



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



February 2016

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

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

February 7

Bring a Torch: Grief and a New Normal - Rev. Rebekah Montgomery, Pulpit Guest

As we persevere through winter, we marvel at the world around us in appreciation and gratitude for so much of our lives. We are also confronted daily with a world that continues to be rocked by news that troubles our spirits. We live, we love and we look to tomorrow. This sermon and service will explore the coming of the light with grief and with hope.

The Rev. Rebekah A. Montgomery is a Unitarian Universalist minister and licensed professional counselor. Commissioned as an Army chaplain, she has served the majority of her career on active duty, most recently as a Family Life Chaplain, which distinguishes her as an advanced pastoral care provider and supervisor. Rev. Rebekah now serves the UU congregation of Rockville, Maryland, as the Assistant Minister (see more complete bio [here](#)).

Greeters: Esther Oey, Eric & Jean Williams-Bergen

Council Welcomers: Todd Moe, Julie Van Duyne

Kitchen Cabinet Advisor: Margaret Harloe

Social Hour: Jim Williams & Donna Dilworth,

Carol Gable, Lana Rodriguez

Worship Associate: Mark Berninghausen

RE Ambassador: Dave Bradford

Collection Counters: Ruth Baltus, Valerie Ingram

Library Table: Pat Gengo

February 14

Unexpected Valentines - Rev. Joel Miller, Interim Minister

Greeters: Karen Bage, Robert Best & Anita Figueras

Council Welcomers: John Danis, Todd Moe

RE Ambassador: Esther Katz

Worship Associate: Robin Collen

Social Hour: Brian & Claire Gardam,

Rich Fennessey & Carmen Stuart-Fennessey

Collection Counters: Pat Gengo, Will Siegfried

Library Table: Judy Gibson

February 21

An Unhip Love of the Hip Hop Spirit - Rev. Joel Miller, Interim Minister

Greeters: Theresa Witmer, Richard Grover & Valerie Ingram

RE Ambassador: Sally Hoose

Worship Associate: Valerie Ingram

Social Hour: Andrea Ferro, Kelly Johnson-Eilola,

Emmy Stevenson

Collection Counters: Jon Montan, Lorraine Olendzenski

Library Table: Sally Hoose

February 28

Humans of the North Country and A Discussion of Community - A service led by the youth group highlighting different aspects of community.

Greeters: Steve & Cara Coffin, Jim Rudd

Council Welcomer: Heather Rousell

RE Ambassador: Wil Rivers

Worship Associate: Mark Berninghausen

Social Hour: Rhonda Rodriguez & Richard Cook,

Sally & Gary Hoose

Collection Counters: Lonie Bogett, Tim Opdyke

Library Table: Lois Cutter

IN THE INTERIM - REV. JOEL REPORTS

I'm still learning about the North Country, and I'm especially curious about how to help you all do conflict well.

That may sound strange, but I want to talk with you about conflict. How to do it - because conflict, when done well, is healthy and useful. Much like it is in a marriage. So, for example, when I first meet with a couple who wish to marry, I always advise them to "have their fights." The most important behavior that predicts a successful marriage is how a couple fights. There is a strong correlation between how couples manage their conflicts and the long-term success of their marriages. Couples who have healthy, useful conflict have a strong tendency to have successful marriages. Couples who avoid conflict or push their conflict into high drama and inflammatory behaviors have a strong tendency for their marriages to fail. This single factor is, by far, the most important factor in the success of marriages.

How congregations manage their conflict is not the only important factor in their success, but it remains important. So this winter I'm starting a Chalice Circle that will use a discussion guide titled "Compassion and Restoration - One Small Group at a Time." It will meet on the third Wednesday of the month, here at the church, at 7:30 p.m. The group will meet for three months (or longer, if the group wishes), and it's important that participants be able to attend each gathering. You can let me know of your interest by emailing me at minister@uucantonny.org

Rev. Joel, Interim Minister

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Right now I am excited about the Search Committee website for prospective settled minister candidates (the "packet" in search lingo.) If you haven't already taken a look I urge you to do so (go to search.uucantonny.org.) The site is visually quite captivating with many great pictures of our historic building and our awesome congregation, as well as a pictorial appreciation of the North Country.

I also urge you to dig deeper into the site. Beyond the beautiful pictures is some pretty insightful information about our congregation.

