

Edited for the Web: Personal information and contacts removed, as well as children's last names. Web viewers needing more information are invited to contact the church office at administrator@fuusalbany.org.

Sundays at FUUSA

Please join us on any Sunday for:

Mindfulness Meditation, Religious Education for children and youth, the Service, Coffee Hour, or any combination thereof. Other programs include Forum (social justice and environmental topics), Children's Chapel, social events, and adult education.

All are welcome!

Services

Jan. 6 "Stopping Violence and Making Peace," the Rev. Sam Trumbore

Galvanized by the deaths of children and their teachers in Newtown, Connecticut, what does our Unitarian Universalist faith call us to do about it? *Music: Emma's Revolution*

Jan. 13 "Finding the Heart of Unitarian Universalism," the Rev. Sam Trumbore

Before we practice the heart of liberal religion in the coming weekend with Thandeka, we need to find it. What is "love beyond belief?" *Music: Sing-a-long-a-rama*

Jan. 20 "Lest Their Name Be Forgotten," the Rev. Sam Trumbore
The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was guided and influenced by other civil rights organizers and leaders. Let us remember them today as we honor Dr. King's vision they carried, too. *Music: Choir*

Jan. 27 "Religion, Politics and Sex — Then and Today: A Conversation for Polite Company," Rabbi Dennis S. Ross

Less than a hundred years ago, it was illegal to distribute birth control when the first family planning clinic opened in a Brooklyn storefront in 1916, yet many clergy supported access to safe and affordable contraception. They invited family planning activists to address their congregations in 1921, leading to recognition of the potential for moral good in birth control.

Rabbi Dennis S. Ross, director of Concerned Clergy for Choice, consultant to Planned Parenthood, and author of *All Politics Is Religious*, will discuss how our clergy led the nation to make birth control available and the lessons for today. *Music: Randy Rosette (flute)*

Children's Chapel in January

January 6 there will be no Children's Chapel so that the children won't miss seeing Emma's Revolution. They will start their day in the service with the adults. After the story the elementary children will go to their Workshop Rotation rooms, and the Pre-K and K children will go to their regular Sunday school classrooms.

On **January 13, 20 and 27** the children will have Children's Chapel and then proceed with their Workshop Rotation rooms.

WINDOWS

Newsletter of the First Unitarian
Universalist Society of Albany

January 2013

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Sunday Schedule

9:00 AM

Mindfulness Meditation

9:45 AM

Nursery/Toddler rooms open

10:00 AM

Service

Children's Chapel

(1st Sunday/mo.)

Religious Education

11:00 AM

Coffee Hour

11:45 AM

Forum (2nd and 4th Sundays)

Calendar

Events happening every Sunday at FUUSA

9:00 AM	Mindfulness Meditation	Sanctuary
10:00 AM	Service	Emerson
10:00 AM	Children's Chapel (1st Sunday/mo.)	Sanctuary
10:00 AM	Religious Education	Classrooms
11:00 AM	Coffee Hour	Channing, Emerson
11:45 AM	Forum (some Sundays)	Emerson

Exceptions: No Children's Chapel Jan 6; Yes Children's Chapel Jan. 13, 20 and 27.

Events happening every week in January

Tuesdays	10:00 AM	Philosophy Group	B-8
	1:00 PM	Bridge	B-8
Wednesdays	10:00 AM	Projects & Quilts	B-8
	7:00 PM	Choir Rehearsal	Emerson

Exceptions:

