



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



February 2012

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

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

Sunday, February 5

Some Advice on Advice - The Reverend David S. Blanchard

Greeters: Esther Katz, Betsy Kepes & Tom Van de Water, Dick & Joan Kepes

Social Hour: Jim Williams & Donna Dilworth, Theresa Witmer, Joan Wright

Chalice Lighters: 2nd, 3rd, & 4th grade class

Council Welcomers: Gary Hoose, Carol Gable

Library Table: Janet Green

Collection Counters: Valerie Ingram, Tim Opdyke

Sunday, February 12

Saint Abe - The Reverend David S. Blanchard

Greeters: Janet Learned & Michael Greer, Viki Levitt, Miles Manchester

Social Hour: Jim Arvidson, Kevin Ball & Ruth Baltus, Karen Bage, Stacey Banfield-Hardaway

Chalice Lighters: 5th & 6th grade class

Council Welcomers: Oscar Sarmiento, Galen Pletcher

Library Table: Bobbi Haldane

Collection Counters: Ruth Baltus, Rick Welsh

Sunday, February 19

The Spiritual Power of Romantic Love - Directed by Karen Wells

The experience of "falling in love" has inspired much of humankind's most compelling music, art, and theatre. This service will include a sampling of these, performed by a cast of UU members and friends. The writings of Helen Fisher will provide an anthropological perspective on this age-old human experience.

Greeters: Maggie Madden & Tom Sokol, Jim & Stevie Michaelson

Social Hour: Pete & Kathy Wyckoff, Barb & Pete Beekman

Council Welcomer: Walt Conley

Library Table: Lila Hunnewell

Collection Counters: Jon Montan, Peggy Sperling

Sunday, February 26

Laughter and Tears, Part 1 - The Reverend David S. Blanchard

Greeters: Todd Moe, Shelli Prespare-Weston, Jon & Kathy Montan

Social Hour: Evelyn Barton, Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel & Ryan Hicks, Gary Berk & Bryan Thompson

Council Welcomer: Tom Pynchon

Library Table: Esther Katz

Collection Counters: Dick Morrow, Lonie Bogett

PASTOR'S PRISM

This year, I'm going to send a few more Valentines. One will be addressed to my cousin, Jeff. I've never sent him one before.

I had a voice mail from him the other day. He is my eldest cousin, just north of 60, and we grew up a thousand miles apart. Nowadays he lives in New York State and our genetic bond has become much fuller as a friendship.

His message brought me up to date with some developments in his life – some good, some not so good – and ended with wishes for a happy new year. And then at the end - part after-thought, part point of the call – he said, “I love you.”

I suppose I always assumed as much. But more to the point, until I heard it, it hadn't really mattered. I have always (well, almost always) felt well loved, and am (still) slightly embarrassed to be told as much. After all, what does it *really* mean? Apart from its romantic connotations, it has gotten pretty well watered down as a casual precursor to saying “goodbye.” Or we say it to our children, who must be puzzled, thinking, “Well, DUH! Of course YOU do....” Or we say it to our spouses who reflexively echo back our own words. (Or so we hope.)

For me, to say “I love you” to someone is as much an obligation as a token of affection. It requires me to do something that can sometimes be challenging. It requires me to live in relation to that person in a way that is intentional and unconditional. It has to be a wholehearted promise to respect and honor that person. As the mystics of this world have forever taught, at its root, this brief declaration acknowledges the presence of the divine in all. We are saying to another that we see the holy in them. And that that alone is reason enough to love them.

I'm not sure what the global impact of naming our loves would be. I can only bear witness to what it has meant to me, when out of the blue, someone has touched me with the magic wand of those three words. (And also how it feels to tell an unsuspecting soul that they are loved.)

I only have one warning. Well, I guess I have two.

The first is this: You've got to mean it. You can't fake this stuff. If your heart's not in it, look for Valentines that leave it at “Gee, You're Swell!”

The second warning is this, and I want you to be prepared for it if you decide to attempt this: You will be changed.

XO

David

FROM THE PRESIDENT

“Call me Ishmael.”

