



UUU NEWS

A BIWEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
SOCIETY OF ONEONTA

Week of May 30, 2018

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MINISTER'S MUSINGS

At the 2016 General Assembly, my colleague and classmate, the Rev. Nancy McDonald, delivered a phenomenal sermon during the Sunday morning service. It had the people present on their feet, calling "AMEN!" and cheering in support. I remember hearing her message and realizing how deeply she spoke to me-- to all of us. Her sermon included words very much like the following (slightly edited for length, context, and reception.)

"WE IN THE LIBERAL CHURCH ARE CALLED TO HELP CREATE AN AMERICA THAT MOVES BEYOND THE PUNITIVENESS AND DIVISION OF OUR DAYS, AND TO YOU, TO YOU THE ONES WHO GAVE ME BOTH MY VOICE AND MY EDGE, I DARE TO SAY THAT WE CANNOT ENTER INTO THIS COALITION ONLY ON TERMS WE CHOOSE FOR OURSELVES. WE MUST ENTER INTO BELOVED COMMUNITY READY TO HAVE THE TERMS CHANGED IN WAYS WE OURSELVES COULD NEVER HAVE IMAGINED, READY TO SHOW UP EVEN AND ESPECIALLY WHEN WE DO NOT GET WHAT WE THOUGHT WE WANTED--BECAUSE NEITHER CONSUMERISM NOR CONFLICT ITSELF IS THE PRIMARY IMPEDIMENT TO THE EFFICACY OF THE LIBERAL CHURCH IN OUR AGE. HE GREATEST IMPEDIMENT TO THE EFFICACY OF THE LIBERAL CHURCH IS NOT THE REAL FIGHTS AND REAL FAILURES WE GET INTO WHEN WE ARE DOING HARD WORK. IT IS THE [small] FIGHTS WE WASTE OUR TIME ON WHILE OUR OWN PEOPLE AND THE PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE. AND WHEN I WEEP FOR WANT OF COURAGE THESE DAYS, WHICH I DO, IT IS BECAUSE I AM PERSONALLY NOT AT ALL ADEQUATE TO THE URGENT MORAL DEMANDS OF OUR TIME. BUT I ALSO WEEP, BECAUSE I

WORRY. I WORRY LITERALLY EVERY DAY THAT IN THIS MOMENT OF UTMOST URGENCY, WE, THE VERY ONES THE WORLD HAS BEEN WAITING FOR, ARE WASTING OUR CAPACITY TO BUILD CHANGE ON [little] FIGHTS THAT DISTRACT US FROM THE WORK AT HAND."

That was in June. In November of 2016, our world changed in ways we could not have imagined. Many of us were shell-shocked after the election, filled with fear, feeling angry, worried about the future. Since then, we have had a non-ending, daily onslaught of new "What happened today?!?". Many of us are dealing with a low-grade, constant level of stress. We feel unsettled. Our foundations feel like they are shifting and sinking beneath us. Every week, every day, there is a new call to action, a new injustice to respond to, a new shock to our collective system. And in this morass of chaos and concern, it is only human for us to look for things we can control, issues we can have an effect on.

So, rather than focusing on:

- The horrors being perpetrated by ICE on immigrant families, separating children from their parents, placing them in "camps" on military bases, or losing track of them completely--
- The ongoing fight of the Poor People's Campaign to draw attention to institutional racism, income inequality, economic injustice, environmental injustice, and voter suppression

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

On May 22, we held a service to honor those who have completed the COAST (Coming of Age Spiritual Trek) program as well as those high school seniors who will be away to new adventures in the fall. It was a powerful service. The COASTers planned hymns and readings as well as presented parts of the service. They each read statements of faith. They have been working on these all year. They were brave to read these to our congregation and it was a blessing to hear them. The graduating seniors are graduating from our Religious Education Program as well as from high school. We are so proud of all of the youth. They are compassionate, courageous, and thoughtful people who will work each in their own way to make our world a better place. It is an honor for all of us to be part of their church family.

Next Sunday will be our annual Flower Communion Sunday. It is called "Within the Seeds". We each bring a flower and will leave with a different flower. This represents our diversity and all that we give each other in our church community. Extra flowers will be available should forget to bring one.

