



News & Information from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton



December 2016

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

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

December 4

Mercy Meets the Great Divide - The Rev. Shaun Whitehead,
Pulpit Guest

The parable of the Good Samaritan asks a critical question of our times – who is my neighbor? Unfortunately, we have defined our neighbor as those who look just like us, think like us, politic like us, worship like us, love like us, and ritualize like us. And because we think this way...it often leads us to cross to the other side of the road in our hearts, minds, and soul...which means *acting* on behalf of others with compassion becomes unlikely. But something radical happened that day on the Road to Jericho. Like today, divisions among races, cultures, and other social groups ran deep. Yet, as deep as the divisions were/are – as rigid and vast as they seem – they are not the only powers at work. That day on the Jericho Road, *mercy met the great divide*. The Reverend Whitehead is associate chaplain at St. Lawrence University.

Greeters: Jerry Bregg, Tim & Carol Opdyke, Bill Short

Lay Leader: Valerie Ingram

RE Ambassador: Sally Hoose

Social Hour: Laura Foster, Helen & Roger Hutchinson,
Maria Dickinson

Kitchen Cabinet Advisors: Helen & Roger Hutchinson

Collection Counters: David Doran, Ruth Baltus

December 11

It's Not a Hill; It's a Mountain – The Rev. James Galasinski
My parents enjoyed having “over the hill” parties for themselves and friends. They were essentially 40th and 50th birthdays that were supposed to be embarrassing. Balloons, yard signs, and t-shirts were black, as if to denote the closeness of death. Cognitively and physically we are over the hill in our late 20s. Yet, as we live longer, we have to rethink the milestones of aging. Also, as we age, our ideas of “old” and “young” have to change.

Greeters: Jan DeWaters & Stefan Grimberg, Esther Katz

Worship Associate: Robin Collen

RE Ambassador: Anna Sorenson

Social Hour: Evelyn Barton, Tom & Carol Pynchon

Collection Counters: Pat Gengo, Tim Opdyke

December 18

Holiday Pageant: “The Christmas Menorahs”

The Rev. James Galasinski and Director of Religious
Education Carol Zimmerman

*please note the pageant will be held at 10:30 a.m.

Greeters: Volunteers Needed

Worship Associate: Mark Berninghausen

Social Hour: Bill Hull, Katherine & Bill Brown,
Erik & Jennifer Whittaker

Collection Counters: Jon Montan, Lorraine Olendzenski

December 24

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - The Rev. James Galasinski

Greeters: Volunteers needed

Worship Associate: Valerie Ingram

Social Hour: Judi Cohen, additional volunteers needed

Collection Counters: Lonie Bogett, Will Siegfried

December 25

UUUs Celebrate Christmas? - The Rev. James Galasinski
Unitarian Universalism has historic roots in Christianity, yet we are quick to say we are not Christian. Perhaps because most UUs do not consider Jesus to be the Messiah. However, living in a Christian culture it is almost impossible to not celebrate Christmas in some way, shape, or form. This Christmas Day let's celebrate how Unitarians and Universalists helped make it into the family holiday it is now.

Greeters: Volunteers needed

Worship Associate: Mark Berninghausen

Social Hour: Volunteers needed

Collection Counters: Lorraine Olendzenski, Jason Shirtz



ON THE CALENDAR

Please print and post!



