

Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

NEWSLETTER

December 2023 - THIS MONTH AND SUNDAYS



Sunday, December 3

Pastoral Care: What It Is and Why We Need It

The Rev. James Galasinski

Pastoral care gives space for healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling our spiritual and emotional lives. We have a pastoral care team trained in the art of listening. But really, pastoral care is all around us.

11:30 a.m., Holiday Pageant Rehearsal

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

Wednesday, December 6

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

6:30 p.m., Church Council Meeting

Thursday, December 7

5:30 p.m., Yoga with Robin

Friday, December 8

6:30 p.m., Holiday Jazz & Coffee Night

Sunday, December 10

Good Deaths *The Rev. James Galasinski*

Currently there are ten states that have some form of Medical Aid in Dying. New York is not one of them. A peaceful and compassionate option should be available for those who are terminally ill.

11:30 a.m., Holiday Pageant Rehearsal

Tuesday, December 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, December 13

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

Thursday, December 14

5:00 p.m., Game Night

5:30 p.m., Yoga with Robin

Sunday, December 17

9:00 a.m., History Circle Meeting

Holiday Pageant: One Christmas

Carol Zimmerman, DRE

Join us to hear this holiday story written by our minister emeritus, the Rev. Anne Marsh. Santa travels the world to visit with friends and learn about their Christmas traditions.

Monday, December 18

7:00 p.m., Worship Committee Meeting

Tuesday, December 19

1:30 p.m., Membership and Outreach Meeting

6:30 p.m., RE Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 21

6:00 p.m., Third Thursday Soup & Solstice

7:00 p.m., Science Book Club

Sunday, December 24

Christmas Eve Morning

The Rev. James Galasinski

We will meet in the social room and converse about what Christmas means to us and our favorite memories.

7:00 p.m., ***Peace on Earth***

The Rev. James Galasinski

This traditional candlelight service we will feature our favorite readings and songs of the season with a message of peace for all.

Sunday, December 31

TBA *Cathy Crosby and Mark Berninghausen*

Watch for announcements in e-news and our website for more information about our New Year's Eve plans.





JAMES' JOURNAL

One of the Elders is Gone

A very old tree died in the past year. It made the news on North Country Public Radio and the Adirondack Examiner. That's not the mainstream media, I know, but still it made the news. There are about 50 more of these old Eastern white pines left in a grove near Paul Smiths. At an estimated 350 years old, they are some of the oldest white pines in the world and are referred to as the 'Elder Grove'.

In the coming decades they'll reach their natural lifespan and all of them will die. The old trees record centuries of memories in their bodies. They are keepers of droughts and storms. They can never truly be replaced because all the other trees in the Adirondacks are much younger.

Pat Dunkelberg died this past October at the age of 93. I knew Pat Dunkelberg as the woman who sat in the same pew she sat in when she was a child. She saw a parade of ministers over the years. She told me about the Rev. Edna Bruner, who served this congregation from 1945 to 1950. Pat was babysitting for a couple who didn't like the fact that she attended that scandalous Universalist Church with a petty-coat preacher. "Well, then maybe you need to find a new babysitter" she defyingly replied.

I once led a member recognition on a Sunday morning where everyone was instructed to stand. I thanked those that had been members for 5 years or less and asked them to sit. Then 10, 15, 20, 30 and so on. Pat was the last person standing.

I remember Pat's red leather jacket which was reminiscent of something Michael Jackson would have worn. When I candidated here to be your minister in the spring of 2016, I led a Theology on Tap session where everyone was invited out to a local brewery. I presented some theological questions and we discussed them in small groups while enjoying a beverage. Pat was there in her red leather jacket at the age of 86.

Each Sunday she came up to the worship table to light a candle for Joys and Sorrows, often with assistance from another person, someone holding her arm. There was something sacred about that: walking together on the path to light. Each Sunday in the receiving line I kissed her cheek and gave her a side hug.

In her last days, she clenched my hand ever so tightly from her hospital bed. I sang to her songs of release and prayed for her. I told her she was loved and that she was going back to love.

One of the elders of our grove has fallen and can never truly be replaced.

In peace,

The Rev. James Galasinski

Monday – Thursday: In the office and available by appointment

Friday: Writing Day (not accepting appointments and slow to response to messages)

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

If You Want to Swim, You Have to Get Wet

This month I will focus on **participation**, which is the third part of our Meaning, Connection, and Participation theme.

We want to feel we are part of something. We don't want to be perpetual spectators in life. It is not enough to merely receive information, knowledge or pleasure in a one-way direction. This may be satisfying in short bursts but eventually we want to share our experience with others.

We do this by participating in life; by giving of ourselves. Our participation takes many forms, be they physical, mental, social, or spiritual. One special opportunity for participation is with our Church Community. The benefits of such participation yield both meaning and connection.

I am grateful for the participation of members and friends who together make this Church what it is. We have a religious community like no other in our county. Ours is a community that offers meaning, connection, and participation to our current members and to potential future members who are looking for these things.

My hope is that people who have not yet found us, or do not even realize that they are Unitarian Universalists, will feel they can participate in our mission. We have an active Membership and Outreach Committee but I think we all need to get the word out on what we have to offer. Fruits will not come unless seeds are planted.

My message is simply that, if you are deciding to participate and the little gnome on one shoulder says: "*Someone else will do it — just sit back*" and the gnome on your other shoulder says: "*Yeah, you can do this*", take the advice of the you-can-do-this gnome. We need you and want your participation at whatever level you feel is appropriate.

This is a message I hope you will share with people who may not yet realize they wish to join us.

