

# THE ADIRONDACK COMMUNITARIAN



A Monthly Newsletter of the Adirondack Unitarian Universalist Community

**Volume 145**

**December 2014**

## **December Services**

### **December 7**

Service by Jane Dwinell  
11:15 Annual Meeting

### **December 13**

Small Group Ministry Meeting  
9 AM Leader: Mary Riley, Host: Susan Arnold

### **December 14**

Worship Service

### **December 21**

No AM Service  
Join us at 4 PM for a Christmas/Solstice  
service and Potluck with Jane Dwinell.

### **December 28**

Ginger Slater  
World Peace

## **December Events & Volunteer Opportunities**

### **December 2**

10 AM Decorate for the Holidays  
John Black Room

### **December 6**

A Cuul Yuule Holiday Bazaar  
10 AM- 2 PM  
Free hot cocoa!

### **December 5,12,19 and 26**

Meals on Wheels Deliveries

**We need a couple volunteers for our  
December 26th run. Contact Elaine at  
891-6717 if you can help!**

## **Save the Date**

**Adirondack Unitarian Universalist Community**

**Annual Meeting**

**Sunday, December 7, 2014 at 11:15 a.m. following worship service**

## Words From the Minister

As the light grows less, and the nights are longer, and yes, it is colder, I am reminded of the words of one of my favorite hymns: "Dark of winter, soft and still, your quiet calm surrounds me." It is a time for cuddling up -- with your loved ones, with a good book, in front of the fire, or with a hot toddy in hand. It is also a time for reflection, and quiet amongst the busyness of the season. I, like many people, have mixed feelings about the holiday season. While I love the light -- whether from candles or from holiday lights -- I am disturbed by the rampant consumerism and the excessiveness of all kinds -- from partying to overeating. As a way to make the season more meaningful to me I stay conscious of my eating and drinking, and I do not buy gifts for anyone -- instead I make donations to my favorite charities.

While Unitarian Universalists no longer call themselves Christian, I think we can all agree that the celebration of new life is something we all get excited about. Who doesn't love a new baby or a new pet? (Think of all those puppy and kitten videos on the internet...) A baby anything brings a smile to our heart. Both the Winter Solstice and Christmas honors the birth of the sun/son. That surely is something to hold a party for!

New beings are not all that are being born this time of year. Many people use this season to reevaluate their lives -- is there something that needs to be changed or improved? While most people seem to have a hard time keeping to their "New Year's Resolutions" perhaps you can find one thing that you could work on, and commit to. Change is hard, but it's part of life. And how much better to choose your change, rather than having something thrust upon you!

Coming up soon is the AUUC Annual Meeting. We'll have a chance to discuss and vote on several things of importance to the future of the congregation -- the budget, a possible new worship space with a possible change in time, and whatever new social justice mission you might want to pursue in the future. It's a time to talk about whatever is on your mind. It's a time to face possible changes. It's part of our religious tradition to exercise "the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process." Hope you will all make an effort to attend on December 7 after worship.

In the meantime, I hope you can find time to enjoy some "quiet calm."

See you in church,

Jane

## Did you know?

In addition to serving as our minister, Jane Dwinell is also studying to become a bioethicist. You may ask as I did, what does that mean? Jane explained that bioethicists help physicians and patients make treatment decisions...some to do with end-of-life care, and others not. They help people weigh the pros and cons, the benefits and burdens of certain treatments (or no treatment as the case may be). They help doctors decide if a patient is capable of making their own decisions, or if they need a surrogate.

## Notes From the Worship Committee and Fund Raising

Here we are at the end of another month of inspiring and fun worship programming. Early in the month our Rev. Jane led us in remembering dear friends, relatives and animals who have passed on; Kelly Metzger, Ginger Slater and Gary Alexander presented their credos at our second service; our third service was a moving sermon on Native American spirituality by Kodata Britton; Rev. Jane's second service was a Bread and Cider Communion; Peter Crowley from the Enterprise lead the final November service: breaking the cycle, a discussion of peace rather than war.

