



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 topics), Children's Chapel, Green Sanctuary Discussion (environmental topics,) War Healing Circle; social events, and adult education.

All are welcome!

WINDOWS

Newsletter of the First Unitarian
Universalist Society of Albany

December, 2010

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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 & 4th Sundays/mo.)

Green Sanctuary Discussion

(3rd Sunday/mo.)

6:00 PM

War Healing Circle

(2nd & 4th Sunday/mo.)

Services

Dec. 5 "Peacemaking," The Rev. Sam Trumbore

A great deal of effort has gone into the Unitarian Universalist Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking that passed at our General Assembly this past June. So what does it say about how to make peace? What are the values it upholds? And how can we put it into practice in our congregation? How can we keep the peace in our own families as the December holidays that celebrate peace approach? Music: Choir singing advent songs

Dec. 12 "Attachment to Disbelief," The Rev. Sam Trumbore

Losing their belief in Santa Claus is the first faith crisis for many children. For them, this was just the first slide down that slippery slope of unbelief as childish beliefs crumbled under scientific scrutiny. The expression "once burned, twice shy" may describe the stance of many Unitarian Universalists with regard to their resistance to believe. Yet, attachment to disbelief isn't a satisfying answer either. Music: Jazz combo "Walden Ponderers" featuring Matt on the piano

Dec. 19 "Would You Like to Hold the Baby?" *Multigenerational*

This annual Christmas pageant celebrates the spiritual truths and metaphorical beauty found in the Nativity story. 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: Choir and guests

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve services 6:30 pm and 8:15 pm. (*Sanctuary*)

First service family friendly.

Dec. 26 "Discovering Kwanzaa"

Jacqui Williams, Mickie Conn and Rev. Trumbore will collaborate to present a multi-generational, interactive, experiential, unorthodox, Sunday service that explains, demonstrates and appreciates this recently created and often misunderstood holiday. Many of the values Kwanzaa celebrates are core Unitarian Universalist values too, as seen through the lens of the African American experience. This service will be a joyful way to increase your cultural competence, if Kwanzaa is not or has not been part of your family life. Music: FUUSA drumming group

Calendar

Events happening every Sunday at FUUSA

9:00 AM	Mindfulness Meditation	Sanctuary	Exceptions:
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 (2nd & 4th Sundays/mo)	Emerson	
11:45 AM	Green Sanctuary Discussion (3rd Sun./mo)	B-8	
6:00 PM	War Healing Circle (2nd & 4th Sundays/mo.)	Emerson	

Events happening every week in the month of December

Tuesdays	10:00 AM	Philosophy Group	B-8	Exceptions: Dec. 29 No choir rehearsal
	1:00 PM	Bridge	B-8	
Wednesdays	10:00 AM	Projects & Quilts	B-8	
	7:00 PM	Choir Rehearsal	Emerson	