From *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville

While working on one of my graduate degrees in marine biology, I lived in an attic apartment of the former home of a whale ship captain in New Bedford, Massachusetts. It was my habit to ride my bike down the hill to the Whaling Museum so I could read among the leviathans. *Moby Dick*, in which New Bedford plays a prominent role, is a book I had started many times. I would take it out on research cruises and to my summer work at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, but I would always find myself migrating toward lighter reads, like James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. When I first heard of the Moby Dick Marathon, a celebration of the book that includes a 25-hour group reading, I added it to my “must do” list. So I spent my first weekend of the new year pulling an all-nighter while reading, with more than 100 others, this American classic at the Whaling Museum in New Bedford.

Among the many factors that struck me was how Melville embraced, through Ishmael, many of our Unitarian Universalist Principles of Faith. In a panel discussion prior to the read, Melville scholars noted how unusual it was, at the time, to embrace the diverse cultures of the characters in the book, or in our words, “the inherent worth and dignity of every person.” Ishmael is also open to a variety of religious beliefs, while being an observant skeptic. In reference to his friend Queequeg’s worship of the carved idol *Yojo*, he says “I cherish the greatest respect toward everybody’s religious obligations, never mind how comical, and could not find it in my heart to undervalue even a congregation of ants worshipping a toad-stool.”

In our principles that translates to “acceptance of one another.” While trying to convince the owners of the *Pequod* that his pagan friend Queequeg was worthy of serving on the whaler, Ishmael argues that we all share a common bond in worship by saying “...to which you and I, and Captain Peleg there, and Queequeg here, and all of us, and every mother’s son and soul of us belong; the great and everlasting First Congregation of this whole worshipping world; we all belong to that...” In our principles that can be interpreted as a “... world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all” and “wisdom from the world’s religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life.” There were so many parallels to our beliefs throughout the book that I concluded that Melville was, at least in his personal philosophy, a Unitarian Universalist.

In Council news, in addition to working with the Capital Campaign Committee to secure our future and protect our church building, we are teaming with members of the Nominating Committee for a workshop on leadership development. As our congregation continues to evolve toward more lay involvement in decision making, providing resources and encouraging members to be more active in our governance is essential. In addition, a subcommittee of Council and members will be exploring ways to move us toward being certified as a Green Congregation by the UUA. More news will be forthcoming as these efforts develop.

Walter James Conley

WHAT’S HAPPENING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?

Jan will be on vacation from February 1 to 12, please contact Gina for any RE concerns.

February 5: Children’s Chapel for 2nd to 8th grade will offer an opportunity for multi-age learning with everyone together. We are exploring world religions during these chapel Sundays. This one is focusing

on the pagan tradition of Candlemas, and the Christian adoption of this holiday, which falls halfway between Solstice and Equinox.

February 12: Instead of meeting during church, the Youth Group will meet with David and youth advisors from 12 noon to 2 p.m. for lunch and to begin planning their worship service.

What's Your Name?

Please join the Membership and Religious Education Committees during social hour on Sunday, February 5, to make a new name tag or jazz up an old one. A table with nametag-making supplies will be set up in the Social Room; children and youth are especially encouraged to participate. Help us expand our welcome with this simple step!

What is a Family?

What does a family do? Who defines a family? The 7th and 8th Grade RE Class will hold its second Family Event on Sunday, February 26, at noon in the Romer Room. Photos taken and stories told will be used to create a photo-documentary project featuring the diversity of families in our church community.

Please RSVP to Jan or Sarah B-G (uucantonre@yahoo.com or srec4@verizon.net) by 2/19 if you plan to attend, and see any 7th or 8th grade youth or team member with questions. Families who took part in the first Family Event are especially encouraged to attend.

JOYS & SORROWS

† Our thoughts are with Betty Weeks, whose brother Warren died unexpectedly on Christmas Day.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN NEWS

At the congregational meeting in January, the membership unanimously approved Council's recommendation to proceed with a \$250,000 capital Campaign. We recognize and appreciate the trust the congregation has placed in us as co-chairs to shepherd this project to a successful conclusion and your faith that we will conduct the work according to the values to which we all aspire.

