



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



February 2015

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

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

February 1

Secrets – Doug Rubio, Pulpit Guest

Everybody has secrets – some good, some bad. Several years ago the website PostSecret became a national sensation when they encouraged people to send them their anonymous secrets on hand-decorated postcards to be displayed online. The many thousands of postcards they received also resulted in several best-selling books. The secrets people sent in represented the full range of human experience, from hilarious to utterly tragic. Doug will share some postcards from those books, and explore the spiritual consequences of the secrets we carry. Doug Rubio is a member of the Worship Committee. He has been attending our church for over 20 years, and has held a number of leadership positions. In his non-church life he is a professor of classical guitar at SUNY Potsdam.

Greeters: Janet Green Bill & Katherine Brown, Pat Alden & Louis Tremaine

Social Hour: Theresa Witmer, Pete & Kathy Wyckoff, Eileen Wheeler

Worship Associate: Doug Rubio

Library Table:

Collection Counters: Jon Montan, Ruth Baltus

February 8

Whose Are We? – Rev. Joel Miller, Interim Minister
Whose are we as we dream, as we fail, as we dream anew? Whose are we as live our daily lives, as threats challenge our health or safety? Whose are we as we raise our children, as we release them into the world? Whose are we grieving loved ones who've died? Whose are we in a world filled with violence and depravation and oppression? Whose are we in a world that is at the same time brimming with beauty, potential, freedom, and love?

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

Social Hour: Pat Alden & Louis Tremaine, Kevin Ball & Ruth Baltus

Collection Counters: Pat Gengo, Tim Opdyke

Worship Associate: Mark Berninghausen

Library Table:

February 15

Spirituality & Transgression- Rev. Joel Miller, Interim Minister

Consent has been an important topic on college campuses this past year. Non-violence is at the heart of our spiritual practice, and so follows the need for consent... yet sex remains a transgressive experience, perhaps with an existential defiance of our efforts to bound it with assured safety.

Greeters: Margaret Mauch, Miles Manchester, John & Donna Wood

Social Hosts: Karen Bage, Erika Barthelmess & Natalie Panshin, Rajiv & Geetika Narula

Worship Associate: Valerie Ingram

Collection Counters: Janet Green, Valerie Ingram

Library Table:

February 22

Auction Sermon: Reclaiming "Conservative" Economics - Rev. Joel Miller, Interim Minister

The topic of this sermon was "won" by David Nelson at the Services Auction 18 months ago. In the polarized politics of contemporary American culture, there are large issues outside of the limited debates found in American media.

Greeters: Matilda Larson & Jon Rosales

Social Hour: Evelyn Barton, Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel & Ryan Hicks

Worship Associate: Jon Montan

Library Table:

Collection Counters: Lonie Bogett, Will Siegfried

IN THE INTERIM - REV. JOEL REPORTS

"Selma," the just-released movie, tells about the dramatic three months of non-violent protest that led up to the Voting Rights Act. There is some controversy about the movie's portrayal of President Lyndon Johnson, but I hear from Unitarian Universalists who went to Selma in 1965 that the movie portrays accurately the sense of how the justice-witness led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. came to make a difference.

Some of those Unitarian Universalists who went to Selma in March of 1965 appear in the movie. Rev. James Reeb and Viola Liuzzo were there - and both were murdered. It's shocking that it took the murders of White Unitarian Universalists to finally galvanize the people of the United States into supporting laws giving Black Americans the right to vote (which they technically had, but local racist governments ignored the law and prevented Black folks from voting).

Many hundreds of Unitarian Universalists travelled to Selma in 1965. Democracy and civil society have been deeply held religious values in our Living Tradition, and when Dr. King asked that people of peace and good will come to Selma, many from our congregations answered his call. Rev. James Reeb was one of those who went (the Jim Crow Museum has an excellent short introduction to Rev. Reeb's story at <http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/news/jimcrow/witnesses/reeb.htm>).