Next month we look forward to our Solstice service, two more credos and a forum on world peace.

We are busily working on goods to sell at our first "Cool YUUIe" to be held December 6, during Sparkle Village in the John Black room. Included will be: knit goods (by the Double Ewe knitters), crafts, baked goods and slightly used Christmas decorations. Y'all come! Happy holidays to all!

submitted by Elaine Holmlund, Chair



### The Swanson Family in the News

The Arbor Day Foundation, a nonprofit conservation and education group, has designated Paul Smith's College as a member of its Tree Campus USA program which honors colleges and universities that promote effect campus forest management and engage students, faculty and staff in conservation goals. Our own resident Professor, **Randall Swanson**, led the effort to gain the designation and is coordinator of the college's arboriculture and landscape management program. Congratulations, Randall.

**Laura-Jean Swanson** had a starring role in "Body Awareness," a play written by Pulitzer Prize-winning Vermont playwright Annie Baker which won a Drama Desk award. Several AUUC folks who attended the free presentation at Pendragon will be able to tell you about the production which took place just as this Communitarian was being assembled.

*True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.*

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## Kelly Metzgar, My First Day on the Job as "Me"!



Monday 11/03/2014 was my first day on the job as "Me"!!! What a most wonderful day it was. The staff & residents at St. Joseph's Addiction Treatment & Recovery Centers made the day so very special for me. I could not have asked for a better first day reception! My boss & fellow departmental co-worker supported me in my process from the beginning. I could not have asked for better understanding and support! Many of our staff said they could see just how happy I was just by how I presented. Hugs of acknowledgement, welcoming and support were happily given and received most of the day!

As a show of welcoming & support, I received the loveliest bouquet of flowers so wonderfully displayed on my desk. From a wonderful friend a nice jar of one of my most favorite candies. From another very special lady, co-worker & former supervisor a most lovely blue scarf! The cards of support showed the care and acknowledgement of the staff. One of the simplest, yet most acknowledging gifts came from our HR Director on behalf of our CEO and the entire St. Joseph's Executive Staff was a name plate with "MY" name. So simple, yet so acknowledging of who I am.

The second picture is me sitting "Pretty" at my desk. Do I seem happy???

To my great relief, our Inpatient Residents were also notified of my impending transition. They were so wonderful in accepting and acknowledging me for finally being true to "myself". I thanked them also.

So now I'm out & about 24/7 at home & at work. The end of one life existence and the beginning of a new phase in this process I call my life. This is not the end of the journey, just the logical "next step"!

I am so very thankful to all the wonderful members of our AUUC Congregation who have also been so welcoming, accepting & caring. You've come to learn and share in my story as it continuously unfolds in new & ever twisting chapters as I make my way through this process I call life!

Kelly Metzgar



Congrats to Kelly for this new step forward in her life! Further in this issue we'll have information on the discussion for Transgender Day of Remembrance that Kelly led, and AUUC's efforts in supporting GENDA.

### **Board of Trustees Announcements**

**Joyce Heinklein** was recently tapped by the board of trustees to fill a board vacancy. She accepted with enthusiasm and is looking forward to putting a lifetime of Unitarian experience and history to work as we move forward into the new year.

We thank **Chi Chi Sloan** for serving on the board for nearly two years and look forward to having her return to the board sometime in the future when her busy schedule slows down.

**Annual Meeting:** Now that we have returned to a January - December fiscal year, our annual meeting will take place Sunday, **December 7<sup>th</sup>**, following the worship service. The 2015 budget and space needs will be among the items for discussion.

**Board Term Extensions:** The current board was elected at last May's annual meeting. At that time we switched to the January – December schedule which means our current terms would be up May 2015. If you will have us, the current board has agreed to stay on until December 2015.