All other events happening in January

Tuesday 1-Jan

7:00 PM Wellspring Meeting B-8

Sunday 6-Jan

11:00 AM Coffee Hour Channing

Monday 7-Jan

6:00 PM Nominating Committee Library

6:15 PM RE Council Channing

Tuesday 8-Jan

5:15 PM RSC B-8

7:00 PM UU Christians B-7

Thursday 10-Jan

7:00 PM PCC Meeting B-8

Friday 11-Jan

2:00 PM Choir Dinner Cooking Kitchen

6:00 PM Dinner and Singalong Event Channing

7:00 PM Parenthood Discussion 21, 22, 23, 24/25, 26

Sunday 13-Jan

11:00 AM Coffee Hour Channing

11:45 AM Forum Emerson

5:30 PM Walker Book Club Channing

Monday 14-Jan

3:00 PM Overflow Shelter Meal Prep Kitchen

Tuesday 15-Jan

6:00 PM Wellspring Meeting B-8

Thursday 17-Jan

12:30 PM Rite of Passage Meeting B-8

7:00 PM Board of Trustees Meeting B-8

Friday 18-Jan

5:30 PM RE Volunteer Party Channing

7:00 PM Practicing the Heart of Our Liberal Faith Emerson

Saturday 19-Jan

9:30 AM Practicing the Heart of Our Liberal Faith
..... Channing, Emerson

Sunday 20-Jan

11:00 AM Coffee Hour Channing

11:45 AM Green Sanctuary B-8

Monday 21-Jan

8:00 AM MLK Services Offsite

Tuesday 22-Jan

7:00 PM CRUUNY Worship Planning B-7

Friday 25-Jan

11:30 AM C. Perkins Wellsprings Joy Library

Saturday 26-Jan

6:00 PM Circle Dinner Offsite

Sunday 27-Jan

11:00 AM Coffee Hour Channing

Monday 28-Jan

3:00 PM Overflow Shelter Meal Prep Kitchen

Tuesday 29-Jan

1:00 PM Bridge B-8

7:00 PM Evensong Service Emerson

Looking Ahead

Feb. 1	Chili Dinner and Movie
Feb. 23, 24	Circle Dinners
Mar. 2	Wine and Cheese Tasting
Mar. 16	Auction
Apr. 5	Annual Dinner

News

Budget countdown

FUUSA committee budget requests for the fiscal year, July 1, 2013—June 30, 2014 are due **January 13, 2013**. The budget request form can be found at <http://www.albanyuu.org/budgetform.pdf>. If necessary, the office can supply you with a printed form.

The Finance Committee and the Board use the completed form to help determine what your group's planned activities are for next year and how much money will be needed to support your endeavors. It will be assumed that no funds will be needed if a form is not submitted. Regular mail and email submissions will be welcomed.

The form is self-guiding, however, if you have questions or need an alternate method of communication, please contact Steve Moskowitz, Finance Committee chair, at xxxxxxxx.



A very special Sunday at FUUSA: January 6

The award-winning, globe-trotting activist duo known as **Emma's Revolution** will perform at our service on Sunday, January 6—straight after performing at Proctor's Eighth Step the night before.

This is a Sunday service not to be missed!

Singer/songwriters Pat Humphries & Sandy O have been described as "Smart, funny and informative. Like Rachel Maddow and Jon Stewart with guitars."

Flyers in this issue

At the end of this newsletter you will find full page items on:

- ◆ Can you sing for your supper?
- ◆ Practicing the Heart of Our Liberal Faith

Evensong services begin this month

Evensong services will be held on the last Tuesday of each month from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m, beginning January 29. Often contemplative, always refreshing, Evensong is a different way to worship together. The services will be mostly musical, and may also bring in alternative experiences using poetry, dance, story, meditation through art, and quiet reflection. We hope you will come and bring a friend, too! Evensong services are currently being planned through May at 7:00 p.m. on the following dates: January 29, February 26, March 26, April 30, May 28 .If you would like to know more about Evensong, contact Jan McCracken at xxxxxxxx.

Guest at Your Table

Please return your well-fed UUSC (Unitarian Universalist Service Committee) **Guest at Your Table** box to the RE window in the lobby not later than Sunday, **January 6, 2013**. Forgot to pick one up? Please write a generous check, and leave it in a GaYT envelope (available in the RE window) on Jan. 6. Thank you from Don Odell, FUUSA's UUSC local representative.

Ready, Set, Elect!

Did you know that May 19, 2013 is a VERY important day for FUUSA? It's the day we hold our annual meeting, during which we determine our budget for the coming year (July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014); we discuss issues critical to our congregation; and, we elect our new leadership.

Members of our congregation are eligible and urged to become involved in this critical process. If you are not now a member, haven't "signed the book", there is time before the election. As they say, if you don't vote, you can't complain about the results! More importantly, our society is built on diversity - diversity of age, background, spiritual and humanist beliefs, and lifestyle. We want our leadership to reflect this diversity as well and that is where you come in. We anticipate vacancies in

our: Board of Trustees - the body invested by our Bylaws to determine matters of policy and management; Religious Education Council - the group that fosters and maintains a religious education program for the children and youth of FUUSA; Social Responsibilities Council - our guide and coordinator when it comes to social issues of moral and ethical significance; Nominating Committee - responsible for publicizing the nominating procedure and presenting a slate of candidates for open positions; and, Endowment Trust - manages gifts to the society including decisions regarding investment and use of designated portions of the money in the Trust.

