



The Latest News

from the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

June 2020
A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

While our church building is closed and we are all practicing social distancing, Sunday worship services will be held virtually on Zoom, beginning at 10:30 a.m. Instructions and the link to participate are [here](#); meeting ID# is 336 941 336. If you don't have internet access, you can also listen over the telephone. Simply dial 1-646-558-8656. When prompted, enter 336 941 336#. (Long distance fees may apply.)

June 7

RE Sunday: Many Pieces, One Faith

*Led by Carol Zimmerman, DRE and
Shelby Hunkins, ADRE*

Our children's faith is shaped by their religious education experiences as well as their relationships with the adults of our congregation. Join us for our annual religious education service as we celebrate our children, youth, and the people who make it happen.

June 14

The Myth of the Single Story Church

The Rev. James Galasinski

Sometimes we fall into the trap of the single narrative that our congregation is this or that. The reality is that we have multiple stories, complex identities, and complicated orientations. To recognize all the rich layers, we have to get to know each other in deeper ways.

June 21

Gender Freedom

*Teresa Veramendi, Social Justice Coordinator,
Arthur Freeheart, and Cathy Crosby*

In observance of Pride Month, and as part of our church's Welcoming Congregation renewal program, this service is dedicated to uplifting the lived experience of transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming members of our congregation and their family members. The LGBTQ+ Action Circle came together last fall and is emboldened by the UUA's call to welcome and include all in our ministry.

June 28

[UUA General Assembly Worship at 10:00 a.m.](#)

Instead of meeting virtually locally, you are invited to worship with thousands of other Unitarian Universalists from around the world. This powerful, communal worship experience will stream on www.uua.org/ga.

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

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

ON THE CALENDAR

Please print and post!



Monday, June 1

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, June 2

4:15 p.m., Welcoming Committee Meeting
7:00 p.m., Sermon Writing Workshop

Wednesday, June 3

6:30 p.m., Church Council Meeting

Thursday, June 4

2:00 p.m., Drop-In Chalice Circle

Sunday, June 7

10:30 a.m., Worship

Monday, June 8

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation
7:00 p.m., Faith in Action Meeting

Tuesday, June 9

9:00 a.m., Sacred Texts and Coffee
7:00 p.m., Second Tuesday Chalice Circle
7:00 p.m., Sermon Writing Workshop

Thursday, June 11

2:00 p.m., Drop-In Chalice Circle

Sunday, June 14

10:30 a.m., Worship

Monday, June 15

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, June 16

7:00 p.m., Sermon Writing Workshop

Wednesday, June 17

6:30 p.m., RE Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 18

2:00 p.m., Drop-In Chalice Circle

Sunday, June 21

10:30 a.m., Worship

Monday, June 22

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Thursday, June 25

2:00 p.m., Drop-In Chalice Circle

Sunday, June 28

10:00 a.m., Livestream Worship from GA

Monday, June 29

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation



IT IS GOOD TO BE TOGETHER *Opportunities to Connect with Each Other!*

In this time of constant change, it is more important than ever to connect with each other in new ways. Check the [website](#) for updates and zoom meeting ID numbers.

Sermon Writing Workshop

Tuesdays, June 2, 9, & 16 7 - 9 p.m.

In the first session the Rev. James Galasinski will show you the do's and don'ts of preaching and examine what makes a good sermon. The assignment will be to write a 10-minute sermon (about 1,000 words). Then we will meet again to preach that sermon in a workshop format. The class will be your congregation and we will give you critical feedback. Please sign up by emailing office@uucantonny.org

Most committee meetings are still happening virtually. If you are a committee member, watch for email invitations to join the Zoom meeting at your normally scheduled meeting time.



JAMES' JOURNAL

Small Groups: Our New Foundation

Where were we?

We were a good healthy mid-sized congregation – pretty stable both financially and in membership. We were not flashy but we had a very good RE program. Social justice was always a strength of ours, and we were starting to use a new model of organization with smaller Justice Circles. We had a lot of good leaders. We had bricks, granite, wood, and relationships. Coffee hour was full of snacks and social capital. We had a very good choir. In the old analog world of our congregation, you became a member, met the minister in person, and got involved by serving on a committee. Then COVID happened. Now we have suddenly gone digital.

I hope I am wrong, but we may not be able to meet in person for regular Sunday worship until fall of 2021.

This is a time of transition and reimagining who and what we are.

Where are we now?

Even amid this huge disruption, we can promise each other our enduring principles and values. We can promise each other the quality of our connection and a relationship to something greater than ourselves. Perhaps there will be more video ministry. We will all need to skill up and learn. Many of us will find it hard to learn and adapt. Nonetheless, we are going to continue to serve our mission and work for social justice, albeit under new circumstances.

What's next?

You are invited to build community and grow in spirit. Our basic building block of community could and should be small groups – groups of 8 to 10 people that meet once or twice a month for 60 to 90 minutes. I see this going in three possible directions:

Soul Matters Groups for those who are interested in spiritual growth. This would require some investment like reading books or regular spiritual practices. I would lead that group.

Theme Discussion Groups that involve a small amount of homework, perhaps watching a video or looking over a short reading that explores the monthly theme (more on that below). Each group meeting would start with an agreement how you will be together, a chalice lighting, silence or other spiritual practice, a short check-in, and then you will explore some questions that would require deep sharing as well as deep listening.

Affinity Groups would be created from a common passion, interest, or identity. Examples might be groups about gardening, parenting, kayaking, or perhaps a book group.

