

Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

NEWSLETTER

February 2023 - THIS MONTH AND SUNDAYS



Wednesday, February 1

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

6:30 p.m., Church Council Meeting

Thursday, February 2

7:00 p.m., Enneagram Workshop (part 1 of 2)

Saturday, February 4

6:30 p.m., Game Night

Sunday, February 5

The Image of God in the World

The Rev. James Galasinski

According to the Hebrew scriptures, we were created in the image of God. In my theological studies I realized we created God in our image. Perhaps, we are the image of God in the world.

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

Wednesday, February 8

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

Sunday, February 12

9:00 a.m., Church History Circle

Swami Vivekananda and Universalism

The Rev. James Galasinski

A young philosopher and religious teacher from India came to U.S. He taught that everything is a unity and spoke with clarity, power, and authority. Many Universalists embraced him.

Monday, February 13

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

Tuesday, February 14

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

1:00 p.m., Communications Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 16

7:00 p.m., Enneagram Workshop (part 2 of 2)

Saturday, February 18

5:00 p.m., Winter Campfire at the Wyckoff's

Sunday, February 19

A Beginner's Mind

The Rev. Margaret Weis

How do we open ourselves to possibility and new learnings as spiritual seekers? If we are to commit ourselves

to lifelong learning, we must also strive to have a beginner's mind. With humility, openness, and wonder we might learn more about ourselves and the world around us.

Monday, February 20

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

Tuesday, February 21

6:30 p.m., RE Committee Meeting

7:00 p.m., Science Book Club

Saturday, February 25

9:00 a.m., UU 101

Sunday, February 26

The 8th Principle

The Rev. James Galasinski

UU congregations across the continent are adopting the 8th principle about committing to a deeper multiculturalism. It came from a feeling that we need something to renew our commitment to the work of anti-racism, to hold ourselves accountable, and to fulfill the potential of our existing principles. Our principles are a living and are to be revised. Should we add an 8th?

Monday, February 27

7:00 p.m., UU Men's Group

Tuesday, February 28

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 2023 Church Council:

Jon Montan, President

Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel,

Vice President

Mary Michalek, Secretary

Stefan Grimberg, Treasurer

Wil Rivers

Jim Williams

Rebecca Pickens

Ron Tavernier

Katie Boczarski

Eden Terrell

JAMES' JOURNAL
Ordinary Special Things



Sometimes in worship, especially during the opening hymn, I look out and see this sea of beloved humanity singing - good people who are smart and care and have big hearts. It is a beautiful feeling. On a Sunday in January the sanctuary seemed especially full of life with a diversity of generations present. The choir sang. We voted on a budget. There was a bunch of tasty soups as part of the fundraiser luncheon for the youth's trip to Boston. It seemed so damn special. And it was so ordinary.

I am the one that is supposed to articulate what this all means. But sometimes I am astonished and left speechless. It's beloved community and the spiritual practice of congregating. But sometimes we have to acknowledge the mystery in our midst. We don't always know and can't always articulate what the feeling of religious space is.

Just being there, I got what I needed. It is like this: You know it snowed and it was a sticky mess. You know how snow muffles sound waves. But you still went by the river for a walk and a thin layer of white covered everything. It was a fresh, beautiful feeling. The silence was still. You were right where you were supposed to be. Aren't ordinary special things the best? Our collection of ordinary people is pretty damn special.

In peace,

The Rev. James Galasinski



FROM OUR PRESIDENT
Bring the Iron Back to the Forge

A wonderful man, whom some of you knew, was the late John Scarlett. Among his many talents was his consummate skill as a blacksmith—artisan. He returned his iron over and over to the heat of the forge and, with expert hammer blows and delicate tong-holds, shaped it into a thing of lasting beauty.