This is probably not an exhaustive list of positions that will become available in the next several months; however it is a start. And, we hope you use it as your start in your thought process as to how you would like to help our society stay healthy, grow, maintain critical programs, and reach beyond our current accomplishments. We are a society that celebrates the worth and dignity of all individuals and looks forward to all members stepping forward to identify how they can help us to better connect our interdependent web.

If you have questions regarding elected positions, what their duties and responsibilities are, or just want to discuss potential areas of personal interest, we hope you will seek out a member of the Nominating Committee (or any board member) for a full discussion. We would love to talk to you.

Thank you from the Nominating Committee: Dawn Dana, Chair, and members Meredith Andrews, Deborah Brown, Dave Metz, Paula Moskowitz, and Linda Way.

Missing anything?

The Lost and Found in the coatroom is filling up with lost items. Please take a look. If it's yours, take it home! If it's trash and you know it, throw it out. Staff will go thru soon and throw it all away, so hop to it!

St. Lawrence UU District news

If you are interested in the activities of the St. Lawrence UU District, please go to the St. Lawrence District web page (<http://www.sld.uua.org/>) for further information. There are columns each month Rev. Christina Neilson, St. Lawrence Congrega-

tional Life Consultant, Dave Munro, District President, Karen LoBracco, Lifespan Faith Development Program Consultant. The District calendar of District activities follows. Mark your calendar.

Jan. 4-6, 2013 Beyond Con: Leveling Up in the Real World

Jan. 11-13 Fundamentals of Healthy Youth Groups

Jan. 25-27 UUtopia Youth Con

Jan. 26 Stewardship: Not Just Once A Year!

May 17-18 Women's Spirituality Conference

April 26-27 St. Lawrence & Ohio Meadville Districts Joint Annual Assembly

June 19-23 General Assembly

July 31-Aug. 4 UULTI By The Lake & Goldmine Youth Leadership School

Aug. 15-17 St. Lawrence District Board/Leaders Retreat

For more details, contacts, flyers and registration forms on the events listed, go to

<http://www.sld.uua.org/calendar1.html>

- Don Odell, FUUSA Denominational Affairs Liaison (482-4574, drodell31@yahoo.com)

Save the date:

Wine & Cheese, March 2

Join us as we explore Spanish wines and cheeses this year at our 8th annual FUUSA Wine & Cheese Tasting on Saturday, March 2 at 7PM. If the only Spanish wine you ever heard of was Rioja, you will be surprised at the wide variety of grapes and growing regions now producing wines for export. We will be pairing the wines with a selection of Spanish cheeses and other accompaniments typically offered in Spain. Eric Paul, proprietor of the Cheese Traveler, will again be sharing his knowledge of the unique varieties of Spanish cheeses. Tickets are priced at \$30 and will be on sale beginning February 3; proceeds benefit the FUUSA General Fund. Childcare will be offered.



Lifespan Learning

Thank You RE Volunteers! And please volunteer!
As you may have heard, in January we have special programming for the children in Sunday school: Workshop Rotation for the elementary children and special guest visitors for the Pre-School and Kindergarten groups. Many thanks to the workshop leaders and special guest visitors who help us keep our program strong and engaging as we finish out the fall term.

And many, heartfelt thanks from me and on behalf of the RE Council and the families to the regular RE volunteers who teach Sunday school.

We are at a highpoint in our Sunday school enrollment: 147 children and youth, up from about 120 last year. And more families visit us each month.

To fully staff our Sunday school program we need 40 volunteers! The spring term starts Feb 3rd and runs through the end of May.

The senior high advisors and the Our Whole Lives facilitators commit to volunteering both terms. Volunteers on the other teaching teams have the option of teaching either or both the fall and spring semesters. With 4 teachers on each team, each volunteer can count on preparing and leading one session a month and assisting a team mate with one session a month. So everyone gets 2 Sundays a month to attend the service, to travel, etc. Prep time to lead a session takes about an hour, because you can count on my support to gather materials for the activities. I also visit the groups on Sunday morning and model and coach effective ways to work with children and youth. And of course, the enjoyment and insight Religious Education volunteers often receive is priceless.

