



# UUU NEWS

A BIWEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF  
THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
SOCIETY OF ONEONTA

Week of April 3, 2019

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Minister's Article	1
Religious Education	2
Society News	3
Worship Services	6

## MINISTER'S MUSINGS

*Words Rev. Craig shared during the worship service on Sunday 3/31/19, edited slightly:*

I'd like to share my thoughts about the results of our stewardship campaign. I speak only as your minister, not for the staff, the Board of Trustees, or the Stewardship Committee.

The results of our stewardship campaign are disheartening. While our membership numbers are at the highest since I was called as your minister, this is the largest shortfall we've ever had...with a goal only 1% higher than last years pledge amount. I want to stress that this result in no way reflects on the members of the stewardship committee, their dedication, or the work they have put into this campaign. This is not a failure on their part-- though I suspect some of them will feel it is.

Some members of our community have had to lower their pledges due to changes in their financial circumstances, and I do not fault or blame them in any way. I appreciate the financial commitment they can make, and their willingness to do so, even as they struggle with other financial challenges. I do not believe our shortfall is due to these reductions or do to widespread economic downturn. The generosity of this congregation and your ability to give, continues to be demonstrated on a weekly basis, when a need is identified.... and you believe in the cause.

I believe our failure to reach our goal to this year, is due, primarily, to a loss of Faith.

I fear the results of the stewardship campaign convey a message that we have fallen out of right relationship with one another, and that some have lost faith in our shared ministries, and in the leadership of this congregation-- something I am willing to take a lion share of the responsibility for.

The last year has been a rough one. We've made a lot of changes. Some of those changes will be for the better. Some, may turn out otherwise. Change is a part of growing.

But in our making changes, we've made some mistakes. We've failed to consider the wider impact, and in some cases, the deeper impact of our actions on individuals. Feelings have been hurt and harm has resulted. I'm truly sorry for my contributions to these harms.

Some of you, with love, compassion, and kindness, shared your concerns about my failings with me. I want to thank you for that. Truly, I appreciate your trust in my willingness and ability to here your hard truths. Others, have expressed their disappointment with me, with much less kindness and compassion. Biting, barbed criticism is painful and hard to hear, but I can't use the lack of kindness to completely disregard this feedback.

I have not been there for some of you when you needed me. I have not been the leader some of you hoped for. I have faltered in my role as staff supervisor, struggling to find the right balance between providing support and demanding accountability.

My sabbatical allowed me the time and the distance, to explore the strengths and the weaknesses of my ministry. Upon my return, I re-dedicated myself to forging deeper connections, sought out more feedback, listened more, and demanded more of myself and of our staff. I've taken steps to address the feedback I've received. I can feel a difference. I can see a difference. But Faith lost, isn't restored that easily or that quickly.

And so here we are. I don't know where we will go

*(Continued on page 3)*

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## Cultivating Curiosity: A Day in the Life of the Explorers Class

This spring in Explorers (grades K- 3), we are investigating the contributions of famous Unitarian Universalists. The lessons are designed to deepen children's understanding of our UU principles while sparking their natural curiosity about people, inventions, and ideas.

Our day opens to quiet activities as children enter the room, sign-in, and greet each other, some clutching stuffed animals, others running to a favorite chair at the table. One day we color detailed stained glass windows in preparation for learning about famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Another day the children pore over diagrams of Rube Goldberg machines, laughing with each other over the "self operating napkin," where the soup-eater's elbow triggers a chain reaction of toasters, clocks, and rockets, ending with face-cleaning swipe. Some children sketch their own machines and are bursting to share them with each other. *Mine's a toothbrushing machine! Mine's a shopping machine! It gets stuff from the shelves and puts it into a basket!*

We light our chalice, gathering in a circle for a short discussion of the week's famous Unitarian Universalist. We learn more about each person's contributions, sometimes forgotten from history. We marvel at Lewis Howard Latimer, an African-American inventor and master credited with improving the lightbulb filament and drafting drawings for Alexander Graham Bell's telephone patent. Questions bubble out: *Why haven't we heard of Lewis Howard Latimer?* This leads to a discussion of who makes it into history books and why and what it means to invent something. Can you invent something by yourself? Another day we learn about Fanny Farmer, the famous instructor of cooking and nutrition who was the first person to use exact measurements in recipes. More questions: *How much is a "pinch" of salt? Is my "pinch" bigger than hers? Another day we study the designs of architect Frank Lloyd Wright. What is an architect? How old was Frank Lloyd Wright when he died?* This leads to math problems sketched on a scrap of paper and more debate. Sometimes we read a book, such as Iggy Peck, Architect. Like Wright, Iggy creates buildings from the materials he finds around him. The children study his bridge, made of shoelaces, lunchboxes, and sticks. That's a suspension bridge, one observes. The others agree.

