

MARCH 2009

Office hours: M & F 8-11:30am, T-Th 8am-3pm

Phone: (315) 386-2498

E-mail: uucanton@verizon.net

Web site: www.uucantonny.org

Co-Ministers: Wade Wheelock and Anne Marsh *Director of Religious Education*: Jan Hutslar

Deadline for next newsletter: Friday, March 20.

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

Worship services and children's religious education begin at 10:30 a.m.

March 1: "Confessions of an American Baker in Africa" - Katrina Hebb, pulpit guest

Last summer, Katrina traveled to Malawi, where she met women from the Widows of Grace group. The trip deepened her understanding of Africa, poverty, and the role of women; it also changed her whole outlook on life. With music by the Handbell Choir. You're invited to bring a contribution of non-perishables for our monthly food pantry collection.

Greeters: Viki Levitt; Miles Manchester; Marilyn Mayer

Social Hour: Kim Bouchard and Ed Clark; Lonie Bogett; Jenna Brown

March 8: Daylight Saving Time begins; set clocks forward! "Sacred Places" - Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock

As we take this month's Social Action Shared Offering for the St. Lawrence Land Trust, let's reflect on our sense of place and on what it is that makes certain places sacred to each of us. Stay after church for Everybody's Birthday Party!

Greeters: John Marson and Al Wioskowski; Jim & Stevie Michaelson

Social Hour: Robb Brigham; Matt Bullwinkel and Beth Robinson; Sheila Cerwonka

March 15: "Empathy, Compassion, Love" -- Wade Wheelock and Anne Marsh

What prompts us to respond to the needs and suffering of others, or allows us to hope that others will help us? Religion at its best calls us to feel the pain of our fellow creatures and then act with compassion. Can we find in ourselves an even stronger motive? With music by the Choir.

Greeters: Lisa McCarty; Jon and Kathy Montan

Social Hour: Tedra Cobb and Scott Shipley; Leo Burger and Lisa Thomas

March 22: "Darkness and Light" - Jan Hutslar and Anne Marsh

At the Spring Equinox, day and night are in balance. In this service for all ages, we explore our own need for balance and celebrate the promise of spring. We'll have special music by Oscar and Sal Sarmiento. In the spirit of spring (or maybe of cabin fever!), everyone is invited to wear a silly hat to church, or to come early and create a hat from materials we'll have on hand.

Greeters: Todd Moe; Dick Morrow

Social Hour: Caron and Phil Collins; Joan Collins and George Yellott

March 29: "Crying in Church" - Valerie Ingram, Wade Wheelock, Anne Marsh

Why is it that many of us find tears coming to our eyes in church? What is it about our worship time or this space or this community that brings emotions close to the surface? With music by the Choir.

Greeters: Constance and David Nelson; Carol and Tim Opdyke

Social Hour: Max Coots and Charlotte Ramsay; Maria and Mike Corse

IN PARTNERSHIP

You might be surprised (or maybe you wouldn't!) to learn that surveys show the two most contentious issues in Unitarian Universalist worship services are not whether we sing hymns or use the word God, but rather how we handle "Announcements" and "Joys and Sorrows." In some congregations, these two elements can take up much of the service. Is that a plus or a minus? On the Sundays when many people line up to light candles, does your heart leap or sink? Many value participation from individual congregants and especially treasure Joys and Sorrows, for this sharing time creates a sense of community and belonging. Others feel that Announcements disrupt the worshipful parts of the service, while Joys and Sorrows can become a forum for a relatively small number of people or may feel like an "in group" thing to newcomers.

The Worship Committee recently had a thoughtful discussion of the pros and cons of Joys and Sorrows. We all felt it was an important part of the service and should be retained. We noted, however, that candle lighting time is occasionally used for something that is more an announcement or political message than a personal joy or sorrow. And of course none of us seem to think the plea to be brief applies to us. (Yet if the service goes too much more than an hour, your ministers hear about it!)