If you see my Facebook page, you'll be sure to see that in place of my picture are the words "Black Lives Matter." There's still a lot of justice-work to do when every parent of a Black boy has to have "the talk" about how to not to be killed by the police. One book in our church library, "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander, describes a national system in which Black Americans are treated not as citizens, but as a class of people subject to a system of courts and prisons.

I'm looking forward to seeing "Selma." Change is possible, even though it is hard to effect and so often frustratingly slow.

Calls have begun to gather recommendations for the next Search Committee. When your call comes, I encourage you to have considered up to three people you think would serve well on the Search Committee. And space in our Chalice Circles is filling up. Let me or DRE Carol Zimmerman know if you'd like to join one.

Rev. Joel, Interim Minister

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By the time you read this we will have gained almost an hour of daylight since January 1st. While we are still deeply entrenched in winter, there is something about the subtle lengthening of days that encourages me. Speaking of encouraging....

The response to our appeal to bump up 2015 pledges has been inspiring. After just two weeks, we have reached our goal of \$3700 in additional pledges. While we still have some serious fundraising goals to meet, we have taken a decisive first step. The depth of generosity present in our congregation never ceases to amaze me. Thank you.

Church Council has put its final stamp of approval on a much-improved Personnel Policy. This is a product of a lot of hard work over the last year by the Personnel Committee and Rev. Joel, with a major editorial assist from Wendy Bachhuber, who also happens to be married to Rev. Joel. Thanks to all who read (and reread) this key component of responsible church governance. The [entire document](#) is available on the church website under Documents.

As you have no doubt already heard, calls are being made to the entire congregation to solicit recommendations for the Settled Minister search committee. Be thinking about who would best represent our

congregation and what particular skills they might bring to this crucial endeavor. Please take a few minutes to answer the call for nominees. I am very excited to see who is elevated to the top by our collective wisdom.

It's February - go toward the light!

Barbara Beekman, Church Council President

RE UPDATE

What Have We Been Up To in Religious Education?

The 2nd - 4th graders had a discussion about seeking the truth with Joel, our interim minister, during their class on January 4. The Coming of Age youth and their mentors created a beautiful mural for their classroom after church on January 11. The 5th - 7th graders were seeking answers to the question "Is life fair?" and heard true stories about UUs' efforts to make the world a better place. The Youth Group had a presentation and discussion with the St. Lawrence University Islam Group on January 18. The LOVED (Living our Values Every Day) program on January 25 explored the idea of social action in the form of loving your neighbor as yourself and asked children to role play a story about helping a new person at school feel welcomed into their new community.

What's Coming Up In February for Religious Education?

February 1 and 8 children and youth will be participating in their RE classes. Check out the enews for weekly details.

February 15 will be a Fun Day.

February 22 will be the final LOVED session.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

THANK YOU THANK YOU...

- † Ian Corse, Linda Kenny, and Barbara Beekman for leading the RE Fun Day and Maria Dickinson for being Acting DRE on December 28.
- † Mark Berninghausen for adjusting the height of the RE bulletin board.
- † Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel and Emma Bentley-Hicks and Jenn Whittaker for providing childcare during the congregational budget meeting.
- † Eileen Raymond for ideas for the January 25 LOVED session and Margaret Harloe for assisting on that day.
- † Heather Rousell for coordinating the COA fundraising luncheon and the COA mentors for creating meals on January 25.

JOYS & SORROWS

- † Our thoughts are with John Tyo after the loss of his mother in January.
- † We wish Janet Green a speedy recovery after her skiing accident. Her address is c/o Burlington Health & Rehab Center, 300 Pearl St., Burlington, VT 05401

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

Update on Fall Canvass

The Stewardship Committee would like to report that we're very close to meeting our goal of raising \$207,000 from the fall canvass process. We appreciate very much the fact that we have 10 new members and friends providing pledges and that over 30 members have stepped up to provide follow-up pledges to help meet the budget gap this year. As was the case last year, we know that we will be doing some additional fundraising to meet the overall budget goal for the year. Stay tuned for more information on an upcoming services auction that we have tentatively scheduled for May 2015.

