



The Latest News

from the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

December 2019

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

December 1

Why We Stayed *Eileen Raymond, Mark Berninghausen,
and Stevie Michaelson, Pulpit Guests*

Three deeply committed lifelong UUs will speak about the only faith they have known and loved.

Music: Betsy Kepes

Lay Leader: Jon Montan

RE Ambassador: Wil Rivers

Greeters: Clara Fargo, Tim & Carol Opdyke

Social Hour Hosts: Helen & Roger Hutchinson,

Kurt & Eden Terrell

Collection Counters: David Doran, Ruth Baltus

December 8

Cultivating a Practice of Faith *The Rev. James Galasinski*

If we want our faith to grow, we need to practice it daily. It is important to develop and nurture daily habits to restore our souls.

Music: Betsy Kepes

Worship Associate: Dave Nelson

RE Ambassador: Ron Tavernier

Greeters: Emily Dixon, Debra Mitchell, Peter Brouwer

Social Hour Hosts: Laura Foster, Maria Dickinson,

Karen Bage

Collection Counters: Pat Gengo, Tim Opdyke

December 15

Holiday Pageant: Spirits of the December Holidays

Carol Zimmerman, DRE

During our holiday pageant, we will observe a meeting of the December Spirits. They have gathered because they are concerned people have lost the true meaning of the season, so they devise a plan to help people rediscover the spirit of the holidays.

Music: UU Choir & Children's Choir

Lay Leader: Ben Hunkins

RE Ambassador: Esther Katz

Greeters: Volunteers Needed

Social Hour Hosts: Bill Hull, Erik & Jennifer Whittaker,

David Nelson & Rebecca Pickens

Collection Counters: Jon Montan, Lorraine Olendzenski

December 19 at 6:00 p.m.

Winter Solstice: One More Circle (Around the Sun)

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

December 22

Rules of the Thumb for the Holiday Spirit

The Rev. James Galasinski

With the beginning of Hanukkah later this Sunday and Christmas just days away we will attempt to universalize a few spiritual rules of thumb to make our winter holidays more holy, more sacred, and less consumer driven.

Music: UU Choir & Handbell Choir

Worship Associate: Robin Collen

RE Ambassador: Wil Rivers

Greeters: Becky Van de Water, Ron & Sharon Tavernier

Social Hour Hosts: Jon & Kathy Montan, David Bradford,

Brian & Claire Gardam

Collection Counters: Lonie Bogett, Will Siegfried

December 24

Christmas Eve Service at 7 p.m.

Mary and Joseph Reimagined: A Candlelight Service

The Rev. James Galasinski

In the Christmas story there is a lot of emphasis on Jesus but what were Mary and Joseph thinking and feeling? Who were they and what place would they have in our society today?

Music: Betsy Kepes, Todd Moe, Mary Michalek

Volunteers Greeters and Social Hour Hosts Needed

December 29

City on a Hill and Redemptive Nationalism

The Rev. James Galasinski

From colonial times Pilgrims, Puritans, and preachers espoused a quasi-religious narrative of American Exceptionalism that has led our country in an imperial direction. By examining it, we will better understand the theopolitics of our time.

Worship Associate: Jon Montan

RE Ambassador: Wil Rivers

Greeter: Jan DeWaters & Stefan Grimberg,

Teresa Veramendi & J. Michael Martinez

Social Hour Host: Lorraine Olendzenski & Tim Nolan, Judi

Cohen, Milner Grimsled

Collection Counter: Valerie Ingram, Lorraine Olendzenski



ON THE CALENDAR

Please print and post!