The children are soon ready to move, and we try some more active activities. Eager hands help prepare cream scones from Fanny Farmer's original recipe. We split up the work so everyone gets a chance to crack eggs (some for the first time!), level flour and sugar, and stir the batter (ten strokes to a turn!). Another day, after studying pictures of cantilevered buildings, the children make their own imaginative stacks and inventions out of graham crackers and frosting. One Explorer makes the world's first cantilevered hammerhead shark. In honor of Lewis Howard Latimer, the children begin a long investigation of tin can telephones to see which types of cups and yarn work best to make a telephone. Explorers sprawl out all over the carpet, working in pairs, testing fishing lines, fuzzy yarn, plastic cups, and metal cans to see which works best to share whispered ideas across the room. Cooperation and collaboration bloom in the room as they learn from each other's work: *How did that fishing line work? This yarn doesn't work at all! Can I try your phone?*

I am reminded that a great RE class is a congregation in miniature, creating, learning, questioning, and working together. I am inspired by the children's inventions, creativity, and support of one another.

We gather in a closing circle to close the day and extinguish our chalice, reminding ourselves that *we will return, knowing that here, we will always find the hands of friends.*

Carolyn Cooper  
RE Teacher, Explorers Class

*(Continued from page 1)*

from here I'm not sure how we will make up the difference between what we have pledged and what we wish to do. Either we will raise more money or we will have to make some significant cuts in our budget. I don't know which path we will choose. But I'm your minister-- and I'm committed to walking this path with you, learning and growing and working together.

I believe in this congregation. I believe in the work we do. I believe, I truly believe, we make a difference in the world, in people's lives. And I believe we will find a way forward and back into right relationship, answering the call of our Faith together.

Thank you allowing me to share my thoughts with you, and for the privilege of being your minister.

Sincerely,

Rev. Craig Schwalenberg  
revcraig@uuso.org



The Oneonta chapter of Dining For Women will meet Sunday April 7, 2019, at 6:00 PM in the sanctuary. DFW is an educational and fundraising organization focusing on issues concerning women and girls in third world countries. Our program of study and giving this month is MindLeaps, Building Our Bodies & Our Lives, in Nouakchott, Mauritania. This project will draw young girls off the streets and out of prostitution through MindLeaps' highly popular dance program. The girls will also receive remedial education, psychosocial counseling, and nutritional support. This project provides 120 girls growing up in urban poverty with the opportunity to defy cultural expectations and leap forward in life. Please join us and bring a dish to share. Cold drinks will be provided as usual. —Linda Wilcox, (607) 433-2985

### **SPRING CHALICE CIRCLE**

Rev. Craig will be facilitating a short-term Chalice Circle this Spring quarter. Chalice Circles are also known as Covenant Groups and Small Group Ministry. This Chalice Circle is open to anyone who would like to get to know others in our community while exploring our spiritual depths. Those experienced with Small Group Ministry and those considering it for the first time are equally welcome. We'll start with a brief, structured check-in, then share a reading on a chosen topic, and then have an attentive discussion of the topic. The Chalice Circles will take place on Fridays from 10a - 11:30a on 4/12, 4/19, 4/26, 5/10, 5/17, 5/31, 6/7, and 6/14, and will meet in the OBH Parlor/Mara Kern Library. It is important that participants commit to coming to at least 6 of the 8 sessions. The Chalice Circle will be limited to 10 participants. If you would like to participate in this short-term Chalice Circle, please contact Rev. Craig.

### **GETTING TO KNOW UU**

Want to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and UUSO? Interested in meeting other people new to the community? Considering membership? Then please join us for this year's Getting to Know UU! Rev. Craig Schwalenberg will present this three-part series. Whether you're planning to sign the membership book or simply curious to learn more about our congregation and its history, you are welcome to join us for conversation and fellowship. Childcare will be provided upon request.

