



# News & Information from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

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**DECEMBER 2017**  
**A MONTH OF SUNDAYS**  
(and a Thursday!)

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

## **December 3**

*Religious Space and the Coffee Shop -*

The Rev. James Galasinski

Religious time and space can happen anywhere: church, temple, mosque, or coffee shop. Coffee shops have permeated our cultural landscape because they provide more than caffeinated beverages—a pace and a place that is not found in other locations of our lives.

*Worship Associate:* Valerie Ingram

*RE Ambassador:* Ron Tavernier

*Greeters:* Jan DeWaters & Stefan Grimberg, Esther Katz, Denise Mock

*Social Hour Host:* Ron & Katie Boczarski, Laura Foster, Helen & Roger Hutchinson

*Collection Counters:* David Doran, Ruth Baltus

## **December 10**

*The Curriculum is the Congregation -*

The Rev. James Galasinski

Religious education goes beyond curricula and promotes faith formation or the process of meaning making. This does not just happen downstairs with children and youth, it happens at all stages and throughout all the rooms of our lives.

Discussion of the sermon with the Rev. James Galasinski to follow 10 minutes after the service.

*Worship Associate:* Doug Rubio

*RE Ambassador:* Jeff Frank

*Greeters:* Rebecca & Tim Weld, JoAnn & Lowell McAllister

*Social Hour Host:* Evelyn Barton, Carol & Tom Pynchon, Maria Dickinson

*Collection Counters:* Pat Gengo, Tim Opdyke

## **December 17**

*World at Midwinter -*

The Rev. James Galasinski and Carol Zimmerman, DRE Join us for our annual holiday pageant in which Santa and UUPS delivery person exploring the customs of Christmas, Hanukkah, and Winter Solstice around the world by visiting Mexico, Spain, Israel, Ghana and more.

*Worship Associate:* Theresa Witmer

*RE Ambassador:* Esther Katz

*Greeters:* Volunteers Needed

*Social Hour Host:* Bill Hull, Erik & Jennifer Whittaker, David Nelson & Rebecca Pickens

*Collection Counters:* Jon Montan, Lorraine Olendzenski

## **Thursday, December 21 (5:30 p.m.)**

*Winter Solstice: One More Trip Around the Sun*

This special earth-centered multigenerational service will be followed by a simple meal of soup and bread.

## **December 24 - Christmas Eve (10:30 a.m.)**

*What Child Is This? -* The Rev. James Galasinski

Who was Jesus? How special was he? Can an historical understanding of the man give us the magic of the Christmas season?

*Worship Associate:* Mark Berninghausen

*RE Ambassador:* Shelby Hunkins

*Greeters:* Volunteers Needed

*Social Hour Hosts:* Volunteers Needed

*Collection Counters:* Lonie Bogett, Will Siegfried

## **December 24: Christmas Eve 7:00 p.m.**

*The Tao of Christmas: Candlelight Service*

The Rev. James Galasinski

How does Taoism interact with Christmas? Can it? Are they compatible? Find out as we celebrate Christmas in song, in word, and in flame.

*Worship Associate:* Mark Berninghausen

*Greeters:* Volunteers Needed

*Social Hour Hosts:* Volunteers Needed

## **December 31**

*Spiritual Practice for the New Year*

Carol Zimmerman, DRE, and Mark Berninghausen

As we look to start a new year, this multigenerational worship will ask us to explore how each of one of us would like to live our faith in the coming year. We will be making our way around altars or stations that offer opportunities to live our UU values and create or deepen spiritual practices.

*Lay Leader:* Mark Berninghausen

*RE Ambassador:* Arthur Freeheart

*Greeters:* Kim Bouchard, Mary Michalek, Annie Chase, Jen & Danny Thomas

*Social Hour Host:* Phil & Caron Collins, Judi Cohen, Milner Grimsled

**Happy Holidays**

## ON THE CALENDAR

*Please print and post!*



### **Sunday, December 3**

9:00 a.m., Choir Rehearsal  
9:30 a.m., UShare Meeting  
10:30 a.m., Worship and Children's RE  
11:30 a.m., Sharing our Love, Sharing our Ministries  
Noon, Children's Choir Rehearsal

### **Monday, December 4**

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation  
7:00 p.m., Canton Goldenaires Concert

