

# Cobblestone News

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

uucortland.uuism.org

## From the Minister

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### Respect for the Interdependent Web of All Existence of Which We Are a Part

April is the perfect month to hold up our 7<sup>th</sup> Principle. The beauty and wonder of our one precious earth will soon inundate our senses with birdsong, fragrance, color, and warmth. A few weekends ago, I had the opportunity to escape our persisting winter by attending a conference in New Orleans. There the perennials were in full bloom and the warm, humid air was a welcome change (although my clothes were way too warm for it).

The conference was a joint one between the UU Allies for Racial Justice and DRUUM, Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries. The site of New Orleans was chosen intentionally to demonstrate, be immersed in, and learn about two intersecting justice issues of the day: Climate Change and Institutional Racism.

The trauma of Hurricane Katrina lingers in New Orleans. Hundreds of thousands of evacuated people were unable to return to their homes. The hardest hit population was disproportionately African American. Before Katrina, the New Orleans population was over 50% African American. Now ten years later it is less than half. Disaster capitalism, corporate-favoring legislation like ALEC, and gentrification of old neighborhoods are displacing the unique culture and tradition of New Orleans.

The keynote was an attorney from Gulf Coast Center for Law and Policy. She cogently laid out for us all the intersecting issues which Katrina left in her wake. The bottom line: one cannot be concerned with climate justice without also being concerned with race and class, migrant rights, land sovereignty, economic justice, and voting rights (voter restrictions and depopulation of people of color profoundly affect local law and policy).

These may seem like issues that are far from Cortland; geographically that's true. But how we live our lives here in Cortland does affect how people live elsewhere. Our carbon footprint (how much energy we use including fossil fuels) and our consumption habits have a direct impact on climate everywhere. In the month of April, let us appreciate the good earth and how we are nurtured by her. Let us conserve water and fuel. Let us reduce, reuse, and recycle. Let us be aware of the multiple injustices of climate change and help when opportunities arise. In other words, let us be a blessing to the world where we can.

Peace,

**Rev. Kathy**

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### As Unitarian Universalists

#### we promote and affirm:

1<sup>st</sup> Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

2<sup>nd</sup> Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

3<sup>rd</sup> Principle: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

4<sup>th</sup> Principle: A free and reasonable search for truth and meaning;

5<sup>th</sup> Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process in our congregations and in society at large;

6<sup>th</sup> Principle: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

7<sup>th</sup> Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

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

The children's religious education class will begin this month by welcoming spring and all the life and renewal that come with it on Easter Sunday. For the remainder of the month we will continue our exploration of the 7 principles with a focus on the fifth principle. The children's version is, "we believe that all persons should have a vote about the things that concern them." We will try out some different ways of making group decisions and discuss what aspects are important to ensure fairness.



### Traveling Light by Lynn Olcott

*Be Glad For Angels*

"...for God will give angels charge over you to guard you in all of your ways..."

Psalms 91:11

Mornings are hectic. This one particular morning I needed gas and a coffee for the road. I scanned the traffic in all directions and then, with a quick turn, zipped into the convenience store lot. It was only afterward that I realized I had very rudely cut off a truck attempting the same maneuver from another lane of cars. I was not only rude, I was dangerous. And I was ashamed.

Quickly I parked my car and jumped out. I waited for the truck to park and then approached the driver, full of apologies. I was sure he was furious with me, and it was justified. He was a medium sized man with graying hair and gray eyes wearing a ball cap, jeans and a flannel shirt. He stood at ease and motionless and let me rattle on for some time.

Finally I wound down. Finally I noticed the stillness in his eyes that held no anger. When he was sure I was listening, he said quietly, "*That's OK. I saw you.*" That's all he said. His graciousness was healing. He needed nothing from me and asked nothing. We went our separate ways in safety and peace.

God, thank you for those people in our lives who serve you as angels.

Help me recognize them. Keep us safe in all the traffic of our days. Amen

*The Wayside Pulpit*

**Behold, my friends, the spring is come; the earth has  
gladly received the embraces of the sun, and we shall soon  
see the results of their love!**

**-Sitting Bull**



### **Summer Camp for UU Children and the Importance of Belonging**

I was recently speaking with a friend whose child is in Middle School and the conversation turned to the importance of belonging in the lives of young adolescents and teenagers. The friend was a UU and was surprised when I shared that summer camp at Unirondack had shaped my now grown children more than any other experience in their lives. She had not known that UU summer camp existed and admitted that she was so full of worry that she never even thought to look.

This set me to thinking about how many other parents in our congregations are searching for opportunities for their children to live our UU values in a safe and nurturing community but have never considered summer camp. Maybe it is the fact that it is called summer camp? I have many friends who cringe at the term because they were sent to camp against their will as children.

So I decided to write to all the parents and kids in all the congregations I could reach to share what I have seen happen to my children at Unirondack.

My 24 year old son now runs his own company in the tech world. He readily shares that the confidence he has, the public speaking and organizational skills, and the feeling of being safe and affirmed as a human being all began at camp. He was a nerdy kid with a limited circle of friends at home as a teenager, and I remember how all year he would look forward to the summer, to returning to the place where he was accepted and could safely try on different ways of being.

My 20 year old son is finishing school at Oberlin. He has had a wonderful experience. Two things about his teen years have stuck with me. The first is when I went to visit his middle school and on the wall in his English class were the student's essays about "home". My son had written about Unirondack. The second is when he visited Oberlin and came back thrilled with the place, commenting that it was like "Unirondack on steroids".

I do not think my children's experience is unique. Over the years I have seen thousands of young people attend Unirondack, or Rowe, or any number of UU camps and have a similar experience. I still have a friend in my community who tells me every time I see her that attending camp was her child's only positive experience of belonging.

The camps are almost always full so if this has gotten you to thinking, talk to friend's whose children have gone to camp, or look on Unirondack's website: <http://www.unirondack.org> or check out any of the other UU camps and conference centers on the UUA website: <http://www.uua.org/directory/where/camps-retreats-and-conferences>.

All my best,

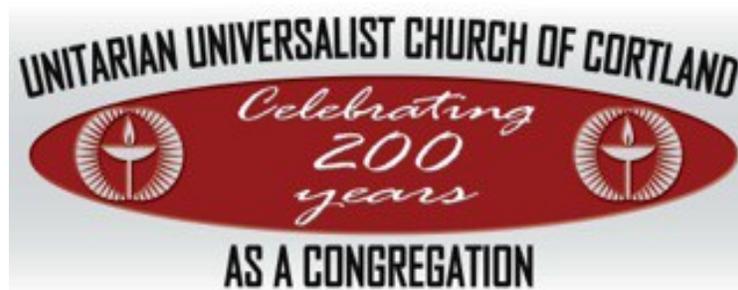
Dan Gottfried  
Executive Director. Unirondack  
Co-founder, UUACCC (Unitarian Universalist Alliance of Camps and Conference Centers)

**Unitarian Universalist  
Church of Cortland**

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## Upcoming Programming

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

**Wed, April 1** 7:00pm: Ted talk view and discuss @ the Beard Building.

**Sun, April 5** 10:30am: Worship service with Kathy Tew Rickey.

**-no classes today**

**Sun, April 12** 10:30am: Worship service: Pulpit Guest TBA.

**-no classes today**

**Sun, April 19** 10:30am: Worship Service with Kathy Tew Rickey.

1:00pm: Building Your Own Theology class.

**Sun, April 26** 10:30am: Worship service with Kathy Tew Rickey.

1:00pm: Building Your Own Theology class.

