

# ALL SOULS NEWS -February 2018

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church

1330 Gotham St.

Watertown, NY 13601



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## SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30 A.M.

"All Souls—the church that puts its faith in you"

### Snow!

In the event we need to cancel a service because of the weather, a notice will be posted on the opening page of our website [www.allsoulsuu.org](http://www.allsoulsuu.org).



**February 3 – Frances Mercer: “Praying as a Modern Spiritual Practice.”** In his book, *Simply Pray: A Modern Spiritual Practice to Deepen Your Life*, UU Minister Erik Walker Wikstrom asks, “Why do people pray? What does it bring to spirituality? Is there a ‘someone’ or ‘something’ that we encounter in our times of prayer, a ‘sacred something’ that is yearning for relationship with us? Is prayer, as Anthony Bloom says, “The building of a relationship or simply an internal monologue with one’s own subconscious mind?” He goes on to ask, “And what if you don’t believe in any ‘sacred something’? Is prayer still worth your while? What merit can there be in an ‘invented’ prayer practice? Weren’t all the real prayer practices developed (or revealed) long ago and handed down through generations? How do you know that what you’re doing is worth doing if you just made it up?” These are challenging questions which call for exploration and reflection. This Sunday service will focus on a conversation during which each person will have opportunities to share their thoughts on these questions and their experiences with praying as a spiritual practice. To facilitate this conversation, Frances has prepared shared readings (a collection of quotes) and a brief synopsis of *Simply Pray*. These will be part of the service, but will also be available prior to the service. You can pick up hard copies at the church or request email copies by contacting Frances Mercer.

**February 10 – Rev. David Weissbard: “Defending Democracy.”** Sometimes it’s hard to see the forest through the trees. Most of us are aware of the various threats to democracy, but until I read

Nancy MacLean's "Democracy in Chains," I did not realize what a serious coordinated plan we are facing. According to our UU principles, this is a religious issue since it's a matter of basic religious values rooted in all the great scriptures. It is important that we understand the magnitude of the threat. This is not a partisan issue.

**February 17 "More Wonder, Please."** Susan will explore the intersection of wonder and reality, and the role of the human heart in navigating the journey. Ms. Tague-Smith is a former Protestant minister and is retired high school English teacher. She is a graduate of Smith College, Andover Newton Theological School (Boston), and SUNY Potsdam. She looks forward to being with the UU community on Sun Feb 17.

**February 24 – Michael Seymour: "Transformative Relationships."**

## *News from the Wondering Center*



The February *RE-Frigerator Page* (Family Quest of the Church of the Larger Fellowship) has arrived and as always is eye catching, thought provoking and full of learning opportunities.

Copies of the *Page* will be available all month. To stimulate your interest, some highlights are provided below:

**We Celebrate.** . . The theme for February is Truth and Lies — Even for big religious questions that don't have a single right answer, it matters that we go looking for truth.

We need answers that make sense, that are consistent with our values. Even in situations where there are many truths, there can also be lies, and it's our job to keep seeking truth.

**Talk About It.** . . In what situations is it hardest for you to know what is true and to tell the truth; how do you feel when you find out someone has lied to you, what do you do; when have you knowingly lied, how did you feel; what is the biggest true thing that you know?

**We Honor.** . . Clyde Tombaugh—astronomy researcher and teacher, discoverer of more than 100 asteroids, a comet, and a supercluster of galaxies, and founder of UU church in New Mexico.

**Act.** . . Questions we can ask ourselves to test whether something is likely to be true: Does this sound too good or too bad to be true, does this match with other things I know about the subject, who or what is the source, is the source reliable, do different sources agree, and does the source have a particular agenda or bias.

**Nurturing the Spirit.** . . We all have lots to learn, but we also already know quite a lot when we take the time to listen to what we have inside.

**Practicing the Principles.** . . Engaging in a free and responsible search for truth and meaning isn't easy, but it is exciting and important.

Getting to the truth is an ongoing process. What truth do you want the world to know?

During February, we will be using the lessons (with necessary adaptations) provided by the RE Express curriculum to which All Souls subscribed.

These lessons focus on where, when and how we teach and learn about religious/spiritual beliefs and values. If you want access to the RE-refrigerator Page and all the lessons, please contact Frances Mercer (315-788-4508, [fmercerc@twcnny.rr.com](mailto:fmercerc@twcnny.rr.com)). She will forward to you the email from Fred Holland (Faith Rocket Launchpad Partner) that contains the password for the RE Express resources for February.