Thursday, December 1

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir practice

Sunday, December 4

9:00 a.m., Choir rehearsal

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

9:30 a.m., UShare Meeting

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

12:00 p.m. Supporting Our Children

Monday, December 5

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, December 6

11:30 a.m., Red Cross Blood Drive

12:15 p.m., Personnel Committee meeting

Wednesday, December 7

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

6:30 p.m., Church Council meeting

Thursday, December 8

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir practice

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee meeting

Sunday, December 11

9:00 a.m., Choir rehearsal

9:30 a.m., Book Fair

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

11:45 a.m., Meet the Minister

Monday December 12

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

7:00 p.m., Social Action Committee meeting

Tuesday, December 13

1:00 p.m., Communications Committee meeting

4:00 p.m., Welcoming Committee meeting

7:00 p.m., Chalice Circle

Thursday, December 15

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir practice

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

7:00 p.m., Leadership as a Spiritual Practice

Sunday, December 18

9:00 a.m., Choir rehearsal

10:30 a.m., Holiday Pageant

Monday, December 19

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, December 20

January Newsletter Deadline

Wednesday, December 21

5:00 p.m., Winter Solstice Service and Potluck

Saturday, December 24

7:00 p.m., Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 25

10:30 a.m., Multi-generational Worship

Monday, December 26

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday December 27

7:00 p.m., Stewardship Committee Meeting

HAPPY ★ NEW ★ YEAR



The Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

Minister, The Rev. James Galasinski

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

Sara Trimm, Congregational Administrator

Carol Strome, Choir Director

The Reverends Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeritus

Office Hours: Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
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FROM OUR MINISTER

The Worship Committee and I were on a mini-retreat recently. It was about 65 degrees and sunny. We sat on a blanket underneath a tree on the church's front lawn mindfully contemplating apples. Less than 48 hours later, that same lawn was covered with a foot of snow. Change happens quickly. Winter is all of the sudden upon us. A time with less light and more cold. It also may mean time off for those of us who are on an academic calendar. It can be a frantic time of traveling and buying gifts. It can also be a quiet, beautiful, and peaceful time. Just as the climate has changed so has the political climate abruptly changed. It felt that as a nation we made such progress in the past eight years and now things seem so uncertain.

However, we have many reasons to celebrate in winter.

The celebration of Christmas dominates our culture but we may also be celebrating Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and/or Winter Solstice. Hanukkah literally means dedication. It celebrates the rededication of the temple in Jerusalem. Hanukkah makes me think about those things to which I am dedicating my life. To what do we dedicate ourselves? One common denominator among the winter holidays is the celebration of light. Whether it is the light of the Christ Child, the returning light of the sun, the light of the Menorah, or the light of our principles, let this winter be a celebration of changing light.

May we all be light to each other in this time of darkness. May we all be warmth to each other in this time of coldness. May we all be hope to each other when hope is hard to find.

Blessed Be, The Rev. James Galasinski

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

I, for one, am tired of being overwhelmed. In the three weeks since the election, I have felt many things, but overwhelmingly, I've felt overwhelmed. How could this happen, what kind of world do we live in, what does the future hold, what does America mean anymore, and what is my place in it? On and on. Every day, something new to worry about.

So, what now? I've decided I just can't afford to be overwhelmed anymore. I'm not going to spend the next four years in a state of disbelief.

When life seems too big, I often return to a simple quote from activist, philanthropist, and yes, tennis player, Arthur Ashe "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." Ashe did not mean this as an excuse for doing nothing, but rather as a spur to action. That everyone can do something. SOMETHING. And the act of "doing" can be cathartic in and of itself.

We can focus on actions right in our own communities. There are many groups and organizations that can use help right now (Church and Community Program, Campus Kitchens, Renewal House, SURJ). "Start where you are."

You can work a shift at the food pantry, make phone calls, give a ride, make a meal, be kind to a stranger, or contribute money to a worthy organization. Time, expertise, money. "Use what you have."

We all can't drop our current responsibilities and devote all our time to this. We can, however, make one phone call, maybe even one phone call each week, to an elected official. Maybe we haven't won a million dollars in the lottery to give to Planned Parenthood, but we can give them \$10 and a show of support (for an extra thrill, make your gift in honor of VP-elect Mike Pence so he gets a personal acknowledgement from PP). "Do what you can."

Many will debate the “why” of this election for a long time. No doubt there will be a lot of analysis of what went wrong. These are important steps to take. But I am moving on to what we can DO today. I am choosing to be productive, choosing action, any small action, to move forward.