### **Tuesday, December 5**

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

### **Wednesday, December 6**

8:00 a.m., Building & Grounds Committee Meeting  
4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir Practice  
6:30 p.m., Church Council Meeting

### **Saturday, December 9**

10:00 a.m., Decorate the Church for the Holidays

### **Sunday, December 10**

9:00 a.m., Choir Rehearsal  
10:30 a.m., Worship & Children's RE  
Noon, Children's Choir Rehearsal  
Noon, Holiday Pageant Rehearsal

### **Monday, December 11**

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation  
7:00 p.m., Social Action Committee Meeting

### **Tuesday, December 12**

1:00 p.m., Communications Committee Meeting  
4:30 p.m., Welcoming Committee Meeting  
7:00 p.m., Second Tuesday Chalice Circle

### **Wednesday, December 13**

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir Practice  
7:00 p.m., UU Men's Group

### **Thursday, December 14**

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

### **Sunday, December 17**

9:00 a.m., Choir Rehearsal  
9:00 a.m., Children's Choir Rehearsal  
9:30 a.m., Holiday Pageant Rehearsal  
10:30 a.m., Worship - Holiday Pageant

### **Monday, December 18**

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

### **Wednesday, December 20**

Newsletter Deadline  
4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir Practice  
6:30 p.m., Religious Education Committee Meeting  
7:00 p.m., Third Wednesday Chalice Circle

### **Thursday, December 21**

5:30 p.m., Solstice Service  
7:00 p.m., Budget & Finance Committee Meeting

### **Sunday, December 24**

9:00 a.m., Choir Rehearsal  
10:30 a.m., Worship & Children's RE  
7:00 p.m., Worship & Children's RE

### **Wednesday, December 27**

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir Practice  
7:00 p.m., UU Men's Group

### **Sunday, December 31**

10:30 a.m., Multigenerational Worship

## **The Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton**

The Rev. James Galasinski, Minister  
Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education  
Sara Trimm, Congregational Administrator  
Carol Strome, Choir Director  
Betsy Kepes, Music Coordinator  
The Reverends Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeriti

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## Sharing Our Love, Sharing Our Ministries

Curious about who runs this place? Interested in finding out more about our church committees and teams? Ready to help out? Then stick around after the worship service on Sunday, December 3rd, for "Sharing our Love, Sharing our Ministries" (formerly known as the Committee Fair). Grab a cup of coffee and then browse through the Social Room and visit tables filled with information about shared ministries. Members of Buildings and Grounds will offer tours of our church! We invite you to ask questions and use this time to find a place for your talents. Help us expand the "ownership" of our congregation!

### FROM OUR MINISTER

#### Silence Asks Questions

I got to my first day as an intern chaplain (which was part of my theological school training) with my mind still racing ahead. Full of uncertainty, I had just quit my secure full-time job days before and was arriving into an unknown. We were told to assemble in front of the chapel. As we waited for our supervisor, we talked about our denominations and where we were from. But Leandro, who I would only later meet, a Roman Catholic priest from Brazil, bypassed us and went directly into the chapel. There he sat in silence while the rest of us gabbed about the weather.

Later on that first day, we were asked to share with the group where we found the divine in our lives. Leandro said he found the divine in silence. He reminded me of the power and the gift that silence is.

Part of that power of silence is the many questions it asks of us, questions we have to regularly dive into to even begin to answer. Where is your peace? What is swirling in your mind? The questions might be new every time or continually nag at us. What question is silence asking you? I like to include silence in our worship services, if just for a moment, because of this inquisitive power.

True silence can be hard to find. I don't know if audible silence is even attainable. As you read this you may hear the hum of the dishwasher or the ticking of a clock. The silence I am speaking of is something more than a physical surrounding can give. We can find silence in the loudness of life.

Normally "being silent" on something is thought of as passive, but by listening to the questions of silence we are actively stripping down life to its bare essentials. Sometimes paring down life and just focusing on silence restores the soul. After all, the immensity of all the universe is floating in utter silence. So, surely we can be in silence from time to time.

Whether we are facing new unknowns, or the predictable hustle of the holidays, sometimes all we need to do is follow Leandro – bypass the noise and go into the chapel of questioning silence.