In the metaphorical world in which we live, his work reminds me of what is currently happening within the Unitarian-Universalist Association. No, there are no hammers and tongs, but rather an attempt to refine the foundational words by which UU's are known. Quoting from the document linked below: "Article II of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Bylaws, Principles and Purposes, is the foundation for all of the work of our UUA and its member congregations and covenanted communities. It is the covenant to which all of our congregations and covenanted communities pledge themselves when they become members of our UUA." Article II contains our Principles and Purposes, such as: "The inherent worth and dignity of every person", etc. A Study Commission has met and recommended changes to Article II. You can read their report and compare the current Article II with the proposed Article II [here](#). As you will read, our Principles and Purposes have seen "the forge" before and now are seeing it again. Church Council welcomes your thoughts. I am raising this now so we have ample opportunity to prepare an informed response in time for General Assembly in June.

In faith,
Jon Montan, Church Council President

FAITH ENGAGEMENT



The winter blues seem to be upon me. The grey skies and lack of sunshine, the transitions of snow to rain and back again and never-ending tasks of keeping up two houses has me feeling all the blahs! How about you?

When I get in these funks, I look for the small things that bring me joy. As I have told a few folks, the other day I had to stop and admire the beauty of ice crystals that had accumulated on my car windshield. Each intricate crystal was so beautiful. Also taking in some of the amazing sunrises and sunsets recently has uplifted me. I am also finding joy in needle felting and knitting. All these small things help me to find my center and bring me out of the blahs. It's also part of growing my faith- finding awe in everyday things.

May you find your ways to clear your winter blues and I'd love to hear how you are doing it.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

JOYS AND SORROWS

♥ Theresa Witmer and Carol Strome are in our hearts. Theresa's sister was recently diagnosed with Stage 4 pancreatic cancer and is in hospice care in Rochester.

♥ We are happy to report that Phil Collins and Janet McFarland are on the mend from their recent injuries, and Karen Wells is out of the hospital. In even better news, all three have been spotted at church.

THANK UU TO

- Sharon Tavernier for stepping in last minute to fill in as storyteller for Spirit Play.

FROM THE WORSHIP TEAM

As we begin the second month of 2023 and I begin my leadership of the Worship Team, I find myself clomping around in some really big shoes: those left by Jon Montan. I know that I speak for all members of the Worship Team as well as the broader church community when I say ***"Thank you, Jon! We couldn't have done it without you!"*** And we truly could not have.

Jon led us through the challenges of the last three years with positivity, poise, and resolve: from pre-pandemic normalcy, to fully online services, to the congregation online but the team in the sanctuary, to the early days of hybrid services, to COVID surges that forced us all back online, to what appears to be our new normal. And through it all, Jon has been the stalwart leader of our team.

I look forward to serving you in my new role as leader of the Worship Team. Please reach out to me with any issues and/or ideas you might have for worship by emailing worship@uucantonny.org. And I will continue to clomp around in those really big shoes, which will hopefully fit a little bit better every month.

Cathy Crosby, Incoming Worship Committee Chair

2022 THEO DUNN SERVICE AWARD

On Sunday, January 22, Church Council presented the 2022 Theo Dunn Service Award to Mr. Bee, **Mark Berninghausen**.



... each Sunday he is often the first to arrive and the last to leave. He is an active member of the Worship committee and a former member of the Building and Grounds committee. He has been a delegate at General Assembly numerous times and serves on the board of the New York State Convention of Universalists. He clearly cares deeply about our church and our faith - and he puts that care into action, consistently, thoughtfully, and with genuine warmth.

Congratulations Mark B!

SOCIAL HOUR HOSTS AND GREETERS

A big thank you to all who served as social hour hosts and greeters in the fall. It was so nice to have you back in church and participating in ways that we always have in the past. You may have noticed that our first schedule only covered the first half of the year and ends in January. You can find the spring schedule [here](#). Please take a moment to find your name on the lists and mark your calendars. If you know there is conflict with your scheduled date, reach out to others on the list to swap dates and then let Sara know by emailing office@uu-cantonny.org. If you don't see your name on the list, but you would be happy to serve, please tell us!

NOTE: This year is a transitional year, so we are asking those who are able to serve as hosts and greeters twice in one year. We hope to have enough volunteers next year that we can return to once per year assignments.



