

THE ADIRONDACK COMMUNITARIAN



A Monthly Newsletter of the Adirondack Unitarian Universalist Community

Volume 120

November 2012

November Schedule

November 11

Maurice Kenny
Poetry

SJC Meeting 11:15

November 25

Lay-led on Gratitude

SJC Meeting 11:15

December Schedule

December 9

David Weissbard
Stewardship

SJC Meeting 11:15

December 20

Karen Graff
Solstice

First Night Help!

Seeking volunteers
to help with this year's First Night
Speedy Soup and
Sandwich Stop

We will have the cafe open from
6pm to 10 pm.

Volunteers will work shifts so that you can
participate in First Night Performances.

Please contact me if you can help!

Thanks, Gail Brill

gailbrilldesign@gmail.com

891-0182

UUA At a Click

What is "CERG?" CERG stands for Central East Regional Group and is a cooperative of four districts, including ours, the St. Lawrence District, who share resources and staff to better serve our congregations. It currently has a fundraising effort underway to help UUs affected by Hurricane Sandy. For more information, click here: <http://cerguua.org/>. AUUC may also address this at an upcoming service.

Committee Members Needed!

We're badly in need of a few people to volunteer for two important committees, Membership and Fundraising. Here are the main responsibilities for each:

- Membership: Take note of visitors and newcomers and send follow up information to them, thanking them for coming. Coach prospective members in what membership means. Follow up with members who no longer attend to understand why they have stopped attending. Work with other committees, such as the Caring Committee.
- Fundraising: Take responsibility for organizing one additional fundraising event (besides the Junque-rama and the First Night soup/sandwich sales).

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Ann Mullen. We need each person at AUUC to help in some way – only through 100% participation can we survive, and thrive. Thanks!

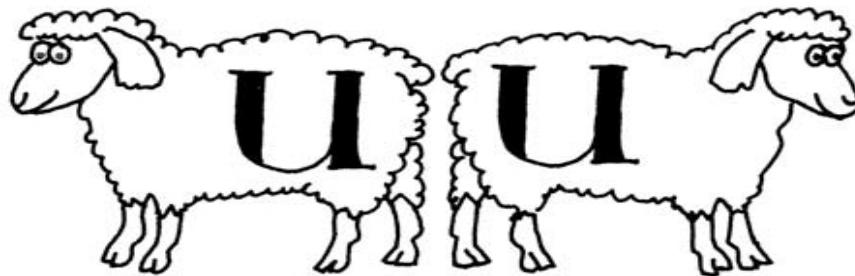
Religious Education Begins for Our AUU Children

We are thrilled to have young families joining our AUU community and are working on providing a fun, meaningful Religious Education (Sunday School) experiences for the children. Gail Brill, Elaine Holmlund, Jean Chamberlain and Chi Chi Sloan have agreed to teach the children's Religious Education class on a rotating basis for this school year. Infant care and young child care is provided by responsible teenagers in our community and then there is a Religious Education class offered for our 5-8 year old children.

We are using the Unitarian Universalist Tapestry of Faith program. The Tapestry of Faith is a series of programs and resources for all ages that nurture Unitarian Universalist identity, spiritual growth, a transforming faith, and vital communities of justice and love. The teachers have chosen the Wonderful Welcome program for the children this year. In this program, children identify intangible gifts central to Unitarian Universalism such as friendship, hospitality and fairness, and share these gifts with others.

The month of September focused on getting to know the children and the children getting to know the teachers. The month of October focused on two intangible gifts. The first gift was love, where children learned that we cannot see or touch love, but you can give and receive it by expressing kindness, offering acceptance, and sharing time with others. The second intangible gift was covenant, where the children learned how making and keeping promises holds people together as a family, or as friends, or as a congregation.

The month of October will focus on the intangible gifts of forgiveness and kindness. It is our strong desire to help our AUU children grow and learn in a loving, supportive environment.



Double Ewe News

“Dear weaver of our lives design
whose patterns all obey
with skillful fingers gently guide
the sturdy threads that will survive
the tangle of our days.