One of the most compelling components is a You-tube video summarizing the results of the congregational survey. It requires a password to view this presentation (for our own protection) but it is well worth the few extra clicks it takes (email search@uucantonny.org to request a password via email).

I found this information most helpful. It heartened me with its description of the commitment and breadth of our congregation's values. It also deepened my understanding of the origins and spiritual outlook of our congregants.

Ultimately, it gave me a clear picture of what the committee will be looking for in ministerial candidates.

* * * * *

At January's Church Council meeting, we agreed that over the next several months we would focus on clarifying what it is that Church Council needs to do to support and empower a new settled minister. With Joel's assistance, we will identify specific policy and governance tasks we need to address.

I'd like to remind people that you are welcome to address Church Council at any monthly meeting. These meetings typically occur on the first Wednesday of the month and are held in the Romer room. We have set aside time on every agenda for this purpose (typically 7 p.m.). Please contact me prior to the meeting at president@uucantonny.org so we know to expect a visitor.

Barbara Beekman, Church Council President

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PONDERINGS

About February

by Kay Montgomery

February is not for the faint hearted, I think.
It is so exceedingly ordinary, having neither the romance of spring nor the bravado of winter.
And the ordinary is tough, it seems to me,
demanding as it does not only endurance but imagination.

Okay so maybe this February isn't quite ordinary for the North Country and still has a bit of the bravado of winter, but there is also the sense of endurance. Enduring the cold temperatures, the lack of snow up to this point, the weight of winter clothes, and the long hours of darkness. With this endurance though, there is time to contemplate and space for imagination.

The Religious Education Committee is in the process of imagining what the curriculum will look like for the 2016-2017 year. A few members and I are currently reading *Think Orange* by Reggie Joiner to inspire us to think more deeply about family ministry. We are also imagining how the concept of theme-based ministry might influence the program. In addition, we are imagining how we can collaborate with the Plattsburgh and Saranac Lake churches to better serve our children and youth as part of our multi-site ministry initiative.

The new adult education program, Coffee, Conversation & More, a collaboration of the Social Action, Environmental Action, Library, Religious Education and Welcoming committees, is developing a schedule of engaging topics for our congregation. Our youth group is creating their annual service for February 28, and Joel and I are collaborating on an intergenerational service for early March. So although there is a heaviness to this endurance of February, there is also a sense of lightness (not to mention the literal return of more daylight) - a lightness to imagine the future spiritual growth in our church community. May this February with its sense of endurance allow you time and space to imagine your spiritual future, too.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

What's Coming Up in January in Religious Education?

February 3 - Guest at Your Table weekly email in e-news
February 9 - Second Tuesday Chalice Circle Gathering
February 10 - Guest at Your Table weekly email in e-news
February 14 - RE Fun Day
February 14 - Guest at Your Table program ends
February 17 - RE Committee Meeting
February 27 - RE Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

THANK YOU THANK YOU...

- † Ian Corse for overseeing the RE Fun Day on December 27.
- † Kelly Johnson-Eilola, Jan DeWaters, Valerie Ingram, Jim Williams, and Richard Cook for teaching our JR High OWL Program.
- † Brook Stevenson and Janet Green for providing childcare during the Welcoming Committee's New-comers Gathering.
- † Jean Williams Bergen for donating an iron and ironing board to the RE Program.

JOYS & SORROWS

- † Congratulations to our own Rev. Joel, who has been selected to be the 25th Year Speaker at the Ministry Days of General Assembly this June in Columbus, Ohio.
- † Dave Smith died in an automobile accident in Florida on December 13. Dave just started coming to our church last summer. His family graciously asked for donations to our church in lieu of flowers. To share your condolences with Dave's family, cards can be sent to Dave's sister, Nancy: Nancy Dille and Family, 122253 Gehrig Drive, Jacksonville FL 32224
- † Our heartfelt sympathies go out to Carol Strome whose mother passed away at the end of December.
- † Happy best wishes to Bill Kirschgasser and Linda Seramur, who were married by Rev. Joel Miller on December 12 at their camp on Arbuckle Pond in Colton.

