

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

November 2020



## THIS MONTH AND SUNDAYS

### Sunday, November 1 – DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME!

#### Soul Songs

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

Do you have a “song” you connect with on a deep, emotional level? A song that reminds you who you are? In this all-ages service, we will explore how songs can heal and bring us back to who we want to be, and how music touches our hearts and souls.

### Monday, November 2

10:00 a.m., Eckhart Tolle Study Group

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

6:30 p.m., First Monday Listening Circle

### Wednesday, November 4

6:30 p.m., Church Council Meeting

### Thursday, November 5

7:00 p.m., Geocache Circle

### Friday, November 6

5:00 p.m., First Friday Happy Hour

6:30 p.m., Taking Flight

### Sunday, November 8

**How Trump is Remembered** *The Rev. James Galasinski*

How we remember someone is influenced by the time and social group we are in. Just think how collective memories of Columbus have changed over time. How we remember Trump now may help our country and democracy heal.

### Monday, November 9

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

7:00 p.m., Faith in Action Meeting

### Tuesday, November 10

9:00 a.m., Sacred Texts and Coffee

### Wednesday, November 11

1:00 p.m., Communications Committee Meeting

### Thursday, November 12

4:15 p.m., Welcoming Committee Meeting

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

7:00 p.m., Geocache Interest Circle

### Saturday, November 14

9:00 a.m., Second Saturday Coffee Hour

### Sunday, November 15

#### **The Mystery of God (Explained)**

*The Rev. James Galasinski*

Like many Unitarian Universalist preachers, I rarely use the word god. There are certain phrases and words that I use as substitutes for the g-word like holy, sacred, mystery, love, and spirit of life. But what do these words even mean? Can anyone speak for god, and say what god wants, what god expects of us, and what god is? I will try.

### Monday, November 16

10:00 a.m., Eckhart Tolle Study Group

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

### Tuesday, November 17

6:30 p.m., Religious Education Committee Meeting

7:00 p.m., Third Tuesday Listening Circle

### Wednesday, November 18

12:30 p.m., Budget & Finance Committee Meeting

7:00 p.m., Science Book Club

### Thursday, November 19

2:00 p.m., Beliefs That Shape Our Actions

7:00 p.m., Geocache Interest Circle

### Friday, November 20

6:30 p.m., Taking Flight

2:00 p.m., 4th Thursday Listening Circle

### Sunday, November 22

#### **Compassion, Pity, and the Wounded Healer**

*The Rev. James Galasinski*

People who have been deeply cut and hurt can know empathy and compassion easier. These wounded healers can guide someone to deepen their pain so it can be shared. Wounded healers see a difference between compassion and pity.

### Monday, November 23

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

### Tuesday, November 24

7:30 p.m., Tending the Spark: A Parenting Circle

### Sunday, November 29

#### **What Wondrous Love is This?**

*The Rev. Lane Campbell, Pulpit Guest*

At the heart of Universalism is a deep and abiding love, a universal love accessible to all. In light of this belief in universal love, how are we to live and to act? Let us explore how vast and far-reaching love can go.

See page 7 for instructions to access  
Sunday worship via Zoom

## 2021 CANVASS: STRENGTHENING OUR WEB

We kicked off our annual pledge drive in October, and we are asking you to help us [Strengthen Our Web](#) by actively engaging in worship, church leadership, small group activities, *and* by making a financial contribution to keep our community strong and vibrant. Even in a pandemic, it costs money to maintain our building and grounds, to pay our dedicated staff members, and to facilitate the online programs we are developing. Your pledge impacts the health of our beloved community. If you have any questions or you would like to speak with a canvasser via Zoom or over the phone, please contact Sara in the office via email ([office@uucantonny.org](mailto:office@uucantonny.org)) or by phone (315-386-2498) so she can put you in touch with our team. Thank you in advance for any contribution you can make.



### JAMES' JOURNAL Mutual Healing

I hear the sound of the front door rattle. Someone checked if it was locked. I rise out of my chair and look out the window toward Main Street. I see someone with a red bandana as a mask walking on the sidewalk. Should I go to the door and ask what he needs? Should I really be meeting a random stranger now in a pandemic? By the way he is dressed I assume he wants money. My mind goes to the Caring Fund account balance and I try to remember where the checkbook is. He appears to be walking away.

