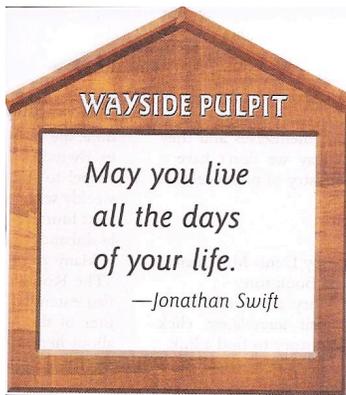


November
2008

Cobblestone News

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



Opening Words

I declare a Sabbath Day – to walk in the wilderness of enlarged perceptions; I declare a release from work – to nourish the stamina to pursue ideals; I declare a special hour – to help cherish life's joys and combat life's sorrows; I declare a reign of holiness – to deepen our grounding in the sustaining mystery.

I declare a time for simply being and letting go. For rediscovering great, forgotten truths, for basking in the arts of the ages, and for learning how to live again.

*The Rev. David O. Rankin
UUCWORLD, Winter 2008*

Chris' Corner

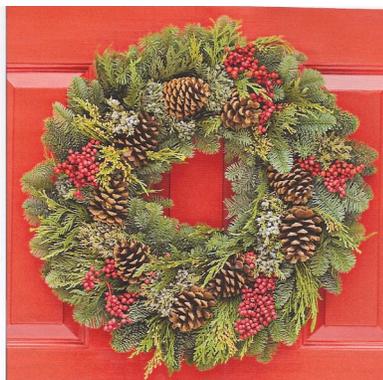
The Connection Between Gratitude and Giving

Today there is new and compelling research that supports the idea that the way to make life more enjoyable, more fulfilling, and more deeply peaceful, is to cultivate gratitude.

Expanding your capacity for deep and abiding appreciation is one of the surest paths to happiness. In addition, the regular practice of gratitude can have a tremendous impact on your health – not to mention your ability to build relationships, make progress toward your personal and professional goals, and function better in the world at large.

This concept isn't new, having been recognized by countless philosophers and religions, including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. However, it seems that we, as a culture, have fallen out of practice. Running counter to what Westerners hold dear, - independence, self-sufficiency, and earned rewards, gratitude has taken a back seat.

Cont'd. on p. 3



Jan's Column



Hello,

Since coming to UU Cortland I have been struck by the degree of openness and sense of community that I've found. I feel so privileged to be your minister. Our *Day of the Dead* service was such a success I promise that we will have more congregational and intergenerational services in the future. I will be preaching on Nov. 23, Dec. 7 and Dec. 14 so I think that Dec. 21 the *Winter Solstice Service* will give us another opportunity to share our thoughts and feeling with each other about the growing darkness and coming light both literally and symbolically. On Dec. 24 at 7:00 PM we will also be having an old fashioned candle light Christmas Eve service in our sanctuary this year. We will have a wonderful pianist plus at least one and possibly two soloists in addition to singing lots of Carols. If you

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Jan's Column, cont'd from p. 1

will be in town please come and bring friends and family.

Last weekend Chris, Chuck, John and I went to a workshop in Barneveld, NY entitled *Big Ideas for Small Congregations*. We learned a lot and had a great time meeting members of other small congregations in our district. I came away feeling that our church has many strengths including being a warm welcoming community with fabulous food during our fellowship hour. What we need to think about is how to keep our pledges current and how to get some of our committees up and running more efficiently. I look forward to having conversations with you about these things.

I think that we can all be thankful that this election we thought would never end has ended. I hope that we can come together as a nation to work on the pressing issues we face.

Lastly, I have also put another topic of discussion on our blog for your input. You can access the blog by going to the church website (<http://www.uucortland.uuism.org>) and clicking on UUCortland blog in the left hand column.

Rev. Jan



Splinters from the Board

Marion Lutz, Treasurer, has requested that those who have made a pledge, to please catch up with their payments, so the church has funds to pay current bills. A graph has been posted in the sanctuary to show how well we as a church are keeping up with our pledge payments on a monthly basis. She will be sending out letters this month to all those who pledged

with the current status of each pledge.

