



UUU NEWS

A BIWEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
SOCIETY OF ONEONTA

Week of October 31, 2018

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MINISTER'S MUSINGS

How wondrous is the human mind and its infinite capacity! That we are able to learn and explore and think new things, that we are adaptive and adaptable, that we can imagine not only all manner of things beyond ourselves – that is wondrous indeed.

I identify as a Universalist theist, finding myself fascinated by and informed by what I perceive as God's love and our capacity for goodness. And part of that fascination draws me to a fascination about how our minds work – these minds can both ponder Mystery and build our human future.

I have these moments every now and then when I am taken completely aback by something a human has created or thought. Sometimes it's amazement at the spectacle of skyscrapers on Fifth Avenue. Sometimes it's awe as I video chat real-time with a colleague in England. Sometimes it's realizing that an operation that once caused 8-inch scars and weeks in the hospital is now an outpatient procedure with a one-inch incision.

I was listening to a podcast about Charles Darwin recently and it was noted that Darwin was definitely a man of his age – like many upper class Victorians of the time, he was interested in art, nature, and science. But in 1859, Darwin made a rather simple observation that has absolutely changed how we perceive the world. That observation, of course, is evolution by natural selection. What struck me, however, was not the awesomeness of the theory that has since been proved as fact by biology, anthropology, paleontology, and other sciences. No, it was the fact that the human brain is so amazing that it can incorporate positively new ideas and actually adapt to new technologies.

In fact, our minds are so adaptive that how we learn, how we use new tools, how we process even more

and more information is evidence of a mind that is constantly seeking to extend itself, to grab on to new tools it has never experienced before and merge with them. We wonder with horror at how easily people become glued to their smart phones, but it would be surprising to biologists if we didn't – as we are, in some ways, natural-born cyborgs.

It is stunning when you think that we constantly incorporate life-shaping ideas such as evolution and heliocentrism... we take space travel as fact, not fantasy... we have spent centuries developing cars and combines and phones and lasers ... we construct buildings that scrape the sky ... we come up with ingenious ways to adapt to our changing climate... we know thousands more words and absorb more information in a year than we did in a lifetime just 100 years ago... and yet we are still human, in human communities, in human relationships, propagating the species and adapting to the world.

We humans, in human communities, also have room in our fabulous brains to create art and worship together, to be social and committed together. We naturally form in groups of like-minded people so that we can not only learn from one another but also strengthen our empathy and compassion, which helps us survive and helps us do the work of justice.

These brains and bodies are marvels – we celebrate them every time we say 'hello' or offer a seat or ask 'how are you' and care to know the answer. We celebrate them when we show care and kindness. We celebrate them when we share our joys and sorrows, when we share meals and hearts.

Oh what a piece of work are we, so marvelously wrought.

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Time to Bake the Bread

On Sunday, November 18, our service, “Always Room for One More,” will feature a time of sharing breads from our traditions. On that day, you are invited to bring a loaf based on your ethnic heritage or other family tradition (home baked or store bought). Please bring it pre-cut into shareable pieces (slices or chunks) in a bowl or basket.

Blessings,

Rev. Kimberley

UUSO Sabbatical Minister

kdebus@uuma.org

COMING - SATURDAY NOV. 10 AND SUNDAY NOV. 11: CANDLELIGHT DINNERS

Sign up after church with Justine or Alice to either be a host or a guest. Hosts provide their home, place settings, beverages, candles. Guests bring part of the meal.

We plan to have childcare this time: maybe shared cost of sitters at a child-friendly home.

These gatherings are a great way to get acquainted. The next ones are Jan. 26-7, May 4-5.

Alice Siegfried, 432-8673, alice.pott@icloud.com

Justine Roefs, 267-0020, justine.roefs@gmail.com



WANTED – USED FURNITURE !!

The Aesthetics Committee is looking for several pieces of furniture to replace items that have worn out at the UUSO. Do any of you have:

1. Two sturdy card tables
2. A couch that could be used in the OBH living room
3. An upholstered chair for the OBH living room

All these items need to be very sturdy as they get a lot of use.

Please contact Kathy Paranya at 607-441-3206 or kparanya@stny.rr.com if you may have any of these furniture items to donate.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

On Sunday, October 28, the Explorers and Hogwarts class (grades k-6) celebrated Day of the Dead. We thanked all the people of many cultures who practice this Holiday.