This coming Friday and Saturday will be our annual Book and Plant Sale mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. The Interconnected Web of Life Explorers Class (those in K-3rd grade) have learned about pollinators' importance to our environment. The plant sale will have beautiful flowering plants for your gardens than will help the bees and butterflies.

Pollinator insects are under threat from the destruction and mowing of their habitats and from the widespread use of chemical insecticides. Should you see some milkweed already growing in your yard, purchase it from our plant sale, or order some online, milkweed is a vital part of the monarch butterfly's life cycle. Growing some would be a great way to help our environment. It is also important to pollinators to make sure the plants purchased from big box stores or even local nurseries are safe. Popular insecticides contain neonicotinoids. Neonicotinoids become a part of the whole plant rather than something that washes off in the rain. It remains in future growth. Home Depot has said they would phase out neonicotinoids by the end of 2018. Lowes will phase them out by 2019. Both say they label plants that are not safe for butterflies and bees.

The Explorers class studied the life cycle of monarch butterflies and learned about their migration last fall. The older children and youth have all learned about these amazing insects in other RE classes. Some of our children and youth have participated in the "Journey North" <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/> program where we can report sightings of monarchs, hummingbirds, bald eagles, and other seasonal events. They use our reports to create migration maps where we can see how the journey is going. There are links to webcams which follow birds in real time. This would be a great site to use this summer to complement our Seventh UU Principle: "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

Wishing you lovely flowers for the spring,

Susan Ryder
UUSO Director of Religious Education



SAWDUST FROM THE BOARD

Healthy Conflict: I'd like to start off by acknowledging the issue raised this past Sunday regarding the Board decision to end our weekly newspaper advertising of UUSO worship services. This decision was communicated in the May 2 newsletter in the Sawdust article, but it clearly registered more intensely with people when the ads actually stopped appearing. While some in the congregation felt it was wise to allocate our resources toward more effective means of outreach, others protested pretty strongly that we may miss informing people about UUSO services. Conflict can be healthy provided we don't shy away from it and rather approach it as an opportunity to listen, learn, and share together in the spirit of beloved community. This will be the purpose of the Board of Trustees Listening Session to be held this Sunday after the service. The ad will continue to run weekly at least through the rest of this fiscal year and the Board will reconsider the decision to eliminate it at the June 20 Board meeting.

Financial Reports: The Board of Trustees met for our regular meeting on May 16. After approving minutes, we heard the Treasurer and staff reports. Sue Gates, our new bookkeeper, is working diligently after supporting the budget process to bring our monthly financial reports up to date. January and February reports are now posted on the website. Reports will all be caught up by our June meeting.

Kudos to COAST: Susan Ryder shared her pride in the work the COASTers have done this year to achieve the objectives of the Coming of Age Spiritual Trek program. Rev. Craig described to the Board how the COASTers were working with him to develop their faith statements. He shared how his opportunity to support them in this task has been a highlight of his year. The Board was pleased to hear about the success of the COAST program which certainly reflects our Mission.

Sabbatical Preparations: We reviewed a draft Sabbatical Minister Letter and the plans of the Sabbatical Committee. All worship services for the sabbatical are scheduled. The Sabbatical Committee is creating a handbook for the congregation to clarify communication channels and responsibilities during this period. The Board President will collaborate with the Personnel Committee to supervise the staff during the sabbatical.

Covenant: The Covenant subcommittee has plans for focus groups to be held June 17 to give the congregation an opportunity to provide more input.

Choosing the Carpet Color: The process for choosing the color of the new sanctuary carpet will be supported by the Aesthetics Committee (formerly the Design Committee) chaired by Kathy Paranya. The Board updated the mission statement for this committee and acknowledged Anne Ray for her long standing service as chair. The Properties Committee will collaborate on the repair and installation process for the floor and carpet. The Aesthetics Committee will insure congregational input is part of the process before recommending carpet color options to the Board.

Other items of interest: Bob Brzozowski, Board member and Historian, informed the Board that a stereo card of the interior of the original Chapin Memorial Building was brought to the Historical Society. The Board will be hosting the New Member Reception at Jeane Bennett-O'Dea's house on June 2. Policies under deliberation include the areas of conflict resolution, finance, privacy, animals, and gifts. The Board will be planning a retreat in July to review the Long Range Plan and set goals for the coming year among other topics will be planned for July. Suzanne Miller and Deb Bruce were approved as UUSO delegates for General Assembly.