I still need volunteers in most of the age groups. You can check out the curriculum offerings at <http://www.albanyuu.org/recurriculum.html>. Please give me a call at 463-7135 email me at dre@albanyuu.org, if you're interested.

Thanks! —Leah Purcell

What is the heart of our liberal faith?

Thandeka calls the heart of our liberal faith love beyond belief. Let's find out if she's right.

Join us at a faith development workshop on Friday-Saturday, Jan. 18-19 led by Thandeka. In "Practicing the Heart of Our Liberal Faith" we will explore personal and collective practices that open our hearts and our minds, and put new insights into practice. For workshop details see flyer at end of newsletter.

The Rev. Dr. Thandeka is a theologian, journalist, Emmy award-winning television producer, and congregational consultant and organizer.

Joy Library notes

The \$60,000 Dog: My Life With Animals by Lauren Slater. Beacon. 2012. [590.92 SLA]

This book is about so very much more than what we will spend to save a dog we love. The writing in this book is so intensely beautiful and evocative that it pings your heart and brain at the same time. While the memoir does wend its way to the issue of how much any of us might spend on a beloved dog, the earlier parts of the book have writing that is universal and so luminous about childhood and nature and the refuge that animals of every kind afford us through our lives. This book will be a surprise gift to anyone who experienced the wonders of nature as a child, and has perhaps forgotten the beauty all around us. A searingly lovely book. Everyone who is or wants to be a writer should soak it up..... Tracie Hotchner on Amazon.

Our Community

CommUnity Potluck

All of FUUSA is cordially invited to Guilderland Plus January potluck supper—Guilderland resident or not! Please join us January 19 at 6:00 PM. We will gather at the Heritage Village Community room, just off Route 155. Call Lois Thomson (xxxxxxx) to tell what you will bring for the potluck and for directions.

Hope to see you there—Bob and Lois Thomson, Barb Cooley, and Anita Patka

Channing Circle meets January 21 for luncheon
Channing Circle will meet at noon on Monday, Jan. 21, Martin Luther King Day, for a Brown Bag lunch (settings, coffee/tea/dessert provided). We will share our memories of notable New Year's Days or resolutions. All retired FUUSAns or friends are invited to attend. If in doubt, check us out ! Info - xxxxxx

**Sing for your Supper??? What is that about?
Supper and Sing-A-Long, Jan. 11, 6:00 p.m.**

The FUUSA Choir is hosting a multigenerational supper and Sing-A-Long on Friday, Jan. 11, starting at 6:00 p.m.

BUT...Instead of bringing a dish to pass, we ask each adult to bring a bag of nonperishable food (or money) to be donated to the Focus Food Pantry. The choir will provide dinner (soups and stews, bread, salad, drinks, dessert). There will be delicious choices for all regardless of your dietary preferences and needs.

The time after the holidays is both dark and cold. While we all hibernate, donations for those who do not have enough to eat fall off. We can remember those who do not have enough food while enjoying each other and making wonderful music.

Come one and all! Bring groceries for the Pantry! Bring your instruments (including your voice) and your song books marked with your very favorite songs!

Sign up in Channing Hall. Please note who is coming and if there are any dietary restrictions the Choir needs to be aware of. Walk-ins are welcome, but we do want to be sure we have enough for everyone!

The choir will provide supper for you during our multi-generational Dinner and Sing A Long event on Friday, Jan. 11. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to donate canned/boxed foods for the food pantry as your admission. Suggested below (from ChooseMyPlate.gov) are healthy and needed food items. Come “sing a song with us” and help the community at the same time! Sign up in Channing Hall.

FRUIT Dried fruit- without added sugar; Canned fruit in juice; Calcium fortified 100% juice boxes; 100% Grape juice

VEGETABLES Canned low sodium orange or dark green vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes (water or light syrup pack), spinach, collard greens, green beans, canned tomatoes and tomato sauce with no added or low sodium

GRAINS Regular, instant or boil in the bag brown rice, Whole wheat pasta, macaroni ,regular Cheerios™, other low sugar cereal, ≤ 6 grams sugar per

**Need to talk?
FUUSA Pastoral Care
Associates are here
to listen!**



Our Pastoral Care Associates have been trained in compassionate listening skills and are available to all members and friends of our congregation. To contact a Pastoral Care Associate, email listeners@albanyuu.org, contact Reverend Sam Trumbore, the FUUSA office at 518-463-7135, or one of them personally. They are: Jon Newell, Phil Rich, Sharon Babala, Jan Satin, Randy Rosette, Jerry Deighan, Bruce Rodgers and Sandy Stone.

serving preferred, Raisin Bran, Quick cooking or instant oats and cream of wheat cereals, no added sugar

PROTEIN Canned or foil packed tuna, salmon and chicken, Peanut butter – natural is even better!