*Blessed Be, The Rev. James Galasinski*

### PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Last month I was traveling with my daughter in Portland, Oregon. We were having a yummy breakfast in a bakery one morning, and I noticed the building across the street was colorfully painted. Portland is full of wonderful murals and other public art, so it was not really unusual to see a structure bedecked with interesting artwork. What was most compelling about this building however, were the words on those colorful walls – "See the humanity. Be the hope." I thought about those two sentences all that day, and I have reflected on them many days since. So simple. So direct. So powerful.

If only we all could just live by those six words. A simple, two-step process to navigating the world.

Simple words but hard to live by. Do I take the time to see the humanity in those I don't know, those I differ with politically, those I don't understand? Can I seize the opportunity to put forth a hopeful vibe, contribute something positive? In these times it is easy to jump on the bandwagon that is saying we are on our way to hell in a gasoline suit. Can I find something hopeful to do today? Is there a chance we can stop for coffee on that trip?

We cannot lose sight of the fact that we are all part of the family of man, that we have some common thread no matter how small, that we have something we can agree on whether it is an interpretation of the Constitution or that the Cleveland Browns are not going to win the Super Bowl this year. We can find the common ground, however small.

This is my final column as president. Although I will *not* miss having the monthly deadline for this column, I will miss the opportunity to communicate directly with you. I have been so lucky to have this chance to witness the breadth and depth of our congregation. I am thankful to the multitudes who have been so willing to help out, advise, step-up, take over, and just plain work at sustaining our church community. Blessed to be here, now. Lucky, thankful, blessed.

And so, in closing, I will leave you with those six simple words: See the humanity. Be the hope.

*Barbara Beekman, Church Council President*

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PONDERINGS**

As we prepare for the upcoming holiday season, I would like to share an idea for creating an Advent ritual as part of your spiritual practice. In an article by Betty Jo Middleton from Quest for Meaning ([www.questformeaning.org](http://www.questformeaning.org)), she shares these ideas about "What is Advent?"

"The word Advent, which means 'coming,' was originally used for the Coming of the Christ, and applied only to that day. After the sixth century, its meaning was expanded to include the whole period of preparation for this day--as it is now.

The Advent season marks the beginning of the Christian church year. The orthodox Christian church year is based on the three main incidents in the life of Jesus--Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost--which form the framework of the Christian year. Each of these great festivals was preceded by a period of preparation to enable Christians to meditate on the spiritual significance of these events in the life of Jesus.

Although the birth of Jesus, or the Nativity, is the major holy day, the four Sundays of Advent are recognized as the Advent season, a time of expectation and quiet reflection. Advent begins on the Sunday nearest November 30, St. Andrew's Day. For Unitarian Universalists, Advent means less than it does for more traditional Christians. However, Advent can provide an opportunity to deepen our awareness of the spiritual values inherent in the winter festival season.

The use of the Advent wreath originated a few hundred years ago among Lutherans in Germany. The wreaths are made of evergreens and are either suspended from the ceiling or placed on a table.

To prepare your Advent wreath, gather four candles (the traditional candles of Advent often have specific colors, blue represents hope and waiting, red/rose represent joy, white represents the Christ child for Christians, for UUs it also represents peace) and choose an area of your home where your Advent candles will not be disturbed. Use a wreath of evergreen boughs to frame them and add a centering chalice candle for our Unitarian Universalist faith. In the four weeks preceding Christmas, light one candle at the beginning of each day or at a meal. In the second week, light the first candle and then the second and so on until you have reached the fifth Sunday in December. Use the words below to light your candles each week. May you find patience, light, peace, love and hope in this holiday season. Blessed be.

*Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education*

First candle: **PATIENCE**

In this holiday season,  
may we find the patience  
to forgive ourselves;  
to forgive those who do not do as we wish;  
may we find patience.  
May we find the wisdom  
to let be.

Second candle: **LIGHT**

In this holiday season,  
may the darkness of winter  
be dispelled in this festival of lights,  
and may the darkness of ignorance  
be dispelled in the strength  
of compassion, reason,  
and sharing.

Third candle: **PEACE**

In this holiday season,  
may we find peace inside ourselves;  
may we be peace for those around us.  
And may we renew our commitment  
to bring peace with justice  
to our community and the world.  
May we be peace.

Fourth Candle: **LOVE**

In this holiday season,  
throughout the year to come,  
and always in our lives,  
may we know we are loved;  
may we share the love we have;  
and may we be the love we wish to see.