So it's a balancing act, and we invite everyone to help us keep that balance. Here are some ideas on how to do so:

- Remember that our candlelighting time is first and foremost an opportunity to share a truly deep joy or sorrow that is in your heart.
- As you speak your joy or sorrow, be mindful of newcomers who don't know your situation; we hope to help everyone feel included.
- Be brief, especially when you notice there are 10 people behind you in line! There are many opportunities after the service to talk with each other in more depth.
- If you have an event to announce, call or email the church office and we'll be happy to include it in the order of service. Or hand the ministers or lay leader your announcement on Sunday morning, and we'll read it or invite you to do so.

Each Sunday, the sanctuary is filled with the joys and sorrows we bring with us. Even when all our candles are lit, most of those joys and sorrows remain unspoken. In that awareness, may we pay attention to those around us, and offer our open hearts and listening ears. And may the stories we share weave our lives together in the embrace of community. - Anne

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I noticed as I left work for the February Church Council meeting earlier this month that it was still light outside! The days are getting longer and for me this is a welcome event. Our February meeting continued well past dusk, but thanks to the efforts of this committed and focused group, we made our way through much important business efficiently and adjourned on time. So, you may ask, what important business did we attend to? I'm so glad you asked! At the February meeting, Church Council approved sponsorship of the North Country Sustainable Energy Fair. We have supported this important community/regional event in the past, but this action formalizes our commitment and places our concern for energy awareness and environmental stewardship in the good company of the *Out At The Movies* film festival (a very different, but equally important local event that we have sponsored for the last several years). The relatively modest cost of sponsorship (\$250/year) will be covered by the Miscellaneous Contribution Expense line of the budget, which will free up the Outreach Committee budget line for other uses.

Council also appointed a sub-committee to look into website oversight. There are no current issues with the website, but we did not want to wait until there were. The task of this committee is to explore various questions concerning the website, and propose a procedure for addressing concerns should they arise. My thanks go out to John Marson, Scott Shipley and Joan Collins for agreeing to serve on this committee.

And speaking of tasks, the Interim Minister Task force (composed of Kim Bouchard, Robin Collen and myself) has completed and submitted the application for an Interim Minister. With the help of the UUA Transitions Office, we will be connected with a small pool of interested Interim Ministers to review and from which we will select a candidate. This "matchmaking" process will occur in April.

Finally, we spend a chunk of time at each Council meeting on reports from committee liaisons. Every committee of the church has a liaison whose role is to be in regular contact with their committee and to keep Council updated on that committee's work. Liaisons often attend committee meetings, and have been known to pick a paddle and row along with the committees. All committee members should be aware of who their committee liaison is. At the very least, this person is an excellent resource, and an important conduit to Council. I never cease to be impressed with the committee liaison reports and the amount of energy and time that we all invest in our church. Unlike retirement accounts and mutual funds, this is an

investment that will only make us richer, and one for which I am tremendously grateful.

- Margaret Harlow

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

There was a large circle of chairs filled with well-fed Unitarian Universalists having a discussion, it was a Saturday night and the faces around the circle seemed happy to be where they were and clearly engaged with one another. Nothing out of the ordinary, and yet I felt especially honored to be part of it, grateful to be a member of this church, where I was seeing our first principle in action. Respect was given and received across the generations, as our youngest participant, a 7th grader, expressed his views to the group, which included 12 high school youth and about that same number of adults of all ages.

The conversation was held to help us forge our brand new church committee -- the Youth-Adult Committee. So far, the purposes of the committee are to be a voice for the youth within our church; to facilitate connections between youth and adults of this congregation; to liaison ways for youth to be involved in most aspects of church life; and to focus on development of youth programs. This process is exciting to me and I wanted to share it with you. If you want to hear more, come talk to me. Or ask a youth group member. -Jan

NEWCOMERS' ORIENTATION

Are you new to Unitarian Universalism or to this congregation? Want to know more about UU history, beliefs, and values? You're invited to join Wade and Anne after church from noon-1pm on Sunday, March 29, for a brief introduction to UUism and a chance to get some of your questions answered. A light lunch will be served.

