



The Latest News

from the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

March 2020

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

March 1

The Gentle Art of Listening

The Rev. James Galasinski and Carol Zimmerman, DRE

One half of language is listening. Listening is an act of relationship that requires empathy. Sometimes you need to be silent to hear. There is wisdom in listening as a whole church together.

Music: UU Choir, Doug & Jill Rubio

Worship Associate: Ben Hunkins

RE Ambassador: Wil Rivers

Greeters: Steve & Cara Coffin, Heather & Jeff Rousell

Social Hour Hosts: Everybody's Birthday Party hosted by the RE Committee

Collection Counters: David Doran, Will Siegfried

March 8

Being Embodied Bodies *The Rev. James Galasinski*

On this celebration of International Women's Day, we recognize that certain bodies have been stigmatized and marginalized by the wants and desires of dominant bodies. We are expressions of our bodies and our bodies are expressions of ourselves.

Music: UU Handbell Choir, Carol Strome

Worship Associate: Dave Nelson

Greeters: Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel & Ryan Hicks, Gabrielle & Ashley Clover

Social Hour Hosts: Margaret Mauch, Jim Rudd, Duncan & Lois Cutter, Paul Cutter

Collection Counters: Pat Gengo, Ruth Baltus

March 15

Eulogizing Our Own Lives *The Rev. James Galasinski*

Maya Angelou, the great poet, "learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Indeed, our feelings are connected to our memories. People won't remember us for the great reports we wrote, or the money we made. We should live according to how we want to be remembered.

Music: Caramelo Trio

Worship Associate: Doug Rubio

RE Ambassador: Arthur Freeheart

Greeters: Lonie Bogett, Sasha & Ali Kocho-Williams

Social Hour Hosts: Judi Cohen, Pete & Kathy Wyckoff

Collection Counters: Jon Montan, Lorraine Olendzenski

March 22

Empowered Youth

Youth Group with Carol Zimmerman, DRE

Our youth group is an essential part of this church community. During their annual service they will share their thoughts and ideas on an issue of their choice.

Music: Paul Swartzel

Worship Associate: Arianna Whittaker

RE Ambassador: Rebecca Pickens

Greeters: Erika Barthelmess & Natalie Panshin,

Linda Kenny, Jon Rosales & Matilda Larson

Social Hour Hosts: Robin Collen, Bobbi Haldane

Collection Counters: Tim Opdyke, Will Siegfried

March 29

Joy, Thou Goddess

The Rev. James Galasinski

A staunch atheist once told me, "I don't believe in God, but I do believe in JOY!" Joy is finding and seeking out what was lost. Joy celebrates return. Joy is found in simply making eye contact or smiling at a baby.

Music: UU Choir & Doug Rubio

Worship Associate: Jon Montan

RE Ambassador: Wil Rivers

Greeters: JoAnn & Lowell McAllister,

Ben & Shelby Hunkins

Social Hour Hosts: Pat & Albert Glover,

Oscar Sarmiento & Lillian Trevizan

Collection Counters: Lorraine Olendzenski,

Valerie Ingram

ON THE CALENDAR

Please print and post!



Sunday, March 1

10:30 a.m., Whole Church Worship
11:30 a.m., Everybody's Birthday Party

Monday, March 2

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, March 3

4:15 p.m., Welcoming Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 4

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

Thursday, March 5

4:00 p.m., Pastoral Care Team Meeting
7:00 p.m., Exploring World Religions

Sunday, March 8

10:30 a.m., Worship & Children's RE
Noon, LGBTQ+ Action Circle Meeting

Monday, March 9 – office closed today

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

Tuesday, March 10 – office closed today

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

Wednesday, March 11

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir Practice

Thursday, March 12

7:00 p.m., Exploring World Religions

Sunday, March 15

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

Monday, March 16

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Wednesday, March 18

1:00 p.m., Communications Committee Meeting
4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir Practice
6:30 p.m., RE Committee Meeting

Thursday, March 19

7:00 p.m., Exploring World Religions

Friday, March 20

Newsletter Deadline

Sunday, March 22

10:30 a.m., Worship & Children's RE
3:00 p.m., Holi

Monday, March 23

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, March 24

4:00 p.m., Pastoral Care Team Meeting

Wednesday, March 25

4:30 p.m., Handbell Choir Practice

Thursday, March 26

7:00 p.m., Exploring World Religions
7:00 p.m., Canvass Committee Meeting

Saturday, March 28

9:00 a.m., UU 101

Sunday, March 29

10:30 a.m., Worship & Children's RE
Noon, Common Read Discussion

Monday, March 30

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

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.

