

Love to sing? Turn to page 13 for information about Northern Blend's Christmas Sing Program in December. You are invited to sing along with the chorus.

ALL SOULS NEWS -December 2022

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church
1330 Gotham St.
Watertown, NY 13601



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Find us on

Facebook www.facebook.com/AllSoulsUW WatertownNY

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.



And speaking of snow, this was the weekend of Nov. 20
Thanks to Rebecca Carr for the photos.



December Services

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

December 4 – Catherine Burns: "December Holidays of Light."

December 11 – Rev. David Weissbard: "The Empty Creche." It's that time again, when that poor, beleaguered, religious minority, Christians, is being attacked by evil secularists and humanists. Yes, friends, the "War on Christmas" is heating up again, as it always does after Thanksgiving. The problem is, as with all civil wars, it is not easy to determine which side is the enemy. In an attempt to rescue the spirit of that holiday, and to prepare for its celebration, we will be considering the roots of the controversy and our place in it. Please join us..

December 18 – Joanne Harter: "My Lessons from Winter Solstice."

December 24 – Christmas Eve Service (Saturday) : Sarah O'Connell and Eleanor Allen present or traditional Christmas Eve service at 7 PM

No service Sunday December 25. Joyeux Noel!

Transition Team

Transitions Team Update, November 20, 2022

The Transitions Team (Eleanor Warren, Sarah O'Connell, Harriet McMillan and Frances Mercer) began speaking with Rev Dr. Hurt in late January. The board agreed in February that we would hire her to present occasional services and work on getting to know the congregation as we talk about change and transition. This proposal is open-ended at this point, because it is an important discussion and also because until recently, we weren't able to meet as a congregation in person at all and feel any sense of normalcy.

Rev. Hurt Introduced herself to the congregation in the April newsletter. We planned to have her here in May, but postponed because we weren't in the church yet and also due to an uptick in COVID cases locally. She had a special meeting with the Board by Zoom on May 19 and did a Zoom service on May 22.

We again planned to fly her here in August and she even had flight reservations; however, we postponed again because we weren't in the church yet and it would be hard to get a large enough representative group of the congregation during the summer.

So in mid-August, Rev. Hurt sent questions for TT, board and congregation, and presented a Zoom service on August 22. The TT gathered congregation responses in small groups after the September 25th service, and since then we have been following up with members not present since then. The Transitions Team will be sending it all to her so that we can provide a report to the board which will then share it with

congregation. In the meantime, Rev. Hurt presented another Zoom service on October 30.

What came out of the questionnaires? Concerns about the building, but a general sense of how people missed being able to meet in person. Having a minister – opinions expressed from no need for one, to remote zoom services to part-time/shared to full time. What do we want out of a minister? Before we decide that, we need to come to some sort of a consensus of what kind of a church we want to offer to our current congregation and potential future members. Why do we make the commitment to come to All Souls? Keep tuned!

-Sarah O'Connell

Religious Exploration in the Wondering Center

Frances Mercer and Kathy Ashland have participated in reorganizing the big RE classroom. They are showing some of their efforts. After many years of managing the RE program, Frances is passing the Wondering Center/RE torch to Kathy.



From the Historian's Files

Sarah O'Connell

A Thanksgiving Tribute from Robert Louis Stevenson

In this month's issue I'm sharing a simple Thanksgiving poem by Robert Louis Stevenson, who was born on November 4, 1850 and died on December 3, 1894 at the young age of 44. He's known for writing such books as "Treasure Island," "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," as well as "Kidnapped." But - he also wrote "A Children's Garden of Verses." Raised in a Presbyterian family, he renounced religion at the age of 23. Often described as an atheist or agnostic, he still continued to have family prayers each evening and a few years after his death, his wife printed a small volume of the prayers he had written.

Robert Louis Stevenson's Prayer with his family, Thanksgiving 1890

God
behold our family here assembled,
we thank Thee
for this place in which we dwell,
for the love that unites us,
for the peace accorded us this day,
for the hope with which we expect the morrow,
for the health, the work, the food,
and the bright skies
that make our lives delightful,
for our friends in all parts of the earth,
and our friendly helpers, everywhere.

Give us strength
to encounter that which is to come
that we may be brave in peril,
constant in tribulation,
and in all changes of fortune,
and down to the gates of death
be loyal and loving to one another.
Amen.



DISCUSSION HOUR IS BACK

The discussion hour will be an open meeting in the informal lounge every Sunday between 9:30 and 10:15.