## The Journey Beyond



We were blessed to have Kodata (Blue Bear), an Elder of the Cherokee and Choctaw nations, visit our Guest Pulpit on Sunday, November 16th. Kodata and his wife Ruby have been our friends for several years. Many of you may know Kodata and Ruby Vann Britton as the grandparents of young London Ruby Call who, at the age of two traveled to China to receive stem cell surgery to improve the total blindness she was born with. Her surgery was made possible by the generosity of donators both near and far. London's sight was much improved although her sight is shadowy. Who knows what the future may bring. London's mother died suddenly this past year leaving the seven year old and her now seven month old brother. The children are being raised by Ruby and Kodata.

After delighting us with the story of "How the Bear Lost His Tail" in the oral tradition, and singing the children off to their programs, he lead us into "The Journey Beyond", his true story.

A little more than a year ago, Kodata died in his easy chair while Ruby cooked in the kitchen. He was able to call out to her before he succumbed. Ruby pounded on his chest (breaking his sternum), until the EMTs came with the "widow makers." He doesn't know when it happened in the nineteen days he was gone, but when he awoke, surrounded by his family, the one word he kept saying was "Heaven."

Kodata says that the old timers would not recognize the man transformed. He admits but does not expound on terrible things he has done in his life. When we met in 2011, it was on an occasion when he was helping someone in need. Shortly thereafter he was helping my daughter lay a dust free sickroom floor before her husband was released from the hospital. He would not take money but suggested that, when she could, to make a donation to something or someone in need. Yet I did sense that he had a rough past. I did not have that

sensation **after** his journey. He told us what he saw, what he came to understand, and how it changed him.

Some months later, on a medical trip to Burlington with London, he tripped and his head hit the ground hard. He stood up and continued his day, even driving home afterwards. Later that evening while in the bath, he literally saw **red**. He was born color blind. Kodata was stunned and called Ruby in. By the time he made his way to the living room, he saw true color. At 73, he saw the color of his lovely wife's eyes and hair for the first time. And he no longer needs to wear glasses.

His Christian faith is deeply seated in his heart and the deeds he performs expecting no reward bears witness to that. He certainly did not come to us to convert anyone, respecting our individual beliefs even if they were not in agreement. I felt we all were grateful to share in one man's profound experience.

*"Divine Love blesses and multiplies  
all that I give and all that I receive."*

*- Ginger Slater*



## Words from Susan

Enthusiasm about our Adirondack Unitarian Universalist Community and our congregation's commitment to its good works are boldly apparent these days. Crop walks, diaper drives, food pantry donations, caring for our members, Transgender Remembrance Day, Meals on Wheels, CUUL Yule Bazaar and our mad- cap knitters. Have you noticed as well? There is a wonderful spirit present every time we meet in the John Black room.

As I was preparing to write my president's column about enthusiasm and commitment, Carolyn Alexander gave me a hard copy of her husband's credo that he presented on November 9<sup>th</sup> during our Credo service.

Gary wrote about the phrase, "**Deeds, not Creeds**" in such an eloquent way that I think his words are worth sharing with our entire community. So...I am turning over my column to Gary Alexander, a volunteer who rolls up his sleeves to serve AUUC as treasurer on the Board of Trustees, as the leader of the Philosophers Camp presentation and deliverer of Meals on Wheels as part of our AUUC team of volunteers.

## My Credo – Gary Alexander

I previously did one of these credo statements four or five years ago. I realize that many of you here today were not present on that day, and even if you were, my words were not so memorable that you can recall them after all this time. Nevertheless, I hate to re-plow that same ground again, so I will give only a very brief summary of those remarks, and move on from there.

I was raised in a traditional Protestant church. Since my mother was a board member and head of the Sunday School, I was expected to attend every week. As a teenager, I became disenchanted and stopped going. I continued to be "unchurched" for more than forty years, when we moved to Maryland due to a career change.

We joined the UU congregation in Columbia, DC and continued to be active members during our six years in Maryland, and since 2008, during our retirement here in the Adirondacks. As we are reminded each week at the beginning of our service, we UU's are each on our own spiritual journey, and we draw inspiration and insight from a great many sources. We are apt to borrow ideas from Christianity, from Judaism, from Islam, from Buddhism, or Hinduism. Among all these "isms", however, my own personal beliefs are based primarily on humanism, sometimes called secular humanism. This simply means that I believe that the fate of humanity as a whole, and specifically my own fate, rests not with a supernatural deity, but with my own actions, and with my fellow human beings.

