

Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton
NEWSLETTER
May 2022 - THIS MONTH AND SUNDAYS



Sunday, May 1

Homo Sapiens

The Revs. Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock

Who now thinks "wise humans" is the right choice of name for our species? On the other hand, perhaps we UUs can find a way to move beyond liberals' reluctance to claim any firm spiritual wisdom.

1:00 p.m., UU Geocache Event

Monday, May 2

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

Tuesday, May 3

Noon, Open Sanctuary Hour

Wednesday, May 4

8:00 a.m., Building & Grounds Committee Meeting

6:30 p.m., Church Council Meeting

Saturday, May 7

8:30 a.m., Spring Work Day

Sunday, May 8

TBA *The Rev. Christine Robinson*

The Rev. Christine Robinson is the minister emerita at the First Unitarian Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and has been a regular pulpit guest during sabbatical.

11:45 a.m., Church History Circle

Monday, May 9

7:00 p.m., [Faith in Action Committee Meeting](#)

Tuesday, May 10

9:30 a.m., [Sacred Texts and Coffee](#)

Noon, Open Sanctuary Hour

Wednesday, May 11

1:00 p.m., [Communications Committee Meeting](#)

Thursday, May 12

4:00 p.m., Welcoming Committee Meeting

Sunday, May 15

I Am Because We Are *The Rev. Douglas Taylor*

The image of the Rugged Individualist has a strong pull in our national psyche. It is a story of personal liberty and independence through self-reliance and resourcefulness. Unfortunately, it does not serve our goal of a just and thriving society. Let us consider wisdom of a different source on how to be a community.

The Rev. Douglas Taylor is the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Binghamton.

Monday, May 16

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 17

10:00 a.m., Open Sanctuary Hour

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

7:00 p.m., Science Book Club

Thursday, May 19

1:00 p.m., Budget & Finance Committee Meeting

Sunday, May 22

TBA *The Rev. Lane Campbell*

The Rev. Lane Campbell is the minister at First Universalist Church of Rochester.

Monday, May 23

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 24

Noon, Open Sanctuary Hour

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

Sunday, May 29

The Evolution of Beauty *The Rev. Sam Trumbore*

What does evolution have to do with beauty? More than advocates for natural selection and survival of the fittest might want you to believe. Many evolutionary biologists turned away from Darwin's theory of sexual selection because it wasn't driven by health or fitness signaling. Darwin was convinced that female preference for beauty in mate selection mattered more. Passion for beauty may have more to do with what drives living systems than you might have thought!

The Rev. Sam Trumbore is the minister at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany.

Tuesday, May 31

Noon, Open Sanctuary Hour

Worship services happen every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. via Zoom at [this link](#) and in the sanctuary. You are welcome to join us in person if you are vaccinated.



MAY: NURTURING BEAUTY

There is nothing more beautiful than someone who goes out of their way to make life beautiful for others. - Mandy Hale

Do you remember a time when someone made your life beautiful?

FAITH ENGAGEMENT

Will religious education ever start again? I know that must be a question many are asking. We had outdoor religious education from late September to early November in 2021, before the weather prohibited meeting outdoors. Then the COVID omicron variant hit us, and church was back to all virtual gatherings for the end of January and all of February. We started making plans for a RE restart for the beginning of May in conjunction with Everybody's Birthday Party, but due to high COVID community levels, we are postponing once again.

The Religious Education Committee has decided that restarting religious education will happen in conjunction with Everybody's Birthday Party! As soon as our COVID safety policy allows, we will make plans for that restart. Our vision for the remainder of this year, which ends on June 12 with the RE Sunday Worship Service and Church Picnic, is to have a one-room schoolhouse environment for our preK-6th grade and the nursery open. We will be outdoors as the weather permits.

Restarting religious education means we will need to have a minimum of two volunteers for the nursery and three volunteers for the one-room schoolhouse every Sunday. We will also need two to three folks who can help set up the tent before church. All volunteers must be up to date with COVID vaccinations. Please contact me at dre@uucantonny.org with questions or to sign up.

We are excited to come back together! Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Blessed be.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

Are you receiving the weekly "Church Chatter" – filled with news about your church friends? If not, you're missing out on lots of fun stories and pictures! Contact [Sara in the church office](#) to be added to the mailing list, then check your inbox on Tuesdays at 4!