Next Board Meeting: Our next Board meeting is Wednesday, June 20 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 via the "Sounding Board" held after the June 17 service.

Karen Palmer, President
UUSO Board of Trustees
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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Continued from page 1)

- The 110 mass shootings that have taken place so far this year, the 25 school shootings that have continued to terrorize our children, and the rote responses from our elected officials to the repeated calls for reasonable gun laws--

I have been spending time dealing with people expressing concerns about:

- My appearance, most specifically my wearing suspenders.

- How we do joys & sorrows in our worship services, complaints about there being too many political statements and too many announcements made as "concerns", worries they will be changed or discontinued, shock when the worship service is interrupted by complaints about staff or uuso leadership policies and decisions during joys and sorrows.

- Whether or not we spend money to list our Sunday services in the local paper. With some supportive of our decision to put our money where it may be more effective and others horrified that we would no longer be listed in the paper for people to see.

And while all of these are important (except for my suspenders, I really hope this is the last I will hear from people regarding my suspenders), they are the small fights Rev. McDonald was warning us about two years ago. Surely, we can find the common ground with these small issues and move on to being the active, engaged, life-saving faith community we are called to be. Yes, the bigger issues are scarier and harder to get a handle on, but that's why we are here. That's why we are in this together. The world needs us, and we need each other.

With Love,
Rev. Craig Schwalenberg

SOCIAL ACTION TEAM RETREAT

The Social Action Team will have its annual retreat on Saturday, June 9th, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the home of Suzanne Miller, 103 Elm St. in Oneonta.

The time will be spent in reflecting on the past year and planning for the year to come. New members are welcome.

Contact Suzanne if you are interested in attending at Suzanne.Miller@oneonta.edu or 607-432-1316,

BOARD OF TRUSTEES LISTENING SESSION **Sunday, June 3, noon** **Chapin Memorial Sanctuary**

Topic: Outreach—Sharing the Good News about UUSO!

Newspaper ads? Press releases? Website? Social Media? Word of Mouth? The Marquee? Posters? Billboard?

How do we best use our resources, financial and otherwise, to inform our community that we are here, welcoming and affirming, mission-driven, and a wonderful home for liberal religious seekers? Join Board members this Sunday to share your ideas, questions, and concerns.

Karen Palmer, President
UUSO Board of Trustees

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT DRAFT

Please review this second draft of our new covenant. We added four main categories that embody the longer document's individual points. They will be the anchor, and main speaking points. This new draft will also be printed and hung on the sanctuary wall, like the first draft.

We will be having small group discussions on June 17th.

Please look for the sign up sheets at church this Sunday and next.

Thank you for your time and input.

The Unitarian Universalist Society of Oneonta is a covenantal community. While we hold many beliefs, we are committed to each other, to our shared search for truth and meaning, and to our work towards building the beloved community. As our covenant, we commit to the following.

We get involved and help where we can.

We strive to be open, honest, and respectful.

We are generous with our time and our support for this institution and each other.

We actively welcome and encourage diversity while seeking shared understanding and common ground.

We recognize that we will not always agree, but we are committed to staying engaged and in right relationship.

We will honor our commitments; if we can't, we will communicate that.

We believe that problems are best addressed directly person to person and when an issue has not been resolved directly we will ask for assistance.

We will respect and maintain boundaries while still promoting community.

We recognize we will make mistakes and sometimes hurt one another; we would like to assume this is unintentional and that we can move forward together.

We recognize the potential for change.

We expect the best from each other.

We recognize the need for confidentiality and discretion and the possible harm of keeping secrets.

We are committed to making this a space where everyone of all ages is welcome, safe, and valued.

We recognize and appreciate our roles in and commitments to this community.

We recognize our human imperfections and our likelihood to fall short of our covenant. We believe in forgiveness and share the responsibility for maintaining this covenant and holding each other accountable to our commitments.

In short, as a community we commit to

Get involved, and stay engaged

Be Honest and Kind

Be Respectful and Open Minded

Grow and Learn Together



Nathan Elsener
Covenant Committee

BACKPACK BUDDIES

June is bursting out all over. It is so beautiful. First Sunday is coming up on June 3. Now that the children want to be outside and running all over good food is more important than ever. Please bring your non-perishable, kid-friendly and vaguely nutritious food to service. Monetary donations are always welcome, too -cash or check. Please make out checks to NENY Regional Foodbank with Otsego/Delaware Counties backpack buddies.

