



*News & Information from the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton*



March 2012

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

Worship services and religious education for children and youth begin at 10:30 a.m.

Sunday, March 4

Laughter and Tears, Part 2 – The Reverend David S. Blanchard

Greeters: Denise Montroy, Sandyaben Parikh, Dick Morrow, Rajiv Narula

Social Hour: Mark Berninghausen, Bill Biggers, Lonie Bogett

Chalice Lighters: 7/8 RE Class

Pulpit Decorations: Nolan Family: Tim, Lorraine, Ryan & Brendan

Council Welcomer: Erika Barthelmess

Welcoming Table: Charlie & Lila Hunnewell

Library Table: Caron & Phil Collins

RE Ambassador: Dave Bradford

Collection Counters: Valerie Ingram, Ruth Baltus

Sunday, March 11

I Wish I Knew - The Reverend David S. Blanchard

Greeters: Constance & David Nelson, Esther Oey, Lorraine Olendzenski & Tim Nolan

Social Hour: Dave Bradford, Leo Burger & Lisa Thomas, Sheila Cerwonka

Pulpit Decorations: Kathy & Jon Montan

Council Welcomer: Galen Pletcher

Welcoming Table: Rajiv Narula

Library Table: Carol Gable

RE Ambassador: Pam Short

Collection Counters: Tim Opdyke, Rick Welsh

Sunday, March 18

Choose Your Own Religion – Rebecca Weld, Pulpit Guest

This sermon explores what it means to choose your own religious practices in a liberal faith tradition. How can we find balance within our own observances when navigating a sea of opportunities among the world's religions? In light of these questions, a pagan UU explains why she observes Lent.

Greeters: Carol & Tim Opdyke, Galen Pletcher,

Shelli Prespare-Weston

Social Hour: Tedra Cobb & Scott Shipley,

Diane Colbert, Robin Collen

Chalice Lighters: Caron, Phil, & Richard Collins

Council Welcomer: Todd Moe

Welcoming Table: Sara Ricalton

Collection Counters: Jon Montan, Peggy Sperling

Sunday, March 25

Mission Possible – The Reverend David S. Blanchard

Greeters: Susan Powers & Will Siegfried, Kim Richards

Social Hour: Caron & Phil Collins, Rich Collins, Colleen Conklin

Chalice Lighters: Pynchon family

Pulpit Decorations: Pynchon family

Council Welcomers: Tom Pynchon

Welcoming Table: Katherine Brown

Collection Counters: Dick Morrow & Lonie Bogett

Under One Roof

Campaign Kickoff

Social Hour, Sunday, March 25

Help us celebrate the official start of this important fundraising drive to raise \$250,000 to repair and re-shingle the roof and make improvements to our sanctuary and kitchen.

PASTOR'S PRISM

How many times have you struggled to find the “right” words to say to someone who has suffered a loss, faces a grave illness, has experienced a failure, is struggling with some private anguish? Perhaps we are all set to dial the phone number, and then we put the phone down, not sure what we would say. We take out a card, or sit down at the keyboard, and typically, take a few stabs at the daunting task, before recognizing our efforts are painfully inadequate to the enormity of what the other person is dealing with. We may start over a few times, taking a new tack each time: Empathetic (but we know we can't really know what the other person is experiencing); Encouraging (but we know that such a response skips over the pressing realities of the immediate crisis); Inquisitive (but we soon see how we are only demanding something that we need, to either understand, or feel useful, or seem concerned). The words just don't come. And our thoughts stay with us in silence. And we have missed a terribly important chance to enter into that sacred space in human relationships where we risk being real, where we discover our strength, where we reveal our own tattered heart.

