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FISCAL YEAR
JULY 1, 2015
THRU
JUNE 30, 2016

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July 2015 Worship

Sunday, July 5, 10:30am

Benedict's Dharma: A Rule of Life for Unitarian Universalists

Lisa Temoshok

Music: Joyce Cowin, piano

Consciously or unconsciously, willingly or with resistance, we all follow rules. In the 6th century, Benedict of Nursia created a set of guidelines that address the challenges of living in beloved community. How might a good rule free us to be our authentic, best selves with one another?

Sunday, July 12, 10:30 am

Chanting on the Side of Love!

Albany Kirtan Band

Embody the spirit of gratitude through song and story. Chant, breathe, release and revive with the resonant tones of the Kirtan tradition. Let's fill the dome with joy and gratitude for all that is good in our lives!

Sunday, July 19, 10:30 am

Connecting to Wholeness

The Wellspring Team

Music: Joyce Cowin, piano

Spiritual deepening draws out the wisdom of the inner teacher and calls us to wholeness. UU Wellspring provides a rich opportunity for inner exploration and connection to others. We offer stories and lessons about our transformative experiences to invite and engage your imagination.

Sunday, July 26, 10:30 am

All I Need to Know about Perfection I Learned from Silicon

Rev. Lynn Ashley

Music: Joyce Cowin, piano

While doing our best is an admirable goal, aiming at being perfect in every way can get in our way and thereby wound our spirits. We draw upon wisdom learned from scientific studies of silicon, the primary element of computer chips, to reflect upon some of the values of imperfection.



CIRCLES



Rev. Dr. Margaret A. O'Neill,
Interim Minister

MARGRET'S MUSINGS

Free to Follow Our Passion

On the walls of my office you might notice the large pages of notes from meetings and discussions that I want to hold in my awareness — because they have interesting or provocative ideas, because they challenge and remind me what amazing ideas are emerging here.

I glanced over at that array last week and noticed a line I recorded during one of the governance discussions: “How do we free people to follow their passion?”

That question — and a sense of urgency to create a system that is flexible and responsive for members here to do the work of their hearts — has come up again and again as we have considered whether and how to address a change in governance. It is passion and commitment that make a church compelling in people's lives and important in the world, so freeing people to follow their passion is a high priority.

In the many Governance Transition Information sessions that I led during May and June, we invariably talked about how the structures of the congregation might change over the next few years. I think this might feel to some folks like we are talking about renovating your house, leaving

the outer walls intact, but considering whether to leave, tear down, or move all the other interior walls of the place in which you have been dwelling. What would it be like to have a larger kitchen, a smaller living room, partitions where there have been walls, cubicles? What might it mean to divide and assign the spaces in new ways?

If you have been living at UUSS for a long time, these ideas can be a bit worrisome. How will our old furniture fit in the new spaces? Will I trip over thresholds or run into walls that are in new places, maybe even falling and hurting myself? Will I have a key to the new doors? Will there be a place for me, and for what I consider important?

Right now, UUSS has elected Board, Councils and Committees with a total of about 46 elected positions that are filled in various cycles of renewal. There are also many volunteer committees, and a range of voluntary activities that are “groups” or “programs.” All these structures have important functions in the life of the congregation, but sometimes their mandates are unclear. There can be overlap and gaps in the areas of responsibility, and sometimes newcomers find it hard to know how they can get meaningfully involved, how they can find and follow their passion.

In the policy-based form of governance that our congregation is moving toward, church structures fall into two main groups: Governance and Ministry. The permanent structures in Governance are the elected Board of Trustees and appointed Committees that do the work of Governance: the fiduciary, strategic and generative work of leadership. Governance deals primarily with abstractions and decisions at the broadest level, and is seldom hands-on with a project.

The structures for Ministry provide the hands-on implementation, and they are designed to be fluid and responsive to emerging needs and interests. They are called Teams, and as described in Dan Hotchkiss' book, “the essential qualities of an effective ministry team ... are passion, urgency, unity, problem-solving skills, and a preference for action over talk.”

What you can expect to see over the next couple of years is some sorting out of functions, the creation of new collaborations, some moving of walls, perhaps some freeing up of restrictions as UUSS moves towards giving people freedom and support to follow their passion. This is an exciting time to be part of it all, and I encourage you to get involved.

It is a joy to be here with you. See you in church!



This diagram taken from *Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership* by Dan Hotchkiss shows how the functions of governance and ministry work in a policy-based form of church governance.



