



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

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**JUNE 2018**  
**A MONTH OF SUNDAYS**

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

**June 3**

**Out in the North Country for 20 years**

*The Rev. James Galasinski*

Help us celebrate in story, song, and ritual 20 years of being a Welcoming Congregation. Being out as LGBTQ and being out as an ally build our community into what we all dream about – the beloved community.

*Music:* Sean Cunningham Duo & the UU Choir

*Worship Associate:* Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel

*RE Ambassador:* Jeff Frank

*Greeters:* Betsy & Mike Bommer, Louise Bixby, Judi Cohen

*Social Hour Hosts:* Kim Bouchard, Annie Chase, Judy & Shaili Singh, Pat Gengo

*Collection Counters:* David Doran, Ruth Baltus

**June 10**

**RE Sunday: Making a Difference in the World**

*– The Rev. James Galasinski and  
Carol Zimmerman, DRE*

Our children and youth will be sharing their ideas on how we make a difference in the world and we will also congratulate our graduating high school seniors.

*Music:* UU Choir; John Danis and James Galasinski

*Worship Associate:* Theresa Witmer

*RE Ambassador:* Esther Katz

*Greeters:* RE Committee, Teachers, and children

*Social Hour Hosts:* Annual Church Picnic

*Collection Counters:* Pat Gengo, Tim Opdyke

**June 17**

**Synchronicity: An Ever-Present Reality**

*The Rev. James Galasinski*

The psychologist Carl Jung defined synchronicity as a “meaningful coincidence.” We all experience these intuitions from time to time and they can point us to a deeper meaning present in our lives.

*Music:* Doug Rubio

*Worship Associate:* Robin Collen

*RE Ambassador:* Arthur Freeheart

*Greeters:* Charlie Bradt, Katherine & Bill Brown, Becky Van de Water

*Social Hour Hosts:* Betsy Kepes & Tom Van de Water, Carol & Phil LaMarche, Sara Hutcheson

*Collection Counters:* Jon Montan, Lorraine Olendzenski

**June 24**

**UU Guardian Angels? – Doug Rubio, Pulpit Guest**

Stories of guardian angels are a feature of many religious faiths throughout time and around the world. Unitarian Universalists, however, tend not to believe in angels of any kind. So is there something we can learn from the idea of guardian angels? Are there UU guardian angels?

Doug Rubio is a member of the Worship Committee. He has been attending our church for over 20 years and has held a number of leadership positions. In his non-church life he is a professor of classic guitar at SUNY Potsdam.

*Music:* Theresa Witmer, Quartet Z

*Lay Leader:* Valerie Ingram

*RE Ambassador:* Shelby Hunkins

*Greeters:* Donna Kimball, Brian & Claire Gardam, Robin Collen

*Social Hour Hosts:* Bobbi Haldane, Debs Kalicin, Valerie Ingram, Janet McFarland

*Collection Counters:* Lonie Bogett, Will Siegfried



**Summer Office Hours for July and August:**

Tuesday through Thursday 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

*The office will be closed July 2-7.*

## ON THE CALENDAR

*Please print and post!*



### **Saturday, June 2**

Dairy Princess Parade

### **Sunday, June 3**

10:30 a.m., Worship and Children's RE  
20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Welcoming Congregation

### **Monday, June 4**

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

### **Wednesday, June 6**

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

### **Saturday, June 9**

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

### **Sunday, June 10**

10:30 a.m., Worship – RE Sunday  
11:30 a.m., Church Picnic

### **Monday, June 11**

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

### **Tuesday, June 12**

11:30 a.m., Red Cross Blood Drive  
4:30 p.m., Welcoming Committee Meeting  
7:00 p.m., Second Tuesday Chalice Circle

### **Wednesday, June 13**

7:00 p.m., UU Men's Group

### **Thursday, June 14**

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

### **Sunday, June 17**

10:30 a.m., Worship and Children's RE  
Rachel Somers Grant Award Presentation

### **Monday, June 18**

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

### **Wednesday, June 20**

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

### **Thursday, June 21**

7:00 p.m., Canvass Committee Meeting

### **Sunday, June 24**

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

### **Monday, June 25**

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

### **Wednesday, June 27**

7:00 p.m., UU Men's Group

## **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  
Theresa Witmer, Handbell Choir Director

The Reverends Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeriti

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## FROM OUR MINISTER A Mission Driven Congregation

