



# UU NEWS

A BIWEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
SOCIETY OF ONEONTA

Week of October 3, 2018

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:	
<i>Minister's Article</i>	1
<i>Religious Education</i>	3
<i>Sawdust</i>	4
<i>Society News</i>	5
<i>Worship Services</i>	7

## MINISTER'S MUSINGS

I had planned this week to write about our third and fourth principles, the delight of our spiritual and intellectual curiosity, and the joy of connecting with each other on a deeper level. But the events of the past two weeks are demanding a different approach, which includes a Content Warning, because I am going to talk a bit about sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual assault.

First, if this topic causes you distress, please know you can call or email me (518-423-1964 or [kdebus@uuma.org](mailto:kdebus@uuma.org)) to talk privately. But I hope many of you will stick around for the rest of the column, because this matters.

I want to tell you a story that happened a few years ago but is relevant today: My friends Kevin and Joann had joined me for lunch, and the discussion found its way to the shooting in California in 2014 that had been motivated by a young man not getting the girl.

Kevin, one of the most gentle and progressive men I know, was struggling to understand why the two of us, one of whom had never experienced sexual violence, were so adamant that the stories that emerged from #YesAllWomen spoke a broader truth. How could it be that every woman could say they lived under fear and frustration due to systemic misogyny?

That's when I asked Joann to pull out her keys as though she was going to her car alone – while I did the same. Together, we held our keys like weapons, each key sticking out between our fingers like a strange set of brass knuckles.

Kevin was taken aback.

I then reminded him that while not all men act on impulses, women don't know which ones will or won't. And Kevin let out a quiet "oh" as he finally got it. Our conversation then veered toward recognition of privilege and how moments like this help us be more sensitive and better allies.

Unfortunately, the conversations we were having in 2014 haven't changed, and in fact have gotten deeper as we again told our stories last year thanks to #MeToo and are now telling our stories – again – thanks to the confirmation hearings for a new Supreme Court justice. For every good post about how men can push back against systematic misogyny, how we must believe survivors and do better, there has been an equal and opposite post by men – and even some women – suggesting that "boys will be boys" and that "we can't ruin a man's life for a mistake made as a teen."

And that fills me with holy rage, because that one moment, that one mistake that they made – for Dr. Christine Blasey Ford, and for thousands of others – changed our lives forever in ways we cannot get back.

The past week reminds us what we have always known: women live in constant awareness of our vulnerability to attacks, and we live in constant frustration that we may not be believed, or worse, shamed (or even threatened) when we do speak up. We live in constant anger that the court system has shown over and over again significant leniency in convictions and sentencing for sexual crimes. #YesAllWomen is real. #MeToo is real. #WhyIDidntReport is real.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

As my colleague Bob LaValle writes,

“This is a moment for everyone, but especially men, to go deep into reexamining their attitudes and actions. Let us acknowledge that rape culture exists on a continuum from an unwanted gaze or remark, to an unwelcome touch, to outright assault. The idea that connects all those things is consent, or more to the point, the lack of consent. We (again, men especially) need to think about the times where we engaged in actions (gazes, comments, touches) that were done without consent, and also when we allowed those actions to happen in our presence. This latter part is critical.”

Rev. LaValle’s call is important: silence is complicity. Now I believe that you are good people and don’t want harm to come to anyone you know – especially the women in your life. Please find some courage to say something when you see a woman in uncomfortable with another’s gaze, remark, or touch. Consider your own approaches. And please believe us: when we say we have experienced sexual harassment, abuse, and assault – when we say ‘it happened a long time ago and I didn’t report because no one would believe me’ – when we say “we were kept from some opportunities because of our gender” – when we say ‘I’m uncomfortable when I’m touched without permission.’”

We have a long way to go – the last few years have been a wake up call that keeps ringing, and with good reason. We won’t get it right without practice. At the beginning of next month I’ll preach more about this and the ways we can address some of the underlying problems in this patriarchal system. But for now, please remember that someone – many someones – that you know is sad, and scared, and angry, maybe all at the same time. Please remember to treat one another with kindness and grace in these days.