Sunday, December 1

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

Monday, December 2

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, December 3

4:15 p.m., Welcoming Committee Meeting
7:00 p.m., Canvass Committee Meeting

Wednesday, December 4

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

Saturday, December 7

10:00 a.m., Holiday Decorating Party

Sunday, December 8

9:00 a.m., Coffee, Conversation, & More
10:30 a.m., Worship & Children's RE
Noon, Holiday Pageant Rehearsal
Noon, Climate Action Group Meeting
4:30 p.m., Advent Spiral Celebration

Monday, December 9

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

Tuesday, December 10

9:00 a.m., Sacred Texts and Coffee
11:30 a.m., Red Cross Blood Drive
5:30 p.m., Safety Committee Meeting
7:00 p.m., Second Tuesday Chalice Circle

Wednesday, December 11

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir Practice
7:00 p.m., Jazz Jam Session

Thursday, December 12

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

Sunday, December 15

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

Monday, December 16

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, December 17

1:00 p.m., Communications Committee Meeting

Wednesday, December 18

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir Practice
6:30 p.m., Religious Education Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 19

6:00 p.m., Winter Solstice Celebration

Sunday, December 22

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

Monday, December 23

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, December 24

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

Sunday, December 29

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

Monday, December 30

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

HAPPY★NEW★YEAR

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

The Rev. James Galasinski, Minister

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education; Shelby Hunkins, Assistant Director of Religious Education

Sara Trimm, Congregational Administrator

Teresa Veramendi, Social Justice Coordinator

Betsy Kepes, Music Coordinator; Carol Strome, Choir Director; Theresa Witmer, Handbell Choir Director

The Reverends Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeriti

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

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FROM OUR MINISTER Care and Support During the Holidays

A couple recently came to the Church and Community Program (C&CP) shop explaining their apartment in Ogdensburg had burned down because a neighbor had a meth lab. They needed everything. C&CP had some clothes and shoes that fit them and some towels. The couple didn't get everything of course but they felt better at what they found there. It was a relief for them to tell their story and know someone cared.

Decades ago our congregation helped start the Church and Community Program (C&CP) so that the area faith communities could pool our resources together to better help those in need. Many congregants are actively helping this important ministry live it out its mission by offering their leadership on the board, by unloading deliveries, or by sorting clothes. In this season, as a faith community, we will also give back. All of the offering at December 15th Holiday Pageant and the Christmas Eve service will be given to the C&CP.

If you're unable to be here in person with us this holiday season, we will be grateful if you send an offering by mail or donate online putting 'Holiday Appeal' as a memo. These contributions help assure that the needs of our Canton neighbors for food, clothing and shelter will be met during the long winter months.

As much as Christmastime is about giving and sharing, it is also a time of celebrating. There will be plenty of time to worship, reflect, and spread joy, including extra opportunities like the December 8th Advent Spiral and December 19th Winter Solstice celebrations.

In peace,



The Rev. James Galasinski



PRESIDENT'S POST

"Hello, I must be going. I'm glad I came. But just the same. I must be going, la-la!"
G. Marx, Animal Crackers

I find this quote, from legendary comedian Groucho Marx, appropriate for my final column as Church Council President. My term is up at the end of the month after serving six years on Council, the last two as president. Kudos and gratitude for the dedication and many contributions from my colleagues on Council this year.

It has been an honor to serve this beloved community. Thank you all for your support. But just the same, change is a good thing. As of January 1st, we welcome Jennifer Whittaker as our incoming president. The Council will also be welcoming three new members, Ashley Clover, Stefan Grimberg and Jim Williams. A new year and new leadership! I think the UU Church of Canton is in great hands!

Happy Hanukkah, Happy Winter Solstice, Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanzaa! However you celebrate the month of December, here's wishing you all the best. With gratitude for all those Shared Ministry moments over the last six years.

Namárië! (A Tolkien Elvish blessing - "Be well!")

Todd Moe, Church Council President

FAITH ENGAGEMENT

As we enter the winter holiday season, many will be celebrating family faith traditions with trees, lights, menorahs, kinaras, gifts and more. For some the holidays are filled with sadness and dread. For others, it may be challenging because they are attempting to blend different faith traditions. As Unitarian Universalists, we often look to many faith traditions to celebrate during this season. However, some Unitarian Universalist's have created UU specific holidays. Check them out!