We want to thank those members who participated in the Appreciative Inquiry Canvass Conversations this past fall. It was a privilege for members of the Stewardship Committee to sit in on these gatherings and

hear your heart-felt responses to Joel's questions. Joel is currently working with the committee to distill your comments and we will soon be sharing a summary statement for the congregation to review. We want to know if we heard you correctly and will solicit feedback to modify our summary until we get it right. Our collective responses will help to describe the "glowing coal" at the heart of our church community to prospective ministers in the upcoming search. Thanks for being so generous with both your time and your financial resources!

Speaking of Generosity -- UU Got Mail!!

Everyone loves to get mail, and everyone appreciates a note of gratitude. This February, the Stewardship Committee invites you to keep the Valentine's spirit of love and letters going by sending a note of appreciation to someone who has shown you a generous heart or a kind spirit. Have you been the recipient of a random act of kindness or a deliberate act of big-heartedness? Or maybe you are grateful for the time and energy our Church Council invests or the great story you heard in RE last week. Take a moment to share your gratitude.

The UU Got Mail Postal Service will be set up in the Social Room after church for the two Sundays following Valentine's Day (February 15 & 22). The Stewardship Committee will provide stationary, simple decorations, envelopes, and postage; all you need to add is a note of thanks. It's that simple!! Stop by our table, craft a short message, and help us celebrate the spirit of generosity in our church community.

Bart Harloe, Stewardship Committee Chair

SOCIAL ACTION UPDATE

Red Cross Blood Drive

The next American Red Cross Blood Drive will be on Tuesday, February 10, from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in our Social Room. We need people to give much-needed blood, and we need volunteers to help with registration and hosting duties. To schedule your blood donation, contact the Red Cross at 1-800-733-2767. To assist with registration/hosting (2- to 3-hour stints) please contact Pat Alden: socialaction@uucantonny.org.

Feed the Need

"Feed the Need" is an important way our congregation can remember the hungry in our community. Food contributions to the brown wooden box (usually in the corner of the Social Room by the kitchen) go to stock the food pantry shelves at the Church and Community Program. We also invite items that support the Canton schools Bear Packs program, which sends needy school children home for the weekend with food. Items for this program should be individual servings and easy to prepare, such as granola bars, quick oatmeal, and fruit cups.

Pat Alden, Social Action Committee Co-Chair

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Understanding the Numbers - Working to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In November, President Obama announced a groundbreaking agreement between the United State and China to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in these two countries. The US side of the agreement will result in emissions that are 26 to 28% lower in 2025 than they were in 2005. New York State's goals were set by Gov. Paterson in 2009 and adopted by Gov. Cuomo. The goal to reduce "80 x 50" implies that emissions within our state need to drop 80% (from 1990 levels) by 2050.

It will take ALL of us to work toward changing our energy use habits and supplies of energy and food to meet these goals in an effort to reduce the extent and consequences of climate change. This includes our church. A challenge was put forth to UU Green Sanctuary congregations to set our own climate change goals that reflect state and federal government targets.

The Environmental Action Committee is reflecting on this challenge – **Can we and should we set a quantifiable goal for reducing our greenhouse gas emissions?** If yes, what percent reduction is appropriate? The first step in addressing this question is to understand our current emissions and define actions that we might take to reduce them, while still sustaining the mission and economic viability of our church. There are three primary sources of our emissions: electricity, heating (space and hot water from natural gas), and transportation of congregants and staff to our building. If we used the standard National Grid electricity supply, natural gas comprises 84% and electricity would comprise 16% of the GHG emissions from building operations. We don't know our transportation related emissions yet, members of the Youth Group will be working this month to estimate these emissions. They are substantial!

As a church – we have focused primarily on reducing GHG emissions associated with electricity use. Most notably, in April 2012 the church switched electricity suppliers to buy 100% wind energy from Viridian. Thus, we effectively cut 16% of our greenhouse gas emissions from building operations. Unfortunately, there are no comparable easy alternative supply options for cutting emissions associated with heating. The Building & Grounds Committee works diligently to make sure our heating system is operating efficiently and cold air leakage in the wintertime is kept to a minimum. Their work is critical, but gets little publicity and attention.

