

OTH 9122109 pg 1

► Olean

There's a new religion in town

Unitarian Universalists strive for merger of many religions

By Brian Lothridge
Olean Times Herald

OLEAN — The world is full of different belief systems, each with different paths to spiritual truth.

But an emerging group in Olean seeks to develop a community where people of all religious backgrounds can unite and support each other in their spiritual journey.

The Olean Unitarian Universalist Community is developing an open-minded, free-thinking spiritual congregation that unites Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Pagans, Atheists, Agnostics and others. The group will be part of over 1,000 Unitarian-Universalist congregations in the United States and abroad.

"It's basically a group of people who want to learn from everybody and form a spiritual community based on that kind of open search for truth," said organizer Anna Bush. "There's no

Public talks

The Olean Unitarian Universalist Community is hosting a series of speaking events to educate the community on the faith and to garner some interest. The events will be on the second Sunday of each month through December. All events will be held in the Olean Public Library at 2 p.m. The following is a schedule of topics:

- Oct. 11 — "A Free-Thinking Faith: What's in it for UU?" featuring speaker Rev. Tim Bancroft
- Nov. 8 — "Ecology, Justice and Compassion"
- Dec. 13 — "For Every Thing, There is a Season"

creed. There's no, 'You must.'"

The group is holding a speaking series at the Olean Public Library on the second Sunday of every month

beginning Oct. 11 at 2 p.m. The first talk, entitled "A Free-thinking Faith; What's In it For UU?" will be given by Tim Bancroft of the Hornell-Alfred Unitarian Universalist Society.

Unitarian Universalism is based on seven principles. They are: The inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity and compassion in human relations; acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations; a free and responsible search for truth and meaning; the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large; the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all; and respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which everyone is a part.

The Olean congregation will be part of the St.

Please see Religion, page