DAIRY Non-refrigerated, shelf-stable 1% or fat free milk, such as Parmalat

January 11 Parenthood Potluck discussion topic
The Parenthood Potluck (aka Parent Group) will join the Jan. 11th FUUSA multigenerational supper hosted by the choir at 6 pm and have their Parent discussion of the book 'Last Child in the Woods' from 7 to 8:30 pm Childcare is provided. Lou Rehder will lead the Parent discussion Hope that you can join us— and Thank you, Lou!

**Walker Book Club
Sunday, January 13, 2013**

Join us in Channing Hall at 5:30 PM. for supper and a discussion of “The Places In Between,” by Scottish Author Rory Stewart. This nonfictional travel narrative describes Stewart’s walk across Afghanistan in 2002.

The discussion is preceded by a welcoming potluck supper, Bring your favorite dish to share and a small contribution to cover beverages. Use dishes etc. at FUUSA and help with the dishwasher or be green and bring your own.

On Feb. 10 we will discuss “Open City: A Novel,” by Teju Cole. This fictional, free-flowing narrative de-

scribes the Nigerian protagonist's frequent walks through New York City and his encounters with various people.

Newcomers are always welcome and the book club is open to all FUUSA members and friends. Contact Linda Hunt at Ishunt@nycap.rr.com with any questions about the group or if you want to have your name added to the Walker Book Club emailing list.

Circle Dinners on Saturday, January 26

Circle Dinners are potlucks held in the homes of FUUSA members and friends. These dinners provide an excellent opportunity to socialize in small groups of six to nine people. Everyone is welcome, singles and couples, regardless of dietary restrictions. We encourage families with young children to attend or host a multi-generational dinner.

If you would like to attend, you can complete the sign-up form in Channing Hall or email Martha at mmusser@nycap.rr.com. In your email, please specify the number of adults and children who will attend and indicate if you are willing to host or need a ride. If you are *not* bringing children, indicate if you would like to attend a multi-generational dinner.

The deadline for signing up is Sunday, January 13.

Save these dates for Circle Dinners:

February: Saturday, 2/23, and Sunday, 2/24

March: Friday, 3/22

May: Saturday, 5/4

Chili dinner and movie, Feb. 1

While many people we know are *on-line*, *in line*, *toeing-the-line* or *crossing the line*...there are a HUGE number of Americans falling below **THE LINE**. The poverty line, that is...

Please join the Social Responsibilities Council and FOCUS Council of Churches for the Friday, Feb. 1 chili-potluck and movie-showing in Channing Hall. This multi-generational event will provide an opportunity to discuss hunger and poverty issues facing individuals and families today in an understandable and compassionate way. Adults and children are welcome to attend and encouraged to sign up. The movie itself is a documentary, featuring interviews with four very different people, each of

whom is struggling to make ends meet, but often falling below **THE LINE**. Unfortunately there are a growing number of families and individuals in this predicament. Please consider attending this event for a powerful look at what is happening in America's communities and what we can do to help those in need.

A simple dinner of salad, chili, bread and dessert will be served (buffet-style) at 6pm, followed by the movie showing at 7pm and discussion at 7:45pm. Sign up to bring one of these items or pay at the door (\$3 per adult and children over 10, maximum of \$10 per family).

Please call or e-mail Renee Panetta, Lois Griffin or Patty Burch with any questions.

150 FUUSAns have joined

Our new Facebook group for "FUUSA News and Updates" has 150 members! This is a 'closed' group where we ALL can share information about happenings here at FUUSA. All we ask is that you restrain yourself to 100% FUUSA news and events so that this page will become a trusted source of information without clutter! The group will be moderated, inappropriate posts will be removed, and the poster will be reminded of the rules.

Members and friends of FUUSA can join the group by using this address to get to the page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FUUSANewsandUpdates/> and request to join. Alternatively, you can email Stephanie Hayes (shayes@albanyuu.org) to ask to be added to the group.

now home from the hospital and rehab and doing well.