The principal motivation for the campaign is the pressing need for new roof shingles as evidenced by minor but consistent leaking and shingle sloughing during high winds. The budgeted amount – \$100,000 to 120,000 – is more than just the estimated costs from contractors; it includes money to cover possible replacement of some roof boarding, rafters, and insulation, and expenses for hiring a clerk-of-the-works. The plan is to have the work done in 2012 and this should give us 30+ years of protection and peace of mind.

The other major projects included in the campaign are:

Audio and visual upgrades for the sanctuary – Much needed improvements in the sound system and installation of technology to allow a wider range of visual resources in the sanctuary. Approximate cost: \$20,000 – \$40,000

New carpeting in the sanctuary – Including possible replacement of some worn flooring. Approximate cost: \$10,000 – \$20,000.

Kitchen improvements – Reorganization of the space to allow for improved function and ease of entry/exit. New paint, flooring, and counter tops are being considered. Approximate cost: \$15,000 - \$20,000.

Capital Reserve Fund - While we budget an annual contribution to our facility capital reserve (\$3,421 for 2012), that fund is currently significantly depleted. Many smaller projects have been identified that could be completed over the next few years with a healthy reserve. Examples include: reworking of the front sidewalk and shrubbery; storage space for files, equipment, tables, chairs, bells; front sign replacement; electrical improvements and back door entry enclosure to limit winter heat loss. Approximate need \$50,000.

Now, with both the congregation's and Church Council's approval, we will assemble a campaign leadership team and move forward with planning the campaign strategy and timeline.

We recognize that the reason for this capital campaign isn't just to keep the rain out, make it easier to get around in the kitchen, or provide a new sanctuary carpet. It's how this building gets put to use that is important. The building is a place we grow our children, and ourselves, and from which we reach out to affect change in a larger community. Together we can maintain and improve this sacred space, as others have done for us.

*With faith in us all,
Kathy and Pete Wyckoff*

A WORD FROM WORSHIP

When I began service on the Worship Committee many years ago, we concerned ourselves primarily with identifying speakers for Sundays when the ministers would be away. This continues to be an important task for the Worship Committee, and we try to keep ourselves informed of the talents and interests of the members of our congregation.

Under the leadership of our two most recent chairs – Valerie Ingram and now Doug Rubio – we are also considering what other aspects of worship should be our concern. In its December meeting, the Church Council approved a revised Worship Committee Charge and Procedures document to incorporate some of these additional responsibilities. We have spent considerable time discussing the relative importance of elements of the service – hymns, Joys and Concerns, period of silence, for example. We are contemplating how to make sermons more readily available to those who may have missed them, and we are also considering whether and how services may be recorded, so those who cannot attend may have more elements of the service than just the sermon. We have also ensured that there is better communication with the Music Committee, since many of our decisions and concerns overlap those of that important committee.

The committee has set up a system that will ensure that pre-service setup (e.g., turning on the PA, filling the chalice with alcohol, etc.) is done for David, so he can devote that time to matters central to the ministry. We have been speaking with the Outreach Committee about making information about guest speakers available for placement in local papers. This outreach is especially important in making more people aware of our church.

The Committee now meets each third Thursday evening at 7 p.m. Current committee membership is Doug Rubio, Mark Berninghausen, David Blanchard, Kimberley Bouchard, Robin Collen, Jon Montan, and Galen Pletcher.

Galen Pletcher

HANDBELL CHOIR NOTES

Rehearsals for the handbell choir will resume on Wednesday, February 22, in preparation for playing at Sunday services on March 18, April 15, and May 13. We look forward to working once more on music for our full three-octave set of bells and eagerly invite ringers, seasoned and brand new, to join in. A thorough grounding in note-reading and especially counting, and the ability to keep a steady beat, are recommended for anyone wishing to participate. Please contact director Nelly Case at home (386-2684) or at church if you are interested in ringing. Come help make a joyful noise!

FROM THE COOTS LIBRARY

Hey, kids! It's a rip-off!! I'm talking about the orange and white book review forms that are hanging in the Coots Library for you to "rip off" and complete for our Reading Raffle project.