Soon I hear I knock on my office door. I open it. It's Betsy Kepes, our Music Coordinator. "Someone is here and he asked to talk to a priest," she says. "I am not a priest," I say. "Well, you are more a priest than I am," Betsy slyly states with a chuckle. "Did you tell him we are Unitarian Universalists and we don't..." I cut short my sentence because I realize he is already in the sanctuary. "I think he just wants to pray," Betsy adds.

I put on my sport coat and my face mask and sit on a pew across from him. Because of our distance and an awkward angle it is hard to make eye contact. So I move a green chair to be in a more natural sight line and still be distant. "You have my undivided attention," I say. "I am here for you. Please tell me what is on your heart."

I can tell right away that this is a man in emotional pain. The man tells me his story. He does not live in Canton. He gave someone a ride and had a little time to kill. He has an addiction problem. He does not want to go to a rehab institution. I feel uniquely qualified to be present to him. I tell him that he has a medical condition. "If you had a broken arm or cancer wouldn't you go to a hospital? Your odds of getting better increase if you go see a professional."

We talk of a higher power and surrender. I mention the illusion of control. His mother is very religious. He only goes to mass when he is obligated to. He is very vulnerable. He tells me how many people he has hurt. I am present to his pain. I do not take away his pain. Through asking questions and listening I help him deepen the pain to a level that it can be shared. I am able to offer up a healing prayer and meditation. I give him words of acceptance of love and of peace. He asks what denomination this church is. I tell him and he asks more questions. I keep it simple, "We are an open and loving faith."

Our faith is a strange one. Isn't it? It is hard to articulate at times. But our faith is one that heals. I deeply connected to this man I just met. I felt the spirit of life in the room. I ministered to him and he healed me of my assumptions and stereotypes and led me closer to my calling.

Aren't we all in need of mutual healing?

The Rev. James Galasinski



## PRESIDENT'S POST

As we move into late fall, it's easy to start feeling isolated. I tend to be the kind of person who wants to cozy up under a blanket with a good book and stay that way until spring!

Getting involved in the new Circles has been a great way for me to combat this hibernation tendency. The Circles have been a way for me to not only connect with others in our church community, they've also been a great way to deepen my personal faith.

I've been enjoying the lively discussions on vegetables and gardening in the Vegetable Gardening Circle. The spiritual exercises and questions about Deep Listening in my Listening Circle have not only been spiritually gratifying, they've been helping me a great deal in my day-to-day life as well. I'm excited to continue in these Circles, and hope to join some other ones this winter.

I'd love to hear about your experiences with the new Circles. If you haven't been to one yet, is there a reason? Is there an interest you have that isn't being met with the ones offered so far?

Please email me at [president@uucantonny.org](mailto:president@uucantonny.org).

*Jennifer Whittaker, Church Council President*



## FAITH ENGAGEMENT

Knots! Ohh. . . how I love knots. A well-tied knot, for me, is a thing of beauty. The rope. The curves. The symmetry. Knots are functional too. Like the Trucker's Hitch, that holds a load in place. This is my favorite knot for tying down my canoe or when I have had to move mattresses. The bowline or butterfly knots create a loop in the rope. I like these for when I hang a bear bag while camping. I also like the slippery taut line hitch for hanging a clothesline or to tie down guy lines on a tent. They say a well-tied knot is easy to untie.

However, there are knots that I don't like. You've probably heard the phrases "It feels like I have a knot in my stomach" or "My shoulders are in knots." For six months now, I feel like I have had knots all over my body. My shoulders, my stomach, my back, my hands. Ohh . . . these knots I don't like at all. These knots are not so easily untied.

And yet, when I spend time in nature, read a beautiful poem or good book, try to meditate, knit, eat a yummy meal, spend time with friends, attend church worship, participate in faith development through a listening circle, laugh till my eyes water or play a boardgame these knots loosen and lose their hold even for just a few moments. I feel better. Where are your knots? Are they in your body or in your relationships? What things help you loosen these knots? As we explore how we can be a people of healing this month, may we look to ways we can untie the knots that bind and find the functional knots that are helpful, meaningful and beautiful. May it be so.

*Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education*

## JOYS AND SORROWS



Kay Briggs would like everyone to know that she cannot respond to cards and messages but is grateful for the support and care of the congregation.



