

## 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 on Sundays include Forum (social justice and environmental topics), Family Chapel, social events, and adult education.*

**All are welcome!**

# WINDOWS

Newsletter of the First Unitarian  
Universalist Society of Albany

December 2014

### In this issue:

- 1 **Services**
- 2 **Calendar**
- 3 **Sam's Outlook**
- 4 **News**
- 9 **Growing Together**
- 10 **Our Community**
- 11 **Social Justice**
- 13 **Contact Us**
- 14 **Flyers**

### Sunday Schedule

9:00 AM

Mindfulness Meditation

9:45 AM

Nursery/Toddler rooms open

10:00 AM

Service

Family Chapel

*(1st Sunday/mo. Oct.-May)*

Religious Education

11:00 AM

Coffee Hour

11:45 AM

Forum *(as scheduled)*

### Services

#### Dec. 7 "Missing you," Rev. Sam Trumbore

The December holidays arrive without fail, but our lives continue to change around them. They can be very hard in the wake of a significant loss in the past year. Even moving to a new location or children or relatives missing from the holiday table can bring a sense of sorrow... yet delight and surprise can be there too, often unexpectedly.

*Music:* FUUSA adult choir

#### Dec. 14 "The Lamp Will Keep Burning," Rev. Sam Trumbore

The Hanukkah and Christmas trains are coming fast down the track as we enter the darkest time of the year. All the shopping, preparations, parties and childish expectations can be highly stressful on everyone. Drawing inspiration from the lamp that stayed lit for eight days, let us keep our inner flame lit during the yuletide season.

*Music:* FUUSA youth and adult choirs

#### Dec. 21 "Would You Like to Hold the Baby?" Leah Purcell and Rev. Sam Trumbore

No one knew on the night of Jesus' birth how important he would become to the world as a great teacher and important spiritual leader. He was also a true friend to the poor and the powerless. So at Christmas time we celebrate the birth of Jesus, eager for the joy and hope that belongs to this season. As Mary invites a stable girl to hold the baby, so are we invited to embrace the deepest meaning that Christmas holds for each of us.

*Music:* FUUSA choir with adult and youth performers

#### Dec. 28 : "Do Humanists Have Souls--and Do They Want To?" Rev. David Weissbard

Many of us who wear the label "Humanist" are wary of traditional religious language, like the word "soul." I will be ending the year by making a case for my non-magical understanding of that concept.

*Music:* Special guest performer TBA





## Sam's Outlook

### Living Into Our First Source *Rev. Sam Trumbore*

“Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.”



December is a wonder-full time to live into our First Source that celebrates the transcending mystery and wonder that creates and upholds life. The wonder that the oil lasted for eight days celebrated during Hanukkah, and the amazing birth story of a holy child can warm our hearts and bring families closer together.

The First Source is one of my favorites because it affirms and celebrates personal experience. We are not talking about something to be read about in a book or heard about in a lecture from a teacher or a saint. They are not every day experiences but ones that transcend us, beyond the scope of what we might have known before that moment.

When I sit in our basement each morning, wrapped in my flannel sheet, kneeling on my Persian rug, my buttocks supported by a bench, sitting without moving, watching my breath flow in and out, I invite that direct experience of transcending mystery and wonder. I never know whether my mind will be still or agitated, my body tense or relaxed, my emotions calm or stirred up, just being present with whatever is there, with a sense of acceptance and equanimity. Most of the time, nothing transcendent happens. But almost every time, I notice something I hadn't noticed before. I'm always learning more and more about how my sensory systems connect with my emotional centers and how they all connect to the activity in my brain.

Another path to that experience of transcending mystery and wonder happens when I follow Sister Simone Campbell's guidance at the Ware Lecture last June at UUA General Assembly in Rhode Island, and “walk toward trouble.” I've learned over the years to recognize a feeling of discomfort that means I'm avoiding something. In that moment I

experience the loving urge to step in and help, it conflicts with the fearful urge to ignore the situation and avoid getting involved. When I overcome my resistance and walk toward the trouble that frightens me, more often than not, I find myself in greater touch with the forces that create and uphold life.

And then there are those delightful moments watching children enacting the nativity story that can warm even the grouchiest curmudgeon's stony heart. Those bright, joyful little faces on Christmas morning opening presents and beaming and for a moment having their wishes fulfilled brings a sense of renewal of the spirit, remembering our own joys from days long gone or happy to offer the feeling never personally enjoyed. The right gift, skillfully given and gratefully received can be a loving affirmation of knowing another and truly being known. It isn't the gift that is the gift, it is the knowing and valuing translated into a physical form.

We live in such a dismal, pessimistic, and dreary time. So many of us are terrified of the damage we are doing to the planet and the climate destabilization we are setting up with all the greenhouse gases we are dumping into the atmosphere. Religious wars threaten to break out in the Middle East and ethnic fractionalization divide country after country. Rather than learn to get along with those who are different, people want to separate and isolate from each other.