**Where, when and how do we teach and learn about religious/spiritual beliefs and values?**

**February 3** — What do children learn about religious beliefs and values from their family's choice to take them to "church" and what they see, hear, and experience at the place and with the people? A guided meditation through the Sunday morning experience at All Souls. Games to illustrate teaching styles: Simon Says—instruction, Follow the Leader—modeling, Twenty Questions—discovery.

**February 10** — Learning about love and speaking our truths from a story about a priest named Valentine. Making and sharing valentine cards that speak our truths.

**February 16** — Learning about religious/spiritual beliefs and values through discovery experiences. Transcendentalist and education reformer Elizabeth Peabody promoted the idea that children learned best by playing and exploring in environments that give them lots of opportunity to use their hands and senses to discover the world. She believed that everyone could connect to God through their own soul, and that people naturally seek out freedom, justice and truth.

**February 23** — Learning about religious/spiritual beliefs and values through stories—hearing, telling and creating stories.

-Frances Mercer

### **Social Justice Committee Meeting Saturday, Feb. 23, 10 AM**

This past Sunday the church welcomed Doug Rubio, a congregant from Canton UU, as a lay leader for our service. The service, and his sermon, were deeply appreciated by the 20 or so brave "souls" who went out in the snow to get to our building and gather together for soul listening and soul sharing.

Jim and Susie Yerdon were able to attend and Jim lit a fire under me asking why there hasn't been a social justice committee meeting. How can people and their interests and their talents with passion and/or curiosity be heard of there is no venue for discussion? Thanks Jim! So, with that in mind—I am calling a meeting of all those who are interested in social justice to meet. I will provide an update on what we have done in the past year—largely building on Jim's call to continue with becoming a "Welcoming Congregation."

I am thinking a Saturday morning might work best. I will set a tentative date of Saturday FEB 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00—at church. Please contact me by email to LMK if you can attend or if you would like to send information (including questions) you would like us to bring forward. Alternatively—you can leave something in writing at the church office or contact any other board member with concerns. Their names are printed in your order of service and are also on the bulletin board outside the social hall.

Veronica Hartman, VP ASUUC Bd. of Trustees  
& current social justice/renewal point person  
veronicah.asuuc@gmail.com

## *From the President's Desk*

**Harriet McMillan**

### **Thanks Bob**

Bob Radke pulled the following out of his wallet to read to the Sunday morning discussion group, and made a copy for me to include here.

#### The Lone Ranger Creed

According to actor, Clayton Moore

I believe:

- That to have a friend, a man must be one.
- That all men are created equal and that everyone has within himself the power to make this a better world.
- That God put the firewood there, but every man must gather and light it himself.
- In being prepared physically, mentally and morally to fight when necessary, for that which is right.
- That a man should make the most of what equipment he has.
- That "this government, of the people, by the people" shall live always.
- That men should live by the rule of what is best or the greatest number.
- That sooner or later, somewhere, somehow, we must settle with the world and make payment for what we have taken.
- That all things change, but truth, and that truth alone lives on forever.
- In my Creator, my country, my fellow man.



Unsung hero for February (and more than that): Robert South, for too many reasons to list. Robert has made my position so much easier by always being willing to help, sometimes with very odd jobs. He always prepares interesting presentations for the Sunday morning discussions which continue to draw many people. Thanks Robert.

## *From the Historian's Files*

**Sarah O'Connell**



With the cold weather we've been having, thought you would appreciate this from March 1, 1904 in the Watertown Times (from the Looking Backward files):

"There are two places worse than Watertown in the winter. One is Richland. The other is a place the Universalists don't believe in. Every few days it has been announced that the storm is "the worst yet." This announcement is made again, and it's true. Last night's storm, which was still raging at noon today on many parts of the road, is the worst in its effects on traffic that the railroad people have encountered since last November. So far as gaining communication with any other burg is concerned, Watertown might as well be at the North Pole, in the center of the Sahara Desert, or again, in that unmentionable locality. Watertown is cut off and isolated from all other places of supposed civilization."

## *Around the Church*

### **Our Recent Snow Cancellation**

Watertown and the North Country were spooked by the weather forecast Saturday, Jan.21, and so were we at All Souls. The board had agreed to make a decision about closing by that evening. I did see on CBS that evening that several Watertown churches would be closed, which prompted a decision to close. I called WWNY-TV to list our closing, and asked Eleanor to call Andrea Abbott to inform her of our decision and to put it on Facebook. Robert agreed to list the closing on our website.

Then it occurred to me that I could email everyone on the membership list and the friends list. I did. Problem is, I broke my own rule to mail via blind copy. Eleanor had the same idea, and sent out more emails, but she used blind copy. (We also try to send out only one email to everyone each week.)