In Ian Frazier's memoir, *Family*, he writes of his own younger brother's death at the age of 20. His reflections on that time, though personal, point up some very universal human feelings. He wrote:

“People don't know what to say. In fact, what people seem to say most often about such a death is that they don't know what to say. In the days and weeks that followed, I had to agree; grief at that stage is mostly wordless....The notions that might have comforted my great-grandparents – that Fritz was now happy in heaven – did not sound right on my lips or my friends', so there wasn't much spiritual comfort to be had. But in my mind that did not exempt people from trying to find some... Not knowing what to say is different from saying nothing.”

I will be the first to acknowledge that the struggle to find the “right” words can overcome our best intentions. What I have come to know, really know, is that there are no “wrong” words in times when life

has slipped into chaos. Perhaps that is something you come to know only after entering the disorientation of loss that life can deliver any of us at any moment. In such times, what you need to trust is that there will be constants around you to get you through, that will not be swept away with whatever other loss you are confronting. People who will call to say, "I'm here." A message of care packed up in a meal delivered. A letter, a note, a few sentences that confirm that, even in the absence of comfort, there is recognition of an event that has in some way changed life forever.

Because, of course, when it comes down to it, there are also no "right" words. There are just *our* words, which are somehow right even when they are wrong. The only wrong words are no words.

In faith, *David*

"UU 101" As part of our welcome to newcomers to our congregation, I will be offering an evening program to provide an introduction to Unitarian Universalism and our congregation. All are welcome to attend either one of these sessions, but we especially encourage those who are considering membership in our congregation to make time to attend. There will be sign up sheets on the "Welcome Table" in the Social Room on Sundays, or you could call/e-mail the church office to indicate your interest. (Pre-registration is not required, but it is helpful in planning for enough space, refreshments, handouts, etc.) The two dates are Wednesday, March 14 at 7 p.m., and Thursday, April 12 at 7 p.m. (With a week's advance notice, childcare can be arranged.) If you have questions, please contact me.
David (revdsb@aol.com)

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?

Happy Birthday to YOU!

Please join us after the service on March 18 for the annual Everybody's Birthday Party. If you have a birthday, you're invited! This year we'll use flowers associated with each zodiac sign to organize the celebration and add to the fun. Bakers are invited to sign up on the sheet on the kiosk to bring a cake. Blow out candles, sing happy birthday, and eat cake with us on March 18th!

The 2nd to 4th graders are deep into their *Love Will Guide Us* curriculum, which highlights love as a central aspect of Unitarian Universalism. Using the night sky and the North Star as metaphors, participants are guided to love. As a Faith In Action project, this class and the RE Committee are hosting a stargazing event on Saturday, March 24 at 8 p.m. We may be able to set up the telescopes outside of town, so stay tuned or check the website for the exact location. Hope for clear skies (there is no rain date); we will have a fun indoor astronomy activity at the church if it is too cloudy to see the sky. For more information, contact Jan or Gina.

Our Whole Lives program for 7-8th graders begins this month. Our wonderful OWL team offers this sexuality education program, with a kickoff retreat the weekend of March 2 to 4. We may be looking for help to provide some meals and/or chaperone services overnight. Stay tuned, or contact Jan or Gina if you want to volunteer.

THANK YOUs!

- † To Eileen Visser for driving and chaperoning youth group members to the Syracuse Con, and to Carol Gable for lending her van so all could go.
- † Kelly Johnson-Eilola, Jan DeWaters, Valerie Ingram, and Tom Sokol - our OWL team for all their work organizing, planning, and offering OWL to our 7 to 8th graders.
- † Gina Nicoletta-Budler for doing such a marvelous job covering for Jan while she was on vacation.

JOYS & SORROWS

- † Congratulations to Theresa Witmer, who was named the New York State Band Directors Association's Richard H. Snook Outstanding Band Director (drumroll, please!).
- † More congrats to Todd Moe and Paul Siskind, recipients of the St. Lawrence County Arts Council's 2012 Arts Recognition Award. Todd and Paul will receive the award for their "significant contribution to the arts and cultural life of our region" on Saturday, March 24, at 4 p.m., at the Arts Council's Snell Hall space in Potsdam.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN NEWS

Under One Roof

The kickoff for the **Under One Roof** campaign will be held on Sunday, March 25. Please mark your calendar and plan to be in church to help us celebrate the official start of this important fundraising drive. We are in the early phase of a campaign to raise \$250,000 to repair and re-shingle the roof and to make improvements in our sanctuary and kitchen.