Let eyes that in our plainest cloth
a hidden beauty see
Discern in us our richest hues
show us the patterns we may use

to set our spirits free....” (#22 hymnal)

This sentiment reflects the heart of our group and serves as our inspiration in choosing projects to serve others. We meet monthly to knit and chat. We have been knitting hats and mittens. Twenty-four hat and mitten sets were donated to the Head Start program which serves eighteen active preschoolers at the site at William Morris Playground. We are going to try our first collaborative project where each one of us knits a section for an afghan. We will see how this turns out!

For those of you who may be new to our congregation, Double Ewe Knitters has been busy for seven years. We have completed the following projects: Knitted ware to Afghanistan and Joplin, Missouri after their tornado, baby blankets and clothing to Haiti after their earthquake, filled hand-knitted Christmas stockings to needy clients served by the Tri-Lakes Center for Independence, sweaters, hats, and mittens to the Lake Colby and Petrova Schools, lap blankets for a VA hospital and hats for the newborn nursery at AMC, and socks for clients served by the hospice program.

If any member is interested in joining our group, please contact Joyce at 891-7761. We will be meeting again on Wed. Nov. 14 at 9:30AM at Henri Trapp's. We will not be meeting in December. If you have an idea for a knitting project for a charitable venue, please let us know.

Your Double-Ewe Knitters,
Henrietta Trapp, Elaine Holmlund,
Emily Warner, Marie Defpref, and
Joyce Henklein

Social Justice Committee News

The Social Justice Committee is planning another public forum. This one will be focusing on education and education issues. Panelists featured will be representing different education models and will discuss the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges each model faces. Education is important since, as they say, “Children are our future”. Details are still being worked on on date and time, and will be announced soon.

Member Gary Alexander is also going to be distributing a legislative watch newsletter which will periodically be released. This letter will feature contact info for representative as well as a sample letter related to a legislative issue. We feel this will be a handy resource for people who want to write their Senator, Congress person or any representative for that matter. As we learned from our Civic Issues forum, letter writing can make a difference!

Anyone interested in becoming a part of the Social Justice Committee is invited to join us after service. We usually meet at 11:15 in the RE room, but can meet downstairs if there is no after-service discussion scheduled.

“We are all sculptors and painters, and our material is our own flesh and blood and bones.”

Henry David Thoreau

Are You Interested in Participating in a Spiritual Book Discussion Group?

Do you enjoy reading books written by the great spiritual teachers of our time such as Wayne Dyer, Deepak Chopra, Eckhart Tolle, Marianne Williamson, Gary Zukav, Caroline Myss, Robert Holdren, and many others?

One of my interests and passions is reading spiritual books and thinking about how the ideas and practices I read about can transform my life and lead to more joy and more love.

I would love to find a group of people who share my enthusiasm for and interest in reading and discussing spiritual books. I am thinking of getting together on a monthly basis to discuss only a small section or chapter of a book written by a spiritual teacher of the group's choosing. The goal is not to read a whole book each month, but to use a chapter as a springboard for a meaningful, lively discussion. I believe that discussing what is read in these books with others leads to a deeper understanding of these spiritual principles and would be fun and inspiring, as well.

I am thinking we begin with the new book, Wishes Fulfilled, by Dr. Wayne Dyer, which is available on Amazon.com for \$13.40. This is just an idea and I am certainly open to other suggestions. The group can meet at my home in Saranac Lake. We can have snacks and beverages and discuss the section of the book we have read.

If participating in a Spiritual Book Discussion Group interests you, please contact me. If there is an interest out there, I will organize the group and get started with it this fall.

Namaste,
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(518) 354-8061 (home)

Outcome of Congregational Meeting

We had a terrific congregational meeting on Sunday, November 4, 2012, followed by a potluck luncheon.

