Film Series (Season 2) on:

PEACE AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

I Am Not Your Negro

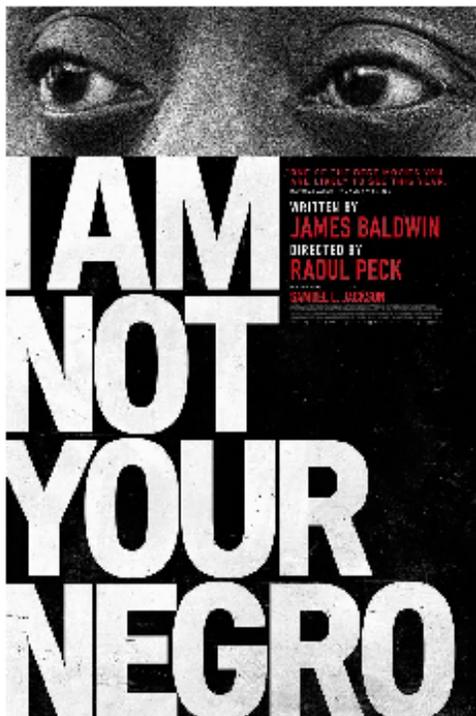
Unitarian Universalist Society of Oneonta (UUSO)

12 Ford Ave, Oneonta, NY

Doors open at 5:30 pm. Vegetarian Meal at 6:00 pm.

Screening at 7:00 pm. Discussion to follow.

Free of Charge. Childcare available.*



I Am Not Your Negro
(2016) filmmaker Raoul Peck envisions the book James Baldwin never finished—a revolutionary, personal account of the lives and assassinations of three of Baldwin's close friends:
Medgar Evers
Malcolm X
and
Martin Luther King, Jr.

*Childcare available—Contact UUSO Office by Monday, January 29, 2018, with ages and number of children.
Email uusoo@uusoo.org or call 607-432-3491.



Coming up, **Sunday, February 11, 2018, 12:15 pm**, in our sanctuary: (Snowdate: Sunday, March 4.)

UUSO's Social Action Team will sponsor a FREE "Food-for-Thought" lunch, with presentation by **Eugene Marnier**, community activist from Franklin, NY, speaking on "**Relocalizing: What It is and Why We Need It**," with Q&A. Public invited! Come, and spread the word.

UUSO UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES
SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30AM



JANUARY 28TH - SUNDAY SERVICE AT 10:30AM

ORIGINS

OUR CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES

Join our children, youth, and religious education volunteers as we explore the beginnings of Life on Earth as well as the beginnings of the life of our church.

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

Coffee Hour Hosts: Pam Strother & Arlana Young
Ushers: Kim Elsener & Ben Friedell
Chancel Table: Religious Education Students
Sound System: Lisa Barr



SUNDAY SERVICE AT 10:30AM

ON BENDED KNEE

REV. CRAIG SCHWALENBERG

FEBRUARY 4
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
SOCIETY OF ONEONTA

Last year, one man chose to "take a knee" during the national anthem and a movement began, along with the inevitable backlash and attacks. Where do we stand or kneel in our fight against oppression and racism?

**Children to Classrooms at 10:30*
With Music provided by Michael Frye Hunt
Worship Associate: Keith Wilcox

Coffee Hour Hosts: Patricia Engel LaFata and Jesse Schwabe
Ushers: **Need Volunteers**
Chancel Table: Rosalind Thomas
Sound System: Scott Segar

**THE UNITARIAN
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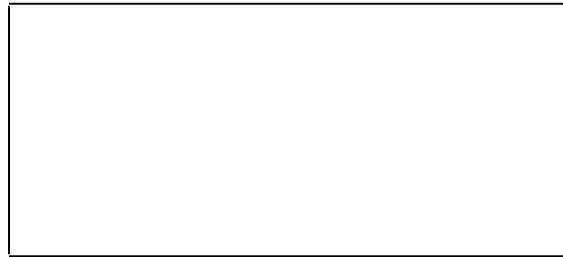
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UUSO DEADLINES:

UU News Articles: Deadline for February 7th issue
is February 5th, 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



FIGHT PLASTICS POLLUTION

Enormous gyres made up of plastic "soup" have been found in all our oceans. The infamous North Pacific Gyre, also known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, covers an area twice the size of Texas! Meanwhile, endocrine-disrupting plastic chemicals like BPA (and its replacements) could be contributing to cancer, birth defects, and behavior problems.

EarthShare.org recommends that we reduce our use of plastics rather than recycle plastics which still results in environmental hazards. Use glass, porcelain, wood, cast iron, and stainless steel instead.

MAILBOXES

Items that were not removed from the mailboxes when they were due for disassembly are in the coat closet in individually marked paper bags. A small amount of unknown items are in the office.
Mailboxes are coming! When they were assembled after the Christmas break, we discovered they were a bit too wide for the space, so we're looking at other options. Thank you for your patience. As a reminder, mailboxes will be now be assigned to Board members, staff, committees and teams, to facilitate communication between the leadership of the church and the congregation.