(315) 386-2498 • office@uucantonny.org • www.uucantonny.org



JAMES' JOURNAL

Spirit in Action

My German Lutheran roots run deep. My great grandfather, Wilhelm, spent his life as the sexton at St. Jacobi, the church and school I attended. My grandfather, Gerhardt, dead for 20 years now yet with whom I still feel a deep connection, often picked me up early on Sundays and drove me to church. Then afterwards he rewarded me with breakfast at a Greek diner. While eating eggs and bacon, my grandfather told me that church is not entertainment. Church should be solemn and calming. For him, feelings were an afterthought, something to be controlled and stamped down. We may have talked about the Holy Spirit but even that was more of a cognitive concept, not something to be experienced.

Now, there are many things I take away from being raised Lutheran, including hymn singing and a love of scripture, but spirituality is not one of them. Spirituality can best be summed up with the positive emotions – joy, trust, love, hope, gratitude, awe, and compassion... and maybe a few others.

Hearing a Lutheran gospel choir, which may sound like an oxymoron, in my high school chapel was life-changing. The joy of gospel music, even if you are not a believer, is felt deep within. Hearing and then being part of a gospel choir caused me to feel the joy that my religion of origin only discussed. Religion and emotion became one.

I think Unitarian Universalism specifically, and really all religions, should try to elicit and evoke the “good” emotions. Exalting and meditating on the positive emotions gives us long-term spiritual health and empowers us to do something about the state of the world. And when we do something, get out of cognition and act on our hope and compassion, we actually get flooded with unspeakable spirit.

The Social Action Committee has been restructuring itself to make it easier to get involved – to put our positive emotions, our spirituality, our faith, in action. The exciting specifics are contained lower in this newsletter.

In Peace,

The Rev. James Galasinski, Minister

PRESIDENT'S POST

Last month, Church Council met for our annual retreat. Beyond sharing a delicious potluck and getting to know each other better, we spent time contemplating the mission of our church and the needs of our congregation. This time of reflection resulted in this year's Vision of Ministry. In thinking about our vision, we also came up with two big questions we want to consider with the help of congregation throughout this coming year.



Needless to say, we're excited to share with everyone what these goals and questions are! Below are the three vision goals and two big questions that came out of the retreat. Please be on the lookout for various opportunities and events to share your thoughts on these questions.

Annual Vision of Ministry

- Strengthen and expand our OWL program
- Increase communication and transparency both internally and externally
- Promote and strengthen stewardship in our congregation

Big Questions

- How can we achieve sustainability and increase our capacity to fulfill our mission?
- How do we connect and engage with people in the north country community who align with our mission?

If you have any thoughts or questions on these, please e-mail me at president@uucantonny.org.

Jennifer Whittaker, Church Council President



FAITH ENGAGEMENT

"In our play, we reveal what kind of people we are." – Ovid, Roman Poet 427-347 BC

Playing board games has become a passion for me. I play any time I get the chance. Mom, Dad and I usually play at least one game a day. I find it thought provoking and social, plus it usually evokes laughter as some point. For me, it is one of the ways I have fun.

It got me thinking about what we are doing to have fun in this church. In January, we hosted a game night where 50 people joined in multigenerational fun and play. In February, we held a sledding party where families came together for a fun day in the snow. This month we will be celebrating Everybody's Birthday Party on Sunday, March 1. We offer many ways to have fun together.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "It is a happy talent to know how to play." If he and Ovid are right, having fun together can be an opportunity to learn more about each other, stimulate our minds, boost our creativity, and bring joy into our lives. All of these deepen our spiritual being as well as our connection to community. May you find fun ways to be in this community and deepen our faith together.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