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For those who want to make calls to elected representatives, I found these two links helpful:

www.attn.com/stories/12768/former-congressional-staffer-explains-how-to-make-congressman-listen

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/1/d/174f0WBSVNSdcQ5_S6rWPGB3pNCsruyyM_ZRQ6QUhGmo/htmlview?usp=sharing&sle=true#

I am sure there are others, but this is a place to start for ideas, tips, and scripts for being effective when calling Congressional representatives.

Barbara Beekman, Church Council President

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PONDERINGS

As we approach the holiday season, many of us will be celebrating and participating in favorite family rituals. Growing up, one of my favorites was going out to get the Christmas tree. My family would trudge through the snow into a friend’s woodlot and walk around until we found the perfect one. Most of the time it was really big and even with our cathedral ceilings, my dad would have to chop off at least three feet. That was part of the tradition and fun. As Unitarian Universalists, many might find it challenging to create holiday rituals and even daily rituals that support our UU values. I recently read Meg Cox’s 2003 *UU World*, “New Family Traditions.” She suggests the following as a recipe for creating rituals. First, have one daily connection ritual. Second, celebrate all major milestones, accomplishments, and relevant holidays. Finally, create rituals for bumpy transition times. The UUA has many resources to help in creating rituals. Check out the following:

New Family Traditions - www.uuworld.org/articles/creating-rituals-with-for-children

Rituals for Holidays and Everyday - www.uuworld.org/articles/stub-2346

Creating UU Family Christmas Rituals - www.uuworld.org/articles/creating-uu-family-christmas-rituals

The New Book of Family Traditions - www.megcox.com/the-book-of-new-family-traditions-how-to-create-great-rituals-for-holidays-everyday

Real Life Rituals - www.uuabookstore.org/Real-Life-Rituals-P17879.aspx

How to Bury a Goldfish : And Other Ceremonies and Celebrations for Everyday Life - www.uuabookstore.org/How-to-Bury-a-Goldfish-P16965.aspx

May this holiday season be an invitation to return to your family rituals or if they no longer serve you consider creating new ones with the help of these links. May it be so. Blessings to you and yours.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

What’s Coming Up in December in Religious Education?

- December 4 Supporting Children with Post-Election Stress, 12 noon
- December 11 Holiday Pageant Rehearsal, 12 noon
- December 13 Second Tuesday Chalice Circle Gathering, 7 p.m.
- December 18 Holiday Pageant rehearsal 9 a.m.; Holiday Pageant, 10:30 a.m.
- December 21 Religious Education Committee Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
- December 25 Multigenerational Worship Service - No Religious Education Classes

THANK YOU THANK YOU...

- † Will Siegfried and Arthur Freeheart for helping with the COA Pizza gathering.
- † Rhonda Rodriguez, Julie VanDuyne, Relani Prudhomme, and Pat Glover for participating in the Coming of Age Retreat.
- † Anna Sorensen and Jenn Whittaker for helping create our upcoming RE survey.
- † Rhonda Rodriguez, Kathy Curro, and Arthur Freeheart for leading the CC&More discussion on adult religious education.
- † Jenn Whittaker for being Acting DRE in Carol's absence.
- † Many, many thanks to so many of you at church who sent me birthday cards and wishes on my 80th. It really made my day - and the succeeding days - and of course added to a big dose of nostalgia! I miss you all. ~Marilyn Ross

JOYS & SORROWS

- † Pat Dunkelberg suffered a minor stroke recently. While she is recovering, you are welcome to send a card or make a visit to keep her spirits high.
- † We send our sincere condolences to Caron and Phil Collins. Caron's mother passed away at the age of 91 at the end of October.
- † Our thoughts are with Joan Kepes as she continues to heal from injuries sustained from a fall that occurred while she was on the last day of a cruise of the Columbia River.
- † We are keeping Arthur and Julia Freeheart in our hearts. Arthur's son (and Julia's brother), also named Arthur, had a stroke at the end of October. He also was just diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease. Although he is doing well in his recovery, it will be a long and arduous process.