All other events happening in the month of December

1-Dec Wednesday	5:30 PM	Caring Network Meeting	B-7	16-Dec Thursday	7:00 PM	Board of Trustees	B-8
3-Dec Friday	3:00 PM	Wellspring	Stott/Joy Library	18-Dec Saturday	7:00 PM	Dances of Universal Peace	Channing
	6:30 PM	Guilderland Plus Potluck	Kathy Harris', Albany	19-Dec Sunday	11:45 AM	Green Sanctuary	B-8
4-Dec Saturday	9:00 AM	Tree setup	Channing		12:00 PM	Caroling, meet at FUUSA	
5-Dec Sunday		Rite Of Passage Poinsettia pickup date			7:00 PM	Earth Spirits Solstice Celebration	Channing, Kitchen
	11:30 AM	Playlet Planning Meeting	24/25	20-Dec Monday	12:00 PM	Channing Circle	Channing, Kitchen
	12:00 PM	Rummage Setup	Emerson - no other use all week	24-Dec Friday	6:30 PM	Candlelight Service, family friendly	Sanctuary
	1:00 PM	Rite of Passage	B-7, B-8 (12:30 setup)		7:30 PM	Reception	Channing
6-Dec Monday	9:00 AM	Rummage Sale Setup	Emerson		8:15 PM	Candlelight Service	Sanctuary
	5:30 PM	Public Relations Committee	B-8	27-Dec Monday	1:00 PM	Shelter Meal Prep	Kitchen
	6:15 PM	Religious Education Council	Channing		7:00 PM	Wellspring	B-8
7-Dec Tuesday	9:00 AM	Rummage Sale Setup	Emerson		7:30 PM	Monday Men	B-8
	6:00 PM	ARISE Meeting	B-3/4				
	6:30 PM	Finance Committee	B-7				
8-Dec Wednesday	9:00 AM	Rummage Sale Setup	Emerson				
	5:00 PM	Religious Services Committee	B-8				
9-Dec Thursday	9:00 AM	Rummage Sale Setup	Emerson				
	7:00 PM	PCC Meeting	B-8				
10-Dec Friday	9:00 AM	Rummage Sale	Emerson				
11-Dec Saturday	9:00 AM	Rummage Sale	Emerson				
	9:30 AM	RE Holiday Crafts Party	Channing, Kitchen				
12-Dec Sunday	11:30 AM	Playlet Rehearsal	Emerson				
	11:45 AM	Forum: Paul Rehm	Sanctuary				
	5:30 PM	Walker Book Club	Lisa Walker's				
13-Dec Monday	1:00 PM	Shelter Meal Prep	Kitchen				
	7:30 PM	Monday Men	B-8				



Forum

Sunday, Dec. 12, 11:45

"A View from Inside the West Bank": Paul Rehm

Looking Ahead

Jan. 7 Chili Cookoff

Jan. 14-15 Meditation Retreat

Jan. 29 UU Weekend Scholarship Dinner

Jan. 30 Get Connected! Activity Fair

News

Community and Connections Still getting started

In the November Windows update the Board put out a call for volunteers to serve on four Task Forces to begin looking at forming a Community and Connections Committee. Unfortunately, with the friendly chaos of the Craft Fair and Bazaar, which did provide a lot of Community and Connections, we did not have a location for sign-ups on November 13. There will be an opportunity to sign up in Channing Hall for the remaining Sundays in November. As a reminder, the charge to the Community and Connections Committee (CCC) is:

The Community and Connections Committee's charge is to assess how existing FUUSA councils, committees and events are promoting community and connections, to identify the gaps and to facilitate strategies to deepen and broaden the connections within our community and with our neighborhood.

The four task forces are:

- ◆ Survey current activities at FUUSA -- The task force coordinated by the Program Coordinating Council will spend time with the various committees and groups that are working on this now and determine what we do well and where the gaps are.
- ◆ Deepening Internal Connections – For example Small Group Ministry and Channing Circle
- ◆ Expanded and Affordable Social Events – For example Friday night dinners
- ◆ Neighborhood Connections – How can we serve our neighborhood better

Each task force will meet in December and January and then present their recommendations at the January Board meeting.

Sign-ups for the task forces will be in Channing Hall at a special table starting on November 21. We would like to have a minimum of five people on each task force.

You can also sign up for a task force by sending an email to Todd Gray, Donna Meixner, or Randy Rosette.—Chuck Manning

Flyers in this issue

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

- ◆ December holiday events at FUUSA
- ◆ Learning opportunities with CERG
- ◆ Introductions to our Pastoral Care Associates
- ◆ Adult Education survey

Survey on Sunday morning services

Rev. Trumbore's "Worship Cabinet" will be randomly surveying visitors, friends and members of the congregation during the month of December to get their feelings, opinions and ideas about Sunday morning services. If you would like to participate in this survey non-randomly, please contact one of these people doing the survey: Irene Saulsbery, Emily Gallagher, Jan McCracken, Don Odell, John Cooley, Fred Boreali, Sigrin Newell, Ben English, Chris or Lauren Liberati-Conant.

Budget requests due January 16, 2011

Yes, it's time once again to figure out how much money your program, committee or group will need in the next fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2011 and ending June 30, 2012.

The budget form for submission can be found on the FUUSA web site at <http://www.albanyuu.org/budgetform.pdf>, or in the File Cabinet. 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 priorities 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.