If you need the services of the Caring Network, please call the office during regular hours at 463-7135.
Items of personal joy or caring may be submitted during the service on the yellow cards provided, or directly to Mary Ann Randall (mabrandall@gmail.com.)

Social Justice

A full Green schedule!

The Green Sanctuary Committee has been very busy this year and 2013 will be no different. As the ominous signs of global warming are making themselves ever more evident in the Arctic, the signs of change are ever more evident on the streets and in the polls, and FUUSA is playing a leading role. In the past month, the Green Sanctuary Committee has sponsored a pot luck dinner organized by Kayla, Sandy and Nichola, and a forum featuring the Radix center for sustainable city living (radixcenter.org).

Coming up January 13 at 11:45 in Emerson Hall is a forum by two of the organizers of the Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign, an effort by New

York Native American tribes to revive a four-hundred year old treaty and with it respect for the natural world around us. The Two Rows Wampum Campaign will consist of many events over the spring and summer, culminating in a flotilla of canoes down the Hudson River to the United Nations Building in Manhattan, planned for August 2013. (www.peacecouncil.net/NOON/2row/index.html)

Coming up in February is a forum on the Habitat for Humanity Re-Store. Learn how you can recycle and re-use building materials, furniture and appliances. More forums are planned for March (gardening) and April (solar energy).

A major green accomplishment for FUUSA is about to be culminated! FUUSA will soon sign an agreement with New York Light Energy to install and lease solar panels on the roof of Emerson and the

RE building. Not only will we become net energy producers, but we will save money in the process!

The GSC will be contributing to this January's RE activities, adding a segment on the environment. As part of this, we will be asking people to bring in old T-shirts so that the kids can turn them into useful handbags.

Join the March Powerdown challenge! It costs only \$3 to sign up. Then, save as much energy as you can during the month of March (the March billing cycle, to be exact) and present your energy bills for 2012 and 2013 side-by-side at our Earth Day service. Higher percent saved takes the pot! It's a win-win situation. Look for the sign up sheet in Chan-

ning Hall.

The Green Sanctuary Committee meets every third Sunday of the month at 11:45 in room B-8. Newcomers are always welcome!



WE NEED OLD T-SHIRTS! Especially T-shirts with messages or images on them. Kids in RE will be instructed on how to turn an old T-shirt into a useful handbag as part of January RE workshops. Bring any old T-shirts Sundays Jan. 6-27. Please leave them in the brightly labeled box in the coat room. Thanks! Questions? Contact Kayla Autery, Renee Panetta, Carol Butt, or Chris Bystroff.

Columns

Sam's Outlook

Practicing the Heart of Unitarian Universalism

Something's missing from the practice of Unitarian Universalism. We don't have a set of spiritual practices that helps us deepen our faith, guide our actions, and strengthen our moral character. I have been consulting with Thandeka about this problem for the last year. She has put together a one and a half day workshop for our congregation that gives us a faith development practice for our lives. I'm going to attend this workshop because I know it is of vital importance for our religious community. I encourage you to join me in this work.

—Rev. Sam



Chuck's Chat

This is the way the world ends

According to the news stories, the world was supposed to end on Friday, December 21, 2012. That is what the Mayan Calendar said. For 20 children and 6 adults the world ended a week early. Hearing the news hit me in the pit of my stomach. I was on my way to FUUSA for a meeting. Details were very

sketchy. As with all of these stories, speculation by the media was rampant. I stuffed the news into a compartment in my brain and went on with the meeting. After the meeting, I turned the radio back on in the car as I drove home. The number changed from 26 to 27 to 28 and then back down to 26.

The next night was my office party. It was a festive event. I did not discuss the shootings with anyone,

but they stayed in the back of my mind. I needed some more interaction, some more feedback, some more human contact to resolve this. Why was the world going on and not noticing? Vacillating between a morbid fascination with wanting to know more and wanting to forget, I read stories over the internet.

Sunday morning I looked for answers at FUUSA. There was the normal hustle and bustle. Talking with some friends before the service, we did share our feelings. It helped that we sang “There is More Love Somewhere” and “Blessed Spirit of My Life” before the service. During the service Virginia Reed’s beautiful haunting voice moved me. None of the children killed would ever be able to sing like that. Some of my grief was released. Rev. Sam talked about getting what we deserve. He said, “None of the victims got what they deserved.” I thought, “or deserved what they got”. After the service, there was some more discussion and reflection. I still remained unsettled.