Even amidst the traffic jam on Main Street outside my office, things keep moving along. It is hard to believe but it is coming to that point again – we are nearing the end of the church year and are on the cusp of summer. I have been here now as your minister for almost two full years! I think it is important to reflect on the last nine months:

We had a very successful canvass and pledge drive in the fall. The highlight of the church year had to be the ordination of the Rev. Jan Hutslar. It was truly a powerful experience for anyone present. You could feel the love in the room. This spring we have been celebrating 20 years of being recognized as a Welcoming Congregation. Our celebration included a panel discussion, two ally training sessions, partnering with PRISM on a queer film series, and our soon-to-come participation in the Dairy Princess Parade – in full rainbow attire with a marching band led by Jill Rubio. Please march with us! The June 3 Sunday service to celebrate being a Welcoming Congregation should be great. Most recently Church Council and the Mission Commission unveiled a draft of our new mission statement.

Creating a new mission statement is an important process and an accomplishment in and of itself. I want thank the Mission Commission led by Kathy Wyckoff and everyone who gave their input (see page 5 for more from Kathy). However, here comes the tougher part – we will have to live out that mission. Having a clear mission guides us in our decision-making process for who we are to be now and whose lives we intend to affect and how. My hope is that having a new mission statement will lead us to be more mission driven. If we are mission driven we will have to re-examine everything we do. It means the budget should be mission driven. All of our programs should be mission driven. We are in the business of changing and shaping lives through creating a welcoming faith community, committing ourselves to social justice, and being open to the mystery, wonder, and love that is in us and all around us.

Blessed Be,

*The Rev. James Galasinski*

## PRESIDENT'S POST



It's been said that June is the gateway to summer. It marks the end of another school year, and gardeners whisper, "Ready. Set. Grow!" as the last of the garden is planted. But before we move into summer, I want to touch on a few proud moments in May.

First, many thanks to all the folks who helped with Jan Hutslar's ordination. It's an event that doesn't happen very often, and I'm grateful for all the work that went into a successful weekend - from the crew that cleaned up the church grounds, to cooks who helped prepare the Saturday evening dinner, those who played hosts to out of town guests, and the musicians and speakers at the ordination service. Thank you!

We are a growing congregation! A couple of times a year we celebrate those who have added their names to our membership book. In late May, I had the honor of welcoming Ethel Slocum and Dottie Hall as our newest members. We welcome their enthusiasm to become part of our church family.

My favorite passage from the New Member Recognition ceremony states, "Here, we share insights from all humanity, yet we each fashion that view of life that holds meaning in the integrity of our own hearts and minds. We support each other in the crises of our lives, rejoice together in life's passages, and share with each other the depths of our thoughts and prayers as we journey together through mystery."

I also want to thank the Mission Commission for the work they put into creating a new mission statement. We rolled it out during our May 20 service; you can read the draft and more about the process on page 5.

Lastly, as a member of the LGBTQIA community, I'd be remiss if I didn't wish everyone a Happy Pride Month! June was chosen as Pride Month to commemorate the Stonewall riots in Manhattan, which occurred at the end of June 1969. This month, we recognize and celebrate the impact LGBT people have had in the world.

"What is straight? A line can be straight, or a street, but the human heart, oh, no, it's curved like a road through mountains." ~ Tennessee Williams.

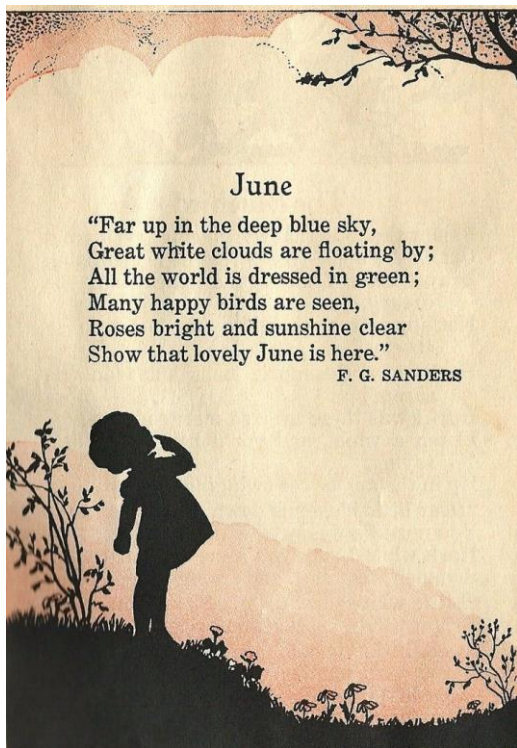
Happy June, Happy Pride, Happy Summer Solstice!

