

Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton
NEWSLETTER
September 2023 - THIS MONTH AND SUNDAYS



Friday, September 1
5:00 p.m., Game Night

Sunday, September 3
Who Are We? *Mark Berninghausen, Lay Leader*
"Where did we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?" A service of three mini-sermons and hymns looking back at where our congregation came from, taking a look at who we are now, and peering into what may be the future of our common faith.
12:15 p.m., First Sunday Listening Circle

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

Sunday, September 10
Ingathering: We Bring the Light
The Rev. James Galasinski and Carol Zimmerman, DRE
Church can be a building but it's actually the people. By participating in our faith community, we foster connections and create meaning. This Sunday will include our multi-generational water ceremony and the beginning of our church year. Please bring a small amount of water from somewhere meaningful to you.

Tuesday, September 12
9:30 a.m., [Sacred Texts and Coffee](#)
1:00 p.m., Communications Committee Meeting
7:00 p.m., [Faith in Action Leadership Meeting](#)

Wednesday, September 13
7:00 p.m., Second Wednesday Listening Circle

Friday, September 15
7:00 p.m., Film Series: Arctic Summer

Sunday, September 17
9:00 a.m., History Circle Meeting
Schmoozers and Machers

The Rev. James Galasinski
As we begin to celebrate the Jewish High holidays it would be good to reflect on two Yiddish words, machers—people who make things happen and schmoozers—people who spend their time in informal conversation. They are not necessarily opposites, and both are needed for a healthy and robust community.
Noon, Teacher Ministry Training

Monday, September 18
7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

Tuesday, September 19
1:30 p.m., Membership and Outreach Meeting
6:30 p.m., RE Committee Meeting

Thursday, September 21
5:00 p.m., PIC Picnic
6:00 p.m., Third Thursday Soup
6:30 p.m., Potsdam Pride Game & Craft Night

Friday, September 22
7:00 p.m., Film Series: The Ants & the Grasshopper

Sunday, September 24
Survival of the Friendliest: Harvest Sunday
The Rev. James Galasinski
The survival of the fittest has become an apology for greed and power. The thriving of our species has actually depended on how honest and cooperative we have been.
Everyone is invited to place something from your garden on the chancel and to take home someone else's harvest home with you.
1:00 p.m., UUGeos Meet at the Collins' home

Monday, September 25
7:00 p.m., UU Men's Group

Friday, September 29
7:00 p.m., SJI Dramatic Presentation Earth: Our Home

Saturday, September 30
2:00 p.m., Memorial Service for Don & Nancy Auster
7:00 p.m., SJI Dramatic Presentation Earth: Our Home

It's a new year with a new schedule!
[CLICK HERE](#) to view the 2023-2024
Social Hour Host and Greeter Schedule.
You should find your name once in each column for the coming year. This is a simple and fun way to connect with your church community!



JAMES' JOURNAL Cultivating Climate Justice

When I was 12 years old, I filled a small milk jug with rocks and put it in the tank of our toilet to save a little water every time we flushed. My parents agreed with that but my lobby for solar panels was unsuccessful. From a young age I cared about our planet and wanted to do the right thing. Three decades ago, global warming sounded so abstract. Sure, it would cause climate change, suffering, and mass extinctions but it seemed so far off in the distant future.

Climate change is no longer something off in the distant future. The wildfire smoke from Quebec that has been blocking our sky and that we have been breathing, the fire that consumed the beautiful town of Lahaina, flooding in New York and Vermont, the record heat waves in Southwest, the 100-degree Gulf of Mexico water off the coast of Florida, and the tropical storm that hit Southern California are all things that happened this summer.

I don't think this is the end of humanity or civilization. But I do think that those affected most will be the poor and those who have been historically marginalized. Plain and simple—climate change is a social justice issue. Getting solar panels and conserving water are good things to do, but we also need to think bigger, broader, and more creatively. There can be a lot of joy in this work.

I am very excited about what your Social Justice Initiative Planning Team has been organizing over the past year. Paul Siskind, Ginger Storey-Welch, Caron Collins, Arthur Freeheart, and I have been meeting regularly to brainstorm and plan using consensus and covenant. We connected with people who are already doing creative and joyful climate justice work. Together, we are calling 2023's Social Justice Initiative, "Cultivating Climate Justice".

There will be a film series with great speakers, a common read and discussion with the author, a 3 Sisters dinner with folks from Akwesasne, a Saturday full of workshops and presenters, a farmer's roundtable, a special Sunday celebration of our sacred earth, and much more. This will be uplifting, spiritual, thought provoking, and chock-full of practical ways to get involved. In the midst of climate change we can organize, form relationships, learn about what we can do, and pressure policy makers. In short, we can cultivate climate justice together. Please check out our [poster](#) and [our website](#) for more details.