*Julie Rigano,
Director of Lifespan Religious
Education*

So Glad to Be Here!

Hello, Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady! My name is Julie Rigano, and I am thrilled to serve your congregation as your Director of Lifespan Religious Education.

I was lucky to grow up Unitarian Universalist at the First Unitarian Society of Westchester. When I returned home from college with a degree in English and an uncertainty as to what to do, I made one of the most transformative decisions of my life. I agreed to be an advisor for the Coming of Age class the following year. While advising, I began to realize how important religious education is to me. I joined the RE committee and in 2014 I became the Religious Education Intern.

My year as the Religious Education Intern was eye opening and grounding. From local cluster meetings in the Metro NY UU district to a Renaissance Module in Memphis, TN, I absorbed as much as I could and developed my own philosophy on religious education.

At the core of my philosophy is my favorite principle: a free and responsible search for truth and meaning. We are blessed with the freedom to explore and discover what is true for us individually. More importantly, we are charged to do this. For children, that responsibility comes in the form of learning morals, values, our UU culture and heritage, along with the culture and heritage of faiths all around the world. I experienced that firsthand in the safety of my own UU religious education classes growing up.

I want to recreate that safe place for the next generation of Unitarian Universalist children and youth. I know how often a kid growing up UU can hear, "That's not a real religion." Religious education is where we can foster the confidence in our children and youth to be their authentic selves.

As my Coming of Age class moved to youth group, I maintained my relationship with them as mentor. Remembering my own experiences with youth group, I guided the new youth as they led themselves in religious education for the first time. I saw from a new angle the dynamics of youth group bonding and leadership.

In my role as Religious Education Intern, I noticed a gap in my philosophy — the adults. If our fourth principle charges us to continue to search for our truth and meaning, we must offer the adults in our community that opportunity in religious education. I am so impressed with UUSS's rich adult programming. I cannot wait to expand the program even further and delve deeper with you.

It is a special thing when a congregation charges themselves to grow together in community as you all have. A free and responsible search is wonderful, but it is also a scary task. Having a congregation learn together eases the burden and enhances the potential for growth. No matter what your role is in the religious education program — leader, participant, child care, set up, etc. — you are nurturing each congregant and the congregation as a community.

I am excited to meet all of you and begin to bloom together at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady.

Julie

SUMMER RELIGIOUS EDUCATION & NURSERY

Summer Religious Education for children ages 5-10 takes place in the main church building on Sundays in July and August from 10:30 - 11:30 am.

The summer RE classroom is located next door to the nursery. Nursery care will be available through the summer for children up through age 4. Children over 10 may choose to be part of the worship service or assist in the RE classroom.

Please join us!



CIRCLES



*John Reschovsky
Board of Trustees President*

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Celebrating & Building on Our Strengths

What a time to take over the reins as President of your Board of Trustees. This is an extraordinary moment in our history. There are such great opportunities to grow and evolve.

Just ponder our recent past. We are entering the second year of our three-year period of transition under full steam. The work of our community is going well, with new initiatives in all areas: spiritual development, religious education and social justice. As we pass the leadership of lifespan religious education from Melissa MacKinnon to Julie Rigano on July 1, we are thankful for all that we have achieved and excited by the new energy, ideas and directions that change will surely bring. Welcome, Julie!

We have just completed an annual stewardship campaign that met and exceeded our most ambitious goals, a striking turn-around from our financial struggles of recent years. And — even more striking — the process of stewardship was actually fun. Who would have guessed that?

We have finally undertaken the refurbishment of our entry plaza after many years of planning — a huge achievement.

Perhaps most significantly, we have made the commitment to begin the process of revising our governance structure. This is a challenge that the congregation has not addressed in as much as a half century, and it can profoundly improve how we operate.

Why change governance, and why now? What we have been doing is not totally broken. It works — but often with noticeable inefficiency and extra effort. Times are changing. The demands on our member families, particularly the younger generations, strain both our time and financial resources. If we are to thrive into the future, we must adopt the very best practices, work efficiently, and use our cherished staff resources in the most effective ways.

Fortunately, UUSS is not alone. All churches face these same issues, and others have led the way. So with guidance from the example of others and the fine leadership of Reverend Margret, we will succeed. And succeed we must, because if we are to attract the very best settled minister that we can, we must have a clear governance structure and concisely defined roles and expectations.