The EAC will continue to ponder these questions leading to a Climate Justice service in March and opportunities for all of us to share and learn how we might best accept the challenge to drastically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions at church and at home. Updates on our GHG emissions and energy options will be forthcoming as we collectively tackle some hard questions and decisions.

Susan Powers, Environmental Action Committee Co-Chair

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

"You U's Got Talent!" ~ An evening of sharing

Calling all performers, young and old – musicians, dancers, storytellers, actors, impressionists, magicians, jugglers, acrobats, poets, thespians, ventriloquists, fire-eaters, sword-swallowers - you name it! We need you all so that we can present an evening of talent-sharing on February 28 at the church.

We are hoping to fill out a roster for a two-hour variety show of performances for a fun-filled evening of family-friendly entertainment and fellowship. There is a wealth of talents and abilities right here within our congregational community. So, mark your calendars for Saturday, February 28, starting at 7:00 p.m. for this free opportunity to get to know some of the folks in the UU community and surrounds, in a new and different light.

We would like to offer the widest possible sampling of material for the maximum number of participants. To that end, we are allocating schedule slots of five to six minutes for solo acts. If there are acts with multiple participants, accommodations can be made for longer performance times. In addition to the performances, there will also be a brief 10- to 15-minute intermission with refreshments. If you are interested in participating as a performer, please fill out a registration form and return it to the church office. The registration deadline is February 22, 2015.

If you have questions, please email John Danis or Stevie Michaelson at fellowship@uucantonny.org or catch one of us before or after the worship service on Sunday morning.

Stevie Michaelson, Fellowship Committee Chair

COOTS LIBRARY BOOK reMARKS

As UU's we take inspiration from many different traditions and texts. Thanks to our successful book fair, we have three new UUA Bookstore titles that may inspire. *True Harvest: Readings by Henry David Thoreau* for

Every Day of the Year, collected by Barry Andrews, *Biblical Literacy – Essential Bible Stories Everyone Needs to Know* by Timothy Beal, and *52 Ways to Ignite Your Congregation: Practical Hospitality* by Randy Hammer are now available in the Max Coots Library. We also have a copy of a beautiful children's book that has just been published by Skinner House Books. *Anne Frank and the Remembering Tree* by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso is a gorgeously illustrated book that is narrated by the tree that lives outside the window of the Secret Annex where the Frank family lived between 1942 and 1944. This is a book worth checking out by young and old. Thanks to a generous donation, we have *Allies & Angels: A Memoir of Our Family's Transition* by Terri and Vince Cook, who are the parents of a transgender child. This book documents their experience as they transitioned together and can be found on the shelves under "Social Issues." We hope you'll come browse and find something from our library to inspire you. And, if you are reading a book from the Coots Library that you particularly love (or not!), consider writing a book review for sharing in the newsletter. We would love to hear from you!

Lorraine Olendzenski, Library Committee Chair

HIGH SCHOOL OUR WHOLE LIVE THIS SPRING

How is High School OWL (Our Whole Lives) different from Middle School OWL? It's because of the participants! Both programs are part of a comprehensive sexuality education strategy created by UUs and the United Church of Christ. The high school program is aimed at 10th and 11th graders. Watch your mail and email for dates for a parent information session taking place in early February.

If you have questions about whether this program is right for your youth, the info session is a good place to start or you may contact a member of the OWL team through the church office. This is an important opportunity we are excited to offer our Beloved Community's youth.

OWL team

ALARM BELLS!

The church bell choir is sorely in need of more ringers. Several of our most recent ringers will either be away for the next couple of months or have conflicts with our scheduled appearances at church services (on February 22 and March 15). If you are new to handbells but would like to give them a try, please contact me. If you have rung before and can spare the time, please lend a helping hand or two. Our rehearsals are on Thursdays at 4:30 pm. Either way, come join in making a joyful noise!