Blessings,

Rev. Kimberley

UUSO Sabbatical Minister

kdebus@uua.org

## CHANGE FOR CHANGE

The small change donations for the month of October, our Change for Change, will go to NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness. NAMI is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. They are the nation’s leading voice on mental health. They are an association of hundreds of local affiliates, state organizations and volunteers who work in the community to raise awareness and provide support and education that was not previously available to those in need. NAMI relies on gifts and contributions to support their important work.

- They educate. Offered in thousands of communities across America through our NAMI State Organizations and NAMI Affiliates, our education programs: They advocate. NAMI shapes the national public policy landscape for people with mental illness and their families and provides grassroots volunteer leaders with the tools, resources and skills necessary to save mental health in all states.
- They listen. Their toll-free NAMI HelpLine allows them to respond personally: 1 (800) 950 NAMI (6264); locally, 783-2522; [info@nami.org](mailto:info@nami.org) or [namiofotsego@gmail.com](mailto:namiofotsego@gmail.com).
- They lead. Public awareness events and activities, including Mental Illness Awareness Week, NAMIWalks and other efforts, successfully combat stigma and encourage understanding. NAMI relies on gifts and contributions to support their important work.

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**PLEASE REGISTER YOUR BABY/CHILD/TEEN FOR RE CLASSES.** This is how we learn about allergies, plan for class sizes, and are able to contact you with current RE information if necessary. Registration forms can be found in all RE classrooms, on the table in the foyer of Chapin Memorial Church, and at [uuso.org](http://uuso.org) under CHILDREN/YOUTH and FORMS. These can be mailed to 16 Ford Ave. or left for me (Susan Ryder) in my church mailbox.

RE Classes have started. The Explorers class of K-3<sup>rd</sup> graders is undertaking a curriculum that has a goal of “teaching Unitarian Universalist identity without the usual arts and crafts projects”. It is for all learning styles with a focus on physical movement, challenges, and adventures. It includes the “Take Apart Party” where children are encouraged to take apart and look inside common machines. They will build cantilevered structures with graham crackers while learning about Frank Lloyd Wright and have animal visitors that honor the vision of Beatrix Potter. I like how this curriculum encourages children to be busy and active.

The Hogwarts Oneonta classmates in 4-6<sup>th</sup> grade have already begun work on their “House Crests”. This activity asks them to examine our Seven UU Principles as well as their personal values in deciding what will be represented on their House Crest. Their classroom is amazing. Feel free to take a look before or after church. Soon they will make wands!

The OWL (Our Whole Lives\*) class of 7-9<sup>th</sup> graders (who have parental permission) has grown to 12 students! We have ended enrollment in order for the class to get to know each other and find safety in working together. Currently, class participants are finding creative and fun ways to learn about and appreciate their own values, respect the values of each other and respect the diverse values of people outside of their group. Much information will be presented throughout the year. There will be chances to do roll-plays and to work on projects in small groups. There is much laughter, there are no wrong questions, and sometimes some there are silly ways to look at difficult topics. There are serious lessons too. I want to acknowledge that the participants are brave and they will find many rewards in their future lives from learning this information.

The YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) class of 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders has surprised me with their commitment to meet together on most Sundays. I was surprised because the group is very small yet they are serious about attending class, supporting each other, and planning activities together for the year.

This is an exciting year for us. Children and Teens will get the most benefit from attending often. They will feel more connected with their class and be able to follow the continuity of the lessons. Religious Education classes are places outside of their regular school or peer groups where they can find support for who they truly are. Please help them attend regularly.

In Peace,

Susan Ryder  
[DRE@uuso.org](mailto:DRE@uuso.org)  
UUSO Director of Religious Education

\**Our Whole Lives*, is an award-winning sexuality education program for those in 7-9<sup>th</sup> grade. It is only available to those who have registered. The following is from the introduction to the Our Whole Lives, curriculum written by Pamela M. Wilson:

*OWL models and teaches caring, compassion, respect, and justice. It helps adolescents address their attitudes, values, and feelings about themselves, their sexuality, and others' sexuality. Participants are guided by trained facilitators through an engaging curriculum that addresses topics most important to young adolescents, including those typically excluded from sexuality education and health classes.*