JOYS & SORROWS

- ⊕ Our sincere condolences go out to Lynn Ekfelt, whose mother Betty passed away at the end of January.
- ⊕ Our thoughts are with Kelly Johnson-Eilola who is receiving treatment for uterine cancer in Burlington (and appreciating the hospitality of Hope Lodge there) and is very optimistic about her outcome.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE Caring Circle Generosity Touches Many



*When you're down and troubled
And you need a helping hand
And nothing nothing is going right
Just call or email Natalie or Eden
And soon a Caring Circle member will be there
To brighten up even your darkest night....*



For many years a circle of volunteers at our church has stepped up to provide just the kind of helping hands Carole King sings about. The Caring Circle is there for members and friends requiring various kinds of short-term assistance. In 2019, close to 100 Caring Circle volunteers were on call to respond to about 120 requests for help from church friends.

Caring Circle volunteers provide transportation to church, doctor and dental appointments, and even an occasional ride to the drug store or babysitting stint so a tired parent can get some rest. Throughout the year meals are prepared and delivered to individuals and families recovering from illness and adjusting to the birth of a new child.

Caring Circle volunteers planned, organized, and hosted six memorial service receptions in 2019. When calls go out for sympathy and get well cards, volunteers eagerly respond, providing recipients with important support from their church community.

Responding to Nat's requests for help is one of the most meaningful ways I connect with church friends. What always feels like a very small favor is so much appreciated. It's what we're here for! Carol Pynchon, Caring Circle volunteer

Our family is so thankful for our church community When life got hard for us recently, the Caring Circle stepped in and provided weekly meals and good cheer, which really helped nurture us and get us through a challenging time. We all looked forward to the meals and it was amazing to see our kids be just as thankful as we were; they learned what it means to be part of our church – taken care of. Cara and Steve Coffin, new parents and Caring Circle recipients

The Stewardship Committee recognizes the thoughtful willingness of Caring Circle volunteers to repeatedly step up as yet another expression of the generosity of our congregation. Heartfelt thanks to Natalie Panshin, who coordinates volunteer efforts with help from Eden Terrell, and all Caring Circle volunteers for the important support provided to make life a little easier when we most need it.

You can learn more about the Caring Circle, sign up to join, or request help [here](#) or speak with Natalie or Eden.

Distinct from the Caring Circle is a newly formed Pastoral Care Team that supports James in providing longer-term pastoral care to church members and friends requiring more particular attention and assistance. Pastoral care needs should be addressed to James.

Pete Beekman, Stewardship Committee

UU 101
Saturday, March 28, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

UU 101

This introductory course is intended for those who are thinking about becoming members. We will cover the theology and history of the UU movement and will also explore how our church functions. We will conclude with lunch. Childcare is available upon request. Please sign up by emailing office@uucantonny.org.

HANDBELL CHOIR Calling all Women!

Sunday, March 8, is International Women's Day. In keeping with this theme, the handbell choir needs singers to help perform the historic lyrics of Ethel Smyth's 1911 suffrage anthem, "The March of the Women." The Handbell choir will accompany the song, and singers and ringers will all process into the church during the first verse. We'll continue the other three verses from a spot near the piano. Rehearsal will be that morning, March 8 from 9 to 9:45 am.



Costumes? Maybe - let's talk! Please [email me](#) if you are interested in singing. I will send you the music, some links to videos of the song, and rehearsal details.

Theresa Witmer, Handbell Choir Director

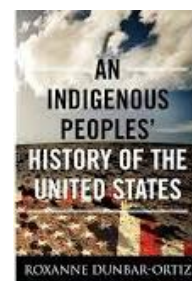


CELEBRATION OF HOLI Sunday, March 22, 3-5 p.m.

The Hindu festival of Holi marks the end of the year before the renewal of spring. This year we celebrate to coincide with the equinox. There will be a play, songs, crafts, color play, and shared food, in the social room (and outside, weather permitting). All are very welcome. Organized by Turning Wheel Collective, for more information check our [Facebook page](#) or ask Sasha Kocho-Williams or Rajiv Narula.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE Get Ready for the UU Common Read

Our UU Common Read discussion will happen on Sunday, March 29, following the service. A light lunch will be served. The UUA Common Read selection is [An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States](#) by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (Beacon Press, 2015). We have some copies of this book available for check out in the library as well as a Young Adult version which may be quicker to read. You can read more about this year's common read selection at <https://www.uua.org/books/read>. Even if you can't find time to read the whole book, please come join us for an open discussion of the book and its topics.