Every month:

1st Sunday: UUism for newcomers

2nd Sunday: Common Read; book discussion

3rd, 4th, 5th Sundays: Random Topic

The "Introductory UUism" will feature youtube videos on this topic, but will also include questions by the newcomers and answers by whatever UU members are present.

A favorite is "Unitarian Universalism on One Foot" by Christine

Robinson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=girNb9xccsg>.

If there are no newcomers on a given month, maybe we can delve into other denomination and congregation related topics such as the history of All Souls or the UUA.

The common reads will be picked in advance by participant suggestion and consensus of those participating, then submitted for approval by the board. In January we will start discussing "Bloodlands" by Dr. Timothy Snyder. So in November and December we will just use this slot to discuss books we've each read recently, not all the same one.

The free ranging discussions won't be billed as education about UUism, just interesting discussions between intelligent adults on intriguing topics. The random topics would be taken from a list based on suggestions and leader research

Suggested topics:

December 4th Unitarian Universalism
December 11th Book Talk
December 18th Bad Government
January 8th *Bloodlands*
January 15th Nuclear War
January 22nd Climate Change
January 29th Ukraine
February 5th Unitarian Universalism
February 12th *Bloodlands*
February 19th Factory Farms
February 26th Flying Saucers
March 5th Unitarian Universalism
March 12th Book Talk
March 19th Spirits
March 26th Business Practices

People News

Jim Harter is home from the hospital following an extended stay. Joanne takes him to the hospital 3 times weekly for dialysis treatment. He is also under the care of Public Health Nursing Service.

Doug Howland, a long time member of All Souls, has moved from Samaritan Summit to the Samaritan Keep Home. He can no longer read, so we will not send him the church newsletter. Prior to the move he had enjoyed getting our newsletter.

Around the Church

Thanksgiving at All Souls 2022

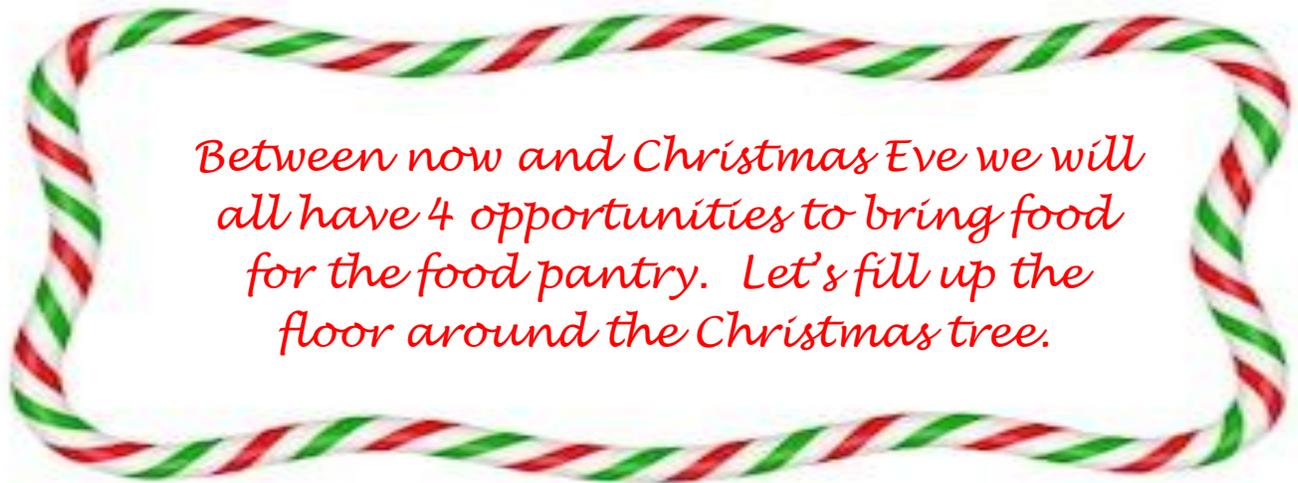


Thanks to Robert South and Eleanor Allen for the photos of Thanksgiving Dinner. 20 people consumed the traditional Thanksgiving dinner at the church.

Why Collect Food this Christmas Instead of Outerwear?

More and more organizations are collecting outerwear. Here at All Souls we have collected outerwear and donated those items to both the Watertown Urban Mission, and the Salvation Army on State Street, where they will be given away, instead of sold.

We made the decision to donate food to the food pantry. People will continue to need food as well as the outerwear donated by other organizations.



Building and Grounds

Aguliar Construction (Diego and his crew) did a wonderful (superb) job remediating and reconstructing the building interior after the flood of 2022. There were several small repairs and projects added to the contract. They include but are not limited to replacing and insulating the broken waterline to the faucet near the patio, painting the teen room, refinishing the stage and replacing the flush valve in the men's room.