This is a hard time for the homeless and less fortunate, also. The weather is warm and they have limited places and supplies to freshen themselves. Please bring personal care items for these folks-soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, etc. in travel size or however you wish.

Thank you so much for your continuing support and generosity. This is one way we live the UU principles.
-Dawn Kilts for the Social Action Team

SUPPORT THE UUSC HELPING FAMILIES IN CROATIA

If you missed the May 19 Social Action Team's (SAT) benefit concert with Anne Feeney to support Syrian refugees, there is still an opportunity to make a donation. Checks will be collected at the SAT table during coffee hour each Sunday through June 17 or you can mail or drop a check off at the church office. Please make checks payable to the *UUSO* and note *UUSC Syrian Refugees* on the memo line.



The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's (UUSC) has partnered with The Center for Peace Studies (CPSP) in Croatia to support Syrian refugees. The CPS provides immediate humanitarian support for refugees and engages in advocacy for changes in Croatian and EU asylum policy. With UUSC's support, CPS has developed a "Welcome Initiative" program focused on pro-refugee and anti-xenophobic activism; creating media campaigns to raise public awareness and sensitivity around refugee issues; education in local communities; advocating to change Croatian and EU asylum policy; and providing direct humanitarian support for refugees in Croatia. The focal point of the initiative is building a Refugee Support Center in Zagreb to provide an array of direct services — including legal aid, humanitarian support, psychosocial support, employment counseling, a Croatian language program, and special empowerment programs focused on women and families, children, and young men — to transiting and long-term refugees.

CHANGE FOR CHANGE

UUSO Social Action Team is responsible for selecting recipients for our monthly **Change for Change** contributions from each Sunday's Offertory collection plate. We will be doing this for the upcoming year at our next meeting, **Tuesday, June 5**, designating one deserving recipient organization per month from September 2018 thru August 2019. We would like to learn of any organizations we might not already be aware of, and we invite UUSO members and friends to suggest organizations for consideration among the 12 we will choose. If you have a favorite, please let us know. You can leave the information at the Social Action table on Sunday, or contact our not-yet-retired Chair Suzanne Miller, or any of the other Social Action Team members.

The recipient organizations should have nonprofit status, 501(c)(3), have a need for our contributions, and preferably serve people (and animals) within our local area, mainly Otsego and Delaware Counties. Please research any organizations you suggest, and include a description of their services and their location/address, phone number, email address, website if any, and name of any person they may designate for contacting.

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR AUTHENTIC DIVERSITY—SATURDAY, JUNE 9

with Rev. Evin Carvill-Ziemer UUA Congregational Life Staff and Rev. Darcey Laine who serves as minister UU Church of Athens and Sheshequin

You'll remember Rev. Evin from their wonderful facilitation of our Covenant workshop last fall. I am going to this and have room for 3 passengers to join me. Scholarship money is available for the \$30. Here is the description:

Each of us has culture--conscious and unconscious ways of being in the world. To become a truly multicultural faith, we need leaders who can build relationships effectively across difference including ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, gender, and more. Come learn about a model of understanding cultural competence that shows we can "move our brains" to become more interculturally competent.

- learn to start with the difference already in the room
- practice skills to help you understand how to bridge cultural differences
- practice engaging in different cultural conflict styles

This program is a skill based, interactive workshop focusing on learning practices that fundamentally change how we interact across difference. It is based on the theory of the Intercultural Developmental Continuum which was the basis of the UU Ministers' Association program Who Our Are Neighbors. Online classes are available to fully explore the this theory.

June 9, 2018 9am to 3pm UU Congregation of Binghamton NY
83 Riverside Dr, Binghamton, NY 13905
\$30 includes snacks, lunch, and materials. Need based waivers available

Contact Evin Carvill Ziemer (330-281-3306 eziemer@uua.org) with questions. Flyer attached!