If you have questions please contact Steve Moskowitz, Finance Committee chair, at smosk@earthlink.net or 439-6347.

On stage

Have you noticed the new plant gracing the Beacon Window in Emerson? This sansevieria (commonly called "snake plant" or "mother-in-law's tongue") was donated by FUUSA An Arlen Westbrook. Thanks to Barb Metz for helping to separate the large plant and repot it. Next time you see Arlen or Barb, thank them!

Bazaar update

Last weekend's Holiday Bazaar, Craft Fair and Café were a great success. The Bazaar committee would like to thank all those who so willingly cooked, sewed, painted, baked, worked, sold and bought. All of FUUSA will benefit from these efforts.

Although Saturday was a little slow (the weather was just too nice!), Sunday



was much better and our vendors seemed happy with their sales. As usual, Randy's Café was a huge success and her team did a great job! Since at this writing we have not had our Post-Bazaar sales, we will give a report on how much we made in the December Update.

Thank you to all for making this event a success! --Jan Satin and Barb Manning.

Rummage Sale

“Pass Along and Purchase” Week – Dec. 5-11

Be a part of our great “clothing swap”—our annual clothing sale. Donate gently used clothing for all ages and seasons, then later in the week shop for bargains to refurbish your wardrobe. Bring in bedding, sheets, towels, and table linens, and Christmas decorations. Please – don't donate anything you wouldn't buy.

Be a green shopper and get half off everything green on Saturday. Bag sale at the end of the day. It's time to reuse, recycle and refurbish.

Set up Emerson Community Hall: Sunday, Dec. 5 We will need LOTS of help to put away the chairs in Emerson and bring up the racks at 12:00 after the service.

Donation and sorting hours: 9:00 am to 9:00 pm Mon.-Wed., Dec. 6-8, and 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Thursday, Dec. 9

Sale hours: Friday, Dec. 10 – 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, Saturday Dec. 11– 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Clean up: Saturday, Dec. 11— 3:00 pm until we are done.

Please sign up to work at the Sign Up Site in Channing Hall.

Lifespan Learning

Adult Education

Sign up for classes at the Sign Up Site in Channing Hall. Both courses are held at FUUSA.

Interfaith Dialog: Etiquette and Rules of the Road When Faiths Collide

Tuesdays, Jan. 11- Feb. 1, 6:30 to 8:30 PM

Facilitated by Robb Smith, Executive Director, Interfaith Impact of NYS

Religious conflict is everywhere and growing. Working with excerpts from the book When Faiths Collide by Martin Marty (a leading religious commentator and historian), on-line resources, and other materials, we will look at suggested etiquette for interfaith dialog, pluralism and tolerance in world religions, pluralism in America, when dialog does and does not work, the role of the media, and other issues. Materials for the class will be copied and distributed, so you do not need to buy any books. The emphasis will be on class discussion. Materials for the class will be posted on www.fuusainterfaithdialog.wordpress.com, which will also be the site for on-line discussions that anyone can join. For more information, contact robb@interfaithimpactnys.org or call 518-441-3231.

Crash Course

Mondays, Feb. 7- Mar. 28 , 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Sandy Steubing will present the “Crash Course” by Chris Martenson. This is an eight week modular course which means you can take one session or take them all. The course title is actually a misnomer in that it will help us prepare for resource depletion and financial chaos instead of crashing as a result of their occurrence. If you heard Sam's sermon “Countering Despair Over the Planet's Future” then you heard the introduction to this course. Between the DVD modules we will discuss your responses and come up with action plans to address these critical issues. The course runs from 5:30 – 7:00 PM so you can bring your supper to eat while we learn and still have time to race to your next meeting.

Adult Education Committee survey

In an effort to guide the direction of the Adult Education program this year at FUUSA, we would like to know which programs, formats and times would be most helpful to our adult members in their free and responsible search for truth and meaning in their lives. The enclosed survey can be dropped off at the FUUSA office in the Adult Education mail slot. If you have already filled out one of our previous survey then thanks for your input. But if you have some new and different ideas, we would very much enjoy hearing from you in the survey or by a letter to the Adult Ed Committee.