In Faith,

Jon Montan, Church Council President



FAITH ENGAGEMENT

About ten years ago, friends introduced me to the new era of board gaming with a game called Cargo Noir. I began collecting games. During the pandemic when I was home with my parents, my collections grew exponentially with a collection now close to 100 games. I play almost every day with my parents and can be found playing with friends most Saturday evenings. It is sooo much fun. I really enjoy the different game mechanics, the themes and the social aspect of being with family and friends.

Games teach us so much — like resource management, math skills, about winning and losing, setting goals, healthy competition and joy. The last Sunday of every month (with the exception of December) this year, we are playing games that help us learn about being Unitarian Universalist and grow deeper in our relationships together. This curriculum was created by my colleague, Kathy Smith, Director of Family Ministries at the Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge. If you enjoy board games, please consider joining the RE teaching team and come play. Blessed be.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education



JOYS & SORROWS:

- ♥ Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of Johndan Eilola, who died in November.
- ♥ We all hold Carol Zimmerman in our hearts as she mourns the loss of her father, Richard, who died at the end of November.



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
3 1/2 East Main Street, Canton, New York 13617-1417

2024 Canvass

Meaning – Connection – Participation

Our [2024 Canvass](#) is almost complete.

If you haven't yet made a pledge for 2024, there's still time! Simply complete a pledge card [online here](#) or ask any committee member for a pledge card when you're at church.

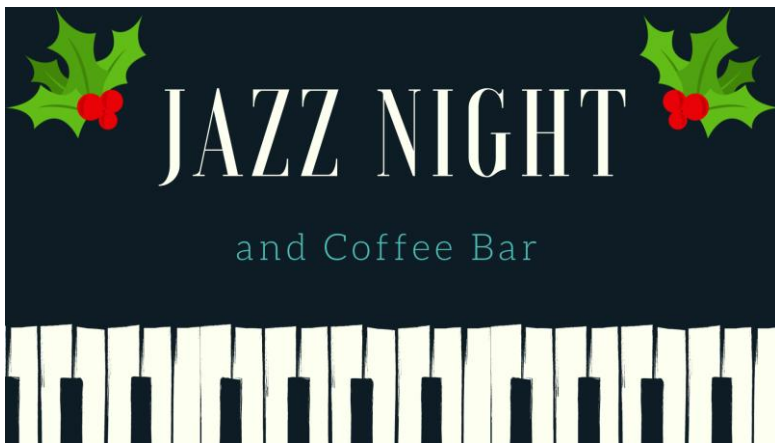
Every pledge makes a difference! Thank you in advance for your generosity and participation.



YOGA WITH ROBIN

Robin Collen is leading a series of free yoga classes **on Thursday evenings from 5:30p.m. – 6:45p.m.** in the Social Room. There are 2 more classes on **December 7 & 14.**

These sessions are appropriate for anyone interested in an accessible, meditative and physical practice that inspires connections, compassion, and joy, and can lead to improved general health, strength, and flexibility. The entire community—whether you are new to yoga or have practiced extensively—is invited to attend. Classes are gentle and meditative with the invitation for participants to work at a pace that is right for them—whether that is taking things more slowly or offering greater challenge. Participants are welcome to use chairs as well as mats. Please bring a yoga mat and bath towel. Call or text Robin with questions and concerns (315.261.1684). Robin is a dance professor at SUNY Potsdam and a 200-hour Kripalu certified yoga teacher.



HOLIDAY JAZZ NIGHT & COFFEE BAR
FRIDAY, December 8
6:30 – 8:30 p.m. in the Social Room

Come enjoy some live holiday jazz by John Danis, Tim Savage, Steve Manders, and the Rev. James Galasinski.

Coffee bar will include cafe americano, espresso, decaf coffee, various teas, including herbal, and hot chocolate.

This event is free and open to the public so be sure to invite your friends!

GAME NIGHT

Join us on **Thursday, December 14 at 5 p.m.** for an evening of board games! Bring your favorite game and friends or just come to join in! We'll meet downstairs and enjoy a relaxing evening of fun and fellowship.
Contact [Carlene Bermann](mailto:Carlene.Bermann) if you have any questions.



SCIENCE BOOK CLUB

The UU Science Book Club's December book is *Brain Bugs* by Dean Buonomano. The club will meet by Zoom on Thursday, December 21, at 7:00 pm. To participate, contact Brian Gardam via email at Briangardam@gmail.com.



THIRD THURSDAY SOUP AND SOLSTICE

Come enjoy dinner with fellow UUsers on **Thursday, December 21 at 6 p.m.** We have been sharing a simple meal of soup and bread on the Third Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. in the Social Room.

This month the Third Thursday is also the Winter Solstice, so we will start the evening with a Solstice Celebration led by the Rev. James Galasinski.

Email outreach@uucantonny.org with questions or to sign up to make soup for any of the meals.

COMPOSTING IN CANTON

Those in Canton may already know of and use the free drop off site for food scraps. Not only will this divert future valuable compost from the landfill, but it will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the landfill. As an effort to "walk our talk" the Canton UU Church will run a trial program through December where you can bring your food scraps to the church on Sunday. We have contracted with NoCoCompost who will supply buckets and transport them to the drop off site each Sunday. All are welcome to contribute! Let's help make the Canton composting program successful.



WINTER POTLUCKS ARE COMING SOON!

These are casual potluck gatherings during the months of January, February, and March.

Stay tuned for more details coming in early January.

If you have any questions or you'd like to be a host, please email outreach@uucantonny.org.

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** & 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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