ASIAN RELIGIONS GREATEST HITS

Join Wade on three consecutive Tuesday nights at 7 pm, March 17, 24, & 31, as he presents his choices for the greatest single lessons from Hinduism, Buddhism, and the religions of China. This won't be an overview, but a focus on one key point from each tradition. No prior knowledge assumed, but for those that are interested, copies of Wade's book, *Considering the Asian Religions*, will be available for \$15 from the church office. Those having their own favorite highlights from the Asian religions are invited to add those to the discussion.

WORKING CIRCLE

Do you have some muscle power, skilled or unskilled, you might feel like contributing to a worthy cause from time to time? Then you could be a candidate for a new group we're thinking of forming. It would be like the church's Caring Circle in that it would create a database and email list of people willing to do certain kinds of chores, and then send out pleas to the appropriate people when specific needs pop up. You would take on a task only when and if you are able. And *no meetings!*

Some of the kinds of projects we have in mind would be done for members or friends of the congregation (or perhaps folks you recommend in the wider community) who would benefit from some kind of fix-up work around their homes. Most would be short-term jobs for one to a few volunteers -- from raking leaves or preparing a garden, to weatherstripping windows or painting a porch. Occasionally a crew might want to take on a larger project.

If you would be willing to have your name on such a list, fill out the *Working Circle* form available during March at the back of the sanctuary, or email the church with your name and some basic information on your skills and when you might be available. We'll be taking suggestions on ideas for specific possible tasks after we see if we have enough volunteers. We'll also need a coordinator. Let Wade or Anne know if you think this sounds like a good idea and would like to help. Thanks!

THE MEANINGS OF AGING

After church on March 15th, join Wade in a discussion of the joys, challenges, and spiritual possibilities of aging. How do we find meaning in our advancing years because or in spite of the inevitable march of time? But aging isn't just for the old. We're all doing it from the moment we are born. So *people of every age* -- from kids, adolescents, and young adults, to the middle- and past-middle-aged are invited to share their ideas and listen to others.

EXPLORING CHRISTIANITY

The Exploring Christianity group will meet at noon on Sunday, March 1, in the Upstairs Room to share a brief UU Lenten communion ritual and to explore the various meanings the Lenten season has for each of us. Have you ever "given up" anything for Lent? Or added a spiritual discipline to your life? Most UUs do not observe Lent -- are we missing something? All are welcome to join the discussion.

SERMONS BY EMAIL

For many years, we've mailed sermons to folks who are housebound or not able to get to church often. We'll continue to offer that service. We can also send sermons via email to any who would like to have them. Just email or call the church office, and we'll put you on the e-sermons list.

JOYS AND SORROWS

- Congratulations to *Matilda Larson and Jon Rosales* and to big brother Jacob on the birth of Aaron on January 18.
- And congratulations to *Jim and Melia Rudd* on the birth of their granddaughter, Calista.
- Kudos to *Karen Wells* for directing the Grasse River Players' Winterfest production, "The Good Doctor."
- Best wishes for a speedy recovery to *Arlene Oey*, who is in rehab from hip surgery in Lake Placid and will soon be home.
- Healing thoughts to *Judy DeGraaff*, who is having serious back problems while she was supposed to be having fun in sunny Texas! Her address: P.O. Box 533, 1211 State Hwy. 361, Port Aransas, TX 78373; phone 215-212-3001.
- Our hearts are with *Bill and Kay Thompson*; Bill is gravely ill at their winter home in Florida. Cards may be sent to 5051 North A1A, Apt. 11-2, Fort Pierce, FL 34949; phone 772-460-7987.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!!

- Thanks to *Maria, Ian, and MacKenzie Corse* and all the older students from the Little River School for their generous donation of the book they created of their artwork and poetry, titled: "Here's Our Card: Thoughts of the Youth." Check it out from the RE Office.
- Thanks to *Laura Foster* and *Adam Jarrett* for being chaperones for the Youth Group overnight at church recently.
- Thanks to *Lois Cutter* and *Carmen Stuart-Fennessey* for making beautiful new Spirit Play stories for our youngest Religious Education classes.
- Thanks to *Dave Weissbard* for coordinating UU dessert night at the Grasse River Players' Winterfest play, and to everyone who made desserts.