Bringing It Home

When I was in New Orleans, I bought a book, hot off the presses, that outlines how to and why to sponsor a service trip that includes youth. From the back cover of *Journeys of the Spirit: Mission trips can be more than social action and service – they can deepen youth's Unitarian Universalist identity and connection to a greater call. This comprehensive manual covers everything from choosing a mission and engaging the congregation's support to logistical and safety considerations. It also helps leaders conduct spiritual reflection sessions during and after the trip. Features testimonials from youth, young adults and religious educators describing how mission trips changed them forever.* This book is available for you to borrow.—Leah Purcell

Our Community

About Us

Kudos to **Lian Henderson** who recently won first place in a Calligraphy contest at Tech Valley High School! All competitors had to recreate a Chinese poem using calligraphy. Lian is from the Guilderland Central School District attending Tech Valley High School and is a member of FUUSA's High School Youth Group. Next time you see Lian, congratulate her!

The Helderberg Madrigal Singers will present *A Winter Celebration: Songs and Carols of Advent* for the Tuesdays @ Noon concert series at St. Paul's/Troy on Tuesday, Dec. 21. It's a free concert, at noon (!), and St. Paul's is at 58 Third Street, Troy, just one block from Troy Music Hall. Feel free to bring your

lunch. A Helderberg quartet (including the three FUUSAns) will also appear at an Open House at Ten Broeck Mansion (9 Ten Broeck Place, Albany) on Saturday, Dec. 18. That event will include three short musical sets at 2:15 PM, 2:45 PM, and 3:15 PM. Contact the **Dawn or Dick Dana or Dave Metz** for more information on either event.

CommUUnity Potlucks

FUUSAns meet occasionally in members' homes in various neighborhoods for a potluck dinner. New-comers are always welcome! Call the church office if you would like to host a potluck.

"Guilderland Plus" will meet in Albany

Friday, Dec. 3, at 6:30 PM.

Hosted by Kathy Harris. Her home is on 96 Homestead Avenue in Albany. Please contact Kathy to let her know that you are coming and what dish you plan to share.

Walker Book Club

The next meeting of the Walker book club is Sunday, Dec. 12, at the home of Lisa Walker, Delmar. If you need directions for the December meeting, call Lisa.

Lisa has graciously hosted the Walker Book Club for ten years in memory and honor of her husband and former FUUSAn, Vic Walker. However, she has decided to pursue other interests starting next year. Therefore, the Walker Book Club will begin meeting at FUUSA on January 9.

Each meeting begins with a potluck supper at 5:30 PM, followed by a lively discussion of the book of the month chosen by participants. Bring your favorite dish to share, and a small contribution to cover beverages. Newcomers are always welcome.

Dates and books currently scheduled:

- ◆ Dec. 12 - Remarkable Creatures by Tracy Chevalier.
- ◆ Jan. 9 - The Housekeeper and the Professor by Yoko Ogawa.
- ◆ Feb. 13 - Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close by Jonathan Safran Foer.

Contact Linda Hunt with any questions or for a list

**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, Jean Bolgatz, Randy Rosette, Mark Yolles and Robin Miller.

of books suggested by participants for future months.

Solstice Celebration

Sunday, Dec. 19, 7:00 PM

Watch for details in Order of Service.

Joys and Caring Corner

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.

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 Ann Lapinski or Mary Ann Randall.

Social Justice

STANDING ON THE SIDE OF LOVE is the banner that is displayed across the Washington Avenue side of FUUSA. It was hung at the culmination of our Social Justice weekend with Rev. Dick Gilbert and it proclaims our willingness to bear witness for people who are the victims of injustice or intolerance. As Rev. Sam explained as we stood outside on the sunny first Sunday of November, it was first meant to show our support of GLBT rights, but now it is more than that. Rev. Sam and thousands of others marched in Arizona to show their opposition to the Arizona law that profiles and arrests immigrants. We in Albany have marched in support of the Muslims who were victims of preemptive prosecution. And we have marched in support of marriage equality. Unfortunately, I fear we will have many more opportunities to bear witness with our banner and wearing our gold Standing on the Side of Love T-shirts. Go to the Standing on the Side of Love web site to see what other UU congregations are doing.

