



*News & Information from the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton*



April 2015

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

Worship services and religious education for children and youth begin at 10:30 a.m.

April 5

Easter – Rev. Joel Miller, Interim Minister

Greeters: Sara Ricalton, TBD

Social Hour: Judy DeGraaff, Jan DeWaters,

Jim Williams & Donna Dilworth

Worship Associate: Robin Collen

Collection Counters: TBD, Valerie Ingram

RE Ambassador: Maria Corse

April 12

Environmental Justice & Spirituality - Youth Group Service

Greeters: Anne Richey, Heather & Jeff Rousell

Social Hour: Noel de la Motte, John & Bonnie Danis,

Maria Dickinson, Maggie Hockett

Worship Associate: Kim Bouchard

RE Ambassador: Jenn Whittaker

Collection Counters: Pat Gengo, Jon Montan

Library Table: Helen & Roger Hutchinson

April 19

Earth Day Service - Rev. Joel Miller, Interim Minister

Greeters: Wil & Rebecca Rivers, Eileen Raymond & Donna Smith-Raymond

Social Hosts: Mark Berninghausen, Patricia Dunkelberg, Rich Fennessey & Carmen Stuart-Fennessey, Dick Fennessey

Worship Associate: Jon Montan

RE Ambassador: Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel

Collection Counters: Ruth Baltus, Tim Opdyke

Library Table: Joan Kepes

April 26

Thoughts About Faith – Coming of Age Group

Greeters: Jim Rudd, Doug & Jill Rubio, Eileen Visser

Social Hour: Andrea Ferro, Laura Foster, Carol Gable, Nicole Pain

Worship Associate: Doug Rubio

RE Ambassador: Esther Katz

Collection Counters: Lonie Bogett, Will Siegfried

Library Table: Rajiv & Geetika Narula

MUSIC IN APRIL



The Adult Choir will sing for the April 12th & 19th services.

The Handbell Choir will play for the April 19th service.

IN THE INTERIM - REV. JOEL REPORTS

Unitarian congregations evolved from the Puritan congregations of New England, before the merger with Universalist churches in 1961 that made us "Unitarian Universalists." Like our Unitarian-Puritan spiritual ancestors, a Unitarian Universalist congregation still authorizes its own creation through the people who are its members. The people themselves are the authority of our churches – just as each of us in practicing this faith is obligated to become an authority of our own living.

A great word: "authority" (and I'm sure this doesn't seem obvious to everyone... at first). "Authority" comes from the word "author," and author is a word rooted in the Latin meaning of "creator." "Authority" has come to have an "authoritarian" overtone, but practicing Unitarian Universalism is learning to share the authoring of life and community in that original sense of being creative. This is impossible in an authoritarian context, which reveals how authority in the limited sense of having power is no authority at all. Mere power creates nothing, and cut off from its creative roots, the authority of power is only brute force, the word itself just another way to spin-doctor lies and tyranny.

In its actual meaning, authority in a Unitarian Universalist church is the creative power its people give it. Taken up a level, our churches gather as communities of communities, authorizing the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (the official name of the UUA). Every year, in late June, over one thousand of our congregations meet at the annual gathering called the "General Assembly" (GA). So much happens at the GA: the "plenary," which is the official business meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Congregations; hundreds of workshops on theology, church growth, women's issues, men's issues, Social Justice work; worship services in a hundred different spiritual expressions; and a display area filled with art and books and conversation. GA is open to anyone who wants to go, except for the plenary, which is attended by delegates authorized by individual congregations.

The GA theme this year is "Building a New Way", encouraging us to be playful as we find new ways to connect with the many people who want to be Unitarian Universalists. This year will also include opportunities to participate via the internet while staying here in the North Country. You can learn more about GA at <http://www.uua.org/ga/>. It does a progressive soul good to see people from thousands of congregations and dozens of nations nurture and celebrate the creative spirit. It is a week meant to authorize the creative spirit in us all – a gathering meant to empower congregations to serve their members well, and, in turn, give us an authority to go as ourselves into the world and nurture that same spirit among others.

Rev. Joel, Interim Minister

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION UPDATE

What Have We Been Up To in Religious Education?

Spirit Play has been hearing the wonderful stories of Grandad's Prayers and Butterfly Friends. The 2nd-4th graders in the Faithful Journeys curriculum are focusing on peace and world community. The 5th-7th graders in the Riddles and Mysteries curriculum have been asking the questions "How can I tell right from wrong?" and "How am I connected with everything else?". The Coming of Age youth have been looking at faith and faith in music as they continue to create their own faith statements. The Youth Group has been creatively working on their April 12th service.

What's Coming Up In April for Religious Education?

April 5 - Fun Day - We will be planting seeds for the Ushare Garden.

