



UU NEWS

A BIWEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF

THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
SOCIETY OF ONEONTA

Week of January 9, 2019

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MINISTER'S MUSINGS

Taking Care of One Another

For a few years now, we've been trying to improve our pastoral care program at UUSO. One of the areas identified as needing the most help, was our response to those who need a bit of pastoral care in the form of a service. When someone has been sick, or has had an accident, or they need a ride, or need help with some basic task; we are usually quite good at providing assistance. But, we've come to realize that our success in providing help to folks in these situations is somewhat dependent on how well connected they are in the UUSO community. This isn't unusual and it isn't anyone's fault. It's just the way things naturally work. But, since we are committed to caring for one another, once we know there are people who are falling through the cracks, we do need to take steps to build a better system of pastoral care.

The Committee on Ministry, in looking at this issue, recommended that we create a database of UUSO members, their location, and the services they could provide to other members in need. This database would be maintained by our Office Administrator, Evelyn, and when someone needed help, she could easily reach out to the nearest folks that could be of assistance. While I was on sabbatical, Evelyn did create the database. And, per my request, she created a survey to gather the data we would need to help provide care when it was requested. Unfortunately, only 17% of the congregation responded to the survey. Which leaves us right where we started in this process. Why haven't more people filled out the survey?

- One person told me they found the idea impersonal - if we wanted their help, we should just ask them directly. Which is exactly the plan. But we don't know who to ask until we have your name and what you are willing and able to provide.

- Perhaps you are too busy to take the survey. The holidays are a busy time. But the holidays are over now and the survey takes 2 minutes, I'm told.

- People may not have heard about the survey. That is always a strong possibility. It happens all the time. Newsletter, announcements, website, Facebook... and things still go unnoticed. But if you are reading this, you know now.

So, help us bolster our Pastoral Care program at UUSO. You can find the survey at:
<https://goo.gl/forms/fD9sk5zwLzbG5HvU2>

If you can't access the internet, just give the office a call and speak to Evelyn. She'll be happy to take down your answers and enter your information into the Pastoral Care Provider database. Together, we can be better about taking care of one another.

Taking Care of One Another – Part 2

The federal government shutdown has gone on for 16 days as I write this article. No one knows how long it will go on. I will not speak to the politics or the morality of this shutdown here. I will say, I know it is adversely affecting some members in our UUSO community. If you find yourself in dire straits because of the shut down, please contact me immediately. We, as a community, will find a way to help you out.

Cooperatively,
Rev. Craig

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Every January the Religious Education Committee leads a series of workshops that focus on a topic and end with presenting an intergenerational service for the congregation. Any participant from K-12th grade is welcome to attend all or any of these sessions as well as to participate in our intergenerational service on January 27th. It is also a great time to bring a friend. This January's topic is about our connections with animals.

The first workshop was held on January 6th and was about the beginnings of human relationships with wolves and dogs. SUNY Oneonta Anthropology Professor Renee Walker led our first workshop. She has found through her own research, as well as the work of others, that some wolves and humans developed an interdependence that eventually evolved into the relationship with dogs that we have today. She showed a video about research that has been done with silver foxes in the former Soviet Union begun by Dmitry Belyaev in the 1950's. It showed how foxes who were selectively bred (just on the basis of interacting well with humans) had evolved in just ten years into generations of foxes who were unafraid of people, had different colors and patterns of fur, floppy ears and barked like dogs. This showed us how ancient peoples may have selectively bred wolf puppies that eventually came to be the dogs we know today. She had real skulls for us to compare. The largest was a wolf skull with large fangs. The middle sized skull was from a medium-sized modern dog and the smallest was from a pug-nosed modern dog. The children passed the skulls around and commented on similarities and differences. Dr. Walker led a discussion about the many ways gentle wolves (and later dogs) could have been helpful to Indians who lived in the United States more than a thousand years ago. The children were fascinated and had lots of ideas to share. They talked about all the ways that wolves and people would have benefitted from their relationship and all the ways dogs help us today.

Our next workshop on January 13 will be about domesticated animals who are not usually our companions but provide us with other things we need such as wool. Our guest will be Sarah Orton-Leddy, an alpaca farmer. There may even be a alpaca visitor if the weather cooperates. Another example of this would be how we get honey from bees. We won't have a bee visitor.