If you are between 4 and 14 we urge you to participate and become eligible for one of three gift certificates to SLU's Brewer Bookstore that we will raffle off in early June. The forms are short and you may enter one each time you read a book. Just fill out the orange form and place it in the box on the windowsill in the library. The only rule you *must* follow: all books must come from the Coots Library. That should be easy as there are over 400 children's and young adult books in the library. So: **Be a winner and read. Be a reader and win!**

Hey, adults and children! Be on the lookout for a handsome, new, soon-to-appear piece of furniture in the Romer Room. It's the Library's new book cart, beautifully designed and skillfully crafted by Michael Greer. We invite you to help yourself to the books you find there and to drop a donation into the attached cash box. Your donations will help purchase new materials for the library. What books will you find there? Duplicates of what we already have on the library shelves (we need more space!), books that haven't circulated for years (but may be just what you're looking for!), and donated books that do not fit the library's mission statement. If you have books you have decided to part with that might belong in the library, drop them off. If we decide against accessioning them, we'll add them to the book cart.

Thank you, Michael, for once again sharing your woodworking skills with the church.

Judy Gibson

I Just Read

Operation Highjump: The Diary of a Young Sailor
by Richard J. (Ric) Miller of West Potsdam

When he was 19 years old, Ric, who taught at Clarkson from 1956 until his retirement in 1993, volunteered to serve at sea on Admiral Byrd's 1946-47 Antarctic Expedition. A few years ago during a visit from his daughter-in-law, Natalie Tucker Miller, founder of Ageless-Sages.com Publishing, Ric revealed to her the diary he kept during the mission. For a few years after that the two worked together to create this book. The result is a rare, delightful, and insightful first-hand look at a world known to few through the eyes, words, and heart of a young man.

In addition to daily entries from November 12, 1946, to April 18, 1947, in which Ric openly shares wonderful stories of his experience during the voyage, there are photographs, maps, newspaper articles, and biographical information that bring a well-researched added dimension to this story.

Though I am not a student of history and ordinarily might not have given my attention to even a peacetime military operation, I was drawn in and delighted as I read this gem of a book. It gives voice to one young sailor's experience and enriches the reader in a most gentle and joyful manner.

Noel de la Motte

NEWSLETTER NEWS

The Outreach Committee would like to thank everyone who dashed a few words on the "Graffiti Table" where we asked for input about the newsletter. We learned that many of you like receiving the monthly newsletter online...but that some of you still appreciate being able to read paper copies. We learned that you appreciate the news (but sometimes find it a little long-winded!).

We will keep your comments in mind as we continue to try to share information as efficiently, expediently, cost-effectively, and, yes, "greenly" as we can. Remember, if you like holding the newsletter in your hand, and having a paper copy to refer to during the month, the newsletter is now prepared in an 8½ x 11 format so you can easily print the copy you receive electronically (or download from the website) at home. Not printing and mailing newsletters from church saves a substantial amount of time, paper, and money. If you would like to begin receiving your newsletter by email – and have your name removed from the snail mail list – please email the church office (office @uucantonny.org). But don't worry, if it's easier for us to mail to you, we'll keep doing it!

As always, if you have any comments or suggestions about church communications and publicity, please be sure to contact any member of the Outreach Committee.

Carol Pynchon

Say Cheese!

It's time for a new church photo directory! The Outreach Committee will be organizing photo sessions for an all-church directory during the first week of June. Mark your calendars and plan your vacation around it! More information to come.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SPIRITUALITY

The Fellowship Committee invites you to a special gallery discussion, "Social Justice and Spirituality: The Journey from Art to Action," on Sunday, February 5, at 1 p.m., at St. Lawrence University's Richard F. Brush Art Gallery. The discussion with visiting artist Daniel Heyman is being held in conjunction with his exhibit "Bearing Witness," which is on display at the Brush Gallery through February 29, 2012.

Everyone is welcome to this special presentation; soup and sandwiches will be provided. To help with planning, please RSVP (with any dietary restrictions) to Cathy Tedford (Gallery Director, ctedford@stlawu.edu or 229-5174) by February 1.

For more information about the presentation visit the church website; to learn more about the exhibit and get directions to the gallery on the St. Lawrence campus, go to www.stlawu.edu/gallery.