Meetings will be held Saturdays from 10:00 am- 12:00 pm at the Olympia Brown House on the following dates: 4/13, 4/20, 5/11

Please RSVP by contacting Rev. Craig or Evelyn, our Office Administrator.

**MAY 4 and 5**—Hope you can join one of the next **CANDLELIGHT DINNERS** as a guest or host. Early bird sign-up! Please call or e-mail Justine Roefs or Alice Siegfried.

## RESULTS OF THE 2018 YEAR END APPEAL

Our congregation really stepped up this year with our annual year end appeal. Together we have raised over \$2,300 more than last year. The Community Fund received a generous matching gift of \$1,785 from an anonymous donor and we raised enough to buy chairs with arms for the sanctuary and other rooms in our buildings. Additionally, we have replenished the Preservation Fund so that we can steward our beautiful historic buildings responsibly.

Including the distribution of gifts to the General Fund, the total gifts by fund were:

Preservation Fund \$6,067  
 Armchair Fund \$2,095  
 Community Fund \$5,926  
 TOTAL \$14,088

Many thanks to the following people who generously donated to the 2018 Year End Appeal.

Mary & Ed Ambrose  
 Larry Armstrong & Suzanne Beddoe  
 Brigitte Beehler  
 Donna Behrendt  
 Steve Berman  
 Deborah Blue  
 Yolanda Bush & Jennifer Hyypio  
 Liz Jacob-Carter & Paul Carter  
 Paul Conway  
 Eta Davidson  
 Elaine Downing  
 Carol Elder  
 Ben Friedell  
 Dennis Fowler

April Gates & Judy Tator  
 Julia Gregory  
 Doug Hallberg  
 Jack & Norma Lee Havens  
 Peter & Eileen Hill  
 Annemarie Hosnedl  
 Sue Hutchison  
 Claudia Koeppel  
 Florence Loomis  
 Suzanne Miller & Walter vom Saal  
 Karen Palmer  
 Spike & Kathy Paranya  
 Kari Reynolds  
 Marie Rudloff

Karl & Kate Seeley  
 Jean & Joseph Seroka  
 Kathy Shimberg  
 Alice Siegfried  
 Duncan & Grace Smith  
 Cynthia Squires  
 Pam Strother  
 Rosemary Summers  
 Molly Swain  
 Rosalind Thomas  
 James & Viola Lane Foundation  
 The Three Treasures Zen Center

## COMMITTEE/TEAM HIGHLIGHT: FUN TEAM NEEDS YOU

Many of the most memorable events at the UUSO aren't connected to the worship service, small group ministries, or social action projects. Instead, those events happen because of the Fun Team.



The Fun Team has a couple of different sub-groups under its umbrella. Anthony and Justine Roefs are responsible for game night, where anyone with a desire can come play the latest board games or old favorites with a like-minded group. Justine works with Alice Siegfried to organize our candlelight suppers, where one UU-er hosts an evening meal full of conversation. Leah Bridgers and Julian Pecenco are Team Winter Festivities. They helm the Holiday Workshops, which are full of crafts and snacks, and the Thanksgiving Meal, which is full of turkey and leaves the crowd stuffed.

Currently, the Fun Team is under Rev. Craig's purview — but a chair who is willing to be the director of fun would be welcome.

## SAWDUST FROM THE BOARD

The Board met on March 27 at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary. We approved the BOT meeting minutes from our online video conference call on 3/8/19 (postponed from 2/27/19 due to the weather). We also reviewed staff and Treasurer reports.

### Focus on our Intergenerational Vision

The Board recognizes intergenerational efforts as a key component of our vision to be a “church for all ages”. We discussed this topic and agreed to pursue three actions:

1. Host Congregational Listening Session(s) on this topic.
2. Consider the possibility of a multigenerational choir.
3. Update our brochure that is currently in our hymnals on intergenerational harmony during
4. worship services.

### Minister’s Vacations/Study Leaves

Per our UUSO Minister’s Agreement the Board approved the Minister’s vacations and study leaves planned for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

### Bylaws/Policy

We reviewed changes to the bylaws recommended by the Bylaws Committee and approved them to be brought to the congregation during the May Annual meeting. We also approved procedures for our safety deposit box and a revised Data Privacy Policy (<http://uuso.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Privacy-Policy.pdf>) If you’d like a paper copy, please contact Evelyn in the church office.

