

Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

NEWSLETTER

December 2022 - THIS MONTH AND SUNDAYS



Sunday, December 4

Cavities, Covid, and Moral Cause and Effect

The Rev. James Galasinski

The New Testament is full of stories of Jesus healing people. In one, the disciples ask him, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" While cause and effect is a very important cognitive tool, it is not always useful in morality and theology.

12:15 p.m., First Sunday Listening Circle

Wednesday, December 7

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

6:30 p.m., Church Council Meeting

Saturday, December 10

7:00 p.m., Peggy Lynn & Dan Duggen Concert

Sunday, December 11

Imagination vs. Fantasy

The Rev. James Galasinski

It is important to imagine what is possible but sometimes it is more important to fantasize about what could be. Fantasy goes beyond imagination.

11:45 a.m., History Circle

Monday, December 12

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

Tuesday, December 13

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

1:00 p.m., Communications Committee Meeting

Wednesday, December 14

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

Sunday, December 18

Holiday Pageant: The Trees of the Dancing Goats

Carol Zimmerman, DRE

Join us as we share the tale "The Trees of the Dancing Goats" by Patricia Polacco. Based on a long-cherished childhood memory, this story of friendship, illness and holiday spirit recalls an incredible winter just outside Union City, Michigan.

Monday, December 19

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

Tuesday, December 20

6:00 p.m., Organ Concert of Christmas Songs

6:30 p.m., RE Committee Meeting

7:00 p.m., Science Book Club

Wednesday, December 21 - 7:00 p.m.

Winter Solstice: One More Circle Around the Sun

This special solar-centered service will honor the new light and warmth amidst the dark and cold.

Saturday, December 24 - 7:00 p.m.

Faith, Hope, Love: A Candlelight Service

Celebrate Christmas Eve in a traditional service and receive the gifts of faith, hope, and love.

Sunday, December 25

Reviving the Festivals of Light

The Rev. James Galasinski

Two centuries ago, Christmas was not the worldwide celebration it is now. How did a minor Jewish festival become so popular? Both, perhaps, need spiritual reviving.

Tuesday, December 27

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

Worship services happen every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. [via Zoom](#) and in the Sanctuary.

Our 2022 Church Council:

Jenn Whittaker, President
Jon Montan, Vice President
Mary Michalek, Secretary
Stefan Grimberg, Treasurer
Wil Rivers
Jim Williams
Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel
Rebecca Pickens
Ron Tavernier
Katie Boczariski

JAMES' JOURNAL

Spirituality and Liberation for a New World



I was interviewed recently by a college student for a class project. My response to one question even surprised me. “How come people in their 20’s and 30’s are not coming to church?”, I was asked. I said, “Because we haven’t adapted and been innovative enough.”

If someone would have asked me this a year ago, I would have said this is just the societal trend. More and more people are not religious. Every religious organization is facing this. The old adage was to just wait until they have children. Then they will attend worship. Well, less and less people are having children and they are having them later in life. The pandemic has sped up what was already happening.

Yet, I firmly believe in the mission of our congregation. It is about liberation for all and meeting spiritual needs of everyone where they are at. Being part of Unitarian Universalist congregations has made me into a better person and I know that I am happier and more fulfilled because I am part of a larger community which shares my values and pushes me to love deeper. This is the good news.

The other good news is that the pledging total is higher than it was last year. The bad news is that the number of family units that pledged has dropped. In order to be more financially sustainable and to live out our mission we need to reach more people. Plus, new members bring good energy to our congregation. I don’t think our mission has to change but we need to be more creative in how we practically apply that mission.

I know that in the last 3-4 months we seem to be just getting back in the swing of things at church. The reality is that members, visitors and guests are just not coming to Sunday morning worship like they once were. With much of this in mind, Jenn Whittaker, Kathy Wyckoff, and I formed a new team. We are calling it ‘Membership and Outreach’ for now but that might change. We will look into innovative and creative ways to reach more people. We will look to the UUA for best practices and learn what other congregations are doing.

Sunday worship is not going away but there are many other creative ways to engage with the wider community. I could see us hosting multiple events at the church that are open for the whole community that are on important topics of our time. I don’t know what exactly this will look like. But I do know that with experimentation comes great learning. I don’t look at it as trying things and seeing what sticks. I think that by trying new things we will learn how to better meet the spiritual and liberatory needs of our community.