We'll try to get our act together so it be a little smoother next time, if there is another next time.

-Harriet McMillan

### **Announcing a New Church Activity!**



Shannon Starkweather-Burke did the research about getting a license to show DVD's at the church. Not a new idea, you say? And you would be right. Except this time we'll be showing Hollywood movies. The license, from Church Video License, has a long long list of available movies to show.

Our board decided that we could select movies based on a theme for the month shown: for example, in February, Black History Month, we'll show the 2016 movie "Loving", about a biracial couple in the South who married in spite of their marriage being illegal. We'll show it on Friday, Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>, at 7 PM in the Eaton Social Hall. And here's the good news! There is no charge for the show. However we'll be glad to accept your donations. And we'll have popcorn for sale (not at Regal prices.)

The rules of the license are that we can't advertise the movie outside of the church, and we can't charge admission, but we can let it be known that movie night is, and we can post signs in the church with the name of the movie. We will ask for donations to help defray the cost of the license.

When planning programs for the year, I had initially thought we would hold a Valentine's Party. Movie night will replace that party.

-Harriet McMillan

### **ADA Bathroom Update**

Harriet asked me to write a report for the newsletter about a series of events that happened related to the new ADA bathroom. When they were doing the bathroom, Till and Rebecca removed a big out of use water tank that used to be in the old "garbage room" and turned that area

into a new closet with accordion style doors. In the process they had to level out the floor in there because it had consisted of two elevated flooding type areas and middle area between them about two inches lower. In doing that they used concrete to make one smooth floor.

Now also in that closet area is a floor drain which apparently got some concrete dust in it during the process. That floor drain only had one small PVC pipe going to it, containing a very small intermittent trickle of condensation runoff from the furnace upstairs and from the Renai water heater. Everything seemed OK for a while, then one day Jim Yerdon called me and reported that there was a big leak back in the ADA bathroom. I came up and looked and sure enough the closet was covered in water. I mopped it up and put some towels down to absorb any more. Nobody could tell where the water was coming from. The PVC pipe had been placed in a tray so that its runoff would be caught by that, but the tray was dry. It was mysterious.

I reported it to Till and I mopped and wrung out the towels every day until he came and did something to clear the concrete obstruction in the drain. That seemed to clear it up because the closet wasn't filling up with water every day any more. In the process of mopping every day I had broken the accordion doors, however, because the automatic fire door slammed shut on them while I had them open for closet access. Till or Rebecca fixed that too. We were happy.

About a week ago Harriet pointed out to me that there was a wetness on the drywall in the hallway next to the ADA bathroom door. I assured her it was probably residual moisture from the former leak, and that it would dry up. However, a few days ago Richard told me one morning that there was bad leak back there. Water was actually coming up from the cracks between the tiles in the hallway when they were stepped on. I contacted Till and he called in Derouin's Plumbing. Warren met them up there and let them in and they went to work. I arrived later and relieved Warren until the plumbers were done. There was a smell of natural gas when I came in because the plumbers had broken a natural gas line that had been running along the wall in the ADA bathroom. They rerouted it through the attic, which actually makes things much more attractive. They also rerouted the PVC drain pipe into the janitor's closet to the mop sink. The theory is that the blockage had just been moved farther down in the drainage system and had been backing up under the hallway instead of in the closet.

Till is going to try to get the bill mitigated because half the time there the plumbers were repairing the broken gas line which they had broken, and only the other half the time were they actually fixing our problem. Warren and I had removed all the hallway floor tiles that had been loose and likely to pose a trip hazard. Once that area is dried out new tiles will go back in, hopefully a good match. Hopefully this is over. I still have my doubts because the catch tray never did seem to catch anything and my thinking is that water from somewhere else is going into where that drain goes to. Maybe that's the Renai or something.

-Robert South

[Ed note: It's still moisture, just not on the roof.]

### **Panera Night Jan. 16**

Our most recent Panera night resulted in sales of \$270.07 for Panera and \$54.01 for All Souls.

### **CUUPS News**

At our January 8th meeting, we made plans for many of our meetings for 2019. Since Imbolc comes in very early February, between meetings, we are discussing ideas for individual celebrations to be performed at home, with a report of what we did and any effects noted to be given at the February 12



meeting. Then, on February 26, we will do further work on the pentacle necklaces to be sent to Bobby Kilgore for the participants in her prison ministry.

There are a dozen meetings later in the year without topics, and we would welcome your suggestions! See Joanne H., Catherine B., or Susie Y. with your ideas.