### Sounding Board

Leah Bridgers, who currently serves on the Nominating Committee, requested that the Board consider how people’s interests can be recognized in terms of recruiting them for a service opportunity that would both match their gifts and feed their spirit. Are some people overlooked for a particular role? Are some being approached too often for areas that don’t interest them? Is going through the directory and choosing people based on our knowledge of them the best way to recruit people for service? We will continue to consider these questions.

### Budget

The board is making salary recommendations to the Finance Committee for the upcoming budget planning process based on a recent report from the Personnel Committee which reviewed the latest UUA Fair Compensation guidelines. The Board also acknowledged \$1400 donated by Solstice for those of us who subscribed to the Laurens solar farm. This will be used for expenses this year that go beyond our revenue. If not used, the amount will be added to our Reserve.

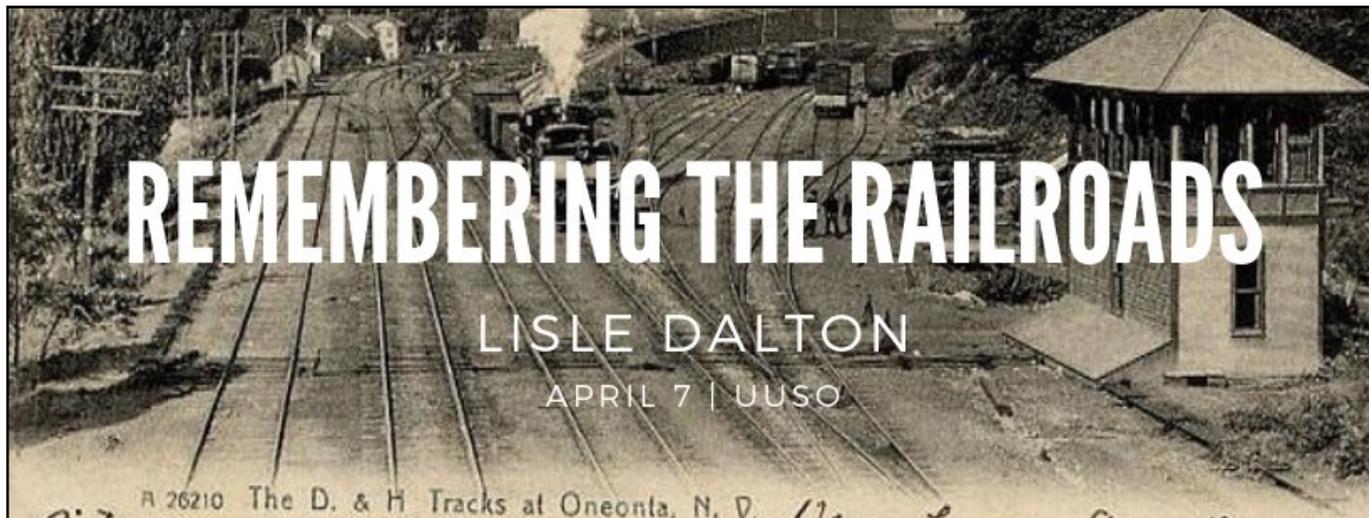
### Next Board Meeting

Our next BOT meeting will be on April 24, 2019 at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary. Congregants are welcome to observe. We will hold the Sounding Board on April 21 (Easter Sunday) after the service to hear any comments, questions, or concerns to be brought to the Board.

### BACKPACK BUDDIES

The need continues for non-perishable food and personal-care items for Otsego/Delaware Counties' Backpack Buddies program. Please continue to bring your kid-friendly food and personal-care donations to the collection basket at the front of the sanctuary on the first Sunday of each month. Cash or checks also welcome: Please make out checks to NENY Regional Food Bank, with "Backpack Buddies Otsego/Delaware Counties" in the memo line. Thank you!

