



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



December 2015

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

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

December 6

Beyond Categorical Thinking – Rev. Keith Kron
Greeters: Jan DeWaters & Stefan Grimberg,
Esther Katz, Byron Whitney
Council Welcomer: Katherine Brown
Kitchen Cabinet Advisor: Helen Hutchinson
Worship Associate: Valerie Ingram
RE Ambassador: Sally Hoose
Collection Counters: Ruth Baltus, Valerie Ingram

Don't miss Rev. Kron's
Beyond Categorical Thinking
workshop after church.
Everyone is welcome ~
lunch will be provided by Church Council!

December 13

The Advent of What's Next – Rev. Joel Miller, Interim Minister
Holidays, seasons, storms, life-transitions--we see them coming. What keeps us awake amid the tensions and expectations?
Greeters: Rebecca & Tim Weld, Eileen & Tom Wheeler
Council Welcomers: John Danis, Gary Hoose
Social Hour: Evelyn Barton, Paul Cutter, Carol & Tom Pynchon
Collection Counters: Pat Gengo, Tim Opdyke
Worship Associate: Doug Rubio
RE Ambassador: Wil Rivers

December 20 @ 4pm

HOLIDAY PAGEANT
Greeters: Volunteers needed
Council Welcomer: Pat Glover
Social Hour: Bill Hull, Katherine & Bill Brown, Erik & Jenn Whittaker
Worship Associate: Mark Berninghausen
RE Ambassador: Esther Katz
Collection Counters: Lorraine Olendzenski, Jon Montan

December 24 @ 7pm

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE – Rev. Joel Miller, Interim Minister
Greeters: Jim & Stevie Michaelson
Social Hour: Volunteers needed
Worship Associate: Robin Collen
Collection Counters: Lonie Bogett, Will Siegfried

December 27

Welcoming the New Year – Mark Berninghausen, Pulpit Guest
Resolutions, looking back, looking forward, and transitions of time.
Greeters: Randy Merrill, Kim Bouchard, Janet Green
Social Hour: Becky Van de Water, Maria Dickinson
RE Ambassador: David Bradford
Collection Counters: Valerie Ingram, Lorraine Olendzenski



HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

Sunday, December 6

11:30 a.m. – Children's Choir rehearsal

Sunday, December 13

9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. – Holiday Book Fair; 11:30 a.m. – Pageant and Children's Choir rehearsal

Sunday, December 20

10:30 a.m. – Pageant rehearsal; 4 p.m. – Holiday Pageant

Thursday, December 24

7 p.m. – Christmas Eve service

IN THE INTERIM - REV. JOEL REPORTS

I was asked recently about the church's growth – haven't we been about the same size for a while? It's true that the size and Sunday attendance have been somewhat steady in recent years, yet when I arrived, I found the congregation's institutional practices reflected the expectations of a congregation that was smaller. A lot of the interim work we've been doing has been to shift expectations and practices to match the congregation's mid-sized membership and ministry.

Part of what a congregation needs when it makes this shift is more formal ways of communicating. Word-of-mouth and other informal communicating remain important – especially given the informality of North Country culture! But the church is an active place throughout the week, and informal communication methods can't get the news out to every member. So some formality in communication becomes important – nothing complex, though. Committee chairs (and, I confess, the minister) have to let the Congregational Administrator know when committees are meeting (because people will call Gwen sometimes about those meetings, looking for more information, for example). And reserving meeting rooms in advance becomes important since there are many evenings in a month when the building is fully scheduled.

It's interesting, as an interim minister, that these changes are some of the hardest to make for a congregation. To an outsider they seem mundane and inconsequential. But I can remember being a lay-leader and finding myself struggling with just this kind of shift in how my congregation worked day-to-day. I found it worth the struggle as these kinds of formalities made church life a lot more comfortable and welcoming to everyone.