SOCIAL ACTION NEWS

DADT

Thanks to all who wrote letters and signed the petition to encourage our congressional representatives to repeal the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy of the U.S. military. It's exciting to send our voices unified and individual to our elected officials to let them know, loud and clear, that we expect to see an end to this discrimination in our military. If you weren't able to participate in our "drive" but would like to send a message, go to the Social Action Committee page of the church website (click on "Getting Connected" then go to Social Action Committee) where there are sample letters and links to congressional leaders. We'll keep you posted on future efforts and responses we receive from this round!

SASO

Our February Shared Offering for the CP Family Health Care Center raised \$836.58, to which was added \$192.50 from UU night at the Winterfest Dessert Theatre, for a total of \$1,029.08. Thanks, everyone!

The March Shared Offering will be taken for the St. Lawrence Land Trust, which is dedicated to the voluntary conservation of privately owned open space in northern New York. Land Trust President Peter O'Shea reminds us, "The rivers that flow north from the Adirondacks to the St. Lawrence provide outstanding recreational opportunities and scenic beauty, and serve as vital wildlife corridors. Protecting these river corridors is crucial to the future well being of the region." The Land Trust focuses on conserving lands important to the quality of our rivers, lakes, and streams, working family farms, natural areas including wildlife habitats, and other lands important to the rural character of the North Country. ***The Social Action Shared Offering will be taken Sunday, March 8.*** If you're not able to be in church that Sunday but would like to support the Land Trust's efforts, you may send your contribution to the church office or put it in the collection plate the week before or after the SASO. Please make checks payable to "AUU Church" with memo "Land Trust."

Special Meeting in April

The Social Action Committee would like to invite interested members of the congregation to a special meeting on an April Sunday yet to be determined. As our church and our nation enter a period of transition, we are presented with an opportunity to think and talk about where we'd like to focus our social justice efforts. Look for details about this meeting in the April newsletter and the church e-news.

- Carol Pynchon

LENTEN LUNCHEONS

The churches of the Canton Church & Community Program (C&CP) will hold Lenten Luncheons from noon until 1:00 on Thursdays in the month of March at the Canton United Methodist Church. This annual fundraiser benefits the C&CP.

Menus are as follows: March 5: shepherd's pie, jello, salad, rolls and homemade pies; March 12: scalloped potatoes and ham, coleslaw, rolls and bar cookies; March 19: turkey-rice casserole, Italian bread, tossed salad and cake; March 26: chicken divan, spinach salad, rolls,

gingerbread. Price for the luncheons is \$5; \$4.50 for seniors and children.

Our church is responsible for the March 26 luncheon. There will be sign-up sheets on the kiosk for set-up, serving, and food contributions. We need volunteers for workers, casseroles, and gingerbread. Recipes for the chicken divan casserole will be posted next to the sign-up sheets and the gingerbread can be a box or your favorite recipe(doubled). Typically we feed over 100 people, so we really need your help. If you are unable to deliver your food to the Methodist Church by 11 on the 26th, it can be dropped off at Ann Spies' house, 24 Fairlane Dr., that morning. Ann Spies(386-1062) and Bobbi Haldane(386-8797) are the contact people. Thank you for your participation.

OUT AT THE MOVIES

Coming up March 2-8, don't miss "Out at the Movies," Northern NY's 7th annual festival of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender films. Our church is a proud sponsor of the festival, and we will once again host the Sunday matinee B a viewing at 2pm on March 8 of "Be Like Others," which deals with transgender issues in Iran. Also of special interest is the March 2 film being shown at SLU's Eben Holden entitled "Ask Not," which concerns the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy. (See the Social Action Committee article for info on our efforts to repeal DADT.) Pick up a flyer at church for a complete listing of films and locations, or visit www.outatthemovies.org.

FROM THE COOTS LIBRARY

You can now access the online database of the holdings of our Coots Library through our church website. Click on UU Links and then on Coots Adult Library Collection or Coots Children's Library Collection.

