

Cobblestone News

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

uucortland.uuism.org

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From the Minister

It's hard to believe we are about to wrap up the 2013-14 church year at our Cortland congregation. What an exciting year for me to accompany you on this journey of recovery and growth. You have worked hard and have shared so eloquently your hopes for our small but mighty church to flourish. And indeed it has in many ways. Our year will culminate in adding new families to our membership role and in sending forth one of our high school graduates as she "bridges" to young adulthood. We'll also say goodbye to our accompanist as she moves on to medical school – how privileged we have been to have Abbey as our pianist, to share in her talents, and to see her off to a bright future.

While goodbyes may be hard, we have so much to look forward to in the coming year. As we've had round table discussions with each other as congregants, we've come up with some very doable capital improvement ideas that will make our church home more welcoming and accessible. In the meantime, let's show our support of church growth through our generosity and getting our pledges in timely so we can be assured of a working budget by annual meeting time on June 15th.



I want to thank the Board of Trustees and the congregation for having faith in me and letting me lead you in worship. Kudos goes to Marion Lutz for her tremendous energy and her pragmatism in getting things done for this congregation. Bess Koval has also been inexhaustible in her planning and hosting the 200th birthday of the congregation. Jim Pelton has been indispensable in working behind the scenes to make things go smoothly such as making sure the building is secure, keeping the books and performing other administrative tasks including copying the program every Sunday morning. Finally, what a blessing we have in Ashley Vormwald who has taken the reins of Religious Education with confidence and competence. I look forward to working with her again next year.

In fact, I look forward to working with you ALL next year whether it's the work of worship or the work of justice-building or the work of building up our beloved community. In the meantime, I invite you to get out there and PLAY this summer so that we can bring refreshed and re-created minds, bodies, and souls to the work that awaits us in the fall. May it be so.

In faith,
Kathy

Children's Religious Education by Ashley Vormwold, RE Coordinator

Summer is on the horizon! These longer, warmer days are well suited for this month's worship theme, which is *play*. Our religious education class will be in a playful spirit (as usual) as we explore elements of play, such as imagination and creativity, and identify the benefits we gain from laughter and joy.

Play can be a spiritually fulfilling practice, especially when we let go of fear, judgment, and perfectionism. The children will have opportunities to practice quieting their minds and letting go of self-judgment, thereby letting their intuition and spirit guide their creative activities. We will also emphasize the importance of process rather than product. The process of self-expression and the experience of joy are beneficial and worth-while, even if nothing else is accomplished as a result.

Please consider following up these lessons at home with your child/children by discussing these concepts, playing, imagining, and/or creating together, and maintaining a judgment-free environment that encourages self-expression. Enjoy!



A Note From Marion by Marion Lutz, BOD president

Hi Folks,

June is a very busy month for church business and preparing for next year. Once all of the business is taken care of we will have the summer off to "PLAY". Take the time to relax, rejuvenate and spend time with your families in the summer sun.

Our last Sunday is June 22. There will be a 10:30 am service with Kathy followed by the Annual Picnic at Little York Park. Bring a dish to pass and your table service. Be prepared for fun and games!

It has been a great year of celebrating our 200th year as a congregation!

Thank you everyone for your help and support of our church community this year.
HAPPY SUMMER!
Marion

What Does It Mean to Be a Person of Play? by Kathy Tew Rickey

There are so many ways to think of play in the adult world. It could mean engaging in recreation like golf or soccer or a bridge club, as well as amusing ourselves with something like working a crossword puzzle or building a model airplane. But what is play and what is merely diversion? This month's spiritual exercise attempts to get at that distinction.

Experts on the social effects of play say that people who engage in purely enjoyable *and purposeless* activities tend to be less violent, more empathetic and trusting, and more adaptable to life's challenges. Unfortunately in our culture today, doing something without purpose is considered a waste of time – at least in our adult lives. But we need to engage purposeless activities throughout all our ages and stages. Human beings are made for play. Play is the exuberant expression of our being. It points us to our true selves and is the fount of creativity and spirituality. The sages have known the spiritual value of play for eons; they have known that play keeps our search for meaning humble.

Given these qualitative aspects of play, this month's worship theme seems vital to our spiritual fitness. So let's see how we might put more play into our lives. As we consider what constitutes our playtime, let us ask ourselves: Is it fun and done just for the fun of it? Is it a freeing experience? Is it the kind of play that taps into our authentic self, the kind of playing that puts in mind the most fun and carefree times of our childhood? This month and perhaps throughout the summer, may our explorations of play help us to grow in spirit, changing our lives so that we may help build a beloved community.

In faith,

Kathy

Here are some resources on the subject of Play:

A Speaking of Faith interview with Dr. Stuart Brown <http://being.publicradio.org/programs/2009/play/>

Unlikely playmates

<http://being.publicradio.org/programs/2009/play/audiogallery/soundseen.shtml#slideshow>

More unlikely playmates <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqmba7npY8g>

Fellowship of the Rings – play as a spiritual practice – a must-see

http://being.publicradio.org/programs/2009/play/soundseen_video-rings.shtml#slideshow

The Wayside Pulpit

**The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new
landscapes, but in having new eyes.**

—Marcel Proust

Summer Spiritual Exercise by Kathy Tew Rickey

How about taking June's worship theme of Play for a test drive over the summer? Here's what to do - first divide a page into two columns and head one column with "Play as a Child" and the other with "Play as an Adult." Then keeping in mind the properties of beneficial play (see the box below), list first all the childhood play you can remember that qualifies, and list next all the adult play you think qualifies. When you complete both lists, see if you can find comparable activities between the two, or if you see a theme or a pattern emerging from your lists. The goal is to discover an activity that can you do in your life now that puts you in mind of those freeing and joyful times of your childhood.

When you nail down that special activity, make a two-hour play-date with yourself and engage in it! Try to get in at least two hours of playtime and then be prepared to share your experience, reflections, pictures, or other objects at our ingathering in September. I'm looking forward to hearing about your experiences with Play.

In faith,

Kathy



Properties of Beneficial Play:

Apparently Purposeless – done for its own sake.

Voluntary – not done for duty or obligation.

Inherent Attraction – fun, exciting, the opposite of boredom.

Freedom From Time – causes you to lose track of the passage of time.

Diminished Consciousness of Self – helps you forget outer self and be in the now.

Improvisational Potential – invites serendipity and novelty; break from the routine.

Continuation Desire – reluctance to disengage from the fun.

From *Play, How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*, by Stuart Brown and Christopher Vaughan Penguin: New York, 2009.

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Church of Cortland**

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Upcoming Programming

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

- Sunday, June 8th** - 10:30 am service with Julie Ganson.
- Sunday, June 15th** - 10:30 am service with Kathy Tew Rickey.
- Following the service is our Annual Congregational Meeting. Please plan to attend.
 - Father's Day
- Sunday, June 22nd** - 10:30 am service with Kathy Tew Rickey.
- This is our LAST service until September 8th.
 - Annual picnic at Little York Park to follow service. (Pavillion #3, near basketball court.)

