

NEWSLETTER

September 2021 - THIS MONTH AND SUNDAYS



Wednesday, September 1

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

Sunday, September 5 – 10:00 a.m.

We will be joining the First Universalist Church of Rochester for a lay led service via Zoom

Wednesday, September 8

1:00 p.m., Communications Committee Meeting

Saturday, September 11

10:00 a.m., Meander with the Minister at Hart's Falls

Sunday, September 12

The Soft and Supple Will Prevail: Ingathering

The Rev. James Galasinski & Carol Zimmerman, DRE

The Tao Te Ching speaks of plants being pliant when they are alive and dry and brittle when they are dead. There is a way of being flexible to the times, a softer path even amidst the uncertainty of the pandemic. *This is the beginning of the church year and we will celebrate water communion both in person and virtually. Please bring a small amount of water with you to this service. If you are at home, please have a houseplant nearby.*

Monday, September 13

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

Tuesday, September 14

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

Mindfulness Meditation, led by Charlie Bradt, is offered Thursdays at noon. Contact Charlie (see directory on website or check with [church office](#)) for more information and the link to join.

Wednesday, September 15

7:00 p.m., Science Book Club

Saturday, September 18

1:00 p.m., UU Geos meet in Edwards

Sunday, September 19

Family Chapel: John Brown and Divine Violence

The Rev. James Galasinski

Violence is wrong except in self-defense and maybe some just war theories, right? But what if violence could serve some higher purpose? Every ethical system has to have exceptions and John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry might be one of them.

Tuesday, September 21

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

Sunday, September 26

She Moves in Mysterious Ways

The Rev. James Galasinski

The Judeo/Christian pronoun for God has always been "He." But before Judaism and Christianity goddesses were more alive, think Venus of Willendorf. Still today Roman Catholics have preserved the divine feminine in Mary. Maybe God is a girl?

Tuesday, September 28

7:00 p.m., 4th Tuesday Listening Circle

Thursday, September 30

7:00 p.m., Sermon Writing Workshop

Dual Platform Worship Services continue! A limited number of people are allowed to attend worship in person. Proof of vaccination is required for anyone 12 years and older. We continue to offer online worship, as well. Find detailed instructions about connecting via Zoom [here](#).

The Rev. James' Journal



Many Unitarian Universalists debate what to call their religious organizations. Are we fellowships, congregations, societies, or churches? Oftentimes the word “church” gets the most scrutiny. I am fine with “church” because I know the meaning of the word really means assembly, an assembly of people. Over the past one and a half years we have not been assembling as we would like. The novelty of virtual worship wore off for some and many who are on Zoom all day for their work don’t want to spend any more time in front of a screen. The UU Church of Canton is committed to staying open as much as we safely can.

There was a lot of hope that we could be fully assembled as a faith community in September. The Delta variant smashed those hopes like a brick thrown through a single pane window. It is normal for us to feel let down, depressed, heartbroken, and anxious. The first task is to admit what has happened, the second task is to experience the pain of it all and somehow move through it. I believe we will survive.

No matter how we assemble we are committed to living out our mission. And we need to balance our mental and spiritual health with our physical health. And we must recognize that we each may have different levels of risk tolerance. While this might not be the exciting entrance into the church year of years past, we do have a lot going on, whether that is dual platform worship, RE outdoors, listening circles, choir, handbells, geocaching, classes, hikes, and other workshops. It might not be what we would have hoped for, but we can still assemble as one.

In Peace,

The Rev. James Galasinski

Faith Engagement

In June and early July, I was feeling hopeful and optimistic. Now, I am feeling weary, broken, and even angry (so many swear words come to mind)! The Delta variant has me double masking while in public spaces, ordering groceries for pick-up, forgoing indoor visits with friends, and telling my unvaccinated family they are not welcome to visit. This is so taxing on my brain and my spirit. My well is dry! I know I am not alone. The pandemic is affecting us all.