Nelly Case, Music Director

SPECIAL MUSIC

Parcour Quartet will be playing the music for the February 8 service. The quartet includes Theresa Witmer (soprano saxophone), David Katz (bassoon), Laurel Kuxhaus (oboe), and Christina Xydias (cello). They'll be playing a short pre-church concert, beginning at 10:15 in the sanctuary.

CHOIR NEWS

The schedule for adult choir for February is as follows:

2/1 rehearse at 9:00 am

2/8 rehearse at 9:00 am, sing in church

2/22 rehearse at 9:00, sing in church (handbells also play this day)

New members are always welcome! Contact me for more information or just show up at rehearsal. We'll be glad to see you. Music reading ability is helpful but not necessary.

Carol Strome, Choir Director

CARAVAN TO OTTAWA

Off to Ottawa for Winterlude! After a short tour of Parliament Hill area, see magically surreal ice sculptures, carved during the annual international ice-carving competition, and take in other activities. Bring lunch (for indoors), park for free, dress very warmly, enjoy dinner in Ottawa. Meet Saturday, February 7, at 10 a.m. in the church parking lot). We'll carpool. Questions? Call Lila and Charlie Hunnewell.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS GATHERING FEBRUARY 5

Rev. Joel and Todd Moe invite you to check-in on committee life, interim challenges so far, some new policy work on building-use, and – especially -- the latest work we're doing on shared ministry. We'll meet on Thursday, February 5 at 6:30pm.

WEBSITE OVERHAUL

The Outreach Committee has begun conversations about revisions to the church website. We'd like to update the look and the content, and we hope to include some features to make the site more accessible, useful, and user friendly. If you have ideas or suggestions – something you like or don't like about the current website, suggestions for changes or new features, samples of websites (especially other church websites) you especially like – please feel free to share your thoughts with any member of the Outreach Committee: Carol Pynchon, Judy Gibson, Jim Rudd, Theresa Witmer, Katie Boczarski, or Todd Moe.

If you would like to receive weekly electronic news updates,
please email: office@uucantonny.org
Deadline for next newsletter:
Tuesday, February 17

ON THE CALENDAR

Sunday, February 1

9:30 a.m., UShare meeting
10:30 a.m., Worship and RE

Monday, February 2

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation
7:00 p.m., Social Action Working Group meeting

Wednesday, February 4

8:00 a.m., Building & Grounds Committee meeting
10:00 a.m., Library work day
12:15 p.m., Staff Relations meeting
7:30 p.m., Church Council meeting

Thursday, February 5

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir rehearsal
6:30 p.m., Committee Chair workshop
7:00 p.m., HUUMANIST Group meeting

Friday, February 6

12:15 p.m., Organ Concert

Sunday, February 8

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

Monday, February 9

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation
1:30 p.m., Outreach Committee meeting

Tuesday, February 10

11:30 a.m., American Red Cross Blood Drive
5:00 p.m., Fellowship Committee meeting

Wednesday, February 11

10:00 a.m., Library work day

Thursday, February 12

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir rehearsal
7:00 p.m., Worship Committee meeting

Sunday, February 15

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

Monday, February 16

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, February 17

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
7:00 p.m., Stewardship Committee meeting

Wednesday, February 18

10:00 a.m., Library work day
6:30 p.m., Religious Education Committee meeting

Thursday, February 19

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir rehearsal
7:00 p.m., Budget & Finance Committee meeting
7:00 p.m., HUUMANIST Group meeting

Sunday, February 22

10:30 a.m., Worship and RE

Monday, February 23

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, February 24

6:30 p.m., Welcoming Committee meeting

Wednesday, February 25

10:00 a.m., Library work day

Saturday, February 28

7:00 p.m., You U's Got Talent!



The Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

Interim Minister, Rev. Joel Miller

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

Nelly Case, Music Director Carol Strome, Choir Director

Gwen Cunningham, Congregational Administrator

The Reverends Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeritus

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