Photos of some of the children filled the front page of the paper on Monday. Funerals were held during the week. Wednesday CNN commentators said, “Emotions in the country are still raw.” On a colored map, the US was red because we have the highest number of guns per capita in the world. The “after shootings” debate about gun control was in full force again. President Obama formed a commission with recommendations due by January. None of this mattered to the 26 victims whose world had ended.

By Thursday I was wondering what I should do or say at the Board meeting about the shooting. We had FUUSA business to do. If I brought up the shootings at the beginning of the meeting, it would cast a pall over what we needed to do. But, ignoring it in my spiritual home did not make sense. This is where in the words of Rob Bell, “We make space, when we gather, for people to have experience with that thing that can’t be named.” I decided on a closing reading that would soothe the raw emotions. Wendell Berry wrote:

“When despair for the world grows in me and I wake in the night at the least sound in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be, I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on

the water, and the great heron feeds. I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.”

It was hard to read this, but it helped.

Friday the 21st came. There was a national moment of silence for the victims whose world ended. For the rest of us, the world did not end. We are left with the an unanswerable question -- “Why does the world end for some too soon and for others too late ?”—Chuck

Religious Exploration

Who are our spiritual and philosophical guides?
I have “go to” people when it comes to figuring things out. For the “how to” questions I usually, ask advice from my colleagues, but when it’s a “why” question, I have learned to ask the children and youth.

As I shared with the congregation in a recent “Message for All Ages”—sometimes I am not clear about what the message of a story is. This was certainly the case in the story of “The Mitten Tree” in which an older woman made mittens for the children who waited at the school bus stop out her window. The woman and the children in this story never talked to each other, but the woman saw a need and found a way to anonymously give away mittens she knitted somehow this method of giving seemed odd to me. The children in the story never waved to the woman when she walked past them on her way to the mail box each morning. But the woman was happy to see them and felt a connection with them. In the end, the children felt a connection with her too. But where was the fairness in this giving arrangement? Something felt odd to me.

So when I told this story in Children’s Chapel, I asked them what message this story had for us, as Unitarian Universalists. And right away they had answers for me:

- ◆be kind
- ◆don’t be greedy
- ◆do unto others as you would have them do unto

you

- ◆ give to people because it gives you joy
- ◆ give to others even though you don't expect to get anything back

I was impressed! Usually we hear children lament when things don't go their way "It isn't fair!" But these responses reflect an understanding that acting compassionately is simply good and right. The children were not as stuck on the issue of "fairness" as I was.

Now I would like to think that these children had learned all these messages in Sunday school. And indeed, they may have. But one of the children who piped up with a response has only been coming to FUUSA for about 4 months. I know our program and volunteers are excellent, but, I think there were other forces at work – and I suspect it is their parents and caretakers!

Unitarian Universalism has been said to be all carrot and no stick. I think families come to FUUSA because they want help raising their children with liberal religious values, not because they are afraid of what will happen to them if they don't. So the RE Council members, the RE volunteers and I are partners with the families. That's one reason why I work hard to communicate with families about what is happening in their childrens' session of Sunday school each week. As Rev. Peter Morales says – if Unitarian Universalism had an ad campaign the slogan could be the same as Lowes Hardware – "You can do it; we can help."

All of us adults are partners with the children and youth. I think that children and youth naturally have a good sense about what they need to learn. Good education or religious exploration empowers them to direct their own learning.

And so I invite the RE volunteers to consider the children and youth to be their philosophical and spiritual guides. I know for me that inviting children into the conversation about what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist helps me to learn and grow. It nourishes my soul.

As we start the New Year with Workshop Rotation for the children, I look forward to seeing the elementary school children in Children's Chapel each week starting Jan. 13. This is a time for me to share a story with them and to hear their responses over the course of the month.

And on January 6th, I'll tell you the story that is the theme for Workshop Rotation for the elementary aged children—*The Rebirth of the Sun*—during the service in Emerson Hall. What a special day that will be, since the music will be provided by *Emma's Revolution*.

We'll miss you for the weeks after that, since the children will not be in the service again until Feb 10, when we'll have our Mardi Gras service. Perhaps I'll have more sage words from the children in response to the story to share with you then.