*Todd Moe, Church Council President*

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PONDERINGS

### Thank You...

- † Erik and Arianna Whittaker for taking pictures during RE Sundaes Sunday.
- † Arthur Freeheart and Mark Berninghausen for helping out with the t-shirt sales.
- † Eileen Raymond for donating toys and books to our Religious Education program.



June  
"Far up in the deep blue sky,  
Great white clouds are floating by;  
All the world is dressed in green;  
Many happy birds are seen,  
Roses bright and sunshine clear  
Show that lovely June is here."  
F. G. SANDERS

### Religious Education Ponderings

Ah, the smell of lilacs and crab apple lingers in the warm breeze and the sun is warming my face as I write. With the coming of June, our Religious Education program for the year has ended, and we are planning for summer. Before summer begins, we will honor our RE teachers with a dinner on Saturday, June 9, and again during the RE Sunday worship service on Sunday, June 10. During RE Sunday, our children and youth will be sharing their ideas on how we make a difference in the world and we will also congratulate our graduating high school seniors.

Summer will find our children and youth exploring stories of Dr. Seuss and reflecting on how they relate to our lives and our UU values. May your month of June find you relishing the blue sky, white clouds, and the beauty of the natural world, and we hope to see you as we celebrate our Religious Education program. Blessed be.

*Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education*



*Thanks to everyone who worked hard during our Spring Work Day to make the grounds sparkle: Tom Pynchon, Sue Powers, Bobbi Haldane, Janet McFarland, Pete Wyckoff, Kathy Wyckoff, Helen Hutchinson, Miles Manchester, Braden Whittaker, Arianna Whittaker, Gary Hoose, Jan Hutslar, Stefan Grimberg, Roger Hutchinson, Jon Montan, Erik Whittaker, Will Siegfried...and everyone else who helped but wasn't there for the picture!*

### **JOYS & SORROWS**

- † Our thoughts are with Betsy Kepes as she recovers from a bicycle accident.
- † Our condolences to the family of long-time church member Jim Arvidson, who passed away in May.

### **MISSION COMMISSION About our New Mission Statement**

The draft of our new mission statement was presented to the congregation at the Sunday service on May 20. This represents the culmination of many months of work by the Mission Commission, the ad hoc team that was assembled to tackle the rewriting of our church's mission statement.

Our team started by researching what makes a good mission statement. We looked at the mission statements of other organizations, not-for-profits, and UU churches. A plan was developed to get input from the congregation. We hosted a "Coffee, Conversation and More," offered an online survey, and included a discussion of the church's mission in two of the winter potlucks. The congregation was asked in various ways what words best describe our church community. The results of the surveys were displayed visually as word clouds.

When the Reverend Christine Robinson was here in February, she conducted a well-attended evening workshop that helped us focus on what is truly important about the UU Church in Canton, New York.

Following the advice of the Rev. Robinson, the Commission took a preliminary statement and supporting information to a poet in our congregation, Albert Glover. A skillful wordsmith, Albert created a succinct, lyrical statement that conveys our core values. Additionally, we crafted bullet points to elaborate on the mission statement. After a few edits from the Commission and Church Council we now have a new draft mission statement as follows.

*Creating a welcoming, compassionate faith community, committed to social justice and open to wonder.*

*Together we:*

- † *Foster a spirit of inclusion and connection*
- † *Encourage exploration of truth and meaning*
- † *Nurture respect for all life and the environment*
- † *Strive to live our values in the North Country and in the wider world*

Our plan is to “live” with the statement for the next few months, leaving open the possibility of a revision or two, before we vote on it in the fall.

*We welcome your thoughts and comments.* Feel free to speak with, phone, or email James or any member of the Mission Commission (Todd Moe, Danny Thomas, Judi Cohen, Cliff Westerling, Carol Pynchon or Kathy Wyckoff).

## **ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC - BYOP!**

**Sunday, June 10**

The church picnic is one of our most fun church-wide social events,  
and we're doing it a little different this year!

**It's BYOP - *Bring Your Own Picnic!***

The picnic will be held at Priest Field - just behind the church- after church on June 10.

You might want to bring a  
blanket or chairs.

There will be plenty of fun and games.