FROM OUR PRESIDENT

My submission for this newsletter started with an email from Sara, our Congregational Administrator, asking if I was planning on submitting a newsletter column for May's newsletter. She was emailing because I was five days late. I'd like to pretend that I hadn't been reminded multiple times, but I had been. Multiple times.

The reality is after the last couple of years, with the pandemic and personal health issues, my mind just doesn't always stay focused on what I want it to. Balls get dropped. Balls get picked up, and then dropped again.

I don't think I'm the only one who is going through this. Many of us blame age or stress, but I think it's important for us to recognize the trauma we've all been through the last two and a half years. It's done a number on all of us, even those who haven't caught COVID, or who haven't had someone close to them pass away. The way our lives were upended was highly traumatic. The fear and lack of control was traumatic.

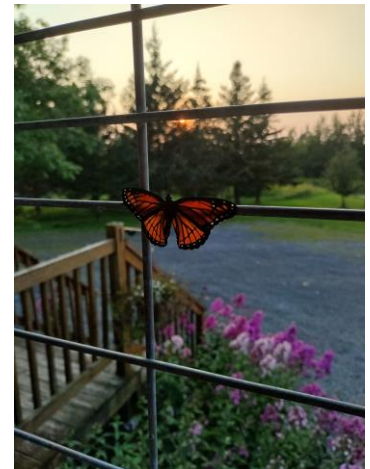
Thankfully, we can help each other. (Like Sara helped me with her reminder!) We can help each other by connecting in a variety of ways. What that looks like will be different for everyone. Some of us are still at a high risk of illness, and some are not. Some of us have a higher personal tolerance for risk taking, some of us do not. Either way, it's important that we all find ways to connect to others. I believe it's the way we'll make it through.

Jenn Whittaker, Church Council President

NOTES FROM THE OFFICE

Nurturing Beauty

I am a lover of porches; I think every house needs (at least) one. There is something soothing about being outside, just a step away from the "regular" environs of the indoors (and the endless chores that await), but in a completely different atmosphere. Porches magically call us to slow down and sit a while. A dear friend and artist once gave a lecture entitled "still" that spoke of being still to notice the patterns of nature and life. That ability to be "still" is beautiful. It can also be quite difficult, and that is why porches are so important. They guide us to stillness without ever really making a big deal about it. Our porches call us to watch storms, or the birds, or to seek out the rainbows. We notice sunsets and butterflies and just how good it feels to sit down and take a rest. When we experience those moments, we notice beauty and we feel it, which then inspires us to nurture more beauty. It's easy to rush from one thing to the next, but sometimes what we really need is a good porch sit to keep things in perspective. There is beauty all around us if we take the time to see it.



Sara Trimm, Congregational Administrator

JOYS AND SORROWS

♥ We send our best healing energy to Pat Gengo as she completes rehab for pneumonia and a cracked rib.

THANK YOU!

- Jim Williams, Tom Van de Water, Jan DeWaters, and Mary Michalek for sharing their time, talent, and wisdom with our 7th and 8th grade OWL class.
- Mary Michalek, Rajiv Narula, Cathy Crosby, Carol Pynchon, Jim Williams, Karen Wells, Pete Wyckoff, Duncan and Lois Cutter, Todd Moe, and Jamey Merkel for participating in the Earth Day with Frog and Toad worship service.
- Mary and Walter Michalek, Todd Moe and Paul Siskind, Carol and Tom Pynchon, and Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock for their Earth Day clean-up work on our adopted stretch of Riverside Drive.



A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

It's May, time for wild leeks, morel mushrooms and, oh yes, black flies. It's also time for our great Sunday lineup of pulpit guests:

Sunday, May 1 is our last chance to see Anne and Wade, our beloved ministers emeriti, in person this spring.

Sunday, May 8 the Rev. Christine Robinson, minister emerita of the First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque and monthly sabbatical pulpit guest, will join us once again.

Sunday, May 15 the UU Congregation of Binghamton's Rev. Douglas Taylor will speak about individuality and our future.

Sunday, May 22 the Rev. Lane Campbell from First Universalist Church of Rochester will join us again on.

Sunday, May 29 the Rev. Sam Trumbore of Albany's UU Society will explore the Evolution of Beauty.

