

ALL SOULS NEWS -December 2024

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church

1330 Gotham St.

Watertown, NY 13601



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allsoulsuuchurch@gmail.com



Find us on

Facebook

www.facebook.com/AllSoulsUWWatertownNY

SUNDAY SERVICES AT 10:30 A.M.

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

Phone Tree

The default method of notifying the congregation of cancellations is to put the information on the website and email it out. However, some people would like to also be called on the phone. Rather than trying to call absolutely everyone, we are putting together a list of just those who prefer to be notified by phone. If that's you, then either reply to this email or call 315-921-1162

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.



December Services

Must bring: a donation for the Urban Mission Food Pantry EVERY Service in December.

December 1 – Robert South: "Development of Character." The bylaws of All Souls say, "Our purpose is to join together in a cooperative quest of religious and ethical values and to apply those values to the fulfillment of our objectives, which are the enrichment of spirit, the development of character, and service to all." Development of character can be the core of this and all the rest. Development of character enriches spirit and inspires service. And it is itself a valuable

service. People are not well served by having bad character. But can we bring ourselves to make value judgments? Do we have the character?

December 8 – Rev. David Weissbard: “A Place at the Table. “ At the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin was asked by Mrs. Powel of Philadelphia whether the Convention had created a Republic or a monarchy. His famous response was “A republic, if you can keep it.” At various times in its history, the “keeping” of the republic has been uncertain. This is one of those times.

This is, on one level, a political question. On a deeper level, it is also a religious question. The nature of the nation has never been fully resolved - and it may never be- but it matters. Is its primary role to provide protection for the property of the privileged, or is it to assure the rights of the majority? We do not all agree.

There is a wonderful hymn, “A Place at the Table” by Shirley Erena Murray, a New Zealander, which has stimulated my consideration of that religious issue. I’m projecting that to be the subject for my December 8th sermon. [That’s a goal not a promise.] .

December 15- Sarah O’Connell and Harriet McMillan: “What Does a Tree Have to Do With Christmas?” Come dressed as a Christmas ornament, or bring one that looks like your favorite Christmas tree ornament. We’ll learn about how the evergreen tree became a necessary part of our Christmas celebration while we have some fun.

December 22 – Joanne Harter: Solstice Yule

December 24 Christmas Eve Service: Our traditional service with Christmas Carols, Readings, Stories, Candles.

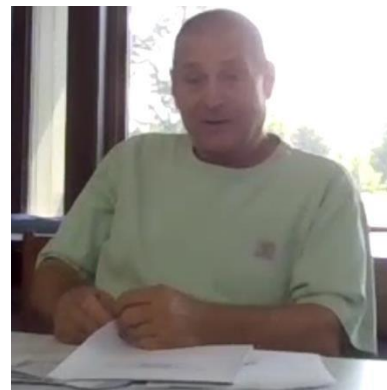
This year we will eat BEFORE the service.
Potluck at 5:30, service starts at 6:30.

December 29 – Robert South: “The Power of Resolutions.” I truly believe that there is some oogie boogie stuff going on in the world. Life uses us for purposes and roles. When you change your mind you do change the world around you. A lot of people believe things sort of like that, but the devil is in the details. The wrong theory can read to the wrong kind of mental changes and the wrong kind of expectations. When we change ourselves such that we can truly resolve, make resolutions that will actually come true, we gain power over the future. By gaining power over the future, we can influence what we will be good for, and thus what kinds of tasks and challenges life will send us. And all it costs is becoming someone who follows through. And understanding what we humans are for.

From the President's Desk

Robert South

The architects from Bernier Carr Associates have finished inspecting our church and are busy writing up a report. We all know we need siding, and the area around the rain chain needs some carpentry and the RE Wing attic needs better insulation. Diego Aguilar and his crew are working on our building now, patching over and insulating the holes left by the removal of the skylights. They will also replace numerous light fixtures in the RE Wing and bathrooms. They will also work on the social hall ceiling. The contract for all this was agreed to back in February but just now we have been wedged in between other projects. The original proposal called for the social hall ceiling to just be repaired by gluing up old acoustic tiles we had in the garage, but also replacing all the light fixtures with fancy new ones. The board has decided to change it. We are removing the acoustic tile and getting just a drywall ceiling like in the sanctuary. It would not look good or be secure no matter what we did and looking for more matching tile to cover the whole ceiling would be slow and expensive. But we are keeping the can lighting, with led bulbs rather than getting the new fixtures which supposedly last forever rather than just a really long time like the led bulbs. However, these fixtures do make it hard to change bulbs so we maybe should only use the can lights when really needed. Which we do anyway, mostly relying on the recessed tube fixtures turned on by the regular wall switch rather than the ceiling can lights turned on by the dial rheostat beside the coffee cup table.



The NYUJJ convocation resulted in some social justice ideas and perspectives which carried into our congregational conversation the following day. Outreach is just not "activism" stuff like sending postcards to legislators and attending sit-ins in the governor's office. And we don't have the skills to help the incarcerated with their problems. Those interested enough to attend chose overwhelmingly to formally select the Watertown homeless situation as our social outreach focus this year. Frances Mercer will write a piece about various specific ideas for how we can do that on a practical level.