In peace,



The Rev. James Galasinski

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

This is my last newsletter entry as your Church Council President. Thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity to help in the governance of our church.



It’s been a difficult three years, both with the pandemic and my own health issues, but I am so glad I was able to go through them with all of you.

Even though I'll no longer be Church Council President, I still plan to be an active member of our congregation. One of my first steps will be helping get our new team, Membership and Outreach, off to a great start.

If you're interested in joining the Membership and Outreach team, or if you'd just like to learn more about what we'll be doing, please email me at jennd2314@hotmail.com or chat with me at Social Hour.

Jenn Whittaker, Church Council President

FAITH ENGAGEMENT



As I write this, the first snow has fallen. Winter has arrived! The holidays are here, too.

The holidays for me are about tradition and merrymaking. Listening to holiday music while I cook and dance in the kitchen. Decorating the house with holiday decorations including a tree, outdoor lights and ceramics made by my mother from the year I was born. Watching "The Year without a Santa Claus" with Snow Miser, Heat Miser and Mother Nature. And so much more!

There are also the church traditions. This year's Holiday Pageant, "The Trees of the Dancing Goats" based on Patricia Polacco's book, will be on Sunday, December 18. We will honor the memory of Esther Katz with this pageant, because she was always such a big part of our Holiday Pageant tradition. The Christmas Eve Candlelight Service is also a favorite. A reminder, there will be no religious education or nursery care on Sunday, December 25 and on Sunday, January 1.

May this holiday season find you enjoying your traditions and merrymaking! Blessed be.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

JOYS AND SORROWS

- ♥ We continue to hold Bonnie and John Danis in our hearts and on our speed dial lists as Bonnie heads to New York City for stem cell cancer treatments.
- ♥ We are glad to report that Gary Berk is steadily recovering from the injuries he suffered in a bicycle accident.
- ♥ We are thrilled to see Becky Vandewater back in church on Sunday mornings, after her fall and subsequent stays in the hospital and rehab.
- ♥ We wish Carol and Tom Pynchon well on their move to New Hampshire in December and though we will miss their presence with us, their spirit will remain!

THANK UU TO

- Collectively the UU Church sent 150 letters to PA and GA. To be especially commended and thanked: Ginger Storey-Welch, Caron Collins, Art Freeheart, Paul Siskind, Dave and Karen Weissbard/Wells, and Pat Alden.
- Thanks to Pat Glover for her work on promoting and facilitating the Church & Community Program Giving Tree again this year.



In 2022, Caring Circle members provided support to at least 17 families in our congregation—through meals, rides, visits, cards, calls, notes,

help with memorial service receptions, and a variety of other ways of demonstrating love and support for one another. Our system works! Most providers will say they receive at least as much as they give. If you are not currently on one of the Caring Circle lists, we hope you will consider adding your email address. There is no obligation to respond to every request. In fact, that's the whole idea. We each plug in when we can and don't need to feel guilty when we can't.

Please consider joining this important part of our community by signing up [here](#).



ADULT CHOIR NEWS

The adult choir has re-formed post-covid and would love some new members! Anyone who likes to sing is welcome! Music reading ability is helpful but not required and all ages and voice parts are encouraged to sing with us. We sing a variety of types of music, and this year we will be selecting pieces that are easy to learn and do not require a lot of rehearsal time. We will rehearse in the large sanctuary space rather than the choir room and with masks as needed, as long as covid is an issue.

We are currently planning to sing in church once a month and rehearse at 9:00 am just on the morning of the performance. Our next rehearsal/performance will be December 11 when we will be singing along with Dan Duggan and Peggy Lynn, Adirondack folk musicians.

Contact choir@uucantonny.org if you are interested.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

There will also be a children's choir forming for the holiday pageant. All children ages 5 and up who like to sing are invited to sing with us. We will practice after church from 12:00-12:30 on 12/4, 12/11 and before the Pageant on 12/18. Look for a sign-up sheet in the Social Room!