Most of us have heard the three word phrase: "**Deeds, not creeds.**" This is a very compact way of saying that we are most concerned with those things that we can do to make the world better, instead of dwelling on an abstract theological principle. When we see a need, we react by rolling up our sleeves and getting things done. We do not sit back and wait for divine being to intercede.

Do we feel the need for a more just world? We could have faith that some omnipotent being will deliver that world to us. Women's rights? Civil rights? Gay rights? Transgender rights? Nothing happens to achieve any of these rights until human beings step up and do something.

Remember that old bit about "Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything?" It turns out that even our climate can be impacted, both negatively and positively, by humans. I feel that we can measure real progress recently in our own AUUC congregation in terms of deeds that we can all take pride in. When Ann Mullen learned that there was a shortage of diapers among families with infants and toddlers, she led a diaper drive. Our community responded by donating a mountain of diapers.

A couple of weeks ago, Ginger Slater and Sue Grimm organized a walk against hunger that raised several hundred dollars.

When Elaine Holmlund heard that drivers were needed to deliver meals to seniors, she sent out an email and within an hour ten of our members had stepped forward.

Our group of knitters has been producing warm clothes for months (even years) and is about to distribute them to deserving children. These are just a few examples of worthwhile deeds by AUUC members, and we should be asking, "What else is next?"

*My credo is based on this simple idea, and I want to finish by leaving you with those three words: **Deeds, not creeds.***

**"To be blind is bad, but worse to have eyes and not to see."**

**-Helen Keller**



## World Peace and Healing Prayer Service

Dear Friends,

On Sunday, December 28th at 10:00 a.m., the Adirondack Unitarian-Universalist Community will provide time and space for an interfaith hour of prayer for healing of the planet. We open our doors, our hearts, and our spirits to welcome anyone who wishes to join us in a special service to affirm that World Peace and Healing is possible. Two days later, more than 50-million people will join in the same prayer circle at noon Greenwich mean time as they have done since 1986.

Because of the nature of this service, we will forego the usual order of service and devote ourselves to prayer and/or meditation except for lighting and extinguishing the chalice candle at the beginning and end. We will be seated in a circle. We invite you to bring a thought, a prayer, a poem, a quote, to share between the silences of meditation.

In order that we may leave the sanctuary carrying our peaceful minds into the day to contemplate world healing and peace, we will all quietly leave the chapel following the extinguishing of the candle.

I'd like to have an idea of how many of our own members are attending. It will help me plan since I may not know how many of our interfaith friends will attend. Please RSVP to [vslater66@gmail.com](mailto:vslater66@gmail.com) or send a message to me on Facebook, Virginia Slater.

If anyone has ideas for music, or any other input, I will appreciate hearing from you. I will also be accessing help from our Jane and Church of the Larger Fellowship. I've attended one of the "events" in Bellevue, Washington in 2010 and have continued to be involved on a personal level and in research.

*"Let there be peace on Earth,  
and let it begin with me."*

*In love and faith,*

*Ginger Slater*

*AUUC Member, Worship Committee*

## Transgender Day of Remembrance and Supporting GENDA

Below is a writeup from the recently held Transgender Day of Remembrance talk Kelly Metzgar gave (photo included), Governor Cuomo's letter in support of GENDA, and a copy of the letter Kelly provided for AUUC members to send Cuomo encouraging him to keep his word on GENDA's support.

I'm going to confess that my partner has been on their own journey of gender identity exploration, and the Rochester trans community has been crucial in providing the compassion and support they need while on this journey.

We participated together in a few TDOR events in the city with some of these friends, who have brightened both our lives. One was a memorial service, to memorialize those whose deaths we can confirm in name or presence, and acknowledge the countless people who have simply disappeared without a trace.

