

First Universalist Church of Southold
PO Box 221 Main Road
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The Free Spirit

Rev. Valerie Freseman, Minister

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Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 9:00am – 2:00pm

Church Web Page – <http://FirstUniversalistSouthold.org/>, e-mail address: SoutholdUU@optonline.net

December 1, 2021

Services – at Holy Trinity Church

December 5, 2021 at 11:00 a.m.

“En-Darkenment”

Rev. Valerie Freseman

December 12, 2021 at 11:00 a.m.

“Why Souvenirs Matter”

A talk about the way in which medieval and modern pilgrims incorporate their experiences with the way in which a “souvenir” allows each traveler to make a statement about their value.

Bill Edwards, lay speaker

December 19, 2021 at 11:00 a.m.

“What the Shepherds Saw”

Rev. Valerie Freseman

December 26, 2021 at 11:00 a.m.

“Climate Change and the Holidays”

The impact of holiday celebrations on our psyche and the interdependent web of all existence.

Susan Johnson, lay speaker

Coming Attractions!!!

Dec. 4th – Toy Drive Drop-off for Rural & Migrant Ministry. Church parking lot, Southold, 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Coming Attractions (cont'd.)

Dec. 7th – Covenant Group. Southold Library, 4:00 p.m. Topic: *The Book of Hope* by Jane Goodall.

Dec. 8th – Social Action Committee & 8th Principle Task Force. Online – Zoom, 4:00 p.m.

Dec. 19th – Cookie Swap. Holy Trinity, 12:00 p.m. Fill a tin with yummy goodies for the holidays!

Dec. 22nd – Winter Solstice Online Gathering. Zoom, 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Join us for a visual and musical toast to winter! An opportunity for reflection and contemplation to celebrate the darkest night of the year.

Dec. 28th – Board Meeting. Parsonage, 4:00 p.m. All are welcome to join via Zoom.

Covenant Group

We will be reading Jane Goodall's, *The Book of Hope*. All are welcome to join us at the Southold Free Library, Dec. 7th, 4-5 pm, upstairs. There is an elevator.

Our topic will be, "Your Best Gift" – the best gift you have received or that you have given. Write a paragraph to bring to the group. If you cannot make the meeting, please feel free to send me your thoughts and I will read them to the group.

Bring a high and a low to share for the month.

In peace,
Ginny Cornell

Thought for December...

Love shifts us from a "get" to a "give" mentality.

Happy Holidays!

News from the Building Team

The Building Team has been meeting regularly, in person, with architect Raymond Calamari and Owner's Representative, Brian Davis, to finalize interior and exterior plans for our new church. Mr. Calamari has been in touch with the structural engineer, John Condon, who is confident the smaller, more efficient plans are in line with the requirements of Southold Town. The BT will meet with Mr. Calamari and Mr. Davis at least once before the Christmas holiday, and hope to have another "congregational update" after Sunday services shortly after that meeting.

Mark Sisson, Chair
Building Team

December Greetings, Southoldian Unitarian Universalists.

What are your end-of-the-year joys?

Perhaps you don't celebrate any particular traditions, but just love the winter season, the shorter days, and the potential beauty of snow on the leaves. Maybe your family – or a neighbor – has already put out their Christmas lights and decorations, which these days can range from the sublime to the ridiculously goofy – with lovely lights or inflatable reindeer stables. Perhaps your family celebrates Hanukkah traditions which kindle the remembrance of miracles from a time long ago. December and the turning of one year over to the next offers all kinds of opportunities for contemplation and a sense of renewal.

Opening up to joy is the “Soul Matters” theme for the month of December. At first, it may seem easy to embrace the idea of “opening up to joy.” What could be so hard about cultivating moments of clarity, release, and hope? Who does not want to experience joy?

And yet it is not that simple. Even if we are experiencing a time of relative peace, being truly open to experiencing joy – and the possibility of hope – can be startling. For one thing, we may cling to a certain routine in our living and in our expectations. We may assume that only one set of experiences can give us joy. We may narrow our circle of friends, acquaintances, or activities out of habit or a desire to protect ourselves, because we are afraid of something new. Perhaps we have found it difficult to express our true selves for a long time and have found it easier to just go with the flow, or to hide from ourselves and others.

For me, the difference between joy and happiness is the suddenness of it. Joy comes as enchantment – a quick reconnection that comes from reconnecting our humanity to the beauty of the universe. Happiness is a kind of orientation – a willingness to seek and embrace the places where joy, love, fellowship, and beauty are readily available. Reflecting on the ways we are open to joy will help us cultivate the kind of fortitude that might serve us in all the phases of our life, and inform how and where we are willing to give service to others.

I look forward to our December 19th service, which will be our celebrating Christmas traditions and the Christmas story. On Wednesday, December 22 we will gather for a winter solstice celebration online.

Thank you for the adjustments you have been making during this COVID-19 era. We will continue to update you if we make changes to our our protocols in the future. If you wish to make an appointment with me for pastoral care, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or through our office.

Brightest Blessings,
Rev. Valerie Freseman

Do you have a news item, announcement, or picture for *The Free Spirit*? You may send it to Susan Pond at suepond58@gmail.com, or mail it to the church post office box.

News from the Social Action Committee (SAC) & 8th Principle Task Force

At the October Board meeting, SAC asked for and received approval to hold a Toy Drive-through and a First Sunday "Share the Plate (STP)" collection for the children served by the Rural & Migrant Ministry (R&MM) Amandla Worker Education Center, in Riverhead. The Toy Drive-through will be on Sat., Dec. 4th, 12-2pm in the church parking lot. We will be collecting new, unwrapped toys and indulging in some Dunkin' Donuts hot chocolate and homemade cookies. This will be followed by the First Sunday "STP" on Sun., Dec. 5th.