This change will start with the Board in the months to come, and it will be very challenging. It will take a lot of discernment about our future. The

role of the Board can surely become more strategic, and day to day management tasks, which have often consumed our Board's energy, will need to be done in different ways. We need to build excitement and make volunteer roles both fun and engaging.

Change is always hard and we will need everyone's input. Through much dialog, I am confident that our congregation as a whole will find the right path.

Please feel free to approach me or any Board member about anything on your mind. We value your thoughts and ideas.

I feel a great sense of hope for our future, and I am honored to be serving in this new role. Together, I am confident that we will find the energy and wisdom to succeed.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to all the staff and members who make our Society work. But in particular, thanks to outgoing Board member Vicki Michela and Board President Donald Whisenhunt for their service. Donald has led us through some very challenging times and leaves us in such a good place.

John

Save the Date!

Sunday, September 13

This year the first Sunday after Labor Day will be a double pleasure.

We will be celebrating not only our annual **Ingathering and Water Communion** but also the completion of our **New Plaza and Fountains!** Planning is underway for a major event and celebration following the service. So mark your calendar now, and remember also to save a small sample of water from your summer travels to use in the Water Communion.

GREEN SANCTUARY

A TRIP TO WILTON PRESERVE



When we wrote the June article for *Circles*, we were looking forward to our trip to Wilton Preserve. We had a wonderful time, although only 16 people attended, including UUs from both Schenectady and Albany.

If you haven't been to this natural area, we highly recommend it. Just off Exit 16 of the Northway, this preserve includes pine barrens and woodlots. Late spring brings blue lupines and Karner blue butterflies in the open fields, and dozens of pink lady-slippers in the woodlots. Both were at the height of their season on May 30.

Nature brings beauty and joy, but also surprises and even fear. As we approached the point on the trail farthest from the parking lot, we heard a thunderstorm approaching. We got wet, but no one was hit by lightning. On our way back to the cars, there were no complaints about the weather. Everyone was very pleased with the experiences we had.

Most of us probably agree that getting out into Nature is therapeutic and spiritually renewing. All of us have very busy lives. Making time to reconnect with Nature can seem quite a challenge.

Green Sanctuary wants to remind you that summer is a great time to set aside some time, both on your own and as a family. You don't need to go far or spend a lot of money. Pay attention to Nature around you, and make sure your kids are aware of it. This is the basis of awareness of our place in the web of life and caring for our Earth in stewardship.

From Nancy Peterson for
Green Sanctuary



HELP WANTED

UUSSBugs is looking for volunteers to help with summer services. For each of the 13 services from June 21st to September 6th, we need a minimum of 2 people who will share the tasks of greeting, ushering and mixing and serving lemonade. If you are willing to help out, please email your UUSSBUG Coordinators Lisa Angle at langle.fking@gmail.com or Mary Anne Mangano at mmangano@nycap.rr.com with the dates you are available. Thank you.

FIRESIDE CHATS!

Are you new to Unitarian Universalism? Wondering what we believe, how we worship, and where you might fit in? Fireside Chat is a place to bring your questions and make connections with members of UUSS! Join us after service in the Fireplace Room on first Sundays this summer: July 5th, and August 2nd!

~ The Membership Committee

CIRCLES

COFFEE, CRULLERS & CONVERSATION!



CC&C is done for the summer. It's over. Kaput. But in September it will "awaken" or "rear its ugly head" (or choose your own metaphor) — and you can be part of it.

Surely you have a sermon in you, a presentation to give, a cause to celebrate, a position to expound upon, or simply an issue upon which a thoughtful discussion might shed some light. If so, contact Bill MacTiernan at bigmiketuna@gmail.com and schedule your very own CC&C. And do not worry, the coffee and crullers will magically appear.

SUMMER PLANS for UUSS PHILOSOPHY GROUP



The Philosophy Group will start its summer schedule on Wednesday, July 8.

Each Wednesday morning at 10:00 am, a member of the group will lead a discussion of material handed out the previous week. We expect the discussion to be diverse and interesting. A schedule will be available in the Philosophy Group mail slot. If you would like further information, contact Michael Foster at mfoster9@nycap.rr.com or 382-5982.

We meet every Wednesday at 10:00am in the Emerson Room, and we welcome new members.

HELP FEED HUNGRY KIDS IN THE PARK DURING JULY 13–17

Join other UUSS members in serving lunch to kids from low income families at Jerry Burrell Park in Hamilton Hill during the week of July 13-17.