**HOPE**

Through this Advent season, this season of waiting, we have asked for patience, light, peace, and love.  
Now that the waiting is over – now that that which was to be has come- we light the flame of hope.

We welcome the coming  
of the days we have waited for;  
we have realized hope,  
yet know that hope  
can never be realized.  
We commit ourselves to patience;  
to working to dispel darkness;  
to working for peace;  
we commit ourselves  
to love and to hope.

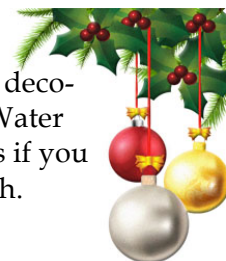
We light this flame  
as an end,  
as a beginning,  
as the symbol of  
the eternal now.

-The Rev. Dr. David Breedon



**Deck the Halls!**

On Saturday, December 9, at 10 a.m., we will gather to decorate the church for this holiday season. Becky Van de Water will lead the charge and provide the tree. Please join us if you can for a delightful morning filled with holiday warmth.



## THANK YOU THANK YOU...

- † When you see Miles Manchester and Pete Wyckoff, please add your thanks for the three days they spent laying and cementing a waterproof roofing membrane on the bell tower floor. Their efforts will prevent future water damage to the wooden substructure by sealing a number of cracks in the concrete floor and stone work. Their hard work has avoided some major problems if quick action was not taken. Thank you, Miles and Pete.
- † John Danis and Carol Pynchon for helping us work out some of the technical details of using the new smart TV.
- † Glen Butler for chaperoning an OWL sleepover.
- † Todd Moe and Teresa Witmer for participating in the October multigenerational worship service.
- † Shelby Hunkins, Ron Tavernier, and Ashley Nadean Clover for joining the RE Committee.
- † Glen Butler for organizing a speaker from the Native North American Travelling College for our youth group.
- † Jeff Frank for organizing and facilitating a meeting for our Neighboring Faiths RE class.
- † Glen Butler, Heather, Claire, Grace and Madeline Rousell and Maria Dickinson for overseeing the RE Fun Day on November 26.
- † Sue Powers and the EAC, with help from B&G, for leading the charge in creating our new pollinator garden.

## JOYS & SORROWS

- † Our love and healing thoughts are traveling to Pennsylvania as Judy Gibson undergoes hip surgery on December 4. Judy and David's new address is in the church directory.

## MUSIC NOTES

### Adult Choir

This month the adult choir will have a busy month, caroling at TAUNY, singing for the Holiday Pageant, and also for the Christmas Eve services. Some of our members will have gone to warmer climates already so we could use some extra voices. If you have been meaning to try singing in the choir, now would be a great time! All voices are welcome. Music reading ability is helpful but not required. Just show up at rehearsal (downstairs in the choir room) and we will be happy to see you!

12/3	Rehearse at 9:00 a.m.
12/8	Caroling at 5:30 p.m.
12/10	Rehearse at 9:00 a.m.
12/17	Rehearse at 9:00 a.m., sing in church for Holiday Pageant
12/24	Rehearse at 9:00 a.m., sing in church at 10:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

### Children's Choir

It's time for our annual Children's Choir to practice for the Holiday Pageant. Any child of school age who likes to sing is welcome to be a part of the choir. Please sign up on the pageant sign up sheet in the Social Room. If you have signed up for another part in the pageant you can still be in the choir!

12/3	Rehearse after church, 12:00-12:30 p.m.
12/10	Rehearse after church, 12:00-12:30 p.m.
12/17	Rehearse at 9:00 a.m., perform in pageant at 10:30 a.m.

*Carol Strome, Choir Director*

### Handbell Choir

I write this with good memories of music for James' Sabbath sermon. The Handbell Choir's music was all Hebrew-influenced and we enjoyed putting together our challenging and *new* (to our church) pieces. We had eleven ringers, so we were able to use all three octaves of our bells. A particular highlight was having guest musicians join us - Erika Barthelmess on tambourine and Laurel Kuxhaus on English horn (the oboe's larger

cousin). That added so much to our experience of the music – and we hope it did for the congregation’s, too! We’ll continue to add guest instrumentalists in the coming months.

We are now preparing for both Christmas Eve services with two octaves of bells and the smaller group of eight ringers.

