

First Universalist Church of Southold
PO Box 221 Main Road
Southold, NY 11971



The Free Spirit

Rev. Valerie Freseman, Minister
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Office Hours: Mon. – Thurs. 10:00 – 12:30
Church Web Page – <http://FirstUniversalistSouthold.org/>, email address: SoutholdUU@optonline.net

January 1, 2021

Services – Zoom Online

Sunday, January 3, 11:00 a.m.

Fireside Service

We will be saying goodbye to 2020 and welcoming in a much better 2021.
Susi Young, lay speaker

Sunday, January 10, 11:00 a.m.

“Our Wildest Dreams”

Our capacity to bring about social change depends on our capacity to widen the circle of our imagination. This service celebrates the past and present efforts of the Unitarian Universalist movement to live into its ideals of justice and compassion, a core principle of our faith.

Rev. Valerie Freseman

Sunday, January 17, 11:00 a.m.

TBA

Mary James, lay speaker

Sunday, January 24, 11:00 a.m.

“Remembering Our Bodies”

Rev. Valerie Freseman and the Long Island Area Council joint service

Sunday, January 31, 11:00 a.m.

“Interdependent Web”

Encouraging directions regarding climate change and diversity.
Sherry Smith, lay speaker

Thought for the Month

The world changes when we change.

The world softens when we soften.

The world loves us when we choose to love the world.

Coming Attractions!!! ** If you have questions about any of our programs, please email us at **
** SoutholdUU@optonline.net **

January 5th – Covenant Group. Online – Zoom, 4:00 p.m. Topic: “Imagination”

January 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th – Afternoon Tea. Online – Zoom, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. A time for fellowship and connection

January 13th – Morning Spiritual Practice. Online – Zoom 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. Rev. Valerie leads us in a spiritual practice – a chance to ground and center oneself during the week. Bring a notebook, pen and a glass of water.

January 14th – Black Lives Matter Book Discussion. Pre-registration required. Online – Zoom, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. **Book:** *So You Want to Talk About Race*

January 26th – Board Meeting. Online – Zoom, 6:00 p.m. All are welcome.

January 27th – Evening Spiritual Practice. Online – Zoom, 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. Rev. Valerie leads us in a spiritual practice.

Covenant Group

We will be meeting January 5th, 4-5:00 p.m., on Zoom. I will send you the link that day. Our topic this month is, “Imagination.” What does it mean to be people of imagination? Here are some questions for your journal writing: What is the opposite of imagination? Have you ever been "saved" by your imagination?

Dr. Seuss (Theodor Geisel) is quoted as saying: “I like nonsense, it wakes up the brain cells. Fantasy is a necessary ingredient in living; it's a way of looking at life through the wrong end of a telescope. Which is what I do, and that enables you to laugh at life's realities.”

Bring a high and a low to share for the month. All are welcome.

We are collecting food for the mini pantry in back of the Arcade in Greenport. There is a mini food pantry at the Presbyterian Church in Southold, if you do not want to go to Greenport.

In Peace,
Ginny Cornell
Ginc289@optonline.net

Notes from the Building Team

Planning ahead...

For us to be in our beautiful new church. In the meantime, we are enjoying church activities and fellowship via zoom. (What better an arrangement when few congregations can meet at church?)

Moving ahead...

The Board and Building Team will be finalizing every aspect of the design...and costs. Soon, we will get a permit from the Town of Southold Building Dept. and be on our way to building our new church.

Happy New Year!

Irene Stewart,
Building Team Chair

Greetings, Beloved Community!

Just as a reminder, I will be on leave beginning December 25th through January 5th. I will not be checking email, but I will be available for emergency pastoral care concerns.

As we turn the corner into January, I can think of no better theme than imagination for 2021. For all that we have experienced this year, for all the adaptation we have done, our capacity to imagine is what we have strengthened the most.

I wonder what social isolation looked like for those wander-gatherers of the ice age – I think about the examples of imagination explorers have found on the walls of caves, or etched into hills and rocks – the sigils and ways people have dreamt of things outside themselves, and then sought to express what they imagined through whatever tools they had. By expressing what they wished for – a good hunt, or fertility – they were imaging a time of survival for themselves – even abundance. They developed this skill alongside the skills of sharpening tools and surviving their harsh existence.

We have faced an unprecedented time of adaptation and anxiety this past year – and there is no doubt that some of the tools we have learned will serve us well in the future, whereas some of them will no doubt fall into disuse again.