"[illUmination](#) is a Unitarian Universalist holiday instituted by the Unitarian Universalist Church of Little Rock. Celebrated during the winter season, this observance places a distinctively UU festival on the calendar during a time of the year when many great religious traditions mark the change of seasons."

[Luminescence](#) created by the UU Congregation of Santa Clarita Valley is a time for recognition, reflection, refocus and renewal. A holiday celebrating the spirit that is our own unique identity.

[Chalica](#) is a week-long celebration of our Unitarian Universalist Principles. The holiday first emerged in 2005 from conversations that Daylene Marshall had with other young adults when she was a student at the Vancouver School of Theology in Vancouver, British Columbia and out of a wish to have a holiday organized around Unitarian Universalist values. It begins on the first Monday in December and lasts seven days.

May we find meaningful ways to connect to our faith during this winter holiday season. Blessed be.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

THANK YOU...

- ⊕ Henry Hebb, Fiona Hunkins, Zoya Kocho-Williams, Jamey Merkel, and Doug Rubio for helping tell the story for all ages during the whole church worship service on Sunday, November 3
- ⊕ Heather Rousell for assisting with handing out pronoun labels on Sunday, November 3.
- ⊕ Danny Thomas for organizing the guest speakers on Intergroup Dialogue for our youth group.

JOYS & SORROWS

- ⊕ We send love and condolences to Karen Bage, and her daughter Coral, following the death of Karen's mother, Sandra Bage, in late October.
- ⊕ Our deepest heartfelt sympathies are with Helen and Roger Hutchinson after the death of their granddaughter, Olivia, in late October.
- ⊕ Congratulations to the Frank family on their newest addition, baby Tom, who was born in October.
- ⊕ Austin & Liz Bailey welcomed Maxwell Chance Bailey to the world in October. Congratulations!

FROM THE WELCOMING COMMITTEE

Holiday Decorating Party!

Join us on Saturday, December 7 at 10 a.m. to decorate the church.
Contact Heather Rousell for more information.



CLIMATE ACTION GROUP



The Climate Crisis Group of the Social Justice Action Team will be offering a second **Coffee, Conversation and More** on Sunday morning December 8 from 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. The topic will focus on “conversations with climate change deniers” and how to be effective, good listeners, and factual in the conversation. We encourage all who might face this issue at the table with friends and relatives during the holidays to come and exchange ideas. Brian Gardam will lead the discussion. The gathering will be held in the Romer Room and coffee and snacks will be available.

Stevie Michaelson, Climate Action Group

ADVENT SPIRAL CELEBRATION

Sunday, December 8. 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Part of a series of celebrations of seasonal changes, at the beginning of Advent we will host a child-centered Advent Spiral Festival. It is based on the Christian faith, but people of many backgrounds and of many faiths (and none) have taken part in it. This is part of the much broader tradition of marking the darkest part of the year, of searching for hope and light in the depths of winter, and of literally bringing the light of all members of a community together. It is a beautiful experience for the children and spectators.



Children (and adults) will walk the spiral and add their light – a peaceful start to the festive season which will be followed by shared cookies. For more information, please contact Sasha Kocho-Williams.

CAMPUS KITCHENS PROJECT (CKP)

CKP offers a free hot meal every Monday night to people in our community. Our objective is to provide volunteer support when students are on vacation. We plan to cover December 16 & 30, and January 6 & 13. Volunteers are needed to help with cooking (at SLU), set up and serving (in our social room), and washing up (at SLU). Sign up for a shift on the storage closet doors in the Social Room. Any donations in the Feed the Need box will also go to our Monday night guests. Help us fill it up! Questions? Contact Pat Alden.



SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE



The Social Action Committee regularly meets on the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Romer Room. Our next meeting is Monday, December 9. Can't make the meeting but want to keep up with Social Action? Look for our meeting minutes on the church website and linked [here](#).

Giving Tree Tags: There is still time to pick up a tag from the tree in our social room and purchase a Christmas gift for a child in our community. The tags and gifts need to be returned by Sunday, December 8. This Church & Community Program has been a tradition for many years and impacts hundreds of low-income families in our community each year.