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CHURCH COUNCIL INVITATION TO GA

Church Council would like to encourage your participation in the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly (GA), which is being held June 24 to 28, 2020, in Providence, Rhode Island. GA is a conference that features inspiring worship, practical workshops about congregational life, and important meetings where we decide the future of our religious movement. There are many chances to connect with other UUs from around the world! *Council has set aside funds to pay the registration fees for members who would like to serve as delegates and for whom the cost associated with GA provides a barrier to attendance.* Members who have never attended are especially encouraged to participate! For more information, contact the office by [email](#) or calling (315) 386-2498.

SERVICES AUCTION



Do you have a skill, like skating or pie-making, that you could teach someone? Are you willing to spend some time helping someone in their garden or with a computer problem? Maybe you make great bread or yummy cookies, or have mastered a delicious, new cuisine. All of these – and so much more – have been service auction items from past years. Start thinking about what services you might provide. You can submit your auction items [here](#).

The 2020 Services Auction is being held Friday, May 1. Whether you are providing a service, bidding on a service or both, come and enjoy the fun. We are featuring Jen Thomas and Danny Thomas as our auctioneers and plan on having a family-friendly format. As is our abiding tradition, there will be refreshments.

If you have any questions, you can speak to auction organizers Kathy Wycoff, Carol Pynchon, Mary Michalek, and Barbara Beekman, or email auction@uucantonny.com.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE Could Use Your Help!

Do you like to write? Edit? Are you a social media junkie? Creative or artsy? Do you know your way around website content management? A camera?

The Communications Committee has three ways to get involved, that might make good use of your special skills *and* good use of your time.

#1: Are you good at solving problems and organizing? Do you like to work together to plan and strategize and coordinate with others to make things happen? We need members on the Communications Committee to work with us as we help our church increase effective communication, both within the church and to the outside world.

#2: Techies, here is a way to use your skills to help our church! Website, social media, electronic news and information – we have lots of ways to reach out, where your expertise would make a huge difference. You can do some of this work remotely, on your time schedule, as a resource to the communications effort. A perfect volunteer role.

#3: Calling all photographers! We are looking for a person or people with photography and/or video skills and the proper equipment to do quality production. There are so many ways to capture and share the spirit of our church with images of special events and general photos for use in digital communication. Helping in this way will not require regular meeting attendance, but good communication with the committee about needs.

If you would like to learn more contact any member of the Communications Committee or email communications@uucantonny.org. Thanks!

Cliff Westerling, Katie Boczarski, Carol Pynchon, Jim Rudd, Jen Thomas, and Mary Michalek, Church Council liaison

FAITH IN ACTION

Breaking News: The Social Action Committee is transforming!

We are very excited to share the latest in our transition to a social justice model that empowers more community members to get involved. Like an upgrade to our systems, our church will be able to support more actions and events, with more people getting involved on their own terms!



Our Social Justice Coordinator, Teresa, will be partnering with the new Faith in Action Leadership Group (formerly known as the Social Action Committee) to tend to recurring events like SASOs and issues requiring urgent response. Our other main priority will be supporting the development of Action Circles, where members of the community can take action to address what matters most to them.

What's an Action Circle?

Action Circles are groups of at least three committed people who wish to organize events, trainings, actions, and/or ministry around specific issues. Currently the church supports three very active Circles: Poverty in the North Country, Climate Action, and LGBTQ+ Action. Two Action Circles that would like more members are organizing around Immigration and Prisoner Support.

How do I start an Action Circle?

You and two friends make a commitment to organize for a specific period of time (one to 12 months), then reach out to your Social Justice Coordinator, Teresa Veramendi, and we will get you started!

I have more questions, or some feedback...

Come talk to us! This is a transformation in progress, and we welcome your thoughts.