## FROM OUR SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

I write to you from October, wondering what you might know about our government when you read this. What do we do after election day? We continue the fight for social justice! For we do not create the world we want by voting and charity alone; we create it by dedicating our energies every day to making this world a better place for the next generation. If you wrote postcards and made phone calls to help get out the vote, bless you! And don't stop your activism now! Pressing issues from the pandemic to climate change to police reform continue to need our attention. That is why I urge you to join our online workshop this month, **Building Our Commitment to Social Justice**. In the workshop, participants will name the issues most urgently on their minds and collaborate to develop both short- and long-term projects to address the needs. Now it's more important than ever to hold our elected officials accountable, while educating, agitating, and organizing our communities. We move forward together, and not one step back!

*Teresa Veramendi, Social Justice Coordinator*

## MEET OUR NEW MEMBER

### Sara Hutcheson

Sara found this church when Rev. Joel Miller was our interim minister. She had attended the Methodist Church for a time and decided to explore some more, though she had been raised mostly unchurched.

She is recently retired from the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center in Ogdensburg where she had a career as a Psychiatric Clinical Social Worker—for 37 years!

She still helps people as a ReachOut Counselor for a mobile crisis unit here in St. Lawrence County.

During those early working years, she opened her heart and home to a two-year-old Russian orphan named Zach, who she adopted and successfully raised and who is now working at Comcast after attending Drexel University.

Sara's family moved several times during her growing up years: Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Kansas, Indiana, and of course New York, where she attended high school in Potsdam as both of her parents worked at the college level in academic fields. She attended Wells College on Cayuga Lake and finished her MSW in South Carolina. A younger sister lives in Tucson, AZ.

For leisure time, Sara walks, runs, loves to travel, and has gotten involved in geocaching circle—a "hide and seek" challenge for the inquisitive! Her two cats—River and Nacho are ever present to walk on and mess up her jigsaw puzzle pieces on the table!

Sara has taken an active role in this church's social outreach, and we are better for her decision to join this church.



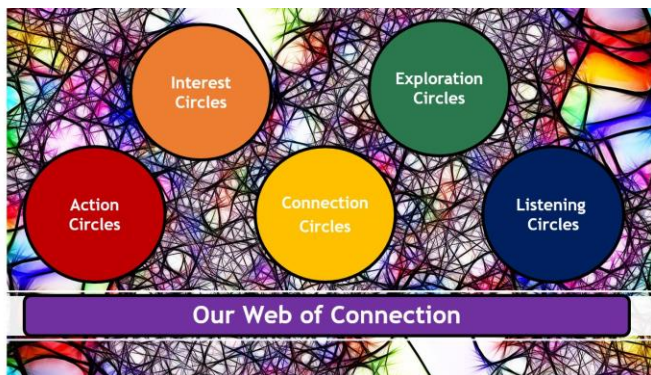
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The Soul Matters Theme for November is HEALING. What is the practice of **HEALING**?

- *The practice of turning our pain into connection.*
- *The practice of letting go of the life you wished for.*
- *The practice of forgiving yourself for being imperfect.*
- *The practice of moving beyond apology to repair.*

Do these statements speak to you? What is your practice of healing?

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## [OUR WEB OF CONNECTION](#)

Are you finding ways to connect with others either virtually or socially distanced in person? As the weather turns cold and days get shorter, we all need to feel a sense of belonging. We urge you to join one of the available groups or circles to strengthen your connection to the church and each other. Find more information by clicking on each of the links below:

- [Action Circles](#)
- [Connection Circles](#)
- [Interest Circles](#)
- [Exploration Circles](#)
- [Listening Circles](#)

To sign up for any of these gatherings or circles, (or to start a new one) you can complete the forms [online](#), email [office@uucantonny.org](mailto:office@uucantonny.org), or call the office at 315-386-2498.

### **GIVING TREE 2020**

The process may be a little different this year, but organizers of the [Giving Tree](#) program have worked hard to make sure we can still brighten the holidays for our neighbors in need. This year, instead of buying gifts for the children and families, we ask that you give a monetary donation that can be converted into food, clothing, and gift vouchers. You can pick up a gift envelope at the church on Tuesdays between 8 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., or you can stop by the Second Chance Thrift Store at 30 Court Street. If you prefer to give a gift online, you can do so [here](#).