Everyone is invited to the kickoff celebration, which will include a special social hour and a brief presentation on the capital campaign. Campaign Events Chair and noted cook Barb Beekman will be coordinating this event and promises some special culinary treats for your enjoyment.

Childcare and a light lunch will be provided for younger children downstairs.

We hope you will join us on the last Sunday of March as we celebrate our church community and our shared commitment to preserve and improve our beautiful church home.

Kathy and Pete Wyckoff

STEWARDSHIP NEWS

As reported at the Congregational Meeting in January, this past year's stewardship effort, led by Scott Shipley, was one of the most successful campaigns in recent years. With a total amount raised of \$218,590, this represents an almost 8% percent increase over the previous year. Scott's committee report described key "best practices" that had been put into place during his leadership term of this key committee:

"Stewardship has tried, over the last several years, to make the pledge process more understandable, and comfortable for the general congregation. Part of our effort has been to speak directly to the need for donations and to give clear information on intent and the expectations of membership."

As the new chair of the Stewardship Committee, I am indebted to Scott's effective leadership and I think all the members of the committee agree that the approach that has been taken in recent years provides an excellent foundation for our future work together. No doubt I will continue to consult with Scott and seek his guidance when we get further into the campaign process in the fall.

As the congregation prepared for the upcoming "Under One Roof" capital campaign, it became clear that we needed to coordinate the main fund-raising efforts of our community, and perhaps also better understand the way the church budget process functions. In February, a group representing the Budget & Finance Committee, Stewardship, the Capital Campaign Committee, and Church Council came together for a short retreat to discuss ways to coordinate and communicate as we move forward with our main initiatives in the coming year. We discussed and reviewed the roles of the Treasurer, the Budget & Finance Committee, the Stewardship Committee, and the way the budget works as an overall process in the church. Finally, we tried to find ways to clarify the roles of each of the budget partners in the church, and at the same time identify ways we can work more effectively together in the near and long term.

I will summarize the main points of conversation in a future newsletter article, but for now I think it is safe to say that we have discovered some potential points of real collaboration and we hope to develop these possibilities in the near term.

While we are focused very clearly on the goal of creating the necessary funding that allows for our various UU programs to operate, we still want to maintain a strong focus on the other part of the mission of the Stewardship Committee: "Look for and promote ways to increase the spirit of generosity within the church and larger community." This is a critically important aspect of our life together and this goal goes way beyond targeted dollar amounts.

In the weeks and months ahead, we will be seeking your input on this important goal as we pursue the formal fundraising efforts that are also central to the mission of the Stewardship Committee.

Bart Harloe

PETTY CASH

Petty cash is maintained in the office for small expenses that don't justify writing a check. Purchases are made, and the receipts are kept and recorded. Each month, the difference between the balance in the petty cash and \$100 is calculated and a check is written for that amount to replenish the fund. At that time, receipts will be debited against the correct expense account.

Beginning now, if a member purchases a small item for the church that costs less than \$10, the Congregational Administrator can reimburse the purchase from petty cash when a receipt is provided. All amounts over \$10 must be paid through the existing voucher system. No reimbursements will occur without a receipt.

It is recommended that those who have authorization to charge at a certain vendor continue to do so; others may choose either the petty cash or voucher reimbursement.

SOCIAL ACTION UPDATE

The Social Action Committee seeks nominations for the Rachel Somers Grant Social Action Award. For information about the award and a list of previous award recipients please consult the Social Action section of the church website or contact Mark Berninghausen or Pat Turbett. Nominations should be received by March 31, 2012. The award will be presented on a Sunday in May or June.

