



THIS MONTH AND SUNDAYS

Wednesday, December 2

6:30 p.m., Church Council Meeting

Friday, December 4

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

Sunday, December 6

A Covenant with Mystery *The Rev. James Galasinski*

As Unitarian Universalists, we make covenants all the time. Our faith is built on covenant. The 7 Principles is really a covenant. But originally covenant was a sacred agreement God made with Noah and Abraham. Focusing on covenant is a focus on relationship instead of individuality. We make horizontal and vertical promises to each other and to the oneness of life.

Monday, December 7

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

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

Tuesday, December 8

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

Wednesday, December 9

1:00 p.m., Communications Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 10

4:15 p.m., Welcoming Committee Meeting

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

Saturday, December 12

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

4:00 p.m., Drive up Candlelight & Carols

Sunday, December 13 – Holiday Pageant

The Latke Who Couldn't Stop Screaming

Carol Zimmerman, DRE

An irate latke at Hanukkah attempts to educate Christmas characters about the history and culture surrounding the Jewish holiday, but his attempts are always in vain until he meets a family who understands.

Monday, December 14

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

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

Tuesday, December 15

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

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

Wednesday, December 16

12:00 p.m., Budget & Finance Committee Meeting

7:00 p.m., Science Book Club

Friday, December 18

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

Sunday, December 20

Stillness: One of the Doors Into the Temple

The Rev. James Galasinski

The poet Mary Oliver speaks of taking days off from ambition. To travel a lot into our own inner temple, all we need is stillness. But sometimes it takes a little craziness to get our attention.

Monday, December 21

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

The Stillness of Solstice* A simple service with readings and songs of Winter Solstice at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 22

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

Thursday, December 24

Silent Night, Holy Night* *The Rev. James Galasinski*

A virtual Candlelight Service at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 27

Time for Stillness, Time for Action

Teresa Veramendi, Social Justice Coordinator

So much of our modern world tells us to "Go, go, go!" When confronting social injustice, this is often what needs to happen. Yet times of crisis, like the one we find ourselves in now, require we embrace stillness. Being able to discern *when to be still* and *when to take action* is the gift that keeps on giving.

Monday, December 28

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

*use the same Zoom link as Sunday Worship Services

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.)



JAMES' JOURNAL
Find the Stillness, Hold the Stillness

It is quite a joyous affair. I get a nice fire going and serve them good food I prepared. In previous years I have featured New Mexican cuisine paired with drinks and last year had a Greek theme. I have hosted a holiday UU Church of Canton staff party at my house for 4 years now. Staff bring their significant others and children. We play fun games. It is my way of thanking them for their hard work. But it is also just fun and creative to come up with a menu. Unfortunately, that tradition will end this holiday season. It is not safe to gather as we used to.

I am not sure what the holidays will be like this year, but they will for sure be different. Our agricultural ancestors took this time of year to slow down a bit. I know we can do the same. December's theme is appropriate, stillness. With less gatherings, we can take less action and be less busy. Perhaps we come up with some new traditions. Holiday cards might be more important than ever. There are too many things to weigh us down and too many causes of grief. There are too many existential burdens to bear. There are also too many reasons to rejoice. Let us all remember to take the time this holiday season to find the stillness, which is only found in those dark deep woods within. Once you find the stillness, hold the stillness. There will be many opportunities to gather in truth and spirit virtually.

Blessed be,

The Rev. James Galasinski



PRESIDENT'S POST

Church Council wants to hear from you! We've hosted two Listening Sessions so far this year. The first was a general Listening Session. The second was on the Paycheck Protection Program. As we head into the New Year, still meeting and worshiping remotely, I want to make sure we continue to have a space for everyone to voice their hopes and concerns.

With that in mind, I would love to hear from you about a topic for a Listening Session. What would you like to discuss with Council? Is there something you're interested in that you think we could review? Do you just want a space to say hello and chat with Council Members?

The promise of a vaccine is on the horizon. My wish is that everybody continues to work to stay safe and healthy. I cannot wait until the time comes that we can all be together again.

Jennifer Whittaker, Church Council President



FAITH ENGAGEMENT

Woah . . . it's December 2020!!! A year that has felt like an endless roller coaster ride. The ups, the downs, the jostling, quick turns, the screaming, the moments of terror, the moments of elation, the queasiness in your stomach, the reactions of others and the overall suspense of the ride. What a ride it has been!!

How have you leaned into your faith as you have lived through this unprecedented year? Our faith calls us to be authentic, love deeply, act against injustice, be compassionate, search for truth and meaning and respect our connection to the web of life.

As we come into December and explore what it means to be a people of stillness, may we look at stillness in a different way. One from a view on the roll coaster of life right now. The Soul Matters Packet for Small Groups suggests, “we don’t really want to be told to be calm these days. There is indeed so much to be angry about. So much that needs to be defended, resisted and restored. Which means that there’s a lot at stake in how we talk and think about stillness. A stillness that invites us simply to escape the world is dangerous. A stillness that merely anesthetizes our nerves comforts us but widens the wounds of the world. To listen deeply to our troubled times is to hear a call to challenge the view that stillness is the resting place at the bottom of the hill we’ve climbed and instead imagine it as the basecamp that launches us into the long trek up the mountain.” May you find stillness and lean on your faith so you can launch into this month and the coming year with resolve and restoration. Blessed be.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education



FROM OUR SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

As 2020 comes to a close, I invite you to consider the possibility of our church officially endorsing the [Poor People’s Campaign](#) (PPC). The Unitarian Universalist Association is an official endorser and faith partner of the Campaign “because we align with the goals, strategies, and tactics that strengthen multi-faith and partner relationships and coalitions, deepen our own faith, and help build a transformative movement for justice.” We will be voting on this item during our next Congregational Meeting in January!