We talked about the Monarch butterflies who left a busy butterfly summer in Oneonta and are just now arriving in Mexico. We read the story, "Ghost Wings" by Barbara M. Joosse and Giselle Potter. It is about a girl who lives in Mexico where the Monarch butterflies gather every fall. The butterflies are thought to be reminders (or even spirits) of those who have died. Welcoming the butterflies is a lovely way to honor our ancestors. In the story the girl's grandmother dies and is remembered during the Day of the Dead of the Dead Celebration and by the return of the butterflies.



We created a beautiful altar to welcome those who have died to be in our memories. We scattered yellow flower petals to help them find their way. We love them. We talked about those who had died: Among them were Grandparents, cats, dogs, bugs, and a pet worm.

We ended by decorating sugar skulls, eating home-made Pan de Muertos (Bread of the Dead), and coloring Day of the Dead images. Amelia W. was the lucky one who found a candy hidden in her piece of bread. This meant she was Queen of the Day and she chose a wind up skeleton as her special present. It was a fun-packed, busy time together and we will do it all again next fall.

We are grateful to Suzanne Miller who accepted Mara Kern Library books that were returned as well as provided new Mara Kern Library books to check out. Please help your child to remember to return their books.

May we always have an altar to life in our hearts,

Susan Ryder
UUSO Director of Religious Education



SAWDUST FROM THE BOARD

Positive reports

The Board met on October 17 at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary. After a chalice lighting, opening words selected by Rev. Kimberley, and a check in with those present, we approved the September minutes and reviewed staff and financial reports. We were particularly impressed with the fact that 57% of pledges have been received to date. Our RE program has had a high starting attendance and we have 12 OWL participants with 5 from outside of UUSO. Our Sabbatical Minister is finding that people are trusting and utilizing her for ministry beyond Sunday services. The final covenant draft is ready for a congregational vote. All in all, UUSO appears to be starting the Fall season off in good shape.

Policies

The Board is drafting a membership removal policy. This will be revisited at the November BOT meeting with the addition of more specifics regarding the process. We want to take great care in making sure to only remove people from membership if they have no desire to continue. We also approved a new sexual harassment policy per a model policy provided by NYS with a mandated due date of October 9. While we are now in compliance, the Personnel Committee will further review the policy for consistency and conformity with our UU principles. Additionally we reviewed a revision to our "Disruptive Behavior" policy provided by the Committee on Ministry along with conflict resolution procedures. These will be revisited at our November meeting after some sections are clarified by the C.O.M.

Trustee vacancy

We discussed some candidates to appoint to fill the Trustee vacancy until June 30, 2019 following the resignation of Jeane Bennett-O'Dea.

Board service

In addition to our regular duties, the trustees will be providing specific service to the congregation in the following ways:

- a) Assist the Stewardship Committee with the Thank You Luncheon for those who have provided regular volunteer service to the congregation over the past year.
- b) Write newsletter articles to highlight our gratitude for the various hard working and dedicated committees and teams.
- c) Provide assistance to those needing support with ambulation when the congregation has its first fire drill per the safety committee's plan.

Next Board Meeting

PLEASE NOTE that the board is changing its meeting date to the fourth Wednesday of the month (not third). We will therefore meet on November 28th at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary. Congregants are welcome to observe. We will hold the Sounding Board on November 25th after the service to hear any comments, questions, or concerns to be brought to the board.

GORGE ON GOURMET DELIGHTS AT COOKIES AND CRAFTS!

The 31st annual Cookies and Crafts event is coming Sunday, December 1st, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. And beyond the cookies and the crafts, make sure you check out the gastronomic gifts on offer!

Try a cup or bowl of Pam Strother's famous creamy corn chowder, or Brian Bendlin's vegetarian chili—or take a pint or quart home of each with you! (Hint: chili freezes well.) Crunch into Molly Swain's delectable cheddar biscuits, or try one of Martha Robinson's melt-in-your-mouth corn muffins; both go great with chowder or chili! Have a cup of coffee or tea (free of charge, of course), and catch up with your UUSO friends in the festively lit Holiday Café!

Once again the gourmet table will be conveniently located right next to the checkout table, tempting you into last-minute impulse buys of really good stuff: salad dressings, breads, pies, and more, all lovingly prepared by UUSO members and friends. Load up—it's the holiday season, after all!

