

Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton NY
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
May 2021 - THIS MONTH AND SUNDAYS



Sunday, May 2

Spiritual Lessons of the Pandemic

The Rev. James Galasinski and the Rev. Doug McCusker

Over the past year we have had to embrace the unknown and be willing to change our habits. Any sense of control became an illusion. Isn't it the same with the path of the spirit? Come as we worship together with the UU Fellowship of Fredericksburg, VA.

The ministers, music, and religious education directors of the two congregations have been collaborating to bring you this special service.

Monday, May 3

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

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

Wednesday, May 5

6:30 p.m., Church Council Meeting

Thursday, May 6

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

4:15 p.m., Welcoming Committee Meeting

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

Sunday, May 9

Cancel Culture and Progressive Values

The Rev James Galasinski

Conservatives have long been saying cancel culture is ruining our nation. What do people mean by the term? Are liberals being too sensitive and too righteous?

Monday, May 10

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

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

Tuesday, May 11

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

Thursday, May 13

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

2:00 p.m., Third Thursday Listening Circle

Sunday, May 16

9:30 a.m., Children's Chapel

We Shall Be Released *The Rev. James Galasinski*

Once we get the vaccine then we will be free. Or maybe not? Let's face it. We have been living behind the wall of COVID. The pandemic has imprisoned our bodies and minds. The cage of fragile existence has traumatized us all. But we shall be released. Featuring John Danis playing some of Bob Dylan's most beloved songs.

Monday, May 17

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Tuesday, May 18

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

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

Wednesday, May 19

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

7:00 p.m., Science Book Club

Thursday, May 20

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

2:00 p.m., Fourth Thursday Listening Circle

Sunday, May 23

Celebrating Coming of Age *Carol Zimmerman, DRE*

Join us to honor youth who have come of age in a year like no other. Youth from our church, May Memorial of Syracuse, and First UU Society of Syracuse will share their credo statements and we will celebrate what it means to come of age.

Monday, May 24

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Thursday, May 27

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

Sunday, May 30

Spiritual Journeys of Fellow UUs

Join us and our brothers and sisters from the Adirondack UU Community (AUUC) for what we are calling "Credo Sunday." We will hear from three AUUC members who will describe their personal spiritual journeys and what Unitarian Universalism has come to mean for them.

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.)

**May 2021
In the Same Boat**



"I still remember the first time I was in the sanctuary after weeks of Zoom worship at home. It seemed surreal. I was in disbelief and grieving at the same time. This beloved space was designed for people to gather and there was no chatter, no choirs, no kids running, just silence." - The Rev. James Galasinski



"I believe the next few months will be difficult. The past year has worn everyone down, and we're ready to get back together. I am feeling the pull of in-person church. But, I am still not fully vaccinated yet." -Jenn Whittaker, Church Council President

Many of you are in the same boat as Jenn. Some of you are in similar boat as Rev. James, with children who cannot be vaccinated yet. Getting back together should be inclusive. We should all be able to ride in the boat together.

Our building has been closed to gatherings for 15 months now. But staff, volunteers, and members do use the building regularly. Our current policy states that once St. Lawrence County COVID case numbers are at or below 10 daily new cases, at or below 60 total active cases, and at or below a 3% positivity rate, we will re-open for in-person gatherings.

We have always been more cautious than New York State mandated. There are a number of reasons for this. We wanted to do the safest thing possible for our congregation and for our community. There has always been a social justice and ethical layer to not having in-person meetings because we know COVID-19 has disproportionately harmed communities of color and the poor. We can do our part to lower the spread. We have also been led by the UUA's guidance and continue to do so now.

Fortunately, now many of us have gotten the vaccine or will get it soon. (We are proud to announce that our entire staff is fully vaccinated!) As more and more people get vaccinated, the numbers in St. Lawrence County should fall. However, the variants throw a new wrinkle in all of this. We also realize singing indoors together spreads the virus. Despite that, we think that we can open up for in-person gatherings safely with low risk in the near future. Church Council has formed a task force to determine how and when to open up. If you like to join the task force please email [Rev. James Galasinski](mailto:Rev.JamesGalasinski).

Our goal is to open slowly and not create any more trauma. Our goal is to create meaningful dual platform worship. Our goal is to put our mission and values and principles in the forefront. Our goal is for everyone to be in the same boat together, safely, with the life-preserving love of each other.

Blessed be,

The Rev. James Galasinski and
Jennifer Whittaker, Church Council President

FAITH ENGAGEMENT



As I write this article, there are still remnants of snow and the daffodils and hyacinths are looking very droopy. I don't know about you but I am feeling droopy these days. My brain and body are feeling very tired.

I recently attended a Unitarian Universalist Association [A Multiplatform Future](#) training, and found out why I might be feeling droopy and tired. According to the Rev. Sunshine Wolfe, over the last year we have experienced trauma. Rev. Wolfe shares "this (COVID) has been a traumatic experience; trauma is simply a shock to the system. And it can be a mental shock, an emotional shock, a physical one, it can be a spiritual one." Trauma is felt in our bodies but processed in our brains. That is why both our bodies and our brains are tired. Rev. Wolfe asks "Have you felt that sense of like, it just takes more energy to even do the things that felt simple or basic before?" I have felt this trauma. I have been in fear for my life and my parents' lives. I don't always remember what day it is. One day seems to go on and on and on and the next goes by in a blink of the eye. I am not as productive as I used to be and yet the expectations of me have increased. We have all experienced some form of trauma this past 14 months.

