



# UUU NEWS

A BIWEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
SOCIETY OF ONEONTA

Week of November 14, 2018

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## MINISTER'S MUSINGS

Every year around this time, my friends and acquaintances on Facebook post daily moments of gratitude. In the past, these have been sweet little notes about family, friends, work, and the world around us. Two years ago, the posts were few and far between, as people wondered what we could be grateful for. It's hard, this gratitude practice, when so much is at stake to ensure the safety and security of those in our lives and communities.

It's hard to be grateful when we know that every day, we are fighting for the inherent worth and dignity of every person, no matter their skin color, sexual identity, gender, religion, place of origin, ability, class.

Every day, we are fighting for justice, equity, compassion, peace, and liberty.

Every day, we are fighting for religious freedom.

Every day, we are fighting to preserve the right of conscience and the democratic process.

Every day, we are fighting for the survival of this planet that we call home.

Every day, we are fighting for the very principles we hold true as Unitarian Universalists.

And despite midterm shifts in political representation, it is still hard to be grateful. How can we celebrate what we have when it may be stripped away from us?

I'm sure I'm not the only one who's been having hard Thanksgivings. For many of us, we'll be celebrating with family members who voted differently, who see

the world through surprisingly different lenses. How do we navigate relationships with people who voted against everything we stand for? This isn't just our being liberal religionists sharing a meal in a conservative household – this is about people we love saying 'who you are and what you are doesn't matter.' And that hurts. How can we be grateful?

And yet, there is a lot to be grateful for. Let me share what I see – maybe you share some of these blessings.

I am grateful for Theodore Parker, who said the moral arc of the universe is long and it bends toward justice.

I am grateful for the democratic process and those in positions of authority and power who won't let it be demolished.

I am grateful for the masks being exposed – as someone reflected, we now know who the racists and misogynists and homophobes and xenophobes are, so we can address the systems of oppression more openly.

I am grateful for the activism that has sprung up – the throngs of women, and people of color, and younger adults who ran – and won – public office... the organizers of marches, protests, email and phone campaigns, and the ways our support of organizations like Planned Parenthood, the ACLU, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and others continues to engage in the good work of justice.

I am grateful for the call to prophetic witness – not just ministers from the pulpit, like me, but as James Luther Adams described, the prophethood of all believers. We are all called to speak up and speak out.

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I am grateful that our denomination is answering the call of love, putting more and more focus on justice, not only through words but through real money and real action.

I am grateful for the ability to learn more about those I don't understand – whether it be a person of color, or a trans person, or someone with a disability, or a straight white man, or even someone considered working class whose understanding of dignity is tied to a different paradigm than the one I operate in.

I am grateful for the space to be wrong and still be loved.

I am grateful that I am part of a religious community that hears the call of love, supports one another and holds one another through the bad times – that here there is space to express ourselves, explore ideas, learn from each other, do good work together, and lean on each other. That's important. We need what songwriter Reggie Harris calls “the Shelter of Each Other.”

I am grateful that this congregation finds a way to feed and support others on Thanksgiving day, sharing love and abundance in the community.

And yes, I am grateful that I have shelter, food, clothing, access to health care and transportation, a loving family, friends, and more. But more, I am grateful to be in a position to fight for others who do not have those things and to help them meet their needs, and to call out injustice when I see it, and to support those who need an ally, even as others support me when I need an ally.

Despite all of the despair, frustration, anger, fear, and anxiety I have felt in the last couple of years, I am grateful.

May you have a fulfilling – and filling – Thanksgiving.

Blessings,  
Rev. Kimberley  
kdebus@uuma.org



# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

*In times of light and times of darkness  
May this small flame  
Kindle what is good  
In us and in the world.  
-Sarah Gibb Millspaugh*



On November 4th the Hogwarts Oneonta class learned about a frightening creature in the Harry Potter books called a *Dementor*. J. K. Rowling writes: "Dementors . . . glory in decay and despair, they drain peace, hope, and happiness out of the air around them..."

This particular Hogwarts Oneonta class introduces the idea of a "Dementor" as a way to encourage participants to talk about their fears in a caring environment. They also talked about ways to deal with hard things that can happen in their lives. They spend time together envisioning and naming what brings them hope and what helps them feel comforted and braver when dealing with adversity.