Julia Schult reported that the belfry beams need to be braced by the end of this church year. Then the outside painting can commence. John Ogden and Bob Martin have been looking into prices for a wireless mike and wireless headsets for people to hear the service better. Then a grant proposal can be written since these items can promote growth in our church.

Thank you to Kate Coffey for offering the OWL program for our children. Also, welcome Julia Schult as our new RE Coordinator. She is being assisted by two SUNY Cortland students.



John Ogden, Finance and Pledge Committee, is organizing a stewardship conference for UU churches in the Southern Tier. Marion Lutz and Chris and John will be attending this event on Dec. 6th in Ithaca.

Fund Raising: The "paint bucket" is available on Sunday mornings in the sanctuary for donations to help pay for paint for the steeple. Audrey Wakefield has booked the Susquehanna String Band again for next October. An all-church service auction is planned for the spring. Marion Lutz is putting together a rental fee schedule for anyone who wants to rent space in our church.

An all-church retreat is being scheduled in January to update our mission statement and create a long-range plan. Julie Ganson and Chris Ogden will be the facilitators.

Chuck Lochner has been taking pictures at Church events and sending them on to Julia Schult, our webmaster, to keep our church website "fresh" and up-to-date. Check it out at: [: http://www.uucortland.uuism.org](http://www.uucortland.uuism.org).

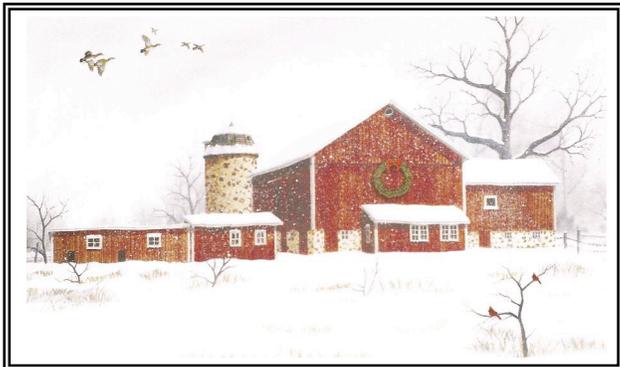
Believing Is Doing

we can achieve
what we can
conceive
and **believe**

-Mark Twain

The difference between
what we do and
what we are capable of doing
would suffice to solve
most of the world's problems.

-Gandhi



Creativity

We can unleash the creativity, innovation and
inspiration that are part of our birthright.
The choice is ours.
The responsibility is ours.
The future is ours.

-Al Gore, excerpted from *An
Inconvenient Truth*

Newsletter Editors

Chris and John Ogden

Chris' Corner, cont'd. from p. 1

But thankfulness, has suddenly grabbed more headlines and book covers than ever before. While it may not make a big splash as falling in love or winning a million dollars, the still waters of gratitude run deep. Ultimately, you end up with a richer, more satisfying view of the world.

A life teeming with gratitude isn't something you find at some later, more enlightened point in your journey. It starts here and now. However, naming our gifts doesn't always come easy. It often takes a conscious effort. Sometimes we have to pay special attention and look at things from a new perspective. For example, when your Internet connection goes down during a storm, it takes practice to focus instead on your leak-proof roof and warm, dry surroundings. It's a kind of mental discipline that you get better at with practice. When you start to see what's right, it will fill you with gratitude and a kind of joy.

Since interdependence lies at the heart of thankfulness, gratitude motivates and inspires us to return the favor, enabling the cycle of giving and receiving that holds people, communities, and societies together. In fact, there's scientific evidence that grateful people naturally feel more inclined to share, further propelling the phenomenon, "what goes around comes around".

To practice gratitude in our lives requires not only consistent effort, but also that we be open to receive it – and brave enough to put it into action. Buddhist psychologist, Jack Kornfield, author of *The Wise Heart*, says, "It's a choice we can make, not only for ourselves, but as a way to connect with everyone else. That's where the beauty lies, in this sense of connection that, in the end, sustains us."