Rev. Gilbert, in his workshop that over 40 of us attended, challenged us in our work for Social Justice. (If you were unable to attend and would like a copy of his workbook, we can e-mail one to you.) We know that most FUUSAns are concerned about social justice. The challenge is to make us more involved, focused and effective. We need to work on the system that allows injustice, and poverty. You are going to be asked to sign more petitions and write more letters. Our current petition is to have CDTA run a bus from Pearl St. up Morton Ave. to New Scotland to allow people to get to work, to shop and to get to medical facilities. If you haven't added your signature stop by the SRC table in Channing to do so. As Rev. Gilbert said in

his sermon on Sunday, we are in a political and economic climate that will challenge us to work even harder and that as UU's our faith is demonstrated by our work. We can't do everything, but each of us can do something.

You can check the bulletin board in Channing to see how you can volunteer and the SRC table to see ways to be involved and informed, and you are always welcome at the SRC meetings the first Sunday of the month following coffee hour. If you have ordered a T-shirt, but haven't picked it up, please see me. And if you would like to buy one for \$15, it's not too late. You can call or email me, or see me on Sunday.

Standing on the Side of Love,
Lois Griffin

Are you feeding your Guest at Your Table?

As you read this, a number of you have taken your Guest at Your Table box home for its caring and feeding during the holidays. As your Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) local representative, I hope you will be generous, either in the feeding of the box, or in simply making a contribution in an envelope (also available in the RE office). I hope to have a lot of counting and tabulating to do in January. And I hope to see everyone contribute to and join the UUSC. As a guide: UUSC membership begins at just \$40 for individuals, \$20 for seniors, and \$10 for youth. If your final gift totals \$100 or more, it will be eligible to be matched dollar for dollar through a grant from the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, N.Y. (the Veatch Fund).

You also have an opportu-



nity to purchase UUSC holiday cards, which is another way to contribute to the UUSC. Look for Maria Joyner at the SRC table in Channing Hall after services on Sunday mornings.

No matter which approach you prefer, it all helps to do the work of the UUSC. For example:

- ◆\$47 helps reunite one Pakistan child flood survivor with his or her family.
- ◆\$66 allows one girl in Afghanistan to receive quality education for an entire year.
- ◆\$240 pays for one person to attend a human-rights workshop in Afghanistan (\$11 per day, per trainer for 8 weeks).
- ◆\$300 pays for a civil-rights activist in the Middle East to attend a training conference in Morocco.

So, please be generous this year. Questions, please contact FUUSA's UUSC local representative Don Odell.

Green Sanctuary news

The next Green Sanctuary Comm. meeting will be on Sunday, December 19 at 11:45. Come and participate in our planning. The next Discussion Group will be in January with Arden Dockter leading the discussion on Nuclear Power.

Check out the new video "The Story of Electronics" on the web. It's in the same vein as "The Story of Stuff" which we presented last year at a Forum.

Remember to recycle your ink cartridges, cell phones, sneakers, cork from wine bottles and bring your used CFL Bulbs to the SRC table and we will dispose of them properly.

Green Tips

Take your old DVDs, CDs, video and auto tapes to Best Buy where they will be recycled

Forum

Sunday, Dec. 12, 11:45
(in the Sanctuary)

Palestine/Israel - A View from Inside the West Bank

Having returned from his fourth period of service with Christian Peacemaker Teams, Paul Rehm will offer an inside perspective not likely to be heard on the evening news. Christian Peacemaker Teams have worked in Palestine/Israel since 1996, attempting to reduce violence between parties in conflict there. A Quaker with Albany Friends Meeting and a member of Upper Hudson Peace Action's Steering Committee, Mr. Rehm serves with CPT for five to seven weeks each year.

If child care is needed, contact the church office by noon the previous Friday.

Columns

Sam's Outlook

Holiday Peacemaking

I'm not sure why, but talking about peace gets people angry. I know a UU congregation that has constant squabbling and aggressive arguing by their Peace Committee members. The Unitarian Universalist Association Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking that passed at our General Assembly last June failed the first time around the year before. An enormous amount of energy and time was consumed as people fought about just war theory, pacifism, non-violence, the military and other peacemaking controversies. Everybody would like to have a more peaceful world but have conflicting ways to get there.