*See you there!*



## HANDBELL CHOIR NEWS



We had a wonderful fall, winter, and spring with the Handbell Choir! As you read this, our three-octave set of handbells will have travelled to “handbell hospital” – the Schulmerich Company in Pennsylvania, where they will undergo a complete refurbishment, the first such repairs in our handbells’ 30-year history! We are very appreciative to have the support of the church, in addition to money from three private donors, to fund this endeavor. We look forward to showcasing our refurbished handbells this fall, and hope you’ll hear the difference, with bells that are more “in tune” and better balanced. For the players, the brand new parts each bell will get means the bells ring more consistently and have their full range of dynamics!

Would you like to help us purchase a set of handchimes? We got many positive comments in March when we borrowed a set from the Presbyterian Church of Canton to play along with our handbells. Handchimes have a beautiful, ethereal tone and provide a lovely contrast to the handbells. A set goes for about \$2,000. Handchimes are slightly easier to maneuver and play; having them would provide a perfect way for new and younger players to learn, in addition to adding to the musical variety of our Handbell Choir. Let me know if you’re interested!

I’m glad to hear your suggestions and comments – send me an email at [handbells@uucantonny.org](mailto:handbells@uucantonny.org).

*Theresa Witmer, Handbell Choir Director*

## ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION COMMITTEE UU Church Goes Solar!

Church Council, acting on the recommendation of the Environmental Action Committee, has signed a contract with [United Renewable Energy, LLC](#) to receive electrical power from the Somerville Community Solar Project (see photo). We are subscribed for 5 percent of the output of the array, which is approximately equal to our yearly electrical consumption of around 14,000 KWh. Each month URE, LLC credits our National Grid account with the KWh produced for us and we pay URE, LLC at a rate of \$0.075/KWh. If our consumption



exceeds what the array can deliver, we will obtain the remainder from National Grid - as we are doing now - at their rate. This arrangement satisfies two major objectives: (1) we obtain clean electricity from a renewable source and (2) we save significantly on our annual electric bill. The Somerville Community Solar Project is visibly located just south of US Hwy 11 in the Town of Rossie, St. Lawrence County.

## MEMORIAL GARDEN



The Memorial Garden, on the west side of the church, is going to get a major overhaul this summer. Paul Siskind is graciously donating his time to accomplish the revision and renovation of the garden.

He will start building a short retaining wall to surround the Silas Wright side of the garden. This area will then get new plantings and benches. On the church side there will be new plantings as well, and a smaller ornamental tree will replace the cherry tree that was removed a few years ago.

Paul will be working on this project as he has time throughout the season. Please note that we can expect some disruption of the garden. Materials for the project (blocks, soil) will be staged on the west side of the church for much of the summer. The utmost care will be taken to avoid disruption of ashes.

Upon completion of the work, the garden will be more circumscribed and more attractive. We want it to reflect the care we feel for this space that has special meaning to many of our church members.

If you have questions feel free to talk to anyone on the Memorial Committee or Paul Siskind. Committee members include Kathy Wyckoff, Claire Gardam, Barbara Beekman, and Judy DeGraaff.

*Kathy Wyckoff, Mission Commission Commander!*

## CANVASS COMMITTEE

Members of the Stewardship Committee have begun plans for the church's 2018 Annual Canvass. This year we will return to a one-on-one individual canvassing format, a style of canvassing that has not been used for a number of years. Our choice will require additional members and friends to volunteer to canvass so numbers are kept to a reasonable two to three assignments. The 2018 Canvass kick-off date is Sunday, October 14. We are working closely with Church Council on a theme for the Canvass. More from us to follow in the coming weeks.



*Jenn Whitaker & Pete Wyckoff, 2018 Canvass Co-Chairs*



*Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton*

**Social Justice Initiative**

*Promoting justice, equity, and compassion in human relations*

## **Criminal Justice Issues and Mass Incarceration**

Three years ago, a generous donation to the church by Todd Moe and Paul Siskind provided for the underwriting of the costs of a series of five biennial symposia focused on critical social justice issues of our day. In September 2017, we hosted our first Social Justice Initiative on the topic of bullying in the workplace. Our key-



note speaker and workshop leaders promoted extensive discussion of these issues, and the impact they have in creating the hostile environments we see so often in work situations today. The productivity and personal costs of such bullying was clearly documented, and attendees helped identify ways we may respond to such incidents and patterns of behavior.