And, after lunch, be sure to check out the rest of Cookies and Crafts, where you'll find one-of-a-kind items from local artisans and UUSO members, home-baked cookies, and more.

—Brian Bendlin

FRUITCAKE TIME OF YEAR

It's that time of year again. I am taking orders for fruitcakes. They come in two varieties, Light Honey Rum and Dark Brandy Molasses. Each weighs about a pound. The price this year is the same as it has been for the past several years-- \$15.00 each. 100% donation to UUSO. The *deadline for ordering is November 15th*. There are three ways to order: Call me at 267-4280. Email me at pstrother@stny.rr.com. Speak to me at church. The fruitcakes will be available for pickup at Cookies and Crafts on December 1st or by special arrangement if you cannot pick them up at Cookies and Crafts.

—Pam Strother



OUR GRATITUDE TO KARI REYNOLDS

Kari Reynolds has become fully involved in UUSO since she moved to Oneonta from New York City nearly two years ago where she was an active member of the Unitarian Church of All Souls for 25 years. She is the person behind the scene who is doing a ton of work!! Last year she helped manage the very successful Stewardship Campaign and will continue as co-chair in addition to now chairing the Finance Committee. She has brought fresh ideas on how to structure Endowment, raise money for both UUSO and UUSC, and honor and celebrate volunteers and she has worked hard to implement those ideas. She is part of the Social Action Team and co-coordinates the UUSC Guest at Your Table project as well as the Social Action table at each Sunday's service. In addition to her work at UUSO she is now on the board of the Oneonta Community Health Center. We are delighted that she chose Oneonta as the place to retire and feel well-blessed to have her part of UUSO.

BACKPACK BUDDIES & PERSONAL CARE ITEMS

This coming Sunday, November 4, is First Sunday of the month, the day for our monthly Backpack Buddies and Personal Care Products collection. Please bring your donations of non-perishable, kid-friendly, vaguely nutritious food, and personal-care items, to church that day. Monetary donations are also welcome, by cash or check. Please make checks payable to NENY Regional Food Bank, with "Otsego/Delaware Counties Backpack Buddies" in the memo line. October's collection provided a \$75 check, a bag of food, and a few personal-care items. The children and their families thank you!

—Social Action Team

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY PLANNING SESSION

All are invited to a meeting on Sunday, November 4 at 12:15pm in the Sanctuary facilitated by Rev. Kimberley and Karen Palmer to plan for the future of our Small Group Ministry. As some are aware, April Gates has resigned as Small Group Coordinator and with Rev. Craig on Sabbatical we were unable to start the new cycle of Small Groups in October this year. We are taking this opportunity to come together and consider what has gone well with our 17 years of conducting the small group ministry and what ideas we may consider discussing with Rev. Craig for the next cycle. We also need to think about who may be able to facilitate our next small groups and possibly identify a potential coordinator to suggest to Rev. Craig when he returns. We hope all who have benefited from the Small Group Ministry experience will consider attending and those new to this ministry are welcome as well.

CELEBRATING OUR SHARED MINISTRY

The bylaws committee could be considered as the most important committee in terms of following our 5th UU principle: *"The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large"*. Each person on the bylaws committee has served as either a current or past Moderator. This is the person who facilitates our Congregational meetings per parliamentary procedure and insures that our members' voices are heard in a civil and democratically conducted forum. If you were at last Sunday's Congregational meeting you witnessed our 5th principle in action and the skill of Moderator Mary Ruhoff as she facilitated our ability to voice disagreements and still come to resolution on issues through an agreed upon democratic process. The bylaws committee members also serve to gather input and make recommendations on any draft bylaws revisions that are presented to the congregation for a vote. The bylaws determine how we are to function and this document is key to reducing conflict, helping us connect in equitable and fair ways, and act with integrity and ethics. It provides guidance to the proper lines of communication and decision making. In essence, it helps keep the peace! The members of our current bylaws committee are Mary Ruhoff, April Gates, and Ben Friedell. You can thank them for upholding our democratic process when you have the opportunity.