The final workshop will be on January 20 and will be about Service Animals. Our guest will be Cheryl DeDecker along with Spirit, who is a Service Dog. We'll learn how Cheryl and Rev. Craig trained Spirit to be a professional service animal. We'll enjoy their company and learn about all the things a service animal can do for people.

There will be a Worship Service Practice and Pizza Party at Chapin on Saturday, January 26th from 5:30 to 7pm followed by an intergenerational service on Sunday January 27th called, "All Creatures Big and Small".

As part of January Intersession, we will be collecting items to donate to the Susquehanna SPCA. Anything from their wish list will help them in their work in our community. According to their Facebook page, the mission of this organization is "to bring about a time when there are no more homeless animals and every companion animal will be guaranteed a loving home. We (they) work to accomplish this goal through our (their) spay/neuter, adoption and education programs."

The following items are on their wish list: Paper Towels, 39 Gallon Garbage Bags, Method Brand Floor Cleaner, Dish Detergent, Hoses and Hose Nozzles, Dry and Canned Dog and Cat Food and Treats, Puppy and Kitten Food, Blankets, Towels, etc., Pet Friendly Ice Melt, Martingale Collars, Cat & Dog Toys, Clay Cat Litter, Tractor Supply Pine Pellet Litter, Sponges, HE Laundry Detergent, and Pine Sol.

There is a box at the right front of the sanctuary, under the banner, to leave any donated items.

We will be meeting at the Olympia Brown House for our January Sessions. We will point out the children's books of the Mara Kern Library and encourage children and their families to check out and return books before and after class. If you haven't yet looked at this library you will be amazed at all the great books you will find there. There is a section of the library for grown-ups as well.

We thank Dr. Walker for leading a fabulous first Sunday of our January Sessions and look forward to the workshops ahead.

In gratitude for the many animals in our lives,
Susan Ryder
UUSO Director of Religious Education

THANK YOU FOR UUSO'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO FAMILY SERVICES' CHRISTMAS JOYS!

UUSO's contribution to Family Services Adopt-A-Family Christmas Project was a huge success, thanks to your generosity. We took care of 3 families with 2 children each, and were able to fulfill every wish, plus extras! Thank you all for your continued support and generosity for this annual project! And thanks to co-coordinator on this project, Rhiannon Ham. Special thanks to Joe Knapp, who provided lots of assistance with carrying and sorting, and even shopping!

-- Emily Phillips, for UUSO Social Action Team

NEW YEAR, NEW DINNER!

Please join us for the first round of Candlelight Dinners in 2019. Dinners will take place on Saturday, January 26 and Sunday, January 27. You can choose to be a host who provides place settings and drinks, or be a guest who provides part of the meal. This is a great way to get involved and get to know others in the congregation, both important pieces of our new covenant! Sign up with Justine Roefs or Alice Siegfried after church on January 13 and January 20, or contact us directly. We hope to add you to our list!

—Justine - 607-267-0020, justine.roefs@yahoo.com, and Alice - 607-432-8673, alice.pott@icloud.com

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RENEWABLE ENERGIES: 21ST CENTURY SOLUTIONS

Join Concerned Citizens of Oneonta to discuss this important issue on Thursday, January 17, 2019, 7 to 9 PM, at Elm Park Methodist Church, 401 Chestnut Street, Oneonta. Panel presentation followed by Q and A, information on Solstice Otsego County and Heat Smart Otsego. Topics include: Economic development, renewable energy possibilities, existing conservation and renewable energy programs, different energy futures, job creation with fossil fuels vs. renewables, the social costs associated with fossil fuel energy use, energy policy-making in local government, and the Clean Energy Community and Climate Smart Community programs.

Panelists: Karl Seeley, Ph.D. Professor of Economics, Hartwick College; Dan Buttermann, MBA, Analytics Manager NYCM Insurance, Gore Climate Reality Project, TEDx Oneonta, Candidate for NYS Assembly 121st District; and Leslie Orzetti, Ph.D. Executive Director, Otsego County Conservation Association, Member, County Energy Taskforce, Otsego County Chamber of Commerce Energy Committee.

