

THE ADIRONDACK COMMUNITARIAN



A Monthly Newsletter of the Adirondack Unitarian Universalist Community

Volume 171

April 2017

Calendar at a Glance

April 2

Craig Milewski
"Poetry in Our Lives"

April 9

Rosalie Fontana
"Nature and the Environment"

April 16

Rev. Lynn Ashley

April 23

Rev. Richard Gilbert
"Our Damned Little Teaspoons: Saving the
World in the Age of Trump"

April 30

Glenn McClure
"The Naked Soul"

Events

April 2

Worship Committee Meeting
11:30 following service, all are welcome.

April 9

Board Meeting
11:30 following service, all are welcome.

April 22

Workshop: Giving Life the Shape of Justice
*Rev. Richard Gilbert; Ret. UU Minister and the
Pres. of Interfaith Impact NYS.*

See more information in this newsletter.

Events of Interest:

April 9

*2pm Film: "The Gender Revolution", hosted by
Kelly Metzgar.*

*Produced by the National Geographic and
hosted by Katie Couric.*

The groundbreaking documentary will be
shown at the United Methodist Church, 127
Beekman St. Plattsburgh NY. The event is
open to the community and free of charge.

The Month Ahead: A Closer Look at Upcoming Services

Craig Milewski: “Poetry in our Lives”

April is National Poetry Month! Poetry is to create. Poems serve our lives in many ways: as silly and care-free nursery rhymes, as a survival technique, as a form of free speech, as a means to cultivate perception and discernment, and as guideposts on a spiritual path. Poetry is the amber morning light of spring. Today, we honor this creative art form through readings and reflection.

Rosalie Fontana: “Nature and the Environment”

John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, and Rachel Carson who wrote Silent Spring both saw the world around them as an ineffable mystery that calls for an experience of wonder beyond mere scientific explanation. Perhaps if we could truly recognize our connection to all life, a knowledge that pervades the spirituality of Native American culture, we too would regard nature with reverence, and stop destroying our environment.

Lynn Ashley: Topic TBA

Rev. Lynn Ashley is a retired Unitarian Universalist Minister, most recently having served in Glens Falls and Barneveld, NY congregations. “

Rev. Richard Gilbert retired UU minister and President of Interfaith Impact NYS: “Our Damned Little Teaspoons: Saving the World in the Age of Trump”

While the pundits are still trying to figure out what happened in November 2016, others of us try to figure out how Unitarian Universalists must respond to it. Our response is not only political, but moral and spiritual. How do we sort that out? What is the proper response of pew and pulpit to politics? We might learn something from the Russian proverb: “Pray like hell, but row for the shore!” And we’ll have a little help from a from a Pete Seeger metaphor about teaspoons.

Glen McClure: “The Naked Soul”

Reflections on Nature and Spirituality in Antarctica. Composer Glenn McClure shares his recent National Science Foundation trip to Antarctica.

Upcoming Special Events

April 22 9:30-3:15

Workshop: “Giving Life the Shape of Justice”

No fee for participation of AUUC members and friends. Lunch is included. We will be joined by guests from the Canton and Plattsburgh UU congregations.

Unitarian Universalists affirm “Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations . . . the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large . . . the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all . . . (and) respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.” However, we have our problems in organizing ourselves for implementation of these principles, values and convictions. However, “giving life the shape of justice,” in the words of Carolyn McDade’s UU anthem *Spirit of Life*, is hard work. This workshop will suggest a perspective on the

unique UU mission, organizational tools for a congregation and a practicum on planning for change.

April 29

Bus Trip: People's Climate March in DC

A charter bus has been secured to take any who are interested from Paul Smiths College on Friday morning (4/28) to DC for the march/rally on Saturday between 10am and 4pm. Those attending will be staying in a quad style hotel room Friday night and have breakfast at the hotel Saturday morning. The bus will be back to Paul Smith's around 6am Sunday morning. The cost per person is \$125, this included hotel and bus expenses. Contact Thomas Huber at thuber@paulsmiths.com to register.



Welcoming Congregation Committee Update for April

The Welcoming Congregation Committee is full of energy! Thanks to your participation in our events, and the hard work of the committee, we feel we're making great progress towards our goal of attaining "Welcoming Congregation" status.

As a reminder, the committee is concentrating on three areas: serving the community and being visible leaders in support of LGBTQ people; educating our congregation; and ensuring that our policies and public presence communicate that LGBTQ people are welcome here.

Congregational education

March 12th post-service discussion on gender:

Thirteen members of the congregation attended this discussion. As preparation, the committee distributed copies of a National Geographic article on "Third Gender" people and the differences in gender-related expression across the world. We thought the article would stimulate thinking about the rigidity of the binary gender system. The discussion was very fluid (like gender itself!) and ranged widely. The discussion included: parental and societal conditioning; the invisibility of lesbians and gays in past decades and the attitudes of disdain that were exhibited in the culture and the home towards them; the acceptance of alternative (non-binary) gender constructs in other societies and the natural integration of "Third Gender" people into the cultures, activities and roles in those societies; the interference of religion and its role of suppressing third gender expression as a part of colonialism.

Congregation members also discussed their own experiences of being forced to conform to rigid gender roles and the impact on their lives.