During March, any and all items contributed for the "Feed the Need" (food collection) box will be appreciated. The special (non-food) item this month is toilet paper.

The March SASO will be the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's (UUSC) Guest at Your Table program. For information about this program please visit www.uusc.org. This SASO will be taken Sunday, March 25.

The next meeting of the Social Action Committee will be Sunday, March 18, after the service and the social hour. We will be discussing spring and summer social action activities. All are welcome, please consider attending.

USHARE FLASHBACK

In this article, we will take a look at some of UShare's accomplishments from the last six years.

Our success can be quantified by looking at three categories from past years: number of volunteers, harvest totals, and outreach.

In 2005: UShare volunteers number 75, makes 50 deliveries to 22 food banks, including 2500 pounds of produce. UShare provides the only fresh veggies available at several pantries.

In 2006: UShare builds relationships with several student organizations at SUNY Potsdam.

In 2007: We deliver produce to Potsdam for two special distributions for families with school kids not receiving subsidized breakfasts and lunches during the summer. UShare provides fresh produce for a nutrition/cooking class hosted by Cornell Cooperative Extension in Massena and hosts migrant tutoring teen clients for a work party at Cecilie Garden.

In 2008: UShare teams with GardenShare to staff a booth at Canton Farmers Market that enables families on food assistance to use their electronic benefits (EBT) cards to purchase market goods. Donations of 2000-2500 pounds of harvest continue and volunteer base is over 100 and growing.

In 2009: Congregation Beth El adopts Cecilie Garden as their social justice project, establishing an ongoing relationship. Students from Seaway Tech Buildings and Trades program construct a garden shed. We count 140 volunteers to thank for invaluable service! A mini-grant is received from St. Lawrence County Health Initiative to purchase an irrigation pump for Cecilie Garden. A "seed" grant is awarded by Johnny's Seed for entire growing season (value ~\$100).

In 2010: GardenShare awards UShare their annual Growing Community Award.

In 2011: Harvest is over 2500 pounds, again. Temple Beth El in Potsdam continues their relationship with UShare and adopts Cecilie garden for two weeks.

We are entering our seventh year anticipating growth in community participation, harvest totals, and impact on hunger in the North Country. For more information about UShare contact Maria Corse; maricorse@gmail.com.

FOOD & GARDEN CONFERENCE

Dig In! Food & Garden Conference will be held on Monday, March 19, at the Clarkson University Student Center. *Dig In!* will offer information, inspiration, and resources to develop and strengthen food-based projects at the organizational level.

If you grow, prepare, market, eat, compost, educate or set policy about food, this event is for you! To register or learn more, visit the Health Initiative at gethealthyslc.org or call 261-4760. The registration deadline is March 9.

CHOIR NOTES

The March choir schedule is:

- March 4 - rehearse at 9:00, sing in church
- March 11 - no rehearsal
- March 18 - rehearse at 9:00
- March 25 - rehearse at 9:00, sing in church

New members are always welcome! Contact Carol Strome (cstrome@twcny.rr.com) or 268-0225 (home) or 212-9014 (cell) for information or just show up at a rehearsal. Ability to read music is helpful but not required.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Universalist denomination, which once stood solidly on its own, and which greatly influenced religion in the North Country, still has a vital organization in New York State. The New York State Convention of Universalists was organized in 1825 and served as the central denominational body for Universalist churches until the merger in 1961, when Unitarian Universalism was born.

Very few of us remember Universalism as a singular church, but this group keeps the name alive in two important ways. The State Convention administers two endowments; one provides gratuities for retired New York State ministers and the other is used to promote the growth of the UU movement and preserve and enhance the Universalist tradition through its grants and loans program. It is through this arm of the State Convention that local member churches may apply for funding to support programming and growth opportunities.