# SAWDUST FROM THE BOARD

## Intergenerational Issues

The Board met on September 19 at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary. After a chalice lighting, opening words selected by Rev. Kimberley, and a check in with those present, we had a “deep dive” conversation about intergenerational issues. We discovered that:

- Parents sometimes feel burdened by “Stay Together” Sundays
- Children sometimes feel uncomfortable being “on show” when on stage for the children’s story
- We spend much money, staff, and energy on a children’s RE program. What is our energy and financial commitment to an adult RE program?
- Some feel parents would be more likely to show up to a “listening” session or other activity before the service whereas the elders of our church tend to be available after the service.
- Other reflections have helped the board to understand we must listen more to the needs of each generation. The workshop this past Sunday led by Reverend Evin gave us more information and questions to ask to help us listen and learn from people of different ages, communication styles, cultural preferences, etc.

**Continuing the Campaign of Kindness:** Rev. Kimberley challenged the Board as to what the Trustees will do to foster the Campaign of Kindness. We are implementing two concrete actions:

1. We are acknowledging the committees and teams of our congregation periodically in newsletters under the heading “Celebrating our Shared Ministry”
2. We are co-hosting a “Thank you” Luncheon for members of committees, teams, RE teachers, and staff to honor their service to our UUSO Mission on October 27. Invitations will be going out shortly

## Thank you, Jeane Bennett-O’Dea!

With deep regret we accepted the resignation of Jeane Bennett-O’Dea from the Board of Trustees. Jeane has been a thoughtful gentle voice on the board and we will greatly miss her wisdom and cooperative spirit in our deliberations. Jeane has also resigned from her service as UUSO Treasurer after providing far more than the 6 months to which she committed.

## Other Business:

Minister, RE, and Treasurer reports were reviewed and August minutes approved. The Board approved a Gift Acceptance Policy and will discuss this further with the Endowment Committee before publication. The Board also approved a Kitchen Policy and reviewed kitchen guidelines. These are published in this newsletter. We appointed Cindy Squires as a new member of the Policy Committee.

**Next BOT Meeting and Sounding Board:** The Board will meet next on Wednesday, October 17 at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary. All UUSO members and friends are welcome to observe. We also encourage comments, questions, and concerns to be expressed during the “Sounding Board” held after the service on Sunday, October 14.

Karen Palmer  
Board President  
UUSO Board of Trustees



## CELEBRATING OUR SHARED MINISTRY

The Board of Trustees acknowledges the Nominating Committee. This is not a committee under the Board's oversight but this congregational committee does essential work to make sure we actually have a Board, Endowment committee, Moderator, and continue to have a Nominating committee! Each May during the annual meeting like "magic" we have a slate of candidates to elect. What isn't noticed sometimes is the incredible amount of work that goes into discerning who will be on that slate and then asking those people if they are "willing" candidates. A lot of thought goes into how our congregation is represented by a good mix of genders, ages, minority groups, and other factors. The three members of the Nominating committee this year are Molly Swain, Leah Bridgers, and Mary Ambrose. In March you may be hearing from them and if so, know that careful thought has gone into their decision to ask for your service.

With gratitude,  
The Board of Trustees



## YOUR THOUGHTS ON OUR WORSHIP TOGETHER

A Sabbatical period is an excellent time to think about the different ways that we can experience worship together. Since there are many different ministers and lay leaders leading worship during this time, try to keep in mind what you like and don't like. Around January of the coming year, there will be another Assessment of the Ministry using the Appreciative Inquiry process and the topic will be Worship. So please collect your thoughts, maybe write them down, and be ready to share them in focus groups at the start of the New Year!

Karen Palmer, President  
Board of Trustees



## SAVE THE DATE COOKIES AND CRAFTS IS DECEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup> THIS YEAR

The 31<sup>st</sup> annual Cookies and Crafts event will be held in the sanctuary on Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, from 10 am to 3 pm. Be sure not to miss it. MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!!

Pam Strother, C&C Co-Chair

## UPDATES TO THE KITCHENS SECTION OF THE UUSO BUILDING USE POLICY

UUSO has two kitchens that are used regularly by many groups for many functions. It is imperative that these kitchens be kept in clean and sanitary conditions to avoid attracting pests – ants, flies, wasps, rodents – and especially to avoid microbial contamination. The kitchen spaces are to be kept in pleasant, comfortable, and workable condition.