The holiday season has begun – Thanksgiving and Divali already celebrated among us, and Chanukah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and Solstice are on their way. I wish for you all lovely holidays and a Happy New Year.

Rev. Joel, Interim Minister

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PONDERINGS



From you I receive,
to you I give.
Together we share,
and from this we live.

Joseph and Nathan Segal, UU hymnbook

For many, December is a month of giving and receiving gifts. This month finds me taking up my knitting needles, stirring pots of lye and fat to make soap, and buzzing along at the sewing machine to make homemade gifts to share with those I love.

In preparing to write this article, I read many different views on how giving and receiving can be acts of spirituality. A few that touched me:

From UUA President Peter Morales' [2014 Holiday Message](#) - "When we give of ourselves we give something precious. Think about that for a moment. You are the gift others most want to receive. We are gifts – one to another."

From Frederic and Mary Ann Brussati in their article ["Learning to Receive,"](#) "Our reluctance to freely receive affects our relationships with others and limits our openness to God's grace. Getting better at receiving, then, is an important intention of spiritual practice."

What are your beliefs and attitudes about giving and receiving? Please take a moment to ponder how you might wish to give and receive during this holiday season. Also please remember, in this potentially frenzied month, you are the gift and to graciously receive from others is a spiritual practice.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

What's Coming Up in December in Religious Education?

December 4 - Jr High OWL Program
December 6 - Holiday Pageant Rehearsal - Youth Choir Only
December 8 - Second Tuesday Chalice Circle Gathering
December 13 - Holiday Pageant Rehearsal - All Cast and Youth Choir
December 16 - RE Committee Meeting
December 20 - Holiday Pageant Rehearsal at 10:30am & Holiday Pageant at 4:00pm
December 27 - RE Fun Day

THANK YOU THANK YOU...

- † Wendy Bachhuber, David Bradford, Jon Montan, and Jenn Whittaker for supporting the Youth Group in participating in the Search Committee's congregational survey.
- † Kevin Ball, Emma Bentley-Hicks, Ron Tavernier, Lois Cutter, Leo Burger, Jim Rudd, Sally Hoose, Carol Pynchon, Rhonda Rodriguez, Will Siegfried, and Wendy Bachhuber for creating a safe and effective fire drill for the RE program.
- † Carol Pynchon for her continued support on creating content for the RE section of our website.
- † Nelly Case and Carol Strome for assisting with the theme of this year's Holiday Pageant.

JOYS & SORROWS

- † Shirley Boenheim began treatments for a malignant melanoma in the spring and is now in a convalescent center. She appreciates the cards and letters she has received from her UU Canton friends -- they have done a lot to raise her spirits. If you would like to send Shirley (and her husband Fred) your loving thoughts, please do so through the mail, as Shirley does not have the energy to take calls. Her address is 2326 Hampton Court, Lima, Ohio 45805.
- † Vince Barwood, husband of church member Aileen Vincent-Barwood, fell and fractured his pelvis at the end of October. He has been in and out of the hospital a few times and is now recovering at home. Visitors would be a bit too much at the present time, but if you would like to send a card to Vince or Aileen, their address is 125 Pike Road, Canton NY 13617.

SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

Many, many thanks to the 153 people who responded to the survey! The data are already being put to use. Currently, we are putting the finishing touches on our Congregational Record, which is the very first thing prospective ministers see about us. It is the document that ministers use to decide whether they want to request further information about us. It contains data about our church and community, including demographics, historical and financial information, and specific questions that we answered using congregational feedback from the Cottage Meetings and the Survey.

Our Congregational Record has already had its first review by our Ministerial Settlement Representative, Rev. Craig Schwalenberg. Craig, the UU minister in Oneonta, NY, represents the UU Transitions Office, which oversees our ministerial search as well as all other UU ministerial searches.

Both Craig and Joel have given us excellent feedback about our Congregational Record. We're revising and then will send it back to both of them for another look. When Craig feels we have the strongest-possible document, the Transitions Office gets our Congregational Record and, after their office approves it, on November 30, our Congregational Record "goes live" on their site, accessible only to ministers in search.