—Submitted by Kathy Shimberg

ASSESSMENT OF OUR WORSHIP

Come lend your voice as the Board once again seeks your input regarding our UUSO ministry. On Sunday January 27 beginning at noon we will be facilitating focus group sessions and asking questions in line with the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach. This model helps us acknowledge our strengths and build upon them. The topic for this assessment is Worship. Our planning subcommittee will be publishing the questions ahead of time for you to think about and will also be asking you to sign up so that we can organize groups and match them with facilitators. All youth 15 or older and adult members and friends are welcome join to the focus groups. Childcare will be provided.

—Karen Palmer, President
Board of Trustees

PLEASE PICK UP YOUR CONTAINERS

There are a number of empty containers on the table in the Chapin kitchen, left over from Cookies and Crafts and perhaps other events. Please collect them by Sunday, January 13th. Any that are left after that date will be disposed of. Thanks for your help with this. We really need to keep the kitchen clean and tidy.

—Pam Strother

CIRCLE OF LIFE

Several members of our UUSO community suffered deaths in their immediate family recently. We hold them all in our hearts and in our thoughts as they grieve. Ben Friedell's mother died after a time of illness. April Gate's mother also died this past week after a long illness, a memorial service was held on Monday. Corena Martin, who was a former member of the congregation, Small Group Ministry member and devoted RE Committee member and teacher, and friend to many here, passed away on 1/5/19. It was her 57th birthday. We will publish information about Corena's Celebration of Life service when it becomes available.

OUR GRATITUDES

If you are in the social hour after the service, you may notice a new piece of furniture. A low-to-the-ground coffee table with folding legs. The table was conceived of and built by Rich Stelling to make things easier for those who would rather sit during social hour. As always, Rich did an amazing bit of craftsmanship. If you want a closer look, sit down and have a conversation with the other folks sitting around it. Thank you, Rich, for making our space more useful and welcoming!

Speaking of new furniture, we also have new places to sit in the Olympia Brown House parlor. Thanks to Joe Stillman for donating a new couch to replace our old one and to Duncan and Grace Smith for the new leather chair (Rev. Craig's favorite color, too!). The couch needed a bit of fixing, but Duncan was kind enough to take care of it and then delivered and set the couch up. (There is also an artificial fireplace heater in the parlor thanks to our Aesthetics Committee.)

Did you enjoy the holiday decorations and the tree in the Chapin Memorial Sanctuary? Then be sure to thank Pam Strother and Brian Bendlin for the tree and Evelyn Warren and Cathi Wiltsey for trimming it (and the un-decorating and removal, respectively, too.) The elves of the Cookies and Crafts team were also responsible for much of the holiday finery. Thank you, all!

—Rev. Craig

Thank you so much for the warm clothing donated during last month's holiday season. We were able to give the Oneonta Family Services Association: 28 pairs of gloves and mittens, 11 hats, 2 scarves, and 8 pairs of socks. These were exceptionally beautiful as well as being warm. I know they will be much appreciated.

—Susan Ryder, DRE

CHANCEL TABLE JAN. 20

The worship service on January 20th, "A Wave of Women", will focus on the Women's March last year, the effects it had on our country, and where we are headed next. Rev. Craig has suggested the chancel table be decorated with items related to the Women's March and/or items from other woman-themed, political actions in the past year. If you have something to contribute to the table, please contact Alice Siegfried or bring it to church early January 20th.

—Alice, 432-8673 or alice.pott@icloud.com

The Treasurer's report is usually presented at the October Congregational meeting but this year that didn't happen due to an technical transmission mishap. Here is the report with some current updates.

Treasurer's Report

January 6, 2019

The UUSO is in good fiscal condition at this time. There is adequate cash flow and the operating expenses are, overall, on target for the amount of the fiscal year that has transpired so far. Pledge contributions are also commensurate with half of the fiscal year finished.

There have been some personnel changes over the past calendar year, with a new bookkeeper, two new Treasurers and recently, the resignation of the current bookkeeper due to personal life issues. The Board of Trustees, Finance committee and Minister are actively working to resolve the challenges related to these changes, as such:

- The Finance committee has created an Ad Hoc committee to oversee the review of procedures which will begin in January and continue through March. All proposed changes to procedures will be discussed with all who are involved with the procedure under review and changes will be approved by both the Finance committee and the Board of Trustees before implementation. Interim progress reports will be posted in the church newsletter and a final report will be presented at the May congregational meeting.
- The Board has created a Search Team to recruit a new bookkeeper. Advertisement will begin in early January and the plan is to have a new bookkeeper hired by the end of February. In the meantime, the Treasurer and members of the Finance committee are covering the duties of the bookkeeper. The patience and understanding of the Congregation during these next few months is much appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,
Arlana Young
Treasurer