The core work of any religious organization should be helping people become more peaceful and loving. "Blessed are the peacemakers," said Jesus. The Jewish Talmud states, "The whole of the Torah is for the purpose of promoting peace." Psalm 34 says, "Do you want long life and happiness? Strive for peace with all your heart." "Victory breeds hatred, for the defeated live in pain. Happily live the peaceful, giving up victory and defeat." is found in the Buddhist Dhammapada. "The taking of one innocent life is like taking all of Mankind... and the saving of one life is like saving all of Mankind" can be found in the Qur'an. I like this selection from the Tao Te Ching "Tao invariably takes no action, and yet there is nothing left undone... Simplicity, which has no name, is free of desires. Being free of desires, it is tranquil. And the world will be at peace of its own accord."

Every Sunday, I close the service with the words, “Go in peace. Make peace. Be at peace.” Each of those phrases is rich with meaning. The first step to making peace is valuing it as an intention. From that intention, the possibility of making peace arises. And the result of making peace is being at peace.

Now, being peaceful in an isolated cave in the Himalayas is one thing. It is quite another to live in constant contact with people and maintain a sense of inner peace while encountering the violent culture all around us. Our consumer culture is constantly prodding us out of our peaceful state by stimulating our desires for stuff. Interpersonal contact often generates jealousy, anger, ill will, contempt, judgment, intimidation, irritation as well as desire, attraction, arousal, and lust.

Holding the intention of peace as individuals and as a congregation cuts across everything we do. We strive to maintain peace in our children's religious education classes. There are peaceful moments in our Sunday morning service like the silent meditation period. (I know people who've told me that that silence can be the only time they have in a week to be peaceful) Our Board meetings, committee meetings and congregational meetings use peace promoting rules of procedure. We have a newly formed “Peace Team” a sub-committee of the Social Responsibilities Council, to advocate for peace in our congregation, our community and the world. As much as possible, we want our congregation to be a place of peace.

The challenge in advancing both inner and outer peace is doing it non-violently. Squelching disagreement violently maintains the peace. Controlling rules that interfere with dissent stifle our freedom. We can disagree without being disagreeable, however. There are more peaceful and less peaceful ways of resolving our disputes and differences.

Given the nature of our biological makeup, preventing violent and aggressive thinking is next to impossible. The better goal is learning how to channel those unruly feelings in non-harmful ways. I've spoken in the past about the amazing power of Nonviolent Communication, as taught by Marshall Rosenberg, to resolve conflict effectively. Developing compassionate, non-violent methods of com-

munication can help us go in peace, make peace and be at peace.

Lao-Tse was so right on so many levels with his observation that: If there is to be peace in the world, there must be peace in the nations. If there is to be peace in the nations, there must be peace in the cities. If there is to be peace in the cities, there must be peace between neighbors. If there is to be peace between neighbors, there must be peace in the home. If there is to be peace in the home, there must be peace in the heart.

As we approach the December holidays of peace, may our congregation be a place to practice peace-making and a place to advocate for peace in the world.

Rev. Sam

Chuck's Chat

Budget Balanced

Thank you to everyone who responded to my September letter asking if you could increase your pledge. As I said in that letter, our canvass this year was a success, given the economic climate. With the increases, we have exceeded the amount we raised last year. At the October meeting the Board approved a balanced budget for the current fiscal year without cutting existing programs or staff compensation.

New York State Convention of Universalists

Ten FUUSA members attended this meeting in October, making us the largest delegation at the meeting. I found it educational and inspirational. We were treated to an exceptional keynote address and workshop by Gini Courter, Moderator of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Gini combines the talents of an evangelist preacher with the organizational skills of a corporate president.

I wanted to share with you a few of her pithy observations, stories, and comments:

- ◆ She accepted this speaking engagement because the Universalists are “her people”. Their god is not the tiny little god of the fundamentalists but an all-inclusive god that embraces all people.
- ◆ “All Inclusive Resorts” are not inclusive in the way we need to be inclusive as UUs.
- ◆ From Mary Oliver, “If god has a plan it is that we

should do better”.