The Schenectady Inner City Ministry (SICM) will provide the food, and we need about 5 volunteers each day that week to serve the kids. We can expect to feed over 125 kids a day. These are children who qualify for free lunches during the school year, but often go without lunch when school is not in session.

This is a heart-warming and rewarding experience, and fun to do with others from the congregation. You may sign up for one day or more, and youth also enjoy this volunteer opportunity. Further information and sign-up sheets are available at the Social Action Council table or through Crys Hamelink at crysh@nycap.rr.com.

SUMMER BREAK



The Women's Alliance is taking a bit of a breather during July and August, but please consider joining us in September as we resume our first Thursdays noontime luncheons — sometimes in the UUSS dining room, sometimes at the Turf Tavern in Scotia. Our delicious meal is followed by an interesting program, questions and conversation. Watch *Circles*, *Circuits*, Facebook, the UUSS website, the Sunday Order of Service, or the bulletin board by the back door for details. If you are available during the day, you really should give us a try!

The Adult Programs Council is also taking a "vacation" this summer. If you have any great ideas for new fun events, please see one of the members of the council, leave a note in the Adult Programs mailbox outside the church office door, or email Jill McGrath at mcgrathjm@icloud.com

Try spelling "fun" without "u." It just doesn't work!

RIPPLES: SOCIAL ACTION COUNCIL



Living Our Principles: The Votes Are In!

On Sunday, June 7, 35 to 40 people attended a CC&C before the service to find out the results of the congregational poll to choose a collective social action project, also known as Living Our Principles. Robin Schnell, Chair of the Social Action Council, presented the data and led the ensuing discussion.

The results were as follows. Of the four possible projects voted on, two of them seemed to garner the most interest.

Joining **Family Promise of the Capital Region** to host homeless families received the highest number of total votes: 52. Of these, 19 people identified this project as their first choice and 18 said it was their second choice.

Climate Justice received 51 total votes. Of these, 33 people said it was their first choice, and 6 said it was their second choice.

The other two projects, working on **Criminal Justice Reform and Inmate Reentry** received 43 votes and **Moon Catchers**, which creates and distributes reusable menstrual pads for girls in developing countries, received 42 votes.

After the results were announced, there was discussion about the best way to proceed. Clearly, all four projects are worthy of support, but it is important to focus our energies in order to have the greatest impact possible.

On the other hand, with such a close vote for the top two projects, Family Promise and Climate Justice, it would be difficult and unfair to eliminate one of them in favor of the other. The two projects are indeed very different, with separate goals and responsibilities, and it was noted that many of the people who voted to work on one of them did not vote to work on the other. This would permit us to work on both at the same time without necessarily diluting the impact on either one.

Of the projects which received fewer votes, Moon Catchers already exists and will continue, and Criminal Justice Issues activities will be made available for those who are committed to this work.

Many details have yet to be ironed out before things get started so stay tuned, but get ready to roll up your sleeves this fall as we begin the necessary but rewarding work to Live Our Principles!



Summer “Social Action Sundays” to support musical instruments & lessons at Yates School

The Social Action Sunday collection in July and August will benefit a program of the Empire State Youth Orchestras that will be bringing small group string lessons to students of Yates School in the Van Vranken neighborhood of Schenectady every day after school.

The program is called CHIME and is based on a system first used in Venezuela called "El Sistema," which enriched children in poverty through music. These children achieved a high level of education, and the system is now being used around the world.

Please contribute generously on July 19th, August 16th and August 30th: (Please make checks payable to “ESYO” with “Chime” in the memo line.)

SOUP KITCHEN HELP NEEDED

Soup Kitchen again thanks members of the congregation for all your generous hands-on and financial support given in the past.

On June 29 and July 13, we will provide our next luncheons to folks at the Schenectady Salvation Army . If you are available to help, please contact Kendra Pratt at kendra.pratt1@gmail.com.

Summer Full-Moon Drum Circles at UUSS

Wednesday, July 1

Friday, July 31

Saturday, August 29

Join us to drum under the UUSS dome from 7:00 to 8:00 pm. All are welcome.

People all over the world drum for peace each month on the full moon from 7-8 pm in every time zone. It is a great way to connect and get energized.

Extra drums are available if you want to try this informal circle. Bring a snack to share.

Sponsored by UUSS Earth Circles



ENROLL IN WELLSPRING NOW!