ANOTHER USHARE FLASHBACK

Last month we looked at *WHY* UShare became our congregation's Social Action project, this month we will take a look at *WHAT* UShare does to alleviate hunger in our communities. The following is an excerpt from a press release distributed in 2005.

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UShare is a gardening project that allows members of the church community to participate at many different levels – from tilling, planting, weeding, watering, and harvesting, to preparing instructions for cooking fresh vegetables, delivering produce to food pantries, and even providing meals or childcare for gardeners. “The idea is that there’s a way for everyone to pitch in to the effort,” explains [then] UShare’s Co-Chair Natalie Panshin. “You don’t have to have a green thumb to help out. People can also participate by donating seeds and seedlings and loaning garden tools.”

The Canton UShare garden is situated in a small corner of Priest Field behind the church. The Cecilie Garden in Potsdam, established by SUNY Potsdam students and named in memory of church member Cecilie Pletcher, is located in Lehman Park. Produce from the two gardens will be distributed to food pantries in all parts of St. Lawrence County. “In particular, we are trying to reach some of the food pantries that don’t typically receive as much outside support as some of the others, say closer to Canton and Potsdam,” says UShare committee member David Bradford.

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Dig In! Food & Garden Conference

UShare is collaborating with the Health Initiative and a number of other North Country organizations to present the *Dig In! Food & Garden Conference* on Monday, March 19. The conference will offer information, inspiration, and resources to develop and strengthen food-based projects at the organizational level.

Visit the church website for more information and links to conference details. To register visit the Health Initiative at www.gethealthyslc.org or call (315) 261-4760. The registration deadline is March 9, 2012, and space is limited, so register soon!

Looking to relieve those winter blahs? Cabin fever setting in? You're in luck!

UShare is hosting a potluck
Saturday, February 18, 5 p.m. at the church. This will include a recipe contest. The recipes will be collected and distributed to the food pantries.

Plan on attending and contributing your favorite dish that uses garden vegetables. Check out the weekly e-news and Order of Service for more information and for contest categories as the date gets closer. This will also be your opportunity to find out more about UShare and how you can get more involved.

Contact Maria Corse for more information: mariacorse@gmail.com

ON THE CALENDAR

Wednesday, February 1

8 a.m., Buildings & Grounds Comm. mtg

10 a.m., Library Work Day

6:30 p.m., Church Council

7 p.m., Worship Committee meeting

Friday, February 3

12 noon, Knitters for Peace

Friday, February 17

12 noon, Knitters for Peace

Sunday, February 5

9:30 a.m., Over 70 Group

10:30 a.m., Worship and Children's RE

11:45 a.m., Nametag Table

1 p.m., Social Justice and Spirituality

Gallery Talk, SLU

Saturday, February 18

5 p.m., UShare Potluck

Sunday, February 19

9:30 a.m., Over 70 Group

10:30 a.m., Worship and Children's RE

12:30, Social Action Committee mtg

Wednesday, February 8

10 a.m., Library Work Day

Monday, February 20

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Friday, February 10

12 noon, Knitters for Peace

Wednesday, February 22

10 a.m., Library Work Day

7 p.m., Bell Choir rehearsal

Sunday, February 12

9:30 a.m., Over 70 Group

10:30 a.m., Worship and Children's RE

12 noon, Youth Group mtg with David

Friday, February 24

12 noon, Knitters for Peace

Wednesday, February 15

10 a.m., Library Work Day

1:15 p.m., Library Committee meeting

6:30 p.m., RE Committee meeting

Sunday, February 26

9:30 a.m., Over 70 Group

10:30 a.m., Worship and Children's RE

11:45 a.m., 7th & 8th grade Family Event

Thursday, February 16

6:30 p.m., Investment Committee mtg

7 p.m. Budget & Finance Comm. mtg

Wednesday, February 29

10 a.m., Library Work Day

7 p.m., Bell choir rehearsal

The calendar on the church website includes specifics and updates about meeting times and places. Click on the Calendar page from the blue navigation bar on the left side of the homepage.

www.uucantonny.org

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.
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Website: www.uucantonny.org

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

Deadline for next newsletter: Monday, February 20, 10 a.m.