The purpose of the meeting was to set priorities for the congregation for the next year. The participants, 23 in number (approximated two-thirds of the congregation), began with an exercise called a "SWOT" analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) which was aimed at identifying the internal and external pros and cons affecting our congregation. The exercise was participatory in nature. The following is a summary:

Strengths - Internal

- Financially stable

Weaknesses – Internal

- Demographics (age, for example)

- The people of our congregation
- Liberal voice in our community
- Strong sense of community
- Committed core group
- Creative programs and services
- Flexibility
- Dedication
- We are seekers and questioners
- Strong leaders

Opportunities (External)

- 50% of Americans have no religious affiliation
- Opportunities to partner with other groups, such as Planned Parenthood
- Network with other UUs (local, national, etc.)
- We have strengths to share with the community
- Adult Religious Education
- Partner with other religious organizations in our community
- Fundraising, for example, soup/sandwich sales for First Night
- Opportunity to back issues we believe in

aren't diverse

- We don't promote our religion
- Our current space isn't always beneficial to what we need
- Small size – no economies of scale
- No minister
- Only two Sundays per month
- We are all busy people
- Low wealth concentration
- No youth group
- Internal conflicts – hard to retain people at times

Threats (External)

- Misinformation about UUism
- Poor state of economy
- Many people have negative views of religion
- Lots of competition for the unaffiliated Americans
- Perception that we are only for liberals

After the SWOT exercise, the participants reviewed the budget. Treasurer Karen Graff presented a spreadsheet that included this year's budget, a proposed 2013 budget, and then the affect on the budget of three options on the table. After her review, the group moved on to consider the following three options:

1. Call a permanent, part-time minister;
2. Expand the number of services to every Sunday;
3. Purchase our own building to use for services, meetings and community space.

All three were weighed in terms of both additional cost, as well as any anticipated increase that would be required in congregational participation. After a comprehensive discussion, the group voted on the three options by rating them as either each individual's first, second or third choice. After this rating, option 1., calling a minister, received the highest rating, although option 2., was close behind in ranking.

As a result, the congregation instructed the board of trustees to take the following action: the board will design a process for selecting a search committee, and the board will also draw up a slate of candidates for the search committee. In addition, we agreed to contact the Plattsburgh UU community to see if we can leverage their search process, since they are in the process of looking for a minister.

In addition, the congregation agreed that there was no reason why we could not expand the number of services, beginning January 1st.

The board agreed to present its recommended process and the slate of candidates to the congregation by

January 1st.

It was quite an exciting meeting, with lots of participation and respectful sharing of opinions. We now can move forward in a concrete way and based on data and information.

Thank you to everyone who participated!

November Presidential Letter

Dear friends,

As I write this, it's election day and we have a lovely day here for exercising the right to vote. A prime Adirondack day with sunshine, a lovely blue sky and snow on top of the High Peaks.

I'm thrilled about our recent congregational meeting, and I thank everyone who came out for it. The board is committed to continue working closely with the congregation so that we can grow and prosper - together.

I wanted to tell you about an action we took at the last Board meeting. Recently, we collected some money for a congregant who had experienced a health issue that challenged her livelihood. About two months later, this congregant sent us a thank you note, along with a check, which she asked us to use to help someone else who needed financial assistance in the future.

The Board had already been talking about establishing a fund for members and friends in need. Most churches have a "pastoral care" budget item for helping out those who need food, shelter, a utility bill paid, etc., administered by the minister. We thought that would be a great idea. Since we don't have a minister, we decided to set it up as a fund to be administered by two board members. We believe that this action will make us ready to respond to a request for help. We've seeded the fund with the generous donation we received, and we're going to hold special collections twice a year to build it to a higher level.

This step brings us in line to assist someone in need quickly, but also we now mirror what other churches in our community already do.

As I write this, I'm reflecting on how blessed I've been. Going into Thanksgiving, my wish for everyone in our region, indeed for all the world's people is simple: sufficient food, shelter, clothing, health care, and love so that all of us may prosper and live peacefully together.

Best regards,
Ann

P.S., Our next board meeting is Sunday, November 11th at 8:00 a.m. All are welcome to attend. BYOC.

Attracting New Congregants is a Tough Proposition

By Ann Mullen

One of the key tenets of marketing is that it is easier to retain existing customers than it is to attract new ones. This is because the current customers of a business have already accepted and are in agreement with its "unique selling proposition" – the unique qualities, services and offerings that stand out from the forest of competition.