A week ago we also attended the Trans Visibility March to support GENDA. A few days before we were at the sign painting party. Supporting the friends we have made is the very least we can do for what they have given us.

-Courtney Miller, editor and publisher, 11/29/14



On Sunday November 16 after our normal service, Kelly Metzgar led a discussion group on Transgender Day of Remembrance. Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) is an annual observance on November 20 that honors the memory of those whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) was started by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith as a vigil to honor the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was killed in 1998. The vigil commemorated all the transgender people lost to violence that year and began an important memorial that has become the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance.

"The Transgender Day of Remembrance seeks to highlight the losses we face due to anti-transgender bigotry and violence. I am no stranger to the need to fight for our rights, and the right to simply exist is first and foremost. With so many seeking to erase transgender people -- sometimes in the most brutal ways possible -- it is vitally important that those we lose are remembered, and that we continue to fight for justice."

The Transgender Day of Remembrance serves several purposes. It raises public awareness of hate crimes against transgender people, an action that current media doesn't perform. Day of Remembrance publicly mourns and honors the lives of our brothers and sisters who might otherwise be forgotten. Through the vigil, we express love and respect for our people in the face of national indifference and hatred. Day of Remembrance reminds non-transgender people that we are their sons, daughters, parents, friends and lovers. Day of Remembrance gives our allies a chance to step forward with us and stand in vigil, memorializing those of us who've died by anti-transgender violence.

As a part of this discussion, Kelly led the group in advocating for passage NYS's Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act – GENDA. Kelly provided letters of support from Gov. Cuomo, Attorney General Eric Schneiderman as well as from US Senators Charles Schumer & Kristen Gillibrand. Kelly further led the discussion as why passage of this legislation is so important for the transgender community. She offered that NYS Assemblyman Richard

Gottfried's office suggested a letter writing campaign by NYS residents to urge the Governor to honor his reelection campaign promises supporting this vital legislation. Kelly provided letters for our AUUC members to sign showing their support. Kelly will mail these letters to the Governor's office.

**VIA REGULAR & ELECTRONIC MAIL**

Mr. Norman C. Simon  
Chair of the Board of Directors  
Empire State Pride Agenda, Inc.  
80 Maiden Lane  
Suite 905  
New York, NY 10038

Re: Equality for Transgender New Yorkers

Dear Mr. Simon:

Per earlier conversations with my office, I write to reiterate my deep commitment to protect the rights of all New Yorkers, including those in the transgender community. Indeed, New York State has a long history of advancing transformative civil rights laws in an effort to protect disadvantaged citizens. We must continue to advance progressive reforms to protect those who continue to suffer discrimination without recourse.

As you may know, New York State was the first state in the nation to enact a Human Rights Law in 1945. In doing so, New York led the nation in protecting civil rights by prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed and national origin in employment, housing, credit, places of public accommodations, and non-sectarian educational institutions. Over the years, the law has been amended to extend protections to families and people with disabilities, and prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and military status.

Nevertheless, today, the State Human Right's Law leaves some of New York's most vulnerable citizens, including transgender New Yorkers, without some basic protections. To ensure that the Human Rights Law extends protections to some of those who need it most, we should amend the law to provide protections based upon "gender identity or expression", which will prohibit ongoing discrimination and harassment.

It is no secret that transgender New Yorkers experience pervasive discrimination in all areas of life.

November 16, 2014

Dear Governor Cuomo,

I am writing to request your support in the upcoming 2015 legislative session to ensure the passage of the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act also known as GENDA. As you are well aware 19 other states plus the District of Columbia current have similar protections for our Transgender Community, yet New York State lags behind in passing this vital piece of Human Rights legislation.

In your reelection campaign speeches you stressed the importance of diversity in New York State. We need your leadership now more than ever to ensure the state legislature and most importantly the NYS Senate enact this very important legislation guaranteeing equal rights protection for a very marginalized segment of our population. People in New York should no longer fear being fired from their jobs, denied or thrown out of housing, denied much needed medical care or denied financial assistance merely for living as their true and authentic selves. I thank you for all the work you've done in the past in terms of marriage equality, easier access to change gender markers on birth certificates and many other pieces of legislation on behalf of the Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual community. Now is the time to include our Transgender sisters and brothers in the very basic protections afforded all New York State residents. With your support we can ensure this happens in the upcoming 2015 legislative year.