Click [here](#) to read the latest [Church & Community Program](#) newsletter.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE Calling NCPR Day Sponsors!

Are you a Day Sponsor at North Country Public Radio? NCPR supporters who make an annual donation of \$365 or more are offered a little “airtime” to acknowledge their support. On a selected day, a Day Sponsor’s 10-second credit will be aired five times. From time to time church members and friends have chosen to highlight the church in their credit. You could announce an initiative or event, spotlight a principle or value, or just say you’re also a proud member of the UU Church. If you are interested and would like help crafting language, contact a member of the Communications Committee. This is another great way to get the word out about who we are and what we’re up to!



Communications Committee (a.k.a. CommComm)

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID WORKSHOP

Join us on Saturday, December 7 for a Youth Mental Health First Aid Workshop offered by Anne Garno from the North Country Prenatal/Perinatal Council. This workshop is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people to teach you how to help an adolescent who is experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge or is in crisis. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. If you are interested in attending, please contact our Social Justice Coordinator Teresa Veramendi at sjcoordinator@uucantonny.org.



Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton
Social Justice Initiative
Promoting justice, equity, and compassion in human relations

Justice for ALL: Community Conversations on Crime and Imprisonment in the North Country

On Sunday, October 20th, we formally closed the 2019 Social Justice Initiative on “*Justice for All.*” As the weeks have passed since then, it has been gratifying and inspiring to learn how much those who participated in any portion of the weekend appreciated the opportunity to engage others in conversations on these critical issues.

We had chosen the framework of a community conversation because we wanted to bring folks together from all over St. Lawrence County and the region to talk with one another... and talk they did! Everywhere you looked that weekend, you saw people who didn’t know each other but who were finding common ground on the impact of incarceration on our lives and communities. Everywhere you looked, folks were coming up with great questions, sharing what they know, and beginning the process of building the networks so necessary to finding solutions.

The weekend began with a premiere “*Justice for ALL Poetry Slam*” on Friday night. As Teresa Veramendi pointed out in opening the Slam, this poetry slam was breaking new ground by including poetry written by writers who were currently incarcerated in addition to local free-world writers. The poems by writers in prison were ably performed by students from St. Lawrence University adding much to our appreciation of the poet’s words. The evening opened with original work by Karyn Crispo and closed with readings by Dwayne Betts from his new book, *Felon*. All this was accompanied by an improvisational jazz trio, including local musicians

(James Galasinski, bass; Keaton Poore percussion; and Josh Barkley piano). It was a fun and thought-provoking start to the weekend.

On Saturday morning, we were moved by the keynote address delivered by R. Dwayne Betts, on the topic, "Falling Asleep in Your Own Narrative: Violence, Incarceration & Reform." Dwayne's message was very thought-provoking, encouraging us all to consider how the narratives we tell about incarceration are often incomplete and flawed. Prison reform must consider all the pathways that lead to incarceration, and the ways that being incarcerated impact individuals, families and communities. He spoke poignantly about how his life has been and continues to be affected by the 30 seconds when he held a gun. He also talked about what made it possible for him to achieve all he has since the time he spent in prison. You are encouraged to listen (again) to his recorded address on the Church website (<https://soundcloud.com/uu-church-canton-ny/2019-10-19-justice-for-all-keynote-address-r-dwayne-betts-guest-speaker>)

Then the fun began as the 125+ attendees fanned out across the church (and the SLCHA next door) to attend one or more of the 15 conversation sessions in five topic areas: (1) Roots of Incarceration, (2) Administration of Justice, (3) Life on the Inside, (4) Alternatives to Incarceration, and (5) Life on the Outside (post release). Throughout the day and over breaks and lunch, intense conversations between attendees and regional thought leaders explored the core issues and potential actions that might lead to societal change. New networks began to emerge and folks with similar interests found others seeking partners for change. Over the next couple of months we will be processing the information from the conversations, and sharing that information with attendees and others. We believe that the purpose of the Social Justice Initiative will not be fulfilled unless tangible reform actions are instigated across our region.