Please Join Us on December 6
Beyond Categorical Thinking (BCT) Service and Workshop

Those in church on a recent Sunday heard Joel admit that he spent a “lot of his political capital” in getting the head of the Transitions Office, Rev. Keith Kron to give the sermon and lead our Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop! What does this mean for you, for all of us? The individual who knows most about ministers and churches in search this year will be at our church, preaching to and working with us! Let’s embrace this opportunity to learn more about ourselves and to show ourselves off to the Transitions Office as the involved, caring congregation that we are! **Let’s have a great turnout!**

Schedule for Sunday, December 6:

10:30 a.m. - Sermon, entitled *Beyond Categorical Thinking--The Van Gogh Café* by Keith Kron, Director of the UUA’s Transitions Department

11:45 a.m. - Lunch for all, provided by Church Council

12:15 to 3:15 p.m. - Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop, led by Keith Kron

What *is* Beyond Categorical Thinking? BCT is a program designed to promote inclusive thinking and help prevent unfair discrimination in the search process for a new minister. Try this: close your eyes and imagine a minister. Was it a person of a particular gender, race, or age? Without becoming aware of our preconceptions and biases, we could potentially overlook the person who would be the best match for us. Ultimately, the church membership will vote to approve the called minister. That is why it is important for as many as possible to participate in the BCT workshop.

You can contact the Search Committee at our church email address: search@uucantonny.org.

*Jon Montan (chair), Erika Barthelmess, Kim Bouchard,
Rajiv Narula, Jenn Whittaker, Theresa Witmer, Pete Wyckoff*

HOLIDAY DECORATING PARTY

Come help us deck the halls! We will be coming together on Saturday, December 12, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon to decorate the sanctuary for the holidays with candles, lights, and Christmas tree decorations. Bring the family a brown bag lunch to join us after for more fun and fellowship. Please contact Becky Van de Water if you have questions.



SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Keeping the Doors Open for Asylum Seekers

In November, our church’s shared offering was taken in support of the work of the [International Rescue Committee](#) and their work with the millions of refugees we are hearing about everyday. I know you have seen them on your TV screens and newspapers ... families and adults trying to save their lives, fleeing war and persecution in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and any number of other dangerous places in our world today. Our SASO offering totaled \$1,429.00 will help IRC do this important work.

But now we are called to do even more. We must continue to support these families who struggle to stay together and even survive. Following the terrorist attacks during the past two weeks in Beirut, Baghdad, Paris, and Brussels, we are seeing calls from our governmental leaders to close our doors – doors that were barely open in the first place. This is not the America we know; we are better than that. If we close our doors, the terrorists have won; they have taken our humanity from us.

As Unitarian Universalists, we believe in the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large. We need to make sure our legislators and other elected of-

officials hear from us immediately and strongly. They must hear that we do not support closing our doors to those in need of safety. They must hear that we do not support a “pause” in the processing of asylum seekers. How unfair to equate asylum seekers with terrorists!

There are a number of ways for you to advocate for justice and fairness:

- Educate yourself through publications like the downloadable International Rescue Committee Report: [Refugee Crisis in Europe and the Middle East](#)
- Email or write your elected representatives directly using the address list on our [Social Action Committee webpage](#).
- Join the IRC email campaign in support of keeping doors open for asylum seekers.
- Learn about other ways to respond to this crisis on the [Unitarian Universalist Service Committee website](#).
- Write a letter to editors of your local newspapers.

Our advocacy working in coalition with the International Rescue Committee and all the other helpers who are working on this cause will make a difference! Don't let anyone else speak for you!

Eileen Raymond, Co-Chair, Social Action Committee

Joining Move to Amend!