Hatred cannot end hatred. Only love can end hatred. In our Unitarian Universalist sources we have the path to overcome differences through honoring and appreciating them. Direct personal experience of the value of another person's religious tradition doesn't require belief. It does require openness to mystery and wonder of the forces that create and uphold life.

So let mystery and wonder lead you into the holiday season and show you their splendor. As the sun dips low on the horizon, we empty ourselves in order to make room for new life that will spring forth soon enough. Let the children guide you, for they embody what we seek in the First Source.

Rev. Sam

## News

### Sunday service matters

You may have seen the item in a recent Preview email indicating that the opportunity to speak your joy or sorrow will continue to be offered in our Sunday services. The Religious Services Committee (RSC) received a great deal of thoughtful feedback on this matter, and there was overwhelming support for retaining this element of our Joys and Sorrows ritual.

We trust that all will honor the integrity of this sharing by using “air time” respectfully and recognizing the need for all to be heard. We understand that not everyone is comfortable speaking his/her joy or sorrow, and we want to ensure that there are alternative means by which important news of our community can be shared. RSC will be deliberating further on this, so stay tuned.

In the context of discussion and feedback about Joys and Sorrows, a number of related issues about the flow and tone of our Sunday services have come to the fore. Many have expressed concern that our Community Greeting – while well-intentioned -- has gotten a bit out of hand. Many people range far-afield from their seats, and the process entails a high decibel level and takes several minutes. Certainly, we are eager to greet each other on Sunday morning, and this speaks well of our caring community. Could the process be equally effective at welcoming, but more in keeping with the dignity and tone of our service, if we simply turned and greeted the people seated near us? Please let us know what you think about how we do the Community Greeting, and whether changes should be encouraged.

Lest there be any perception that concern with our service rituals is primarily about the time that they take (one commenter cautioned that we needn't be in such a hurry to get to our coffee), please be assured that this is NOT RSC's primary concern – although the length of our services is not a factor that can be ignored. I think we've all had the experience of being disappointed when a reading or hymn is skipped because we're running into overtime on the clock. Rev. Sam can provide ample testimony that when services run long, he faces complaints. Our generous RE volunteers need to be confident that

### Flyers in this issue

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

- ◆ Holiday Events
- ◆ Let's Keep in Touch!

youngsters will be picked up at the designated time. We have Forums and committee meetings and myriad other FUUSA activities scheduled after the service. So, there are many ramifications when services run longer than planned. Nonetheless, our focus and effort is on the QUALITY of our services. We believe that being intentional about how the pieces fit together best ensures the high quality of our time together on Sunday mornings.

Thanks for your thoughtful response, and we look forward to continued conversation. Please contact any member of RSC with your comments: Dawn Dana (Chair), Cate Bohn, Peter Meixner, Sue Stierer, Rev. Sam Trumbore, and Carol Lynn Youtz.

### Holiday Bazaar & Craft Fair success!

Thanks to all who helped set up, contributed baked goods and/or hand-crafted items to sell, peeled and cut up apples, made baking mix or soup mix gift bags, worked as sales people on Saturday and Sunday, made soup, worked in the kitchen, served food, cleaned up, came and shopped and ate lunch, bought pies, donated items for Granny's Attic or told a friend to come. We had more people come shop than last year (particularly on Saturday), we had an interesting array of outside vendors and we have grossed about the same as last year.

This is a fun event that brought many FUUSAns together in community, as well as made a significant amount of money for FUUSA's general budget.

If you haven't shopped yet, it's not too late! We will be selling FUUSA products after the service at the “Post Bazaar Sale” on Sundays Nov. 23 and Dec 7.

Look in January Windows for our final tally of what we made for FUUSA's general fund.

### Dave Weissbard--in our pulpit on Dec. 28

Dave Weissbard was born into this congregation--his parents became members two weeks before his birth. His mother, Ramona, is FUUSA's

## Board notes

Michele Desrosiers, Trustee



### Looking to the future

It's hard to believe the New Year will be upon us in just a scant five weeks! Just as many of you will be looking at your life and making resolutions, so too has the FUUSA Board of Trustees been looking to the future.

Some of the questions in active discussion include:

- Now that we have a “new and improved” mission statement, where do we go from here?
- Are we organized to live out our mission?
- How should the Strategic Plan be updated to guide us?
- Will our current organizational and governance structure enable us to execute our new plans?
- What do we mean by “success?”
- Will we have the means to accomplish our long term goals for growth?
- What does “growth” look like?

And, most importantly, *What will we resolve to do to move our Congregation forward?*

So far, The Board has taken a number of actions to educate themselves in anticipation of developing a course of action to address these questions.

1. Work is underway to ensure we are **living up to our mission** to be a truly welcoming congregation. The Board sponsored Michael Hornsby's recent trip to All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma where he participated in a weekend workshop on Multi-cultural Congregations and Faith Formation. Michael has shared his inspiring experience with the Board of Trustees and will also hold a session for all interested members of the Congregation.
2. Under the leadership of Dick Dana, the board is actively engaged in learning more about a very successful “**Growth** Through Service” initiative piloted by the UU Church of Delaware County in Medea, PA.
3. The Board of Trustees will meet in December with Rev. Joan van Becelaere from the Central East Regional Group (CERG) of the UUA to tap into “best practices” for **organizational structure and governance** from other UU Congregations.
4. The BOT has requested a presentation from the Finance Committee to discuss our long term financial commitments and fiscal outlook to ensure our plans are in line with our **financial means**.
5. The Board will be working through our upcoming budget process to ensure **alignment with our mission, values and goals**.