UU 101

If you've been hoping to learn more about the history and theology of Unitarian Universalism, and how our church works here in Canton, we invite you to attend UU 101, led by the Rev. James Galasinski.

The next UU 101 will take place on **Saturday, February 25 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.** in the Romer Room. Coffee, tea, and a light lunch will be provided. For planning purposes, we ask that you register in advance by emailing office@uucantonny.org.

WINTER CAMPIRE AT THE WYCKOFF'S

Pete & Kathy Wyckoff will be hosting another campfire at their house on **Saturday, February 18**. The campfire will be lit at 5 p.m., but you are welcome to come anytime after 3p.m. if you'd like to snowshoe, ski, or sled before the fire starts. Light refreshments will be provided, but feel free to bring your own chairs, beverages, and/or snacks.



WINTER POTLUCKS

There will be Winter Potlucks in February and March! Listed below are the hosts/locations to date. Hosts supply the main course and guests are asked to bring accompaniments. It's a great chance to get to know new friends and re-acquaint with old friends in a small-group social setting. Please check the meal notes for more specific information about each potluck. Since they are in people's homes, there will be a limit to the number of guests they can accommodate. Please let your host know if you have special dietary requirements. You can sign up in the social room after church on Sundays, by clicking on the form next to the hosts below, or by contacting the [church office](#).

Host	Date	Location	Meal Notes	Sign-up Link
Pat Alden and Louis Tremaine	Saturday, Feb. 25, 6pm	Canton	Chicken will be the main dish. 6 guests total	Sign-up
Valerie Ingram	Sunday, March 12, right after church	Canton	There are multiple pets at the house. 5 guests total	Sign-up
Jenn and Erik Whittaker	Friday, March 2, 6pm	Canton	Children are welcome. 8 guests total	Sign-up



Nine Ways of Showing Up in the World: An introduction to understanding yourself and others through the Enneagram

Facilitated by Peter Brouwer, Ph.D

The Enneagram is a system of personality typing that describes patterns in how people interpret and act in the world. The Enneagram describes nine personality types and maps each of these types on a nine-pointed diagram. Understanding your Enneagram type provides an opportunity for greater self-awareness, authentic presence, and personal growth. Please email office@uucan-tonny.org to sign up for this 2-part workshop.

Thursdays, February 2 and 16 at 7:00 p.m. in the Romer Room

ALL AGES GAME NIGHT

Saturday, February 4 at 6:30p.m. in the Social Room

Join us for an evening of fellowship and playing board games. Come to learn a new game. Bring your favorite games. All ages are welcome!





BEYOND OUR WALLS

Are you looking for ways to live your faith and grow as a UU beyond what happens at our church? Now you can sign up for a monthly email. The Unitarian Universalist Association, UU Ministry for the Earth, Side with Love, Soul Matters, local organizations and many more groups offer fantastic ways to live your faith values. This newsletter will offer links and materials that will connect you with the wider UU world and our local communities.

Sign up today by clicking [here!](#)

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, February 14, at 9:30 a.m.** and continue to meet on the second Tuesday of every month in the Romer Room. Everyone is welcome. If you can't make it in person, to join us via ZOOM at [this link](#).

SCIENCE BOOK CLUB

On Tuesday, Feb. 21, at 7:00 pm the UU Science Book Club will be discussing *Through the Language Glass: Why the World Looks Different in Different Languages*, by Guy Deutscher. For the Zoom link and more information, contact Brian Gardam at Briangardam@gmail.com.

UU MEN'S GROUP

Unitarian Universalist men are not your average men. We recognize that what it means to be male in our culture is changing. We deplore toxic masculinity and want spaces to explore our identity. We may have numerous work colleagues and buddies, but it's rare these friendships provide opportunities for exploring personal issues in any depth.

This group will start with a check-in allowing for personal sharing, followed by discussion of an issue of relevance and will be facilitated by the Rev. James Galasinski.

4th Monday of the month at 7p.m. in the Romer Room

FAITH IN ACTION

FIA's next scheduled meeting is Monday, February 13 at 7p.m. via [Zoom](#). Your attendance and participation are encouraged and welcome.