### KITCHEN POLICY

For both kitchens:

- a) Kitchen use is limited to church events or building renters. (Staff may keep their food in the Olympia Brown kitchen.)
- b) Leave no open food anywhere in the kitchen.
- c) Our kitchens are not approved for food preparation for public consumption. (*Editor's note: Reheat, but don't cook from scratch.*)
- d) Food is not to be stored on the counters or in the refrigerator more than 24 hours before an event, except for those items used for weekly services, or RE events (e.g. sugar, tea, coffee).
- e) Any food remaining after any event must be immediately removed; i.e., given away, taken home, or discarded.
- f) Used dishes are to be washed, either in the dishwasher or by hand. Clean dishes may be left in the dishwasher or in the rack to dry.

### KITCHEN GUIDELINES

- a) Separate garbage into proper containers – trash, single-stream recyclables, redeemable bottles/cans or compost.
- b) Air dry dishtowels and dishcloths on the drying rack; then put them into the tablecloth hamper to be washed.
- c) New sponges are available under the sinks.
- d) Cabinets, drawers and shelves are labeled; return kitchen items to their proper storage area.
- e) Do not use the kitchen as a place to leave items to be swapped or exchanged between people or for others to deal with.

THUS: IF YOU BRING IT IN, YOU TAKE IT OUT

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



SUNDAY SERVICE AT UUSO - OCTOBER 7

# Transmogrified

REV. KIMBERLEY DEBUS

Sometimes, when our ideas, beliefs,  
and perspectives seem stuck,  
it's helpful to take them apart,  
mix them up, and see what comes out.  
Let's see what happens when we do this  
with our principles.

\*Start Together Sunday

With music provided by Michael & Dorothy Frye-Hunt  
Worship Associate: Keith Willcox

Coffee Hour Host: Kim Yousey-Elsener

Usher: Sue Troost

Chancel Table: Rosalind Thomas

Sound System: Scott Segar



OCTOBER 14 | UUSO  
SUNDAY SERVICE  
REV. DARCEY LAINE

# Living in Body

What does it mean to live in a body?  
Does that meaning change as  
our capacities change?  
What is the relationship between  
our body and our Self?

Rev. Laine will tell us about her journey of living in body, and reflect on how our answers change as we grow into ourselves.

\*Children to Classrooms at 10:30

With Music provided by Music Director Tim Horne & the  
UUSO Choir  
Worship Associate: Rich Stelling

Coffee Hour Hosts: Pam Strother & Arlana Young

Ushers: Dave & Meg Ainsworth

Chancel Table: Molly Swain

Sound System: Patrick Rost

**UNITARIAN  
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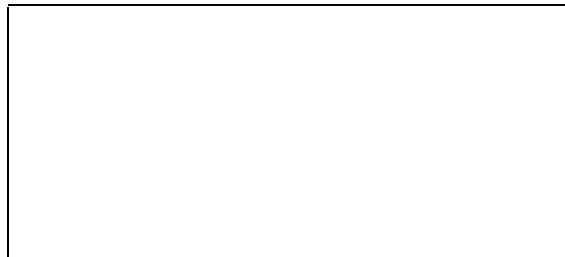
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## **UUSO DEADLINES:**

**UU News Articles:** Deadline for the week of October 17 issue is October 15th, 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**

After Kevin Shultz' UUSO talk on "Climate Change: What Can We Do?", it seems appropriate to dedicate the Green Sanctuary Corner to a series that features each one of the 10 basic and the additional more advanced actions that Kevin proposed. What difference could we make as a community if we each took all of these steps or at least some of them?

Kevin's 10 step plan to reducing our carbon footprint:

STEP#1: Get power strips to turn off all of our devices when not in use. Kevin explained that we use a lot of electricity by simply keeping our devices in "sleep" mode. By plugging them into a power strip it allows us to turn them off at night to prevent this waste.

Also, I found a blog that Kevin contributes to with articles that reinforce his presentation:

<https://medium.com/hot-new-world>