



December
2009

Cobblestone News

Unitarian Universalist Church of Cortland: 607-753-0020. Web site: <http://www.uucortland.uuism.org/>

Note from the editors. It was decided to have more frequent newsletters, more of which will be electronic, to save on duplicating and postage. This is the second issue of the purely “virtual” edition. We will mail these to people who do not have e-mail. – Chris and John Ogden

Jan's Column

This is my favorite time of year. According to the Christian tradition, the period leading up to Christmas day is called Advent. The season is marked by a spirit of expectation, preparation and longing. The root meaning of the word advent and the word adventure is “coming to” or “arrival” indicating not only a process but an attitude. The attitude of truly adventurous people is that of openness. They are open to finding the new and discovering the unexpected.

In the Christmas story, the three wise men from the East are on an adventure seeking the child they believed to be a king. During the long trip home, they had time to reflect on all they had seen and experienced.

During this time of deepening darkness and the turning of the year, we have the opportunity to turn inward and reflect on our accomplishments and those things we have yet to do. We can embark on a spiritual journey of our own. There is the possibility of finding the wonder child which exists within each of us. In our church community, we can find the support we need while we are on this important quest. How will we know when we have arrived? What sign will tell us? We do not have the answers to all of our questions, but there is one thing about which I am sure. Through caring for each other (family, friends, neighbors, church members) we strengthen our spirit of courage, perseverance, love, peace, hope and faith every day.

I am looking forward to our Winter Solstice celebration on Sunday, Dec. 20th at 10:30 AM and our Christmas Eve service on Thursday, Dec. 24th at 7:00 PM. For those who want to remain after church, we will have wassail and cookies. On Jan. 3rd we will have a burning bowl ceremony. We will rid ourselves of whatever is holding us back from being fully who we are and take only those things that promote our growth and well being into the future.

In faith,
Jan

Chris's Corner

As the winter snow blankets the frozen ground, it quiets the world around us. It gives us pause to go inward, contemplating and reflecting on what is most important to us. Now more than ever, we need these moments to shield ourselves from the raging storm of tumultuous upheaval and change in our world. The things that stand out for me are love and hope. Surrounding ourselves with people and activities that we care most deeply about and feeling a connection with something greater than ourselves, can lift us up and sustain us. The other, hope, gives us the incentive to keep moving forward. Though the path may sometimes be arduous and difficult to follow, on some level, we know that things can and will get better, for our lives are like the course of the sun. At the darkest moment, there is the promise of returning light.

Wishing you all a peaceful and heartfelt holiday season,
Chris Ogden, Board President

Spotlight on Committees

Committees have been asked to draw up a statement of purpose (job description), select a few goals to work on this year and pick a regular meeting time. So far the following committees have submitted this information to the Board in written form: Building and Grounds, Finance and Pledge, Membership and Publicity and Social Responsibility. Children's Religious Education, Program, and Renovation and Restoration Committees continue to work on this.

Building and Grounds

Thanks to Rick Downing, the electric chalice is in good-working order again. Also, thanks to Jim Pelton and Jason Thornton, we now have a new CD player in the social hall and an area rug in the space for the very young children.

Jim Pelton and Julia Schult – co-chairs

Children's Religious Education

Remember the Children!

The Children's Religious Education has been humming along this fall, with the teens providing child care for the small ones during the service, and lessons for the K-7 kids team taught by Julia Schult as Children's RE Coordinator and Jamie Snow, our SUNY Cortland student Teacher. Jamie

has been very helpful, and we're glad that her cheerful face will be back again to assist during the spring semester 2010!

The Children's RE has found ways to include food in our lessons, which seems to be very popular with the kids. The Program Committee is basing adult services throughout the year on the 7 UU Principles, and we are roughly following those Principles as a guide for planning R.E. lessons. For instance, the first UU Principle is the "Inherent worth and dignity of every human being." A parent and newcomer to our congregation, Glen Reynolds, along with Jamie, used a made up country with strange (to us) customs to help the kids understand how it feels when others use a different language and different rules of behavior from those we are used to. Our thanks also go to others who have helped out, including Ellen Ketchum, Patricia Roiger, and David Millet who carved his first pumpkin!.