April 12 - Youth Group Service - The youth will share their thoughts about Environmental Justice and Spirituality.

April 19 – Regular RE Classes

April 26 – Coming of Age Service – The Coming of Age youth and their mentors will offer their thoughts about faith.

In Joyful Service, Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

THANK YOU THANK YOU...

- + Phil Collins for patching and painting kitchen walls and for repairs made to leaking bathroom faucets.
- + Theresa Witmer for her above and beyond efforts in planning for the new website.
- + The Coming of Age advisors and mentors for planning and supplying food for the fundraising luncheon.
- + Pete Beekman, Dwight Stevenson and Wil Rivers for covering in RE at a moment's notice.
- + David Bradford for organizing and making hot chocolate for the sledding party.
- + Kelly Johnson-Eilola, Jim Williams, Valerie Ingram and Jan DeWaters for their flexibility in planning OWL this year.
- + Jill Rubio for sharing her music and thoughts about faith and music with the Coming of Age Youth.

JOYS & SORROWS

- + We were saddened by the passing of long time member, Ruth Whitney in March. Our thoughts are with her husband, Byron, and all of her family. A Memorial Service is scheduled for May 23 at 2pm.
- + Our thoughts are with Bruce Smith after the loss of his father in March.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

Planning is underway for another Services Auction scheduled for the evening of Saturday, May 16th. If you are new to the church, the Services Auction is an opportunity to share your talents, make new friends, support our church community and have lots of fun in the process! We hope that everyone will participate by offering a service of their own and bidding on others. All stripes and colors of services are ed. Items from past auctions include homemade meals, canoe trips, igloo building, childcare, music lessons, computer help and a father-son work team to name just a few. The more the merrier, so put on your thinking cap!

In the next few weeks, members of the Stewardship Committee will be reaching out to everyone to solicit help with the auction and services for the auction. But you needn't wait – if you want to be an auctioneer or have a service to offer, please let us know!! We will develop an auction catalog that will be available at least a week before the auction, so you will have time to plan your bids and to ask questions about particular services and/or products, etc. Refreshments and childcare will also be provided the night of the auction. Our goal overall is to meet the budget objective of raising another \$9,000 for this year's budget. With the search for a new minister on the near horizon, we will need to demonstrate our capacity to both create and fund new initiatives. This project is part of that effort.

We're looking for creative ways to provide services to our community. Although we gladly share our talents 364 days of the year, on this one night they will go to the highest bidder!

Bart Harloe, Chair, Stewardship Committee

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE

One of the goals of the Worship Committee is to work with the minister to make worship services as meaningful as possible. To that end, we explore ways to incorporate new ideas into services while simultaneously preserving the basic order of service to which we have become accustomed over many years.

One of the elements of our worship services is the Candles of Joys and Sorrows ritual. This is the time in the service for anyone to come forward, light a candle, and, within our loving and supportive environment, share the importance of a special joy or sorrow. People can also light a candle in silence. The flame used to light each candle begins with the Community Candle, then passes to the Flaming Chalice and finally passes to each personal candle. Because the ritual is important and personal, people tend to have strong feelings about it. Some are very comfortable coming up to the candle table, and some are not.

As members of the Worship Committee have visited other UU churches, we have become intrigued with the ways other congregations handle this important ceremony. Different churches have different approaches to incorporating this element; there is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Each congregation has tailored its ceremony to suit its particular needs.

In the spirit of trying different things during our transition years between settled ministers, we would like to try out some different ways of doing Joys and Sorrows to see if there are ways to make the ceremony more meaningful to more people. Our goal is to provide continued opportunity for expression through exploring some new ways of shaping the joys and sorrows ritual that may help make it a more positive experience for as many as possible.

What you can expect over the next five or six months – beginning on March 29 – is a series of alternative formats for this ritual. We will try each of these new formats for approximately four weeks, and then move on to the next one.

Your feedback is very important. We will have a suggestion box with forms for you to give us feedback about what you found meaningful or less-than-optimal about each of the ways we try. We will also have a final survey at the end of the experimentation period. After gathering all the feedback we will see which aspects of the different rituals work best for our congregation, including the option of continuing what we are currently doing.

In summary, Candles of Joys and Sorrows will remain an important part of our worship services, as it is in many Unitarian Universalist churches. We are not proposing change for change's sake. Instead, we are exploring, during our interim period, ways of deepening our worship services so that they are as meaningful as possible. As always, we welcome your thoughts as we work together to help this church fulfill its mission.

