

# Cobblestone News

Unitarian Universalist Church of Cortland, 3 S. Church Street, Cortland, NY, 13045

uucortland.uuism.org

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## From the Minister

### What Does it Mean to be a Person of Gratitude?

On Thursday, March 20, my beloved dog Gracie died. She was a beautiful black Labrador retriever. We brought Gracie home as a puppy just before Easter 14 years ago; my daughters can't recall a home life without her. So it was hard for all of us to say goodbye to Gracie – there were lots of tears.

Yet my heart is full of gratitude for having been “graced” by her company. Her gentle nature, her thick otter-tail always wagging happily, her robust appetite, her love of winter, her odd habit of eating snow, her contentedness at curling up at our feet at the end of a busy day – for all these things my family and I are grateful. These things that made Gracie special will warm our memories and sustain us in her absence. Even in death we can find gratitude.

To me gratitude is not so much a feeling or emotion as it is a spiritual experience. To put it another way, experiencing gratitude awakens us spiritually. Brother David Steindl-Rast speaks to this concept in his book, *Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer*. Steindl-Rast says:

**“[E]verything is gratuitous, everything is gift. The degree to which we are awake to this truth is the measure of our gratefulness. And gratefulness is the measure of our aliveness.”**

Boredom and discontent are the cultural banes of our times. With the distractions of our televisions, computer screens, and our overly busy lives we can become indifferent to the everyday joys of life that come to us gratuitously. We didn't conjure up or even ask for that double rainbow but there it is. If our response to the rainbow lacks surprise and then gratitude for the gift that is given then we are asleep, numb, or disengaged from life; we become disconnected from the giver of life, whoever or whatever that may be for us.

I hope the first signs of spring – the robins and the crocuses – delight you. I hope you will look for them and be awakened by these gifts of life and that you will feel in your heart a gratitude for that which we did not make, for that which comes to us unbidden and unearned, for that which is given freely, and that which comes to us through the holiness of life itself. May it be so.

– Rev. Kathy

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## A Note From Marion by Marion Lutz, BOD president

Happy Spring!

Even though the snow continues to fall..... I have to believe that my flowers are now getting ready to pop out of the ground and bless me with their beauty and color after their long winters nap.

We have some programing changes for the remainder of our church year. Because the Family Night Supper has not been well attended we decided to discontinue it. Starting in April we will be having a 10:30 am Sunday service **EVERY** Sunday for the remainder of the church year. The 4th Sunday meditation will continue at 3-4pm led by Joe Pullman. Our minister Kathy Tew Rickey will lead the 4th Sunday services. Thank you to Joe and Kathy for your dedication to our church community.

**HELP!!!! We need a pianist to start the 2nd week in May. Do you know anyone that plays the piano and/or the organ that would be interested in playing for us?** If you know someone, please email or call me at [marionlutz@mac.com](mailto:marionlutz@mac.com) or [607-749-7533](tel:607-749-7533) for details.

It is with mixed emotions that I am sending out this call for help. Happy for Abbey, sad to loose her beautiful gift of music. Abbey, our talented and gifted pianist/organist, will be leaving us. Abbey started playing for us when she was in junior high school, in 8th grade. She will be graduating from Syracuse University in May and has been accepted into the Med School at SU. A BIG Congratulations to Abbey!! We will miss her!!

See you **EVERY** Sunday!  
Marion

## Children's Religious Education by Ashley Vormwold, RE Coordinator

In the spirit of this month's worship theme, I'd like to begin by expressing my gratitude for the opportunity to be a part of this congregation and for being able to explore matters of the heart and spirit with our children. Thank you!

During this month's religious education classes, we will be delving into the topic of gratitude. The children will have opportunities to identify and share what they are thankful for. We will look at all facets of our life to recognize that we have many important things to be grateful for, including things that might typically be overlooked. We will also talk about how it feels to be thanked and explore ways we can show our appreciation for others.

We will also discuss different types of gratitude practices that the children could adopt for themselves. Some ideas you might consider adopting as a family include creating gratitude journals to write or draw what you are thankful for each day or having a regular time of day, such as dinner time or before bed, when everyone says what they are thankful for that day. At least the highlights could be identified each day, as a gratitude list could be almost endless when we stop to think of all the things in our lives to be thankful for. Perhaps your child or family could begin an ongoing list that is added to daily.

Being conscious of all there is to be thankful for each day can be very rewarding. I'm looking forward to exploring this theme with our children!

*The Wayside Pulpit*

**There's more to life than increasing its speed.**

**—Mahatma Gandhi**

## Celebration Committee Bio Request by Bess Koval

Again we ask for your BIO. (We will take your photo at church. Times to be announced.) We especially ask you to respond within DAYS . . .