Sunday morning saw our church family and guests gathered for worship and to consider the topic, "Where's the Justice in Criminal Justice?" with a sermon presented by Margaret Kent Bass. The takeaway from that service was that justice will not be achieved unless we all look for the things we personally can do to make change happen. If you missed Margaret's sermon or want to listen again, you can check it out in the sermon files on our church website: <https://soundcloud.com/uu-church-canton-ny/2019-10-20-wheres-the-justice-in-criminal-justice-margaret-kent-bass-pulpit-guest>

During the service on Sunday, we also received a Social Action Shared Offering to benefit *The New York Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement* (www.NYCAIC.org). This offering will help them continue their statewide advocacy on solitary confinement and the passage of the HALT bill. This issue will be a critical issue at the beginning of the next session of the NY State Legislature. A statewide Lobby Day action is scheduled for January 21 in Albany, and of course, letters to our Assembly Representatives and Senators are always in order. The HALT bill has strong support in both houses... let's see that this is passed! Need more information?? See the Social Justice initiative Bulletin Board next to the name tags box!

In closing, we thank all of those who participated in making this event a success:

Planning Committee: Pat Alden, James Galasinski, Brian Gardam, Claire Gardam, Margaret Harloe, Lorraine Njoki, Eileen Raymond, Paul Siskind, Louis Tremaine and Teresa Veramendi

Our Conversation Leaders, local and regional professionals and advocates who provided information and guidance for our breakout sessions:

Margaret Kent Bass, Joann Chambers, Donna Clark, Karyn Crispo, Mike Dinan, Bill Doyle, Nicole Duve, Till Fritschling, Alexis Gondasch, Jane Haugh, Sara Hutcheson, Timothy LePage, Nancy Lewis, James McGahan, Deborah Miller, Peggy Mooers, Arliene Oey, Rosemary Philips, Chris Rediehs, Jeff Reifensnyder,, Rivka Roccio, Chuck Smith, Rena Smoke, Anna Sorensen, Kathleen Stein, John Tenbusch, Rod Votra, Kevin Wells, and Carolyn White

And of course, our wonderful **UU Canton Volunteers** who made it all work:

- Barb Beekman, who wrangled the coffee and food all day on Saturday

- Pete Beekman, Christian Beekman, and Dave Bradford who so efficiently managed our table and chair set-up
- Esther Katz and Louis Tremaine who staffed registration
- Jon Montan, Robin Collen, and Todd Moe who made sure our technology worked for us, providing recordings of the Keynote address and the Sunday sermon.



UU THE VOTE

In the coming month, you will hear about a bold new organizing campaign called **UU the Vote**. No matter who you are, what skills you have, what issues you care most deeply about, I invite you to join with other Unitarian Universalists to #VoteLove and #DefeatHate at all levels in 2020. With organizing resources for your congregation and opportunities to collaborate across UUism and with local and national partners, we will amplify energy already moving to mobilize voters, combat voter suppression, leverage our resources, and nurture our spirits.

Sign up now to be a part of this work. Text **VOTELOVE to 51555**, or [sign up online](#). Share this message to spread the word in your congregation.

SAVE THE DATE: BEYOND THE BINARY

Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary, an annual conference at the [First Unitarian Universalist Society of Syracuse](#) is scheduled for February 8, 2020, with Keynote Speaker [Robyn Henderson-Espinoza, PhD](#). See the postcard in our social room for more information.



Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

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

Together we strive to:

- ⊕ Foster a spirit of inclusion and connection
- ⊕ Encourage exploration of truth and meaning
- ⊕ Nurture respect for all life and the environment
- ⊕ Live our values in the North Country and in the wider world



If you would like to receive weekly electronic news updates,
please email office@uucantonny.org
Submission Deadline for our next newsletter: Friday, December 20.