(Excerpted from *body + soul*, September 2008)

*May the holiday season bring you a sense of
peace and heartfelt gratitude.*

*Chris Ogden,
Board President*

How to Remember a Loved One at the Holidays

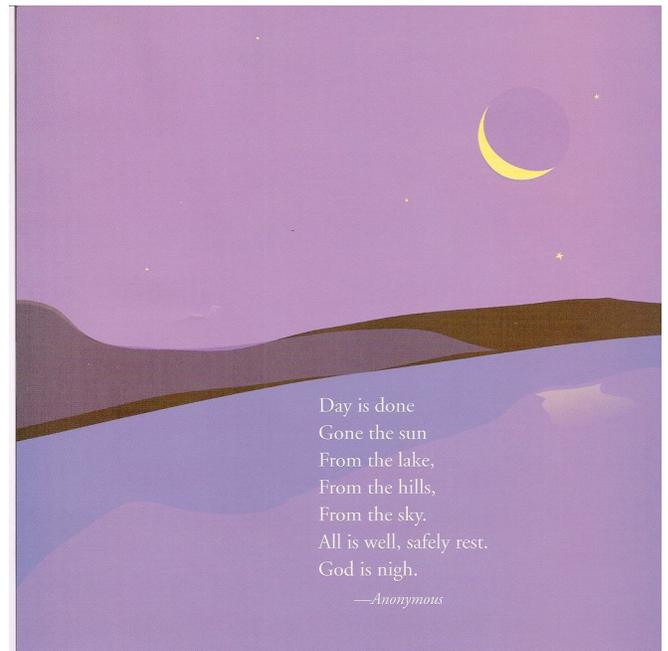
Holidays can create feelings of dread and anxiety in those who are grieving. The images of family togetherness and the often unrealistic expectations of a season filled with picture-perfect, joyful gatherings can cause tremendous stress for those who are not grieving—let alone those in the midst of the painful, isolating experience of loss. How does one celebrate the holidays when a loved one is so sorely missed? Creating new rituals and new traditions that pay tribute to the memory of the deceased is one way to survive, and perhaps even embrace, the holidays when a loved one has died. Here are some suggestions of what you can do.

- * Wrap a favorite keepsake that belonged to your loved one or a framed picture of that person, and give it as a gift to another grieving family member.
- * Decorate a candle and light it at mealtime in memory of your loved one.
- * Make a book of pictures, drawings, and memorabilia about the deceased to give or simply share with one another. This is a good activity for children as well.
- * Make a donation to a favorite charity in the person's honor.
- * Purchase a holiday book—perhaps a favorite of the deceased—and donate it to your local library or school. Ask the librarian to inscribe it in memory of your loved one.
- * Bring your loved one's favorite food to share at a holiday dinner. Mention their name in the blessing over the food or propose a toast to their memory.
- * Share anecdotes and favorite stories about the person who died.
- * Decorate and hang a cutout star in your home

with your hopes and dreams for the future. Thinking about tomorrow is part of your healing.

Once you've remembered your loved one, make sure you remember yourself. Take care of yourself. Be gentle. Do what you can do – no more and no less.

—Excerpted from *Pathways*, published by the Upstate New York Hospice Alliance



Something to Strive for and Keep in Our Hearts

“Whatever size church you are, know that there are gifts and challenges all along the way. The trick is to be the best you can be at whatever size you are. Have quality worship. Find one social action project to commit to, pay your bills, take care of each other, learn to handle conflict graciously, welcome visitors and love your children. Any congregation can do that.”

—from *Big Ideas for Small Congregation* by Jane Dwinell and Ellen Germann-Melosh

“Quit griping about your church; if it was perfect, you couldn't belong.” – Anonymous (courtesy of Sam Morrie)

**UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH OF
CORTLAND**

**ADDRESS SERVICE
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c/o 49 Madison St.
Cortland, NY 13045-2036



*Congregation active
since 1843
Building dedicated
in 1837*