I would also like to enlist your support to outlaw the practice of Reparative Therapy for our LGBT young people. This practice by some behavioral health care workers has been shown time and again to be so detrimental to their development of self as well as inflict more serious long term mental health issues. Our LGBT Youth need to be accepted for the special and wonderful people they are.

Thank you for your support and leadership in the upcoming year on these two very vital issues.

Sincerely,

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## AUUC YOUTH AND (AND A DAD) IN ACTION

**Daven, Sylvie, Elodie and Walt Linck** will be among the dancers performing in the Nutcracker Ballet at Lake Placid Center for the Arts on Saturday, December 6 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, December 7 at 1:00 p.m.

**John Holmlund** participates in the Saranac Lake High School Chorus and has recently been selected as the only freshman to participate in the High School's Ensemble Group. Watch your calendars for the SLHS's December concert.

(If you would like to include your youth's news in this column, please notify [sarnold3744@verizon.net](mailto:sarnold3744@verizon.net))

## Summary of the November Board of Trustees Meeting November 2, 2014

- President's report - Peter Crowley will run Jane's press release in the Enterprise. Thank you notes for the grants we received from the chalice lighters contributors were completed and sent out by Susan Arnold. Our newsletter, the Communitarian, is improving and looking very professional and more people are contributing to it.
- Treasurer's report - We have received approx \$6,500 from grants from the UUA chalice lighter's fund. The Vanguard account has been closed and the AUUC has about 48K from that account that was currently put in our checking account. The board discussed how we should save this money. Gary has looked into interest rates for CDs, however it was decided to wait until the annual meeting the beginning of December to make a final decision on where to put this money. We are running behind on our budget at this time, but hopefully the budget will be close to balanced by the end of year when all the pledges are received. The financial report was approved.
- Worship Committee had a nice summary written in the Communitarian and the services are scheduled through middle of February.
- Ecumenical Council update - We received a nice thank you note from Grace Pantry regarding the AUUC diaper drive.

### Old Business:

**New space for services and other options** - The board discussed whether we could meet at 4:30 in the afternoon to accommodate families. Discussion was opened to members. There are future parking concerns once the Hotel Saranac opens next year as there will only be 5 spaces open at the museum. There doesn't seem to be another rental space in SL at this time. Board members will think about a place that we could rent in the area or other options and we will bring ideas to our next meeting.

**Giving Away the Plate** - The board discussed giving the extra money from our offering to a local charity. We will start this in January and start with once a month. This will be brought to the congregation at the annual meeting in December for approval.  
Respectfully submitted by Jean Chamberlain, Secretary



## Contact Numbers

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

Minister:	Jane Dwinell	802-279-9565
President:	Susan Arnold	891-3744
Vice President	Joan Kelly	572-6054
Secretary:	Jean Chamberlain	354-8061
Treasurer:	Gary Alexander	354-7823
Trustees:	Ginger Slater	637-5717
	Chi Chi Sloan	354-3607
Caring Co.	Joyce Henklein	891-7761
Coffee Hour:	Jean Chamberlain	354-8061
Communitarian:	Courtney Miller	<a href="mailto:starrypoetics@gmail.com">starrypoetics@gmail.com</a>
Double Ewe: Knitters	Joyce Henklein	891-7761
Place:	Randall Swanson	891-3512
	Glenn Arnold	891-3744
RE:	Ann Mullen	891-5735
	Julia Goren	845-216-3810
Social Justice:	Stephen DeHond	<a href="mailto:sdehond@hotmail.com">sdehond@hotmail.com</a>
Social Media:	Kelly Metzgar	891-0454
Worship Co.	Elaine Holmlund	891-6717



**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  
Saranac Lake, NY 12983**