This tenet can readily be applied to the idea of attracting newcomers to our congregation. We need to do a great job of retaining our current congregants.

However, most marketing strategies include attracting new customers. So, while we should rightly

concentrate on those who are loyal AUUC-ers, we also need to grow by attracting newcomers. This is easier said than done. As we well know, our religion defies easy explanations, and isn't for those who are looking for a well-defined creed. But, in addition to that, the available pool of people who are actively looking for a religion to join is very small.

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life published a survey in October, 2012 that looks at this pool of searchers. A key conclusion of the survey is that "the number of Americans who do not identify with any religion continues to grow at a rapid pace. One-fifth of the U.S. public – and a third of adults under 30 – are religiously unaffiliated today, the highest percentages ever in Pew Research Center polling." * Of these nonaffiliated adults, however, only 10% responded that they are actively looking for a religion to join. This means that competition for this group – about 2% of the public - among all religions is fierce.

There is good news for us, though, because another opinion uncovered by the survey is that "the unaffiliated say...they think that religious organizations are too concerned with money and power, too focused on rules and too involved in politics." *

Our liberal approach to and support of diverse beliefs and our commitment to social justice issues could position us to attract more of these seekers. However, it is also very important to make sure we work hard to keep the members we already have and continue to offer them the best experience they can get here at AUUC.

For more information on the Pew Center and on this report, click on the link below.

Executive Summary, "None" on the Rise, Pew Center;
<http://www.pewforum.org/unaffiliated/nonesontherise.aspx>

Worship Committee News

As a result of our Congregational Meeting last Sunday, the Worship Committee is delighted to have 3 more members volunteer to generate and organize our services. We believe that the services are critical to our congregation, and to our place in the larger community as well. We are dedicated to consistent quality and strive for easy execution. We are so appreciative of everyone that lends a helping hand - leading a service, suggesting a topic or presenter, or volunteering for parts of the service and for the coffee hour. Please contact me if you can help in any way.

One of the options discussed at the Congregational meeting is to have weekly services. This, of course, will call for another whole level of commitment of personal and financial resources. The committee will be ironing out the details and logistics, and we will fill you in as we go.

We will have a Winter Solstice Service on Thursday, December 20th at 7pm. We are in the early planning stages now, and are looking for members to be a part of the service creation and presentation. Please contact me to be a part of creating this centerpiece of our community holiday season.

Again, thank you for all that you do for our UU family.

Regards,
Karen Graff
kegraff@gmail.com
891-5735

Contact Numbers

www.adkuu.org

President:	Ann Mullen	891-5735
Vice President	Gary Alexander	354-7823
Secretary:	Laura Reid	359-2019
Treasurer:	Karen Graff	891-5735
Trustees:	Karen White	524-1100
	Adrien Vlach	(734) 474-4706
	Jason Brill	586-1064
Worship Committee:		
	Gail Brill	891-7230
	Karen Graff	891-5735
	Elizabeth Phillips	354-8218
Children's Programming:	Gail Brill	891-7230
Communitarian:	Courtney Miller	
	(starrypoetics@gmail.com)	
Double Ewe Knitters:	Joyce Henklein	891-7761
Congregant Care:	Susan Arnold	891-3744
	Carrie DeClerque	891-2207
	Emily Warner	891-1947
Social Justice:	Courtney Miller	starrypoetics@gmail.com
	Stephen DeHond	sdehond@hotmail.com
Flower Power Program:		
	Elaine Holmlund	891-6717
Place:	Randall Swanson	891-3512
Stanley Ingeson	946-7465	



**We the member congregations of the Unitarian
Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and
promote**

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person.*
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations.*
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to
spiritual growth in our congregations.*
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.*
- The right of conscience and the use of democratic
process within our congregations and in society at
large.*
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and
justice for all.*
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of
which we are a part.*



From the "Church of the open mind, loving heart, and helping hand" to

**Adirondack Unitarian Universalist Community
89 Church Street
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