This discussion was a critical piece of our congregational education effort and follows up on our kickoff service in September about gender. The rigid, binary system of gender that dominates our culture is the source of the oppression of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender and queer folk. As well, non-LGBTQ men and women also suffer as a result of being forced to conform to tightly defined expectations of how girls and boys, women and men should behave and express themselves.

On May 21st, we'll be presenting a service on spirituality. Coming to an acceptance of one's self as lesbian, gay and transgender cannot help but be a spiritual journey, one that never really ends. We're modeling this service on the "mini-credo" service, with three speakers who will about their own personal spiritual experiences.

Serving the community

October Film Festival:

We're going to be presenting an LGBTQ Film Festival in October! We've reserved four consecutive Thursdays at the Library, and are working on identifying the films, the format and other logistics. Mark your calendars now!

Public Presence

We'll soon be flying the rainbow flag on Sunday mornings, as well as adding an LGBTQ Welcome sign underneath our main sign out front.

Also, we've worked with the Worship Committee to clarify speaker guidelines in order to ensure that speakers communicate inclusiveness and reflect our welcoming posture.

Celebrate Earth Day April 22



We have arrived at a moment of decision. What is at risk of being destroyed is not the planet itself, of course, but the conditions that have made it hospitable for human beings. ~Al Gore

Message and an exercise from Soul Matters on the April theme of "Transformation"*

Let mystery have its place in you; do not be always turning up your whole soil with the plowshare of self-examination, but leave a little fallow corner in your heart ready for any seed the winds may bring, and reserve a

nook of shadow for the passing bird; keep a place in your heart for the unexpected guests, an altar for an unknown God. -Henri-Frederic Arie

Author Barbara Kingsolver is a master at celebrating the connection between perception, transformation and healing. She writes,

"In my own worst seasons I've come back from the colorless world of despair by forcing myself to look hard, for a long time, at a single glorious thing: a flame of red geranium outside my bedroom window. And then another: my daughter in a yellow dress. And another: the perfect outline of a full, dark sphere behind the crescent moon. Until I learned to be in love with my life again. Like a stroke victim retraining new parts of the brain to grasp lost skills, I have taught myself joy, over and over again."

This exercise invites you to experience a similar gift of a "single glorious thing" from your own surroundings. Here are your instructions:

1. Take some time to identify a special “single glorious thing” that you have the opportunity to look at every day. Your daughter getting on the bus. The flower cart on your way to work. Your spouse brushing her hair or reading the morning paper. You will know it when you see it.
 2. For at least 5 days in a row, use your phone/camera to take a picture of that glorious thing.
 3. Make time to meditate on the collection of photos, either for a full hour of one day or 10 minutes for 3 days in a row. Pay attention to the differences and the similarities. Let the sameness and subtle differences enable you to see something new or appreciate it in a deeper way.
 4. Share with others what you discovered, and how this transformative looking “taught you joy over again” or “add color” to your world.
- *The Soul Matters Sharing Circle is a group of over 200 UU congregations who materials on monthly worship themes for small group discussion, Sunday services, music and children’s religious education resources.*



President's Notes

We are blessed to have five Sundays this month, and a special event of the Social Justice Workshop on April 22. One of our recently attending friends commented that she had questioned not having one worship leader who was a weekly presence in the pulpit, but then noted that she had left one congregation because in that ‘one presence’ her values were not being supported. I am anticipating with pleasure the diversity of this month’s roster of services, both lay and ministerial. I am so often pleasurablely surprised at the manner in which commonplace topics inspire philosophical and meaningful discussions.

Thanks this month to...

Susan Arnold ...for her work on our name tag board, obtaining a new Guest Book and Caring contacts.

Joyce Henklein...for providing some new ""UU Moment" welcoming Board statements and her welcoming notes to our recent newcomers.

Elodie Linck for showing up for child care in midst of play rehearsals and dance auditions.

Our refreshment providers who help make our after service time convivial...and give young parents an opportunity not to rush away in search of snacks for the little ones.

These are ongoing activities and they are always appreciated.

Joys and Sorrows

We were sorry to learn of the death of Julia Goren's father.

We send Robert Scofield healing thoughts following his bypass surgery.

Happy that our member families contributed so much to the excellent school performance of Fiddler on the Roof...Elodie Linck as Tzeitel and assistant choreographer, Witter Swanson as Fyedka, Sylvie and Daven Linck as villagers and in the orchestra, Sue Grimm Hanley

Happy anticipating the return of our 'snowbirds', Elaine Holmlund, Joan and Richard Kelly, Karen Graff and Ann Mullen.

So sad anticipating that Jean Chamberlain and husband Doug will be leaving us soon to settle in Asheville, NC.



A Thank You to AUUC for Signing the Declaration of Conscience

“Thank you for joining us in committing to speak out and take action in support of basic human rights. While we cannot predict what the future will bring, and we do not pretend to have all the answers, we can and will be ready for the struggle ahead of us. Information about our work together will be shared in the coming weeks.”

The Declaration in short: “Unitarian Universalist Association and UU Service Committee presidents vow to oppose any and all unjust government actions to deport, register, discriminate, or despoil....As people of conscience, we declare our commitment to translate our values into action as we stand on the side of love with the most vulnerable among us.”