In the first five months of the church fiscal year, we are educating ourselves in order to make important resolutions and actions to ensure we are challenging ourselves to live out our updated mission statement, achieve our goals for growth, and keep our congregation vibrant and relevant as we head into the future. Look for more updates and opportunities to engage in these exciting initiatives.

Yours in Service,

Michele Desrosiers

longest term member. His daughter Meredith [Andrews] and sister Judy [Hanson] are active members. Dave graduated from Albany High and received his BA and MDiv. degrees from St. Lawrence University. He served UU congregations in Bedford, MA; Fairfax, VA; and Rockford, IL for 41 years. He retired from full time ministry in 2006 and lives in Canton, NY with his wife, Karen, and daughter, Hillary. Dave preaches monthly in Central Square, annually at FUUSA, and occasionally in other UU pulpits.

### Honoring Our Legacy

Every Sunday as we enter Emerson Community Hall, we walk by a plaque that recognizes individuals who have either given funds directly or who have been honored by having gifts given in their name to the FUUSA Endowment Trust. These past gifts were one of the key ingredients to the funding plan that enabled us to build Emerson. I often don't pay attention to this plaque, but I should because I have a feeling of deep gratitude to these visionaries. These individuals created a lasting legacy. Many of them are gone now.



In addition to honoring those who have already made a legacy gift to FUUSA, the Stewardship Committee is creating an Honor Roll of members and friends who have made provision for a legacy gift as part of their estate plans. We will not be creating another plaque, but we would like to recognize and thank those who are planning ahead to insure the continuing vitality of our FUUSA community. We also hope that it might encourage others to follow their lead. This Honor Role could be published in the Annual Report, a newsletter article, or a brochure encouraging legacy giving.

Please let me know if you have made provisions for a legacy gift to Fuusa. We will either list you in the Honor Roll by name or count you among our anonymous donors, if you so desire.

If you would like to discuss making a legacy gift, you can talk to me about how Barb and I did it. Thank you very much for your continuing support.—Chuck

Manning, Stewardship Chair

### Newcomer orientation

#### Learn about Unitarian Universalism and FUUSA

We invite you to meet with others who are new to the congregation at our next "Getting to Know UU" session, scheduled for **Saturday, Dec. 6** from 8:45 a.m. to noon.

We'll start with coffee and snacks and getting to know each other: new folks, Membership Committee, and Rev. Sam Trumbore. You'll learn about Unitarian Universalism and about our congregation, and you'll get a chance to ask all the questions you've been collecting. We'll talk about how to get involved in the FUUSA community and about becoming a member. All in all, it's a fun morning of conversation and fellowship, and a pleasant first step on the path to membership!

There is a sign up sheet in Channing Hall (at the Sign Up Site), or you can send an email to [registration@albanyuu.org](mailto:registration@albanyuu.org). You can also call the church office, 463-7135. Please let us know when you register if you will need childcare (and how many children and their ages.)

Other orientation dates planned for this year are Feb. 7, and Apr. 4

### Welcoming a Guest at Your Table

Each year at this time, friends and families in our congregation participate in Guest at Your Table — a 40-year UU tradition. By bringing home a beautiful **Stories of Hope** booklet and **Guest at Your Table envelope**, families and individuals learn about how the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee puts our shared values into action. Through a potent combination of advocacy, education, and partner-



ships with grassroots human rights leaders, UUSC promotes workers' rights, upholds the human right to water, and protects communities at risk.

Through the *Stories of Hope* booklet, we connect with leaders throughout the world who

are working hard for human rights in partnership with UUSC. Households are invited to share Guest at Your Table materials when family and friends gather together, reflect on the contributions of these "guests" toward justice, and share generously. This year Leah is putting together "kits" for families to decorate their own Guest at Your Table boxes. Each week, we can choose a different story to read, bringing our guests to life and helping celebrate our own rights.

Sharing our blessings through Guest at Your Table ensures that UUSC's human rights work continues. Please consider making contributions throughout the program, to collect enough to be eligible for the matching grant: any donation of \$125 or more is eligible to be matched dollar for dollar, thanks to a generous grant by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, N.Y. This means you could double the impact of your gift!

Please be sure to pick up your *Stories of Hope* booklet and envelope at the Religious Education window on Sunday

mornings. The kits to decorate boxes will be also be available at the Multigenerational Pot Luck Dec. 5 and at the Religious Education window on Sunday mornings in December. If you prefer, you can make your contribution online at [uus.org/givetoguest](http://uus.org/givetoguest). Our Guest at Your Table program will run from Friday, December 5, 2014 until Sunday, January 11, 2015.