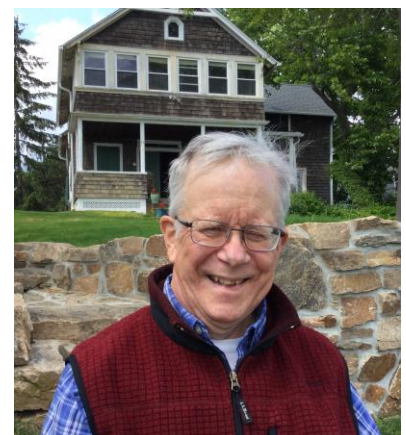
In peace,

The Rev. James Galasinski

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Welcome back from your summer travels and activities, as we gather once more in the Sanctuary for regular services! For those who were able to partake of our special services during July and August, I know that we all deeply appreciate the work of the Worship Team and Carol Zimmerman in planning, coordinating, and carrying out these meaningful and participatory events.

Our faith tradition is so important and can be a home for many seekers who have become disillusioned or disheartened by social divisions, fundamentalism, and loss of faith in general. Our religious community needs to offer three essential things: Meaning, Connection, and Participation. (These are taken



from a brief article “Quiet Quitting Comes to Church” by David Brubaker.) You will be hearing more about what these terms mean in practice as we head into our fall programs and worship services. See you soon.

In Faith,
Jon Montan, Church Council President

FAITH ENGAGEMENT

Squee!!! I am so looking forward to September. The beginning of our church year and the start of our religious education program. As I begin my tenth year of ministry, I have been thinking a lot about what church and our religious education ministry means to me, why I value this faith community and how it contributes to my sense of wellbeing.

Its people and the relationships are the foundation of my much joy. They are caring, loving and sometimes challenging. From talking with elders about the end of life, engaging with a young child around a picture they created, talking with a youth about their next life steps or being part of a conflict. This spectrum offers me a chance to live all of my faith values.

Then there is attending and planning worship services, preparing time for all ages stories, leading religious education classes, attending a Listening Circle and conversations during coffee hour. All of these activities offer perspective on how I can grow my spirit. I am offered so many opportunities to expand my mind and my heart.

Knowing I have a network of folx who will support me in a time of need offers me so much solace. I feel lovingly supported in a way that isn't found in many other parts of my life. There is peace of mind knowing I am part of something bigger. Church is good for my overall wellbeing.

I look forward to seeing you at our Ingathering Worship Service on September 10th. On Sunday, September 17 our children and youth will have an all-ages children chapel and covenant creation program. After church that day, the religious education committee and I will be hosting our annual Teaching Ministry Training (see more details in this newsletter). Our religious education program will begin on Sunday, September 24. All of these and so much more make me excited to be part of this faith community.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

JOYS & SORROWS:

- ♥ Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of Stuart Hills, a long-time member who died peacefully on August 2 at the age of 90. You can view his [full obituary here](#).
- ♥ Our hearts are with the family of Charlie Bradt, our Mindfulness Meditation leader, who died on August 17 at the age of 86. You can view his [full obituary here](#).
- ♥ Congratulations to Claire, granddaughter of Janet McFarland, for her recent [Rotary Scholarship award](#).
- ♥ Our heartfelt condolences go out to Sam Joseph, whose father died unexpectedly this summer.
- ♥ We hold John Trombley in our thoughts following the loss of his mother.



WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Thank you!

The members of the Worship Team wish to thank all of the individuals who made our Summer Worship Series: Our Own Voices—possible. Without your time and efforts, both big and small, it absolutely could not have happened. It also could not have happened without the willingness of the congregation to allow us to try something a little different. So, thanks to all of you!

We would also like to thank all of the individuals who shared poems during our Poetry Service on July 30th; we will be sharing a link to a page with all of the poems as soon as we have that put together.

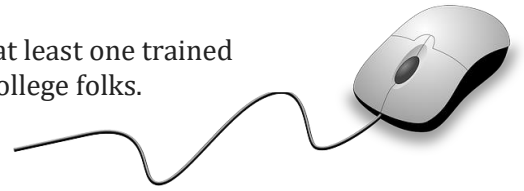
We would also like to thank all of those who kept us in coffee and goodies week after week all summer long! Thank you!!