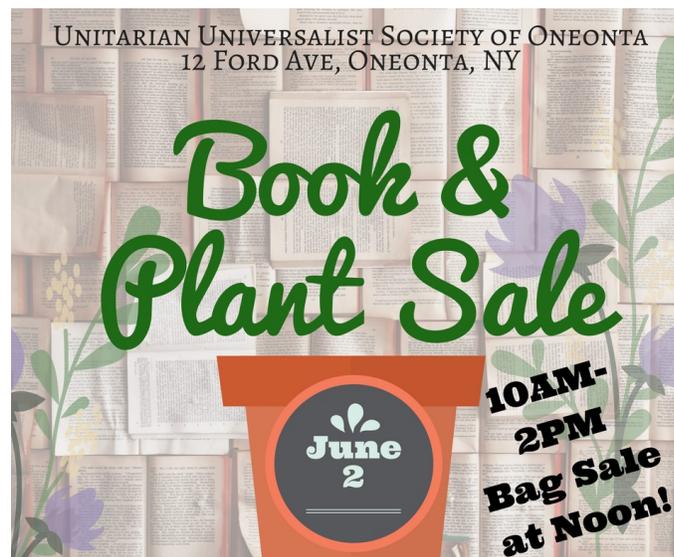
<https://www.uua.org/central-east/events/region/building-authentic-diversity-ny-18>

-Karen Palmer, UUSO Board President

BOOK AND PLANT SALE

Please join us Friday and Saturday for our annual book and plant sale! We are still taking donations until Friday afternoon. No encyclopedias, please.

Donations of plastic shopping bags would be appreciated. The members and Friends Sneak Peek will be Friday, from 5PM-9PM, and we officially open to the public at 10AM Saturday morning.





**SATURDAY
JUNE 2
2018**

PRIDEFEST

NEAHWHA PARK - ONEONTA

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 12:00 PM PARADE GATHERING
- 1:00 PM RALLY
- 2:00 PM PARADE
- 3:00 PM CATSKILL PUPPET THEATER
- 3:45 PM LEAH ECHSTEIN
- 4:00 PM BOLD THEATRICALS
- 4:45 PM DRAG SHOW
- 5:15 PM ITHACA GAY MEN'S CHORUS
- 5:45 PM ENORMOUS LITTLE THINGS
- 6:30 PM ZUMBA
- 7:00 PM DRAG SHOW
- COSMIC KARMA FIRE

WILL BE PERFORMING THROUGHOUT THE DAY

ONEONTA PRIDEFEST

Please join us at Oneonta Pridefest in Neawha Park this year and consider helping out at the UUSO booth!

We still need volunteers to cover an hour or two at a time. We will have a water bottle filling station, a new banner and some pamphlets on what it means to be a UU— we just need some UUs to talk to people about our community.

(We could also use a canopy tent!)

Please talk to Evelyn in the office for more information.



Many thanks to John Bagby for fixing and reinstalling our Black Lives Matter Banner!



UUSO UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30AM



Emerson said, "The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn."

What lies within the seeds of flowers?
Or in the seeds of our faith
we plant every day?

*Please bring a flower to
contribute to our ritual.*

**Stay Together Sunday*

With Music provided by Music Director Tim Horne
& the UUSO Choir
Worship Associate: Cathi Wiltsey

Coffee Hour Hosts: Patricia Engel LaFata & Jesse Schwabe

Ushers: **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Chancel Table: Flower Communion

Sound System: Patrick Rost



In a faith tradition that encourages individuals to find their own beliefs, sharing those beliefs with others is an important part of discernment, refinement, and evangelism.

Join Rev. Craig and Rev. Kimberly for a faithful conversation about their beliefs about the Divine.

**Children to Classrooms at 10:30AM*

With Music provided by Music Director Tim Horne
Worship Associate: Rich Stelling

Coffee Hour Hosts: Carol Malz

Ushers: **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Chancel Table: Deb Blue

Sound System: Scott Segar

**UNITARIAN
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UUSO DEADLINES:

UU News Articles: Deadline for June 13th issue
is June 10th, 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

The Green Sanctuary Task Force is going to be brainstorming actions that UUSO can take to more responsibly steward our planet. We would appreciate any ideas that the congregation has toward this effort. Please e-mail Karen Palmer at greenspeech3278@gmail.com or send ideas to 3278 State Highway 28, Milford, NY 13807.

Many thanks for everyone's support so far with the assessment process!