



UUU NEWS

A BIWEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF
THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
SOCIETY OF ONEONTA

Week of November 28, 2018

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MINISTER'S MUSINGS

How time flies!

It seems just yesterday that Rev. Craig started his sabbatical, and now I am days away from delivering my final sermon with you. We've had quite a journey in these past four months – full of joy and sorrow, full of hard conversations and life-affirming experiences. You've learned some things – about yourselves, about our faith, about the world we live in.

And now it is time to reunite with your minister – who has had his own joys and sorrows, who has learned things about himself, his faith, and our world. I will make my way to my own much-needed time off, then will begin a new sabbatical ministry in Kennebunk, Maine – holding them as I have held you, in joy and sorrow, in curiosity and generosity, in kindness and forgiveness.

In my time here, I am most proud of the hard work you all did to write, revise, and finally pass your congregational covenant. The covenant isn't a one-and-done, however. It contains active reminders of how covenant works between you and how to be kind, helpful, and subject to one another. Here is what you affirmed on October 28th:

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

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

We respect and maintain personal boundaries while still promoting community.

We recognize both the necessity and challenge of change.

We expect the best from ourselves and one another.

We recognize the need for confidentiality and discretion and also 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 commitment 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.

It's not easy, this covenant you have affirmed. Behaving as your covenant suggests will require attention and change. It's so easy for us to fall back into old patterns, to rely on old ways of being, to maintain old habits. Covenant – and our faith – isn't easy. But it makes such a difference to know that we can always do better, and support one another as we try to do better, and come back when things go awry; as the Rumi poem says, 'though we've broken our vows a thousand times, come yet again, come.'

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This matters, because if we don't get it right inside our walls, we have no hope of getting it right outside our walls. Because being subject to one another is about family, and friends, and fellow UUSO members, but it's also about strangers. This is about how we treat one another with our policies and our laws. This is how we affirm and promote justice, equity, and compassion. This is how we affirm our first principle – showing others that they matter, seeing them as individuals, listening to their stories and considering their needs.

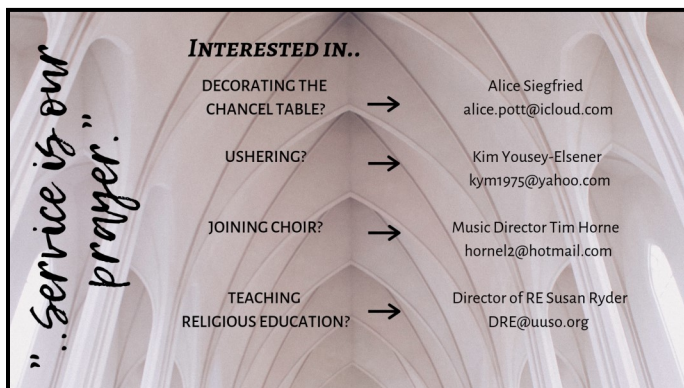
This matters if UUSO is to be the beacon of hope we know it can be. Remember that it is this radical, life-giving message of Unitarian Universalism that draws the circle of love ever wider.

And so as you reunite with Rev. Craig, remember to notice each other's needs and seize the moment to act. Be willing to be uncomfortable in service to something greater than yourselves. Give of yourselves out of love and affection and compassion. Be truly kind to one another. Think before you speak, and speak with openness and generosity.

You have such goodness and love within you – let it shine!

Blessings,

Rev. Kimberley



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

There are many opportunities to participate in holiday festivities at our church. I would especially like to point out the intergenerational “Stories of the Season” and Holiday Workshop planned for Sunday, Dec, 9th. All ages will listen to holiday stories told by Rev. Craig. After the service we will gather together to create holiday decorations and presents. This is one of my favorite Sundays of the year! The stories are fun and congregants of all ages have a chance to enjoy each other’s company. Children, especially, appreciate this time as an opportunity to create just the right present for someone special. The YRUU (Grades 9-12) will be offering one of the workshops.