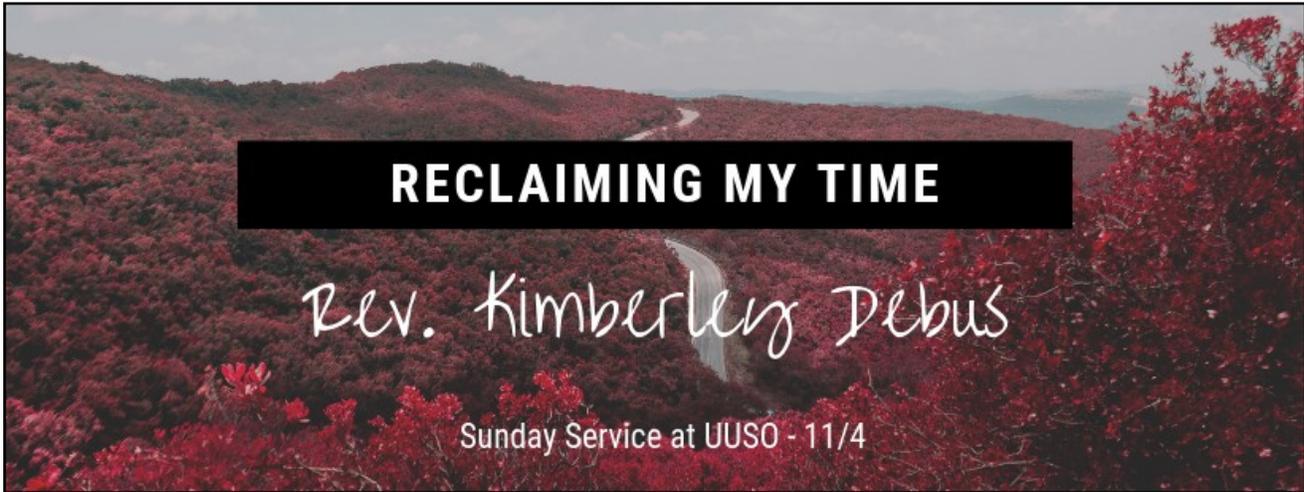
—The UUSO Board of Trustees

DINING FOR WOMEN

The Oneonta Chapter of Dining for Women will have its next potluck dinner on Sunday, November 4th at 6:00 pm at the Unitarian Universalist church at 12 Ford Ave in Oneonta. Each month the group learns about and supports organizations that help women and girls in developing countries improve their lives. The featured organization this month is Wiser International's program for girls in Muhuru Bay, Migori County, Kenya. The DFW grant will focus and reach out to vulnerable at-risk adolescent girls in rural Kenya by offering them a holistic high quality education experiential learning, leadership development, and reproductive health education. All are welcome to come to the monthly meetings. Bring a dish to pass if you would like. For more information, call Linda Wilcox at 607-433-2985.

UUSO UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30AM



Over the past year, we have seen women and more than a few men say "enough" to misogyny, sexual violence, and a culture that devalues half the population. What does it mean to promote a new vision of a world that no longer needs #metoo?

**Children to Classrooms*

With music provided by Music Director Tim Horne & the UUSO Choir

Worship Associate: Alex Tolin-Schultz

Coffee Hour Host: Kim Yousey Elsener & Brian Bendlin

Ushers: Sue Troost & Sallie Han

Chancel Table: Carl O'Shea

Sound System: Scott Segar



How dangerous it can be to just be who we are.
 How courageous it can be to be who we are.
 How amazing and healing it could be,
 if we are all who we were meant to be.

**Start Together Sunday*

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

Coffee Hour Hosts: Carol Malz

Ushers: Kim Yousey Elsener

Chancel Table: Liz Jacob-Carter

Sound System: Patrick Rost

**UNITARIAN
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SOCIETY
OF ONEONTA**

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UUSO DEADLINES:

UU News Articles: Deadline for the week of November 14 issue is November 12, 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

Another step in Kevin Shultz' action plan to reduce climate change is to turn down your thermostat a few degrees as the weather turns cooler. Wear extra layers if needed vs. jacking up the heat!

UUSO Board of Trustees

Karen Palmer	President
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Mary Ruhoff	Moderator
Keith Willcox	
Nathan Elsener	
Arlana Young	
Jennifer Hyppio	
Rosemary Summers	

INTERESTED IN..

DECORATING THE CHANCEL TABLE? →	Alice Siegfried alice.pott@icloud.com
USHERING? →	Kim Yousey-Elsener kym1975@yahoo.com
JOINING CHOIR? →	Music Director Tim Horne hornel2@hotmail.com
TEACHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION? →	Director of RE Susan Ryder DRE@uuso.org