The Worship Team thanks all our guest speakers for their sermons and involvement with helping us during James' sabbatical, which comes to a close at the end of May. If you missed any of our guests' sermons, you can find them on our [YouTube channel](#) and on our [website](#).

Happy May,

Jon Montan, Worship Committee Chair

CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATE

Our congregation is delighted to have formally rejoined the Potsdam Interfaith Community (PIC) as a member congregation. The Canton Potsdam Hospital care package project we participated in during late 2021, is an example of a recent PIC activity.

The PIC's mission statement says:

We choose:

- *to be an interfaith community of congregational representatives striving to understand and respect our diversity before God;*

- *to provide mutual support and encouragement to one another as we are enriched by our individual gifts and journeys, so that we might offer to our own faith communities, and the Potsdam community as a whole, hope and care expressed in specific acts of compassion and justice, and opportunities for service, common witness, and spiritual and intellectual growth.*

Pat Alden and Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel currently serve as PIC co-liaisons. Reach out to the church office, Pat or Sarah for details or visit the [PIC's Facebook page](#). Please watch for upcoming opportunities to deepen our engagement with inter-faith dialogue, shared community service, and good fun with our neighbors.

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Join Us for a Picnic in the Park

It's been a wild couple of years, friends, but the weather is warming up, and there are buds on the trees—better times must surely be ahead!

Despite the many challenges the pandemic has put before us, our community remains intact—as does our desire for meaningful connection. So, join us in ringing in a fresh new season at our annual church picnic!

We'll gather on **Sunday, June 12** at **Bend in the River Park** (90 Lincoln Street in Canton) and celebrate from noon to 2 pm.

Here's how it works: The church will provide grilled meat and veggies—and drinks, too. You can bring your favorite salad or dessert to share.

As is our custom (we know you've missed it!) we'll divvy up assignments: If your last name starts with the letters A-M, you're invited to bring a salad or side dish to pass around. If your last name starts with the letters N-Z, please bring a dessert.

Please bring your own silverware, plates, and cups. (If you forget, we'll have disposable plates and utensils on hand.) As a safety precaution, designated servers will dish out the foods you bring to share.

If you'd like to help out on the grill that day, contact Ron Tavernier. Anyone wishing to help with other picnic fun can contact Jenn Whittaker at president@uucan-tonny.org.

*Psssst.....don't say you heard it here,
but there's there's something special in
store at the picnic. Watch your email for
the latest!!!*





FAITH IN ACTION Social Justice Initiative Survey

After a hiatus during the pandemic, the Faith in Action Group is excited to begin planning our next Social Justice Initiative (SJI).

The SJI is a biennial program to raise awareness about important problems that we face in our communities, with particular focus on the UU Principles of “justice, equity, and compassion in human relations” and “a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.” Each SJI focuses on a specific social justice issue and brings together people from across our region to make connections, share information and resources, and develop strategies for addressing the issue. Previous SJIs have focused on systematized imprisonment in the North Country (2019) and harassment and bullying in workplaces (2017).

SJI activities center around us hosting a regional conference along with presenting workshops, educational activities, and arts events. These events assemble various facets from within our congregation as well as fostering connections with the community beyond our congregation. The SJI is made possible by a gift from the family of Paul Siskind and Todd Moe, along with support from our UU Church and the larger UU community.

We are planning to present our next SJI conference in either spring or fall of 2023.

The Faith in Action group is soliciting ideas from the entire congregation for the topic for our next Social Justice Initiative. Please help us by completing the three-question online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5G8XTK2>

Social Action Shared Offering

In January, Tom Langen’s sermon [“Earth Stewardship in the Spirit of Wangari Maathai”](#) described the social, environmental, and political activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner’s journey to creating the Green Belt Movement. At that service the Social Action Shared Offering (SASO) was taken to benefit the [Green Belt Movement](#). Carol and Tom Pyncheon, who were at the time planning a trip to Kenya, were so inspired by Tom’s talk they made plans to visit a GBM farm when they were in Maathai’s hometown of Nyeri. Their story:

We visited the home and farm of Lydia and Julius Githaiga, who worked directly with Wangari Maathai in their early farming years. They spoke at length about GBM, Maathai and her philosophy, and the work they do in their community - growing and planting trees for economic and environmental benefit, empowering women to improve their lives (and encouraging the men in the community to support that, too!), and serving as public health resources for women and families in their community. We were overwhelmed by the depth, breadth, and impact of their work. We were deeply honored to be invited to plant a tree on the property of a school/church near their home.