Now that the most recent restoration is completed, there is more. ... 🙄 :

The RE roof,
The Clerestory windows,
The exterior wood siding, and
The security system

The **RE roof** has been an ongoing issue and subject of far too many discussions, for years. Immediately after the flood in January there was an intense search for a roofer to replace the roof to protect the finish work inside the RE wing, but not enough acceptable estimates have been returned for the Board to vote on, so far.

To avert potential damage to the newly repaired work in the RE wing, our Robert South was supplied with three 5-gallon buckets of "Fiber asphalt roof coating" and a long-handled brush and began covering the RE roof with this sealer. The brittle condition of the roof caused it to soak up more sealer than expected, so a few more cans were purchased. This is a temporary fix until the roof can be replaced.

The **Clerestory window** casings are deteriorating. A stain on the very top of the curved wall in the social hall appeared a couple years ago. An evaluation of the existing roofs (metal and rubberized) indicates they are not the source. Precipitation is getting through the window casings and seeping inside with some flowing under the metal roof causing the social hall ceiling to break up and the pieces to fall.

The **exterior wood siding** boards are bowing and cupping on the south and east sides of the building, some have fallen off. Tarp material has been placed to temporarily cover and protect the building interior from the winter until work can be performed to restore the siding.

That being said, the Board has discussed hiring a contractor to manage these construction projects. Writing a request for proposal (RFP) is one thing but finding contractors that send us estimates for all these projects and perpetual monitoring are beyond reasonable expectations for a simple volunteer committee. Discussions with one contractor is beginning as of this publishing.

The **security system** began failing soon after STAT was bought by Doyle. Board members, Sarah O'Connell and Amy Loomis have been working with Kevin Burke (Shannon) to establish what is needed in the RFP. RFP bids/estimates are going out now.

I'm glad B&G is going back to maintaining the ordinary things.

Thanks for your attention,

-Rebecca Carr

Every Month at All Souls

CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans)

Will resume meetings at a future time. Once underway again, the group meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at the church. Gathering and chatting begins at 6:30, the meeting begins at 7 PM.

And Every Week at All Souls

The baskets for your donations to the Urban Mission Food Pantry are 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) 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 NCPR and the Workers Center of Central New York. Each organization receives 1/2 of the uncommitted funds for the year.

Unitarian Universalist Association

From the UUA Newsletter

This is a busy time of year for so many. Seasonally, we are in a transitional period, with possibilities for connection and celebration over the holidays, as well as experiences of grief and letting go. We are living in what I have come to call a liminal time. “Liminal” means a time in between, when what has been is no longer and what is next is not yet here.

The pandemic moved many congregations into virtual and hybrid gatherings and the ways in which people connect to religious community are changing. I can relate to that sense of liminality as I finish my last year as your UUA President and the UUA prepares to welcome a new President, to be elected by delegates at the next General Assembly (GA) in June 2023, online and in Pittsburgh, PA.

Another very significant change happening in Unitarian Universalism comes through the dedicated work of the UUA’s Article II Study Commission (A2SC). Article II is the section

in our UUA bylaws that contains the Purposes, 7 UU Principles and our Sources. Charged to review Article II, the Commission has held thoughtful discussions online, at General Assemblies and with groups of leaders across our Association.

This fall, the A2SC incorporated the extensive input from individuals, groups and congregations and developed an initial draft of a new Article II. You are invited to review the new draft text and share your feedback with the Commission online

Article II Purposes and Covenant

Section C-2.1. Purposes.