SAC received an invitation, for the entire congregation, from R&MM to attend **Roots of Gratitude**, the first annual North Shore Music Concert and Toy Drive. It is being held on Sun., Dec. 5, 2021 from 2-3:30pm at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Sea Cliff. You will be receiving an email with all the pertinent information, should you who wish to attend in person (the price of admission is a new, unwrapped toy).

When this event was originally discussed with Angel Reyes Rivas, the LI Coordinator for R&MM, he did not know the specifics but agreed that it might "be a bit too far." So SAC decided to hold a local **Toy Drive-Through** and then bring the toys to R&MM. If anyone would like to carpool to the concert, please contact me: pattemcgoo@yahoo.com or (631) 997-9405. I'll be leaving directly after our Sunday worship service.

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This month's meeting of SAC and the 8th Principle Task Force was held on Wed., Nov. 10th via Zoom. Among other things, we worked on logistics of partnering with the Membership & Outreach Committee on the Holiday Cheer and Food Drive-through / drop-off event for CAST. The weather, on Sat., Nov. 20th was perfect; the conversation was lively; the goodies delish; and, the donations filled the back of my car. The pinnacle of the event for me, however, was going to CAST with my granddaughter to "deliver the goods." We'd called ahead to make sure someone would be there to receive your donations but didn't know that another event would be going on when we arrived. The large downstairs room was filled with the laughter of pre-schoolers and their parents engrossed in some artistic holiday activity. Knowing that some of those families were probably recipients of your generosity was a personal reminder of why I love this time of year and how grateful I am to have found this faith family.

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The 8th Principle Task Force had a thoughtful month. Discussions went well beyond the monthly meeting, spilling into Rev. Valerie's class on the 8th Principle, and continuing with a flurry of emails. Our December agenda is already quite full. The next monthly **SAC & 8th Principle Task Force Meeting** will be held on Wed., Dec. 8th, 4-5pm. Looks like we're falling into a 2nd-Wednesday-of-the-month routine. Please join us; we've got a lot planned over the winter months and would love your input.

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Quote of the Month is from poet, short story writer, and photographer Michelle G. Stratford (Author of *I'm Rising*): "During the weeks ahead, as we experience the absence of sun and warmth, we create light and warmth with our traditions, love and gratitude. May the holiday season be filled with opportunities for you to experience meaning and love!"

Enjoy the simple pleasures - family, friends, life, and love,
Patte McManus, Chair
Social Action Committee

Thoughts on Spirit

“Awareness”

I find it difficult at times to determine exactly what is the “sixth sense” we humans possess that is foundational to a good life.

The Naturalist, Edwin Way Teale, once said, “The great gift of our lives is the gift of awareness.” That begs the questions, “aware of what?” and “how do we use this gift effectively?”

In this age of complex communications technology, we are bombarded daily with information about people and situations from around the world. There is so much of it that we’ve come to rely on so-called expert intermediaries to sort, prioritize, and

analyze for us. It becomes all too easy to rely on influencers to thinking for and steer us.

We are essentially sleepwalking thru life. Our gifted awareness is no longer organic but borrowed, and we form our beliefs, set our priorities and make decisions based on second-, third-, and even fourth-hand opinions with all their biases.

In order to access our gift, we must take frequent time-outs with zero input. We need to create quiet time and space so we can hear the “still small voice within” which guides us to action based on our own innate values.

Sometimes the things we love and would like to spend time at seem frivolous considering the state of the world we feel we “need” to worry about! If we can make ourselves aware of that conflict, we will have taken a major step toward enjoying a

more awe-filled life of rich personal expression.

Based on this resurrected awareness, we realize that we need be concerned only with the things that we really care about and that fit into our finite schedule. This requires a triage mentality... a letting go of stuff that does not enrich us and make us happy with ourselves and how we spend our time.

Joe Mc Kay
December 2021

Food Drive for CAST

Thank you to everyone who was able to stop by the church parking lot on Saturday, Nov. 20th, to drop off food items for CAST. It was a beautiful, sunny day and we all enjoyed hot, mulled cider (provided by Rev. Valerie) and everyone took home a special holiday cheer package. Special thanks to Patte McManus and her granddaughter, who delivered the food donations to CAST.



Cookie Swap ! December 19th, 12:00



You may remember at this time two years ago, we had our first Cookie Swap – a fun opportunity to share your baking gifts and favorite recipes with your friends! It was such a hit, that we've decided to do it again this year, if the COVID statistics do not get worse. We will continue to monitor conditions and will notify everyone if plans have to change. As of now, though, the swap is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 19th, at Holy Trinity following the worship service. Here is how it works:

1. Bring six dozen cookies (or more!) of any one recipe, or a combination of recipes.
2. Accompany your cookies with recipe cards.
3. Bring a serving platter and storage tins if you can; also if you want to, bring festive wrapping.
4. Bring a few extra cookies for sampling.
5. EVERYONE brings home a variety sampler. If you don't bake, feel free to bring another baked good from the store. Non-bakers will also go home with cookies!

We hope you will be able to join us for this deliciously fun event!

Looking Back...

Guess who is Santa. You all know him!
The boy on his lap is now a pilot.

Send me your pictures of the past or
thoughts on an event from the past.
Many of our pictures perished in the fire.

Thank you.
Ginny Cornell