For the month of May, we are exploring how are we a people of story. This past year of COVID and trauma has shaped our story. As Linda Graham, MFT shares "Trauma causes changes. There are a lot of opinions out there about how that change manifests, but you just don't stay the same." Our stories matter. As we continue to live with COVID and long for a return to "normal," we will need to process this trauma both personally and in community. That process is part of our story. We will need to take things very slowly to allow this process of healing. As a people of faith, we need to support this healing process for ourselves and our community.

The daffodils and hyacinths will rebound and so will we, although much more slowly. Our stories will be changed. How has your story changed since COVID began? What do you need to heal this trauma? Our church community is a place to look for support, love and healing. May it be so.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

FROM OUR SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR



This month, Faith in Action has chosen the North Country Poor People's Campaign as the recipient for our May 9 Social Action Shared Offering. Over the past two years, my work with the group has become more passionate and outgrown the scope of my job here at the church. This is due to the fact that the Poor People's Campaign is very well-organized with many opportunities to develop as a leader.

For example, this past year I was asked to help redesign a storytelling workshop for the campaign by collaborating with a state-wide team of activists and media creators. Good storytelling is essential as one of the PPC primary strategies is shifting the narrative by shifting the narrators of our national story. This resonated with me as a practitioner of theatrical storytelling and an activist focused on lifting up the silenced stories of the oppressed.

In the North Country, we want to strengthen these same voices. The disenfranchised of the North Country are many – the Mohawk, the poor white and the poor black, the single mothers, the struggling students, and the abused children, to name a few. The disenfranchised are the majority of this county and country, upholding the industries that create luxury

for the few. We at the North Country PPC are working to amplify the voices of poor and disenfranchised in the North Country, to build connections across these historic divisions, and to empower our communities to hold political sway over issues and elections.

We ask the members of this community to support the disenfranchised of the North Country by contributing to our fund to purchase outdoor audio equipment. Last year, we held four outdoor forums on economic and racial justice in Canton and Ogdensburg, in addition to monthly organizing meetings and various protests. During these events, it became clear that an outdoor sound system was necessary for our campaign. As more and more folks gathered socially distanced, crowds were too spread out for one megaphone to reach all who gathered.

We look forward to making more good trouble this summer and making sure everybody hears us when we chant, Everybody Has a Right to Live! Thank you for supporting our work in the North Country.

Teresa Veramendi, Social Justice Coordinator

THANK UUs

- Zoya Kocho-Williams for sharing a story as part of Family Chapel in March.



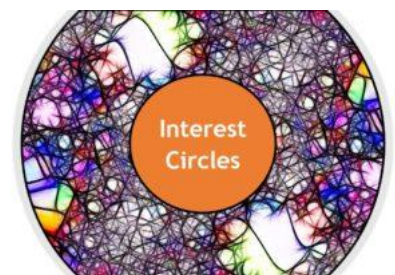
HYBRID WORSHIP

When I first heard the term “hybrid worship” I have to admit that a vision came to my mind of people kneeling around their Priuses, Hondas, Fords, etc. speaking and singing words of praise. Hybrid worship is *supposed* to mean a combination of in-person and on-line or “virtual” worship. Recently a small group of us plus the minister have been compiling the necessary technology to make hybrid worship at the church a reality. This involves using multiple cameras and linking the audio from the church’s sound system to a computer that runs the Zoom software that many of us have become familiar with during the pandemic. We have made good progress and are doing some “practice” services in preparation for real services in the near future. Also, staff has applied for some grant funds to help defray the costs associated with hardware and software acquisition. So, for now, services will be virtual, but at the point when the Covid-19 numerical indicators have dropped to an acceptable level, we can look forward to actual hybrid worship.

Jon Montan, Worship Committee Chair

INTEREST CIRCLES ARE MEETING!

This spring the [UU Vegetable Gardening](#) group is meetint at 7:30pm on Mondays via Zoom. If you love to watch zucchini grow or can't wait to pick your first ripe tomato, please join us. We bring ideas and gardening questions to our meetings and usually have a topic of the week.



The next [UUGeo Outing](#) will be Saturday, May 29 at 1pm in the Canton and Potsdam area. All are invited to join in the fun whether you are a geocache expert or a novice. Contact Caron Collins for more information.

Stimulus Campaign

We have exciting news! Thanks to 31 members and friends of our congregation we have raised \$13,625. With our generous match, our total stands at \$ 20,250 toward our [Stimulus Campaign](#). We're more than half way to our \$36,000 goal!

It's not too late for you to be part of this important campaign. Can we count on you to pitch in and help get us there? With \$5,000 remaining in the matching challenge, your gift today, in any amount, will have twice the impact!

For your convenience here is the [link](#) to make your gift. If you have questions about this essential campaign to raise funds for our reserve fund, please contact me or any member of the Stewardship Committee.

Steve Coffin, Stewardship Committee Chair

BUILDING USE PROTOCOL

Church Council has currently limited use of the church building to staff and individual visitors.

The following precautions must be taken:

- *sign in on arrival
 - *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
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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 Revs. Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeriti

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