UPDATE FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Search Packets – Ours and Theirs

Our “packet” for ministers-in-search is now fully online at <http://search.uucantonny.org> (If you need the password to view those “protected” sections, just ask. You can contact us at search@uucantonny.org.) It will also be posted on the Search Committee bulletin board in the social room.

The UUA sent us a list of ministers who were interested in us; we studied their packets (also online), and from that study we selected a list of ministers we wanted to interview. It's been another labor-intensive stretch for us; those ministerial packets contain links to the ministers' sermons, letters of recommendation, and lots and lots of information about their backgrounds, theology, experiences, etc.


The Process Next Step: Interviewing the “Explorers”

Jon came up with the term “explorers” to describe our interviewees, which seems better than calling them “pre-pre-candidates.” We had a series of Skype interviews with those explorers; Kim arranged for a wonderful meeting room in SUNY Potsdam's new Performing Arts Center. If you're not familiar with Skype, it's an online application that allows the people talking to see each other, so it has great advantages over a phone call. Using a computer and a camera, the person we're talking to can see all of the committee at once. Erika made us huge name tags that sat on the table in front of each of us, which we understand was a great help to the ministers we were interviewing.

We asked each explorer the same set of questions. They asked us questions, based on what they've learned about us from our congregational record and our packet. We also had several “explorer-specific” questions, which helped us to clarify or delve further into information from their packet. This part was also labor-intensive, but very exciting for all of us. I think each of us is feeling the privilege you've bestowed on us to represent you in this important process.

Pre-Candidates

Following those calls, we decided which of the explorers we'd like to invite. Those four ministers then become “pre-candidates.” Jenn and Rajiv have begun a series of calls to references. Pre-candidates will travel to this area and have a number of meals and meetings with the Search Committee. (Pete is keeping a close watch on our budget to ensure we don't overspend!) We'll then all travel to the “neutral pulpit” and hear



Packets and
Process and Skype
Calls, oh my!

them give the Sunday sermon. Pre-candidating will start in early February and continues into March. At the end of pre-candidating, if we have found "the right fit," we'll have a candidate!

We could use some **help** from a few volunteers during these visits. For the sake of confidentiality (see below), we'll be meeting in one of our homes. We would be very appreciative of offers to help prepare and deliver Friday dinners and Saturday lunches. Carol Pynchon has agreed to organize meal preparers and deliverers for us. Please contact her if you can help.

Communication and Confidentiality

As promised, the results of the Cottage Meetings and the Congregational Survey are now available online! There is too much information to put into this newsletter: go to the packet at <http://search.uucantonny.org>; scroll down and under Our Congregation, click on "Survey and Cottage Meetings." Remember, you'll need the password, which you can get from any of us, by sending an email to the search address, or from our bulletin board. In addition to lots of data, Erika has created a video walk-through of the survey that our explorers have found helpful. We encourage our congregation members to check it out!

We still want to hear from you. Ask us questions and give us your thoughts. We've been so honored to have your support in this and that support has continued into your respectful treatment of the few (but important) parts that we must keep confidential. Thank you so much for that. The tight lid we keep on is primarily for the protection of the ministers in search. As in many types of job search, the current employers don't always know that their employee is looking for a new position!

The Search Process Goes On!

So that's where things stand! To see the entire Search Process, which began in November 2014, click [here](#).

Please contact the Search Committee at our church email address: search@uucantonny.org if you have questions.

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

COFFEE, CONVERSATION, & MORE!

Have you ever wished you had a regular opportunity to explore a variety of religious and social justice topics with other UUs? Have you found it difficult to attend such events in the evening due to distance or work and family obligations? Recently representatives from these church committees met to collaborate on an ongoing program of Sunday morning adult discussions and education to respond to these needs:

- Environmental Action Council
- Library Committee
- Religious Education Committee
- Social Action Committee
- Welcoming Committee

Each of these committees periodically holds discussion events on topics relevant to our UU principles, but all encounter barriers to scheduling and participation. Publicizing so many individual events becomes cumbersome. Room scheduling often encounters conflicts. Night events are sometimes poorly attended. Barriers to attendance also include childcare responsibilities and distance from church.

We agreed that a regularly scheduled program of events would provide ongoing opportunities for adults to interact with other UUs on a flexible but regular basis outside of the worship hour. It would likely en-

courage wider and more inclusive attendance at all of our events, with attendance likely to better reflect the diversity of ages and stages of life in our congregation. These Sunday activities would allow us all to get to know each other and to bring new folks into our church family more quickly. Each session would stand alone but be part of the series that would include a wide variety of topics related to our UU values.