WELCOME NEW MEMEBRS

The Welcoming Committee is pleased to have three new signatures in our membership book! Please welcome Debra Mitchell, Louise Bixby, and Mary Michalek to our congregation. Check the "new member" bulletin board by the elevator for a short bio on each of them as well as a few others who have joined in the past few months.

Stevie Michaelson, Welcoming Committee

COFFEE, CONVERSATION & MORE!

Please join us on Sunday, December 4 at 9:15 a.m., in the Romer Room for a conversation about the Church and Community Program. (We will only have one offering of CC&More this month due to the holidays.)

The Church and Community Program was established in 1974 by local clergy, our congregation being one of the founding members. The program combines resources from local churches and the wider community to provide a safety net for those in need of emergency assistance for food, shelter, and clothing. A broad and active volunteer base is needed on an on-going basis to do this work. Program Director Connie Jenkins will join us to share more about CCP's current work and the variety of ways we can support it. Find out more about this important community program at www.ccpcanton.org.

As always, child care will be available. We hope you can join us!

B&G PROJECTS

In keeping with our Green Sanctuary covenant, dual-flush low-water-use toilets will be installed in the Social Room bathroom and the small bathroom near the west side entrance and the choir loft. Both toilets will be ADA compliant.

Custom blackout shades were installed in the Romer Room by North Country Window Fashion at the request of various committees and building user groups. The shades will block daylight to enable video conferencing, and viewing slideshows and movies. The fabric was selected because of its ability to block sunlight and is low in off-gassing of chemicals.

Pete Beekman, Building and Grounds Committee

A SEASON OF THANKS

We are winding up this year's canvass. If you have already made a commitment to the 2017 operating budget – thank you! If you have not yet been contacted about a pledge and would like to be, please let us know. The Stewardship Committee works very hard to be inclusive, but sometimes we make honest mistakes. We have noticed that many church members and friends are actually increasing their pledge commitment and this will help us make the four percent increase we need to strive for this time around.

Thanks to all those who attended Appreciative Speed Pledging. Over 60 people attended an ASP session, which got the canvass off to a terrific start *and* generated a lot of very good conversation and ideas about the future of our church community. James was present at all the sessions and took lots of notes (with the help of the Stewardship Committee). Between the ASP sessions and the individual canvass conversations, we have begun an important conversation about where we want to journey with James.

Now we're in the home stretch. If you have been contacted by a canvasser and asked for a meeting, please make sure the meeting happens in the next week. Our goal is to have the church budget finalized before Christmas so we can plan for our congregational meeting in January, when we will approve next year's budget. In the meantime, let's keep the UU generosity moving forward!

Bart Harloe, Stewardship Committee

SOCIAL ACTION NEWS

Our next Social Action Committee meeting will be on Monday, December 12, at 7 p.m.

Giving Tree Tags: The Church and Community Program organizes gifts of toys and clothing for the children of low-income families. Please consider taking a tag for a gift or for a monetary contribution; tags will again be available at church on December 4. Gifts must be returned by December 11.

Our traditional **Holiday Appeal** on behalf of Habitat for Humanity and Church and Community Program will be received during the month of December.

The next **American Red Cross blood drive** will be held Tuesday, December 6, from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Social Room. For more information, or to register in advance, go to www.redcrossblood.org. If you can assist with registering and dispensing refreshments at this drive, please email socialaction@cantonny.org.

Women's March on Washington: The Social Action Committee is helping coordinate community planning for the January 21, 2017, march in Washington, DC. Go to www.uucantonny.org/womens-march-on-washington to learn more or sign up to join the trip.