We will hold our Traditional Christmas family-friendly celebration at 6:30PM on December 24th. (This will be followed by a Meditative Christmas Candlelight Service at 9PM)

The RE Program is collecting warm mittens, gloves, hats, and scarves for donation to Oneonta Family Services. This is a tradition that we have included in our holiday festivities for many years. Please consider bringing warm accessories to the Holiday Services on Christmas Eve or perhaps on Christmas morning. Look for the donation basket near the small Christmas tree at the back of the sanctuary. This basket will be available for your donations from Sunday, Dec. 2, through Sunday, Jan. 6.

There will be no Religious Education Classes on December 28th although the Nursery will be open for those up to age 10. Children are also always welcome to attend the service in the sanctuary.

The following is from a “Meditation on Winter Celebrations” by Rev. Dr. Elizabeth M Strong:

...Let us be embraced by the strength and power of this sacred space that we each bring as we create this beloved community.

Let joy and sorrow join in the fullness of our living.

Let the power and strength we embody join us together as we move through the seasons of celebration into a new year with a new vision of hope for peace on earth.

In Peace,

Susan Ryder
UUSO Director of Religious Education

MUFFINS FOR MALI AND MORE THE NEXT FOUR SUNDAYS AT UUSO

It’s win--win when you buy some delicious muffins, beautiful jewelry and handicrafts, you also help Youchaou’s School in Mali West Africa! We were delighted when Youchaou visited us here this summer. Stop by our table in the front of the sanctuary after the service next Sunday and see the new jewelry and carvings he added to our offerings.

—The Mali Education Group

ADOPT-A-FAMILY

The UUSO is participating again this year in our local Family Service Association's adopt-a-family Christmas project. We will provide holiday gifts and other help for three local families. Please take a tag or two off the tree in the back of the sanctuary and help us make this holiday season a joyous one for our three adopted families. Please return gifts, unwrapped and with the accompanying tag attached, by Sunday, Dec 9. Thank you to all who plan on participating in this holiday project, and for the continued generosity displayed by this amazing congregation. We greatly appreciate you all.

-- Rhiannon Ham & Emily Phillips, for Social Action Team

CELEBRATING OUR SHARED MINISTRY

As Reverend Craig's sabbatical winds down and we look forward to welcoming him back on December 9, we are extremely grateful to both Reverend Kimberley and to the Sabbatical Committee for helping to ensure that our ministries – and the practical doings that support them - have remained strong over the past four months.

John Bagby provided essential leadership in chairing the Sabbatical Committee, convening its meetings, and keeping on top of congregational needs. Evelyn Warren has served as staff team leader and has represented the staff on the Sabbatical Committee. Her commitment to UUSO has shone brightly as she has worked to serve the needs of the congregation, discern which issues should come to the Committee for discussion, and represent us to the broader community. Suzy Beddoe has been a warm and compassionate provider and coordinator of pastoral care, and together with Reverend Kimberley, Evelyn and many in our community, has ensured support for members and friends.. Thanks to Pam Strother, representative of the Worship Team, our pulpit has been filled with wonderful guests and members when Reverend Kimberley has not been in it.

The collective UUSO response of stepping up, caring for each other, worshipping, having fun, and getting business done over these past months has truly demonstrated the depths and capacity of our shared ministry.

With gratitude,
The Board of Trustees

DINING FOR WOMEN



The Oneonta chapter of Dining For women will meet Sunday December 2, 2018, at 6:00 PM in the sanctuary. Please join us and bring a dish to share. Cold drinks will be provided as usual. Our program of study and giving this month is GRAVIS, an organization working in the Thar Desert in Northern India. The title of the DFW sponsored program is IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE THAR DESERT, INDIA. GRAVIS will use the \$49,000 raised for them to address the health aspects of women and girls with a specific focus on their sexual and reproductive health status.

CANDLELIGHT DINNER REPORT

Thirty four adults and eight children enjoyed dinners Nov. 10-11 hosted by Vickie Andritz and Bob Rightmire, Kim and Nathan Yousey-Elsener, Rosalind Thomas, Donna Behrendt, Suzanne Miller and Walter VomSaal. Be ready to sign up to be a host or guest January 26-27, 2019. —Alice Siegfried

COOKIES AND CRAFTS, THIS SATURDAY!