You can certainly look to this past year as a successful one, even though it may not seem the same. You have shown up for one another, you have questioned the world and engaged in thoughtful discussions about racism and so many other issues, you have tried new things, and you have all been tenacious and thoughtful. Our recent successful coat drives and cookie exchanges have been a testament to the spirit of “doing what the spirit says do,” as one of our hymns says.

We may have spent the vast bulk of this year hiding, each person in their cave, but that does not mean we have refused to dream, and dream big.

This coming month we will continue our discussion of the book, *So You Want to Talk About Race*, as well as explore the theme of imagination in our spiritual practice classes. On January 24th, we will again have a joint service presented by the Long Island Area Council – the theme will be “Remembering Our Bodies.” It is a good topic to explore in the wintertime, or really any time of intense hibernation, as our embodied selves are the means by which we experience the sacred. So please enjoy this opportunity to connect with your fellow religionists across the North Fork!

Warm Regards,
Valerie F.

Looking Back

I am starting a new section for *The Free Spirit*, entitled, “Looking Back.” If you have any pictures from past events at the church, please send to me, with names and event (ginc289@optonline.net). If you do not have a cell phone to take the pictures, you may mail me the pictures and I will return them to you. Or perhaps you have a story you would like to share.

This is a picture of one of the church school groups. Left to right: Baxter Townsend, Jessica Pond, ? Fevola, Katherine and Mary Ellen Doering, Robert Pond in the front.

Thank you,
Ginny Cornell



Thoughts on Spirit

“Go-to Words for 2021”

(adapted from an essay written in 2013 for my book, “Crazy About Words”)

It always impresses me that the 100,000 plus words in my dictionary are each constructed from a unique combination of letters derived from a 26-letter alphabet! From aardvark to zyzyva, we have managed to create the most expressive language imaginable, the toolbox of writers & poets, and all who use and appreciate words.

After our 2020 annus horribilis, the beginning of this new year puts most of us in a reflective mood. As that mood extends to my writing this piece, I wonder what single word I might select as my “guide word for the new year.” Looking at a smorgasbord of candidates, I quickly realize that I have long regarded “attitude” as basic to just about everything in life.

It’s a great word that originally had a physical meaning: the “position of something relative to some other physical thing” (e.g., an aircraft or a ballet dancer assumes an attitude). It was later adopted by our ancestor-wordsmiths looking for a word to describe a “mental or emotional position relative to some aspect of life” (e.g., a person has a positive or negative attitude about money). Because we all have the power to wake up each day and assume the attitude we choose, and so set the course for “the first day of the rest of our lives,” I rank it my #1 word.

Viktor Frankl, Dachau survivor, when asked upon liberation in 1945 to describe his experience, simply said, “I learned a lot about myself in these past three years.” In his book, *Man’s Search for Meaning*, he says that “the ultimate human freedom is to choose one’s attitude.” Looking at the word again, and seeing that it begins with “a,” the abecedarian in me comes out, and I reach for a “b” and a “c” word that will fit into this New Year’s reflection.

“Bittersweet” is a nice compound word with a yin and yang quality to it. The strong, fast-growing bittersweet vine chokes its host bushes and trees in growing season but adorns their bare branches in winter with its glowing red berries encased in orange. Look up on a sunny day in the winter woods, or gather pieces of the vine to bring indoors, and you’ll appreciate the -sweet end of this word. Frankl’s point was that many life experiences, even the toughest, are bittersweet. And we can learn and grow as human beings from each of them if we have an attitude of openness and an interest in learning about ourselves relative to Life.

“Circumstances,” a Latin word meaning “the things that surround us,” need not dictate our attitude. Attitude comes from within us, is self-determined. Imagine you have only six pennies. Are you poor? Circumstances might say so. But you give two away with generosity in your heart, then buy a piece of bread with a third, consciously savoring its taste. You are rich!

So, we might look back on 2020, a year of health, financial, and political crises, and consider if we “learned a lot about ourselves.” Has our attitude been positive, and our view of events bittersweet? Have we allowed circumstances to rule our lives or have we used them to our benefit? I hope this trilogy of words – attitude, bittersweet, and circumstances – when considered, will be useful to you as you launch into 2021.

Happy New Year!
Joe Mc Kay 1/1/21

Thank You !

We want to thank all of our members, friends, and neighbors in the community for making our holiday clothing and food drive, mitten tree, and cookie exchange wonderfully successful. Thanks to everyone’s participation, and generosity, we collected a car load of warm clothes, many boxes and bags of food and paper goods, and over 150 NEW winter accessories that were delivered to CAST. And we shared holiday cheer, and delicious homemade goodies with those who were able to stop by the church grounds.

We wish you all a very happy, and healthy, New Year!