A Call to Action—from Your Living Room!

Almost 10 years ago, I became a friend to a young person imprisoned in Texas. It has been a rich experience for us both, and John has finally been released on parole. To hear more about my experience as a pen-pal, you can check out my video on the [Worthy Now website](#)

I am frequently asked how I came to be writing to John. For many years a small group of UUs like me has been providing support to folks incarcerated across the country by the simple act of writing a letter to each other about once a month. [The Church of the Larger Fellowship \(CLF-UU\)](#) has a core mission of supporting folks in prison through its Worthy Now ministry. Worthy Now provides CLF's prison members with a monthly newsletter and mail-order courses on UU topics and spirituality more broadly. Folks in prison can also take a UU 101 course and then can apply to become a member of CLF and be assigned a free-world pen-pal. Today CLF has over 1000 members in prison, but we do not have enough willing free-world members to assure that each of them who wants a pen-pal can be assigned one.

You can change this! If you've been concerned about issues among our prison populations and are looking for a justice activity that fits your time and situation, this may be just what you are looking for. I have learned so much from John, and he from me... and I have been a much more educated advocate on criminal justice issues. As my pen-pal has been released now, I have asked for and received a new pen-pal who is currently in a federal prison in Texas. I am writing my first letter to Mark today. I eagerly await "meeting" my new friend and supporting him through my letters on his journey.

So, think about it; you can find out more [here](#) ... And track me down during social hour at church some Sunday to get your questions answered. This is a truly enriching and reciprocal experience in supporting and being supported by another UU!

-Eileen Raymond

Faith in Action Advocates for End-of-Life Decisions

Unitarian Universalists have a long history of supporting our individual control over our lives. Death with Dignity, Compassion and Choices, Medical Aid in Dying and other groups are working to give individuals more say in their end-of-life decisions. A key step, for us, is to become informed about important legislation under consideration in Albany: the "Medical Aid in Dying Act." 2023 may be the year in which the New York legislature may pass "Medical Aid in Dying" bill. This carefully limited bill will, if passed, give New Yorkers options in facing terminal illness. Your help is urgently needed to push this legislation, which has been blocked for several years, forward in 2023. Communicating with key legislators directly (by phone or email) is important (and easy!). We encourage you to consider as well writing letters to editors.

Summary of the bill can be found [here](#). An overview sheet (including contact information for legislators) can be found [here](#). And a personal Statement from Eileen Raymond, member of Faith in Action, follows here:

When I was diagnosed with stage 4 endometrial cancer in December 2020, my prospects looked bleak, and what I feared most was the thought of treatments that could lead to a long and pain-filled period leading up to

my eventual death. I would have felt much more in control of my life and body had this bill been law in New York as it is in Oregon, Vermont and 9 other states. Passage of this bill would have enabled me and my doctors to have access to medication that I could take by myself to end my suffering if or when I reached the terminal stages. I could feel comfortable pursuing treatments that might prove difficult to manage. Because we do not have a Medical Aid in Dying law, I had no such peace of mind.

I was fortunate to have beaten this cancer for now, but I know that it could return. Please let your NY Assemblymember and Senator know that you support Medical Aid in Dying, a bill that would respect my autonomy over my own body and which has strong safeguards to prevent any possible abuses. Medical aid in dying allows a mentally capable, terminally ill adult with a prognosis of six months or less to live, to request and receive a prescription for medication that they may choose to take to bring about a peaceful death, so long as they are able to self-ingest the medication. Research shows that a majority of those in other states who get this prescription end up never taking it ... what they DO have is the comfort that they can exercise control over when and how they die. We New Yorkers value our personal autonomy and choices. Please join me in taking action NOW to make this the year we make this option legal for any New Yorker facing difficult end of life decisions.

Need more information? Have questions? See the Faith in Action bulletin board or a member of Faith in Action during social hour this month in 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
Sara Trimm, Congregational Administrator
Betsy Kepes, Music Coordinator
The Revs. Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeriti

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