UUSO UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30AM

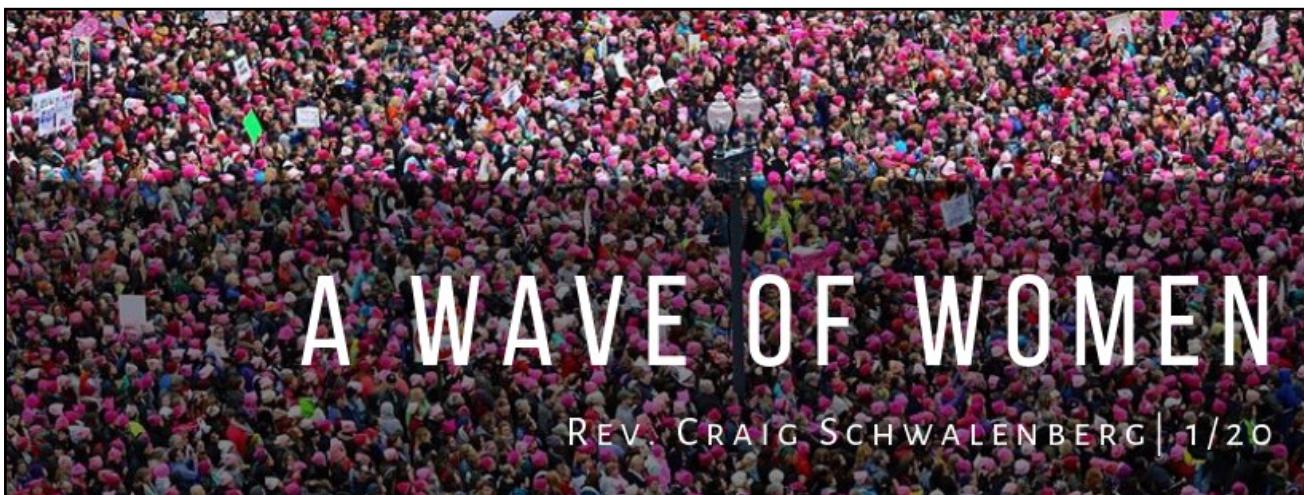


Our first principle affirms and promotes
the inherent worth and dignity
of each person.

What if we decided to widen the circle to
"Every Being"?

**Children to OBH for Intersession*
With music by the UUSO Choir and Music Director
Tim Horne.
Worship Associate: Julian Pecenco

Coffee Hour Host: Kim Yousey-Elsener
Ushers: Sue Troost & Bob Brzozowski
Chancel Table: Dotty Hudson
Sound System: Nathan Elsener



In November, we elected a record number
of women to Congress after a record
number of women ran for office at every
level of government.

What effect will this wave of women
have?

**Children to OBH for Intersession*
With music by Kathy Shimberg
Worship Associate: Kevin Schultz

Coffee Hour Hosts: Liz Jacob-Carter & Jenny Bagby
Ushers: Ben Friedell & Kim Yousey-Elsener
Chancel Table: The Congregation
Sound System: Julian Pecenco

**UNITARIAN
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SOCIETY
OF ONEONTA**

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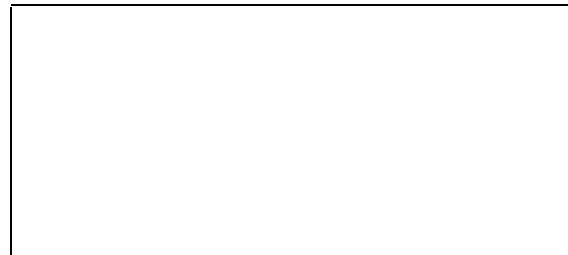
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@UUSOneonta

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UUSO DEADLINES:

UU News Articles: Deadline for the week of January 23rd issue is January 21st, 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

Sustainable Land Bonds: Investing in Nature for Climate

This may be a little “high finance” for some, but the concept of helping 3rd world countries use more sustainable land practices to reduce carbon emissions through investment in Land Bonds is a sound concept with potentially great positive impact. The Nature Conservancy has written a comprehensive report to explain this.

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-insights/perspectives/sustainable-land-bonds/>