Thank you from your DRE, Leah Purcell and your UUSC coordinator, Don Odell.

### Planning for weather emergencies

We have rarely cancelled Sunday services or other programs at FUUSA due to snow or other weather emergencies, but we do have a plan for those situations.

In the event of a big winter storm or other weather emergency, the decision to cancel any program will be made far enough in advance so you will be able

to make your plans. Notice of cancellations will be distributed three ways:

- ◆FUUSA homepage: [www.AlbanyUU.org](http://www.AlbanyUU.org)
- ◆Email sent to "Preview" list
- ◆School Closings Network (on local television)

### Little Free Libraries

Grassroot Givers-Albany Book Project and I are pleased to announce the installation of two Little Free Libraries in Albany. The Macedonia Baptist Church and the Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science and Technology (TOAST) Elementary School are their new homes.

These freestanding small enclosed book exchange boxes were built with the help of FUUSA Endowment Trust funds and the skills and care of volunteers from FUUSA, the City School District of Albany, SUNY and Grassroot Givers. Future locations for the other libraries are Albany School of Humanities and Giffen Memorial Elementary School.



Each library will be registered on the Little Free Library website, thereby adding their name, sponsor and location to the growing international network of mini libraries where people of all ages are encouraged to "Take a book. Return a book."

A big thank you to everyone who helped and encouraged us to achieve our goal of increasing access to literacy in the City of Albany!—Pam Crane

### Memorial Society position

The Memorial Society of the Hudson-Mohawk Region, an affiliate of the Funeral Consumers Alliance, is looking for someone to work as a paid administrator a few hours a month. We need someone with excellent computer and clerical skills to maintain and expand our data base and community outreach. Hours are flexible, and you can work from home, so this is an ideal position for a retired person or stay-at-home parent. Writing, public relations and online

## Religious Exploration

Our Whole Lives—Sexuality and Faith Education – for our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders starting in February

*Leah Purcell, Director of Religious Education*



“Paired, ‘sex education’ and ‘church’ still sound strange to some ears, but it needn’t be so,” writes Rev. Sarah Gibb Millspaugh in the Winter 2011 edition of the *UU World*. “Now, with a four-decade tradition of honest, comprehensive, health-promoting talk about sexuality—and eleven years of offering specialized curricula for all ages called Our Whole Lives (OWL)—Unitarian Universalist congregations

***Dave Quist, Religious Education Council member and parent of a child who participated in OWL as a 4<sup>th</sup> grader shares his thoughts: “OWL provides kids with accurate information about sexuality, a place to ask questions about themselves, a place to learn skills regarding relationships and keeping themselves safe, and a supportive and welcoming community in which to do it. Hats off to FUUSA for providing that gift. Our kids are better off for having the opportunity.”***

are recognized as leaders in sexuality education. ....Children, youth, and adults have gained knowledge, interpersonal skills, and values that help them live healthier lives and treat others with respect. We celebrate this vital, transformational ministry as we embark on our fifth decade of joining “sex education” and “church” to positively impact the whole person.”

At FUUSA we have a long commitment to offering the year-long OWL course for our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Starting in 2013, we began offering OWL to younger students and this spring we are offering OWL for our students in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade for the second time. We plan to start the OWL session in Sunday School this February.

I will meet with families of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders to explain more about the program, share the contents and methodology. **If you**

**have a 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grader, please plan to attend one of these meetings:**

- ◆ **Sunday, Jan. 11** from noon to 1:30 in room B-8 with light lunch; childcare provided in room 26
- ◆ **Wednesday, Jan. 14** from 7:00 – 8:30 pm in room B-8; childcare provided in room 26

In joyful service,  
Leah

social media experience are a plus. To apply or to learn more, e-mail us at [memsoc1@nycap.rr.com](mailto:memsoc1@nycap.rr.com) or phone Julie Lomoe at 518-441-5287.

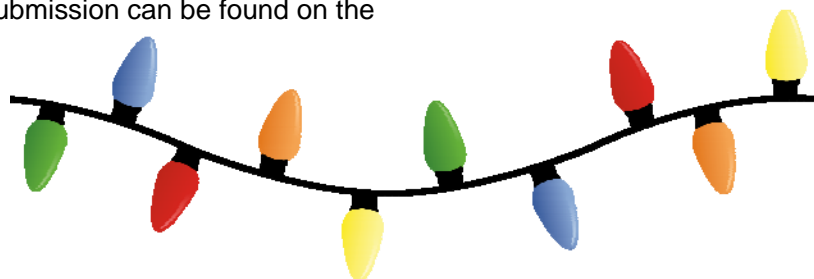
### Budget requests due Sunday, Jan. 11, 2015

Yes, it’s time once again to figure out how much money your program, committee or group will need in the next fiscal year that starts on July 1, 2015 and ends on June 30, 2016.

The budget form for submission can be found on the

FUUSA web site, in the left column, under the Church Office tab, in the File Cabinet. The form is below the Financial heading. If necessary, the office can supply you with a printed form.