I think that our (4<sup>th</sup> grade and up) religious education communities are the perfect place (besides home) to talk about the idea of evil. If there is evil, what is it? What does it look like? What makes it go away? If there isn't evil, what's to be done about bad things that sometimes occur? We live in a time of difficult, and sometimes frightening, events happening in our world. We can all use the wisdom that comes from naming the problems and focusing on positive things to do to bring about change. We don't have to know the answers but we can know we are here together in a supportive, loving community. We are not alone. We can pay special attention to whatever brings us hope and we can remember to be mindful of the things that bring us joy.

The class learned the way that characters in the Harry Potter books dealt with *Dementors*. The class meditated about an animal that would bring them a feeling of hope, life, and/or love. Some characters in the Harry Potter books are able to make this animal appear as a Patronus when *Dementors* were around. A Patronus banishes a *Dementor*. Hermione Granger, a character in the Harry Potter books, was overheard saying, "That's very, very advanced magic ..."

Miranda Goshawk (author of the *Standard Book of Spells*) aka J.K. Rowling, said:

"This ancient and mysterious charm conjures a magical guardian, a projection of all your most positive feelings. The Patronus Charm is difficult, and many witches and wizards are unable to produce a full, corporeal Patronus, a guardian which generally takes the shape of the animal with whom they share the deepest affinity. You may suspect, but you will never truly know what form your Patronus will take until you succeed in conjuring it."

The class worked on creating their own versions of Patronus Charms.

After working on a Patronus Charm, there is a very important way to recover from a brush with a *Dementor*. That is a small bite of chocolate. There was chocolate available at the end of the class.

*May the light of this chalice reach into dark places  
to offer hope to the hopeless  
to give comfort to the suffering  
to bring reason where there is ignorance  
to show understanding where there is hatred  
and to shine like a beacon, showing the way home  
- DRE Iris imaginaria, UU Church of Baton Rouge*

May we all find Peace, Hope, Community, Patroni, and sometimes Chocolate to cheer us and help us in hard times.

Susan Ryder  
UUSO Director of Religious Education

## GORGE ON GOURMET DELIGHTS AT COOKIES AND CRAFTS!

The Crafts part of Cookies and Crafts is a work of art and effort. This year we will welcome new crafts-people Holly Bator (new-ish) with her handmade soaps, and lotions, Jen Riley who has wool yarn and knit/crocheted items (Pagan-Pride themed and other), and Stephani Vaughan with paper craft such as ornaments, mobile, and gift boxes.

Returning artists will be there with printed clothing, pottery, stuffed toys, quilted goods, calendars and needle felted ornaments, aprons and wallets, mittens made from recycled wool sweaters and fiber-made novelties, jewelry and silk scarves, Earth's Harvest Farms porridge and pancake mixes, Pysanky eggs, and note cards. Last but not least, we will have Summer's End Orchards jams and other condiments. There will also be a raffle as there is every year of items donated by the artists.

There will be items in every price-range, and something for almost everyone on your gift list. You'll be able to buy home-made soups and cookies, and visit with friends after making the rounds of fine-craft displays and the UU Gourmet table. Come early and enjoy a relaxed shopping and fun atmosphere. Hours are from 10 AM to 3 PM.

—Jennifer Kemper

## 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](mailto: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

## UP FOR GRABS!!

We're trying to remove some items in the church that we have stored but very seldom if ever use. Some of these items are free on a first come first served basis:

1. We're planning to remove the rug in the antechamber outside the Chapin loft. It measures 7 ½ X 7 ½ feet and has some spots but is in pretty good shape otherwise. It's free if you want it. Take a look.
2. We have a couple long, heavy but very sturdy 4 X 8 foot folding tables that we don't need any more. (We'll keep two for now until we replace them with lighter ones, but two are up for grabs.) Two of these are stored behind the ushers' seats at the back of the sanctuary. These tables are also free.
3. If you can use any of the old folding wooden chairs, we'd like to sell them for \$10 each.

Please contact Kathy Paranya (607-441-3206 or [kparanya@stny.rr.com](mailto:kparanya@stny.rr.com)) if you are interested in any of these items.