Based on this discussion, we decided to go forward with a pilot run of Sunday morning “Coffee, Conversation, & More” events from January to May this year:

- The program will run on the 2nd and 4th Sundays from 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. in the Romer Room. Child-care available will be available.
- Individual committees will be responsible for specific sessions scheduled into the general calendar.
- Announcements of specific events topics will be provided each month in the newsletter, with weekly reminders in the e-news, and advance posting on the website. This regular publicity will help everyone plan to attend.
- The committee sponsoring a particular Sunday will take responsibility for preparing the coffee, getting volunteers to bring some sort of food, and arranging childcare with Carol Zimmerman.
- In May we will evaluate the pilot and make decisions about continuing in the fall.

The following sessions have been scheduled for February. We hope you will come have coffee and join in the conversation and more:

February 14: 2016: International Year of the Pulse (The What???)

Sue Powers, Environmental Action Committee

The United Nations declared 2016 the International Year of the Pulse. You likely eat pulses even if you do not know that they are dry peas, lentils, and beans. These high-fiber and high-protein foods are versatile and beneficial to global food security and sustainability. Join us to learn more about the social and environmental benefits of adding more pulses to your diet and as a way to reduce your personal carbon footprint. Tasty samples and recipes will be part of the conversation (bring your own favorite recipes to share!). This Sunday morning session is part of our Environmental Action Committees effort to share meaningful ways to reduce your personal and family emissions of greenhouse gas emissions.

February 28: Justice for North Country Farm Workers

Rebecca Fuentes, Executive Director, Workers' Justice Center of Central New York

Relani Prudhomme, Occupational Health Clinical Center of the North Country

“Dairy is king” is the saying in the North Country, but there is a hidden cost to our prized dairy products – the human cost to the laborers who milk the cows on many of the biggest farms throughout the area. In not a few cases, these workers experience long hours, few days off, little training, hazardous work conditions, and on occasion, wage theft, abuse, and retaliation when they protest. Farm workers across the state have been injured or even died due to hazardous work conditions. In the past year, we learned about two cases of workers in our region being beaten badly by their managers, with no consequences by the farm owners employing them. Join this conversation about helping our farm workers obtain more just and humane working conditions, and to find out what we can do to help fortify North Country’s milk with *justice!*

FEBRUARY RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

The next Canton American Red Cross blood drive will be held in our Social Room on Tuesday, February 9, from 11:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Volunteers are needed to help with the registration and passing out refreshments. Please contact Pat Alden in person or at socialaction@uucantonny.org

If you are able to give blood, consider scheduling an appointment on the 9th day by calling 1-800-733-2767 or visit www.redcrossblood.org Walk-ins are always welcome.

NEWS FROM OUR LARGER ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONS:

Unitarian Universalist congregations are interconnected through the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA.org). An additional layer is organized by “districts” within the UUA, and in recent years many in our district and national leadership have been working toward reducing the complexity in how our congregations relate to each other. Thus there will be a vote at the annual meeting of our district –the St. Lawrence District – to dissolve this district, but to preserve its work and resources through the regional structures of the UUA.

I believe this is a good change for our Association of Congregations. Districts were a very good structure for our congregations when they were formed in the 1960s, empowering nearby congregations to support each other directly. With the advent of the Internet and a lot of institutional successes since then, I believe the goals of creating the district structures have been met. We are, in many ways, closer to each other with a more global outlook and the immediacy of communicating through the Internet and social media. The resources that sustained the institutional structures of districts can be made available for the important work of supporting congregations, starting new congregations, and helping congregations create their own local “shared ministries.”

If you have questions or thoughts about this upcoming vote at what may be the last annual meeting of the St. Lawrence District, I’m very pleased to talk with you or you can talk with Margaret Harloe, who is on the St. Lawrence District Board of Trustees (you can find contact information in the church directory at www.uucantonny.org/directory/).