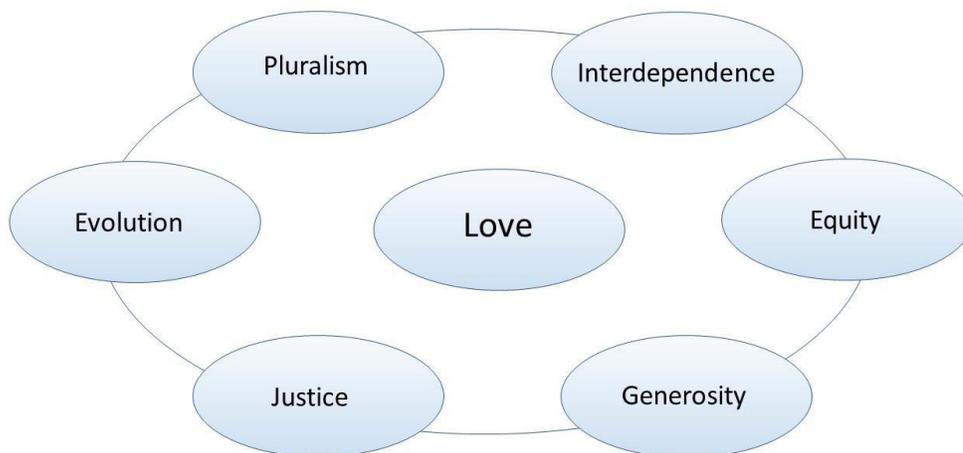
The Unitarian Universalist Association shall devote its resources to and exercise its organizational powers for religious, educational, and humanitarian purposes. Its primary purposes are to equip congregations for vital ministry, to support and train leaders both lay and professional, to heal historic inequities, and to advance our Unitarian Universalist values in the world. We will transform the world by our liberating love.

Section C-2.2. Values and Covenant.

Love is the enduring force that holds us together.

As Unitarian Universalists in religious community, we covenant, congregation-to-congregation and through our association, to support and assist each other in engaging our ministries. We draw from our heritages of freedom and reason, hope and courage, building on the foundation of love.

Love inspires and powers the passion with which we embody our values. Inseparable from one another, these shared values are:



Justice. We work to be diverse multicultural Beloved Communities where all people thrive.

We covenant to dismantle racism and all forms of oppression within individuals and our institutions. We are accountable to each other for this work.

Generosity. We cultivate a spirit of gratitude and hope.

We covenant to freely share our faith, presence, and resources. Compassionate generosity connects us one to another in relationships of mutuality.

Evolution. We adapt to the changing world.

We covenant to collectively transform and grow spiritually and ethically. Evolution is fundamental to life and to our Unitarian Universalist heritages, never complete and never perfect.

Pluralism. We celebrate that we are all sacred beings diverse in culture, theology, and experience.

We covenant to learn from one another and openly explore the depth and breadth of our many wisdoms. We embrace our differences and commonalities with love, curiosity, and respect.

Equity. We declare that every person has the right to flourish with dignity and worthiness.

We covenant to use our time, wisdom, attention, and money to build and sustain a fully inclusive and accessible community of communities.

Interdependence. We honor the sacred interdependent web of all existence. With humility we understand our place in the web.

We covenant to care for and respect the earth and all beings by fostering relationships of mutuality. We work to repair the bonds we have broken.

Section C-2.3. Inspirations.

As Unitarian Universalists, we draw upon, and are inspired by, the full depth and breadth of sacred understandings, as experienced by humanity. Grateful for the religious lineages we inherit and the pluralism which enriches our faith, we are called to ever deepen and expand our wisdom.

Section C-2.4. Inclusion.

Systems of power, privilege, and oppression have traditionally created barriers for persons and groups with particular identities, ages, abilities, and histories. We pledge to replace such barriers with ever-widening circles of solidarity and mutual respect. We strive to be an association of congregations that truly welcome all persons who share our values. We commit to structuring congregational and associational life in ways that empower and enhance everyone's participation.

Section C-2.5. Freedom of belief.

Nothing herein shall be deemed to infringe upon the individual freedom of belief which is inherent in the Unitarian Universalist heritages or to conflict with any statement of purpose, covenant, or bond of union used by any congregation unless such is used as a creedal test. In expressing our beliefs, we do so in the spirit of love, in ways that further Beloved Community.



“Holiday Sing”

with



Northern Blend Chorus!

SINGERS WELCOME!!!

Monday evenings, Nov 28, Dec 5, & 12 from 7-9pm
and all are welcome to enjoy our FREE

COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE

Monday, Dec. 19th at 7:30pm

Stone Presbyterian Church (140 Chestnut St) in Watertown!



Please feel free to bring a non-perishable food item for our local food pantries! Thank you so much!

President: Heather Winn

Vice President: Amy Summerville-Loomis

Secretary: Sarah O’Connell

Treasurer: Eleanor Allen eleanora.asuuc@gmail.com

Trustee: Janine LaClair

Trustee: Shannon Starkweather Blurke

Trustee: Catherine Burns catherineb.asuuc@gmail.com

Trustee: Joanne Harter

Custodian: John Krupi

Music: Toni Zygadlo

Childcare: Kim Davis

Religious Exploration:

Kathy Ashland

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

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PLEASE SUBMIT ITEMS FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER NO LATER THAN THE 15TH OF THE MONTH.

ITEMS ARE APPRECIATED AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

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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.