Now we are turning our attention to the 2019 event in this series, which will focus on criminal justice/injustice and the impacts of mass incarceration. These issues related to criminal justice and incarceration feature daily in our news feeds. By dedicating the Fall 2019 Social Justice Initiative to their consideration, we hope to promote networks that can develop constructive actions we as individuals and the church can take to assure that everyone has equal access to justice.

Many factors have resulted in the U.S. having one of the highest rates of incarceration in the world. Those caught up in the “system” face longer terms, long incarceration in solitary confinement, abuse by guards and other inmates, and punitive parole and probation procedures. Upon completion of their sentences, offenders are often unable to get employment and housing, and are often not able to even vote.

As New Yorkers, we must own the role our state has played in promoting long and punitive sentences as a way to stem the perceived rise in crime through the Rockefeller Drug Laws. In the North Country, we became the warehouse for the rest of the state when prison populations downstate mushroomed in the 1980s. Housing city inmates up here made it impossible for families to stay in touch with their incarcerated family member. Local North Country folks saw the prison populations (largely black) as something fearful, feeding the racial bias we are seeing today. Ironically, our local state prisons became an economic advantage up here where good paying jobs were seemingly out of reach for many. Thus our state and region became a major player in the prison-industrial complex, a “model” for the rest of the country.

By focusing on this central issue, we will identify specific ways we in the North Country and the state of New York can address these issues, making our state more just for all. In developing the program for the 2019 Social Justice Initiative, we will need to reach out to many resource persons in the North Country and the state, including:

- Criminal justice degree programs and faculty at SUNY Potsdam and SUNY Canton
- Local correctional facilities
- New York and U.S. legislators
- Rev. Chuck Smith, Chaplain, Gouverneur prison; pastor at Grace Episcopal Church
- Prison Ministry of the Church of the Larger Fellowship (UU)
- Local police, sheriff, and state police departments
- Prosecutors
- Public defenders
- Probation officers
- Addiction counselors
- Educators working in local prisons
- Mental health professionals
- Vocational services and counselors
- Pen America Prison Writing program
- Kim Bouchard, SUNY Potsdam Theatre Department
- Reginald Dwayne Betts (former inmate, now a lawyer and poet)
- Bryan Stevenson, Equal Justice Initiative, <https://eji.org>

In keeping with the framework for the Social Justice Initiative program, we will also include a significant arts component, involving ways that poetry, theater, music, and visual arts help us understand the experiences of those caught up in our criminal justice system.

With a project of this magnitude, it is important that we have sufficient time to consult broadly with folks in this field so we can get on the schedules of those who can contribute to the rich program we envision. It is essential that we begin this preliminary planning now to build the networks needed to make this event a powerful one. Eileen Raymond will be serving as the chair for the 2019 Social Justice Initiative. Please [contact her](#) or any member of the Social Action Committee if you would like to participate on the SJI Planning Com-

mittee, or if you have questions about what might be involved. We urge everyone to watch for announcements of meetings of the planning groups that will be required to fully address this complex topic and to pitch in!!

### SOCIAL ACTION NEWS:

**Rachel Somers Grant Award:** Ginger Storey-Welch is the 2018 RSG Social Action Award winner! Ginger has provided leadership for the North Country 350 Alliance, addressing climate change, and she has worked for many years on raising environmental awareness locally and nationally. Additionally, she contributes tirelessly to a range of other social justice movements. The award will be presented on Sunday, June 17 during worship.

**American Red Cross Blood Drive:** Our next blood drive will be held Tuesday, June 12 from 11:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Walk-ins are welcome but appointments are preferred. There is urgent need for all blood types. Please give.

### Save the Date

#### HUUTENANNY – Sunday, August 5

Each summer, the three North Country congregations – UU Fellowship of Plattsburgh, Adirondack UU Community, and UU Church of Canton – gather for the Huutenanny, a day of fellowship and outdoor fun at Meacham Lake. This year's Huutenanny will be on Sunday, August 5, beginning with a 10:30 a.m. worship service followed by a potluck lunch and an afternoon of fun-at-the-lake. Canoeing, kayaking, swimming and competitive sandcastle building are all possible and everyone is welcome!

Those who want to make a weekend of it can click [here](#) for more information about the Meacham Lake Campground. The participating congregations rotate the responsibility of organizing the day, and this year it's our turn. If you are interested in helping to organize or have questions about attending, contact Margaret Harloe. In the meantime, mark your calendars for August 5!

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, June 20**