Our spirits are so weary. When our wells are dried up, we seek comfort, care, rest, and rejuvenation. Church leadership and staff are making hard decisions about how to offer worship, religious education, and church ministry to provide comfort, care, and rejuvenation amid so many different needs – of unvaccinated children, the immune compromised, the single elder, the overworked parent, the unemployed, the ill, and so many more. We are social beings. The need to be together is so strong and some of the weariness in our spirits would be eased if we were to come together. There is risk in this. Real risk! Our individual and family risk tolerances differ greatly right now too. This faith community is looking to find ways to live our values and balance the varying needs and risk tolerances of all. No easy task. Yet, I think we can find a way. There will



be mistakes, conflict, and failures. There will be joys and revelations. Through this we can grow and find a deeper community. It will take work. The rewards will feed our spirits. This faith community is a place to come to lift our spirit and fill our empty wells. We can engage our faith values by coming together online, outdoors with masks, and indoors with full safety precautions to work through conflicts, grieve, share joys, worship, and learn. May the challenges we continue to face not divide us but bring us together. Blessed be!

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education



Assistant DRE Director Shelby Hunkins is excited about the tent where religious education programs will be held this fall – as long as the weather cooperates! We're working hard to create safe options for our families to be together in the safest manner possible.

WORSHIP TEAM

Covering Our Bases

During mid-summer I think it is fair to say we all hoped things were returning to an approximation of normalcy. Cases were way down and the Delta variant had yet to announce its presence on the pandemic scene. Yet as we are all too aware, the scene has changed and we must now practice awareness, vigilance, and prudence. In this changing pandemic landscape, the Worship Team is striving to enable us to connect as a spiritual community. We are doing this by offering both on-line and in-person worship. We are very happy that we will have two paid technicians who will operate the computers and software on Sundays – Billie McClosky and Elias Nelson. Please join us for worship and, as always, let us know your comments and suggestions. Thank you.

Jon Montan, Worship Committee Chair

COVID SAFETY PLAN

Church Council has adopted a COVID Safety Plan that is effective immediately. Read the entire plan [here](#).



Among the safety standards, please note that we will be requiring proof of vaccination (for anyone 12 and older) in order to attend Sunday worship in the sanctuary. We will no longer require prior registration but will limit attendance in the Sanctuary to 50 family units. This number is based on safe spacing measurements.

We feel the plan is very protective and, by providing hybrid worship, we can meet the needs for most, whether or not you choose to attend in-person gatherings.

If you have questions, please reach out to us via [email](#) or by calling 315-386-2498.

JOYS AND SORROWS

- ♥ We share our love and concern with **Jim Rudd**, who is receiving radiation treatments for terminal brain cancer.
- ♥ Our thoughts are with Gwen and **Sean Cunningham** as Sean recovers from seven weeks of daily radiation and weekly chemotherapy for throat cancer. His prognosis is very good, but it's been a tough summer.
- ♥ **Pat Dunkelberg** is back at home, receiving ongoing physical therapy to help with her walking. She has appreciated all the notes and calls cheering her on.
- ♥ We are happy to report that **Eileen Raymond's** recent check-ups have found her cancer-free. Her on-going follow-up has been transferred from Syracuse to Canton Potsdam Hospital.
- ♥ We rejoice in the addition of baby Rose Lockwood Morreale to the family of **Denny Morreale, Allie Rowland**, and big brother Rocky, on July 19.
- ♥ The Kocho-Williams family is expecting! Another little one is due in October.
- ♥ We will remember long-time and beloved church member **Janet Green** at a memorial service on October 16. Watch for details in the coming weeks.

CARING CIRCLE

What is the Caring Circle?

The Caring Circle is a group that responds when church members and friends experience special needs and challenges due to illness, birth/adoption, death, and other life changes. The impact of these challenges can be eased by our caring for one another, person to person, family to family.

New Caring Circle members indicate which caring actions they would be willing to provide when needs arise. This might be helping with transportation to a doctor's appointment, bringing a meal to a family, or helping with a memorial service reception. It can be as simple as sending a card to someone having a tough time.

When a request arises for the type of need you have offered help with, you will receive an email from the Caring Circle coordinators. Please be assured that when you are contacted about a need, you are free to decline if the timing of the request is not good.