- ◆ We should be greeting newcomers with love not as if we are HR Directors.
- ◆ Our strength is that we recognize that life is full of complexity, mystery and diversity as opposed to fundamentalists of all stripes who only see one true way.
- ◆ When the Tea Party wants to take back America, they mean to take it back to 1820 rather than move forward.
- ◆ Discussing the constitution, as UUs we can say, “My people wrote the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and we are baked into the fabric of this country.”

Finally, two last stories. Gini was at the demonstrations in Phoenix against the Arizona immigration bill. There were 81 people arrested, 29 of them were UUs. Gini worked at making bail for them. The sheriff of Phoenix asked a UU minister why he had come to demonstrate and was willing to be arrested. The minister replied, “Because Jesus spoke to me.” I expect he did not mean this in the evangelical literal sense.

Finally, Gini told about a meeting at General Assembly this year. The purpose of the meeting was to draft a resolution regarding the planned GA in Phoenix for 2012. The question was – “Should we boycott or should we go and bear witness?” A person of color said “Every time I go anywhere I must summon my courage to go out.” This was echoed by a Latino from Phoenix. A white UU at the meeting asked, “Every time?” The response was, “Every time!” This was a profound moment. The meeting stopped, tears of awareness and insight came. This is why the values and message we bring to the world is important.

There was a moment at the meeting when our ability to put our values into action was tested. During the afternoon session on hydro-fracking, two Native American women were treated very rudely by one of the panelists and the moderator. Jacqui Williams, with help from Donna Doran and Lois Griffin, intervened. They listened to the women’s concerns and tried to get them resolved. This sensitivity was an example of how we should always be ready to be engaged and act on our values.

So, I was really glad I decided to go to the Convention. It reinforced my appreciation of the Universalists’ contribution to the foundational beliefs of our beloved community. Next year the Convention will be in Binghamton and I hope to be able to go again.

In peace and universal love,
Chuck

Religious Exploration ---

Creating solidarity – not charity

The 2002 slogan of the Louisiana Tourism Board still rings true about New Orleans: ‘Come as you are; leave different.’ I feel lucky to have the resources to attend the annual Fall Conference of LREDA (Liberal Religious Educators Association) most every year. This year the conference was held in New Orleans. And that made all the difference.

Usually we gather for Fall Con at a hotel for our work–workshops, meeting with the president of the UUA, chapter meetings, collegial support, spiritual practice, etc. And we have some free time to see the local sights. But the organizers this year knew that to be in New Orleans as religious educators would mean that we would be compelled to do things differently. And so we were given resources ahead of time to learn about post-Katrina New Orleans. (That way we wouldn’t have to be “disaster tourists” when we got there.) And we had all signed up ahead of time to go out into the communities and do some hands on work. We met city residents in our work and in sessions at the hotel. And we were encouraged to listen to the stories of the people of New Orleans. People in New Orleans are generally friendly and ready to tell their stories. We listened to our wait staff, shopkeepers, street musicians and fellow trolley car passengers.

For my volunteer work I went with a group to the Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana. There we filled bags to go into weekend backpacks for students who receive free or reduced price breakfast and lunches at school. (You can see pictures on my Face Book page). And we talked to one of the managers, Charles. His story was like so many others. Before Katrina, he led a comfortable enough life, man-

aging a tire store and working on old cars as a hobby. Now he uses the skills he learned acquiring his MBA to run a multi-acre food bank, coordinate volunteers, solicit donations, seek out needs in the communities, and develop compassionate ways to deliver food. In his new job he has taken a large cut in pay, now works long hours – including weekends, and does lots of physical labor, but he feels that his life is so much richer now. He also wanted to learn more about our group and why we were there. And he wants us all to come back and *to bring more people with us.*

During the conference, we had time to contemplate our experiences and to share them with our fellow conferees. We strove to become more aware of what it meant to be benevolent “outsiders.” Being the ones with extra resources makes it easy for us to control what things will get done and how they will get done. The hard part of relief work is to remember that we did not earn our status, though we may be of good will. So there must be a dialog with the residents to preserve their right to control their communities, and we must be mindful to honor the inherent resources of the community. It’s important to appreciate the reciprocal nature of serving a community. This is what it means to work in solidarity, not charity.