## Musings from Warren Allen



Ten years ago there was a long and high hedgerow between our parking lot and the street. It was of native brush, including buckthorn with 2 inch thorns. The city fire department suggested its removal (fire danger?) and the thorns did not fit into our friendly welcome, so with Robert's lead, it was removed. Last spring we spoke with a city group, Tree Watertown, and this spring we should get some saplings planted between the street and the parking lot. Funding for the saplings is a gift left as a legacy by a local person. Digging will be by the city plus volunteers.

While we considered cures for the sanctuary roof problem, another and smaller situation has been found. There is a large flat roof about the entryway, plus the welcome desk, AND all of the informal lounge, plus most of our kitchen. Near that roof is a higher and small roof which is above our kitchen sinks plus the area where we first enter the sanctuary. Underneath that higher flat roof is a room holding one of our 4 furnaces. Snow lands on those flat areas, and no volunteers have been shoveling up there. So the snow builds up and piles against the bottom of the wooden siding which encloses that furnace room. Wet wood eventually decays.

The cure could involve, on snowy Sundays, tossing up some kids and snow shovels to uncover that siding. Or we might install wide metal flashing next to where snow gathers.

We might have a field trip. How do people turn on the sound system in the sanctuary? Why is the yard out back partly flat and elevated? Why does the floor sound like a drum near the sanctuary's rocking chair? How do I get to the inside of the window above "The Sower" stained-glass window? Where is the path from ASUUC to the high school?

Some families compost or recycle over half or over three-quarters of their leftovers. We here recycle about a third of the material going each Monday with the trash. We pay almost \$30 per month for the pickups. Is anyone interested in doing the composting of food scraps with grass clippings here each week?

IDEA—Richard seems to move the tables in the Eaton Social Hall many times per week. The M.O. seems to be grab one edge and push or pull. The table legs have no diagonal bracing, so in jiggling back and forth this seems to weaken the connection between legs and the table's underside. How about a DOLLY, which I can provide, with board across it to widen/lengthen it? Person lifts one end of table, and uses one foot to move dolly under the legs so that the legs will rest on the board. Then walk to other end and lift the table and walk. At destination, back in, set down 2 legs then walk to doll end. (Ed. Note: when more than one person is moving the tables, the tables could be carried into position.)

## Women's Rally January 19<sup>th</sup>

Eleanor Allen and Sarah O'Connell, put together another Women's Rally, which coincided with rallies on the national level. There were several speakers representing a variety of issues. Sarah served as moderator. Our own Eleanor Allen spoke about the Poor People's Campaign; Sharon Horning spoke about the need for universal health care; Robin Johnson talked about labor's positions regarding employment. Anita Seefired- Brown represented Beth Israel Synagogue, our own Rebecca Carr spoke of immigration actions, and our own Natalie Turner spoke about women of color.

Nance Arquette, St. Lawrence county legislature spoke encouraging women to run for office. Molly Reilly, mayor of Sackets Harbor, and Tedra Cobb, candidate for 2018 U.S. Congress also encouraged women to run for office.

The event was well attended and not just by women. Following the rally, people went into the Eaton Social Hall to browse the various tables where people could sign up to work on the various issues.

Rebecca Carr has already had a meeting of women wanting to help with the immigration issues, and another is planned for Feb.



## Every Month at All Souls

### CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans)

meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays at the church. Gathering and chatting begins at 6:30, the meeting begins at 7 PM.

## And Every Week at All Souls

The basket for your donations to the Urban Mission Food Pantry is always available for your donations. Also, Joanne Harter collects the orange bags in which our newspapers are delivered. She then delivers them to the SPCA to be used to keep the grounds clean.

We serve fair trade coffee during our pot luck coffee hours.

As always, Joanne Harter, our CDO (Chief Decorating Officer) and her assistant, Catherine Burns, appreciate help with the altar decorations.

## **Generosity Project**

Every year we choose two organizations to share half of our uncommitted plate collections. It works as follows: the collector tracks the uncommitted funds, and the congregation selects the organizations. At the end of the church year, we divide the uncommitted funds in half, retain one half, divide the remainder in half and send those monies to the chosen organizations. This year we chose Hospice and Planned Parenthood. Each organization receives 1/4 of the uncommitted funds for the year.