If you have questions, please contact Steve Moskowitz, at [smosk@earthlink.net](mailto:smosk@earthlink.net) or 439-6347. Submit your electronic budget request to Alyssa at [admin@albanyuu.org](mailto:admin@albanyuu.org) or on paper to the Finance Committee mailbox.





## Growing Together

### Consider participating in “Beloved Conversations”

**Saturdays, 10:00 - 12:00, March 7 - May 9**

Once again, we are fortunate to have trained facilitators willing to give their time and talents to bring this powerful small group series to FUUSA. Beloved Conversations will be facilitated by Michael Hornsby and Patti Jo Newell beginning on March 7 and running through May 9 (no meeting on Easter weekend).

It has often been said that one of the most difficult topics about which to have an honest conversation is race. This country's history of race-based injustices and inequalities, from slavery to segregation to institutionalized discrimination, has influenced the ways that we as Americans perceive ourselves as well as how we perceive our neighbors who may be of a different racial or ethnic background. The Beloved Conversations series seeks to facilitate honest conversations about race and ethnicity as a vehicle for faith formation and spiritual awakening.

Beloved Conversations creates sanctuary for a learning community to take place with a group of people who will not judge their colleagues, who are transparent and open about their views, hopes, dreams and experiences, and are committed to lifelong learning. Past participants have said this about their experiences:

*“Beloved Conversations is not for the faint of heart, but for those who have faith in the heart.”*

*“You don't know what you don't know.”*

*“Beloved Conversations is a wonderful small group setting to discuss the issues of racism and multiculturalism in a safe and friendly environment. Everyone should have the chance to participate in this workshop.”*

*“The experience focused not on blame, but on a deeper understanding of another viewpoint. It was the quality of the leadership of the discussion that mattered, and that was excellent.”*

The curriculum for Beloved Conversations was developed by Dr. Mark Hicks, Professor of Religious

Education at the Meadville Lombard Theological School. According to Dr. Hicks, the series of ten discussions is framed in the spirit of small-group ministry or a covenant group. Unlike diversity seminars, Beloved Conversations is a spiritual practice. As people of faith and human potential, success is measured by one's ability to be curious when one is unsettled by the expression of a new idea or experience.

The size of the group will be limited to 12 participants. Please register by email to [registration@albanyuu.org](mailto:registration@albanyuu.org).

### UU Leadership Courses—a hybrid of online and in-person sessions

Would you like to learn skills and materials that will help be an effective leader at FUUSA and also connect to other local UU leaders? If you lead or serve on a committee or council here; lead FUUSA activities or initiatives; or would like to take on a leadership role in the future, H-UULTI might be for you! Hybrid UU Leadership Team Institute is a year-round learning community helping religious leaders deepen connections, grow innovations and enhance their communities' impact on the world. Courses for the spring term include

**Healthy Leadership 101** - Develop an understanding of how your congregation functions as an interconnected, organic system of relationships. (This course is similar to Healthy Congregations® or Smart Church and is a prerequisite for other courses.)

**Leading Adaptively** - Develop advanced leadership skills that will change the way you think about your own leadership and equip you to lead through any change, welcome or unwelcome.

**Process in Plurality** - Learn more about process thought and explore the possibilities for yourself and your faith community.

**Guiding Our Journey: Building a Faithful UU Identity** - Construct a religious identity that matches your particular experience and your unique journey.

**If a Tree Falls in the Forest... Marketing, Branding and Communicating Your Message** - This course will cover topics such as creating a marketing plan, branding, web sites, and so-called

“guerrilla” (low-cost) marketing techniques.

Available for Audit:

**Theological Plurality in Our Congregations** Explore the varied theological landscape of Unitarian Universalism as well as the ground on which we come together in theological commonality. Learn about the theology behind the 7 principles and the value of covenant to lead us forward

**The Future is Here: Trends in American Religion** From the birth of ‘atheist churches’ to generational shifts in religious attitudes to the growth of the ‘Spiritual But Not Religious’ and “Nones” and the appearance of non-western faith traditions, the religious landscape of the United States is quickly evolving in new and sometimes unexpected ways. As a leader, how do you help guide your congregation in this suddenly unfamiliar social context?

**Leading Change in Changing Times** Sometimes the world around us can feel like a roller coaster. As a leader, you need the skills to understand the dynamics of change and how to help your congregation meet the challenges of an ever-changing world. This track will give you tools to understand the dynamics of change with different change theories as well as how to apply them using case studies

Here’s a link to a brochure with more information: <http://tinyurl.com/klegava> Or you can contact any Board member or Leah Purcell .