Members of the Worship Committee

SPRING CHURCH WORK DAY

Saturday, May 2, 2015

8:30 am - 1:00 pm

(Rain Date: Saturday, May 9)

The Buildings and Grounds committee needs your help for our annual spring cleaning work day especially after a long, cold, and snowy winter. Interior tasks include window washing; cleaning closets, block room, etc. Outside tasks include raking, edging, weeding, mulching of garden beds, pruning, planting annuals, etc. The B&G committee members will be staffing a table in the social room after Sunday services during the month of April to sign-up volunteers. Many hands make short work so please sign-up...we can use all the help we can get.

Pete Beekman, Chair, Building & Grounds Committee

FEED THE NEED

Please consider contributing to the “FEED THE NEED” box in the Social Room. This initiative supports the local food pantry (aka Church and Community Program) and also the Canton School “Bearpacks” program, which provides weekend supplements for hungry school children.

Particularly needed for the food pantry:

Tuna fish, canned fruit, peanut butter, cereals

Particularly useful for Bearpacks:

Individually packaged foods, such as: cereals and cereal bars; standard size mac and cheese; Chef Boyardee items; tuna; fruit and pudding cups

BLOOD DRIVE

The American Red Cross will hold a blood drive on Tuesday, April 7, from 11:30-4:30 in our Social Room. As always, we need people to help with registration through the afternoon. This is a pleasant, and even sociable, kind of volunteer work. Please email Pat Alden at socialaction@uucantonny.org or call the church office at 315-386-2498 if you can help.

But more importantly: Whatever your blood type, whether you are a new or a regular donor, your contribution is needed! Especially needed are those with O positive, O negative, B negative and A negative blood. Also, type AB blood, which contains the universal plasma type– a type possessed by a mere four percent of the U.S. population. The Red Cross must collect 15,000 donations a day to serve patients. And red blood cells have a shelf life of only 42 days and platelets just five days, so they have to be constantly replenished. Please consider donating! Participants must be in good health, at least 17 years old and weigh at least 110 pounds. Parental permission needed for 16 year olds. Please bring photo identification or your blood donation card. Walk-ins welcome. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 1-800-733-2767 or visit www.redcrossblood.org.

Pat Alden, Social Action Committee Co-Chair

OUR WHOLE LIVES

The Our Whole Lives facilitators and everyone involved with the Youth Group have been wrangling with schedules and other endeavors in order to get this year’s OWL program off the ground. Alas, time has slipped on by and we are finding it difficult to squeeze the program into everyone’s busy schedule at this point of the school year.

We would like to offer a workshop for the Youth Group during an extended Sunday morning session. This “Sexuality and Our Faith” workshop will be held on May 31st starting at 10 am going to 1pm. Besides deep discussions and thought-provoking activities as we consider the role of our faith and beliefs in the sexuality of our lives, we will also have some really good food. We ask all youth who would like to participate to RSVP to the RE Office by April 10th so we can have some numbers to plan for.

Keep an eye out in the newsletter and pay attention to some special announcements at church about our plans for the fall. Plans center around a weekend OWL retreat for the 7-8 graders.

Jim Williams

COOTS LIBRARY BOOK reMARKS

The calendar says that we have officially arrived at spring, but the kids were still joyfully breaking through ice covered puddles as we walked to church. The North Country runs on its own schedule, so it may take a while before we are convinced that spring is here. While we are waiting for warmer temperatures, consider checking out a few books from the Max Coots Library. It might be a good time to get a closer sense of place

by reading *North Country Reflections: On life and living in the foothills and valleys*, edited by Neal Burdick and Maurice Kenny. Some newly added titles for young (or young at heart) readers are *An Environmental Guide from A to Z* by Tim Magner and *Frenchtown Summer* by Robert Cormier. Also available are *Bringing God Home: A Traveler's Guide* by The Reverend Forrest Church and *Jesus and Buddha: The Parallel Sayings*, edited by Marcus Borg. In addition to browsing the library, be sure to stop by the book cart in the Romer Room. The cart is stocked with books that have recently been removed from the library shelves. There are many children's books on the cart ready for adoption; we welcome any donations in exchange for these books. Donations are used by the library for the purchase of new books to help keep our collection up-to-date. Thanks for browsing, and enjoy spring!

Lorraine Olendzenski, Library Committee Chair

EVERYBODY'S BIRTHDAY!

What better time to celebrate Everybody's Birthday than right after the Youth Service on April 12th. Plan to stay and find out which of our youth share your birth month. Look for the sign-up sheet if you can bring a cake. We'll make sure vegan and gluten free options are available so all can participate. See you then.

Dave Bradford

BENEFIT CONCERT FOR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY PROGRAM

Thirty 1 & Mandolin are playing on Saturday, April 25, from 6-8 p.m. at the Methodist Church. Tickets are \$10.