—Kathy Paranya for the Aesthetics Committee

**THERE WILL BE NO NEWSLETTER THE WEEK OF CHRISTMAS.  
THE NEXT NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINE WILL BE JANUARY 7.**

**YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO  
SUPPORT UUSO  
SPECIAL PROJECTS**

Each year we are presented with the opportunity to support several special projects that are not funded through our operating budget. You will receive the appeal in the mail or by picking one up on Sundays near the door and Welcome Table.

The board has approved the following items as options for your stewardship. If you are able, please consider a gift to support one or more of these initiatives:

**Preservation Fund:** Chapin Memorial and Olympia Brown House were both constructed in the nineteenth century. The Board established the Preservation Fund to support building repairs and renovations such as newly installed sanctuary carpet. The fund now needs to be replenished for continued upkeep of our beautiful historical buildings.

**Aesthetics Committee:** In response to requests from members, the committee hopes to purchase 16 armchairs (matching the current chairs) for the sanctuary at \$100 each to provide seating for those with physical challenges/trouble standing up. This purchase will enhance our efforts to be a fully accessible community.

**Community Fund Challenge Grant (formerly known as the Endowment Fund):** The interest from this fund provides small grants to UUSO committees and to local nonprofits for work consistent with our UU principles. We are deeply grateful to an anonymous donor who is again providing a challenge grant of up to \$2,000 to match your gifts.

**NEW THIS YEAR! You can make your gifts in honor or memory of someone and a notecard will be sent to the name and address you specify on the response form.**

Thank you in advance for your support of our annual year end appeal.

—The Stewardship and Fundraising Committee



DECEMBER 9 | AFTER SERVICE

**IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!**

*Holiday Workshop*  
&  
**WELCOME BACK CELEBRATION**

*Join us for an afternoon of merry-making and celebration! We'll make holiday crafts and welcome Rev. Craig back from his sabbatical.*

If you'd like to help with the holiday craft portion, please contact Leah Bridgers at [LCBridgers@gmail.com](mailto:LCBridgers@gmail.com) or Julian Pecenco at [jp.pecenco@gmail.com](mailto:jp.pecenco@gmail.com).

## UUSO UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30AM



In this celebration of Thanksgiving, we will consider what it means to be open and welcoming. We will celebrate with bread and cider –

**all are invited to bring a loaf of bread based on their ethnic heritage or family tradition.**

*\*Stay Together Sunday*

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

Worship Associate: Julian Pecenco

Coffee Hour Hosts: Rosemary Summers & Arlana Young

Ushers: Kim Yousey-Elsener & Elayne Mosher Campoli

Chancel Table: Dotty Hudson

Sound System: Paul Carter



Each of us has a story of how we came to UUSO, though I have yet to meet another person who based her spiritual quest on the alphabet.

Come to hear my story.

There may even be a surprise ending!

*\*No Religious Education*

With Music provided by Patrick Rost & Khalil Jade

Worship Associate: Keith Willcox

Coffee Hour Hosts: Pam Strother & Deb Bruce

Ushers: Kim Yousey-Elsener & Sue Troost

Chancel Table: Jane Bachman and the Cookies and Crafts Committee

Sound System: Julian Pecenco

**UNITARIAN  
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**UUSO DEADLINES:**

**UU News Articles:** Deadline for the week of November 28th issue is November 26, 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**

From Kevin Shultz's Climate Change Talk:  
Among the Top Ten Ways to Reduce Climate Change:  
"Switch to a car with better fuel economy. Upgrading from a 20 mpg car to a 40 mpg car keeps 90,000 lbs of CO2 out of the atmosphere over the lifetime of the car."

*"...service is our prayer."*

**INTERESTED IN..**

DECORATING THE CHANCEL TABLE?	→	Alice Siegfried <a href="mailto:alice.pott@icloud.com">alice.pott@icloud.com</a>
USHERING?	→	Kim Yousey-Elsener <a href="mailto:kym1975@yahoo.com">kym1975@yahoo.com</a>
JOINING CHOIR?	→	Music Director Tim Horne <a href="mailto:hornel2@hotmail.com">hornel2@hotmail.com</a>
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