If you are interested in becoming a ringer, if you want to know more, or if you have suggestions for music you’d like us to play, send me an email at [handbells@uucantonny.org](mailto:handbells@uucantonny.org). Or, talk to me or any of the Handbell Choir members: Bonnie Danis, Judy DeGraaff, Bobbie Hart, Maggie Hockett, Toby Irven, Margaret Mauch, Stevie Michaelson, Natalie Panshin, Eileen Raymond, Carol Strome, Eden Terrell, and Janice Westerling. Any of us would be happy to give you information and hear your ideas.

*Theresa Witmer, Handbell Choir Director*

### **WELCOMING COMMITTEE**

A big welcome to our newest members: Shelby and Ben Hunkins, and their children Fiona and Max; Ashley and Gabrielle Clover, and their daughter Geri; and Danny and Jennifer Thomas, and their children Maya, Finley and Claire. Be sure to look for more information about these members on the New Member Board in the Social Room.

Also, please stop by the Welcoming Committee table during “Sharing Our Love, Sharing Our Ministries” on December 3. We will have stickers and decorations to jazz up your name tag!

Thank you to all for being welcoming to all who visit our church.

### **Annual Food Festival**

Temple Beth El in Potsdam is holding their annual Food Festival  
(<http://www.potsdamsynagogue.org/content/food-festival>)  
on Sunday, December 3, from 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

### **STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE**

Our 2018 Canvass goal of raising \$245,000 is well in sight with 108 units having committed \$240,575 or 98% of the goal. We are so pleased by the response of everyone who has made a pledge. We are especially grateful to the 52 units who have increased their commitments by \$15,151 over what they gave last year; the nine units making their first pledges totaling \$5,062; and the three units who have committed \$6,340, having missed giving last year but who have supported us in the past. Accounting for decreased gifts, new gifts, gifts from lapsed donors, and increased gifts over last year, we have raised \$26,553 in new money. As we conclude our efforts we are optimistic that we can reach and perhaps surpass our goal. The Stewardship Committee will be contacting members and friends we have not heard from in the coming days. If you have not made your commitment please call the office (315-386-2498) or visit our website to donate online.

Why give? We aim to change lives and transform the world. We have a history of being fiscally responsible with our resources, while remaining committed to environmental sustainability. Our minister and our church council members are working diligently to lead us into a future that nurtures a spirit of love. We aim to live out justice in our community and the wider world. Your generosity is essential to advancing our mission.

*Pete Beekman, Stewardship Committee*

## LIBRARY COMMITTEE

### Weekly Library Table

Love reading? Enjoy making reading recommendations? Please consider signing up to set up the library table in the Social Room some Sunday. There is a short "how to guide" on the wall near the card catalog. Arthur Freeheart has volunteered to coordinate library table staffing and is happy to answer any questions and help.

## SOCIAL ACTION NEWS & NOTES

Thanks to our co-sponsors SURJ and all who joined us for the Racial Injustice Film Series. The films helped us learn more about systematic and structural white supremacy, and the discussions that followed were substantive and engaging.

We are also grateful for all who contributed to the November SASO on behalf of the Hurricane Maria Community Recovery Fund. Thanks to your generosity, we collected \$2256 to support relief and recovery efforts.

Closer to home, we are happy to announce Cliff Westerling is our congregation's new representative to the Church and Community Program, taking the place of Relani Prudhomme who recently stepped down. We thank Relani for her work and are grateful that Cliff has stepped forth to carry it on.

And mark your calendar for the Goldenaires concert to support the Church and Community Program on Monday, December 4 at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary. Cash donations will be accepted and everyone is invited to bring a can of food. Our next Social Action Committee meeting will be Monday, December 11 at 7:00 pm. Everyone is welcome.

*Margaret Harloe, Co-Chair, Social Action Committee*

## COMMUNICATION NOTES

Have you checked out the new big screen in the Romer Room? We are excited to have that new addition, which will allow us to screen films and documentaries, hold Skype meetings, share online information and materials from a laptop with a group, navigate the website in large format, share important news on Sundays, and much more! If you would like to use it for a meeting, please check with Sara in the [church office](#) for instructions and information about getting and using the remote. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to check in with Sara or with me at [communications@uucantonny.org](mailto:communications@uucantonny.org).

*Carol Pynchon, Communications Committee Chair*

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If you would like to receive weekly electronic news updates,  
please email: [office@uucantonny.org](mailto:office@uucantonny.org)  
Deadline for the next newsletter: **Wednesday, December 20**