Please include any of the following info in your BIO:

**-date, name, family, address, phone number, e-mail, current occupation, religious background, when you first attended UUCC, when you joined UUCC, roles in the church, inspiring or memorable moments-**

Always, any HISTORICAL, NOTABLE, and just plain interesting events, are always appreciated. Imagine how our lives today will be viewed by members 50 to 100 years from now!

Also, please answer the following “yes” or “no” questions:

- 1)Do you have short stories?
- 2)We have membership lists for 1966, 1988, 1998, 2001, 2005-06,2012. Do you have others?
- 3)Do you have any unrecorded dates of births, children's dedications, deaths, and marriages or funerals performed in the church?
- 4)Do you know names and dates of our ministers that followed Bob Payson?
- 5)Do you know names and dates of Moderators/President of the board and members of the board?

Thank you for your cooperation!

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### DID YOU KNOW?

Pastor Farmer (1909) turned the basement (our social room) into a gymnasium to host the first Boy Scout troop in Cortland.

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## Gratitude Journal by Kathy Tew Rickey

If you find yourself bored, blue, or out of step with life, here’s a suggestion: keep a gratitude journal. At the end of each day, think of and write down three things you experienced that day for which you are grateful. It could be a call from a faraway friend or birdsong in the morning or someone holding open a door for you when your arms were full. The trick is to look for and chronicle those experiences which you might otherwise overlook in your discontented state. A gratitude journal will chase your blues away, I promise. – Rev. Kathy –

## Register Now For Summer Camp

by Dan Gottfried, Executive Director of Camp Unirondack

**Registration for summer camp is filling quickly at the UU Camps and Conference Centers. If you are considering attending as a family or sending your child now is the time to act.**

Registration at Unirondack, the camp in upstate New York that many youth and families in our region attend, is already full for their older high school sessions (Ballou). Space still remains in the Parker sessions (for 14-16 year olds) and some of the weeks for younger children, Barton(9-12 year olds) and Channing (12-14 year olds), although they are filling fast. Family Camp at Unirondack has room for a few more families but generally fills by the middle of April.

The UU Camp and Conference Centers provide an opportunity for children and families to live our UU values in a creative, accepting and nurturing community outside the doors of our congregation. For more information about Unirondack, and to register for summer camp or weekend programs, visit their website at <http://www.unirondack.org/>.

Other Camp and Conference Centers in the region include Rowe, Ferry Beach, Star Island, and Murray Grove. And don't ignore DeBenneville Pines in California, U-Bar-U in Texas, Unistar in Minnesota, or The Mountain and Shelter Neck in North Carolina.

Many of the centers have year-round programs. All provide an opportunity for personal growth, fellowship and community.



## Pledges: Chalice Lighters by Kathy Tew Rickey

If you completed a Chalice Lighter pledge form, please give it to me or Jim Pelton. If you submitted one directly to the St. Lawrence District office let me know and I will give you a Chalice Pin.

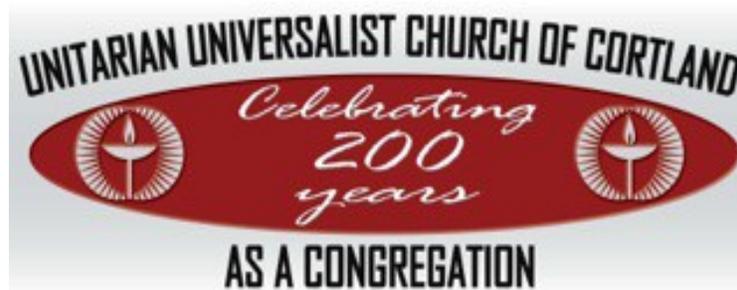
Also, please note that a Chalice Lighter pledge is not a pledge to our congregation alone nor does it replace our own pledge drive which is coming up in May. Your Chalice Lighter pledge supports annual grants to the 35 churches in the St. Lawrence district. These grants support growth and development of our fellow congregations. Please see <http://www.sld.uua.org/conggrowth/chalicelighters.html> for more information.

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**Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Cortland**

**3 S. Church St  
Cortland, NY 13045**

**607-753-0020**



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## Upcoming Programming

Join us for Social Hour downstairs after all 10:30am services.

**Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>** - 10:30 am service with Kathy Tew Rickey.

**Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup>** - 10:30am service: to be determined.

**Sunday, April 20<sup>th</sup>** - 10:30am service with Kathy Tew Rickey.  
-Easter Sunday

**Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>** -10:30 am service with Kathy Tew Rickey.  
- 12:00 pm Board Meeting.  
- 3-4pm silent meditation with Joe Pullman.