The more I have worked with this well-organized, national network of faith leaders, activists, and artists, the more I have become convinced of its inevitable long-term impact. Begun in 1968 by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Poor People’s Campaign has always addressed the interlocking evils of racism, poverty, and the militarization of the economy. With the revival of the campaign in 2018, ecological devastation was added to the list of evils that must be conceived of and fought as interrelated systems.

In my experience working with the campaign, I have encountered multiple transformational and durable aspects to the work.

First, the recognition of interlocking systems means that the campaign will never lose sight of the forest for the trees; other organizations focus too narrowly and mistake some of the influences leading to the problems we face. It also allows the campaign to form strategic alliances and unify groups who previously had been splintered by the 1%.

Second, our emphasis on “changing the narrative by changing the narrators” means that we focus on organizing the oppressed & disenfranchised directly so that those who are most impacted guide our path. Other organizations help those who are struggling without actually getting to know the people they are fighting for, and what their needs and capacities really are.

Third, the campaign refuses to endorse politicians, or put them in leadership positions. Instead, the Poor People’s Campaign asks politicians to endorse their platform. Other organizations get swallowed up by larger political parties; this will never happen to the Poor People’s Campaign.

What endorsing the Poor People’s Campaign means for the UU Church of Canton:

1. We will publicly endorse the campaign’s [Fundamental Principles](#), [Demands](#), and the [Poor People’s Jubilee Platform](#).
2. We will support and engage with state-level Campaigns and poor people’s organizations working closely with the Poor People’s Campaign.
3. We will participate in and/or support national days of action and other national initiatives.
4. We will participate in semi-regular PPC partner organization gatherings and informational sessions.

Most of these things are already happening in our church! Endorsing the Poor People’s Campaign means we are coming out loud and proud to support this powerful, beautiful fusion movement for a moral revival in our country.

Teresa Veramendi, Social Justice Coordinator

JOYS AND SORROWS

- ♥ Our thoughts are with Dave Weissbard as he continues to recover from hip replacement surgery.
- ♥ Our heartfelt condolences go out to Duncan and Lois Cutter. Their son, Paul Cutter, passed away at the age of 53 in mid-November. We send our love and care to them.

THANK UUS

- The Nelson-Pickens Family for lighting the chalice on Sunday, November 1st.
- Josiah “Magpie” Nelson, Jamey Merkel, Todd Moe and John Danis for sharing their favorite songs during the Whole Church Worship Service on November 1st.

HOLIDAY APPEAL FOR THE CHURCH & COMMUNITY PROGRAM

Decades ago our congregation helped start the Church and Community Program (C&CP) so that all of the area faith communities could pool our resources together to better help those in need. Many congregants are actively helping this important ministry live out its mission by offering their leadership on the board, by unloading deliveries, or by sorting clothes. All of the offerings at the December 13th Holiday Pageant will be given to the C&CP. If you’re able to help us support the valuable work they do this holiday season, we will be grateful for your contribution. You can send an offering by mail or donate online putting ‘Holiday Appeal’ as a memo. These contributions will help assure that the needs of our neighbors for food, clothing and shelter will be met during the long winter months. Thank You.



WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Zoom Era

We began the Zoom Era this past spring with the first of our many on-line worship services. I want to thank you all for participating in this manner and helping to make the services meaningful! The Worship Committee looks forward to staffing our on-line services during 2021. As you may know, it takes a few people to smoothly run a Zoom session when multiple speakers, musicians and visuals are involved. We welcome any offers of help to perform Zoom functions. If you can occasionally volunteer your time to help spread out the workload, let’s talk. Thank you.

Jon Montan, Worship Committee Chair

CANDLELIGHT AND CAROLS... IN YOUR CAR!!!



Saturday, December 12 – Drive Up Candlelight and Carols – Candlelight and Carols are part of the rituals of the season. Join us for at 4pm in the County Parking Lot (“the big one” behind the church) for singing, readings and light from the safety and warmth of your car. BYOL (Bring Your Own Light) and festively decorate your car!

BUILDING USE POLICY

Church council recently updated the building use policy to adjust for rising cases of Covid in St. Lawrence County. The original building use policy remains in effect, with the following provisions added:

Church Council shall continue the Base Policy if **any** of the following parameters are not exceeded but will temporarily prohibit non-staff building use if the past seven-day average of **any** of these daily parameters **are** exceeded:

For St. Lawrence County

- **Daily New Cases:** at or below 10
- **Total *active* cases:** at or below 60
- **Test Positivity:** testing in the area is widespread and 3% (or more) of the tests are positive.

We will be monitoring the statistics daily and informing any potential building users accordingly. The building will still be available for individual use upon prior approval, however no small groups will be allowed when numbers are exceeded.

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

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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