## Joy Library--new books

Find these in the new book section:

**Fire shut up in my bones** : a memoir by Charles M. Blow. (2014 ) *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt* [070.92 BLO ] “When you finish *New York Times* columnist by Charles M. Blow’s mesmerizing memoir, you will cry. And you will better understand poverty, the South, racism, sex, fear, rage, and love. Then you will miss being in his authorial grip. Then you will start reading this stunning book again.” LAWRENCE O’DONNELL

**The great agnostic** : Robert Ingersoll and American freethought by Susan Jacoby. (2013 ) *Yale University Press* [211. 4092 JAC ] “In this provocative biography, Susan Jacoby, the author of *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism*, restores Ingersoll to his rightful place in an American intellectual tradition extending from Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine to the current generation of “new atheists.” Jacoby illuminates the ways in which America’s often -denigrated and forgotten secular history encompasses issues, ranging from women’s rights to evolution, as potent and divisive today as they were in Ingersoll’s time. Ingersoll emerges in this portrait as one of the indispensable public figures who keep an alternative version of history alive. He devoted his life to that greatest secular idea of all—liberty of conscience belonging to the religious and nonreligious alike.” AMAZON.

**Fields of blood : religion and the history of violence** by Karen Armstrong. (2014 ) Knopf. [201.72 ARM ] . “The central themes of the entire 400+ page book are well summarized in its nine page Afterword, but the particulars of history in the earlier sections are what makes this book so interesting. One of the main ideas Armstrong makes a case for, as best as I can do justice to it, is that religion isn’t the cause of violence, the same religious texts can inspire very different actions, and it’s societal stratification and expansion brought about by the development of agriculture and then industrialization that began the cycle of subjugation and violence as we understand it today. Among the book’s many other interesting points to ponder, whether or not you end up agreeing with Armstrong, are that most people don’t make the claim that WWI or WWII--two of history’s largest wars--were caused by religion, that before the French Revolution there was no separation of church or religion and state so separating out religion as the cause of war is problematic, and that belief systems, even secular belief systems, can play a role in stemming violence and preserving the best aspects of our humanity.” AMAZON.

## Our Community

### Guest at Your Table

#### Multigenerational Potluck Dinner Dec 5

Our December 5 Multigenerational Potluck Dinner

will celebrate 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Guest at Your Table program. This year’s Guest at Your Table theme is food sustainability: ensuring that people have sufficient, affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate food to eat and that it’s produced in a way that doesn’t damage the environment. We’ll join

with other Unitarian Universalists as they host their own Guest at Your Table Dinners and share a meal in the name of food sustainability.

We encourage you to sign up to bring one of these Haitian dishes, since Haiti is one of the countries featured in the Guest at Your Table program this year. <http://www.uusc.org/recipes-for-guest-at-your-table-dinners> Of course, you can bring one of your own specialties to the potluck instead; if you do, consider using locally produced food. Or you can pay to attend. Sign up in Channing Hall or email Leah Purcell at [dre@albanyuu.org](mailto:dre@albanyuu.org)

At the dinner, we'll have a few short videos to show about how the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee advances human rights in Haiti and other places through grassroots collaboration. Children and others are invited to decorate their own Guest at Your Table boxes to take home.X

### UU Christians meet Dec. 9

In celebration of Christmas, the UU Christians, meeting Tuesday, December 9 at 7pm, will be comparing the accounts of the birth and/or life of Jesus presented in the gospels of Matthew (1:18-2:16), Mark (1:1-3), Luke (2:1-20), and John. (1:1-39). All are welcome to join us.

### Channing Circle to meet Dec. 15

Channing Circle meets on the third Monday of the month. Members and friends gather for lunch at noon, bring a sandwich, and Marion Tischler is bringing dessert. Coffee and tea are available as well. We will meet in December on the 15th and after lunch we will have a special event coming up with Reese Satin interviewing Bob Blank. All are welcome and there will be time for group members to ask Bob questions as well. So come join us!

### FUUSA Humanist news and next meeting

Fifteen FUUSA Humanists met on Tuesday, Nov. 11 and continued a lively discussion about the state of humanism, whether secular, religious and/or spiritual, in the denomination and at FUUSA. Rev. Sam joined us for this meeting. We will next meet on Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 7 PM at FUUSA. We seem to be settling on the second Tuesday of each month. We welcome all to join us. Questions? Contact Don Odell ([drodell31@yahoo.com](mailto:drodell31@yahoo.com), 482-4574).

**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](mailto:listeners@albanyuu.org), contact Reverend Sam Trumbore, the FUUSA office at 518-463-7135, or one of them personally. They are: Dave Munro, Chuck Manning, Phil Rich, Sharon Babala, Jan Satin, Randy Rosette, Bruce Rodgers and Sandy Stone.

### Walker Book Club gathers Dec. 14

Join the Walker Book Club for a potluck and book discussion on Sunday, Dec. 14 at 5:30 pm in Channing Hall. Newcomers are always welcome and the book club is open to all FUUSA members and friends.

We start with a welcoming shared supper which is followed by a lively discussion of the book of the month. Bring your favorite dish to share and a small contribution to cover beverages. Be green and bring your own dishes etc., or use dishware at FUUSA and help with the dishwasher.

On Dec. 14 we will discuss the fictional work *The Things They Carried*, about a platoon of American soldiers in the Vietnam War, by Tim O'Brien. This anthology of short stories is, according to Amazon.com, "a ground-breaking meditation on war, memory, imagination, and the redemptive power of storytelling."