Now that our summer series has concluded, we are looking for your feedback to use for future planning. If you have any feedback to share about the summer series, please drop the Worship Team an email at worship@uucantonny.org.

See you back in the pews!

SUNDAY TECHNICIANS

Zooming our Sunday worship service doesn't happen magically. It takes at least one trained technician. In the recent past, we have contracted with high school and college folks. We pay \$50 for each Sunday. Including setup and breakdown the technician works 2-3 hours. Each technician is trained. Do you know anyone interested? Please contact office@uucantonny.org.



TEACHER MINISTRY TRAINING



Are you interested in working with the infants, toddlers, children and/or youth of our congregation? If you would like to learn how, join us after church on Sunday, September 17 from noon till 2:30pm. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP with Carol Zimmerman, DRE via [email](#).

UU MEN'S GROUP

This is a small group for male identifying individuals who want to explore what it means to have healthy masculine intimacy, friendship, and spirituality in a deeply caring environment. We start with a check-in which is followed by discussion of a relevant issue. We meet on the **4th Monday of the month at 7p.m.** in the Romer Room. Please contact the [Rev. James Galasinski](#) with any questions.

LISTENING CIRCLES

Would you like to connect with others? Consider joining one of our Listening Circles. Listening Circles meet once a month September through June. Each person commits to doing at least one spiritual exercise and to ponder one question from a packet that relates to a monthly theme or a topic chosen by the facilitator. You can spend 15 minutes or 5 hours on your homework. Then we get together and talk about our



experiences. The goal is to experience the theme together and learn from each other. These circles provide an intimate opportunity for individual and collective growth.

We have two circles meeting right now. 1st Sunday of the month at 12:15 p.m. and 2nd Wednesdays at 7 p.m. The first Sunday circle has space for (3) more folx to join. If you are interested in joining the first Sunday circle, please contact [Carol, DRE](#). Contact [Rev. James](#) if you are interested in the second Wednesday circle.

If you are interested but [neither of these](#) date work for you, please contact Rev. James.



THIRD THURSDAY SOUP

Come enjoy some dinner with your fellow UJers! A simple meal of soup and bread will be offered on the Third Thursday of the month at 6 p.m. in the Social Room.

Vegetarian options will be available.

Our first Soup Dinner is scheduled for **Thursday, September 21 at 6 p.m.**

Any questions or interest in making soup once a month, email outreach@uucantonny.org.

Save the Date! The Potsdam Interfaith Community (PIC) will hold its annual picnic on September 21st. Please look for details. Contact Pat Alden or Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel to learn more.



DO YOU LIKE ADVENTURES?

Explore Pierrepont with the UUGeos! Join the UUGeos on **Sunday, September 24th at 1:00 p.m.** exploring the state lands in Pierrepont for hidden geocaches! We will meet at the home of Phil and Caron Collins at 372 Irish Settlement Rd, Colton, NY and carpool to the nearby Glenmeal State Forest.

We will seek up to 6 geocaches, including Castle Top, Grandpa's Geo-cave, The Whale, and others. Afterwards, we will return to the Collins' home for refreshments to celebrate our finds. Dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes. For more information, contact Caron at bandtchr1@hotmail.com

Our CHURCH HISTORY LEARNING CIRCLE Prepares to Celebrate 200 YEAR OF UNIVERSALISTS in Canton!

Have you ever noticed the small date on our church's sign?

What happened in 1825?

Have you wondered how our church came to be out here in the North Country wilderness?

For the past 2 years, our History Learning Circle has been scouring all available sources of information to piece together a more complete history of the Universalists who gathered at this church here in Canton in 1825, and those who have maintained it ever since.



If you are intrigued by the idea of this treasure hunt, we hope you will be interested in spending some time this year to help us continue our search and to preserve our archives. The information we gather about the role Universalism has played here in St. Lawrence County will provide direction to our bicentennial planning committee, and hopefully allow us to create a formal historical record of our movement here.

You can help in two ways:

1. Join the **Church History Learning Circle** as we continue researching our history. You can do much of this in your own time in our church archives, and other community archives and newspaper files. We meet once a month on the third Sunday at 9:00a.m. before church to share what we have found out. Our next meeting will be on Sunday, September 17th. Contact Eileen Raymond at history@uucantonny.org.
2. Join the **Bicentennial Planning Committee** to turn the history into a year-long celebration of US, with events throughout the year, with celebrations in October with the NY State Convention of Universalists, and culminating in November with our own Canton birthday party! Interested?? Please contact Kim Bouchard to get on the committee list.