Refreshing our Caring Circle Lists

In a few weeks, once we are all in our fall routines, Caring Circle will be sending out an "opt-in" email to everyone currently on our email lists. Perhaps your life circumstances have changed and you are no longer able to provide rides, yet you still get the

emails requesting rides. Or maybe your cooking inspiration has taken a sabbatical, and you find providing meals more difficult than you used to. That's OK. Circumstances change and maybe you are looking for a different opportunity to serve the church community. When the opt-in email goes out, if you do not respond to say you want to stay on the list to receive emails, your name will be removed. In other words, we'll be building the various lists back from scratch to be sure we still have valid addresses and are not unnecessarily cluttering in-boxes.

If you or another church member has a "Caring-Circle-type" need, please contact Caring Circle Coordinators Eden Terrell or Valerie Ingram (their contact information is in the church directory or email caringcircle@uucantonny.org). If you have a need that requires pastoral care, please contact our minister, James Galasinski at minister@uucantonny.org. By letting us know about the needs that are out there, you enable us to do the work for which our committee was designed, and help us create the type of caring environment that allows our church to live up to our UU values.



Minister's Sabbatical

The Rev. James Galasinski will be taking a five-month sabbatical from January through May 2022 to focus on his writing. James is lining up pulpit guests in his absence and working with our Pastoral Care Team, staff, and Church Council to ensure a smooth transition. If you have any questions, please contact the Rev. James Galasinski.



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES & WORKSHOPS

Meander with The Minister

Saturday, September 11

Meet at 10 a.m. in the [Hart's Falls Preserve](#) parking lot near Pyrites for a short leisurely hike



Sermon Writing Workshop

Thursdays, September 30, October 7, and October 21, 7pm – 9pm

In these two sessions, the Rev. James Galasinski will cover the dos 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.



Listening Circles

Participants and facilitators are invited to join this year's listening circles, which will be based on the UU Soul Matters curriculum. This is not the typical UU "discussion" group where topics are studied and analyzed. Monthly themes will provide an intimate opportunity for individual and collective growth. The goal is to experience the theme together and learn from each other.



Soul Matters
SHARING CIRCLE

These groups will meet once a month for 10 months, beginning in September and ending in June, and will be led by facilitators who will work in close collaboration with the Rev. James Galasinski. Each month, group participants commit to doing at least one spiritual exercise and pondering one question from a provided list that relates to the monthly theme. You can spend 15 minutes or five hours on your homework, it's up to you!

If you are interested in participating in or facilitating a circle, please email office@uucantonny.org.

Indian Creek Nature Center Hike

Saturday, October 30 at 10:30 a.m.

Led by Roger Hutchinson; details to follow.



UU Geos



Geocaching undiscovered places! That's one of the joys of geocaching. Join our UUGeos group on Saturday, September 18, at 1:00 p.m. to discover the historic closed Reynolds Talc Mine and explore the Edwards Nature Trail to find three geocaches. This nature trail is an easy walk near the Oswegatchie River along a flat rails-to-trails path. We will meet at the Edwards Nature Trail Parking area near the Edwards Town Barn: N 44° 19.372 W 075° 15.566.

For more information, contact Caron or Phil Collins. Trail information and driving directions can be found at <https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/new-york/town-of-edwards-nature-trail>

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Is there an activity or a group you would like to lead?? Please share! We are all seeking connection and opportunities to enjoy each other and relieve some stress. It could be a walk in the woods, sharing a skill, or hosting a discussion on a topic that interests you. We would love to hear your ideas – office@uucantonny.org.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee – Eden Terrell, Church Council Liaison Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel, and member-at-large Sasha Kocho-Williams – is hard at work seeking candidates for two Church Council Trustee positions for January 2022-December 2023. If you have recommendations for those vacancies, please let any committee member know by contacting the church office or finding their contact information in the directory.

The Nominating Committee is also seeking the next chair of the committee, which is a one-year position elected each October during the church's Annual Meeting. The goal of the Nominating Committee for the last two years has been to involve newer members of the church at all levels of church leadership to work alongside long-time community members. If you are interested in helping further church leadership through the Nominating Committee, please let Eden Terrell know.

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
Betsy Kepes, Music Coordinator
The Revs. Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeriti

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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

We have been there for each other over the last challenging months, and we will continue to be there for each other – for this beloved church community.
 Enjoy these reminders of our connections during the time we have been apart.