In joy and service, Leah



Contact Us

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Regular meeting days

Check current calendar for time and location

Board of Trustees, 3rd Thursday

Program Coordinating Council, 2nd Thursday

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany

Phone: 518.463.7135

Address: 405 Washington Avenue, between Robin Street and Lake Avenue, Albany, New York 12206

Main entrance is on Washington Avenue. Rear entrance is on West St. Both have ramp access. The building is fully handicapped accessible.

Parking: Parking is available on the street. On Sundays (and for some special events) FUUSA has permission to use the University at Albany's downtown campus parking lots: the Hawley Lot on Robin Street at Washington Avenue and the Thurlow Terrace Lot on Western Avenue.

Office hours

September-June: Monday-Friday, 9:00-3:30

July-August: Monday–Thursday 9:00-12:00

Website

www.albanyuu.org

Building use

To **reserve a room** for a FUUSA activity, contact Office Administrator Stephanie Hayes (463-7135 or administrator@albanyuu.org).

To **rent classroom space** for a personal or non-FUUSA activity, contact Office Administrator Stephanie Hayes (463-7135 or administrator@albanyuu.org).

To **rent one of the large halls** or plan for an event that will use both halls and classrooms for a personal or non-FUUSA activity, contact Rental Agent Lynne Lekakis (427-7386 or kaneandlekakis@gmail.com)

Windows is the newsletter of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany. It is published monthly, except July and August, in the offices of the Society at 405 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12206, and distributed to members and friends of the Society. Church office phone is 518-463-7135.

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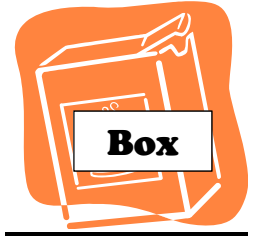
Send submissions for all publications to:
Windows@albanyuu.org or to the church office.

Publication deadlines

FUUSA Preview email: 9:00 a.m. Wednesdays

Order of Service: 9:00 a.m. Thursdays

Windows: 9:00 a.m. 3rd Friday of the month



YOU SING FOR YOUR SUPPER?

Multigenerational Supper, Sing-A-Long and Charitable Event
Sponsored by the FUUSA Choir

What: Dinner and Sing-A-Long to Benefit the *Focus Food Pantry*
Food donations are historically low in the winter.
Our donations will help “beef” up the supply

Who: ALL invited – Adults, Kids, Youth

When: Friday, January 11, 6pm

Suggested donation = a Bagful of Canned or Boxed Goods” or \$\$\$

Members of the choir will be preparing dinner for you so you can bring a donation instead.

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS ARE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

Sign up in Channing Hall on Bulletin Board. Though walk-ins are welcome, it would be helpful to know how many are coming so we have plenty of food for all 😊



Feel free to contact Randy Rosette with any questions - 783-2637 or rosette_jensen@juno.com or Kathy Harris
512-5655; harr70@nycap.rr.com

Practicing the Heart of Our Liberal Faith

A FUUSA Faith Development Workshop

led by Thandeka

January 18 – 19, 2013

Part One: Friday (7:00PM to 9:30PM)

Part Two: Saturday (9:30AM to 2:30PM)



Thandeka calls the heart of our liberal faith “love beyond belief”. Let’s find out if she’s right.

Friday:

Part One of this workshop explores personal and collective practices that open our hearts and our minds to insights beyond traditional religious beliefs. Should we call these experiences love beyond belief? Drawing upon our own personal experiences, we will answer this question.

Saturday:

Part Two of this workshop tests the insights and conclusions gained from Part One by putting them into practice. Through a series of faith development exercises, we explore new ways of expanding and assessing our Unitarian Universalist faith as an ongoing personal and community way of life at FUUSA.

Sign up for this workshop at the Sign Up Site in Channing Hall. Lunch on Saturday will be provided: a freewill offering to cover cost of the lunch will be accepted.

The Rev. Dr. Thandeka is a theologian, journalist, Emmy award-winning television producer, and congregational consultant and organizer. She is the creator of the “We Love Beyond Belief” project for congregations (revthandeka.org). Thandeka has taught at Harvard Divinity School, Brandeis University, Williams College, and Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago, and has been a Fellow at the Stanford Humanities Center at Stanford University and a Visiting Scholar at Union Theological Seminary in New York City and the Center for Process Studies at the Claremont School of Theology in Claremont, California.

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