The book for Jan. 11 is *TransAtlantic* by Irish author Colum McCann.

Contact Linda Hunt at [lhunt@nycap.rr.com](mailto:lhunt@nycap.rr.com) for further information or questions. You can add your name to the Walker Book Club email list by going to the FUUSA homepage at <http://albanyuu.org>. Click on Answers to your questions about FUUSA online for detailed instructions to sign up for the Walker Book Club and other Church DB Egroups.

## Social Justice

### Social Responsibilities Council

I'd like to share some words of Rev. Nancy McDonald Ladd from a worship service at the 2014 General Assembly. Rev. Ladd is Senior Minister at River Road UU Congregation in Bethesda, MD. This is an excerpt: "Here we are, friends. Look around. We are thousands strong. Here we have gathered. We who resist oppressions great and small. We who open ourselves to continued transformation. We who seek partners in our holy work. Resistance. Transformation. Community. These are the tools of the spirit that we use to make the world more whole. These are the tools of the spirit that change us and challenge us to grow ever so much braver than we already are." As Chair of SRC, I would like to invite your involvement in social justice. For some, it is best expressed in direct service such as volunteering at a resource-impooverished school, or a Focus Pantry event. For others, it may be working on environmental justice issues, ending police militarization and mass incarceration, or lobbying for a significant increase in the minimum wage. For still others, it may be focused on shaping policy as with immigration reform, Peace initiatives, or Move to Amend (ending corporate rule). Whatever raises your fist or ignites your heart, know that you're not alone. We welcome you to our first-Sunday-of-the-month meetings. Or, ask to be placed on the SRC email list so that you can learn of events you may be interested in. Join us in helping to "make the world more whole." I can be contacted at [poppej@sage.edu](mailto:poppej@sage.edu).--Jean Poppei, Chair SRC

### Dr. Canough: getting off fossil fuels

At the Green Sanctuary Forum held on Nov. 9, Gay Canough, Ph.D. and Binghamton UU, talked about getting off fossil fuels. Dr. Canough previously worked at the Fermi Laboratory and at NASA. She is presently the CEO of ETM Solar Works.

Dr. Canough started the forum by stating that we have already seen effects of climate change in increased flooding, bigger hurricanes, melting from glaciers. She said that people must reduce their use of fossil fuels, and that solar power, which is renewable unlike the fossil fuel supply, is the largest known source of energy available on earth and is more than

enough to provide the world's energy needs. She stated that any place in the USA has more solar energy than any place in Germany, and that the City of Albany has 20% more solar energy than the sunniest place in Germany. Material for solar panels is not in short supply, since panels are made of silicon, which is the second most common element on earth.

In general, ways to reduce fossil fuel use include reducing energy load by being energy efficient, by converting to air-source heat pumps for heating, by driving an electric vehicle, by riding a bike or by walking, and by using renewable energy. (Dr. Canough said that thirty percent of workers in the Netherlands commute by bicycle.) In addition, people should use LED lights for lighting, and should dry clothes on racks or on a clothes line. People should reduce heat loss in an old home by insulating (for example, in the attic floor), or in a new home by using passive solar. People can use bricks made of sawdust, a renewable source, in pellet stoves for heating. People should collect water in barrels and reservoirs. Some people can even use collected water to produce micro hydro depending on the permit process.

Dr. Canough said that, since the USA is awash in solar energy, it makes sense to go solar now while the cost of panels and installation are low, while federal and state incentives exist, and while home equity loans have a low interest rate. Wind power is another renewable energy source, but it is not so easily available to a home owner.

This was FUUSA's first skyped forum. Hats off to Dr. Canough, Carol Butt, Chris Bystroff, and Dave Musser for the forum and the presentation.

### Tip from the Green Sanctuary

The Green Sanctuary Committee will be recycling old Christmas lights during the month of December 2014 and January 2015. Please put them into the box at the Social Responsibility Council table. January sales would be a good time to replace old strings of Christmas lights with new LED lights. LED lights are not as hot as conventional lights and use up to 75% less electricity.

The next meeting of the Green Sanctuary Committee will be Sunday, Dec. 21. All are welcome to join us.

## Contact Us

### Board of Trustees 2014-2015

email: [board@albanyuu.org](mailto:board@albanyuu.org)

#### Executive Committee

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#### Office Administrator

Alyssa Yeager, [admin@albanyuu.org](mailto:admin@albanyuu.org)

#### Custodians

Hadiya Wilborn, Cameron Holloway

### Regular meeting days

Check current calendar for time and location

Board of Trustees, 3rd Thursday  
Program Coordinating Council, 2nd Thursday  
Religious Education Council, 1st Monday  
Social Responsibilities Council, 1st Sunday

### 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, 9:00-3:00

July-August: Monday–Thursday 9:00-1:00

And by appointment

#### Website

[www.AlbanyUU.org](http://www.AlbanyUU.org)

#### Building use

To **reserve a room** for a FUUSA activity, contact Office Administrator Alyssa Yeager (463-7135 or [admin@albanyuu.org](mailto:admin@albanyuu.org)).