We are now looking for help for January, during the time Jamie will be away on break. If anyone in the congregation is willing to lead or assist with Sunday Children's RE, please email or call Julia Schult (jschult@gmail.com or 756-7587). We need help for the first 4 Sundays of the new year: January 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th.

This month and next, the Children's RE Committee will be considering our goals for the rest of this church year, and our budget request for next year. Contact Julia Schult, Ellen Ketchum, or Patricia Roiger if you'd like to be involved. In particular, we really need someone in our congregation to step forward and coordinate some events for our teens! We have great ideas for teen happenings, but we don't have an advisor or coordinator who can make them happen. Please let us know if you are willing and able to help.

Respectfully submitted,
Julia Schult, Children's RE Coordinator

Finance and Pledge

Treasurer, Marion Lutz, reported 80% of the pledges due by the end of November had been paid. This helps the church keep up with its bills. In addition, the church received a total of \$1,350 during the past two months for the Building Fund.

The Committee is planning the Stewardship Campaign for next year and a calendar of events has been mapped out.

John Ogden –Chair

Membership and Publicity

Autumn Pfister volunteered to share the web master responsibilities with Julia Schult.

Materials about UUism and visitor packets are available on the Welcome Table in the social hall. A new brochure, created by Julia Schult, is also there. Bookmarks with the UU Principles and sources of UU beliefs were placed in the hymnals in the sanctuary by the RE children.

Committee members are in the process of contacting lapsed members and friends.

Bob Martin and John Ogden – co-chairs

Programs

Events for the second half of the church year are being planned. Check out the Calendar on the church's web site for up-to-date information (at <http://www.uucortland.uuism.org/>).

Julie Ganson - chair

Renovation and Restoration

Audrey Wakefield, Dottie Fowler, and Chuck Lochner are gathering information on how to apply for 501 (c) 3 status for our building. They will also explore the benefits and pitfalls of such status. In addition, the Committee is laying the ground work for a Capital Campaign sometime in the future.

Chuck Lochner – chair

Social Responsibility

“Guest at Your Table” boxes were passed out in November and will be collected during a January service. For anyone who hasn't received one, boxes are still available in the social hall.

The sock collection for the CAPCO Angels is underway. We are again gathering non-perishable food items for Catholic Charities. Please place your donations in the basket in the social hall.

Joyce Morgan – chair

Church Events

Fund Raising Events

Christmas Flower Sale

Marion Lutz is taking orders for Christmas poinsettias that will decorate the sanctuary for our Christmas Eve service. Orders must be placed by Dec. 15th. The plants are \$12 each and can be given in honor or in memory of a family

member or friend. These dedications will be printed in the order of service. Plants not collected after the service will be taken to a local nursing home. For more information contact Marion fauxsister@aol.com .

Italian Dinner and Concert

Mark your calendar for our next fund raiser – Saturday, January 23rd. It will be an Italian Dinner and concert given by our very own musician, Abbey Phelps. You can come out of the cold and into the warmth of our church community for a delightful evening of good food, good company, and enjoyable music!

Time, Talent, Treasure Auction

Our next auction will be in March. Put your thoughts together about what you could donate to be auctioned and whom you'd like to invite to join in the fun. Donation sheets and a collection box will be available in February. Any questions? See Chris Ogden (<mailto:seaogden@twcnny.rr.com>) .

Quilt

Marion Lutz is gathering the blocks that have been sewn by church volunteers. She will assemble the quilt and pass out tickets to be sold by church members. The raffle will be drawn during our Annual Congregational meeting in June.

SOME DAY
AFTER WE HAVE MASTERED
THE WINDS, THE WAVES,
THE TIDES AND GRAVITY
WE SHALL HARNESS THE ENERGIES
OF LOVE.
THEN, FOR THE SECOND TIME
IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD,
MAN (WOMAN) WILL HAVE DISCOVERED
FIRE.

Pierre Teilhard De Chardin