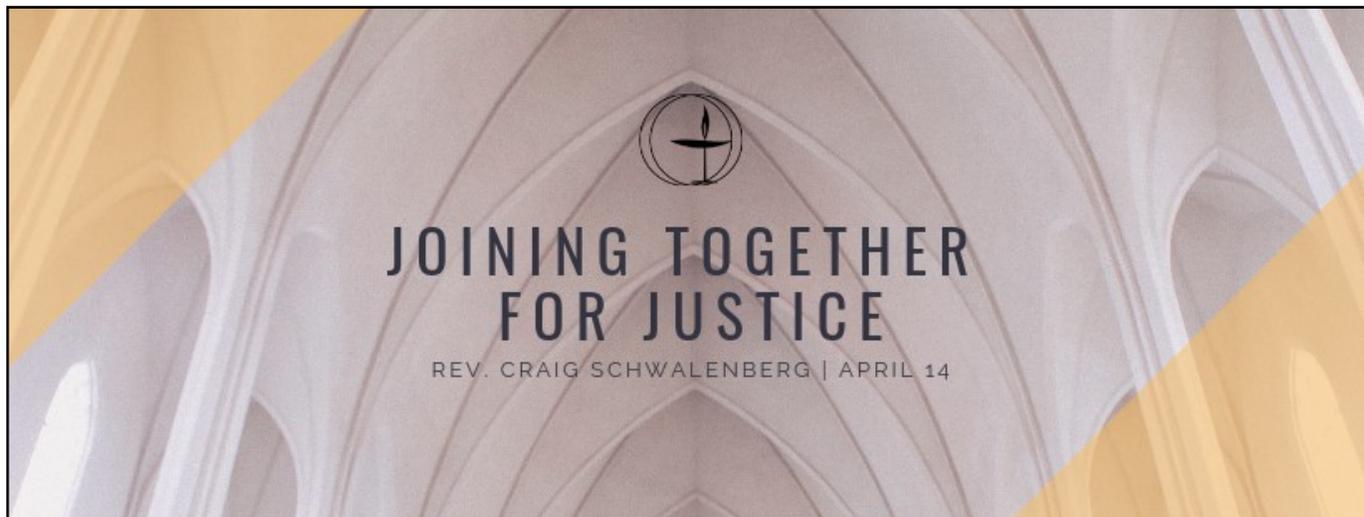
UUSO UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES  
SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 10:30AM



In Oneonta, a city largely built by the passions and toils of people laboring in the railroad industry, it can be spiritual work to reflect on the "Great Machines", and the world they built for us.

*\*Children to Classrooms*  
With music by The SUCO Brass Ensemble, led by Ben Aldridge  
Worship Associate: Kevin Schultz

Coffee Hour Host: Liz Jacob-Carter & Pam Strother  
Ushers: Arlana Young & Sue Troost  
Chancel Table: Grace Smith  
Sound System: Julian Pecenco



The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is committed to creating coalitions of justice-seeking people around the globe. But solidarity isn't always easy and the stakes are so high...

*\*RE Spring Gathering at OBH*  
With music by the UUSO Choir and Music Director Tim Horne  
Worship Associate: Keith Willcox

Coffee Hour Host: Carol Malz  
Usher: Elayne Mosher-Campoli  
Chancel Table: Carol Malz  
Sound System: Scott Segar

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
SOCIETY OF ONEONTA**

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@UUSOneonta



## UUSO DEADLINES:

**UU News Articles:** Deadline for the week of April 17th issue is April 15th, by 9AM, to [newsletter@uuso.org](mailto:newsletter@uuso.org)

**Order of Service Announcements:**  
Wednesday a.m. before the Sunday Service,  
to [OOS@uuso.org](mailto:OOS@uuso.org)

**Verbal Announcements:**  
Contact Worship Associate by Friday before Service

## Green Sanctuary Corner

Another Green Tip from Kevin Schultz' presentation on Climate Change:

Upgrade your refrigerator and Air Conditioner. If your fridge is avocado, it's not green. And your parents were right. Close the darn door!

—Karen Palmer  
Board President  
Green Sanctuary Committee Chair  
[president@uuso.org](mailto:president@uuso.org)

### UUSO BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Karen Palmer	President
Amy Forster-Rothbart	Vice-President
Arlana Young	Treasurer
Adrienne Martini	Clerk
Mary Ruhoff	Moderator
Keith Willcox	
Nathan Elsener	
Jennifer Hyypio	
Rosemary Summers	

Janet Sutta has proposed a new, small environmental project, turning plastic mesh bags into attractive, useful "pot-scrubbers." We need your help to fulfill the intent: Please save plastic mesh bags, the kind that lemons, oranges, potatoes, etc., come in from grocery stores, and bring them to church also on the first Sunday of the month.

Janet will join us during coffee hour to crochet pot-scrubbers from the bag netting and will show anyone interested how to make them. Completed pot-scrubbers will then be available to take home and enjoy using, at no cost.