The worship committee is going to start doing more exciting things with soliciting guest ministers from area churches and other sharing with them. Hopefully this will help lead to making connections with connections so we might get a lead to a minister through unorthodox channels.

In RE, we now have three qualified child care assistants: Robert, Frances, and Janine. Here's the website again: <https://nysmandatedreporter.org/TrainingCourses.aspx>

-Robert South

Historian

Sarah O'Connell

The weekly post in 1963 was for the Watertown, Dexter and Henderson churches. On the December 15 issue, Rev. John Wood was in the Watertown pulpit at 10:30, while Mr. David Weissbard led the 10 a.m. service in Dexter before dashing to the Henderson church for its 12 Noon service. The bulletin also referenced the traditional Christmas eve service in Watertown: "The service on Christmas Eve is at 7:30 pm. It will be a brief service of carols, readings, and singing by the Junior Choir. It will be a radiant service unless your pew is full of gloom instead of you."

Around the Church

Winter is coming and the fine, new picnic tables fabricated this year under Rebecca Carr's direction are protected with "shroud" tarping that has been used for years at Kelly Sackheim's hydro site, and an "heirloom" fish net contributed by WarrenAllen. Bernier & Carr is working to provide input to restore/maintain our building exterior moving forward, and Diego is resuming his work on the interior now that weather precludes outdoor work.





Ceiling Work
Diego Aguilar and crew will be working in the building over the next few weeks to fix some problems with the ceilings. They will remove all the acoustic tiles from the social hall ceilings, smooth and repair the drywall underneath, and then paint it to look like the ceiling in the sanctuary. They are also insulating and patching over the holes where numerous skylights used to be before they were eliminated with the installation of the metal roof. They were huge sources of heat loss. Also some fluorescent light fixtures will be replaced with newer ones that can use LED bulbs (namely in the bathrooms and attic and RE Wing hallway)

CUUPS Reconstituted!

3 members of All Souls UU Church were present, which is a requirement to be recognized as an official CUUPS group. For now, meetings will be held on the first Friday of the month, with gathering from 6:30-7 pm, and the meeting itself at 7

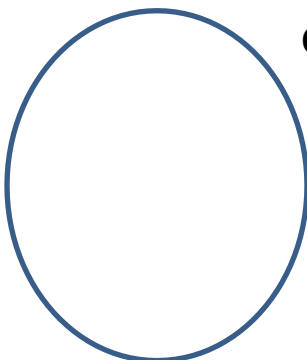


We will be holding a Samhain ritual on Friday, November 1, in the Social Hall, which is open to all. We will honor and remember our departed loved ones, including animal companions, during a ceremony which will allow time for writing of letters to the departed. They will be "delivered" by being burned in a cauldron.

Following this will be a Potluck/Dumb Feast; please bring foods the Departed enjoyed to share with them and other attendees.

Chalice Circle CUUps

Our early November Samhain Ritual/Dumb Feast/Potluck proved to be a success, with loved ones remembered, a good variety of food shared, and letters written to the departed. The letters were "delivered" by burning in a cast iron pot out on the patio. The letters burned so well! And the ashes were then scattered on the ground.



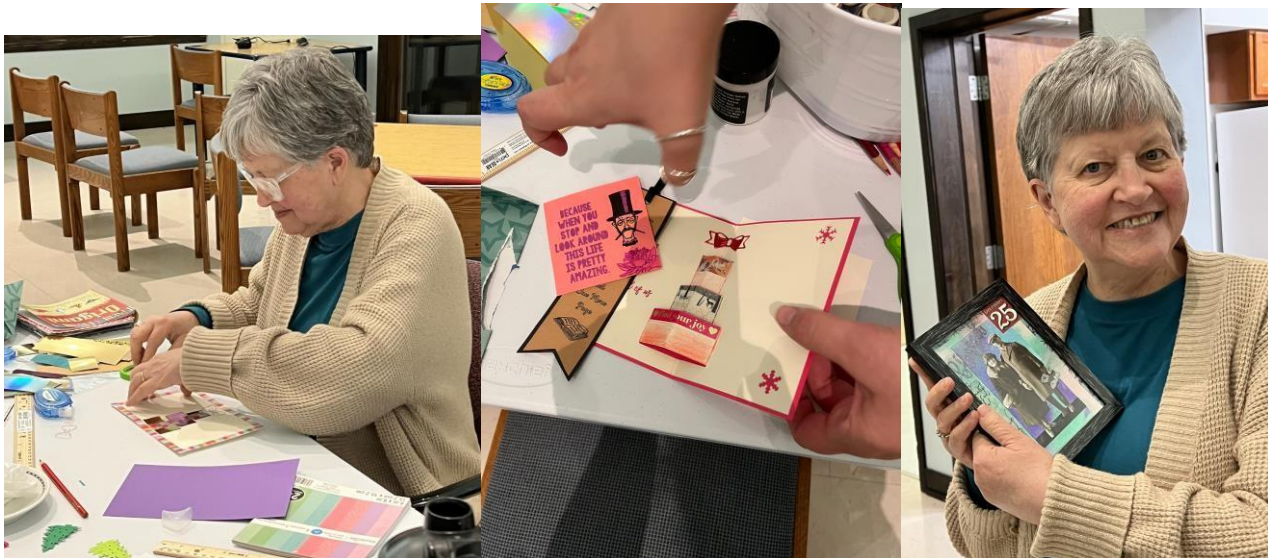
For our December 6th meeting, we will be planning an open-to-the-public Winter Solstice Ritual (and deciding on a date for it probably the 21st), as well as the December 22nd Sunday service, which has a Yule/Winter Solstice theme.