Last month, the Social Action Committee sponsored an after-church discussion on the implications of the US Supreme Court's Citizen's United decision that defined corporations as persons and money as speech. Our discussion was in part prompted by the UU General Assembly 2013 Action of Immediate Witness asking for congregations to consider the issue of corporate influence upon our democracy. This effort was originally sponsored and continually championed by Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC).

Move to Amend is seeking to pass an amendment that would repudiate Citizen's United and amend our constitution to firmly establish that corporations are not people and money is not speech. One outcome of our November discussion of the many issues surrounding Citizens United was a desire to bring a resolution in support of the Move to Amend campaign to a vote at our next congregational meeting in late January. Click on the links for background information about [Move to Amend](#) and a [list of endorsing organizations](#). Please note that many UU Congregations have already voted to support this initiative.

As we move into the next election cycle, and toward the congregational vote on the Move to Amend resolution in late January, the Social Action Committee encourages everyone to explore resources on our church website (Social Justice page, Church News, and Social Action Committee) to become more informed about the corrosive influence of money in politics. Please share comments and questions you have with a member of the Social Action committee. We look forward to the congregational discussion and vote at our January meeting!

Bart and Margaret Harloe, Social Action

The Giving Tree is Here!

The Church and Community Program annually organizes the Giving Tree for the December holidays. This initiative provides gifts for children in low-income families. Each child in the program receives at least one toy and one item of clothing, donated by Cantonians of every stripe. On a small tree in our Social Room, you can find a tag for a specific child for whom you may shop. UNWRAPPED gifts, with tags attached, may be returned to our church or to the Church and Community Program office at 7 Main Street. Thanks to generous donors, this year we will also include a book for each child. Also new this year



will be an array of stocking stuffers, which we are asking our congregations to contribute to. Please consider purchasing one or two small, inexpensive items, such as cosmetics, hygiene items, bubble bath, deodorant, hair bands, nail clippers, travel-size items, little “hotel bottles” of things (unopened, please), etc. These and any “tag gifts” should be brought in by Friday, December 11. If you would like to help organize and/or distribute these gifts (December 13-19), please be in touch with Pat Alden (socialaction@uucantonny.org).

Pat Alden, Co-Chair, Social Action Committee

COOTS LIBRARY BOOK *re*MARKS

Mark your calendars for the ANNUAL HOLIDAY BOOK FAIR! This year’s sale will take place on Sunday, December 13, from 9:30 a.m. until 1 p.m., in the Romer Room. Our sale will feature new and classic titles published by Beacon and Skinner Press, with books for adults and children alike. We’ll also have a selection of highly recommended titles for young adults and a new printing of the Max Coots “Friends” poster



that may make the perfect gift for someone you know. Profits raised at the book fair are split between the Caring Fund and the library’s New Book Fund. Items will be available for purchase that day, so bring cash or your checkbook - we can’t take credit cards. Plan to come early, stay late, and have an extra cup of coffee while browsing.

Thank you to all who participated in our recent Common Read. This was an extremely successful event, with more than 30 people attending. It was wonderful to hear people sharing their views and experiences related to Atul Gawande’s *Being Mortal*. We especially thank Jon Montan and Kathy Curro for masterfully guiding the discussion and leading us through the topics in each chapter. For those of you who were not able to attend, we still have many copies of the book available in the library. Some of you may also want to watch the PBS Frontline episode “Being Mortal” that aired February 10, 2015, and is available online. If anyone is interested in exploring this topic further or has suggestions for keeping the conversation going, please contact Jon, Kathy, or me by dropping an email to library@uucantonny.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Lorraine Olendzenski, Chair, Library Committee

OUTREACH FROM OUTREACH

The Outreach Committee continues to work with the staff and church leadership to ensure that we’re offering the best and most effective communication – internal and external – that we can. The new website is a big help!