Our visit made us think about the generosity of our congregation and the SASO donation for GBM. We couldn't help think how enormous the impact of that donation would be for this farm, these farmers, and their community, so we proposed that the donation be made directly to the Githaigas' farm community. Our proposal was enthusiastically embraced. The \$1100 we collected has been delivered directly to Julius and Lydia. Based on what we saw during our visit, we know our congregation's donation will positively impact a large number of farmers, women, and families in the Tumutum hills of central Kenya. And we are delighted that Tom Langen plans to visit the Gathaigas farm when he's in Kenya this summer!



As Faith in Action SASO coordinator Pat Alden said in her letter to the Gathaigas, which explains our SASO and described our past connections in Kenya, including with the Red Rose School: "As Unitarian Universalists, our congregation is committed to these beliefs: the inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity and compassion in human relations; and the interdependent web of existence of which we are all a part. We see this SASO as a particularly poignant example of that interdependent web, which links our communities."

We look forward to providing updates from the Githaigas!

[Our next Social Action Shared Offering \(SASO\)](#) will be received on Sunday, May 1, to benefit Vermont-based [Rhino Foods Foundation](#), an unusual not-for-profit foundation connecting effective business practices with the well-being of employees, especially those struggling from paycheck to paycheck to make ends meet. Faith in Action urges you to check out their website and view the four-minute video about the Income Advance Program. The leader behind this and other innovative practices is Ted Castle, the CEO of Rhino Foods, and he will speak briefly about this work during worship on Sunday, May 1.



UU Geochachers Unite!

Do you like to walk, hike, paddle, or climb—all while searching for hidden treasures? Then perhaps you would enjoy Geocaching! Caron and Phil Collins have been avid Geocachers since 2007 and have logged over 700 finds all across the US, Canada, and Europe. Many are hidden here in the North Country! Anyone of any age or ability can enjoy it; all you need is a smartphone or GPS device.

Weather permitting, we will be gathering in the church parking lot on **Sunday, May 1, at 1 p.m.** to introduce you to this fun hobby. Please wear comfortable walking shoes for a short tour around Canton while seeking our UU Multicache. Want to learn more? Visit <https://www.geocaching.com/play/search> or contact Phil or Caron Collins.

UNIRONDACK

... is back and filling up fast!

After closing our doors in 2020 and a limited summer in 2021, we are excited for camp to return. [Unirondack](https://www.unirondack.org) is a radically inclusive, UU-founded summer camp located in the beautiful lake-filled Adirondacks on the ancestral lands of the Haudenosaunee. We're currently enrolling for spring and summer programs, and spots are filling up!

At Unirondack we provide a space that holds progressive values but focuses on providing a space for campers to play, scream, shout, be themselves, and learn about others. Our values create norms, but it's our campers and staff arriving with a focus on creating community who provide an environment of learning and exploration that makes Unirondack special.

Also: we're hiring! Unirondack is currently hiring for summer staff, including counselors, crew members, a medical director (EMT or nurse) and a professional head cook. We offer salaried positions, and volunteer work-exchange for parents seeking to offset their camper's tuition. For more information about Unirondack, visit www.unirondack.org or email us at Director@unirondack.org.

This year, May Memorial in Syracuse has reserved the weekend of Friday, August 26 - Sunday, August 28 for our inter-generational rental weekend at Unirondack. This weekend is open to members and friends of other Central NY UU congregations as well. Internet is available, as well as comfortable sleeping accommodations (indoor showers and bathrooms) as well as great community spaces for gathering, recreation on the lake, campfires; hiking and exploring the western Adirondacks. No pets are allowed and everyone must bring their own bedding, towels and personal items.

The cost will be between \$122 - \$140 per person for the weekend depending on the number of reservations, which includes use of the Unirondack facilities and five meals on Saturday and Sunday. A 50% deposit is required to reserve your space. Please contact Stephanie Cross, who is the coordinator of the weekend mscross1234@gmail.com

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
Sara Trimm, Congregational Administrator
Betsy Kepes, Music Coordinator
The Revs. Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeriti

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