The 31st Annual Cookies and Crafts will be taking place this Saturday, December 1st, from 10am to 3pm. This year's event will again showcase the talent and creativity of several local artisans. We are excited to have with us some returning favorites as well as some amazing new faces. Be sure to stop in and check out the wide assortment of holiday crafts. There is sure to be a something for almost everyone on your gift list. We have everything from pottery, soaps and lotions, ornaments and much much more!

While shopping, be sure to stop by our Holiday Cafe for bite to eat! There you will be able to warm up with a bowl of delicious vegetarian chili or savory corn chowder. Plus we also have biscuits and muffins to help satisfy your taste buds.

Of course one of the highlights of this annual event is the cookies! Oh the cookies! Once again we will have a variety of wonderful tasty treats! This year our cookie bakers are hard at work making beautiful, delicious cookies that are sure to satisfy your sweet tooth. Not only do we have our plates of cookies for sale but also decorative tins to help make your cookie gifting that much easier.

So be sure to stop in and see us this Saturday, December 1st, for 31st annual Cookies and Crafts. We promise you will not be disappointed! See you there!

Circle of Life

Announcing the death of Debbie Misner



UUSO Friends,

It is with sadness that I announce the death of one of our members, Debbie Misner. Debbie had been a member of UUSO for many years and was known and loved by many in our community. She suffered a cardiac event two weeks ago and was held in care at Albany Medical Center where she peacefully died early last Thursday morning, on November 22nd. She was surrounded by love and with her husband and children by her side. As always, please feel free to reach out to Rev. Kimberley or Suzy Beddoe if this news has hit you particularly hard. My condolences to Debbie's family, her friends, and all those who knew her. May the memories of her life be a comfort to us as we grieve her passing.

You can read her obituary here, or find it on the Daily Star website, under obituaries: <http://obituaries.thedailystar.com/obituary/deborah-misner-1946-2018-1071552494>

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Debbie's name to NAMI or the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.

There will be a memorial service in celebration of her life at UUSO on Saturday, Dec. 8th, at 4PM. If you would like to assist with the service, please contact Jane Bachman.

UUSO UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES
SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30AM

What to Expect
When You're Expecting

Rev. Kimberley Debus
UUSO - December 2



December is a time of waiting.
The holidays we celebrate
—Winter Solstice, Christmas, and Hanukkah —
are all connected to anticipation, hope, and expectation.
Sometimes the waiting is good,
but sometimes it's difficult.
Together we'll explore what it means to wait
and dwell in possibility.

**Start Together Sunday*
With music provided by Mark VanLaeys, the UU Choir, and
Music Director Tim Horne.
Worship Associate: Julian Pecenco

Coffee Hour Hosts: Kim Elsener
Ushers: Sue Troost & Sallie Han
Chancel Table: Suzanne Miller
Sound System: Paul Carter

Stories of the
Season

Rev. Craig Schwalenberg

12/11, Service at 10:30AM, Unitarian Universalist Society of Oneonta



There are many stories told during this
season of holy days and holidays.
Tales of hope and love, joy
and generosity.
Come, let us share a tale or two.

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

Coffee Hour Hosts: Sabbatical Committee/Board of Trustees
Ushers: Kim Yousey-Elsener & Sue Troost
Chancel Table: Grace Smith
Sound System: Nathan Elsener

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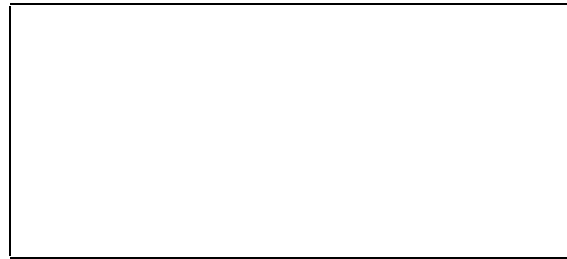
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UUSO DEADLINES:

UU News Articles: Deadline for the week of December 12th
issue is December 10, 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

Green Tip comes just in time for the Holiday Workshop.....

Create Eco-Art

Take advantage of the cozy long nights, blow off some steam and get lost in your creativity - all at the same time! Find a unique and meaningful way to repurpose cast off materials that would otherwise be thrown out. One great tip to create eco-art is to recycle last year's cards into gift tags or cut shapes to create an entirely new card. Use serrated scissors to create all kinds of appealing shapes and sizes.