- If you missed the website tour/tutorial and still have questions about navigating and finding information you’re looking for on the new site, the Outreach Committee is happy to make house calls! It’s often easier to catch on if you’re using a computer you’re familiar with, so we’ll come to you! Contact Carol Pynchon or any member of the [Outreach Committee](#).
- Website tip: the looking glass icon next to the section headings is the search bar. If you can’t find something you’re looking for on the website, click on the looking glass and type in what you’re hunting for.
- Please be sure to check your weekly enews regularly. It includes all the most up-to-date information about church events and activities, with important links to more details on the website. The enews arrives in your mailbox Wednesdays at 7 p.m. If you’re not on the list and would like to receive it, please let Gwen know in the [church office](#)/386-2489.
- Please be aware that new church policy is to NOT include any personal information – email addresses, phone numbers, addresses in the enews, newsletter, and website. Contact information for church members and friends is available in the Church Directory; you may request a copy from the church office or access it from the Our Church or Get Involved tabs on the website (it is password-protected for everyone’s safety, for first-time access contact the church office or a member of the Outreach Committee for the password).

- The Outreach Committee will also be meeting with committees to offer instruction in “back end” website administration. If you or a member of your committee would like to learn more about how you can help manage your portion of the website, please contact a member of the committee.

Carol Pynchon, Chair, Outreach Committee

DECEMBER HANDBELL SCHEDULE

The handbell choir will rehearse as usual on Thursdays at 4:30 p.m. through December 17. On the afternoon of the pageant, our warm-up rehearsal will start at 2 p.m. Dress for the pageant is seasonal. On Thursday, December 24, we will gather for our warm-up at 6 p.m. for the 7 p.m. Christmas Eve service. There may also be another rehearsal earlier that week, depending on everyone's availability. After Christmas there will be no rehearsals until at least Thursday, January 21. Happy Holidays!

ANNUAL HOLIDAY MUSICAL GET-TOGETHER

On Friday, December 4, beginning at 5 p.m., all UU choir members--singers and ringers--and their families are invited to a holiday gathering at 9 Farmer Street in Canton for a holiday potluck supper, followed by carol singing and other sorts of musical merriment. RSVP to Nelly Case (contact information available in the [church directory](#)). Come one, come all for fun and fellowship.

ADULT CHOIR NEWS

The Adult Choir schedule for December is as follows. New members are always welcome!

December 6 - rehearse at 9:00 a.m., sing in church
 December 13 - rehearse at 9:00 a.m.
 December 20 - pageant rehearsal at 10:30 a.m., pageant at 4:00 p.m.
 December 27 - no rehearsal

There is a sign-up sheet in the Social Room for a Children's Choir for the holiday pageant. Children from 2nd grade and up who like to sing are welcome and encouraged to participate. We will rehearse as follows:

December 6 - 12:00 noon in the choir room
 December 13 - 11:30 a.m. and stay for pageant rehearsal
 December 20 - Pageant rehearsal 10:30 a.m.

Carol Strome, Choir Director

BIBLIOTHERAPY

Recovery can be solitary business. You can feel quite alone as you struggle to adjust to changes following a major event like illness or injury. Sometimes, even happy events like a new baby's arrival may bring new routines that feel overwhelming!

The members of our UU Caring and Library committees are creating a new resource: Bibliotherapy – Readings on Recovery. We hope to deepen our caring ministry beyond the necessities of food and transportation. The premise of our project is that words can be healing! And that our members' collective experience can be mined for each other's benefit. Readings on Recovery will soon be available in the Coots Library. For those unable to visit the library, please contact our Caring Circle Co-Chairs, Natalie Panshin and Esther Oey at caringcircle@uucantonny.org

What a great example of Bibliotherapy in Peter Beekman's Caring Bridge blog! As we follow his journey through stem cell therapy, Pete promises to share his experience in recovery – the challenges, the discouragements, and those things that lift his spirits. If you have made a journey to recovery, consider how your words may help someone else.