To **rent hall or classroom space** for a personal or non-FUUSA activity, contact Office Administrator Alyssa Yeager (463-7135 or [admin@albanyuu.org](mailto:admin@albanyuu.org)).

**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.

*Editor:* Amy Lent

Send submissions for all publications to:  
[Windows@albanyuu.org](mailto: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

December 2014  
**Holiday Events**  
at FUUSA



**Come, trim the Christmas tree!**

**Holiday Crafts Workshop and Party**

**Saturday, Dec. 6, 1:00 PM-3:00 PM**

Channing Hall

Food—Fun—Holiday Music—Wreath Making!

Your favorite holiday crafts – gingerbread houses, origami boxes – and new ones: A great opportunity for children to make presents.

Sign up in Channing Hall. Walk-ins are also welcome! Freewill donation for craft supplies and refreshments. Sponsored by the Religious Education Council



**Solstice Celebration**

**Saturday, Dec. 20, 3:00 PM**

Channing Hall

Let us celebrate the Winter Solstice! With story, music and drumming, we will wake the slumbering sun. Children, youth and adults are invited as we honor our Sixth Source of Unitarian Universalism: which invites us to celebrate the sacred

circle of life and calls us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature. Bring a percussion instrument and/or a noise maker. And also bring a light refreshment to share, if you like, for the celebration afterwards.



**“Would You Like to Hold the Baby?”**

**Sunday, Dec. 21, 10:00 AM**

**Emerson Community Hall**

No one knew on the night of Jesus' birth how important he would become to the world as a great teacher and important spiritual leader. He was also a true friend to the poor and the

powerless. So at Christmas time we celebrate the birth of Jesus, eager for the joy and hope that belongs to this season. As Mary invites a stable girl to hold the baby, so are we invited to embrace the deepest meaning that Christmas holds for each of us.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**

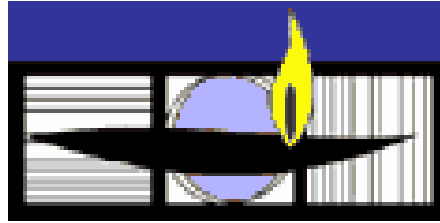
**Wednesday, Dec. 24, 6:30 and 8:15 PM**

Sanctuary



Be sure to plan some time at the reception between the services!

Let's Keep  
in Touch!



## Many ways to stay connected with FUUSA:

<p>Our <b>Website</b>— <a href="http://AlbanyUU.org">AlbanyUU.org</a>. This is an important resource. On our homepage you will find quick connections to many of the items listed below. <i>(See location in parentheses.)</i></p>
<p>Find us on <b>Facebook</b>— <a href="http://www.facebook.com/AlbanyUU">www.facebook.com/AlbanyUU</a> <i>(Homepage location: center column)</i></p> <p>We also have a closed group on Facebook called “<b>FUUSA News &amp; Updates</b>” . To join, please send email requesting to join the group to <a href="mailto:admin@albanyuu.org">admin@albanyuu.org</a>.</p>
<p>Follow us on <b>Twitter</b> @AlbanyUU</p>
<p>Rev Sam's blog, “<b>The Mostly Mindful Minister</b>”— <a href="http://trumbore.org">http://trumbore.org</a> <i>(Homepage location: left column)</i></p>
<p>Leah Purcell's “<b>RE Director's Blog</b>”— <a href="http://albanyuu.org/wp/dre-blog">http://albanyuu.org/wp/dre-blog</a> <i>(Homepage location: left column)</i></p>
<p>“<b>Preview</b>” <b>weekly e-mail</b> sent on Thursday keeps you informed on this week's events. To subscribe: send email to <a href="mailto:admin@albanyuu.org">admin@albanyuu.org</a> or call the office. <i>(Homepage location: center column)</i></p>
<p><b>Monthly “Windows” Newsletter</b>, available for download from the website, sent via e-mail as a pdf, and paper copies are in the lobby. To subscribe: send email to <a href="mailto:admin@albanyuu.org">admin@albanyuu.org</a> or call the office.</p>
<p>Make an <b>online donation</b> to FUUSA, or set up recurring payments. Use the Online Giving button on our homepage <a href="http://albanyuu.org/wp/">http://albanyuu.org/wp/</a> or scan this QR code with your smartphone to go to the online giving page. <i>(Homepage location: right column)</i></p>
<p>Send <b>photos of people and activities at FUUSA</b> to <a href="mailto:photos@albanyuu.org">photos@albanyuu.org</a> for use in our publications! (Please include names of people in the picture if you can, as well as the event name or date.)</p>
<p>Sign up to volunteer on Sundays—Usher, Greeter, Coffee Host, Welcome Table— <a href="http://www.volunteerspot.com/login/entry/675611858051">http://www.volunteerspot.com/login/entry/675611858051</a> <i>(Homepage location: center column)</i></p>
<p><b>First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany</b> 405 Washington Avenue Albany, NY 12206 <b>518-463-7135</b> Main Office (put this number in your phone now for later if you have a question!)</p>

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