

Cobblestone News

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

uucortland.uuism.org

From the Minister

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

A colleague recently passed this article along to me:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/14/opinion/sunday/arthur-c-brooks-abundance-without-attachment.html?action=click&contentCollection=The%20Upshot&module=MostEmailed&version=Full®ion=Marginalia&src=me&pgtype=article&r=0>

It's an op-ed piece in the New York Times by Arthur C. Brooks titled, "Abundance without Attachment." It explains simply and eloquently what I've been trying to express about the tensions between the material and the spiritual during the winter holidays.

Brooks, an economist, tells of seeking a Hindu swami in New Delhi to ask his thoughts on material wealth. This swami happened to be an Indian-American business man who gave up his wealth to become a monk. The swami told Brooks that wealth and material things are not problems in themselves; it's our attachment to them or our grasping for them that is problematic, especially when one looks to these things as the ends and not the means for a fulfilled life.

I know we all know this – it is conventional wisdom shared by many religions and philosophies. Yet our culture and capitalist society bombard us with a much different message about what material things can do for us. We are under tremendous pressure to consume.

Brooks and the Hindu swami say enjoy your abundance if you have it but don't let it consume you. In addition Brooks suggests three practices that promote mindfulness and help us keep our focus on joy and meaning in our lives:

1. **Collect more experiences than things in your life** – you'll cherish a memorable vacation more than a new couch 25 years from now. This is the paradox of things: material things fade from our memories while the immaterial endures in us mind, body, and soul.
2. **Steer clear of excessive usefulness** – in the Gospels, Jesus says, "You see these lilies of the field? No king has ever dressed finer than these, yet the lilies do not toil nor spin." In other words, they just are. Allow yourself to be like the lilies and toil not; rather than do something for gain, do something just for the fun of it now and then.

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Inside this issue:

From the Min. Con.	2
A Note From Joyce	2
Religious Education	2
Information Sought	3
Traveling Light	3
Wayside Pulpit	3
Programming	4

As Unitarian Universalists

we promote and affirm:

- 1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- 2nd Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- 3rd Principle: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- 4th Principle: A free and reasonable search for truth and meaning;
- 5th Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process in our congregations and in society at large;
- 6th Principle: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- 7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

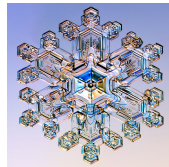
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3. **Get to the center** – There is a concept that runs through Hinduism, Buddhism, and even early Christianity: think of life as a wheel: on the outside we endure the vagaries of living in a material world where we can get knocked off our horse quite easily. However, at the center of the wheel is the spiritual, the divine or ultimate truth. This is where we find non-attachment. The more we can move our awareness to the inside of the wheel, the less vulnerable we are to the ever turning wheel of fortune (or misfortune) on the outside.

This is what I wish for you in the New Year: **Experience, Play, and Center**. And I dare say you can find elements of all three at church on any Sunday morning: So. Please. Come. Often.

Peace and blessings,

Rev. Kathy

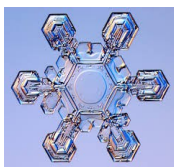


A Note From Joyce by Joyce Morgan, Board President

Hello All – It is January. Time to reflect on the past year and prepare for the new one. Some of us will find last year didn't turn out the way we thought it should have. Letting go of expectations takes time, but in the coming year disappointments will fade and life is sure to give us new things to look forward to. Until then – one practices acceptance.

With the holidays behind us, the cold gets tiresome, but winter holds its own beauty. Who hasn't wondered at a hillside that has just been covered with freshly fallen snow? Sunshine makes the white tree branches shimmer. It's like a picture post card. But enough of that. I am hopeful that 2015 will be a positive year for our church. On the board, we are working on our plans for repairing the bell tower in the near future. We also have talked of ways we can grow our congregation and will share our ideas with all of you soon.

Personally, I plan to direct my attention on the second half of my year as president of the board and also want to work on social justice projects. The Justice Sunday Service will be in March. I am beginning to think about that and I also want to have a bake sale for hunger. If anyone has any other social justice issues they would like the church to get involved in, please tell me. Until Sunday, Joyce.



Children's Religious Education by Ashley Vormwald, RE Coordinator

The children's service last month concluded our focus on the first Unitarian Universalist principle. This month we will begin looking at our second principle. The children's version of this principle is "we believe that all people should be treated fairly and kindly." We will consider how this principle applies to relationships and situations in our everyday lives as well as how it applies in a broader societal context. We are also going to start exploring possible service projects. Please let me know if you have any suggestions!

Information Sought About McLean UU Church

Hello,

Do you know where the McLean, NY UU Church is or was located? My Grandfather, Fred E Fitts was a member. Also my Great Grandfather, George Fitts and Great Great Grandfather, Paschal (Pascal) Fitts were also members. Grandfather Fred E Fitts sold the farm in McLean and moved to Cortland after his father, George, died in 1905. He was also a member of your church, I believe?

A Memorial Window was donated to the McLean UU Church in 1905 in the Memory of George and Paschal Fitts. I would love to see or know anything about the window or their UU Church affiliations.

Thank you,
William Calvert Fitts

Traveling Light by Lynn Olcott

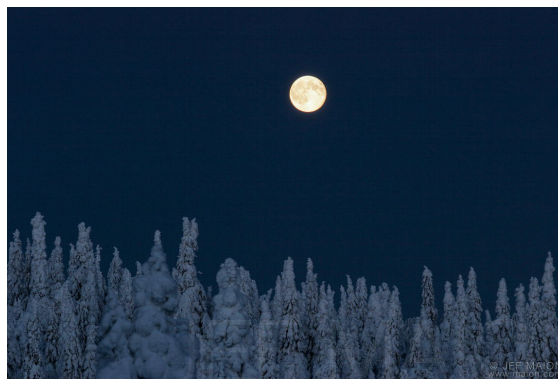
Full Winter Moon

"...and God made two great lights...the lesser one to rule the night."
Genesis 2:16

Driving northwest before dawn, I see a perfect circle of moon against the glassy black sky, casting a wan light on the winter landscape. What is a full moon full of? The moon is confident in its purpose and its place in the sky. The moon is immune to what people think or write or say about it. Part of the moon's purpose is to disappear and be reborn. The moon is a creation of God.

I too am a creation of God. I try to trust God enough to be confident in my purpose and my place in the sky. I try not to be distracted by how other people view my humble efforts to live through the purpose of this life's gift. Like the moon, I too will fade and disappear. But I trust that I will live on, reappearing out of stillness, in my writing, in my children and in the fruits of my work.

God of winter, God of the moon, I am as you created me. Amen.



The Wayside Pulpit

Memory is where the proof of life is stored.

—Norman Cousins

**Unitarian Universalist
Church of Cortland**

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

607-753-0020



Upcoming Programming

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

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| Sunday, January 4th | - 10:30 am service led by Ruth O'Lill.
Burning Bowl Ceremony |
| Sunday, January 11th | - 10:30 am service led by pulpit guest
Rev. Janet Shortall.
TBA |
| Sunday, January 18th | - 10:30 am service led by Kathy Tew Rickey.
TBA |
| Sunday, January 25th | - 10:30 am service led by Kathy Tew Rickey. |