## **Unitarian Universalist Association**

### **Standing on the Side of Love**

It is that time of the year when we strengthen our resolve to adhere to our new year commitments and turn inwardly to focus on our contribution to the struggle for justice. Many of us will gather in congregations or at functions and listen to the poignant words from the slain Black Southern Baptist Preacher Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. III who led a movement that has been distilled to the tagline of achieving “. . . a dream that one day little black boys and girls will be holding hands with little white boys and girls” with little homage to the bravery of the numerous nameless people who bent the arc toward justice by risking their reputations, sacrificing comfortability and determining that justice was worth their lives.

History has fed us a story that our movements are led and sustained by a charismatic male figure, but when we scratch the surface, we understand that movements are made by people and power is conceded by the strategic action of the collective.

As Side with Love embraces our 10th year of harnessing love's power to stop oppression, we want to pause to say thank you to each of you who have been on this journey with us. We are on the side of the rabble rousers and truth-tellers that history sometimes ignore. We are a part of the legacy of sheroes and heroes, that may never get the spotlight but is the backbone of our liberation. We are inspired by the deeds and creativity of our kindred who movement identity and we speak their names: Ella Baker, Dorothy Height, Dorothy Cotton, Bayard Rustin, Pauli Murray, Clyde Warrior, Yuri Kochiyama, Gloria Anzaldúa, Cesar Chavez and many more.

On our 10th year of resistance, Side with Love will be reflecting and learning about our impact and discern what this current political, social and economic moment is requiring of us. We will be sharing content from our previous years of 30 Days of Love instead of launching new content. There are many ways we will invite you to #sidewithlove throughout this year as we continue to construct a World where we each can live with dignity.

## Calendar

### February

\*Not open to public  
Call the church office to get the name  
of the contact person for the T'ai Chi  
class you want.

#### **Sunday 2/3, 2/17**

T'ai Chi, Eaton Social Hall, 8:30 AM  
Adult discussion group, Informal Lounge,  
9:30 AM  
Buddhist Sanga, Informal Lounge,  
1:30 PM

#### **Sunday 2/10, 2/24**

T'ai Chi, Eaton Social Hall, 8:30 AM  
Adult discussion group, Informal Lounge  
, 9:30 AM

#### **Monday 2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2/25**

\*AA Into Action Group, Meeting Room,  
5:45 PM  
Northern Blend Chorus, Eaton Social Hall,  
6:30 PM

#### **Tuesday 2/5, 2/12, 2/19, 2/24**

\*Qubed Youth Group, Eaton Social Hall  
and Informal Lounge, 3 PM

#### **Tuesday 2/12, 2/26**

\*Women's Discussion Group, LaMothe  
Lounge, 6:05 PM  
CUUPS, Eaton Social Hall, 6:30 PM

#### **Tuesday 2/12**

Rebecca Carr's Allies Group, Meeting  
Room, 6 PM

#### **Wednesday 2/6, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27**

T'ai Chi Parkinsons, Eaton Social Hall,  
1 PM  
Advanced T'ai Chi, Eaton Social Hall,  
5:30 PM

#### **Thursday 2/7, 2/14, 2/21, 2/28**

Beginning and Intermediate T'ai Chi,  
Eaton Social Hall, 9:30 AM  
\*Alcoholics Anonymous, Eaton Social Hall,  
8 PM

#### **Friday 2/1, 2/8, 2/15, 2/22,**

T'ai Chi with V. Hartman, Eaton Social  
Hall, 10 AM

#### **Saturday 2/23**

Social Justice Committee Meeting, Eaton  
Social Hall, 10 AM

## All Souls UU Church Board of Trustees

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Vice President: Veronica Hartman veronicah.asuuc.@gmail.com  
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Religious Education: Frances Mercer

Board meetings are held the third Friday at 9:00 AM at the church in the conference room. Meetings are open to all members of the congregation.

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PLEASE SUBMIT ITEMS FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER NO LATER THAN THE 15<sup>TH</sup> OF THE MONTH.  
ITEMS ARE APPRECIATED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.



Robert South took this photo of our annual outerwear tree before taking down all the items and delivering them to the Urban Mission.

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ALL SOULS NEWS February 2018

## ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



We affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

### Our Principles

#### **Unitarian Universalist congregations 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 the 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.
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

### Our Mission

- The mission of All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church is to create an environment in which personal and spiritual growth is encouraged; and where each of us is free to explore our individual beliefs and search for meaning.
- We strive to be a warm, supportive, nurturing and inclusive religious community where all people are respected and honored because of their uniqueness.
- We promote acceptance, diversity and social justice through our dealings with each other and our actions in the local and global community.

Visitors are welcome! If, as a visitor to our church community, you find yourself in agreement with Our Principles, please consider joining our church community. Just sign our membership book in the presence of two board members.