I JUST READ...

I just read *Out of the Flames*, by Lawrence and Nancy Goldstone. I was hooked by the subtitle: *The remarkable story of a fearless scholar, a fatal heresy, and one of the rarest books in the world*. The scholar was Michael Servetus, who was burned at the stake in Geneva in 1553 because of his refusal to accept the orthodox definition of the Trinity as propounded by both Rome and the Reformation's John Calvin. His "heresy" had arisen from his incredible personal study of early Latin, Greek, and Hebrew texts of the New Testament wherein he found no reference to the tri-partite nature of God before the Council of Nicaea. This discovery, among others, led him to desire a form of Christianity that was simpler and nearer to its origins than what it had become by the 15th and 16th centuries. Hence, he wrote *Christianity Restitutio* (The Restoration of Christianity), a book immediately banned and which made Servetus an enemy of the church, pursued for the rest of his life by the Inquisition. He fled to Paris where he studied medicine, changed his name, and might have lived out his life as a respected and wealthy doctor in a French village near Lyon.

However, Michael Servetus could not leave well enough alone. The Protestant Reformation spawned many theological questions, and thanks to Gutenberg's printing press, these matters could reach a broad spectrum of society across Europe. Servetus felt impelled to debate John Calvin. By the 1550's Calvin had changed Geneva, once a safe haven for those being persecuted for their faith, into his own rigid theocracy which brooked no free thinkers. Calvin feared Servetus's challenge and ordered all of his books as well as their author to be exterminated. One copy of the *Restitutio* was even tied to Servetus's arm to burn along with him on the stake.

- Carol Opdyke

AND I JUST READ...

To me, a Young Adult book (referred to as "a YA") should feature teens who tackle difficult problems, beyond the narrow world of who-likes-whom in high school. Neal Shusterman, in his 2007 novel, *Unwind*, has done just that. Set in a not-too-distant dystopia, society has settled a war between the Pro-Life army and the Pro-Choice army with a gruesome "compromise." Abortion is forbidden but between the ages of 13 and 18 some teens are "unwound," cut up and distributed for their body parts. "Nothing is wasted," the nurses assure the kids. Some religious groups consider this an honor and tithe a child or two. Other families get rid of unruly teenagers this way and in crowded State Homes for orphans, older kids are unwound to make way for younger ones.

This all sounds very grim but Shusterman has crafted a fast-paced thriller featuring four teens who try to escape their unwindings. Along the way they question the rules their society has forced upon them. They even try to answer the questions, "when does life begin?" and, of great importance to them, "when does it end?" Sound interesting? The book is in the Coots Library.

- Betsy Kepes

UU CHILI COOK-OFF

The Transition Team is sponsoring a UU Chili Cookoff on April 4th at 6pm. Proceeds from the event will be donated to a charity, or charities, of Anne and Wade's choosing. A gift from us to them, a gift from them to the community.

Donations are \$3.00 per person and \$10.00 for a family. Bring quarters to tip the cooks, which will be added to the kitty. In an effort to “green up” the event, we ask that each person bring a bowl for sampling. We will provide the spoons.

The competition will be tight, with one People’s Choice Award. The prize will be - Todd Moe’s Voice on YOUR answering machine!

Keep your eyes on the kiosk for sign-ups for Chili Entrants and Baked Goods for dessert. For more information, contact Tedra at 386-4928 or tedracobb@gmail.com.

HOUSING REPAIR GRANTS

The Village of Canton is applying for a grant to repair sub-standard homes. In preparation, the Village is seeking residents who may qualify (based on income and severity of housing conditions) for housing repair grants. Call the Clerk’s office at 386-2871, ext. 1, to add your name to the list.

HOSPICE TRAINING

Hospice and Palliative Care of St. Lawrence Valley offers care and support for people with life-limiting illnesses. There are many ways for volunteers to get involved. Hospice will offer its next volunteer training series starting March 21. Details are on the kiosk, or call 265-3105 for more information.