SUMMER CAMP FOR UU CHILDREN AND THE IMPORTANCE OF BELONGING

I was recently speaking with a friend whose child is in Middle School and the conversation turned to the importance of belonging in the lives of young adolescents and teenagers. The friend was a UU and was surprised when I shared that summer camp at Unirondack had shaped my now grown children more than any other experience in their lives. She had not known that UU summer camp existed and admitted that she was so full of worry that she never even thought to look.

This set me to thinking about how many other parents in our congregations are searching for opportunities for their children to live our UU values in a safe and nurturing community but have never considered summer camp. Maybe it is the fact that it is called summer camp? I have many friends who cringe at the term because they were sent to camp against their will as children.

So I decided to write to all the parents and kids in all the congregations I could reach to share what I have seen happen to my children at Unirondack.

My 24 year old son now runs his own company in the tech world. He readily shares that the confidence he has, the public speaking and organizational skills, and the feeling of being safe and affirmed as a human being all began at camp. He was a nerdy kid with a limited circle of friends at home as a teenager, and I remember how all year he would look forward to the summer, to returning to the place where he was accepted and could safely try on different ways of being.

My 20 year old son is finishing school at Oberlin. He has had a wonderful experience. Two things about his teen years have stuck with me. The first is when I went to visit his middle school and on the wall in his English class were the students' essays about "home." My son had written about Unirondack. The second is when he visited Oberlin and came back thrilled with the place, commenting that it was like "Unirondack on steroids."

I do not think my children's experience is unique. Over the years I have seen thousands of young people attend Unirondack, or Rowe, or any number of UU camps and have a similar experience. I still have a

friend in my community who tells me every time I see her that attending camp was her child's only positive experience of belonging.

The camps are almost always full so if this has gotten you to thinking, talk to friend's whose children have gone to camp, or look on Unirondack's website <http://www.unirondack.org/> or check out any of the other UU camps and conference centers on the UUA website: <http://www.uua.org/directory/where/camps-retreats-and-conferences>

Dan Gottfried, Executive Director
Unirondack Co-founder, UUACCC (Unitarian Universalist Alliance of Camps and Conference Centers)

SUNY CANTON LECTURE SERIES

On Wednesday, April 1 at 6:30p.m. in Roos House, Bill McKibben will present a lecture as part of the Living Writers Series. Bill McKibben is an author and environmentalist. His 1989 book *The End of Nature* is regarded as the first book for a general audience about climate change, and has appeared in 24 languages. He is founder of [350.org](http://www.350.org), the first planet-wide, grassroots climate change movement. The *Boston Globe* said he was "probably America's most important environmentalist." Please visit <http://www.canton.edu/writers/> for more information.

If you would like to receive weekly electronic news updates,
please email: office@uucantonny.org
Deadline for next newsletter:
Monday, April 20th

ON THE CALENDAR

Wednesday, April 1

8:00 a.m., Building & Grounds Committee meeting
10:00 a.m., Library work day
6:30 p.m., Church Council meeting

Thursday, April 2

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir rehearsal
7:00 p.m., HUUMANIST Group meeting

Friday, April 4

Noon, Organ Concert

Sunday, April 5

9:30 a.m., UShare meeting
10:30 a.m., Worship and Children's RE

Monday, April 6

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, April 7

11:00 a.m., American Red Cross Blood Drive

Wednesday, April 8

10:00 a.m., Library work day

Thursday, April 9

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir rehearsal
7:00 p.m., Worship Committee meeting

Saturday, April 11

Time TDB, Finance & Stewardship Summit

Sunday, April 12

10:30 a.m., Worship and Children's RE

Monday, April 13

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation
1:30 p.m., Outreach Committee meeting

Tuesday, April 14

5:00 p.m., Fellowship Committee meeting
6:30 p.m., Welcome Committee meeting
7:00 p.m., Chalice Circle

Wednesday, April 15

10:00 a.m., Library work day
6:30 p.m., Religious Education Committee meeting

Thursday, April 16

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir rehearsal
7:00 p.m., Budget & Finance Committee meeting
7:00 p.m., HUUMANIST Group meeting

Saturday, April 17

1:00 p.m., American Guild of Organists event

Sunday, April 19

10:30 a.m., Worship and RE

Monday, April 20

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Wednesday, April 22

10:00 a.m., Library work day

Thursday, April 23

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir rehearsal

Sunday, April 26

10:30 p.m., Worship and Children's RE

Monday, April 27

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, April 28

7:00 p.m., Stewardship Committee meeting

Wednesday, April 29

10:00 a.m., Library work day

Thursday, April 30

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir rehearsal



The Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

Interim Minister, Rev. Joel Miller

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

Nelly Case, Music Director Carol Strome, Choir Director

Gwen Cunningham, Congregational Administrator

The Reverends Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeritus

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

(315) 386-2498 office@uucantonny.org www.uucantonny.org