I came away from New Orleans a little changed – maybe even transformed. Meeting Charles and the

other people of New Orleans makes me want to go back and to bring more people with me. You might ask if my time wouldn’t be better spent working with FUUSAns on problems closer to home. After all, many of the problems that New Orleans faces are ones that Albany faces too – the issues of youth who drop out of high school, gun violence, problems between community residents and the police. However, what I have heard from other DRE’s is that once you take a group of youth and adults on a trip to do a service project, they are transformed. Youth especially, develop a stronger sense of what it means to be a UU and adopt those values as their own. They develop empathy and conviction to do more social justice work wherever they see the need. They are changed at their cores.

What would it take for FUUSA to get involved in a travel service project? We came up with some good ideas at the workshop with Rev. Gilbert in November. There has been talk at the cluster level (CRUUNY – Capital Region UUs of NY) of a service trip. A youth approached the Social Justice Council last year about a trip and they were interested. It feels like we’re on the verge of something that could be amazing. We’ll need youth, adult allies of youth, parents and others interested in social justice work to make it happen.

In faith,
Leah

December Sunday Volunteer Opportunities—Sign up in Channing Hall at the Sign Up Site.

	Lead Usher (1)	Ushers (3)	Coffee Hosts (2)	Greeters (2)	Chalice Lighter (1)
Dec. 5	A. DeSalvo			J. Bolgatz	
Dec. 12	A. D’Attilio	A. Patti	B.&T. Zima	J. Keers	I. Daniels
Dec. 19	D. Odell		T. Henderson	B. Manning	S. Tilgner
Dec. 24 6:00 pm					
Dec. 24 8:00 pm	D. Odell				
Dec. 26			C. Howard and ?		

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, 9:00-4:00

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

Building use

To **reserve a room** for a FUUSA activity, contact Administrative Assistant Dave Stone (463-7135 or dstone@albanyuu.org).

To **rent classroom space** for a personal or non-FUUSA activity, contact Administrative Assistant Dave Stone (463-7135 or dstone@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.

Editors: Amy Lent, Irene Saulsbery

Photos: Chris Strebel

Send all submissions to:

windows@albanyuu.org or to the church office.

Next publication deadlines

Dec. *Update:* Dec. 6

Jan. *Windows:* Dec. 20

December 2010

Holiday Events

at FUUSA



The RE Mitten Tree

Emerson Community Hall

During the month of December you can decorate the Mitten Tree in Emerson Hall with new hats, gloves,

and mittens for children and adults. You can also put new, unwrapped toys under the tree. All will be donated to the Marillac shelter, which offers an emergency housing program for homeless families in the Capital Region.

Come, trim the Christmas tree!

Holiday crafts workshop and party

Saturday, Dec. 11, 9:30-11:30 AM

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; Wreaths \$5. Sponsored by the Religious Education Council

“Would You Like to Hold the Baby?”

Sunday, Dec. 19, 10:00 AM

Emerson Community Hall

A multigenerational Christmas service celebrating the spiritual truths and metaphorical beauty found in the Nativity story

Children and youth participation in the pageant:

Sunday, Dec. 5, 11:30 to 12:00 – Selection of major parts of the pageant and costume selection – (Sanctuary)

Sunday, Dec. 12, 11:30 to 12:30 – Rehearsal (Emerson Hall)

Christmas Caroling

Sunday, Dec. 19

Caravan starts at FUUSA at noon

Singing locations TBA! Families are encouraged to attend.

Solstice Celebration

Sunday, Dec. 19, 7:00 pm

Channing Hall

Join us for this earth-centered Unitarian Universalist ritual to recognize the shortest day of the year. Drums and rattles are welcome!

Please bring a non-perishable food item for the food pantry—and, if you are so inspired, a snack to share after the celebration.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Friday, Dec. 24, 6:30 and 8:15 p.m.

Sanctuary

The 6:30 PM service will be “family friendly”. And be sure to plan some time at the reception between the services!