NEWS FROM THE MAX COOTS LIBRARY

The book discussion is coming! As part of the Social Justice Initiative, we will have the opportunity to meet with Timothy Beal, the author of **When Time Is Short: Finding Our Way in the Anthropocene** on Sunday, October 8. The Coots Library has purchased 5 copies of the book, and they are available in the library for checkout.

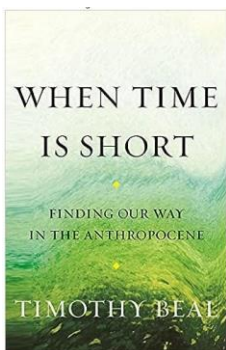
If you are new or new-ish to the congregation, be sure to spend some time browsing our library. Typically, the library is open before and following the service each Sunday. Bring the kids; we have lots of great picture books and a few young adult titles. We have also added a few new books to the shelves.

Books that are newly available for checkout are: How to Change your Mind by Micheal Pollen, Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer, The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself by Micheal Singer, Women Rowing North: Navigating Life's Currents by Mary Pipher and Finding the Mother Tree by Susan Simard.

The Library Committee is working to accession more books – this is the process that gets books properly logged into our collection so they can be checked out by you! If you are interested in helping with accessioning, or learning more about how you can help the library, contact me or Arthur Freeheart. We welcome your interest.

Lorraine Olendzenski, Library Committee Chair

***When Time Is Short: Finding Our Way In The Anthropocene* by Timothy Beal book review by Arthur Freeheart**



The "Anthropocene" is defined as the current geological age; the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment (OED). The short time referred to in the title is the time our species may have before we cause our own extinction by environmental degradation.

Beal skillfully describes a number of "exceptionalisms" used to rationalize exploitation of the planet and of one another (human exceptionalism, Western exceptionalism, White exceptionalism, Christian exceptionalism, etc.). He analyzes the ways in which Judeo-Christian creation accounts have been used to fuel environmental and social injustice. He interprets the Hebrew words in those creation references to find their pre-colonial indigenous meanings. The resulting analysis provides the seeds of a 'dark green spirituality' which can grow into more positive, proactive planetary advocacy when time is short.

Faith in Action (our social justice leadership group) will meet on Tuesday September 12 at 7 PM via [Zoom](#). Please join us.



Connections and Community Fair

Join us after church on **Sunday, October 1st** to learn about opportunities for connection in our church community. From committees and teams to circles and groups, there are many ways to begin or deepen involvement. Find and create meaningful - and joyful - experiences to grow and thrive together. Please watch for details in upcoming church media. Contact Sarah Bentley-Garfinkel with questions.

Like to bake? We need you!

The Social Justice Initiative planning committee is seeking bakers to make these delicious homemade pumpkin chocolate chip cookies for our Cultivating Climate Justice Day on Saturday, October 14th. If you can help, please [email Ginger Storey-Welch](mailto:storeygi@cpcs.us) at storeygi@cpcs.us or contact the church office.

Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Cookies

Preheat: 350 degrees F

Ingredients:

4 c flour
2 c oats
2 tsp baking soda
2 tsp cinnamon
1 1/2 c butter
1 3/4 c brown sugar
3/4 c white sugar
1 egg
1 tsp vanilla
16 oz can pumpkin (plain)
1 1/2 cup chocolate chips



Directions:

Mix dry ingredients separately. Cream butter, sugar, egg, vanilla separately. Add dry to wet ingredients. Then alternate adding pumpkin and chocolate chips and mix well. Scoop dough with tablespoon onto a greased cookie sheet. Bake approximately 13 minutes until lightly brown. Makes 4 dozen cookies.

UU SCIENCE BOOK CLUB

The UU Science Book Club will meet next by Zoom on **Thursday, October 26**. In the meantime, they are preparing the reading list for the 2023-2024 season. If you know a book the club should read, non-fiction or fiction, send your suggestion to briangardam@gmail.com.

More Schedules, Calendars, and Information:



[Social Justice Initiative: Cultivating Climate Justice Website](#)

[SJI Events Poster](#)

[Social Hour Host and Greeter Schedule 2023-2024](#)

[Instructions for Hosts and Greeters](#)

Staff Schedules for the 2023-2024 Church Year:

THE CHURCH OFFICE IS OPEN on TUESDAY and THURSDAY from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

The Rev. James Galasinski: Available by email and by appointment **Monday – Thursday**

Carol Zimmerman, DRE: Available by email **Sunday-Thursday** and by appointment on **Tuesdays & Wednesdays**.

Sara Trimm, Administrator: Available by email **Monday – Thursday** and in the office **Tuesday & Thursday**

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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