Teresa Veramendi (Social Justice Coordinator), Margaret Harloe (Co-Chair), and Pat Alden (Co-Chair)

Social Action Shared Offering (SASO)



The Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) began in 1973 to create a supportive space for parents with gay and lesbian children. By 1982, members had created a national organization and a non-profit. In 1998, PFLAG added transgender people to its mission and in 2014, the organization officially changed its name to simply "PFLAG," to accurately reflect all the members, communities served, and the inclusive work PFLAG has been doing for decades.

PFLAG has established over 400 local chapters across the nation, offering support through online learning programs, advocacy and media training, scholarships, and publications helping to generate safe schools, support LGBTQ+ pride celebrations, and provide ally training.

As part of the UU Church of Canton's Welcoming Congregation Renewal program, we are also working to create a more inclusive environment for transgender folks living in the North Country.

The Social Action Shared offering on March 29, 2020, will benefit PFLAG at the national level and help the congregation honor International Transgender Day of Visibility on March 31. Both the discrimination against and contributions from transgender people worldwide are usually made invisible, we will be lifting these voices up.

In 1997, a local PFLAG chapter was founded by members of our church as part of our first Welcoming Congregation initiative. For nearly 20 years, chapter members did solid, pioneering advocacy work. The LGBTQ+ Action Circle is starting a new PFLAG chapter to resume this valuable work. If you would like to become a PFLAG member, and/or help organize the new chapter let us know! Contact [Arthur Freeheart](#).

Upcoming Meetings – Mark Your Calendars!

LGBTQ+ Action Circle is meeting on Sunday, March 8 at noon in the Coots Library. All are welcome!

Faith in Action Leadership Group has its next meeting on Monday, March 9 at 7 p.m. in the Coots Library. Come join us!

Campus Kitchens Volunteers will be hosting the free community meal on Monday, March 16. [Sign up here](#) if you can help.

Climate Action Circle will be offering a Coffee, Conversation & More on Sunday, March 22 at 9:15am entitled *“Ladder of Engagement: Taking Action on Climate Change”*

CAMPUS KITCHENS HELP NEEDED

St. Lawrence University students will be on break Monday, March 16, so our action circle will be leading the charge on that day. If you would like to volunteer for a shift to prepare the meal, set up at the church, serve the meal, or clean up after the meal on March 16, please [sign up here](#). If you have any questions, contact Carol Pynchon or Pat Alden.

CLIMATE CRISIS ACTION CIRCLE

It’s Easy Being Green!

Climate change acknowledgement and green living practices go together. Rather than feel overwhelmed by the enormous impact of the facts and photos we see of planetary changes, our climate crisis action circle will be offering helpful weekly tips which we can all implement in our homes and daily practices. Let’s do our part to save energy, reduce waste, and treat the earth like a dear friend.

Look for tips in our weekly enews that look like this:



It’s Easy Being Green!

Wash your clothes in cold water and hang them on the line for solar energy to do the work, or hang them inside to provide extra humidity to the dry air in your house during the long cold winter.

The Climate Crisis Action Circle had another great **Coffee Conversation & More** in February. Ginger Storey-Welch shared her well-cited work understanding the US military’s perspectives and preparedness for a changing climate. She left us with a few key messages and information to share with our elected officials to help to assure that our military personnel are prepared and safe.

Key Points:

- The Defense Department has written numerous reports defining their concern and need to prepare for a changing climate. Retired leaders are especially vocal with their concerns.
- One report indicated that they are "*precariously unprepared for national security implications of climate change-induced global security problems*" ([link to report](#))
- Over 50 military installations are vulnerable to current and future coastal flooding, with repair and restoration costs in the billions of dollars for each extreme weather event ([link to report](#))
- Exposure to high temperatures and dry conditions will threaten our troops' health
- The current federal government has dismantled a Navy task force on climate change just before its final report was completed

If you weren't able to attend but would like to hear more, [click here](#) to view a short video of Ginger summarizing the ideas of her presentation.

Call to Action: Rep. Elise Stefanik (202-225-4611) is on the Armed Services Committee and chairwoman of the House Armed Services' Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities. Please call to:

- Express your concerns about climate change and the immediate need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions
- Express your concern about politics trumping science in our current response to all climate threats
- Indicate that you are concerned about the emerging threat of climate change to our national security and health of our troops
- Ask her why the findings of military reports are not prominently available and placed on a higher priority within the DoD



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, March 20.