Rev. Joel Miller, Interim Minister

COOTS LIBRARY BOOK *reMARKS*

Thanks to our Annual Book Fair and some very generous donors, new books keep appearing in the library! In the children’s collection we now have *Little Treasures: Endearments From Around the World* by Jacqueline Ogburn, *A Garden In Time* by Jill Hammer, and a colorful book for active kids – *Good Night Yoga* by Mariam Gates. We also have updated versions of some informative UUA titles for preteens, *It’s Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health* and *It’s So Amazing: A Book About Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies, and Families*, both written by Robie Harris and illustrated by Michael Emberley.

New books for adults include *American Universalism* by George Huntston Williams and *Coming Out in Faith: Voices of LGBTQ Unitarian Universalists* edited by Susan Gore and Keith Kron. We also have the newest Mary Oliver book, *Felicity* and past New York gubernatorial candidate Zephyr Teachout’s book, *Corruption in America*. So if you’re looking for new reading for 2016, come browse the library, or stop by the library table in the social room after the service.

Lorraine Olendzenski, Chair, Library Committee

OUTREACH REMINDERS

The Outreach Committee is still available to make house calls! It’s often easier to learn to navigate new websites and functions at your own computer, so we’ll come to you! If you’d like company taking a quick spin around the church website, contact Carol Pynchon or any member of the [Outreach Committee](#).

Church Directory Online

Please be aware that church policy is to NOT include any personal information – email addresses, phone numbers, addresses in the e-news, newsletter, and website. Contact information for church members and friends is available in the Church Directory, which you can access from the Our Church or Get Involved

tabs on the website. The directory 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.

Carol Pynchon, Chair, Outreach Committee

MUSIC POSITION POSTED

As Joel announced in the January newsletter, our long-time music director Nelly Case is retiring this summer. The search for a new director, led by the Music Staffing Team - Doug Rubio, Worship Committee; John Danis, Church Council; Carol Strome, staff; and Joel - has begun. Ads announcing the quarter-time position have been placed in local papers and the job description and application process are available on the [church website](#). As a reminder, this is a one-year "acting" position, with the potential to be a long-term position; the final appointment will be made with our new settled minister. If you have questions, please speak with any member of the staffing team.

CHURCH & COMMUNITY PROGRAM SEEKS DIRECTOR

The Church and Community Program seeks applicants for the position of Director. The mission of this little not-for-profit with a big heart is to provide food and clothing to those in need, provide emergency funds in certain situations, and offer referrals for additional assistance. The ability to work with a diverse group of people in a welcoming and respectful manner is required. The successful applicant also will have strong skills in communication and computer use and be an effective, detail-oriented administrator. Currently the position is 30 hours, but depending on the successful candidate's interests and skill set, the hours might be increased.

An associate's degree expected, a bachelor's degree preferred. Equal Opportunity Employer. Qualified applicants may submit a letter of interest and resume by mail to: Search Committee, P.O. Box 55, Canton, NY 13617. Applications must be postmarked no later than February 19, 2016.

If you would like to receive weekly electronic news updates,
please email: office@uucantonny.org
Deadline for next newsletter:
Monday February 22

ON THE CALENDAR

Monday, February 1

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, February 2

12:15pm, Personnel Committee meeting

1:30 p.m., Outreach Committee meeting

Wednesday, February 3

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

10:00 a.m., Library work day

12:15 p.m., Personnel Committee meeting

6:30 p.m., Church Council meeting

Thursday, February 4

4:30pm, Handbell Choir rehearsal

Sunday, February 7

9:30am, UShare meeting

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

Monday, February 8

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, February 9

5:00 p.m., Welcoming Committee meeting

7:00 p.m., Chalice Circle

Wednesday, February 10

10:00 a.m., Library work day

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

Thursday, February 11

4:30pm, Handbell Choir rehearsal

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee meeting

Sunday, February 14

9:15 a.m., Coffee, Conversation and More

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

10:45 a.m., RE Fun Day

Monday, February 15

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Wednesday, February 17

10:00 a.m., Library work day

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

Thursday, February 18

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir rehearsal

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

Sunday, February 21

10:30 a.m., Worship and RE

Monday, February 22

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Wednesday, February 24

10:00 a.m., Library work day

Thursday, February 25

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir rehearsal

Saturday, February 27

6:00 p.m., RE Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

Sunday, February 28

9:15 a.m., Coffee, Conversation and More

10:30 a.m., Worship (Youth Group Service)

Monday, February 29

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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