Groups will meet via video or phone conferences or maybe through a closed Facebook group to keep in contact. There is a chance we could begin meeting in small groups safely before we begin meeting in person together for Sunday worship. Again, the purpose is to build robust community and to grow in spirit.

We could begin by using monthly themes. (i.e., March is *hope*, November might be *gratitude*.) Please check out [Soul Matters](#), a program on which our small groups would be loosely based.

Do you have the calling to open a space up for spiritual growth and community building? Please consider hosting a group. (This could be as simple as pressing play to show a video.) There would be a short training and a monthly check-in with me. If you host a group, our church staff and I can provide the materials.

Please take this [short survey](#) to indicate your interests and help us shape the future of our community.

In peace,

The Rev. James Galasinski, Minister



PRESIDENT'S POST

The work of Church Council has changed drastically with the pandemic. Not only do we no longer get together for meetings, much of what we must consider and envision has changed. Items that seemed so important and on the forefront of our minds, are no longer even relevant. Other things that we'd never thought to consider are now crucial.

I feel like much of life is now like that. Just the other day, I came upon an old to-do list that had slipped under my desk, and I realized that many of the items on it were either put on hold indefinitely or pointless because they no longer fit with my present and near future life. It made me really consider what needs to be my focus right now.

Church Council's focus has been on considering how best to serve a congregation that can no longer meet in person. The importance of keeping everyone connected cannot be understated. We will continue to work hard to make this a reality.

What do you think is an important focus in your life right now? Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns at president@uucantonny.org.

Jennifer Whittaker, Church Council President

FAITH ENGAGEMENT

As I write this, we are experiencing the nicest weather so far this spring (gotta love all the sunshine), flowers are blooming, trees are leafing out, school work is winding down (or done for some), states are moving toward reopening, and there are still so many unknowns. Will there be a resurgence of COVID-19 cases in the county? Will the warmer weather help slow the number of new cases? What will summer be like?



I don't have the answers, but I can share that our religious education ministry has been working diligently to think how we can be supportive and help make summer enjoyable and fun. On June 7, we will celebrate our children, youth, and teaching teams during the worship service. Starting the week of June 21, we will begin our summer offerings. We are still making plans for children and youth. We are checking out "Books and Cooks," a program that uses stories about food and cooking to give children a "taste" of different cultures around the world. We are also exploring an online gaming platform, where you can be Henry David Thoreau for a year at Walden.

We want to offer faith engaging opportunities that are fun, meaningful and fit into your schedule not just something to add to your "to do list." With all the unknowns, cancelled summer plans and the need to find a new normal, it is important to stay grounded in your values. Do you have any ideas or requests of how we can support you? Please [email](#) or call me with ideas and requests. May we all look to summer with hope and a sense of new possibilities.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

RE THANK YOUs

- Lois Cutter, Pete Beekman, and Sharon Tavernier for reading stories during our After-school Story Time.
- Tom Van de Water, Mary Michalek, Jan DeWaters, Arthur Freeheart and Todd Moe for hosting Zoom meetings for our JR High OWL class.

FROM OUR SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

During this time of crisis, we cannot wait for “normal” to return for us to pursue social justice. In fact, our compassionate hearts and minds are needed now more than ever! We must fight now for the unprotected, including essential workers, the homeless, and the imprisoned, to name a few.

That is why I am offering a new Action Circle, *Direct Action from Home*. In consultation with the Faith in Action Leadership Group and the Action Circles created over the past several months, we will be targeting officials and community leaders with phone calls and letters demanding protection for the most vulnerable in the North Country. Starting in June, we will meet briefly each week to share tips, evaluate our progress, and choose the most effective path forward. We will share call scripts and contact information in the weekly e-newsletter so every member of the congregation can take part. In this way, all of us can make a better world together.

Sign up [here](#) to get involved. And don't forget to join our calls for **Direct Action from Home!**

Teresa Veramendi, Social Justice Coordinator

THE UU CHOIR AND HANDBELL CHOIR Have you missed hearing the choir and the handbells?

We've missed being able to rehearse together and perform in church. You might have seen videos of choirs and instrumental groups performing “together,” each person in their separate little Brady Bunch window. Those are fun, but they're very challenging to produce and need lots of work by someone with a good deal of ability in editing! Everyone's internet speed is different, so while we can see and communicate with each other online, we can't make music together. It's been an enormous loss for us.

We thought we'd share some photos, videos, and recordings of the choir and the handbells over the past several years. Until we can perform together and in-person again, we hope you enjoy [these!](#)

Carol Strome, Choir Director

Theresa Witmer, Handbell Choir Director



Murmuration

These days we move like the starlings do

Through the air, never touching

Constantly adjusting

Keeping distance while

moving as one

-Jon Montan



CAMPUS KITCHENS PROJECT



This could be you!

On Monday, June 1, Campus Kitchens will resume the good work of providing free take-out meals from our church parking lot. The process involves preparing meals in the kitchen at Eben Holden on the St. Lawrence University campus, then packaging those meals into the van for distribution at the parking lot. We could use your help. If you are willing to help prepare or distribute these meals, please [sign up online](#) for a shift that works with your schedule. If you have questions, please reach out to office@uucantonny.org for more information. If you know someone who could use a meal, please send them to the church parking lot at 5 p.m. on Monday evenings.

JOY & GRATITUDE IN A PANDEMIC

Our Youth Group created a video for their worship service, which highlighted what brings joy and gratitude to our members during this time of pandemic. You can watch the [video](#) online for some uplifting entertainment and reassurance during these trying times.



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: Saturday, June 20.