Several of our church members are writing letters to tell their own stories of recovery from joint-replacement and other surgeries. Other members are contributing poems, quotes, essays, stories, sermons, and jokes. Peg Mooers wrote a sermon after her treatment for colon cancer. Her message, "Illness and the Care of the Soul," has already helped another member. We now have a slim folder of quotes collected by Judy Gibson, little messages with powerful doses of humor, grace and healing. Words that provide comfort to one of us, may give others encouragement, too.

Since most of us are or will be assisting a disabled loved one, our collection has a section just for caregivers. In an essay from North Country Reflections, entitled "Apples, Sardines and Bullhead," Betsy Kepes tells of a daughter's struggle to meet her father's needs as dementia begins to claim his abilities. Also in our collection is Judy Gibson's journal describing her experience as a caregiver during the last few weeks of her sister-on-law's life. Both essays will be helpful for many, many of us.

Natalie Panshin and Esther Oey always end their Caring Circle emails with "Thank you for all you do to care for each other. " We DO care for each other in so many ways.

How can you contribute to Readings on Recovery?

- Send quotes to Judy Gibson
- Send copies of sermons/essays/short readings to Betsy Kepes
- Send your letters to Kathy Curro

Contact information is available in the [church directory](#) or from the church office.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP & FAITH

Rev. Joel and Rajiv will join spiritual leaders from across the North Country in a discussion about how our respective faiths value protecting the earth. This multi-cultural panel, sponsored by the Ministerial Association of Potsdam and Clarkson's Institute for a Sustainable Environment, will include representatives from Mohawk, Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu and UU faiths. Professor Bill Vitek will moderate the discussion on Thursday, December 3, at 7 p.m., in Clarkson's BH Snell Building, Room 213.

BENEFIT CONCERT FOR C&CP

The Canton Goldenaires - featuring our own Jim Michaelson and Ben Budelman - will perform holiday music to benefit the Canton Church and Community Program on Monday, December 7, at 7 p.m., at the Presbyterian Church on the Park. The event is free and open to the public; people are asked to bring canned goods for the CCP food pantry or to make a monetary donation. The Goldenaires' four-part harmonies are sure to put you in a holiday mood!

If you would like to receive weekly electronic news updates,
please email: office@uucantonny.org
Deadline for next newsletter:
Monday, December 21

ON THE CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 1

1:30 p.m., Outreach Committee meeting

Wednesday, December 2

8:00 a.m., Building & Grounds Committee meeting

10:00 a.m., Library work day

12:15 p.m., Personnel Committee meeting

Thursday, December 3

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir rehearsal

6:30 p.m., Church Council meeting (note date change!)

Friday, December 4

6:30 p.m., Jr. High OWL session

Sunday, December 6

9:00 a.m., Adult Choir rehearsal

9:30 a.m., UShare meeting

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

11:30 a.m., Children's Choir rehearsal

Noon-3 p.m., Beyond Categorical Thinking

Monday, December 7

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, December 8

5:00 p.m., Welcoming Committee meeting

7:00 p.m., Chalice Circle

Wednesday, December 9

10:00 a.m., Library work day

4:00 p.m., Interim Shared Ministry meeting

Thursday, December 10

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir rehearsal

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee meeting

Friday, December 11

9:30 a.m., Library Committee meeting

Sunday, December 13

9:00 p.m., Adult Choir rehearsal

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

11:30 a.m., Children's Choir/Pageant rehearsal

11:30 a.m., Book Fair

Monday, December 14

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Wednesday, December 16

10:00 a.m., Library work day

6:30 p.m., Religious Education Committee meeting

Thursday, December 17

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir rehearsal

7:00 p.m., Budget & Finance Committee meeting

Sunday, December 20

10:30 a.m., Pageant rehearsal

4:00 p.m., Holiday Pageant

Monday, December 21

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, December 22

7:00 p.m., Stewardship Committee meeting

Thursday, December 24

7:00 p.m., Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 27

10:30 a.m., Worship and RE

10:45 a.m., RE Fun Day

Monday, December 28

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation



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

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