This body also appoints most of the Board of the St. Lawrence Foundation for Theological Education, which controls a third endowment used to support students studying for the UU ministry.

The Convention has produced several adult education curricula that help explore and explain the importance of the Universalist faith in New York.

The board meets in a central New York location three times a year to carry out the business of the Convention. The annual meeting in October features a keynote speaker and several workshops determined to be of interest and service to the church representatives in attendance. The January meeting focuses on the distribution of the grants and loans money, and the spring meeting plans for the fall gathering to which all churches in the State Convention are invited.

The present officers have expressed an interest in getting a member from the Canton church to join their board. A fuller description of the New York State Convention of Universalists can be seen at nyscu.org. If you have an interest in the work of this board and would consider representing our church, please see me or David Blanchard.

Stevie Michaelson

TRANSFORMING WOMEN'S SPIRITS
Women's Spirituality Conference

May 18 - 19, 2012
5 p.m. Friday - 5:30 p.m. Saturday
\$75 Registration due by May 10

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse
109 Waring Road, Syracuse, NY 13224

Check the website
www.slduuwr.org
and
SAVE THE DATE!

www.uucantonny.org

ON THE CALENDAR

Friday, March 2

12 noon, Knitters for Peace
5 p.m., OWL Overnight

Saturday, March 3

All day, OWL
9 a.m.-2 p.m., Council retreat, Potsdam

Sunday, March 4

More OWL!
9 a.m., Choir rehearsal
9:30 a.m., Over 70 Group
10:30 a.m., Worship and Children's RE

Wednesday, March 7

8 a.m., Building & Grounds Comm mtg
10 a.m., Library Work Day
6:30 p.m., Church Council meeting
7 p.m., Bell choir rehearsal

Thursday, March 8

1:30 p.m., Outreach Committee meeting

Friday, March 9

12 noon, Knitters for Peace
5 - 10 p.m., OWL

Sunday, March 11

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS
9:30 a.m., Over 70 Group
10:30 a.m., Worship and Children's RE

Wednesday, March 14

10 a.m., Library Work Day
7 p.m., Bell choir rehearsal

Thursday, March 15

6:30 p.m., Investment Committee meeting
7 p.m. Budget & Finance Committee mtg
7 p.m., Worship Committee meeting

Friday, March 16

12 noon, Knitters for Peace
5 - 10 p.m., OWL

Sunday, March 18

9 a.m., Choir rehearsal
9:30 a.m., Over 70 Group
10:30 a.m., Worship and Children's RE
11:30 a.m., Everybody's Birthday Party
12:30, Social Action Committee meeting

Tuesday, March 20

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Wednesday, March 21

10 a.m., Library Work Day
1:15 p.m., Library Committee meeting
6:30 p.m., RE Committee meeting
7 p.m., Bell choir rehearsal

Thursday, March 22

7 p.m., Stewardship Committee meeting

Friday, March 23

12 noon, Knitters for Peace

Saturday, March 24

7 - 10 p.m., Stargazing with RE

Sunday, March 25

9:30 a.m., Over 70 Group
10:30 a.m., Worship and Children's RE
11:45 a.m., Campaign Kickoff Celebration

Wednesday, March 28

10 a.m., Library Work Day
7 p.m., Bell choir rehearsal

Friday, March 30

12 noon, Knitters for Peace
5 p.m. - 10 p.m., OWL

Saturday, March 31

3:30 - 5 p.m., Final OWL meeting, w/parents

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

The Reverend David S. Blanchard, Minister
Jan Hutslar, Director of Religious Education
Pat Mustakangas, Congregational Administrator
Nelly Case, Music Director Carol Strome, Choir Director
The Reverends Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeritus



Office hours: Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Phone: (315) 386-2498 Email: office@uucantonny.org

Website: www.uucantonny.org

If you would like to receive periodic electronic news updates,
please email office@uucantonny.org.

Deadline for next newsletter: Tuesday, March 20, 10 a.m.