2023 BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

The Budget and Finance Committee has been working on a draft budget for the 2023 church calendar year. This process has to weigh our potential income (i.e. pledge income and distributions from the endowment) and predicted expenses, which are dominated by staff salaries and benefits. The Canvass Committee has been working hard to increase our pledge income for the coming year and currently we have an estimated pledge income of \$236,000 for 2023. This is higher than last year (*Congratulations!*) but not quite as high as we had hoped. When we take into consideration recommendations from the personnel committee to increase our staff compensation by 6% due to high inflation rates over the past year, we project a deficit of approximately \$29,000 for the coming year.

The solution to cover that deficit has multiple tradeoffs. We could try to raise more income, use more of our savings to cover the shortfall, or cut more expenses (i.e. reduce the salary increases of our staff). All of the decisions are difficult and require us to reflect what is most important for our church community. So, if you are in a position to help and increase your pledge to cover some of the shortfall that would be most appreciated. If you have thoughts on what is most important in terms of services that the church provides to you, that is welcome input too as it will help us identify areas that we may reduce until we have more funds in the future. Thank you for providing your feedback (email me at treasurer@uucantonny.org).

FROM THE WORSHIP TEAM

I know I speak for the entire Worship Team in wishing you Happy Holidays! As 2022 draws to a close, we look forward to a thriving Church Community in the new year. Although we remain alert and take suitable precautions, we have been freed from the heavy shackles that Covid-19 has placed on us since March of 2020.

It has been such a pleasure for me to work with the members of our team over many years. I know the team will continue to perform our mission to assist Rev. James with worship services, along with Carol Zimmerman.

Starting January 1, 2023, the team will consist of: Arthur Freeheart, Cathy Crosby, Dave Nelson, Mark Berninghausen, Maya Thomas, Rajiv Narula, and Stevie Michaelson. Our technicians who enable worship services via Zoom are: Billie McClosky, Elias Nelson, and Isaac Tavernier. Maggie Hockett swoops in to help us out if we are short-staffed. And then there are our musicians. I cannot possibly thank all of them enough for giving us the gift of music. Worship would not be complete without them. I want to copiously thank the members and friends of our Church Community who have been worship leaders, sermon givers, chalice lighters, readers, testimonial givers, Community Candle-makers, Time-For-All-Ages storytellers, greeters, offering collectors, and skit actors. You are the solar energy that powers us.

You, too, can be part of this picture!

Best wishes,
Jon Montan, Outgoing Worship Committee Chair

FAITH IN ACTION

Social Action Shared Offerings (SASOs)

The Faith in Action (FiA) leadership group invites you to propose recipients of our 2023 collective donations. Past offerings have been donated to a wide variety of local, national and international organizations. Please send your ideas to Faith in Action through the Church office by Wednesday, December 7.

FIA's next scheduled meeting is Monday, December 12 at 7pm. via [Zoom](#). We will be choosing SASOs for next year. Your attendance and participation are encouraged and welcome.

SACRED TEXTS AND COFFEE

This is a small group gathering to read and reflect together on sacred texts and drink coffee and tea in the Social Room. No preparation is necessary. We even read unconventional sacred texts like the poetry of Mary Oliver. We'll meet again on **Tuesday, December 13, at 9:30 a.m.** and continue to meet on the second Tuesday of every month in the Romer Room. Everyone is welcome.

Legalizing Medical Aid in Dying in New York



If you missed the information session at Church in November, you can view a video with Corrine Carey, the New York State campaign director for [Compassion & Choices](#), as she discusses the Medical Aid in Dying Act, which was first introduced in 2016. Compassion and Choices.org is an organization that advocates for legislation to permit terminally ill people to request medication to end their lives. She talks with NCM host Donna Seymour about the history of the legislation,

the need and support for it, the safeguards built into the bill, and the next steps in the campaign. [Click here](#) to view the video.

Too Cold to Geocache?

Our UUGeos invite you to join geocachers around the world to celebrate improving our outdoors and log a rare geocache type. This geocache provides a unique opportunity to share how you contributed to environmental improvement and protection efforts in a way that was most meaningful for you.



For those who joined us on Saturday, September 17th at the Red Barn Preserve in Morristown for the Volunteer Day trail clearing, you can use this outing for logging the **Let's Improve the Outdoors" #GCNEAT** geocache.

For those who did not join us, have you participated in any environmental clean-up project this past year? Then celebrate with and share what you did by logging this geocache.

Instructions for logging your geocache can be found [here](#). Deadline is **December 31, 2022!**

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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