Our meetings are open to anyone who follows a positive Pagan path, and/or wants to learn more about Paganism. We gather at 6:30 pm, and conduct the evening's business from 7-8:30 or 9 pm.

-Joanne Harter

Calling All Crafters

Kat Hammond



There's been a lot of fun at Craft Night this year. For November we made some pop-up Christmas Cards. Lots of smiles and share with each other happens. Want to get to know each other a little better? It's a great venue to combine creativity and friendships!

A special thank you goes out to Susan Favre who donated card and stamping supplies! What a blessing!

December fast approaches and I have a few ideas for the final project this year. Where did 2024 go? Watch the weekly bulletin for the announcement of what our project will be. **Craft Night is scheduled for December 13th from 6-8pm.** Hope to see you there!



Unitarian Universalist Justice Convocation

On Nov. 16, some of us at All Souls attended (online) the NY Unitarian Universalist Justice Convocation. The theme: engaging in grassroots advocacy for bills being considered, but have not yet passed, at our state's legislative level. The topic of one of the four workshops was on the "Medical Aid in Dying Act." This bill -- should it become NYS law -- would allow a terminally ill, mentally capable adult, at least 18 years old, who has a prognosis of six months or less to live, to take medication prescribed by a doctor to end their own life. The person must be able to self-ingest the medication; it may not be administered by anyone else. This bill was first introduced in 2015; since then, several safeguards have been written into the text, and support among state assemblymen and senators has grown, but more support is needed before it can become a law. This practice is already the law in eleven states, including Vermont, Maine and NJ.

Are you interested in advocating for the passage of this bill? The workshop speaker, Amanda Cavanaugh, suggested letting our state representatives in Albany know where you stand. Amanda also suggested checking a website called NY@compassionandchoices.org.

Another workshop that was offered focused on Environmental Justice. The speaker railed against "incrementalism" on the part of both Gov. Hochul and the state legislature. More needs to be done, and at a faster pace, he urged. Currently, the "Climate Change Superfund Act" has passed in both the state's Assembly and Senate, and is waiting for the governor to sign it into law. If enacted, it would require companies in NYS that produce pollution to pay for past emissions. That \$\$ would then be set aside for communities in NYS to use to repair storm damage caused by climate change. Other bills relating to environmental justice are in various stages of legislative consideration.

Maybe you would like to get involved in environmental justice? Find more information on the state's Department of Conservation (DEC) website: <https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection> . Also, check out "Third Act of Upstate NY" (<https://thirdact.org/upstate-ny/>) which is a "community of elders (age 60+) throughout Upstate New York using our life experiences and resources to safeguard the climate and uplift democracy" and/or the "Climate Can't Wait NY" website (<https://www.climatecantwait.org>) for further avenues of environmental action

-Karen Hall

Every Month at All Souls

CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans)

CUUPS will be meeting on the first Friday of each month. Gathering begins at 6:30 PM, the meeting begins at 7 PM.

Game Night

Join us on the third Friday of the month from 5-7 to play games. There are many games available for us all to play. We provide pizza, and you can feel free to bring a treat.

And Every Week at All Souls

The basket for your donations to the Urban Mission Food Pantry is always available for your donations. We serve fair trade coffee during our pot luck coffee hours.

There is also a basket in the back of the sanctuary for donations to the Veteran's Organization. Household goods and clothing are collected for donation.

As always, Joanne Harter, our CDO (Chief Decorating Officer) appreciates 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 Citizens Advocates and Planned Parenthood. Each organization receives 1/4 of the uncommitted funds for the year.

Unitarian Universalist Association

For a holiday message from Rev. Susan Frederic-Gray, go to [.youtube.com/watch?v=pgtwthaFERS](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgtwthaFERS)
She delivered the message in 2022, it's relevant today, too.

All Souls UU Church Board of Trustees

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Vice President: Amy Summerville-Loomis

Secretary: Karen Hall

Treasurer: Eleanor Allen

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Trustee: Kelly Sackheim

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eleanora.asuuc@gmail.com

Staff

Custodian: John Crupi

Music: Toni Zygadlo

Religious Exploration:

Office Volunteers: Robert South

Board meetings are held the fourth Saturday of the month at 9:30 AM by Zoom. Meetings are open to all members of the congregation.

Newsletter Editor, Harriet McMillan, harrietm@allsoulsuu.org

Office Hours: Mon 9-11, Wed 11-1, Fri 1-3

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Website: <http://www.allsoulsuu.org>

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



Zane Palladino is ready for Dec. 15.
Photo by his Dog Mom (Netty.)

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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.

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.