### **FAITH IN ACTION LEADERSHIP GROUP**

The [Social Action Shared Offerings](#) (SASO) program was created in the 1990s with the goal of helping our members and friends learn more about the work of social justice organizations. Through the program, we raise contributions and awareness about a wide variety of organizations that are working to solve social problems and make a difference. About eight times a year (September-June) the Sunday offering is collected for the SASO.



**Sunday, November 15** will be the church's first SASO of this church year benefitting The Child Advocacy Center of Northern NY, a program of the Victims Assistance Center of Jefferson County. The satellite office in St. Lawrence County, currently located in Canton, opened in 2017.

[The Child Advocacy Center](#) provides services such as multidisciplinary investigations, mental health services, forensic interviews, medical services, advocacy services along with community outreach and education. By working in collaboration with other disciplines the judicial process is streamlined for families and children who are experiencing trauma and difficult times.

In 2019 the Advocacy Center provided services to 279 children/families in this county. In light of the recent pandemic, the Advocacy Center saw 25% more children receiving services from April to June of 2020 than in past quarters. The

global pandemic poses different challenges for children who are victims of abuse or neglect. The Advocacy Center is ever evolving and expanding to meet needs more efficiently and offer additional support in times of uncertainty.

Recently, the Advocacy Center has been looking into purchasing a shed to free up space in the office in order to make the space more trauma-informed and increase space for direct services. The staff at the Advocacy Center appreciate the congregation's effort to aid in their mission and help them reach even more people than before. For more information check out the website at [www.vacjc.com](http://www.vacjc.com).

### **POLICE REFORM IN NEW YORK**

On June 12, 2020, the Governor signed [Executive Order 203: Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative](#) in New York State. This order requires every local jurisdiction (villages, cities, counties) with a policing unit to engage in a community conversation and planning process on what works and what isn't working for our village and county in our public safety system. Continued state funding to local policing units is contingent on the submission of these reviews due to the state by April 1, 2021.

Executive Order 203 positions policing at the center of the conversation as the element of our collective life that is currently not working for some in our community and state. However, the issues are not solely at the police station, but more importantly they are about the mix, functionality and integration of all of our protective and social services.

Executive Order 203 has given us the opportunity to imagine our villages and county through a different lens. What might be different –

- if we were to change the way new recruits are prepared for our police units, underscoring their obligation to de-escalate conflicts using a variety of options rather than going directly to arrests, or the use of lethal force
- if we were to shift some resources and personnel away from enforcement and containment to providing supports to address the social problems at their sources
- if we were to shift funding to help prevent problems that too often can result in the negative effects of policing

**We all have an opportunity to make a real difference right here.** St Lawrence County and the villages of Canton, Potsdam, and Massena (and probably others) have convened Advisory Committees to review current law enforcement procedures and practices with the goal of reimagining public safety services and developing plans for changes to current practices. The Canton Advisory Committee includes broad representation of village residents, as well as representatives from St Lawrence University and SUNY Canton, law enforcement personnel, mental health workers, diversity officers and those who are part of or represent a marginalized community. The Advisory Committee will be considering policing standards and practices, accountability measures, and recruitment and training of law enforcement personnel. The process is designed to ensure that all in the community find a place to share their needs and concerns, regardless of age, economic status, education level, political affiliation, citizenship, gender/sexuality, employment, religion, or racial or ethnic diversity.

Our church's Faith in Action Committee encourages everyone to become involved in your local effort at the village or county level. You might be able to serve as advisory committee member or take part in one of the many conversations and requests for input that will be issued over the next few months. Your stories and ideas for change are important to keep our local governance units focused on this issue. Several members of our church are serving on the Canton committee: Sara Hutcheson, Eileen Raymond, James Galasinski; Village Trustee Anna Sorensen, represents the Village Public Safety Committee. Anyone interested in getting involved in their community can contact the Faith in Action Committee for more information.

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.)

**PLEASE NOTE: When prompted, update your Zoom app to ensure we are all using the most current version of the program. You can click on your profile in the upper right corner to see if updates are available.**

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### BUILDING USE PROTOCOL

Church Council has approved limited use of the church building if the following precautions are taken:

\*all meetings must be approved \*sign in on arrival \*no more than 10 people \*wear masks  
\*maintain 6' distance \*use hand sanitizer \*no shared food \*wipe down surfaces when finished in the church

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### 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

### 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  
The Reverends Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeriti

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