C&CP Board Member Needed: Our church is allowed three representatives on the board of the Church and Community Program. Currently, we have a vacancy and would like to have our full complement. Could this be a way for you to serve our church and community? If working on behalf of low-income families in our community sounds right to you, please speak with Pat Alden, Relani Prudhomme, or Janet McFarland (outgoing representative, current food pantry volunteer) or email socialaction@uucantonny.org. Learn more at the CCP website - www.ccpcanton.org.

Showing Up for Racial Justice, a national organization to support racial justice, held its first Canton meeting in our church in November. Over 120 people showed up. If you are interested in learning more about what this group is planning, please go to [NorthCountryNYSURJ](https://www.facebook.com/NorthCountryNYSURJ) Facebook page or contact surjnorthcountryny@gmail.com.

Pat Alden, Co-Chair, Social Action Committee

MUSIC NOTES

Choir Schedule

New members are always welcome in our adult choir. Music reading ability is helpful but not required. Contact me for more information or just show up at a rehearsal. We'll be glad to see you!

Adult Choir schedule for December

12/4 Rehearse at 9:00 am

12/11 Rehearse at 9:00 am, sing in church

12/18 Rehearse at 9:00 am, sing in church

Children's Choir

A children's choir will perform as part of our holiday pageant on December 18. Children from 2nd grade and up are invited to sign up in the Social Room. The only requirement is that you like to sing! Children who have other parts in the pageant can still participate in choir. Rehearsals will be for a half hour at noon after church on December 4 and 11, and as part of the regular pageant rehearsal at 9 a.m. on December 18.

Carol Strome, Choir Director

Jazz Circle

The next gathering of the Jazz Circle will be on Wednesday, December 14, at 7:30 p.m., in the sanctuary. We will meet monthly to play jazz standards, with the goal of playing in Sunday services regularly. Please bring your instrument, lead sheets, and ideas for the future. Anyone with an interest in jazz is welcome. If you have questions, please contact Pat Glover or James Galasinski.

COOTS LIBRARY

The Book Fair is coming! The Annual Holiday Book Fair will take place on Sunday, December 11, from 9:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. in the Romer Room. Our book sale features new and classic titles published by the two presses owned by the UUA - Beacon Press and Skinner House Books. We'll have selections for adults, youth, and children, as well as a new printing of the Max Coats "Friends" posters, which may make the perfect gift. Forty percent of the price of all Beacon and Skinner Press books is donated back to the church; all profits are split between the Caring Fund and the library's New Book Fund, so you can feel good about buying something for

yourself or a friend. Items will be available for purchase that day only, 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.

If you are looking for something new to read, stop by the library and pick up a list of our favorite Coots Library books, compiled by Library Committee members. On that list you'll see a collection entitled Black Lives Matter, a selection of books we are building related to racial justice issues. In the months ahead we hope you will spend time reading one or more of these titles, in anticipation of a Common Read discussion in the spring. The book selected by the UUA for the 2016-2017 Common Read is *The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement* by Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II with Jonathan Wilson Hartgrove. If you haven't heard the ideas of Rev. Barber, you can find his speech from this summer's UUA General Assembly on YouTube. He also spoke at the Democratic National Convention this summer.

Other titles available in the Coots Library are *Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving, *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son* by Tim Wise, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson, and *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color-Blindness*, by Michelle Alexander. We look forward to some stimulating conversations related to these issues in the year ahead.

Lorraine Olendzenski, Library Committee Chair



Let's Celebrate!

Winter is coming. And we're going to celebrate! Join us for a short service followed by a Winter Solstice - Yule Potluck in the Social Room on Wednesday, December 21, from 6 to 8 pm.

The Solstice celebrates the rebirth of the sun and beginning of winter. Yule is one of the oldest winter celebrations known. We'll share some comfort food and winter-related readings, poetry.

Join us for food and stories on the longest night and shortest day of the year!

If you would like to receive weekly electronic news updates,
please email: office@uucantonny.org

Deadline for next newsletter:

Tuesday, December 20