UU Wellspring is a course in spiritual deepening designed specifically for UUs!

In this intentional 10-month program, participants study the history of Unitarian Universalism and explore spiritual questions in a small group setting. Five interconnected components serve as guideposts: commitment to a daily spiritual practice, monthly spiritual direction, bi-weekly meetings, readings, and putting faith into action.

Honor the voice of the inner teacher as you reflect on life's biggest questions. To find out more, contact Rosemary Bishop at rosybishop23@gmail.com or 339-7814. You can also enroll online at <http://goo.gl/bqAcU7>



SAVE THE DATE!

AUGUST 20-23!

FOR THE UUSS CAMPING TRIP!

Imagine waking up to the birds singing in the trees over your tent; sharing breakfast outside with UUSS folks; spending the day fishing, boating, swimming, hiking, birding, walking with a naturalist and/or visiting a nature center; cooking and sharing dinner at a campsite grill; and gathering around a campfire in the evening!

All this and more will happen at Thompson's Lake State Campground on our summer camping trip. The dates are Thursday evening August 20 through Sunday morning August 23rd.

You can attend one, two or three nights. Or you can visit during the day. The campground is well maintained and has convenient bathrooms with showers. Instructions for registration and more details <http://goo.gl/3pr14Q>

Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady

July 2015

July 2015							August 2015						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
							30	31					

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jun 28 - Jul 4	Jun 28	29	30	Jul 1 7:00pm EBWA Steering Committee (E) 7:00pm Full Moon Drumming (GH)	2	3 Church Closed	4 Independence Day (United)
Jul 5 - 11	5 Summer RE Begins 10:30am Worship Service	6 7:30pm FUSSBudgets (E)	7 Minister's Day Off	8 10:00am Philosophy Discussion (E) 12:00pm Green Sanctuary (F) 7:00pm Men's Group (WH)	9	10	11
Jul 12 - 18	12 10:30am Worship Service	13 7:00pm Trusts Committee (E)	14 Minister's Day Off 7:00pm FF/GLBT (F)	15 Circles Items Due 10:00am Philosophy Discussion (E)	16 12:15pm Men's Lunch (Edison Club) 7:00pm Finance Meeting (E) 7:00pm Herb Group (E/K)	17 Helen	
Jul 19 - 25	19 Helen 10:30am Worship Service	20 1:30pm Caring Team (F) 7:00pm Board of Trustees (E)	21 Minister's Day Off 5:30pm Niskayuna Coop (E)	22 Julie Conference (Off Site) 10:00am Philosophy Discussion (E)	23	24	25 Julie Conference (Off Site)
Jul 26 - Aug 1	26 Julie Conference (Off Site) 10:30am Worship Service	27	28 Minister's Day Off	29 10:00am Philosophy Discussion (E)	30	31 7:00pm Full Moon Drumming (GH)	Aug 1



1221 Wendell Avenue
Schenectady, NY 12308

Forwarding Service Requested

Mission:

*Connecting in spiritual community, we
celebrate life with joy
grow in compassion
create justice*

Visit us at

uuschenectady.org

and

www.facebook.com/UUSSchenectady

PURPOSE OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF SCHENECTADY

The members of this Society covenant to maintain and foster in Schenectady a non-creedal religious society whose purpose shall be to:

- Encourage a free and responsible search for truth, knowledge, and understanding;
- Nurture the religious growth of all who participate in the life of this Society;
- Serve the community;
- Seek the realization of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.

Affirming the individual right of conscience, freedom of belief and the democratic process, with reverence for life and respect for the profound mystery of existence, we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.

**Sunday Services and Religious Education
10:30AM every Sunday Morning**

Minister: Reverend Margret A. O'Neall
Hours: Monday, Wednesday & Thursday
10am-4pm (by appointment)
Phone: 518-374-4446 #2
Email: revmargretuuss@gmail.com

Lifespan Religious Education Director:
Julie Rigano
Phone: TBD
Email: JulietheDRE@gmail.com

Music Director: Gareth Griffiths
Phone & Fax: 518-395-9381
Email: ggriffiths1739@gmail.com

Office Administrator: Susan Marino
Summer Hours: Monday-Thursday, 7a-5p
Phone: 518-374-4446 #0
Email: uuadmin@nycap.rr.com

Bookkeeper: Carolyn Sabol
Email: uubookkeeper@nycap.rr.com

Custodians: Helen Freeland & Ed Holen
Phone: 518-605-5551